

N-Scale

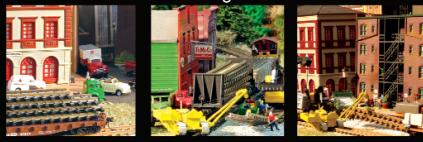
JULY / AUGUST 2008



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Making Dirt
and much more!

Pre-Made Sectional Track

an Interesting Car Load



by Dennis Murphy

There are many different aspects of railroading that we try to incorporate into our home layouts. Any aspect of railroading is fair game for us to model. (And some things that don't exist out there in the "real world" can be added to our model railroading, the more I want to create as "real" of a "train world" as I possibly can.) This month I am giving you ever increasing attention to detail.

Last year when I made a visit to the rail yard at the Chicago Model Railroad Museum, I encountered an interesting little known aspect of railroading. I was surprised to find they had a number of pre-made track sections. Upon closer inspection,

I found they also had a number of rail cars that were specifically designed to hold

these pre-made track units. As I had never seen

this practice before, it got me wondering.

Upon my return home, I started to research this practice of preloading rail cars with track. I found my quest was as easy as 9 words. Then, maneuvering along and life got in the way, I never got back to the back burner until I had a second chance with these pre-made track sections.

Just recently, I visited the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, Illinois, where there they were again! The museum has the same type prefabricated sectional track as the CMRRM, but their rail cars ready to move. This time, I could get right up to them for some photos.

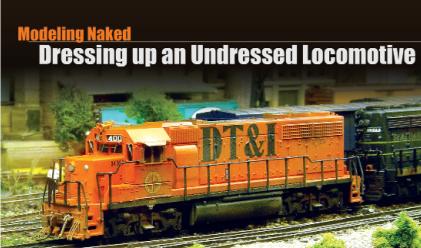
Come to find out the museum offers



Photo 1



Photo 2



Modeling Naked Dressing up an Undressed Locomotive

Part 1

Photo 2 below is showing the "out of the box" Atlas GP-40 locomotive in its undressed state. Our subject locomotive (above) as

shown off in its TDFI painted splendor. You walked in the back door, and there she was, right there on the counter! She was laying there on the showcase in all her naked splendor. She

by Greg Jones



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

Guidelines for

Authors



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Preparing an article for publication is not difficult, but too many who are interested, never do it. By presenting a clear picture of what a submission should include, and with a little guidance, perhaps you too can be published.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The article you submit should include: A) typed text, B) color photos, C) supporting data - sketches, drawings, bill of materials (as required).

When preparing an article for N-Scale magazine, assume a high level of intelligence on the part of the reader. Cover the difficult or unique steps in detail, and briefly cover the areas where few problems could be encountered.

Copy should be double spaced to allow room for edit notations; the average article should be three to ten pages. A four-page manuscript will be the equivalent of one-page of copy in the magazine. If you prepare the manuscript on a computer, provide a copy on disc, but be sure a printout is also included.

Don't be wordy. Remember, even a small tool house can become a 24-page article if laborious directions are given. Don't leave out details you feel are required. We can (and normally will) edit copy, so don't be overly concerned with polish. Do be concerned that information is complete and that captioning is done in complete sentences.

If writing is a problem for you, get a tape recorder and use it to create the text. Have someone transcribe the recording into typed copy for you. We can all explain what we do. Many, however, have trouble writing it clearly.

Step-by-step photographs are a necessity for modeling articles. They ease the work in preparing a manuscript, converting it almost entirely to captions. Without this step-by-step presentation, it's impossible to give the reader the information to duplicate or refer to what you've done. Finished model photos are fine if you're writing a product review, but are inadequate if that's all you provide for a construction article. However, even for construction articles, we prefer to see one or two finished photos to draw the reader's attention at the open and close of the article.

Prints can be normal jumbo prints: 3x5, 4x6, 5x7, or 8x10. We look for good color photos. Some articles, especially historical, will not have color at all. High-resolution digital TIFF files (see "Digital Article Submissions") are preferred over color transparencies, and color transparencies are preferred over prints. If the transparencies are of special value to you, provide duplicate transparencies, not the originals. Be absolutely sure the material submitted has your name and address on each piece, but when marking prints that will be stacked, be sure the ink does not track onto the surface of photographs underneath. "Lumicolor" permanent pens work well.

The ideal prototype package would include official railroad drawings and good photos; sometimes even spanning the time from first-built until ready for retirement.

ARTICLE SELECTION

Select articles based on common interest to modelers throughout the country. Standard equipment, not the unique, is our principal focus. Many modelers work on locomotives; therefore, to keep the magazine content balanced, we are constantly looking for articles on other subjects as well: rolling stock, structures,

tools, scenery, track work, layout planning, and especially new techniques.

MODELING

Break your project into easily handled segments. Start by gathering good prototype material to help you understand the prototype. Then, plan the modeling portion of your article. Once started, don't put off the photography!

When you're ready, present the project as a group of separate tasks. On a freight car for example: the underbody would be one part, the roof another, ends and sides, two additional parts. The addition of details, painting, lettering, and weathering would finish the job. A similar breakdown would work for a structure, with the addition of a small vignette on which the structure is mounted.

It goes without saying that the modeling must be good. Take your time, and if a subassembly isn't successful, overcome your resistance, and do it again. Plan the story so it can be told in the fewest words, using photos to tell as much of the story as possible. If a technique is merely expressed in text, few readers will fully comprehend. If it's well detailed through photographs, the majority of readers will capture the method.

PHOTOGRAPHY

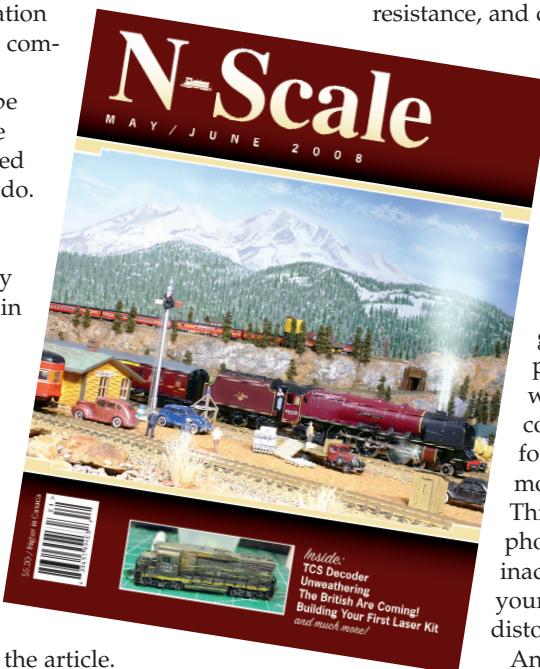
The key to great studio photography is good lighting and, in the case of standard photography, proper film. Use one 500-watt photo flood 2' from the subject. Don't compromise on this. Fuji makes great film for transparencies and color printing, but most manufacturers are on the same level. Three problems prevalent in most model photography are: inadequate depth of field, inadequate lighting, and distortion. Focus your efforts on the first two and ignore the distortion, which is not of great concern.

Any lens has critically sharp focus on a single plane. The focus falls off as you move away from that plane. The fall-off is rapid with the lens aperture wide open, and fairly slow with the smallest f-stop your camera will allow; the largest being 1.4 to 3.5, the smallest being 16-32. Use 1/2-second exposure. With long exposure, a tripod and cable release.

Normally, a 500-watt light is placed about 5' from the closest corner of the model, the light is turned on, and the camera focused. The camera is then set for 1/2 second and smallest f-stop; the light is moved to 2' from the model, and the photo snapped and the light moved away. Since the light is hot and can melt a model, be careful.

Inadequate lighting is a problem with about 60 percent of the photographs we receive. Don't try short cuts on lighting. Use a 12" reflector with a 500-watt photoflood bulb. Every bit of that light is necessary to give the type of photography you've come to expect in N-Scale.

Occasionally, it's a good idea to soften the shadows on the end of the model, away from the photoflood, with what is called fill light. This can either be another photoflood at a greater distance from the model, or simply a mirror used as a reflector. A piece of



white card stock will work, but marginally. If you're using the fill light method, try to keep the light off the side of the model illuminated by your primary light source. That will soften the shadow that outlines detail and defines shape.

Good photographs can make the story almost complete without captions. It's not hard. Outline your project and plan your photos ahead of time. Include both still-life photos and hands-on. Come in close with the camera on some shots and, on others, back off for an overall view. A little variety in your effort rewards you with the most pleasing results.

Unless you're prepared for it, step-by-step photography can interfere with the flow of your work. Breaking for photography should require no more than a minute per photo. Locate both the 500-watt photoflood and the camera on a tripod near your work-bench. When you reach the point where a photograph is required, slide a piece of white or black paper under the work, and move your chair out of the way. Be careful of using colored paper, as this can alter the color of the light reflecting off your subject. Move the photoflood in at one side, and place the camera where your chair was. Focus, shoot, and go back to work.

The paper you slide under the work should be white if you're working entirely with dark plastic, and black or dark colored when using white plastic... medium to light gray when you're working with both white and black parts. To bring out detail in dark parts, move the light to the opposite side of your work-bench so the light bounces off the plastic into the camera. Unless you move the light to the far side of those parts, detail cannot be emphasized.

MORE PHOTOGRAPHY

For outstanding results, take photographs of your completed project outside. Early morning or late afternoon sunlight is the ONLY lighting acceptable. The exception is northern regions, such as Seattle, where mid-winter sun only gets thirty degrees above the horizon at mid-day. When you set the model or module up for outdoor photography, look at it closely to determine from what angle the photos would best be taken. The least attractive angle is with the sun behind you; the best is somewhat into the sun or at 90 degrees to it. Outdoor transparency film should be used: preferably Fuji 50 or Kodachrome 64. Do not use high-speed film. With 35mm, you're taxing the system severely because of the amount of enlargement, so use the appropriate film.

For indoor photography of completed modules, we recommend Fuji 50 Indoor transparency film. It's a professional film, not available at every location, but worth searching for. It's an exceptionally fine indoor color film that reproduces well. Other indoor films still seem to present problems. Adequate lighting is the key to color photography. With outdoor shots, the adequacy

of the lighting is not a concern, however, with indoor, it is. Five hundred watt photofloods again are recommended. With indoor layout photography, you must take care to get adequate exposure. Dark transparencies are common and often not usable. Another common problem is putting the light too close, which gives uneven lighting through the photograph. If more than one light is used, be sure the lights all point in the same direction. Lighting from both sides of a model makes it flat, eliminating the shadows that give it shape and substance.

When photographing modules or layouts, especially for N scale, be sure to take your photographs at eye level. This will give the readers a sense of actually being in the scene and will bring out more of the little details.

If a problem occurs in any phase of the photography, ask for our help. We'll gladly work with you.

DIGITAL ARTICLE SUBMISSIONS

For digital media, we recommend using a digital camera that has at least a 4 Mega pixel Resolution CCD (higher is better, of course). Photographs can be either TIFFs or JPEGs, but we prefer high-resolution (300-1200 dpi) TIFFs, at a reasonable size (around 4" to 10" wide, 17.5" wide for Reference Photos). We operate on a Macintosh platform, using Photoshop and QuarkXpress. However, we can also accept documents done in Adobe Illustrator, or AutoCAD files exported to DWG or DXF formats. We prefer multiple large images to be burned to a CD and sent to us that way, to keep our email inbox happy and crash free. Text done in Microsoft Word, plain text file (.txt), or "Rich Text Format" (.rtf) can be sent via e-mail to info@nscalemagazine.com while the CD or transparencies are enroute. We have difficulty with Word Perfect and other less-used text editing programs, so if you are using any of these, please save your article text and captions to a plain text file (.txt).

Just remember, we are always willing to work with you and are available to answer any questions you may have. As technology changes, so do the requirements for digital submissions. With that in mind, we are always on a learning curve, and are open to any suggestions you may have.

THANKS!

We appreciate all article interest, and we love to hear from readers and potential authors. Drop us a line and let us know your thoughts on potential articles or questions about the magazines or previous articles.

Pamela Clapp, Publisher
N-Scale Magazine

