

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING IN THE NER.

ISSUE 295 AUTUMN 2024

NER COUPLER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



The Green Mountain Division hosted its first "Mountain Division Tour." Superintendent, Erich Golschneider captured this amazing photo on Dave Myers' Mid-Atlantic & New England.

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EDITOR
CHRISTOPHER S. CARFARO
editor@nermmra.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR
MAX BRISBEN
assteditor@nermmra.org

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS
**ERIC GOLSCHNEIDER, TOM OXNARD,
MIKE WHEELER, ANDREAS WERDER
DENNIS DEANGELIS, DAVE MYERS**

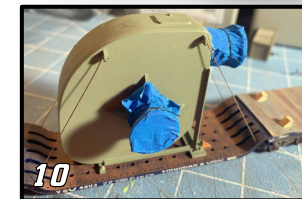
PROOF READERS
**MAX BRISBEN, CHUCK DILJAK,
RICK MAZZOLA, DAN SHEPARD**

FINAL COPY EDITOR
JEFF PASTON

CIRCULATION
ERICH WHITNEY
nerofficemanager@verizon.net

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OUR COVER PHOTO

One of the great things about being in the NMRA, is the opportunity to visit other members' layouts.

Erich Golschneider, Superintendent of the Green Mountain Division, took this amazing cover photo while visiting Dave Myers' Mid-Atlantic & New England. The combination of stunning model work and a great photographer equals a fantastic cover for us all.

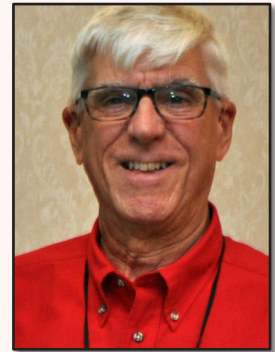
Well done gents. csc

TRAIN ORDER #13

ED O'ROURKE, MMR

PRESIDENT, NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA

VOLUNTEERS



By the time you read this the 2024 Convention in Rochester will be in the rear-view mirror. I hope that many of you were able to attend, and visit the many great layouts in upstate New York, learn some new things at the clinics, and perhaps most importantly, visit with old friends and make some new ones who share our enjoyment of this great hobby.

I want to thank Dave Durr and his team of VOLUNTEERS from the Lakeshores Division for hosting us.

The 2025 Convention is being hosted by the Seacoast Division in Concord, NH. A group of VOLUNTEERS led by Tage Erickson, are working hard to produce another great convention for your enjoyment and education.

I want to stress the word VOLUNTEERS. The NER (as well as the NMRA,) is a volunteer organization. Nothing gets accomplished without the efforts of volunteers willing to sacrifice their time for the benefit of the membership. (Time spent on NER/NMRA stuff is time not spent on the layout.) Without volunteers, the NER would not exist.

As you have heard, the NMRA National Office is no longer collecting payment for subscriptions to the print version of the *NER Coupler*, our quarterly newsletter. A group of VOLUNTEERS including Webmaster Jim Seroski, Coupler Editor Chris Carfaro, Office Manager Erich Whitney, Treasurer Gerry Covino, Assistant Treasurer Bill Rutherford and Assistant Coupler Editor Max Brisben have created a replacement system for our website that will be up and running, any day now. We owe them a vote of thanks for taking time away from their layouts to put this in place.

How about you? Where can you VOLUNTEER to help keep the organization running?

For example, Gerry Covino is now stepping down as our NER Treasurer and as the NER Convention Registrar. His work has been exemplary and his shoes will be hard to fill. That said, we are fortunate to have two VOLUNTEERS step up. Cheryle Insley of the HUB Division is willing to become our Convention Registrar while Bill Rutherford of the Green Mountain Division is stepping into the NER Treasurer shoes.

This is exactly the type of VOLUNTEERING that keeps our organization viable and moving forward. Along those lines, we are still in need of a VOLUNTEER to serve as Model Contest Committee Chair and carry on the work Ken May has done over the years for the NER. And, most importantly, we need a team of VOLUNTEERS to step up and host the 2026 NER Convention, which presently does not have a home.

Please give some consideration to what you can do to keep the NER thriving.

I Am The NMRA! So are YOU! 🚂

The winter edition of the *NER Coupler* will feature coverage of the Lakeshores'24 convention!

Look for it the first week of January!

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

CHRIS CARFARO, EDITOR



TO BE SEEN

A long time ago, I was one kid out of many. With eight children, two pets and two parents, it was quite the busy house. So much so, that being number five of eight, I would often feel invisible.

Over the years, I have become okay with not being noticed, both in my family and in other groups. I learned how to keep my own company and appreciate being part of a group or ensemble, rather than the star. Mind you, I

was a professional actor and dancer in New York and Los Angeles, so aspiring to be a star was not too far from my persona.

In the NMRA, although I would want to fade into the background, some people would find me and pull me out of my introverted nature. People like Tony Lichesse, Rich Laube, Paul Preuss, or Paul Mallery Jr. at the Model Railroad Club, in Union, NJ. More recently, I have found people willing to dig a little to get to know me better. Chuck Diljak, Jim Seroskie, Dave Gunn, Bill Brown, and Jeff Paston, to name a few. I was surprised when I asked a meeting of the 2025 NER Convention committee if someone could give me an introduction to various layout owners so that I could visit before the convention to gather photos. To my surprise – and slight embarrassment – one member of the group said, “Chris, are you kidding, everyone knows who you are.” Really?! Interesting, I felt “seen.”

Dave Gunn in the Eastern Canada Division and I have been conversing via Zoom and Whatsapp for months now. In the summer of 2022, Dave provided a great article for the *NER Coupler* on stock pens and abattoirs (slaughter houses), and we ran it in the autumn 2022 issue. After that, our friendship and conversations have led to me assisting Dave with a photo submission to the 2025 annual NMRA calendar.

This past August, Dave had a close family member pass away and he called me within a few days of it happening. Me! Why me? I called him back and we spoke for a bit. He reminded me that he saw our interactions as a growing friendship, and thought I might want to know about the situation. He was right. I have seen many deaths in my life, not to mention my time running as an Advanced Emergency Medical Technician. It can be startling when someone recognizes an empathic quality in your personality and then actually calls upon you to exercise that part of your being.

The question you might be asking by now is, why on earth is this the topic of my editorial? Because I want to remind us all that the people who we get to know better, will in turn get to know who you are. You will be seen. Whether you are number five of eight – or eight of eight – your presence holds a place. Sometimes that “place” you are holding is not your own; you hold it for a friend or loved one.

Model trains not only give us the joy of allowing our minds to drift into a made-up world to “suspend disbelief.” They also put us in close proximity with some really nice people. So, as you travel to conventions and meetings this coming year, I would charge you to stretch yourself and notice the people around you. Open yourself up and say, “hey, want to do lunch,” or “let’s ride to that together,” or something like that. The trains are so cool. The execution of the modeling – good or not so good – will give you a lot to think about. Your willingness to be open to other people might get noticed and invite a call. It might be a sad call, but if you can field it, the model trains you build together will stand second to a friendship that will deepen.

Heartfelt sympathies to you, Dave. 🚂

By the way, the headshot photo above, was taken on the Great Smoky Mt. Railway in North Carolina by my daughter, Sofia Carfaro.

FRESH AIR, STALE BASEMENT

MAX BRISBEN, ASST. EDITOR



WHY THE NMRA, INDEED?

One recent afternoon upstairs at Tony’s Train Exchange, I asked, “Hey Chris, what should I write for my column?”

He responded, “Are you going to the Rochester convention?”

“No,” I said. “I won’t be able to make it this year.”

“How about you write ‘Why are you in the NMRA?’” he said.

Well, it is a valid question – one which I have written about previously in this column. I feel I can say more about it. But, at that moment, I didn’t actually have an answer. I had to think about it! At face value, I do not fit the mould for a garden variety, card-carrying NMRA member.

Call it an investment in the future. This is *THE* community organization that is at the center of our hobby. It has connected me with people I wouldn’t have otherwise met, and opened doors to me that would’ve remained shut had I not been a member. I feel like I am slowly building a name for myself within the scale modeling community, and being in the NMRA is one of the supporting pillars in that endeavor. I don’t have an end goal or desire for fame, I just want to be connected with other people who participate in this hobby to learn and share. What has come and will continue to come along the way, I feel, is the result of what I put into my work and the relations I build with others.

With that, I would like to share what I have been working on recently. Since the second half of this column is titled “Stale Basement,” I’ve been quite busy with commission work in my basement workshop. It has been full of painting and weathering projects. There are always new projects coming in and almost always completed projects going out. These range from weathering an existing locomotive or freight car, all the way to building and detailing an undecorated locomotive; then painting, weathering, and installing DCC/Sound.

I love this type of work, especially when I get to do every step of the process and take a locomotive “all the way” from undecorated kit to finished piece. That includes installing the DCC, adjusting sound programming to match a prototype, lighting, detailing, and weathering. One of those recent projects is an Atlas HO ALCo S4 for which I just finished building the metal handrails.

I hope you enjoy the photos below, showing off all that wire bending work prior to painting. 🚂



NEWS & EVENTS

TIMETABLE

Compiled by Jack Lutz: alton_house@yahoo.com

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES
ALL POINTS NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA USA & CANADA

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION / TRACK
MOST EVENTS ARE MULTI DATE, ONLY THE FIRST DATE OF EVENT IS SHOWN		
October 9	National Steamup Symposium	Lodi, CA
October 12	Great Falls Model Railroad Club October Train Show	Lewiston, ME
October 13	2024 Upper Valley Model Railroad Show	White River Junction, VT
October 26	St John Society of Model Railroaders Model Train Show	Quispamsis, NB
October 26	The Great Hudson Valley T-Trak Contest	Hyde Park, NY
October 26	South Shore Model Rwy Club Model RR Show	Hingham, MA
October 26	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
October 26	Newtown Lions Foundation Model Train Show	Newtown, CT
November 2	Crawford Notch Excursion	North Conway, NH
November 2	The 49th Great New York State Model Train Fair	Syracuse, NY
November 3	Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show	Ansonia, CT
November 3	The Fireman's Hall Train Show at Lindenhurst	Lindenhurst, NY
November 10	Train & Hobby Show of the Hudson Valley	Poughkeepsie, NY
November 16	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Wilmington, MA
November 23	Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club 46th Annual Show	Brewer, ME
November 23	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Edison, NJ
November 29	Tour de Chooch	NH & MA
December 7	New England Model Train Expo	Marlborough, MA
December 8	Great Train Extravaganza	Albany, NY
December 14	18th Annual RIT Tiger Tracks Train Show & Sale	Rochester, NY
January 5	The Fireman's Hall Train Show at Lindenhurst	Lindenhurst, NY
January 25	Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show	West Springfield, MA

NER DIVISION "OPERATIONS", LAYOUT TOURS & EVENTS

DIVISION OPERATION SESSIONS, LAYOUT TOURS AND OTHER NMRA EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CHECK WITH THE EVENT PROVIDER WEBSITES FOR UPDATES.

Great Train Extravaganza 2024

PUBLIC MODEL TRAIN SHOW AND SALE

returns to the
Empire State Convention Center
Albany, New York (underneath the egg)
December 8th, 2024 10 to 4



PHOTO BY C. CARFARO

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- Giant LEGO layout for kids (of all ages) •
- Sales of model trains, scenery accessories, DVDs, photos and much more.

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NER COUPLER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

November 20th for January 2025 issue
February 20th for April 2025 issue

NER Coupler Reminders

1. Submission of articles and photos are welcome.
2. Print edition subscriptions can now be purchased on the NER website. Visit: www.nernmra.com
3. The NER Coupler is also available on the NER website for viewing or downloading at no cost, .

New Members

Provided by Erich Whitney as of August 2024

MASSACHUSETTS

Diane Mattera, Bryan Donovan

NEW JERSEY

Frank Chadwick, Garrison Vereen

Li, Anthony Fleres

NEW YORK

Jason Kirk, Steve Rogers, Patrick Flannigan, Adam Holota,

William Clarke, Edward O'Neill, Stephen Walsh

NOVA SCOTIA

Robert Melanson

RHODE ISLAND

Andre Gregoire

VERMONT

Jason Eastman

NER COUPLER SUBSCRIPTION UPDATE

by Chris Carfaro, Editor, NER Coupler



Hi friends. In the last issue I wrote about the concerns facing the NER Coupler. After much discussion, it turned out that basically there were three main issues to work out. 1. A cost adjustment for printing, mailing and the online setup of a subscription service. 2. A volunteer was needed to provide reports that could be easily imported and transferred to the NER treasurer, and 3. An online subscription portal/method needed to be created so that people could easily sign up for NER Coupler home delivery.

A solution has been worked out to all three issues. I will spare you the fine details and simply refer you to the NER website. As of September 1, 2024, you no longer paid for your print subscription to the NER Coupler when you renewed your NMRA membership. Instead, anyone who would like to receive the print edition can subscribe at the NER website. This includes the general public. And, as always, you can still read and download the NER Coupler without charge online. 🚂

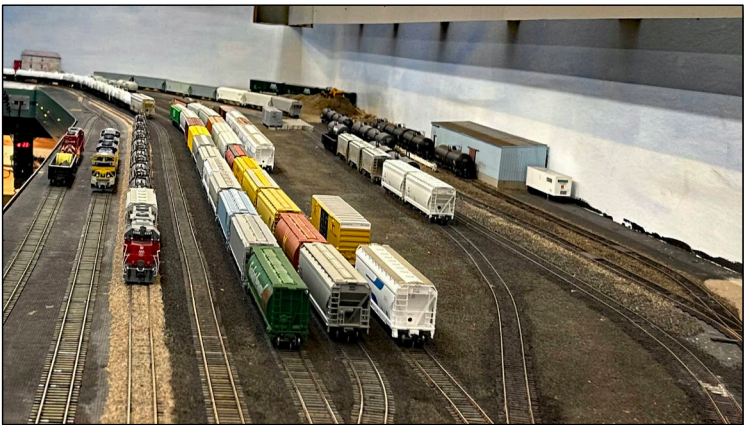


Paul Allard's Northern Vermont Railway

It was a beautiful mid-May Sunday in northern Vermont. The crab-apples were in bloom and the sun was shining in a cloudless sky, perfect for the Green Mountain Division's railfanning tour. Per our tour package itinerary, the first stop was the Northern Vermont Railway. Over the course of the day, 18 folks were on the tour.

After a greeting and overview of the NVR by its President, Paul Allard, MMR, we gathered at the busy rail barge terminal on Lake Champlain at the western terminus, Adams. Management had arranged for the 44- and 45-tonners that call the port home to be rolled out just for us, and they put on a great show doing several roll-bys. On the hills above us we spotted a Boston and Maine 4-6-2 Pacific, exercising its trackage rights, on the approach to the line's big bridge. Some of us headed off through the beautiful rolling Vermont countryside to the small town of Chateaugay and were lucky enough to be at the station as a pair of NVR F units rolled through with a freight. Others spent a lot of time at the two roundhouses on the line, photographing all the equipment while watching trains roll past on their way to the eastern end at Hamilton, New Hampshire. What a start to the day!

Our allotted hour was up faster than any of us could believe, and we piled into our cars to get to our next stop.



Nick Santo's Vermont Railway

The Vermont Railway has a lot of exciting construction going on. Nick Santo, top dog of this division of the VTR, joined by his wife Sue, gave us a tour of the right of way from St. Albans to Rutland with a branch to Whitehall, NY. The trackwork is completed and it's easy to understand why industries are being attracted to this line. Per Nick, the Maintenance of Way crew was inspired by having our tour on the calendar. It's clear to see that they went all out to show off the VTR. Industry tours are often a part of rail conventions. As a bonus, we were invited to the NixTrains factory to learn how Decoder Buddy is produced.

Then it was time to head off with lunch on our own, meeting up at the Northwestern Vermont Railway headquarters. We were provided the use of a conference room where the GMD held its annual business meeting. The agenda, including officer elections, moved quickly as trains awaited!



The Northwestern Vermont Railway, the NWV

The NWV runs from Champlain in the north through bucolic Vermont scenery, terminating in Mechanicville, NY. On the way, it stops in several small, but busy, towns. Green and gold NWV engines are a familiar sight for folks living along the line, interspersed here and there with Boston & Maine and Central Vermont Railway interchange-bound trains using trackage rights. The units are primarily EMD, but there are a few S-2s and C-424s for the Alco fans like me. In true railroad fashion, the Northern Vermont Railway and the NWV have interlocking boards of directors, and Paul Allard graciously hosted the tour on behalf of the NWV Model Railroad Association membership.



Next up, was the northern headquarters of

Dave Myers' Mid-Atlantic and New England

The Mid-Atlantic and New England (MANE) stretches all the way from Vermont to Baltimore, MD. President Dave Myers greeted us and set us loose along the line, making himself available to explain various aspects of the railroad's construction and operation. Much of the track runs through deep, narrow valleys hemmed in by steep wooded hillsides. Towns and cities cling to the slopes; the buildings and roads ascending toward the ridges on multiple levels. There was so much to see. Tracks disappeared into buildings along busy city streets; peaceful mountain streams stretched into wooded areas; and a busy waterfront caught our eye.

At the top of a ridge was the Gatorfoam factory, which Dave also heads up. He explained the many uses of this product in railroad and building construction.

Before we knew it, the day was over. In addition to the tour participants' individual thanks to the owners who had so generously shared their railroads with us, the Division presented each of our hosts with a personalized Green Mountain Division apron to use when operating their railroads. All agreed it was a terrific day out by the tracks.

Next issue: Planning a Layout Tour Day. 

"THE GREAT LITTLE KIT..."
Bar Mills Bashing
 SCALE MODEL WORKS

by Tom Oxnard, MMR
 Seacoast Division

Bar Mills has been making some wonderful model kits for a couple of decades. I like their detail parts, their signs, and their flexibility. One great thing about them is their well written and illustrated instructions. While I have made a few of the kits straight up as designed, I have often photo copied the wall drawings, and made changes to the original structure. It is easy to build various mock-ups from the copies and try out different designs. Let me show you a few examples.

A fairly simple change was done to the Gravelly Building kit. This kit comes with the two buildings butted together. I decided to separate them to allow for some more posters on the walls between the buildings, and because I wanted separate buildings along this roadway on my layout. To do this I needed to construct two new walls from basswood clapboard material. The edges needed trim boards from 1/16" stock and other basswood, all common to Bar Mill kits – and hopefully your pile of supplies. I also needed to put in some Northeastern Scale Lumber windows. I changed the roof shingles to wooden shakes to add a different touch.

Another wonderful model kit is Gibley's Furniture Company. This is a medium size building kit. I like it because of the interesting roof, the shingled walls, and the tar paper, all of which are different and typical of New England. I had a piece of real estate that was big enough to increase the size of this building and make it 2 inches longer. I also needed to build the mirror image of the stated plans and that was easy by taking the photo copied wall drawings and building a mock up for starters. I changed the store front to the right end and the loading dock to the left. I took two full inches off the back wall and used it to lengthen the building. I then built a new back wall with a piece of 1/16" basswood and added new windows. The walls are covered in shingles and tar paper so any seams are covered. I added a 2 scale foot brick foundation made from Monster Model Works 1/8" basswood. I altered and shortened the loading dock and lumber shed because of limited space on that side. I added an extra roof support and vent, and trim boards around the roof. Along with other small changes, I added an interior to the showroom, front stairs and railings.

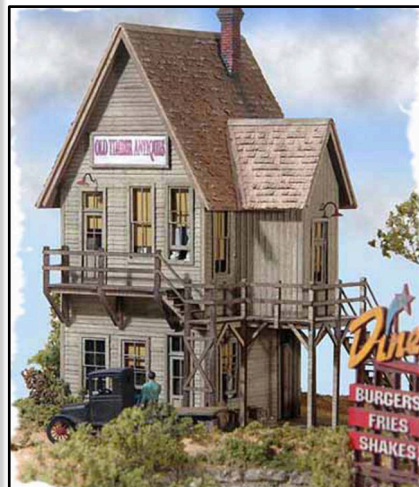


▲ PHOTO BY AUTHOR
 ► PHOTO COURTESY OF BAR MILLS MODELS



Wicked Wanda's is a popular early kit by Bar Mills that I built a long time ago exactly as the instructions stated. It has a high peaked roof, and a front balcony. It has nice weathered siding for a building in my seaport. Over the years I have made small changes to it, starting with renaming it for my granddaughter.

◀ PHOTO BY AUTHOR
 ▼ PHOTO COURTESY OF BAR MILLS MODELS



A big reconstruction was to change the steeply peaked roof to a gambrel roof. To do this, I took the model back to the work bench, and with a sharp Xacto knife, sliced along a shingle line to remove the upper section. I also cut down the end walls. Often the easiest way to do this with a built-up model is with fine sprue cutters, cutting along your pencil line until you get the proper angle. I was able to keep the shingles in place and add a new ridge cap and trim boards.

The next reconstruction





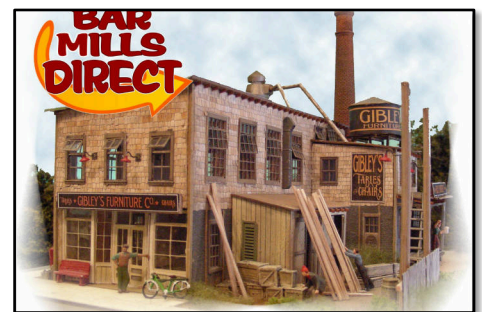
was to lower the peak of the second-floor entrance. This was done basically the same way but more shingle repair was needed on the main roof. I removed the front stairs, balcony, and posts that seemed to cover the front door to the cafe. I replaced the second-floor door with a window and patched the wall. Lastly, I built a shed roof over the front door, added some interior detail and LED light, and the Café is open for business again.

Finally, I want to show the changes I made to Bud Smiley's Gas Stop. This is a cute little kit with nice signage and many detail parts. The kit comes with a single office with a flat roof, and a front portico. I had space on the layout to make it bigger and wider, and I wanted to add an open garage to the side. I designed the station and garage to have a peaked roof line, replacing the flat roof, and leaving off the portico. I constructed the office as per the kit's instructions, added the gables on the ends with basswood clap-

board, and added the garage to the side. I wanted to show interior detail so I installed lights.

The kit comes with a variety of signage and I chose to make this a Shell station because I already had a Texaco station on my layout. I had to alter the sign board on the roof for the new building shape, but that was an easy process. I bought new gas pumps from JL Innovative Design, along with a Gas Station interior detail set. The rest of the outside detail comes with the Bar Mills kit. The "Shell" of the hanging Shell sign in the parking lot was printed from the internet.

▲ PHOTO BY AUTHOR
▼ PHOTO COURTESY OF BAR MILLS MODELS



▲ PHOTO BY AUTHOR
▼ PHOTO COURTESY OF BAR MILLS MODELS



Bar Mills kits offer you the ability to make different mockups and designs to challenge your creativity. You can make them larger or smaller to fit your space. You can change the architecture to suit your needs. They are made for kitbashing.



BOWSER ALCO RS-3 IN LONG ISLAND LIVERY

by Dennis DeAngelis
Sunrise Trail Division



Long Island Railroad modelers have long awaited for an ALCO RS-3. One made by Bowser has finally arrived. After purchasing two of them, these are my impressions.

THE PROTOTYPE

The American Locomotive Company (ALCO) followed up its RS-2 locomotive with an updated version – the now famous RS-3. Although, not a revolutionary change, the principal difference was in upgrading the horsepower from 1500 along with improved electrical systems and traction motors.

Introduced in the mid-1950s, the RS-3 went through three distinct versions or phases. These phases can be identified by the car body air intakes on the long hood. The Phase 1 units had louvers on the doors to the engine compartment. Phase 2 units had six large square intakes along the long hood. The final version, Phase 3, had three stacked air intakes on one of the forward engine compartment doors and two on one of the back doors. RS-3s were available with numerous options, including steam generators and dynamic brakes.

All told, 1,656 units were produced until 1956. They were mostly popular with eastern roads, being used in both freight and passenger service. New York Central had 130. Pennsylvania had 115. D&H had 104. The major western roads – SP, UP, ATSF, WP – all passed on them. In recent history, AMTRAK had 45 that were used in switching service (per Jeremy F. Plant in his *RS-3, Classic Locomotives, Vol. 4*)

ON THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD

In 1955 the Long Island Railroad ordered 10 Phase 3 RS-3s numbered 1551-1560. When delivered in September 1955, these locomotives (equipped with steam generators) replaced the last of its steam engines – freight H10s, and G5s in passenger service.

On a rainy October 8th, 1955, east facing G5s engine #39 met RS3 #1556 and G5s engine #35 facing west met RS3 #1555 in Hicksville. In what has become known as the “Farewell to Steam Ceremony,” the RS-3s replaced the steam engines and took their single cars back to their point of origin

Remarkably, three of these engines – steamers 35, 39, & RS-3



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWSDAY

1556 – still exist, albeit in various states of preservation. Prototype photos of #1556 in this review are courtesy of the Railroad Museum of Long Island in Riverhead, NY.

The LIRR designated these as class AGP-16msc: Alco General Purpose 1600 horsepower multiple unit equipped - steam generator equipped - speed control equipped.

Originally delivered in a paint scheme featuring a smoke grey body with orange ends and pilots, the RS-3s were later repainted in the LIRR'S classic World's Fair or sweep design. When the LIRR was taken over by the State of New York, RS-3s were painted in the MTA blue with yellow ends and cab pattern. It wore these colors until the end of their service on the LIRR.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BOWSER MFG.

THE MODEL

Several years ago, Bowser Manufacturing Co. embarked on an ambitious project to release models of the RS-3 in numerous variations. Long Island modelers waited patiently for release of a LIRR version. When it was finally delivered, it did not disappoint.

These are the first, correct versions of RS-3s decorated for Long Island ever produced in plastic. Delivered in the classic World's Fair paint scheme in road numbers 1552 and 1553. Planned for future release are units painted in the MTA scheme. Trainland is also offering a fantasy scheme: MTA colors in the World's Fair design.

My models were shipped well protected in a cardboard box with the locomotive attached to a plastic carrier by two screws into the bottom of the fuel tank – not in the plastic ‘clamshell’ that has become so popular. The unit can be easily removed with a Philips screwdriver. Plugs are provided to fill the screw holes. Both of my samples arrived in good condition with no missing or lose parts.

STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS

The models have diecast frames. They are powered by can motors with dual brass flywheels. All wheels are powered and supply power pickups, and are reportedly stainless steel. All wheels passed inspection using an NMRA gauge.

The DCC equipped models are fitted with LocSound V5 decoders and dual speakers. I followed the instructions for programming and had no problem changing the DCC address to match the road numbers using a NCE Power Cab system. I also adjusted the momentum and volume setting with no issues.

After a brief break-in period, both units ran smoothly through all speed ranges. With my DCC system set to 28 speed steps, the unit crept along at a very slow speed with no hesitancy. At maximum speed, the units exceeded 70 scale mph – a bit faster than the prototype. The engines had no problem pulling 10+ freight cars up a 2.5 % grade.

Sound is very subjective. To me, the sound is as I remember or like recordings I've heard. ALCO prime movers were famous for sounding like rattle cans. The horn sounds just like the Nathan M3R1 that was on the prototype. The bell rang too fast to my ear, but I am sure this could be changed with a CV adjustment.

The units are equipped with knuckle couplers without trip pins. The height is correct according to a Kadee height gauge.

DETAILS AND PAINT

These units are decorated in the World's Fair paint scheme. The grey paint matches Tru-Color paint #298 closely. The orange matches models by other manufacturers and is less 'red' than recent Atlas LIRR decorated models. The paint is smoothly applied. Warning labels are readable with magnification.

It's in the details where these models really shine. While they lack the sunshades and underframe cabling found on some contemporary models, they lack little else. Grab irons, windshield wipers, m.u. hoses, coupler lift bars, and wind screens are all present. Handle details for the access doors are all applied separately. The cab has engineers and fireman seats, and control stands. There are no figures installed.



PHOTO BY AUTHOR

Unit 1552 has front and rear snowplows, while 1553 does not. Period photos show 1552 with snowplows, although they were added and removed at various times. Correct for the LIRR prototype, the models feature twin sealed beam headlights, lit with directional LEDs. The radiator screens are see-through and fans underneath are detailed. LIRR specific details are unlit 'coffee can' marker lights on the sides of both ends and Nathan M3R1 air horns on brackets on the cab front of the long hood. While the horn is very well done, the bracket looks a bit short (a very minor detail). They are painted silver. Period photos show them in body color. On the fireman's side of the



PHOTO BY AUTHOR




PHOTO BY AUTHOR

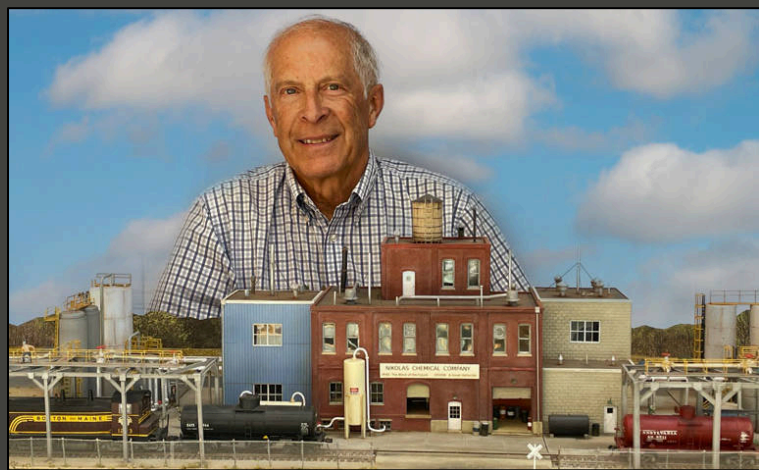
long hood (the LIRR ran long hood forward), the handrails stop short of the cab and turn to the body. This is correct. Mounted right behind the cab are Pennsy style speed control boxes. The Long Island had been a Pennsylvania Railroad subsidiary and used its speed control system. A cable from the cab to the walkway before the control box is present, but the junction box that connected that cable to the control box is missing. These could be added. The attached picture shows the cables, but the control box is missing.

With the attention to details, the roof of the short hood is an anomaly. Present is the steam generator exhaust stack up against the rear of the cab. The steam generator intake vent is located to the engineer's side of the cab and there are two 'protrusions' sticking out along the centerline. On the prototype the intake vent is much closer to the centerline of the hood and the 'protrusions' are nuts on bolts coming up from inside the hood located right of center (the exhaust stack has been removed).

Overall, these are outstanding models, and I am sure that Long Island Railroad modelers will agree it was well worth the wait.

List prices: DC Analog Version \$219.95; Sound/DCC Version \$319.95.

As an aside in other LIRR news, a surprise announcement was made by Athearn Trains. They are releasing one of their RS-3s decorated for the passenger paint scheme that matched the extra-fare heavyweight cars that ran to Montauk. This scheme was the "Goodfellow scheme" – dark grey with orange ends – with a wide blue stripe across the sides. This scheme was only applied to the two LIRR RS-2s 1519 and 1520. It has never been offered on a plastic model. The only model that I am aware of is a brass version offered years ago for over \$1,000 without DCC and sound. While not technically correct, it will be interesting to see Athearn's version. 



Scratch-building A Depressed Center Flatcar Load

By Mike Wheeler -Nutmeg Division



▲ FIGURE 12 - READY TO SHIP.

My dad has a saying, "It's not what it is, it's what it can be." This has been a helpful lesson everywhere in life, especially in my model railroading efforts.

I remembered this phrase at work one day while swapping out the cartridge on my label maker. Something about the shape and size of the empty cartridge kept my attention. So, I brought it home, intending to use it for some sort of scratch-building project.

When I saw the advertisements for Class One Model Works' new GSC depressed center flatcar, I was hit with two realizations:

1. I had to have one of these excellent cars, and 2. My empty cartridge would make a great and unique load for this car. I ended up purchasing one of the limited-run Virginian and Ohio GSC cars from Homeshops LLC.



▲ FIGURE 1 - THE BASIC LABEL CARTRIDGE AFTER CLEANUP.

With the car in hand, I then sought out a suitable heavy machine load to forge my label cartridge into. A Google search for "heavy flatcar load" revealed many interesting loads, but nothing with the distinct shape my cartridge had. I was stuck. Then one evening, it hit me. I had used a similarly shaped piece of machinery at a past employer – a centrifugal blower!

A centrifugal blower is essentially a fan where the inlet is in the center, along the axis of rotation. Fluid or air enters, then is spun to the outside by centrifugal force and through a radial outlet. Searching for photos turned up many excellent examples of large centrifugal blowers I could use as a reference. From these photos and my past work experience, I set out to craft my cartridge into a large centrifugal blower load.

CONSTRUCTION

All of the styrene I'm listing was in my existing stock or my scrap bin. I started fabrication by trimming the small protrusions on the outside of the cartridge so that the general shape had no interruptions. I removed the ribs on the curved face with a chisel knife and filed down any high points. I also sanded the large sides so any adhesives would stick better. Since my cartridge had one nice flat face, I decided to keep it as the bottom of my load. This was the only feature I kept.

I elected to laminate a piece of .030" styrene sheet to each side, which would cover the recessed letters and give me a smooth surface on which to glue details. I traced the cartridge shape onto large scrap pieces of styrene, and cut out two slightly large pieces, one for each side. I bonded these in place with solvent cement and

let them set. I also covered the end notch with another small scrap of styrene (Figure 2) and bonded it in place. Once the bond had hardened, I sanded and filed all edges to align with the original cartridge shape.

Next, I added the support framework under the outlet end of the blower. I used 1/16" styrene angle for all of these pieces and made sure to align the vertical faces of the angle to the

outside of the blower housing. I cut four pieces approximately 15 scale feet long, and one piece about six scale feet long.

With the blower sitting right side up on my workbench, I glued two of the long pieces vertical and aligned with the front side. I then glued the short piece to the bottom of these, making sure it was centered. I then glued the remaining



▲ FIGURE 2 - LAMINATING SHEET STYRENE TO THE CARTRIDGE.

two long pieces connecting the front crossmember and the blower housing. The result of all this is shown in Figure 3. The angles should all nest into each other to make strong joints.

I then set to work creating the inlet and outlet. I had some 1/2" styrene tube from Plastruct on hand. I cut two pieces about 5/8" long and filed the ends square (this removed a little of the length). I glued the inlet tube in the center of one of the sides and the outlet tube on the end plug (Figure 4). I made sure to apply the solvent around the full circumference – both on the inside and outside of the tube – to have a strong bond. I also added



▲ FIGURE 3 - FRONT SUPPORT LEGS MADE OF 1/16" STYRENE ANGLE.

four 90-degree gussets equally spaced around the inlet tube on the side. These came out of my scrapbox.

The next step is creating the flanged connections at the end of the inlet and outlet. Here you have a few options. You can model the flanges with cover plates and N-B-W castings. You can also leave the tubes open and use scraps to create some interior fan detail. I elected to keep the flanges simple and cover the inlet and outlet with strapped-down tarps. The choice is up to you. I cut four 5/8" discs from .030" styrene sheet and laminated them into two discs of 0.060" thickness. I then bonded one to the end of each tube, taking care to keep the discs concentric to the tubes.



▲ FIGURE 4 - BLOWER WITH INLET AND OUTLET INSTALLED.

Turning to the backside of the blower, I glued a short chunk

of 3/8" square tube to the center of the face, roughly aligned to the inlet tube. This piece represents an electric motor housing or some other type of drive unit (Figure 5). I covered the open end of the tube with a small chunk of styrene sheet and added braces and gussets made from scrap strip. I then sanded all of these pieces to remove burrs and rounded the edges at the end.

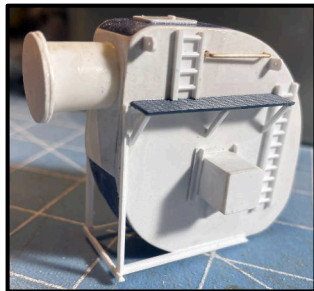


▲ FIGURE 5 - MOTOR HOUSING INSTALLED ON BACKSIDE.

I then turned to detailing. On the motor side, I glued a short length of scrap roofwalk as a platform above the motor box (Figure 6) and added gussets made from .040" square strip. I made a handrail from .020" brass wire, drilled two corresponding holes in the housing, and glued it in place with cyanoacrylate adhesive.

I also glued a few lengths of styrene ladder stock, one from the ground to the platform, and one from the platform to the top of the blower. At the top of the blower near the ladder, I glued a small rectangle of .030" x .250" strip as an access hatch. A small slice of 1/16" styrene rod served as a handle.

I then added mounting points (Figure 7) for attaching the load to the flatcar. I made these from .030" x .125" strip, with a 1/32" hole. I added 2 to each side at the top, making sure to orient the holes horizontally. You could also add other mounting lugs in different places for more visual interest. Big loads like these often have many tie-down points.



▲ FIGURE 6 - MOTOR SIDE WITH SAFETY EQUIPMENT INSTALLED.

Next, I cut two lengths of scrap .030" thick styrene strip – about 6 to 7 scale feet long – to make mounting base plates. I glued one to the underside front cross-member, and one near the rear of the bottom of the housing. Both should be centered on the body and squared to the sides.

The last pieces to be added are the four deck mounting pins made from .020" brass wire. I pulled out my flatcar for this step.



▲ FIGURE 7 - MOUNTING PLATES AND PINS ON UNDERSIDE.

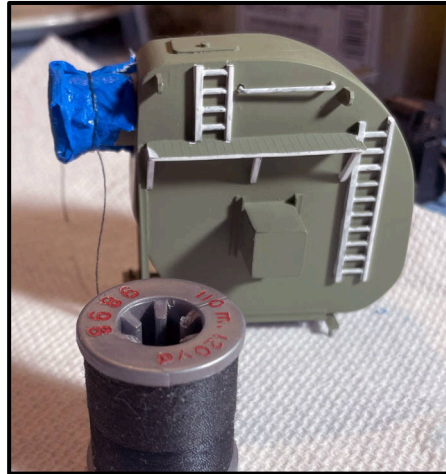
The Class One Model Works car has a nice center deck with a grid of holes for mounting pins. I placed my blower on the car deck and centered it both side-to-side and end-to-end. Using a pencil, I marked locations on the front and rear mounting plates where holes were to be drilled. I removed the load and drilled slightly undersized holes in the given locations. Under-sizing the holes made them a press-fit, making it easier to put the pins in place for gluing.

I cut short lengths of wire and pressed them into place, making sure that the wire protruded out the top of the plate to represent the deck-mounting bolts. You can also add thin discs to represent washers and nuts. Once the CA on the pins set, I made sure to file any burrs or glue blobs on the pins.

With the assembly of the blower complete, I then washed it with warm water and dish soap in preparation for painting. I used Rustoleum Camouflage Green, but any neutral industrial color such as blue or gray will do. Since this is a rattle-can paint, I used two light coats. Once this base coat dried, I painted the ladders, railing, and walkway white for visibility (orange or yellow would

also be appropriate).

Once the detail paint dried, I used plain gray tissue paper and blue acrylic craft paint for tarps around the inlet and outlet. I cut small squares of tissue paper and wrapped it around the flange as shown in Figure 8. Starting on the flat surface, I



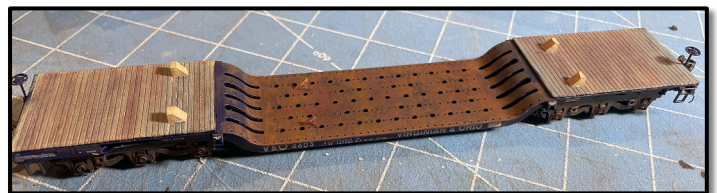
▲ FIGURE 8 - WRAPPING THE OUTLET WITH TARP AND TIE-DOWNS.

Painted the tissue paper which effectively glued it in place. I worked my way from the center of the paper square towards the edges until the entire square was blue. I had success by working in small spots and allowing the paint to dry before moving on.

My final step on the blower was to simulate straps around the tarp. I used thin black

thread to tie loop knots around each tarp. I wrapped around the circumference two to three times to properly secure the tarp, then secured the thread on the underside with some gel CA. This completes the blower.

FLATCAR PREP:



▲ FIGURE 9 - AFTER THE WEATHERING DECKS.

Next, I turned my attention toward the flatcar and weathering it to match my early 1980s era (Yes, I weathered a special-run car!) The detail and construction on the car are excellent but delicate, so I was careful in handling. For my weathering, I used acrylic craft paint in several colors and shades.

I dry-brushed the center depressed deck area, freely mixing colors as I went to get variations of rust. I used nutmeg and chocolate brown, mixed with flat black and orange in places. I worked in small patches, then blended everything with a large soft brush in a swirling motion a la Bob Ross.

The upper end decks received a base coat of light gray with highlighted individual boards, using tan and nutmeg brown for visual interest. Once this set, I dry-brushed the boards with chocolate brown and white, mixing as I went.

For the remainder of the car, I used mainly nutmeg brown and white. I kept the brown darker towards the decks, and lighter towards the trucks and underside. I added hints of black on the ends where wheel spray would come up.

I had placed blocks glued to the upper decks, originally intending these as mounting points. But after coming up with a better mounting scheme, I elected to leave them for visual interest.

FINAL ASSEMBLY

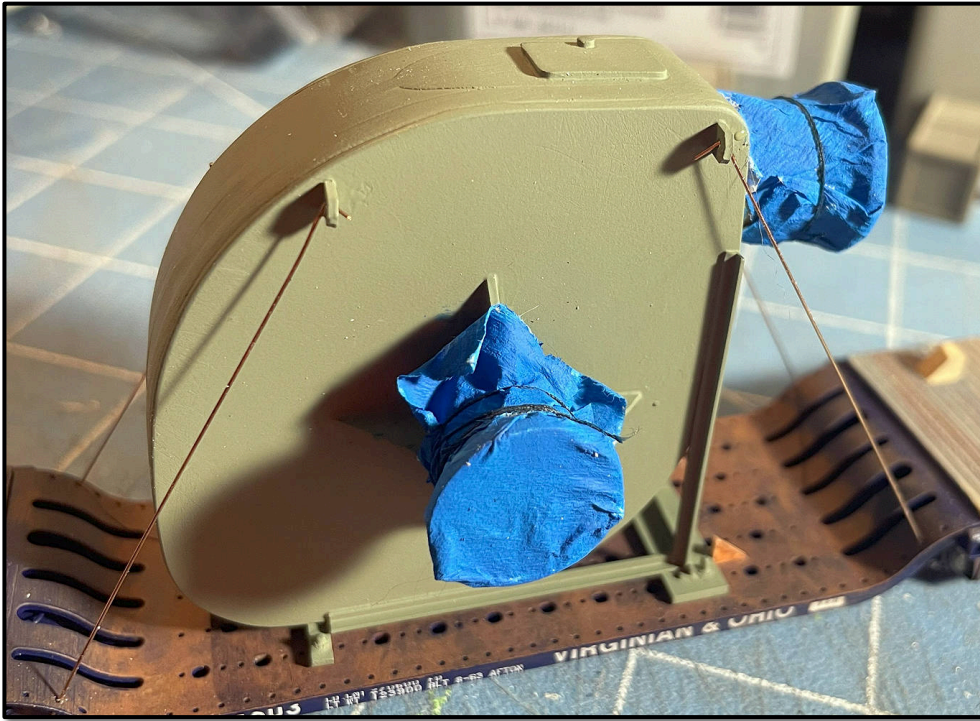
With the paint on the car dry, my intention was to make the load removable, but not so loose that it would come off during regular operation. I centered the load on the deck, making sure the four pins fit in place and the plates were flush on the deck. To make sure loading the car went the same every time, I glued two small scrap triangles of styrene to the deck aligned with the front load mounting plate. I later brush painted these to match the deck.

I used .020" wire to make the tie-down cables. I cut four pieces, about 3 inches long. On one end of each wire, I bent a small 90-degree hook. I inserted the wire through the mounting lugs on the load, so that the hook is at the top of the blower. I then passed the wire through the holes in the edge of the step-down of the flatcar deck. These are an excellent feature of the car, and Class One Model Works executed them perfectly for removable loads like this.

This next step is crucial if you want your load to be removable. Using CA sparingly, glue the wire tie-downs to the mounting lugs on the blower. Glue all four wires, then leave the load to set overnight. This will create a strong bond which will not break when you remove the load. The next day I came back and trimmed the wires to length under the flatcar deck. I then dry-brushed the wires with brown and black to simulate rusty cable. You could also use chemically blackened wire in place of the phosphor bronze wire I used and skip the painting step.

There you have it! A neat load made from a scrap piece of office supplies. You could go a lot farther here if you wanted. Add more supplies in crates or on pallets to the end decks or add more tie-downs. A blower like this could be shipped with pipe sections, electrical boxes, and more. Review prototype photos and use them for inspiration.

And don't forget to keep your eye out for useful materials in your everyday life. You never know what you can make them into for your layout. 🚂



▲ FIGURE 10 - INSTALLING THE LOAD USING WIRE TIE-DOWNS.



▲ FIGURE 11 - THE TIE-DOWNS IN PLACE. NOTE THAT THEY ARE ONLY GLUED TO THE LOAD, NOT THE FLAT CAR.



Boxcar Alley

By Andreas Werder
Sunrise Trail Division

While successful photography often requires planning, proper equipment, and ideal conditions like lighting. The following is even more critical in model photography.

Sometimes, we capture images spontaneously with minimal staging and low expectations for the outcome. Surprisingly, these impromptu shots often yield remarkably good results. **Photo 1** exemplifies this kind of spontaneous success. I took it on my CNJ Bronx Terminal layout, a detailed model of a historic freight yard in the South Bronx, New York, owned by the Central Railroad of New Jersey.

The scene in Photo 1 depicts Paul, a local grocer, having just finished loading fresh produce onto his pickup truck (Woodland Scenics) from one of the reefers (Rapido Trains) on team Track 2 of the terminal. Paul is absent as he has gone to the office to pay his dues. In the background, we see the two-story office of the freight house. A string of boxcars, including one from the New York Central railroad (Atlas), are being unloaded. The highly prototypical Belgian Blocks paving is from MonsterModelWorks.

This photo is one of several where I tested photo stacking. I had just finished developing an app for my iPhone (a model 6+, back then) that allowed me to take multiple shots from a fixed location, each with a different focal point. Each photo captured a perfectly sharp section at a specific distance. I then processed the series of photos with *HeliconFocus*, which combined them into one sharp image with a depth of field from foreground to background. I only replaced the background with a uniform sky (thanks to Chris Carfaro for the clouds!) using Gimp. This realistic photo is the result of a few key ingredients: prototypical uncompressed scenery, a few realistically looking details, maximum depth of field, and an unusual low-angle shot that could represent the point of view of an observer.

The CNJ prototype terminal began operations in 1907 and



served until the early 1960s. It lacked direct rail connections to other freight terminals or mainlines, relying instead on float bridges to transfer freight cars to and from New Jersey. A distinctive feature of the terminal was its oval freight building with two circular tracks. The inner track allowed for multiple 36 ft boxcars to be spotted simultaneously, enabling efficient loading and unloading through aligned freight doors.

Photo 2 is of my prototypical N scale layout measuring only 4 by 4 feet and is based on plans from *Railroad Model Craftsman* (1950). I started the project in 2016 after discovering the enjoyment of hand-laying track, building turnouts and crossings using FastTrack templates and tools. When I took the photo, the layout was nearly complete with only a few details remaining. All tracks were finished and ballasted with fully functional turnouts, controlled by DCC accessory decoders. The driveways between the team and storage tracks were paved, and the freight house, along with a row of houses along the (invisible) Bruckner Boulevard, were built, painted, and weathered. However, the cars on the access ramp of the Third Avenue Bridge, leading into Harlem and Manhattan, were hastily placed on an unfinished bridge deck that still lacked railings. So, that is a brief look into my N scale laser cutting world. I look forward to sharing more with you in the future. 🚂



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD JEFF HANKE, MMR VEHICLES TELL THE STORY



As model railroaders, we tend to focus on the rail equipment and the right of way. But for the casual visitor to your layout, other elements will quickly tell the story of the era you are modeling. Structures and signs give some clue, but it is the presence of highway vehicles that really relate the timeframe in which you model.

I model 1982 and I focus some of my modeling effort on having appropriate vehicles in parking lots, driveways, and on streets. The average age of a vehicle in 1982 was about 7 years, so the average car is a 1975 model. Those of us who remember those days will think fondly of cars that were much larger than they are today. The era of the land yacht abounded. Gas could be leaded or unleaded. Single digit miles to the gallon was common. American makes prevailed, as imports – other than the VW Beetle – were rare. Vinyl tops, landau roofs, two-tone paint, artificial wood paneling, conversion vans, and El Camino type car-trucks was the style of the day.

The late 70s and early 80s era vehicles have been extremely hard to find in model form. Probably the best example of the void in the market for this era vehicle, the Atlas 1978 Ford Fairmont sedan and wagon which sold new for \$15 or so, routinely sell on eBay for over \$50 a piece! Crazy prices for a plastic HO scale common 70s era car.

Luckily, there have been some recent releases that allow the late 70s or early 80s era modeler to better fill their vehicle collection. I acquired eight higher end cars and decided to outline how to make even top shelf cars look better. Rapido has released an early 80s Chevrolet Caprice sedan in several colors and I picked up a blue and green one. Brekina has stepped up their game offering a Ford Gran Torino coupe, Ford LTD Country Squire station wagon, Jeep Wagoneer SUV, and a Cadillac Eldorado convertible. A new comer to the vehicle market, PCX, has started making extremely good vehicle models. I picked up its Jeep Golden Eagle CJ-7 Wrangler and Lincoln Continental Mark V coupe. Each car ran about \$20-30 apiece. This is the upper end that I'm willing to pay for a vehicle, but for such well done models, I'm willing to buy them.

DISASSEMBLY AND REPAINTING

I started the first of these cars – the station wagon – the way I had done previous vehicles by applying *Micro Mask* liquid masking agent to the windows. It didn't occur to me to try to disassemble the vehicle first – until the second car.



The good news is that the cars are just snapped together so disassembly is a breeze. I took my smallest screwdriver and just popped the bottom off each car, exposing the interiors. After a quick Google search, I identified appropriate interior colors for each car. It was common for interiors of the day to have different seat, wheel, center console, and dash colors. It was also typical for seat colors to match the exterior paint. I painted each of the interior seats, dashboards, and steering wheels with Tamiya paints of various shades. I next "weathered" the interiors with a wash of flat black paint, thinned with alcohol. This was darker than I would normally do on the outside of a freight car, but the interior is only visible through the thick clear windows, so the



wash needs to be heavy to have any effect. I also applied the wash on each of the wheels to add depth to them.

For years, I normally add a license plate decal to my cars. But for these, I worked with CMR Products to make a custom run of 1982 West Virginia license plate decals. West Virginia only uses a plate on the rear of each car, so a sheet goes a long way. I sent CMR photos of a dozen or so real 1982 plates and he made a sheet of 75 or so random numbers. I applied each decal with Micro Sol, so the decal softens and conforms to the model.

After popping the clear plastic window pieces out of each car, (and taping over both sides of the Jeep and Cadillac convertible windshields,) I coated the shells with Tamiya flat clear (TS-80) from a rattle can. This clear coat really tones down the metallic paint on some of the car and has a realistic effect.

DRIVERS AND ASSEMBLY

Once the clear coat was dry, I clicked the clear plastic window pieces back into each car. The Gran Torino needed some



white glue to keep the piece in the shell securely.

Since these models were so finely detailed, I wanted to draw attention by adding drivers in most of them. I didn't put a driver in the Jeep or Cadillac because they are open cars. To fit a driver in most HO scale cars, you'll need to cut them off at the knees and I didn't want this to be so obvious on open cars. To fit the drivers into the other cars required some trimming, first from the knees down. There is no leg room in these cars so I took a Dremel tool and sanded the hamstring area of the legs and the small of the back of each figure. Finally, I sanded the bottom of each driver seat off. This is necessary to make the drivers sit lower in the seat and not hit their heads on the car roof. I secured each with super glue gel.

I let the glue dry for an hour to make sure it was fully cured. Super glue lets off fumes as it dries, and if you reassemble the car too quickly, the fumes will fog the clear windows. To finish the cars, I just pushed the shells back onto their frames. They are held together with friction, not glue.

This was a quick and easy series of little projects that added some classic shaped and painted cars to my layout. They all scream late 70s and early 80s, adding to the quick recognition of the era I model.

I look forward to sharing more on the new East End going forward, but until then...Keep on workin'.




Running in Circles by Mike Tylick MMR

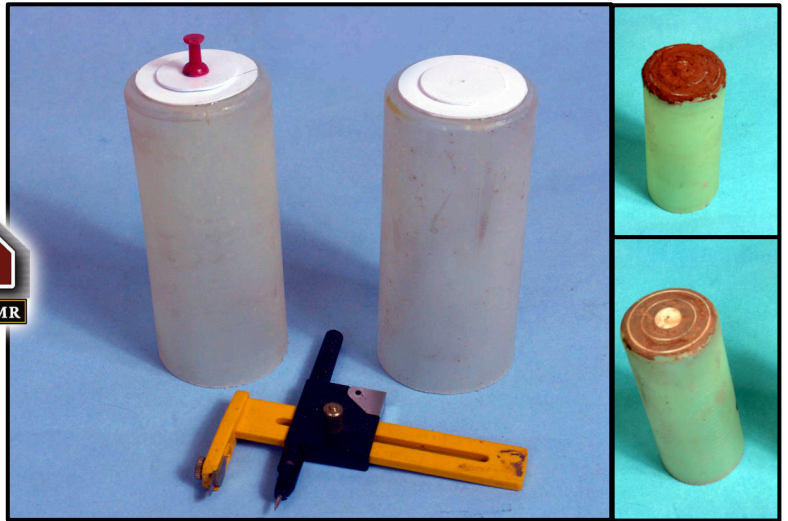
A straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Curved lines are a little longer, so they take a little more time and effort for the eye to follow, and thus become more visually interesting.

Curves appear much more frequently in nature than straight lines. They occur more often than one might think in man-made objects. Unfortunately, it's much easier to draw or cut a straight line with a ruler. A good set of French curves can help to plot an irregular curve, but cutting along that line still takes patience, skill, and practice. Luckily there are good tools for cutting circles – which are almost impossible to draw or cut perfectly by hand.

As many dutiful husbands, I occasionally accompany my wife on shopping trips. In doing so, I've discovered that craft shops – in addition to stocking many useful paints and glue – are a treasure trove of small beads, buttons, and ribbons. With a little imagination these “finds” are very suitable for modeling projects. These craft shops also often have unusual tools that you see nowhere else.

The Olfa Circle Cutter is such a tool. It's inexpensive and suitable for cutting circles, ranging from a half inch up to a three inch radius. Although not suitable for metal, it will cut through most wood and paper products with multiple passes and a bit of patience. Styrene sheet is the easiest material to cut. One or two passes with a sharp scribe will easily let you snap away the unwanted material. Better compass sets offer blade attachments for circle cutting, but they are now difficult to find and can be quite expensive. And they really don't work any better. Larger circle cutting tools are readily available from a number of sources, but I find my little craft tool suitable for almost all of my modeling projects.

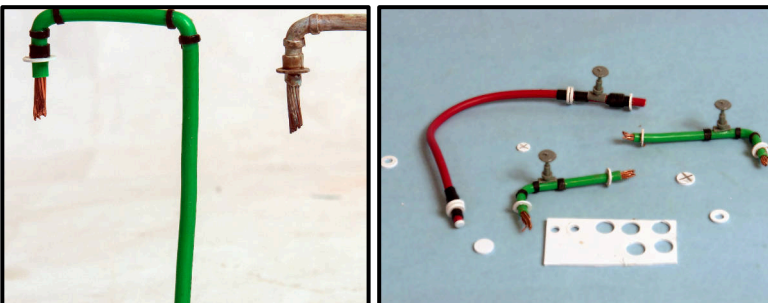
Unfortunately, it's difficult to accurately cut circles smaller than a half inch radius with the Olfa tool. However, stationery store paper punches offer an easy way to cut very small circles and disks up to a quarter inch in diameter. Even with the gap in small sizes, it's surprising how much work can be done with these small cutters. Novelty punches are also available at the craft store, but I rarely use them for my projects. Pictured here are an assortment of some recent projects. I was surprised how often I use these tools. 



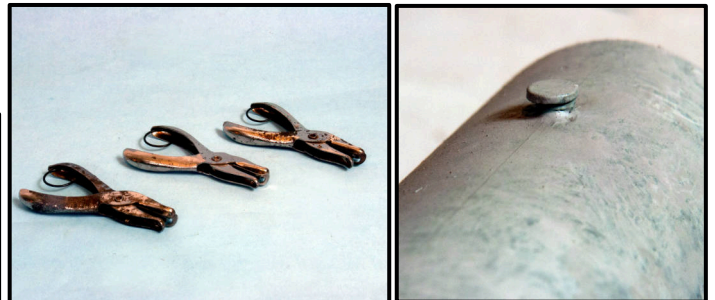
TOP PHOTO: THE OLFA CUTTER IS SHOWN WITH A PAIR OF CONDIMENT DISPENSERS THAT I'M CONVERTING INTO O SCALE OIL STORAGE TANKS. THE CONCAVE BOTTOM WILL NEED A CONVEX END CAP. I MADE MINE FROM THREE CONCENTRIC DISKS CUT FROM .040" STYRENE WITH MY OLFA CUTTER. A PUSH PIN FORCED THROUGH THE CIRCLE CENTERS ACCURATELY ALIGN THEM FOR GLUING TOGETHER.

TWO TOP RIGHT PHOTOS: THE CONCENTRIC DISC CONTOURS ARE FILLED WITH BONDO SPOT & GLAZING PUTTY AND SANDED INTO A SMOOTH CONVEX SHAPE.

BOTTOM: THE FINISHED FUEL TANKS. THE SMALL PUMP HOUSING WAS BUILT FROM SCRIBED STYRENE.



AT LEFT, THE FILLER PIPES FOR MY OIL TANKS WERE BENT FROM #12 STRANDED WIRE. PAUL ST. MARTIN SUGGESTED THIN SLICES OF HEAT SHRINK TUBING COULD SIMULATE PIPE JOINTS. THE STYRENE FLANGES JOINING THE PIPE TO THE TANK WERE CUT USING TWO OF THE PAPER PUNCHES. AT RIGHT, MORE FILLER PIPES AND A TANK CAR HOSE WERE MADE IN THE SAME WAY. PLASTRUCT GATE VALVES WERE ATTACHED WITH CA SUPER GLUE.



MY OLD, BUT TRUSTWORTHY, PAPER PUNCHES, 1/8", 3/32", AND 1/4" AVAILABLE ALMOST EVERYWHERE. I SEEM TO USE ALL THREE ALMOST AS FREQUENTLY.

A VENT CAP FOR MY OIL TANK WAS MADE FROM 3/32" AND 1/4" PUNCHES FROM .040" STYRENE SHEET. .040" STYRENE IS ABOUT THE LIMIT OF THE THICKNESS THAT CAN BE EASILY PUNCHED. THICKER PARTS CAN BE MADE BY LAMINATING SEVERAL DISKS.

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NORTHEASTERN REGION, NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



PRESIDENT

ED O'ROURKE, MMR
Townsend, MA 315-247-0494
nerprez@nmra.org

VICE PRESIDENT

DAVE INSLEY
Jamesville, NY 978-855-4363
david.insley@comcast.net

PAST PRESIDENT

JOHN DOEHRING
Pepperell, MA 978-433-6337
john@jdoehring.com

NMRA EASTERN DIRECTOR

JOHN DOEHRING
Pepperell, MA 978-433-6337
john@jdoehring.com

AREA DIRECTORS

NORTHERN

TOM OXNARD, MMR
Exeter, NH 603-772-6265
tfoxnard@gmail.com

EASTERN

MIKE TYLICK, MMR
Marshfield, MA 413-262-1582
mtyllick@hotmail.com

SOUTHERN

MARK MORTIZ
mwmortiz@optonline.net

WESTERN

ED OLSZEWSKI
Syracuse, NY 315-488-4193
eolszew1@gmail.com

DIVISION DIRECTORS

EASTERN CANADA

GREG WILLIAMS, President
Canterbury, NB 506-279-2232
gregw@gmail.com

GREEN MOUNTAIN

ERICH GOLSCHNEIDER,
Superintendent
Chelsea, VT 802-751-5361
erichg60@aol.com

SEACOAST

GLENN MITCHELL, President
Concord, NH 603-856-4103
glenn.t.mitchell@comcast.net

METRO NORTH

SCOTT RUSSELL
upturbine@aol.com 203-426-1407

GARDEN STATE

JIM HOMOKI, President
Pittstown, NJ
heavyelectric@netscape.net

SUNRISE TRAIL

DENNIS DEANGELIS, President
Northport, NY 516-885-3901
rs31553@yahoo.com

HUB

MANNY ESCOBAR, President
president@hubdiv.org

LITTLE RHODY

SUE OSBERG, Superintendent
Coventry, RI 401-822-0956
sosberg1701@gmail.com

NUTMEG

ART DUTRA III, Superintendent
Meriden, CT
apdutra3@sbcglobal.net

CENTRAL NEW YORK

DREW JAMES, Superintendent
Clay, NY 315-430-3440
domerdrew@gmail.com

HUDSON-BERKSHIRE

BEN MAGGI, President
Loudonville, NY 585-506-2680
benlmaggi@hotmail.com

HUDSON VALLEY

HENRY KRAMER, Superintendent
Walden, NY 973-600-0269
henry.hvnmra@gmail.com

LAKESHORES

DAVID DURR, Superintendent
Penfield, NY 585-738-6760
superintendent@lakeshoresnmra.org

SOUTHERN TIER

Superintendent position is open.

REGION STAFF

SECRETARY

JEFF PASTON
Manilus, NY 315-682-8144
secretary@nernmra.org

TREASURER

BILL RUTHERFORD
Lunenburg, VT
treasurer@nernmra.org

OFFICE MANAGER

ERICH WHITNEY
Derry, NH 603-537-1120
nerofficemanager@nernmra.org

ASST. OFFICE MANAGER

STEVEN MILLS
smills@comcast.net

NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Open position

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

BILL BROWN, MMR
Jamesville, NY
larcproducts@yahoo.com

OP-SIG COORDINATOR

ED O'CONNELL
ops@lakeshoresnmra.org

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

CHRIS CARFARO (tentative)
Richmond, VT 802-999-6520
vermontcarfaro@gmail.com

WEBMASTER

JIM SEROSKIE
webmaster@nernmra.org

NER COUPLER, EDITOR

CHRIS CARFARO
Richmond, VT 802-999-6520
editor@nernmra.org