

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:
The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

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Hello again everyone! We'll need to skip the usual frivolity and get right to the matter this month, since there is a lot to do here at UMTRR HQ to prepare for next month...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



042 00 130, \$14.50

Reporting Marks: NH 172050.

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Boxcar,
Single Door, New Haven (New York,
New Haven and Hartford).**

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left roadname on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1920s to late 1930s.

We begin this month with a car that's almost as simple as it can get. Well, such was much of life in the early part of the twentieth century for boxcars: plain brown cars with white lettering. Sure, some had more than others, but for the most part, less was, well, less. And it was easier to paint.

As simple as the car decoration is, the car history is not. I was recently given an accumulation of several years of back issues of the magazine **Mainline Modeler** for the UMTRR Research Library, and there is a two part article on the rebuilding of the New Haven boxcars in the July and September 1988 issues. There's additional information in the Morning Sun Color Guide to the New Haven. I'll try to summarize. The railroad acquired over 22,000 new 36 foot steel underframe boxcars with wood double-sheathed bodies including wood ends, during the period from 1903 to 1912, replacing an even older fleet of cars. (This is what provides MTL with the 1910 build date in their car copy.) These cars became almost immediately obsolete from a construction perspective, especially the wood ends. From 1926 to 1929, the NH then rebuilt over 12,000 of these cars to more modern standards including the use of steel ends and required safety appliances. The post-rebuild combination of Dreadnaught ends and double sheathed wood sides was rather unusual according to the article's authors Chris Barkan and John Nehrich. Based on my reading, there's some question in my mind as to whether the roadname should read "New Haven" as it does on the car, or "NYNH&H" as it does on some surviving images.

The prototype for the 172050 was apparently among the later of the boxcars to be rebuilt. No cars with 172000 numbers appear in the Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for April 1928, though there are plenty of cars numbered through 170999 which appear to have

been part of this rebuilding program. My next available ORER is July 1935, and there are 1231 cars in the group 171000 to 172237. The inside length of these cars was 36 feet 3 inches, inside width 8 feet 5 inches, inside height 8 feet 6 inches, outside length 37 feet 10 inches, extreme height 13 feet 5 inches, door opening 6 feet and capacity 2560 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. In short-- if you'll pardon the expression-- the MTL 042 body style is really a bit too large on all dimensions to fit the New Haven prototype.

Following the arrival of all steel boxcars starting in 1941, the ranks of these wood-sided cars dropped dramatically. Before that, the cars were renumbered, apparently by simply dropping the leading "1" from the road number. For example, the 172050 would have become the 72050. This happened quickly: by the January 1940 ORER there are just eight cars left numbered from 171000 to 172399, effectively ending the Approximate Time Period.



058 00 590, \$24.15

Reporting Marks: SRLX 4011.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Swift Refrigerator Line.

Yellow sides, brown ends, roof and panel below door. Black lettering including "Swift Refrigerator Line" and reporting marks on left. Red and white Swift trademark on right. Approximate Time Period: 1948 to the early 1950s at least.

One of my favorite books in the Morning Sun Color Guide series is the "Refrigerator Car Color Guide" by Gene Green. Green devotes Pages 96 to 103 to the wood and steel cars of the Swift Refrigerator Line. Although he doesn't have a photo of any cars in this exact paint scheme, he does note that "in 1948 a white 'Swift' appeared in a large red field on the right half of the side." That will give us the start of the Approximate Time Period. That ATP could be fairly short, since just two years later in 1950 the next paint scheme debuted: a red car with white lettering, done on a forty foot refrigerator by MTL as catalog 49400 in 1994 and 2004. Photos of strings of Swift cars taken in the 1950s and published in the "Refrigerator Car Color Guide" and other books show mostly the red and white scheme, with a couple of pre-1948 painted cars in the mix. I'll be conservative here and tag the early 1950s as the end of the ATP, but mind that "at least" since we'll never know when the last car painted in this scheme was redecorated. Speaking of this scheme, it was also used way back in November 1976 by Kadee on their 40 foot wood double sheathed refrigerator (catalog 47070) which we now know is the wrong length car. (Anyone want a slightly used copy of that car, cheap?)

Online sources didn't yield any images of this particular paint scheme. There is a black and white photo of SRLX 6723 on Page 33 of the February 1993 issue of the magazine **Rail Model Journal** (online at trainlife.com if you register with that site). Author Martin Lofton calls this scheme an "interim" one so maybe that early 1950s end to the ATP is correct after all.

Given the changing nature of the paint schemes for Swift cars, a long trip through ORER lookups won't be terribly useful. So we'll grab the 1950 edition as an illustration. The SRLX

4011 was part of the series 3300 to 5199, with AAR Designation “RAM,” inside length 29 feet 5 inches, inside width 8 feet 2 inches, inside height 6 feet 2 inches, outside length 37 feet 5 inches, extreme height 14 feet, door opening 4 feet wide by 5 feet 9 inches tall, and capacity 1588 cubic feet or 75,000 pounds, ice not included. There were 1602 cars in the series at that time which looks like the largest single set of refrigerator cars under those reporting marks.

Yes, the Swift Refrigerator Line is no longer with us. In fact, the SRLX reporting marks have been repurposed and they now belong to Southern Rail Leasing Incorporated. Technically speaking, the enterprise was a “fallen flag” of sorts since 1930 when nearly all of the Swift fleet was sold to General American Transportation Company and leased back to Swift. Gene Green noted that just a single car remained under the Swift Refrigerator Line markings by April 1978.



077 00 211 and 077 00 212, \$20.30 each
Reporting Marks: MKT 2366 and 2370.
50 Foot Steel Box Car, Single Youngstown
Door, No Roofwalks, Full Ladders, Missouri-
Kansas-Texas (MKT).

Green with mostly yellow lettering including reporting marks on left and very large “M K T” from left of the door to right end of side. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970s (1975 service date given by MTL) to late 1980s.

Hey, it’s another Mom-Kieran-Thalia boxcar pair, and isn’t it nice to have Micro-Trains doing cars that honor the other three members of the family here at UMTRR HQ. Well, maybe that’s my interpretation of it, anyway. For the rest of the world, this virtual two-pack is a depiction of Missouri-Kansas-Texas boxcars from the series 2344 to 2382.

The series isn’t in the July 1974 ORER at all, and is listed in the April 1975 group with complete dimensional data but no car count, what I would call a “coming soon” entry. In the April 1976 ORER there are 34 cars in the group, and while we’re here let’s get the vital statistics: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 54 feet 4 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 4880 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. Continuing through the ORERs we find the series at 39 cars in April 1981 and 34 cars in July 1987, but it’s completely gone by the time we reach the July 1989 Equipment Register. That puts a pretty tight boundary around our Approximate Time Period. The series’ deletion predates the acquisition of the MKT by the Missouri Pacific which took place in December 1989.

The Fallen Flags site provides several photos of MKT boxcars in the 2300s including one of sister car 2364 in an undated photo taken in North Little Rock. The ladders are cut down on this car, which I normally call out as a delta to the model. However, shots of cars that are in adjacent series and have very similar dimensions as well as the same paint scheme show up with full ladders. I doubt that the Katy made the distinction between number groups based

on the length of the side ladders and I note that the ladders could have been cut down anytime during the ATP. Otherwise, we've got at least a decent look and feel match between prototype and Micro-Trains model.



096 00 050, \$33.60

Reporting Marks: B&O 602903.

**PS-2 3 Bay High Side Covered Hopper,
Baltimore & Ohio / Chessie System.**

Yellow with black underframe and trucks. Mostly blue lettering including reporting marks on left, "Ches-C" outline herald in center and small Chessie System roadname at top right. White lettering on hopper bays. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s to early 1980s at least.

The prototype for this car is a survivor! It was photographed in January 2009 by John Gray and posted on a Pbase account (to find it, search directly on "B&O 602903," ignore the references to the MTL model!). While a considerable amount of the lettering is gone, and the poor "Ches-C" looks quite the worse for wear, you can still discern that this is a Chessie System covered hopper, decades after the absorption of the Chessie System into CSX Transportation.

But is it an outlier, and should the Approximate Time Period for the series at large not count the 2009 sighting of this car? Maybe, maybe not! Out on RRPictureArchives.net, there are images of cars from this group dated as late as July 2010, including the 602901, the 602903 again, the 602911, 602914, 602916, 602922 and 602924, all with very faded paint and all still rolling the rails in the later part of the decade of the 2000s.

These cars were Class HC-30, built in 1970 by Pullman-Standard and numbered in the B&O series 602900 to 602935. The Morning Sun Color Guide to the B&O shows the same 602903 that MTL modeled, but in the original paint scheme of gray with black lettering and small Capitol Dome herald. There is a delta to the MTL model that I wouldn't have picked up had it not been in the MSCG photo caption: the cars have six round hatches instead of the more typical trough hatches. (I don't know how frequently this change to the specifications occurred besides this order for the B&O.) A photo of the 902916 back on RRPictureArchives is the only one I found that comes close to showing this detail. According to a post from October 2009 on the Baltimore_and_Ohio YahooGroup, CSX altered the outlet gates at some point and the cars have been seen in alumina service.

The ORER for April 1976 shows the 35 cars in this series with these dimensions: inside length 49 feet 6 inches, inside width 10 feet 1 inch, outside length 54 feet 8 inches, extreme height 15 feet, and capacity 4427 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. Whether these cars were still in B&O or Chessie System paint isn't something we're going to get from the Equipment Register, of course. Based on the photo dates, I jumped all the way to the October 2007 ORER which shows seven cars still in service and with B&O reporting marks. Survivors, indeed!



102 00 050, \$39.95

Reporting Marks: CN 704367.

**89 Foot Tri Level Closed Auto Rack,
Canadian National.**

Black flat car with white lettering including reporting marks on left. Black and aluminum racking with white roof. CN “wet noodle” herald on placard on rack. Approximate Time Period: mid-1980s to as late as the present.

Haven’t we been here before? No, not exactly. There’s been a previous CN autorack release, but it was the bi-level open auto rack (112020, February 2004). This car is similarly painted to that one.

But we might have something to RAVE about here, and that’s the end doors on this car. The prototype series CN 704365 to 704451 was equipped with “Radical Anti-Vandalism Enclosure” fully enclosed slatted doors, which are different from the more typical clamshell type end door that MTL uses on the 102 body style. Would make for an interesting aftermarket detail, no?

Anyway, according to Ian Cranstone’s “Canadian Freight Cars” site (www.nakina.net) this series had the RAVE doors and were also apparently rebuilt in 1985 from the 700775 to 701074 series which was originally built in 1976. Cranstone notes that some of these cars were subsequently restenciled into the CNA series 704365 to 704451 in 1996; that is, the same number series with the CN’s reporting marks for “built in the USA” cars. He shows the group as in service from 1986 to the present.

However!

We get a bingo on the MTL car’s prototype on RRPictureArchives.net as of December 2008 and guess what, it shows the car without any RAVE-ing... the end door is in fact the one that Micro-Trains uses on the model. And how about that. Online photos of other cars in the series do show RAVE ends. Looks like some folks behind the red and yellow sign did their homework! We know we have at least one car out there with the ends that MTL has on its N Scale depiction, though we can’t say how many more might be out there. Or can we?

I’ll go to my most recent ORER, October 2007 (still looking for something newer, hint hint) and find that we really might have an exception to the rule with the 704367. The series of cars as listed in the Equipment Register entry takes in several adjacent groups from Ian Cranstone’s table, and spans the road numbers 704276 to 704519. There are 190 cars in the main series, which is described as “Flat, Tri-Level Fully Enclosed Rave Doors 10 Inch End of Car Cushioning, Axle Spacing 5 Feet 1 Inch, Truck Centers 63 Feet 9 Inches.” So the doors are part of the description? That’s pretty specific. There are three exceptions that are described simply as “Flat” with identical dimensions except for the Gross Rail Weight. Could those have the other doors? We don’t know, but we do know that the 704367 isn’t one

of those three exceptions. Oh, before I forget: inside length 89 feet 4 inches, outside length 93 feet 10 inches, extreme height 18 feet 11 inches, and height to top of sides a mere 2 feet 10 inches – top of sides this time referring to the flat car below the autorack.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



069 00 150, \$17.70

Reporting Marks: NPMX 155.

51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Car,
Rivet Sides, Northern Pacific
Refrigerator.

Aluminum with black lettering including reporting marks on left and "Vista Dome North Coast Limited" slogan on right. Medium red, white and black NP monad herald on right. Reporting Marks: NPMX 155. Approximate Time Period: mid- to late 1950s as painted, then to at least 1970 as "NPM," see text. Previous Release: A three-pack, catalog number 69152, individual cars 69150, road numbers 152, 154 and 156, June 2001.

These cars were originally part of the fleet of Merchants Despatch Transit Company, a subsidiary of the New York Central, and carried the NPMX reporting marks while registered to that company. The January 1959 ORER which is the closest issue I have to the 1956 built date of these cars shows them under the MDT registration. NPMX 150 to 249 were described simply as "Refrigerator." An end note called out sliding doors! That's as opposed to the hinged doors that were far more typical of refrigerator cars at the time. The inside length was 44 feet 5 inches and described as being "between ice tanks with bulkheads in place" – not really applicable for mechanical refrigerator cars! The inside width was 8 feet 6 inches, inside height 8 feet even, outside length 52 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, door opening 6 feet wide by 7 feet 9 inches high, and capacity 3023 cubic feet or 120,000 pounds. All 100 cars were in service at that time. Those of you who know the MTL model might have concluded that we have a small and perhaps not so noticeable "door thing" working here, with the model's plug door being about seven feet wide versus the six foot door opening quoted in the Register.

By the January 1964, the next ORER I have, the series is with the Northern Pacific and has the reporting marks NPM, not NPMX, and in addition, the NPMX reporting marks are gone from the Merchants Despatch listing. In this issue, unlike the 1959 ORER, the cars are shown with the AAR Mechanical Designation RP, defined as "Mechanical Refrigerator" and further described as "A house car equipped with insulation, with or without means of ventilation and provided with apparatus or other device for furnishing protection against heat and/or cold. Apparatus operated by power other than through the car axle." More importantly, we have an Approximate Time Period that is pretty short, strictly speaking.

What to do if you model 1963, like I do? Just paint over the "X" from the car; that's apparently what the Northern Pacific did, based on photos in the Morning Sun Color Guide

to the NP. Page 95 of that volume includes a photo of NPM 139 from the previous series, dated November 21, 1962. The silver paint doesn't have to be an exact match; it isn't on the prototype.

At the dawn of the Burlington Northern in April 1970, we find just one NPM car missing out of the original 100, and the outside length has moved up to 55 feet 2 inches, so get out those medium extension MTL trucks, folks! And then get out the eraser: By July 1974, the entire combined refrigerator fleet of the BN and its predecessor roads including the NP had been restenciled and renumbered, and the NPM reporting marks are gone. I can't really guess the BN series into which this group went. I wouldn't doubt that a translation from NPM to BN exists somewhere in the railfan and/or modeling community.



108 00 120, \$21.25

Reporting Marks: ATSF 179551.

100 Ton Three Bay Open Hopper, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Mineral brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large Cooper Black "Santa Fe" roadname across top center. Simulated "copper load" included. Approximate Time Period: late 1970's (1976 build date given by MTL) to as late as the present. Previous Release: As catalog number 108120.x, road numbers 179655 (108120.1) and 179482 (108120.2), August 2003.

The number series for these cars align with the Santa Fe's GA-195 class, according to a summary of Folio 211 of the Santa Fe Historical and Modeling Society (www.atsfrr.com), which I located from several sources on the net. It's just the summary, folks, not the detail — we've got to let the group sell something to you! One somewhat unusual detail is that these are referred to as "3 cross hoppers," which I hope for MTL's sake translates into three bay!

This detail carries over into the ORER entry for April 1981, which describes this group of cars as "Hopper, Cross." The AAR classification is HT and as MTL reports, the series ranges from 179300 to 179699. The inside length was 45 feet 1 inch, outside length 48 feet 9 inches, extreme height 12 feet 2 inches, and capacity 3420 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds-- which you'd expect with 100 ton Barber trucks. There were 355 cars in the series out of a possible 400, about five years after the February 1976 build date. There were 353 cars in January 1985, and 350 in October 1991, where several subseries start; also the description changes to "Hopper, Steel, Axle Spacing 5 feet 10 inches, Truck Centers 36 feet 2 inches." There's a drop down to 242 cars in October 1996, and another one to 215 cars under new owner Burlington Northern Santa Fe in January 2000. When this car was first run in 2003, I noted that the ATP was probably good to "the present" given that there remained 199 cars as of January 2002. I can update that to 167 cars in the October 2007 Equipment Register, so we might still be OK on that "to present." It's not obvious to me whether these cars were restenciled for BNSF or simply retired; and further, if they were renumbered, it's not clear to me what new numbers they received.

There are a number of pictures available online. First, there is a shot of ATSF 179655, which was one of MTL's "virtual two pack," as it looked in Butte, Montana in July 1998 on the "Northwest Rail Pics" website (<http://www.trainweb.org/nwrp/>). It's noted there that these cars were built by Greenville Steel Car in December 1976, confirming the Micro-Trains car copy. Then, there are six shots on the Fallen Flags site. The 179324, 179414 and 179697 were lensed in Arizona in the year 2000, and in glorious black and white we have 179619, 179634 and 179658 at Fort Worth TX in May 1994. The photos show these cars to be 14 panel hoppers, same as the Micro-Trains model.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:

The following items were announced as "off-cycle" releases for May via the Micro-Trains website and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" on May 13.



092 44 010, \$27.70

Reporting Marks: GTW 315063.

2 Bay ACF Center Flow Covered Hopper, Grand Trunk Western.

Blue with white lettering including reporting marks and roadname on left and large GT herald on right.

Light to moderate weathering and multicolor graffiti "NeetZ" on one side. Approximate Time Period: 1967 to mid-1980s (note different from most recent previous release). Previous Releases (all unweathered): As catalog 92010, Road Number 315060, October 1993 and Road Number 315065, November 1999; then Road Number 315066, August 2010.

You might recall from the August 2010 UMTRR that this series had an interesting history. Though there were fifty cars in the original series 315050 to 315099 and the group was relatively healthy through at least the October 1986 ORER, there were just two cars left as of the July 1989 Register – and the 315063 wasn't one of them. For the record, the two that were left were the 315059 and the 315066, the latter of which was the August 2010 reprint. The net of it is that the ATP for this car is about ten years shorter than the previous MTL release.

We questioned last year with the previous run of this car whether these cars were actually owned by American Car & Foundry and leased to the GTW, and then returned in the mid-1980s, or at least all but two of them were returned, anyway. We're no closer to an answer to that question than we were last year, but there's always that chance of securing Incremental Information if I bring this up again.



103 44 100, \$54.95

Reporting Marks: SP 654809 and SP 654--- (last three digits obscured).

A two pack of 60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Double Plug Door, Waffle Sides, Southern Pacific.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname on right. Black on white "Excess Height Car" bands at top of ends. Moderate to heavy weathering on the 654809 (which is catalog number 103 51 100) and light to moderate weathering on 654--- (which is catalog number 103 52 100). Approximate Time Period: 1979 (build date) to the early 2000s at least. Previous Releases (unweathered): As catalog 103 00 10x, Road Numbers 654812 and 654814, September 2010.

As was the case with February's Union Pacific two-fer, we have a "some and some" situation. There's a car with a previously unreleased roadnumber paired with a "leftover" from a previous MTL run. The three obscured digits under that patch panel could be either 812 or 814, and Micro-Trains ain't tellin'.

We noted last September with the release of the "virtual two-pack" that wasn't weathered that our friend Joe Shaw contributed five photos of cars in this small SP Class BX-100-46 to Lee Gautreaux's "Railgoat" site (<http://www.railgoat.railfan.net>). Images of the 654800, 654803 and 654804 are available for viewing; all photos were taken between 2000 and 2003 and show the car as MTL depicts it. We should be good with the comparison of model to prototype, but there is the matter of the couplers: the real cars had some pretty extended draft gear. The full complement of cars is just eighteen in number, in two groups distinguished by inside length: 654800 to 654808 at 59 feet 4 inches and 654809 to 654817 at of 60 feet 10 inches. The cubic capacity of these cars differed as well but the outside length didn't at 67 feet 9 inches for both. As of October 2007, sixteen cars remained in service with SP reporting marks and possibly with the as delivered paint that MTL depicts—at least before the weathering.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #52, three Ringling Brothers Sleepers, is now available. UMTRR coverage was provided in the December 2010 issue. These are Con-Cor passenger cars with MTL paint, trucks and couplers.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is December 2011. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close June 30.



Scheduled December 2011 Release:

Runner Pack #58: 993 00 058, \$69.95

Road Numbers: 9015, 9120, 9276, 9304

Quantity four of Troop Sleeper Car.

Pullman green with black roof. Yellow lettering including "Pullman" across top, "Troop Sleeper" across bottom, and road

number on bottom left and bottom right. Comes with simulated windows, diaphragms and interiors. Approximate Time Period: 1943 through about 1950. Previous Releases (as catalog 116 00 010 or 116 00 010.x): Road Numbers 9010, 9153 and 9426, May 2003; Road Numbers 9082 and 9340, July 2003; 9536 and 9027, May 2005; Road Number 9148, May 2007. Also, road numbers 9975 and 9809 were included as part of the 993 01 020 "US Army Set #1" Special Edition release of September 2006. Runner Pack #27 (993 00 027, announced October 2008 and released May 2009) included road numbers 9149, 9257, 9316, and 9488.

Another fairly easy Runner Pack to pre-review here. The models are quite faithful to the prototypes and have been previously hailed as excellent in print and online, so there's not much I can add. Except to ask: is this the first "Runner Pack" reprint? It certainly seems that way to me.

The definitive reference in the UMTRR Research Accumulation remains the Winter 2001 issue of the magazine "Classic Trains" which covered the role of the railroads in the Second World War. Like the previous fourteen (!) road numbers, these four were part of the series 9000 to 9999 which was built between October 1945 and May 1946 by Pullman-Standard, under contract to the Defense Plant Corporation.

You might be surprised, as I was, about that contractor, the Defense Plant Corporation. It was one of eight corporations established by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. That's right, the government agency created by Congress in 1932 during the Herbert Hoover administration as a countermeasure to the Great Depression. The RFC was modeled on the War Finance Corporation which was in place during the First World War. The RFC lent and spent more money during the World War II years than it did during the Depression years. It was brought under the Treasury Department in 1954 "to wind up its affairs" and was dissolved in 1957. That Approximate Time Period was far longer than that of the Troop Sleepers that it commissioned, at least as far as the original purpose of those sleepers. There are several "scholarly documents" available online: for the record, this was the first time a 'net search returned the category "scholarly documents" as the top entry in the results!

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



063 00 020, \$34.95

Railway Post Office, Ringling Brothers Big Top Extravaganza Car #6, "World's Biggest Menagerie" Reporting Marks RBBX 20156.

Orange with black lettering. Yellow and red lettering on blue panel: "Ringling Bros World's Biggest Menagerie." Multi color panels attached to each side depicting the head of a hippopotamus. Includes load of three hippopotamuses.

I'm sorry that this is probably not the thought that Micro-Trains would prefer be prompted by this latest Special Edition release, but my brain immediately went to the comedic song by the late Allan Sherman, sung to the tune of "What Kind of Fool Am I" and titled "One Hippopotami." (Ask your parents.) According to Mr. Sherman, "One Hippopotami cannot get on a bus, because one hippopotami is two hippopotamus." But the term hippopotami is considered to be an alternate for the plural hippopotamuses, or of course just hippos.

Considered to be one of the most dangerous animals in Africa, the hippo is quite aggressive. Don't let its shape fool you as it can outrun a human. Hippos live in groups; I wonder what Allan Sherman might have been able to do with the terms pod, herd, dale or bloat which all refer to these groups. The word hippopotamus comes from the Greek for "river horse" but its closest living relatives are actually whales and porpoises—now, I certainly didn't know that.

You might know that the 063 body style is among the least used in the MTL tooling accumulation. In fact, this fantasy scheme is only the second "roadname" if you will for this particular car. The first and only other paint scheme used on this gondola is for the Grand Trunk Western, which has been done in 1987, 1993 and 2001.



074 00 133, \$23.95

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #33: Grover Cleveland (as 24th President).

Cream sides and ends with green roof and black lettering. Multicolor rendition of the Seal of the President of the United States and dates in office on left. Name of Vice President, home state of president and party affiliation at bottom left. Multicolor portrait of president in front of red, white and blue rendition of American flag in service during presidency on right.

So let's get my first question out of the way: is this second car for the 22nd and 24th President identical to the first one? Answer: No, as evidenced by the image of the first car released in December 2009 and reproduced for your convenience at right. Checking the second car against the first, it looks like President Cleveland aged quite a bit in four years or so!



So... what could I say about Steven Grover Cleveland that I hadn't covered last time? Plenty, actually, since I don't pretend to do more than a brief overview of any of the Chief Executives that I've discussed in these bytes. As before, we'll turn to the scholarly essays available at the website of the Miller Center (<http://millercenter.org>) for a few items, though it's also possible to cite other sources—some better than others. (Should you surf on your own, beware of some modern-day political commentary that I don't think is terribly relevant to the topic of Grover Cleveland.)

Our daughter who has a particular attraction to the 50th State might be interested to know that it was during the tenure of the 24th President that what is now the State of Hawaii became a United States Territory, after a bloodless overthrow of the peaceful monarchy that had ruled the island kingdom since its unification under Kamehameha I in 1810. It was no real secret then that American interests were at least partially behind the regime change. President Cleveland addressed Congress in December 1893 with a healthy skepticism with respect to whether the United States should have gotten involved. He stated, "If national honesty is to be disregarded and a desire for territorial extension, or dissatisfaction with a form of government not our own, ought to regulate our conduct, I have entirely misapprehended the mission and character of our Government and the behavior which the conscience of our people demands of their public servants." Ouch!

But Cleveland had far bigger domestic issues. The Panic of 1893, somewhat caused according to some sources by a second bursting of the "railroad construction bubble" (imagine that!) set off the worst economic depression that the country had ever experienced (and would until the Great Depression of the 1930s). Cleveland blamed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act of 1890 for the depression, continuing the then-heated debate about bi-metallism or the use of both silver and gold to support paper currency. The overbuying of silver mandated by the Sherman Silver Purchase Act altered the then-historic 16 to 1 ratio of its value relative to gold. But Republicans blamed Democrats, including Cleveland. Republicans scored their largest political gains ever (yes, to date!) in the election of 1894. Cleveland's response to the issue was to call for repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, which was repealed but split the Democratic Party in two, assuring an easy victory for Republican William McKinley in the Presidential Election of 1896.

While initially seen as being a reformer President who would side with the population at large, Cleveland's actions during his second term appeared to be considerably pro-business. Perhaps the most railroad-related of his decisions was the one to send federal troops to

Illinois to crush the Pullman Strike of 1895, citing interference with the United States Mail and violation of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. The then Governor of Illinois John Atgeld was infuriated by this action—he had specifically requested that the President not intervene—and he proceeded to use his influence to block Cleveland from renomination for the Election of 1896.

In short, probably not the best second term that a Chief Executive could hope for, non-consecutive or otherwise. Cleveland left office “feeling betrayed by his own party” according to the Miller Center, though it also notes that he “almost single-handedly restored and strengthened the power and autonomy of the executive branch” which did leave a considerable precedent for those Presidents of both parties who followed him.

Well, we know we won’t have a “repeat answer” for the trivia question. Let’s have a look. Never had a Vice President under him? Possible to look up, but not as easy as the hint “acquired Alaska during his presidency.” It may have been called “Seward’s Folly” after the man who was Secretary of State at the time, but the actual purchase of what would become the 49th State took place in 1867 which was under the administration of Andrew Johnson. There’s your answer, get those contest entries in, and good luck!

The following locomotives are to be available mid-month according to Micro-Trains (via the “Micro-News” published flyer). “Pre-review” commentary appeared in the November 2010 issue of the UMTRR.



985 00 721 and 985 00 722, \$119.95 each
FP-7 Powered Locomotive, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus (“Red Train”). Model Power locomotive with Micro-Trains paint and couplers.

Aluminum with white lettering “Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey” in red banner on side. Multicolor “The Greatest Show on Earth” logo at front of side. Black and white numberboards.



985 00 731 and 985 00 732, \$119.95
FP-7 Powered Locomotive, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus (“White Train”). Model Power locomotive with Micro-Trains paint and couplers.

White with red lettering “Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus” in blue banner on side. Multicolor “The Greatest Show on Earth” logo at front of side. Black and white numberboards.

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is November 2011. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close June 30.



993 21 140, \$169.95

Veterans Tribute Set.

Consists of five Heavyweight Railway Post Office Cars, each decorated for a branch of the United States Military (alphabetically: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy). Car sides will be decorated in the appropriate branch's color, with all cars having black roof, underframe and trucks. Each car will be lettered with the branch name in the center of the letterboard and "reporting marks" consisting of the branch abbreviation and year of establishment at the bottom right of the side, and will including a multicolor depiction of the branch's official seal and motto. Please note that images at left are for illustration purposes only. Catalog numbers of cars in the set will be posted to the UMTRR Website once the set is available.

Model railroad rolling stock with a military theme has been popular for as long as I can remember, regardless of the scale or manufacturer, and for good reason of course: many model railroaders are either veterans or know one. I would be in that second category: my father served in the Army. He was in the Infantry based in Fort Dix, New Jersey, assigned to the Finance Corps. He would often say that his group "would throw adding machines at the enemy." I'm sure many of you have your own stories, and that some are quite profound.

As part of its pre-order announcement, Micro-Trains stated that it would be donating five percent of the proceeds from sales of this set to the Disabled American Veterans Fund. The DAV marked its ninetieth anniversary in 2010. According to its website (www.dav.org) the organization "was founded in 1920 by disabled veterans returning from World War I to represent their unique interests. In 1932, the DAV was congressionally chartered as the official voice of the nation's wartime disabled veterans." Among its activities is the National Service Program, which provides representation for veterans and their families who have claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and other governmental agencies. There are 88 offices throughout the United States. The organization also provides Transition Services for those who are in the military discharge process. DAV volunteers provide other important services such as rides to hospitals and other facilities. The DAV has about 1.2 million members and is recognized as a 501(c)(4) charity. In short, it's a good cause and I'm glad to see Micro-Trains supporting it.

Nn3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



500 00 720, \$18.90.

Reporting Marks: NH 32022.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, New Haven (New York, New Haven and Hartford).

Brown with black door. White lettering including script herald roadname on left and reporting marks right. Approximate Time Period: 1944 (build date) into the 1960s.

While Kadee and Micro-Trains have issued this boxcar in N Scale several times, going back all the way to the “Class of ‘72” initial runs of forty foot boxcars that started it all, we can’t really use any of the information from those releases—and besides, the most recent run of this car in 1:160 was back in May 1995 anyway, when the UMTRR was hardly what it is today. (Whatever that is.)

So let’s go to the Morning Sun Color Guide to the New Haven. At the start of the 1940s, the line’s roster consisted of seventy percent wood cars, including all 7800 (!) of its boxcars. (One of which was depicted in N Scale this month, see above.) The change to steel boxcars began with an order of one thousand from Pressed Steel Car Company in 1941. The car represented by MTL this month was among two thousand more built in 1944 by Pullman-Standard. However, these P-S cars were built to the AAR 1937 design, with a ten foot interior height, as the PS-1 type which is the basis for the MTL model hadn’t yet been introduced. These were delivered with boxcar red paint, white lettering and the script herald as MTL has it, but I didn’t recall seeing photos of any of these cars with black doors. We’ll come back to that.

A table summarizing ORER data in the MSCG shows the group 31650 to 32999 as being of 1343 cars in 1950, 1119 in 1960 and just 176 in 1970 which would be under Penn Central ownership. Many of the 1940s era boxcars were rebuilt, often through a sale and leaseback arrangement. At that time they were renumbered, and some repainted into the “N over H” scheme. After 1960, many NH cars were simply sold off as the line fought for survival. Even so, a few script herald cars survived into the Penn Central era. In theory, you’d have to be thinking about roofwalk removal, and I think it’s probably best to call the ATP for this car at the 1960s. The Fallen Flags website has a curiosity of sorts: an abandoned NH 32070 with shadows of its original paint barely visible, found in Boston in March 2008.

And this just in: I found a black door version of this boxcar scheme! The Friends of the Valley Railroad restored and repainted NH 35386. It has a seven-foot door and I believe it’s a true PS-1 type, but it’s there and you can see it on RRPictureArchives.net. It might still be an open question whether NH cars in the series MTL utilized carried black doors, but I think that the Friends of the Valley would have their car right. The dimensional data on the MTL car closely follows that on the restoration.



506 00 261 and 506 00 262, \$24.70 each.

Reporting Marks: GN 35559 and 35564.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Double Youngstown Doors, Great Northern.

Vermillion red with mostly white lettering including small side-facing goat herald and reporting marks on left, and large slant roadname on right. White simulated reflective rectangles along bottom of side. Red trucks and couplers. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) to early 1970s.

The Morning Sun Color Guide to the GN, Page 55, includes a photo of sister car GN 35729, looking a bit worn down in 1971 after twenty-four years in its original decoration. The image gives us two quickly spotted differences between the prototype and the model: first, an 8+7 door arrangement for a total opening of 15 feet; and second, a diagonal row of rivets either side of the doors. Come to think of it, the sides are riveted and not welded, but that's all part of the same delta to me. I'll note that as of the date of the photo the roofwalk is still in place, which helps to define our Approximate Time Period.

The two cars MTL depicts were part of the series 35500 to 35749, shown in the January 1959 ORER as simply "Box" with the basic AAR Designation of XM. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet, door opening 15 feet, and capacity 4953 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. An end note calls out nailable steel flooring. All 250 cars were present in 1959 and in April 1970 under the Burlington Northern registration there were 237 remaining in the series. That was down to 93 in July 1974 and just 19 in the April 1975 ORER which is where I stopped looking. I suspect that these cars may have been repainted for the BN as were other Great Northern boxcars but I don't have the number series into which they went.



531 00 170, \$19.95.

Reporting Marks: SOO LINE 69078.

PS-2 Two Bay Covered Hopper, Soo Line.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname across car. Approximate Time Period: 1957 (build date) to mid-1980s.

There were twenty-five covered hoppers in the Soo Line series 69074 to 69098 as of the January 1959 ORER, plus another twenty-five numbered from 69099 to 69123 with identical dimensions. Though, at the time, the Soo was still in possession of many groups of cars that were even numbers only (such as boxcars) or odd numbers only (flat cars, open hoppers), these covered hoppers were numbered consecutively. According to the information on the Soo Line Historical Society website (www.sooline.org) these cars were built by Pullman-Standard in 1957 and were sublettered for the Wisconsin Central—the first one, not the

second one with which you might be more familiar. Also on the SLHS website: “Unique to these cars are the prototypes’ unusual shapes of the ‘S’ in the billboard ‘SOO LINE.’ Some of these cars lasted in their original paint schemes until the 1990s.”

Heading back briefly to the '59 ORER, we'll provide the usual vital statistics for these cars: inside length 29 feet 3 inches, outside length 35 feet 3 inches, extreme height 13 feet 3 inches, capacity 2003 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. Breezing through the rest of the ORER Accumulation, we find all 25 cars still in service in April 1976, 18 in October 1986, and just one, the 69098, in July 1992. That yields for us a decent Approximate Time Period which I'll call at the mid eighties.

We get a bingo on the 69078 on RRPictureArchives.net, as found in June 1976 in Saint Paul. As a special treat, the view of the car is from above, giving us a view of the roof as well as the side facing the camera. That roof may have been brown once, but it's positively covered with... well, something. Could be concrete, since a concrete plant was where it was spotted.



761 00 080, \$19.95.

Four-Pack of Forty Foot Containers, K-Line.

Two containers are white with white company name and white flag in red panels (one shown at left).

Two containers are red with white company name and flag on side (one shown at right). Reporting marks are not printed on containers. Approximate Time Period: 1980s (a guess!) to present.



I need to say at least something about these containers: When our son Kieran was much younger and I'd take him down to the tracks to see trains go by, he'd pick out this name as "his" — his "K" (for Kieran) Line, of course. And you can just imagine his reaction when, while traveling the elevated portion of the BART line out of Oakland toward San Francisco, we came across hundreds of the red, white and gray containers at the Port of Oakland all with his initial prominently displayed!

K Line America is actually the United States subsidiary of Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Limited, a fully-integrated global transportation company based in Japan. To them, the "K" stands for the three initials, but I kind of like our family interpretation as well. The Approximate Time Period is based on my perhaps faulty memory of when I first saw these containers. I'm no expert on the "dry boxes" that these MTL models represent, so Incremental Information is welcome.



980 01 200, \$129.95

Road Number: 231L (will be "ATSF 231L" in website listings).

F7-A Powered Diesel, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

and

980 12 200, \$49.95

Road Number: 231B (will be "ATSF 231B" in website listings).

F7-B Unpowered Diesel, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Both units are painted dark blue with yellow band at the top of the side and cab, yellow stripe at the bottom of the carbody, and yellow nose stripe (on the A unit). Yellow lettering including roadname on side and modified circle cross herald on nose of A-unit. Approximate Time Period: mid-1950s to early 1970s (1973 specifically for the 231L).

This blue and yellow freight scheme has the passenger style herald on the nose. According to the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society website (www.atsfrr.com) the passenger style herald replaced the previous "cat whisker" herald by the mid-1950s, so we'll call the start of the ATP at that time though it could be a bit earlier. The Santa Fe's F7s were numerous, starting with the set 202LABC delivered in June 1949 and running consecutively through 268LABC. They and the Santa Fe's FT units "formed the backbone of the Santa Fe's mainline freight motive power roster through the decade of the 1950's," states the SFRH&MS. "Newer locomotives of GP20, SD24 and RSD-15 types pushed the FTs aside for the most part by 1960 but the 200's were still first class mainline power until the SD45's began arriving in 1965." Not much later, many F7As including the 231L were rebuilt into CF7s and served the Santa Fe and then shortlines. The B-units were eventually retired, with some lasting a bit later than the A units.

Micro-Trains takes note of the somewhat unusual numbering scheme for the Santa Fe's F units: L for Lead, C for Cab, and A and B for the boosters or B-units. That's how they started service, but after a while, the AT&SF broke up those sets in order to assign whatever number of units were needed to pull a given train. This resulted in some pretty spectacular lashups; for example an A unit, four B units and another A unit (A-B-B-B-B-A!), which is what I think I remember seeing in a Pentrex video that's around here somewhere at UMTRR HQ.

The Fallen Flags site has several 1970s images of sister units including the 232C, the 237C, and the 238A. The site also has a nice, though undated, Santa Fe publicity photo of the 226 set. Details differ somewhat overall between prototype and model; the most notable for me is that the grills on the real locos I checked weren't actually painted yellow, but were stainless steel. I'll wager that someone's already working on an aftermarket part for that.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: The following was announced as an “off-cycle” release for May via the Micro-Trains website and the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line” on May 13.



530 44 300, \$23.70

Reporting Marks: TCX 8268, but could also have road number 8099, 8128 or 8246.

39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, Texaco (The Texas Company).

Black with white lettering including company name and reporting marks on left and “TEXACO” brand name on right. Light to moderate weathering particularly in rusty brown color. Approximate Time Period: 1929 (build date on car) to as late as the 1950's. Previous Release (unweathered): Runner Pack #21 (993 00 021), with Road Numbers 8099, 8128, 8246 and 8268, September 2010.

As noted back in March 2010 in my “pre-review” of Runner Pack #21 that was the source of this weathered release, this car probably represents a more common prototype paint scheme than the well known silver and black one with large “TEXACO.” Likely far more common than either of these is the plain old reporting marks only version, particularly after the takeover of the TCX fleet by General American Transportation. As of January 1945, this car eventually fits into the series TCX 4900 to 8299 of which there were 1193 cars of 10,000 gallons capacity, including the four numbers in the Runner Pack, plus another 155 cars with 8,000 gallons capacity. The Texaco cars were eventually absorbed into the main GATX fleet.

Officially, there is just the one catalog number for this weathered car, but it's my understanding that “at least” three of the four road numbers in the Runner Pack were weathered and released, and it's possible, but not confirmed, that all four of the cars in the quartet were dirtied up and issued. Will that set off a collecting frenzy as Z Scalers scramble to try to locate and purchase all four possible cars... assuming they exist? Well... probably not.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #30, four Pennsylvania Railroad boxcars, has been released. UMTRR coverage was in the November 2010 issue.

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is December 2011. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close June 30.





Scheduled December 2011 Release:
Runner Pack #36: 994 00 036, \$74.95
Reporting Marks: CNA 419550, 419565, 419581, 419594.

Quantity four of 50 foot exterior post boxcars, single door, Canadian National.

Boxcar red with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and “wet noodle” CN herald on right. Yellow stripes at bottom of door. Reporting Marks: CNA 419587. Approximate Time Period: mid-1980s to present. Previous Release (as catalog 510 00 160): Road Number 419587.

Yes, I’m still very biased towards N Scale when doing my research. I quickly observed that none of these Runner Pack numbers match the July 2003 release of this car in N Scale which was CN 419587. Well, duh... the 419587 was already issued in Z Scale...

Which means I can start by reprinting myself from the November 2006 UMTRR. Except that commentary is largely a reprint of the July 2003 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release. See what I mean about “bias”? We do need some updates to what I’ve previously reported.

Anyway, as we’ve stated before in these bytes, one way in which the Canadian, or Canadien, National could get around the need to be bilingual with its freight car lettering would be to not bother to paint the roadname on the car at all! (Which reminds me-- how did the Canadian Pacific get around this?) The CNA reporting mark designates CN cars built in the United States. An example of this was given on the “CNCyclopedia” website: “old RailBox cars now owned by CN.” Yep, that’s what this one is, in fact. Unfortunately, the URL I previously provided for CNCyclopedia is no longer in service; there is what looks like a smaller version of the site at <http://cnlines.ca/CNcyclopedia> (no “www”).

Ian Cranstone’s Canadian Freight Cars roster shows the series 419549 to 419599 as coming over to the CN in 1985 from former RBOX series 40250 to 40749, built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating. The MTL 25000 body style is a model of an FMC car so it won’t be an exact match to the prototype. Ian shows these cars as still in service. That’s confirmed, but perhaps just barely, via the October 2007 ORER with just 11 cars spread across the number series 419000 to 419603. The vital stats from that issue: inside length 50 feet 7 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 58 feet 1 inch, extreme height 15 feet 5 inches, door opening 9 feet, gross rail weight 220,000 pounds. Just to make things very confusing, some of the cars from that larger series were ex-Railbox cars built by FMC and Pullman-Standard. I guess the CN didn’t care too much about the pedigree of the cars it could get on the cheap; and when you’re down to 11 cars that probably doesn’t matter all that much in any case.

I think we can safely assume that MTL owns the Canadian Rail Car Pictorial series. So does Anthony Hunter who pointed out back in 2003 that the very car CNA 419587 that was the initial release is in “Volume Four A: 50' - 52' - 60' - 86' Canadian National Boxcars - Part 2,” by

Richard Yaremko. "Yes, that really is the title," writes Anthony. "The paint is identical to the Micro-Trains release. The photo date in the book is June 29, 1985" he added to us here at UMTRR HQ. If you don't have that volume, George Elwood's Fallen Flags site can get you to a photo of CN 419072 taken in June 1999. That one is actually an FMC car according to Ian Cranstone, but it's a larger capacity than the MTL 510 body style. I note that a number of photos of cars in the CN 419000s reveal them to be in Railbox paint with only restenciled reporting marks.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:



502 00 535, \$22.95

Reporting Marks: AR 1836.

40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, Arkansas State Car.

Aluminum sides, black roof, ends, sills and door hardware; blue and black primary lettering including reporting marks, state name and outline map on left. Four color process graphics including state flag, state bird (Mockingbird) and state flower (Apple Blossom) on right. Thirty-fifth release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

[The following is largely reprinted from the October 2004 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release of this car.]

I've often thought of how I've given South Dakota short shrift in the visiting department, but perhaps Arkansas should be the real "leader" in that category. I've not done more than crossed over from Memphis to set foot there, although that was twice, versus once for South Dakota, and I did eat a meal in Arkansas versus nothing in South Dakota. Even so, I have not had a chance to see any of the real attractions of The Natural State, like Ozark National Forest, Hot Springs or the Ouachita Mountains. Arkansas Scenic 7 Byway was ranked among the top ten scenic drives in the entire country, and that's the kind of road I like to travel.

Native Americans in the area included the Quapaw, who called the area "Arkanssea." Hernando de Soto was probably the first Western explorer to see the area but the French were the first of the "old world" to become resident there. Arkansas Post, near the confluence of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, was the first European settlement in the state, founded 1686; although it was nearly abandoned several times it grew back enough to become the capital of the territory prior to Little Rock. The area went from France to Spain and back to France before it was part of the Louisiana Purchase.

The Arkansas Territory was carved out of the Missouri Territory in 1819 and in 1836, the area became the 25th state. Although the state seceded to the Confederacy during the Civil War, thousands of residents fought on the Union side as well. Politics were difficult during Reconstruction with no less than three different state constitutions adopted. In 1887, bauxite

was discovered and Arkansas was the key source of the aluminum ore for some time. The only diamond mine in the United States was located near Mufreesboro after discovery of the gems in 1906. The Depression hit the state hard as did flooding, including one occurrence in 1927 that put one-fifth of the state under water. The 1940s and 1950s were turbulent as desegregation was slowly adapted by the state, not before a number of violent incidents. In 1962, Sam Walton opened the first Wal-Mart store and started the chain that changed retail, its key distinction being a very efficient inbound supply chain. That same year, the state moved into number one for rice production-- not something that would have immediately occurred to me. Thirty years later, Arkansas native Bill Clinton was elected President. And yes, I suppose it would have been interesting to have released this car last month when the Bill Clinton Presidential Car was also issued...

Speaking of Arkansas natives, here are a few others: General Douglas MacArthur, poet Maya Angelou, golfer John Daly, baseball speedster Lou Brock, pitcher "Dizzy" Dean and catcher Bill Dickey, football coach "Bear" Bryant, trucker J.B. Hunt, department store mogul William Dillard, political figures Martha Mitchell, Brooks Hays, Wilbur Mills, and J. William Fulbright, women's advocate and publisher Helen Gurley Brown, pop pianist Floyd Cramer, country artists Glen Campbell, Charlie Rich, Colin Raye and Conway Twitty, and the "Man in Black," Johnny Cash, whose music spanned much more than just country songs.

HO_n3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: We'll start this time with a load: two sets of four "diesel holding tanks" (499 43 971, \$9.95). As I mentioned when a set of these tanks was included with the Union Pacific/CNW reporting marks gondola (105 00 526, December 2010). Continuing with the logging camp theme in Z Scale, there are two items: a set of 24 tree stump castings (799 91 903, \$13.95) and a twelve-pack of logs (799 91 904, \$13.95). I suppose you could think small and use these in N Scale as well... or they might make good small branches in HO Scale...

Has Micro-Trains begun to include weathered cars in its official database of releases? When checking for the release date of the UP/CNW gondola mentioned above, I came across an entry for the weathered Florida East Coast gondola (105 44 516, mid-month May 2009). Short answer: I hope so!

Joe D'Amato posted some unofficial Z Scale information online during May. He said that MTL is expecting test shots of the R30-12 steel ice refrigerator car. This will be the first accurate R30 in Z, says Joe. "We will do two different roofs, wood and the rebuilt with the metal roof." Joe also noted that with a new vendor in China, motive power (other than the F7s that is) will be coming back into the release cycle, including "the long suffering E8." He also hinted of locomotives to come: "Think something smaller that helps move stuff around." More structures are planned, and Joe disclosed that "I'm a firm believer in the idea that industries have to be scale. Stay tuned for that." We will!

STRUCTURE KITS: In Z Scale, the next item is a "Logging Loco Shed Kit" (799 90 947, \$36.95) which reminded me of the classic enginehouse that John Allen scratchbuilt for his

legendary Gorre and Daphetid model railroad. In N Scale there's a "Freight Warehouse Kit" (499 90 927, \$31.95) which could fit into a variety of applications.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: It's a relatively short list, so we'll proceed through these in catalog number order, of course without missing the use of the usual phrases, such as "Bye Bye Board" (that's one!)...

In N Scale, the uniquely painted Canadian National "CN North America" plug door x-post boxcar (027 00 330, April) is outta here (that's two phrases!) as is the Canadian National double door boxcar without roofwalk and with load from just last month (037 00 080). The Van Camp's refrigerator car reprint (049 00 060, February) has left the building (and that's three phrases). The Weathered "Ship it on the Frisco" boxcar is gone (074 44 090, mid-month July 2010). Wash down those Van Camp's beans with Tropicana Orange Juice? Maybe not, since that double plug door boxcar reprint is gone too (075 00 040, January). The IMC 4427 covered hopper is the first of that new body style to be sold out (096 00 020, April). The weathered Soo Line covered hopper has faded out (099 44 110, mid-month April). Finally in N Scale, the Railway Post Office car in Pennsylvania paint has been cancelled (140 00 050, January)—and believe me, there are plenty of other postal references I could have stuck in there.

Turning to Z Scale, we start with the first number of the NYRX New York Central "Earlybird" plug door boxcar having flown away (502 00 251, December 2009, second number still available). The second number of the Chesapeake and Ohio gondola has progressed out (522 00 182, February 2009, first number also gone). The first number of the Lehigh Valley gondola is sold out (522 00 211, October 2009, second number still available). Three cabooses have vamoosed: the Pacific Electric (535 00 200, October 2008), the Ringling Brothers companion to the Billboard Special Edition Series (535 00 280, February 2010), and from just last month, the Canadian National (535 00 320). Two Husky-Stack well cars are gone: the first number of the Southern Pacific reprint pair (540 00 041, May 2010, second number still available) and the second number of the Kansas City Southern (540 00 092, February 2010, first number also sold out). Finally for the outs list is the Alaska Railroad baggage car (553 00 040, May 2009), which completes the sellout of that set of passenger cars. Looks like those recently released F units have pulled that train out of the station!

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Not exactly bringing the ATP of last month's Norfolk and Western trailer (450 00 030) up to "the present" are a couple of photos found on Flickr of similarly painted NWZ 208221 without its wheels or gear and being used as a storage container at Gambrinus Yard as of May 2010. An attempt was made to black out the N&W markings, a not terrible successful attempt as the round herald on the trailer nose is still there, mostly. Meanwhile, Joe Shaw tells us that "The 1981 N&W Equipment Guide shows 113 trailers still remaining in the series NWZ 208700-208824."

Terry LaFrance checked in with more on the Farmrail covered hopper from last month (096 00 040), and the company itself: "Next time you want to get information on Farmrail, just call them. I think that green car is one of a series of cars that are a variety of colors, based on

various employee choices. Employees are asked what color they want to paint a car and they get to pick.” Terry also corrected my misspelling of one of their locations: “It’s WesthoM, not WesthoRN.” I suppose that does belong in Oops Patrol...

OOPS PATROL: Er, see above?

FINALLY, THE SCHEDULING... I expect to be able to e-mail the usual UMTRR Update once MTL releases the mid-month weathered cars, and then, well, things get interesting. UMTRR HQ “closes” for the typical summer break, but it will be for longer than usual this time and in fact I will miss the entire part of July in which I usually author these bytes. So this is the official notification (of an Unofficial Report?!?) that the July issue will be, let us say, Extremely Late. This will probably make the August issue Somewhat Late as well, though I’m not sure by how much. I have a very good reason for this... my wife and I mark our Twentieth Wedding Anniversary this summer. Our extended vacation to celebrate has been three years in the making. And no, there aren’t any Special Runs planned! In fact, there might be very little to do with trains at all. Or I might have some great photos when I return. We’ll see...

I had thought about just skipping the July UMTRR altogether, or combining it with the August issue, but decided that neither approach will do. What probably will happen is a shortened version of July’s bytes, followed by a closer to full-length column in August. Meanwhile, once the June update to the website is made, there most likely won’t another refresh until late in August. A month there, I can skip!

Anyway, until next time – whenever that is – do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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