

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:

The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report

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Hello again everyone! Although it's not possible to fit the UMTRR Research Accumulation under the seat or in the overhead compartment, it's not necessary to have it handy for this month's rather large number of Special Edition releases and announcements. And that made work possible on this month's bytes while away from UMTRR HQ which means that the column isn't as late to you as I originally projected. Those Special Editions feature cats and mice of the fictional kind, and in the meantime we have two more observation cars in N Scale and four more wood refrigerator cars in Z Scale. Let's have a look...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:

In addition to the below items, Catalog Number 114 00 720, the Modified 89 Foot Bilevel Open Auto Rack, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus, is shown as now available, a delay from mid-last month. This item was covered in the September UMTRR.



031 00 390, \$21.15

Reporting Marks: B&O 299206.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Baltimore and Ohio.

Brown (boxcar red) with white lettering including reporting marks and small capitol dome herald on left and large "B&O" on right. Simulated interior freight load included. Approximate Time Period: about 1964 to as late as the mid-1980s.

According to MTL's car copy, this car was built in 1951 by American Car and Foundry and was serviced in 1971. It is one of the B&O's Class M-61A, converted from M-61 via the addition of DF-1 belt loaders and resided in the number series 299000 to 299216. (Note that some references use a small letter for the subclass, while the B&O itself uses a capital letter on the cars I've seen though sometimes in a smaller size, for example M-61A.)

We know from the B&O Historical Society, via a file available on the Baltimore_and_Ohio YahooGroup that the capitol dome herald used on the car dates to the 1960s. A post by Bob Witt on the "BnOinN" YahooGroup narrows this to about 1964 so that's where I started the ATP. Both Bob and the Morning Sun **Color Guide to B&O Freight and Passenger Equipment** give 1953 as the date for the add of the DF loaders. Bob added that the group 299600 to 299963 was also done at the same time.

Things are a bit messy in the Official Railway Equipment Registers (ORERs). The ORER for June 1953 doesn't show any cars in the 299000s for the B&O. In the January 1955 ORER, the series 299000 to 299216 has the star for "denotes additions" and there are 138 cars in the group. While I'm here, the dimensions were: inside length 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 52 feet 11 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet and capacity 4863 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. An end note called out the 18 belt DF loaders. By the January 1964 Equipment Register the number series was the same but all 217 possible cars were in it. The June 1967 ORER shows a bunch of series that roll into the numbers 299000 to 299698. The April 1970 Register has these collapsed into one group with only 75 cars in it.

However! In the July 1974 ORER we're back to 147 cars in the series 299000 to 299216, and other cars in the 299s have different equipment. In at least one case, there's a different door opening width! I suspect that the B&O may have consolidated numerous fifty-foot single door boxcars into the 299s but I don't have any evidence of this. I'll stick to the initial number set to keep things simpler. It actually inches up a bit more through April 1976 but it's down to 41 cars in the April 1981 ORER and it's gone sometime between the January 1985 and October 1986 ORERs.

A photo of sister car B&O 299204 on the Fallen Flags site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) is undated but was taken after June 1971 which is the clearly visible service date. The lettering on the MTL car generally matches the prototype with the possible exception of the herald which I think is a little smaller on the real car. The 299204 has its roofwalk removed and ladders shortened. However I know better than to generalize to the entire series without more evidence so I can't call MTL on this delta, although I will add an "as late as" to the ATP. I can note that the real cars had riveted, not welded, sides, and that the lower sill and ends are also different from what I can see. I would not expect MTL's PS-1 model to match an AC&F prototype and, in short, it doesn't.



076 00 120, \$25.35

Reporting Marks: FEC 5007.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug and Sliding Door, without Roofwalk, Florida East Coast.

Red with white roof and doors. Mostly yellow lettering including large reporting marks on left and "hurricane" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s to as late as 2006.

Quite a while ago, a reader pointed me to a series of worksheets which detailed the Florida East Coast's revenue roster. Within that treasure trove of information was a tab with year by year data through 2002 for the FEC series 5000 to 5015, built in 1964 by Fruit Growers Express Company. (The FGE was more than just yellow refrigerator cars!) These cars had an inside length of 50 feet 6 inches, inside width of 9 feet 4 inches, inside height of 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 55 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet, and door opening 16 feet. Capacity was 4952 cubic feet and 140,000 pounds initially rising to 154,000 pounds by 1980. A second

order of cars was placed with Berwick Forge and Fabricating in 1969, was delivered in 1970 and was given the road numbers 5016 to 5030. That second set was apparently off the roster sometime in 2001, but four cars from the original group 5000 to 5015 remained in April 2002 which is the latest date in the table. The last two of these four appeared as late as the January 2006 ORER but were not in the July 2007 Register.

What all of this does not tell us, of course, is anything about the paint scheme. We can reach back at least to May 1987 as there is a photo from that date taken in Reno, Nevada of the exact car FEC 5007 posted on RRPictureArchives.net. There are a number of differences between model and prototype, but the most prominent one is an door opening mechanism operated using a wheel that looks rather like a brake wheel. In fact, a decent depiction of this probably could be fashioned with the right size brake wheel and some strip styrene. Though photographed in 1987, this paint scheme certainly didn't look new in the photo. Several of the side panels appeared to have been redone and the bottom stripe of the herald was in a different shade of yellow. The white sliding door was covered with a lot of black grime... well, at least I hope it was only grime.

In the archives of the FECRailway YahooGroup, I read of how the FEC's logo, once officially referred to as "Going Places in Florida," became known as the "hurricane" herald. Certainly Florida has had its share of these destructive storms, and it was the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 that finished off the FEC's fabled Key West Extension. So the connotation of the word "hurricane" in reference to a rail line is probably not optimal (and my referring to the logo as such isn't helping matters, is it?). Technically, it's also wrong, as the "circulation" around the FEC initials is clockwise, and a hurricane's "spin" in the Northern Hemisphere is counter-clockwise. What I really wanted to know, however, is when the emblem was introduced, for Approximate Time Period purposes. That would be the early or mid-1960s, depending on what you read; but there's agreement that the "Going Places in Florida" design was a replacement for the "Flagler System" herald. In theory, this means that the paint scheme chosen by MTL is the "as delivered" scheme, but I'm not willing to go that far. Fortunately, I can call a nitpick and declare the start of the ATP to coincide with the appearance of the consolidated stencils in the 1970s... and how's that for using a loophole?



096 00 070, \$24.55

Reporting Marks: D&RGW 15331.

PS-2 3 Bay High Side Covered Hopper, Rio Grande (Denver & Rio Grande Western).

Gray, including couplers and trucks, with black lettering including reporting marks on left and large "speed lettering" roadname with slogan "The Action Road" on right. Approximate Time Period: 1968 to mid-decade of the 2000s.

The Rio Grande Historical and Modeling Society website (www.drgw.org) shows in its online table of covered hoppers the series 15250 to 15399, built by Pullman-Standard at its Butler plant in 1968 as Lot 9273. These carried the light gray with "stacked" Rio Grande

roadname which was introduced in 1967. I hasten to add that there was a question on the DRGW YahooGroup – unanswered at “press time” -- as to whether the Railroad Roman font used by MTL was typical for the reporting marks on these cars.

The April 1970 ORER shows 149 of the original 150 cars in service. They’re AAR Designation LO with description “Covered Hopper, Steel,” nothing really special there. An end note calls out triple hoppers, gravity type discharge gates, trough hatch with sectional covers and roller bearings. The inside length was 49 feet 6 inches, outside length 51 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, capacity 4427 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. In the January 1985 ORER the car count was 136, and in October 1996 there were 121 cars remaining. Yes, that was a month after the Union Pacific added the Rio Grande to its holdings via the purchase of the Southern Pacific, but the Equipment Register still had separate listings. That changed by January 2000 but 98 cars in the DRGW series were shown in the larger UP listing. That was down to seven cars in the January 2007 ORER which is as far as I can go for now.

The commodities that MTL mentions in its car copy were more fully described in the Morning Sun **Color Guide to Rio Grande Freight and Passenger Equipment**. Page 89 includes a photo of sister car D&RGW 15306. The barley hauled was from the San Luis Valley of Colorado to the Coors brewery in Golden, and the petroleum coke was “produced at a plant at Gilsonite, just west of Grand Junction.” I checked and petroleum coke is similar to that produced from coal, except produced from crude oil. Meanwhile, the photo reveals a rather dirty covered hopper, except on the ribs, which would make for a good weathering exercise. I also note that the 15306 has the reporting marks and road number in Gothic, not the Railroad Roman font. Just to confuse things further, the site RailcarPhotos.com has a shot of D&RGW 15355 from the same series that has the reporting marks in Railroad Roman and the road number in Gothic. Perhaps more to come on this point.



144 00 020, \$22.70

Road Number: None (will be “GN None” in website listings).

Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car, Great Northern.

Pullman Green sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Delux gold roadname in center of letterboard. No road number or car name. Approximate Time Period: None specifically (see text), but would fit best in 1930s and 1940s.

As with the Union Pacific release of last month, this car is a bit of a “fill in” – as in, if you want to “fill in” your Great Northern passenger train with one of these, you can. But looking for a prototype will be a frustrating exercise, as the GN didn’t have anything on its roster like this 3-2 observation. The prototype police are no doubt already busy writing citations, but other parts of the N Scale community will be just fine with operating this car on the end of their trains. The ATP, such as it is, aligns with either the Pullman release from August as a “good enough” span, or, might I say, a “fill in.”



144 00 070, \$22.70

Reporting Marks: SP 106

Heavyweight 3-2 Observation Car,
Southern Pacific.

Pullman Green sides and ends. Black roof, underbody and trucks. Delux gold roadname in center of letterboard. Reporting marks and car name "Shasta" at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1954 to 1958 as painted, see text.

The prototype car for this MTL has a rather incredible history, but not much of it took place while it was wearing this particular paint scheme. The car was built in 1926 and received ice air conditioning in 1936 according to Tom Madden's "Pullman Project" database. It carried the name "Central Plains" and was in Pullman's standard paint scheme of green and black. But it's safe to say that many more people saw the car in a different decoration, specifically red, white and blue, as part of the original Freedom Train which ran from 1947 to 1949! As part of that famous train, the car is said to have rolled into all forty-eight states (No Alaska or Hawaii yet.) Following that service, the Central Plains was part of the "Merci Train," which included forty-nine boxcars with gifts for the United States from the people of France in gratitude for more than 700 boxcars full of relief supplies sent to France in 1948. (More about this train, which I'd never heard of before, at www.mercitrain.org . It turns out that the car sent to New York State is still around. Road trip!)

According to the website Freedomtrain.org , after its service on the Freedom Train and the Merci Train, the Central Plains went back into Pullman service until 1953 when it was sold to the Southern Pacific. It stayed with the name Central Plains with road number 106, then became the Shasta as a Southern Pacific business car. And that's what MTL depicted. What I did not find is when that renaming occurred. After Shasta the car was renamed Oregon, and I didn't find when that happened either. Fortunately we have our SP Special Correspondent David Carnell, who did, start quote:

"As soon as I saw MTL was doing the Shasta, I took a look at my reference materials. A picture of the car taken from the diaphragm end is found on Page 5 of Morning Sun's **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Volume 3**. Taken August 28, 1955 at Dunsmuir, California, the car is painted in SP Dark Olive with gold lettering and it is assigned to the Shasta Division Superintendent. There are three additional photos of the car on Page 6. According to the caption, Shasta was repainted into the two-tone gray paint scheme in 1958. So the green paint scheme ATP is 1954 to 1958. The car was renamed Oregon in late 1964 when the Shasta and Portland divisions were combined into the Oregon Division.

"The Oregon (ex-Shasta) remained in the two-tone gray paint scheme from 1958 to some time in the early 1970s when it was repainted into the Simulated Stainless Steel and Scarlet letterboard paint scheme. In the mid-1970s the car received red, white and blue Amtrak striping along the windows. The car was rebuilt at Roseville in the early 1980s and returned to the simulated Stainless Steel Scheme with the addition of the Sunset ball and wing logo.

Oregon then served as a track geometry car for SP and the Union Pacific until retired by UP in 2000 when it was sold."

David further relates that "When the car was rebuilt from a 3-2 observation car to a business car, extensive modifications were made to the window layout on both sides of the car with a number of windows being blanked out, some windows being enlarged and all of the windows being sealed. On the right side of the car (looking forward from the rear diaphragm) a door has been added to most likely access a kitchen. The roof was also modified with additional ductwork on the right side and a multiple light package over the observation platform. These changes are visible in the picture of the car when it was first converted and named Shasta and in the photos of the car when named Oregon." In other words, we don't have a match to the car as painted by MTL. But there's hope for Espee fans and modelers: David adds that "Micro-Trains has additional choices for future Southern Pacific assigned Pullman cars that are almost an exact match for this body style. SP was assigned 18 3-2-observation cars in the 3959, 3959A and 3959B series. These cars were named in the Crystal and Golden series and famous explorer name series and used in San Francisco-Portland service, San Francisco Overland Limited service, Golden State Limited service and Apache service prior to World War II. Information about these cars can be found in **Southern Pacific Passenger Cars, Volume 2: Sleepers & Baggage-Dorms** published by SPH&TS on Pages 100 to 106."

As always, our thanks to David for his help on this release. But wait, there's more... while owned by the SP as the "Oregon" the car traveled with the Second Freedom Train, pulled by the SP's 4449 steam locomotive. This apparently makes this car the only one to be in both incarnations of the famous rolling display. The Union Pacific picked up the car in 1996 along with the rest of the SP and sold the #106 to the Livingston Rebuild Center in 2000. From there it went to the Tri-City and Olympia Railroad in Washington State where it still resides.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



020 00 070, \$21.30

Reporting Marks: UP 190579.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Union Pacific.

Brown with yellow lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left and slogan "Be specific-ship Union Pacific" on right. Simulated interior load included. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (based on paint scheme) or 1960 (given service date on car) to 1970s. Previous Releases: As Catalog Number 20089/20070, Road Number 124239, November 1972 and Road Number 124244, March 1973, see text for variations; then as Catalog Number 20070, Road Number 190576, September 1998.

MTL has, as they did in 1998, narrowed the time period for this paint scheme to the years 1958 to 1962, based on the use of yellow lettering, the size of the roadname, the slogan and the appearance of periods after the initials in the reporting marks (i.e., "U.P."). Our trusty

January 1964 ORER says that this car was part of the series 190000 to 190699, of 663 cars. Here are the vital statistics: inside length 40 feet 4 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet, outside length, 41 feet 9 inches, extreme height 14 feet 8 inches, door opening 6 feet, and capacity 3705 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. Those dimensions, particularly the ten foot inside height, don't exactly line up with the 020 body style which is based on a PS-1 prototype. Though you might have to consider roofwalk removal by this time, in April 1970 the series was down by almost half to 340, in April 1976 just 53 cars were in place and in April 1981 a mere six, which is where I stopped looking. Any cars still remaining in this paint scheme would surely be heavily weathered and/or rusty.

With the help of the previous release and a magnifying glass (!) I can discern that this car belongs to the UP Class B-50-27 and was built by the UP itself at its Grand Island shops in May 1940. According to the Steam Era Freight Cars website (www.steamfreightcars.com) these were modified versions of the 1937 AAR design. The prototype cars used a technique called "alternate center riveting" which is not something we're likely to see in N Scale. Believe it or not, Marklin—yes, Marklin—reproduced the design from UP blueprints for an HO Scale model, which was the subject of a review on the SEFC website. The small print stays the same from that reprint to this one, so the service date is July 1960, which, strictly speaking, would start the ATP. A review of the above HO Scale boxcar by Richard Hendrickson in the June 2003 issue of **Rail Model Journal** includes a May 1970 photo of UP 190033 in the scheme reprinted by MTL. It's noted that the large UP roadname first appeared in mid-1956 and the "Be Specific" was dropped in 1963. At that time the lettering color changed from yellow to white as well. This validates MTL's car copy.

The first release run, 124239, was part of the "Class of '72"—the first rolling stock ever produced by Kadee in November 1972. It was offered with two different lettering colors: white or yellow. The reprint in March 1973 had the yellow lettering on a darker boxcar red and white lettering on a lighter shade of boxcar red. When the aftermarket was in full bloom, the 239 with yellow lettering and the 244 with white lettering were the priciest variations. Micro-Trains reissued the car for the first time since the 1973 run with road number 190576, from a completely different UP series, in 1998 as part of its "25th Anniversary Collection." And as if we need another piece of evidence that we're all getting older, Micro-Trains is now approaching its Fortieth Anniversary of that first UP boxcar.



046 00 050, \$19.25
Reporting Marks: WP 6611.
50 Foot Steel Gondola, Fishbelly Sides,
Drop Ends, Western Pacific.

Black with silver lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname across car. Simulated crushed stone load included. Approximate Time Period: 1949 (build date) to mid-1980s. Previous Releases: Road Number 6606, January 1977; Road Number 6610, August 2000.

The July 1950 ORER shows series 6601 to 6800, AAR Class GB, as "Gondola, All Steel, Drop Ends, Steel Floor." The MTL 046 body style has the typical problem we see with this car: the inside length is less than the prototype's 52 feet 6 inches, but its overall length is greater than the real ones' 55 feet 1 inch. I also note from previous research, namely the Z Scale Runner Pack #29, that the prototype car is a 15 panel (14 rib) gondola while the MTL body style is a 14 panel (13 rib) gondola. Your concern may vary. The other usual dimensions: inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height is 3 foot 6 inches, extreme height 7 feet 4 inches, and capacity 1745 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds. All 200 cars were present and accounted for, not surprising given that according to MTL they were built in 1949. (Last time they said 1950, so I guess they received some Incremental Information.)

By the January 1964 ORER the group had dropped all the way down to 99 cars. Back in the August 2000 UMTRR I wondered if some of these weren't redeployed. That guess turned out to be correct: according to the **Morning Sun Color Guide to Western Pacific Freight and Passenger Equipment**, during the time 1956 to 1958, 101 of the 200 were fitted with steel coil cradles for loading coiled steel strips and renumbered into the series 6300 to 6400 and reclassified to AAR Designation GBS. The reason for these, and in fact the purpose of many of the WP's steel gondolas, was the carriage of raw steel plate from a plant on the Rio Grande to a rolling mill in Pittsburg, California on the WP's subsidiary Sacramento Northern. The WP and SN earned a considerable amount of revenue from this work, enough for them to need several hundred gondolas. Many of these were later fitted with covers and other equipment.

Meanwhile, back with the 6600 series, there were still 99 cars in the April 1970 ORER, which had dropped to 63 units in April 1976 and 25 in January 1985. It looks like a few of these survived into the 1980s and the Union Pacific absorption of the WP. Only two were shown with WP lettering in the Union Pacific registration in the July 1989 Equipment Register, including the WP 6650 which is now preserved at the Feather River Railroad Museum in Portola, California.

In the Morning Sun Color Guide it's noted that these gondolas were the first freight cars to wear the California Zephyr-inspired silver lettering. That sets up a "not a reprint" designation for this car in the correct silver paint, as the first two runs had white lettering.



055 00 410, \$22.20

Reporting Marks: CP 354501.

33 Foot Two Bay Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Canadian Pacific.

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and script style roadname across car. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (based on paint scheme) to no later than 1990. Previous Release: Road Number 354116, March 1998.

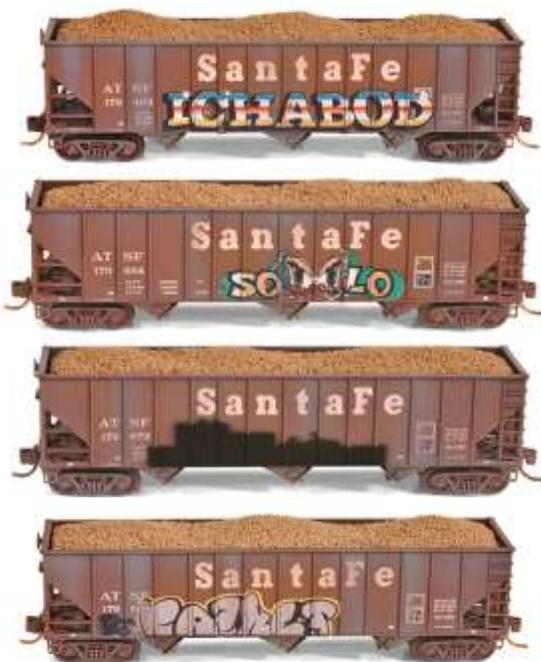
Although built in the late 1930s- 1937 per MTL's car copy and either 1937 or 1938 per Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" website (www.nakina.net), the ATP for this reprint

starts a lot later with the debut of the script style roadname. The CDS Lettering Guide agrees with MTL on the 1959 start date of this version of the CP name on freight cars. It was used on company letterhead as early as 1954 according to the RPI website.

Two photos of cars from the series CP 354000 to 354899 in this script lettering appear on Pages 65 and 66 of the Morning Sun **Color Guide to Canadian Pacific Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The 354127 was found in British Columbia in 1967, freshly refurbished, and the 354839 was in Alberta in 1976, looking significantly less fresh. These cars had Yost hopper doors which the MTL cars don't, but the match between model and prototype looks pretty good otherwise. By the way, a 1972 shot of CP 354517 in the earlier block lettering roadname style also on Page 65 of the MSCG shows that the two schemes co-existed, so no worries running both this and any examples of MTL's catalog number 55150/055 00 150 (including Runner Pack #3) together in a train.

Oh, for the days when large rosters fit into short listings in the ORER... for example, the January 1964 registration for the CP is only six pages to cover 84,814 cars! Among those are 5,787 hoppers, of which 878 were in the group 354000 to 354899. They had an inside length of 33 feet, inside width of 10 feet 4 inches, inside height of 7 feet 5 inches, outside length of 34 feet, extreme height 10 feet 10 inches, and capacity 2190 cubic feet or 123,000 pounds. The car count was 421 in the July 1974 ORER but just 17 in the April 1984 Equipment Register, where, by the way, it took twelve pages to list 58,963 cars. Ian Cranstone has the 1990 as the last date in which he found cars in this group in the ORER. We'll take it.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following items were announced as "off-cycle" releases for September via the Micro-Trains website on September 15 and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" also on September 15.*



993 05 080, \$119.95 - Santa Fe Weathered Hopper Pack. Consists of four 100 Ton Three Bay Open Hoppers, Reporting Marks ATSF 179463, 179484, 179672 and 179698. Each car is 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. Each car has light weathering in shades of gray. Three of four cars have multicolor graffiti and the fourth (ATSF 179672) has a black patch panel simulating the covering of graffiti. Approximate Time Period: late 1970's (1976 build date per MTL) to as late as the present. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): As catalog number 108120.x, road numbers 179655 (108120.1) and 179482 (108120.2), August 2003; as catalog number 108 00 120, road number 179551, June 2011. Individual catalog numbers are in the 108 5x 120 series (51 to 54) in road number order.

Repeating from the June UMTRR coverage of the most recent reprint, 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. These are referred to as "3 cross hoppers," which I hope for MTL's sake translates into three bay! The ORER entry for April 1981 also describes this group of cars as "Hopper, Cross." There were 355 cars in the series out of a possible 400 at that time. There were still 167 cars in the October 2007 Equipment Register, so we might still be OK on that "to present" ATP.

Again as reported in June, there are 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 (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 RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #56, four Southern Pacific two-bay hoppers, is now available. UMTRR coverage was provided in the March 2011 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 056 51 340, Road Number 460600, 056 52 340, Road Number 460610, 056 53 340, Road Number 460631, 056 54 340, Road Number 460676.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is April 2012. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close October 31.



Scheduled April 2012 Release:
N Scale Runner Pack #62: 993 00 062, \$59.95 Reporting Marks: USAX 38140, 38158, 38362, 38373. Quantity four of 50 foot fishbelly side flat car, United States Army.

Olive green with white lettering including reporting marks on left, "United States Army" left of center and Transportation Corps insignia right of center. Pack includes four unassembled and unpainted tank loads (depiction at right). Approximate Time Period: early 1950s (1953



build date given by MTL in previous runs) to mid-1960s. Previous Releases: Road Number 38066, June 1996; Road Number 38064, July 1997; Road Number 38065, May 2004 (as catalog 45180); Road Numbers 38080, 38068 and 38036, each with loads, January 2005 (as catalog 045 00 18x); Road Numbers 38250, 38262 and 38274, each with loads, as part of the US Army Flat Car Set (set catalog 993 01 030, car catalog 045 50 18x), October 2005; Road Numbers 39525, 39540, 39632 and 39663, in Runner Pack #14, June 2008 (announced November 2007) with individual catalog numbers 045 51 180 to 045 54 180.

Once in a while the pain of keeping track of every Micro-Trains regular release pays off. If you had pulled the regular release database from the MTL website to check out previous runs of this car, you'd have been short by seven: the three cars in the "US Army Flat Car Set" (actually a "train set" of sorts with an SW-9 diesel and caboose as part of the assemblage) and the four in Runner Pack #14. This reprint Runner Pack has a higher MSRP than the first one but also includes four tanks for your assembly and painting. In deference to the previous Runner Pack, these cars are expected to have the catalog numbers 045 55 180 to 045 58 180. We're not quite ready to start building the 2011 Release Table however!

Though these road numbers are the fourteenth through seventeenth for this paint scheme, there are still plenty more road numbers available: The July 1953 ORER has 650 belonging to the flat car series modeled by MTL. That would be numbers 38016 to 38665, which have AAR Classification "FG." We'd better check that: it translates to "Flat or Gun Truck Car for special transportation of heavy ordnance or other heavy commodities." And the description matches: "USAX Flat, Heavy Duty." So does the capacity: 200,000 pounds. I suspect that this means that the MTL model isn't a true match for the prototype car. The rest of the dimensions: Inside length 54 feet, outside length 54 feet 9 inches, extreme width 10 feet 7 inches, extreme height 4 feet 2 inches.

In January 1959 there remained 640 cars in this series, still marked "USAX." In the January 1964 ORER there were some changes: First, the overall designation was flipped to "FM" which is an "ordinary flat car for general service" even though the capacity remained at 200,000 pounds. Second, 14 cars were redesignated "LF" which translated to the ability to handle "demountable containers" (the numbers MTL has done not in that subset). And perhaps most importantly, the Army and Navy rolling stock was consolidated into one listing for the Department of Defense, the precursor to the relettering of all military cars to DODX reporting marks. This transition was well underway by April 1970 even though there were still 623 cars in the original series of flat cars. The DODX restenciling was done by April 1976 but 619 flats in the group made it to that point, plus 16 of the LF reclassifications. So with the change in reporting marks, we have to call the ATP at the mid-sixties even though the cars themselves, well, soldiered on. (Sorry.)

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:

In addition to the below items, the **Sugarland Peppermint Company Train Set** (993 21 130, \$249.95) will be available mid-month per the Micro-Trains website. UMTRR coverage (such

as it was) was provided in the May 2011 issue, but the images of this set weren't yet available. So here they are:



985 50 702, 4-4-0 American Steam Locomotive and Tender. Black with gray smokebox. Green panel on tender with legend "Sugarland Peppermint Co." in white and red. Road number 100 on cab in red and white on green panel. Model Power locomotive with

Micro-Trains paint and couplers.



020 50 029, 40 Foot Boxcar, Single Door (020 series). Green with red door. Tied pair of candy canes in red and white with green ribbon on left and right. Includes simulated "peppermint products" interior load. Reporting Marks: SPC 112.



114 50 009, 40 Foot Modern Log Car with Uprights. Black with no lettering and simulated "cut peppermint beams" load. No reporting marks.



046 50 009, 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Gondola, Drop Ends. Green with red drop ends and white reporting marks. Candy canes and peppermints in red and white across car. With simulated "Peppermint chips"

load. Reporting Marks: SPC 121.



051 50 039, 36 Foot Wood Sheathed Cabooses with Straight Cupola. Green with red cupola and end ladders and hardware. Red and white "Merry Christmas" on left (or right) of cupola. Multi-color "Micro-Mouse" character below cupola. Reporting Marks: SPC 24.



035 00 371, \$34.95

50 Foot Fishbelly Side Flat Car with Circus Wagon, Ringling Brothers Big Top Extravaganza #8. Reporting Marks RBBX 21058.

Orange with black lettering consisting of reporting marks only. Includes circus wagon in white with gold markings and lettering "Ringling Bros." across top, and multicolor image of a tiger.

The circus wagon has a history and tradition that rivals if not surpasses that of the circus train. Circus wagons were not only used within the shows themselves, particularly in sideshows, but had a major role in circus parades. These events which were either used to bring the circus “to town” from the railroad train or were held in their own right were used to drum up additional publicity for the show. The website Circushistory.org contains four pages of photos of various types of circus wagons in parades and set up for shows. Wagons sometimes changed hands from one show to another. The oldest of these images dates to 1872. The most unusual, in my opinion, shows a ticket wagon equipped with a vertically mounted brake wheel! Some wagons were quite ornate; on a blog devoted to circus wagon history there’s an “only known” photo of one that features the legend of Saint George slaying the dragon, for example. Meanwhile, the one included as part of this Special Edition includes a portrait of a tiger that looks like it comes from a Ringling Brothers poster.

I am unofficially calling out this release as number eight in the series, since I’m not counting the locomotive and caboose in this sequence. This may differ from MTL’s own numbering. Speaking of numbering, has anyone else caught that this catalog number ends in 371? That frequently means a second release is on the way... did we just break the code here? I guess we’ll find out next month.



074 00 137, \$23.95

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Without Roofwalk, Full Ladders, Presidential Series #37: George W. Bush.

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... when the Barack Obama Presidential Car was released in March 2010, I “declined, courteously” (to use a favorite phrase from the play and film “1776”) to say much. How can the legacy of a sitting President be discussed? I feel the same way about Obama’s predecessor. A quick look at the first few pages of returns of a search via your favorite engine will give you a sense as to why... the accomplishments and ramifications of the eight years of George W. Bush’s presidency are still, let us say, controversial and are far too new to evaluate from anything approaching a historical perspective. This column isn’t about that. In fact, as I once mentioned to a couple of my readers, current politics make my trains nervous.

Even the Miller Center, which tries to be as scholarly as it can, has this to say: “In a nation divided bitterly along partisan lines, however, millions of Americans had other shorthand ways of referring to this polarizing President elected without a majority—or even a plurality—of the popular vote.” Yikes. A quick read through the remainder of the Miller Center essay seems to continue that theme, although I hasten to add that the long form

coverage appears to end at about the Election of 2004. And let's not even cite the overtly partisan websites, on both sides of the question of whether Bush was an effective president.

At some point in history, there is going to need to be an evaluation of the 43rd President, especially considering that numerous events of importance occurred during his two terms, led by those that took place on September 11, 2001. But that time has not arrived. It seems from my readings about other Presidents that it takes at least a few decades before things can be viewed from a less biased perspective.

So let's move on to the Presidential Trivia Question. The key hint is that this Chief Executive never married; so a quick 'net search on the phrase "bachelor president" reveals James Buchanan. Good luck!



099 00 120, \$22.30

Three Bay Evans Covered Hopper, 2011 Holiday Car. Reporting Marks MTL 2011.

White with black reporting marks at far right. Multicolor depiction of MTL's "Micro-Mouse" in Santa Claus clothing on left. Multicolor "sign" reading "Merry Christmas from Micro-Mouse" on right.

There was speculation earlier this year among a small number of the UMTRR Gang, including me, as to whether we would see a single Holiday Car release this year. There was the locomotive for 2010 and there was the themed train set also, but there was no single car. Considering that there was the Sugarland Peppermint Company set already announced for 2011, would that pre-empt the appearance of the Micro-Trains mascot once again?

Well, it looks like we have our answer! The Micro-Mouse has returned for 2011, and in N Scale at least, on one of the newest freight car body styles. The mouse (has its gender ever been identified?) displays a heretofore unknown talent: painting. Nice sign, MM!

But there is one more outstanding question: along with the illustration of this car in the October Micro-News, there is the tease, "Watch mid-month for a surprise graffiti car!" What do we suppose that means?

The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is March 2012 (mid-month per MTL announcement). UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of these items in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close October 31.



993 21 150, \$119.95 - Chessie Vintage Advertising Set. Consists of five 50 foot plug door boxcars. Each is painted dark blue with yellow lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and multicolor depiction

of a Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad advertisement painting featuring "Chessie the Cat" (the

original version). Reporting Marks: C&O 1944, 1948, 1949, 1957, 1959. MTL artwork for one of the five cars shown above.

Well, isn't this set the Cat's Meow? What is probably without question the most famous animal mascot for a North American railroad is the centerpiece for this Special Edition set. This finally gives me the excuse I need to pick up the book "Chessie The Railroad Kitten" by Thomas W. Dixon Jr. and it's been added to the UMTRR Research Accumulation. My copy is of this book's **tenth** printing—so, do you think this set will be popular? Those of you who have in your accumulations the September 2008 issue of The C&O Historical Magazine, the publication of the C&O Historical Society, will find a short update by Dixon himself who is the founder of the Society. That month marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the famous feline. Thanks to our C&O Special Correspondent James Pugh for that information.

This surprised me: the illustration of the serenely sleeping kitten was not commissioned by the C&O—it was actually one of a number of copperplate etchings created by Guido Gruenewald, a European artist. Gruenewald was not particularly successful and sold this etching to the Robertson-Deschamps Gallery in New York. The etching was used in an article published in the New York Herald-Tribune, where it caught the eye of C&O Vice President L.C. Probert. Probert had been looking for a replacement advertising campaign for the railroad's few passenger trains and the phrase "Sleep like a kitten" came to him. The Campbell-Ewald Company, which was the C&O's advertising agency at the time, designed the advertisement which appeared in the September 1933 issue of **Fortune** magazine. More than 300 requests for reprints were received; the ad was an instant hit. Exclusive rights to the etching were purchased in December 1933. Except she wasn't yet named Chessie. That would not come until January 1935 when the railroad published "An Acknowledgement to Chessie" in their internal magazine "The Rail." Chessie's kittens—occasionally named "Nip" and "Tuck" soon joined Chessie, and in 1937 "Peake—Chessie's Old Man" completed the family. By this time Chessie had become "America's Sleepheart" and was among the most popular advertising characters in travel or any other industry at the time. As the use of Chessie continued, the railroad received thousands of letters and requests for calendars. Print runs of these ranged from 250 to 450 thousand copies—and they were quickly "sold out" every year.

And speaking of calendars...the illustrations planned for each of the five boxcars in this set are drawn from calendar art for each of five years, conveniently called out by the road numbers on the cars. Comparing the original illustrations that are published in "Chessie the Railroad Kitten" to the pre-production artwork in the Micro-News, we can see that the originals are excerpted to better fit the space available on the car sides. There are a number of other calendars available featuring Chessie and her family, should this set prove popular... which I believe it will.

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



510 00 210, \$24.15

Reporting Marks: BNSF 727874.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe).

Brown (boxcar red) with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and small circle cross (“heritage”) herald on right. Yellow conspicuity stripes along bottom sill. Simulated interior pipe load included. Approximate Time Period: 2005 to present (though not to present for this specific car, see text).

I technically can’t repeat myself from the N Scale release from just last month. First, the door is different on the Z Scale car since at present Micro-Trains doesn’t make a Superior version for this body style. Second, the load is different. I’ll withhold any questions about how one can load pipe into a boxcar. Er, carefully, I guess?

More positively, I received some Incremental Information from a reader after the September UMTRR was published. Start quote:

“Taking a look in the UMLER, BNSF 727873 was previously BN 376701, and BNSF 727875 was previously BN 376703, so it makes sense that BNSF 727874 was previously BN 376702.

“This has been an interesting journey. The current Car Drawing Index shows BNSF 727862-727889 (27 cars) was previously BN 376690-376717 (27 cars) which was renumbered from BN 376200-376399 which had 12-1974 and 01-1975 build dates.

“Looking at the car drawings for the various series and the UMLER/ORER, the data matches. What doesn’t match are the car drawings themselves. The car drawing for BN 376200-376399 shows a 14-panel, rib-side, sliding door car, with a type of Dreadnaught ends, similar to the photos and to the Micro-Trains car with the exception that the MT car has non-terminating corrugated ends.

“The on-line car drawing for BN 376690-376717 is quite different, with a different configuration of side panels, a plug door, and a corrugated end. I suspect, as I have seen several times before, they pasted the wrong diagram in when they created the file for the BN 376690-376717 series. Unfortunately, my printed car diagram book pre-dates that series, and I haven’t found any photos yet from that series.”

End quote, and thanks to our Gang Member, who’d like to remain anonymous. Obsessed as I am with acronyms (part of the AFE Process, “Acronyms for Everything”), I wondered what UMLER stands for. So I checked and according to the Great Lakes Railcar website, “UMLER was an acronym for Universal Machine Language Equipment Register. With the re-write of the system which went live in August of 2009, the acronym was retired, but the system is still known as Umler.” And there’s your useless trivia for today. Just to wrap up, there are

photos of BNSF 727864 from the current series, and BN 376285 from the series in its previous incarnation, on RRPictureArchives.net .



518 00 031 and 518 00 032, \$24.90 each.
Reporting Marks: BREX 74606 and 74617.
40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Burlington Refrigerator Express.

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe, trucks and door hardware. Black lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Red, black and white "Burlington Route" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1958 (based on paint scheme) to no later than the early 1970s.

First off, let's note that since the MTL 518 body style is a match for the Pacific Fruit Express R-30-1/2 prototypes, it will range anywhere from a close match to a stand-in to a non-match for just about any other paint scheme they would release on the car type. How much of an annoyance this represents is up to the individual Z Scale modeler of course.

The Burlington Refrigerator Express Company was formed by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad with Fruit Growers Express. Fruit Growers Express, Western Fruit Express (the Great Northern's refrigerator line) and BREX were under common management at their joint headquarters in Washington, DC. The company took delivery of its first all-steel refrigerator cars in 1937. That's before the 1945 build date of these wood-sheathed cars, but as MTL notes, new construction during the Second World War—when it was allowed at all!—often included "war emergency" accommodations. So the series 74500 to 74699 was listed in the January 1945 OREX as "Refrigerator," not "Refrigerator, All Steel." As long as we're here, let's check a few dimensions: inside length 33 feet 2 inches, inside width 8 feet 3 inches, inside height 7 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 8 inches, extreme height a fraction of an inch over 15 feet, door opening 4 feet wide by 6 feet 6 inches tall, and capacity 75,000 pounds or 2067 cubic feet. These cars could handle between 9600 and 10,600 pounds of ice depending on the type (chunk, coarse, crushed). These cars were equipped with Preco fans which aren't represented on the MTL model.

The Morning Sun Color Guide to CB&Q Freight and Passenger Equipment doesn't show anything except steel refrigerator cars, so no help with a prototype photo there. However, it does give us two data points: first, 1958 as the start for the "Block Gothic" lettering, and the description of the "Everywhere West" slogan between the door and the Burlington Route herald as "unusual." The slogan is shown on BREX 74279 as of 1970, so at least one car lasted that long with that wording. Morning Sun's Refrigerator Car Color Guide by Gene Green adds that the first 100 cars of the series were originally equipped with plywood sides and after that cars were built with tongue and groove lumber for sides. A photo of BREX 74458 shows the later construction as of 1961, in a paint scheme without the slogan. I can't be completely sure about the comparison of prototype to model here, but I do think that the side

ladder versus grab irons delta to the MTL body style is a reasonable callout. In addition, the sides of the 74458 are not completely flush with the roofline and sill, unlike the MTL car.

Things get more interesting: a photo taken of BREX 74637 is available in the Otto Perry Memorial Collection at the Denver Library's digital photo archive (digital.denverlibrary.org and then look for call number OP-2764). I should call this a sister car, but it clearly doesn't have tongue and groove wood sides. The photo is undated but the lettering is the pre-1958 version with the serif style company name and reporting marks and lines above and below those reporting marks. An undated photo of BREX 74536 on Fallen Flags is too blurry to discern the composition of the sides. These photos sent me back to the ORERs to see if there was anything further to the description; however, there wasn't. I can tell you that the series stood at 286 cars in January 1959, 276 in July 1963 and 186 in January 1967. Of these, 64 survived to the Burlington Northern merger of 1970 according to the ORER for April of that year, but by July 1974 the Burlington Refrigerator Express had been merged into the Western Fruit Express and there were just two cars remaining.

The January 1985 issue of **Model Railroading** magazine (that's "-ing" not "-er") includes an article titled "The Refrigerator Cars of the Burlington" but as of now that's not in either the UMTRR Research Accumulation or online. If anyone out there has it (it's not yet on Trainlife.com which has been digitizing and posting these back issues) let me know for some possible Incremental Information.



**518 00 041 and 518 00 042, \$27.60 each.
Reporting Marks: ART 22787 and 22789.
40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator
Car, Vertical Brake Staff, American
Refrigerator Transit Company.**

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe, trucks and door hardware.

Black lettering including reporting marks on left and company name on right. Red, white and blue shield on left above reporting marks. Red and white Missouri Pacific "buzzsaw" herald and red, white and blue Wabash "flag" herald flanking company name on right. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1950s.

The American Refrigerator Transit Company, like many other lessors of the time, was a joint venture of United States railroads. This time, it was two lines once controlled by Jay Gould, the Missouri Pacific and the Wabash, with the MP owning two-thirds of the company and the Wabash one-third. ART was formed in 1881 and was headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri. There are a number of photos of American Refrigerator Transit Company cars, including in the Morning Sun Refrigerator Car Color Guide which devotes an eight page section to the company. ART's first steel refrigerators were delivered in 1936, but it's wood sheathed cars we're after here.

According to an article by Stan Rydarowicz describing the ART's early steel refrigerators in the July 2000 issue of Rail Model Journal, the color double herald scheme dates to 1950. The color heralds were replaced with less expensive black only in 1961. In 1964 the Wabash was taken over by the Norfolk and Western and the N&W's "half moon" (or "hamburger") replaced the Wabash's flag. Taken together, we get a first pass at the ATP.

Meanwhile, an article by Al Westerfield in the March 1992 issue of RMJ goes too far the other way, focusing on the early wood-sheathed cars but not this group which was numbered 22000 to 22818. We do learn from an ORER summary in the article that this group consisted of 734 cars in October 1949 but was gone from the roster before April 1961. Micro-Trains states that the build date is unknown; that may be because the ART only listed that the series existed in ORERs prior to 1945, not numbers of cars. Westerfield's summary shows a "Y" for the group in March 1934 but no record in the June 1929 Register. I don't have anything in between those dates so I can't narrow that further. The June 1953 ORER will do for the dimensional data, of which there isn't much: inside length 33 feet 3 inches, inside width 8 feet 4 inches, inside height 7 feet 2 inches, outside length 41 feet 9 inches, capacity 279 cubic feet of ice and 1985 cubic feet or 77,000 pounds of lading.

As of June 1950, the service date MTL provides in its car copy, the 22787 was painted in the scheme that MTL depicts. There's a black and white photo of that very car posted to Tom Stolte's online compilation of Missouri Pacific photographs (www.trainweb.org/mopac), taken in Stockton, California in that same month of June 1950. The view is from ground level so no check of the roof is possible. However, I do note that the real car had a fishbelly underframe and a full side ladder whereas the MTL body style has a straight underframe and grab irons. A few small black and white panels are missing from the Z Scale rendition, but hey, that rendition is in Z Scale...

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following item was announced as "off-cycle" releases for September via the Micro-Trains website on September 15 and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line" also on September 15.*



502 44 150, \$29.90

Reporting Marks: NP 98--- (last three digits obscured).

40 Foot Boxcar, Plug Door, Northern Pacific.

Dark green with white lettering including semicircle roadname and reporting marks on left, and "Scenic Route of the Vista Dome North Coast Limited" slogan on right. Small red, white and black NP "monad" herald on right. Red and yellow "DF2" designation on door. Light weathering in shades of brown. Red-brown patch panel covering part of reporting marks and dimensional date. Approximate Time Period: 1959 (build date) to mid-1980s. Previous Releases (as Catalog 14915, now designated 502 00 150): Road Number 98585, September 1996; Road Number 98638, March

2003, both previous releases with either Magne-Matic or Marklin couplers; then Runner Pack #25 (994 00 025) with road numbers 98593, 98600, 98636, 98639, January 2011.

Runner Pack #25 is the source material for this Weathered Release, which explains the obscured road number. There could be one of four car numbers under that brown paint. As noted previously, these are examples of "Refrigerator" cars masquerading as boxcars. This particular car is AAR Designation RBL and described as "Refrigerator, Steel." The ORER for January 1964 which is the closest I have to the 1959 build date shows 99 cars in the group 98550 to 98649. The inside length was 39 feet 11 inches, outside length 42 feet 1 inch, capacity 100,000 pounds and door opening 8 feet 3 inches. An end note tells us that all cars are "equipped with ceiling hooks for application of portable heaters and harnesses" as well as "crossbar type loading devices." The April 1970 ORER shows 96 cars remaining under the Burlington Northern, with 66 extant in April 1981. Just one car remained as of July 1987. You'd have to consider roofwalk removal by then, though, so the ATP is probably shorter.

Morning Sun's Color Guide to Northern Pacific Freight and Passenger Equipment, Page 57, includes a shot of NP 98583 from the series. I'm sure that the observant will find differences, for example, straight sills on the prototype, but terms of overall effect, we're okay. Author Todd Sullivan reported that though the NP was already favoring 50 foot boxcars at the time these were built, there was enough interest on the part of the road to build four series of these cars, totaling 250 pieces. They were assembled at the line's shops in Brainerd, Minnesota.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS: In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #34, three C&O / Chessie System flat cars with loads, has been released. UMTRR coverage was in the February 2011 issue. The catalog numbers and road numbers for individual cars in this Runner Pack are as follows: 525 51 110, Road Number 216001, 525 52 110, Road Number 216018, 525 53 110, Road Number 216020.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is April 2012. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release of Runner Packs in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close October 31.



Scheduled April 2012 Release:

Z Scale Runner Pack #40: 994 00 040, \$94.95

Reporting Marks: PFE 13, 15, 20, 22.

Quantity four of 40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Vertical Brake Staff, Pacific Fruit Express.

Yellow sides, brown roof and ends, black underframe, trucks and door hardware. Black lettering including

roadname and reporting marks on left. Black and white Southern Pacific herald on one side of car and red, white and blue Union Pacific "Overland" shield on other side of car (both on right hand end of side; side with SP herald is given as "Side B"). Note that image above shows Side A of two cars at top and Side B of two cars at bottom. Approximate Time Period: about 1925 (based on paint scheme) or 1928 (based on rebuild date given by MTL) to mid-1930s. Previous Releases: Road Numbers 12 and 23, September 2011, catalog number 518 00 01x.

Well, this is an easy one! The first two road numbers blew out quickly (see Discontinued Alert below) so we can see fairly clearly that there's some pent-up demand for these cars. Therefore, how about four more. I am still trying to get used to PFE cars with two digit road numbers, but they are legitimate.

And there's certainly plenty of room for reprints. As noted last time, the R-30-1 and R-30-2 classes comprised the first 6,600 cars for the Pacific Fruit Express. The April 1928 ORER three subsets of cars in the overall series PFE 1 to 6600, the details of which I have in last month's column. The ATP was also explained in the previous month's bytes but could have ended as early as 1936 when the UP shield lost the word "System."

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:

In addition to the below items, the **Sugarland Peppermint Company Train Set** (994 21 030, \$249.95) is now available. UMTRR coverage (such as it was) was provided in the May 2011 issue, but the images of this set weren't yet available. So here they are:



981 51 039, GP35 Diesel Locomotive. Green with black underframe. Legend "Sugarland Peppermint Co." in white and red in center of long hood. Road number 100 on cab in red and white. Note that this is a substitution for the SD40-2 which was originally announced for this set.



500 50 009, 40 Foot Boxcar, Single Door. Green with red door. Tied pair of candy canes in red and white with green ribbon on left and right. Simulated "peppermint products" load included. Reporting Marks: SPC 112.



538 50 039, 40 Foot Modern Log Car with Uprights. Black with no lettering and simulated "cut peppermint beams" load. No reporting marks.

522 50 029, 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Gondola with Drop Ends. Green with red drop ends. Candy canes and peppermints in red and white across car. Simulated "peppermint chips" load included. Reporting Marks: SPC 121.



535 50 069, 30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose. Green with red cupola and end railings. Multi-color "Micro-Mouse" character below cupola flanked by words "Merry Christmas" in red and white. Reporting Marks: SPC 24.



502 00 539, \$22.95

Reporting Marks: ID 1890.

40 Foot Box Car, Plug Door, Idaho 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 (Mountain Bluebird) and state flower (Mock Orange) on right. Thirty-ninth release in the Z Scale States of the Union series.

[The following is largely reprinted from the February 2006 UMTRR coverage of the N Scale release of this car.]

Yeah, it's the land of the potato, I know. The first of these were grown circa 1836 by one Henry Spalding, who also started the Gem State's first school, printed its first book, and set up its first irrigation system. That all got going just two years after the first forts, at Laramie, Boise and Hall, were established. Prior to that, the area was left mostly to fur trappers and traders, although Louis and Clark included what is now Idaho in their famous exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. Prior to that, Native American tribes such as the Shoshone, the Nez Perce, the Palouse and the Kalispel inhabited the area. Evidence of Paleo-indian big game hunters goes back about 14,000 years.

But it wasn't until 1860 that Franklin, the first town in Idaho, was established. (Look just north of the Utah border.) This is despite the traveling of many settlers and fortune seekers through the area; they didn't stop. Even a gold discovery on the Pend Oreille River in 1852 didn't encourage permanent settlement. Finally, Idaho Territory was created in 1863 with its first capital at Lewiston, moved to Boise the next year. Franklin was the site of the first railroad service in the territory, circa 1874; at the time the non-native population was not much above 17,000. Indian wars marred the time period: the Snake, the Nez Perce, the Bannock, the Sheepeater; and the largest slaughter in the West, the Bear River Massacre. By 1880 the population was up past 32,000 and a Historical Society was established. Yes, that's

ten years before Idaho became the 43rd State, on July 3, 1890, the same year that the Great Northern Railway completed its route across the “panhandle.” At the turn of the century the population was over 160,000. It reached one million in 1990. Current industries include high tech, agriculture, mining, and tourism-- did you know that the Union Pacific founded the Sun Valley ski resort?

Famous Idahoans include baseball players Harmon Killebrew and Walter Johnson; developer of television Philo T. Farnsworth, supermarket Joe Albertson, downhill skier Picabo Street, industrialist J.R. Simplot, actress Lana Turner, poet Ezra Pound, and Lewis and Clark's famous guide Sacagawea.

My first visit to Idaho was part of the single longest one day drive I’ve ever taken; it started in Salt Lake City (also the first time in Utah) and followed Interstate 80 into Wyoming (also the first time there), then angled up to US 30 and thence into Montpelier, Idaho, where Butch Cassidy robbed a bank in 1896. From there it was around the west side of Bear Lake on US 89 and back into Utah. But that stop in the Gem State was only a warmup. The second trip was about a month later and began out of Spokane on US 2. That highway follows the former Northern Pacific into Sandpoint, which is the home of “The Funnel” where the Burlington Northern’s former Great Northern and Northern Pacific lines come together, met by the Montana Rail Link and the Union Pacific’s former Spokane International line. I observed and shot video of a couple of trains at Sandpoint, and got a real lesson on how silent they can be on welded rail! From there it was down the very scenic Idaho 200 along the Clark Fork and into Montana. On the way back, I took Interstate 90, which enters the state from the east through Lookout Pass, quite the view. I-90 also begins in Idaho with “Exit 0” – that’s Exit Zero-- which I always find an amusing designation.



507 00 540, \$22.65
50 Foot Plug Door Boxcar, 2011 Holiday Car.
Reporting Marks MTL 2011.

White with black reporting marks at far right. Multicolor depiction of MTL’s “Micro-Mouse” in Santa Claus clothing on left. Multicolor “sign” reading “Merry Christmas from Micro-Mouse” on right.

Let’s see, 160 divided by 220 would be the same as 16 over 22, which is the same as 8 over 11 if you reduce to the lowest common denominator, or something like that. Wow, it’s been a long time since sixth grade math. Anyway, the Micro-Mouse on this Holiday Car is some fraction smaller than the one on the N Scale version, and probably less than 160 divided by 220 since MTL needs to use a different body style for the Z Scale release which makes the image of the mouse necessarily less large. We will assume that the tease about a mid-month surprise Graffiti Car applies to Z Scale as well as N Scale. Check the Micro-Trains website a few days after this column reaches you. We’ll have full coverage in next month’s UMTRR since I have stopped the “UMTRR Updates.” Well, maybe I’ll make an exception this time...

HO_{n3} SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: A pretty quiet month this time. In fact there's just one item: a two-pack of N Scale boxcar plywood loads (499 43 975, \$9.95). Other items marked as new in the October Micro-News are actually releases from previous months.

Unofficially, though, it's been posted on the Nn3 YahooGroup that MTL might have an Nn3 wood refrigerator car coming, based on the new Z Scale 518 body style. This is analogous to Micro-Trains using the Z Scale tank car and wood boxcar for Nn3 releases. Stay tuned...

STRUCTURE KITS: Two items to tell you about. First, by popular demand the locomotive shed kit previously released in Z Scale is now available in N Scale (499 90 931, \$38.95). This structure looks quite a bit like the one on the legendary John Allen's HO Scale layout, the Gorre and Daphetid. (Which makes me wonder whether we'll see it from MTL in HO.) In Z Scale there's a Freight Pier Kit (799 90 953, \$27.95) which continues the Waterfront Series.

DISCONTINUED ALERT: We'll start with Z Scale since that's where the big news is: three of four of the wood refrigerator cars released last month are already on the bye-bye board. That would be the pair of Pacific Fruit Express cars (518 00 01x) and the second URTC/Land O' Lakes car (518 00 022), with the first number on the "almost gone" list. We'll take the rest of the 1:220 outs in catalog number order, starting with the second number of the green Great Northern boxcar (503 00 102, January, first number still available). The second number of the Milwaukee Road brown and yellow plug door boxcar is reported outta here (507 00 432, July 2010) though I already have it as such in my records. The first number of that car is gone too. The second number of the TTX 60 foot bulkhead flat car with load has left the building (527 00 082, February, first number sold out). The Pennsylvania Railroad sleeper (550 00 060, July 2009) has rolled on. Finally, the Rock Island coach has left the station (552 00 090, July 2010).

The first item in catalog number order on the N Scale outs list is the Pacific Fruit Express weathered two-pack (064 44 190, mid-month August), and so much for my lament about obscured road numbers. Ditto for the weathered IMCX covered hopper (096 44 020, mid-month, also mid-month August). Speaking of covered hoppers, the first high side release, for the Santa Fe, is gone (096 00 010, March), which took longer than I thought it would. And speaking of the Santa Fe, the reprinted open hopper is closed (108 00 120, June). Finally, both numbers of the CSXT gondola have been unloaded (105 00 536 and 537, November 2010).

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: The big contribution for the month was about the N Scale BNSF boxcar from last month, which was conveniently placed into the commentary for the Z Scale BNSF boxcar for this month! And that's all I received, I think.

OOPS PATROL: I neglected to include the Previous Releases in my commentary on the Union Pacific F7A and B locomotives last month. And there were a few! The A unit had four previous runs: Road Number 1458 in March 1986, Road Number 1455 in December 1994, Road Number 1467 in December 2002 and Road Number 1469 in April 2005. All of these carried the previous catalog number 14001 with any remaining stock of the April 2005

reclassified to the new catalog number 980 01 010. There's been just one previous B unit though, which had road number 1476B and was released in September 2001.

I also blew it on my note that Z Scale Runner Pack #33 had been released, not noticing that I hadn't changed it to Great Northern Coaches from Great Northern Sleepers which was the previous month's Runner Pack. Which means I need to mention the individual items: 552 51 030, Road Number 1120; 552 52 030, Road Number 1122; 552 53 030, Road Number 1125.

AND THAT'S (THAT IS?) ALL FOR THIS MONTH. I don't mean to be so formal here, but apparently the font I use for my headings since switching to the new PC and the netbook does not have an apostrophe; therefore I can't type "That's" instead of "That is." How annoying... well, I'm not breaking my traditional use of the Tiffany Bold / Fantasy / Jewel font for said headers, since it's been a favorite since high school. I hope that "insert symbol" worked, anyway. Speaking of the computing equipment, over on the "rest of my writing" part of the website, namely "Irwin's Journal Online" (www.irwinsjournal.com/ijonline) I've posted a new installment about that, appropriately titled "New Toys." I invite you to have a look, and in the meantime, do the best you can!

Cheers,
George

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