

IrwinsJournal.com Presents:
The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report
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Hello again everyone, and let's get right to the news and views for this month... although there's quite a bit of material at the end of the column this time around...

N SCALE NEW RELEASES:



022 00 130, \$22.50

Reporting Marks: CB&Q 41554.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug and Sliding (Youngstown) Door, Burlington (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy).

Red (the CB&Q's "Chinese Red") with white lettering including reporting marks and large

"Burlington" on left. Black and white "Burlington Route" herald with slogan on right (alternating "Way of the Zephyrs" and "Everywhere West"). Approximate Time Period: 1959 (build date) to early 1970s. Also see Weathered Release farther along in this column.

This car is sort of an "it figures" for me. My own model railroad happens to use this body style as a key part of its own roster of rolling stock. When I saw that there weren't any undecorated 022 cars available from MTL, I went on a bit of a shopping spree to pick up some older releases for the express purpose of repainting them (horrors!). And of course now that I have a sufficient stock on hand, along comes a new release on the car type, meaning that undecorateds are probably available again... but enough about me.

This car represents the "as delivered" paint scheme; the previously run CB&Q car (Road Number 41465, 22100, March 1998, part of "Fallen Flags Four Pack #3) is an example of a later decoration without the slogans or stripe astride the herald. Photos in Morning Sun's **CB&Q Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** suggest that the slogans were dropped in the mid to late 1960s, perhaps when the cars' roofwalks were removed and ladders were cut down. I expect that cars with and without the slogans would have been seen together on the Burlington and even the Burlington Northern post-merger, so I'll let the Approximate Time Period end at the early 1970s. By then I think either repainting or roofwalk removal would have occurred. I should note that the ATP for the original run, that is, the car without the slogans and stripes, shouldn't have started at the 1959 build date. And thus you have a 14 year old Oops.

The Color Guide has a bingo for that previous release, and although the paint scheme isn't the same, the car series is, and so we can compare prototype to model. The key deltas I see are riveted sides and a diagonal row of rivets either side of the doors. The real group 41000 to 41599 was built in the Q's own Havelock Shops in 1959.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1963 shows a larger group, 41000 to 41899, with 896 total cars. They were described as "Box, All Steel" with these dimensions: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, capacity 3940 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, and door opening both 6 and 14 feet. This is further explained in an end note stating "Cars... equipped with eight foot flush type auxiliary doors." A rather fancy way to say "plug door," but then again, there weren't that many of them around yet.

Jumping to the April 1970 ORER and the Burlington Northern registration, we find 867 cars in the group, so most of this series made it to the merger. And so did the end note about the auxiliary doors! A total of 408 cars are shown in the CB&Q series in the April 1981 Register, including ten designated for the dreaded "tankage loading," but I suspect that the plug doors might have been permanently sealed since the door opening is shown as only six feet. For the record, the cars don't completely disappear from the BN roster until the 1990s, though that's well past the ATP I'm calling for this car.



046 00 400, \$19.45

Reporting Marks: PRR 373719.

50 Foot Steel Gondola, Fishbelly Sides, Drop Ends, Pennsylvania Railroad.

Brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname across side. Black and white shadow keystone herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1959 through the 1960s at least (based on paint scheme).

The ORER for January 1959 is as close as I can get to the MTL given repaint date of this car. It was originally built in 1951. There were 1932 cars in the main series PRR 371950 to 373949, plus another 62 cars which were fitted with racks for handling automobile frames. The description was the same: "Gondola, All Steel, Drop Ends, Flat Bottom, Wood Floor" and the Pennsy's car class was G31b. The inside length was 52 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 3 feet 3 inches, outside length 54 feet 8 inches, extreme height 7 feet and capacity 1646 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds.

We'll next go to Rob's Pennsy Page (prp.railfan.net, no "www"), where we learn that while the original G31s were built with steel floors, later builds in classes G31a through G31e had wood floors (that's what the small "W" in the circle left of the herald denotes). The ORER summary provided on the page shows 3000 cars as of April 1952 and 2480 as of April 1968. Interestingly, Rob calls out the Micro-Trains car as the N Scale model for this class.

Next stop is the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** from Morning Sun. Page 79 of this volume has a shot of the exact car PRR 373719, in other words, a bingo. The photo is from April 1963 and shows that the car is pretty beat up just four years after repainting into the shadow keystone scheme. Such is life as a gondola, though. The car is shown carrying a load of forty-eight canisters with half-spherical tops and lift handles which would be an interesting challenge to model.

There is a delta between model and prototype: the MTL 046 has a brake wheel while the real G31a class utilized lever-type hand brake mechanisms. The real 373719 is a 14 panel gondola with drop ends, as is the Micro-Trains model. However... there's something about the lettering that looked a little off to me. It's not the actual lettering, which from reporting marks to keystone, is all there. I was scratching my head for a while until I figured it out: the MTL 046 body style has a larger interior height—about five scale feet—than the real G31a class, which was at 3 feet 3 inches. So while the roadname extended about halfway down the side on the prototype, it goes down only about a third of the way on the Micro-Trains model. You might consider this a nitpick of the highest order, and I'm not sure I'd blame you! Of course Rule #1 always applies.

These cars lasted into Penn Central, and in fact 340 made it all the way to Conrail per the April 1976 Equipment Register. But this shadow keystone scheme (technically the "SK2a" version) was supplanted by the plain keystone scheme starting in 1960. An example of this later less complicated decoration is on the same page of the Color Guide, applied to PRR 372968 as of March 1964. We know that in its final years, the Pennsy didn't put a priority on repainting, so it's certainly possible that the shadow keystoned cars made it right through to their later owners. I think that might be a bit of a stretch so I'm calling the ATP at the end of the 1960s. Again, Rule #1—It's Your Railroad—applies.



058 00 140, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: EPX 54.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Evansville Packing Company.

Orange sides with white outline. Brown roof, ends and sill below doors. Black trucks and underframe. Black lettering accented in white including company name top left and right and reporting marks bottom left and right. "May Blossom Lard" in white with black shadow on left. "Battle Ship Hams and Bacon" in black with white shadow on right. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: 1910 to 1919 (a guess, see text). Release #6 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

The website "Historic Evansville" (www.historicevansville.com) contains photos and two Sanborn maps which illustrate the former site of the Evansville Packing Company, Evansville, Indiana. Evansville is on the Ohio River in the southern part of the state. The plant was located along Morgan Avenue and was served by the Evansville Belt Line which became part of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois about 1911.

By the 1962 Sanborn map the plant was shown as belonging to Swift, but based on other research, it appears that Swift purchased Evansville at least as early as 1947 and possibly in the 1930s. A history of the Evansville Police Department posted online refers to "a local strike that turned violent and involved the Evansville Police Department was at the Swift Packing Company" that seems to have taken place during the Depression.

We also know that Evansville Packing is listed in the New York Central's 1920-1921 "Industrial Directory and Shipping Guide" and it's not listed in the April 1928 ORER. An online snippet of a copy of **Moody's Industrial Manual** is not completely readable but I think it says that Swift bought the Evansville Packing plant in 1927. All this for an ATP. Sheesh.

Meanwhile, we also know that the plant was demolished in 1969 by the Whirlpool Company. Searches on the two brand names, "May Blossom Lard" and "Battle Ship Hams" led right back to other models of this and other Evansville cars, including the Kadee Micro-Trains offering in the Refrigerator Lines' Six Pack of 1982.

Since the ORER for April 1928 is no help, we go backwards to the October 1919 Equipment Register, and the company's not listed there either. My last chance is the June 1905 book, and no match there. MTL says in its car copy that the EPX 54 was built in 1910, so the ATP can't be any longer than 1910 to 1919, unless the cars were never listed in the Equipment Register at all—as is the case for a number of current private owners. Therefore, the ATP is a guess. The lack of dimensional data is also a clue that the car is from the very early 20th Century.

Page 21 of **Billboard Refrigerator Cars** by Hendrickson and Kaminski provides the reference photo for this car. They note that the car "had air brakes and knuckle couplers, but its wood body and underframe and outside-hung brake beams were typical of late 19th century refrigerator car construction." One delta between model and prototype I spotted was the use of a single grab iron on the right hand side of the car, near the word "Bacon." And that's it other than end grab irons used to reach the brake wheel.



096 00 101 and 096 00 102, \$25.55 each

Reporting Marks: UP 80968 and 80980.

PS-2 3 Bay High Side Covered Hoppers, Union Pacific.

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname across side. Approximate Time Period: 1980 (renumbering date given by MTL) through

mid-decade of the 2000s.

We get a bingo on the first car in this virtual two-pack over on RRPictureArchives.net . The 80968 was found in Clinton, Iowa in July 2006. It was part of the Union Pacific class CH-100-45. It looks like we have a good match between prototype and model, although the real 80968 didn't have grab trucks at the time its photo was taken.

From RailcarPhotos.com we learn that the UP series 80950 to 81950, which includes the two numbers modeled by MTL, came from the Rock Island. There's quite the amazing 2007 photo of the 81633 from the same series posted on RailcarPhotos: the UP paint has worn through sufficiently to show an almost complete "The Rock" paint scheme! A reporting marks stencil indicates who really did own the car at that time. I think this explains the MTL car copy about the original series and the 1980 renumbering.

The April 1981 ORER shows the series of covered hoppers UP 80950 to 81950, described as “Covered Hopper, Steel, Triple Hopper, Self Cleaning, Trough Loading Hatch Full Length of Car.” The dimensions: inside length 49 feet 3 inches, outside length 53 feet 1 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, and capacity 4427 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. There were 739 cars in the main series and 16 more that had interior lining (the numbers MTL selected not being among them). Given the prototype photo date I jumped to the January 2006 Equipment Register, where 84 cars remained. Just five were left as of the January 2011 ORER, so I think we miss the “to present” ATP by just a little bit.



144 00 030, \$23.45

Reporting Marks: CB&Q 6113.

Heavyweight Paired-Window Coach, Burlington (CB&Q).

Pullman green with black roof, diaphragms, underframe and trucks. Gold lettering including roadname in center of top letterboard and reporting marks at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: 1950s and 1960s.

According to the **CB&Q Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, the Burlington started buying 84-seat coaches from both Pullman and American Car & Foundry. Among these purchases was the series 6100 to 6116, which came from AC&F. These cars had 23 windows per side. A shot of sister car 6110 from 1962 is on Page 19 of the Color Guide and shows that these weren't paired window coaches. (And the MTL 144 body style has 22 windows per side.) A significant amount of weathering makes the entire car look Pullman Green, though I do think that the roof was black – at least at one point.

The Approximate Time Period for this car is driven by the use of what's called “Ribbon Lettering” in the Color Guide. I had to back into the start of the ATP through the statement in the Color Guide that the CB&Q's converted troop sleepers began to receive that style of roadname and number during the 1950s. The close of the ATP is similarly a bit of a guess and might end a bit earlier than the 1970 merger of the CB&Q into the Burlington Northern.

If you're thinking about buying several of these and doing some renumbering, please note that the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment for January 1953 shows only numbers 6110 to 6116 in service. The ORPTE for March 1943 is the only other one in the Research Accumulation, and it does show 6100 to 6116, but the 6103 is an exception at 72 feet long.



144 00 040, \$23.45

Road Number: 2205 (will be “ATSF 2205” in website listings).

Heavyweight Paired-Window Coach, Santa Fe (AT&SF).

Pullman green with black roof, diaphragms and underframe (including trucks). Gold lettering including roadname in center of top letterboard and road number and bottom left and bottom right. Approximate Time Period: See text.

As long as I have the two soft copies of the Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment open on my PC anyway let's check for this car. And... there's no 2205 shown in either listing. So there's nothing definitive there, or in the **Santa Fe Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**.

So online we go. I note from the Santa Fe Railway Historical and Modeling Society's website (www.atsfrr.com) that "Santa Fe Heavyweight cars were painted Santa Fe Coach Green, which was similar to but not the same as Pullman Green. The Santa Fe color has more yellow in it." This is the opening to a comprehensive discussion of how best to match the Coach Green color. I came across that on the way to the Society's spreadsheet roster of the Santa Fe's heavyweight coaches, which also does not list a road number 2205. It does show all of the coaches in the roster to be either 63 or 70 feet long, whereas the 144 body style is in the 80 foot range depending on the end points on which one measures. And the Santa Fe's chair cars (what they called coaches) appear to be railroad-specific. So, might we conclude that the car carries a fictional road number for those who'd just like a coach lettered for the Santa Fe?

Well, yes, **except** that there is a photo of a coach painted as Santa Fe 2205 I found online (membres.multimania.fr/martinc057/Photo0106-Santa_Fe-Emilio_Charon.jpg , no "www"). So another possibility is that this photo was picked up by MTL and run with, even though the car is a full-size non-prototypical repaint itself. Hmm, a full size car not being prototypical? Yeah, that is a bit of a mind-bender.

N SCALE REPRINTS:



025 00 650, \$24.05

Reporting Marks: CNA 419585.

50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, 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. Approximate Time Period: mid-1980s to present. Previous Release (as catalog 25650): Road Number 419587, July 2003.

The N Scale version of this car was last done in 2003, but this same paint scheme was on Z Scale Runner Pack #36, announced June 2011 and delivered December 2011. At that time I reiterated my report that these cars are ex-Railbox, some or mostly from the former series RBOX 40250 to 40749, built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating. They went to the CN in 1985 as their series 419549 to 419599, according to Ian Cranstone's Canadian Freight Cars site (www.nakina.net).

The MTL 25000 body style is a model of an FMC car so it wouldn't be an exact match to the prototype. There were just eleven cars shown in the October 2007 ORER, spread across the number series 419000 to 419603. The vital statistics 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. For the record, ten of those eleven cars were still hanging on in the January 2011 Equipment Register, so "to present" is still at least possible.

MTL probably used the book **Canadian Rail Car Pictorial: Volume Four A: 50' - 52' - 60' - 86' Canadian National Boxcars - Part 2** by Richard Yaremko for the original run of this car. Back in 2003 long time UMTRR Gang Member Anthony Hunter who pointed out back in 2003 that first run road number 419587 was included in that book in a June 1985 photo. 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 027 body style. I note that a number of photos of cars in the CN 419000s were in Railbox paint with only restenciled reporting marks.



055 00 140, \$25.90

Reporting Marks: ICG 322200.

33 Foot Steel Two Bay Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Illinois Central Gulf.

Black with orange and white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname across side, and "solid rail"

herald on right. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s (1974 service date given by MTL) to early 1980s. Previous Releases (as catalog number 55140): A six pack of Road Numbers 320866, 321076, 321078, 322061, 322710, and 322999, November 1981; Road Number 322197, March 2005.

I didn't have Morning Sun's **IC/GM&O Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** when the 2005 reprint of this car was issued. I do now. The book has a short section covering the Illinois Central Gulf, a natural addition since it was the product of the merger of the two railroads in the title. We don't get a bingo on the car or even its series, but we do get a 1975 image of ICG 324089 in the same paint scheme. That particular car was part of the series 324000 to 324299, which had their sides extended by the Illinois Central in 1962. I bring this up because the availability of these larger capacity cars may have hastened the removal of the smaller hoppers from the ICG roster. The Fallen Flags site has the same general paint scheme on a three-bay hopper, as does RailcarPhotos.com, but I didn't find any images online or in print from the specific series MTL modeled.

That series would be 320000 to 322999. Micro-Trains gives a service date of April 1974 for the car and I can get very close to that with the July 1974 ORER. There are just 153 cars in the group at that time, but you're still not far from the 1972 merger date of the ICG. As long as I am there, I'll give the key dimensions: inside length, 33 feet even, outside length 36 feet 6 inches, extreme height 11 feet 10 inches, capacity 2540 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. That was up to 459 cars in the April 1976 Register, back down to 123 in April 1981 and just two in January 1985.

In the July 1974 ORER there was also an Illinois Central series 320000 to 322999. But on further review, I think that other groups of IC cars, for example hoppers numbered in the 70000s, 80000s and 90000s, might have been reshuffled and collected into the ICG group. It's also possible that merger partner Gulf, Mobile and Ohio contributed some of their cars to this group since in April 1970 they had over 700 steel 33 foot hoppers too.

N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following items were announced as "off-cycle" releases via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or about October 12.*



022 44 130, \$26.40

Reporting Marks: CB&Q 41327.

40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug and Sliding (Youngstown) Door, Burlington (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy).

Red (the CB&Q's "Chinese Red") with white lettering including reporting marks and large

"Burlington" on left, partially removed by repaint of plug door. Black and white "Burlington Route" herald with slogan on right (alternating "Way of the Zephyrs" and "Everywhere West"). Light to moderate weathering on entire car; repainted plug door in brown. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 41554, earlier this month (see above).

While it is somewhat of a "see above" (!) referencing the unweathered release, there are more differences than the weathering and the missing "gton" from the roadname here. Take a look at the bottom right of the side: there are consolidated stencils and the circa-1978 U-1 Inspection Dot. That would put the ATP for this car past the end of the ATP I gave for the unweathered release up there at the top of this column. There were still cars in the CB&Q series then, so it would be logical, but then there is the matter of the roofwalk which really should be pulled. As long as the car is weathered anyway, I'd go right ahead with that step.



077 44 220, \$28.25

Reporting Marks: CNA 794218.

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, No Roofwalk, Canadian National.

Blue with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left. Extensive Halloween-themed graffiti across one side of car. Approximate Time Period: 1974 to 1988. Previous release (in unweathered form): Road Number 794210, July 2012.

The "Halloween Car" has become somewhat of a tradition for MTL now; three years running in mid-October there's been a Weathered Release with that theme. (I think it's going to be difficult for them to top 2010's "Evil Pumpkin" though.) The blue car makes a nice canvas of sorts for a nighttime scene; with apologies to the late Charles Schulz and the Peanuts gang, I don't think that's the Great Pumpkin rising out of the pumpkin patch!

The ATP given here is the same as for the unweathered release; it's relatively short given what we know from the ORER and the "Canadian Freight Cars" site. And it's probably not even the point with this release anyway, but please feel free to refer back to the July 2012 UMTRR for more detail.

N SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #67, three Department of Defense 54 foot general service tank cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the May 2012 issue. The individual catalog numbers and reporting marks are as follows: 110 51 140, 14233; 110 52 140, 14238; 110 53 140, 14274. Also note that this Runner Pack is out of sequence in the release schedule as Runner Pack #68 (four CSXT boxcars) was released last month.



The following items are in pre-order at present and are NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is April or May 2013 (see individual entries). 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 2013 Release:

993 00 074, \$89.95

Quantity four of 40 Foot Boxcars, Plug Door, No Roofwalk, Full Ladders, CP Rail.

Reporting Marks: CP 165165, 165198, 165222, 165223.

Yellow with black and white multimark on right. Mostly black lettering including CP Rail roadname and reporting marks on left. Approximate Time Period: late 1970s or late 1980s (see text) to late 1990s. Previous Release: As Catalog 74010, Road Number 165204, July 1996; as Catalog 074 00 010, Road Number 165181, September 2006.



There aren't too many cars that I know of that use an italic font for dimensional data, but this is one of them. The reweigh dates on the first two runs of this car are "CP 11 88" and "CP 4 87" which would put this car at the tail end of the time period in which CP Rail used the famous Multimark. But the Multimark, and the yellow for insulated cars, had been in use from the start of the CP Rail time period, so we kind of have a split ATP here.

Ian Cranstone's "Canadian Freight Cars" website (www.nakina.net) has the series 165000 to 165200 showing in Equipment Registers from 1963 to 1998. The 200 cars were built by DOSCO, or Dominion Steel Car, in October 1962. There were similar cars taking the next 100 numbers built by National Steel Car in 1963. Ian says that 15 of these cars from the two groups were converted to mechanical refrigerators numbered 285600 to 285614.

In the July 1989 ORER, the two groups Ian shows are combined into one series, 165000 to 165299, of which there were 179 extant at the time. The description was "Box, Steel,

Bulkhead, 3 Inch Insulation, Thermostatically Controlled Underslung Alcohol Heaters” (still waiting for that aftermarket part!) and the AAR Designation is XLI. The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 8 feet 9 inches, and inside height 9 feet 2 inches, all somewhat constrained by that insulation. The outside length was 45 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch, door opening 8 feet, and capacity 3100 cubic feet or 114,000 pounds.

The Canadian Freight Car Gallery (freight.railfan.ca , no “www”) has a 1997 image of CP 165282. The plug door is different from that on the MTL model, and there are trapezoidal channels on the car sides either side of the door that I believe contain equipment related to the temperature controls. Despite the roofwalk removal, the high ladders are intact, and yes, that dimensional data is indeed in italics.



Scheduled May 2013 Release:
993 00 802, \$179.95

Quantity eight of 51 Foot Mechanical Refrigerator Cars, Rib Sides, Pacific Fruit Express.
Reporting Marks: PFE 301901, 301998, 302003, 302111, 302120, 302186, 302200, 302208.

Orange sides, aluminum roof, black ends and underframe. Black lettering including reporting marks and Southern Pacific and Union Pacific heralds on left and stepped three-line “Pacific Fruit Express” name on right. Approximate Time Period: early 1960s (1960 build date given by MTL) to early 1970s. Previous Releases: A six pack, Catalog 70012 (individual catalog number 70010) of Road Numbers 301213, 301231, 301312, 302011, 302210, and 302322, December 1988; then as Catalog 70010, Road Number 302212, July 1993 and Road Number 302113, August 2003.

This “super sized” Runner Pack release, equals MTL’s entire output of previously run road numbers of these cars-- if you don’t count Special Runs. We’ll come back to that.

This R-70-12 refrigerator car counts among the first large contingent of mechanical reefers put into service by the PFE, and marked the beginning of the end of the ice reefer era. They were state of the art for the time and included such niceties as load dividers. The ORER for January 1964 shows a large series of 990 cars numbered from 301213 to 302212. The inside length was 44 feet 10 inches (allowing for mechanical refrigeration equipment), inside height 8 feet 2 inches, outside length 53 feet 3 inches, extreme height 15 feet 1 inch and capacity 3174 cubic feet or 120,000 pounds. There was an eight foot door opening; the MTL model looks to be a nitpicky width off that, not enough to declare a “door thing.”

In the April 1970 ORER, the large series had been subdivided into a number of smaller sub-series and the description has changed to "Mechanical Refrigerator, Load Dividers." The subset we're most interested here was 302113 to 302187 for 75 cars. By April 1976, the series is gone completely... but not really. A glance I had back in 2003 at the book **Pacific Fruit Express** by Anthony Thompson and Bruce Jones (not in the Research Accumulation), notes that the R-70-12s had their load dividers removed starting in 1968. The cars thus de-equipped were renumbered into the 305000s. The ORER listing confirms this, showing 700 plus cars in those series. The inside length went up to 45 feet 7 inches without the dividers, and the PFE must have also added extended draft gear trucks as well, pushing the outside length to 55 feet 7 inches. As renumbered, it looks like a number of these cars may have lasted until split between PFE owners Southern Pacific and Union Pacific as part of the dissolution of the company in the 1980s. A few of the 62 cars left in the PFE listing in the October 1986 Register look like they could have been held over from that original R-70-12 series. Recall, though, that the split of the PFE was in 1978. The UP quickly covered the SP herald on their half of the cars if they did not repaint them outright. So the late 1970s ATP end should still be good.

I would have thought that a series of nearly a thousand cars would have a representative image somewhere online, and fortunately there is on Ken Harstine's "Boxcars and Freight Cars of North America" site (www.boxcars.us). PFE 301979 as of March 1962 is shown in glorious black and white. A delta I picked up between model and prototype is that the real car had five ribs on one side of the door and four on the other side of the door (not counting the diagonals), whereas the 070 body style has six ribs and five ribs respectively. Note that which side of the, er, side, is which depends on the placement of the mechanical refrigeration unit from your perspective. Otherwise, from what I can see, which doesn't include the roof or of course the other side of the car, it looks to be a pretty good match.

With respect to the MTL runs, I should note that the 2003 release is a "not a reprint" with respect to the previous releases of this car. Unlike the 1988 six-pack and the 1993 reissue, the 2003 car, road number 302113, has an aluminum roof and the SP and UP heralds in swapped positions on different sides of the car. This is also true for the Special Run two-pack which was commissioned in 2006 by Paul Avezedo (NSC Numbers 06-76 and 06-77 for the individual cars and 06-78 for the two-pack).

N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: In addition to the below, MTL will release mid-month the "Tree Trimming Express" Christmas Set (993 21 180, \$169.95). Production images of the actual components of the set weren't available at "press time" so we'll have those on the UMTRR Website later. I do have the individual item information though:

- Bachmann GP7 diesel with MTL paint and couplers, Catalog 985 50 707, Road Number 12.
- 50 Foot Fishbelly Side Gondola with Drop Ends, Catalog 046 50 019, Reporting Marks TTX 122.
- 33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Catalog 055 50 019, Reporting Marks TTX 123.
- Heavyweight Depressed Center Flat Car, Catalog 109 50 009, Reporting Marks TTX 121.
- Bay Window Caboose, Catalog 130 50 019, Reporting Marks TTX 124.



101 00 702, \$24.95

Modified 40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Battle of Bull Run.

Car #2 in the Smithsonian Civil War Series.

Side A is gray with one smooth side across which is rendered a full color depiction of the Battle of Bull Run based on artwork provided by the Smithsonian Institution. Other side of car is

in gray with United States and Confederate flags either side of the door. No reporting marks or road number appear on this car.

I will assume that MTL is planning to issue the twelve Civil War cars according to the chronological order in which the events depicted on the cars occurred. So this car would be depicting the First Battle of Bull Run, also known as the First Battle of Manassas.

President Lincoln believed that a quick victory over Confederate forces which had massed behind Bull Run in the area of Manassas, Virginia would lead to a swift end to the war. That quick victory did not occur. On July 21, 1861, a little over three months after Fort Sumter, the first major battle of the Civil War began. Some 28,000 Union Troops took on what would eventually be a force of over 32,000 Confederate soldiers. Both armies were inexperienced and both had the same top level strategy: attack and break their foe's left side. The Confederates were not well coordinated and the Union was hindered by their own engagement complexities. Colonel Thomas Jackson earned his nickname "Stonewall" though his efforts to hold a key hill for the South. When Confederate reinforcements arrived, some by rail from the Shenandoah Valley, they pushed forward from early losses of ground and successfully broke the Union right flank. This turned the Union to retreat and that action quickly turned to panic—not helped by civilian spectators who had come from Washington only thirty-five miles away to see the battle. The Confederates couldn't pursue—had they, the war might have ended in the opposite way from what Lincoln had hoped as the South could have marched into Washington instead of the North into Richmond. There were nearly two thousand Confederate casualties taken including almost 400 dead, but three thousand casualties and some 460 dead among the Union forces.

The battlefield itself is now in a heavily populated area southwest of Washington, but the Manassas National Battlefield Park preserves much of the land on which the Battles of Bull Run took place. A film runs at the Henry Hill Visitor Center there, titled "Manassas: End of Innocence." A very true statement. Both sides realized that the War Between the States would be much longer and bloodier than they expected. Lincoln replaced his general and made plans to enlist a half million men to the Union Army. The Confederates did not celebrate their victory as they knew that many more battles were yet to come. And that would include the Second Battle of Bull Run, or Manassas, in August 1862.

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

Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



518 00 130, \$26.95

Reporting Marks: EPX 54.

36 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car, Truss Rod Underframe, Vertical Brake Staff, Evansville Packing Company.

Orange sides with white outline. Brown roof, ends and sill below doors. Black trucks and underframe. Black lettering accented in white including company name top left and right and reporting marks bottom left and right. "May Blossom Lard" in white with black shadow on left. "Battle Ship Hams and Bacon" in black with white shadow on right. White end lettering. Approximate Time Period: 1910 to 1919 (a guess, see text). Release #6 of an expected twelve in the "Meat Packer Reefer Series."

Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above, though note that this Z Scale release is on a forty foot refrigerator car while the prototype and the N Scale release were thirty-six foot truss rod cars.



524 00 091 and 524 00 092, \$22.85 each

Reporting Marks: CN 667419 and 667444.

60 Foot Flat Cars, Canadian National.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname (in English on both sides) in center. Simulated loads included; generator on the 091 release and lumber on the 092 release. Approximate Time Period: 1975 (build date) to as late as the present.

National Steel Car built 100 flat cars for the CN in January and February 1975, numbered into the series 667411 to 667510. They had an inside length of 62 feet 10 inches (so the MTL car is a little short) and a deck width of 10 feet 2 inches. There's a bingo on the 667419 in the Morning Sun book **Canadian National Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2**, Page 72. The load that the 667419 is carrying as of its photo in February 1991 is a lot more interesting than the large generator that MTL provides. But it would sure be a lot more expensive to model as well: a three-foot gauge locomotive minus its trucks and painted for the White Pass & Yukon Railway! As an aside, according to the Color Guide, four diesels were built in 1982 for the White Pass but the order was cancelled after the build by Bombardier. The locomotives were orphaned for ten years until purchased for gypsum hauling in California. I wonder if one of them (the 112 to be exact) sat atop the flat car for all ten of those years? Not a very efficient use of rolling stock!

I'll add a few dimensions from the April 1976 ORER: outside length 65 feet 8 inches, extreme height 3 feet 9 inches and capacity 199,000 pounds. An end note calls out how much of a load can be centered on the car based on the lading length, for example 179,000 pounds for an eight foot long load. Sixteen cars remain in the January 2011 ORER so a "to present" ATP may be okay here.



530 00 320, \$21.75

Reporting Marks: CTTX 8401.

39 Foot Tank Car, Single Dome, Colorado Animal By-Products.

Black with white lettering reporting marks on left and company name across car. Approximate Time Period: decade of the 1930s (1930 build date given by MTL).

“Feed Golden Brand Bone Meal to your Cattle and Sheep,” advised an advertisement in **The Deseret News** of January 6, 1937. “Manufactured by Colorado Animal By-Products Company.” Those of you who know your periodicals—or who live in Utah—might already wonder why a company based in Denver is advertising in a paper that is based in Salt Lake City. The ad copy continues though: “A Utah Company” with locations in Ogden, Spanish Fork, Logan, Salt Lake City and Heber City. “While attending the stock show visit our Odgen Plant,” the reader is invited. That’s not all: the company is also shown as being in Montana and Idaho. “Prices paid for dead or useless Sheep” states another advertisement (which is otherwise behind a paywall; I can’t say I’m that interested in learning more!). And other than a few court cases and the information that the firm is “inactive,” that’s about all there is online about this company, which I don’t find very surprising. Unless you count the references to this very release, which popped up pretty quickly after the MTL announcement of the month’s issuances; which just confirms that those search engine “spiders” are working quite well, thank you.

We hit a similar near-dead end in the ORER. The CTTX reporting marks belong not to Colorado Animal By-Products, but to the Canton Tank Car Company. The July 1935 ORER shows the 8401 as part of Canton’s series 8000 to 8510. The 8000 gallon capacity cars in that series, a total of 511 of them, constituted the majority of the 771 cars on the Canton roster at that time. Of course, this tells us nothing about how they were painted. But the fact that the CTTX reporting marks have been transferred to the General American Transportation Company might help us back into an ATP. On the other hand, the fact that the GATX listing does not show any car counts does not help, although it does show that the CTTX series 8000 to 8750 is still extant. We also know that General American stopped using the CTTX marks around 1946. (Trailer Train started using them in 1961 for a time, but that’s another story.) What’s a byte-slinger to do? Guess! And I will, at an ATP of the decade of the 1930s.



533 00 050, \$22.60

Reporting Marks: ICG 322200.

33 Foot Steel Two Bay Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Illinois Central Gulf.

Black with orange and white lettering including reporting marks on left, roadname across side, and “solid rail” herald on right. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: early 1970s (1974 service date given by MTL) to early 1980s. Please see the commentary on the N Scale release above.



970 01 181 and 970 01 182, \$195.95 each
Road Numbers: 5582 and 5583 (will be preceded by "CP" in website listings).
Powered SD40-2 Diesel Locomotives, CP Rail.

Action red with black underframe and trucks. White lettering including road number on cab and roadname on long hood. Black and white multimark at rear of long hood. White striping on nose and end. White simulated reflectors along bottom of carbody. Approximate Time Period: mid-1980s (based on paint scheme) to early decade of the 2000s.

Here's something I didn't know: there were two versions of the "multimark" on these units. The "large multimark" went all the way to the roof and included the grilles. This was the "as delivered" scheme from the build date of 1972 to sometime in the 1980s as noted in MTL's copy. The website cprdieselroster.com shows a shot of the 5582 in the large multimark as of 1976 and in the small multimark as of 1989 and 2003. The 5582 was sold to National Railway Equipment in 2005. I will leave the lookup of any other unit to the reader and call the general ATP at about the same time, but I should keep in mind that CP Rail reverted to the Canadian Pacific name in 1996 and the "golden beaver scheme" was introduced sometime after that. The above website has an over 100 page (!) PDF with individual information on every CP diesel available for your use.

Comparing model to prototype, the first thing I notice is a brake wheel on the short hood of the real 5583. The handrails look black, not red as on the model, but I believe that this is a case of the original paint wearing off and exposing the metal underneath. The ends of the railings are white; note that MTL did that for you on the end rails. The white "spots" on the carbody sills are a nice touch, and prototypical.

The 5583 wasn't so lucky: it was wrecked in 1980. An image also posted to the CPR Diesel Roster website shows the aftermath of the accident: there's not much left. It was rebuilt and returned to the roster for snowplow service in 1985, again with road number 5583 and with the small multimark. It was different from the "standard" SD40-2--"standard" being relatively speaking.

Z SCALE REPRINTS: No releases this month.

Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES: *The following item was announced as an “off-cycle” release via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail “Micro-Trains E-Line,” all on or about October 12.*

994 05 040, \$109.95 – Weathered Canadian Four-Pack. Consists of the following items:



507 50 480, Reporting Marks: CP 8---0 (middle three digits obscured).

50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, CP Rail.

Green with mostly white lettering including large roadname and reporting marks, on left end of one side and right end on other side.

Dimensional data in black. Extensive graffiti over most of one side of car. Approximate Time Period: late 1980s to late 2000s. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 80060, July 2011.



510 50 200, Reporting Marks: CP(AA) 21---- (last four digits obscured).

50 Foot Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, CP Rail.

Red with aluminum roof. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks and

roadname on left. Small orange rectangular panels along bottom of side. Moderate weathering and patch panel obscuring some of reporting marks and dimensional data. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s to present. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 211077, December 2011.



531 50 180, Reporting Marks: GTW 111140 (road number partially obscured).

PS-2 Covered Hopper, Grand Trunk Western.

Blue with mostly white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left and large herald on right. Consolidated stencils in black and white at lower right. Light to moderate

weathering. Approximate Time Period: mid-1980s to at least 2007. Previous Release (in unweathered form): Road Number 111140, August 2011.



533 50 030, Reporting Marks: CP ----- (road number completely obscured).

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

Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname in center. Moderate

weathering. Simulated coal load included. Approximate Time Period: late 1930s to 1970s. Previous Releases (in unweathered form): Road Numbers 354025 and 354037, May 2012.

I'll recap here from the UMTRR commentary for each of the previous releases. All four cars in this set are "overstock" of the unweathered road numbers, as is typical in Z Scale. I do hasten to add that either of the two previous road numbers of the CP hopper could be in any given Weathered Set.

The green CP Rail plug boxcar is from the "post-multimark" time period and belonged to the series 80000 to 80966, built by Hawker-Siddeley between December 1964 and June 1965. The ATP is defined by the lack of multimark, a quiet change made by CP in the eighties. It's reported by Ian Cranstone via his "Canadian Freight Cars" site that all of these cars were off the roster by 2008.

The red CPAA boxcar starts its Approximate Time Period about 1996 when it and the series 211000 to 211100 were purchased used from, well, the previous owner. I can update the "to present" with the January 2011 ORER which I didn't have when this car was run in unweathered form; 95 cars remain out of the original group of 101.

The Grand Trunk Western covered hopper is in the Canadian National holdings—the only non-CP car of the quartet. It was, or is, part of the series 111109 to 111199 which was still hanging on with 11 cars as of the January 2011 ORER (another update). My suspicion based on photos was that this car could be in captive service on the former Central Vermont. The GTW might have acquired these cars along with the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton as they don't appear in my Equipment Register library until the October 1986 issue.

Finally, the plain black CP open hopper is the one car that you probably would not be able to run with the other three based on the Approximate Time Periods. (Of course, Rule #1 always applies.) Not only was the original series 354000 to 354999 down to just thirty cars as of the April 1981 ORER, but that was more than two decades after the block lettering roadname was replaced with the script lettering roadname. Photos from Morning Sun's **Canadian Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** show CP 357156 in June 1967 and CP 354517 in January 1972, so you're good at least until then; but that doesn't get us to the start of the ATP for either one of the boxcars.

Z SCALE RUNNER PACKS:

In addition to the below announcement, Runner Pack #46, four Rio Grande Despatch Stock Cars, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the April 2012 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 520 51 20, 36413, 520 52 020, 36419; 520 53 020, 36428; 520 54 020, 36457.



The following item is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is April or May 2013 (see individual entries). 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.

994 00 052, \$74.95

Quantity four of 60 Foot Bulkhead Flat Cars, Union Pacific.

Reporting Marks: UP 262113, 262126, 262150, 262174.

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname and "Cushioned Load" on right. Approximate Time Period: late 1990s to through 2000, or to present, see text. Previous Release: As Catalog Number 527 00 010, Road Number 262148, September 2007. Catalog Numbers (probably 527 5x 010) will be confirmed upon release.



George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" site (www.rr-fallenflags.org) has several photos of sister cars in this series. Specifically, there is UP 262108 at York, Pennsylvania in September 2002 with a load of pipe; UP 262142 without a load, also at York in June 2003; UP 262154, also unloaded at York in January 2003 but with lots of pipe in a fenced yard just behind the car; UP 262179 with a wrapped load of some sort in Nashville in November 2003; and finally the oldest shot from March 1999 of UP 262190 in the snow in Framingham, Massachusetts with a load of lumber that actually goes a bit past the tops of the bulkheads-- hey, is that legal? All of these cars look recent to me, down to the plain block lettering on the roadname and reporting marks that doesn't quite look the same as the standard UP font to me.

And recent they are, relatively speaking. I first pick up the series UP 262000 to 262284 in the July 1998 ORER with a main group of 149 cars, a subset of 58 more, another one of 48 cars, a third subgroup of 30 cars, and... well, you get the idea. The Gross Rail Weight and the outside length are the differentiating factors on these subgroups. The GRW is in the range of 167,000 pounds to 203,000 pounds, and the outside length is either 69 feet 8 inches or 73 feet. The latter would be due to cushion underframes, most likely, and the telltale extended couplers. This fact sent me scrambling back to Fallen Flags to check said couplers: the first three have the shorter draft gear, the 226190 has the extended draft gear and I can't tell on the 262179. Not much of this matters in Z Scale, of course, since MTL truck selections are a bit limited.

My first thought was if that these were modern cars, the model will be too short. Not to worry: the inside length of the group is shown as 62 feet for all but 31 cars which are listed at 61 feet 3 inches. (Uh, make that another differentiating factor.) That fits within the "close enough for me" continuum. Here's the rest of the vital statistics: inside width 10 feet 6 inches, inside height 11 feet 6 inches, extreme height 14 feet 2 inches. However, by the January 2006 ORER all but three cars have the outside length of 73 feet 4 inches. That's worthy of a "see text" on the ATP I think. There are 281 cars total shown in the group as of that issue. I can update to January 2011's Register which shows 279 total cars.

Scheduled May 2013 Release:

994 00 802, \$129.95

Quantity eight of 33 Foot Two Bay Open Hoppers, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Chesapeake and Ohio. Reporting Marks: C&O 51244, 51256, 51258, 51260, 52133, 52135, 52141, 52155.



Black with white lettering including reporting marks on left and roadname across car. Simulated coal loads included. Approximate Time Period: 1942 to early 1960s at least. Previous Releases: None. Catalog numbers (in the 533 series) will be confirmed upon release.

Six of the eight road numbers in this eight pack have been previously released in N Scale, as two three-packs back in March and April 1993. The “new” road numbers are the 51260 and the 52141, if you’re curious. One immediate delta: the 1:160 cars are on MTL’s 086 “notched arched end” body style while these 1:220 cars will be on the 533 flat end body style, though both are two-bay hoppers. If I recall correctly, the notched arched end provided for a slightly higher cubic capacity for the hoppers, and less chance of spillage over the ends.

The build and new dates on the N Scale version of these cars is May 1942. (The C&O was still able to buy all steel cars at that point, but after that and for the duration of the Second World War they had to use “war emergency” hoppers with wood sides inside steel framing.) The January 1943 Equipment Register shows the series 50000 to 52999 with all three thousand (!) cars in service. They were described as “Hopper, Self Clearing, Steel” with inside length 33 feet, outside length 34 feet, extreme height 11 feet 7 inches and capacity 2081 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. I jumped to the July 1963 ORER to find 666 cars in service in the series at the time, that time being well into the period for replacement of two bay hoppers with larger three bay models. For the record, the series is not completely gone until the July 1980 Register. But I think we’ll cut the ATP back a bit from there given the change to the “For Progress” paint scheme that would have occurred starting in 1948.

Morning Sun’s **Chesapeake and Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 40, provides an example of what the repainting would have looked like. Only the road number and the “&O” from the as delivered paint scheme remains on C&O 52423 as of February 1965, and there’s plenty of wear and tear, and rust, on the car.

Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES: No new releases this month. MTL will release mid-month the “Tree Trimming Express” Christmas Set (994 21 040, \$189.95). Images of the actual components of the set will be posted to the UMTRR Website when available. Meanwhile, from the MTL pre-production are we do have individual item information:

- F7 Powered Diesel, Catalog Number 980 51 019, Road Number 12
- 50 Foot Steel Gondola, Straight Sides, Drop Ends, Catalog Number 522 50 039 (note that this may be corrected as straight side gondolas are the 523 series), Reporting Marks TTX 122

- 33 Foot Two Bay Open Hopper, Offset Sides, Flat Ends, Catalog Number 533 50 009, Reporting Marks TTX 123.
- Gunderson "Husky-Stack" Well Car, Catalog Number 540 00 019, Reporting Marks TTX 121.
- 30 Foot Steel Center Cupola Caboose, Catalog Number 535 00 079, Reporting Marks TTX 124.

HOn3 SCALE (NARROW GAUGE): No releases this month.

MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS: The latest N Scale building kit (499 90 946, \$29.95) is titled "Officers' Quarters" in keeping with the Civil War theme, but my first thought was "cheap rooming house" that would fit in a number of situations. In Z Scale, there's a Stockyard Kit (799 90 964, \$28.95).

DISCONTINUED ALERT: Well, I still haven't gotten to updating the Runner Pack bye-bye board in the website tables, but meanwhile more single cars have made it into the outs list. In another example of how years can make a difference, the August re-release "not a reprint" of the Union Pacific dual slogan boxcars (020 00 29x) cleared out quickly, even though the three-pack from 1995 took... well, let's just say longer than that. The Fruit Growers Express plug door boxcar (021 00 060, July 2011) is outta here, as is last month's Kingan's Meat Packer car (058 00 130). We bid farewell to four Presidential Cars: the first Grover Cleveland release (074 00 116, December 2009), the Zachary Taylor (074 00 118, February 2010), the Chester A. Arthur (074 00 120, April 2010) and the Franklin Pierce (074 00 122, June 2010). Finally in N Scale, the Baltimore and Ohio RPO has been fully delivered (140 00 090, March).

In Z Scale, just five cars have left the building. The first release of the ART refrigerator car is gone (518 00 041, October 2011, second number still available). Both numbers of the Burlington Route open hopper (534 00 03x, May) and the Conrail double door boxcar (506 00 25x, May 2011) are outta here as well.

INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT: Last month's N Scale Peoria & Eastern boxcar (031 00 400) generated some e-mail. First, Bruce Bird provided a rundown of what's left of the line, which is more than would have thought by what I read online: "Short segments are in the eye of the beholder. Remainders of the P&E still being operated include from Crawfordsville east towards Clermont, Indiana for 37 miles west out of Indianapolis. This is part of the CSX mainline between Chicago and Indianapolis and hosts Amtrak's "Cardinal".

"There is also a 21 mile segment in Illinois from Mansfield east towards Urbana that serves several large customers for Norfolk Southern. NS picked up this segment when Conrail abandoned it prior to the split [of Conrail between NS and CSX]. There is also a 34 mile segment that is still in but mostly unused from west of Mansfield to Bloomington. The west end is occasionally used to store cars. There are also smaller segments in use in Danville, Illinois and Indianapolis for terminal and switching purposes.

“All in all, almost 50% of the ‘modern’ P&E trackage remains intact with about 40% being actively operated. Of those segments abandoned probably the most interesting stretch runs west from Georgetown Road to Lyndhurst Drive in Speedway, Indiana. It is owned by a local plumbing company and is used as a pay parking lot three weekends out of the year, when the adjacent Indianapolis Motor Speedway is hosting races.” Thanks, Bruce!

Meanwhile, Dan Sullivan wondered if a three-pack of these P&E cars done a number of years ago by Al’s Kustom Train Kars means last month’s release is actually a reprint. Technically, the answer would still be no by my reckoning, since a Special Run isn’t always a generally available release. But Al painted his own cars and Micro-Trains wasn’t involved at all in that enterprise. Chuck Baldwin checked in later to note Al’s efforts and also that MDC has done the P&E boxcar before as well. Chuck made the observation that there have been various versions of “Century Green” that have been used over the years as well.

I think I may have misled you with my comment that I was waiting for this car. I knew about the previous releases, and it was Micro-Trains’ version that I had been anticipating. Which brings us directly to the next department...

OOPS PATROL: The pre-order window for the Grand Central Terminal Anniversary Set (993 01 220) has been closed, but the delivery date was wrong in the column: it’s February 2013, not March 2013. The description of the Z Scale Soo Line boxcar was pretty much backwards; fortunately, we have images now! And the Weathered Cars for September were all announced on the 17th; I had two different dates in the N and Z Scale sections. Still on Weathered Cars, the MSRP is \$119.95, not \$199.95, for the Soo Line Weathered Four-Pack. Prices are going up all over, but not that fast! Speaking of prices, the Z Scale B&O Eight Pack of open hoppers is going to be priced at \$129.95, not \$149.95. MTL had that price incorrect and I passed the error right along to you.

SPECIAL RUN NEWS: The folks over at Trainboard are doing a Special Run fundraiser: It’s a Missouri-Illinois boxcar in an attractive scheme with large diagonal “Cushion Car.” Part of the Missouri Pacific empire, this is a railroad you don’t see every day in any scale and has an Approximate Time Period from a bit after the build date of 1962 (given an MP system-wide renumbering of the sixties) into the 1970s. Check Trainboard’s N Scale section at www.trainboard.com for more information.

A special run on an existing body style is ambitious enough, but a special run on a newly tooled body style is something else again! Lowell Smith has done just that, with a heavyweight business car that’s based on the existing MTL passenger car chassis with a new body. First roadnames scheduled are Spokane, Portland and Seattle (if you know Lowell, you know why!) and Western Pacific. Check lowellsmith.net/executive.html (no “www”).

And I would be remiss if I did not mention our friend George Hollwedel’s latest MTL special run: a three-pack of Kansas City Southern forty foot boxcars with single Superior doors. They’re based on Pullman-Standard prototypes and are brown with white lettering including the KCS Lines’ octagonal herald. Contact George at protonscale@yahoo.com for more.

GJI HACKED, BUT UMTRR SAFE: Those of you who have been around the distribution list for a while know that these bytes used to come from another address that starts with my initials, namely “gji”. That particular address has been around for longer than I’ve had kids and I suppose I should say I was fortunate that it had not ever been “hacked” – until last month, that is. Anyone on my online address book got one or more “messages” from “me” with some web links of questionable origin included. This address book included my work address (!) and the addresses of the A1G and Micro-Trains YahooGroups which I moderate. Since I knew I didn’t send this junk to myself, I was able to act quickly, but not before the damage was done. I have taken countermeasures including, of course, a password change. A helpful tip from UMTRR Gang Member and Information Security expert Ben Woelk: length of passwords (more characters) is harder to crack than complexity of passwords (i.e. special characters). The good news is that the main distribution list for the UMTRR, which does not reside anywhere online, was not touched. That’s a key reason why it doesn’t exist online, but safely (I hope) on my PC in a now-obsolete e-mail program.

FINALLY, MY FIRST RPM... One specific type of “train show” that is becoming more popular is the Railroad Prototype Modelers’ Meet. These events are opportunities for modelers to bring and display in a non-competitive setting their latest completed and in-progress work toward modeling a specific railroad-related item as faithfully as possible to the real thing. I had heard and read many good things about these events, and I’m very pleased to report that I was able to attend the Northeast Fallen Flags RPM last month in Bridgewater, New Jersey – better yet, with my father. As we looked at, no, admired, the handiwork of several dozen modelers, the phrase that repeatedly came to mind is the same one that the FIRST Robotics Program in which my son is involved stresses: “Gracious Professionalism.” The participants in the RPM simply enjoy what they do in the hobby and sharing it with others. For example, we received a very thorough explanation of what makes some Canadian National forty foot boxcars different from other North American prototypes. There’s no down-your-throat sermonizing about what does and doesn’t make one a Real Model Railroader. There’s just a genuine interest in making the most accurate model and discussing what was done to get there and how you can emulate those steps – if you want to. I’m very glad that I was able to spend a half day at the RPM and I heartily encourage all of you to attend an RPM as well if you can fit it into your plans.

And that’s all for this month. Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers, George

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