

THE

S

SCALE

RESOURCE

NEWS, REVIEWS, INFORMATION TO USE

Vol. 1 No. 1

October / November

2014



NASG Convention
Trees From the Ground Up
The Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers
The Caribou and Sierra Falls Railroad
Removing Lettering From Pre Painted Cars

A.R.A. Box Car Kits

'S'
Scale

IN 1924 the American Railroad Association's Committee on Car Construction reviewed drawings of a 40-foot steel-sheathed box car. Although not approved overall, the Pennsylvania Railroad had over 30,000 built to the design with several thousand others built for a number of other carriers. Our kits is of injection molded styrene consisting of separate roof, floor, sides



and ends with individually applied detail parts. All of the models in the photos were assembled with Testors™ liquid cement. Assembly is similar to that of a plastic model airplane kit. Lettering for the cars pictured is available as well. Three different kits are offered:

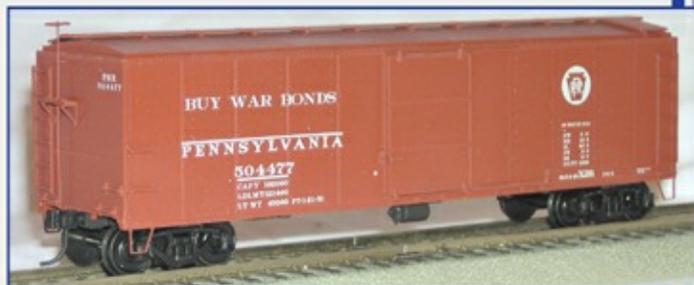
- SSA700 with a Panel Door
- SSA701 with a Youngstown Door
- SSA702 with a CRECO Door

Each kit is less trucks, couplers and decals.

Kits
\$48⁰⁰
Each



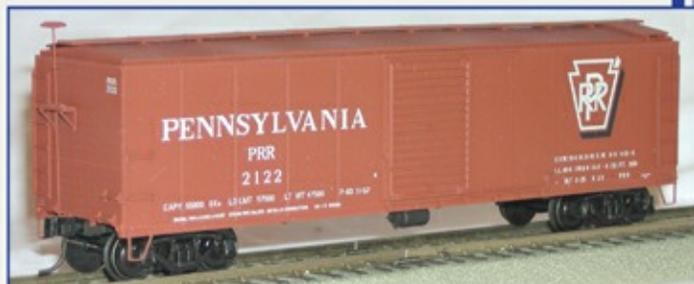
BALTIMORE & OHIO - Decal SSADB&O1



PENNSYLVANIA "Buy War Bonds" - Decal SSADPRR16



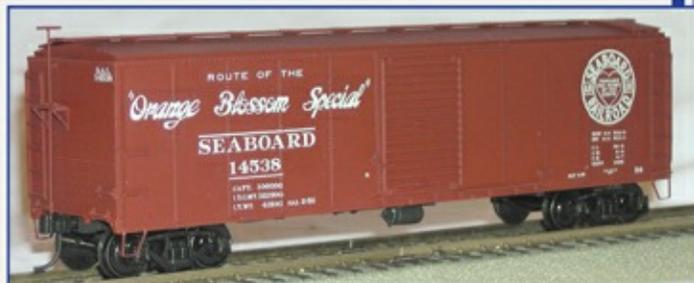
CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN - Decal SSADCGW1



PENNSYLVANIA "Shadow Keystone" - Decal SSADPRR17



LEHIGH & NEW ENGLAND - Decal SSADL&NE1



SEABOARD AIRLINE "Orange Blossom Special" - Decal SSADSAL1

Additional lettering for several more roads are under development. We would love to offer the DT&I scheme, but as yet we have not been able to find a prototype photo or lettering diagram.

Decals
\$7⁰⁰
Each

All kits and decals are available direct from Des Plaines Hobbies/S Scale America by calling 1-847-297-2118 and may also be purchased online at:

www.desplaineshobbies.com

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Bill Of Lading

Published Bi Monthly

The Model Railroad Resource LLC
Plymouth, Wisconsin

Editors

Glenn Guerra
glenn@sscaleresource.com

Dan Dawdy
daniel@sscaleresource.com

Copy Editor

Amy Dawdy

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Vol 1 #1

Welcome to the online *S Scale Resource* magazine. The magazine is presented in an easy to use format. The blue bar above the magazine has commands for previewing all the pages, advancing the pages forward or back, searching to go to a specific page, enlarging pages, printing pages, enlarging the view to full screen, and downloading a copy to your computer.

Front Cover Photo

A view on John Albee's layout shows the Ol' Ben Mine switch engine taking a rest.

Rear Cover Photo

Night signal. Another view on John Albee's layout.

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The Model Railroad Resource LLC also publishes *THE O SCALE RESOURCE*. Be sure to look at it. There are many articles in our magazines that are not scale specific and will be of interest to you. Click this announcement to see the magazine online.

Editorial Comment



Welcome to the first issue of *THE S SCALE RESOURCE*. As many of you are aware, Dan and I also publish another bi-monthly magazine, *THE O SCALE RESOURCE*. The readers like the magazine, and I am sure many of you have seen it. We were being asked to do a similar magazine for the S Scale modeler; so, after thinking it over and going to the NASG convention in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, we decided we would go ahead. *The S Scale Resource* will be a bi-monthly magazine coming out in the odd months of the year. That way, readers of both magazines will have something to look at each month. That's right, there are many articles that are not scale specific, so be sure to check out *The O Scale Resource* while you are waiting for the next issue of *The S Scale Resource*.

The S Scale Resource will focus on S Scale modeling in 1/64 size. I think the key word here is, modeling, as opposed to collecting. The aim of the collector is to have models in as near as possible, perfect condition. For our purposes, we will consider the modeler as someone who is creating something with his models. That is a broad field, and does not exclude the Hi-Rail modeler. Many people run collectable trains along with new ones on layouts that have scenery details from many sources, and these, we believe, fall into the modeler category. We will not be doing articles about the variations of models, or years produced, because we feel that falls under the interests of the collector more than the modeler.

Now, on to the first issue. In this issue, we have a brief showing of the NASG convention in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. The show was fun, and there were a lot of model products there. The Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers had a layout at the show. I started talking to some of them, and did a short article about the club. The club is interesting because of the number of members and varied interests. Take a look and see how they do it. Next, we went to see John Albee in Normal, Illinois. John was in HO Scale for a long time and switched to O Scale. However, O Scale would not work in the current space he had available, so he switched to S Scale. John has a freelance layout with a good story behind it. Take a look at what he has done. Then, Jim Kindaka shows us how to take pre-painted cars and sand the lettering off. There are many pre-painted models out there, and this is a mess-free way to change the paint scheme. Lastly, a local S Scaler showed me how to make very realistic tree trunks from twigs in the back yard. When I tried this, and it was very easy. Try making some on your own.

Enjoy the magazine, and be sure to send us photos of your projects. We will be happy to see what you are doing, and look forward to promoting the hobby in future issues.

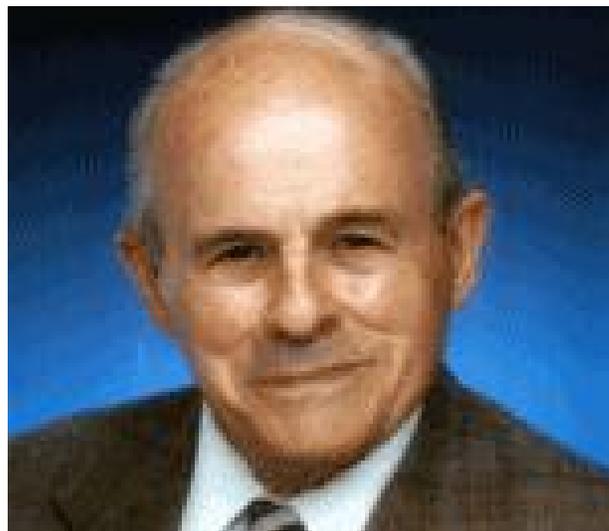
Glenn Guerra



NEWS AND REVIEWS

The Lake States Railway Historical Association has received a grant to catalogue their Rock Island drawing collection. They received the collection a few months ago and were able to secure some private funding to catalogue it. The collection is estimated in excess of 20,000 original ink on linen drawings. The drawings are of locomotives, cars, and buildings. They will hire full time help to expedite the cataloguing.

They have already catalogued and have available over 25,000 drawings from the C&NW and CStPM&O. See their web site <http://www.lsrha.org/> for other assets.



Mullet River Model works has sold their entire S Scale line to Des Plaines Hobby. They will continue to be sold under the Mullet River name. The structure kits and detail items will complement the S Scale caboose kits designed by Mullet River for [Des Plaines Hobby](#). See their web site for more information.

A True Pioneer in Model Railroading, Dale Edwards was the “D” in Kadee and his identical twin Keith was the “K”.

The twins started Kadee in the mid 40’s and created the first knuckle coupler that actually looked and worked like the real ones. With several improvements on the original design, the Magnetic® metal knuckle coupler became an instant hit.

Today, the knuckle coupler is the de-facto standard in Model Railroading.

In 1990 the twins decided to split the company with Dale taking Kadee with the HO couplers and larger and Keith with the Micro-Trains line N Scale and smaller.

Dale had his hand in developing more than 40 patents.

Dale believed in the American dream, his employees and vision to make the best possible products with the quality people he employed while doing so all under one roof as to not sacrifice quality nor lose control of supply chains.

Dale was preceded in death by his older sisters Wilda and Nathie, older brother Al, his wife Grace and twin brother Keith.

His five children Larry, Jacque, Bonnie, Melinda and Doug and his many grandchildren will miss him greatly.



Dave Nitsch from Plymouth, Wisconsin sent us some photos of a couple of PBL kits he built. When Dave moved the layout was taken down and for the time being he builds structures and rolling stock.

NASG Convention 2014

Oconomowoc, Wisconsin



By Glenn Guerra

The National Association of S Gaugers Convention was held in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin this year. There was a lot of interesting models, as well as, the usual clinics. Conventions and meets are always fun to attend. Through the hobby, you make acquaintances who live great distances away, and you may only see them at a show. It's always good to catch up on what is going on. In addition to catching up, there is the trading hall. This year's trading hall had a good turn out of vendors, and there were a lot of scale products. I took a few photos to show you what was there.





The NASG had a switching layout set up so you could get a feel for how DCC control works. If you are not familiar with DCC control, these types of displays are a great help. In addition, it's fun to take a break and run the trains.



Here is another reason to attend shows and meets. That model you missed, or did not know about, just may be there. You have to like the pricing!



Dan Navarre from River Raisin Models was there with the latest offerings.



Al Castellani from East West Rail Service had a nice display of the Pacific Fruit Express icing platform. The kit is designed so it can be expanded with the addition of extra sections. The kit is laser cut wood and there are lots of details.



Micro Motors was there and had some nice displays to show off their vehicle models for sale.



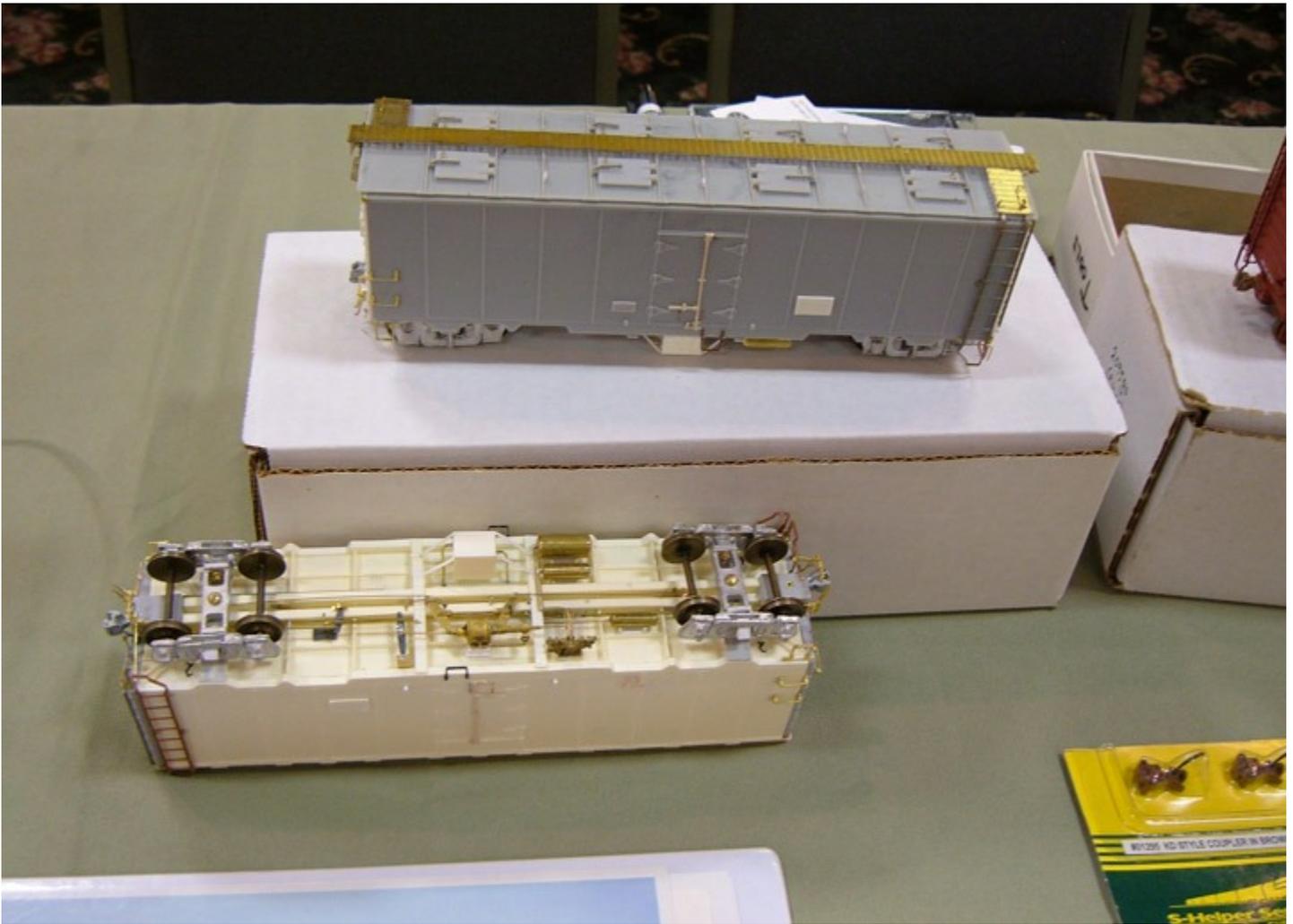
There were some nice structure kits for sale.



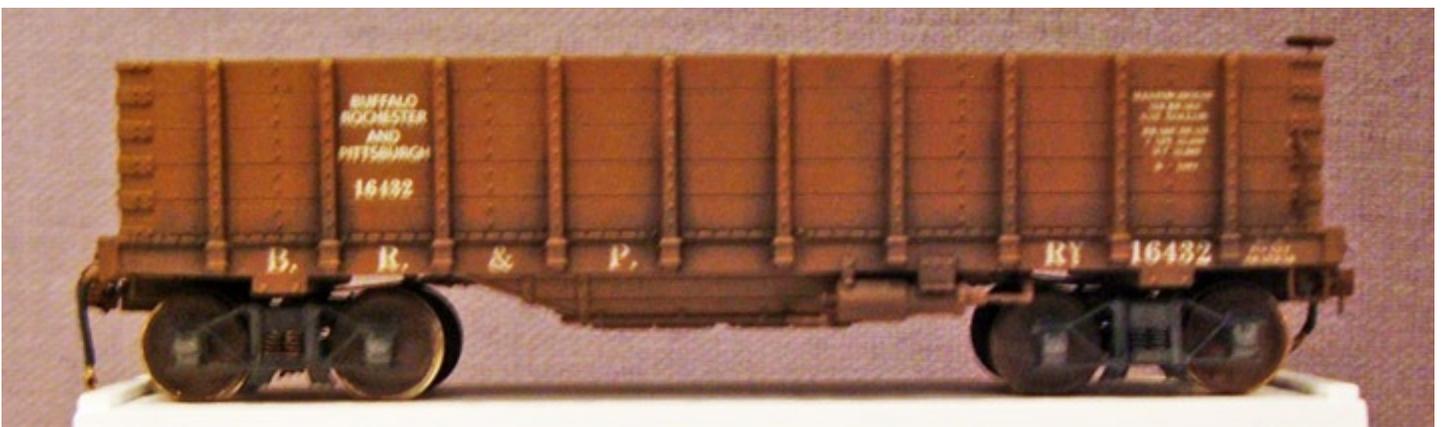
Besides the good structure kits and vehicles, there were a lot of detail items for sale.



Port Line Hobbies was in attendance with lots of detail items.



This kit of a Canadian Pacific refrigerator car makes for a nice model. Going to the show gives you the chance to see models like this that may not be on your local store shelf.



This model of a Buffalo Rochester and Pittsburgh wood side gondola was entered into the model contest.

Southeastern Michigan



Club members in attendance at the NASG show in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

Standing, from left, Gary Chudzinski [out of uniform], Dan Navarre, Gaylord Gill, Earl Carlsen, Sig Fleischmann, Tom Hawley, Randy Bosscher, Bob Stelmach, Seated, from left, Chuck Riker, Tom Nimelli, Bob Bubeck, Hugh Daly.

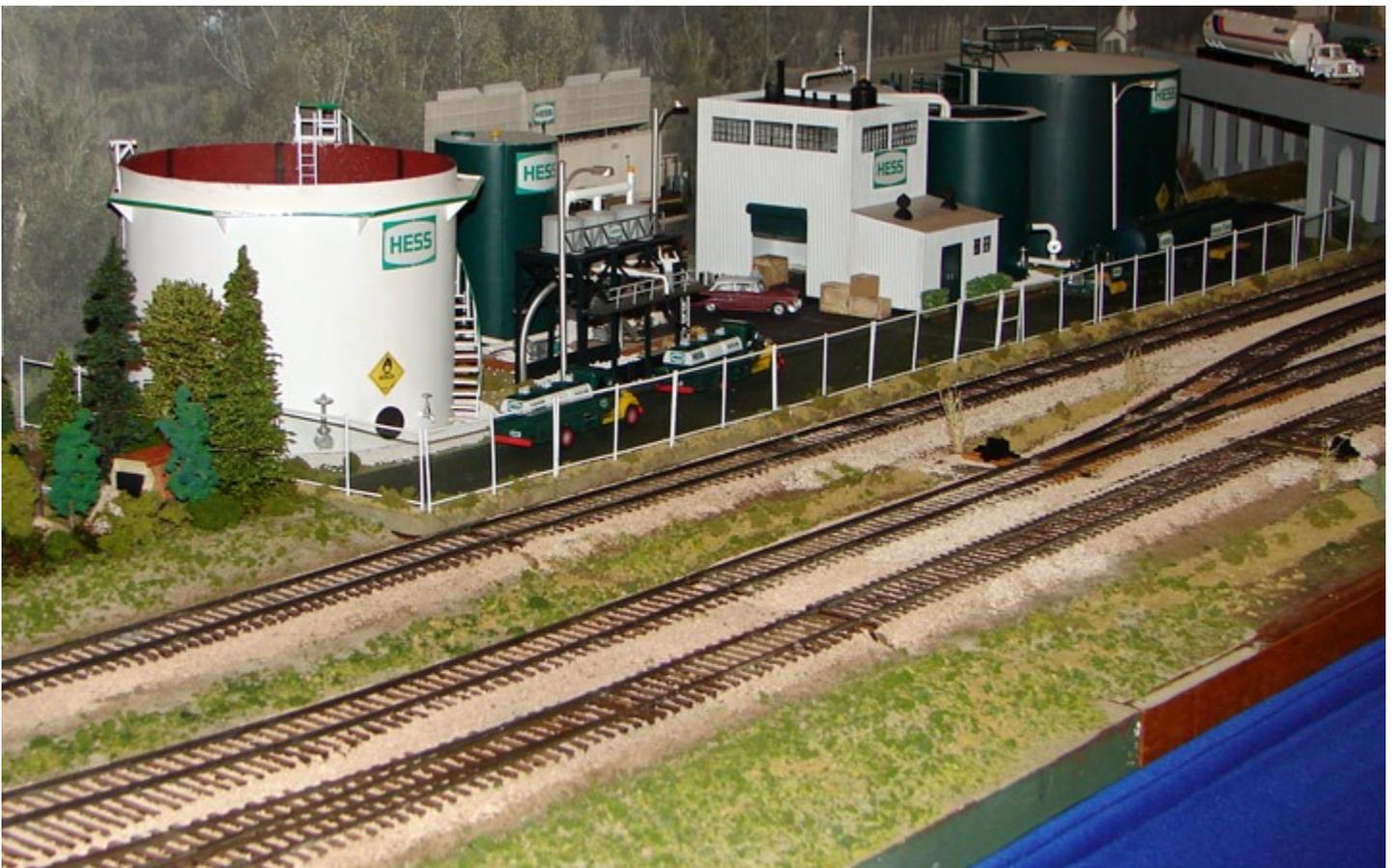
By Glenn Guerra

I talked with Tom Hawley, current president of The Southeastern Michigan S Scalers, at the recent National Association of S Gaugers convention in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Tom was running his train on the group's club layout. We got to talking about the club, and I wanted to share some of that with you. In addition to that discussion, Tom put me in touch with Gaylord Gill. Here is a little information about the club.

The club started around 1978. They were a small group of people who were modeling in S Scale and S Hi Rail. Most of the members at that time had started with American Flyer trains. By 1978, many of them were more interested in scale modeling. Tom said the current membership roster includes some members who focus on collecting as opposed to modeling, but they are all welcome in the club. In the beginning, they were an informal group. As the group grew, the idea was brought up that they should have some By Laws to formalize the group. So, By Laws were written, and the club became a formal entity. I asked where the group meets and how often. Tom said they meet once a month at a member's house. This round robin idea works well for them. They get to each show their home layouts and collections by hosting a club meeting. Currently, the group has around 40 members, mostly in the southeast Michigan area; however, Tom said they do have one member in Northern Ireland and another in Canada, so anyone is welcome. To become a member all you need is to be nominated by some other member. Your nomination then goes to the membership for approval. Dues are \$15.00 per year. I asked how many times the club sets up the layout at shows. Tom said they set it up a few



The club had their layout set up recently at the National Association of S Gaugers convention in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin recently. The layout measures 14' X 36'.

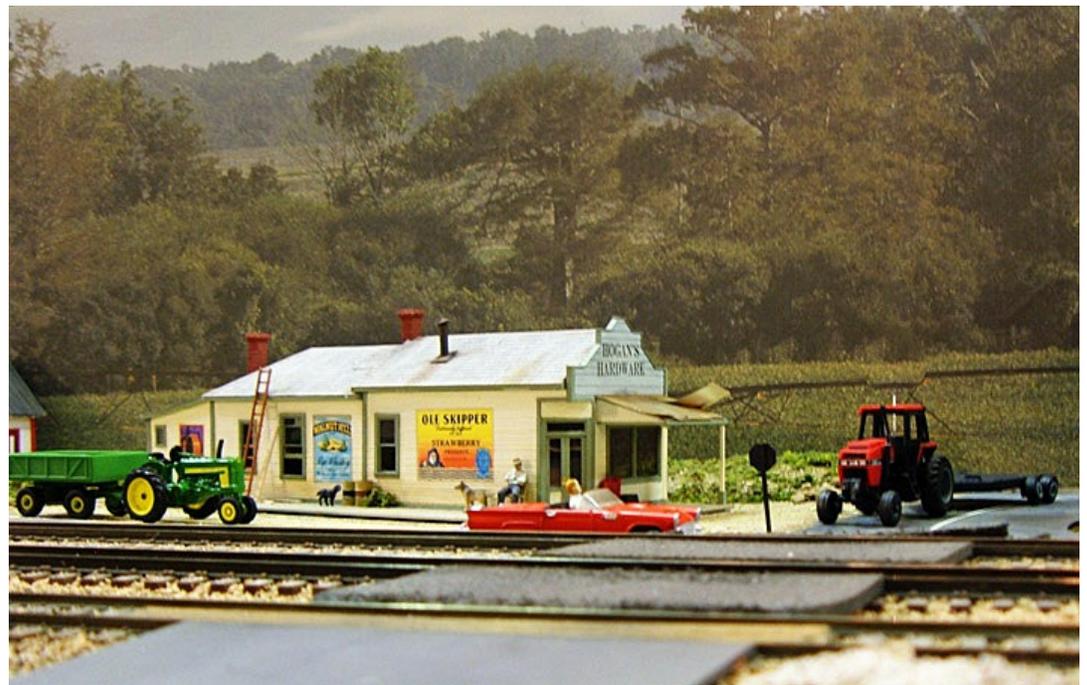


There are three loops on the layout. The outer loop is built to NMRA S Scale standards. The inner loop has track and switches that will accommodate Hi-Rail equipment. The middle loop will accommodate both. This was done so members who have home layouts built to Hi-Rail standards can run their equipment on the layout. This arrangement works well for the club. Tom Hess built the oil depot. Tom Nimelli took the photo.



The scenery on the club is very complete and well done. The country corner sections were scened by Bob Stelmach and Earl Carlsen. Brooks Stover, MMR built the general store, Earl Carlsen built the oil depot and Dave Held built the gas station/bar. John's bar was built using a laser kit from Twin Whistle Sign & Kit Co. The other two buildings were also laser kits with much modification.

The photo backdrop works very well in this scene. It gives the view lots of depth. Randy Bosscher assembled this Scenery Unlimited hardware store for the Farm Grouping.



Another well detailed scene on the layout. The backdrop was built using furnace filter material with twigs and puff balls dipped in ground foam for trees.



The IGA grocery store started as a Plasticville kit. The front wall was all that was used, and the rest of the building was scratch built. This is a very good use of some of the best parts of kits. Randy Bosscher designed and built the IGA, and in constructing the arched roof, he says he employed engineering similar to that used in airplane wings. He also assembled the block of brick commercial buildings, located directly behind the IGA, using three Pine Canyon kits and adding a scratch built structure.

times each year at shows. The next question was how they raised the money to build the layout. The answer was that most of the money for the layout comes from dues. Occasionally, they get involved in promoting a show and some of the revenue from the show goes to the club. So, that is the story on the club. For more information on the club, go to their website <http://www.smsgrains.org/index.html>.

On to the layout. Tom said that many of the members have home layouts, and the layout shown in this article is the club layout. Originally, the layout was a module layout built to MNRA module specifications. At that time, each member owned his own module except for the curved modules which were owned by the club. When the layout was set up for a show or to run, there was always the problem of an odd number of modules which meant that one would need to be left out of the set up. At some point in time (Tom was not sure of the exact date), the club decided to build a new layout. For more on the layout, I corresponded with Gaylord Gill. He told me that before starting the new layout, they put down some key objectives they wanted for the layout.



A freight rolls under the city street. The bridge is a nice touch, giving the impression that the railroad is part of a larger area.

One of those was, all forms of S Scale equipment need to be able to run on the layout. Some of the members model using Hi-Rail track and standards, while others model using NMRA S Scale standards. To accomplish this, they made two loops on the layout. The innermost loop is made to Hi-Rail standards so Hi-Rail equipment can run on it. The outer loop is double track, and is made to the NMRA S Scale standards. The other objective was, to be able to assemble the layout fairly easily. I was there when they were setting up and it does go together well. Gaylord told me that the design and planning of the layout was done by a committee of the club members. When it came time to build the layout, Jerry Poniatowski was the driving force. Jerry did most of the carpentry and organized the work sessions. So, that is how it came about, now let's look at some of the technical details.

The new layout, which is shown in this article, is a sectional layout. The pieces of the layout can only be assembled one way, and are not compatible with any module standards. The layout measures 14' x 36', and it consists of 16 sections. Unlike modular layouts, which can be assembled in various configurations, this one only goes together one way. That's one of the ways the second objective was achieved – there are none of bridge rails or track sections that are typically needed to join modules. The sections simply bolt together, and the rail ends align to a close-enough tolerance. Legs are lengths of 2 1/2" PVC that fit into wood sockets, and electrical circuits are carried through 12-pin connectors.

Since the club has members who have home layouts which use Hi-Rail wheels and track, the new club layout needed to have a place for them to run their equipment. Gaylord informed me the track work was planned with the first objective in mind. There are three independent loops on the layout. The outer loop is intended for scale equipment and is laid with code 100 flex track from Tomalco and Shinohara. The middle loop and the inner loop are intended for Flyer and Hi-Rail equipment, and they are laid with S Helper Service flex track. There are two long passing sidings and two stub sidings for operational capability. The layout has a number of power systems, and depending on the locomotives selected, any of those can be plugged into any one of the loops. The power systems include AC (vintage Flyer), DC, DCC, and Lionel's TMCC.

One of the things that caught my eye was the detail on the layout. The scenery is complete and cohesive. The cohesive part comes from the sectional concept. As for the detail, here is what Gaylord had to say. In 2012, the club decided it was time for a significant upgrade of the scenic components of the display layout. While the layout already had scenery throughout, it was pretty modest. Committing treasury funds (most of which had been achieved through the running of a successful national NASG convention in 2006), the club organized work teams and set some goals. Since the layout was already laid out with four scenic themes – farm, country,



Part of the city industrial area of the layout. This section was handled by Tom Hess. Tom led the group who worked on these scenes. The factory was made from Design Preservation Models components.

industry and town – it was natural to create a work team for each. Bill Bartlam coordinated the work for the farm grouping at his home, Earl Carlsen handled the country grouping and Tom Hess oversaw the industry grouping. Gaylord Gill handled the town grouping, and also managed the overall project. Over a period of just six months, 22 club members were contributing to the construction of 44 new structures plus new roads, trees, landforms and ground cover. Some 72' of backdrops from Backdrop Warehouse were also added.

Lastly, Gaylord summed it up stating “We're pretty proud of the fact that all of this – the 16 sections, legs, electronic components and every one of those delicate structures – fits into a 6' x 10' trailer.” One of the secrets is an ingenious set of built-in racks, thanks again to Jerry. Think of baker's racks, where the eight straight sections slide into horizontal slots in the nose of the trailer. Then the eight corner sections fit vertically into another set of racks anchored to the floor of the trailer, with a top set of racks bolted down to hold it all in place. Finally, all the structures are packed into plastic tubs, each specially prepared with custom cradles and packing to protect the pieces in transit. In between shows the club's trailer can also serve as the storage facility for the layout, although in recent years, Southeastern Michigan S Gauges has found a commercial building that had some unused basement space that could be rented very reasonably.

The whole concept of this club seems to work well. There are diverse interests in the club, and everyone gets something out of it. The informal atmosphere and meeting in a round robin fashion works well. By not having a large permanent layout, the club can keep it's expenses down and, as a result, keep the dues down. If you are contemplating a club, consider some of these things. Thanks to Tom Hawley and Gaylord Gill for the information.

NASG



Congratulates *THE S SCALE RESOURCE*
Volume 1 Issue #1

New To S Scale? Want to meet other S Scale modelers?
Come and join us.
See the NASG web site for more information.

Dodson Farm's Creamery in S Scale

Dodson Farm's Creamery dates back to the 1870s and has been family-run since that time. Rail service is brisk at the creamery. In addition to the daily incoming milk cars with cans picked up along the line, there is the daily milk car with internal tanks that takes the daily collection to the bottling plant. Ice is available for the farmers from the ice house (left end) to help keep their milk cold so every couple of weeks a refrigerator car arrives with a load of ice. And coal for the boiler is brought in by rail.

As with all *B.T.S.* kits, this masterpiece is laser cut and engineered for easy construction. The kit includes the detail castings shown, including the three workers, to provide a high level of realism.

This kit consists of laser-cut basswood, plywood, and cardstock. The footprint is about a scale 130' x 65'. Track and scenery are not included. The creamery was inspired by those serviced by the NYO&W Railway. You must order by October 31, 2014!

#07305 Creamery \$ 289.95

Dodson Farm's Milk Platform



The company built platforms along the main line where milk cans could be dropped off for pickup by the local milk train. This kit consists of laser-cut basswood and plywood. Milk cans are included. The footprint is a scale 25' x 11'.

#07306 Milk Platform \$ 29.95

Order deadline is Oct 31, 2014
for this limited edition kit.

More photos are on our web site!

Oh, BTW, milk cars are coming!



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John sits at the controls at Attilissa. The Union Pacific daily freight has arrived and cars are being switched. The layout height was set so John could operate from a chair.

and the other is Orestod. Getting back to the Caribou line – the line wandered through the mountains and ended at Caribou, Colorado which is near Craig, Colorado. By 1910, there was enough business to justify standard gauging the line, but not realignment. As a result, the curves are still tight. When the Denver and Salt Lake was sold in 1948, the branch to Caribou was taken out of service. In 1981, investors bought the line and rebuilt it.



This is the view from where John is sitting in the above photo. The Caribou line goes through the high meadows on the climb to Summit. On the right is the start of the Roaring Fork narrow gauge. The separation is only inches on the layout, but miles in the imagination.



Ol' Stumpy lives up in the mountains. No one is sure how he lost his hand, but everyone knows him and watches out for him. When the weather is nice, Stumpy likes to camp. One of his favorite spots is up next to the cliff by the tracks. The railroad is not real excited about the bonfire so close to the tracks, but they leave him alone.

The intention was to be a bridge line between the Union Pacific at Atalissa, Colorado and the Denver and Rio Grande at Dotsero, just east of Glenwood Springs, Colorado. The investors envisioned saving time by avoiding the congestion of the front range by not having to go through Denver, Colorado. The Union Pacific had built a branch from their main line in Wyoming south into Colorado to tap some of the coal deposits around Craig. This line crossed the Caribou and Sierra Falls at Atalissa, Colorado. The south end of the line would be a connection with the Denver and Rio Grande at Dotsero, Colorado

The present day operations of the Caribou and Sierra Falls Railroad are as follows. The Union Pacific has cut their line back to Atalissa, Colorado. Currently, one train a day comes to Atalissa and lays over for the night. The next day it returns north and meets the southbound train along the way. The Caribou and Sierra Falls works the Old Ben #1 mine and hauls the coal to the Rio Grande connection at Dotsero. The Caribou and Sierra Falls has a train a day between Atalissa and Sierra Falls which is near the connection with the Denver and Rio Grande. Freight consists of all general freight, including a few containers. The line is slow because of the curvature, but the savings in miles and congestion more than makes up for it. The scenery is spectacular and there is a passenger train for excursionists in the summer and general travel in the snow season. The passenger

The daily train to Caribou is at Glenwood Springs. This is a popular stop for tourists in the summer. The train in the photo is a Rio Grande train that has come from the west and is heading for Dotsero.





Caribou is a sleepy little town on a gravel road. It still draws travelers and tourists for the motel. The Union Pacific tracks stop at the switch down to the mine. The train is operating on trackage rights to Cattails where the interchange point is.



The gravel road into Caribou runs under the Union Pacific. The line once had a lot of traffic and was signaled. Today Union Pacific ownership ends just to the left of the bridge but the signals are still in place..



Main street in Caribou. Things are starting to wind down as the days get shorter. Soon there will be snow and only a few local residents will be around. The buildings are kits that John added to the scene. The police car has pulled over Johns wife "Mama G" in her black Chevy.



There is a tired old RS-3 working the Big Ben #1 mine. This old dog has seen better days but as long as it runs they will keep it around.



Back at Atalissa there are some grain cars parked by the elevator. There is not much grain grown in these parts but there is a lot of cattle ranching. With winter coming the cattle will be brought in and will need some feed to get through the winter. The Caribou line does have some seasonal business moving the cattle from the high ranges also.



When seasonal traffic picks up the Union Pacific will send a switch engine to Atalissa to help out. When the road crews get to town they are almost out of time and can't handle a lot of switching.



The stack train car is sitting on the Caribou line with the Union Pacific crossing just in front of it. There is another interchange track just over the hill. The train crews like the small cafe by the tracks and don't seem to be bothered by the bar behind. The bar is a favorite place to meet for the local motorcycle clubs. They are on the outskirts of town and most people don't mind the rabble rousing.

train has come to be called the Sierra Rocket and runs every day but Sunday. The equipment is a mix of second hand cars. There are stops at Atalissa, Summit, and Sierra Falls. There is a resort at Glenwood Springs that is a popular tourist stop on the Rio Grande. A bus takes tourists to Sierra Falls so they can board the Sierra Rocket. The Caribou line has to operate very economically to survive. Maintenance is minimal. An avalanche at



The local motorcycle club is getting together at the bar on the outskirts of town. The motorcycles are from MTH.



There's lots of back country out here and good rugged roads. It looks like these guys are just getting started. That truck is awful clean. The building was a kit.



There is some local business on the Caribou line, and occasionally they ship a car of lumber from the Drumline Forest Lumber plant. The complex was made with Walthers buildings

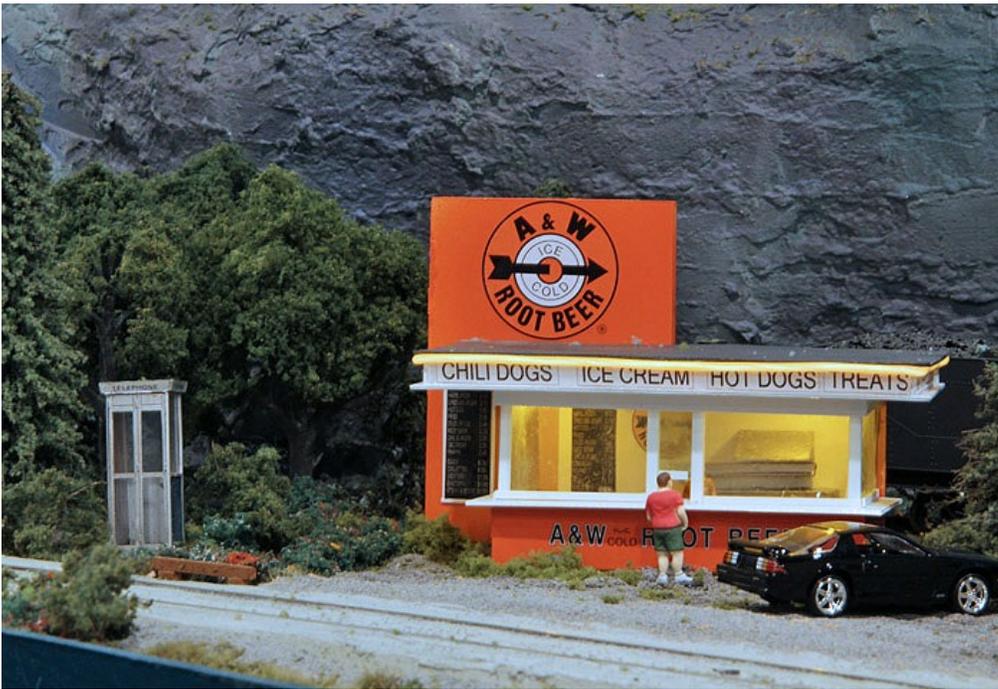
Summit put the future of the line in jeopardy, but with federal loan guarantees, they were able to repair the bridge and track so operations continue today. Motive power is all second hand and includes a mixed bag of builders. Basically, the Caribou buys what is cheap and runs. They run it until it is broken, and then put it aside. There are no Caribou owned freight cars, but that is not a problem since they are predominantly a bridge line hauling other people's freight. Other than the Old Ben #1 mine, there is very little outbound freight originated on the line. Like the railroads in Canada and Alaska, the Caribou will stop the passenger train anywhere on the line. Campers will take the train into the mountains and get off by the side of the tracks. When they want to get picked up, they simply flag the train when it appears. So, all in all, the Caribou is a laid back operation. The owners make enough money to get by, and the local residents in the mountains are happy to have the railroad around.



In this view of the layout, the Rio Grande is on the right. Glennwood Springs is just off the photo on the right. The Rio Grande disappears into a tunnel by the passenger cars. Those passenger cars are the Sierra Rocket. The tired old FP-7 that normally pulls the train died, and a switch engine had to be called out to rescue the train. For the time being, they parked the FP-7 in the hole. The town of Sierra Falls looks kind of sleepy. The rails run down the middle of the street right in front of the Rails Inn B&B.



Out of view in the above photo is this section that John wanted to remind him of Glenwood Canyon. The tracks hug the cliff with the Colorado River right next to them.



Sierra Falls may be sleepy, but they still have an A&W Root Beer stand. John built this from a Twin Whistle kit. John put lights on the interior and added the “neon” light trim around the roof.

This is where the rail fans stay. The building is an MTH building and fits the scene well.



In addition to the standard gauge operations, the investors also purchased a narrow gauge line farther to the south called the Roaring Fork Railroad. The line is short and runs from Marble to Redstone primarily hauling logs. Operation is seasonal due to the high elevation and snow in the winter.

Back to Glenn

So that’s the story on John’s layout. Don’t strain your eyes looking for any of the places. Most of them don’t exist. This is a trip down memory lane for John, and that’s what model railroading is to a lot of us. Caribou was a town at one time, and when John visited all that was left was foundations of buildings. Atalissa is actually a town in Iowa, but John liked the name so it ended up on his railroad. Glenwood Canyon in Colorado has some spectacular scenery and railroading. John wanted some of this on his railroad. And so it goes.



*Dan Dawdy is one of the editors of **THE S SCALE RESOURCE** and a friend of John's. Dan helped John with the DCC installation, and has a business named after him on John's layout.*

The layout is built on a wood grid with 2 inch foam on it. John has been working with this type of construction for many years, and likes the way it works. The track is flex track with ready made switches. The track is glued to a foam roadbed, and glued ballast further holds the track. The scenery is foam core with plaster covering. John uses NCE DCC control and said he likes it a lot. Like the railroad, there is a story for all the details on the layout. Most of the buildings are kits or ready built, but some are scratch built. The signal system is lit, as well as, the buildings. When the lights are down low in the room, the layout comes alive with lights.

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Removing Lettering From Pre Painted Cars



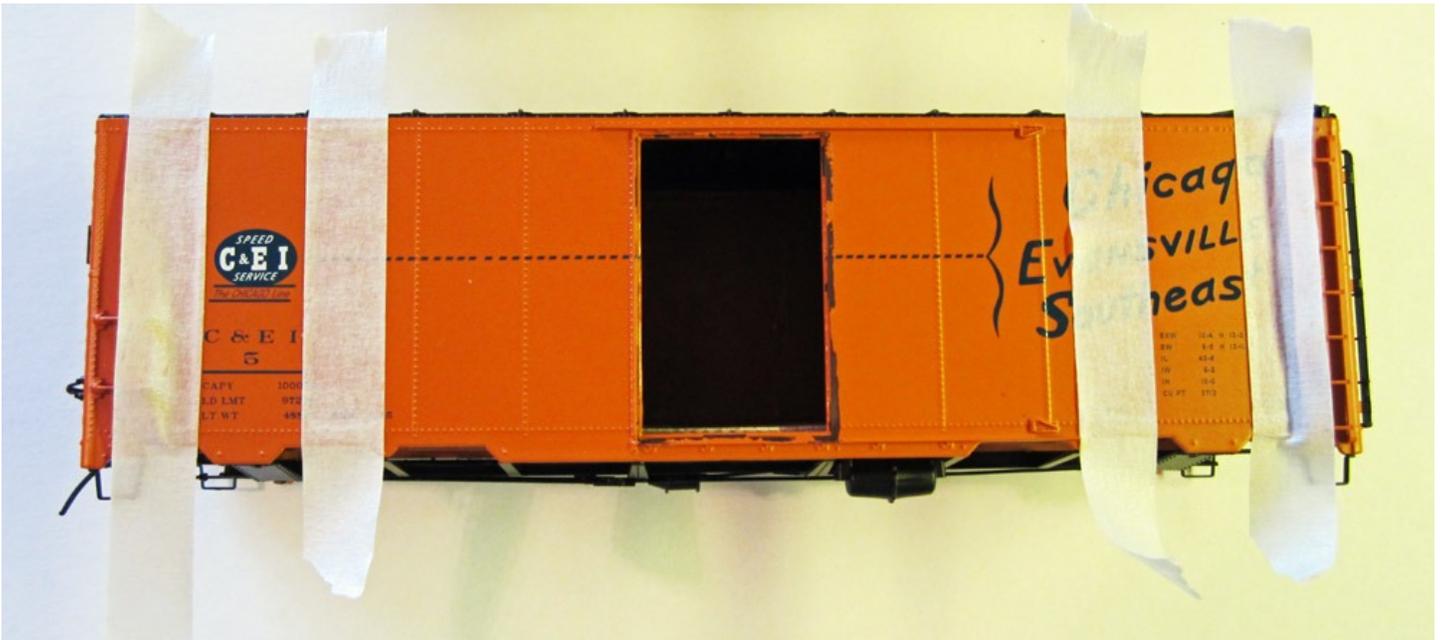
Jim Kindraka started with an orange C&EI boxcar and removed the old lettering before painting and lettering to make this Union Pacific boxcar. Take a look at how he does it.

By Jim Kindraka

There are a lot of great resource materials out now for a modeler who wants to develop a more prototypical freight car fleet for their model railroad. Over the last several years, color guides have been published for many railroads, and more recently, the *Railway Prototype Cyclopedia* series. Historical societies and photo resources provide many photos that will help when lettering models. These are great resources for making your models fit a prototype era or local. The problem is there are so many variations that pre-painted models may not fit the era or railroad you are specifically modeling. This will require repainting the model.

There are many ways to approach the problem of repainting a model. One method is to completely strip the old paint from the model. This involves the use of chemicals that may be unpleasant to use, messy or difficult to dispose of properly. In addition, these chemicals may have an effect on the plastic the model is made of, or residues can mar the re-applied paint. For these reasons, I prefer to wet sand the existing lettering of the model. In this article, I will explain the method using a recently completed project.

S Scale America, manufactured and distributed by Des Plaines Hobbies, came out with a 1937 AAR boxcar as a ready to run model in S scale. Thus far, the cars have only been made ready to run in five versions of a C&EI express box car scheme. In reviewing some of the resource material, it is obvious this model can form the basis for a lot of other really nice prototype box cars in S scale.

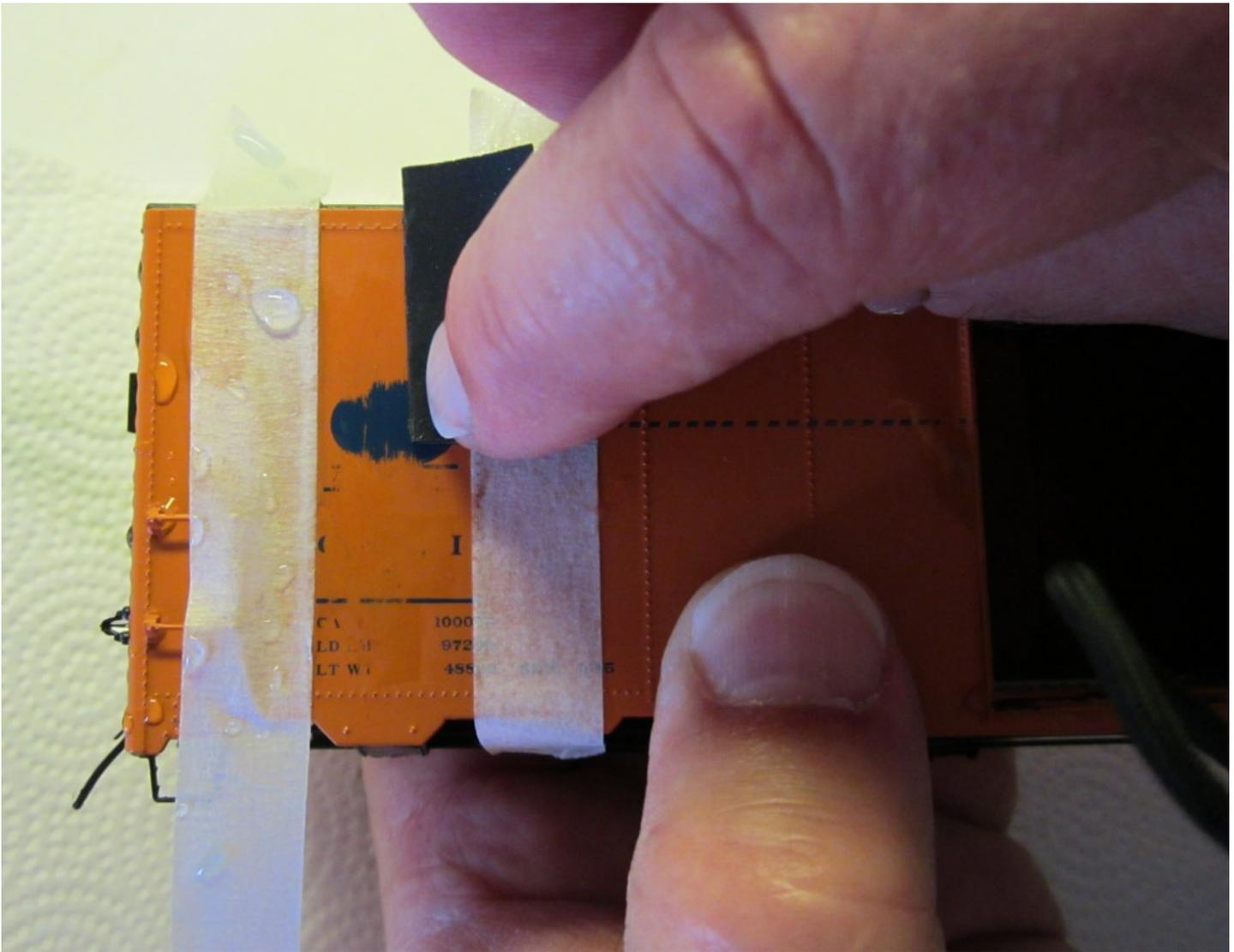


In these two views, Jim shows how he puts masking tape on the model to protect the details. The lettering is raised by the thickness of the paint, and all you want to do is sand the lettering flat with the side of the car. By doing this, the old lettering will not show when you repaint the model.

The herald, numbering and lettering on the C&EI model needs to be stripped so there is a smooth surface for repainting, and that is always a challenge. It seems every model railroader has a "can't miss" method for stripping paint and/or lettering from plastic models. These models already have a great paint finish to act as a base coat that really doesn't require removal. Personally, I wanted to stay away from solvent or alcohol strippers that would likely take the base paint off too and can present disposal and storage problems. I decided to apply a technique of wet sanding the lettering detail only to leave as much of the original paint intact as possible.

Step one is to remove the trucks. Additionally, I used a pointed knife blade to carefully pry off the four corner stirrup steps. Once the trucks are removed, the steps become exposed and will likely break off during handling. Just removing them up front allows reattachment later. If any of the steps do break, it's possible to purchase parts sprues from the car's manufacturer, Des Plaines Hobby, to replace those or any other small detail parts.

The next step was to cover the car's rivet strips with drafting tape, setting one edge as close to the rivet strip as possible. I used both 400 and 600 grit wet sand paper for my work, and getting as close to the rivets as possible is sometimes necessary. I worked with small pieces of sand paper, about 1" square. You can control



In this view Jim is sanding the herald off the side of the car. Note the water drops. You want to use a lot of water to keep the sand paper from clogging. Jim uses 400 grit wet/dry sand paper. Concentrate on the lettering to start, widening out the area as you sand. If you concentrate too much on one area, you will make a hole that will show if you use high gloss paint.

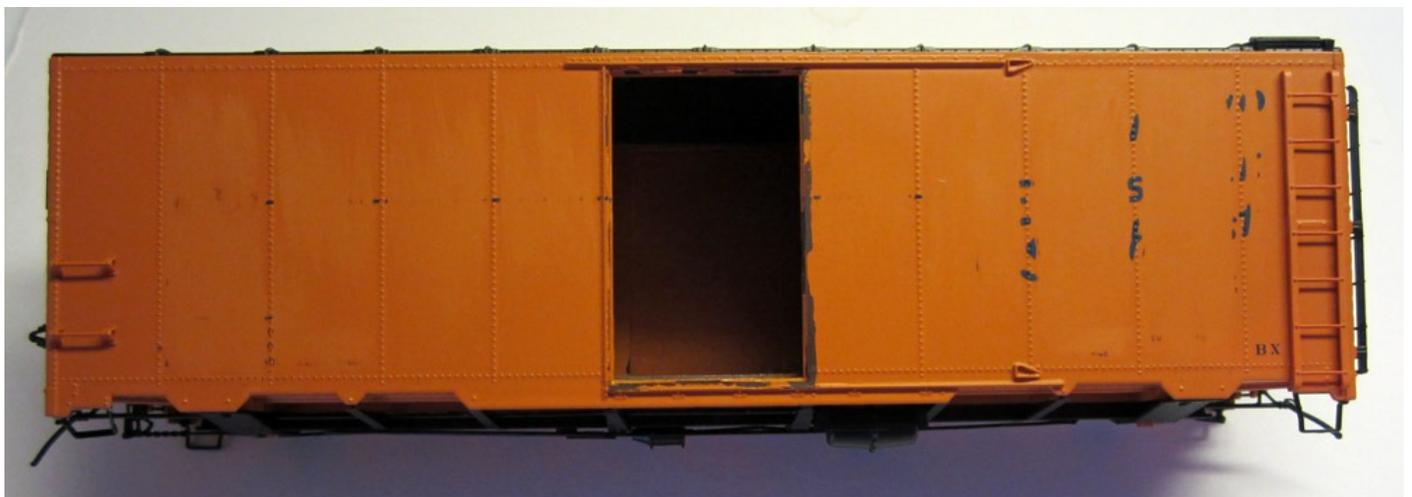
small pieces better, and fold them in half to get very close to rivets and other details. It also helps to let your finger nails grow out a bit to provide firm pressure right at the fold line on the wet sand paper. The work was done over a slop sink so sanded material could be washed away often so it did not obstruct the work. Apply pressure and sand to only get the lettering detail off, don't go overboard or you will take the paint off too.

On the C&EI box cars, it took about 30 minutes to strip away the number, herald and lettering detail from both sides. I then washed the car thoroughly and rinsed it with distilled water. To dry, I set the oven for 180 degrees F and turned it off when it reached that temperature. I set the car inside on a rack; left the oven door cracked about 2" and allowed the car to dry in the slowly cooling oven. This particular model suffered no warping or ill effects, but I would recommend being careful when trying this the first time with any model. Always use an independent oven thermometer; never depend on the oven controls themselves!

I let the stripped bodies air dry overnight, and then shot them with the appropriate color the next day. I repeated the oven method to set the paint, then let the painted model sit for a couple days and finished with the correct dry transfers or decals. In one case, I repainted the entire car; in another, I masked the roof and ends before painting. The SSA C&EI cars come with black roof and ends and I wanted to model a C&O boxcar class that was delivered the same way.



In this view we see the sanded car. Jim said it takes about 20 minutes to get to this point. Note that there are still some small spots of the black lettering near the rivet line. These can't be sanded without affecting the rivets. Note that there are some different shades of orange. These are layers of paint that you have sanded through. Think of the lines between these colors as topographic lines on a map. The closer they are together the steeper the ridge. When you see these lines close together on your sanding that will be an indication there is a steep edge to a hole. This will show when you paint so feather these edges out and make a wide space between the colors.



Here the model is finished and dried. You can do a little touch up around the rivets but be very careful. Just make sure the edge of the old lettering is feathered out and it will not show. At this point your car is ready for the new body color. There is no need to prime since your car still has some of the old paint on it.



Here is a photo of the before and after. The stock car is on the left and one of Jim's conversions on the right.



This photo shows two of the cars Jim repainted. On the original C&EI car, the ends and roof were black. When Jim did the C&O car, all he repainted was the sides.

Here are a couple of other helpful hints. The doors are just tack glued on, and I found it helpful to remove them for painting. SSA has both 10' and 10' 6" doors as the cars come in both heights. They also offer both Youngstown and 7-Panel Superior doors so you can change doors and paint them separately. Additionally, the car's interior weights sometimes come loose with all the handling. Removing the doors makes securing the weights quite simple.

Des Plaines Hobbies will sell the S Scale America 1937 AAR boxcar as an unpainted kit with no trucks. From my own skill level and time perspective, it is more efficient for me to strip and repaint existing cars than build the cars from kits; and still need to do the painting. Also, if I watch for sales, it is about a wash on cost between paying more for the ready to run car with trucks or paying less for a kit, but having to then source trucks.

This is one example of a technique that can increase the number of models and paint schemes available to you. It's a way to satisfy the urge to add unique prototype freight cars to your fleet. Give it a try some time. In a future article, I plan to report on the techniques used on a different, recently available addition to the S scale freight car family.



TREES

FROM THE GROUND UP

By Glenn Guerra

Jerry Thompson lives here in Plymouth and runs the local hobby store. In his spare time, Jerry models in S standard gauge and narrow gauge. Jerry is building a new home and, until that is finished, the layout is on hold; but Jerry keeps busy making models – both structures and rolling stock. One day while talking to him at the hobby store, I noticed some nifty looking stumps sitting on the desk. He told me he makes them and explained how. Here is how he does it.

Jerry was telling me that, first, you need to look at how trees flare out at ground level and many times the roots are exposed. On older trees, the roots can be very large, and a lot of the root is exposed. So, I took a walk down the street and took a few photos. When trees grow, the only living part is just below the bark. This layer, called the cambium, carries the nutrients and this is where the cells divide to create the growth. When the cells divide, the inner layer of cells adds more wood to the tree, making the tree larger in diameter. The outer layer of cells adds more material which becomes bark. Since the tree is getting bigger in diameter and the bark is not growing, something needs to give. This is why the bark cracks. The way the bark cracks can be distinctive. When I was doing wood working, I worked with sawn wood. I



Note how the roots of this tree are exposed. The bark on the exposed portion of the root is not as coarse as the bark on the trunk. Also note that the root is almost at a right angle to the trunk.



*Here is another tree near my house.
Note how one of the roots is almost perpendicular to the trunk of the tree.*

learned to identify wood by the color and cell structure. People who run saw mills see the bark all the time and can tell what type of wood the log is by the bark. This may seem like a bunch of trivia, but it will help in making our model tree stumps. Do what I did; take a walk around and see how the tree trunks look at the ground.

Next, I was sent to the wood shed. Well, not really, but Jerry said to look for small branches on trees and bushes. So, I went to the brush pile in the back yard. In this pile, are all the trimmings from trees and bushes around my yard. Jerry said to look for the diameter of twigs that will match the size of tree trunks we want. In S Scale that is around 1/4" to around 1/2". The 1/4" twigs would be 16" trees and the 1/2" twigs would be about 32" trees. These are larger trees that have been around a while, and the soil has eroded around the roots leaving them exposed. What you are looking for is the area where new branches and shoots are. Don't agonize over how they look, just grab a hand full, and head for the shop.



The brush pile in my back yard. I have a new view of this mess since Jerry told me how to make tree stumps. There is lots of good stuff in here.



This is an example before trimming. This is a cutting from the black locust tree in my front yard. Each winter, I cut a few of the lower branches off so the tree is growing up, and I can cut the grass under it.



These are some of the pieces I cut out of the black locust branch in the top photo. They don't look very much like tree trunks yet, but we are getting close.

The next step is to create the stumps. I used a small model saw for this. We are looking for areas where new branches take off. Find the main branch of the diameter you want, and cut just above the joint. There is probably many more joints that look interesting, so cut them out also. Leave around 2 to 3 inches of length so you can hand hold them when trimming. Now that you have some smaller pieces to work with, start the final trimming. For me, it worked best to cut just above the joint first. That way, I could hold the twig while cutting. I used a small block of wood to cut on, and this seemed to help. When I cut the first branch, the wide end caused the twig to bend while I was cutting and pinched the saw blade. After using the small block of wood, the large end was suspended in the air and the saw cut freely through the twig. Use a fine tooth saw and it will not grab the wood while you cut. Don't force it, just let the saw do it's thing. What you want to do is cut just above the



Compare this photo with the preceding photo and you will see where I cut the twig. Now it looks like a tree stump at the ground and not the joint of two branches.



These two tree stumps were made from the same small twig in the above photo. As a bonus you get some logs for scenery details.



After the first few times of the saw binding in the cut, I used a small block of wood for a support. Now the saw cuts through freely. Note that I started this cut on an angle as the tree would be growing on a hillside.

branch joint. Cut straight through, roughly perpendicular to what will be the main trunk of the tree. If your tree will be going on a hillside, you will want to cut at an angle so the trunk will stand straight up. Now, you have the area of the tree trunk at the ground line. Next comes the tree trunk itself.

These are some tree stumps and trunks I made in a few minutes. Note the difference in the bark. The reddish ones are from the black locust tree in the front yard. The others are from a box elder tree I keep trying to get rid of. Different trees have different bark, and this will show on your models. Also, since these twigs are young, the bark is smooth and not overly coarse for you model.



If you are making a logged over area, or just want a cut tree trunk, make two saw cuts on opposite sides of the twig. Don't cut through, and make one cut higher than the other. Then, break the rest of the twig off. This will look like the stepped cut that a logger would make so he could fell the tree where he wanted. Jerry told me another trick about this part of the operation. If the wood is still moist, the twig will bend and not break. Jerry said that after you have the first cuts of the twigs made, lay them on a backing sheet and put them in the oven for a bit on very low heat. This will dry the wood making it brittle. Now, when you make the stepped cut and break the twig, you may get some jagged edges just like full size trees get when they break. If you want to use these trucks for tree arbors, cut them long. At this point, you can use some of the existing branches on the twigs as branches for your tree or glue other ones on. If you make the foliage of the tree dense, you may not need anything else.

This was an interesting project. Making a few tree trucks is not hard. Give it a try if you have not already done so.

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