



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report Issue #276 – December, 2019**

(Not affiliated with Micro-Trains Line, Inc.)

Copyright ©2019, George J. Irwin. Reproduction prohibited.

Please see legal notice at the end of this document.

Hello again everyone! Well, as predicted toward the end of the November bytes, Micro-Trains did indeed run a Black Friday Special on their website. For each \$100 spent, N Scalpers could choose one of three weathered well cars (Arizona and California, BNSF, or TTX) and Z Scalpers had a selection of five 50 foot x-post boxcars, four of which were from the Incentive Per Diem series (Delta Valley and Southern, Green Mountain, Bath and Hammondsport, and East Camden and Highland) and one that wasn't (Frisco). Each car has light weathering and a small "Santa" (or maybe one of the elves?) stenciled on the car. In a rare burst of efficiency, I already have the eight items documented in the 2019 Release Table on the UMTRR website. With that news communicated, it's on to this month's offerings...



### **N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:**



**020 00 117, \$24.75.**

**Reporting Marks: MEC 8745.**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door, Maine Central.**

Yellow with green door. Green lettering including large "MEC" and reporting marks on left, and rounded rectangle "Pine Tree

Route" herald on right. Approximate Time Period: 1963 (service/paint date given by MTL) to no later than 1974. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

I would not have guessed that this car's paint scheme sneaks into the 1963 Approximate Time Period of my Wilmington and New York Railroad (which hopefully I will begin rebuilding soon). But it does, see that May 1963 service date. So this clearly isn't the "as delivered" paint scheme. It's not the "as delivered" railroad either. According to the **Northern New England Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 44, the Maine Central leased five sets of boxcars from Chicago Freight Car Leasing in 1962 and 1963. Among these were sets of forty foot cars numbered from 8600 to 8729, from 8730 to 8774, and from 8775 to 8799. These all came from the Reading Railroad and were rebuilt and repainted by the Reading prior to lease. That explains the "RDG" next to the "5-63" service date. Also on Page 44 of the Color Guide is MEC 8661, but we can get a lot closer on George Elwood's "Fallen Flags" website (URL [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org)) with a 1967 shot of MEC 8747, just two road numbers away. MEC

8792 plays a supporting role in a photo from 1972 posted on the website RRPictureArchives.net, but the image is good enough to see that the car is in the same paint scheme—with much more dirt—and retains its running board and full ladders. The early 1970s is about the time that removal of both was beginning in earnest.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for July 1963 has the group MEC 8730 to 8775 and the two other leased groups starred as additions to the railroad's roster. We'll focus on the group with the MTL modeled road number, ignoring the typo in the ORER that has the series ending at 8744, which would make a group of 45 cars impossible. (Unless there was an 8744<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, 8774<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, 8774<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>... you get the idea.) The inside length was 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 41 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet, capacity 3898 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds, and door opening 8 feet. Yes, that's a "door thing" as the MTL 020 body style has a 6 foot door opening. (That is addressable.) At the time, the Maine Central had 4,441 cars, of which 3,213 were boxcars of various types.

Given the 1972 date of the photo on RRPictureArchives, I went next to the ORER for October of that year. The series span had been corrected to read 8730 to 8774 and their capacity had been increased to 110,000 pounds. There were 44 cars in service at the time. However, we have a rather abrupt end to the ATP after that, as the next Equipment Register in the Research Accumulation, July 1974, shows the entire series gone.

You might recall that in January, MTL made a change to this body style with the introduction of a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. This month there's a more subtle change: a new 40 foot "cored-through roofwalk." Here's a comparison photo. The car at the top is the new Maine Central boxcar, while on the bottom we have a release with the previous roofwalk. (I chose a New York Central boxcar since you can see the running board!)



**025 00 176, \$26.90**

**Reporting Marks: GNWR 300007.**

**50 Foot Steel Exterior Post Boxcar, Single Door, Genesee and Wyoming.**

Orange with aluminum roof. Black lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left, and round herald

on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1975 (build date) to at least 2011. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. This car is a "Special Offering / Regional Railroad" limited release per Micro-Trains, and is not included in dealer standing orders.

Hey, it's a railroad that operated practically in my backyard! Wait, George, what do you mean, "operated," as in past tense? Isn't Genesee and Wyoming Industries the largest shortline operator in the country? Well, yes, it is, but its namesake is more or less a "fallen flag." We'll take a look at a map of the "classic" G&W a bit later in the second "Special Offering / Regional Railroad" release for the shortline, but for now I'll note that the G&W operations have been absorbed into the Rochester and Southern, which is itself a spinoff of CSX Transportation that can be traced all the way back to the Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh. To keep things confusing, there remain plenty of freight cars lettered with GNWR reporting marks, and there is an ORER entry for the railroad itself. Officially, though, it's a "paper railroad."

Anyway, RailcarPhotos.com provides the bingo for this car, and an interesting data point: there were only five cars in this series. GNWR 300007 was built in 1975 by Berwick Forge and Fabricating, one of the set 300006 to 300010 as Lot 32300. It was caught far from home in Bakersfield, California in March 1977, still looking pretty new. From the slightly off from straight-on view we can see the significant difference in Berwick's ends versus the MTL 025 body style which is based on an FMC car. As of 2009, the car still existed in its original paint scheme but with a replacement door, a U-1 wheel inspection "dot," conspicuity stripes added, and, believe it or not, an intact ACI Label on a placard attached to the first exterior post left of the door. That image along with shots of sister cars 300006 and 300010 are on RRPictureArchives. I think they were all taken in the Warren, Pennsylvania area, on that part of the GWI's Buffalo and Pittsburgh which was formerly the GWI's Allegheny and Eastern.

The ORER for April 1976 shows ten 5277 cubic foot boxcars in the series 300000 to 300010. However, more photo research shows that the first five of these cars have "waffle sides." Five of these cars remained as of the January 2011 Equipment Register, and helpfully the 300007 is called out separately so we know it was still around as of then. The cars, including the 300007, left the revenue roster no later than the April 2013 ORER.



**049 00 870, \$27.95**

**Reporting Marks: NWX 14404.**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car with Fishbelly Underframe, Horvitz Brothers Wholesale.**

**#11 in the Farm-to-Table Series (Pre-orders taken in September 2018).**

Yellow sides, brown ends, roof, and door sill, black details. Black lettering including "Horvitz Brothers Wholesale Fruit and Produce Chicago Illinois" on left and "Commission Merchants Distributors Receivers Shippers" and reporting marks on right. Black, red and yellow sack of "Selected Onions" right of door and black, red and brown sack of "Selected Potatoes" on far right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1934 (service date) to no later than 1938.

There are Billboard Refrigerator Cars, and then there are "Let's See How Much Lettering We Can Get On A Refrigerator Car" cars. This is an example of the latter. Horvitz Brothers was,



as can be seen from the car, headquartered in Chicago. What's on the car may be all we will ever know about this firm, however, as web searches mostly bring up citations to previous versions of this car. (Including in N Scale, yes, I know.) Unlike the Nash Food Products wipeout a couple of Farm to Table releases ago, there was no finding anything promotionally oriented either.

So let's go to what we do have: Page 90 of **Billboard Refrigerator Cars**. It's noted that NWX 14404 was repainted for Horvitz Brothers in July, 1934. The car was built in April, 1927. "The images to the right of the door are 50-pound bags of onions and potatoes." And yes, they are different color sacks. That shows even in the black and white photo in the book. The paint on the MTL model aligns with the photo, excepting a few nitpicky details.

We've come across the lack of car count in the July 1935 ORER for the NWX series 12000 to 14999, including the 14404, before. Some dimensions are listed but blurry on my digital copy: inside length 32 feet plus with bulkheads in place and 39 feet 9 plus inches with them collapsed; outside length 40 feet, door opening 4 feet wide by 6 feet high, lading capacity 80,000 pounds and ice capacity 9857 pounds if crushed and 8817 pounds if chunk style.



065 00 990, \$29.90

**Reporting Marks: CPCX 29527.**

**39 Foot Single Dome Tank Car, Cosden Petroleum.**

Black with white reporting marks on left. Red, white and blue "Remember Pearl Harbor!" graphics across car. Approximate Time Period: after December 7, 1941 into the 1950s.

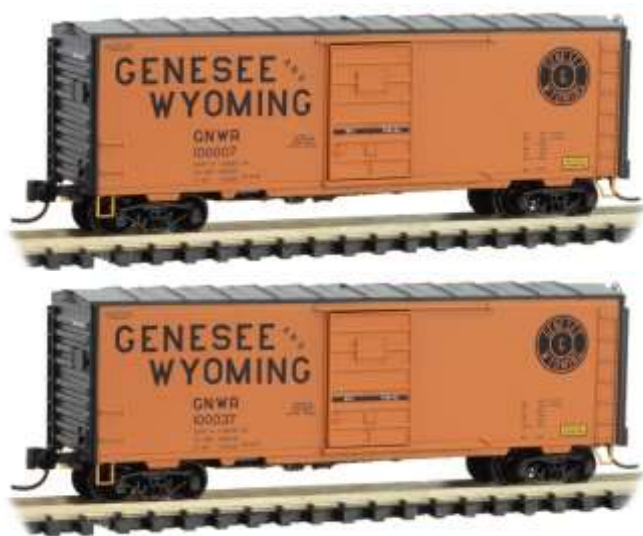
There are pictures of five Cosden Petroleum tank cars across two American Car and Foundry books I own, but none of them look like this! No worries, though, as a search on the phrase "Cosden Pearl Harbor Tank Car" led directly to a bingo photo on the order form for Sunshine Models' HO Scale version of this car. (Sunshine Models, a maker of resin kits for specific prototypes, went out of business a number of years ago, however much of their documentation has been thoughtfully preserved on this unofficial website.)

On the information sheet it's noted that Cosden Petroleum purchased a number of General American Transportation "Type 30" tank cars. The "30" is a reference to the year 1930 although the car was developed in the late 1920s. Type 30 tank cars had several different sized tanks, the most popular being the eight and ten thousand gallon versions. The Cosden car is an 8000 gallon version, so it does differ from the MTL 065 body style which is of a 10,000 gallon version. The Micro-Trains car does resemble the real Type 30 in its overall look. "The visual characteristic of the Type 30 design was a frame with a more open appearance than contemporary designs. There was no side sill from the bolsters to the end sill and only a modest end sill. The frame featured massive bolsters that bore the weight of the tank and included a poling pocket in the end." Many Type 30 8000 gallon cars were used for chemical

and food products, but Cosden bought them for crude oil service. Finally for our use here, the plain Cosden Petroleum reporting marks version of the tank car has a given reference timeframe of 1927 through the 1960s, while this Pearl Harbor car has a timeframe of 1942 to the 1950s. That works for an ATP for me. To see the flyer for Sunshine's kit and the bingo photo, the direct URL is <https://www.sunshinekits.com/sunimages/sun87a.pdf>.

The Tulsa, Oklahoma library has what's called the "Cosden Legacy Collection" and it's described but not posted online. The company's founder was Joshua (J.S.) Cosden, who began operating a refinery in 1913 in West Tulsa. In 1915 he built a pipeline connecting 97 miles to the Cushing Oil Field. This was the first part of the Mid-Continent Pipeline. In 1925 the company name was changed to Mid-Continent Petroleum. Yes, that's sixteen years before the "Remember Pearl Harbor" car could have been painted. But the Cosden name was still in use in the January 1943 ORER, where CPCX 29527 was part of a small group, 29519 to 29527. Overall the company had 622 tank cars, every one of which was of 8000 gallons capacity. The Cosden roster was all the way down to 190 cars in the April 1952 Equipment Register including 29 numbered between 29501 and 29599.

Useless trivia department: With this release, MTL "runs out of numbers" for the 065 body style. The next 39 foot tank car will start a new series of numbers ending in a different final digit than zero. What will it be? We'll find out...



**073 00 201 and 073 00 202, \$28.90 each.**

**Reporting Marks: GNWR 100007 and 100037.**

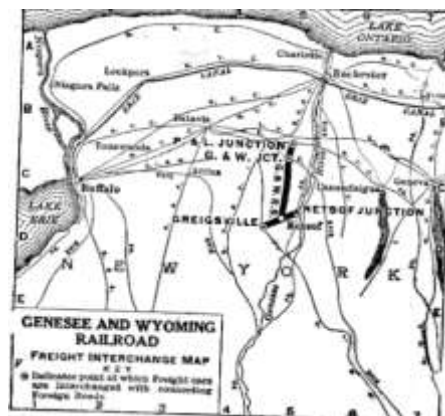
**40 Foot Steel Boxcars, Single Superior Door, No Running Board, Full Side Ladders, Genesee and Wyoming.**

Orange with black roof and ends. Black lettering including large roadname and reporting marks on left and circle herald on right. Black on yellow "Keep Off Roof / No Running Board" sideboard at bottom right. Black stripe with white lettering on door. Approximate Time Period: 1967 (based on service date) to no later than 1974. These cars

have a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. This is a "Special Offering / Regional Railroad" limited release per Micro-Trains, and is not included in dealer standing orders.

Now for more on the G&W. The Morning Sun book **New York Short Lines in Color Volume One** devotes thirteen pages of coverage to the shortline. The G&W was the 1899 re-charter of the former Genesee and Wyoming Valley, which was chartered in 1891 and extended from Pittsburgh and Lehigh Junction down to Retsof by 1894. Retsof was a made-up name which reversed the letters of William Foster, Jr. who was searching the area for oil and found extensive salt deposits instead. The G&W has been primarily an originator of salt traffic ever

since. Despite its mere sixteen mile length, the G&W once boasted interchanges with six different railroads: Baltimore and Ohio and Lehigh Valley at Pittsburgh & Lehigh Junction, the Erie and New York Central at Caledonia, the Lackawanna at Greigsville, and the Pennsylvania at Retsof Junction. At right is a map of the G&W from an Equipment Register prior to consolidation and closure of lines in Western New York. In 1982 it picked up a piece of the former Lackawanna Railroad main line from Conrail, enabling a connection to the Dansville and Mount Morris, which it also purchased in 1985. That increased the line to all of thirty-seven miles.



One of the most recent new builds of trackage took place after the 1994 collapse of the salt mine at Retsof. A new salt mine was built east of that site and the G&W trackage was extended to it. That operation, owned by American Rock Salt, is visible from Interstate 390 just north of its interchange with New York Route 408 in the hamlet of Hampton Corners. It's the largest rock salt mine in the United States and the only one built in this country in the last forty years.

In April 2005, Micro-Trains released what we can call an earlier version of this boxcar, catalog number 020 00 706, Road Number 100079 (image at right). That car was photographed in 1963 and appears on Page 14 of **Classic Freight Cars Volume 1**. The caption with that photo says the cars were bought used. I don't know the source.



So the virtual two-pack this month represents a later version of cars from this prototype series. The obvious difference is the running board removal, but there's also the addition of an "R" to the original "GNW" reporting marks. Back in 2005 I speculated that this change was made to avoid confusion with the "CNW" - the Chicago and North Western. I did not locate a bingo to either car MTL released this month. Fallen Flags does have sister car GNWR 100009 without the running board as of August 1971, aligning with the MTL model.

The service date on these cars is October 1967. The ORER for October 1969, the closest I have after that service date, shows 99 boxcars in the series 100001 to 100100, with inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 10 feet (a bit shorter than the standard PS-1), outside length 41 feet 11 inches, extreme height 14 feet 7 inches, door opening 7 feet (a "door thing" as the MTL 020 body style has a six foot door) and capacity 3715 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. There are again 99 cars listed in the April 1970 ORER, and 95 in the October 1972 ORER, but they're gone by the July 1974 Register.



**094 00 601 and 094 00 602, \$30.90 each.**

**Reporting Marks: SP 496474 and 496441.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers  
Trough Hatches, Southern Pacific (Union  
Pacific).**

Gray with mostly black lettering including reporting marks on left. Small red, white and blue Union Pacific shield herald with black "Building America" slogan on right. Yellow vertical conspicuity stripes at six points along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005, given conspicuity stripes, to present.

These cars were already well into their third decade of service by the time they could have been painted in this scheme. Southern Pacific series 496450-496699 was built by American Car & Foundry, during July and August 1980. The ATP on these cars can't be any earlier than the UP's adoption of "Building America" in 2002 or, more strictly speaking, the use of conspicuity stripes starting in 2005. What's interesting is that this car doesn't have a COTS (Clean, Oil, Test) panel. The prototype didn't have one either, based on a bingo photo of the 496474 as of December 2017 on the site RailcarPhotos.com.

The ORER for January 2018 has, in the Union Pacific registration, the series SP 496450 to 496999, with 182 cars in the main series and 18 more in subsets. All of these cars are 4650 cubic foot versions, which is the prototype for the MTL 094 body style.

A quick perusal of the Center Flows in this series shows multiple co-existing schemes. In between the "as delivered" and this scheme, besides variations, was the sale and leaseback of these cars under the Golden West Service structure. In other words: lots of variety.



**094 00 610, \$29.80.**

**Reporting Marks: CSXT 255206.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper,  
Trough Hatches, CSX Transportation.**

Beige with black lettering including reporting marks on left and CSX herald on right. White on black double COTS panel at

bottom right. Yellow vertical conspicuity stripes at six points along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 in general, or 2009 for this specific car, to present.

We have the luxury of two bingos on this car! The earlier one is on RailcarPhotos.com, with this caption: "A group of freshly repainted and apparently renumbered 4600s rolled south through Marion on June 22, 2009. According to Eric Neubauer's 'History of the Center Flow,' these former C&O cars were among the last 4600s built."



Then, from the second bingo on the 255206, found as of October 2016 and posted to RRPictureArchives, we find that this car was previously Chesapeake & Ohio 607209. When delivered, this car was decorated in Chessie System paint. It was part of Class HC-47, built in 1978, 1980 and 1981, and split across B&O and C&O series. Micro-Trains has done the C&O/Chessie cars as a single in August 2007 and then as Runner Pack #74 in March 2013, all from the same C&O prototype series. The 4600 cubic foot size is a little off the MTL 094 body style. It's also a little bit longer than the MTL model at 53 feet 4 inches inside length and 55 feet 5 inches outside length.

I found examples of the CSX paint scheme as shown on the MTL model in use prior to 2005, so the ATP driver here is the use of conspicuity stripes. Given the bingo photo caption from RailcarPhotos, the Approximate Time Period for this specific car is 2009. The January 2018 ORER shows a total of 533 cars in the series CSXT 254271 to 255445, so I think a "to present" ATP will work here. (And yes, I'm thinking about a newer Equipment Register for the New Year.)



181 00 100, \$24.90.

**Reporting Marks: CNW 150099.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Chicago and North Western.**

Brown with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left.

"Employee Owned" ball and bar herald on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1980 (service date on car) to mid-1990s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.

We've seen this paint scheme before: it's been done by Kadon and Micro-Trains as Catalog 32230. Road Number 152053 was done in July 1988 and Road Number 152043 (at right) was a reprint issued in February 2000. Though those cars model fifty foot plug door boxcars also built by Pullman-Standard, they're not from the same prototype number series.



©2000 Micro-Trains® Line Co.

So let's come back to the release at hand. The bingo photo for the 150099 is on Page 34 of the **C&NW Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. It was found in September 1980, a few months after its April 1980 servicing at the North Western's shops in Clinton, Iowa. The car, part of the group 150000 to 150099, was built by Pullman-Standard in October 1966, Pullman's Lot 9134. The "Employee Owned" herald was adopted around 1972, so the ATP doesn't begin back in 1966. I'm going to go with 1980 for this specific car given the photo bingo, but feel free to invoke Rule #1 (It's Your Railroad) if you're modeling in the mid and late 1970s.



The ORER for July 1980 shows the series 150000 to 150099 with 97 cars. The description was “Box, Steel, Wood Lined, Cushion Underframe, Evans DF Loading Devices, Odd and Even Numbers, 25K.” (The “odd and even” distinction was still being used; several railroads including the C&NW previously used even numbers or odd numbers only for rolling stock depending on the type.) The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 3 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 58 feet 4 inches, extreme height 14 feet 11 inches, door opening 10 feet 6 inches, and capacity 4944 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. In the July 1987 Register the car count was at 93, split into multiple groups by capacity ranging from 149,000 to 154,000 pounds; also the capacity was rounded down to 4900 cubic feet. Just three cars from this group were shown in the Union Pacific listing as of April 1997, where I stopped looking.



*In addition to the above, the New York Central Pacemaker Scheme 34 Foot Steel Caboose (100 00 440, \$35.90, Reporting Marks NYC 20133) is now available. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2019 issue.*

#### **N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:**



**147 00 110, \$29.95**

**Reporting Marks: NYC 7957.**

**Heavyweight Baggage Car, New York Central.**

Pullman Green with black roof, underframe and trucks. Imitation

gold lettering including roadname top center and reporting marks at bottom center. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1939 to no later than 1968.

I didn't have to go too far into the **New York Central Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** (Volume One) to get to the bingo photo for this car. The top of Page 4 shows the 7957 as painted by Micro-Trains as of December 1961 in Dallas, Texas. A key data point the photo conveys is that yes, baggage cars left home rails; the NYC went nowhere near Dallas. Another data point is that the real car had four-wheel, not six-wheel, trucks. So we have a bit of a “stand in” here. However, it's noted on the “Canada Southern” website that of the series 7938 to 7977, which includes the 7957, four cars did have six-wheel trucks: 7939, 7943, 7949 and 7962. The series, built in 1914 by Barney and Smith, originally carried road numbers 2960 to 2999. They were in service until 1968, with two cars going to Maintenance of Way service and two others converted to live fish service. (And those two, 7939 and 7962, were among the four that had six-wheel trucks.)

The Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment (ORPTE) from March 1942 shows that the change to the 7900s numbers had already taken place. In fact, there is a not-terribly-helpful super series of 726 “Baggage, Steel” cars numbered from 7800 to 8599. Fortunately, the ORERs

prior to the introduction of the ORPTE do list passenger equipment of the New York Central, and I was able to narrow down the renumbering to between 1935 and 1940.

Going back to the Canada Southern website, in 1939 the official paint scheme was Pullman Green with Imitation Gold lettering including the familiar Gothic style roadname, the reporting marks "NYC" in three inch high lettering and the road number in five inch high lettering. In other words, the way MTL painted its model. While head-end cars went to a solid gray paint in 1958, I question whether all baggage cars received that decoration and I think it's possible if not likely that the 7957 was retired while still in green.



147 00 360, \$32.90

**Reporting Marks: PRR 7942.**

**Heavyweight Baggage Car, Pennsylvania Railroad.**

Tuscan Red with black roof, underframe and trucks. Yellow

reporting marks at bottom center. Red and white keystone heralds at far left and far right. Approximate Time Period: 1964 into the late 1960s.

Just as with the New York Central release above, the bingo photo for this release again shows that baggage cars didn't necessarily stay put on home rails. This time, it's PRR 7942 found in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, definitely not PRR territory, as of 1968. This car and thirteen others were purchased from the Reading Railroad in May 1964 according to Page 31 of the **PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two**. They were given the PRR Class B62B and were Class BAu while on the Reading. I'll speculate that they were given this "spartan" paint scheme as well, since also in 1964 the Pennsy's Altoona Shops was refurbishing PRR B60B baggage cars and painting them the same way. Those PRR Keystones were likely large Scotchlite decals – now that'll save time and money.

Checking model to prototype photo, the use of four-wheel trucks is a match, as is the fishbelly center of the underframe but the door widths and spacing don't appear to align with the MTL 147 body style. There's also an overhang of the roof at each end.

**N SCALE REPRINTS:** Technically speaking, there is one...



468 00 011 and 468 00 012, \$16.95 each.

**Reporting Marks: APLU 481713 and 482013.**

**48 Foot Ribside Containers, APC Container.**

Aluminum with some ribs in white. Red stylized eagle logo at center of side; black reporting marks on white patch panel at tail end. White "48" in red band at nose end of side. Black reporting marks and blue, "APC" and "48" on nose. Blue lettering on tail. Approximate Time Period: at

least the mid-decade of the 2000s. Only the 011 item is shown here. Previous Release: Road Number 432689, December 2016. Micro-Trains has announced that these items are not on Dealer Standing Orders.



If the bingo photo of the 481713 as of 2007 on RRPictureArchives is any indication, then a Weathered Version of this container would make perfect sense. Sitting below a blue APL container in a DTTX double stack car – itself pretty filthy – you’d have a tough time discerning that this APL box was aluminum colored. A shot of APLU 482013, on the ground alongside three other containers as of 2005, shows a container that doesn’t look that much cleaner than the 481713. I suppose those two images would narrow down the ATP, but that’s hardly enough of a sample. When the other APL 48 foot container was released by MTL in November 2016, I guessed at “1990s to present.”

Wait a moment... that APL container issued in 2016 (MTL image at right) carried Catalog Number 468 00 010, which technically makes these two reprints, not new releases. Whether these qualify as a “not a reprint” is an exercise I will leave to the reader, as the tail of the 2016 release can’t be seen in the photo. The side and end we can see look the same between the 2016 run and this virtual two-pack.



I covered the history of APL – previously known as American President Lines – with that 2016 release. It was a pioneer in containerization; in fact, it was the first out with a 48 foot container in 1996. APL’s predecessor was founded in 1847 as the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. APL was bought by Neptune Orient Lines of Singapore in 1997. It’s now part of the French firm CMA-CGM.



**N SCALE MULTI-PACKS: Runner Pack #160 (993 00 160, \$109.95)**, of four New York Central “Pacemaker” 40 foot boxcars, is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 020 51 240, 174942; 020 52 240, 174858; 020 53 240, 174973; 020 54 240, 174956. Depending on how you count (see the July 2019 UMTRR), these are either the first through fourth releases for this item with this specific paint scheme, or numbers 12 through

15 overall. I think MTL is going with the latter, since the 20240 / 020 00 240 catalog number was retained. These cars also have a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers.





through sixteenth releases for this item. (As noted with the pre-order coverage, this red and white scheme was done on a 40 foot wood refrigerator in May 1994, reprinted in November 2004.) The box, shown at right is pretty cool, too... pun not intended...

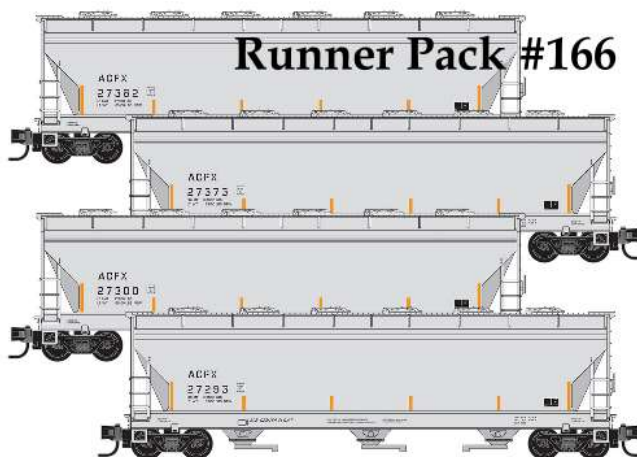


Also, the Swift "Clean" 16-Pack of 36 Foot Wood Refrigerator Cars (993 01 920, \$349.95) is expected to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows (Reporting Marks SRLX): 058 51 586, 6109; 058 52 586, 6124; 058 53 586, 6171; 058 54 586, 6225; 058 55 586, 6240; 058 56 586, 6277; 058 57 586, 6299; 058 58 586, 6312; 058 59 586, 6351; 058 60 586, 6384; 058 61 586, 6417; 058 62 586, 6446; 058 63 586, 6480; 058 64 586, 6501; 058 65 586, 6537; and 058 66 586, 6590. These are the first

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close December 31.*



**Runner Pack #165**



**Runner Pack #166**

**Scheduled Delivery April 2020:**

993 00 165 and 993 00 116, \$114.95 each.

Reporting Marks: ACFX 27324, 27333, 27340, 27352 (Runner Pack #165); ACFX 27293, 27300, 27373, 27382 (Runner Pack #166).

Runner Packs #165 and #166, each with Quantity Four of Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Round Hatches, ACFX (Shippers Car Line/General Electric Railcar Services/Wells Fargo Rail Corporation).

All cars are gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and white on black double COTS panel on far right. Runner Pack #166 has orange vertical conspicuity stripes at far left and far right of sides. Runner Pack #165 does not have conspicuity stripes. Approximate Time Period: Runner Pack #165, 1981 through the decade of the 2000s. Runner Pack #166, no earlier than 2005 (given conspicuity stripes) to as late as the present.

If you've been waiting for some Plain Old Center Flows, from Micro-Trains, whether to run or to add your own graffiti (what!?) here's your chance. In fact, Micro-Trains just used another road number from the prototype series, 27280, as the "canvas" on which to place the "Seasons Greetings" graffiti last month.

That series – well, it's actually a pair of series of 4650 cubic foot hoppers, ACFX 27257 to 27317 and ACFX 27323 to 27387. The first ORER in which I pick these up is the April 1981 issue in which the total between these two sets is 126 cars, under the listing for Shippers Car Line. These groups are not in the July 1980 Equipment Register so we have a pretty tight start to the overall Approximate Time Period. Checking the rest of the dimensions, which are identical across the two groups of cars, the inside length is 49 feet 9 inches, outside length 54 feet 7 inches, extreme height 15 feet 6 inches, and capacity 197,000 pounds in addition to 4650 cubic feet. The MTL 093 body style is modeled after the ACF 4650 car so we're good there.

Runner Pack #166 includes conspicuity stripes which were required starting in 2005. So it's alright to jump to the ORER for January 2006. By then, the ACFX cars were under the registration for General Electric Rail Services. The two groups had been merged into a larger series numbered 27060 to 27387, which has a total of 101 cars. Plenty of chances to add stripes! I'm going to presume that all of the cars have had conspicuity stripes added within a few years of the beginning of the requirement, putting the end of the ATP for Runner Pack #165 sometime by the end of the decade of the 2000s. Could one have snuck through to 2011 or 2012? Sure. In fact, see below.

Moving to our current proxy for "the present," the January 2018 ORER, the cars have moved over to Wells Fargo Rail Corporation, where there is an even larger series of CF4650 cars, ACFX 27257 to 28100, with a total car count of 124. That's out of 843 possible cars, so the four MTL will offer in Runner Pack #166 (27293, 27300, 27373, 27382) might or might not still be in service. So we'll go with "as late as the present" for the end of the ATP for this set.

Over to bingo photos on RRPictureArchives: there are two for ACFX 27293, from 2008 and 2014. Conspicuity stripes and, ahem, additional painting, are in evidence in both images. The 27300 as of 2007 doesn't yet have conspicuity stripes but does have a dent, which wasn't fixed as of 2010, though it did have stripes by then. ACFX 27324 was captured in May and June 2006 without conspicuity stripes but with some rust. The 27333 made it into 2012 without stripes, but has a pretty heavy coating of, well, I'm not sure what that is. The 27340 was clean in 2005 but as years went on, it acquired a heavy dose of orange! Check the photo from 2013 to see what I mean. No stripes on the 27352 as of September 2004, of course, but they've been applied by February 2010; the latest photo is from October 2015. I do not think MTL will be reproducing the graffiti on ACFX 27373 as of September 2006 (don't ask). It was painted over

by November 2015 and stripes were added, but probably a lot earlier than that on both counts. Finally, the 27382 escaped to May 2010 without having conspicuity stripes, but they'd been applied no later than August 2014. So how about that... bingo photos for each of the eight road numbers in the two forthcoming Runner Packs.

**Scheduled Delivery May 2020:**

**993 02 020, \$109.95**

**NASA Weathered Three-Pack.** Scheduled to consist of:



(painted but not assembled). Light weathering. Previous Releases: None.

• **064 Series 57 Foot TOFC Flat Car.** Blue with white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Simulated pipe load included



Previous Releases: Technically none, but Catalog Number 071 00 830, Road Number 162, August 2017, is similar.

• **071 Series 89 Foot Flat Car.** Blue with white lettering including reporting marks on left. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Heavy weathering including on deck.



Technically none, but Catalog Number 110 00 260, Road Number 191, December 2016 is similar.

• **110 Series 54 Foot General Service Tank Car.** Black with white lettering. Reporting marks restenciled over fresh black patch panel on left. White double COTS panel on right. Moderate weathering. Previous Releases:

Catalog numbers and reporting marks will be confirmed upon release (I can't quite read the artwork so I'm not going to guess on the road numbers). Approximate Time Period for the set is mid-1980s to no later than 2011. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

I'm not even going to try to find bingo photos for these pending releases. As you may recall, I had quite the frustrating time of it trying to locate any images online for the NASA Series releases in 2016 and 2017, and I suspect things have not improved since then. My general conclusion for the original set of NASA cars is that they were at least representative of the roster of 75 various pieces of equipment, and some better than that.

As I noted via the Wikipedians at the start of the Micro-Trains NASA Series in September 2016, the NASA Railway served the NASA operations in Florida. Picture a capital letter "F" tipped on its side with the tail connecting to the Florida East Coast Railway west of Cape Canaveral



and the tines of the “F” pointing south. The left hand or West Leg stretched 11 miles, down to the Kennedy Space Center Industrial Area, while the right hand or East Leg served the Air Force’s Titan Complex as well as two launch pads. At the junction of these two legs was Wilson Yard, which was built by the Florida East Coast.

A principal mission of the NASA Railroad was delivery of solid rocket booster segments for use in the Space Shuttle, but the line also brought in other bulky items that were too costly or logistically difficult to bring in via, say, trucks. However, with the conclusion of the Space Shuttle Program in 2011, the NASA Railroad was closed down and the equipment scattered.



***Scheduled Delivery April 2020:***

**993 02 020, \$109.95**

**Montana Rail Link (MRL) Weathered Gondola Tie Loader Three-Pack.**

Scheduled to consist of three 105 series gondolas:

- MRL 40004 and 40005, blue with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and “W” (Washington Companies) herald on right. Red and white roadname at top left. White on black double COTS panel at far right. White horizontal simulated reflective stripes at points across bottom of car. These cars have weathering and paint fading effects revealing Burlington Northern cascade green paint.

at far right. White horizontal simulated reflective stripes at points across bottom of car. These cars have weathering and paint fading effects revealing Burlington Northern cascade green paint.

- MRL 100503, blue with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and “W” (Washington Companies) herald on right. Red and white roadname at top left. White on black double COTS panel at far right. Orange horizontal simulated reflective stripes at points across bottom of car. This car is not weathered based on the MTL image (subject to change).

All three cars will include a simulated crosstie load. Pack also includes a tie loader kit (assembly and painting required). Approximate Time Period: at least mid-decade of the 2010s, but feel free to use Rule #1. All three cars have paint schemes not previously released by Micro-Trains. Catalog and road numbers will be confirmed upon release. Micro-Trains artwork is preliminary and actual product may vary.

It’s captioned as MRL 40006, but I think it’s actually a bingo to MRL 40005 over on the site RRPictureArchives, as photographed in September 2014. Certainly there is more than a passing resemblance between it and the MTL artwork. Meanwhile, over on RailcarPhotos.com, there is a shot of MRL 100503 – bingo-- in fresh paint as of November 2009, not only carrying the Jimbo tie loader crane, but decorated with the word “Jimbo” in script lettering right on the middle of the side. It would be cool if Micro-Trains added that to the finished model. (Remember, all artwork is preliminary!)

While Montana Rail Link officially came into existence in 1987, I don't think the Approximate Time Period for this set goes back quite that far. Assuming that the stripes on the 100503 are of the Conspicuity Variety, that would make a Strictly Speaking ATP after 2005. While Montana Rail Link does list its passenger cars (!) in the ORER, it doesn't register its MOW equipment, so that avenue is a dead end. I think a generous application of Rule #1 (It's Your Railroad) is perfectly acceptable here.

**N SCALE WEATHERED/GRAFFITI RELEASES:** *The following was announced via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or after December 12.*



**092 44 470, \$32.90**

**Reporting Marks: NDYX 298237.**

**Two Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, First Union Rail.**

Base car is gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left. A side has black and multicolor graffiti including large curved "RIDLECROW" partially obscuring reporting marks. B side has black and multicolor graffiti including "RIDLCROW" (no "E") at bottom of side. Approximate Time Period: 2006 and 2007, plus or minus. Previous Releases: None.

OK, so how **do** you spell it, with or without an "E"? A web search did not provide the answer. Oh, well...

Anyway, MTL correctly has both spellings of "RIDLECROW" ... or is it "RIDLCROW" ... as found on this car in 2007 (the side without the "E") and posted to RRPictureArchives.net, and on Flickr (the side with the "E") also as of 2007. The graffiti appears to be "dated" 2006 so I'll add that year to the ATP. Another photo of the "A" side loaded to Flickr in May 2010 but showing the car in snow could extend that plus or minus out a couple of years.

NDYX 298237 is part of the series 298100 to 298299, built by Thrall in 1996 according to captions on RailcarPhotos.com. My understanding is that Thrall's design is quite similar to but not exactly the same as the original American Car and Foundry plans. Their 3000 foot capacity is just a bit larger than the MTL 092 body style which is based on the CF2970 from AC&F.



**094 44 430, \$33.95**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 402200.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper, Trough Hatches, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.**



Base car is brown with white lettering including reporting marks on left and circle cross herald on right. Small simulated reflective stripes along bottom sill. White on black double COTS panel on far right of sides. "A" or featured side of the car has blue and white "NSF" with

orange background covering most of the side. "B" side of the car has white and multicolor graffiti. Approximate Time Period: 2016, plus or minus. Previous Releases: Technically none, although Catalog 94150/094 00 150, Road Number 420505, September 2000 is very close.

I'll wager some folks over at a certain group that focuses on the many aspects of our model railroad proportion (and full disclosure, for whom I also write) are looking at this car and saying, Rats, Just One Letter Off. Why couldn't this graffiti be "NSE," for N Scale Enthusiast, instead of "NSF," the financial abbreviation for Not Sufficient Funds? Ah, but "NSF" is what was added to the real BNSF 402200, found on Flickr by our Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe. The photo date is given as March 2016, which gives us our "plus or minus" ATP. According to information on RailcarPhotos, the BNSF series 420097 to 420846 was formerly Santa Fe group 313800 to 314799 built by American Car and Foundry in 1973, the Santa Fe's class GA-183. These are 4600 cubic foot cars, just 50 cubic feet less than the MTL 094 body style. And yes, Micro-Trains has done Santa Fe Center Flows from this number series.

Meanwhile, David has a question about the "B" side of the car: "The other side says Ucm (U C ME) I'm guessing?" Seems to me like another example of "if you want us to know who you are, be more legible." David continues, "This could have come from anywhere. A graffiti search for UCME yielded tons of photos but I didn't find the exact colors MTL used. They could have changed the colors for that matter." The net here is that the "B" side of the car likely leverages graffiti from elsewhere. Neither of us found photos of that side of the 402200.



993 05 590, \$64.95.

**Reporting Marks: D&RGW 10000 and 10002.**

**Rio Grande Weathered Two Pack.**

Consists of two 092 series Two Bay Center Flow Covered Hoppers. Base cars are gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left and speed lettering roadname with "The Action Road" on right. Multicolor ACI Label and white on black double COTS panel on far right. Moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects on both cars; patch panels on the 10002. Approximate Time Period: 1974, or late 1970s given COTS panel, or mid-1980s given weathering, to as

late as the present. Previous Releases (Unweathered): Catalog Number 92020, Road Number



10099, November 1993; then Road Number 10116, February 2005. Individual catalog numbers are 092 51 020 (the 10000) and 092 52 020 (the 10002).

When this car was reprinted in 2005, I commented, “This offers a chance for weathering buffs to do their worst. Cement, which is what the prototype carried, can make a car awfully messy in a hurry. This one shouldn’t be an exception. What do you mean, weather MTL cars?” And now, behold, it has come to pass, although the prototype series of cars is different.

Both the previous “clean” runs came from the Rio Grande series 10070 to 10119, so I need to do a little digging. The immediately preceding series numerically speaking was Rio Grande 10000 to 10069, built in 1974 for American Car and Foundry. The 10012 is pictured on Page 86 of the **Rio Grande Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, looking rather dirty as of July 1985, but not quite as bad as the two cars Micro-Trains has done. This series was also in cement service.

RailcarPhotos.com has a bingo on D&RGW 10000, the first car in the prototype series, as of August 1986. It seems to me that the Micro-Trains car has a touch more wear. Meanwhile, there are two shots of the 10002, one from September 2007 and a second from August 2011. The September 2007 picture appears to be the one Micro-Trains used; note, though, that graffiti that Union Pacific does not allow on its models was present on the real car at the time. (And if you can figure out what it says, you’re good at reading graffiti!) The August 2011 shot has quite the curiosity: what looks like a fresh ACI Label, some twenty-plus years after that identification protocol was discontinued! The car also had orange vertical conspicuity stripes, including two placed right over the graffiti. Come on, folks, have a little pride in appearance!

The ORER for April 1975 shows all 70 cars with these key dimensions: inside length 37 feet 11 inches, outside length 41 feet 7 inches, extreme height 14 feet 10 inches, and capacity 2971 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. And, whoa, that is an entire single cubic foot capacity difference from the MTL 092 body style... however the dimensions that get you to that delta are also a little different than the Micro-Trains model. Since there’s a bingo to the 10002 as of August 2011, I jumped to the Union Pacific listing in the January 2011 ORER. As of that time, 47 of the original 70 cars were in service. Twenty-six of those remain as of the January 2018 Equipment Register, so an “as late as the present” ATP is what I’ll go with here.



**993 05 600, \$124.95**

**Railbox Graffiti Four-Pack. Consists of the following 50 foot exterior post boxcars:**

- 025 51 561, RBOX 40353, Single Door. Base car is yellow with black door and with

mostly black lettering including later Railbox name and reporting marks on left. Small red, blue and black “Next Load/Any Road” logo on right. Light weathering especially on roof. “A” or featured side of the car has multicolored graffiti covering most of the side right of the door, depicting an ape. “B” side has two large multicolor graffiti tags, one each side of the



3, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 11 during 2018. Counting unweathered and weathered cars, this is the twelfth release in this paint scheme.

Based on bingos of both sides of this car found on RRPictureArchives, the Approximate Time Period for this car would be “2005, plus or minus” if we considered the “B” side of the car (above), with another example of “I can’t read this” tagging. It’s entirely possible that the “B” side graffiti was still in place when the ape figure was added no later than 2011. Or perhaps it was still there in 2014 when another shot of the featured side was taken and posted to Flickr--thank you as usual, Graffiti Special Correspondent David Grothe. Well, that’s why we use “plus or minus” around here. David also noted that “Five” is likely the party bringing you all of these members of the simian family.

The 40353 is part of the prototype series RBOX series 40250-40749, built by Berwick Forge and Fabricating, in April and May 1980. These 5277 cubic foot cars differ from the MTL 025 body style, most notable with respect to the ends. As of the January 2018 ORER there were only 55 of these boxcars left in service, so “to present” might not quite be reached. If they are still around, they’re probably all, ahem, additionally decorated.



•026 52 071, ABOX 50828, Combination Single and Plug Doors. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and “The nationwide boxcar pool” on right. Black, red and blue original version “Next Load/Any Road” logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Both sides have moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects. “A” side of the car has multicolored graffiti covering nearly all of

the side right of the door and the door, depicting two chimpanzees. Approximate Time Period: 2018, plus or minus (using the “A” or featured side of the car). Previous Releases: Unweathered, Catalog 026 00 070, Road Number 50915, February 2018, then Eight Pack #16 with road numbers 50445, 50467, 50523, 50532, 50654, 50676, 50898, and 50910, October 2018. Counting unweathered and weathered cars, this is the tenth release in this paint scheme.

When the first “clean” car in this paint scheme was released in N Scale in February 2018, I remarked that the prototype series to which it belonged was closer to the 026 body style than previous runs. That continued with the Eight Pack in October 2018, and applies to this car as

well. The series to which this car, 50828, belongs was built by FMC; that company's cars are the basis for the MTL x-post boxcar models, although the Micro-Trains cars represent 5077 cubic foot cars and this ABOX series is of 5277 cubic foot cars.

The July 1980 ORER has the series ABOX 50400 to 52449. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 8 inches, inside height 11 feet, outside length 55 feet 9 inches, extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, door opening 16 feet, and capacity 5277 cubic feet or 154,000 pounds. A total of 695 of these cars remained in the group as of the January 2018 Register.

The bingo on RRPictureArchives is from June 2018, however it shows a patched road number, and, if you can believe this, faded graffiti. I think that pushes the "minus" part of the "plus or minus" back a few years.



•026 53 011, ABOX 52264, Combination Single and Plug Doors. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including later Railbox name and reporting marks on left. Small red, blue and black "Next Load/Any Road" logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Both sides have light weathering and fading effects. "A" side of the car has multicolored graffiti extending from left of the plug door across both doors to the far right of the side, depicting a gorilla.

Approximate Time Period: 2011 through 2013, plus or minus. Previous Releases (Unweathered): Road Number 50062, March 2002; then Runner Pack #97 with road numbers 50006, 50050, 50073 and 50110, October 2014. Counting unweathered and weathered cars, this is the sixth release in this paint scheme.

The roster information is the same as the above ABOX 50828, though the paint scheme is the newer one with the less large graphics. Bingo photos for the "A" side are on Flickr from 2011 and RRPictureArchives from 2013, and the "B" side is also on RRPictureArchives from 2012.



•026 54 071, ABOX 52075, Combination Single and Plug Doors. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and "The nationwide boxcar pool" on right. Black, red and blue original version "Next Load/Any Road" logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Both sides have moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects and heavy weathering on the roof.



“A” side of the car has multiple multicolor graffiti areas including the depiction of a monkey on the right. “B” side of the car has multiple multicolor graffiti areas. Approximate Time Period: 2011 to 2016, plus or minus (using the “A” or featured side of the car). Previous Releases: Same as the 026 52 071 above. Counting unweathered and weathered cars, this is the eleventh release in this paint scheme.

Look carefully at the road number! At first I thought it was 53075, but that can’t be since there was no prototype car with that number lettered ABOX. On further review, as is said often by referees at National Football League games (and, yes, “On further review” is a redundant expression), the “2” in the road number on the “B” side is faded in such a way that it looks like a “3.” So this car also falls within the series ABOX 50400 to 52449 with more details above.

With that out of the way, let’s check the bingo photos. First, David Grothe pointed us over to Flickr for a shot of the “A” side dated March 2011, and on RRPictureArchives there are 2014 and 2016 views. The actual appearance of the car differs a bit from picture to picture. I’d go with the 2011 view as the closest match. A 2011 view of the “B” side on RRPictureArchives reinforces that as it also corresponds to the MTL model.



#### N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION

**RELEASES:** Car #9 in the **Thomas Kinkade Painter of Light Series** has been released (102 00 809, \$31.95). UMTRR coverage was in the December 2018 issue. This release features the 2011 work

“Christmas Lodge.” View a larger version of this painting along with notes on it at <https://thomaskinkade.com/art/christmas-lodge/>.

Fun fact: There’s also a film, **Christmas Lodge**, one of several made under the Thomas Kinkade imprimatur. Amazon’s description: “While out hiking with her boyfriend, Mary comes across the run-down lodge she remembers from her childhood, so she decides to help restore the lodge and bring her family together for one more Christmas.” Reviews were, let us say, mixed.

*The following is in pre-order at present and is NOT currently available. Scheduled delivery is as noted below. UMTRR coverage is being provided ahead of the actual release in order to facilitate pre-order decisions; pre-orders close **December 31.***



**Scheduled Delivery Starting May 2020:**  
**Catalog Numbers TBD, \$27.95 (unlit) and \$36.95 (interior light included).**  
**Solar System Series.**



Scheduled to consist of nine modified 102 series 60 foot boxcars. Each car will have multicolored sides with black roof and ends. White lettering including “Our Solar System” and planet name (or the Sun on one car) on left and description and information on right.

Color illustration or photographic image of the subject planet (or the Sun) replacing doors, printed on translucent material. Lighted version includes LED interior light with telescope-shaped magnetic actuator wand. MTL pre-production models shown; actual product may vary. Approximate Time Period: 4.568 billion years ago to present.

Two questions immediately came to mind upon reading this announcement:

- 1) What about Pluto?
- 2) Was I partially responsible for this?

We’ll cover the first question in a moment. But did I put this idea out there years ago, when I wondered at the end of the State Series whether planets would be covered? (The N Scale Collector/N Scale Enthusiast did commission Special Runs in the same design as the State Cars for The Moon and Mars.) The short answer is, I doubt it. If the pre-production models are any indication, the artwork will be light years ahead of the State Series cars. (Pun intended.) Add the lighting capability, which I presume to be the same as on the lighted 2019 Christmas Car, and you’re putting on quite a show on, say, a public display layout. As the cars are released starting in May of next year, I’ll see if I can dig up some fun facts about each of the subjects of these cars... other than what Micro-Trains will print on these cars, that is. Challenge accepted!

Ok, now, what about Pluto? I mean, just because it’s only 17.7 percent the mass of our Moon, and there’s now been discovered a larger Trans-Neptunian object (meaning that its orbit is sometimes inside the orbit of the planet Neptune), that doesn’t mean it shouldn’t count, right? Well, on August 24, 2006, the International Astronomical Union declared that Pluto did not meet all three criteria in a new definition of “planet,” reclassified Pluto as a dwarf planet, and the scientific equivalent of a food fight ensued. Both New Mexico and Illinois passed resolutions in favor of Pluto retaining its status. “The Great Planet Debate” of 2008 hosted by Johns Hopkins University resulted in a conclusion that “scientists could not come to a consensus about the definition of planet.” But there’s no debate here: as my daughter Thalia sang with her Eighth Grade Chorus, “Pluto, you’ll always be a planet to me.”

## Z SCALE NEW RELEASES:



518 00 810, \$27.95.

**Reporting Marks: NWX 14404.**

**40 Foot Wood Double Sheathed Refrigerator Car with Fishbelly Underframe, Horvitz Brothers Wholesale.**

#11 in the Farm-to-Table Series (Pre-orders taken in September 2018). Yellow sides,

brown ends, roof, and door sill, black details. Black lettering including “Horvitz Brothers

Wholesale Fruit and Produce Chicago Illinois” on left and “Commission Merchants Distributors Receivers Shippers” and reporting marks on right. Black, red and yellow sack of “Selected Onions” right of door and black, red and brown sack of “Selected Potatoes” on far right. White end markings. Approximate Time Period: 1934 (service date) to no later than 1938.

Please see the coverage of the N Scale release above (049 00 870).



**531 00 301 and 531 00 302, \$27.90 each.**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 405654 and 405619.**

**Two Bay PS-2 Covered Hoppers, Burlington Northern Santa Fe.**

Gray with black lettering including reporting marks on left. Orange and black “wedge” herald on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Orange horizontal conspicuity stripes at points along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 2005 to mid-decade of the 2010s.

RailcarPhotos.com provides the lineage of these cars as well as a bingo on the 405654 taken in September 2011. The series BNSF 405600 to 405681 was the Burlington Northern series 420750 to 420899, and was originally the SL-SF (Frisco) series 85150 to 85299 built by Pullman-Standard as their Lot 9091 in February and March 1966. The “no earlier than” ATP is not just given the conspicuity stripes this time; it’s also for the introduction of the “wedge” herald... and yes, it is scary that that was around fourteen years ago. We can’t get quite to “the present” though. After just twelve cars shown in the group as of the October 2014 Equipment Register, the series is gone from the January 2018 ORER.

And let’s flash back to the Frisco listing for these cars to get the key dimensions: inside length 36 feet 11 inches, inside width 9 feet 11 inches, outside length 45 feet even, extreme height 14 feet 4 inches, capacity 3010 cubic feet or 200,000 pounds. If those dimensions seem a bit different from the typical Pullman-Standard PS-2 covered hopper, you’re right about that. The look of the car isn’t that much different from the MTL 531 body style; reduced to 1:220 proportion I’d be hard pressed to tell you there’s a delta between model and prototype.



**531 00 311 and 531 00 312, \$27.90 each.**

**Reporting Marks: BN 440181 and 440193.**

**Two Bay PS-2 Covered Hoppers, Burlington Northern.**

Green with white lettering including roadname and reporting marks on left, and large herald on right. White on black double COTS panel at bottom center. White simulated reflective blocks at points along bottom of car. Approximate Time Period:



1971 (build date) or 1981 (service date on car) through at least the decade of the 1980s.

Back to Railcar Photos we go to learn that the series 440150 to 440349 was original to the Burlington Northern, not a pickup from a predecessor railroad. These cars were built by Pullman-Standard as their Lot 9537 in April 1971, just thirteen months after the BN merger became official.

The paint scheme certainly drives the Approximate Time Period; the question is how far. As evidenced on Page 46 of the **Burlington Northern Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** and an undated photo of BN 440168, some of these cars were painted gray. And of course from the bingo photo some were painted green. I think both may be “as delivered.” Certainly BN went to smaller and smaller lettering, until eventually the “spartan” scheme of just reporting marks was the rule. The image of the 440181 is from October 1984, so we’re good at least that long. The other car has a bingo on RRPictureArchives, from October 1982. BN didn’t repaint on any particular cadence, so I think we would be okay through the decade of the 1980s at least. Invoke Rule #1 and carry that out farther. I won’t tell anyone.

And finally... and I do mean this!... the **Union Pacific “Desert Victory” SD40-2 (970 01 300, Road Number 3593, \$249.95)** is now available and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. I’ll replace the MTL artwork with an actual product photo on the UMTRR website, should an image become available.



**Z SCALE REPRINTS:** No releases this month.



**Z SCALE MULTI-PACKS:** The **Northern Pacific Passenger Car 4-Pack (994 01 250, \$124.95)** was scheduled to be available mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. UMTRR coverage was in the July 2019 issue. This set consists of three Streamlined Coaches and one Modernized Business Car. The individual catalog and road numbers are as follows: 552 51 120, 505; 552 52 120, 508; 552 53 120, 514; 556 54 120; Gallatin River.

There are no pre-order announcements this month.

**Z SCALE SPECIAL EDITIONS:** No releases this month.

**Z SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced via the Micro-Trains website, the MTL Facebook page, and via the e-mail "Micro-Trains E-Line," all on or after December 12.*



**994 05 240, \$62.95**

**Railbox Graffiti Two-Pack. Consists of the following 50 foot exterior post boxcars:**

- 510 51 222, RBOX 40353, Single Door. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including later Railbox name and reporting marks on left. Small red, blue and black "Next Load/ Any Road" logo on right. Light weathering especially on roof. "A" or featured side of the car has multicolored graffiti covering most of the

side right of the door, depicting an ape. "B" side has two large multicolor graffiti tags, one each side of the door with a white restenciled road number on a black patch panel. Approximate Time Period (based on the "A" side of the car): 2011 to 2014, plus or minus. Previous Releases: Eight Pack #4 (994 00 804), road numbers 20520, 20648, 20664, 20682, 20750, 20794, 20875, and 20883, September 2013; then Weathered/Graffiti "A Year of Railbox" cars 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 12 during 2018. Counting unweathered and weathered cars, this is the 17<sup>th</sup> release in this paint scheme.

- 512 52 041, ABOX 52075, Combination Single and Plug Doors. Base car is yellow with black door and with mostly black lettering including original version Railbox name and reporting marks on left and "The nationwide boxcar pool" on right. Black, red and blue original version "Next Load/ Any Road" logo on right. White on black double COTS panel on far right. Both sides have moderate to heavy weathering and fading effects and heavy weathering on the roof. "A" side of the car has multiple multicolor graffiti areas including the depiction of a monkey on the right. "B" side of the car has multiple multicolor graffiti areas. Approximate Time Period: 2011 to 2016, plus or minus (using the "A" or featured side of the car). Previous Releases: Eight Pack #11, road numbers 50445, 50467, 50523, 50532, 50654, 50676, 50898, and 50910, November 2018, then Weathered Release 512 44 040, Road Number Obscured, September 2019. Counting unweathered and weathered cars, this is the tenth release in this paint scheme.

Please refer to Cars 1 and 4 in the N Scale Railbox 4-Pack (993 05 600) above, as they are the same cars.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The main announcement from Micro-Trains also concerns Z Scale and a process transition. First, there will be Z Scale product released as is happening now from January to May 2020. Starting in January, there will be pre-order announcements for all items except mid-month Weathered Releases for delivery starting in June 2020. These pre-order announcement are scheduled to occur every other month—in other words, January, March,

May, et cetera. However, there will be releases each month. Micro-Trains has more details about this on their website. This may seem a bit confusing during the transition months, but that time won't really be different for consumers from the current protocol – some releases and some pre-orders. MTL is available for any questions.

My protocol for review and commentary won't change here in these bytes. The pre-order announcements for single item releases—which is really what's affected here—will get the same coverage as I provide now.

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** In the What, More Euchred Figs Department, the July 1954 issue of **Model Railroader** includes a line drawing of that particular Heinz Refrigerator Car, with the somewhat infamous “Pickles, Euchred Figs, Onions, etc.” lettering. Road Number 484 was done by Micro-Trains in May 1997 and 485 was the road number of the January 2019 reprint, part of the Heinz Yellow Series. Accompanying the Heinz car drawing is a much less ornate Canadian National 36 foot truss rod refrigerator car, which has yet to be done by Micro-Trains... hint to the folks in Talent...

**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** An abbreviated bye-bye board this time around, looking at only 2019 items. I'll return to the full review next month. First, none of the Weathered Releases from last month have left the building. Staying with N Scale Weathered Releases, the Norfolk Southern Center Flow two-pack has emptied out (092 44 460, June). The EMP weathered container has been hauled away (468 44 030, September). The “Lost In Space” Ferromex auto rack (111 44 290, October) has taken off. No 2019 Z Scale Weathered items sold out since last check. In fact, no 2019 Z Scale items at all have sold out since last check.

So, back to N Scale. Last month's “Regional Railroads” release boxcar for the Jersey Central Lines is outta here (034 00 470, November), as is the gondola which was voluntarily recalled for a replacement in the correct black paint (105 00 300). Farm to Table Series #2, for Joan of Arc Kidney Beans, is empty (049 00 810, March). The Union Pacific caboose reprint (051 00 101, August) has been dispatched. The Penn Central Center Flow from just last month (094 00 590) is gone faster than I'd expected. The NKCR/CN auto rack, also from last month (111 00 340) is gone about as fast as I'd expected. The Blue Line Civil War Era Four-Pack has marched away (993 01 800, April). Runner Pack #153 of four Great Northern double sheathed boxcars is gone (993 00 153, May). So is Runner Pack #158 of four Canadian National steel boxcars (993 00 158, October). I may have missed the sellout of the CSXT open hopper eight-pack (993 00 817, September): oops. Last month's Union Pacific Tie Loader 3-Pack (993 01 890) is gone. Finally, the surprise Pennsylvania Railroad Flat Car Three-Pack with construction equipment has unloaded (993 01 940, September).

**OOPS PATROL:** The Oopsies were confined to the Release Tables, which I fixed during the update with these very releases. Well, at least as far as I know.



**FINALLY, THE MT40:** Last year's "year-end survey" on the count of body style releases was fun, and I've had a request to run down the top items in each scale this year. So, once again channeling my inner Casey Kasem, here we go.

First, let's recap last year's results. In Z Scale, the top three were the 550 body style Streamlined Sleeper Passenger Car, the 510 body style 50 foot x-post single door boxcar, and the 518 body style 40 foot refrigerator car. In N Scale, at number three was the 025 body style 50 foot x-post single door boxcar, at number two was not a freight car, but the SW1500 locomotive, and in the number one slot was the 047 body style 40 foot refrigerator car. Now, let's see how things stack up this year. Our basis for this ranking is counting each road number as a separate release, and also each component of a train set, multi-pack or Weathered Item separately as well. And here we go with the top of the chart in Z Scale:

Vocal up: "Number Five!"

At number five this year we have the venerable 500 series forty foot boxcar with single door, checking in with six releases.

Then there's a tie for the number four position, with seven releases each. The 531 series PS-2 covered hopper was caught by the 510 series 50 foot x-post single door boxcar, thanks to those four Black Friday specials.

At number three, we also have a tie: both the 505 series fifty foot double door boxcar and the 540 series well car have ten releases each. The double stack cars were certainly helped by that TTX Weathered Eight-Pack.

All alone at number two is, not a freight car, but the SD40-2 locomotive, which had a total of eleven releases. We would have had a three-way tie here were it not for the just under the wire mid-December release of the Union Pacific "Desert Storm" diesel. Word here at UMTRR HQ, though, is that this body style will fall off the charts in 2020.

And at number one among all 1:220 Micro-Trains offerings, for the second year in a row, it's the 518 series 40 foot wood sheathed refrigerator car, with thirteen releases.



Before we get to the N Scale Countdown, we have a Long Distance Dedication to all the Narrow Gauge modelers out there. From the **Schoolhouse Rock** soundtrack, it's "Three Is A Magic Number" – as in Three Foot Gauge, of course. You were not forgotten in 2019, with a set of four log cars in each scale.

And now, let's look at our top five in N Scale. At number five, there is a three-way tie at twelve releases each. The 102 series 60 foot boxcar is driven by the Painter of Light series plus the two

Christmas Cars. The 092 and 094 series two-bay and three-bay Center Flows share the number five slot.

In fourth place by itself is the car type that has charted since all the way back in 1972, with fifteen releases this year... the 020 series forty foot steel single door boxcar.

Thanks to some surprise three-packs, in the Number Three spot with sixteen releases is another veteran, the 045 body style fifty-foot fishbelly side flat car.

With a huge surge at the very end of the year, a Swift sixteen-pack in fact, the 058 body style 36 foot double sheathed refrigerator car jumps all the way to Number Two on the chart, with 22 releases.

And sixteen-packs figured largely in the success of our top body style this year as well, helped along by three Black Friday specials as well. It's by far the Number One Body Style this year...

(Drum roll)

...and leaping into that Number One spot for 2019, it's the 135 body style double-stack well car.



And there you have it, the top body styles for the year just ended. Until next time and next year, have a safe and happy holiday season. May you and yours enjoy whatever you celebrate!

Cheers,  
George

[Legalese: You've received this because you've requested a UMTRR e-mail subscription. If there's been some mistake, please let me know via e-mail at [umtrr@irwinsjournal.com](mailto:umtrr@irwinsjournal.com), including "UMTRR" in the subject line. You may also reply to this e-mail, but PLEASE delete attachments and other text first. All information contained herein is supplied "as is" and no warranties are express or implied. Trademarks are the property of their respective owners and are used for product identification only. Images of releases provided through courtesy of Micro-Trains Line, Inc. The Federal Trade Commission considers this effort to be an "endorsement." I assume readers can make up their own minds. **The UMTRR is copyrighted and all reprinting, reposting and other transmission is expressly prohibited, except for "Fair Use" quotes, unless prior permission has been obtained from me.**]