

TRACTIVE EFFORT



An O-Gauge Forum Publication

**Let There Be
Light! - pg.34**

**O-Gauge
Layouts in a
Small Space -
pg.24**



**Butt Ugly Trains
pg.7**



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Trey Conway	Sparky O's Workbench
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Tractive Effort
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Glen Burnie, MD 21061

Editor's Comments

By Paula R. Webb

All aboard. Grab a comfy seat and enjoy.

Everyone on board. Welcome back to the wonderful world of model trains and to our second edition of *Tractive Effort*, an O Gauge Forum Publication. This is a special way for us to march forward into Spring and a brighter year. In this issue, we will explore many different areas that the model railroad hobby encompasses.

Spring is a time for growth and renewal and this edition has grown with additional columnists and writers, a colorful and interesting photo section, and a salute to one of our sponsors, Evan Designs.

This month, new columnist Mark Sarver has a delightful column entitled Butt Ugly Trains and some beautiful outside photos of his layout. Wood Foss continued with part 2 of Fabulous Railroad Hotels of the Gilded Age in which he describes how he filled an empty corner of his layout with the help of Fairmont Banff Hotel in Alberta, Canada.

John Henninges wrote about his dad's tinplate collection that he now treasures, Mark Boyce began a column, So You Want to Build a Layout, An O Gauge Layout In a Small Space, and Emile began his first column in a three part series with Photo Hints, Lighting.

Are you interested in techniques that will improve your layout? If so, check out Charlie Stoia's article about Dry Brushing, Joe Brino on Box Car Loads, and Andy De La Rosa who continued his series on Upgrading a UP Set.

Bruce Urbanski, Brian Vaill, and Adam Rypinski, all contributed as did others. I won't divulge every topic. And there is a special tribute to a two time winner. Open and enjoy.

O Gauge Forum has a group of talented people and it has been a pleasure reading and editing their work as we add them to our magazine. A special thank you to those who have made submissions and, last but not least, I want to thank our publishing staff, Trey Conway and Anna Underwood for the hard work that they did putting this entire thing together... Thanks to both of you for YOUR tremendous assistance.

Future editions are planned with a March, June, September, December, schedule. Included are plans for additions such as member's comments, member's layout, and product reviews.

Tractive Effort and the staff welcome suggestions, photos, comments, additional articles, and columns. Please contact me at oldhokie70@charter.net.

Happy Easter and Hope for a Warm Spring.

Paula R. Webb
Editor-in-Chief



About Paula

Paula was born in Suffolk, Virginia and is a Latin teacher. She is married to Bill Webb and they have three children, four grandchildren, and Pepe', a Standard Poodle who can almost talk and who enjoys watching Emile's Epic Christmas Village videos. She has four brothers and a sister. One Christmas the boys received a Lionel train. Paula was five and can remember sitting on the floor and running it for hours. Hobbies include needlepoint, reading, travel, and occasionally fishing offshore with Bill.

Publisher's Comments

By Trey Conway

Dear Reader,

After reading all the articles and columns submitted for the Spring 2021 issue of *Tractive Effort*, I sat quietly at my desk for quite some time, deep in thought. In all my years I have never EVER seen such an outpouring of support for a member based, enthusiast publication. When we began this endeavor my first question was, "Can we, as a membership sustain content for the magazine"? I think this issue settles that question!

I'm so thankful for every contributor, every photo and every single story submitted to us. Each and every one furthers our hobby and stokes the fires of enthusiasm to drive it forward.

Speaking of forward, we've added some new columns, including a DIY repair feature called Sparky O's Workbench. Anyone can contribute to Sparky O's Workbench by the way. It's an anonymous column of repair and maintenance tips/tricks. Some articles will be deep dives into complex repairs and some will be simpler, but required procedures to keep your motive power and rolling stock in top shape. It's all up to you.

We've also added a member photo gallery to spur your imagination. It's a great place to show off your best layout scenes, dramatic operating sessions, your awesome photo skills, and get ideas for what's next in your own O-gauge world.

Finally, let's keep this great momentum we have built together. Submit your story, tip, layout photo, or innovative creative process, to *Tractive Effort*. We're just getting warmed up!

Hope that you enjoy it,

Trey

About Trey Conway

Trey is from Knoxville, TN where he owns a full service advertising and marketing firm. He has been an ASE Certified Master Tech since 1986, and is an avid scale aircraft and sci-fi modeler. Trey rediscovered his interest in model trains in 2007, and has built a large collection which runs on a unique layout built into his home. Trey has four children, four grandchildren, and is married to Jennifer, who is a professional educator and band director. According to legend, she is also the "Wifiest, wife that ever wifed".

Confessions of a Model Train Nerd

An Ode to "I Made That!"

Recurring Col. by Adam Rypinski

I made that! I fondly remember it as if it were just yesterday, but due to That Which Must Not Be Named (I refuse to grace C&^%!-19 with its real name), it happened back in mid-2019. My nephew was visiting for a few weeks over the summer and we spent several memorable evenings in the train room.

During our second train running session, he asked me about the cool water tower on the lower level and where I got it. "I made that! 3D printed it actually!" It was at that moment that I realized why we get such joy in sharing our layouts with others. It is the pride in our creations, the output of our own imagination, and hard work, that fuel our excitement.

Sure, we buy many of our buildings and accessories, but many of us also kit-build, scratch-build, and re-imagine many, many things (OGF members are very talented!). Putting it all together is a labor of love requiring creativity and hard work. As I beamed with pride describing to my nephew all of the things I'd made, I could see his creative wheels turning, giving me a glimpse of hope for the hobby's future.

This hobby is very infectious and has so much to offer. We could, and often do, debate for hours over the many wonderful facets that make it so great. However, imagination-fueled creation is what I suspect keeps most of us engaged, excited, and able to relive the child-like joy of our first train. I know that I often easily get lost in time thinking about and planning my Grand Opus layout (6x12 is humongous, right?).

To close my first column of 2021, I would like to offer an "Ode to I Made that!" to my fellow model train nerds.

I made that,
the new bell that was lost when I my first
4-4-0 crashed to the floor

Yes, I made that,
the 3D printed train station I imagined from
long long ago

Of course, I made that,
the office building where important railroad
business does abound

Don't you know, I made that,
the upper loop for my holiday trains to grace
the room round and round

Indeed, I made that,
many train cars to pull behind the overly
abundant engines I adore

I proudly say, I made that,
the OGF Clubhouse where members drink
beer and debate the best loco and car

I can't believe, I made that,
the village that helps me remember grandmas
home, cooking and love

And I will continue to make,
imagine, create, and invent, to keep the joy alive.

To all of my fellow Model Train Nerds on the
O-Gauge Forum, keep creating and show us what
you made! 🇺🇸



About Adam Rypinski

When not hiding in the train room playing with his choochoos, Adam can either be found tinkering with other hobbies (guitars, 3D printing, electronics, reading, or napping) or in his office working for a high-tech company in the area of technical services. He loves helping people, is endlessly curious, and loves being creative. Adam has a beautiful wife of more than 23 years, two wonderful daughters, and two perpetual puppy pals.



|Evan Designs

David, the co-owner of Evan Designs brought his son Scott Evan to a train show in Connecticut in 1997. Dave was working as a software developer at the time and was inspired by the train show to write his own software that would allow modelers to design and print their own paper buildings for their layouts.

The modeling software was a huge success, and Evan Designs was born. From 1997 to 2006 the business expanded, offering a variety of software programs to design buildings, road signs, windows, and more.

In 2006, Shelly the CEO of Evan Designs, had the brilliant idea to expand the business and start selling LED lights. From 2006 to 2021, Evan Designs has seen a huge expansion in business, employing 20 workers and offering over 100 different types of lights, circuits, electrical accessories, and still the software that started it all.

Shelly and David are continuously innovating new ideas for the business such as the lightning circuit LED that was just released in January 2021. Beyond this Evan Designs strives to provide high quality products by hand testing all lights in house before shipment, and providing email and phone assistance to modelers all over the world, and all products come with a 2 year warranty.

EvanDesigns.com
Evan Designs can be reached at:
help@evandesigns.com
(888) 764-2610

Below you will find inserts from Evan Designs web-site that we have used with their permission. This is a small part of what the site offers. If you have never looked at what is available, you probably would benefit by visiting. If you have been to the site, you might want to examine it even more carefully as the number of options is amazing and it does change.

Hobby LED Lights for Models & More

We love spending time with our hobbies, and we want our customers to experience that same joy when using our premium battery powered LED lights. From RC helicopters to model trains, you'll find the best hobby LED lights online at Evan Designs.



Evan Designs Website Photos
Used with permission

Often someone asks about vehicle lighting. Evan Designs has an entire section that is devoted to this subject.

Vehicles

Sirens and Small LED Lights for Diecast Police Cars

Are you ready to give your model cop car that extra realistic effect from tiny LEDs? Our selection of lights for diecast police cars includes LEDs for sirens and headlights. And, we also carry micro LED lights for slot cars and firetrucks.

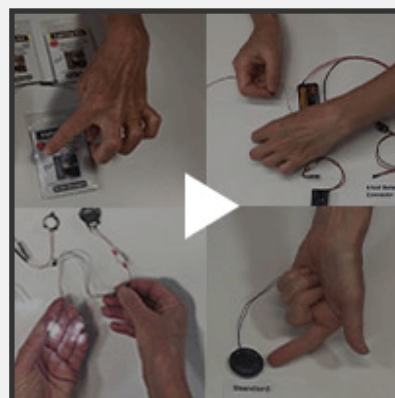


Don't miss the model builder section, the numerous videos, or the gallery which shows projects submitted by more than 100 customers, a great place to "borrow" ideas.

Videos, additional Information, and LED Gallery

High-Quality Battery Powered LED Lights for Your Projects!

At Evan Designs, we're dedicated to supplying hobbyists from all over with regular and small LED lights for a variety of fun and interesting projects. Whether you're searching for tiny LED lights for diecast police cars, diorama lighting or model train lights, our selection of bright bulbs and accessories will breathe life into your craft. Browse our collection of mini LED lights for models to get started!





BUTT UGLY TRAINS

By Mark Sarver

Butt ugly. Who in their right mind would want to own trains like those? That was my frame of mind for many years in my youth and younger years when I would walk into the hobby shops and train stores in the late 60's into the early 80's, seeing tinplate and standard gauge sitting on the shelves and in the show cases.

Fast forward to November 1994 sitting in my favorite little train shop in Fort Wayne Indiana. Every year right after Halloween and before Thanksgiving, people would start bringing in toy trains that they had stored away for years. Some of those people wanted their trains fixed up so that they could run them under the tree. Some just wanted to cash out.

A young man comes into the shop with a box holding an original Lionel 408E along with 3, 300 series passenger cars. The whole time he and the shop owner are haggling over a price, I am looking at the 408E and thinking, "God, how butt ugly. I wouldn't give him \$20 for it." They finally came to an agreement and the young man left the store with a little more

cash in his wallet than when he came in. When the customer left, the shop owner looked at the new acquisition and chuckled. "I'll be stuck with this for awhile."

Like in many train shops, Friday nights are when the guys come in and sit around talking trains, telling train stories, similar to fish stories, and enjoying each other's company. I kept looking over at the 408E sitting on the counter and at some point in time, I started hearing this ever so faint voice saying to me, "You want me." It seemed to get a little louder every time I looked over at it.

The next morning I woke up and, just like in the movies, there it was, the Lionel 408E, along with the three passenger cars. Sitting on my kitchen table. In all of its beautiful glory. "Why on earth did anyone want to part with you", I thought. "They must have been MAD!"

And so began my closeted love affair with standard gauge and tinplate. No one I knew of in Fort Wayne collected or operated Tinplate or Standard Gauge trains. If

it was brought up, people started to look at me sideways. Oh well, I have always had my regular Lionel and MTH trains to enjoy also.

When I moved to Detroit, I thought that there would be a good chance of finding a Tinplate or Standard Gauge group to join. I was surprised that there was no group to be found. I floated an idea about creating a group on the OGR forum and received no responses. Oh well. Not the first time I have swam against the stream.

My little collection of Standard Gauge and Tinplate was growing. I would run the O-Gauge Tinplate from time to time on the Glancy Modular Layout when they were set up at various shows. It always garnered expressions of joy and amazement when they were in operation.

I would look at the Standard Gauge on the shelf or open up boxes and stare at it thinking of how they would look running around on a layout. At some point in time, I started hearing this ever so faint but familiar voice saying to me, "Build it and they will come."



As that voice got louder in my head, I started drawing up plans to build a modular Standard Gauge layout. Some of those plans were quite elaborate for which I had to slap myself back to reality, telling myself that I would be the only one working with this layout. It has to be handled and moved by one person.

Coming out of the workshop, the final design is an L shape layout that is 20' x 20' modifiable to 12' x 20' or 12' x 12'. This is accomplished by using four, 4' x 8' tables and four, 2' x 8' tables on folding banquet table legs with levelers to compensate for uneven ground. It is a single track plan with one crossover utilizing O-84 and O-57 curves. For power, I am using a MTH Z-4000 transformer and 16 gauge wire terminated every 4' to 6'.

I am working on some plans to add a siding on one leg of the L along with building two smaller sections, one being a Hellgate bridge and the other a custom

built viaduct style of bridge, adding an additional 3' to the other leg when used. In the near future, I will make scenery modules that can be placed around the layout to include working lights and animation.

This layout has brought me immense joy, and true to the familiar voice that whispered in my head, indeed "they have come." So much for, "Butt Ugly Trains."

Lastly, yes, I think my Standard Gauge trains are possessed.

(To see some additional pictures and video clips, check out the Detroit 3 Railers videos, June 2019 or October 2020 meets.) 🇺🇸



About Mark Sarver

Worked for Norfolk & Western Railway, and later, for the Department of Defense, Michigan Air National Guard, retiring as Senior Master Sergeant. Retired as Vice President of Glancy Trains Modular Group at The Detroit Historical Museum Presently on the Board of Directors for the Festival of Trees, the largest benefit organization for the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation in supporting medical research of childhood diseases and treatments. Mark is also a member of the Detroit 3 Railers, "a fantastic group of guys sharing in the love of this great hobby". Mark has built a modular layout for the Detroit 3 Railers that is 24' x 32'.

Perilous Passenger Projects – Part 1 of 2

By Andrew De La Rosa

This is really: “A Tale of Two Projects,” one just started and one just finished. Their common denominator being passenger trains but, more importantly, concern detailing – very elaborate detailing.

In the whole time I have been a scale modeler, I’ve always gone in for a high level of detailing of whatever the model happened to be, including adding more or better operating features than what came as stock. But elaboration of this kind is certainly the enemy of efficiency – and sometimes even realism in the finished product.

In the case of the project just started, in fact, I began it more out of fatigue than anything else – I needed a break from the UP dome car revamp described in the first issue of *Tractive Effort* because my own elaborate ideas about that became tiresome to complete. So that led on to . . .

The new project

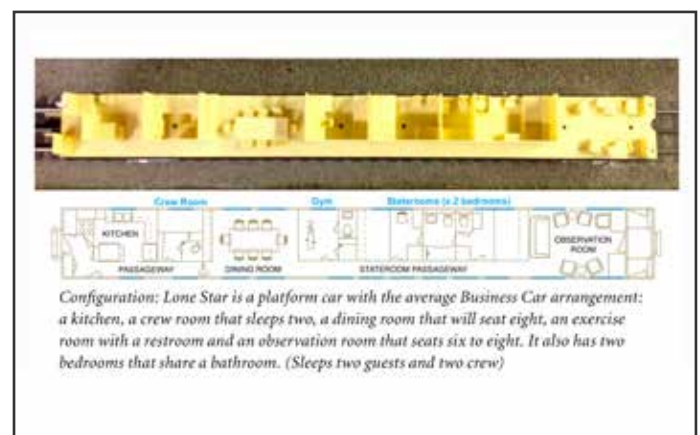
When I recently took delivery of an entirely new Lionel passenger car, the UP Lone Star Business Car, I decided to do some additional research on the prototype. This was partly because, at full scale length, this car is genuinely huge, inside and out, and seemed to offer the possibility of an easy or at least relatively quick modification to spruce up the otherwise dull interior treatment.

Neither easy nor quick has been achieved, but here is the raw material and a view of the real thing. [See photo page 12]. Looking through the windows and then taking the body shell off, it was clear that Lionel has produced a nice facsimile of the real car, especially inside, although unfortunately, it is dull to look at because of the bland monotone color and absence of passenger figures.

As far as I know, before this, Lionel had not

produced a business car for over 10 years and, when they did, the cars were aluminum-bodied, based on K-Line tooling, not scale size and had what to my eye were slightly strange-looking windows. So, the first thing I did with this car was to analyze the more prototypical window placements of this model and how they related to the compartments represented inside the model.

Lone Star is one of UP’s Excursion Cars and has



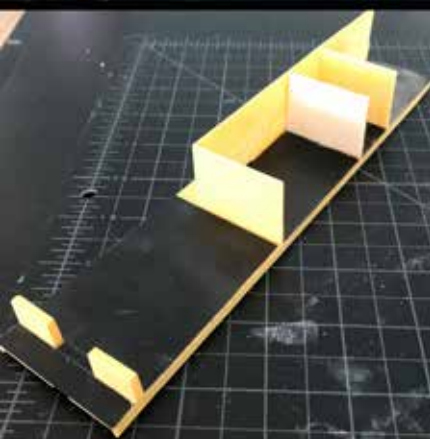
had a full interior renovation that is – well, truly elaborate. It includes wood paneling and furnishings that look like they belong in a Gold Rush-era gin palace. This car, which UP offers for private rental, has been documented in great detail, including the entire interior, and what really caught my eye as something worthwhile, or at least amusing, to model was the gigantic and plush serpentine sofa in the rear observation section.

Unfortunately, this led on to the bigger idea of



creating an interior that was fit for railroad barons and their privileged guests, which had to include this sofa.

The interior of the car is formed by two moldings, which are each one piece (no separately applied details like tables, chairs etc.). I opted to start with the rear of the car, including the observation area and the two staterooms. My original idea was not to replace all of the molded-in details like chairs, stateroom beds, bathrooms, and the like. However, bigger if not necessarily better ideas overcame common sense, and in one sitting I cut out all of those details and rebuilt the floors and walls. (4.)



My first effort at the sofa came out looking to me like it belonged in the Flintstones' house. I still haven't got either the contours or the proportions right, but this second effort, using epoxy modeling compound, is probably the best I can manage with my fumbling fingers and deteriorated eyesight.(5.)

Exactly how this will be finished, including the fringe around the base, to resemble the plush surface of the real thing is something I am still experimenting with, but I may use an old car model technique I haven't practiced in about 40 (or more) years.

Far more recent is my discovery of so-called "quarter scale" (otherwise 1/48) furnishings and

accessories. What professional miniaturists can now create in this tiny size, and at very limited cost, is truly amazing. Much of it is 3D printed but some is in worked metal or laser-cut wood. As examples, these pieces I have are going to take the place of some of the stock items I cut out – in my effort to

revamp this car for my imaginary railroad barons. I especially like the drinks trolley.



The only other thing I have completed so far is another odd detail. At some stage in its travels, on an excursion through California, Lone Star was fitted with caboose marker lights. These are not standard equipment (I guess that they were added to comply with local railroad regulations), although the real car appears to be retrofitted with mounts for them. Anyway, I like lighting features, and I actually had a pair of O scale brass marker lights in the identical design to the ones on the car. These will be installed in due course and illuminated by nano-sized LEDs.



I can only justify my obsession with detail by reference to the recent thread on OGF concerning what visitors really like to see on layouts – which in most cases is scenery and details rather than the trains themselves. I get the same thing with passenger cars – the appeal of miniature towns and cities seems to carry over into the dioramas which are my cars' interiors.

More on this project in Part 2 as and when I can move on with it, which may have to wait for more mobile times.

The (Very) Old, And Now Finished, Project

I have already mentioned my obsession with operating features. This is reflected in a project posted on OGF in late 2019 - as far as it had gotten when I posted it. What's been missing, until now, is the really arduous epilogue.

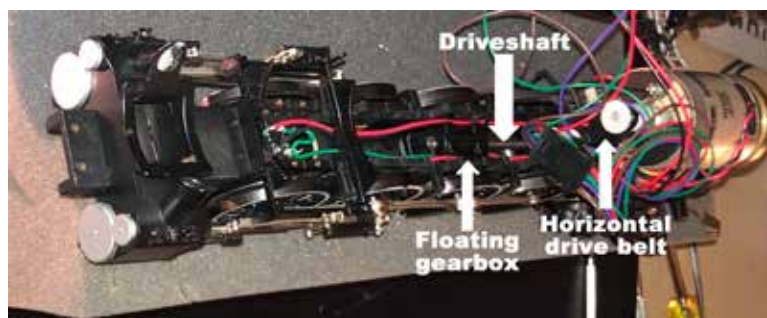
The worst part of any engine or car project is the end stage, when you see whether everything actually fits back together and works – or whether you have pinched wires, failed to allow adequate clearances, irreparably bent metal parts, and the like.

This is a 3rd Rail GS-4 in passenger service livery – with whitewalls (much maligned by purists and rivet counters). (8.) In this case, I upgraded the smoke, lighting and most of all the sound – an exercise that I worked on by stages very occasionally over a period running eventually into years.



I had to put this aside while quarantine kept me from getting the parts. On installation and start-up, the sound came on but the engine moved a foot or so and then stopped, although I could hear the motor turning. Stupidly I tried restarting it and persisted with moving the throttle, then the transformer circuit breaker kicked in and the new sound board died.

I discovered that the gearbox was “floating” up into the boiler. That is Scott Mann’s term for what happens when the gearbox that is connected to the 3rd Rail horizontal belt drive works loose and the driveshaft-mounted worm gears disengage from those connected to the wheels. You can see the parts in this image.



This floating must have been my fault, from handling the engine innumerable times. 3rd Rail engines are not meant to be taken apart by an amateur like me, although you can do it with some tutoring by Scott. I managed to get to the gearbox and de-float it. Another ERR sound board later, it's all back together and running properly.

I might post a video of this on OGF at some stage. After a little touching up of the parts that had inevitably gotten scuffed in the long process, the real beauty of this engine shines through – right down to the big diameter driving wheels used in passenger service. But the last touch on putting this back together nearly drove me nuts – it was re-fixing the tiny wire that represents the power cable to the Mars Light, which I've had to re-do at least five times. (11.)

The sound was my undoing, for the stock components developed a fault, which I thought I had fixed. However, on reassembling the parts I blindly misaligned the pins connecting the sound board to its original powered motherboard, and the motherboard literally went up in smoke when power was applied to the track.

A lot of searching produced what I hoped would be a substitute for the original motherboard. No dice – the Lionel codes are different and the substitute part would not correctly answer TMCC sound commands. A complete sound transplant was necessary using the ERR Daylight Railsounds Commander. This is practically a drop-in upgrade and consists of a single board combining power components and sound files, shown in the middle of the following photo.



11.



This original detail is now restored. I really do not see myself opening up this engine ever again, and in fact, I may mostly admire it on display rather than hear and see it moving down the track. You might say that defeats the purpose of working on it at all, but at this stage I think I'm satisfied with just proving to myself that I could finish this. 🇺🇸

About Andy De La Rosa

I've been an active scale modeler mostly during two periods; one when I was very young and the other now - when I most definitely am not (young). My original inspiration for 3rail O gauge trains was my Dad, who built a fairly large permanent layout in the old homestead. I've never been able to do likewise, and it was only long after my Dad passed that I understood exactly how devoted to the hobby he was. Passenger trains fit with my period/era interest, and offer a substitute for the scenery and interior scenes I like to think I'd create for permanent display. Andy prefers to go pictureless.

The Brooklin Corner

"What Does Brooklin Produce?"

By Bill Webb



Someone answered, "What kind of a question is this? Why most people know that they make 1:43 model cars or, to be more specific, die cast American cars and pickups. And they are pretty nice looking too."

Wrong, so let's start again with what we learned last month.

"First Lesson – Brooklin Models are not die cast models. Molds for die cast models, be they trains, boats, planes, or autos, are very expensive to produce.

Very exact brass masters are made and rubber molds are taken of the various parts just as is done with some trains. A white metal alloy is poured into the mold and models are cast one at a time. This is not high volume mass production work. Products are built by hand and in fairly small quantities. They are in large part cleaned up and finished by hand. Often items are painted by brush rather than spray."

This type of production enables Brooklin to produce vehicles that do not require high volume sales for each model to cover production costs and also enable the company to produce highly accurate and detailed cast metal models.

Actually the company produces cars, trucks, trailers, boats, and a few other things. Recently they combined with SMTS (Scale Model Technical Services) a company located over 170 miles from Brooklyn's plant in Bath, England. As a part of

SMTS, they will continue to produce cars but will also produce and develop larger projects.

Brooklin and SMTS are the two remaining volume car producers left in England according to Simon Elford, a director of SMTS. They are dealing with what so many companies have, the Chinese.

Enough of this. It sounds too much like train production and, unfortunately in my opinion, far too many other products, for us to be overjoyed. And, at the present time, there are plenty of models, both new and old, to enjoy.

Brooklin over the years has produced vehicles under a number of different names which they refer to as collections. The collections range in size and that is what we will look at today. So let's begin with the largest collection, The Brooklin Collection.

The Brooklin Collection's primary focus is on American vehicles that were made in the period of nineteen thirty to the mid-seventies. If you look thru the vehicles that have been produced, you will read names such as 1933 Pierce Arrow, BRK1 (the first car that the company produced), Packard, Nash, Tucker, Studebaker, Graham, Stutz, as well as the more familiar names such as Ford, Buick, Chevrolet, Pontiac, Lincoln, Edsel, Mercury, Chrysler, Dodge, Cadillac, and others.

If you like American automobiles, there is something here for you. There are hundreds of choices and they are available in a wide range of prices.



BRK093x 1935 Studebaker



BRK172x 1937 Lincoln Le-Baron



BRK233x 1957 Chevrolet 210 Sports Coupe



BRK083x 1947 Ford Woody Wagon

About five years ago, the Brooklin Collection was split and The Brooklin Limited Collection was started. It contains newly produced vehicles from two decades, the 1930s and 1940s while the Brooklin Collection continues to hold the decades of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. As new models are produced, those before 1950 will be in the Brooklin Limited Collection.

Newly released autos in the Brooklin Limited Collection are quite special and the company is obviously working hard to produce a quality and beautiful model.



BML025 1942 Oldsmobile Station Wagon



BML14 1947 Chrysler Windsor Town and Country



BML26 1948 Packard

The Buick Collection was started in 2007 as Brooklin released a series of 1930s Buicks. These are beautiful cars, some of our favorites, that you may recognize from old movies and elsewhere. We plan to use a number of Buicks plus a few other cars on our layout in a funeral procession in honor of a famous old coot who became famous on OGF.



CSV1 1934 Buick Hearse



BC05A 1937 Buick Special



BC004x 1938 Buick Touring Sedan



BC013x 1936 Buick M14 Sedan



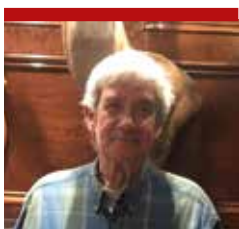
BC026 Buick Special



BC013 1936 Buick Special

A smaller Pontiac collection was also produced with vehicles from 1935 – 1939. As might be expected, since these are GM products, they are not terribly different from the Buicks although Pontiac fans would undoubtedly disagree.

We have not acquired vehicles from this collection and are not posting photos to avoid possible copyright problems. 🇺🇸



About Bill Webb

Bill was born in Bluefield, West Virginia and moved to Suffolk, Virginia in 1957; both are located along the route of the former Norfolk and Western Railroad. His wife Paula was born in Suffolk and had four brothers, all of whom liked trains. So does she, especially N and W. They have three children, four grandchildren, and Pepe', a Standard poodle who enjoys watching trains. Both love fishing, especially offshore for billfish, formerly on a 41' Viking Sportfish and now with friends. They are active in church.

Crowning a Champion

By Paula R. Webb
Editor in Chief

Each year, the Forum holds a Championship Match during the NCAA Tournament that determines a champion for the “Greatest O-Gauge Locomotive on Rails.”

In 2019, the honor went to the Lionel Vision Line New York Central 700E which was without doubt an extremely worthy champion.

The contest is underway at Press Time and the big-crabcake has enlarged the affair this season. We all appreciate the hard work that Emile puts in and the honesty that we hope manages to enter the contest from time to time. “Vote early and Often” is Emile’s advice on how best to win.

But our reason for writing today is not to talk about the future or to lament the distant past, it is to recognize the existing champion.

Welcome the beautiful

LIONEL NORFOLK AND WESTERN Y6B

The Y6B, last emerged from the Roanoke Shops in

1952. It was the last mainline steam locomotive on the last class 1 steam railroad in the US. Only the Virginian Railroad had a locomotive which developed more tractive effort and, as we are all aware of, the Virginian was purchased by the N and W in the 1960’s.

The Y6B retained the title as the “Greatest O-Gauge



Locomotive on Rails,” when it defeated the New York Central 700E in 2021.

Howls and yowls of detractors were not enough to dissuade Honest Crabcake from reporting the truth. 🇺🇸



Member Photo Gallery

This edition we are introducing a new feature, member photos of train related activities, layouts, etc. As might be expected, this edition features many Christmas photos.

Thank you to all who participated. If you want to submit a photo to the magazine, send it to the editor by e-mail and she will handle it.



Photos by Charlie Stoia (MichRR714)

Charlie's railroad does not have a name as yet. It is based on the mining railroads of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Very nice photos Charlie. Thank you.

Photos by Joe Brino (Country Joe)



“This is a photo of some of the Vero Beach Model Railroaders who visited my house to run trains in late 2019 before the China Virus. I am the one on the left. Next to me is Chip Pecere with the red glasses, Chris Caldwell behind him, Larry Dreyer, Roy LoPresti and Steve Franek.”

Memories of yesteryear.



The second photo is Joe Saggese and me when we met at Roundhouse South Electric Trains in Port Orange, FL back in February.

Photos by JDaddy



These photos are of JDaddy's son Nate, age 2, at a local train show.



The second photo shows Nate shouting out a scream when the train shot out of the tunnel at him. The train show crew was cracking up as the show continued.



Photo by Mark Boyce (Mark Boyce)

Mark is a new member to the Forum and a new columnist on Tractive Effort staff. Read his column [O Gauge Layout In a Small Space](#).

Mark said, "I am a new member this past weekend, and am impressed with the first issue of Tractive Effort! Job well done by all."

Mark is pictured with his 2020 Christmas layout and the "train tree," as his wife calls it, which is located in their family room. The photograph was taken using a delay timer.

Mark, thank you for all your help.

Photos By Adam Rypinski

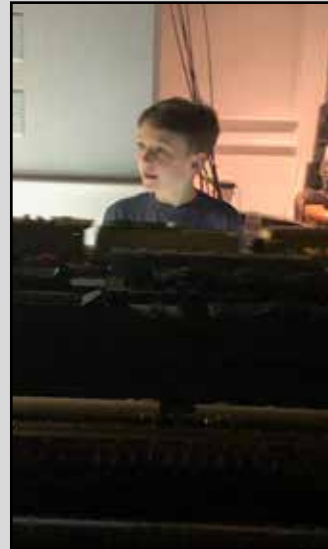
Adam Rypinski (Adam) sent photos of his 2020 Christmas Village on the MESA-East Model Railroad featuring the Polar Express. Thanks Adam.



Photos By Bill Webb

Bill Webb (Bill Webb) took these photos December 26. They show that a layout doesn't have to be completed to be fun, especially when the grandchildren are in town.

These are some of the train related ornaments on the den Christmas tree.



Photos By George Lazar

George Lazar (Laz57) whom we all recognize from his Whistle Stop Wednesday videos, sent these pictures from home around the tree. Check out the new lighted Lionel track.

Thanks George, very colorful.



Photos By Brian Vaill

Brian Vaill (PTC) sent four beautiful photos of their layout which can probably be seen by the space shuttle at Christmas time. It may have the most lights of any Christmas layout in the US and Canada and more are being added. Be sure not to miss the fabulous details that abound on both the North Pole and Christmas In the City sides of Brian and Elizabeth's creation. It is fantastic. Thanks Brian and Elizabeth for all that you do.



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Create More Realistic Scenery With Dry Brushing

By Charlie Stoia

Building scenery can be a fun and very rewarding aspect of enjoying our hobby. The feeling of accomplishment achieved when a section of the layout or diorama starts to come together is very fulfilling

One of the easiest techniques I've learned over the years to enhance the look of scenery is dry brushing. Often painted scenery can take on a singular color spectrum that is not at all representative of the varied colors that occur in nature. While we cannot use every hue on the spectrum in our layouts, we can make things look more realistic.

Dry brushing is simply taking paint on a brush and then removing most of that paint. The brush then only deposits a very small amount of paint on the scenery surface. The technique works by accenting the protruding surfaces of the scenery or casting.



Painted scenery and rockwork ready for some dry brushing

Cheap art store acrylics and a couple of inexpensive brushes are all that you need for dry brushing. A small palette or even a paper plate works well for placing a dab of color to work with. Siennas, Umbers, and Oxides, are usually good choices for some secondary color on rocks and landforms.



Loaded palette with some acrylic color

Drybrush these colors first, then finish with a dry brushing of white over the surface to complete the effect with some highlights.



Rock casting painted with basic scenery black prior to dry brushing

Load your brush with some paint then use a paper towel to brush and remove most of the paint from the brush. This allows the magic to happen when you whisk the brush over the surfaces as it imparts color on the protrusions creating a realistic effect on the surface of your model railroad scenery.



Removing paint from the brush prior to dry brushing

Removing the paint from the brush is key in allowing the technique to work properly. Less is more in dry brushing. Get the brush almost dry so that you can build up to the effect you are looking for rather than an over application of paint in a single pass.



Completed dry brushed rock casting

The completed scenery imparts varied color and highlights. This will certainly improve the look of the scenery on your model train layout. Scenery is easy to do; often the hardest part is just convincing yourself that you can do it. There is a little artist in all of us. 🇺🇸



About Charlie Stoia

Charlie Stoia is a long time train enthusiast and Hi-Rail modeler. A history buff at heart, much of the inspiration for his modeling comes from travels in his home state of Michigan. With a specific interest in the railroads of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, the modeling focus is the iron ore and copper mining tradition of the area. As a founding member of the Detroit 3 Railers, Charlie enjoys sharing the hobby with his fellow club members and anyone with his shared passion for railroads.

NEW OGF Coffee Mugs!

Imagine beginning the day running trains with fresh cup of joe in your new OGF coffee mug. Your coffee will taste better and the caffeine will keep you on your toes for complex operations in the yard, and down the line. And as we all know, train layouts and friends naturally go together. So it would be prudent to have several OGF mugs on hand for entertaining around the layout as you show off your latest acquisition or creation. Get 'em while they're hot!



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O Gauge Layout In A Small Space

By Mark Boyce

So, you want to build a permanent O gauge layout, but do not have much space.

We see many folks in magazines, online forums, and in person visits, who have exceptionally large spaces for wonderful large layouts. However, there are a lot of us who just do not have that space. Maybe you have a spare bedroom, generally small, that you can devote to a layout. Or maybe you only can spare a corner of a room for a layout. Ah, the dreams of a great railroad empire seem beyond your means.

I have always been on the same train as you.

When asked if I would consider writing an article or column for *Tractive Effort*, I was given the opportunity to pick a topic. Though I am new to the O Gauge Forum, many of you know me from other venues. It soon dawned on me that one thing train enthusiasts know me for is trying to squeeze an O Gauge Layout into a Small Space. Hence the name for the column.

For the traditional Pre-war Post-war 3-rail operator, with 027 curves, you can fit a good bit of operations into a spare room or a corner of a larger room. A lot of under the Christmas tree layouts would fit this bill also, even those with the new LionChief sets running on 036 FasTrack.

The question however inevitably comes up, "How do I get the most out of the space available?" The traditional 4'x8' sheet of plywood or the repurposed 5'x9' ping pong table will certainly fit in a spare room or the corner of a family room or home office. They make a great table for starting out, but if placed in a corner, how do you reach that inevitable derailment 5 feet away??

The age-old method has been to climb up on the layout and crawl to the point of trouble. Ouch! Ouch! Maybe you young readers can endure that, but not this train enthusiast. I crawled on too many concrete floors and climbed too many ladders in my younger working years to build a torture chamber for the knees and back in my retirement years. If you place the 4'x8' or 5'x9' in the middle of the room, you can get around all sides and reach every spot on the layout. However, what space is there for

anything else in the room besides your vast collection of trains on shelves covering every wall in the room? That certainly works if your main hobby interest is collecting trains.

There is nothing wrong with that at all. I have seen train rooms with walls covered with shelves from near the floor to the ceiling with wonderful collections, and you probably have too. Some folks have wonderful island layouts displaying lots of operating accessories and some wonderful trains running on traditional track. But what if you want to run modern scale equipment such as long passenger cars or auto racks, all pulled by that new scale Big Boy that you treated yourself to for Christmas? There is going to be a big problem, sure as shooting.

That brings us to the point of this column I hope to cover in the issues to come.

You may have limited space for a layout because you are raising a family. You could be in the situation where you had a basement sized layout and now, since the nest is empty, you have downsized to single level living. Maybe you are in an apartment with a spare room, but you cannot attach anything to the walls.

Whatever your situation, why not try to get as much layout in your space as you can and still be comfortable building, running, and maintaining that layout?

Many years have been spent trying to fit layouts into small spaces. I have used the 4'x 8' sheet of plywood and 4'x 8' sheet of extruded Styrofoam, each pushed against a wall.

I have built a roughly 4'x4' island layout and a 30" to 36" deep 'L' shaped layout against one wall.



Layout in a Small Space



Each had its peculiarities, and, as you can imagine, the 4' deep, against the walls layouts created the aggravating reach problem.

I have also tried the 'dogbone' style layout with an easily accessible middle but 'featuring' 4'x4' ends of the 'dogbone' to accommodate 042 turnback curves.



My plan of using rollout modules that looked good on paper (paper in my mind that is) but were not as practical as I had imagined. That last one was what I call 'Plan B' of my current Blackwater Canyon Line layout build that I have described briefly on OGF. Some of you may have seen it described on other venues.

By designing 'Plan D' of the Blackwater Canyon Line I believe I have solved many issues. In future issues, I plan to take you through some of the planning and building of these layout style choices, most notably considerations that led from 'Plan A' through to 'Plan D'.

The photograph of 'Plan D' is in its present form. In this form, I am using an around the walls style with a lift-up bridge section to enter the inside of the layout. This method provides for larger 054 curves and more room for spurs and scenery I believe than other forms. I could have fit 072 curves in this room for that Big Boy (No I do not have a Big Boy, but you may have one).



You may notice a variety of materials used in construction. I would also like to share some ideas on building strong benchwork that does not break the bank and keep you from buying that limited run OGF diesel.

In future issues, I hope to be able to field comments, questions, criticisms of what I have to say and provide a venue for each of us to learn something along the way that will help us without current layout and/or future layouts. I look forward to having you join in on the adventure. 🇺🇸



About Mark Boyce

"I grew up and live in rural Western Pennsylvania. Like many boys, I wanted a train set for Christmas. My Dad taught me to save for an HO set, which I purchased when I was about 12. After deciding that both HO and N scales were 'getting too small', I bought my first O gauge set in 2012. Our older daughter gave me my first Christmas gift train set on my 58th Christmas in 2013. I am retired, and my wife will soon retire. We have 2 married daughters who live nearby."

Sparky O's Workbench

Lionel Scale Berkshire Rear Coupler Replacement

Today we have a Lionel Legacy Polar Express tender on the bench with a defective rear coupler. It must have gotten a serious workout over Christmas hauling all of those Polar Express heavyweight cars. What are there, like thirty or so scale cars you can buy? Funny, I don't remember a thirty car consist in the movie... or an Acela for that matter, but I digress.

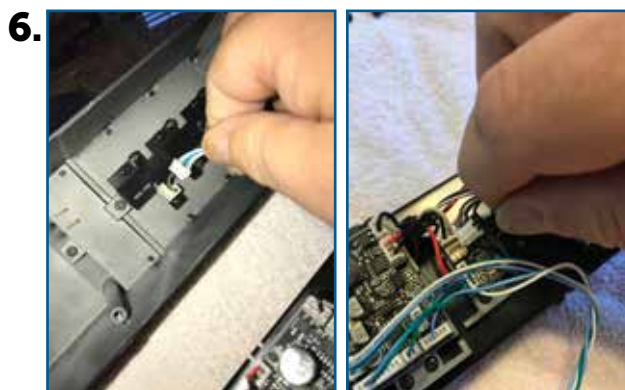


The first thing to understand is you cannot repair these coil couplers. It is best to obtain a replacement from Lionel. In this case, our new coil coupler has arrived, and it is Lionel part number 6911450550.

As with all repairs, it is always good practice to confirm the malfunction. In this case, our Berkshire was tested with a consist of eight cars and would not decouple on command. The coil inside the unit was indeed weak.

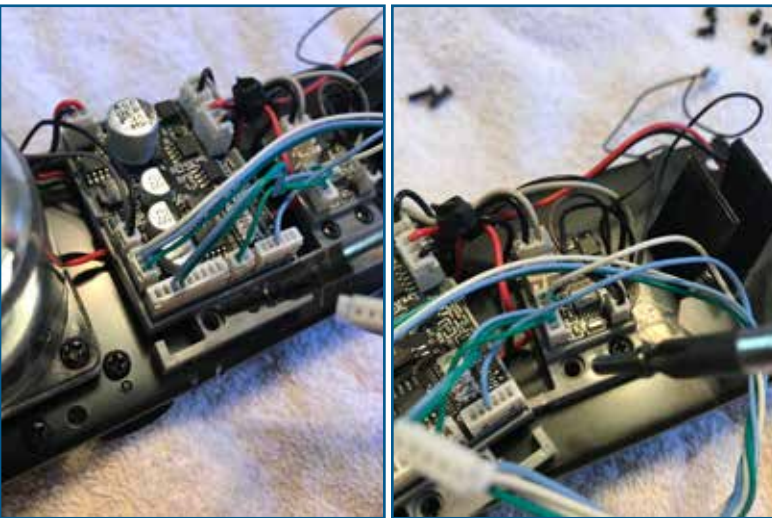
The first step is to remove the shell of the tender (2.) by removing the six screws (3&4.), one in each corner and two in the center, across from each other. Slowly lift the shell and carefully unplug the harness attached to the underside that connects the volume control pot. (5.) This harness, like all modern wiring sockets, only plugs back in one way, so note the orientation of the harness guide slots as you remove it. You can now set aside the tender shell itself and focus on the tender frame, which is where all the electronics are housed. NEVER force a harness back together, or apart. Take your time. Wiggling a bit helps. (WHERE you wiggle is entirely up to you. hahaha)

Locate the Legacy IR Driver circuit board, which will be the rearmost and smallest PCB. The two-wire rear coupler harness plugs into this board. Carefully remove the harness from the board, noting its orientation. (6.) See the slots? It only installs one way.

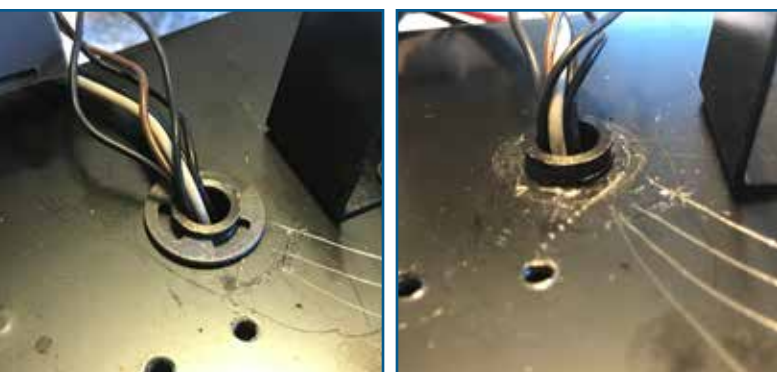


The next step is to remove the coupler from the chassis. To do this, we have to remove the rear truck of the tender, and loosen up both PCB mounts.

Begin by loosening up and removing the two screws on each gray plastic PCB mounting tray. There's really no need to unplug any other PCB harness connections, however you may choose to carefully cut the small zip ties that hold the wires out of the way for more clearance. Be wary of the wires from the front truck that are stabilized by a small wire bundle guide secured to the side of the clear speaker box. If you need to remove this, double-sided foam tape can be used to reinstall it.



Once these circuit boards are carefully slid aside, you can access the rear truck E-clip. Use a 90-degree pick or straight screwdriver to carefully remove the E-clip from its groove. Please try NOT to launch it across the room like a Lionel Missile Car. In my experience, parts that violently leave the work bench are only found by tender bare feet during the pitch-black, wee hours of the morning, only to be frightened into a new hiding place by the piercing shrieks of intense pain and hopping up and down clutching your tootsie. But back to the repair at hand.

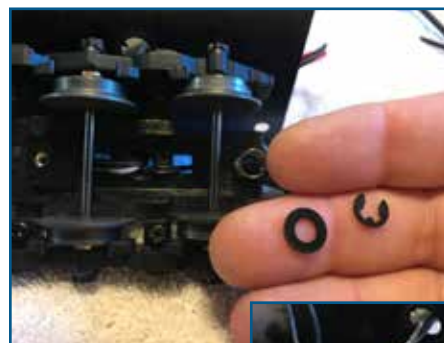


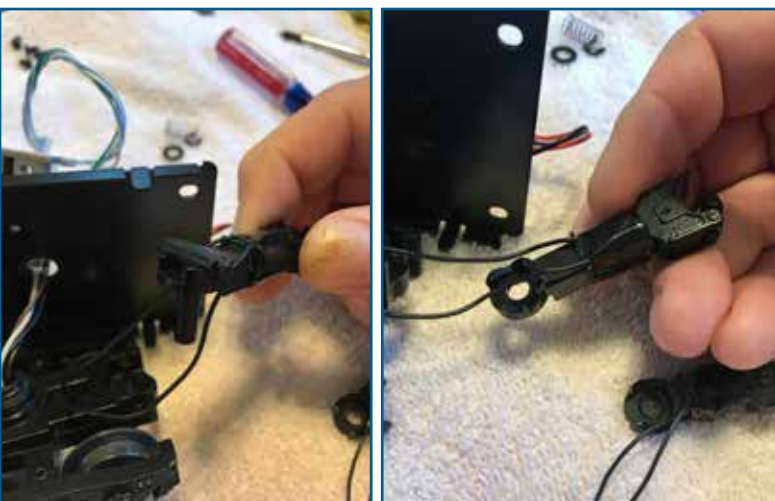
Now that the rear truck is loose, it's time to remove the coupler assembly. First, you can see that there are a few wires running up through the

truck pivot shaft. Two of these wires are power and ground from the pickup roller and the truck frame. The other two are small black wires that come from the coupler itself. We will return to these wires in a minute.



The coupler is held in place by a tiny E-clip, washer, spring and T-bar. The top of the T nestles into grooves in the truck frame, while the coupler shank hole is fitted down the T shaft and it is held in place by the spring, washer and E-clip. This is not as hard as it appears. Simply remove the E-clip, releasing the washer and spring. Now the T-bar and coupler can be removed from the truck.





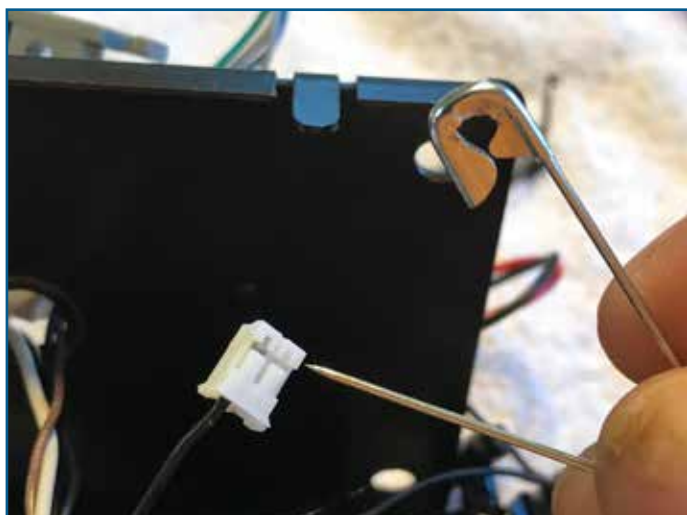
Well almost.



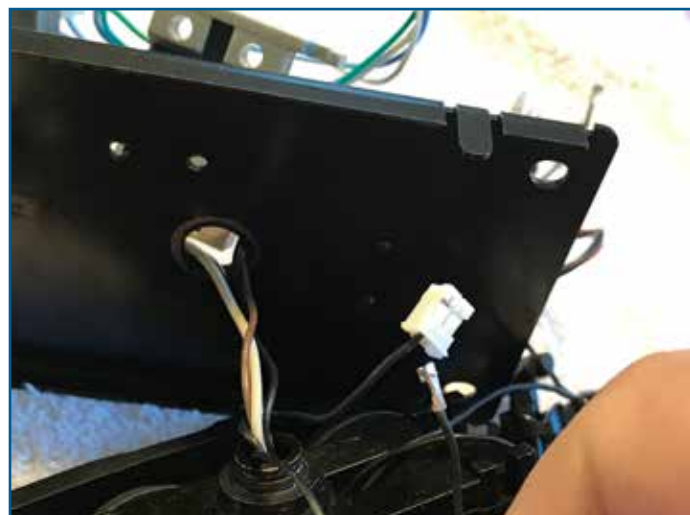
Remember that this coupler has two black wires that travel up the truck pivot shaft, and plug into the Legacy IR Driver circuit board. The problem is, you can't fit the white socket of the wiring through the truck pivot tube, even IF the pickup wires weren't in the way.

We must release the wires from the coupler plug (gasp!). It's not that bad. Be stout of heart!

Take a tiny tape shred and mark one of the old coupler wires, then mark the side of the plug it came from with a sharpie. Get your glasses, or, better yet, magnifiers. You will also need a tiny straight pin or a needle. Carefully lift the white harness plug "tongue" with the pin and gently pull the wire rearward from the plastic plug. DO NOT pull hard. The wire should release almost effortlessly. The only thing holding the wire in place is that small plastic tab that you are lifting, and it engages a tiny metal point on the end of the wire.



The bump side of the connector ALWAYS faces the plastic tongue. The other side of the connector is U shaped, and this is what connects with the pin on the PCB. Do this procedure for both wires, noting which marked wire came out of what side of the plug connector. Now carefully slide the old wires through the truck pivot post, around the truck base, and out. The defective coupler is now removed.



Place your old coupler next to your new one. Note the old coupler wire that you marked, and mark the same wire on the new coupler. I'm not sure marking the wire matters to the disassembly/assembly as these are simple coil couplers, but I have a nasty habit of putting things back the way I found them.



Now rerun your coupler wires up through the truck base and up the shaft, following the route the old wires had taken, and reseal them into the white harness plug. Be sure your sharp peak is pointing up toward the white tabs as you gently install them, and that the marked wire is inserted on the proper side. They will faintly click into place. A gentle tug ensures that they are seated properly.



Now you can reinstall the coupler assembly on the T-bar with the spring, washer and E-clip. The rest of the assembly is straightforward and in reverse order of the steps above.



The only reassembly note that I have encountered is that the front truck wiring likes to get pinched under a center shell screw. Re zip tie the wires and ensure that you do not pinch any wires during reassembly.



Now your Polar Express cars should uncouple. "All Aboard." 🇺🇸

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Glancy's Trains

A Compilation by Bruce Urbanski (Stoshu).

Foreword by Bill Webb

“We need articles, pictures, and columns,” *Tractive Effort* Editor Paula Webb told the members several times. And our members responded.

As we sat at the desk editing articles and columns, we kept pushing the photos aside... sure, we glanced at them but the basic thought was, “Save them for last. They should be a quick edit, then send them on to Trey.”

And so we did. Finally the time came to do photos. Paula went to get a cup of tea while I pulled up those sent by Bruce Urbanski who wrote the article A Christmas Train Story, A Soldier Goes Home, for the December edition. I stopped, “Paula come here please and see these. This is a story for sure.”

She agreed so I was back in touch with Bruce asking him if he had time to put them into a story. These deserve more than just being put in the magazine.

Bruce got back to me and we e-mailed back and forth. He had been really busy, his Dad was ill and was supposed to go into hospice in a day or so.

We talk a lot about this being a friendly forum and that we care about our members. Many/most of us

have experienced the loss of loved ones. Paula and I prayed for Bruce and his family a number of times. We all care a great deal about each other even if we have never met in person.

February 11 we heard from Bruce again. When we read his e-mail, we were shocked. His Dad didn't make it to hospice. We are still praying for Bruce and his family and ask that you join us if you are so led.

Here is what Bruce wrote. We have used it with his permission and will add in the photos, etc.

“Hi Jack,
Sorry again for the delay, but Dad never made it to hospice. He passed Monday night. It was not unexpected but you only have one Dad.....

Anyway, I don't think there is enough here for a full layout tour. I'm attaching 3 more pictures that may help explain. The event that we do is at Greenfield Village, which is the outside part of the Henry Ford Museum. The building is an old tin smith shop built sometime in the 1880's.

An old COLD stone building. The event brings just over 100k people during the month of December. We estimate about 20k see the layout. Great for the hobby. There are not enough pictures for a tour but

I'll explain what is there."

Picture listing:



The tin smith shop.



Lionel Santa pylon. Just a good shot with a background light that looks like the moon.



Lionel gateman.



Horse car with a tree and presents added.



Coal loaders with naughty and nice cars. Patrons must choose between 2 buttons to activate. This tells whether you are naughty or nice. This goes over well.



A switcher pulls gondolas full of presents at the beginning of Main Street.



Going down Main Street where there is a parade taking place. There is also a lane for the operating trolley car.



Santa Claus' Farm, stuck in one of the curved sections.



Other end of Main Street, the trolley is on it's way.



Another view of the naughty and nice coal loader as the train passes buy.



Back side of layout. Dept. 56 buildings with a loop of EZ streets circling it. Guests can push a button to activate Snoopy.



Snoopy circles the town pulling presents as a pedestrian gives chase. Snoopy is button activated.

Layout has 3 main lines. 2 trains passing here.



Another train passes Main Street



A Photoshop version of the above photo



Bruce uploaded a U-Tube video that he created. Check it out.

Stille Nacht - YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UZdvl-3RZNc&feature=youtu.be>

Before the end of the year we plan to be including layout tours as a part of the magazine. But we can only grow so fast. Undoubtedly one of the first layouts that we want to bring to you is the full story of this one.

Thank you Bruce. 🇺🇸

NEW OGF Coffee Mugs!

Imagine beginning the day running trains with fresh cup of joe in your new OGF coffee mug. Your coffee will taste better and the caffeine will keep you on your toes for complex operations in the yard, and down the line. And as we all know, train layouts and friends naturally go together. So it would be prudent to have several OGF mugs on hand for entertaining around the layout as you show off your latest acquisition or creation. Get 'em while they're hot!



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About Bruce Urbanski (Stoshu)

Bruce Urbanski is a long time train enthusiast who, like many, was given his first train by his Dad. He has been a HVAC technician for 42 years and he is due to retire July 1, 2021. He is proud to have two children, four grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. In December, Bruce helps to put on a train display known as Glancy's Trains at Greenfield Village, the outside portion of the Henry Ford Museum. An estimated 100,000 people visit the Village, 20,000 of whom visit the trains.

Simple Rules For Professional Quality Photos And Video

Lighting, It's Everything

By Emile Henault

There is treasure hidden in basements, attics, garages, and converted spare bedrooms, all across America. There you will find works of art and testaments to creativity and design. They are the many Model train layouts waiting to be photographed and shared with the world.

In this series of Articles we will unpack the baggage car of rules and techniques for taking professional quality photos and video and repack it into the basic elements. We will review everything you need to build an Instagram page and a YouTube channel that will be the envy of your family.

Let's start with an easy one: There is no difference between Photos and Video. Video is simply a lot of photos shown in rapid succession. Generally, 1 second of video is made up of 30 photos. This can get confusing because in video the photos are referred to as "Frames". Most video is produced at 30 frames per second (fps). Hollywood movies use 24 frames per second which creates that Cinematic look.

The recent surge in Ultra High Definition Video is referred to as 4K and is produced at 60 fps. You might say that Photos are just 1 fps video. No matter which frame rate you choose, the rules of photography will be the same and one rule stands above all others.

Lighting. It's everything.

Nothing else has a bigger impact on photography than lighting. Nothing.

The reason is clear when you break down the process. Digital cameras don't take pictures, they capture light. That's all they do. Instead of film, digital cameras have a light-detecting microchip to take in the light. The more light you produce, the more light your cameras microchip can capture.

More captured light means higher quality images.

The typical room in the average house is not even close to producing enough light for professional quality photography. Sunlight through a window usually is not enough either. You're going to need more. Lots more.

In general, lighting for photography should be three times brighter than the rest of the room's normal lighting. Fortunately there are some simple ways to get all the light you need.

For lighting on a budget, you can find clip on/clamp lights at the hardware store for around \$8.00 each. Three or Four of these with 100 watts equivalent LED bulbs in each will give a big boost to your light level.



Taping a piece of waxpaper or a piece of thin white bed sheet in front of the light will produce an even distribution of light known as diffuse lighting.



Lighting, It's Everything

Diffuse lighting is the best for photograph. That's why outdoor photos always look best on overcast days. Sunny days produce too many shadow lines. Clamp lights are by far the least expensive but they can be a little cumbersome.

For excellent photography light that is easy to manage, you can find lighting kits and softboxes at photography dealers like B&H Photo Video for under \$100.00. The lighting kits usually "Bounce light off the silvery underside of umbrellas and softboxes shine light through a fabric diffuser. Of the two, the softbox is the most versatile and easy to use. They provide all the broad light needed for wide areas of a layout and closeups as well. Both require a fair amount of set up time and take up significant floor space.



If you will be photographing a permanent layout, there is no better solution than track lighting. LED track lights with at least double the normal number of mounted lights will light up the room and help you produce clear high-definition images.

They can be moved and aimed to where ever the light is needed most. The perfect train room lighting would have "Can lights" in the ceiling every 4 feet and track lights running parallel to the inside edges of the layout mounted directly overhead. This configuration would cost around \$1,000.00 but once installed is the most convenient and discreet way to properly light a layout.

Whatever method of lighting you chose, it is always best to light from above. When lighting for photography, the best angle for the light is 30 degrees. This will reduce any glare or reflectance and cover the layout in sufficient light. To avoid casting shadows with larger areas of a layout, add 5 degrees to the angle. To accentuate fine details, subtract 5 degrees.

Now that you know how to light your layout, you're ready to produce professional quality photos and video. You just need to select the right camera.

We will show you how in the June issue. 🇺🇸



About Emile Henault

Emile Henault is a senior partner in the Law Offices of Henault & Sysko and is president and general counsel to Maryland First Title. Emile and his wife, Jennifer, have 4 grown children and recently welcomed a son-in-law to their family. The empty-nesters live near Annapolis, Maryland with their two dogs, Pennsy and Zephyr.

A Letter From Santa



To all OGF Children, young and old, who can hear the bell:

First, I'd like to thank BlueComet400 for nominating The Polar Express in the annual OGF Train Tournament. I can still remember bringing gifts to little Johnny and to his Dad, The Reverend, for untold Christmases past. Both are train people and it is nice to see Johnny remembering us in such a way.

And a hearty HO! HO! HO! of thanks to all of you who have been supporting us in the contest with your votes. As you know, trains have been associated with Christmas for over 100 years. I have been to many of your homes and left the train of your dreams under the tree. They all come in many different sizes, colors, and features, but they all have one thing in common. They all build deep, heartwarming, family memories that transcend years gone by. So memories are what trains are all about, and even more so what Christmas Trains mean to millions. The Polar Express is far more than just another engine. It is a train of childhood dreams and I want it to represent that to every child who has such memories. It is a beautiful train that evokes wonderful times spent with family, times that come once and are fleeting – not to be repeated, save in our dreams.

Imagine The Polar Express coming toward you right now. A blinding headlight pierces the falling snow. You can feel the rumble in your chest as it grows ever nearer. Chuff! Chuff! Chuff! Magic rails sing as the lumbering behemoth with glistening valve gear glides closer. Thick plates of steel riveted together creak and moan as they strain to hold back the power within. You experience firsthand the quilled wail of the soulful whistle, the bell sharply ringing, and perfectly timed hissing from the laboring steam chests as the large drivers squeal to a stop. 'All Aboard! This is The Polar Express!'

Please cast your vote for The Polar Express and remember to BELIEVE.
Can you still hear the bell?

With all my heart,

Santa Claus



Layout Lighting Makes a Difference

By Brian Vaill

We all remember God's words, "Let There Be Light" and alas, there was. Maybe a little dramatic start to this article, but it makes a very important point. Light plays such a dramatic impact on a layout, more so than many of us realize. While building our layouts, we are working in natural lighting or lighting that we installed. At this point, we are replicating daytime lighting conditions.

But what happens when we shut off the natural or other lighting? If we have not compensated with lighting installed as part of our layout design, then the operative word is darkness and a lot of it. Planning for lighting, like any other part of a layout build, is so important. Here are some of the things you need to consider.

1. Internal and externally lighting for structures
2. Street lighting
3. Area lighting
4. Special effects lighting
5. Lighted signage
6. Accessory lighting
7. Spot lighting

Let's start with buildings.

In most cases, it is very desirable to light each structure. LED lighting plays an important role in structure lighting today. The benefits are obvious, less power draw, less heat, and long lasting-bulbs.

When we built our new layout 3 years ago, I investigated the various options for LED's. I had over 200 buildings to light, so getting this correct was important. The specifically designed LED's for the volume I needed would be costly and just one would not get the impact that I wanted. I decided to go with the Department 56 light sets that I had used for many years, but replaced the bulbs with these: Meridian 13177 - LED C7 White, Super replacement bulbs. They have exceeded my expectations. They light the buildings better than any other product I have used in the past and in three years, I have not had to replace a single bulb.

If you want something different, Miller Engineering produces fluorescent lighting in various sizes. Try it, it works and looks quite realistic.

Lighted buildings have a huge impact on the night effect on your layouts.



Street Lighting

Street lights have a subtle but big impact on what your layout looks like with the nighttime effect. I am a huge advocate for their use. Again, there are options for you to consider. Both of our two biggest equipment suppliers, Lionel and MTH, offer street lighting options. Additionally, there are others. Wood Foss uses lighting products from a firm called "We Honest".

For many years, I have used lights made by Lionel. They are die-cast Gooseneck Street Lights that are stylish, well made, and do an excellent job in providing quality street lighting. I place them about 18" apart to achieve the desired result.

Lionel also makes post style streetlamps. I find them much more useful for special effects than casting much light. There are several other suppliers of street lighting products and I highly recommend that you use street lighting to improve your layouts.



Area Lighting

Floodlights best serve for area lighting.. They come in a variety of configurations and are prototypical as to what you would find in a railroad yard. They do a wonderful job in lighting a larger area that you want to bring a nighttime focus to. Railroads work 24/7 in many cases.

Both Lionel and MTH produce floodlight towers. Some are now made with LEDs and older models can be converted to LEDs.



Special Effect Lighting (String Lighting)

This is a subject near to my heart. Back in 2006, I wanted to light the cables and decking for my version of the Newport Bridge. I found Evan Designs (OGF Corporate Sponsor) and lighting a layout has never been the same to me since.

Evan Designs supplied string lighting with the exact same colors that are used on the real Newport Bridge. It took this accessory to a whole new level. Since then, string lighting has become an important part of lighting for our layouts. We use it for trees, accessories, station platforms and anything that requires a special and/or unique lighting effect.

String lights come in virtually any length you require and four types of bulb strength, not to mention colored lights and white in cool or warm versions. They are one of my most important lighting tools and can add quality to virtually any layout.

(See opening image.)



(String Lights)

Lighted Signs

When we think of lighted signs, most of us immediately think of Miller Engineering. They offer a huge variety of lighted signs that add both interest and a visual impact to our layouts. They make lighted signs in a variety of options, window, billboard style, and rotating.

Accessory Lighting

Most accessories come with lighting. Having said that, in some instances, the accessory can be improved by adding additional lighting. As an example, my Grand Central Terminal

has both interior and exterior lighting provided by Harry Hieke. However, it sits right in the middle of Christmas in the City and came with no Christmas decorations. I decided to add lighted garland around the edge of the roof. What a huge difference this has made.

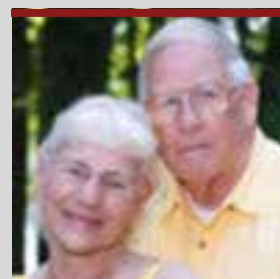
Also, I have an Ice Cream Shop installed on the layout that has both interior and exterior lighting. I wanted to make the lighting over the outside counters brighter and add colored lights to the roof. Again, what a dramatic difference it has made to add this additional lighting.

Spot Lighting

There are opportunities where an accessory can be best lighted with a spotlight. In our case, we had two such examples. Elizabeth wanted to spotlight our beautiful Santa Clause, Sled & Reindeer. It is a large

piece measuring some 40" long and we used two (2) Micro Pivoting LED Spotlight that I found on Amazon. These small spotlights are easy to hide and make a huge difference.

We also used the spotlights to light the O-Gauge Forum Sign made by River Leaf Models (Andre). I hope this helps our members who want to improve their lighting on their layouts. Experience is the best teacher and I have had a lot of it with lighting. Some say we have set a record with the number of lights on our layout. And, we are not done. We plan to add more in 2021. 🇺🇸



About Brian Vaill

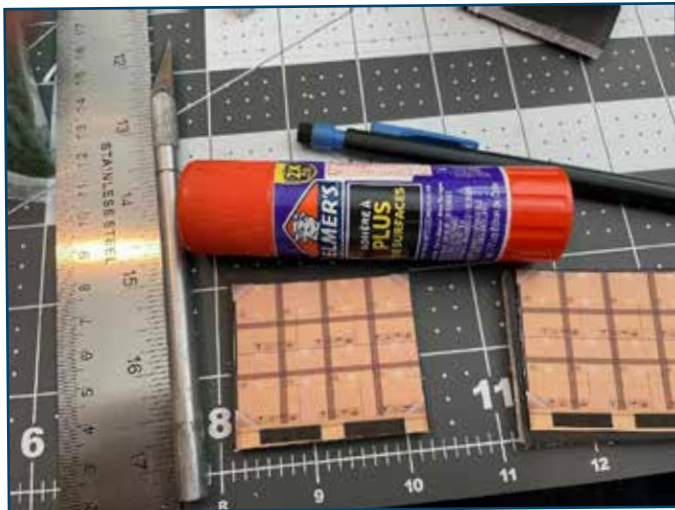
Brian is a retired Vice President of Sales for an international consulting firm. He has been an active member of the O-Gauge community since he was 8 years old. His layouts have been featured in several national magazines and a featured video. He and his wife Elizabeth continue to be very active participants in our hobby.

Creating Boxcar Loads

By Joseph Brino

As I run trains on the layout, the doors of boxcars often open showing a sheet metal floor and an empty car. A car with a floor and a load looks a lot better and is more interesting, whether it's rolling on the mainline or sitting on an industrial spur. Creating a floor and load is easy and fun, so why not give it a try?

The methods I used would work for any boxcar regardless of scale. I used two MTH Railking cars for this project. The tools needed are a computer, printer, scissors, hobby knife, screwdriver, ruler and glue. I used an Elmer's glue stick and Aileen's Fast Grab Tacky Glue. The project also uses some printer paper and foam core.



Next, take the body of the car off of the floor. The Railking cars have four screws on the bottom that hold the body to the frame. Remove these screws and the body lifts off. Measure the inside width of the car from side to side. The cars I used are 2.1 inches wide inside and 1.9 inches from floor to the lowest part of the ceiling.

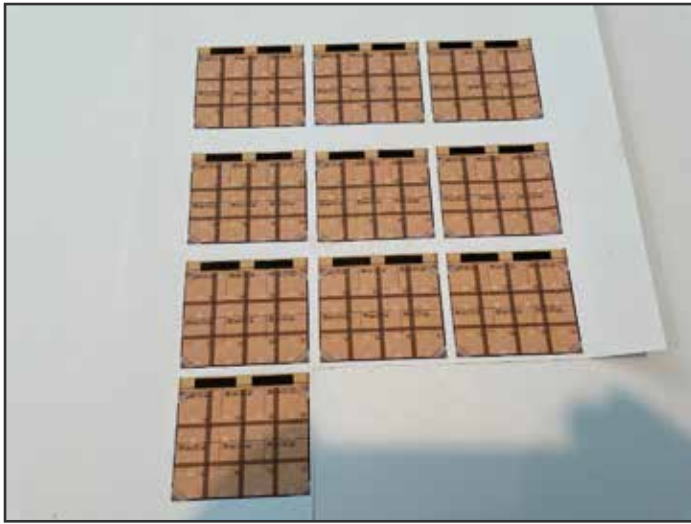


With dimensions in hand you can work on the floor and load (I have a Mac Book Pro laptop and used the included Paint S program. I'm 99% sure that windows has a similar paint program). First import the floor photo into Paint. Play with the dimensions until it looks good and then fill a page with flooring. Open a new project and do the same with the load photo, playing with the dimensions so it will fit inside the car you are using. For the Railking cars I used the load dimensions are 2.1" wide and 1.9" tall. Fit as many loads onto a sheet as you can. I decided to use the pallet load for my car but any load photo will do.

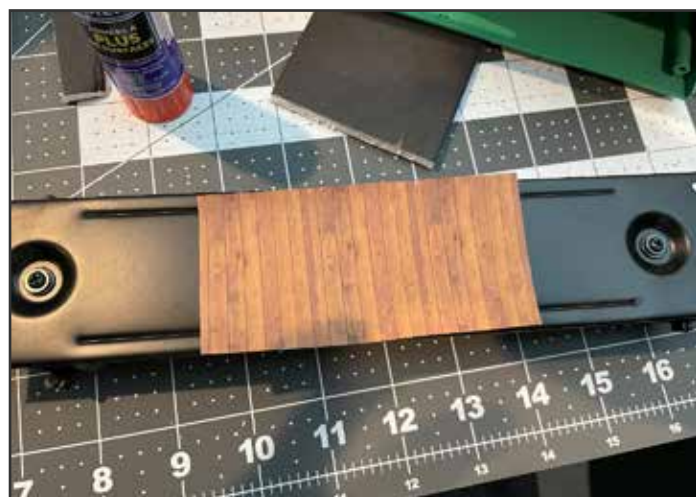


The first step is to search the internet for flooring pictures. I searched for wood flooring photos and found one that looked good to me. I downloaded the photo and then searched for photos of pallet loads. I also looked for sacks, stacked boxes and any other photos that might work as boxcar loads. I downloaded a few photos, one to use now and others for future use.

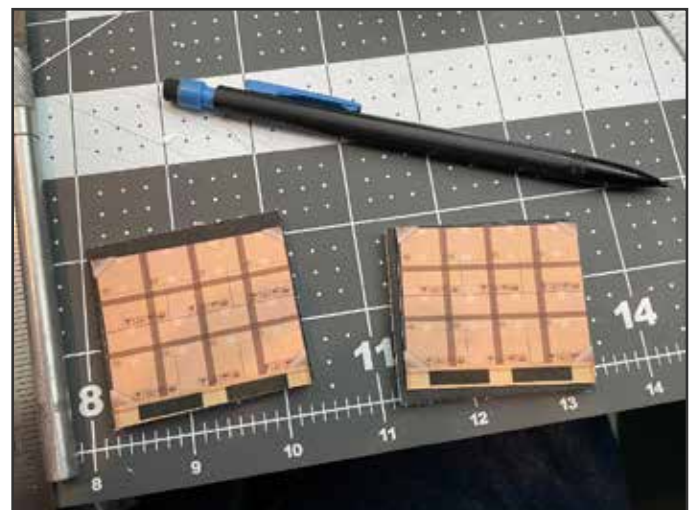
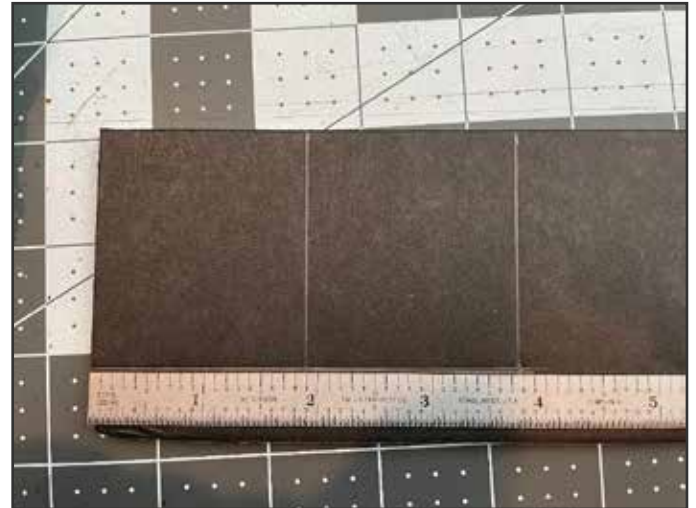
Boxcar Loads



Install the flooring on the sheet metal floor first. Cut a piece of your flooring slightly wider than the width of the sheet metal floor. For my cars that was 2.1". The boards should run side to side. The floor does not need to run the full length of the car, only wide enough so that when the doors are open you see floor. If you want an empty car make the flooring long enough so that you can't see the sheet metal floor from normal viewing angles. Use the Elmer's glue stick to apply glue to the back of the flooring paper and glue the floor to the frame making sure that it is positioned so that it covers both side of the door opening. The floor is done.



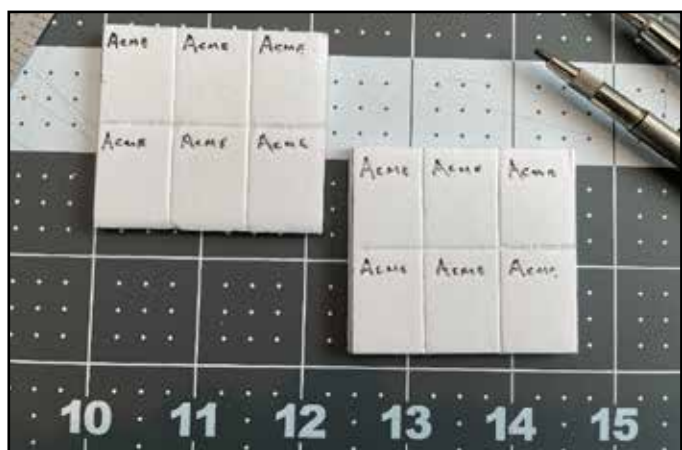
For the load, cut out two pieces from the loads you printed. You will attach these to two pieces of foam core. I used black foam core that I got from the dollar store. I used black so that if there was any mismatch in the size of the printed load and the foam core the black would be impossible to see inside the boxcar. For my car I measured and cut pieces 2.1" by 1.9" to attach to the printed loads. Use the glue stick to attach the printed load to the foam core.



Next fit the load/foam core inside the car. The Railking cars I used have a molded rail on one side inside the car. I used that as a guide to locate the load. Test fit the load. It should be snug but not tight. Trim if necessary. Once you are satisfied with the fit you can glue the loads in place on each side of the door using a glue like Aileen's. It is important to check that the load is properly positioned before the glue sets. You do this by sitting the body on the frame. Make sure the load is not too low, interfering with reassembling the car, or too high, floating in the air when the car is reassembled. When the glue sets you can reassemble the car and admire your work.



To make the second car different I used white foam core, measured to the 2.1" x 1.9" dimensions, and then scribed it to look like stacked boxes using a scribe that I had on hand. I used a fine black marker to write Acme on the boxes and then measured and glued them into the second boxcar just as I had the first.



And that's it. Two boxcars now have loads! 🇺🇸



About Joe Brino

Joe Brino was born and raised in Glen Cove, New York and has been a model railroader his whole life. His first train set was a Lionel Work Train with a 2020 engine. Joe and his Dad built their first Lionel layout together when he was 8, a step up from around the tree. Joe was the New York Eastern Regional Supervisor of Weights and Measures, and his wife Anne was an accountant and business manager. Both retired in 2014 and moved to Florida in 2016. Anne and Joe are active in the Vero Beach Model Railroaders and their local church.

A Humble Beginning—And a Not-So-Humble New Beginning

By John Henniges

Of all the eras of toy train production to collect and operate, mine is, without question, the pre-war era, especially the trains and accessories made by Lionel between 1930 and 1942. I admit, it is a bit unusual for someone who grew up in the 1970s and 80s to have a strong interest in this era of toy train production. However, a few years before I was born, my Father started collecting prewar Lionel trains, so I was raised in a home where running prewar Lionel trains was a daily activity. My Father loved prewar Lionel toy trains, and as the saying goes, “the apple didn’t fall far from the tree.”

My Father’s interest in Lionel trains started in about 1937, when he received a Lionel #636W “City of Denver” O-gauge streamline passenger set for Christmas. My grandfather was a letter-carrier, and my grandmother was a full-time Mom. As a result, there was little discretionary income, so even though my Dad pined for something bigger and more expensive, the City of Denver, priced at \$16.50, was what his parents could afford. That little train sparked an interest in toy trains that stayed with my Father his entire life.

Fast-forward to the mid-1960s. By then, Dad was well into his career as a minister. My parents, living on a minister’s salary, had to stretch every dollar, especially raising 4 children. As a result, Dad’s City of Denver was the only train in the house. Then, one Sunday after morning worship services, one of his parishioners said to him, “I hear you’re interested in toy trains. When I was a kid, I got a train for Christmas but never really had any interest in it. If you would like to have it, I’d like to give it to you.”

Shortly after that, Dad went to see the train and bring the gift home. However, he was taken aback when he unpacked it. Dad was, at the time, a rookie toy train enthusiast, but he knew enough to know that the train his friend was offering to him as a gift was highly prized by collectors. Being the honorable man

that he was, he told his friend that before he could accept the gift, he wanted to have it appraised. Dad took the train to his friend, John Gillander, a well-known and respected collector and TCA member, and John gave his opinion of what it was worth at the time. In the 1960s, there was no such thing as a reproduction toy train, so prewar toy trains, especially those in pristine condition, were appreciating in value.

Dad went back to his friend who owned the train and told him what he had learned about its value. His friend replied, “I don’t care if it’s worth 10 times that amount. If you want it, I want you to have it.” Dad gladly accepted it, and that is how he started collecting toy trains. The train his friend gave him, and that re-kindled his interest in toy trains, was none other than an all-original Lionel #396E Standard Gauge Blue Comet passenger set headed by the iconic 400E locomotive, in like-new condition, complete with all the original boxes and the outer carton.

Most tinplate collectors spend decades building a collection before they find—and can afford—a Standard Gauge Blue Comet. Dad, on the other hand, started his collection as an adult by receiving one as a gift. Over the years, he experienced more good fortune as he built his collection, but the gift of an original Standard Gauge Blue Comet as the start of his collection is difficult to top.

For most of us, our interest in toy trains started when we were young, perhaps when we received a toy train as a gift. Sometimes the gift is a modest train like the Lionel City of Denver my Father received, and it is the beginning of a lifelong hobby. On the other hand, his friend received the “Holy Grail” of Standard Gauge trains but had no interest in it and re-gifted it to my Father as an adult. As the saying goes, “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” 🇺🇸



My Father’s First Train: Lionel City of Denver, circa 1938



Classics In the Station: Lionel 260E, circa 1935 and Lionel 763E Hudson, circa 1941



Part of John's beautiful collection



Lionel Standard Gauge #51, circa 1915; this was the successor to the #5 Locomotive, the first steamer that Lionel produced



About John Henninges

John was introduced to toy trains as an infant. He grew up watching his Dad build his tinplate collection and helped him build 3 layouts. John is a small-business owner. He is married to Sue and they have 2 cats, no kids. John is currently working on a layout in his new home. His other hobbies include: boating, sailing, fishing, water-skiing, and home improvement projects.

Fabulous Railroad Hotels of the Gilded Age

Part 2

by Wood Foss

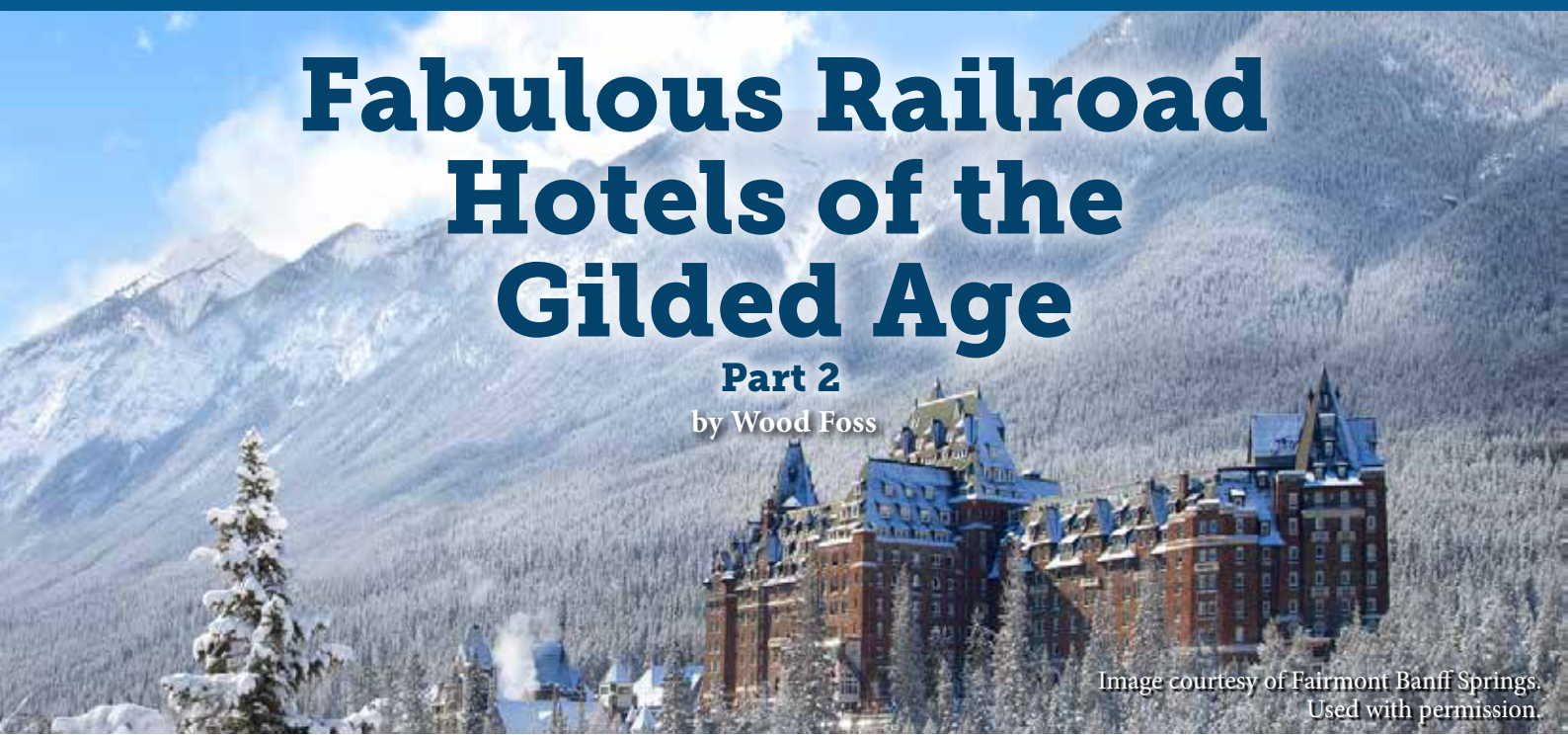


Image courtesy of Fairmont Banff Springs.
Used with permission.

Welcome back to the OGF's creative magazine. Part 2 of the Gilded Age Hotels deals with re-creating a close rendition of the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel in Banff Alberta, CA. There will be a lot of pictures which say a thousand words and my comments will be limited to description. Enjoy the journey.

In 2017 the Geezerville O gauge layout track operations were completed. Modeling had started and my interest turned to scratch building structures. There was one large corner completely empty. It was large enough to be a focal point for the entire layout. Lots of thought was put into this, Las Vegas and Disney World were considered. The monorail was purchased, the famous Las Vegas welcome sign was on the table.

Nothing moved me, until we were planning a vacation by rail and an advertisement for the Glorious Railroad Hotels popped up. I discovered The Canadian Pacific built Banff Hotel. It offered everything, a big, beautiful hotel, the Bow River and winter sports along the Rocky Mountains.

You will notice in the pictures below the empty scene and beginnings of progress. Our beautiful stone basement would blend very well with a background image of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. The graphics came from BackDrop Warehouse.



The goal was to elevate the scene. This gave a terrific opportunity to create a Dog Bone on the layout. The first step was to build a raised track for access to the scene.



Hotel, lower mountains and lake Location.



A lake will be located in front of the hotel with a beach and moving boats. This picture is the platform for the boat pulling engine with magnets attached. The engine is an RDC GEEP with an added platform for the magnets.



Lower level mountains were built using Scenic Express Pennsy Style cut block stonework and by carving high density Styrofoam, chicken wire, cardboard strips and lots of plaster cloth.



The Banff building needs an explanation.

“Scratch” building to some means going into the woods, chopping down a tree and cutting out appropriate pieces.

“Re-creation” means to some an exact copy of the building.

That is why I like to call my work a rendition. “Rendition” means, to me, a recreation of a building that shares a close appearance and is pleasing to the eye.

Railroad Hotels

In the 1950 and 1960 time period, when becoming an engineer was important, the toy train manufacturers made many project kits. Erector sets, build your own radio sets, etc., were perfect gifts for children. A lot of those sets are still available by vendors who buy old sets and collect the parts to provide a complete set.

A company by the name of Elgo made a set called the American Skyline. Small plastic pieces you can place together to produce different buildings. The scale is "S". My collection of sets is up to 5 and the Banff hotel is one of the buildings I rendered with these kits.



My helpers. Two who are very crafty and two who are bored. LOL.

The kit did not have a good roofing system and the Banff has a unique roof. The roof structure is card stock, and the 82 windows are N scale with card stock sides.



You will note the Hotel is lighted with dimmable LEDs, the windows have opaque plastic covering, the white Skyline blocks have been painted and pin-striped to create separation and detail. Nothing left but placement and detailing.



Ta Da!!!

Thank you so much for the encouragement and interest you all have had in this project. It is by far the most noted work on the layout and my family and friends love this scene. 🇺🇸





About Wood Foss

Model train enthusiast throughout my life. Beginning with Christmas layouts as a child and after fathering my own children and grandchildren. Became a serious modeler after joining Model train forums in the early years of 2000. Current layout is 300 sq. ft. with Legacy Control, Santa Fe, Canadian Pacific, Union Pacific and Amtrak equipment. Generally, a modern era layout. Credit for the given information is via the internet and specifically Wikipedia.



How to Submit an Article to Tractive Effort

- 1)** Pick a topic that you are passionate about.
- 2)** Write about your topic in your own words. NOTE: We cannot accept text cut and pasted from the internet or another published source. This includes Wikipedia, ebooks or websites.
- 3)** Take some photos of your project or topic to add interest. NOTE: We cannot accept photos from other sources without explicit WRITTEN permission by the owner of the photo who will be credited. You will be asked to provide the proper permission documentation. Just because an image may be all over the internet, does not give you the right to use someone else's work without permission.
- 4)** Submit all text in Word or email text format.
- 5)** Submit all images in .jpg format with enough resolution for good reproduction. (1-3mb each)
- 6)** Don't be afraid to ask questions! We are here to help.
- 7)** Submit your materials to the Editor at: oldhokie70@charter.net