



Thousand Lakes Region

National Model Railroad Association

The FUSEE



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www.thousandlakesregion.org

Winter 2011

Rails to the Rocks readies to roll in Sioux Falls Dakota Southeastern Division plans a first class convention

Caboose rides, chances for cab rides, unique rail-related tours, and nationally known hobbyists as speakers—including NMRA president Mike Brestel and Model Railroader associate editor Cody Grivno highlight the upcoming TLR convention.

Clinics galore, a model contest, and Chinese auction after the banquet are on tap. All occur in a modern conference facility with lodging either there or few minutes away. Your registration fee includes four meals—and breakfast is included with lodging at our two host sites.

Sioux Falls offers lots of non-rail activities too. SculptureWalk, the Japanese Gardens at Terrace Park, recently renovated **St. Joseph's Cathedral**, the National Geological Survey



photo by Eric Carlson



Midwest Railcar Repair in Corson promises energetic train enthusiasts a comprehensive, hour long walking tour of the 650 car capacity shop

EROS data center are all free! Plus there's **Sertoma Park Butterfly House** and Purdy Marine Cove (aquarium) and neat museums. You can railfan four former Class 1 railroad depots including the historic (still active) BNSF depot in downtown Sioux Falls.

Convention preview on YouTube
Want to see what's in store? Google Rails to the Rocks 2012 on YouTube for a snazzy glimpse of what's coming.

Dakota Southeastern Division members are excited about hosting the TLR convention for the first time since 2002. We look forward to welcoming you as well as offering a few surprises too, from the time you register till the time you head for the dozen layout tours Sunday afternoon.



View from the Cab

by TLR President Gerry Miller

There seems to be some confusion regarding membership rules of NMRA Divisions. I attended the national convention in Sacramento in July. There I spoke to NMRA President Mike Brestel and legal counsel Bob Amsler about this issue. All members of a division must be paid members of the NMRA. New people (guests) are welcome to attend division meetings. It should be made clear at their first visit that to become a member of the division, they must join. Generally speaking before attending a third meeting, prospective members should be informed that they must either join or no longer be welcome. The three visit rule was set as a standard by the NMRA board of directors and our insurance provider. It is believed that three meetings are sufficient time for a prospective member to decide whether membership was for them.

We must adhere to this rule because of liability insurance—a benefit of your membership. Insurance protects members of your division if an accident should happen at a train show, open house, or any other division sponsored activity. **Many of you will say that there won't be an accident at your event. All it takes is one slip, trip, or fall and you may have a lawsuit or claim on your hands.** If the NMRA insurer finds that your division is not in compliance with NMRA membership regulations they will not pay. This will make all officers of your Division and possibly the entire membership of your division liable.

If anyone has questions on this matter, the NMRA website contains detailed documents on the insurance page. **You can also read NMRA President Mike Brestel's column in the February 2010 Scale Rails.**

I'd like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season. Hopefully Santa will be good to everyone!

34th Annual Spud Valley Hobby Show

Sunday, October 21, 2012
9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Admission: \$5.50
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- ◆ operating model
- ◆ railroads
- ◆ Vendors selling farm toys, plastic models, model railroad items, die cast vehicles, old toys, railroad collectibles and more
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- ◆ Valley RC Flyers display their planes

For information, call Don, 701-234-9351

FRom the EDitor

By Alan Saatkamp, Fusee editor

While the spring Fusee traditionally details the TLR convention specifics, **our Dakota Southeastern Division can't help but toot our horn (and ring the bell!) this winter. We want to let you know what's on tap for May 18-20 here in Sioux Falls. Actually it's Sioux Falls and the surrounding area, as our caboose train ride originates in nearby Dell Rapids. Midwest Railcar repair technically is in Corson. Both are a short distance north of Sioux Falls.**

Everyone associated with the organization and hobby should recognize our special guest speakers by name. NMRA President Mike Brestel has faithfully steered the ship (had a steady hand on the throttle is a more fitting image). **Cody Grivno, star of Cody's Office, the MR magazine online video, returns too. Cody's been busy since he appeared last with us in Duluth. He married Dorothy, and now they're the proud parents of Albert.**

Check the rest of this issue, not only for more worthwhile ideas from our TLR members who share their expertise, but also for more reasons why you (and your significant other) will enjoy our convention.

TLR Convention Director Jay Manning and the planning committee have been working ever since the ride back home from Dubuque, developing a complete, affordable weekend with lots of variety and fun in store. More on convention in the March issue, including registration info.

Dakota Southeastern puts new trailer to good use

Blessed with a 2011 TLR grant, the Dakota Southeastern Division put its new hauler to good use this fall at a variety of events. The fourth annual Ronning Library clinics nearly doubled its previous two year average attendance, drawing over 350 guests. A month later, the layout was among the eight on display during the sixth annual open house layout tour.



Over 350 guests enjoyed layouts, clinics, and a chance to drive the train during the four hour library event held September 10

Rich Dahl photo

Sandwiched between the recurring events was a weekend gig outdoors next to the downtown Orpheum Theatre. The “Choo Choo Concert” featured railroad songs from multiple eras, performed by a talented local musical group, the Hegg Brothers. Trains ran before the shows and during intermissions.

The modular club layout made its traditional visit to the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds the weekend before Thanksgiving, allowing hundreds of model railroad fans another opportunity to see the many additions and improvements during the past year. Additional industrial spurs, ballasted



Bill McKean and Eric Wollan unloaded modules from the trailer at the library last September. This marked the first use of the long-discussed hauling and storage device.

double mainline, plus a variety of buildings and scenes throughout the 64' mainline run on the 12' x 20' layout provided interest and variety.

The modular allows members to learn from one another's knowledge and expertise while gaining modeling skills. Work sessions to make improvements on the layout also pro-

duce a team-building atmosphere and help DSED promote model railroading in Sioux Falls as well as in the surrounding region.

The division appreciates the support of the TLR board of directors for the grant. The trailer increases efficiency and reduces the number of vehicles to haul the layout as well as providing safe storage.



The Fusee wants you!

Actually, The Fusee wants your photos, ideas, stories, drawings, and other material to share with fellow subscribers. See how many different authors and photographers contributed to this issue—their names are listed on page 11. You could be next! Contact the editor with your questions and ideas.

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A pair of switch crew puzzles

story and drawing by Fred Headon, MMR

Because they are “neat” cars, it is easy to have too many tank cars in proportion to our prototype’s ratio. Those who model the “classic” era really need quite a few of the 6,000 to 10,000 gallon varieties as put out by Intermountain, Proto 2000/Walthers, or Red Caboose.

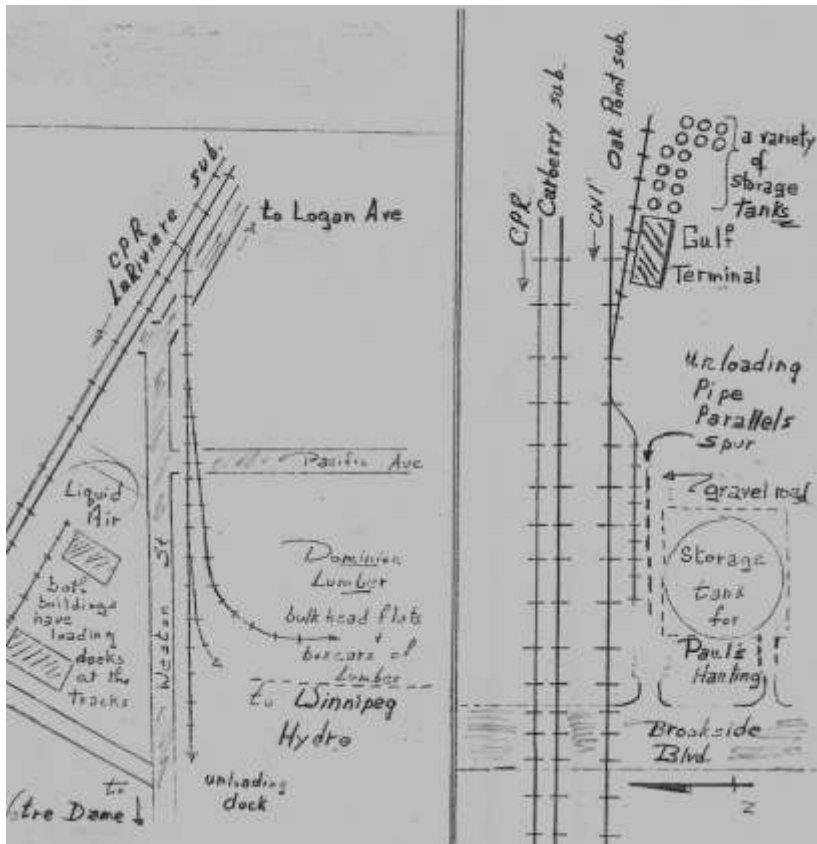
Modelers of more modern times can acquire cars by Athearn and Atlas. Below, the right hand setting could be a fine destination for these modern beauties. Paul’s Hauling often has a half dozen cars being unloaded at one time. The Gulf Terminal may see another half dozen, and it was in place when the smaller cars were the common ones. Additional operating interest can come from having to leave or re-spot cars for their turn at the unloading pipes.

In the left hand setting, Dominion Lumber required double door

boxcars for those modeling earlier times, while bulkhead flatcars are appropriate for later years. The latter will require an open load which is always appealing to the eye. The Winnipeg Hydro trackage saw many a depressed flatcar carrying a transformer, while 53’6” cars commonly arrived with line poles.

Again, there are great opportunities for open load modeling. The Liquid Air plant could be served by one of those older Linde cars put out by Athearn or by other boxcars. Then too, a few of today’s tank cars could be reasonably seen at the loading docks.

In each case, the track arrangement requires thought by the crew responsible for spotting and lifting cars.

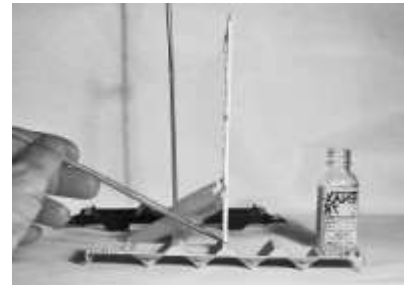


Sprues—not just scrap

by Gerry Miller
story and photos by the author

Have you ever wondered what to do with those left over sprues when you get done building a model kit? For years I have been using them to hold items that I paint. This is an inexpensive way to keep the paint off your hands and give you better control of where the paint goes.

All you need is a few sprues, glue, clamps to hold the sprues to the part to be painted, and string or wire to hang items while drying.

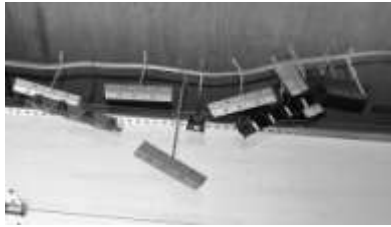


Use a clamp to hold the sprue at right angle to the part and apply glue. Hold the part by the sprue while painting with airbrush or spray can. Hang from wire or string. My favorite spot is to hang mine from the garage door track to dry. When done, just



(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4)



snap off sprue and you're ready to begin assembly.

A couple of hints if you are painting more than one piece: you will want the sprues to be of different lengths. That way when they are hanging you can get them closer together. Be sure to test hold the part before you paint. Sometimes the glue may not have set very well, and when spinning the part it might fall off. I know this from experience.

Next time you get done assembling a model kit you may want to save a few of the plastic sprues and give this technique a try.



Region Roundup

division activities and events this fall around the TLR

No. 1 Northern Division celebrated National Train Month November 5 with a meet. Morning clinics followed by an afternoon three site layout hop were featured.


Southeastern Division met October 27 and decided on a round robin house layout help sessions. **They will rotate among each other's homes each month to assist completing each other's layouts.**

Minnesota River Valley Division held their fall meet Nov. 19. The division meets the second and fourth Saturday morning of the month at the Milwaukee Road Heritage Center in Montevideo, MN. They are building a layout modeled on the Monte rail yard as it looked in 1953. **If you'd like to come and see it, be sure to email superintendent Brian Wordes at briggale@rswb.coop to make sure someone is available to host you.**

Twin Cities Division programming is off and running. Three regular meetings and five modeling clinics open to the public are among the current offerings. Clinics provide opportunity for hands on tools to build a something while learning new skills or techniques. During October, topics included module building and track work. Our modeling contest features boxcar loads.

Prairie Lakes Division celebrated their 25th anniversary with a fall swap meet and dinner October 1. The event took place in Cherokee, Iowa, at the community center. A dinner speaker followed dinner.

South Red River Valley Division prominently contributed to the 33rd annual Spud Valley hobby show at the Ramada Plaza Suites Crystal Ballroom on October 16.


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Just because you can't make it to a national convention doesn't mean you have to miss out. Right now the NMRA's Kalmbach Memorial Library has over 50 DVDs of clinics presented at national conventions from 2002 to 2010. Each is available for NMRA members to borrow for the cost of processing and postage.

So you can see clinics on everything from decoders to design, tools to techniques, helices to highways, and research to resin casting.


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Visit www.nmra.org and go to the Kalmbach Memorial Library page for a complete listing. Or call the Library at 423-894-8144.



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October 1 Board of Directors meeting minutes

The following are the minutes for the TLR board fall meeting held in Louis Park MN on Oct 1st 2011.

Present for the meeting were Jay Manning, Paul Gerry, Dave Hamilton, Paul Ullrich, Jim Krekelberg, Dave Hohle, Frank Gerry, Ken Zieska, Greg Smith, Tracy McKibben, John Hotvet, Les Breuer, and Gerry Miller

The call to order was made by TLR president Gerry Miller at 10:11am. Gerry thanked those in attendance for coming to the meeting and their continued support of the TLR.

The minutes for the last meeting in Dubuque were the first topic on the agenda. Secretary Paul Gerry made a motion to accept the minutes as printed in The Fusee which was seconded by Jay Manning. The vote was unanimous for the motion.

Jim Krekelberg then presented the Treasurer's report. The TLR is still in a good financial position and the process of switching the accounts over into a business account continues. Some bank fees were incurred during the move but these will be brought to the banks attention with the hopes that they will be reversed. Jim and Dave Hamilton (previous Treasurer) made the suggestion that the US dues and Canadian dues be blended in reality but kept separate on paper in an effort to streamline the accounting process and reduce the number of back fees incurred. A motion

to blend the US and Canadian accounts and **accept the Treasurer's report was made by Jay Manning** and seconded by Tracy McKibben. The vote was unanimous for the motion.

Gerry Miller then presented the President's report. All divisions are currently doing well and are stable. Most have even grown slightly in the last year which has brought about a need to clarify the membership rules.

Tracy McKibben presented the Public Relations report. The TLR Facebook page is up and running and has attracted some fans but few people have so far uploaded any data. He hopes that as work spread more people will use the site to stay in touch with fellow TLR members and share ideas as well as alerting non-members to the hobby.

John Hotvet presented the AP Program report. The contest held in Dubuque went well although 28 models in the contest were out of region entries. The plaques went out on time to the contest winners and the same supplier of plaques will be used this year again for the contest in Sioux Falls. There were two AP certificates and two Golden Spikes presented since the last meeting.

Dave Hamilton presented the Membership report. There are currently 528 NMRA members with 216 of them subscribing to the Fusee. This means that overall membership is slightly up over the last five years. A suggestion was then put forward to merge the Membership and Treasurer spots since they tended to duplicate each other. Since the Membership Chairman is an appointed position, the Treasurer will now automatically be appointed the Membership Chairman to avoid this duplication. Jim Krekelberg will be taking on the new responsibilities as he is the current Treasurer.

A motion to accept all the above reports was made by Tracy McKibben and seconded by Paul Gerry. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Paul Ullrich presented the Division report for the No 1 Northern on behalf of Denis Rietze. A new HO scale modular club based on the Free-Mo style was set up over the summer and will be called the "No 1 Northern Div HO Modular Club". The club is open to all NMRA members and has already laid down plans for the construction of the first few modules. Also a mini meet is being set up for November 5th in Winnipeg which will feature clinics, layout tours and a silent auction.

Jay Manning presented the division report for the Dakota Southeastern on behalf of Alan Saatkamp. The trailer has been bought using the grant money and has cut down set-up and times at events from 3-4 hrs down to one hour. It has also greatly eased the transportation headaches associated with moving the modular layout as well and more people are now willing to help run an event and move the layout. The biggest event so far was the Ronning Library clinics day where over 350 people were on hand to experience the different aspects of model railroading. Future plans included bringing the modular

layout to a concert dedicated to railroad music.

Gerry Miller presented the division report for the Southeastern Division. New members are constantly being added to the division and a round robin group between the members to help build individual layouts as started up.

Ken Zieska presented the division report for the Twin Cities Division. An effort is being made to have some sort of hands on activity at every meeting to encourage participation. More on this later on in the meeting.

Old Business

For the Dubuque convention final notes, Gerry Miller reports that there was 95 people at the event and a record 38 of these were women. This was a good attendance level and the convention itself did better then break even when all the expenses were accounted and paid off.

Jim Krekelberg gave an update on the DSED trailer grant. So far the trailer has been purchased and used successfully. The interior setup of the trailer still has to be designed and purchased. The DSED is currently taking care of all ongoing expenses associated with the trailer.

New Business

Gerry Miller noted that there was still some confusion within the divisions on who exactly was considered to be a member of the division for bookkeeping reasons and for compliance with the NMRA rules and regulations. As it stands all divisions need to have a 100% NMRA based membership. These rules are in place to protect the divisions by allowing them to access the liability coverage that the NMRA provides if needed. The three Visit Rule (i.e. visitor must join after three meetings) was discussed and **clarified. For simplicity's sake a guest is a non-NMRA member who is attending meetings/clinics and NOT paying a fee.** Please see the article by Gerry Miller in the Fusee for more information.

On the same note of how to encourage new members to join without violating NMRA rules, Ken Zieska, from the Twin Cities Division, made a special presentation describing the ways that the TCD was engaging the public and its members. Most meetings or clinics are hands on affairs with the Public getting charged to attend. The TCD is also reaching out to the multiple other model railroad groups that are not NMRA affiliated in the twin cities area and trying to get everybody together under one roof. NMRA members gather for ops sessions, and an N scale timesaver module built, which can be taken to model railroad events to promote the division and the NMRA.

A secret vote for the Bob Dew Award then took place. The winner will be announced at the 2012 convention in Sioux Falls in May.

A grant request was then presented by Dave Hohle of the Twice Cities Division. The TCD is asking for a \$900 matching grant to buy audio visual equipment to record their monthly hands
(continued on page seven)

Two More GN Sets This Year

Our last new HO & N Brass Car Sides sets for 2011 will be the 1947 Empire Builder and 1951 Western Star PS 60-seat coach (GN 1110-1114) and PS diner (GN 1150-55). Reserve now. See our website for current Bulletin, illustrated catalog, photos of models from our customers, closeout items and reservation form. Also check website for sale list of magazines, books, videos, calendars and other items.

Our brass sides are for GN, NP, SP&S, CB&Q, BN, MILW, UP, PRR, NYC, SP, C&NW, IC, RI, B&O, C&E, L&N, KCS, ERIE, ATSF, MP, CN, VIA & Amtrak. Use HO sides with TSP, Rivarossi, Con-Cor, ECW, Bachmann, Kato, Walthers, our HO Basic Body Kit, or in N the ALM core kits or plastic dome car overlays. Send 644 SAE for catalog and Bulletin. Available through hobby shops or direct from us. Also check website for recently updated modeling information sheets and Two-DVD "Indiana, Minnesota and Early Amtrak Railroad Memories:1964-72". Shipping \$4.50, plus \$0.50 per body kit. Add 6.875% sales tax for MN orders.
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(continued from page six)

on clinics for future reference and to aid presenters by allowing them to project what they are doing onto a large screen so that everybody can see. Camera and tripod, wireless headset, PA system and an overhead projector would be part of the purchase. The new equipment would be used as part of the divisions current outreach programs to promote the TLR and NMRA in their area. The grant was voted on after some amendments to the Grant Guideline were put in place (read further for more information). The vote for the grant was unanimous with Jim Krekelberg, Jay Manning, Paul Ullrich and Paul Gerry voting for the grant. Tracy McKibben abstained since the grant was to be used in his division.

Jay Manning then presented an update on the 2012 Sioux Falls convention. The clinics will be run on Friday and Saturday mornings. On Friday evening tours featuring a rock quarry, a plastics transloading facility and the Ellis & Eastern railroad will occur. Saturday will also feature Midwest Railcar tour and a train ride with cab ride raffle along with the usual Saturday evening festivities. Mike Brestel (NMRA President) will be giving the keynote speech and Cody Grivno will also present. Registration will start on Thursday. There will also be plenty of off-rail events planned.

Greg Smith then presented an update on the

2013 Twin Cities convention. So far there are possible Minnesota Commercial and Progressive Rail tours in the works along with a lot of layout tours from some very talented modelers.

The convention will feature the modeling side of things with clinics and modeling taking center stage. The convention will take place downtown within easy travel of the Mall of America and the various light rail and commuter services.

The grant guidelines were again a topic of discussion with Gerry Miller leading the topic. Changes or addendums to the guidelines were that division members must abstain from voting on grants for their own division and there must be at least a one year wait period between successful grant requests from a division. The amendment was also made that a division had to finish the project that the grant was for before applying for the next grant. As well, all grant funded projects should be finished within one year of a successful application with longer terms being considered on a case-by-case basis. A motion to accept the amendments to the grant request procedures was made by Paul Gerry and seconded by Tracy McKibben. The vote was unanimous in favour of the motion.

A thank you note from Jenny Hendricks for the generous support of the TLR when her home was destroyed by a tornado was presented and will be kept by the Historian.

A motion the close the meeting was made by Paul Ullrich and seconded by Jay Manning. The vote was unanimous in favour of the motion. The meeting ended at 12:42 pm.



Upcoming train shows and events in and near the region

Twin Cities Division meetings and clinics are held at the Jackson Street Roundhouse, 193 Pennsylvania Ave. E. in St. Paul, MN. **Clinics are open to the public as part of the division's education and outreach program.** Events are free to NMRA members. Admission to the public is \$5.00 per evening. Upcoming programs feature a wide variety of topics, including building laser kits, weathering, scratchbuilding, building structures, rock castings, and staining castings and ground cover. For more details including dates and times, check the division website at: tcdnmra.org. or follow us on Facebook [NMRA-Twin-Cities-Division](https://www.facebook.com/NMRA-Twin-Cities-Division)

Saturday February 11, North Metro Model Railroad Club flea market, Coon Rapids VFW, Minnesota. 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 1919 Coon Rapids Blvd. Vendors, door prizes, and hourly tours of the new club space. Admission \$5 or \$4 with a nonperishable donation. Kids 12 and under free. Vendor tables \$15 each. Contact fleamarket@nmmrc.org for information, or visit the club website at <http://nmmrc.org>

Saturday February 18 and Sunday February 19. 45th annual Mad City Model Train Show and Sale, Madison, Wisconsin. Over 90,000 square feet of space devoted to model train displays and vendors at the Alliant Energy Center. Sponsored by the South Central Wisconsin Division of the Midwest Region. Call 608 829 3820 or visit nmra-scwd.org

Friday May 18 through Sunday May 20. Thousand Lakes Region convention, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Prototype tours, caboose train rides and locomotive cab rides, modeling contests, clinics, guest speakers and more. **Check the region's website:** www.thousandlakesregion.org. There you'll find the link to our YouTube video below. Or simply locate the Rails to the Rocks 2012 video on YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Mv0e74kP3s>

TRAINS AT CHRISTMAS
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Reliable wiring for a Kato SD40-2

by Eric Carlson
story and photos by the author

The EMD SD40-2 is a venerable old workhorse in the real world. Its nearly ideal weight to horsepower ratio, tractive effort, and reliability earned it a reputation as one of the best diesel electric locomotives ever for its time.

My clear favorite model of this locomotive was produced by Kato in Japan. It has to date the best and easiest to work with plastic body. It also has the same smooth running mechanism shared by all HO scale Katos.

However, a defect in the design of **Kato's pickup on the first production** runs of these engines has caused modelers fits. The models affected are early production (chicken wire radiator inlets) and the mid-production with snoot nose. This is an easy correction to make, provided some **basic modeler's tools and know-how**.

Begin by removing the shell. First remove the couplers, which are mounted at both ends of the engine on machine screws. Then gently pull on the body with one hand, and the

invert the locomotive and disassemble both power trucks. There are clips that extend up from the gear box. Starting with the leading edge, pry these out (I use a pair of hobby knives) and place something (tiny screwdriver) in between the gear case and cover to keep the cover from snapping back shut. Do this for



the middle one and then the last one. With the gear cover removed, the side frames will then slide out to the sides. The pickups will be exposed. I cut approximately four inch pieces of decoder (or similar gauge multi-strand) of wire. I solder these to the inside of the copper pickup strip between the outside and middle



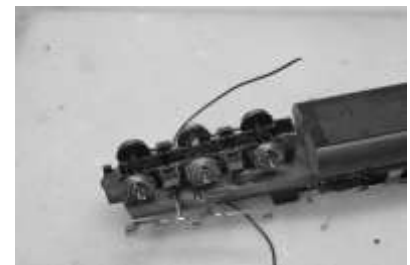
wheels. I solder to the inside of the strip as not to interfere with the proper fit of the side frames.

While I have the truck apart, I check the gauge of the wheelsets with an NMRA standards template (available at hobby shops). Kato units in HO scale almost always have wheels spaced too narrow.



I then drop the wheel sets back in, sometimes after weathering the dished and outside rim portions of the wheel with Polly-S roof brown or similar paint. If you paint the wheels, be certain to keep the axles clean. Otherwise, the paint will interfere with electrical conductivity.

Next, I thread the wire up between the gear towers and the loco's frame, toward the printed circuit board, being careful not to interfere with the workings of the mechanism.

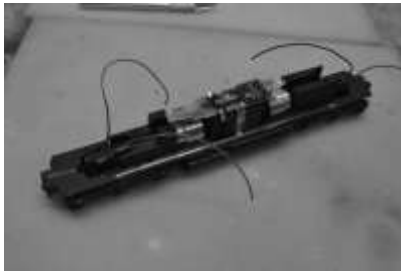


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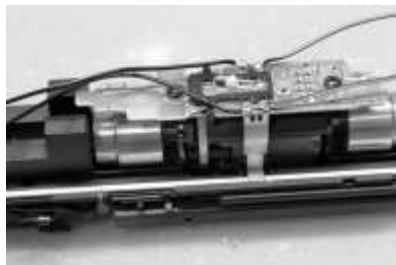


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I then reposition the truck sideframes. With one hand, I apply pressure to both sideframes to keep them against the gearbox. With the other hand, I replace the gearbox covers.

After repeating this with the other truck, I then cut the wire to length to reach the place on the factory Kato PC board where the original inputs from the trucks came in. I solder these joints and then install the decoder. Finally, I replace the shell and the locomotive couplers. This method is also applicable to almost all



other HO scale Kato, Atlas, as well as Bowser models where the electrical contact has become poor due to broken or loosened wires and/or connectors. Give it a try.

Coming soon:
Spring 2012 Fusee

Convention details and photos of attractions

Registration form

Lodging information

Sightseeing throughout the Sioux Falls area

TrainToons

by Paul Ullrich



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Mail to: Jim Krekelberg, Treasurer
 6305 W. Westminster Dr. Sioux Falls, SD 57106

SSW Flatcar Upgrade

by Jeremy Dummler
story and photos by the author

Factory-weathered, ready-to-run freight cars have become more common in recent years. For those modeling modern or post-transition era trains, these cars are an easy way to add equipment to their layout that will look okay for awhile.

Until recently, I had never seen the early 1990s cars that Ertl manufactured. They were manufactured for only a few years during that period. These cars have grabs that look fairly good, not being flat molded; under frame details; and factory weathered, giving the modeler the option of opening the box and placing them on their layout without having to stop at the workbench first.

I had been looking for an excuse to try a tie-weathering technique that Paul Scoles described in the November, 2009 Railroad Model Craftsman to see how it looked. I decided that upgrading a flatcars would be a good test. I selected a SSW flatcar for the



project. As you can see above, the car looks ok, but the deck is pristine while the underframe and trucks are monotone in their weathering.

The first task was to disassemble the car. This was easy—first by removing the screws holding the trucks, unseating the plastic wheels from the trucks, and then popping the coupler pocket covers off to remove the couplers. I set the coupler pocket covers and the screws aside while putting the wheels in my parts bin for future detail use. I discarded the old coupler. My next task was to add some depth to the flat deck of the car. I started with a small flat file, and scrubbed across the deck to get some fine scratches. Using my hobby knife, I



The disassembled car. The off-brand couplers and plastic wheels that came on the car were discarded, to be replaced with upgraded Kadee couplers and metal wheels.

added distress marks to the deck. My intent was to give the look of a car that had been used. Flatcar decks tend to have loads scrape and rub against them—they are often unprotected from wear and tear.

After adding the slight distress to the decking, I followed the steps laid out in the track-weathering article to paint the deck of the car. Once I was satisfied with the results, I further weathered the deck with weathering powders, adding stains, marks, and other colors to give the deck more interest and depth.



Post-re-weathering, this view of what was once a solid gray deck is much more interesting to look at on the model.

From there, I moved to the car underside. The stock weathering was unicolor and provided little visual interest. Many freight cars are viewed these days from side on or slightly upward angle. Adding color to the underside of the car was my next priority. Working with the car, the trucks, and the coupler pocket covers all at the same time, I added additional color using weathering paint pens and powders, blending everything into the existing color while adding depth.

The trucks received black to represent oil on the journals. The springs showed additional rust. Mud colors improved the underside of the car. Before I went too far, I decided to **stop. It's easier to add more weathering** but difficult to remove these materials if you take it too far. After 24 hours, which allowed the paint to dry, I sprayed everything with Dullcote.

After allowing another 24 hours for the Dullcote to dry, I reassembled the car, replacing the stock couplers with Kadee Number 5s and the wheels with semi-scale metal wheels from Intermountain. Not including drying time for the paint and dull coat, the whole project took me about 30 minutes, spread over several days. The resulting car appears as I intended, an upgraded and more interesting to look at version of the stock Ertl flat car.

Project Materials List:

Ertl – 1374, St Louis & Southwestern
50 Ton 40' Flat Car
Kadee No. 5 Couplers



The re-weathered and reassembled flat car. The car now is ready for service on the layout.

Floquil Earth Tones Weathering Color pens
Minwax Wood Finish Stain Marker
230 "Early American"
Weathering Powders from Doc **O'Brien's and Bar Mills**
Testors Dull Coat
Intermountain IRC 40052 Semi-Scale **33" Wheels**

Tools Required:
Small screwdriver
Hobby file
Hobby Knife
Various sized paint brushes

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The Fusee
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Sioux Falls, SD 57106

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DSED and the new trailer busy this fall

A pair of switch crew puzzles

Sprues—not just scrap

Division activities within the TLR

Board of directors meeting minutes

Reliable wiring for a Kato SD40-2

SSW flatcar upgrade

Check your expiration date! If you have questions (or a change of address) email Jim Krekelberg at: jkrekelberg@sio.midco.net