THE "CANADIAN"
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WINTER 2025 ISSUE #90

IN THIS ISSUE

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THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION
OF RAILWAY MODELLERS

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David King, Lex Parker

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HOLIDAY WISHES TO EVERYONE

On behalf of my wife and I, Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for 2025 to all of you and your families.

Let me also express my thanks and appreciation to everyone who takes the time to send me material to keep this Newsletter alive and well. Thankyou to the Chapter Chairs who send in material; to the regular contributors like George Dutka, Willie Waithe, Peter Mumby, Dave King, Bruce Leckie, Walter Reid, Ted Rafuse and many others; and to all of you who have sent in material to be used in the Member's Submissions. It is all of you who keep this Newsletter going. Thankyou.

MUSING ABOUT THE STATE OF MODEL RAILROAD ORGANIZATIONS & CARM

Subsequent to my musings in last month's Issue, Willie Waithe was slated to represent CARM at a Toronto area Train Show and prior to his attendance he emailed the Board and asked several profound questions. "What do I tell prospective candidates about reasons for joining CARM? Can one feel even comfortable about promoting our organization? Are there any concrete plans for the future that I can offer? "

Willie's questions led to an email discussion between Board Members. No conclusions were reached but it was clear to the Board that they need to address Willie's questions and share the answers with the Membership. There was a call for Chair Ian McIntosh to call a Board meeting to discuss the issues and he is in the process of doing so. Through the Newsletter we will keep you informed of any progress that is made.

MEMBERS AREA PASSWORD

USERNAME:
gondola

PASSWORD:
hopper

COVER PHOTO TOP BY ROBERT LANGLOIS: The Royal Navy tugboat HMS Pert sits in Dry Dock in the module built by Robert Langlois in 1/48 Scale for his Gosport, Portsmouth & Hayling Ry.

COVER PHOTO BOTTOM BY JEFF HILL: We're at Sarnia on Michel (Mike) Plouffe's layout. Mike is looking out over the refinery which is one of several large industries on the layout.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SPEED MATCHING DCC LOCOMOTIVES

I have been working on Speed Matching for a few months now and I wanted to share some of the things I have learned in the hope it helps someone else. To be clear, I am not an expert, nor do I guarantee that anything I have done is right. At best these are the things I have learned and my observations along the way.

I do my Speed Matching using JMRI on my laptop computer connected to a Digitrax PR3 and a Programming Track. After programming I then test the locomotives on the layout. I know that others do it using Programming on the Main. I haven't progressed that far yet. My locomotives are N Scale and I primarily use Digitrax decoders with a few TCS and LokSound thrown in.

This Issue, I will focus on getting the first locomotive in the consist set up and running in the manner that I want. In future Issues I will talk about actually building the consist. You often find this first locomotive referred to as "The Golden Locomotive". It will be the standard against which every other locomotive will be tested.

My first step is clean the locomotives wheels and then run the locomotive around the layout for 5 to 10 minutes just to break it in, warm it up and ensure that its running smoothly. If it isn't running smoothly I deal with that first. Most often the loco just requires a little lubrication.

I have a double track section of the layout about 8 feet long that I like to test and speed match locomotives on because I can run 2 locomotives side by side. I make sure that this section of track is super clean and that the locomotive has clean wheels and mechanically runs smoothly. These steps take all of the variables out of your speed setting/matching other than the decoder settings.

Most of my locomotives are Kato and you would think the speed range would be consistent, I have found that not to be true. No idea why. Some run really slow at the top end and when I encounter that I usually will do a Factory Reset. Quite often this step completely changes the running characteristics of the locomotive for the better. With JMRI a Factory Reset is in the Menu, if you do it on a Programming Track, you reset CV8 to 8 in Digitrax decoders.

Next step, turn off any momentum set in the decoder. Momentum is CV3 and CV4. They should be set to 0. Next step, turn off BEMF. In Digitrax decoders this is CV57. It comes from the Factory set to 6, reset it to 0. BEMF "smooths out" the running of your motor and when you are trying to fine tune the speed, it can work against you as you make adjustments. Setting it to 0, turns it off. You can turn it back on at the end of the process.

Using JMRI there are 2 methods to set speed. You can use Basic Speed Control which uses Vstart, Vmid, and Vhigh or you can use 28 step Speed Tables. This month I will just deal with Basic Speed Control. This is CV2 (Vstart), CV5 (Vhigh), and CV6 (Vmid). You would have thought CV5 and CV6 would be reversed but they aren't, again, above my pay grade, just be aware of it.

Start by setting CV2. With the locomotive on the track turn the throttle one click at a time and see at what number it start to move. If the number on your throttle screen is for example 17 before your engine moves you need to adjust CV2. If you read CV2 chances are it will read 0. Here's how I guess at how much I need to adjust it. Your throttle goes from 0 to 100. If it read 17 to move the loco that's 17% of the throttle. CV2 numbers range from 0 to 255. 17% of that would be around 40. I would write 40 into CV2 and then test the loco again. If it takes off quickly with the throttle set at 1, I would adjust the 40 lower. If it still didn't start until a number higher than 1 on the throttle, I would adjust the 40 higher. You go backwards and forwards testing the locomotive until you find the setting for CV2 that allows your locomotive to crawl at Throttle setting 1.

My next step is to set CV5 (Vhigh). Same process as before. First read the decoder to see what the current setting is. It will probably be 255. Put the locomotive on the track and turn the throttle all the way to 100%. This shows you how fast the loco will run flat out. An important note here is that the high end is very much up to the user. If you want a prototypical top end speed you may have to adjust this speed setting much lower. If you want to keep the "fast" high end than you can leave it alone. I would recommend that even if you want a "fast" high end that you adjust this on your "Golden Locomotive" down to somewhere around 180 to 200 in CV5. This allows you room to adjust the setting in other locomotives that might not run as fast as your "Golden Locomotive".

CV6 (Vmid) is simple. Take your low setting, for example 40, your high setting, for example 200. Subtract low from high, in this case 200-40 = 160. Divide it in 2 = 80. Add this to the low 40+80 =120. That is the setting for CV6. Your settings would now be CV2 = 40, CV5 = 200, and CV6 =120. This was a quick and dirty look at speed setting for DCC. I will do a little more detailed view next Issue.

John Johnston: Editor

Chairman's Report

To Thunder Bay and Back

Our friend Susan, my wife Joan and I set off to visit Susan's niece Erin in Thunder Bay. The first stop was Sudbury, where Susan lived in as a kid. The Toronto to Sudbury and Montreal to Sudbury sections of the train to BC used to join in Sudbury, a pretty busy station. I don't know if they still do – the station was closed because it was Monday. Only one end of it is still in use. Outside were lots of stored freight cars so I took some photos. It's still a good place to stop. The Stompin' Tom Connors statue and some good restaurants are across the street. We ordered the cheese platter with many kinds of cheese. Then we headed west on highway 17, seeing some train tracks and mines but no trains. Interesting scenery though.

Next day, more tracks (some beside or near the highway) and a few railway maintenance trucks but no trains. And the next day. Don't they run trains any more? One small town has a very short lighthouse across the highway from the lake. A few blocks south of that I was hopeful when I saw a small yard in the trees, but it was empty.

In Sault Ste Marie we saw an actual train, and spent the day riding it up the Agawa Canyon with its colourful leaves. On the way out of the city we went through a rail yard, with lots of engines and cars, a few moving. At the top of the canyon I spent much of the hour looking at the equipment (handcars and the like) there. The trip downhill took four times as long as going up. Apparently using the brakes heats the rails too much, and the solution (?) is to reduce the speed by using the brakes.

The next day we explored the city including the Bush Plane Museum (worth it). In a room connected to the museum I met a guy looking after his boss's beautiful antique car. After we left, while photographing a ship I ran into him again where he works by the river, and ended up below decks in a tug boat. We also took a great boat tour of the Canadian and US lift locks, which roughly parallel each other (the US locks are much newer and longer).

Our next stop was Wawa and its giant goose (we saw 3 from different eras). We actually saw several old mining trains there – one at the visitor's centre and several by a store and some houses. Many motel guests had motorcycles either in the back of their trucks or on trailers behind the trucks, but those didn't count as trains.

The next afternoon we reached Thunder Bay, with the first stop at Craig Symington's *excellent* Hon3 Rio Grande Southern layout (his articles on it are bimonthly in the Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette).

Then and the next day we were off to see Susan's niece Erin and explore Thunder Bay with her and by ourselves. Among other things we saw the old passenger station, an unidentified freight train (orange locomotives), and briefly the Thunder Bay Model Trains store.

The next day it was time to head home. Our first stop was the train museum in Schreiber (small but enjoyable) which we had skipped on the way west to get to Craig's sooner. We spent another night in Wawa, then off to Manitoulin Island to take the Chi-Cheemaun ferry to Tobermory, and the next day home to Toronto. It was a great trip, and we did see some trains just not as many as I hoped.

Ian McIntosh

Chapter Reports

The National Capital Chapter visited two layouts on September 21st. We had a total of 9 members participate, broken into two groups to minimize the congestion at either layout.

The first layout was hosted by Michel(Mike) Plouffe of Casselman. This large HO layout is set up for operation and features double track mainline and double ended staging at both ends as well as a 3 loop helix. Mike has set up extensive working signals and all the switch machines are DCC controlled by his NCE system and JMRI. There are several sceniced areas and these are nicely done. He has a large freight yard and a very well equipped passenger terminal/ yard.

We all met for a nice group lunch and our group visited Lloyd Henshey's HO layout in St Eugene. Lloyd is loosely modeling the area around Hawksbury. Lloyd's layout is double tracked as well and is also set up for operation. He has several fully sceniced areas and many scratch built structures. His NCE system is being integrated with JMRI and Lloyd will use Operations Pro to manage his traffic. An unusual feature of this layout is the modelling of all 4 seasons. This is nicely done and quite interesting.

Another great excursion in the Nation's capital!"

MICHEL (MIKE) PLOUFFE'S LAYOUT

PHOTO TOP by Bruce Leckie: The layout has three long peninsulas. We're at Sarnia, on the other side of the first peninsula after Coteau. The refinery is one of several large industries on the layout. All track is painted grey for mainline, brown for secondary trackage; they have different ballast too.

PHOTO LEFT CENTRE by Jeff Hill: Mike Plouffe is taking a freight out of Coteau Station, at the east end of his very large layout, the CN-CP-VIA-GO. Trains come up from east staging under this peninsula and enter the layout from the tunnels below the window. Coteau is very busy, with an interchange with CSX, plus several industries. The mainline is double track throughout; all signals are functional.

PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT by Bruce Leckie: Dryden has a very large paper mill with complex trackage extending halfway along the peninsula. Mike has designed his layout with lots of operating potential; he uses Ship It software to create switchlists for his freight traffic.

PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT by Jeff Hill: Mike Plouffe is explaining the operations to our group. From left to right: David Hain, Mike Plouffe, Andrew Taylor, Rich Stewart, Ian Frost.

Lloyd Henchey's Layout

PHOTO TOP LEFT by Jeff Hill: Lloyd Henchey is giving us the history of his layout, the MHO Junction, as we follow it from end to end. Here, we're near the west end of the modelled portion, on the outskirts of the town of Hawkesbury, Ontario. The large freight shed beside Lloyd will keep a crew busy for a while during operating sessions.

PHOTO TOP RIGHT by Bruce Leckie: Rich Stewart is admiring downtown Hawksbury

PHOTO LEFT CENTER by Jeff Hill: CARM members Peter Jackson and Garry Comber listen as Lloyd describes the swing gate at the entrance to the train room. Lesson learned: use the biggest hinge you can! The train has just crossed over Highway 417 travelling from Hawkesbury to the village of St. Eugène, Ontario, around the corner at the far end of the room. As it does, the scenery gradually changes from fall to winter. Lloyd is modelling all four seasons on his layout.

PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT by Bruce Leckie: Ian Frost and Remy Gagnon, Lloyd's assistant for the day.

PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT by Bruce Leckie: Left to Right Andrew Taylor, David Jain, Lloyd Henshey.

UPGRADING AN On18 SHAY FOR DCC

Article & Photos by WALTER REID

On18 is the marriage of 2 scales, using bodies that are O scale (1/48) and powered by an N scale (1/160) chassis. It gives you the flexibility of using the many refined power chassis available for N Scale. In this project, I am using a body from Carroll Creek Designs of an On18 1 cylinder Shay locomotive with a Kato 11-109 power chassis. To add to the fun, I will show you how I upgraded the unit to DCC, using a Digitrax DZ126 decoder and a LaisDCC model 871009 keep alive, as well as adding headlights. Shorten the wires coming out of the decoder so you have less to tuck away at the end, and use shrink tubing to insulate the wires. I made the motor wires 2 cm (gray, orange), track pickup wires 3cm (black/red), and left the rest to length.

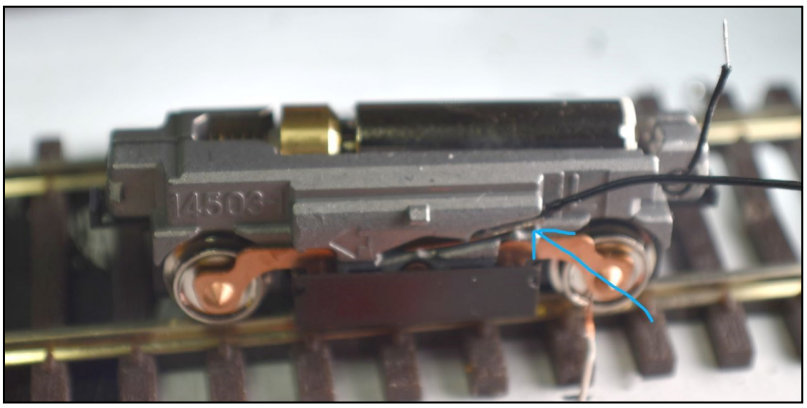


PHOTO "A" ABOVE LEFT: The photo shows opening up the Kato power chassis. Remove the pickups, desolder the wires from the motor to the pickups, and replace them with the wires from the decoder for the power pickup.

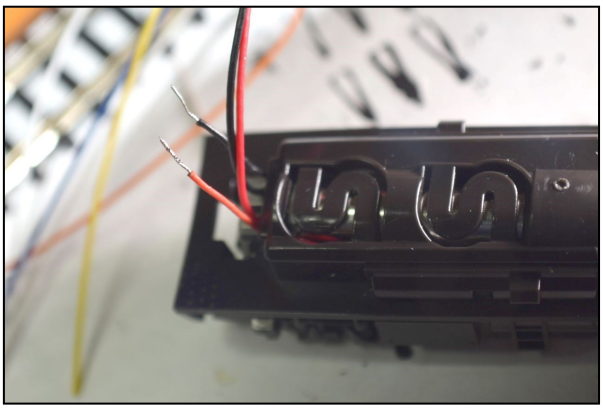


PHOTO "B" ABOVE RIGHT: You feed the wires through one side of the power chassis cover.

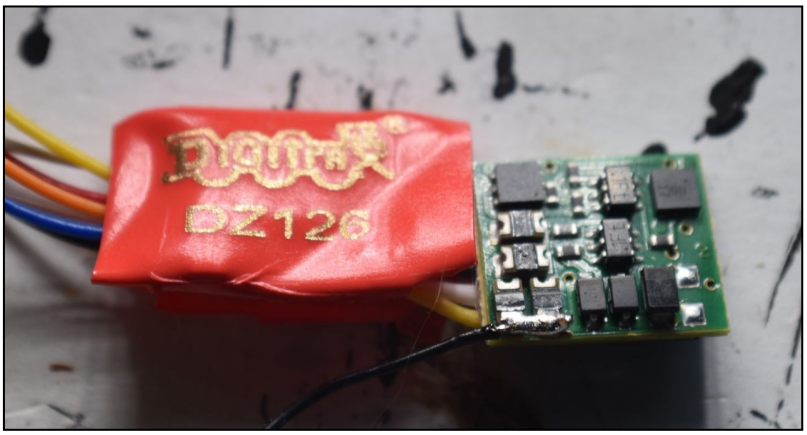
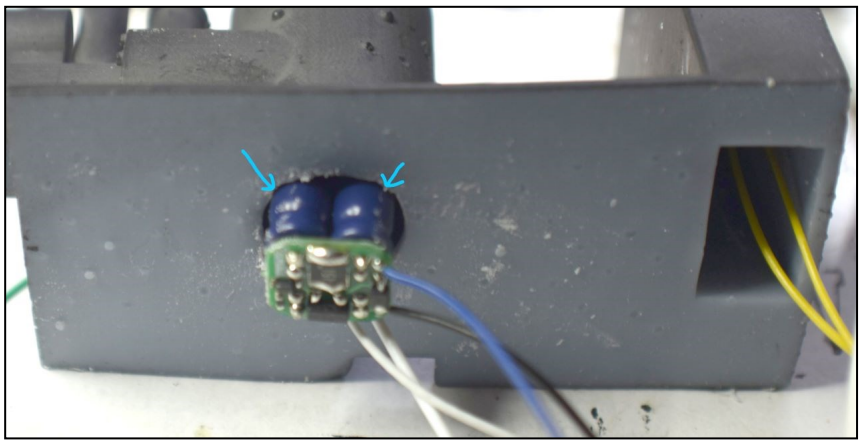


PHOTO "C" LEFT CENTRE: To allow you to use a keep alive with the Digitrax DZ126, you need to remove the cover and solder a wire on the decoder as shown by the added black wire in the photo. You will need to replace the cover by using a piece of heat shrink tubing or equivalent.

PHOTO "D" BOTTOM LEFT: Remove the cover off the keep alive and file some of the shell where the arrows are to make a little more room to slide the keep alive into the cavity of the boiler



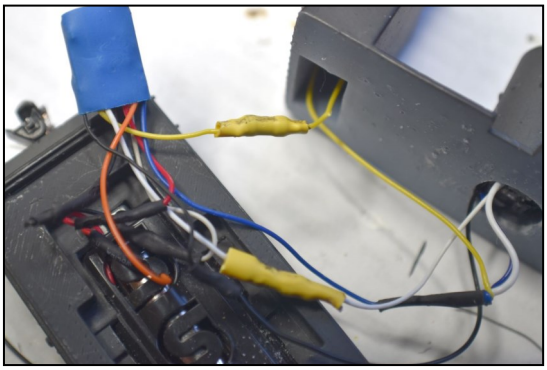
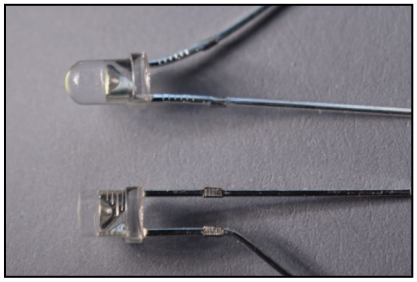


PHOTO "E" LEFT: Feed 2 wires into each of the open cavities for the headlights. I used white wires for the front headlight and yellow wires for the back headlight. The white and yellow wire from the decoder should have a 1K resistor soldered inline and a piece of shrink wrap to cover them, as shown with the yellow shrink wrap tubing. The blue wire from the decoder should be attached to the other wire for each headlight, and the blue wire from the keep alive. The black wire from the keep alive should be soldered to the wire you soldered to the decoder in **photo C**.

PHOTO "F" RIGHT: The headlights are LEDs. The holes given in the shell fit a 4mm LED, which I could not find, so I used a 3mm LED. To reduce the depth of the LED, I sanded the tip of the LED making it flat and shorter in depth. The hardest part is you need to solder the wires directly on the back of the LED. I first make sure the polarity of the wires are correct, as wiring it backwards will not harm the LED, but it will not light up.



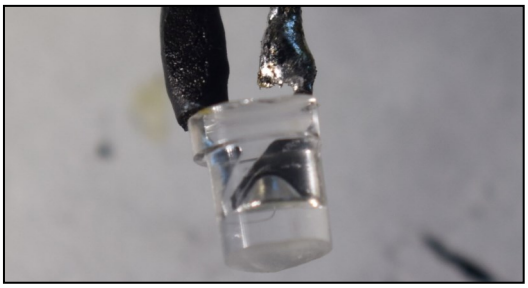


PHOTO "G" LEFT: Solder the wires and test. Please note that I went through multiple LED's to do this step properly, so have some spares as the heat from the soldering iron can (did) burn out an LED. Try to use low temperature solder to reduce the risk.

PHOTO "H" RIGHT: To give a path for the wires, I used a Dremel to trim the riser piece that attaches to the bottom of the shell to give a path for the wires to go from the front to the back. In hindsight, it would have been easier to trim beforehand.

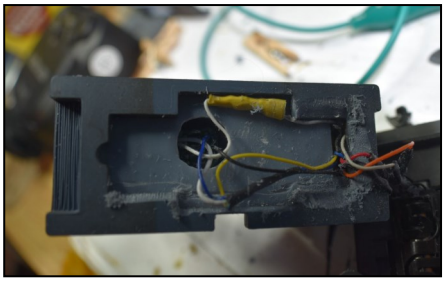
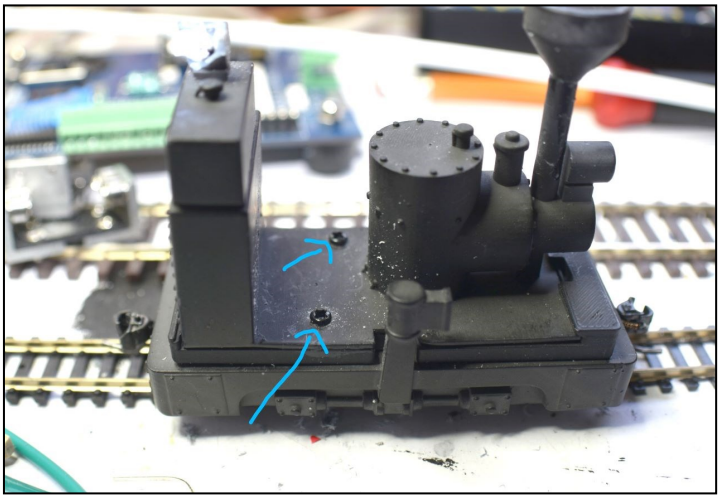
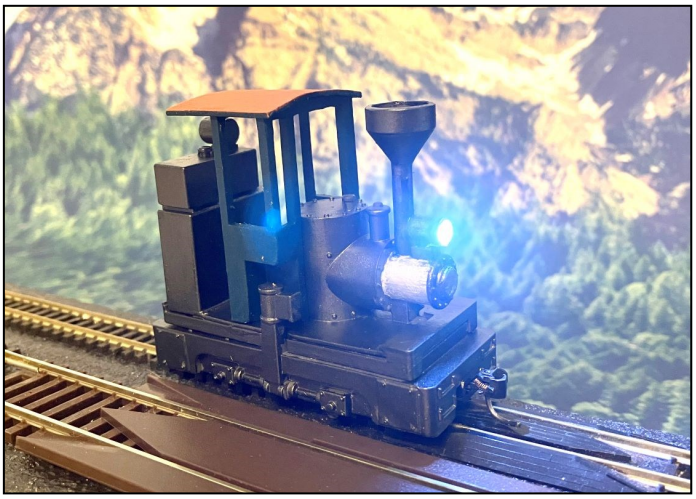


PHOTO "I" BELOW: Drill tap 2 screws to hold the shell and the riser to the bottom plate of the shell that holds the power chassis. I made sure the cab would hide the screwheads. This will hold it all together.

PHOTO "J" BELOW: Done. Another critter to work the logging branch of the layout.





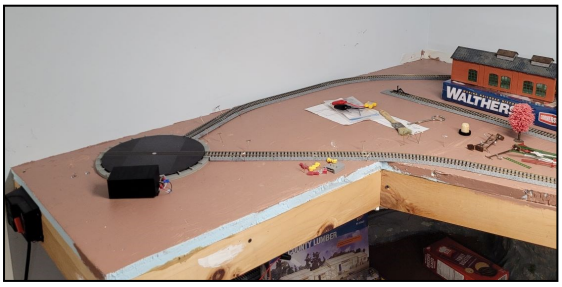
MEMBER'S SUBMISSIONS

CONTENT AND PHOTOS FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF MEMBERS

ANDY CRAWFORD (Southampton, ON)

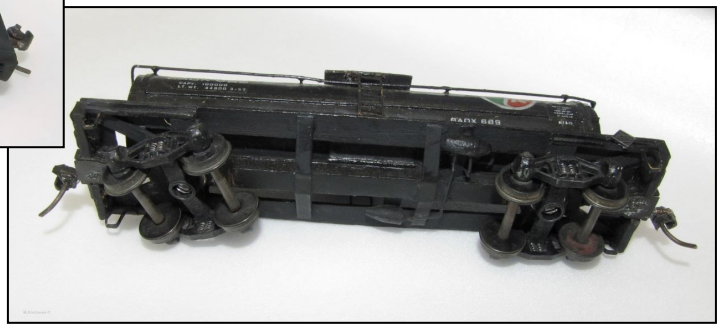
I am a long-time modeler and a part time model railroader. Here are some pictures of my HO layout in progress. It is certainly not clean and tidy, but few are! It is my third layout and this time I tried a shelf layout very loosely based on the Ontario Northland. I lived and worked in the Timmins area of Northern Ontario for many years. It took about 1.5 years to imagine and plan the helix build but only about 1.5 months to push myself to build it. It rises 17.5 inches from the lower level to the upper level in 4 revolutions. It is a 3-4% grade with variations. All my locos can climb it.

My latest "feat" was to install the turntable so I can now run the whole layout turning a locomotive at one end. No reversing loop because the table itself creates the isolating joints on a DCC layout. Lots more to do, mostly scenicking now but winter is coming so a good time to build.



WOLF KIRCHMEIR (Blind River, ON)

A large dose of nostalgia here. I built this tank car over 60 years ago, while I was still in high school. Bought trucks, couplers, ladder stock, and decals, used spikes for the dome bolts, had paint on hand. Carved brake gear from balsa. Warning placards added later. Tank is a calculator paper-roll core. Rest is cardstock, wood, wire and staples. Replaced KD-4s with MK-5s a few years ago. It was the third car I built, the other two were trashed as not good enough. This one passes the 3-foot rule, just barely. I keep it in part to show how we made do with what we had back then.

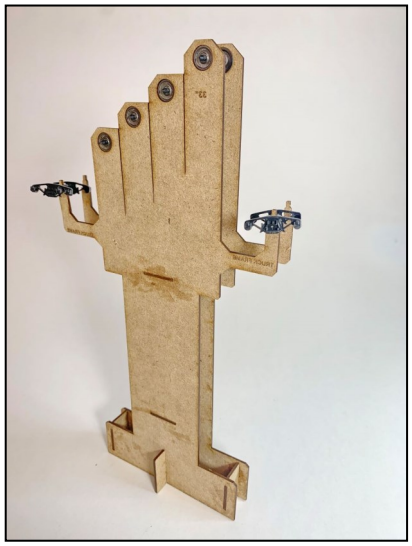


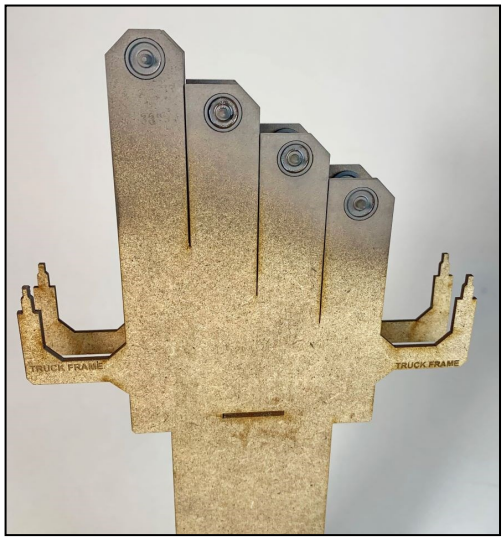
DON JANES (Sarnia, ON)

Back in the summer I ordered the Tri-State Fabricating kit from Nick at ITLA. When I stopped by to pick it up we got into a discussion about painting wheel sets and the masking jigs that were available. I had been using plastic (possibly acrylic) masks from American Model Builders which come for 33” or 36” wheel sets. They make several different ones for the various wheel manufacturers such as KD, Intermountain and others since there are slight variations in the diameter of these sets. I have had good luck using them but it seems like after using them for a while they become brittle and tend to break. I am not sure if it is due to lacquer based paints attacking the plastic or what but they all ended up breaking at various locations on the jig. The very thin area around the wheel is very prone to breaking.

I mentioned this to Nick and asked him if he could make something similar out of wood on his laser cutting machine. I said I thought it should be much more durable than the plastic ones. Nick told me he would look into laser cutting one and see how it would work out. Well, fast forward to last week when I received a package of parts from Nick in the mail and inside was a 33" wheel mask he had designed and cut for me. It consisted of two main sections to hold the wheels and several tab and slot pieces that are spacers to get the correct width for the wheel sets. Another neat thing he incorporated into the design were small tabs on the sides to mount the truck frames on so they can be painted at the same time. A very good idea. The mask also has the wheel size cut right into the jig so you can see what wheel size it is for. The entire assembly took about five minutes.

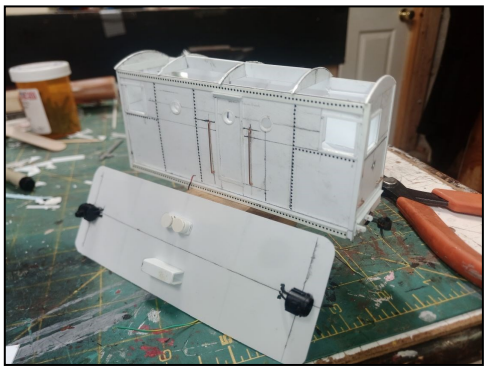
I tried KD, Intermountain and Rapido wheel sets in the mask and all fit nicely. I did notice the TLT wheels were a little tighter but still fit in the holes. I decided to give it a try and painted a set of Rapido wheel sets and it worked great. There is enough flex to get the wheel sets in place but it is stiff enough to hold them while painting. The tool has a long handle so you have lots to hold onto and still not get any paint on your hands, a feature lacking with the smaller plastic masks. I have painted several other wheel sets with good results. All in all, I really like the masking tool and hopefully Nick will produce another tool that holds 36" wheels which are common on most passenger cars and a lot of the newer freight cars on the rails today. Hats off to Nick for producing such a good masking tool. Drop Nick a line at ITLA if you are interested in buying one of these tools.





BRUCE LECKIE (Brinston, ON)

Boxcab 25 is the most recent addition to the Calabogie, Renfrew and Madawaska roster. She is a shop built unit using parts of #2 and #5, both inactive due to "driver error". The On30 model is scratch built from styrene on a Bachmann HO 70 ton chassis.



GEORGE DUTKA (London, ON)

Pola Electrical Relay Boxes: We all have seen or used these small HO scale relay boxes on our layout. They are kind of shiny and sometime odd colors. I decided to repaint mine recently as I have 4 kicking around. I spray can painted one bright silver and the second Princess Auto Iron gray. Flat clear by Tamiya is spray can applied. I began by adding some rust dots using a Micron 03 black and 05 rust pens followed by AK rust steaks and slimy grime dark, then Vallejo rust texture. Once dry PanPastel raw umber shade is used to blend. On the darker box I rusted it up with acrylic rust color paint which actually was called Vermont maple, but looks a lot like rust. An AK rust steak wash is then applied. Vallejo rust texture is applied as older looking rust. Areas of the box was highlighted with dry brushing milk white acrylic paint. Some PanPastel raw umber shade it then applied.

PHOTO ABOVE LEFT: The boxes have all the stains and pen markings added now to overcoat them with powders to blend it all together.

PHOTO ABOVE RIGHT: The bright silver relay box is seen on the layout.

PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT: The iron gray darker tone metallic tone looks like it has been around a long time.

MALCOLM VANT (Ottawa, ON)

Our local NMRA group, the St Lawrence Div, is doing a group build of four simple structures this season. We all get the same kits: a hydrocal, a cardstock, a plastic and a laser cut. The idea is to learn how to construct them and realistically weather and detail them. The hydrocal is a Downtown Deco Chop Suey (or photo studio) building and it comes as four separate castings. Here is my completed kit and a few details of the build.

After the pieces were cleaned up and fitted together some work was needed on the joints. I used Polystipple Rapid to fill imperfections and then recarved any brick lines that were filled in. Polystipple wiped over the joints to fill the mortar lines and then excess cleaned off with a damp sponge. Before painting the concrete steps, thin cracks were scored into them with a no. 11 hobby knife. As additions to the basic model, I applied brick cardstock to the walls. The floor was printed on cardstock using hardwood flooring photos from the web. Interior details include photo posters and a roll top desk and chair.

The interior has an LED light hanging from the ceiling. A similar working lamp was created for over the door. The roof consists of a styrene sheet painted black on the interior side. Scale 36 in wide strips of 1000 grit emery paper were cut and overlapped for the sloped roof. A black gel pen was used for the joints and black paint along the edges for sealing the roof edges. Two of the signs came in the box, the third, which was applied to the side, came from a web search. The backs of the paper signs were sanded carefully using the fine side of an emery stick to thin them and then they were coated on the backs with 50:50 white glue and water and applied to the walls.


RICHARD MORRISON (Toronto, ON)

Tenants who live in apartments or other forms of rental housing may regard a model railroad as an impossible luxury. Even if a spare room is available, landlords may not allow benchwork to be screwed into walls and floors, and layouts complicate moving. In my case, we have a two-year lease on a lovely home with space for a medium-sized layout. There is always the possibility the landlord may want to move in, however, which means the layout may have to come down on relatively short notice. I intended my last layout to be permanent; I even built the 10' x 25' structure that housed it beside our home. By the end of 2022, however, rising interest rates had increased our debt payments and decreased the value of the investments we used to supplement our income. I was forced to work more than full time while we scrambled to get our house ready for sale so we could pay off our debts and move to rental accommodation. In addition to many hours spent preparing the house to be sold and packing up our belongings, I spent three full months miserably dismantling the layout I had spent 15 years building.

I vowed that wherever we lived next, the new layout would have to be 1) small, simple and quick to build and 2) portable enough to be dismantled in a day. I was not about to spend years building benchwork, laying and ballasting track, painting backdrops, running wires, installing switch machines and plastering mountains only to have to take it all down and throw it out.

Other modellers may have to move as well, so the portability goal works for them too. My new around-the-wall HO layout is an 8' by 16' C-shaped dogbone that measures 84 square feet, plus two screwed-on extensions for a fiddle yard and a loop that bring the whole thing to about 100 square feet. The benchwork is made up of nine 2' x 4' and one 2' x 6' lightweight folding tables I made from 1x2 pine strips, reinforced with bolted-on 1x2 braces. Once the braces are unbolted, the legs can be folded up and each table can be carried out with one hand. The tables have screw-on adjustable feet for levelling. Each table is topped with a 2' x 4' x ½" piece of GIS softwood screwed into a 3" deep frame. The tops sit freely on the tables so they can be lifted off easily. Once everything was in place, I screwed on a few more braces to fix any wobbly bits and if there was any further instability, I cheated and screwed the benchwork to the wall with a tiny corner brace. For added stability, once in place the top sections were joined with a couple of screws.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

For the backdrop, I screwed on three 1x2 vertical braces to the back of each lift-off section to support a 24" high by 48" wide piece of Masonite. I covered the Masonite with pieces of a sky backdrop from Amazon, held in place with spray-on glue and Scotch tape. The curved corners were made from pieces of poster board taped and glued together. For lighting, I attached 1x2x24" horizontal arms projecting over the layout, anchored to the backdrop braces with L-brackets, then bought a few long strips of the narrowest, lightest door frame millwork I could find and used tiny screws to attach them to the arms. I unrolled three reels of self-stick under cabinet LED lights and stuck them up on the millwork.

Portable layouts are usually flat, but it's relatively easy to make the back part of an around-the-wall dogbone layout higher than the front by using grades at each end. The back tracks are 4" higher than the front, with the grades made from a pair of Woodland Scenics 2% Incline Sets. I used Woodland Scenics foam Track-Bed for the roadbed, and re-used Peco flex track and turnouts salvaged from my old layout, both glued down sparingly with Alene's Tacky Glue so they can be easily pried off with a putty knife if necessary. There is no glue under the turnouts and no spikes anywhere. And no ballast. I spent hundreds of tedious hours ballasting the track on my old layout and dozens more hours cleaning off the glued-on ballast after I pulled up the track. Unballasted track may not look realistic but we can't have everything.

The loops at each the end of the layout must have a scenic reason why they curve. I made steep mountains out of flat foam slices glued together like a layer cake, with the bottom piece sitting loosely on the tabletops so each mountain can be lifted off. Structures, too, sit loosely on the tabletop, allowing them to be easily removed, wrapped and packed when moving time comes. The small layout means I will likely operate only one train at a time. The fiddle yard is attached to the front of an Ikea Billy bookcase. While books would look out of place next to a yard, so would empty shelves, so I decided to use the bookcase to store cars. I added five shelves to the bookcase so each shelf is only 2 inches deep. The freight cars are stored with their ends facing outward. Labels affixed to the front edge of each shelf identifies each car with its road name and number, making it easy to find. When it comes time to assemble a train, I will fish out each car with soft tongs.

This is where things stand now. When the track is all down, I will put expansion joints at end of each 4' lift-off section to minimize rail cutting when the layout is dismantled. There will be as few tracks as possible crossing between sections for the same reason. Turnouts will be operated with fingers and there will be no switch machines or control panels, unless these too can go with the layout or be easily detached. Trees will be pushed in without glue so they can be pulled up. Eventually we may end up in an apartment with room for only a simple switching layout along one wall of the living room. I have a box of N scale track and turnouts ready for that.

PETER MUMBY (London, ON)

Probably everyone who has been shooting railfan photos for a few years has experienced what could be referred to as a No Train Day, or NTD. This is a day when you spend a couple of hours trackside at some of your regular haunts but fail to encounter a single train. Possibly, out of boredom or frustration, you then focus your camera on structures, signals, or track work - features that might not normally capture much of your attention. When you review the resulting images several years (or decades) later, you may find that you are glad that they were added to your collection as memory aids to a railway scene that is constantly evolving.

I suspect that April 08, 1990 was such an NTD for me. While checking some scenes from the early 1990s I found that I had photographed both the CN and CP roundhouses in London on that day. While a portion of the CP roundhouse at Quebec St remains today, the turntable is long gone. The CN roundhouse at Rectory St suffered a fire in January of 1992 and was demolished shortly thereafter. Today a large indoor soccer facility stands on this lot. Don't necessarily wait for an NTD - just get those photos while you can!

Gosport, Portsmouth and Hayling Island Ry. In “O” Scale

Article & Photos By Robert Langlois

My railway is a set of four foot modules resting on wall brackets and running around the basement workshop. Several years ago after a sad event I ripped it out and it has taken all this time to regain the initiative to rebuild. Modules can be removed and rebuilt while a temporary filler module takes up the slack in track continuity. Two of these module projects are "The West Admiralty Jetty and Dry Dock" for three modules and the other is the "Portsmouth Light and Gas Company" for another three modules. Earlier this spring, I displayed the Gas company module with it's working rotary coal dumper (tippler) at our model engineering club in Beachville, at the Buffers in London and at the Great British Train Show (GBTS). Youtube videos of the layout can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhI9oyL-V4Q&t=250s and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZkhlZ30Sxs

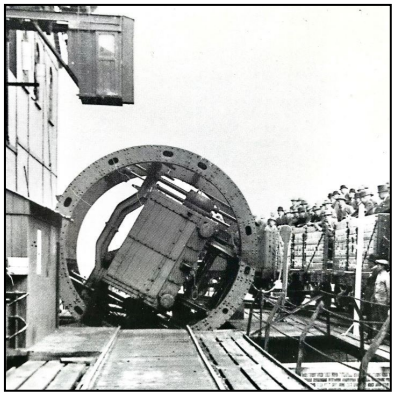


PHOTO ABOVE: The original gas works rotary dumper in 1926.

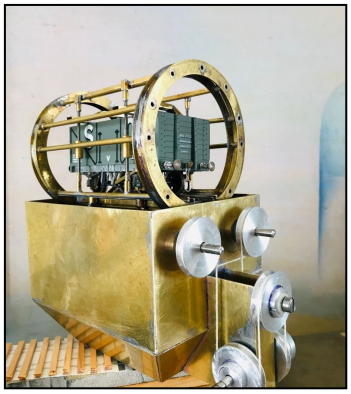


PHOTO ABOVE: The rotary dumper, all in brass and aluminum with a few parts from old laser printers.

PHOTO ABOVE: The weigh scale shack (Peter Moffett's Workshop 2003 Toronto NMRA CARM) finished Spring 2024 and incorporated into the Gas Company.

The Dry Dock module puts my model Railway and my model boat hobbies together. I have been building a 1/48 stand-off scale model of the sidewheel paddle steam tug HMS Pert and which acts in the role of a railway destination for re-victualing during WW1. During the war, HMS Pert was fitted with a three inch QF HA gun to scare off enemy bombers and which was promptly removed at the end of hostilities to prevent the boys from celebrating birthdays with starry flash -bang airburst munitions. The gun came back again for WW2.

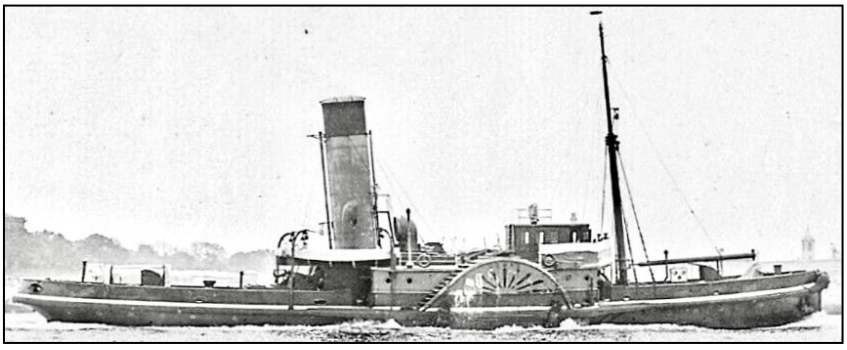


PHOTO LEFT: HMS Pert was a Royal Navy paddle tug launched on April 5th, 1916. She had a displacement of 1023 tons, could generate 2000 horsepower, and had a top speed of 13 knots. She was withdrawn from service and scrapped in October 1961.

PHOTO RIGHT: HMS Pert, the model, started life as a number of scrap layers of blue styrofoam, shaped with a rasp, papier matched with grocery store flyers and detailed with card stock, brass, wood, acrylic paint, surplus store motors and radio control.

PHOTO TOP LEFT: Yours truly at the Stoney Creek Legion on Remembrance Day, 2024. The track will be handlaid with Fast Tracks parts.

PHOTO TOP RIGHT: All the modules are a combination of blue Styrofoam and thin plywood. This has been of concern to some, due to shrinkage and fire concerns but some of the plywood layouts I have seen are worse than an arsonist's bag of potato chips. I have some modules older than 40 years and there is neither shrinkage nor warpage. What was 48.0 inches long in 1985 is still 48.0 inches long today ... and dead level. No warpage whatsoever. Anyway, what layout lasts 40 years? Here is an end view of the dry dock module constructed last month.

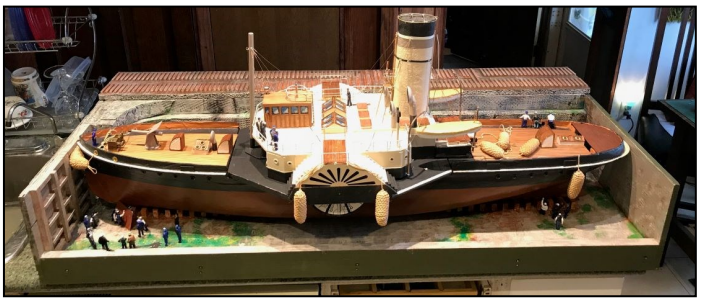


PHOTO TOP CENTRE: The Dry Dock Module: 48" x 22"; 1", 1-1/2" and 2" Styrofoam; 1/8 " plywood; glue was a soupy mix of concrete acrylic bond Homebond and Weldbond white glue which was put on by brush and plastic spreader, allowed to air dry for 5 minutes then brought together. Long pieces of cheap 1 x 4 were drilled every 6 inches and the glued surface was brought up tight by 4" deck screws. Brought up tight is the operative word here since we want to pull tight on the Styrofoam but not strip the screw's tenuous hold on the Styrofoam. This module weighs 15 lbs complete without the ship. When I stood on it at midpoint !!! (173 lbs) supported only on it's ends the deflection was less than a sixteenth of an inch !!! You don't have to make something absurdly heavy to get strength and rigidity:

PHOTO BOTTOM CENTRE: The little people give a sense of the scale and mass to be found in a drydock. This tug is at 1/48 but fits neatly into the 1/43 railway because tiny liberties were taken with the deck furniture. The actual ship was 178 ft long overall by 59 ft beam over the paddle boxes by 1023 tons.

PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT: The module is a safe and fitting place to display the ship while waiting for warm weather. It makes for an interesting destination, a place to which various and unusual cargoes can be shipped. Gunpowder, Ammonium Nitrate, canned corned beef, mines, Marines, Tanks, Horses as examples.

This module sits on the layout directly beside one that displays King George V and Queen Mary returning from a 'round the world visit. The backdrop is a Queen Elizabeth class battleship which at 1:160 scale is still 8ft long.

The CN Weston Subdivision

Reconfiguration of trackwork at Dixon Road.

By William Waithe and Keith Martel

The original two tracks entering the metal works plant at Dixon Road (Anik Metals) consisted of a curved, rather broad turnout (Atlas 25”/15” radii) leading into two tracks **(fig. 1)**. Because the space was a tight fit with a sharp turn, there were occasional derailments when servicing the plant. We therefore decided to remove the turnout and tracks, excavate the area and install an even surface for the new tracks **(figs.2,3)** and design a better configuration that would fit into the available space with at least a minimum curvature of a 15” radius for both tracks. Using several turnout templates for planning, we decided that an Atlas 5” straight turnout **(fig.4)** would work well. The final results are shown in **figures 5 and 6** and a photograph taken from the same viewpoint as in figure1 is shown in **figure7** for comparison of the two installations.

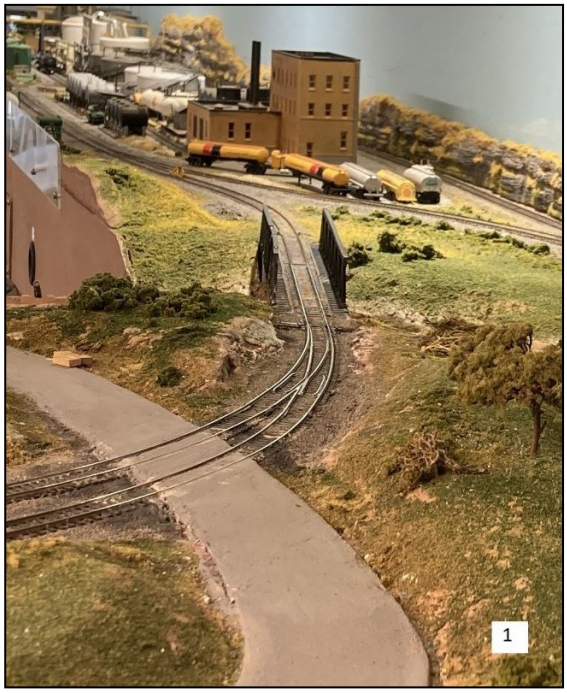


PHOTO ABOVE Fig 1: The initial configuration of tracks entering Anik Metals using the curved turnout.

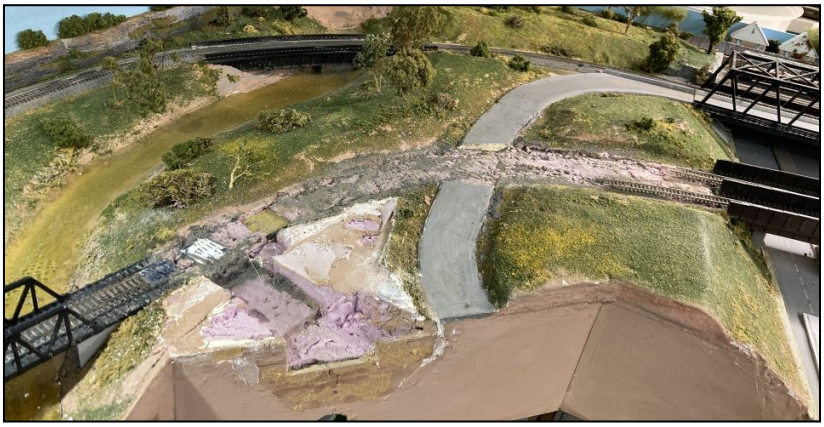
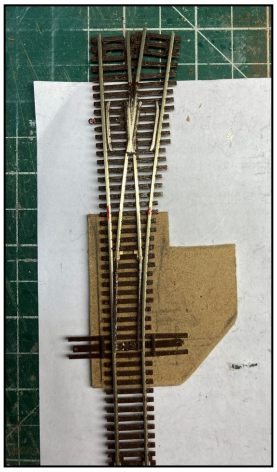


PHOTO ABOVE Fig 2: Removal of tracks and excavation of the area to provide a solid, even surface. The bridge side girders were also removed to permit installation of the new turnout further away from the turning point of the tracks.

PHOTO RIGHT Fig 4: The 5” radius Atlas straight turnout used as a replacement. This allowed generous minimum 15” radii for the two tracks into Dixon Road. The activating 9gm servo was fixed to the underside of the MDF shown with Pliobond.



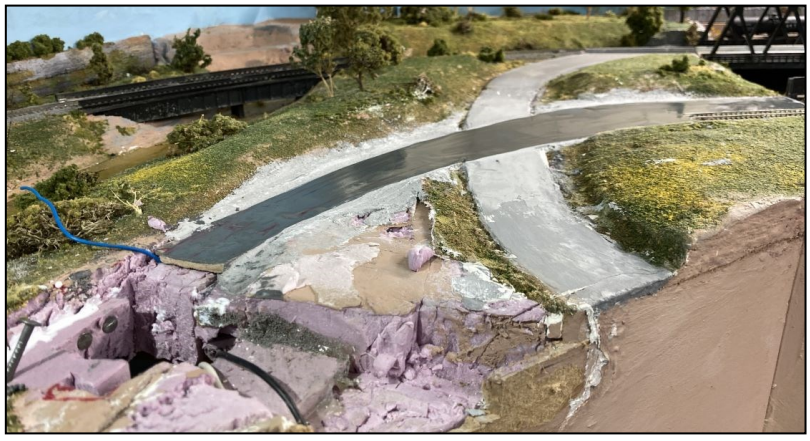


PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT Fig 3: Installation of a 1/8” medium density fiberboard (MDF) as a track base. Both sides of the board were sealed with an oil-based paint for prevention of warping. The MDF was carefully leveled and fixed to the Styrofoam base with Weldbond. Tracks where then attached with caulking and then ballasted.

PHOTO TOP LEFT Fig 5: The re-built bridge over the Humber River using salvaged side girders for construction is shown after final landscaping of the area.

PHOTO TOP RIGHT Fig 6: An overhead view of the completed section. Two bridges are seen crossing the Humber River near Dixon Road (there is only one bridge crossing at this level in the prototype).

PHOTO ABOVE Fig 7: After completion of the revision, a view similar to that of figure 1 is shown for comparison of the trackwork.

RAPIDO CN COMBINATION DOOR BOXCAR

By George Dutka

This past summer I picked up a Rapido CN Combination Door boxcar. These are a common car that almost all trains carried during the 1980's and 1990's. The combination door boxcar is a very nice looking model right out of the box. All I had to do to my model was add the door bar strip and apply some weathering. I kept it light as I wanted the car to look like it did early in it's life.

A coat of flat finish is applied to the car first. I like using Tamiya TS-80 flat clear which comes in a spray can. I began weathering the roof first. The roof got a coat of India ink and alcohol which gave the silver tone a faded galvanized look. The alcohol reacts with the flat clear making a neat effect. I then applied PanPastel raw umber shade, Vallejo rust texture paint and AK dark rust deposits stain on the roof edges and seams. This is a very simple process that makes the car look weathered even if nothing else is done to the car.

These cars had a yellow metal door bar strip across the middle of the door that forklifts would use to open and close the door with its forks. These door bars strips were located at different locations on the doors, depending on the car. They also got beat up quickly since most forklift operators are heavy handed. So one might want to distress these door bar strips on the model and add lots of rust as the paint would be knocked off quickly. This detail is not attached to the Rapido model making it easy to apply it were you want it using maybe a photo from reference. It also makes it easy to bang it up a bit when not attached.

I added a few rust spots on the boxcar sides using Micron black 03 pen with the dots dragged down with a damp brush. I kept these to a minimum. The car is to be newer for the era I am modeling. On the sides I applied PanPastel blender to fade the boxcar red a bit. I dragged this tone between the seams leaving the seam areas darker. I then applied PanPastel raw umber shade near the bottom and roof edges. This tone is a great way to dirty up the sides and edges of the car. It is my go-to tone for the weathered look on models. PanPastel Paynes grey extra dark (an almost black color is applied to the door, boxcar ends and lower side areas, but lightly. Remember, I wanted to keep the car looking newer. A small piece of paper is used as a placard on the door. This is cut from my notepad, sanded lightly to thin it down a little then glued to the tackboard.

The boxcar trucks are painted AK winter streaking grime. Any dark tone will work. The wheels on my car I wanted to look new or replaced so they are painted dollar store acrylic cinnamon brown which gives a rusty look to them. I then applied PanPastel Paynes grey extra dark to the wheels that helped darken them up a bit. Any dark powder or chalk will also work.

These National Steel Car's were built in Hamilton exclusively for CN in the late 1970's. The CN cars were in revenue service until being retired in the early 2000's. They were a common sight in Southwestern Ontario and a good model to add to my fleet. Although I only have one at the moment I am sure I will be purchasing a few more in good time.

PHOTO LEFT:
Just out of the box and looking way too glossy. Rolling stock should always receive a coat of flat finish before being added to the layout.

PHOTO RIGHT:
Lightly weathered with paint fading done to the car sides using PanPastel blender. One can find my Rapido CN boxcar rolling along the WRD when the era changes to the late 1970's or early 1980's.

PHOTO LEFT:
The door is lightly weathered as it is a newer car in my era. As it ages the yellow forklift door bar gets really rusted and beat up. This detail is separate from the boxcar and has to be applied to the model. The edges of the doors and center areas are rusty from being hit by the forklift repeatedly leaving the paint removed and rusting. I added a paper placard to the door also.

PHOTO RIGHT:
Some AK and Vallejo paint and stain coloring is applied to the roof prior to the PanPastel raw umber shade. A nicely weathered roof really adds to the final appeal of the model.

PHOTO BELOW: On a snowy Dec 6, 2024 George Dutka caught VIA 71 at the hot box detector at the Pulham Rd crossing near London, Ontario. Locomotive 2316 is a brand new Siemens SCV-42. It is one of 32 bidirectional locomotive-hauled corridor trainsets currently being built by Siemens for Via Rail.

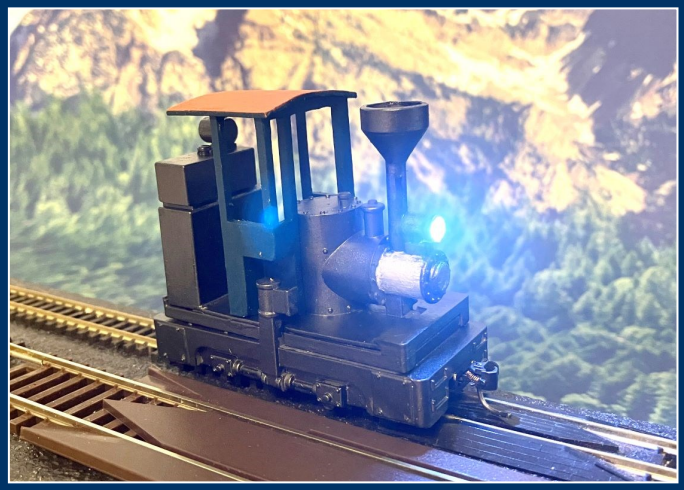


PHOTO ABOVE LEFT: Walter Reid has scratchbuilt this On18 critter. For this project he used a body from Carroll Creek Designs of an On18 1 cylinder Shay locomotive and powered it with a Kato 11-109 power chassis.

PHOTO ABOVE RIGHT: Bruce Leckie's scratch-built Boxcab 25 is the most recent addition to the Calabogie, Renfrew and Madawaska roster. The On30 model was constructed from styrene on a Bachmann HO 70 ton chassis.