

WHEN SPACE IS AT A PREMIUM
Small Can Be Beautiful: Two ways that work

HO Traction Modeling in Small, Portable Modules

By Fred Miller

Many MER members who were lucky enough to travel to the last two regional conventions (Charlotte and Allentown) got an opportunity to view a sampling of my HO Scale trolley modeling. "Gotham City" and "Upper Gotham" are two small modular dioramas in which I depict the golden age of traction, mid 1920's. Single truck Birneys and larger interurban cars ply the downtown and outer residential area tracks of the Town & Country Traction Company.

Perhaps a little history of how I arrived at modeling HO trolleys might be of interest. After a number of years of modeling railroads, starting with LIONEL under the Christmas tree as a kid, as many of us have, I wound up modeling HO Traction. My model building interests have tended towards the "minority" scales beginning with writing about and modeling in TT Scale in the early 60's, then switching over to OOO (later to be called "N") and dabbling in Z Scale followed most recently by HO traction.

Most of my modeling interests have centered around layout building

Layout in a Trailer

By John Teichmoeller

In the last year or so there has been a dialogue going on in the Layout Design Special Interest Group regarding "alternative" layout environments - i.e. alternatives to the traditional basement, attic, garage or spare bedroom. Two of the possibilities discussed were shipping containers and mobile homes. For those of us old timers, this discussion brought

some chuckles as at least the mobile home idea has been tried before. In particular, Railroad Model Craftsman featured a layout built by one Alex Landesco in a specially ordered and equipped mobile home. RMC Editor at the time Hal Carstens must have been particularly taken by the layout because he dedicated a cover story to in the April 1964 issue, and photos of it appeared in several other issues, the exact references to which I have

Continued on page 4

with focus on scenery and operation. Even the venture into the tiny world of Z Scale included multiple train operation with provision for way-freight switching, thanks to MicroTrain couplers. Electronic controls, even custom built PC based, have been included in some of my model work, reflective of my earlier training in electrical engineering. My recent HO traction modules are DCC and computer controlled.

After many years in New Jersey, I currently live in Charlotte, North Carolina with my wife, an ordained Presbyterian minister with pastoral duties in one of the community's churches. Our new life style has dictated small and portable modeling efforts. HO traction turned out to be an ideal choice for me.

And so Gotham City and surrounds were born. The ideas behind The Town & Country Traction Company began in the early 1990's when various modular approaches to HO trolley modeling were tried. In 1994, construction of the T&CT Co. Gotham City module began in earnest. Although four other modules, or dioramas, have been planned, only two have been

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MER LOCAL

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Presidential Pennings

Kids are still “into” model trains in a big way

by Bill Gruber

It's hard to believe we're in the final year of this century already! I suspect there will be many media presentations in 1999 that reflect back on the achievements and events of the past 100 years. Technology has increased at such a rate that the new computer you bought yesterday is already obsolete today! Fortunately for us model railroaders, the pace has been a bit slower and those resin kits bought 10 years ago can still rival some of the plastic kits offered today. The '90's saw the release of many exceptional plastic models from manufacturers who have been producing “toy” trains for years. DCC, like ACC, used to be an acronym that seems to have been elevated to formal word status today. I'm not sure it's in the Webster dictionary yet, though! Best of all, many of these new model railroad products are quite affordable to the average modeler.

The Reading Lines hosted over 300 people in month of November for National Model Railroad month. One event was a Division meet held by the New Jersey Division. The other two were “open houses” coordinated by Bruce Friedman. Several months in advance Bruce contacts layout owners in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey and schedules their railroads to be open during the month of November. Maps are distributed, along with each week-end lineup of layouts, to local hobby shops for distribution to the general public. This year, Bruce said there were around 70 layouts participating with the possibility of over 100 next year!

November's “open houses” provided an opportunity to share my railroad as well as some of the techniques I used in building it. In return, I also learned some things others have tried and been successful with. I found it amusing that some of the kids were really the ones “into” model railroading and that the parents were only the means of transportation! Looking back, there were numerous “trackside mini-clinics” held during the course of these events that covered scenery, electronics, manufacturers and prototypes.

In the first week of December, I received a phone call from Mrs. Buff, my fourth grade teacher from 35 years ago, asking if it was possible to come over and see the railroad. After a brief catch-up on the phone, we decided to get together one night the following week. I found out that each year prior to the Christmas holidays Mrs. Buff has her class build a model railroad. She uses the experience to teach things like electricity, proportions and teamwork. Before leaving, I gave her my copy of Brad Bowers' (Digital Image Works) Operations video which features Jim Hertzog's LNE, Ken McCorry's PRR and my Reading Lines, to show her class. After showing it two days straight, one of the students brought in the August '94 issue of MR that featured my layout! Believe it or not, there are young people interested in the hobby. It's our job to keep them interested!

To me, the preceding three paragraphs illustrate the basis for which our organization should exist. We must be a collective compilation of anything needed on how to model railroad! It must be perpetual as new ideas and things replace old. We have access to the resources that should provide the means for catapulting would-be model railroaders to the next level. Those resources are none other than plain old members of the organization who are presently researching, traveling to model railroad conventions, attending clinics, using new techniques, asking questions and building model railroads even better than the “experts” they learned from. If you've ever gathered information, modified or “invented” a new idea or made your own shortcut then we're all ears! You never know who may be listening!

For those of you choosing your 1999 vacations, don't forget the MER Spring Convention will be held April 23-25 in Lynchburg, VA and the Fall Convention will be held November 12-14 in Hagerstown, MD. Both Conventions promise to be MER “Events of the Year”! See you there.

And a reminder note, three positions for the Board of Directors are coming up in the next election. To place a name in nomination, contact Alex Pope at (301) 894-4400 by April 1.

HOTRACTION MODULES

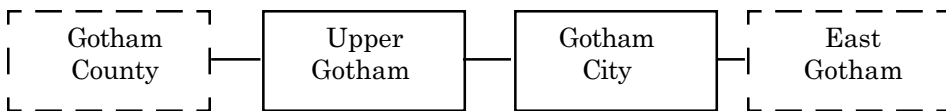
Continued from page 1

developed past the paper planning stage. These modules include: Gotham City - completed 1996; Upper Gotham - completed 1998; Gotham County and East Gotham are still in the planning stages.

All modules are set in the 1925 circa. The first module, Gotham City represents a small city with moderately large (3 - 4 story) city buildings served by the City Line of the T&CT Co. The second completed module, Upper Gotham, represents an average upper middle class residential community, also served by the City Line of the T&CT Co as well as some interurban services.

All modules are constructed as "standalone" dioramas. Each contains three sided complete wraparound backdrops. Provision is made in all modules for track access off the module and into the next module.

Current alignment is:



Each module is 24" by 48" with a backdrop 20" high. The base is constructed of wood frame with a plywood and homesote surface. The backdrop and its support is all aluminum. Use of light weight materials is preferred, including foam board and light weight patching plasters.

The Gotham City module contains 151 people, 25 cats, dogs, horses and pigeons, 28 cars, wagons and trucks, and 18 modeled buildings, most with lighting and some detailing. The Upper Gotham module contains 129 people, 12 cats, dogs, horses and pigeons, 18 cars, wagons and trucks, and 12 modeled buildings, most with lighting and some detailing.

All street track work is constructed from Richard Orr's girder rail and single point switch castings. This provides for authentic looking trolley rail if somewhat oversize. All city street curves are 6.25" radius representing a prototype 45 ft radius. Street paving is done with patching plaster and Holgate and Reynolds brick sheet as appropriate. The street surface is intentionally left a bit lower than the rails to enable non-destructive track cleaning.

The T&CT Co equipment runs with authentic overhead power. Both rails are bonded together for maximum pickup. The overhead wire is strung with a combination of nickel-silver and phosphor bronze wire. Trolley wire supports make use of various commercial lost-wax castings. Detection blocking is accomplished with insulated overhead wire sections.

All T&CT Co. operational equipment is fitted with Digitrax DCC decoders. Most equipment uses the Digitrax DN140 but some smaller equipment uses the DZ120. A standard Digitrax system (Big Boy plus additional controller equipment) are used for manual control and WinLok is used as the PC control software for automated operation or augmentation. Digitrax DS54 Accessory decoders are used in each module for switch and detection controls. CVP's AD4K accessory decoder is used in the Power Control Box for additional non-LocoNet controls.

Each module is wired with connection sockets at both ends to pass Track and Light Power as well as the LocoNet between modules. Fascia

(edge mounted) push buttons are also provided on each module to "manually" control the track switches. (The switches are also controlled via DCC handheld throttles and WinLok automation.)

The most recent activity in Gotham City and Upper Gotham has been the addition of some computer controlled "automation." WinLok had already been used to run trolley equipment for shows. The setting Sun and rising Moon are enhanced by the building and street lights. Sounds have been added to really give that additional dimension. Church clocks striking in the distance, the wail of a railroad steam engine, the band striking up "Washing Post" in the suburban bandstand as the Sun dims, are all part of WinLok's new assignments. The extensive modeling detail, multiple car trolley operations, enhanced by the light and sound automation, has really brought Gotham City to life for me. And all this in portable 2' x 4' modules.

As an aside, my electronic and programming backgrounds also were a natural for maintaining significant hobby interest in the world of Personal Computers, starting with the early "computer kits" in the mid 70's. After retirement from the corporate world, I put more effort into program and product development after establishing Challenge Products to market my railroad-oriented game/simulations. Products to date include RRSwitch, Freight Train and Trolley Time Challenge. These programs have all been advertised and reviewed in the model magazines. A visit to my web site will provide additional description. URL is http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/challenge_products.

Layout in a Trailer

Continued from page 1

temporarily misplaced. When the material in the LDSIG began appearing I wondered what had ever become of the Landesco layout. Then a year or so ago, I noticed a blurb in *Model Railroader* mentioning that the layout and trailer were still "alive" and had been bought by someone. I didn't recall seeing anything further since.

Thus I was pleased when during the summer of 1998, MER member and Williamsport and North Branch Railroad historian and aficionado Dr. Henry Hinrichs, who summers in Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania, sent me some material that he stumbled across. First of all, he discovered there actually is a formal Williamsport and North Branch Railroad Historical Society. He thought he was the only one previously! Secondly, it turns out that the W&NBHS is the group that purchased the Landesco layout. They publish a newsletter (P.O. Box 392, Picture Rocks, PA 17762-0392) and also have a Website: www.track2.com. The group currently has over 20 members and is pursuing multiple objectives including (to quote from their Website) "restoration, preservation, and operation of the historic Alex Landesco HO Pennsylvania Model RR."


Williamsport & North Branch Historical Society member Robert Soars squatting to make adjustments to the Landesco layout., August 1998.

Henry Hinrichs Photo

Here's what their Website says of the layout: "This layout is currently being restored [and is] located at the Lycoming County Fairgrounds in Hughesville, Pennsylvania. The public can see it in operation on selected occasions when the fairgrounds are open. Alex Landesco worked in Defense Contracting with RCA. Alex had built a previous permanent layout, which he later had to tear down when his job required that he move. He decided to build his second layout in a trailer, so that the layout could move with him. After his death in the early 1980s the trailer sat unused in Toms River, NJ for fourteen years. [W&NBHS] Treasurer Ron Gardner found a notice of the layout's availability on the

Internet. Through the generosity of Alex's heirs, the W&NBHS acquired this trailer layout and moved it in May 1996 to the...fairgrounds. The layout features several of the original scratch built structures. In July of 1997, the Treasurer met Alex Landesco, Jr. for the first time. Alex, Jr., with extreme generosity, donated for display several additional pieces of his father's layout, including several brass items, cars and a scratch-built, fully detailed maintenance shop. The society is currently in the process of repairing the roof of the trailer, completing the scenery, rebuilding the power supplies and modernizing the automatic train control systems."

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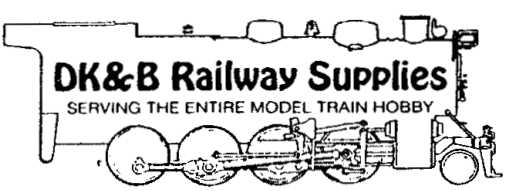


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Layout in a Trailer

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So building a layout in a trailer can work! By the way, according to the Society's minutes of their April 1998 meeting, they have \$1100 available so far for a new roof for the trailer vs. \$1800 they need. Rather than rely on the flat trailer roof, the plan apparently is to essentially build a free-standing roofed-over, open sided structure that the trailer would live beneath - sort of a pavilion.

Member Robert Soars gave Henry a personal tour in August of 1998, and Henry sent along a number of snapshots. Although a bit too blurry, one showed the statuesque "Altoona" passenger station that was modeled after the

Stuttgart station—"Stuttgart Station still lives," says Henry. Some of us really old timers remember this station from George Allen's Tuxedo Junction series in *Model Railroader*. While George got his building from Marklin, I think Landesco was inspired to scratch build a replica. The layout was billed as a "Pennsylvania Railroad" theme layout, but it was from that earlier era when you could model Pennsylvania by doing nothing more than decaling your locomotives Pennsylvania and having a bunch of Athearn cars lettered for the PRR. Back then you didn't have to worry about getting arrested by

the prototype police. Inasmuch as the layout still (or again) operates, it is truly a collectable. The back reaches of the track plan requires a duck-under, and apparently yard operation is from the narrow center aisle. This is probably not one of those you would want to have on the Convention bus tour with its 10' x 56' dimensions unless you have a door at each end. However, since the layout has survived over 30 years despite 14 years of neglect, the concept is probably viable. All you need to do is to get your neighborhood or community association architectural review board to approve it. The W&NBHS website mentioned above contains 13 photos of the layout.



One of the original Landesco scratch-built structures intact on layout, August, 1998.
Henry Hinrichs Photo

"Chinese Wall" carrying tracks into "Stuttgart" (Altoona) station on Landesco layout. Steam locomotives are lettered for Williamsport and North Branch but Henry says they are "not exactly right."
Henry Hinrichs Photo, August, 1998.



From the LOCAL Editor

There were a few errors in the last issue and I apologize for that. The article on Mantua brings personal memories to me. My first locomotive was the Mantua Mikado. My dad (the late Dick Knotts of Troll & Elfin fame) used the Mantua loop couplers as his standard and I now have what may be the largest "collection" of Mantua couplers. Those early days were interesting. I started out using Model Die Casting's cast metal couplers which looked good but operated poorly. I later switched to Kadee which is now the defacto standard for most modelers.

We are still looking for layouts to feature in the LOCAL. If you, or a friend, would like to see a feature on your layout please prepare a brief article and provide a few photos (color photos are fine). Even if your layout is not complete you can share your work and ideas with your fellow modelers. As you can see by this issues featured layout, size is not important. A photo of this issues featured layout module appeared on page 3 of the November/December LOCAL.

CONVENTION UPDATE

Come join fellow modelers
and their families for

THREE DAYS OF
CLINICS, TOURS,
CONTESTS, AND MORE

BLUE RIDGE



in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia for
The Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA Spring 1999 Convention
April 23-25, in Lynchburg, Virginia

CLINIC SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

Room A

- 11:00 - 12 Often read author from *Model Railroading* magazine, Larry Puckett on model photography
- 1:00 - 2 John Johnson, kitbashing Pennsy freight cars
- 3:00 - 4 NMRA Executive Director Connie Rudder, what the national can do for you
- 4:00 - 5 Alan Meade on his award winning scratch building techniques
- 7:00 - 8 Life Like Inc. sales manager George Riley on "why we make what we make" also open for suggestions
- 8:00 - 9 City of Lynchburg museum director Tom Ledford, Lynchburg history, primer for lower basin tour on Saturday
- 9:00 - 10 Trains Unlimited owner and James River Division asst. superintendent Bill Cox on Bob Ross backdrops

Room B

- 11:00 - 12 James River Division director Don Wells on advanced DCC including sound
- 1:00 - 2 Bill Ataras on signaling and devices
- 3:00 - 4 Louis Godbold, snow scenes
- 4:00 - 5 High school history teacher and NHRS member Ed Fielding a presentation on the Virginia Blue Ridge Railroad
- 7:00 - 8 Mike Maloney on bridges and viaducts
- 8:00 - 9 Noted author and modeler Jim Six on how and why he does what he does
- 9:00 - 10 Railpace author and Canadian modeler Roy Evans on rail fanning Lynchburg

SATURDAY

Room A

- 10:00 - 11 Bill Hammer, my toy box
- 11:00 - 12 Mark Chase on scale model mockups, see what a scale model of your scale model can help you do
- 2:00 - 3 Dick Macavoy on handmade turnouts, an AP requirement
- 3:00 - 4 Bill Hammer, turpentine
- 4:00 - 5 Author and state police captain Howard Gregory on the writing and research of the "wreck of the old 97"

Room B

- 10:00 - 11 Dean Ebner demonstrates airbrushing acrylics
- 11:00 - 12 Repeat of Don Wells' advanced DCC
- 2:00 - 3 Repeat of Larry Puckett's model photography
- 3:00 - 4 Dean Ebner finishes the model from this morning and weathers it.
- 4:00 - 5 Repeat of Jim Six

SUNDAY

Room A

- 9:00 - 10 Monroe Stewart on what it takes to impress Allen Keller
- 10:00 - 11 NMRA president Bob Charles "fireside chat"
- 11:00 - 12 John Johnson why you should enter the contests

Room B

- 9:00 - 10 Repeat of Alan Meade
- 10:00 - 11 Repeat of Bill Ataras

PROTOTYPE TOUR

Our prototype tour will be Saturday morning conducted by city museum director Tom Ledford on the "lower basin" two blocks from the convention hotel. Tom will walk and talk you through the history of the Norfolk and Western, the Southern and the Chesapeake and Ohio railroads and their network in the lower basin and how they made a major impact on the livelihood of the city.

For information, contact Linda Sanders (804) 993-9210.

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CONVENTION UPDATE

At the far end of the tour is the C&O Sandy Hook yard where the locals are classified. Across town is the Norfolk Southern, ex Southern Montvue yard and car shop. Nearby is the Norfolk Southern, ex Norfolk and Western, Kinney yard that can readily be seen from the expressway US 29. We are working with Norfolk Southern to have on display one of their "Operation Lifesaver" locomotives and their instruction car. Also within an hour's drive are Appomattox, where the truce to end the civil war was signed, as well as many more civil war sites, natural bridge, one of the seven natural wonders of the world, many caverns, Schuyler (pronounced, skyler) birthplace of Earl Hamner, author of Waltons mountain. There is a museum and beautiful scenery abounds.

It is unknown at this time what the schedule will be, but the Lynchburg Hillcats baseball team, a farm team for the Pirates, may be playing a home game on convention weekend. Several vineyards in the area offer wine tastings. Rev Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church welcomes all worshipers. The fantastic peaks of Otter can be seen from many places in and around the city. The old N&W passenger station (built of stone) in Bedford has been converted to a restaurant and currently serves a prime rib and seafood buffet Friday night for about \$15.00! At lunchtime on Saturday we are planning a fashion show in the hotel restaurant.

SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET

The Saturday night banquet sounds like it will be scrumptious: a choice of roast strip sirloin of beef served with a maderia sauce, chicken cordon bleu, or breast of chicken stuffed with ham and swiss cheese; baked sweet potatoes or regular baked potatoes; brandied carrots; fresh fruit cup; tossed garden salad and home baked apple pie (who's home they aren't telling us). Coffee, hot tea, or iced tea (be sure to tell them if you don't want it sweet, remember you'll be south of the Mason-Dixon line).

The layouts on tour currently are:

Roy Evans - Canadian HO
Steve Blanchard - Free lance eastern signaled and CTC, HO
Bill Cox - Sunday as you leave only, Southern, Western Maryland, HO

Jean Traas - Erie Lackawanna, o scale
Aubrey Wiley - Virginian, HO
Jeff Thaxton - Union Pacific, signaled, HO
Mark Day - N&W, N scale
Tom Nelson - Maine Central, mountain division, HO

AT THE HOTEL:

Lynchburg Area Module Builders - "LAMBS" HO
Lynchburg O scale modules
Tom Riddles S scale layout
Jimmy Walkers N scale
Terry Nesbitt's HO

- Auction Saturday after the awards banquet, with Bob Charles as the auctioneer.
- A full bill of contests.
- A whole room of dealers that have exactly what you are looking for and maybe even at the price you want.
- Talk about door prizes! it looks like we have them in all scales, maybe even narrow for some of you.

LAYOUT DESCRIPTIONS

Chris Wiley's C&O James River Subdivision

A late 1950-early 1960's model of the C&O James River Subdivision in N scale. The island style layout is under construction in a 25' x 26' room. Trains are currently running on part of the layout (between Gladstone and Reusens) with many more miles of track to lay, gallons of river water to be poured, and lots of trees to be planted. The scenery is polyextruded foam board with hydrocal rock castings and lichen covered hills. There are many completed scratch built and kit structures, with many more under construction.

Jean Raas' Tidewater, Rappahannock & Afton Mountain RR

"My Railroad was designed to serve as a test bed for the construction of locomotives and cars that I have built over the years. The basic design is a single track loop with a long passing siding which follows along the walls in my family room. The radius of the curves was held to 72" on the outer track, and all of the track was hand laid. The layout has been invaluable

in the helping to troubleshoot both new and previously constructed equipment.

"The layout structure is sectional and features open grid construction. The individual sections of the railroad are bolted together and there are terminal strips at each joint to allow simplified disassembly if the railroad should ever be moved to another location. A plywood table top was added later to provide a nice clean working surface around the railroad (and a place to "store" things). The entrance to the layout area features a swinging gate type of bridge to allow easy walk-in access. As is typical of many O Scale layouts, the framework is of heavy construction. I have found that this type of construction provides a high degree of operating reliability and a minimum of maintenance.

"My modeling interests cover a broad spectrum of prototype railroads with some concentration on the Lackawanna and the Southern Pacific Railroads. I have built passenger trains for both of these roads. My layout also features several structures, but no scenery yet. The structures represent both commercially available kits and scratch built models of specific prototypes."

Tom Nelson's Maine Central Mountain Division

This HO scale layout covers the Maine Central's Mountain Division from St. Johnsbury to Portland. The railroad is set in 1962 and runs first generation diesels over the 80% scenicked layout. A new section is underway to represent the port of Portland, ME.

Roy Evans' Hamilton, Bayview & Western

"The Hamilton, Bayview & Western Railway is a fictional railroad based on the two major railroads in the beautiful country of Canada, those being the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National. The eastern terminal of the railroad is located at Hamilton, a steel producing city located in the province of Ontario. Bayview Junction, one of the most popular railfan spots in Canada is located near Hamilton. CP and CN,

Continued on page 12

Blue Ridge Crescent 99 Registration Form — April 23, 1999

(PRINT NAMES EXACTLY AS YOU WISH THEM ON YOUR NAMETAGS.)

Primary Registrant Name: _____

Spouse Name: _____

Children's Names: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State & Zip: _____

NMRA#: _____

Primary Registrant (\$30 pre - Feb.1, 1999, \$35.00 after January 31, 1999) = \$ _____

Spouse \$10.00 = \$ _____

Children (under 18)#_____ X \$ 5.00 = \$ _____

Children (18 and over)#_____ X \$10.00 = \$ _____

Non-NMRA Fee (In addition to Primary Registrant Fee) \$16.00 = \$ _____

Banquet — April 24, 1999

Meal #1: Roast Strip Sirloin of Beef with Madeira Sauce

Meal #2: Chicken Cordon Bleu (Breast of Chicken stuffed with Ham & Swiss cheese)

Both Meals also include:

Fresh Fruit Cup

Brandied Carrots

Assorted Bread and Rolls

Tossed Garden Salad

Home Baked Apple Pie

Coffee or Tea

Number of meal #1's ordered _____ X \$25.00 = \$ _____

Number of meal #2's ordered _____ X \$25.00 = \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed (Registration and Meals) \$ _____

Convention cancellations must be received by 4/9/99 for a full refund of registration/banquet fees.

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Linda D. Sanders, NMRA-MER, P. O. Box 11313, Lynchburg, VA 24506 -1313

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Special requests: (i.e., smoking, non-smoking) _____



COMPILED BY ROGER L. CASON

MANTUA INDUSTRIES, INC.

Mantua Industries is one of those rarities on the current American business scene—a family-owned and —managed firm now in the hands of the third generation. But, there have been some interesting lumps, bumps and detours along the way. Mantua's roots go back to 1926, when co-founders James P. Thomas and English-born John N. Tyler formed a partnership to make model boats in Mantua, NJ. Their 1927 success with a battery-powered motorboat, and problems in obtaining quality motors, led them into small motor manufacture and sale. Their first offering was a six-volt field-wound open motor, and it became the basis for a variety of other toy/hobby items such as small drill presses and grinding wheels.

Tyler's interest in model railroad-ing led naturally to the development of a motor small enough to be used in an OO scale locomotive. The initial commercial offering was in 1930. This was followed by additional product development aimed at the growing OO and HO markets. In 1933, business growth necessitated moving from their original facilities in Mantua to a newly-built shop in Woodbury Heights, NJ (their current location). The initial advertisement in *Model Railroader* appeared in 1935, and their first permanent magnet motor intended for HO use was shipped in 1936. The 1936-37 period saw the introduction of ready-to-run (RTR) freight cars, locomotive mechanisms, and finally a complete RTR freight train set (at \$59.50) which included a Consolidation locomotive, two gondolas, a caboose, and a track kit. This was followed by other offerings such as a more affordable

A feature profiling model railroad manufacturers located in the Mid-Eastern Region. To be included in a future issue, contact:

Roger L. Cason
1125 Grinnell Road
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Reading camelback switcher, a Reading Atlantic, hook-and-loop couplers, and a line of patented HO "Ready-Laid Track."

World War II saw Mantua's facilities completely devoted to making precision measuring and mapping equipment for the armed forces. Employment peaked at 400 people. Their high quality twenty-four hour per day efforts were rewarded with the coveted Army-Navy "E" award. Even today, the "E" flag is proudly displayed in Mantua's museum room.

The end of the war saw many changes. John Tyler bought out co-founder James Thomas, and John's son Norman joined the firm. The entire prewar product line was revived, but with twelve-volt motors and zinc alloy die cast parts. Once the initial post war sales surge was satisfied, new product development resumed. New offerings included injection molded plastic freight car bodies and extruded aluminum passenger cars.

Up to this point, most Mantua offerings were kits for hobbyists. But in 1953, Mantua produced its first post war RTR train set. Several years later, the Tyco name was formally established to market RTR train sets, and to distinguish train sets from the traditional Mantua kit offerings. Although there was some growth of the Mantua product sales, RTR train set sales became by far the largest percentage of the firm's sales. The Woodbury Heights facility was expended to its present 50,000 square foot size. Production of the traditional Mantua product line ceased in 1967.

In 1970, Consolidated Foods (now know as Sara Lee) bought the business. Starting in 1973, an increasing percentage of Tyco's manufactur-

ing was done in the Far East, and activity at the Woodbury Heights facility gradually diminished. Norman Tyler, son of the founder and a Tyco executive, bought the facility and the then-dormant Mantua product line in 1977. What goes around comes around! The traditional Mantua product line was re-introduced with considerable commercial success, and the Mantua comeback was the focus of a seven page article in the November 1984 *Model Railroader*. At this point, most manufacturing was at Woodbury Heights.

Mantua is now managed by President Thomas Swartz (Norman Tyler's son-in-law) and Executive VP Eric Tyler (Norman Tyler's son). Both have been with Mantua for many years, and have learned the business from the ground up. Bowing to economic reality, much of the manufacturing activity has now been shifted to the Far East. Manufacture of some key components is still done at Woodbury Heights, as is the rigid final product testing. An extensive supply of spare parts is also maintained there, some of which are kept to service items sold decades ago. The facility now employs about 25 people. President Tom Swartz reminds us about another economic reality of this business. Many products start with a set of dies that can easily cost up to \$250,000. As a result, new products requiring new die work are introduced only after considerable deliberation. Mantua management views the firm's niche as a significant step or two above the typical toy store starter set. With locomotives, Mantua's goal is to make (and sell for a reasonable price!) a rugged, dependable product that runs well and pulls well despite possible less-than-perfect conditions.

The Mantua catalog shows 23 model steam locomotives ranging in size from 0-4-0's to 2-6-6-2's. Diesel offerings include F-7-A/B's and GP-20's. There is also an extensive assortment of freight cars. Modelers can buy these traditional products direct, but most sales are through hobby shops and mail order houses. Mantua also exhibits at selected shows, such as MRJA, Ft. Washington, and some NMRA National Train Shows.

Most recently, Mantua has

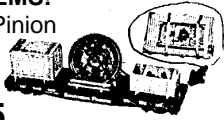
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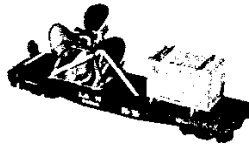
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MANTUA INDUSTRIES, INC.

Continued from page 10

marketed a line of collectibles—principally hand crafted highly detailed locomotives such as the B&O Royal Blue 4-6-2 and the PRR 4-4-2 Lindbergh Special. Many of these come with a stock certificate from the railroad in question, and are limited editions (for example, the Royal Blue is almost sold out). These are not just static models. They operate just like other Mantua products because they have the same basic mechanism. The collectibles line also includes train sets with NFL, NHL, and major league baseball decoration. The collectibles are largely marketed direct, and much of the advertising is in non-model publications.

Modelers who want to contact Mantua for parts, prices, or any other purpose can do so at PO Box 10, Woodbury Heights, NJ 08097-0010, (609) 853-0800. The FAX number is (609) 384-1081. The E-mail address is webmaster@mantua.com. The Internet address is [HYPERLINK http://www.mantua.com](http://www.mantua.com) <http://www.mantua.com>.

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Coming Events

Notices must be typed and have complete addresses. Use the style shown below and be brief as possible. Be sure to include a contact telephone number. Send items for CALLBOARD to Stan Knotts, 19808 Falling Spring Court, Laytonsville, MD 20882-1226. E-Mail to Srknotts@erols.com

Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc. Open House, February 13, March 13, April 17, May 30, July 17. Washington & Old Dominion railroad station, 231 Dominion Road (at Ayr Hill Road), Vienna, VA 22180. 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm each day. Information call (703) 938-5157 or HYPERLINK "http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/6120" www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/6120

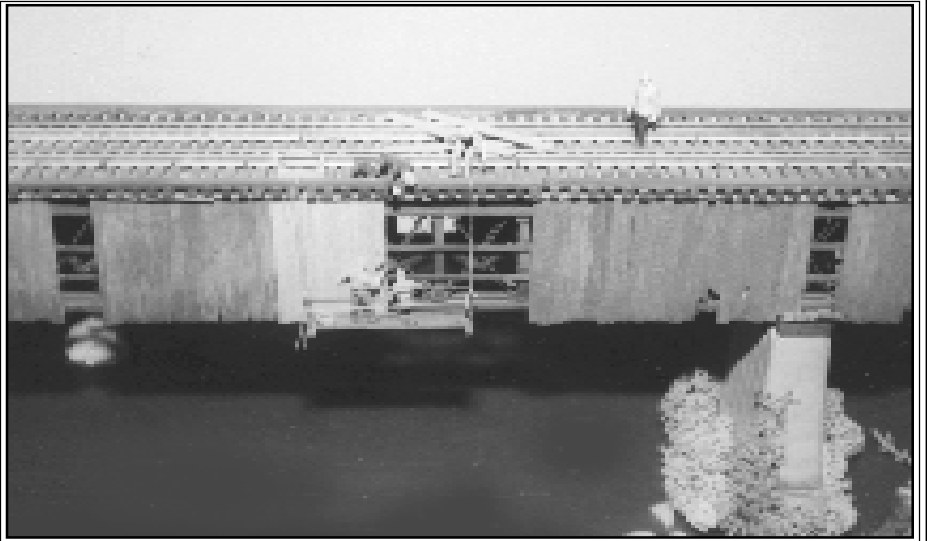
Waynesboro Model RR Club Open House, HO, O, & N gage layouts, 1-5 PM, Sundays January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and Saturday January 30; Wayncastle road at PA Route 16. Donations gratefully accepted, Don Florwick, 717-352-8759.

Great Scale Model Train Show, January 30 & 31, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium, MD, Saturday 9 a.m.—4 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m. ñ 5 p.m., Adults \$6.00, Information (410) 730-1036.

Frederick County Society of Model Engineers Open House, All Sundays in January, 423A E. Patrick St., Frederick, Maryland, 1-4 p.m., Harvey George (301) 663-0853.

Baltimore Society of Model Engineers open house, All Sundays in January, 225 W. Saratoga St., Baltimore, MD, 1-5 p.m., Donation, Information (410) 837-2763.

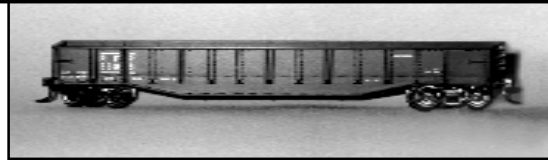
Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum Show, January 8-10, 15-17, 22-24, 29-31, Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum, 300 S. Burhans Blvd., Hagerstown, Maryland, 1 to 5 p.m., Fee \$3.00, under 13 is 50 cents, Bill Knode, HRM, P.O. Box 2858, Hagerstown, MD 21741, (301) 739-4665.



A WINNER from the MER Lehigh Valley Limited model contest held in Allentown last October, this upside down covered bridge was modeled by Eugene Mones.

Send your model photos to the LOCAL; we can always use 'em. Share your modeling skills with others. Everyone's a winner in our pages!

Submit photos to Editor Stan Knotts, 19808 Falling Spring Court, Laytonsville, MD 20882-1226.



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Mantua Industries, Inc.** *page 9*

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CONVENTION UPDATE

Continued from page 7

as well as GO Transit commuter trains are seen at this location. Burlington Bay provides the backdrop for this scenic location.

“As the railroad proceeds west, the scenery begins to change from the rolling hills of Ontario and Manitoba, to the plains of Saskatchewan, and the eventual climb upward through Alberta and on to the scenic mountains and canyons of British Columbia.

“Foreign power can be seen on many trains. Locomotives of the Algoma Central, British Columbia Railway (BC Rail), Grand Trunk, Alberta Northern, and Soo Line are among the most often seen.”

“The layout exists in an area of approximately 20’x28’. It is a two mainline railroad, one CP and one CN. Scenery has begun, especially in the Fraser Canyon area. Atlas flex track and Peco turnouts are used on the layout. At this time, there is not a definite time era being modelled. Many of these locations

have not changed much from the sixties to the present. Therefore, eras may change with the changing of rolling stock and locomotives.

**Steve Blanchard’s
Virginia Piedmont & Northwestern**

An HO scale freelance design model railroad connecting Portsmouth, VA and Staunton, VA. The railroad has interchange connections with the Seaboard Railroad (a majority owner of the VP&N) and with the Southern, Norfolk & Western, and Chesapeake & Ohio Railroads. Motive power and rolling stock represents the late 50’s through the early 60’s.

The model railroad occupies a 24’ x 22’ space with tracks on two levels. Track work is complete, but only a few areas are scened. Digital Command Control, by System One, and operating automatic block signals by Integrated Signal Systems are featured.

Recent additions include a scale 820’ (over 9 actual feet) curved steel trestle, CTC-style dispatcher control panel (work in progress), and car-card and waybills by Old Line Graphics.

**Aubrey Wiley
Virginian and Chesapeake & Ohio
Railroad**

Aubrey Wiley’s HO layout started circa 1970. Although maintaining the same overall dimensions with slightly over 300 square feet of space, the fully scened layout has kept up with developing modeling techniques. He models the Virginian and the Chesapeake & Ohio railroads in August, 1954. Appropriate steam, running with PFM sound, early diesel and jackshaft electric locomotives power the mainline and local freights and the branch line and through passenger trains. Pictures and stories of Aubrey’s layout and models have appeared in the major magazines, starting in the 1980’s.

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