



*IrwinsJournal.com Presents:*

## **The Unofficial Micro-Trains® Release Report**

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Hello again everyone! Before we head into the news and views for this month, a couple of housekeeping items...

First, my ISP is getting rather persnickety about the blind copy send I do of these bytes to you, the completely, one hundred percent opt-in subscriber base, that is. Said ISP has decided to place limits on how many copies I can send out at a time, and then arbitrarily cut off my ability to send anything at all for an unspecified number of hours – a number which appears to be getting larger. The net of it is that it took more than a day and a half to get all copies of the last issue out the door. I've had suggestions (including from my wife!) that I switch to another method to distribute the UMTRR. However, anything I've looked at I consider to be a potential compromise to **your** privacy. I'd rather not share your e-mail address with any third party service. So I'll grit my teeth, delete my expletives, and press on. I apologize in advance if your last name is at the end of the alphabet, because that's the order in which I send out the Monthly Massive Missive... at least for now.

Second, where I can, I'd like to replace the MTL artwork of recent releases with photos of the actual product. If you happen to have or can take good quality photos of Runner Packs and such, please feel free to share. I especially could use an assist on Z Scale releases. Plain backgrounds are best, but as you can see I violate that rule myself (example at right) even though said background is out of focus.



Yes, I could pick some "actual photos" off of eBay listings, a widespread practice to be sure, but you know how I am about "fair use" – and that's not "fair use." So... little help, please? Let me know. I will credit you with any images provided if you'd like. The UMTRR "Month by Month" tables for this year and last are finally updated through February and I'm almost done with this month as well (!) so I know what I do and don't have.

With that out of the way, let's bring on the goodies for the Month of March...

**N SCALE NEW RELEASE FREIGHT EQUIPMENT:** We're going to take things in a bit different order this time around, beginning with the items which had their releases delayed into this month from January and February. As you'll see, though, that actually puts things **into** sequence by catalog number... sometimes things just work out that way!

*Available now, rescheduled from January, are these two cars:*



**020 00 247, \$27.95.**

**Road Number: 90600 (will be "SP 90600" in website listings).**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door with added hatches and hoppers, Southern Pacific.**

Brown (including trucks) with white lettering including roadname and road

number on left. Black and white circular "Southern Pacific Lines" herald on right. Black on white sideboard "For Bulk Sugar Loading Only/When Empty Return to Carlton" left of door. Includes painted cast resin hatches and hoppers to be installed by the modeler. Approximate Time Period: 1953 (based on reweigh date on car) to no later than 1958. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Hatches and hoppers are painted but not installed on the car. UMTRR coverage was in last September's issue.



**020 00 257, \$27.95.**

**Road Number: 26922 (will be "SOU 26922" in website listings).**

**40 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Superior Door with added hatches and hoppers, Southern Railway.**

Brown with yellow door. White lettering

including large "Southern Serves The South" and road number on left. Black lettering on door: "Roof hatch car for clay loading only / Return promptly when empty to Sou. Ry. or C. of G. Ry. at any junction point for loading." Includes painted cast resin hatches and hoppers to be installed by the modeler. Approximate Time Period: mid-1960s to mid-1980s. This car has a lowered underframe and body mounted couplers. Hatches are painted but not installed on the car. UMTRR coverage was in last September's issue.

*Available now, rescheduled from February, is:*



**065 00 136, \$29.95.**

**Reporting Marks: SLAX 49104.**

**39 Foot Tank Car, Bee Hive Corn Syrup / St. Lawrence Starch Company.**

Car #1 in the "Sweet Liquid Series" (Pre-order announcement last September). Yellow and blue tank, blue underframe, black trucks. Blue lettering on yellow section

of tank and yellow lettering on blue section of tank. Company name (blue) and reporting marks (yellow) on left. "Bee Hive" (blue) "Corn Syrup" (yellow) on right. Approximate Time Period: 1950 to 1987. UMTRR coverage was in last month's issue.

Now, to this month's releases, although two of these are scheduled for mid-March.



094 00 660, \$30.90.

**Reporting Marks: B&O 602259.**

**Three Bay Center Flow Covered Hopper with Trough Hatches, Baltimore & Ohio/Chessie System.**

Yellow with mostly blue lettering including reporting marks on left, "Ches-C" herald in center and "Chessie System" roadname on right. White on black double COTS panel and multicolor ACI Label at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1975 (based on service date) to mid-1990s. *Micro-Trains has announced that this release will be available mid-month.*

We start this month's coverage "for real" now... with a release delayed to mid-month. No worries, we have the bingo anyway, on Page 33 of the **Chessie System Color Guide to Freight Equipment**. B&O 602259 was caught in a three-quarter view facing away from the camera in Columbus, Ohio in 1985. It was among two groups of Class HC-24 cars; the first was B&O 602000 to 602299 and the second was C&O 602300 to 602399. They were built in 1967 by American Car and Foundry. Given the C&O's control of the B&O, a set of cars split by the railroads was not unusual. It's noted in the **Color Guide** that these were successors to the HC-15 class and were the first to be delivered to these railroads with lowered brake wheels. They were used in grain unit trains to Great Lakes and Eastern ports. The 4700 cubic foot capacity means these are just slightly larger than the CF4650 design on which the MTL 094 body style is based.

The Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER) for April 1976 would not tell us whether this car was still in B&O paint or had been redone with the "Ches-C" — but we already know that from the service date of July 1975. There were 288 cars in service in the 602000 to 602299 series at that time. In the October 1986 ORER there were a total of 237 cars on the roster, but just 19 remained in the CSX Transportation registration in the April 1995 Equipment Register. I'd say this was a result of restenciling, not full repainting, into CSXT reporting marks. And don't assume that it was only the Chessie System paint that got "the treatment" here... over on RRPictureArchives.net there is a 2012 shot of former B&O 602207, still in its original 1967 paint scheme with capitol dome herald (!!!), which had become CSXT 255768. Oh, and it also had conspicuity stripes added. This data point allowed me to find the series CSXT 255447 to 255838, a mix of 4700 and 4600 cubic foot cars. It's a start if you want to perform your own restenciling.

Oh, by the way, there's a photo of an example of the Chesapeake and Ohio version of this Chessie System set of Center Flows on the same page in the **Color Guide**. C&O 602307 is certainly a candidate for a follow on release. MTL already has the paint and the reference photo!



130 00 280, \$35.95.

**Reporting Marks: CNW 10385.**

**Bay Window Caboose, Windowless Sides, with Battery Box, Chicago and North Western.**

Yellow with dark green roof and end rails, aluminum underframe, end platform, steps and smokejack, white side rails, and black

battery box, trucks and couplers. Dark green lettering including reporting marks and road number on bay window and "We Originated... Safety First!" on left. Red, black and white "Employee Owned" herald on left. Red, white and blue waving American Flag on right. White on black triple COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1982, plus or minus.

The shade of dark green used for the lettering on this new release isn't quite the Pennsylvania Railroad's Dark Green Locomotive Enamel, also known as Brunswick Green, also known as "Can't Tell It From Black," but it's close! I can confirm, however, that the roof is a very dark green.

Well, as long as I'm digressing, let me confirm that this is similar to but not the same paint scheme as that on the Micro-Trains release of another C&NW bay window caboose (at right, Catalog 130 00 030, July 2009). Also, that release didn't have a battery box. Hmm, that lettering looks black also...



The bingo photo of the 10385, on Page 33 of the **Chicago and North Western Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume One**, doesn't help much with the lettering color. It does help validate that the side we can see doesn't have any windows other than in the bay; they had been plated over as of the September 1982 photo date. There's no specifics on the builder of the series CNW 10373 to 10397, but they look a lot like other CNW bay window cabooses that were built by International Car Company in 1955 for the railroad. It's noted in the Color Guide that "In the early 1980's the C&NW instituted a major rehabilitation program for all of their cabooses, a rarity for a Class One railroad at that date."

I did not conduct a statistically significant sampling of photos of the North Western's bay window cabooses in general — actually, that would be very difficult! — but the photos I did find of cars with slogans were taken in early 1980s. I think that gives us a "plus or minus" Approximate Time Period this time, although of course Rule #1 ("It's your railroad") can be applied. I did pick up from the Fallen Flags website ( [www.rr-fallenflags.org](http://www.rr-fallenflags.org) ) a June 1990 shot of CNW 10396 from the same prototype series, with the "Pulling Together" slogan on MTL's previous caboose. And for those who'd like another road number for this new release, the site RailcarPhotos.com offers a September 1985 in-motion shot of CNW 10360 in the same, er, dark green or black, lettering and "We Originated Safety First!" slogan.





180 00 240, \$29.80.

**Reporting Marks: ATSF 11971.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Single Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Santa Fe (AT&SF).**

Red with black ends. Mostly white lettering including reporting marks and large circle

cross on left. Yellow and white "Shock Control / A Smoother Ride" on right. Yellow "SL" in circle at top right. Multi-color ACI Label left of door. White on black single COTS panel at bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1974 (based on photo evidence) to late 1980s.

The organization then known as the N Scale Collector but now called the N Scale Enthusiast released a five-pack of Santa Fe "Shock Control" boxcars back in 2002 (NSC Number 02-89 for the pack). One of those cars comes close to the paint scheme on this new release, but not quite. I checked to see whether or not this was an "update" to that Special Run, and, well, no, it isn't, strictly speaking.

This new release is, instead, a Class Bx-79 boxcar, built by the Santa Fe in 1959. When built, it carried the red and black paint scheme with large circle cross and "Shock Control" wording. The book **Santa Fe Freight in Color Volume One**, Page 50, has a shot of another Bx-79, ATSF 12073 as built. We then turn to the **ATSF Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, Page 35, for a bingo on this release, shining brightly in the sun in May 1974. The running board has been removed and the ladders we can see are cut down, however the brake wheel is still in the high position unlike the one on the MTL 181 body style.

The ORER for April 1975 shows the series ATSF 19100 to 12164, described as "Box, Shock Control, SL Loaders, Nailable Steel Floors, 50K" with AAR Designation XL. The inside length was 50 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 2 inches, inside height 10 feet 6 inches, outside length 56 feet 2 inches, extreme height 15 foot 1 inch, capacity 4898 cubic feet or 140,000 pounds, and door opening 8 feet... which is less wide than the 10 foot door on the MTL car. Is that a "Reverse Door Thing?" We'll think about that. There were 220 cars in the series at the time.

In its car copy, MTL notes that these cars were all off the revenue roster by 1990. More specifically, the July 1989 Equipment Register showed just four cars remaining in a smaller group from 11987 to 12167... a span which does not include the 11971.



181 00 141 and 181 00 142, \$29.95 each.

**Reporting Marks: UP 499090 and 499194.**

**50 Foot Steel Boxcar, Plug Door, No Running Board, Short Side Ladders, Union Pacific.**

Yellow with aluminum ends, trucks, couplers and draft gear. Red roadname and black reporting marks on left. Red slogan "We Can Handle It / The Union Pacific Railroad

People” and red, white and blue shield herald on right. Black and white double COTS panel and multicolor ACI Label at bottom right below slogan. Approximate Time Period: mid-1970’s (1975 service date given by MTL) to mid-1980s. MTL artwork shown; actual product may vary. *Micro-Trains has announced that these cars will be available mid-month.*

This paint scheme might look a bit familiar: it’s been done twice on the 038 body style. The example at right is the reprint from February 2015 (Catalog Number 038 00 030, Road Number 499234). The first run of the car was done back in June 2002 (Catalog Number 38300, Road Number 499223). The differences between these two and the previously run cars are the body mounted couplers and cut-down side ladders, plus the etched metal end walks. All four cars are from the same prototype series.



Although the cars actually date to 1957 as the UP’s class BI-50-2, the paint scheme doesn’t. This is most likely the third decoration that they would have worn, following the as-painted “Be Specific” scheme and the “Automated Railway” scheme that was applied beginning in the early 1960s. “We Can Handle It” debuted around 1970 or so. Plain brown with varying minimal amounts of white lettering came afterwards, but let’s not talk about that! Suffice to say that scheme complexity declined over time. Also since the cars date to 1957, they were originally built with running boards (roofwalks), which were pulled later. As with many “boxcars” with plug doors, these were dubbed AAR Class RBL, as in refrigerator, from the start of their service.

The MTL-given service date was 1975 so let’s check the April 1976 ORER. The series 499000 to 499299 was described as “Refrigerator, Steel, 9 Belt DF Loaders, Plug Doors” and numbered 264 pieces. Inside length was 50 feet 1 inch and outside length 54 feet 6 inches. The door opening was 7 feet 7 inches wide, a little smaller than usual, and come to think of it, the inside height was smallish too at just 9 feet 7 inches. Could have been insulation inside the car which limited its useful area. Capacity was 4477 cubic feet or 100,000 pounds. The series was down to a scant 28 by the January 1985 ORER and was gone completely by 1989. It’s possible that they were downgraded to maintenance of way status, or maybe just plain boxcar status, and renumbered. But even so, that would be the end of the ATP.

Page 19 of the **UP Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume Two** has a shot of sister car UP 499233 as found in March 1975. It’s a bit difficult to see under that bright yellow paint but the sides are riveted, not welded as on the 181 (and 038) body style. It would probably be even harder to see in 1:160 scale. A bit easier to discern are the straight side sills on the real car, though that could be addressed by the modeler with a bit of care. The brake wheel is in the high position on the real car. MTL upgraded these cars with ACI Labels, which are appropriate for the ATP. Its placement on the car in the photo was below and to the left of “people” in the slogan, as on the artwork for these cars.

## N SCALE NEW RELEASE PASSENGER CARS:



149 00 330, \$29.95.

Road Number: 4200 (will be "SOU 4200" in website listings).

Heavyweight Horse Car, Southern Railway.

Pullman Green with black roof, ends, and underframe including six wheel trucks. Gold lettering including roadname across letterboard at top, "Railway Express Agency" right of center door on one side, and left of center door on the other side, and road number at bottom left and bottom right. Approximate Time Period: 1948 (based on paint scheme) to at least the early 1960s.

The bingo on this car, on Page 9 of the **Southern Railway Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**, shows the other side of the car from what we see in the official Micro-Trains photo. That's good, for that opposite side of the car has the "Railway Express Agency" lettering on the opposite side of the door. This was reproduced on the MTL car; the lettering is under the "SOUT" on one side and under the "HERN" on the other side of the car.

According to the **Color Guide**, this car and the 4201 were built by the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation in 1926 as horse cars, and both were moved to baggage service later. "Inside it had two movable partitions, each between the wide center door and the smaller end side doors, plus water tanks in the interior overhead." The vents had been plated over; I think that refers to on the sides and on the clerestory roof as well. The 4200 and 4201 were assigned to the Southern's Alabama Great Southern subsidiary, but in the image in the **Color Guide** it was definitely offline at the New York Central's Buffalo Central Terminal in September 1961. There were other cars of this type as well: 3900 to 3903 were on the roster of the Cincinnati, New Orleans and Texas Pacific roster, and 3250 to 3253 were on the Southern proper.



149 00 410, \$33.90.

Road Number: 212 (will be "C&O 212" in website listings).

Heavyweight Horse Car, Chesapeake & Ohio.

Yellow, dark blue and gray sides. Dark blue roof, ends, and underframe including six wheel trucks. Dark blue lettering including roadname in center of letterboard at top, "Railway Express Agency" and road number left of center door, and "Horse Express" right of center door in gray band. Small "C&O for Progress" herald at one end (see text). Approximate Time Period: no earlier than 1950, or strictly speaking, 1954, to at least the early 1960s.

The **Chesapeake & Ohio Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** has three photos of horse-express cars... from the previous prototype series! Nothing for us on the 212 there. However, I was able to find out that the 212 was among a few cars converted from 1910's era parlor cars. When repainted into the "tri-color" scheme, the cars received modernized doors; the photos in the **Color Guide** do help with that.

Though the 212 might not yet have been in the paint scheme as done by MTL, it is shown in the **Official Register of Passenger Train Equipment** for January 1953 as one of a three car series numbered 210 to 212. They're shown as being 81 feet 10 inches long over the buffers, while MTL calls out the 149 body style as being 70 feet long and they're about 72 feet long over the buffers.

As with the Baggage Car released last month, the "C&O For Progress" herald appears on the right hand end of the side of the car in the MTL image. On the side we don't see, the herald appears on the left hand end of the side of the car. Put another way, if you were looking down on the car, both heralds would be at the same end. As noted last month, the C&O's "tri-color" paint scheme was introduced in 1950, and the "straight line" herald (meaning that the line over "For Progress" is straight and not wavy) was used beginning in 1954. So we have a rough guide to the ATP.

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

**N SCALE MULTI-PACKS:** There are no pre-order announcements this month, but there's some catching up from the folks in Talent:

Originally scheduled for January, **Runner Pack #173 (993 00 173, \$109.95)**, of four CSX Transportation gondolas with coil covers is now slated to be released mid-month and should be at MTL dealers as you read this. (The switch to the official photo from the MTL artwork is encouraging.) UMTRR coverage was in last July's issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 105 51 810, 475235; 105 52 810, 475239; 105 53 810, 475274; and 105 54 810, 475275. These are the first through fourth releases of this item, which hasn't been previously issued.



**Runner Pack #176 (993 00 176, \$99.95)**, of four Southern Railway 14 panel fixed end 50 foot gondolas with fishbelly sides, is now available. UMTRR coverage was in last October's issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 105 51 340, 60514; 105 52 340, 60750; 105 53 340, 61118; and 105 54 340, 61349. These are the first through fourth releases of this item, which hasn't been previously issued, although as noted in the pre-review, there have been similar cars done by MTL such as Runner Pack #22 in May 2008.





One more reschedule... fingers crossed? The **CSXT Three Pack of "TBOX" cars (993 01 860, \$119.95)** was shifted from mid-last month to mid-this month. (Again, the use of an actual product image is encouraging here.) UMTRR coverage was in the April 2019 issue. The individual catalog and road numbers are: 123 51 030, 173565; 123 52 030, 173572; and 123 53 030, 173576. These are the first through third releases for this car. "TBOX" is so much shorter than "60 Foot Exterior Post High Cube Boxcar with Double Plug Doors." Remember, these sets are already completely spoken for so you will need to "Contact Dealer."



And finally, the **TTX Weathered Wreck Recovery Pack (992 02 130, \$74.95)** is also expected to be available mid-month. UMTRR coverage was in last November's edition. This set consists of a damaged well car and its trucks (135 52 063, DTTX with officially no road number though the MTL artwork shows 5687-something) atop an 89 foot flat car (071 51 890, JTTX 962855). Per Micro-Trains, the resin chocks for trucks will come painted, but not installed, and the etched-metal chain tie-downs can be cut to the desired length.

**N SCALE WEATHERED RELEASES:** *The following was announced on the Micro-Trains website on March 17.*



**101 44 060, \$34.90.**

**Reporting Marks: SP 659049.**

**40 Foot Hy-Cube Steel Boxcar, Single Youngstown Door, Southern Pacific.**

Brown (including trucks and couplers but not wheels) with mostly white lettering including reporting marks on left and large roadname on right. Yellow "Hydra-

Cushion for Fragile Freight" legend on left. ACI Label left of door (making this a "not a reprint"). White on black double COTS panel on right. Black on yellow "No Running Board" stencils at bottom left and bottom right. Black on white "Excess Height Car" warning at top of ends. Moderate to heavy weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1965, or "strictly speaking" early 1970s (given the ACI Label and COTS panels) to early 1980s. Previous Releases

(Unweathered): Road Number 659031, March 2007; Road Number 659036, May 2012; Road Number 659039, March 2019 (this one with an ACI Label).

Page 33 of the **Southern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment Volume 2** has a shot of the road number that MTL originally ran on this car, 659031, as it appeared in November 1977. This was an extensive rebuild, not a new car. In this case, the SP's boxcar class B-50-33 provided the "raw material." There are some differences – between model and prototype, but overall, it's a pretty good depiction in my opinion of a prototype that was more or less a custom job. The lettering including the "high up" roadname is basically faithful to the real thing. An image of sister car SP 659046, taken by prolific photographer Jim Sands and available on the Fallen Flags site, shows this "raised roof" quite well: the seams appear between the "Hydra-Cushion" and "For Fragile Freight" left of the door and between the "Southern" and "Pacific" right of the door. The Canadian Pacific Railway boxcar to the left of SP 659046, probably of ten foot interior height, provides a marked contrast in size. The seam is perhaps even more apparent in the bingo photo for the SP 659049, which is over on RRPictureArchives. I'll also note a delta that I hadn't seen before between these cars and the MTL 101 body style: a sloping roof, not a flat one. There is again a contrast with the car next to it, this time, an Illinois Central "Baby Hi-Cube" with the more typical flat roof. Surprisingly for an Espee car, it's **not** as dirty as how MTL weathered it. But then again, the prototype photo is dated November 1973. Plenty of time for additional weathering.

The path through the ORERs is a little complicated, with a number of subseries, some of which contain only one car, numbered from 659000 to 659052 and totaling all possible 51 cars. Most of the basic dimensions vary a bit, probably due to interior equipment: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside height 9 feet plus 2, 4 or 5 inches; inside height either 12 feet 4 inches or 12 feet 5 inches, outside length 45 feet plus either 2 or 4 inches, and extreme height 16 feet 11 inches with door opening 10 feet in all cases. The cubic foot capacity differed across the cars but the weight capacity of all of these was 110,000 pounds. We're down to 49 total cars in the April 1970 Register and 35 in April 1976. In the April 1981 Register a couple of the subsets are out and the total car count continues to drop, at 24 cars. All of these are gone by the April 1984 Equipment Register.



**101 44 140, \$31.90.**

**Reporting Marks: CB&Q 19837.**

**40 Foot Hy-Cube Boxcar, Single Door, Burlington (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy).**

Red with aluminum roof. White lettering including Burlington roadname and reporting marks on left. Black and white

"Burlington Route" herald on right. White diagonal stripe on door. White end markings (no "Excess Height" band on ends). Moderate to heavy weathering. Approximate Time Period: 1967 (build date on car) through the decade of the 1980s. Previous Release: Road Number 19825, September 2016.

*[The following is mostly “reprinted” from the September 2016 UMTRR.]* How about reference photos from two different Color Guides for this release? I’m not sure that’s ever happened before. First, there’s a photo on the car MTL selected for its September 2016 “clean” release, CB&Q 19825, on Page 30 of the **Pullman-Standard Color Guide to Freight Equipment**. It was one of fifteen cars numbered 19825 to 19839 constructed in October 1967. There is a straight-on shot of the car from ground level and a second shot that’s really meant to be advertising. “Because these cars were so novel at the time, Pullman went on a promotion campaign to highlight the features of this type of car. Here, a massive yardstick is used to show off the height of the car, necessary so that appliances could be stacked three high.” The photo is a more-or-less three-quarter view with that “yardstick” placed next to the end to illustrate its sixteen foot height. At the time, the requirement to mark these cars as “Excess Height” didn’t yet exist so there is correctly no black on white band at the top of the end of this car. Between the two images I think we can conclude that we have a good match of the MTL 101 body style to the prototype.

The second photo reference is to sister car CB&Q 19836, found in service in Washington State in April 1976, still without an “Excess Height” warning on the ends. This shot is on Page 64 of the **CB&Q Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment**. The presence of Evans DF2 loader devices is denoted by the diagonal white stripe on the door. The aluminum roof – perhaps it’s an unpainted roof, actually – is just barely visible in this image. According to this **Color Guide**, most of these cars were assigned to the Admiral Corporation in Galesburg, Illinois. (Speaking of Fallen Flags, the Admiral Corporation is, though the brand name remains in use.)

The ORER for October 1969 has the 19825 to 19839 series marked with a double dagger (‡) which “denotes large cars exceeding Plate C dimensions.” That was still quite uncommon at the time! The dimensions of these cars were: inside length 40 feet 6 inches, inside width 9 feet 6 inches, inside height 12 feet 9 inches, outside length 48 feet 4 inches, extreme height 16 feet 10 inches, door opening 10 feet, and capacity 4900 cubic feet or 148,000 pounds. While we think of appliances as heavy (especially when trying to maneuver one up a flight of stairs...) the odds are that the cube would be filled out before the weight was exceeded – which was the whole point of introducing these taller cars. The end note for this group calls out belt rails and cross bars.

It’s noted in the **Pullman-Standard Color Guide** that these cars would become part of the BN 281425 to 281474 series, and MTL has also done one of these (Catalog 101 00 090, August 2009). The last Equipment Register in which I have any of these cars lettered for the CB&Q is the July 1989 edition, with two remaining.

And just how big, relatively speaking, were these cars? Well, given their height, they were listed in later ORERs as Exceeding Plate F dimensions, even though they were built well before Plate F was introduced.



993 05 820, \$69.95.

**Reporting Marks: NP 84142 and 84162.**

**Northern Pacific "Pig Palace" Stock Car Two Pack.**

Consists of two 40 Foot Despatch Stock Cars (Individual Catalog Numbers 035 51 320 and 035 52 320). Brown with white lettering including roadname and top left and reporting marks at bottom left. Black and orange "Pig Palace" artwork on white placard on right. Heavy weathering and fading effects including on placards. Approximate Time Period: 1958 through the 1970s. Previous Releases: None.

When you think of an N Scale Pig Palace, it's probably one of these cars (at right): the Atlas First Generation 85 Foot Stock Car. While it's true that the Northern Pacific did have these cars (and the A1G model isn't bad compared to the prototype especially given its manufacture more than fifty years ago!), the "Pig Palace" name did not originate with these monsters. In fact, if you look carefully, those cars were given the name "**Big** Pig Palace," a reference to their size, not necessarily a description of what they carried. These 85 foot cars were built by splicing two 40 foot boxcars together.



So it's off to the **Northern Pacific Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment** for a check of these, well, regular size Pig Palace stock cars. Page 101 of that volume includes a bingo on the first of this two pack, NP 84142. It was part of the series 84000 to 84188, built at the company's own Brainerd shops in 1958. The basis for this group was old boxcars from the road's own accumulation. It's fair to say that these don't look like any other stock cars you've seen (which, yes, includes the MTL 035 body style). Among other innovations they had shutters along their sides, effectively allowing the slats to be selectively closed against the elements. It's a bit hard to describe this however there is an official drawing of the series over on the website of the Northern Pacific Railway Historical Association (direct URL to the drawings via [www.nprha.org/NP%20Stock%20Cars/Forms/Thumbnails.aspx](http://www.nprha.org/NP%20Stock%20Cars/Forms/Thumbnails.aspx)). The cars also had steel fishbelly underframes—hey, just how old were those donor boxcars? While the cars had their roofs and ends painted silver, to help reflect heat, photos of these cars in the **Color Guide** show at least the ends quite dirty. I can't tell from the MTL images whether there's silver under all that weathering, but perhaps it doesn't matter that much.

It's noted in the **Color Guide** that the cars were active from their 1958 build date into the early 1970s, "when the structure and operation of the livestock market changed." That's a pretty diplomatic way of putting it: basically, meat packing operations became much more dependent on trucks and a lot less dependent on rail.



The ORER for January 1959 shows the series NP 84000 to 84189 with all 190 possible cars, described as “Stock, Double Deck, All Steel” with AAR Designation SF. We’ll detour here to fully describe that designation: “This car is for transportation of stock on the hoof, and is equipped with roof, slatted sides and side doors, and convertible single or double deck. With or without feed and water troughs.” The inside length was 40 feet 9 inches, inside width 9 feet 4 inches, inside height 5 feet 1 inch and 5 feet 2 inches – which I believe applies to each of the double decks, outside length 42 feet 2 inches, extreme width 10 feet 10 inches, extreme height 15 feet 3 inches, door openings 5 feet 1 inch wide by 4 feet 4 inches and 4 feet 7 inches tall – again, the double deck coming in here, and capacity 3922 cubic feet or 80,000 pounds. An end note calls out the “adjustable metal shutters for protection of live stock in cold weather.” Jumping to the Burlington Northern listing of April 1970, we find that 170 of the cars were transferred into the new company from the Northern Pacific. That was down to 63 by April 1975, just 15 by July 1980, and a mere three in April 1982; still, some did last all the way through the 1970s. That’s late enough to add an ACI Label and COTS panels if you’d like.

## N SCALE SPECIAL EDITION RELEASES:

Hmm, what do I call the next car in the **Solar System Series**? It was among the pre-orders I covered in last October’s UMTRR. Perhaps I’ll keep counting at #10, or should I call it Supplemental Car #1? Anyway, the car is for The Moon and as with the Sun and the Eight Planets (sorry, Pluto) it comes in the same configurations:



Catalog 102 00 840, \$36.95 (at left) has the interior light.



Catalog 102 02 840, \$27.95 (at right) does not have the interior light.



I’ll stick with my usual nomenclature and call the **Milky Way Galaxy Caboose (100 00 810, \$29.95)** the companion car to the Solar System Series. Pre-orders were also taken last October for this car. Incidentally, might the 100 series steel caboose be the next body style to run out of the first series of numbers?

*In addition to the above, 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 **March 31**.*

We come back down to Earth now with three pre-orders for Anniversary Cars. Hmm, the UMTRR is celebrating **its** 25<sup>th</sup>... am I missing an opportunity here? Note that I’m being

stubborn here and going by my usual catalog number order protocol, which is different than the expected order of release. The currently planned chronological order of the below releases is Amtrak, CP, BNSF.



**Projected Delivery August 2021:**

**104 00 080, \$27.95.**

**Reporting Marks: BNSF 9520.**

**60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Single Door, BNSF 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

Multicolor paint scheme (black, green, orange, blue, yellow) with white reporting marks on left and black lettering "25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" and "1995-2020" straddling door. From left to right, heralds of the Burlington Northern, Burlington Route (CB&Q), Great Northern, Northern Pacific, BNSF "Wedge" (on door), Spokane, Portland and Seattle, Frisco (SL-SF), Colorado and Southern, and Santa Fe. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.



**Projected Delivery July 2021:**

**144 00 740, \$31.45.**

**Reporting Marks: None.**

**Heavyweight Modernized Business Car, Amtrak 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

Platinum mist with black roof, underframe and six wheel trucks.

One side has a representation of

Amtrak's "Phase 1" original decoration with red and blue stripes separated by white stripes, and "pointless arrow" logo with roadname on left with blue "1971" below, and white lettering "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" in blue panel at bottom center. Other side has representation of Amtrak's current "Phase 4" decoration with red stripe and blue band across most of the center, blue "Connecting America for 50 Years" plus yellow "50" and blue current Amtrak logo on right, with blue "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" at top left and "2021" at bottom right. MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.



**Projected Delivery August 2021:**

**181 00 160, \$27.95.**

**Reporting Marks: CP 21681.**

**60 Foot Excess Height Boxcar, Single Door, Canadian Pacific 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

Green, maroon and red sides, black ends, aluminum roof. White lettering including large script style herald and reporting marks on left and "CP Celebrating 140 Years 1881-2021" on right. Large gold "Golden Beaver" herald in center (on door). MTL artwork is preliminary; actual product may vary.

I'm going to take these three pre-orders together since they all represent one thing: *history*. One thing which makes the UMTRR fun for this byte-slinger is researching and passing along to

you histories of railroads, companies, and whatever else makes sense (remember the Presidential Series? The States of the Union Series?). So it's nice to see a commemoration of three Big Birthdays in North American Railroad History, even if one of them was technically last year. What I also find interesting is that with the current CMYK decorating process Micro-Trains uses, it's possible that these cars will arrive with an MSRP lower than if the previous pad printing process was still in use... if these cars could be done at all. There's not space to do justice to the rich timelines of each of these companies... yes, that does include Amtrak, let's be nice here!... but a few highlights are in order.

I suppose the first question one might ask is "how come" the BNSF car has lots of predecessors of the Burlington Northern half of the railroad, and just the Santa Fe "Circle Cross" to represent the Santa Fe. Thinking about my decades-ago reading of a history of the Santa Fe, I was reminded of how many subsidiaries it had. They just weren't as well-known to the general public even though I'm sure they were numerous. In addition, they tended to be quickly absorbed into the larger Santa Fe name whether they were owned or leased. For example, who remembers the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway, which was purchased and effectively merged into the AT&SF in 1886 even though it existed on paper until 1965? On the other hand, the Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Burlington along with the Spokane, Portland and Seattle were thought of as independent roads, even though they were as intertwined as "independent" roads could be. Were it not for the Northern Securities Case of 1904, there might be only one railroad herald instead of three or four on the boxcar: the Great Northern Pacific. The Frisco was really independent until 1980 when it was picked up by the BN. As for the Colorado and Southern, it was part of the CB&Q starting in 1908, so I'm not quite sure how it gets included, or why the Fort Worth and Denver isn't if we're using that protocol. Both the C&S and the FW&D heralds appear on the BN's "Pacific Pride" locomotives, one of which I saw in person in Spokane, Washington during a business trip back in the Previous Century. I guess it's just a matter of how much real estate there is on a fifty foot boxcar side.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Pacific was nothing less than a unifier of Canada from coast to coast. The website "Fresh Tracks" says it well: "An incredible feat of engineering, the Canadian Pacific Railway opened up the wild western provinces to settlement and played a key role in the expansion of [the] Confederation." The title of one history of the line is appropriate: **The Impossible Railway**. There were the Rocky Mountains to conquer, to be sure, but the challenges of building a transcontinental line across the Dominion of Canada started well before that: carving through the Laurentian Shield and trying not to sink into muskeg, for example. The CP celebrates its long and storied history on a website created by the company: [cpconnectingcanada.ca](http://cpconnectingcanada.ca). I'm glad to see the inclusion of the "Golden Beaver" insignia on this car, which is at once a throwback to its earlier heralds and an updating to everything that's come before.

Then there's Amtrak, formally known as the quasi-public National Railroad Passenger Corporation. It's been maligned, it's been threatened with extinction, it's been chastized for not serving enough cities, but above all, it's **survived** since its takeover of most long-distance passenger train service on May 1, 1971. (The Southern Railway and the Rio Grande initially stayed out.) Many of you were not born yet, but I'm old enough to remember seeing a rainbow

of colors in passenger trains on the Northeast Corridor in the company's early days. Even though Amtrak had its pick of equipment from the railroads from which it assumed intercity service, that still resulted in a fleet that ranged anywhere from relatively well-maintained to, well, let's just say less service-ready. Many railroads were down to just a few trains and "deferred maintenance" was the operative phrase at the time—and that's not counting Penn Central, which was regularly and infamously having derailments of cars that were simply standing still! A key blow to the continuation of passenger service was the cancellation of Rail By Mail contracts in 1967, although the last Railway Post Office service didn't end until ten years later. Passenger service was already in a steep decline after a brief post-World War II upswing, of course, and many branch and secondary lines already had no service at all. Amtrak was not in a position to change that; in fact, its network left out entire states. The original 1971 map and other artifacts are available at [history.amtrak.com](http://history.amtrak.com).

**Z SCALE:** Only one item to tell you about this time, and it's Car #1 in the Sweet Liquid Series, delayed from last month. **530 00 490, \$29.95**, Reporting Marks SLAX 49104, is the 39 Foot Tank Car, Bee Hive Corn Syrup / St. Lawrence Starch Company. Pre-orders for this item were taken last September.



There are no other releases in Z Scale this month. Three 531 series covered hopper pairs announced in September of last year: Frisco, Penn Central and Milwaukee Road, are showing on the MTL website at this writing as "February/ March." I wouldn't count these out just yet... the folks in Talent are still catching up. The first three "virtual two-packs" dropped last month (Santa Fe, Pennsylvania, Chessie/CSXT). The 1:220 pipeline will also be pretty full through mid-year at least, with six roadnames for open hoppers and six roadnames for fifty foot boxcars, in two roadnumbers each... presuming that pre-orders were sufficient.

**MTL ANNOUNCEMENTS:** I never quite know where to put the Hummers... I guess this will do. MTL has announced pre-orders for another pair of these in black and white "Police" lettering, with extra details included to be added by the modeler. The MTL artwork is at right. Catalog Number 499 45 955 has an MSRP for \$34.95, and that is for a pair. The pre-order window is through March 31.



And I'll repeat that Micro-Trains' license for sale of the Thomas Kinkadee and Thomas Kinkadee Studios Special Editions expires at the end of March, so MTL has issued a "last call" for the remaining items in this series. That list still includes all three of the Christmas cars from last year (101 00 831, 832 and 833) and Numbers 6, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in the Painter of Light Series (102 00 806, 809, 810, 811 and 812), as well as the companion locomotive (987 01 808).



**DISCONTINUED ALERT:** The Do It Yourself Bye-Bye Board leads off with both Toledo, Peoria and Western boxcars from last month (020 00 277 and 020 00 717) having left the building in a hurry. They are joined by both numbers of the Southern Pacific tank car (065 00 12x), the Jack Frost covered hopper (099 00 250), the Conrail hopper with topper (108 00 410) the BNSF Auto Rack (111 00 420), and both versions of the Neptune Solar System car (102 0x 838). And apparently the Micro-Mouse broke a lot of hearts: his Valentine Car (032 00 540) didn't even make it to the "Freight Cars" page on the website to receive a "Contact Dealer" banner! The Pacific Fruit Express Refrigerator Car Runner Pack #175 (993 00 175) is already sold out too. There's a contradiction between the Micro-News and the MTL website with regard to last month's Weathered Two-Packs: The former has the BNSF/Santa Fe Buffer Cars (993 05 800) gone and the latter has the ACL Boxcar Two Pack (993 05 810) outta here. I'm going to say, "Let's Do Both" in the words of Dilbert's Pointy-Haired Boss. Backing up to last month, the Western Pacific Weathered Bulkhead Flat (054 44 280) has been unloaded, the TTX Fuselage Two Pack (993 02 120) has flown away, and the two versions of the Uranus Solar System car (102 0x 837) have left orbit. In fact, the only thing you can buy from the original Solar System Series is the magnetic wand to turn on the lighted cars. January's Rio Grande Baggage Car (145 00 390) is not showing on the MTL website, but I'll try to confirm that it's left the station as that would be a fast departure for a heavyweight passenger car. All in all, as far as N Scale products, the sellouts for this year far outnumber the items still in stock. Not so in Z Scale where there's just one out, last month's Rock Island Weathered Stock Car (520 44 450).

Moving in reverse to The Year That Shall Not Be Named, and sticking with Z Scale, the bi-colored CSXT caboose has rolled away (535 00 420, October).. and that's it in 1:220. So back to N Scale, where the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac hopper (055 00 560, January) has emptied out, as have the Sherwood and Northern California Wineries three-dome tank cars (066 00 100, February; 066 00 160, December) and the Maine Central single dome tank car (065 00 056, August). The CSXT Bay Window Caboose is gone (130 00 041, November), and so is the Conrail double door boxcar with "wheel on rail" (182 00 120, March). Runner Pack #170 (993 00 170) of four Missouri Pacific Center Flows received the Dreaded "D" in my website listings. By omission from the MTL website I'll conclude that a Dreaded "D" goes to the Pennsylvania Railroad Heavyweight Diner also (146 00 360). Hmm, phrased that way it almost seems like an award.

Back to 2019: The "April Fools" Standard Fruit Company "Bananas" Refrigerator Car has slid out (058 00 566, April). Setting the pace – out – is the New York Central "Pacemaker" caboose (100 00 040, December). The Weathered Florida East Coast Ortner Hopper has hopped away (125 44 020, July). In Z Scale, the first number of the Santa Fe "Chief" Boxcar is gone (505 00 411, September), as are the first number of the BNSF Bulkhead Flat Car (527 00 171, October), the Christmas Graffiti BREX Plug Door Boxcar (507 44 510, November), and the Union Pacific "Desert Storm" SD40-2 (970 01 300, December), which cleans out the last of that locomotive type from the MTL factory. And that is as far back as we need to go this time around.

**INCREMENTAL INFORMATION DEPARTMENT:** None received or located for this issue.

**OOPS PATROL:** The only catalog number mistakes I found were in the Z Scale section. The Micro-Mouse Valentine's Day Car repeated the N Scale number when it should have been listed as 507 00 690. The Weathered Rock Island Stock Car is Catalog 520 ~~44~~ 250, not 520 ~~55~~ 250. I guess I "homed on the wrong keys" on that one. (Look it up, kids.) Meanwhile, in N Scale, I managed to refer to the TP&W as the Toledo, **Period** and Western at least once. Rats, I thought I'd undone all of those auto-corrects...

**25 YEAR LOOKBACK SPECIAL #3:** In honor of 25 years of the UMTRR, this year I'm going to take a brief look back at twelve of my personal favorite releases from the past quarter-century. There's no particular rhyme or reason to these selections, other than "I liked it."

For March, how about some Euchred Figs? I'm showing the reprint of the Heinz refrigerator car that MTL issued in January 2019 (058 00 051, Road Number 485), but the original release was in May 1997 (Catalog Number 58050, Road Number 484). That was back in Year 2 of the UMTRR. Since then, at least several of us



in the UMTRR Gang have had fun with this car, starting with the obvious question: What is A Euchred Fig? Well, ... I like this car because it illustrates well the camaraderie that model railroaders have with each other, and how we show that, in the words of a famous magazine slogan, "Model Railroading Is Fun."

**FINALLY, PHOTOS, WE HAVE PHOTOS:** My choices of go-to sites for bingo photographs have not changed, and probably won't anytime soon. In no particular order, my top three are Fallen Flags, RailcarPhotos.com and RRPictureArchives.net. Other frequently checked sites include: boxcars.us (much more than boxcars!), the Canadian Freight Railcar Gallery, the late Jerry Laboda's Passenger Car Photo Archives, and the site of long time UMTRR Gang Member Joe Shaw (at krunk.org).

But that's not all. Digital libraries, brought online in many cases by real libraries, have brought an explosion of previously unavailable images to the internet. Some of these photos match Kadee and Micro-Trains cars or series. Take, for example, a shot of D&RGW 23018, a 50 foot flat car: <https://cdm17228.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/imc/id/12757/rec/9>. It's been posted to the website of The State Historical Society of Missouri, and brought to the attention of modelers by Bob Chaparro. You may have come across Bob online including on Facebook Groups. I don't know how he finds all these photos, but I'm certainly glad that he does and that he shares links. There are no known copyright restrictions on the photo so I could reproduce it here, but I'd rather let you have a look. For one thing, you can zoom into the picture such that you can read the American Car and Foundry builder's trademark quite clearly! (Look to the right of the "Rio Grande" roadname.) The 23018 is part of the Rio Grande series 23000 to 23099, from which Kadee and then Micro-Trains selected other road numbers for their offerings in 1975, 2001 and 2007. When photographed, it was just about brand new with a build and "new" date of August 1956. How about that!

Unlike the usual go-to sites, however, there's no real order to these images. We're limited to searches on key terms, which is sometimes more like looking for a needle in a haystack than it isn't. But sometimes you find a real gem, like something related to the Friendship Train of 1947. Micro-Trains released a bunch of these cars, but there were others that couldn't necessarily be included in the series. The Pacific Electric decorated one of their single sheathed boxcars for the cause: [tessa.lapl.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/photos/id/28746/rec/40](http://tessa.lapl.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/photos/id/28746/rec/40) , located in the Digital Collections of the Los Angeles Public Library. I know a certain R&D guru who works in Talent, Oregon who's going to like that picture of PE 10009! (Actually, I've already sent it to him.)

Many of these citations, along with images from the Barriger Collection, as just another example, are of older equipment. But then there are sites like Flickr, which have plenty of modern photos but again with only the search function to help you locate them. (Just to confuse things, the Barriger Collection, over 48,000 images and counting at this writing, is also hosted on Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/barrigerlibrary/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/barrigerlibrary/) .) It's become a hobby in itself to get lost in... I mean, browse methodically through, these "Railroad Images of Bygone Days" (as one Facebook Group calls itself). And if you happen to trip over a photo of something that you think Micro-Trains could consider for a future release, I don't think they'd mind being sent a link. That's what I do. Just be sure that the photo is clear and all lettering is legible, and that it's a reasonable match to one of their current body styles. An XY&Z nine-dome tank car is probably not going to be feasible, for example.

Until next time, do the best you can!

Cheers,  
George

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