

THE

S

# RESOURCE

NEWS, REVIEWS, INFORMATION TO USE

August/September 2023

Volume 9 No. 6

SCALE



**New Column: S Scale... Old School Style  
Time to Build Something  
The Makasey Railroad  
New Tracks My Build  
New Tracks  
And So Much More...**

**Let's Build  
Something!**

Published Bi Monthly

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**June/July 2023**

Volume 9 No. 5

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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 beautiful scene from David and Jean Burns featuring their Makasey Railroad.*

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The Model Railroad Resource, LLC publishes *The O Scale Resource* and *The S Scale Resource*. Be sure to look at both of our magazines. There are many articles in our magazines that are not scale specific and will be of interest to you. Click the magazine title in this announcement to see the magazine.



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# Guest Editorial

## My Concern and Theory About Why Modeling in Model Railroading is Declining!

**By: Jim Kellow MMR**

*Editors note: This ran in the [May/June issue of The O Scale Resource Magazine](#). We are running it here for those who may not have seen it. Please email Jim with your thoughts. Some of the comments Jim received from the O Scale issue are printed after the editorial.*

My first memories of model railroading go back to the early 1940s. For my parents, World War II and its immediate consequences were the conversation of the day. I don't remember model railroad magazines, or any discussion of the hobby by my mom and dad. The only actual model railroad I saw back then belonged to my mother's brother who had built a loop with a crossover using 4 Lionel 027 switches on a dirt shelf in my grandfather's basement. Yes, he used all very old Pre-War Lionel. I remember loving to watch him run his railroad.

Other than that, my only contact with model railroading was during Christmas when the large downtown department store had a big, at least to me, Lionel display layout in the toy department. That, and the Lionel catalogs, were my model railroading world.

Then Dad showed me an O scale box car he had built when he was a kid. I wanted to build one, but could never find a source that sold O scale kits. A Lionel hardcover book about model railroading was my complete library. I still have the it.

Mentors to teach me modeling skills? Forget it. Everyone in my early years, adults and older kids I knew, were all working. For me, going to school, playing outside with my friends, and building things, with whatever stuff I could find, occupied my days.

I kept getting more Lionel every Christmas from Santa, and even had a piece of plywood on rollers that fit under my bed. My first railroad empire! I was a model railroader.

About the 5th or 6th grade, I discovered HO and model railroading magazines. I found kits, and actually could build a model. HO was smaller so I could expand my empire. Lionel was put away, and I became a HO modeler. I started building everything. Locomotives, rolling stock, structures and scenery. I completed my first realistic, mostly hand built, model railroad. I was now not only a model railroader, I was a modeler and I loved it. But I was still a loner as far as I knew.

I made many modeling mistakes, and some of the models were really bad, but I kept at it and slowly got better. Back then, for me, building models required patience and a lot of "do overs and try agains". I learned to use my own creativity and imagination to solve my modeling problems, and consequently, my modeling got better and took up more and more of my time.

No mentors were around except in the magazines. Now those guys were true master craftsmen and I would have loved to meet them. I wonder how they got so good with their modeling? Who taught them? Trial and error? I read and reread those magazines, hoping some of what I read would rub off and help me learn their secrets.

I believe my model railroading modeling experiences and memories during my youth is why I am the dedicated modeler I am today. I am concerned however that modeling in model railroading is declining. I wonder why?

It may be that later generations of youth had different experiences and memories, like TV and computers, etc., than my generation, and modeling for them never was that important. Therefore, as adults they do not have modeling skills and have to learn them. This is why I believe mentors are so important to help modeling continue in our hobby. Read on.

I am now 84 years old now. Was my childhood and growing up years in the 1940s and early 50s so different than a kid who grew up later? Well let's see.

1. Was technology, TV, computers, YouTube, streaming movies, etc, different?
2. Were real railroads less visible and did they play a lesser role in our personal transportation?
3. Were the local hobby shops that carry model railroading material that I often visited still around?
4. Were model railroad manufacturers, like Lionel, as visible and just as important for Santa to give?
5. Did kids still play outside with things they improvised and created to play with? (Kick the can, stick ball, rubber guns, come to mind.)
6. Did model railroading become more of a hobby of “buy it, collect it, run it”, rather than imagine it, create it, and build it to learn modeling skills, imagination, creativity and modeling freedom?
7. Were kids still always looking for stuff they could use to build a model of something, or do they just buy it prebuilt ?
9. Do kids build a model with their hands or design it on a computer and have another machine build it?
10. Is Lionel 3 rail and American Flyer high rail still considered model railroading today?
11. Is model railroading today still as popular a hobby with as it was in my youth?

I think answering these questions helps explain why we are currently in the declining state of modeling in model railroading. Maybe many kids just did not need modeling in their youth, and consequently, did not learn about model building like I did. Therefore, as adults, they do not have the skills to be modelers.

No question about it, when TV came into my life, my modeling kid's world changed. Our first TV had a tiny screen by today's standards, but my friends and I had a new exciting experience that was truly fascinating. One of the first TV shows I remember seeing was “The Lone Ranger”. That required me to acquire my first 6 shot cap pistol, holster, and those red rolls of caps, along with my first cowboy hat. New Western history to learn. New games to play. I forgot modeling.

Oh sure, there were other distractions that came later and took me away from modeling – cars, girls, military service, and college. Followed by marriage and a family. No time for a hobby.

But then career and family became secure and I found some spare time and money. I immediately came back to my first love. Model railroad “modeling”.

Therefore MY THEORY!

Sometime in the late 40s early 50s “The Lone Ranger” came on TV and more families bought TVs. Seems the lives of kids changed forever. Kids growing up in the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s had totally different experiences than in my generation. Modeling and model building may not have been viewed or needed as a necessary part of a happy childhood. Almost anything a kid wanted was now available prebuilt, and TV and many other technological experiences (computers come to mind) were available. Was model railroading really a “first love” for them like it was for me and my generation?

If not, will they return to modeling and model railroading later in their lives like I did? It appears to me they have not. So how can they be brought into the modeling and model railroading community? Exposure, education, and mentoring I believe is the answer. I am trying to do my small part how about you?

The Lone Ranger won many kid's attention. Will modeling in model railroading win their attention in their later life? I sure hope and pray so! Mentors I know can help. But I worry, can modeling have the draw of: "Hi Ho Silver Away".

Your Opinion:

Well what do you think? I believe, "How do we bring back modeling to our hobby?" is a discussion model railroaders need to have in order to have modeling continue to be an important part of our great hobby. I will print in my next article all the comments and suggestions I get. My email is [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

**Happy Reading & Happy Modeling,**

*Jim Kellow*

Replies to the original editorial: I am pleased that I received several comments. Here are the comments I received and my replies. That is what I was hoping for. Thanks to all of you. And if you are reading this editorial for the first time, please feel free to [Email me your comments here](#).

**Christof Henseler in Berlin, Germany wrote:**

*I am convinced there is nothing wrong if a model railroader wants to "buy it, collect it, run it". I like to say we model train enthusiasts are all individualists distinguished by a common hobby. I am 64 years old and always wished a "plug and play" layout was offered for sale.*

*I did card kits of buildings in my youth but was never successful with plastic kits, either things fell apart again or I used too much glue which spoilt the surface.*

*So why should I spoil my free time with modeling if it isn't fun for me? Collecting art, paintings, sculptures or coins, bills, postal stamps are recognized hobbies, no collector is expected to make such items himself (which of course is forbidden for the last three categories). Model makers have the right to be proud of their work, but I think they should not show pride towards model collectors but should accept them as hobby colleagues.*

*I have participated in model train exhibitions for many years, I always had the visiting children run the toy trains and streetcars by generators:*

<https://kleintischspielbahn.forumieren.net/t2996-spur-0-spielanlage>

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*They always had fun and I received much praise from their parents. I never had an automobile, so this is what I can carry to the exhibitions using a hardcart on public transport.*

*When I retire in two years, I'll move into a former station building at an electric museum railway line and open a museum of small trains, in both meanings, scale models of small railway lines and trolleys. I get 30 showcases from a model car shop which is going to close to show my collection to the public.*

*There will be room for several layouts in different scales where trains shall be run by the visitors. There will also be a modeling workshop in the basement, but it's not me who will teach modeling to young people. If others are ready for this, they are welcome to do so there.*

*Greetings from Berlin, Germany*

## **My Reply:**

Thanks you for your comments. I completely agree with your comments and am very impressed with what you are doing to promote our great model railroading hobby and help kids and their parents learn about the hobby. I am also impressed with your collection of model trains and wish you all the success with your planned museum. Please let me know when you get it open as I would like to write about it in one of my articles.

Naturally, I am very happy and pleased about your planned model building space in your museum basement. I hope some of the kids will be able to build some models you can use on your railroads.

I am sorry to hear about your past model building experiences, but believe your activities at collecting, introducing families to the fun of operating your model railroads, and showing them your collection, is certainly to be admired and praised. Thanks for your comments, and again, good luck with your museum.

## **Art Williams in Detroit Michigan, wrote:**

*I just read your article in The O Scale Resource magazine and felt compelled to reply. There are many facets to the model railroading hobby and no single one is better than any other. There is no "right" way to do model railroading, just the one that is "right" for you. Everyone's background and experience is different, but like you, I started with my dad and uncle's Lionel set, spent some time with HO, had life get in the way for a while, but came back to the hobby when time and resources improved.*

*My position is that "modeling" has been to some extent replaced by "operations". Modeling is mostly static, whereas operations is dynamic. Even beyond the advances in technology (DCC, sound, LEDs, 3D printing, etc.), the key development for me was the Kadee working couplers. Now I can actively switch industries just like the real railroads. And look at the advances in operating schemes, from tack-on-car, to car cards, to switch lists, to timetable-and-train-order. A computer with spreadsheets and databases made all that easy. And then the Internet connected all these model railroaders so they could ask questions and share information. You didn't have to be a lone wolf unless you wanted to be one.*

*I said earlier that modeling is static. The better the model you build, the less you want to risk damaging it by running it. Also, modeling tends to be an individual sport, whereas operations is a team sport. When recruiting younger members for our club, I tell them to think of model railroading operations as the best interactive 3D game they have ever played. But you "win" this game by collaboration instead of competition.*

*COVID forced the hobby back into a lot of solitary things and there is nothing wrong with that. I saw a lot of that operations downtime spent fixing things that had been put off while the trains were running. But in the last year I have seen the social aspect of model railroading come roaring back. Train shows, conventions, and yes, op sessions have returned. And that is good for everyone.*

*So I am less concerned that the modeling facet of model railroading diminishing as long as the overall hobby is evolving in other directions. I want this to be a "big tent" pastime that celebrates all its dimensions. I prefer a glass-half-full positive view for a relaxing activity instead of the glass-half-empty view that the hobby is dying and everyone else is doing it wrong because they aren't doing it the way I do.*

*But that's just me. As they say, you do you. And if I can run your beautiful scratchbuilt models during my operating session, it is a win-win.*

*Best regards, Art Williams, Operations Superintendent: Detroit Model Railroad Club*

## **My reply:**

Thank you for your comments. I believe there are three major branches to the model railroading hobby. 1) model building; 2) model train operation; and 3) collecting. Over the course of my life in model railroading, I have participated in all three branches and thoroughly enjoyed each one. When I get asked "What is my hobby of model railroading all about?", I say, it's a hobby with something for all ages. It is the most diverse and imaginative hobby you can choose. It can be an art form that will charge your creative juices. It's a hobby that can transport you to a place of serenity and sanity, in a new world you have created. It is a hobby that can last your lifetime. It constantly provides new learning experiences and it's fun!

Saying all that, I am not sure I agree with you that operation is taking the place of modeling for a specific model railroader. Frankly, that has not been my experience in talking with various people in all phases, scales and gauges in the hobby. If you are saying the hobby may be moving away from attracting people who enjoy building models, to attracting people interested in the operation of a model railroad, I can not say I agree one way or the other with that statement as I just don't have any basis to comment.

But if that is true, why? From my perspective, the decline of model building in the hobby is evident. I hear both good and bad comments about the overall health of the hobby, but my opinion is that I hope our model railroad hobby grows and exists for a long long time offering the same opportunities for achievement in the three branches as it does today.

I like the way you explain to new young members how operation is a game. I have a segment every two weeks on my New Tracks weekly Zoom shows called "Local Clubs and NMRA Divisions" hosted by Phil Edholm a NMRA Division Superintendent in the Coast Division in California. I would love for you to be one of Phil's guests and discuss your clubs activities. Please let me know if you are interested.

Also, if you are interested, I would love to do a profile of you and your club in one of my New Tracks articles in The O Scale Resource magazine. Let me know and I will send you the information I need for the profile. If I still lived in Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan I would love to bring some of my scratchbuilt cars to operate on your club's layout. I never had the time to when we lived there due to my travels and work schedule. Thanks again for your comments, and all the best for your club.

## **Art replied to me:**

*Being newly retired, I would be happy to Zoom with anyone who wants to talk model railroading. I would also be happy to do a profile on the Detroit Model Railroad Club, which was founded in 1935, making it one of the oldest in the country.*

*And I agree with your three branches of the hobby. Let's look at some of the objective statistics about the hobby. 100 years ago there were zero people who identified as model railroaders. The hobby was formed and grew (in all 3 branches) until the raw numbers peaked, probably somewhere in the 60's. After that, even though the US population grew, the total number of model railroaders began to decline. Attendance at conventions and so forth are probably a fair representation of that. As for the why for the decline, that is a lot more subjective and so there are lots of opinions. And likely there is no singular reason, but instead a broad range of reasons. If the number of model railroaders were shown on a line graph, it would show a mountain-like picture with it rising on one side and descending on the other. Is the hobby "dying"? In the same way we are all dying, it will happen some day. But I won't be around when it finally gets back down to zero so I choose not to worry about it.*

*Now if you took all those model railroaders referenced above and graphed them every year on a pie chart of the three branches, I maintain the slice representing operations has been growing in proportion to the slice of the modelers. I have no idea what the collectors have been doing over time. So of an overall pie that is*



*diminishing, the operations slice may be smaller and growing, and the modeling slice could be larger but shrinking. As evidence, I point to all the modeling hobby shops going away, but there has never been more stuff available online regarding operations. Again, the reason why is subjective and viewed through a lot of different lenses.*

*But I see I am falling down the rabbit hole again on this subject, so I will stop here.*

*Best regards, Art*

**I replied:**

Thanks Art for your viewpoint. I am glad to hear about your interest in being on the New Tracks Modeling zoom show and being profiled in one of my articles.

I hope you are wrong about the evidential death of model railroading. In regard to modeling, I hope it will always be a very important part of our hobby. Thanks again.

**Terry Weldon wrote:**

*Price!! Latest prices follow locos: O scale \$600.00 / HO \$300.00.*

*How do kids afford these kinds of prices?*

**My Reply:**

Good question. What age group is defined as kids? Under 13, or under 18 or under 30? In my case when I was under about 16 my parents or relatives provided my hobby money primarily with gifts at Christmas and Birthdays. Then when I got my drivers license and began dating girls, the car and date costs were where my money went. Then college, military, and start of career, I did not really spend on a hobby. When I really started to spend my earned money on my hobby was about when I was 40 or so.

So what age group would I target to sell these locos? What age group would you target? A manufacturer in O scale just offered a brass boxcar for \$500.00. Wonder how many kids he thinks will buy one? I understand what you are saying about the cost of model railroad items for young kids, but based on my personal experience I just don't have an answer. As it was for my generation of kids, I guess it depends on how badly kids want the loco and how wealthy the parents or relatives are. What do you think? Thanks for the question.

I truly believe this is a crucial issue that needs conversation and attention. New technology and AI are coming very quickly to our hobby. How will it impact modeling? Anyone looking into this? If so please let me know. Thanks.

**Robert Taylor in Canada**

*Hello Jim. I have debated bothering you by email BUT I read with interest your article on the future of "O" scale. I am of your vintage and we may have similar interests!!!*

*If you choose to reply to me I can send pics of my MRR and elaborate a bit on my reply to you.*

*1) Personally I agree with you 100%. There are not too many of us genuine "O" men modelling in CANADA. The younger people are more interested in computer games and cell phones than MRR things. Note the age of most of the people at the conventions.*

2) My Dad built a 10,000 gal black SUN OIL tank car for my 4th Birthday in 1944. I was hooked on “O” scale! Finally in 1965 it got a Walther's underframe and cast DOME! I still have it in my collection for sentimental reasons.

3) My MRR was 2 level “O” scale with 2 roundhouses and 2 turntables, with my theme being to send power to 2 regions. At one point I had 36 locomotives that I had built & operated. I think I really loved locomotive building in brass. (Steam and Diesel). I added more detail than Bill Lenoir to my models & the same with my friend Bob Turner in San Diego, CA.

4) I loved Dan Denon's O scale NEWS rag with its Buy/Sell/Trade etc. There are pics of MY MRR in one of his last editions. When the mag was sold to the new O scale Mag which was in my opinion a glossy “O” scale paper, I lost interest except for the Archaeology articles by my MRR friend James DeBruin in Texas.

5) My dear wife of 52 years finally said that she had seen what happens to LOVELY models and MRRs when we guys head up to the GREAT Roundhouse ABOVE and she did not want to be bothered having to unload or give away or sell my equipment. So I started selling to Steve Neill of Dripping Springs, Texas. You may have known him, but one dark rainy night he was T-boned and killed. Suzanne, his widow, sent all his lovely collection to an Auction house in Chicago and many of my good models are with “O” men in the USA.

Jim De B saw one of my Lobaugh BERKSHIRES and recognized my workmanship. It is NOW in his collection, and I still have a second one the #2812!

6) At one time I also had about 48 CPR Stainless steel CPR CANADIAN cars + many Walther's passenger cars. I lost count of the number of freight cars I had – but most were Scale Craft, Walther's, Lobaugh, scratch built and All Nation + imported brass.

7) I note there is no more Scale Craft, Walther's, Lobaugh, Hines, & Thomas stuff offered NOW. Even Champ decals and Floquil are GONE! I did note Norm's “O” scale is still around + All Nation!

8) Finally, I note that MECANNO was the elite toy of the 1930/1940 era. My dad had it, and I had a large collection which probably was instrumental in my mechanical engineering inclination. To close, I had a railroading career (enough for another time) but I am the engineer who developed the successful 66 foot hi-Beam Lumber cars in the 1963 era while at National Steel Car + several other innovations. Enough rambling for now.

*Wm. Robert Taylor KANATA, (OTTAWA), ONTARIO, Canada*

### **My Reply:**

Thanks so much for your comments. I would like to profile you and your modeling in one of my New Tracks articles. I would also like to have you as a guest on one of my Weekly Zoom shows on Wednesday evenings at 7pm Eastern Time. Please let me know if you are interested. Thanks again for your comments.

I really appreciate getting comments like these from readers, and hope to hear from more of you in the future. After all, starting this discussion is why I wrote my original comments. Thanks again, and happy modeling to you all.

Again, if you are seeing my guest editorial for the first time, please let me know your thoughts.  
[jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

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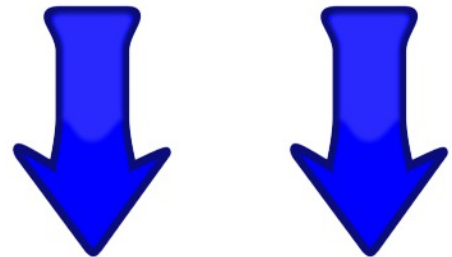


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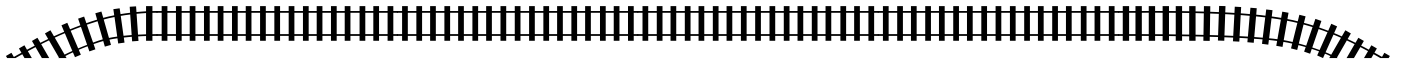
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# NEWS YOU CAN USE



Custom Model Depot, has many S-scale items listed on their web site. For example, 1920 Curtis Air Compressor, 1948 Bridgeport Milling Machine, Monarch 10EE Lathe, Hit & Miss Engine and more.



Bill Wade, of B.T.S., announced that he plans to release the S-scale version of the McCabe Fire Train.

Fire is a nasty thing for a lumber company. And while he hoped it was never used, John McCabe had the shop crew build a three-car fire train. This train was kept ready in the yard just in case. He also constructed additional water cars and used these on other parts of the line, but they could be added to the train in case of an emergency.



They also have many vehicles such as a 1952 Ferguson TO-30 Tractor, 1951 Studebaker Champion and many more. Also detail parts.



Check their Website here [custommodeldepot.com](http://custommodeldepot.com)

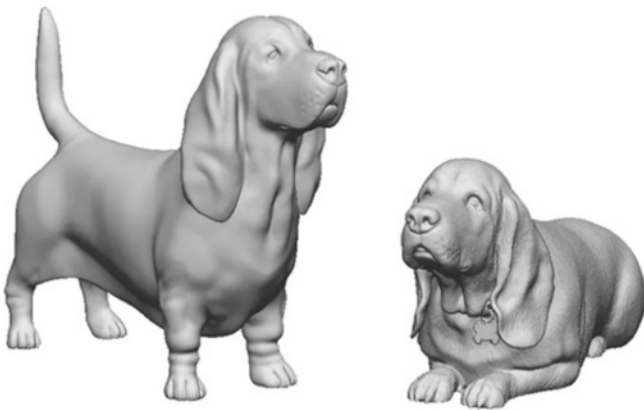


The train consists of a Firefighting Car, Water Car and a Tool Car all of which will be available separately.

See their Website here for the more pictures.



Modelu, a 3D printing company, is adding animals to their line. Cats, dogs, chickens, sheep and many more available.



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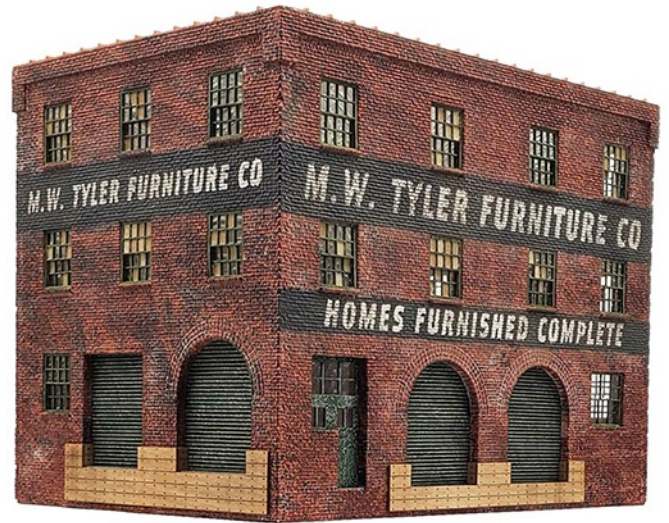


Check them out at <https://www.modelu3d.co.uk/>

Monster Model Works has some new kits available in S scale. Hansen Machine & Tool Background Kit is perfect for any industry or track side scene.



M.W. Tyler Furniture Co. Kit is based on the H.L. Benbough Furniture Co. located in San Diego, CA.



Also new is their Freight Yard Office based on Maine Central's freight yard office located in Bangor, ME.



Check their Website for all their S scale offerings here.

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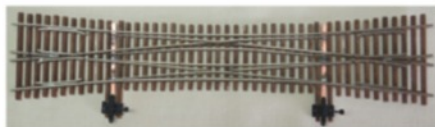
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# The Makasey Railroad

By **David J. Burns** with Amy Dawdy

*Email author by clicking on their name.*

*Editors note: Amy and I went to visit David and Jean Burns and their Makasey Railroad last summer. Well... it got pushed to the back burner which was my fault. So here, a year after, is that story. We will be making another trip down to see the progress, and I promise not to sit on that.*



*Waterfall to the right spilling into Roselake.*



*Scene above the waterfall.*

## The Beginnings

I grew up next to the Grand Trunk Western, and that was the inspiration for model railroading in general. Like most, I received a Christmas gift of a Lionel layout when I was 5. It was a simple 4 x 8 plywood over and under with one turnout. Growing up next to the Grand Trunk Western in South Bend, IN, I quickly realized that the 3-rail Lionel was not the same. After moving the layout to the basement, my older brother tried to scenic the layout with a mountain made from screen and plaster. I





*Roselake beach with volleyball players. All figures were resin printed.*



*Another look at Roselake beach. Lake is a drop down for access.*



*Overlooking Roselake in the foreground with Wolfpine in the back. On the right is the trestle connection to Chadwicke.*

However, HO was a little small for the tech at that time. I really wanted to go to 2-rail O Scale (my first love), but my basement does not have enough room for a decent-sized layout. I stumbled upon American Models in S Scale, and I was hooked. There was a decent number of engines and rolling stock along with track to suit my needs.

played with this layout for a couple of years until I learned about another scale (HO) while visiting the local hobby shop. I quickly fell in love with the concept of a 2-rail (more realistic train) scale.

The next Christmas, I received an Athearn hustler engine, one gondola, and a 3' piece of flex track. I did not have a DC transformer to run the engine, so I pushed and pulled the engine and gondola back and forth for a while. Six months later, I saved up enough money (only a partial amount, the rest was from my parents) to get a golden MRC throttle. I was so happy now that I could run this little engine without having to push it. I ran this little hustler on the track on the carpet for several months until it stopped working. We had to take it to the hobby shop for repair, and they said it was full of carpet fibers. At this point, my parents decided to help with a small layout in the basement. The layout was free form as I just kept adding track and turnouts.

I stepped away from model railroading for several years (high school, college, marriage, and kids) until around 1990 when I saw an Aristo-Craft FA in a hobby shop, and I got the bug again. I started collecting and planning a basement railroad in 1/32 scale with hand-laid track. I got this about 25% finished until we started to build a new home, and that ended. About 6 years ago, I got interested in 3D modeling and started to think about going back into HO scale.

As an electrical engineer, I had a desire to get into DCC and dead rail.



*We now begin to swing to the left and newer areas of the layout.*



*The entire layout is on L-girder construction at a height of 54" and 34" to 45" curve radius.*



*The backdrop is Masonite with rounded corners and the clouds are hand painted by my wife, Jean. Overlays are yet to be applied.*

The limited number of other products did not scare me as I could 3D model what I needed. At this point, I first started by researching and getting acquainted with DCC and Dead Rail. As I've been working with Raspberry Pi's and Arduinos for a while, I decided to try DCC++/DCC-EX with JMRI.

I've always loved the western railroads (SF, SP, UP), so I decided to model northern California and Oregon. I wanted to run trains and do some switching, not necessarily for operations. The Makasey Railroad, which is an amalgamation of my granddaughters (Makala and Casey), is a fictional railroad set in the late 1950s.



*Sample of one of my resin printed fiber optic searchlight signals.*

My wife Jean does much of the work – all the scenery. It is her deal. Jean has always done crafty stuff, and her cousin encouraged her to contribute to the layout. However, she has not done any doll house stuff in three years. She has done weathering on buildings, and the next thing she wants to tackle is weathering of cars and using Pan Pastels.

The signals are all fiber optic & testing now. Three Arduinos are being utilized: two are turnout controls, and one is for sensors and signals. All is JMRI. As a kid, I was enthralled with the signaling right along with the trains. All signals were designed and scratch-built by me for the layout.

For signals, David started out using bi-color red/green trying to mix into yellow but was difficult to get the right color, he then went to micro RGY, but it was too hard to deal with. And wanted to simplify the wiring; Since then, He found it could be done with addressable WS8712 LEDs (similar to the led strips), These provide a myriad of colors and I'll I need are the basic Red, Green, Yellow, Lunar, so I scratch built a lot of boards to accommodate either 2, 3, or 4 led signals. They are daisy chained together on a single signal wire to the boards located below the signals.

Each signal is a 3d resin printed searchlight type with either 2 or 3 heads with an internal tube to accommodate the fiber. To make the fiber into a lens, he flared the end using a tool he created, which is a piece of brass tube just slightly bigger than the fiber, flared at the end. The fiber is inserted, and then a heat gun is used to start melting the fiber to look just like a lens. David then cools it a little bit and pulls it back out, and the end result is what looks like a lens.

The layout is not a point-to-point or a CTS-based system; it is basically designed implementing absolute permissive blocks, so APB. David did not want to run it where there is a CTC guy running the operation. Everything is block-controlled and not quite all wired in to the Arduino yet, but everything is driven from the Pi with DCC-EX running everything wireless to the cabs so they work wirelessly. He used the layout editor on JMRI to configure everything and uses a touch screen. There are different icons for the signals to show which way they were facing, and he can use the simulator to show signals even if they don't work. All the logic was done without being hooked up to the layout and is now connected with sensors. It is a very visual system with reference points.



*This is a view of Silver Harbor switching yard.*



*The hole in the center is for the town of Chadwicke which will be a removable section for access.*



*In the background is the town of Chadwicke. The foreground will be the passenger terminal and small a switching area.*



*Rocks are Hydrocal utilizing various molds from Woodland Scenics.*

Eric Peterson worked with David to help develop the signals and understand how signaling worked to make sure it was done correctly.

There will be an industrial backdrop for a switching area. Jean painted all the clouds on Masonite, although after attending the Indy Junction and seeing a presentation on sheet metal backdrops, they would have used material in a heartbeat. It uses the same material gutters are made with, comes in different widths, comes on a roll, is already painted (basically primed), and you can get one continuous flat piece of 100 or 200 feet with no seams. It is attached with a vinyl strip that goes on the top and uses a crimper every 6 inches or so and it clicks in and is held in place. It can also be used on the bottom if needed. Backdrops are curved so there are no hard angles.

Jean made a lot of the trees, but some were made for them. Jean used dried hydrangeas and flocking. They also attended a static grass seminar at Indy Junction, and have not gotten the technique down yet but are working on it. Dan Dawdy had some tips for David and Jean and suggested starting with 2 mm grass and then adding longer grass such as 4 mm or 6 mm, and also making sure the applicator is full when starting. Jean put on all the tufts of grass and made some fences.

Part of where the layout has taken over, bit by bit, was once a movie room with theater seating, curtains, and a screen. It has been about a year taking that area over and reconfiguring it for the layout. A lot of time was spent on electronics.



*All engines are battery powered, Dead Rail, utilizing S-Cab devices.*



*Above: Lift section to allow access to the utility room.*

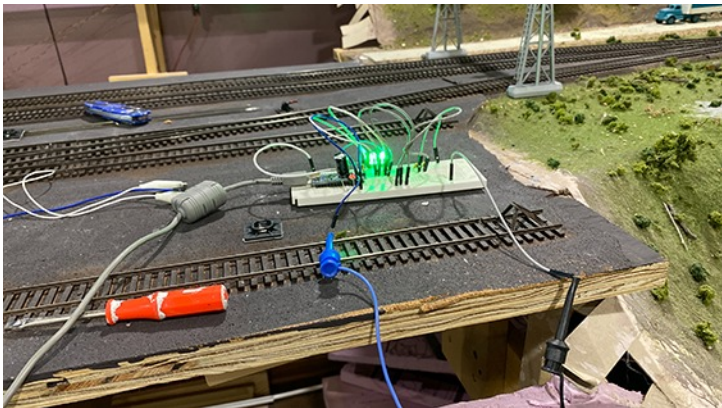
*Below: There are two sections to allow for equipment movement. The lift in the removable is on to the left.*



All the turnouts are servo motors that queue up to switch but with circuit relays throughout, they individually do a slow-action type action – turn on & turn off; otherwise, the servos will hum when they are trying to hold their position.

There is a latched area in front of a door that will come out if needed for access (i.e., replacing a furnace). The only thing left is one piece of theater seating, and a TV has been added for the “crew lounge”.

Everything is dead rail & battery operated, except for DCC to the tracks which is just for signal/block control so that the sensors can tell where everything is at and controls the signals. Utilizes that plus DCC++ EX, driven by an Arduino. Has a Raspberry Pi running JMRI, so again, they all communicate back through the Arduinos.



*Test board for driving the optical signals.*



*Control point for one of the sections. Block sensor, fiber optic control board, bus wires and turnout control.*



*Part of my collection of engines and rolling stock.*



*Supplies for both filament printer on the left as well as resin printer and wash station on the right.*



*Jean and David Burns with their Makasey Railroad.*

The area will be a town – coming in on Main Street and will have a capital or county seat in the back and will be a lift-out section. They have some storefronts, and Jean will be building a lot more. Coming into town, there will be a passenger station. Silver Harbor is a fishing area & will have a bay and some fishing-related things, including a crane that can pull stuff off and onto a boat. The area up there is Stratford, and the background is made so that it will go on the wall and show the back of a city and/or a downtown area with mountains in the distance.

O scale is David’s love, but S scale fits much better in this area. S scale is a great scale, but requires allot of scratch building and kit bashing, and together with Jean, they have the talent to make and design what they need by either scratch building or 3D printing.

The shipyard building was a kit that Jean built. Jean paints mostly with acrylic watercolors and uses chalks and stuff like that. Jean was into miniature dollhouses for years and has five dollhouses and eleven room boxes, so she definitely has the background in scratch building. The layout will be finished off with skirting.

The layout is based on Northern California/Portland, Oregon, in the transition era. One of the neighbors has a son who lives in Portland, who saw the layout and said it looked like Portland without knowing that was what they were modeling. So the vision has been realized through artistic license. David wanted something that showed the UP, SP & occasionally the Santa Fe running through it. He will be printing a background on a roll printer and cutting it out to place on the backdrop.

If David had it to do over again, he would have done around the walls with some wider areas and a peninsula, which would make it easier to access.

We want to thank Jean and David for their time and again apologize for the time lag to print. We will be heading back down to see them this Fall and will be able to add a track plan and all the new areas. And even run some trains!



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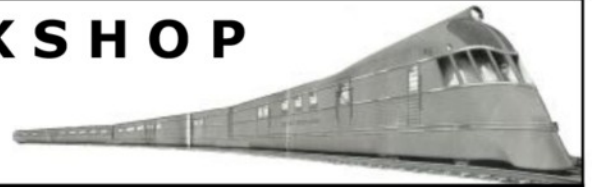

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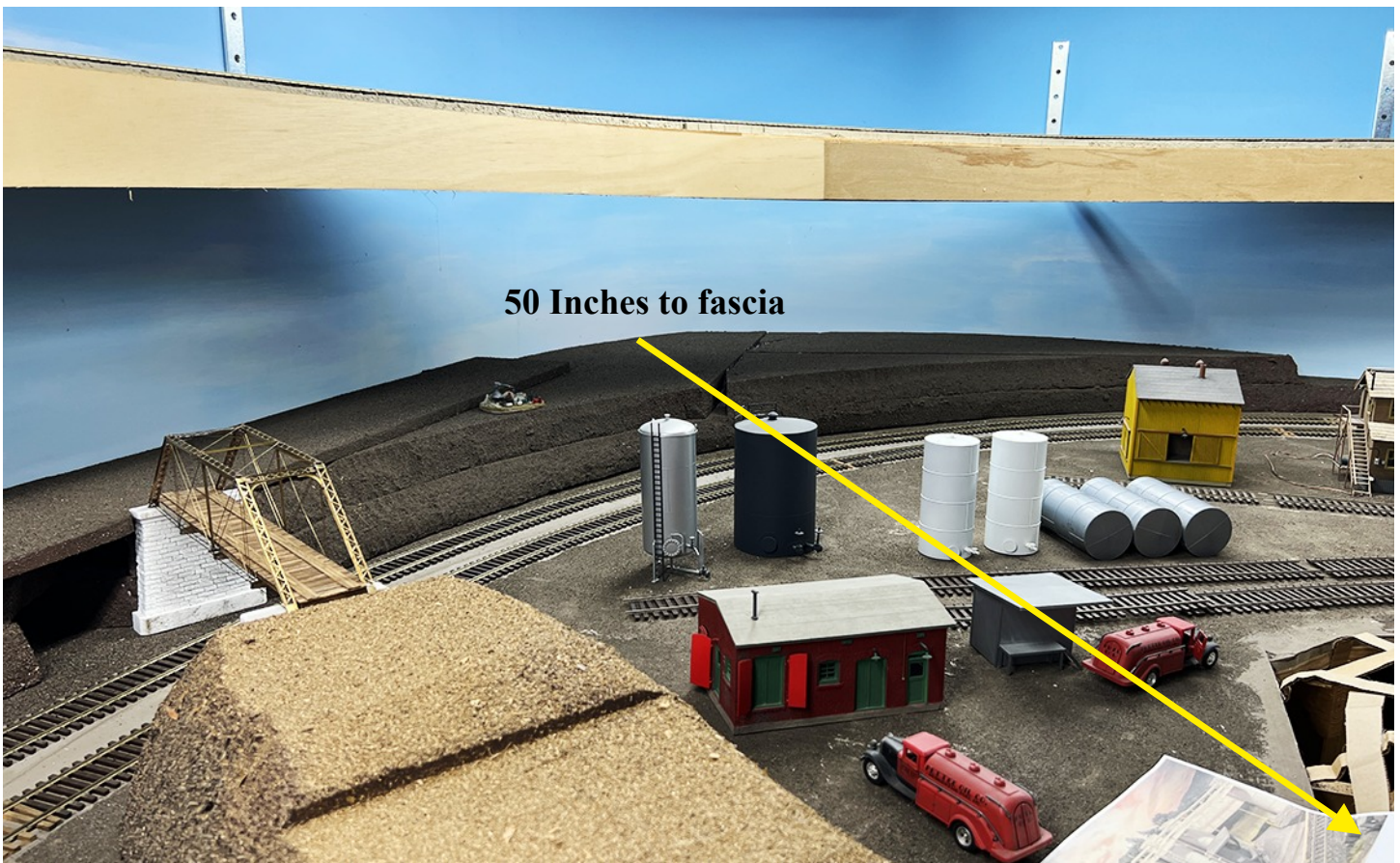
# TIME TO BUILD SOMETHING

BY DAN DAWDY

Email author by clicking on their name.

## LONG-BELL Lumber Company Skid Shack/Cabins By American Model Builders

While Amy and I were at the 2022 NASG convention, I bought a few building kits to bring back home for friends and myself. “What”, I hear you saying, “you are an O scaler”! Yes I am, but I have a new area I am working on where I think S scale will fit the bill.



50 Inches to fascia

*A new scene with an old one lane bridge crossing over the double track main and new industrial area down front.*



As you can see in the picture above, it's a long way back to the sky from the front fascia, and I thought what a great place for some forced perspective. So I am going to try a few S scale buildings back there. The first is the Long Bell Skid Shacks from American Model Builders. Next, I'll add a house from Banta Modelworks, but that

will be in a later article. This is not a review. It's me hopefully helping someone who has not yet entered into the world of kit building seeing what it's all about. This kit is about as simple as it can get, so it makes a great first time build. It also contains two buildings; so if you have an issue, you can fix that and build the other one correctly.

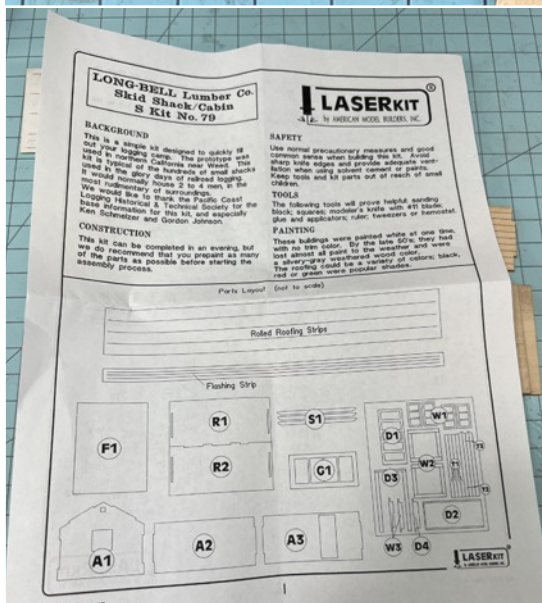
## The Tools



Nothing too special here. Hobby knife with new blades, 1-2-3 blocks, squares, tweezers, emery boards and a sanding stick. I like the thick double sided emery boards as you can cut them to fit in small areas. A drill for the hole in the roof for the smoke jacket, micro applicator brushes for gluing and wood glue.

I use glue from gallon jugs and pour a bit into a ceramic bowl. This will last an hour or so. If I am still working after an hour, I just stir it to get under the setting glue on top. The next day, I simply pop

out the dried glue out and start over. I find this so much easier than squirting small amounts each time I need to glue something. Notice also that I have wax paper on the bench top so when I am gluing (i.e. the sides of the building to the base) I don't have to worry about the parts sticking to the bench.

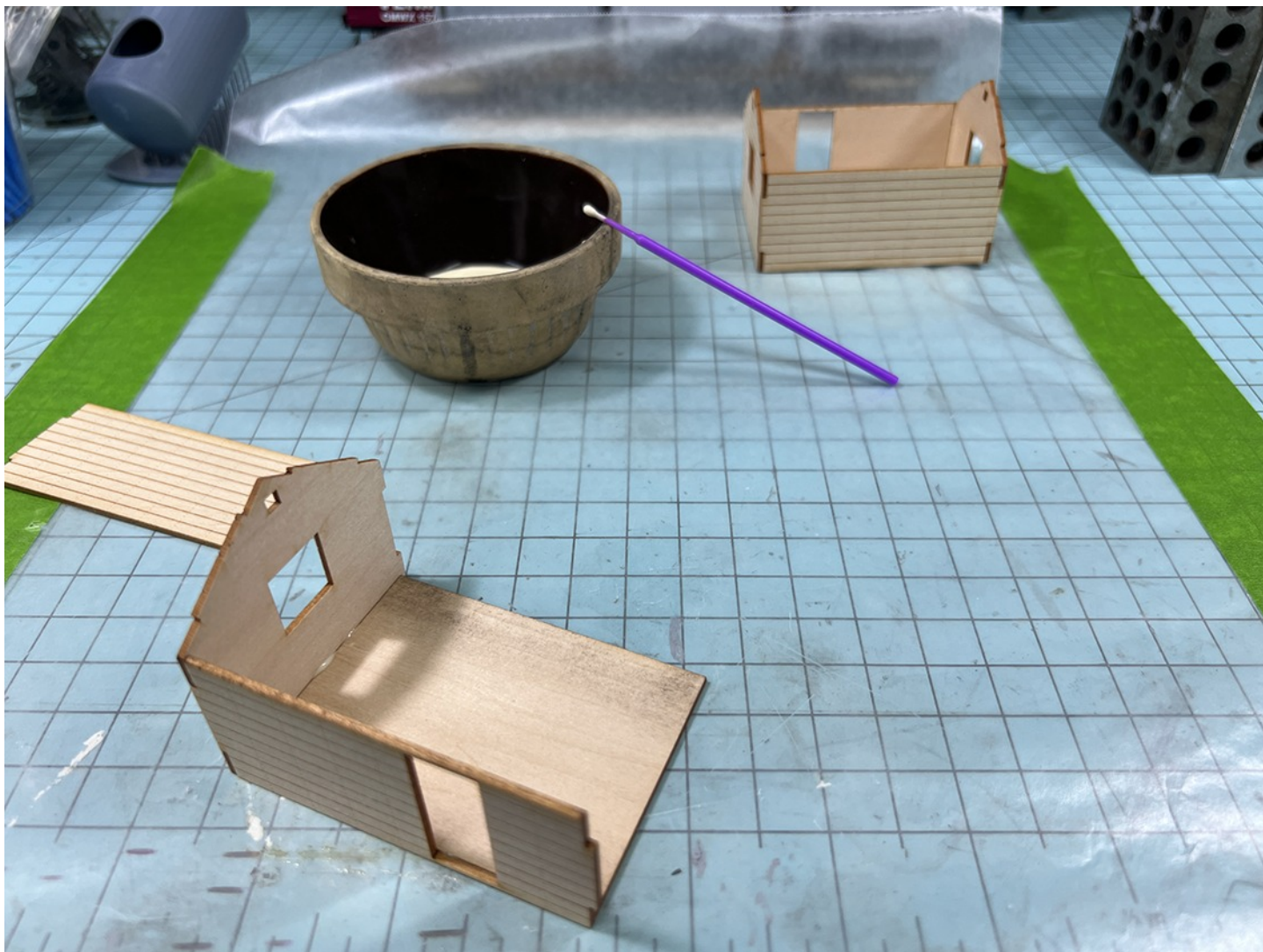


### In The Box

The single instruction sheet is clear, lists all parts with diagrams and isometric drawings. This is a basic put tab A into slot B type of construction. The only parts issue I had was two of the roof slots were broken off, and thinking they were not needed, I tossed them. In this case, the tab ends make the side roof fascia so I used some scrap wood to fix that. More on that later, and I now keep everything, all scrap and bits till the kit is finished. In larger kits of this type, there is a lot of good extra lumber and such to toss in your scrap drawer. You do have a scrap drawer right? If you want to paint the pieces separately, now is the time. I'll paint mine a bit later.

## The Build

Start by gluing the four walls to the base. The floor will keep everything square. Add the skids if wanted. These will be permanent shacks, so I did not use them.



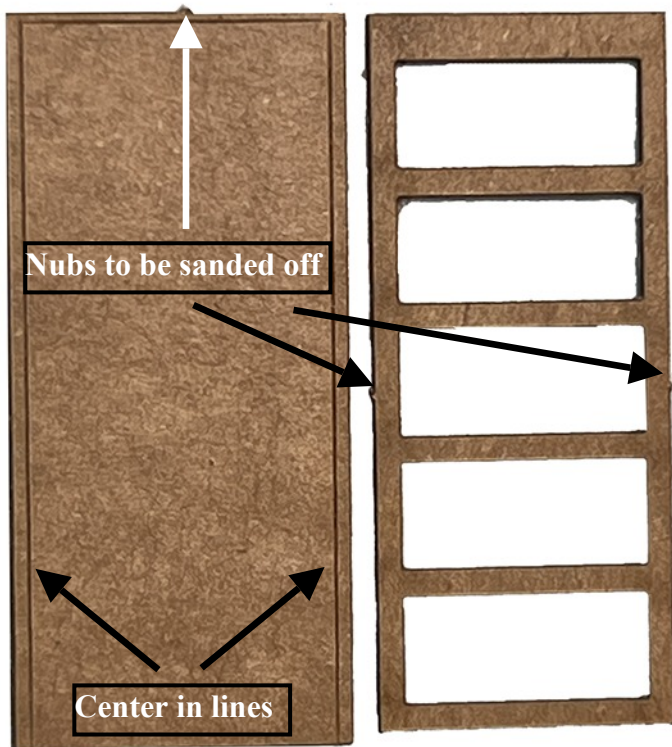
Now we need to carefully cut the door, window parts and trim pieces which are laser cut onto a peel and stick material. Use a sharp hobby knife and change out the blades as needed. I use an old gum container to hold my used blades.

The door has three parts. The frame which gets



attached to the outside and the flat panel that has the trip and rails attached to it. When pushing the knife through the parts, you may have small

nubs where it was attached. The emery board is great for knocking those down for the best fit. Be careful when attaching the the frame to the solid board as it must be centered within the lines. Now you can install the door from the inside.



As an aside, I am not sold on this peel and stick idea. I understand that it's the new norm, but I wonder just how long it will stay on place.

I still prefer small amounts of glue which also allows me to move the parts while placing it.

Ok, enough complaining, it's on to the corner trim.



**Another reason I like the thick emery boards is that you can get in close to an edge that needs sanding without sanding the from the side of the board.**

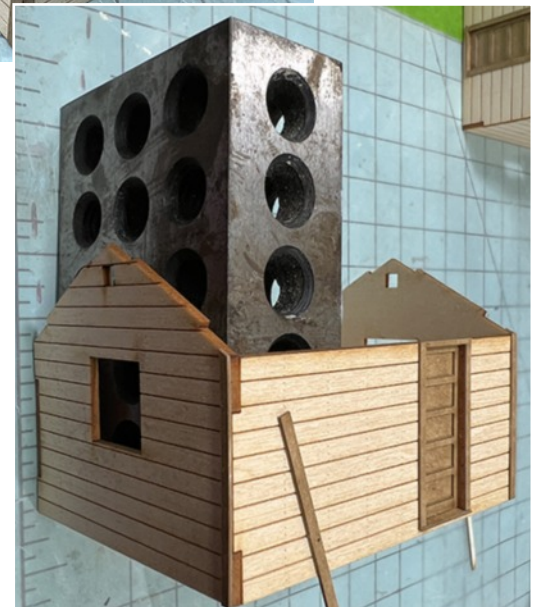


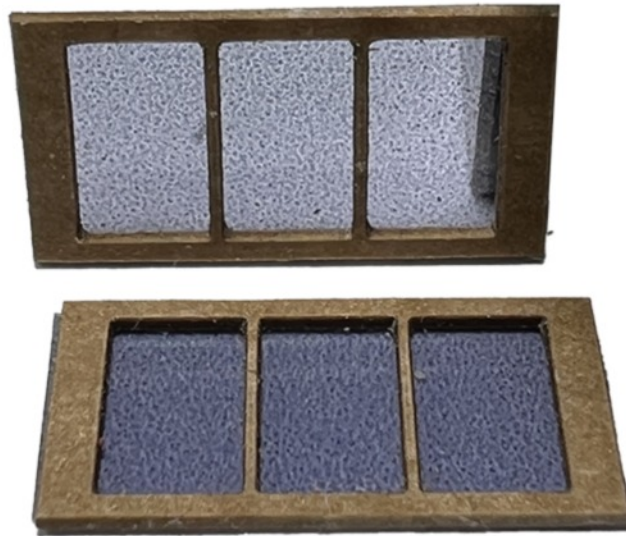
Read carefully, as one of the parts overlaps the other for a clean look. Don't mix those up. The 1-2-3 block is inside so the building will not move around on the bench.

Notice I did not add the windows and glazing yet. I want to paint the building without those.

The kit comes with clear glazing, but I don't use it. My first choice is real glass, but in smaller pieces. [I really like clear polycarbonate \(LEXAN\) from Clover House](#). It looks much better than Styrene and does not give that "rainbow effect" you see with Styrene. However, in this case I wanted the windows to be dirty so I used a piece of transparency sheet used for overhead projectors. I printed a small dot matrix on the sheet and then cut it to size. From a short distance, it just looks dirty.

Now I glued the roof halves together, but not to the frame. I wanted the roof removable for now. You can also see where the





broken tab is and why it's important. Nothing a bit of scrap wood won't fix. Yes, I looked for the broken piece and it was lost in a full trash can!

Nest, drill a hole for the smoke jacket and we are ready for paint.

Well almost... I wanted to get the roofing material on and fix the broken pieces. I will not be using their peel and stick rolled roofing strips as I have my own material for that that I have used for years.



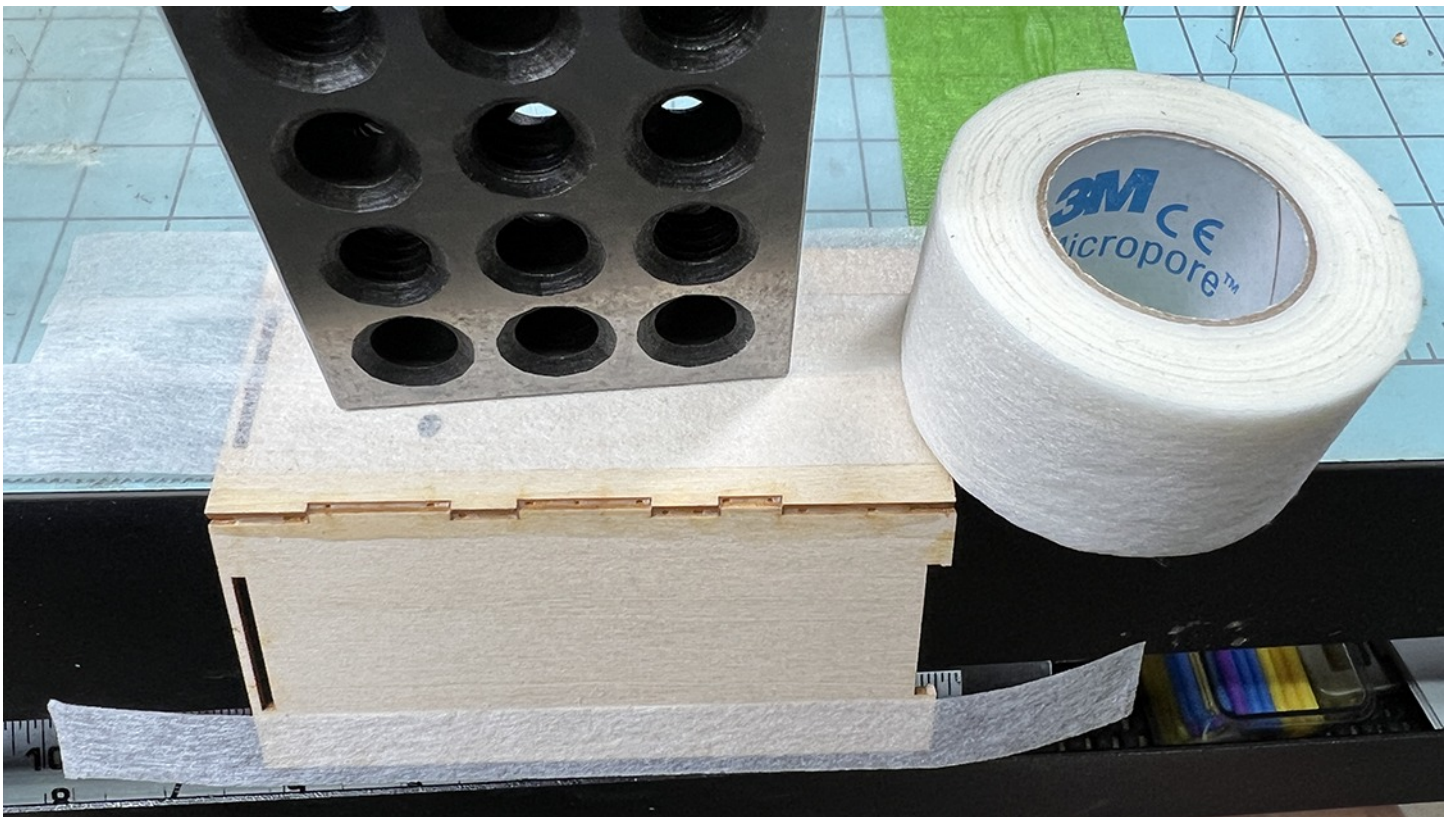
I next shot the building, inside and out, with Mr Primer Surfacer 1000 from a can. It's an off white and I think I'll just leave it and weather later.

Next, I had to fix the broken tabs. Of course I now kept all the extra wood and found pieces that I cut and sanded to use for the fix. has a

For the roofing material, I use 3M Micropore 1530-1 Medical Tape to simulate rolled tar paper. It's thin,

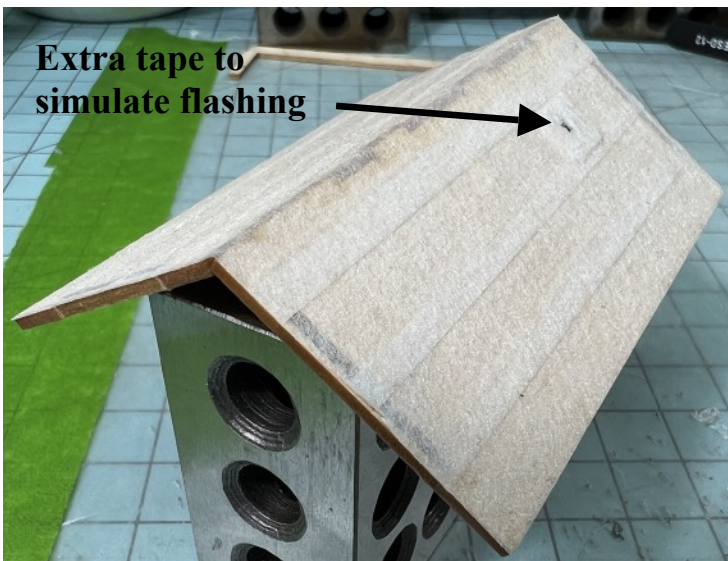
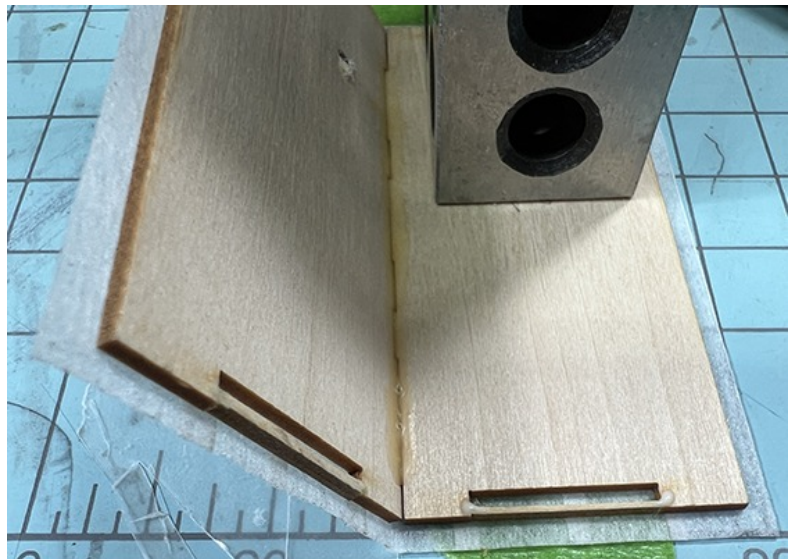


cheap, and once glued and painted, it will look fine. It has slight texture so it's not 100% smooth. ([Amazon link here](#))



It also will not tear so painting is not an issue. I first lay out a strip longer than needed and slice to just over 2 scale feet. Then, starting at the bottom of the roof, I simply stick it on. I continue up to the peak stopping before the top, then do the same on the other side. I then cut a strip to overlap both sides for the ridge piece.

Before trimming the roofing material, I added the replacement parts to the broken tabs. The tape actually helps here to hold them and I just needed a dab of glue on the ends. One last thing before painting. Since I was not using the skids, I went to ye ol' scrap box and cut some supports/piers for the cabins. Now I can move on to painting the roof and weathering.



I brushed on Floquil, yes I have a stash of Floquil, grimy black over the tape on the roof. That gave me the color base I wanted. At the same time, I painted the chimney. Next, I'll come back using PanPastels to get a more weathered effect. Using blacks and grays, it's easy to add the variations and remove if you feel you have over done it.

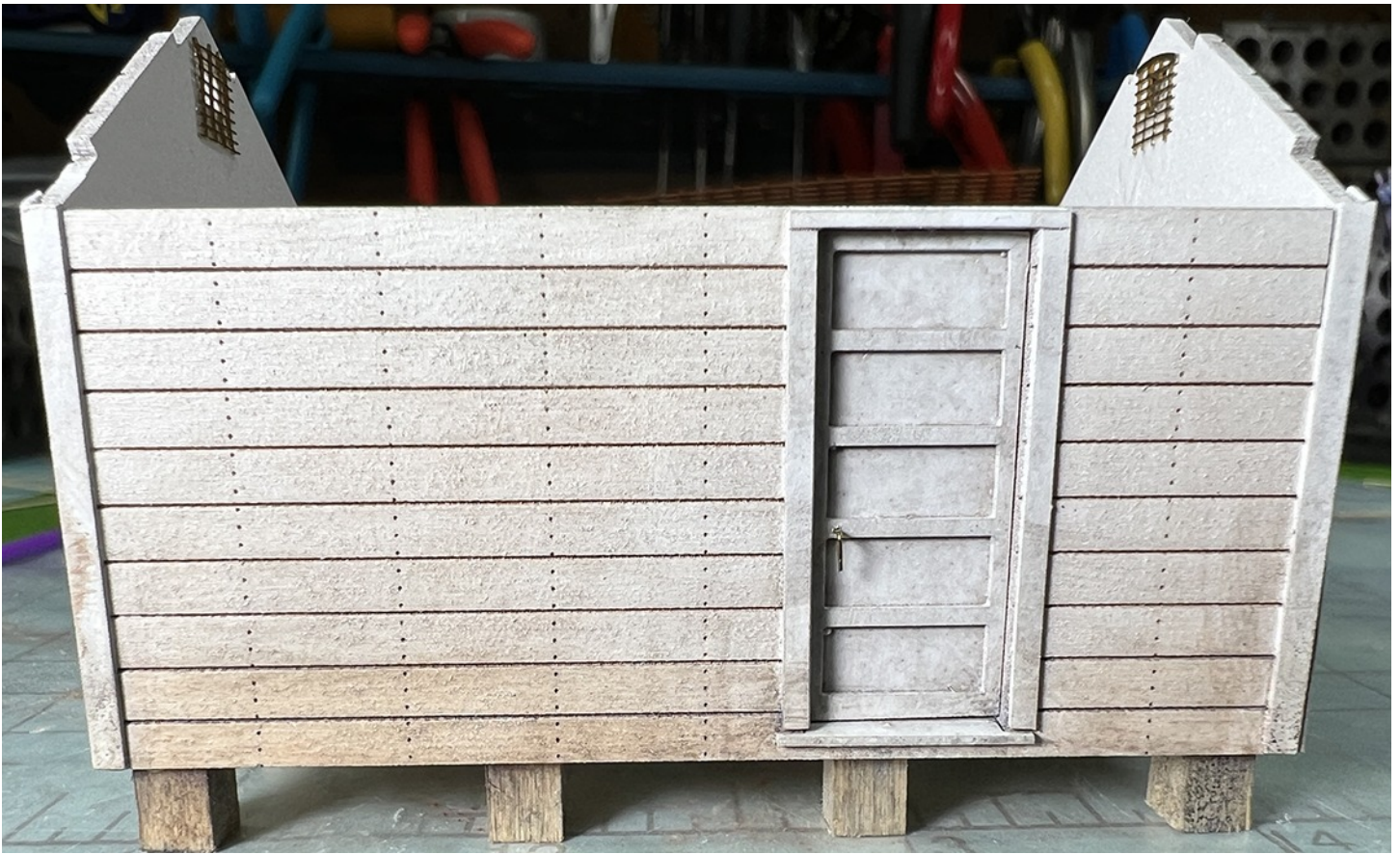
Next is the weathering of the building. I started with a rattle can white and sprayed both the inside and out. Once that dried, I again I went with PanPastels building up the mud/dirt that would appear near the bottom of the cabins from rain. Now Amy thought I overdid it, so I toned it back and blended with a wash of alcohol and ink.





I will admit going a bit heavy handed on the “dirt and mud”, but remember this will be a background building and light weathering would not be seen. Now it was time to put the dirty windows in. I also found some screen material for the two holes in the gables. The kit leaves them open, but I hate bats!





Also, is it just me or were our grandparents that symmetrical with the nailing of the walls? It's just something that has bugged me when looking at these kits. Not even Amy is that anal! There was no doorknob of any kind, and I did not have anything in S scale, so a simple latch of bent wire will have to suffice.



Once completed, it did not take long for this family to move in... I hope this helps some beginners and people who were afraid of trying a kit like this. It's not hard, and everything can be fixed if accidents happen. Next time, I will step it up a notch with the Summer-Plant House from Banta Modelworks.



# S Scale... Old School Style Looking at Vintage S Scale

By Carey Williams

Email author by clicking on their name.

This article will begin a series exploring the roots of 3/16" scale, 7/8" gauge .... S scale.

Each article will highlight a manufacturer or piece that helped build the timeline from 1934 - 1960's+.

So step back in the time machine to April 1937. Cleveland Models and Supply Co. placed a 2 page ad in *Model Railroader* and a full page in *Model Craftsman* announcing CD (Cleveland Design) gauge 3/16" scale, 7/8" full line of train kits including the flashy Hiawatha streamliner!

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It's Here! **C-D** It's Here!

## MODEL RAILROADING!

COMpletely REVOLUTIONARY! NEW C-D SCALE GAUGE IS  
RADICAL DEPARTURE FROM ANYTHING NOW ON MARKET . . . THE ONLY  
TRULY AMERICAN SCALE AND GAUGE! MORE PRACTICAL! GREATER POSSIBILITIES! EASIER BUILT!

Now, to Model Railroading, just as in the past to Model Airplane building, Cleveland brings a new day—a new interest—a great new thrill. Many years' intensive study and experimental work by Cleveland's engineering staff and thousands of dollars of development research have resulted in this great model railroad that promises to completely revolutionize American scale and gauge—to be known as the C-D Scale and Gauge—which, in our opinion, based on very intensive study, is the most logical and most practical yet offered. Starting from "the ground up" with an exclusively 2-rail system (without the

unsightly third rail), entirely ignoring British and Continental European practices and measurements that have always been fundamental in model railroading, we have developed commercially a truly American scale and gauge—the Liberty Bell.

**Advantages of New C-D Scale and Gauge**

This new C-D Scale is 3/16" to the foot—Gauge is 7/8" between tracks. Prototypes are scaled down to basis of 1/48 scale. Present enthusiasts of the three most standard model railroad gauges now in existence, namely O gauge, O<sub>27</sub> and HO gauge, may at first resent the introduction of a

which is all fairness to the advancement of the hobby and we feel the more they study and consider the C-D Scale and Gauge, the more will they appreciate its many advantages. For instance, O gauge enthusiasts will find (perhaps their probable advantage) it permits building all types of passenger and O gauge engines to fit a given main line (as easy as the O gauge) locomotives and rolling stock, permits alternating or direct current, and eliminates the headaches of those smaller than this new gauge. Moreover, it puts behind model railroading the full force of Cleveland's designing and engineering department

which has given model airplane builders the biggest variety and most comprehensive line of fine type models ever known. These world-famous C-D's are now sold all over the globe.

**Unlimited Number of Projects, at Low Prices, to Be Available**

Cleveland's simplification and refinement of Model Railroading will make this hobby of unusually keen interest available to thousands who heretofore have built only model airplanes at a very low cost. It brings a broader scope to your modelmaking activities and imparts the same fundamental fascination that has made model airplane building of such keen interest to you. For the present, we are producing only what might be termed a Representative ("Rapp") line of railroad models—most of which are shown in the large illustration above. Built almost entirely of wood and C-D's special kit features, most all are now available in kit form, and enable you, at little expense, to get started on a new adventure in model work. Any model builder, with C-D's superdetailed plans, can very easily build any of the Locomotives or Cars shown here—whether it be the Hiawatha, the Pennsylvania Switcher, box cars, tank cars, cabooses, etc., at prices that run from 25¢ up for the simplest cars, to 25¢ for the largest locomotive and tender sets. Ready April 20th.

**Try Your Hand at It Now—Big Surprises Later**

But this is only the beginning. Model Builders—only the beginning—in the Fall there will be a great many new Kits available in what we shall call "Super-Models." REALLY authentic operating rolling stock, perfectly proportioned and detailed. The surprising thing about all the present Rapp cars is that when you are ready to make your final layout to run on actual tracks, you may use the same rolling stock if you desire, by simply employing the same working trucks which we shall then have ready. Locomotives may only be used for display or as "ambassadors" on standing at or in roundhouses at switching operations, or for rolling stock authentic in appearance.

Therefore, before deciding that C-D is just a few kits and sets in its new scale, for the few cents it costs—order a few kits and build them. We assure you many enjoyable hours, and an experience you will not forget for a long time. Try it! Thousands of dealers are already ordering these kits—if your dealer hasn't dealers are already ordering these kits—if your dealer hasn't dealers are already ordering these kits—if your dealer hasn't dealers are already ordering these kits—if your dealer hasn't

**WHAT MODEL RAILROAD (DRY) KITS CONTAIN**

1. All locomotive and car parts completely printed out where hand colored, leaving only hand work to complete; they all roll, and
2. Necessary building blocks, printed out.
3. All necessary metal or solid wood construction of the prototype.
4. All wire and other small pieces included, etc. etc. etc.
5. And last, but not least, a completely detailed full size, copyrighted plan, enabling you to make each model most easily by the copy.

This is the best scale yet offered for converting toy O gauge material to a truly realistic and complete set of rolling stock. It's the nearest yet to a "ready-to-run" layout. Extremely easy to build, and the cost per car, locomotive, etc., is the lowest.

**NOTE THE LOW PRICES!**

**SEND YOUR ORDER TODAY!**

Item	Price	
Average over all items	1.99	
Passenger Cars, 15"	Box Cars, 8"	average
Penn. Switcher (4-4)	RR-7	.45
C&O Pacific (4-4)	RR-8	.45
and tender	RR-9	.45
Hiawatha (2-8-0)	RR-10	.45
Hiawatha (2-8-0)	RR-11	.45
Hiawatha (2-8-0)	RR-12	.45
Hiawatha (2-8-0)	RR-13	.45
Flat Car, C&O	RT-1	.35
Flat Car, N.Y.	RT-2	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-3	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-4	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-5	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-6	.35
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Box Car, N.Y.	RT-96	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-97	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-98	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-99	.35
Box Car, N.Y.	RT-100	.35

**PLEASE REFER TO THE LIST OF MATERIALS FOR COMPLETE LIST OF PARTS AND MATERIALS.**

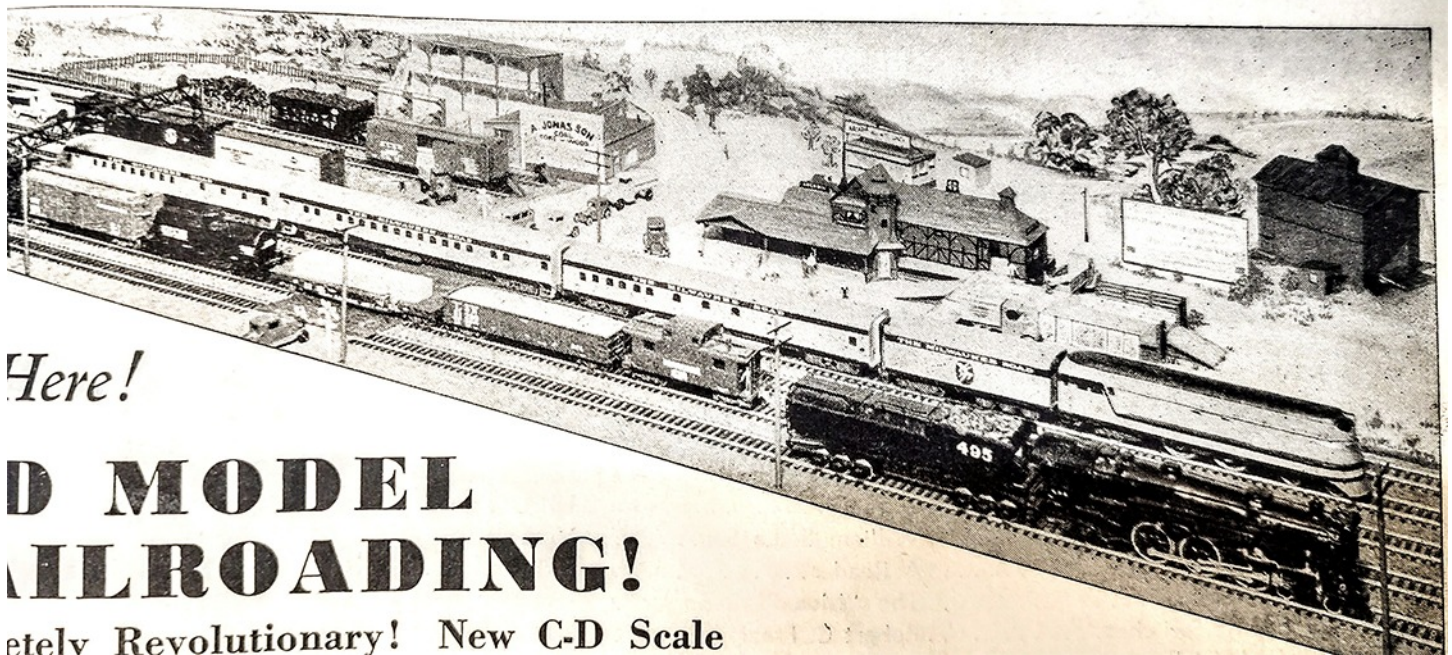
**PLEASE REFER TO THE LIST OF MATERIALS FOR COMPLETE LIST OF PARTS AND MATERIALS.**

## Cleveland Model & Supply Co., Inc.

1866 MR West Street ★ America's Foremost Model Engineers—Since 1919 ★ Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

Edward T Pachasa (would change his last name to Packard in 1950) was fascinated by airplanes and began producing and selling model airplane kits in 1926 through his company, Cleveland Model Supply Co. As soon as Lindbergh touched down in Paris, the fever for model airplanes took off, and Cleveland was poised to cash in on this overnight success of model airplane kits.

below shows the Valley City Station in the Tippecanoe, Tuckahoe and Tehachapi line (T. T. & T. to you) the line on which all trains run, of the great 3/16" scale C-D lines with the Rep Hiawatha Streamliner thundering through, as Valley City is not a stop station, the tail end of the Pennsylvania freight pulling through, a Chesapeake and Ohio Pacific type, the Locomotive that draws the famous "George Washington train lazily" after run, down to the roundhouse, the Pennsylvania Switcher with several cars having just left the scene, being somewhat isolated, it was eliminated in the above layout.



Here!

# D MODEL RAILROADING!

Completely Revolutionary! New C-D Scale

Model airplane kits of the time consisted of a small box filled with random pieces of balsa wood and instructions with detailed drawings. In the days when the bars were closed, and there was no television, folks had time and patience to develop hobbies, and model airplanes became all the rage.

Cleveland became the prominent model airplane kit manufacturer selling kits up through the '70s. The company was sold in 1996 and the plans for many of the airplanes are still being offered and sold today. In the early '30s, model trains were also increasing in popularity amongst the hobbyists, and many of the model airplane kit manufacturers hoped to also cash in on the model train world by offering very reasonably priced car kits which were not that different to that of the airplane kits. Hawk, Comet, Megow, Ideal, etc. all started making airplane kits before offering model train kits. 1937 Cleveland Models moved to a larger facility on 4508 Lorain avenue in Cleveland (the building is still standing) to handle the increased sales of model airplane kits and had a hobby shop on the first floor which also carried model trains HO, OO, O, and their new CD gauge. The initial Cleveland models CD gauge line consisted of a Pacific, 060 switcher, a Hiawatha passenger set and assorted freight cars. Kits were 75-95¢, made of balsa wood, printed paper graphic sides, wood wheels, nails for axles and great instructions. It would be up to the hobbyist to modify the kits for electric rail use.



## ★ C-D REPRESENTATIVE (REP) R. R. KITS ★

For clearance center to center tracks should be laid 2-7/16" apart on straight sections to 3" on curves, depending upon radius and overhanging of equipment. The clearance above top of tracks at bridges and tunnels is from 21 ft. to 22 ft. This would give a good average of 4-1/8". Average over all sizes, Locomotives, 12"-17"; Passenger Cars, 15"; Box Cars, 8"; heights 2-1/2".

RL-1	PRR Switcher 0-6-0 and Tender	\$.65
RL-2	C&O Pacific (4-6-2) Locomotive and Tender	.85
RS-1	Hiawatha (4-4-2) Locomotive and Tender	.95
RS-2	Hiawatha Tap-Diner Car	.75
RS-3	Hiawatha Coach	.75
RS-4	Hiawatha Beaver Tail Car	.75

These Kits are all dry—no cements or colors included with them. By simply employing working couplers, detaching the dummy trucks, and replacing them with actual working trucks, all your "Rep" (cars only) models may be used as your "Super Model" or operating layout.

### BOX CARS

RB-1	NYC—40 ft. steel (NYC Herald)	.45
RB-2	B&O—40 ft. steel	.45
RB-3	B&O—40 ft. wood	.45
RB-4	Rock Island—40 ft. wood	.45
RB-5	Wabash—40 ft. wood	.45
RB-6	South. Pac.—40 ft. wood furn. car (SP Herald)	.45
RB-8	Texas & Pac. 40 ft. wood auto	.45
RB-9	AT&SF—40 ft. wood (Santa Fe Herald)	.45
RB-11	Union Pac.—50 ft. steel	.55
RB-12	AT&SF—50 ft. steel auto (Santa Fe Herald)	.55

### CABOOSE

RC-1	PRR type N-5	.45
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### GONDOLA TYPE CARS

RG-1	L&N—41 ft.—50 ton, Class G.A.	.35
RG-2	NYC—41 ft.—50 ton black, Class G.A. (NYC Herald)	.35
RG-3	MC—41 ft.—55 ton, Class G.A. (NYC Herald)	.35
RG-4	T&P—41 ft.—50 ton, Class G.A.	.35
RG-5	PRR—65 ft.—70 ton, Mill Gondola, Class G.M. (PRR Herald)	.55

### FLAT CARS

RF-1	C&NW—46 ft.—50 ton	.25
RF-2	PRR—46 ft.—50 ton	.25
RF-3	B&M—46 ft.—55 ton	.25
RF-4	L&N—46 ft.—50 ton	.25

### HOPPER TYPE CARS

RH-1	CCC& St.L.—55 ton, Twin Hopper, Class HM (NYC Herald)	.40
RH-3	Southern—55 ton, Twin Hopper, Class HM	.40
RH-4	Illinois Central—50 ton, Twin Hopper, Class HM	.40

### TANK CARS

RT-1	Texaco—TCX (white) 8,000 gal.	.35
RT-2	NATX (black) 8,000 gal.	.35
RT-3	Sinclair—SDRX (black) 8,000 gal.	.35
RT-4	Gulf—GRCX (black) 8,000 gal.	.35

All Cleveland Designed to New 3/16" Scale and 7/8" Gage

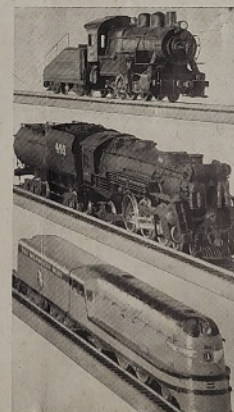


# CLEVELAND

World Famous

# HOBBIES

1938 - 10c



Start Your C-D Model R.R. Now



### EASY TO MAKE A LAYOUT LIKE THIS

As far as either operating or representative kits are concerned or even working trucks, couplers, brass rails, spikes, ties, etc., for we supply them all (pages 4, 5, 6 and 7) start with only a few inexpensive cars if you like. The photo above shows a section of C-D's own Tippecanoe, Tuckahoe and Tehachapi line (T. T. & T. to you).

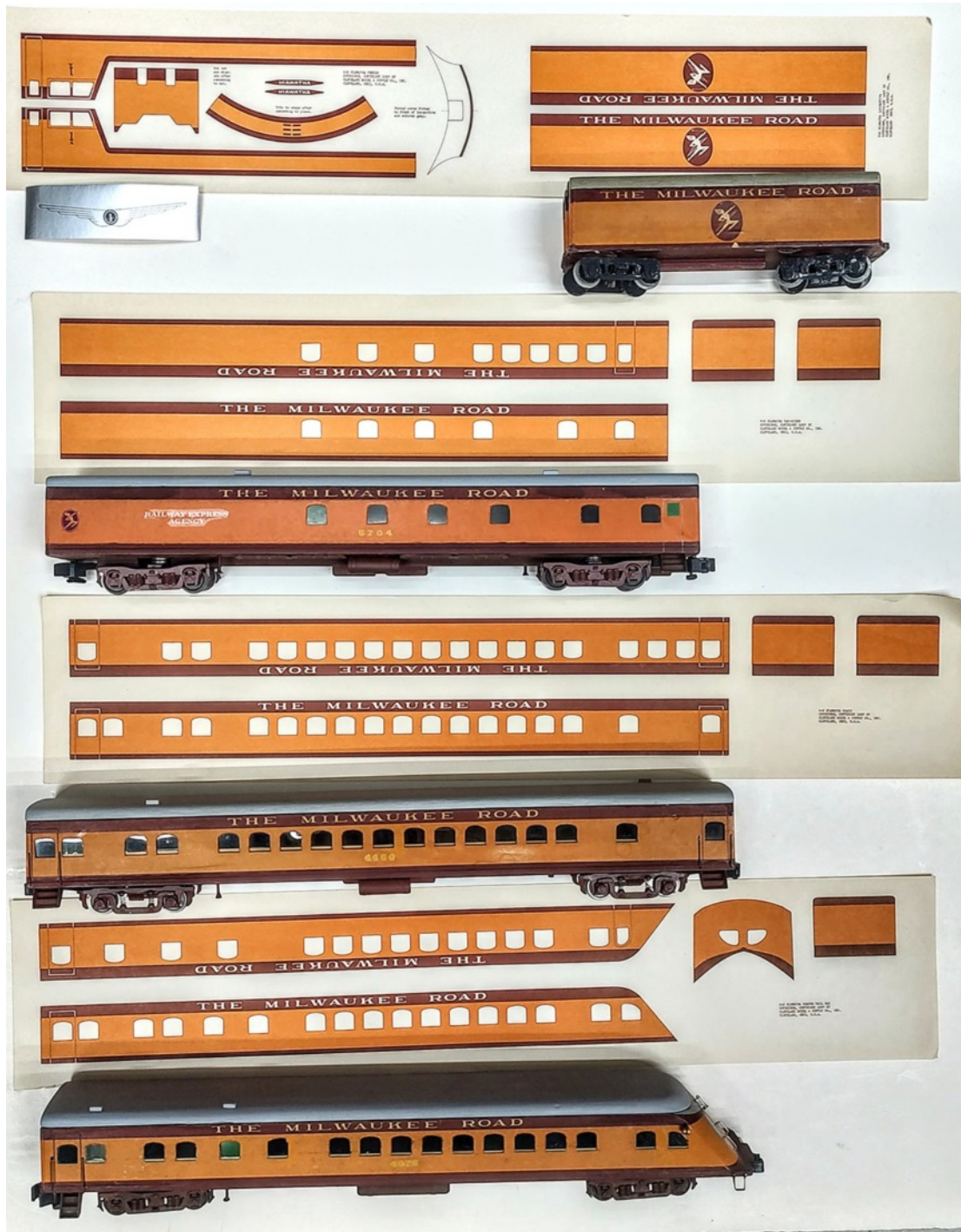
In 1938, Cleveland models would expand the line, adding two engines with diecast chassis motors and offering scale wheels and rail for electric use. Sales may have not been as exciting as they were hoping, as that was the last improvement in the line till the postwar period when additional car sides are offered. So we have to extrapolate a little bit why Cleveland Models did not expand the line... In 1939, Gilbert enters into the 3/16" scale world, but to run on O gauge. An interesting text citation is found in the Cleveland models 1941 catalog "The Gilbert Co now also manufacturers 3/16" scale equipment, but for time being for operation on O gauge track."



Much more research is needed to find out what interaction may have happened between Gilbert and Pachasa regarding the 3/16" world... NMRA in 1943 would name 7/8" gauge S gauge.

**The Hiawatha:** I first saw this Hiawatha in 1973, at that time it was a full set with its engine. Over the course of 50 years, the set went through several owners.... Unfortunately, the engine went missing prior to my purchase of the set last fall. The photos show the instructions and the graphics that were supplied by Cleveland models. The





graphics would be glued to the basic wood body structure. Originally the truck side frames would have been wood with wood wheels.

1937 prices for the Hiawatha engine were 95¢ and cars were 75¢ each... Sales must have been less than robust as prices were discounted to 50¢ each by 1941. There were still many unsold graphic kits in the Cleveland factory upon closing in 1996.

I would hope there have to be many more of the Hiawatha's out there; however, they've alluded me. Perhaps you know where one or two run and still polish the rails. Hopefully, one day I'll find a missing engine for the set or I'll have to get industrious and build one using the old graphics.

[Cheers Carey Williams](#)

*Email author by clicking on their name.*



# NEW TRACKS JUNE 21, 2023 MY BUILD

*Mitch "Doc" Lovelace - No scale - This is exactly what this segment is about. First build of a waterfall. Has Jurassic Park references for a neighbor's young son.*



# NEW TRACKS JUNE 21, 2023 MY BUILD

Greg Cassidy - [gassidy2@verizon.net](mailto:gassidy2@verizon.net) - 1/35 scale - Jaguar European Fountain (A) - Built for Greg's Halloween Spooky Town display.



# NEW TRACKS JUNE 21, 2023 MY BUILD

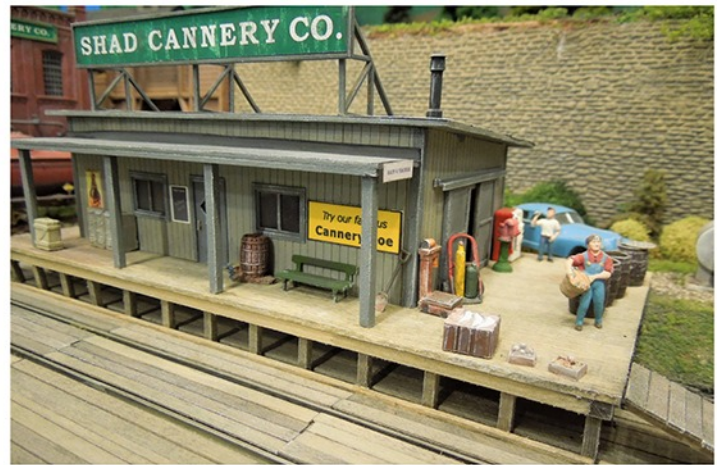
Jim Murphy - [berkshireshort@yahoo.com](mailto:berkshireshort@yahoo.com) - Here is a cannery and rail dock that should have stood in my hometown where Dad and I could have fished from way back when.

*Top Left: BSLRR Mikado handles set-outs this morning on the Connecticut River Cannery. The Bachmann loco is custom painted and lettered. The wind is blowing, making for choppy water. A Faller sailboat heels with the wind on this beautiful day.*

*Top Right: The dock is scratch-built from pre-stained strip wood and pilings from Northeastern. Track is hand laid. The cannery is a Kibri kit and the MI-5 warehouse started as a Life-Like Supply House kit. All models were weathered using light washes of acrylic paints, weathering chalks, and finished with Dullcote overspray. Detail components are by various manufacturers.*

*Bottom Left: The river was painted a base coat of stippled blue, with dark shadows added below the dock. A coat of Realistic Water was followed by heavy acrylic gel to form the waves. After a few days drying, the wave caps were dry brushed with white acrylic.*

*Bottom Right: The bait shop is a Blair kit, with added details and lighting. Woodland Scenics figures load the fish barrels and populate the dock.*



# NEW TRACKS JUNE 21, 2023 MY BUILD

Upper three pictures: Alan Rogers - [eauchiche@gmail.com](mailto:eauchiche@gmail.com) - O scale - Bayou from Alan's layout.

Botom: Bob Farquhar - [bob.farquhar@sympatico.ca](mailto:bob.farquhar@sympatico.ca) - HO scale - Waterfront scene from 2015.



# *NEW TRACKS JUNE 21, 2023 MY BUILD*



*Martin Brechbiel - [martinwb@oscalemag.com](mailto:martinwb@oscalemag.com) -*

*Left: O scale - Blacksmith car*

*Center: CVRR Water car #37.*

*Bottom: CVRR Tool and Water car.*

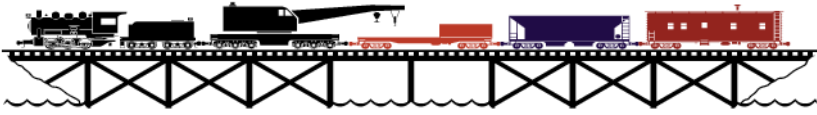


# *NEW TRACKS JUNE 21, 2023 MY BUILD*

*Earl Hackett - [hackettet@gmail.com](mailto:hackettet@gmail.com) - HO scale - Bridge from (I believe) his layout.*



# NEW TRACKS MODELING



By Contributing Editor **Jim Kellow MMR**

*Email author by clicking on their name.*

**MENTOR DEFINITION: A TRUSTED COUNSELOR OR GUIDE**

## **MODELING WITH MENTORING FROM TALENTED MODEL BUILDERS AND EVEN FROM MODELERS IN OTHER HOBBIES**

### **New Tracks Modeling Announcements**

#### **We changed our name but our programs are the same.**

**New Tracks Modeling** offers exciting digital opportunities to obtain mentoring to help you improve your modeling. You will meet talented modelers and manufacturers from all over the world who will share their model building expertise and artistic advice. **New Tracks Modeling** is open to all modelers of all skill levels in any scale or gauge.

Our weekly shows are live every Wednesday evening at 7pm Eastern/4pm Western on Zoom and YouTube. Other special shows include our Modeling Lifestyle series on our YouTube channel. By subscribing to our website [newtracksmodeling.com](http://newtracksmodeling.com), you'll receive email notices containing links to all our presentations.

We also sponsor the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship program. Complete information is on our website. To donate click on this link:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/038439bf-a552-44e2-9b46-ef54aaa0e274>

We have also improved the management structure for New Tracks Modeling.

I have been very impressed with our current Management Team and the help and guidance they have provided, but with the growth of our viewership and activities, we need a more structured management system to make sure everything gets done, no one person is over stretched, and every volunteer gets the training and access to information they need.

So we are creating a set of Management Committees, made up of knowledgeable volunteers, who will focus on a particular area of our activities. These committees will all have a blueprint for their operations which is documented, so that the work is defined in such a way that it's not dependent on any one person, but rather the total team's abilities.

Each Committee Chairman has been appointed and existing volunteers assigned to their appropriate committees, but as always we need more volunteers. Please take a look at the various Committees, and if you see one you are interested in joining, please let the appropriate Committee Chairman know. They, and their emails, are listed below. The Chairman can provide the needed leadership, but they need volunteers to help them. So please consider giving a little of your time to help make this new system work. Thank you for your help.

**1. Program Committee:** Responsible for developing, reviewing, analyzing and suggesting CONTENT for the shows. This would address our need for feedback on what works and what doesn't, what should be added or removed. Operational procedures are developed and training of new committee volunteers provided.

Chairman: Jim Kellow [Jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

**2. Operations Committee:** Specifically operates the RUNNING of the live presentations (Wednesday and Thursday) and training/assisting new committee volunteers and presenters. Works to enhance presentations and develops an operations manual for the shows.

Chairman: Phil Edholm [Phil.Edholm@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Phil.Edholm@newtracksmodeling.com)

**3. Internet Presence Committee:** Handles website and YouTube operations and COORDINATION. Develops a repeatable, consistent standard so that our on-line presence, image, and brand for New Tracks Modeling can be enhanced and kept up to date in an easy fashion. Operational procedures are developed and training of new committee volunteers provided.

Chairman: Heck Meerhof [Heck.Meerhof@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Heck.Meerhof@newtracksmodeling.com)

**4. Executive Committee:** Works to ensure that all committees operate effectively and that messaging is consistent. Approves any substantive changes to any audience interaction channels. Looks at and evaluates return on investment (has a particular idea worked and are we seeing any positive results?) Operational procedures are developed and training of new committee volunteers provided.

Chairman: Jim Kellow [Jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

**5. New Tracks Scholarship Committee:** New Tracks Mentoring, Inc is staffed by unpaid volunteers who develop and implement management policies and procedures which implement the 501(c)(3) organization's fundraising, applicant solicitation and selection of applicants to receive scholarship funding. Operational procedures are developed and training of new volunteers provided.

Chairman: Bob Davidson [Bob.Davidson@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Bob.Davidson@newtracksmodeling.com)

**6. NMRA Merit Award Committee:** Approves and provides to any NMRA member the documentation for their clinic or other types of presentations on our Zoom shows for their use in documenting either the NMRA Author or Volunteer AP Certificates.

Chairman: Pat Rivard [Patrick.Rivard@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Patrick.Rivard@newtracksmodeling.com)

**7. Merchandise Committee:** Develops and implements the New Tracks Modeling Merchandise Program.

Chairman: Hank Primas [Henry.Primas@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Henry.Primas@newtracksmodeling.com)



The reason I write New Tracks Modeling articles for this magazine is because I believe in its motto: “We’re putting the Modeling back into Model Railroading”. It is a wonderful goal and I truly believe mentoring can help accomplish this goal. But I have a question for you.

### **What Modeling Skills do you want to learn?**

I really wonder! What are modelers today interested in building? Is it only structures and scenery because everything else they need for their model railroads can be purchased already built? If so, is that one reason why we are seeing a decline in modeling?

Well certainly this statement does not apply to everyone. Those working on the NMRA Achievement Program Certificates, Cars, and Motive Power, are building cars and locomotives. Also, I see some narrow gauge modeling especially from On30 modelers building cars and locos. And, let me not forget the diorama modelers who will feature a car or locomotive they have built in their scene. Lastly, I see a lot of weathering of all types of models, much on pre-built items.

Are there USA manufacturers who are still even making kits for locomotives and cars? I know of companies making specific parts to upgrade or change cars and locos, and a few companies making car kits but only one, Stevenson Preservation Lines, making a complete American model locomotive kit. Internationally, there are other companies making kits, but mostly European or Far East models that are little heard of or seen in the US. Seems to me the vast majority of manufacturers I know, or hear other modelers talking about, make structures or scenery detail and materials.

Available modeling time, and the vast supply of Prebuilt car and locomotive models, I believe are very important reasons for this situation. Why take the time to learn how to build it and then build it, if you can buy it already built? Another reason is that most of us, even if we can build the model, cannot build a car or locomotive, as good as, or better than those currently produced. Also, we can simply modify an existing ready to run model with 3D printed parts, repaint it, decal it, and make it very close to whatever prototype we want that is not pre-built.

But whatever the reason, I believe modeling cars and locomotives is becoming a part of our modeling history. Too bad, because learning the modeling skills, and experiencing the thrill of creativity from modeling cars and locomotives will be lost to future generations. Since I still scratchbuild my cars and motive power, along with traction, I think that’s a shame, but understandable.

What about structures? Most of us still kit build, bash, or scratchbuild our structures. For most model railroaders building structures is still an enjoyable and significant part of our hobby. In fact, I believe this is the area of the hobby that has the most scratchbuilding going on.

I believe the offering of pre-built structures, while small now, will increase significantly in the future, caused by improvements in technology, particularly 3D printing and AI, as well as increased demand, to save modeling time and/or lack of modeling skills.

What about scenery? This is something I believe model railroaders really enjoy creating the most. There are currently various small 3D printed or cast pieces available, but not complete scenes yet. Most of us welcome the various parts that we can buy and use that we do not have to scratchbuild for our scenes. I think more 3D items are on the way daily. But when I look at the possible capabilities of new technology such as AI, I wonder if pre-made scenes are coming next? I don’t know, but it would not surprise me. What do you think?

However, I think there is a bigger question. Will building and operating model railroads be done much longer? It’s not just time involved in this question, it’s also a matter of space, money and age of modelers who have modeling and technological skills.

What do we see in much of the model railroad magazines or on YouTube? Large, beautifully detailed layouts. The vast majority of us cannot aspire to build such a layout. Large club model railroads are declining due to lack of affordable space to rent or purchase by local modeling groups. Not many of us will actually ever personally see one of these large beautiful layouts, let alone be able to talk to the builder or operate on them. I am fortunate to have had a large detailed layout in my basement for years. It is gone now that I am retired, but it was great fun while it lasted. Now my layout is very modest, and frankly, seldom operated anymore. So what modeling skills do I think modelers want to learn today?

Most of us have dreams that are much less grandiose than the model railroads we read about. Maybe we dream of a switching shelf layout, or at most, a small bedroom size empire around three of the walls. For some of us, it is a module or two for your club's periodic operating module get together, or even a diorama to display and enjoy privately.

For these modelers, the skills to create a specific scene is what they need and want to learn. They want each scene to tell a story and be as highly detailed as possible. They know each scene will require a significant amount of research and modeling time to imagine, plan, and create. Therefore, any skill they can learn to help them research and create their scenes is what they want.

These scenes do not necessarily rely on cars, locomotives, or structures, but rather the total detailed scene they are part of. So building a car, locomotive or structure is no more important than other parts of the scene and maybe doesn't even have to operate. What becomes critical is the scenery and its main focus point. Track and its detail become just another part of the scenery. Electrical is needed only if it will be needed for operating something in the scene. Painting, and particularly weathering, are important modeling skills whether you build it or buy it pre-built.

So, it seems to me, we need to concentrate on articles, discussions, and mentoring directed to helping modelers create beautiful scenes that are pieces of model railroading "art". This, I believe, can insure the continuation of modeling in model railroading. I also believe it will increase the subscription value of the modeling press and YouTube viewership.

Well, as I said to start these comments: "the reason I write New Tracks Modeling articles for this magazine is because I believe in its motto: "We're putting the Modeling back into Model Railroading". It is a wonderful goal, and I truly believe mentoring can help accomplish this goal."

Well, what do you think? What do you want to learn how to build? What article can you write to help other modelers improve their modeling abilities? How can you become a mentor to less skilled modelers? Become active and join the discussion. Share your wisdom, or as some say about me, "Jim is sharing more of his Crazy Ideas". But I am sharing and encouraging your comments. So jump in... the waters fine!

**"Lets Remember" In Memoriam page is now on our Website to recognize Model Railroaders no longer with us.**

We are adding a page on our website to recognize those model railroaders who are no longer with us. If you have a friend or member of a club or organization you belong to and would like to see them added to our page, please send their name to Steve Sherrill at [Steve.Sherrill@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Steve.Sherrill@newtracksmodeling.com). Steve will make sure they are added and recognized. Thank you for your help.

**Agreement of Association between New Tracks Modeling LLC and the Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads Virginia (MRMHR)**

Thanks to Martin Breckbiel MMR for representing New Tracks Modeling in these negotiations.

On June 13, 2023 New Tracks Modeling, LLC entered into its first Agreement of Association with this organization. We appreciate the MRMHR's interest and are looking forward to working with the [Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads](#). We will be providing more information about the Museum in future articles.

New Tracks Modeling is interested in entering into agreements with other organizations for our mutual benefits. For additional information, please contact me at: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

### Our Local Hobby Shops

We try to help keep the remaining hobby shops in everyone's minds on our monthly "Local Hobby Shops" segments on our New Tracks Modeling Shows, Wednesday evenings at 7pm Eastern Time hosted by Mark

Poggendorf. Join us. More about this show segment later in this article. The below shows part of our Hobby Shop history



I saw this post by Robert Scobie: *For years, as I visited hobby shops, I always got a card and added them to this bulletin board. How many of these stores do you recognize and how many are still around?*

While many model railroad hobby shops have closed, I am encouraged that the National Retail Hobby Store Association featured model railroading on the cover of their current magazine. Just shows any hobby store might be a source of products for model railroaders. I believe you should give your local hobby store a look.

### Do We Create Enthusiasm In Our Modeling Scenes?

Yesterday, I talked to Paul Pallansch, a professional modeler who makes dioramas for museums. You will meet Paul in an upcoming New Tracks Modeling Wednesday Zoom show. He caused me to think about whether our dioramas or individual scenes are truly inspirational and as opportunities to convey our "enthusiasm" for model railroading to viewers through our modeling. But how do we convey "enthusiasm"? To me, this will require taking our modeling to a different level. We can't just strive for good enough, or even worry if our model will get a NMRA merit award or win a contest. Seems to me that showing enthusiasm requires more of us.

We need to be able to take photos of our finished dioramas or scenes and ask if a viewer has trouble telling if the photo is of a real prototype or a model. Can we really say our model reflects a moment in time in a

recognized location? Does the model tell a story to the viewer, or do they need a caption to explain what they are seeing? Does being able to answer these questions help us know if we are showing our enthusiasm for building the model? I am not sure. There may be even more to it. Yes, as you can tell I am struggling to define modeling enthusiasm!

How do you look at and judge your finished modeling dioramas or scenes. Does your modeling convey enthusiasm? Do you believe conveying enthusiasm in our modeling makes us better modelers and maybe brings more people into modeling? If so, how do we define "Modeling Enthusiasm"? Please let me have your opinions and thoughts. My email is: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

I will talk about this more in a future article after I receive your comments. But wait. Here is another voice heard from!

After I had written this article, two modelers on one of my Zoom shows, Phil Edholm and Tom Farrell, introduced me to a free version of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) program called ChatGPT. You ask a question and the AI program gives you an answer. Here is the AI answer I got on this subject.

The following message has been generated by Nova - [download Nova here it for free](#):

"Enthusiasm can be defined as a strong emotion or feeling of excitement, passion, and energy towards something. In modeling, enthusiasm refers to exhibiting a positive attitude, eagerness, and passion for the job. Some ways to define enthusiasm in your modeling could include:

1. Showcasing a positive attitude towards yourself, others, and the task or project at hand.
2. Being eager to learn, grow, and improve your skills and abilities.
3. Maintaining a high level of energy and dedication, even when faced with challenges or setbacks.
4. Displaying passion and excitement for the work you're doing and the industry you're involved in.
5. Demonstrating a willingness to take on new and innovative ideas to keep your work fresh and exciting.
6. Encouraging and motivating others to feel enthusiastic and engaged in their work as well.

Overall, it's important to remember that enthusiasm is contagious, and by exhibiting it in your modeling, you can inspire others and create a more positive and productive work environment."

Well there you go! Is enthusiasm in our modeling important? Do you think: Yep or Naw? My email is [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

### **Now for some Good and Bad news:**

Bad News. Campbell Scale Models is gone! Gosh I hated to hear this. I have built their great kits over many years. We can only hope someone comes along and brings the products back to life. This was posted on their website: "Campbell Scale Models has closed down. Thank you for visiting Campbell Scale Models Online!"

A big THANK YOU to all our dedicated customers, some of you have been with us for over 60 years, but everything must come to an end. As those actively involved in the railroad hobby become older and older, it becomes harder for any RR product manufacturer to survive."

Some good News: Frank Deuter told me that the Corddry Company Crossing Model Railroad Club had their [3rd summer camp for young, 8-16 year old kids June 27-29, 2023](#). Sounds great to me. Never heard about this kind of Club project before.

Is your club doing anything like this? Please let me know.

More Good News: [What a great club at Penn State.](#)

When I saw this, I had heard that the University of Illinois-Urbana and MIT have model railroad clubs, and I understand Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY used to, but I did not know about Penn State's club. I wonder if any other schools have such clubs? If so which ones? I found this information at the MIT site

“Other College Model Railroad Clubs

We believe this is a complete list of all collegiate model railroad clubs in the US. Please contact us if you know of an active club at a college or university that is not listed here, or can otherwise help us correct the list.

- Rensselaer Model Railroad Society, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- RIT Model Railroad Club, Rochester Institute of Technology
- Penn State Model Railroad Club, The Pennsylvania State University
- Society of Model Engineers, Milwaukee School of Engineering
- Purdue Railroad Club, Purdue University
- Illini Railroad Club, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Rose-Hulman Model Railroad Club, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
- The Railroad Club at the University of Minnesota, University of Minnesota
- Illinois Tech Model Railroad, Illinois Institute of Technology
- Iowa State Railroad Club, Iowa State University, actually a railfan club rather than a model railroad club
- NSCC Model Railroad Club, North Seattle Community College

Fallen flags: as far as we can tell, the clubs listed below no longer exist.

- Carnegie Mellon Railroad Club, Carnegie Mellon University
- WPI Model Railroad Club, Worcester Polytechnic Institute”

I wonder what makes these schools have model railroad clubs?I

What do the students going to these schools know about having model railroading in their lives that students at other schools don't know? Or is it the faculty and administration at the school?

Does it have something to do with the STEAM program emphasis or influence at these schools. I am going to try and get representatives of some of these schools, and any others I can find, on our Zoom show. Any comments, suggestions or help in contacting representatives of these clubs from readers are appreciated. My email is: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com).

Some Great News: Dennis Brennan, owner of [Brennan's Model Railroading](#), will begin two special monthly show segments this Summer.

On the July 12th show, he will begin a series on “Model Railroad Photography “ and on August 9th, begin a monthly series on “Model Railroad Modeling is Art Sculpture”.

Dennis is a great modeler and model railroad manufacturer and is well credentialed to discuss both of these subjects. Dennis is the only model railroader, I know of, who has had his own show for his photographs.

He told me: *“As I am thinking about creating model railroad art. I am not consciously thinking about creating art. Yes, I graduated from Rutgers with a degree in art with a concentration on filmmaking and photography. However, in my Intro to Art course we had assignments in painting, drawing, and sculpture as well as photography and filmmaking. My intro instructor became my advisor and he suggested I do sculpture. Although I didn't follow his advice, I now understand that he saw something in my work that I didn't. What I am presently doing when I create a diorama or a model is sculpture. It's innate. When I photograph a model railroad scene there is the art of photography in capturing the scene that was created.”*

I believe we will all learn a lot from Dennis and perhaps take a slightly different attitude when viewing our “Modeling Art”.

**We are Reaching Out to a New Audience:** New Tracks Modeling starts a Monthly Newspaper Column

[\(Read a sample column here\)](#)

In my last article, I told you I am doing everything I can think of to promote modeling and mentoring. I even showed you the newspaper article that was written about me. Guess what? Because of that article, the local Citrus County Florida Chronicle newspaper asked me to do a monthly article on model railroading! My three articles appeared on April 5, May 3, and a two part article on June 14 and 21. We even got a small piece about our Scholarship program in another part of the paper on June 7.

That is great, but I have got to find a way to get my articles in other local newspapers.

Now, because of these articles I was asked to join a digital business group called Alignable. As a result of this, New Tracks Modeling was designated as Highly Recommended to other businesses.

Writing these articles in a non traditional channel of communication, at least for me. It has shown me the value and reach, to a very broad and diverse audience, our local newspapers can provide New Tracks and our hobby. I think we should work with them to promote our hobby every way we can. If you think your local newspaper is interested in publishing my articles, or in you writing articles for them, I hope you will pursue such opportunities. Please let me know what your local newspaper says.

I believe having New Tracks, or any hobby company, recommended by non model railroading private companies to their customers and viewers can only be considered a significant accomplishment and benefit . For example this was posted by a local Company that certainly has a great involvement with real Railroading.

**“Take Notice”: All Modelers and Manufacturers**

What makes a kit great to build, gets more modelers building kits, and gets manufacturers more sales?

First, I want to thank Martin Breckbiel MMR for reviewing and making suggestions that greatly clarified this article. His editing also helped make it more readable. Thanks so much Martin.

I have been writing New Tracks Modeling articles about mentoring and model building for over five years in this magazine. I have profiled many small and medium sized manufacturers many of you may never have heard about before I wrote about them. I have also profiled many modelers that I believe can help all of us, and particularly less skilled modelers, improve their skills.

My purpose in writing these articles is two-fold: 1. to encourage more model building by today's modelers, and 2. to increase mentoring to pass along the skills and modeling knowledge from today's talented modelers to those less skilled or novice modelers, and therefore to the future generation of modelers.

I never asked any of the manufacturers to send me a kit to build, but rather asked them to offer a free kit to one lucky reader through a contest drawing for readers to enter. I asked each winner to send me photos of the prize kit they built with any comments they had on building it. In this way, I hoped to accomplish a part of my

purposes for writing the articles. I am pleased that I only had one manufacturer I contacted turn me down to supply a Contest Drawing kit.

However, I am extremely disappointed that the majority of winners never followed through on their commitment to share their model building of the kit they won. Why they didn't, I don't know. Maybe they put the kit in a closet to build later (never), or tried to build it, had a problem and gave up, or they built it and created a fantastic model and just did not want to take the time to share their model with the rest of us, or maybe they did not like the kit and just didn't want to give us a negative comment. Whatever the reason I got nothing!

So I decided to try to find out what the problem is. Sending follow up emails got me nowhere. This is too bad because their non-response is not fair to the manufacturers who gave one of their kits for free to a reader of my articles who said they wanted the kit by entering to win the contest drawing. It's also not fair to other readers who also entered the contest and did not win. I don't want to publicly embarrass anyone, but I hope all of the winners will please build their prize kit and send me some photos with at least a couple sentences about their building experience. Note I did say please.

But the question remained in my mind. Why does a modeler who gets a free kit that said he/she wanted to build, but either does not build it, or if he/she does, tells no one? Hmm... Partly because of my frustration in trying to figure out an answer to this question, and partly because of comments from readers about problems they were having building kits, I began to wonder if there is some kind of disconnect between modelers and kit manufacturers that results in modelers not building kits even if they are free.

Maybe the kits a manufacturer is producing are not living up to the expectations of modelers and modelers just don't want to build them. Or vice versa, the kit is so great to build that the modeler is too busy building the kit he does not have time to take a photo or send me an email. Therefore, I decided to see if I could determine if communication between the buyer and seller about what a kit includes and how to build it has broken down. If so, maybe my readers were not getting the benefits from the Contest Drawing efforts I was hoping for. My research is by no means scientific, but I believe it points us in a direction we should definitely discuss.

So I decided to ask what modelers and manufacturers believe make a great kit to build. I asked the question on my Facebook page and I got a lot of responses that I want to share with you. So here they are.

1. Jim, For me, it is:

Fidelity to the prototype.

Quality of components

How much do I have to fiddle with it?

Easy enough to assemble that I don't need the help of an octopus to get it together.

Quality components. Good trucks, good wheels, KADEE couplers. Preferably scale head.

Just a few that I can think of this morning.

2. Easy to follow instructions

Finely detailed parts

Scale, or as close to scale details as possible

3. Jim, I suppose that the answer/s to this question also depends on the skill level or interest of the person assembling the kit.

Even the finished product can be subjective. What I want is different from what someone else wants. So for some, a blue box Athearn kit is a great kit because it was simple to put together, was fairly quick to put together, but also gave them the quick satisfaction of building something.

Others may see an Athearn blue box kit as a great kit because it is fairly inexpensive and gives them a lot of opportunity to modify and detail it to whatever level they desire.

Back in the mid to late 90's, I thought Intermountain and Proto 2000 cars were the bee's knees because they had separate grabs and other finely detailed parts. However, after a bit of use I cursed them a bit because all those great details began suffering damage.

You've asked a very complicated question, Jim!

Final comment. Hands down the best kits in the world are Lego kits! Well detailed instructions, perfectly fitting parts, and never a missing part. I honestly don't think anything on the market comes close to Lego in terms of instructions.

#### 4. Concise instructions

Parts (preferably with options) that fit correctly

Spruces suitable to the size of the aforementioned parts

Not too much flash

Decals in good register

5. A kit that provides an education, historical, applicational purpose of the kit as well as skill building.

6. Great instructions, all the pieces available, extra small bits in case something breaks

7. The parts actually go together.

8. Clear and easy to follow instructions. Good quality and accurate parts and a good looking finished product with good performance.

9. The fitment of the parts

10. A lot of good suggestions already. I think it depends on the materials. A resin kit I saw recently didn't have pre-drills for grab irons and ladders, etc., even though the masters were 3D printed. The kit producer should do whatever they can so the modeler can make the most accurate model.

11. Help in learning new skills.

12. Hi. Parts that fit and enough material to complete it.

Instructions that don't hinder construction.

13. Good instructions, well cut and fitting parts.

14. Good instructions is really important and has already been mentioned. Having instructions that discuss options that are possible with the kit to avoid everyone's kit looking exactly the same. Weathering and distressing processes outlined as you build

15. It fits.

16. A kit you would look forward to building again. A kit you could build differently each time.



17. Something original. Not the same old cookie cutter that everyone has. Ease of assembly and proper scale.
18. Specify the accurate footprint and height on box or web site; detailed painting weathering suggestions; period appropriate sign options; sources for details not included in the kit but shown on the model picture.
19. Good representation of the prototype, decent and sturdy detail, either decent instructions or intuitive assembly. Friendly to young and old, and not too difficult for those lacking dexterity. That is what makes a good kit in my humble opinion.
20. Parts that fit, complete bag of accessories, and good wall plans. Plans with detail pictures are a major plus!
21. Realism, good mold engineering, minimal/zero flash/warp/voids/etc. Fine, accurate and scale details. Extra parts for breakage. Optional parts to modify. Clear, verified and pictorial instructions.
22. Ambroid, Northeastern, Gloor Craft. etc.
23. Every answer above is dead on, but we need to add NO MISSING PARTS. Make sure your kits go out without missing parts, enough scale lumber, etc. Yes most all manufacturers will send you whatever is missing without question. But nothing sucks more than opening a box and not finding a part, and having to wait a week or even way longer to get that part sent and all you want to do is build!
24. 8 Traits of Flow According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
25. One you can finish before the estate sale.
26. All those things and that it looks good and natural on the layout and/or is easy to paint and customize to make it more unique.
27. A good kit develops new skills and reinforces known skills.
28. A kit from Tangent or Rail Yard Models. Sadly RYM is no more. But with it you got a CD with prototype photos and a color PDF showing every step. Sorry all you others, but that's the one to beat. Too much trouble? Maybe, but Gene Fusco went to the trouble to show what can be done. Tangent kits are excellent too, as are Moloco, if he's still offering kits. Kits that don't fit and have a cheap inkjet printed fuzzy instruction sheet that cost the same as a RYM kit... sorry no excuse. I threw that one in the garbage.

A whole lot in between. Intermountain and Red Caboose have made some fairly decent kits, but non-Kadee couplers and crappy trucks get thrown away.

Oh yeah. RYM was RESIN with etched parts. Resin, and straighter and better fit than most styrene. I swear if I drilled the mounting holes, and folded the etched ladder I could have thrown it across the room and it would have landed in the holes. It would be unfair to compare anything to this ideal fantasy. Except it's not a fantasy, it really happened. So all you manufacturers and your excuses: somebody did it, so "why couldn't you?" is a legit question.

29. Opportunities to personalize it. Quirkiness is appealing to me too.
30. If you are going to include plans that would assist in any kind of assembly, print them to scale size. I've had to get enlarged copies made because the drawing I needed to use for assembly and measuring was printed in a random scale. Drop everything and make an enlarged copy. What a pain. I don't need everything drawn to scale, just the sub assemblies that need to be made on top of a scale drawing
31. I've always liked Campbell's instructions. Old school and very detailed — with 1 to 1 scale drawings where required.

32. Quality designed into the kit; instructions clearly stated and illustrated to the point anyone's mom or grandma could put the kit together, a phone number to call the manufacturer for tech support or advice if a problem is encountered.
33. Something that is easy to assemble with clear instructions and doesn't require a shopping list to complete it.
34. Intermountain if you can find them.
35. [Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi describes a state of process called "flow" and a great kit puts you in "flow"](#). Flow is a state where you are challenged, but not frustrated. The kit has good instructions, fits together well, and does not require 14 fingers, or \$800 worth of clamps. The close adherence to a prototype makes the goal of completing personally rewarding.

Naturally, each of us has a different state of flow, which (hopefully) moves us up the flow channel. Do a couple of Campbell kits, then tackle a South River Model Works beauty.

35. I don't understand all this talk about instructions... people use those for something other than fire starter??? LOL!
36. One that you finish
37. One that's finally dug out of the stack and built.
38. Sierra West lots and all of his examples
39. Fun to build, within your capabilities, can be tweaked a bit, and look just a little better than off the shelf pre-built products and have related kits that fit the theme.
40. Good instructions, parts which fit together without too much fiddling.
41. EZ to follow instructions with pictures on everything they tell you to do.
42. A great kit starts with a master built mold that will have parts lining up with little to no seam marks visible.
43. Good instructions with good illustrations, good material, good castings with nice details and enough lumber and roofing materials to actually finish the kit.
44. Painted examples.
45. Scale fidelity, smooth assembly, clear instructions are key. Options to personalize or show real variations are good. So are some figures to give a sense of scale.
46. Instructions with images and naming of parts is appreciated. Quality raw materials used for the kit.
  - Accurate scaling of car and parts to prototype
  - Quality decals
47. Seamless (e.g. corner walls...) finished product.
  - Easily able to convert walls and roof line into a low profile building.
48. Good prototype information, good instructions with good illustrations and drawings and components that fit together. If parts are really fragile, then extras.

49. Whether of an actual prototype or a freelanced kit, the instructions should be well organized, step-by-step with pictures or diagrams to assist the builder, should have an indexed list of parts, a list of tools needed along with recommendations on painting, detailing and weathering the designer did to build the kit. If a structure it needs to be designed in a compressed way to fit the majority of layouts.

50. I think the definition of a great kit changes with your skill and interests. Sheepscoot models, for instance, demand skill, time, and patience. There is an incredible beauty to the way they are even packaged. For me, it's enjoying the game of getting into the intricacies of the kit's design, and the satisfaction of taking the beautiful box of stuff into a beautiful model.

51. Instructions!

52. Walther's Cornerstone. All the Walther's cornerstone kits are great. They are well designed prototype buildings typical across US & Canada, they're easy to build, easy to paint, & look terrific when they are finished on a layout.

53. Well molded or cut parts and clear instructions do it for me.

54. It's a kit, that when you finish, you sit back and look at it and say, "That's a Great Kit".

55. A good kit for me allows for various possibilities of kitbashing... no instructions needed!

56. I would say, a) an attractive real thing to model and not to be overlooked, b) a good and easy to follow instruction

57. A great kit has great instructions, no way around it.

58. Have fun making it! I've never made a building kit. Perhaps in the future I'll have more time to concentrate on the detail of the kit, be it an engine shed or station. I tend to buy old Hornby O Gauge tinplate. I find it fun going to train shows and hunting out items. They go well with my Ace trains.

59. A great color photo of the finished kit on the box, clear step by step instructions. Parts that fit and diagram showing how complicated parts go together. Side bars or helpful hints on how to weather or add details. If you can learn a new technique or modeling trick while putting it together even better.

60. Well written rules and laser cut pieces that the designer actually assembled. Laser cut kits are supposed to be easier than "Craftsman" style kits. They should "test" fit together with very little (or even better, no) filing or trimming by the purchaser.

61. Clear instructions. Parts clearly identified in the instructions and either on the sprue or parts bag/part itself. Excellent customer support for when things go wrong. A great kit turns horrible if there are missing or malformed parts from the factory.

Lastly, and slightly more subjective due to scale and details included, is price point. If the kit is of something the targeted user is going to buy multiple of, a great kit should take that into consideration with its price. Take, for example, a unit coal train hopper. All things being possible, I'd rather spend \$2500.00 USD on 100 \$25 hopper kits than 25 \$100 kits. A hundred dollar great kit should be a unique structure, or a signature piece of rolling stock for which the target audience needs but a few, or just one.

A final thought that comes to mind under the heading of customer support is multimedia. In 2023 it is probably safe to say that the Internet is a primary source for generating sales for kit manufacturers. Why not, therefore, post construction videos for your kits? Either do it in-house or sponsor a build video by an experienced YouTube blogger?

62. Instructions, and having a variety of parts for customization without having to buy separate details.

63. The quality of parts and their fitment together. Well written instructions, eg, ease of comprehension. Easily understood diagrams.
64. The fit of the parts.
65. Something you want with a price reduction! Now that's a great kit!
66. Decent instructions, quality materials, and sections that fit like they should.
67. Well thought out and clearly written instructions, preferably with detailed illustrations or photographs.
68. Faithful to the prototype and not a great hassle to build.
69. Good clear instructions, well fitting parts, accuracy and of course good detail pieces. Quality decals as well.

After reviewing all the above comments, I came up with this conclusion.

### **What Makes a Kit Great?**

Once a buyer has fallen in love with a kit and decides to buy it, I believe he is counting on the manufacturer to have personally researched, built, and finished their kit as shown in the advertisement. He also expects to be provided with all the needed information and material to complete the kit, and counts on the manufacturer to have corrected any potential problems that might have been encountered in developing and test building the kit being sold.

#### **Further, the buyer expects/wants:**

1. Easy to read and understand construction instructions, with good quality photos or drawings, scale diagrams, where appropriate and possible, painting, weathering, and signage recommendations as well as historical and prototypical information about the model, if relevant.

While how to build the kit, may be “obvious” and less detailed instructions needed for the manufacturer and even modelers who have significant knowledge of the prototype and/or greater modeling experience, the need of less experienced modelers is that when they open the box, the instructions and prototypical information provided fully details the history and how to build the kit. Yes, there are kits that state that you are “on your own” in some aspects. However knowing that from the kit advertising is important.

2. There should be no missing parts in the kit. While that seems obvious, it seems to be a too frequent occurrence. Most manufacturers producing current production products will be responsive to quickly correcting this deficit when discovered. Those that are not, may be avoided in the future. All parts need to be well made of good quality material(s) that fit well according to instructions. Sources of parts not from the manufacturer need to be revealed either in the advertising, packaging exterior, or listed within the instructions. A corollary to this is that there should not be any unnecessary parts in box. It can be befuddling being confronted with parts not in the instructions or in the illustrations!

3. Ideas and options for making changes during construction to make the finished model unique to the builder are generally appreciated.

If a manufacturer's kit fulfills these requirements, the buyer should be happy with a great kit and should become a repeat customer. Let me know if you agree or have other ideas. My email is [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com).

Next, I wanted to get the opinion of a manufacturers. So I sent my conclusion about what modelers want to Chris Course, the owner of Conowingo Models. Chris is the host of the My Build monthly segment on my Zoom show and has done several Build Alongs on the show using his own kits. Chris also attends many train

shows and events around the country and talks to a lot of other manufacturers. Here are his comments about what modelers said they wanted.

“Jim, I read this yesterday and decided to think about it. If you’re looking for a direction, it can go in any of several directions.

If you’re looking for a manufacturer’s view, instructions are the toughest part of designing a kit. I update kit instructions when I get feedback from people having issues or perhaps I want to try something a little different to make things easier or perhaps more realistic. The latest instructions are on my website.

To go off on a tangent for a second, when I designed the tank car, I decided to use wire truss rods. They certainly look better than the threaded ones that are in the current rolling stock kits. It worked, so my next thought is to spread that concept to the rest of the rolling stock line. Initially, I decided to remove the thread out of the rolling stock kits. However, when I did the clinic at Amherst, I realized that I have to meet different skill levels and some people would try the thread over the wire and vice versa. The Amherst flat car kits only had the wire truss rods and they were a bit problematic for those at lower experience levels. So, the kits will be updated with both.

As far as parts are concerned, I’m a one-man shop and I do miss things when converting a pilot model into a production model. The best thing I can do when this happens is “own it”. This means being upfront and proactive in terms of fixing the kits that have already been sold. I do occasionally throw “you might want to try this…” into instructions. I generally don’t offer suggestions about knocking down walls and adding a lean-to or anything like that. However, I do recommend getting certain products from other manufacturers. My main philosophy in this area is that I want for people to do unique things with these kits. I don’t want to see a hundred buildings that all look like the photos. I want for people to dig into their parts box and pull out something that’s collecting dust. Or perhaps scour their local hobby shop, train show or the Internet for ideas on how to make their model unique. Show us something completely different that we haven’t thought of before. Unfortunately, some kits are too specific in design and don’t allow for much customization.

If you’re looking for my prospective as a hobbyist/manufacturer, I look for unique things. The last year or two, I have been buying kits to learn things from them. I don’t want or intend to steal things from other manufacturers. For the most part, we all get along, encourage each other and want to see each other succeed. I don’t want to directly compete with someone over a very similar product. One example is the old style fire houses. There are a bunch of kits out there that all look the same. While I’d like to put out a fire house, the chances are very slim that I will ever produce one.

### **Back to the educational piece...**

One kit that I bought a long time ago was the Detail Associates kit for Foothill Station. I don’t know the origins of the kit, but I know Howard Zane has one very similar that he built. I don’t think that it could exist in real life, due to the arrangement of the different levels and how they are compacted together. I also don’t think there’s no room for staircases on the inside. So, there’s a lesson there. One other takeaway was that I like the size and shape of the building. It’s a medium height, square building that’s about 13 scale feet wide, if I recall correctly. It’s a multi-level building that has doors at two different levels, which makes things interesting. There may eventually be a Conowingo Models building that carries out the flavor of that building, but it certainly won’t be a station. Thanks, Chris Coarse, ConowingoModels.”

I am inclined to take Chris’s comments as representative of serious small to medium sized manufacturers in our hobby. Please note that I differentiate serious manufacturers from hobby manufacturers. The difference, in my mind, is a hobby manufacturer may not have the same dedication in his kit production as a serious manufacturer who looks at his business as a very real part of his livelihood.

I must say, after reading Chris's comments, I think manufacturers would be by and large in agreement with modelers about what makes a great kit. I also know, from my personal conversations with a lot of manufacturers the hardest part for them in producing a kit is writing the instructions.

With the importance of instructions noted by modelers, time and time again, this is the one area that I believe needs the most attention by manufacturers. It's also really one that can be addressed.

With today's technology there is no reason for kits to not have great fitting parts and castings, or for not taking extra care to include all the parts needed to build the model in the kit.

But instructions! That is a different story. It's not just that it takes a lot of time to write them. It does and everyone knows it. Sometimes they may not be written by the manufacturer, but by the person who actually built the sample of the product to be sold. Nothing wrong with this as long as the manufacturer is sure following the instructions will enable a less skilled modeler to successfully, easily, build the model. I have found not every talented modeler can explain how he/she builds a model in sufficient detail to allow a less skilled modeler to have a successful building experience. Why does this happen? Because the modeler has built a lot of models and automatically assumes a lot of what he/she has learned from experience will also be known by other modelers, and this we all know is not necessarily true. It's just hard for anyone to recognize sometimes, so it's up to the manufacturer to catch any such issues.

I may be wrong, but I believe it takes a specific set of skills to write great instructions that modelers of all skill levels can use to successfully build a kit. So here is the area where what some manufacturers are producing as instructions may be falling short of what modelers need to successfully and easily build their kits. This is evidenced to me by the high number of modeler's comments about instructions what should be included in them.

Is the solution the development in our hobby of professional instruction writers and/or education for the manufacturer about how to improve their instructions? Maybe we need the manufacturer to include a statement in each kit that he/she built their own test kit with the parts produced by the manufacturer and used the instructions provided in the kit. Nope, I am not sure such solutions will actually help improve instructions.

My conclusion is that we definitively need kits with great instructions if we are going to get more modelers building more kits so the manufacturers can make more money and continue to provide us new products. I don't have an easy answer, but maybe this is an area the NMRA should consider looking into as part of their Standards Programs? For today's modeler, this issue may be as important as to whether couplers matched up in the past. I definitely believe this is the one area where our small to medium sized manufacturers need help. I also believe this is the one area that can get more modelers building more models. Or, we can just let the market work to decide the continuation of each manufacturer's business, and let the buyer beware.

I hope every manufacturer reads these comments and takes another look at their instructions. What do you think? Modelers and manufacturers ideas are needed and welcome. My email is: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

### **But wait. I wanted another voice heard from!**

After I had written this article, as I mentioned previously, I was introduced to a free version of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) program called ChatGPT. I asked a question and the AI program gave me an answer. Here is the AI answer I got about the importance of kit instructions.

“This message has been generated by Nova - [download it for free.](#)”

“Having great kit instructions can play a significant role in a model railroader's decision to buy a kit from a specific manufacturer. Here are some reasons why:

1. Ease of assembly: One of the most obvious benefits of having great instructions is that they make the kit easier to assemble. If the instructions are clear and detailed, the model railroader will be able to follow them step-by-step, which will reduce frustration and make the experience more enjoyable.
2. Time savings: Clear and detailed instructions can also save time. If the instructions are easy to follow, the model railroader will be less likely to make mistakes that require backtracking and rework. They can move through the assembly process more quickly, which can be important if they have limited time to spend on the hobby.
3. Confidence: Well-written instructions can also give the model railroader confidence in the manufacturer and their products. If the instructions are clear and easy to follow, that can be a sign that the manufacturer cares about the experience of their customers and takes pride in the quality of their kits.
4. Repeat business: Finally, if a model railroader has a positive experience with a manufacturer's instructions, they may be more likely to buy from that manufacturer again in the future. They will remember that the instructions were clear and helpful, which can be a factor in their decision-making when it comes to purchasing future kits.”

As my Mom used to say: What do you think about them Apples?

### **Don't miss the New Tracks Build Along at the 2023 NMRA National Convention August 21-26, 2023**

New Tracks is honored to have been asked by the NMRA 2023 National Convention Clinic Chairman to host a Build Along with Phil Edholm at the upcoming NMRA National Convention in Dallas Texas in August.



The Clinic will be on Thursday evening of the convention and last approximately three hours. Alan Rogers is the manufacturer of New Creations Model Railroad Buildings, LLC, whose Handcar Shed kit will be built. The kit is available in N, HO, S, and O scale at a significant discount to modelers attending the convention who “Build Along” with the New Tracks Mentor Phil Edholm. Phil will build the structure and offer help and advice to the modelers participating in the “Build Along”.

We look forward to working with the NMRA Long Beach California Convention Clinic Committee and offering other New Tracks Modeling clinics at their convention in 2024.

If anyone is interested in offering one of our clinics at your convention or train show, please let me know. My email is [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

### **New Tracks Modeling Build Alongs**

Our Build Along Modeling experiences provide you with a personal mentor and great discounted prices on the models to be built. Join us on our weekly Zoom shows for a great learning experience that will help you improve your modeling.

### **Wm. K. Walthers, Inc.**

Starting September 6, 2023, Gary Shurgold MMR will build one of the Walthers Cornerstone Company House pkg(2) kits. Gary will be building and finishing the model using modeling techniques that make the completed structure appear to be made out of wood and stone not plastic. Gary's work is absolutely amazing!



Plus Walthers is offering New Tracks modelers who Build Along with Gary, a 30% discount on the kit starting August 1, 2023 and ending September 23, 2023. Please visit [Walthers website](#) during this period to order the kit. You will need to enter the code NTRACKS at check out to get the discount.

A Walthers representative and Gary will on our July 26, 2023 show to discuss the Walthers Company, the kit, and to discuss any special tools, stains, paints, glues , etc. needed by a modeler to build the kit.

Also every “New Tracks” viewer who builds the kit will be invited to join Gary on the “New Tracks” My Build segment October 18, 2023. I hope everyone who builds this model using the techniques Gary demonstrated will show us their models.

I hope every modeler, regardless of scale or gauge, views Gary’s demonstrated techniques on finishing plastic models. These techniques will work on all scales and gauges. Thank you Walthers and Gary for opening our eyes to, at least for me, a new modeling material to use, and new plastic kits to investigate.

### **Dylan Lambert Locomotive Works**

Starting October 4, 2023, Bill Davis will build Lambert Locomotive Works new Commuter Coach shown

below in HO scale. More details concerning price, discount for New Tracks modelers and ordering dates will be provided soon on our website.



### **Rail Tales Hobby Shop**

Bret Jones, owner of Rail Tales Hobby Shop, informed me of an illness in his family that has required him to postpone his Build Along until later this year. Well, that time has come on October 11,

2023. More details will follow shortly. We are so pleased that Bret’s family illness is over and he can join us.

### **Brennan's Model Railroading**

Starting November 1, 2023, Dennis Brennan will build his Electrical Substation kit. There will be a 10% discount for New Tracks Modeling modelers from October 1 to November 29, 2023. More details including ordering instructions will be provided soon on our website.

More Build Alongs to come. I hope you want to participate in all the "Build Alongs". The modelers and manufacturers, who are making these events possible, are doing them to try to help you improve your skills and have more enjoyment and confidence in your modeling. They are a true learning experience that have helped many modelers. So if you have been sitting on the sidelines for awhile, give model building a try with the help of a mentor.

I am looking for more modelers and manufacturers to be involved in future "Build Alongs" in 2024. Contact me if you are interested at: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)





## **New Tracks Modeling Watch Me Build**

These segments provide modelers the opportunity to build a model to demonstrate their modeling skills and techniques. Viewers can ask questions and learn from experienced modelers in various facets of our hobby.

Upcoming Segments:

- September 6, 2023, Pete Steinmetz Glues to Use
- September 13 and September 20, 2023 Charlie Rausch MMR and John Sokash brass modeling
- September 27, 2023, Pete Steinmetz Paint Brushes to Use
- October 4, 2023. Jeff Jordan builds a structure in Styrene.
- October 11, 2023 Myles Marcovitch scratching a Victorian era structure using 3D printing, laser cutting technology and old school methods. Take a look at his type of scratchbuilding structures and the techniques he uses.

## **New Tracks Mentoring Scholarships: Today's Modelers Made It Happen, Thank You!**

Our First Year's 2023/2024 Scholarship is a success all because of your help and support.

We successfully raised contributions to pay for the first year of our New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship program and received some very impressive applications from young modelers.

Thanks to all the individuals who contributed to make this happen. Thanks also to all the organizations and businesses who supported our program. We had an update on the status of our Scholarship program on our June 28, 2023 Zoom show. A video of the show is available on our YouTube channel New Tracks Modeling. By the time you will read this, we will have announced our 2023/2024 Scholarship winner.

To say I am proud and thankful is an understatement for all the support and hard work put in by so many modelers and organizations that helped make our first year Scholarship program a great success. New Tracks Modeling is the only unpaid volunteer group of model railroaders who, as far as I know, are offering a National STEAM scholarship program, funded by donations from today's model railroad community. We encourage other groups to offer similar programs or join with us to expand our efforts. Our young model railroaders deserve all the educational help we can give them so our hobby will continue to have the leadership and enthusiasm to guide our hobby into the future.

Last issue I thanked Atlas for their support, and now I want to thank the NMRA for their Facebook posts of support for New Tracks and our scholarship program.

In, addition the other day I got the GSMTS, Timonium Show, report from Scott Geare, that he sends to all the show participates. Scott included the following comments about our Scholarship Program. Thank you Scott for your help and interest.

*"I write to all our exhibitors, whether or not you were present at our February 4th and 5th Great Scale Model Train Show (aka "The Timonium Show").*

*Jim Kellow and the STEAM SCHOLARSHIP: You know what "STEM" stands for, don't you? Of course you do: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. That's the current emphasis of the national educational agenda. But what does "STEAM" stand for? Same thing, with the addition of "ART".*

*Jim Kellow, himself a credentialed Master Modeler, has been working to establish a scholarship program for youth who are involved with serious modeling. Thus, he and his associates have established the "STEAM" scholarship program, which adds "ART" to the STEM program, making it "STEAM".*



*And indeed, what is model railroading, if not art, even “fine art”? (As Howard Zane would say). Learn more, here: <https://newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship/>.*

*Are you the parent or grand-parent of a kid who needs some financial help with college? Or do you know such a youngster? If that youngster is involved in model railroading or any modeling art, connect him or her with Jim’s scholarship program. You may also want to contribute to the fund yourself. I did. Visit this web page: <https://newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship>”*

Thank you Scott Geare for including New Tracks in your show and also in your show’s report which goes to all your vendors. We look forward to being in your future Timonium shows.

I am also pleased that the National Retail Hobby Stores Association (NRHSA) included New Tracks and our scholarship in their monthly magazine “*Hobby Merchandiser*”. Having the support of this association and local hobby stores is very important in helping to get our message out to potential applicants and donors.

So now let’s make sure every potential model railroader applicant, knows about our program and, if needed, gets help in completing their application. Specifically what can you do? Find out below.

## Starting the 2024/2025 New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship Program

What you can do to help notify amend encourage potential applicants to apply for the 2024/2025 Scholarship?

Bob Davidson donated three banners through his company, Exhibits And More, which will be shown at train shows and rail expos across the country.

Each banner is 3’ wide and about 7’ tall and has a QR code on it to link you directly to our website to get more information including the application to apply.

It’s a retractable unit that is very easy to ship and set-up. So if you want one for your event, let Bob Davidson know at: [bob.davidson@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:bob.davidson@newtracksmodeling.com).

Look for New Tracks at any show you attend. We hope to be represented at as many shows as possible for our 2024/2025 Scholarship program . If you want to take one of our banners, or help man a table, or have us be a part of your table, let Bob Davidson know at: [bob.davidson@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:bob.davidson@newtracksmodeling.com).

Remember, one of these years your younger kids or grandkids may benefit from the New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship program that you helped start. I truly hope so. Thank you.

Thank you to everyone who helped us display the banners at shows around the Country. We are currently taking reservations for our banners for our second year’s (2023/2024) Scholarship Program.

## Donate to the 2024/2025 Scholarship Program

Our Scholarship Team has set high expectations for 2024 and have goals to offer a significant number of high value scholarships. To be successful we will need all your continued support and help. You can read the details about our 2024/2025 Scholarship Program on our [website](#).

New Tracks Modeling is the only organization, that we are aware of, comprised solely of volunteers from the model railroad community who have created a nonprofit company whose sole purpose is to provide scholarships throughout the United States for the benefit of young modelers who are pursuing their STEAM education after High School graduation, in a college, university or accredited technical school.

We have finalized our donation process and Levels of Recognition for donors, and we hope you will consider making a tax deductible donation to our very worthwhile scholarship effort. **To donate click here.**

The contributions by current model railroaders can help the next generation of modelers continue the traditions of our great hobby. For more information, visit our website: [newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship](http://newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship)

## Just an afterthought about generative AI

I read this AI article shortly after I finished writing this great kit article. I wondered if generative AI can help model railroad manufacturers prepare their kit instructions? I think it is worth looking into. If you get a chance, I recommend reading the total article. Here is a portion of it.

How will generative AI affect knowledge work?

Philip Moyer, Global VP, AI & Business Solutions at Google Cloud wrote in the July 2, 2023, Geek Wire.

*“Generative AI can help an inexperienced writer turn a list of ideas into a coherent article, and with some skilled prompting and human revision, that article can still express a lot of personality and style. But an AI assistant is not going to replace skilled writers in the foreseeable future — though it might help many of them do their work more efficiently and happily.”*

Then I asked ChatGPT what AI can currently do for model railroad manufacturers.

My Question to Chat GPT: Can generative AI write model railroad kit instructions?

ChatGPT answer:

*“Yes, generative AI can potentially be used to write model railroad kit instructions. Given the proper training data and task-specific instructions, a generative AI model like ChatGPT can learn to generate text that resembles model railroad kit instructions. It can help provide step-by-step guidance on assembling the kit, explanations of different components, and troubleshooting tips.*

*However, it's important to note that the quality of the instructions generated by AI models can vary, and they may not always be perfect or completely error-free. Human review and input would still be necessary to ensure accuracy and clarity. Nonetheless, AI can still be a useful assistant in the process.”*



[Click image to view Narrow Gauge Modeling Company's video introduction.](#)

Now some more New Tracks Modeling upcoming Show Announcements

Modeling Lifestyle: A NEW Bi-Weekly YouTube Show Thursday evenings at 7pm EDT on our YouTube channel and sponsored by [Narrow Gauge Modeling Company](#) (NGMC).

New Tracks Modeling has started a new, bi-weekly live series called Modeling Lifestyles. It is available to watch live on our YouTube Channel, New Tracks Modeling. This is your opportunity to meet and chat with some of today's outstanding modelers and a few of their friends. You can see all of the interviews we have conducted so far on our YouTube channel, New Tracks Modeling.

For a complete list of the modelers and their friends who will be on our shows, please visit and subscribe to our website [newtracksmodeling.com](http://newtracksmodeling.com)

Please also subscribe to our YouTube channel, New Tracks Modeling, and ring the bell to get prior notification of the shows and be able to join us live.

### Weekly Wednesday Show Segments

### Find your Mentor at Local CLUBS and NMRA DIVISIONS: A Bi-Weekly Segment about Local Organizations

Supported by the NMRA



This Bi-weekly Segment introduces local model railroading organizations where many of us have found mentors, modeling help, and met some really outstanding modelers. I credit these local organizations with providing much of my modeling education and believe such organizations can also help you.

Phil Edholm, a NMRA Division Superintendent of the NMRA PCR/Coast Division, which includes the San Francisco Bay Area down to Monterey in California, hosts this segment.

Every other week, these segments feature an NMRA Division or Local Club leader to discuss what activities they do, how they engage with members, how they recruit new members, and other topics. The focus is a discussion around what they have done that is successful and unique. The goal is to have actionable ideas come out to be used by other organization in their local activities.

Each time we try and identify a few key nuggets that all of us in model railroading leadership positions can use. Each segment is live streamed to our YouTube channel New Tracks Modeling. You can see all of the previous interviews on there.

If you ,or someone you know, is actively involved in an NMRA Division or a Local Club and you would like to discuss how your organization is thriving (or surviving) in the new world, please contact Phil Edholm at [coastsup23@gmail.com](mailto:coastsup23@gmail.com) or call 408-832-5618.

### Let's Go To Our Local Modeling Hobby Store

A monthly segment with hobby store owners supported by the National Retail Hobby Stores Association (NRHSA).

“Local hobby shops need modelers and modelers need local hobby shops”. This segment shows just how true this statement is.

Mark Poggendorf, a NMRA member working on his MMR, a hobby manufacturer, and owner of Poggies Trains Hobby Shop, and a member of the National Retail Hobby Stores Association (NRHSA), started a monthly show segment concerning common issues facing hobby shops and modelers. The focus of these segments is on how both groups can work together for their mutual benefit and hopefully introduce the value of your local hobby store to help you become a more knowledgeable and more skilled model builder.



Mark's involvement in our hobby as a modeler, manufacturer and, hobby shop owner, who not only has a brick and mortar store in California but also attends, as a vendor, many of the train shows throughout the Country, makes him well suited to lead these discussions and provide insights into the problems and issues facing both the hobby shop industry and modelers. Who knows, you also may find a new source for your modeling products from this series.

If viewers have a hobby shop you recommend to be on our show, or you are a hobby shop owner who is interested in being on our show, please let Mark know at [Mark.Poggendorf@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:Mark.Poggendorf@newtracksmodeling.com).

It's that time again for me to return to my workbench and start working on something that I fell in love with and just have to model. Happens all the time. My current project is a 1938 Buick "Y" model in brass.



While I am modeling, you can help New Tracks Modeling by:

1. Volunteering to help us produce and develop our New Tracks Modeling shows.
2. Making a contribution to our Patreon account New Tracks Modeling to help pay for our out of pocket cost to run our shows. Click here to [donate](#).
3. Subscribing for free to our YouTube Channel, New Tracks Modeling, and ringing the bell to get advance notices of our YouTube shows including our Modeling Lifestyle series. If the advertisements on our YouTube videos are of interest please watch them so we can gain a little revenue to produce our shows.
4. Subscribing for free to our website: [NewTracksModeling.com](http://NewTracksModeling.com) which provides login links to our Wednesday Zoom events and also provides information about what New Tracks you can travel with us.
5. Spreading the word about our New Tracks Modeling Mentoring Scholarship program to every young Model Railroaders you know or you meet. Get the word out. Details at our website: [newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship](http://newtracksmodeling.com/scholarship)
6. Subscribe for free to O Scale Resource and S Scale Resource online magazines so you don't miss any of my articles and also see some great modeling by various modelers who may become one of your mentors.
7. Writing me! I love getting your comments, suggestions, and modeling ideas. I so enjoy hearing from you and having a conversation. My email is: [jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com](mailto:jimkellow@newtracksmodeling.com)

Thank you again for reading this far. Till next time with more New Tracks Modeling, Happy Modeling!

# S SCALE SHOWS & MEETS

## S-scale Zoom Meeting

Every Tuesday at 8pm Eastern Standard US time.  
hosted by Ken Zieska or Bill Lane

[Zoom Link](#)



## S Fest West 2023

Saturday, September 9, 2023

The Southern California S-Gaugers Club will be hosting its fifth triennial\* S FEST WEST on Saturday, September 9th, 2023 at the Knott's Berry Farm Hotel. We've moved the date up one week to secure a block of hotel rooms at a lower rate. Planning is in the early stages as we engage a guest speaker for the evening banquet. In addition to the banquet the Fest will feature vendors, trading, silent and live auctions, a door prize, and a commemorative car. Website: <http://www.socalsgaugers.org/sfestwest>



## Fall S-Fest 2023

November 2-5, 2023

Georgios Banquets Quality Inn & Suites Conference Center  
8800 W. 159th St., Orland Park, IL  
110 tables of Flyer and S scale. Two S-Fest 2023 Commemorative Cars by American Models  
Home layout tours. Call Joel Lebovitz at: 847-212-3541

## 2023 Danville Indiana Train Show O/S November 18, 2023

This will be the 16th year that volunteers from the CID have put on this outstanding multi-scalegauge Train Show. The 2023 Show will highlight O-S Scalers in an exclusive 2,000 square foot room for vendors, layouts, and socializing. Last year we had 14 vendors with 32 sales tables dedicated to O-S Scale Trains. Make your plans early to attend. We expect to sell out the O-S Room. [Please download the O & S Vendor Invitation here](#) to secure your sales table. NOTE: Please register and make payments to the CID contacts on the Vendor Flyer. S Scale Contact: Charles Malinowski, [bmry1905@gmail.com](mailto:bmry1905@gmail.com), 317-730-3187 O Scale Contact: Eric Peterson, [ericgpet@gmail.com](mailto:ericgpet@gmail.com), 904-607-7035





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**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
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**1600 members strong!**

- Annual All-S National Convention
- Bi-monthly Magazine
- Gauges and Merchandise
- Comprehensive website at:

**[www.nasg.org](http://www.nasg.org)**

*The most complete source of information about S!*





## The Model Railroad Resource LLC

Announcing our new BUDA No. 30 Clamp Type Steel Bumping Post. These can still be found all over, on customer sidings, yards and more. Kit includes the clamping parts to attach to the rail.

**\$7.95**



# How to contact us...



[www.oscaleresource.com](http://www.oscaleresource.com)



[www.sscaleresource.com](http://www.sscaleresource.com)

**Phone: 815-584-1577**

**FAX: 800-783-0127**

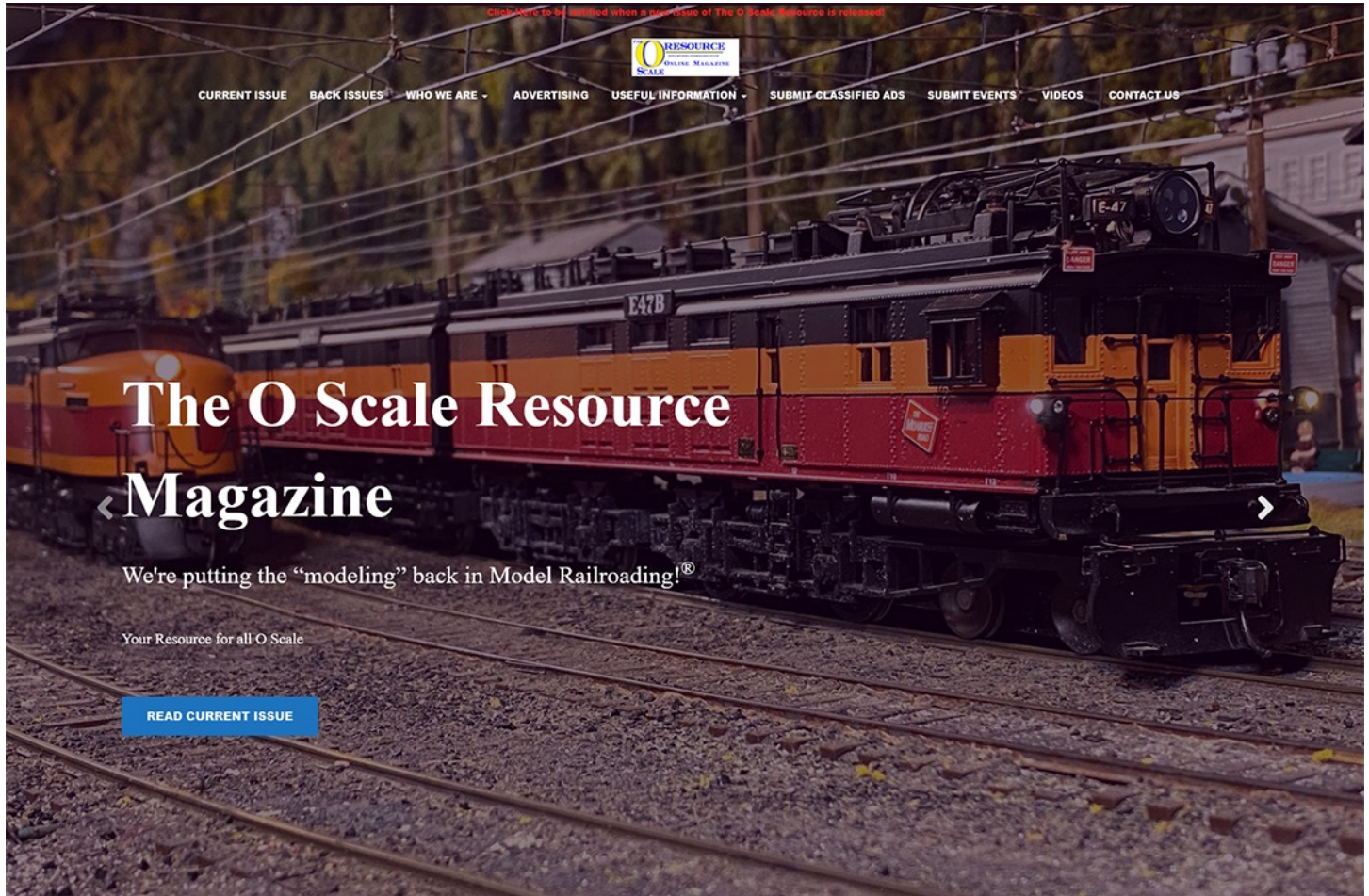
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[www.oscaleresource.com](http://www.oscaleresource.com)

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**Check out our other magazine, *The O Scale Resource*. Also free to read/download!**



## MANUFACTURERS

## DEALERS

## PRE OWNED



**Car Kits**  
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4778 Habits Glen Ct. Cincinnati, Ohio 45244  
www.eastwestrailservice.com trains@fuse.net

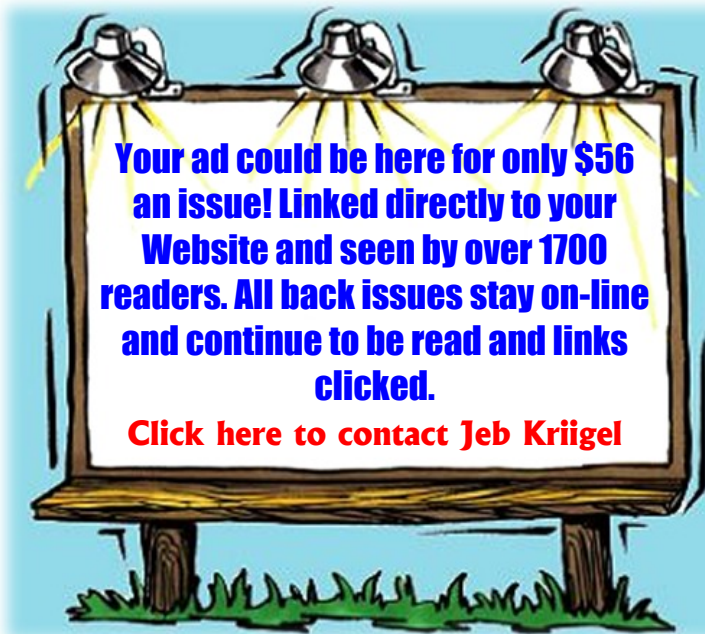
**S Scale Model Railroading Kits**



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