

The logo features a large green circle with a black 'N' inside. To the right of the circle, the word 'SCALE' is written in yellow, and 'RAILROADING' is written in white. Below the main title, the text 'THE BEST OF 1:160 SINCE 2000' is written in yellow.

# N SCALE RAILROADING

#135 AUG/SEP 2021

THE BEST OF 1:160 SINCE 2000

A red-bordered sign with white background and red text that reads 'NODAK CEMENT'.

NODAK  
CEMENT

## John Corky Whitlock

- Tool Box 3

## Marty Coil

- Modeling a Milwaukee Road Grain Boxcar

## William Plourde

- Modeling a Mission Style Depot:  
The WP's Livermore Depot

## Kim Saign

- Weathering Cement Covered Hoppers  
Starting Nodak Cement



## Steve Stark

- Inspirations for the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway

# N SCALE RAILROADING WELCOME!

**N**ODAK Cement caught my eye as I was reviewing Kim Saign's images of his covered hoppers. It turned out that this was an old structure that has been a great for industrial switching on Kim's layouts. He's not in a hurry to complete the model I now know how I will model my next grain terminal,

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∞  
AND SEE WHAT  
HAPPENS!**

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## AD INDEX

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Bluford Shops	17	<a href="http://www.bluford-shops.com">www.bluford-shops.com</a>
Digitrax	15	<a href="http://www.digitrax.com">www.digitrax.com</a>
Factory Direct Hobbies	07	<a href="http://factorydirecthobbies.com">factorydirecthobbies.com</a>
Fifer Hobby Supply	15	<a href="http://www.fiferhobby.com">www.fiferhobby.com</a>
Fleischmann	09	<a href="http://www.fleischmann.de">www.fleischmann.de</a>
Kato USA	03	<a href="http://www.katousa.com">www.katousa.com</a>
Lombard Hobbies	17	<a href="http://www.lombardhobby.com">www.lombardhobby.com</a>
Micro-Trains Line	19	<a href="http://www.micro-trains.com">www.micro-trains.com</a>
<a href="http://www.modeltrainstuff.com">www.modeltrainstuff.com</a>	04	<a href="http://www.modeltrainstuff.com">www.modeltrainstuff.com</a>
N Scale Architect	17	<a href="http://www.thenarch.com">www.thenarch.com</a>
N Scale Division	15	<a href="http://www.nscaledivision.com">www.nscaledivision.com</a>
N Scale Enthusiast	13	<a href="http://www.nscaleenthusiast.com">www.nscaleenthusiast.com</a>
N Scale Supply	19	<a href="http://www.nscalsupply.com">www.nscalsupply.com</a>
NRail (NTRAK)	34	<a href="http://NRail.org">NRail.org</a>
Rapido Trains	11	<a href="http://www.rapidotrains.com">www.rapidotrains.com</a>
<a href="http://ScaleTrains.com">ScaleTrains.com</a>	17	<a href="http://www.scaletrains.com">www.scaletrains.com</a>

**W**elcome to *N Scale Railroading* #135, the AUG/SEP, 2021 issue. I combined two issues, partially as I wasn't sure how to follow #134 with the in depth Steve Stark's E&N layout article. Here we go with multiple how-to features.

Page 04. **New Products.**

Page 06. **Corky Whitlock** is back with part 3 of his "What's in the Toolbox" series.

Page 14. **Marty Coil** doesn't seem to shy away from intense projects. Here Marty shares how he built this Milwaukee Road grain boxcar by adding the needed ribs and the roof hatches.

Page 24. I figure custom models of specific prototype depots is high art and I love **William Plourde's** model of the Mission Style Livermore, CA station.

Page 27. While studying **Kim Saign's** cement hopper article, I was fascinated by his NODAK Cement structure. I think most of you will be, too.

Page 34. **NCalendar and Observations.** Who and what layouts have influenced Steve Stark? ▶

**N SCALE  
RAILROADING**

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No other railroad in this country has retained its historical equipment and honored its past like the Union Pacific. Excursion trains, like the 7-car set offered by Kato USA, are made up of finely preserved and maintained heritage cars from the UP's fleet of vintage cars, each one unique and representative of the UP's storied past. This heritage fleet has been used for countless special trains, including the 2019 funeral train which brought president George H.W. Bush to his final resting place, pulled by one of the Union Pacific's numerous special paint SD70ACe locomotives.

The Union Pacific Excursion Train from Kato USA includes 7 unique cars, each one a prototype from the Union Pacific's fleet of heritage cars. Highlites from the set include the Business Car, "Kenefick" (pictured below), the specially painted Museum car (pictured above), and the unique power car which is used to power the train's onboard amenities and has different trucks on both the front and rear.

You can operate the Kato UP Excursion Train with any of Kato's specially painted SD70ACe engines, including the latest release, #1111, the "Powered By Our People" unit, which showcases the diverse catalog of people who make the Union Pacific one of the country's largest and longest running railroads.



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#176-8412-DCC	N EMD SD70ACe UP "Powered By Our People" #1111 w/ Pre-Installed Digitrax DCC	\$218
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# N SCALE RAILROADING NEW PRODUCTS



Northern Pacific 503 in the 1947 scheme is Railsmith RS75110. The prototype coaches upgraded the North Coast Limited and pool trains 407/408.



NP505 is Railsmith RS75111. This is part of Railsmith's Build-A-Train plan. Visit <https://lowellsmith.net/railsmith/> They will sell out soon. Note: There are interior chairs but at this angle they are hard to see because they line up with the windows.



Here is artwork for Railsmith's next new tooling: The NP prototype (Pullman plan 4119) duplex sleeper. Early 2022 should see a baggage car in this scheme. Not announced yet, but the next all-new tooling is expected to be a food service car.

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# WHAT'S IN YOUR TOOLBOX

By John Corky Whitlock/ Images by Author



# ?

# #03

**A**s I was revisiting my “What’s in Your Toolbox” articles part one and two found in N Scale Railroading #132 and #133, I discovered a few more items of interest to present here. I’m thinking most of us have a myriad of tools lurking near our workbench, especially if you are often tackling new scratchbuilding projects.



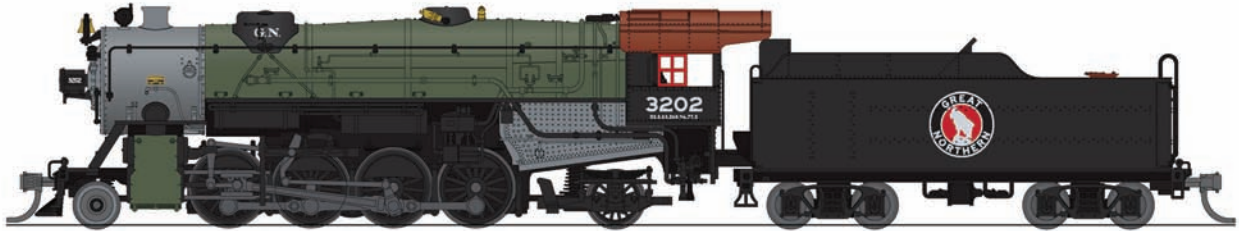
**TWEEZERS.** I previously described my stable of tweezers, but wanted to show you a pair of locking tweezers, (bottom pair in photo) that come in handy on occasion when you simply don’t have enough fingers to hold a bunch of parts. In addition, I forgot to mention using a bit of heat shrink tubing on the working end of tweezers to protect the tip(s) while they’re in your toolbox.

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**MAGNIFIERS.** A pair of clip-on magnifiers get used almost every time I tackle a project at my workbench. The clip-ons are inexpensive and available in a number of different magnification strengths. The old fashioned “Sherlock Holmes) magnifying glass comes in handy when you need to zero in on a project. Notice that mine has a “super strength” small magnification area built in. I do have one of those circular work lights with a big magnifier in the center, but don’t use it much anymore. The glass needs regular cleaning, and I kept bumping my nose on it!



**“EXOTICS”.** I don’t use these tools on a regular basis, but they’ll come in handy on occasion. From top left a simple tool for pushing truck pins in place. I used the ponce wheel during my heavy scratch building days to simulate rivets in lightweight styrene sheet. The tapered reamer is very handy for enlarging holes in both styrene and metal stock, and I probably use this tool more than any other in this photo. I got that “funky” looking hand vise from a grandfather. He used it while doing repairs to his saxophone. At the bottom is a double - ended ball tip burnisher left over from my dry transfer days. A lot handier than burnishing with either a pencil or ballpoint pen.



# FLEISCHMANN

## Diesel electric double locomotive 288 002-9



CAD-drawing

item# 725100

DC

item# 725170

DCC



## 6 piece set goods wagon



Gbz 252

Genra 53

item# 880906



Es 050

Hbbs 299

Kbs

## Diesel electric double locomotive D311.01



CAD-drawing

item# 725101

DC

item# 725171

DCC



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725100:



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**VACUUM ATTACHMENTS.** Early on I tired of knocking over or destroying things on my home layout and NTRAK modules while using my shopvac to clean things up and stumbled upon this set of micro attachments. I don't know where I got the hose piece, which prevents banging the shop vac hose on the layout, but you could make your own using a 35mm plastic film container and a piece of hose. (Do they still make 35mm film containers?)



**WHITE GLUE.** White glue is Indispensable when you are scratch building in wood or paper, and it dries clear. You can also use it to simulate old glass in windows by stretching it thin in a window opening using a toothpick. Sobo brand seems to work best for me.

# TANKS FULL OF DETAIL

**N**  
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# CLICK HERE



ADHESIVES 1. You'll be using different types of glue for bonding different types of materials. Find Fix-All at the dollar store. It's a sort of contact cement, and is clear in color. I don't think Liquid Nails needs much of an introduction. It's also a contact cement. My go-to epoxy cement is Dev-Con, and you used to be able to find it "all over town." Not so anymore, and I really have to search it out. You can also cast parts with it using homemade rubber molds.



ADHESIVES 2 These are my current everyday adhesives. Clockwise from upper left, two types of gel super glue that come in easy to apply and use containers with fine tips. (Be certain to keep those tips clean!) The dollar store super glue is lightweight liquid, and inexpensive. Loctite liquid super glue is a favorite, with a long tip for easy application. (Did I suggest keeping the tip(s) free of cement? My new absolute favorite cement is the DAP Rapid Fuse. For tiny amounts the best application is a dab on a piece of plastic (such as a hotel key card,) then apply it with a toothpick. I think this DAP cement is fantastic.

I hope this series of "What's in Your Toolbox" articles has been of use to you in completing your everyday modeling projects. ▶

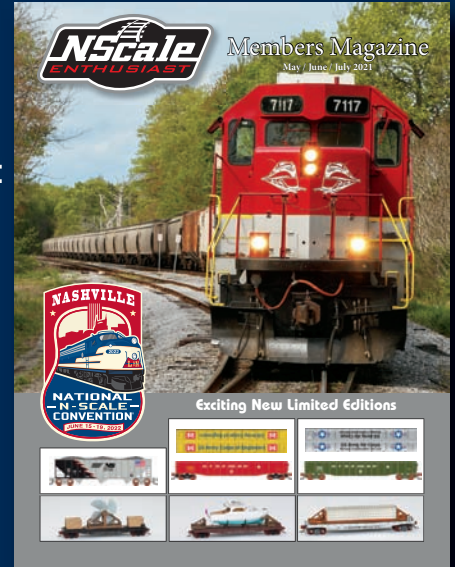


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## KITBASH A DEDICATED SERVICE BOXCAR

# MILWAUKEE ROAD BEER CAR

by Marty Coil/ Images by author

**"D**edicated Service" cars were made by some railroads to serve long time customers with very specific needs. The Milwaukee Road "Beer Cars" (spent grains) was one of these "dedicated service" box cars. In N Scale, these cars were offered by Fox Valley as a special run at the 2013 N Scale Enthusiast Convention in Milwaukee. So, for modelers, this car would be very rare.

My beer car started out as a Micro-Trains Line standard 40' boxcar. The roof of a PS-1 boxcar is not the same as the rare double panel Murphy panel roofs (available in N only on the Fox Valley Models ribbed cars) but is probably closer than normal Murphy panel, diagonal panel, etc. roofs. Especially after the roof hatches are installed.



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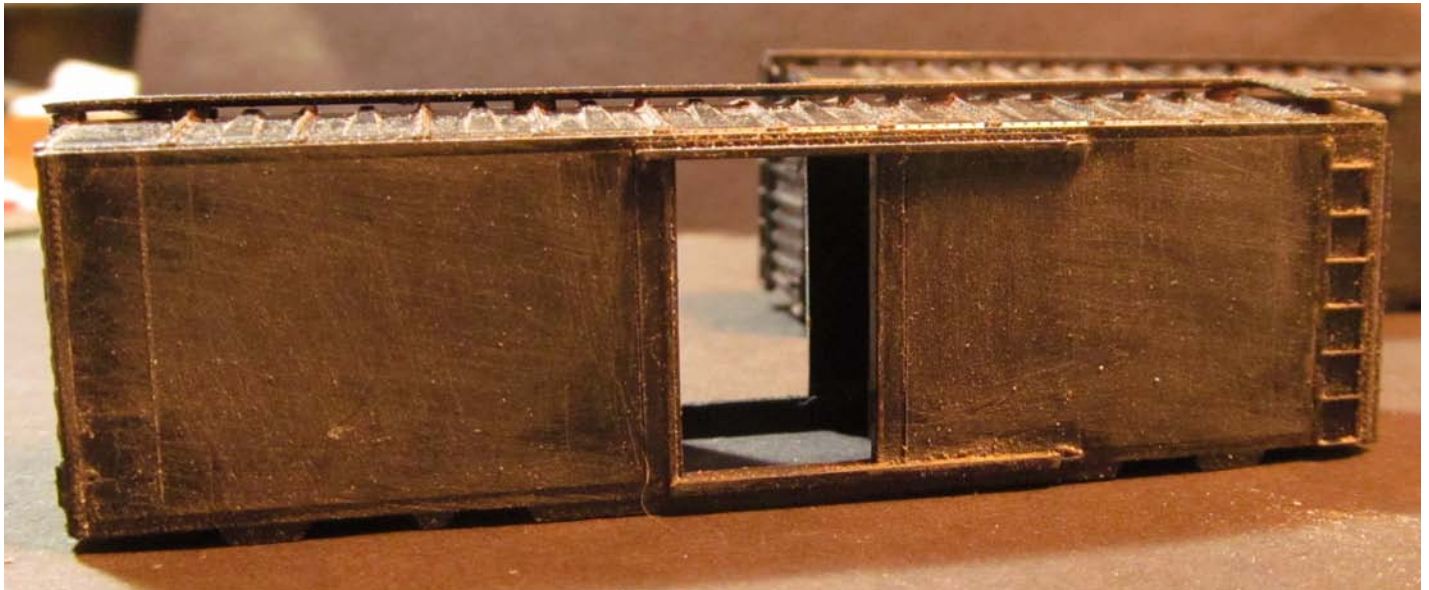
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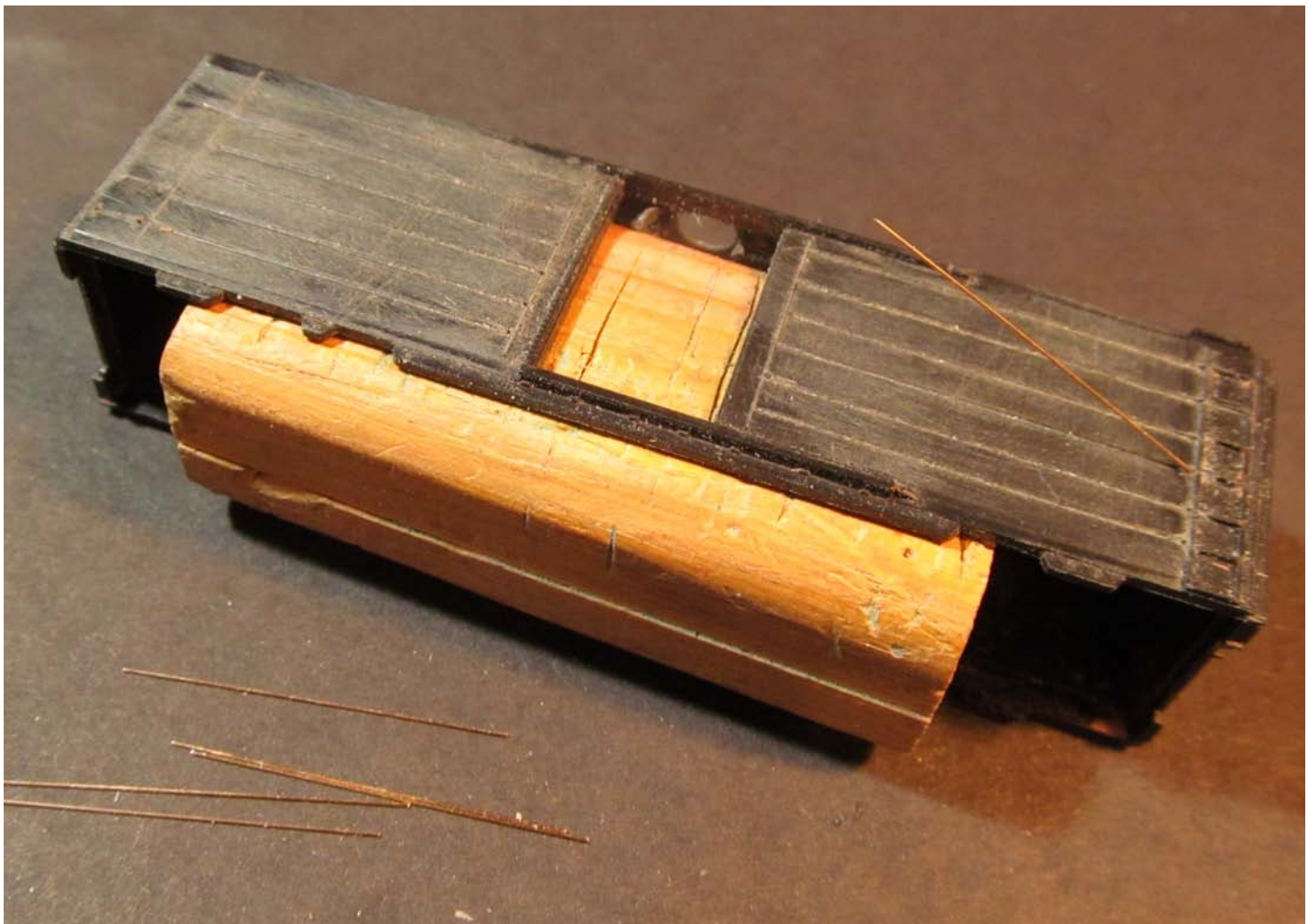
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I began by stripping the paint with 91 percent alcohol, I remove the doors and the faux grab steps. Number 80 drill holes are made for their replacement. On the A end of the car, I drill a pilot hole for the lumber door. Now it was easy to sand the car to remove the panel lines



To add the ribs to the car I use a steel rule, clamps and X-Acto knife. Using the ladders as a marker, I scribe the line for the ribs. Go deep enough so the scribing tool will create a channel to secure the ribs. The scribing process will create flash. Remove the flash with the sharp edge of small screw driver.

Use .010 brass wire for the ribs. Cut to size and use CA glue (Zap green). Attach one end with a CA dab and place it at an angle. Paint the underside of the rod with CA and press into the channel. This process securely sets the ribs.

Sand the brass ribs to make the primer hold the paint. I like to prime the sides to see any areas that need to be cleaned.



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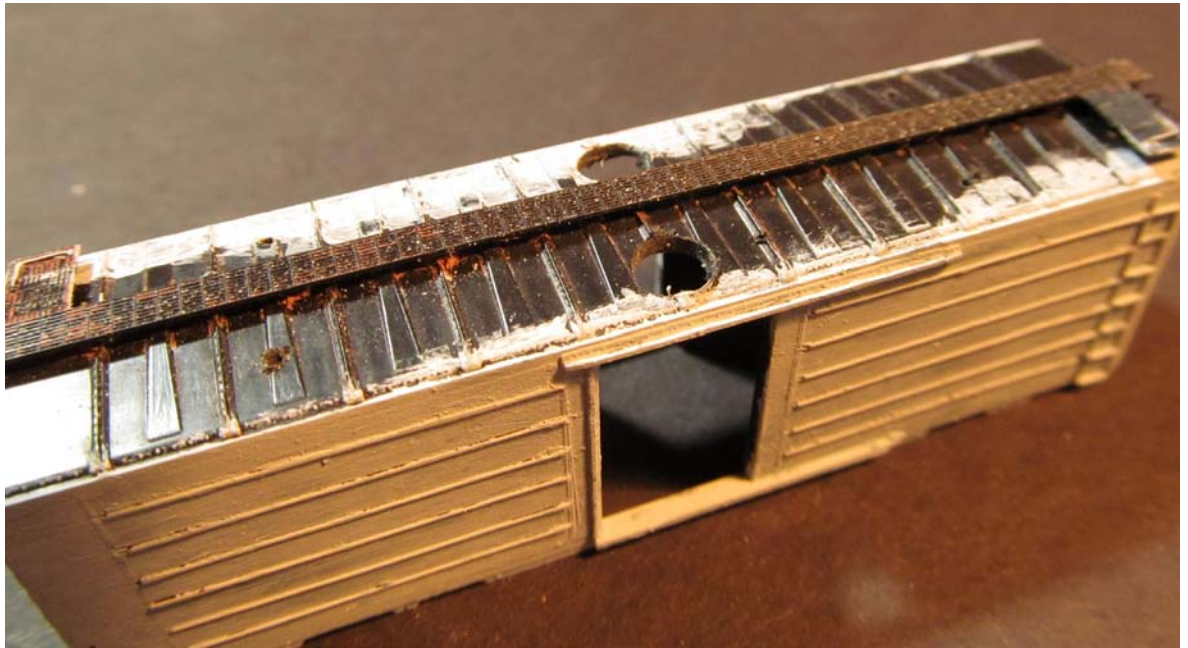
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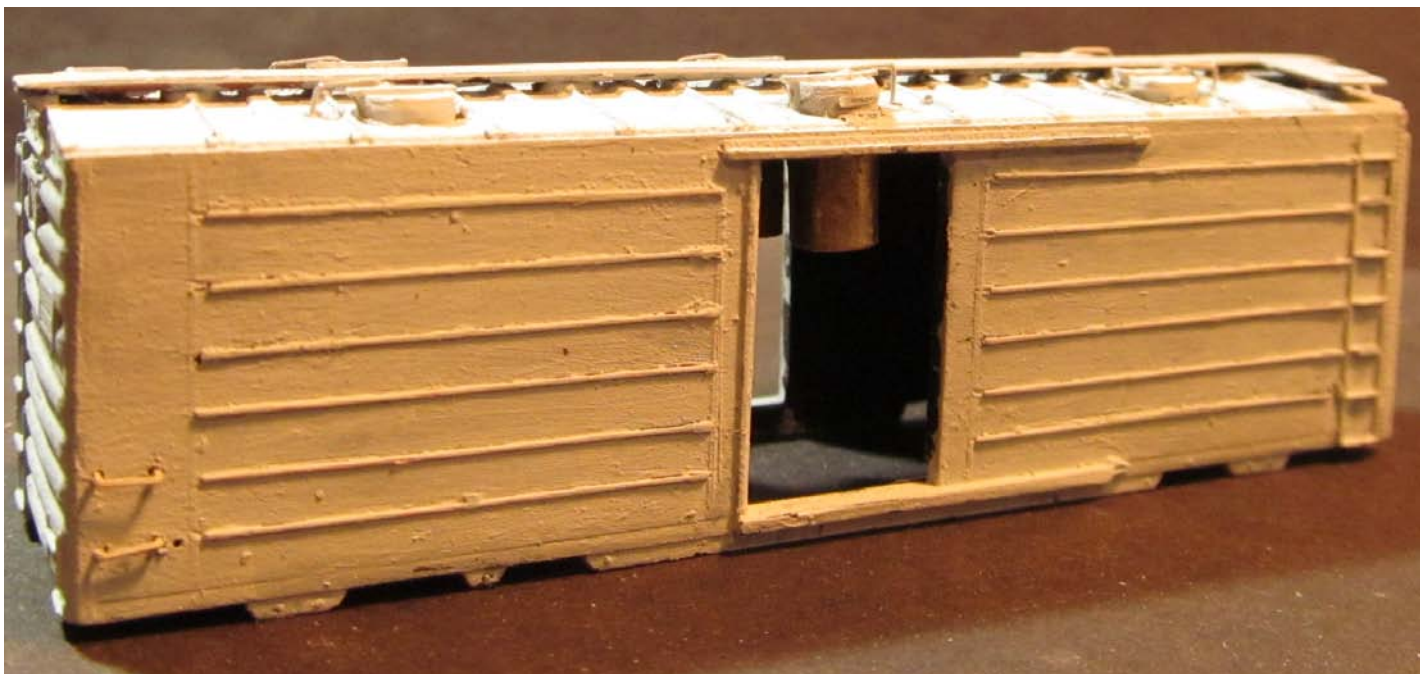
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# SCALE TRAINS

For spent grain tanks, cut 6 holes in the roof. The holes are in the middle and the 2nd roof panel from the ends. I used a X-Acto knife to widen the holes and a Dremel to finish for the 1/4" copper tubing.



Cut the tubing to a 3/16"-1/4" length.  
 For the top of the tanks, I glue the tanks to a thin styrene sheet. Cut them out and sand the styrene smooth to the top of the copper tubing.  
 Then glue the assembly into the 6 holes.  
 Once the glue dries, I add a 10x20 strip to the top to represent the latch mechanism



Before I prime the rest of the car, I frame and finish the lumber door, add Gold Medal grabs and attach latches to the grain tanks. For these latches use .080 brass rods and bend it so it fits into the #80 hole drilled into the roof and the top of the tanks.

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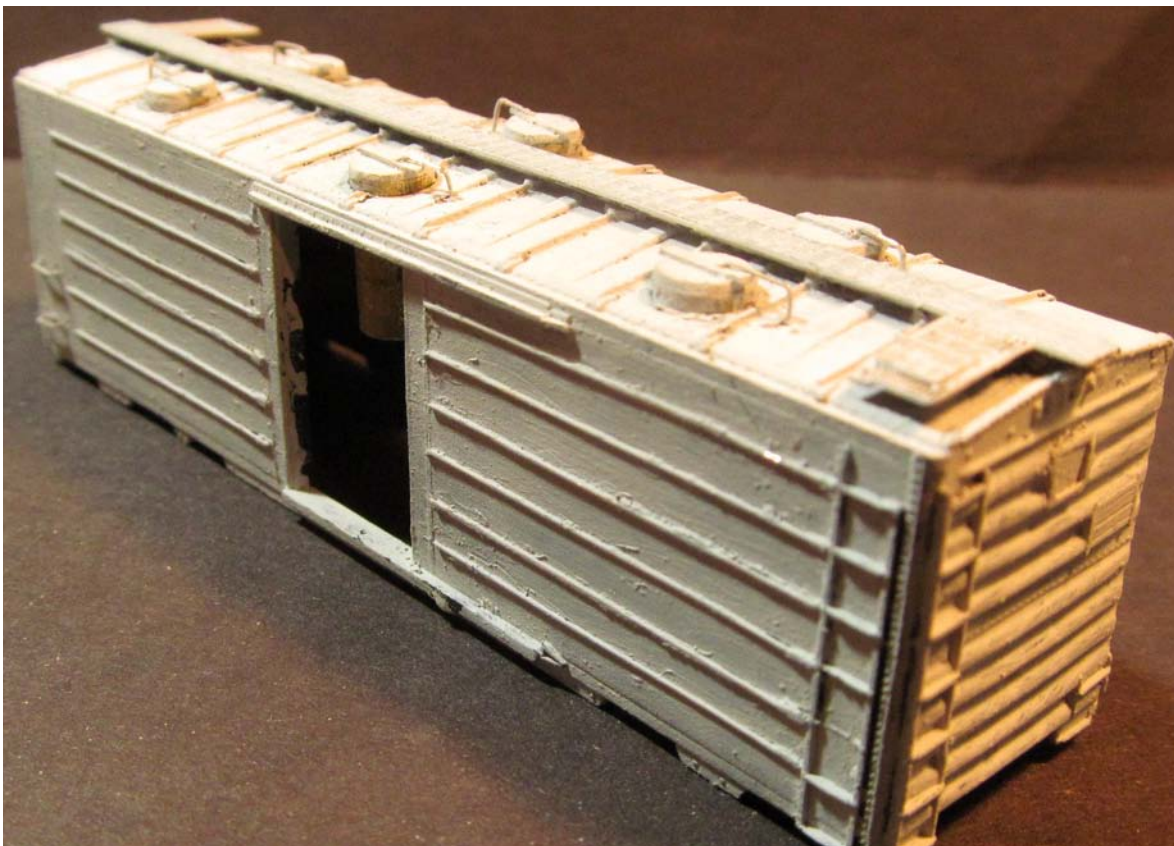


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Notice the lumber door on the "A" end.



The paint color I have found to match this Milwaukee car is a Polly S, AT&SF Red. It seems to match pretty close. The doors were painted with Model Flex, Milwaukee Orange. The slider was removed from the back of the doors before gluing in place.

An Ebay seller, K4, has decals for this car. For me, they work nicely to complete the decaling of the project.

The benefit of this project is that you have added another industry to your layout. This unique car fits nicely and is the type of 'Dedicated Service' car that railroads used to maintain servicing special customers. ▸

# The WP's Livermore Depot

by William Plourde/ Images by Author



Image 01. Trackside view of the depot. Used with permission of the Livermore Heritage Guild.

**T**hroughout the Southwest, Mission Revival Style Depots were used extensively by the Western Pacific, Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads. Yet, commercially produced N scale kits for these ubiquitous depots are difficult to find. Any modeler who wants this style of depot on their layout must scratch-build or kit-bash it. Some may want to design their own generic Mission Revival Style depot using the methods described in this article. My N scale layout includes the City of Livermore, CA on the Western Pacific. The Livermore Depot was easier to construct because the Western Pacific's architectural drawings were available.

Stephan Hayes' comprehensive *Western Pacific Depots and Stations* was invaluable in the construction of the Livermore Depot. Using the drawings in the book and a copier, the diagrams were blown up to exact N scale size. Numerous copies were needed to create the three-dimensional model from the two dimensional drawings.

These copied images were cut for all the architectural sections of the depot and glued to a piece of art matte board using stick glue. The matte board was chosen because the texture of the board closely matched the pattern of the structure's stucco exterior walls. The matte board is also very easy to cut using a number 11 blade. The arches were cut using a jeweller's saw as the #11 blade does a poor job of cutting curved edges. The saw also enables the modeler to precisely control the cut of the curve.

Once all the parts of the depot were cut, the parts were test fitted to insure proper alignment. Pieces were sanded until all the corners met perfectly. The window openings were then cut

to size to fit the Tichy Trains windows that were used for this depot. When all the openings and windows were cut, the back of the boards were labeled with their location and the glued paper was removed. The use of stick glue worked very well, as it makes applying/removing the paper quite easy and leaves no residue on the board. The station agent's office was created inside the structure and topped with thick black construction paper to keep light from bleeding through after the office is lit. A real challenge of this fairly straight forward construction was creating the pop-out walls for the station agent's office. The side view drawings showed windows on both sides of the office, which gave the size of the protruding office. Walls for both sides of the pop-out were cut from scrap matte board.

The two large doors of the depot, including the large freight doors, were made using N scale 2X6 wood stock cut to size and glued together. Once dried the top of the doors were cut, using the jeweller's saw, to fit the curved top in the architectural drawings. Doors on both sides of the depot were test sanded and glued into place. Windows were then installed and glued into place.

Once the four walls of the structure were glued together and the interior office installed, it was time to create the arched arcade on the depot's exterior. The arches of the arcade were created following the drawings in the same manner as the walls of the depot. The arcade was glued together and then test fitted to the building. To stabilise the arcade, a roof was constructed using quarter-inch black card stock. Turning the arcade upside down made the perfect template for cutting this card stock. As seen on the exterior of the arcade, wooden beams were used on the interior of the arcade to hold the roof and anchor the arcade's structure. The arcade was then attached to the building.

*Text continues on page 26)*  
#135 AUG/SEP 2021



Image 02. Livermore Depot from the rear soon after completion. Used with Permission of the Livermore Heritage Guild

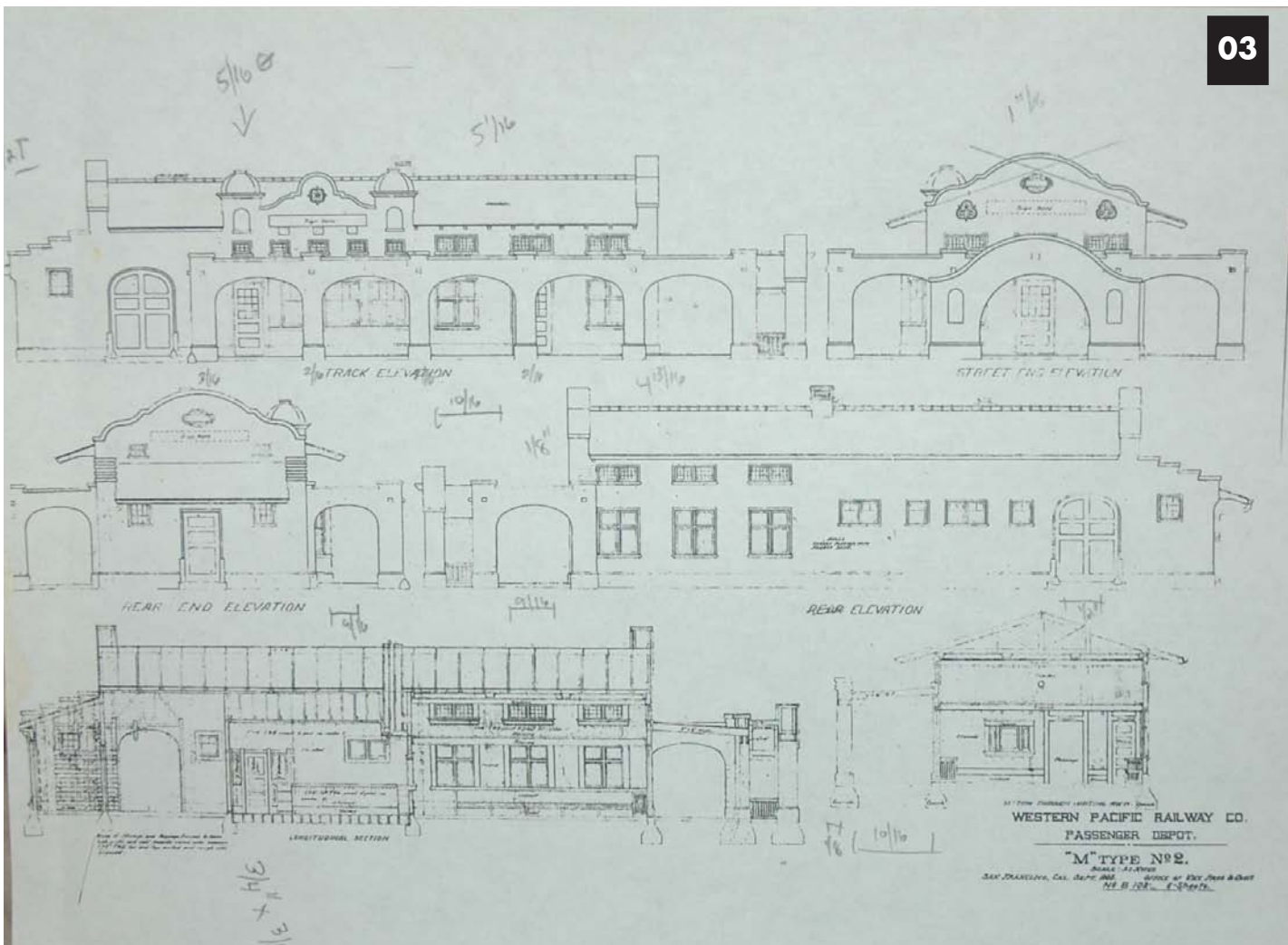


Image 03. Architectural drawings. Courtesy of Stephen Hayes



Image 04. Reduced exterior drawings glued to mat board with doors and windows.



Image 05. Assembled mat board walls with windows, doors and domes installed.



Image 06. Arcade added to depot.



Image 07. Completed Depot with roof and timbers and arcade (American Model Builders Interlocking Tower also shown).



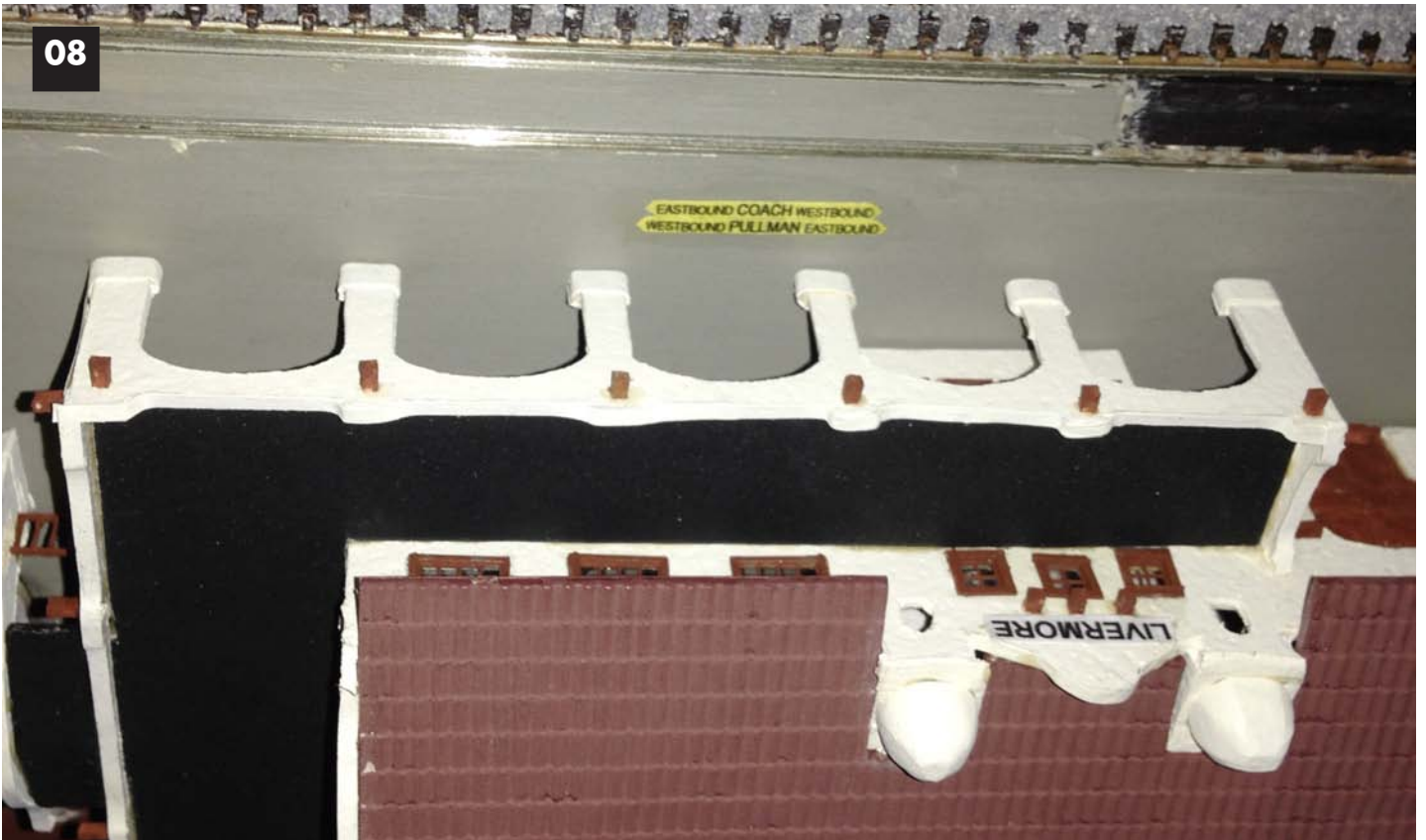


Image 08. Station installed with passenger instructions on platform.

At this point, the structure required the two towers on either side of the architectural parapet above the depot roof. The interior wall of the station agent's office provided the base for the two towers. As the facade includes the front of the towers, only three added sides were necessary. As with the rest of the depot, scrap matte board was used to build the rest of the towers.

Another major challenge was creating the domes on top of the depots two towers. The solution was found in two rubber "feet" from the bottom of a discarded small kitchen appliance. These turned upside-down were just the right size and shape for the domes. These were glued into place and left to dry.

The roof of the depot and the freight office is created using commercially produced Spanish tile plastic roof pieces. These were cut to size and trimmed to fit the contours of the depot's roof. Once again, the jeweller's saw and files were used to get a precise fit around the towers. The depot was painted an off white and the windows, doors and roof were painted boxcar red.

The final details were the station signs, fences between the arcade, the parapets of the station and the exterior beam extending from the outside of the arcade. Using a word processing program, the correct font for the depot signs was selected and text boxes were created to make sure the signs size fit exactly the location on the depot. They were printed onto self adhesive labels, cut, peeled and applied to the sides of the depot. Scrap fencing was used on the right side to connect the arch facade to the end of the arcade. Pieces of 4X4 scaled lumber was cut to size and glued to the proper places on the exterior the arcade. Finally, chart tape was used to cap the parapets and the bases of the arcade columns.

Then, a bottom of thin card stock was added to the base of the depot and it was installed on the layout. To illuminate the structure, a grain of wheat bulb was used. To change the bulb (should it ever burn out) and adjust the height of the bulb within the office, the bulb was attached to a styrene tube with the wires inside the tube. As the base of the layout is half inch foam core, it was easy to drill a hole up into the station agent's office and insert the bulb and tube.

To bring the entire depot together with the layout around it, vinyl wallboard compound was used to cover the joint between the platform and the walls and columns of the depot. Once dried and sanded, the compound was painted to match the base and the building.

Scratch building this depot based on the actual depot architectural drawings was an enjoyable experience and is recommended to anyone wishing to add a structure that is desired but not commercially available. The only caveat is take one's time, measure twice and cut once. If the results are not satisfactory, remember, it can always be changed.

#### References:

Harry Briley, President - Livermore Heritage Guild, P.O. Box 2913 Livermore, CA 94551-2913

*Western Pacific Depots and Stations* by Stephen M. Hayes Hayes Publishing c. 2007 ISBN 978-60461-880-8

*(More photos on next page)*



Image 09. Depot from Oakland direction.



Image 10. Depot from Stockton direction. ▶

# NODAK Cement

by Kim Saign/ Images by Author

NODAK  
CEMENT



**T**he basis of this industry goes back to the purchase of 42 Pecos River Brass ACF two bay hoppers back about 30 years ago at a train show. At the time the V-Line ACF two bay hopper was the only plastic/resin option other than the PRB version. Now we also have a Kato produced square hatch, closed side version. Several of the PRB hoppers I purchased were painted. Most were square hatch, open side and closed side versions. However there were 4 closed side round hatch that were unpainted. After some research I determined they were close to the Soo Line round hatch closed side cars they use for sand service. So I painted them and started looking for decals. There were none to be found that would work for these cars. So fast forward about 25 years. John Killinger, one of our moderators on

the NScaleYardSale said he could make the decals for me. I provided a picture of what I needed then provided the spacing between the ribs on the hoppers. He created the artwork, had the decals printed and applied the decals to the four round

hatch hoppers I had painted 25 years ago. They turned out so nice I decided to do four PRB square hatch open sided hoppers for cement service. I already had plenty of other cars for cement service but none painted for Soo Line. I asked John to just change the numbers on the decal sheet to the 89XX series instead of the 69XX series. At first glance I thought the artwork was the same between the two series except for the body color and road numbers. I was somewhat wrong. The data was similar but the arrangement was different. These open sided hoppers are a somewhat different shade than the closed side hoppers to help differentiate them. All of this lead to weathering the cement hoppers much differently than the sand hoppers.



01



Image 01. Here are the four round hatch, closed side PRB hoppers that started this adventure. They sat in this drawer for about 25 years waiting for decals. Some of the ladders were bent. That happens in the real world too so it didn't bother me at all. The paint was well cured.

02



Image 02. After John decaled the four round hatch hoppers I took over. A neat aspect of the decals is John designed them per panel. Meaning it's a single decal for everything per panel, the lettering above as well as the data lower on the panel. So only eight decals per car side. I researched how the cars in sand service weathered. Overall the sand doesn't appear to harm the paint much. The biggest feature is the white lettering "SOO LINE" tends to oxidize and run down the sides over time. So there is white streaks below the lettering. I recreated this effect with Bragdon weathering powders using a micro brush. Just put a light amount of powder on the micro brush and drag it down the sides below the lettering. I used a light amount of a tan powder to depict sand spilt on the roof while loading the car. This picture shows an unweathered car on the right vs. a weathered car on the left. Another thing to note is these cars had solid bearing trucks so the wheel face should look black and greasy from oil leaching from the journal box on the wheels. I like to use a dark powder to make the springs and journal boxes look darker, too.

03



Image 03. During operation the plan is to have one sand hopper parked near the sand tower that gets swapped out once per op session. With 4 cars I can have one loading, one in transit, one unloading, and one idling waiting for the call of duty.

04

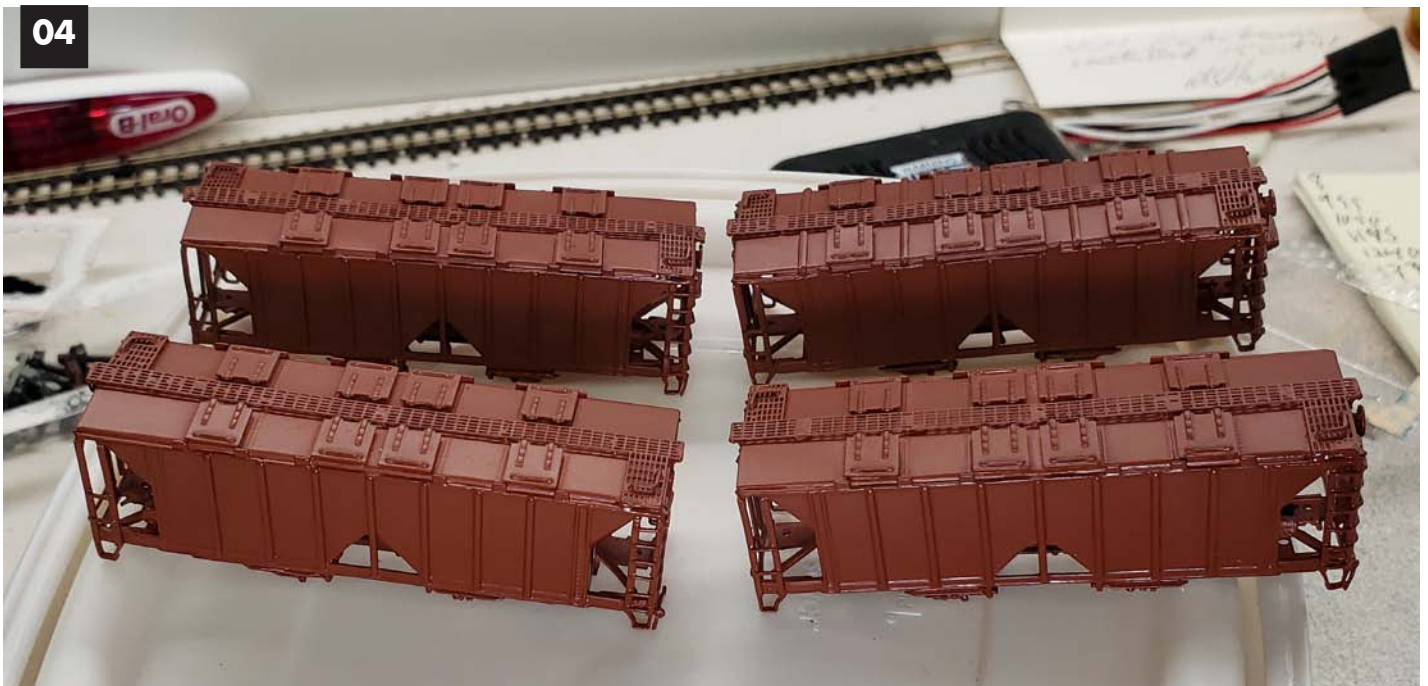


Image 04. These four sand cars turned out so nice I decided to do four more but this time on a body with square hatches and open sides. The body color was different for this series of hoppers.



05

Image 05. I had John Killinger change the numbers and run off another sheet of decals. I assured him he didn't need to make any changes because the open side and closed side hoppers were about the same. As you can see from the comparison of the closed side hopper above, the placement of the data is different after all on the open side hopper. So what could have been a 64 decal job turned into a 104 separate decal job. I had to separate the bottom data from the "SOO LINE" at the top of each decal. It took about five hours to do all four cars. The results were well worth it. This image is before Tamiya clear flat was applied to hide the decal film.



06

Image 06. Cement is a much messier commodity. The two cars on the right were weathered with Bragdon powders. I used a light gray powder applied with a micro brush to simulate streaks. Continuing the streak down to the trucks is a nice touch. Often spillage on the roof near the hatches from loading will linger as well. The hatches should be cleaner than the top of the car because they are open during loading and not subject to spillage on them. I was mindful to not overdo it on the reporting marks so they stayed legible.

07



Image 07. Here is a group photo showing the difference in the weathering between cars in cement service vs. cars in sand service. BTW this new layout is still under construction, thus no scenery yet.

08



Image 08. This shot is from the prior layout. When I was planning this layout in 1992 I knew I needed a cement plant to make use of all those PRB two bay hoppers I had recently purchased. It seemed like using PVC pipe would be an easy and cheap way to make the silos. So I planned to use 3" PVC for the silos. I laid the track so there would be room for the silos between the wall and the spur. What I didn't know at the time is 3" means inner diameter not outer diameter. So when I brought home 3" pipe I realized it wouldn't fit. So I went back and bought a 2" PVC pipe (2.4" outer diameter). I cut ten 11" sections. For solvent to weld them together I used the stuff that comes in the can with the ball type applicator that dries up after a few months no matter how tight you put the lid on. The tops of the silos are just .020" styrene attached to the tops then trimmed to the size of the silo. I lightly sanded the pipe to knock the sheen off the pipe. There is always printing on the pipes. I oriented that to the back side then welded the ten 2" pipes together in a row. I had the bright idea to lay styrene strips across the back to provide a little more strength to the structure. I test fit the structure on the layout. Liked what I saw, added signage and forgot about it till I took that layout down in 2018.



Image 09. Fast forward 25 years. Now it's time to place the cement silo on the new layout. I noticed the whole structure had bowed somewhat to the back. I suspect the styrene strips I used may have caused this. They had also become brittle and wavy. The weld between the 8th and 9th silo broke. Initially I tried to fix that with a .080" plate that spanned the 8th, 9th, and 10th silos. Then a 6-32 screw between the silos. That worked but I managed to have a couple other welds fail while handing it. I mended those too with a plate. But I realized I needed a single something that spanned the whole structure mechanically rather than with glues or solvents. I found a piece of 1" x 1/8" aluminum stock that was already the right length. I marked where the center of each silo was and drilled a 5/32" hole in the aluminum. I laid this across the 10 silos then drilled 1/8" holes for self tapping 6-32 machine screws. This provided the mechanical stiffness I needed to the structure along the bottom. It also took the bow out of most of the structure. I left the two mend plates on the back for additional strength. If I was starting from scratch today I would lay a piece of aluminum like this at the top and bottom of the back to hold it all together rather than try to use solvent to weld it together.

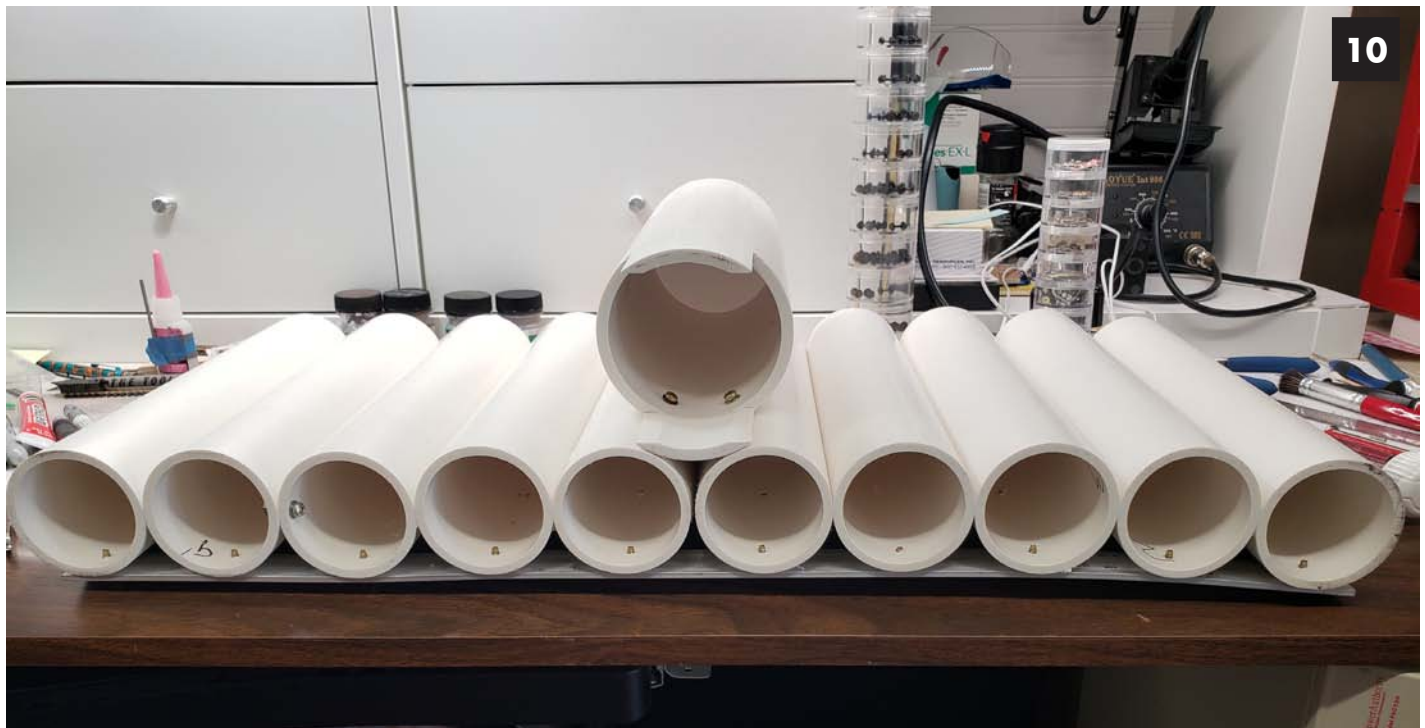


Image 10. Here we see the screws holding the silos together as well as the 2 screws holding the 3" pipe for the loading silo to the main structure. The 3" pipe is the right size to span 2 tracks for loading. I had to find something to use that pipe I purchased. I just used a hack saw to cut away where the tracks go under that silo. Then a file to clean up the edges.





Image 11. When I saw the back of the structure while attempting to fix the breaks I realized I had never got around to painting the structure 25 years earlier. So now it was time to fix that. Paint the bottom first so when you flip it over to do the top if any issues occur it will be at the bottom. Tru-color makes a spray can color called TCP-4006 Matte Concrete. It's a very good color for concrete unless you need an aged concrete look that has more tan to it.



Image 12. After painting the structure a concrete color I used a pan pastel white with a cheap paint brush to place a little weathering on the silos. Most of the streaks start about the height of where the roofs of the covered hoppers would be due to wind and rain blowing cement from the cars onto the silos. Unless there was some sort of spillage at the top of the silos there wouldn't been much reason for streaking in that area. It seems a lot of businesses in North Dakota use "Nodak" for a name. For signage I used Photoshop to create the NODAK CEMENT sign. Then printed it on 48# matte presentation paper. That is stiff enough that no additional support is needed. The sign is held on with three strips of double sided adhesive.

Final thoughts. This structure is 24" wide, 11" tall and 6" deep. A similar structure could be made with smaller diameter pipe, more or less silos, taller or shorter. It's very customizable for whatever space you have. The materials are inexpensive too. I still plan to add some other details at some point. But to my operators there is no question where the cement hoppers go to be loaded. ▀

# TRAVEL GUIDE N EVENTS

**2021 SEP 11-12 UK** The International N Gauge Show. Warwickshire Event Centre, CV31 1XN  
[Click Here.](#)

**2021 OCT 01-02 NC** Fletcher. Autumn Rails 2021 All Scales Model Railroad Show. SA 12 to 6PM, SU 10AM to 4PM. WNC Agricultural Center, Expo Building, 785 Boylson Hwy, Gate 5.  
[www.fbe-nscale.org/autumn-rails/](http://www.fbe-nscale.org/autumn-rails/)

**2021 OCT 09-10 MO** Kirkwood 30th Annual Greater St. Louis Metro Area Train Show sponsored by the Mississippi Valley N Scalpers Kirkwood Community Center

111 S. Geyer Road  
Admission \$7, kids 12 and under are free  
Operating layouts including MVNS NTRAK  
Email: [mvns@railfan.net](mailto:mvns@railfan.net)  
Website: <http://mvns.railfan.net>

**2022 JUN ??-?? TN** Nashville. 28th Annual National N Scale Convention

**2023 JUN ??-?? NV** Sparks/ Reno area. 29th Annual National N Scale Convention. ▶

# OBSERVATIONS

Thoughts by Steve Stark



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# THANKS

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## Who and What Layouts Influenced My Layout.

**I**nfluencer - 'noun' - a new but apt term for the people and sometimes companies and organizations that affect and perhaps mold the direction we take in our lives and our hobbies.

My niece, Kate Stark, is an influencer. She does this for a living and, from all accounts, is pretty good at it. One Christmas, she persuaded my brother Stuart to prepare shortbread using our Scottish grandmother's (and our) favorite recipe live during her podcast. Based on feedback, shortbread is now being made around the world using that recipe.

Back in the dark ages, before N Scale, and for a long time afterwards, modelers were influenced by personal contact, usually by a small group of local hobbyists, a limited hobby press, a few organizations such as the NMRA, and, with a bit of luck, a lo-

cal hobby shop. None were called 'Influencers', but that is what they were. H0 and O were the predominant scales and those scales drove the hobby. While preparing my update on the Nanoose Division of the E & N, Kirk asked me who and what influenced me as a model railroader over the years, especially early on. I immediately replied, Frank Ellison and John Allen. During my Lionel days in the early 50s, I avidly read Frank's articles in Model Railroader about his Delta Lines. He was ahead of his time, writing about operation and scenery when most modelers ran trains in circles on plywood table tops or on the floor. John Allen's modelling as rendered in the Gordon Varney ads that started appearing in MR about the same time I switched to H0 in 1958, took detailing and scenery to new levels. John's Gorre and Daphetid, when featured in MR, was something to behold.

Kirk pressed me for more names, and then said "Write about it."

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that there were and are many influencers for me in this wonderful hobby. The first ones were my parents who provided me with the opportunity to see the real thing when I was a kid, including the Wabash Railroad when we lived in Missouri in the late 1940s while my father attended medical school, and gave me model trains for Christmas. My father helped me build the bench work for my Lionel and H0 layouts. When I was 11, my mother painted a series of buildings on a partial backdrop for the Lionel set up that were far better than any I have done since.

Joining the NMRA in 1960 was probably the greatest influencing event of my modelling experiences. The resulting personal contacts enabled me to join the Southern Vancouver Island Model Railway Club in my high school years and to learn from its talented members, as well as to visit George Hearn's large Canadian Pacific O scale layout in Victoria BC. An NMRA convention in Vancouver in 1965 put me in touch with some very skilled 7th Division PNR NMRA members whose influence lasted a lifetime. The printed NMRA membership directory enabled my wife Mary and me to visit some inspiring layouts in New Zealand and Australia in 1972, particularly an attic one in Christchurch which modelled NZR "ish". This was my first introduction to serious scratch building in N Scale as nobody was manufacturing models of New Zealand Railways equipment back then.

The first articles in MR introducing readers to N Scale in 1965 were interesting, but not particularly influencing as my H0 layout in my parents' house was expanding nicely and club activities kept me busy. However, a move to Vancouver to attend law School in 1968 relegated me to a dorm room with no space for even an H0 display. My parents gave me an N Scale Aurora (Minitrix) train set that Christmas. I was hooked. Although I did not give up my H0 or even my Lionel equipment, I have modelled in N ever since.

My wife Mary expressed an interest in model

trains soon after we first met in 1970 when she saw my limited collection of N Scale at the house I shared with roommates. She had a Lionel set when she was a girl and soon expressed a desire to have her own N Scale railroad. With my meagre student budget, an Atlas box car, some GN sky blue paint and white Letraset the Ambleside and Tiddlycove Railway was born (both real communities in West Vancouver BC). One of her cars appears in photo 22 in my Nanoose division article. Mary has attended many N Scale conventions over the years and has often influenced my purchases, usually encouraging me to buy something I was hesitant about. Her critical comments (in a positive way) from time to time on various aspects of my modelling improved my skills.

In 1972, Mary and I met George Carroll and his then girlfriend Nicky at a 7th Div. PNR NMRA meet in Vancouver and the four of us have been life-long friends since then. George had modelled in N Scale since 1967 and each of us has been lucky enough to influence the other continuously for 49 years. Since local hobby shops in Vancouver were mostly H0 oriented, George and I incorporated Pacific N Scale Ltd (now Pacific Scale Rail) in 1974 to bring in N Scale products for the local hobbyists. This brought us into contact with more N scalers with whom we mutually shared ideas. George and I also produced the CS Models line of products which led to contact with more modelers, as well as manufacturers, resulting with more exchanges of ideas.

The NMRA members' directory resulted in Hal Riegger, of future NCat fame, contacting George and then visiting George and Nicky, and Mary and me, in 1974. For many years thereafter, Hal would stay at one of our homes during his annual pottery trip to British Columbia. Hal introduced us to NTRAK and Jim FitzGerald. As a result George and I built an 8' NTRAK module, boxed it up, strapped it to the top of George's BMW, and took it to the 1974 NMRA convention in San Diego to participate in the first public NTRAK layout. There we met a talented group of N scale modelers including Tom Knapp, whose scratch building efforts were eye-open-

ing. George and I, along with Dale Laird, built NTRAK/NCat modules for the 1979 and 1981 NMRA conventions, which again allowed us to meet and be influenced by new modelers.

In 1975, Mary and I and year-old son, Bob, travelled to California and visited with Jim Fitzgerald and Ben Davis. We were able to see and operate on the Belmont Shore Lines original club layout. Up to then, it was the largest N Scale layout I had seen. The scenery to track ratio convinced me that a large layout would fully explore the potential of N Scale.

In 1975 George and I were involved with a number of Vancouver N scalers (VANS) in building a 20' x 8' modular layout centered on our NTRAK module which we displayed for a number of years in the Greater Vancouver area. It was at one of those set ups where I met Brian Morgan. He and I worked on each other's layouts for years. Brian did a lot of my wiring and I painted his backdrops. One of the advantages of our alternating weekly work sessions was that we would have a new project to show the other every second week. This led to each of us being pushed to improve our modelling skills and develop our layouts beyond what we would have otherwise accomplished. We both started operations on our respective layouts around the same time, even exchanging cars each session after putting in 'purchase orders' (an informal request) for the commodities required for certain industries. Usually the empties would be returned the following session to the owner's layout, although one tank car of mine was lost on Brian's Selkirk Division for 3 years. It eventually showed up in a tunnel. Brian's operations became more sophisticated at an earlier date than mine and went in a slightly different direction, but every op session added to my enjoyment of that side of the hobby.

No list of influencers would be complete without mentioning Allan McClelland (Virginian & Ohio H0), Tony Koester (Allegany Midland, Nickel Plate Road (H0), and the Reid Brothers (Cumberland Valley N). Allan's 'good enough' approach to modelling when building any layout, especially a large one where time is a constraint, is a philosophy that allowed me to

mostly complete my various renditions of the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway while balancing the requirements of family, a busy law practice, and operating a hobby shop and manufacturing business. Since few of us have the skill sets to master all aspects of the hobby - I certainly don't - 'good enough' is a philosophy worth adopting most of the time.

Tony's philosophy and observations in his articles in RMC, Model Railway Planning and Great Model Railroads have been thought provoking and project pushing over the years and continue to this day. The privilege of operating on his NKP layout reinforced his influence on the building and operation of my E & N layout. The Reid Brothers have been an influence on every aspect of my modelling with every article I have read on their Cumberland Valley system including planning scenery and operation. It is interesting to note that the 1994 issue of Great Model Railroads contained articles on the Cumberland Valley, the Allegany Midland and my Esquimalt & Nanaimo.

Over the last 20 years, our younger son Jock, who models the BN in 1970, has become quite an adept kit basher. His ability to turn common kit parts and bits and pieces into unique, but well modelled and believable structures have exceeded my efforts and have inspired me to look at kit bashing in a whole new light.

Finally, I need to mention the thousands of layouts that I have read about and the hundreds of layouts I have visited over the years, of every scale and gauge and their owners, including Kirk, as influencers. I have learned something and continue to learn from them all. Sometimes I find out what works and what doesn't. Sometimes I learn a new way to do something, or an old forgotten way to solve a problem. Sometimes a new camera angle or a new product grabs my attention, and sometimes I simply see a different perspective for looking at a problem.

Each of you are or can be influencers simply by sharing whatever you have done or are doing. That is the best part of the hobby - sharing. Now off to find some shortbread, although I suspect I will have to wait for Christmas.

## Captions for Observations

I realized, while writing the Observations column that I had in my collection a car that in some way was tied to every person, organization or company mentioned in the article. I thought it would be fun to share photos of those cars.

Notes:

a. unless otherwise noted in the captions below, all photos were taken by, and all decals and dry transfers were applied by the author;  
b. unless otherwise noted, all cars in the photos are Micro-Trains;

c. The N Scale Collector (NSC), now the N Scale Enthusiast, assigns an identification number to manufacturer produced Special Run cars i.e. NSC 74-01 (the first MT special run car), NSC ATL 08-06. The first letters after NSC, if any, signify the manufacturer, the first 2 numbers signify the year, 1974, 2008 and the second numbers identify the order in which the car was produced in that year. If no letters appear the car was likely made by Kadee or Micro-Trains. The NSC # did not appear on box labels in the early years of the numbering system.



01. rank Ellison's Delta Lines car # 2941, NMRA Heritage Collection # 3, NSC 93-43



02. John Allen's Gorrie & Daphetid car # 8401, NMRA Heritage Collection # 1, NSC 92-10



03. NMRA Promotional car # 37421, not offered for sale, NSC 00-17



04. MR 40th Anniversary car 114N37 lettered for Al Kalmbach's RR, Kadee, NSC 74-01



05. RMC car 'Abilene' with nod to RMC Publisher Hal Carstens, Model Die Casting Corp.



06. Aurora (Minitrix) # 4880 GN # 11875, the author's first N Scale box car Christmas 1968



07. Steve Stark's Esquimalt & Nanaimo # 19509, PNS-25, NSC MT 08-77



08. Mary Stark's Ambleside & Tiddlycove # 2305, dry transfers



09. George Carroll's Union Bay Transportation & Navigation Co. # 19650 dry transfers applied to partially factory printed Dominion Refrigerator car



10. Pacific N Scale 10th Anniversary Car # 1974, PNS-1A, Kadee, NSC 84-02





11. CS Models Woodchip car Pacific Great Eastern # 9770 –assembled, painted and decaled by Tim Horton and George Carroll



12. Hal Reigger's Penn Valley Lines # 19\* 'Sawback', painted and lettered by Hal Reigger, Minitrix



13. NTRAK 10th Anniversary car # 1983, Kadee, NSC 83-01



14. NTrak 40th Anniversary Tribute Car 'Jim Fitzgerald', NSC MT 14-105



15. NTrak 40th Anniversary Tribute Car 'Benjamin Davis', NSC MT 14-106



16. Belmont Shore Lines 1976 N Scale Meat car # 2306, Kadee, NSC 76-02



17. Brian Morgan's Burlington Northern Selkirk Division 25th Anniversary car # 200825 decals



18. Allan McClelland's Virginian & Ohio car # 404, NMRA Living Legends # 5, NSC MT 04-130



19. Tony Koester's Allegany Midland car # 35167, NMRA Living Legends # 6, NSC MT 05-129



20. Reid Brothers Cumberland Valley car # 1996, car # 5 of 12, custom printed by... not sure



21. Jock Stark's Starmoca Industries car # 8809 decals, Jock Stark photo



22. . Kirk Reddie's nod car The Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound 'Route of the Electrified Columbian' # 2010, Fox Valley Models part # 8923

**SEE YOU NEXT ISSUE!**