



of a very common size and prototype. It achieves success in every aspect. Models are available in four roadnames or painted-unlettered. The MSRP each is \$275.00. Bachmann's On30 Climax earns our highest rating. It is superb.—*Russ Reinberg*

#### 1:20.3 SCALE SHAY

*Bachmann Industries, Inc.*, 1400 East Erie Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19124 ([www.bachmanntrains.com](http://www.bachmanntrains.com)) has released an improved, ready-to-run version of their revolutionary 1:20.3 scale Spectrum® narrow gauge Shay. Bachmann lists it as 38 tons instead of the previous version's 36 tons despite identical dimensions (34 feet long over the end beams, 7 feet 6 inches wide across the end beams, and about 13 feet 6 inches tall at the stack).

The primary differences between the initial and current models are the mechanism and the cab. The latter now represents metal rather than wood construction. As for the mechanism, some original 1997-1998 Shays experienced gearbox problems after extended operation. Bachmann has reengineered the drive train with die cast metal gearboxes, a pair of high quality can motors, and DCC ready circuitry. Initial reports from hobbyists suggest the new mechanism is very durable.

Our sample runs very quietly and solidly. At slow speed it exhibits some

hesitation on each drive shaft revolution but that binding should disappear after an appropriate break in or relief of pressure at some point along the drive train. It is a minor issue and seems to have little or no effect on performance at higher voltage. The



Shay will creep extremely slowly and has a reasonable top speed indicating careful design and engineering.

Features include operating piston rods with reverse linkage, complete operating metal valve gear, a die cast I-beam frame, sealed ball bearing races, and low gearing. Exterior detail

includes a boiler with no visible parting lines; your choice of three stacks; brass bell, whistle, and pop valves; an engraved number plate, metal handrails and stanchions; water siphon hose with detailed head; and superdetailed air pump, unions, and valve castings with metal piping.

The directional head- and backup lights operate, a load synchronized LED in the firebox flickers, the cab interior includes full detail, and the smokebox contains a smoke unit and a three position switch to permit NMRA or NEM polarity or turn off the motor. Unlettered models include parts for representing both oil and coal fired locomotives. A tool and accessory detail package comes with each model along with engineer and fireman figures. Each Shay includes a comprehensive DVD video covering the locomotive's history and mainte-





nance as well as a printed manual.

Bachmann's Shay revolutionized large scale narrow gauge when it first appeared not only because of its quality, detail, value, and finish but also because of its scale: A proper 1:20.3 while other mass producers built toys. Today's iteration, with its more rugged gearbox, still stands among the best models in large scale. It is available in four roadnames or painted-unlettered. The MSRP is \$799.95. It is an excellent product.—

*Russ Reinberg*

#### 1:29 SCALE HOPPER

USA Trains, P.O. Box 100, Malden, MA 02148 ([www.usatrains.com](http://www.usatrains.com)) has released a magnificent 1:29

scale Ultimate Series 55 foot 4 bay center flow hopper. As you may recall from our reviews of previous USA Trains Ultimate Series models, expectations of superior quality, accuracy,

details are metal, whether cast, etched, rod, chain, or spring. Our sample's detailing is excellent; its workmanship outstanding; its paint, graphics, and overall appearance



and appearance should be high.

The model actually scales 56 feet long over the end beams (nearly two actual feet), 10 feet 3 inches wide, and about 15 feet 6 inches tall above the railhead. The frame and superstructure are injection molded plastic but most

magnificent. Please study our close up photos of the side and end to appreciate the model's level of detail and standard of craftsmanship.

The hopper features operational bottom hatches, round or elongated roof hatches to match specific proto-

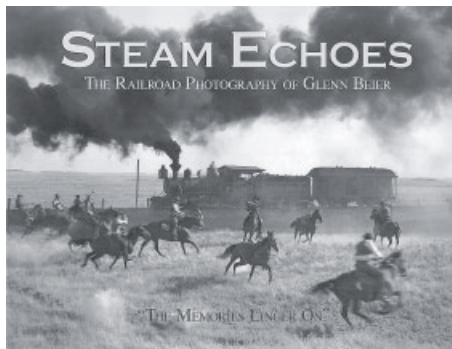




types, die cast truck sideframes with rotating journals and metal wheelsets, die cast metal knuckle couplers, a very detailed airbrake system, and additional parts for mounting Kadee® 830 magnetic couplers.

The model is available in at least four road numbers each of 24 roadnames as well as gray or red oxide unlettered. The MSRP is \$129.95 each. USA Trains' center flow hopper earns our highest rating. It is superb.—*Russ Reinberg*

## BOOK REVIEWS

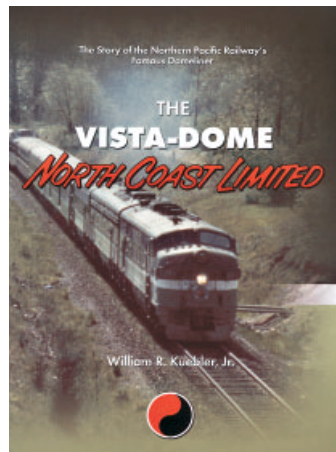


*TimberTimes*, P.O. Box 219, Hillsboro, OR 97123 ([www.timber-times.com](http://www.timber-times.com)) has published an exquisite 288 page, black-and-white, 11 by 8.5 inch hardbound book by Glenn Beier, *Steam Echoes, The Railroad Photography of Glenn Beier*. It is at once obvious the author is an artist and his canvas is the final days of steam in the western United States. His subjects are the Southern Pacific, Sierra Railroad, West Side Lumber Company, Pickering Lumber Corporation, Feather River Railway, Southern Pacific Narrow Gauge, Denver & Rio Grande Western Narrow Gauge, Southwest Lumber Mills, Sacramento Northern, Carson & Colorado, some Arizona lines, even railroads in the movies and John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid.

Should your railroad interests tend to other subjects, Beier's photography so beautifully illustrates the texture and detail of locomotives, rolling stock, and structures, you will refer to the volume for modeling inspiration. I found myself noticing such minutia as peeling or worn paint, cracks in wood, the width and depth of board-to-board joints, and the degree of weathering

on equipment in service. The photos in most books make such detail difficult or impossible to detect.

TimberTimes publications consistently exhibit outstanding quality in every aspect. Photo reproduction, in particular, is exceptional. *Steam Echoes, The Railroad Photography of Glenn Beier* excels in every respect and earns our highest rating. It is superb. The MSRP is \$58.95. Domestic postage is \$4.50.

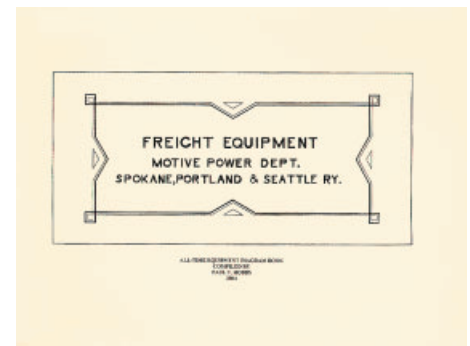


*Oso Publishing Company*, P.O. Box 1349, Hamilton, MT 59840 ([www.osorail.com](http://www.osorail.com)) announces a new 352 page, full color, 8.5 by 11 inch hardbound book, *Vista-Dome North Coast Limited*, by William R. Kuebler, Jr. It is an exhaustively detailed examination of the Northern Pacific Railway's premier passenger train from 1954 to 1970.

The volume includes more than 280 beautifully reproduced photos, diagrams, charts, lists, consists, personnel rosters and photos, anecdotes, even the commentary a stewardess would read at specific points along the line. If you model passenger car interiors, you will find extremely helpful floor plans and photographs to assist you.

As always is the case with an Oso publication, the quality of the binding, paper, printing, and photo reproduction are excellent. *Vista-Dome North Coast Limited* is a goldmine of information for those with a nostalgic, historic, or modeling interest in the Northern Pacific's two-tone green crack passenger train. It is an excellent book. The MSRP is \$74.95 plus post-

age.—*Russ Reinberg*



*Vintage Ads of North America*, 8002 N.E. Highway 99, Suite 577, Vancouver, WA 98665-8813 ([www.vintagead.com](http://www.vintagead.com)) has released an 84 page, 11 by 8.5 inch, spiral bound, soft cover *All-Time Equipment Diagram Book* by Paul T. Hobbs. It is a comprehensive compilation of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway's freight diagrams from the company's inception to its merger with the Burlington Northern in 1970.

The book includes 75 diagrams with dimensions (as opposed to detailed industrial drawings), representing 97-percent of the freight cars from the Oregon Trunk, Oregon Electric, United Railways Company, Portland, Astoria & Pacific, Gales Creek & Wilson River, and SP&S. It lacks only those from the Columbia River & Northern Railway—possibly no longer extant. The author meticulously has scanned, cleaned up, and restored each.

The paper is the same as what you may run through your laser printer or copy machine. The illustrations are strictly black-and-white line art. And a modeler certainly must augment the diagrams with photographs. But, if you favor the SP&S or are a student of Pacific Northwest railroads, the *All-Time Equipment Diagram Book* will be an indispensable addition to your library. The MSRP is \$22.95 each plus \$5.00 shipping up to five copies.—*Russ Reinberg*

The name *Crankcase Productions*, 1908 Augusta Drive, Champaign, IL 61821 ([mrgreen@insightbb.com](mailto:mrgreen@insightbb.com)) may mean less to you than that of its owner, Mic Greenberg. Many of you may recall Mic's revolutionary *Narrow Gauge & Shortline Gazette* modeling articles



model peeling paint on wood and metal and how to fabricate scale windows, cement foundations, toolboxes, sawhorses, and fuel tanks. Future sheets will deal with rust and dust, the textures and shades of weathered wood, and scale roofing. The techniques and illustrations are excellent. The price per Tip Sheet (usually four or six pages) is \$5.50 plus \$1.25 postage. Discounts may apply to orders of multiple Tip Sheets.—*Russ Reinberg*

#### VIDEO REVIEW

*Darryl Huffman*, 12020 Old Seward Highway, Anchorage, AK 99515 ([darrylhuffman@alaska.com](mailto:darrylhuffman@alaska.com)) has sent a very useful DVD, *Easy Weathering: Rusty Metal, Rotten Wood, and Peeling Paint*. His conversational, self-produced, two hour how-to clinic makes you feel as

in the late 1970s and early 1980s. He has updated some techniques and digitally photographed details of his models and dioramas for a series of 8.5 by 11 inch full color, beautifully printed, three ring binder Tip Sheets providing essential information for any serious modeler. Subjects include how to



though you are in the room, watching a demonstration of how to dent an automobile model, rust out its fenders, then chip, blister, and peel the paint. Darryl also shows you how to achieve the appearance of old, rotten wood and peeling paint; how to create, etch, and weather corrugated metal siding; and how to apply and age a tarpaper roof. Excellent information. The price is \$20.00 plus \$5.00 domestic or \$7.00 international Priority Mail postage.

## PRODUCT PORTRAITS

*Southwest Narrow Gauge*, P.O. Box 9987, Phoenix, AZ 85068 ([www.i-sng.com](http://www.i-sng.com)) will import a special series of ready-to-run Berlyn Locomotive Works On3 Denver & Rio Grande Western drop bottom gondolas nearly identical to the samples in our photos. They will represent 7- and 800 series cars from the 1930s and '40s and include 40 new road numbers. The first run, now sold out, consisted of 38 numbers of the same series of cars from the same era. Construction is of wood and metal and you may order the models



“mint”, as in our photo of Number 745 circa 1945 or, for an additional charge, with custom weathering, as in our photo of Number 867 circa 1935. The “mint” price is \$199.00 each. The quality and appearance of our samples are excellent. (Rio Grande high side coal cars, also of wood and metal construction and representing the same era, currently are in production.)

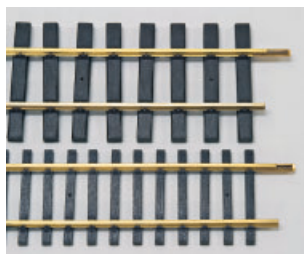
*Backwoods Miniatures*, 11 Netherton Southside, Netherton, Morpeth NE65 7EZ, England ([www.backwoodsminiatures.com](http://www.backwoodsminiatures.com)) has an On30 crane-loader to fit Bachmann's On30 Gas-Mechanical 0-4-0 mechanism. The etched brass, cast metal, and cast resin model reflects an American Hoist & Derrick prototype and builds into the small crane in the photo or, with additional photo-etched parts, a log loader. The price of UK£48 includes shipping.



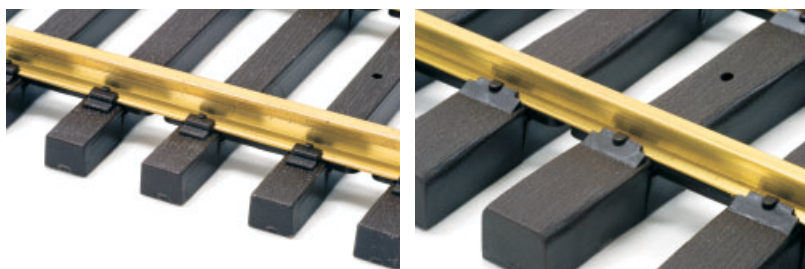


## PRODUCT PORTRAITS

*Foothill Model Works*, P.O. Box 470, Willits, CA 95490 (<http://home.inreach.com/jkitts>) has produced one of the finest quality 1:48 scale molded Celcon® brakewheels you can find. The prototype is a 15 inch diameter ACME such as you might see, for example, on West Side Lumber Company rolling stock. The quality is superb. The price each is \$1.00 plus postage.



*Accucraft Trains*, 33268 Central Avenue, Union City, CA 94587 ([www.accucraft.com](http://www.accucraft.com)) has sent samples of weather resistant 45mm Number 1 gauge flextrack. The rail in each case is solid code 250 brass. Two UV resistant molded plastic tie strips are available, one for narrow gauge and the other for standard. The tie and rail sections come five feet long in packs of twelve, each with an MSRP of \$190.00 per box. The 1:32 scale standard gauge ties measure 8 feet 5 inches long by 9 inches wide and the 1:20.3 scale narrow gauge ties 6 feet 11 inches long by 10 inches wide. The track seems a good compromise between durability and appearance.



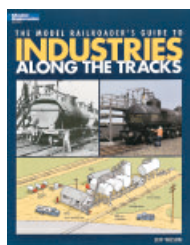
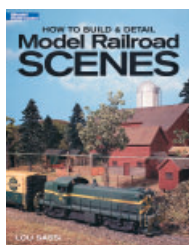
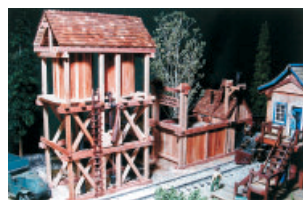
*Sunset Valley Railroad*, 21616 23rd Street Court East, Sumner, WA 98390 ([www.svrronline.com](http://www.svrronline.com)) has introduced an O and Number 1 (45mm) dual

gauge number 6 turnout. Blackened stainless steel spikes secure code 250 brass rail to 15-percent glass filled polypropylene ties and machined Delrin frogs. Switch stands or ground throws are available separately. The price is \$225.00 each.

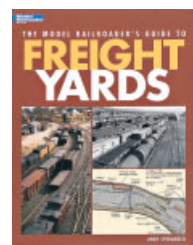
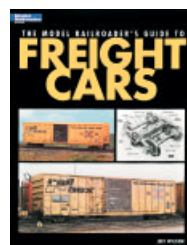


*Crew Change Innovations*, 2055 Sunset Point Road, Suite 3701, Clearwater, FL 33765 ([www.crew-change.com](http://www.crew-change.com)) sent a sample of their new DCC Throttle™ Gripstrips to fit NCE Procab™ and Wangro Electronics System One™ handheld controllers. The five rubberized, textured, adhesive backed strips make holding handheld units more comfortable and secure. The quality is excellent and the MSRP is \$8.85 each.

*Garden-Texture*, P.O. Box 690444, Charlotte, NC 28227 ([www.gardentexture.com](http://www.gardentexture.com)) has a new 2005 catalog with more than 400 items for large scale modelers, including over a dozen new ones. The price is \$4.00 in the U.S., \$6.00 elsewhere, refundable with your first order. Among the new precut cedar and redwood kits are a backwoods sand facility and water tank (\$89.00 and \$79.00 respectively) as well as a single track compression deck bridge kit (\$59.00). Each kit includes full size templates, complete instructions, and finishing suggestions.



*Kalmbach Publishing Company*, 21027 Crossroads Circle, P.O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612 ([www.kalmbachbooks.com](http://www.kalmbachbooks.com)) has released four new 8.5x11 paperback books: Jeff Wilson's *The Model Railroader's Guide to Industries along the Tracks* (\$19.95) and the *Model Railroader staff's How to Build and Detail Model Railroad Scenes* (\$21.95), *The Model Railroader's*



*Guide to Freight Yards* (\$19.95), and *The Model Railroader's Guide to Freight Cars* (\$19.95). Each is mostly color, between 80 and 96 pages, and includes useful information.

*The Friends of the East Broad Top*, c/o Henry Inman, 2016 A Park Avenue, Richmond, VA 23220 ([www.febt.org](http://www.febt.org)) mark



the fourth year of fundraising to restore the railroad by offering beautifully printed, authorized reproductions of John H. Coker's *Leaving Robertsedale, Pennsylvania* painting to encourage donations of \$50.00 or more. The print alone appears to be worth that price and the EBT urgently needs your support.



*Shawmut Car Shops*, 307 North Michael Street, St. Marys, PA 15857 ([www.shawmutcarshops.com](http://www.shawmutcarshops.com)) has a new catalog of custom locomotive modifications and paint schemes, pickle

cars, passenger cars, motorcars, custom freight cars, and cabooses. They also produce high quality custom decals.

## SMALL SCALE



*Bachmann Industries, Inc.*, 1400 East Erie Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19124 ([www.bachmanntrains.com](http://www.bachmanntrains.com)) has released a gorgeous ready-to-run Spectrum® HO scale standard gauge 50 ton Class B (two truck) Climax geared locomotive.

Features include die cast construction; detailed cab interior; and separately applied stack, domes, cab, bell, whistle, pop valves, and handrails. Our sample operates smoothly and quietly from an exceptionally slow sustained speed to full throttle—most impressive. The paint, graphics, and quality of construction are excellent; the overall appearance is excellent as the photos illustrate. The DCC ready model is available in five road-names as well as painted-unlettered. The MSRP is \$275.00. The locomotive is excellent.



*Life-Like Products, LLC*, 1600 Union Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21211 ([www.lifelikeproducts.com](http://www.lifelikeproducts.com)) has released three outstanding PROTO 2000 HO scale locomotives, two with optional QSI sound and DCC. The first is a Heritage series USRA 2-8-8-2 with 12,000 gallon tender. Our sample's detail, finish, fidelity to scale, and overall accuracy alone were sufficient to impress us but the QSI Quantum sound system with dual speakers and DCC operation make the model nothing short of remarkable. Among the effects are dual steam sounds (since the locomotive is a Mallet with two sets of cylinders), bell, whistle, squealing brakes, air release, and an adjustable Doppler effect. All operate per-





fectly with or without DCC. But the locomotive's beauty extends beyond appearance and sound; it creeps at less than 3 scale miles per hour and its top speed is 59 mph. Moreover, it will haul at least sixty freight cars on level track. The cab interior is fully detailed. In short, the model earns our highest rating; it is superb. It is available in three road numbers each of five roadnames (one, in each case, with neither sound nor DCC) and undecorated. The MSRP is \$525.00 with sound and DCC or \$425.00 without.



The second model with sound and DCC is a General Electric U28B. Its appearance, accuracy, finish, and features equal those of the Mallet and its operation matches any previous PROTO 2000 sample we have tested—superb. The models' detailing corresponds to that of their prototype so any given locomotive may have a large or small brakewheel or none at all, may include or exclude drop steps or dynamic brakes, may feature cab windows with a large or small corner radius, and may ride on either EMD or GE trucks. Each model also includes eleven molded plastic add-on details such as sunshades, plows, wind deflectors, and beacons. The U28B is available in at least two road numbers each of six paint schemes as well as undecorated. Half the numbers of each roadname include sound and DCC (with an MSRP of \$240.00); the others lack those features (and their MSRP is \$140.00). The locomotives are superb.

Finally, PROTO 2000's EMD GP38-2 with an 88 inch





long low hood. Earlier models had an 81 inch hood. Depending on the road name, the locomotives might have dynamic brakes, extended range dynamics, or none at all; standard or high adhesion truck sideframes; early or late roof air filter box, radiator grills, and roof fan spacing; might include or exclude drop steps; and might have a large or small fuel tank. Our sample's operation remained consistent with previous PROTO

2000 units: superb. And

that word sums up the model as a

whole. Each is available in two road numbers of eight paint schemes and undecorated. The MSRP is \$135.00.



Kadee® Quality Products Company, 673 Avenue C, White City, OR 97503-1078 ([www.kadee.com](http://www.kadee.com)) has added an HO scale "starter pack" to its line. In previous issues, we have reviewed many components individually. They consist of two pair each of five different couplers, a height gauge, plastic and fiber shims, plastic 2-56 screws, Greas-em dry graphite lubricant, trip pin pliers, a manual uncoupling and spring pick tool, a pair of magnetic uncouplers, and a gluing jig. The MSRP is \$46.95 and the quality of each piece is outstanding.

Bachmann Industries, Inc., 1400 East Erie Avenue, Philadelphia, PA



19124 ([www.bachmanntrains.com](http://www.bachmanntrains.com)) is shipping an N scale USRA 2-6-6-2 Mallet in two numbers each of three roadnames as well as undecorated. The photo illustrates the scale appearance and beautiful finish of the little jewel. The MSRP is \$275.00.



Life-Like Products, LLC, 1600 Union Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21211

([www.lifelikeproducts.com](http://www.lifelikeproducts.com)) has sent samples

of two ready-to-run N scale locomotives, an EMD GP20 and GP60. While we have no facilities for testing N scale products, the photos should suggest the excellence of their appearance and fidelity to scale. The models are available in at least two road numbers each of eight paint schemes as well as undecorated. The MSRP of the GP20 is \$97.00; that of the GP60 is \$95.00.



Finally, Life-Like has printed a full color 2005 catalog illustrating new train sets, rolling stock, and accessories including an exclusive HO scale Life® Magazine "America's

History in Photos" collectible set and limited run freight cars.





# BUILD BETTER MODELS WITH E-MAIL

**W**E OFTEN HEAR how the Internet has eroded the hobby. Some hobby shop owners claim Internet discounters are putting them out of business. Sorry, but mail order discounters have been around for at least thirty years and plenty of hobby shops do just fine, thank you. Some manufacturers and publishers bemoan the loss of potential hobbyists to net surfing. Wrong; in the late 1990s, when the Internet was a novelty, some hobbyists did spend more time online than modeling but those with a legitimate interest in the hobby soon returned to the workbench.

It is true the numbers of hobbyists and hobby shops are noticeably smaller now than they were a few years ago but the reasons for that are social, cultural, financial, and political. On the other hand, computers and the Internet actually have brought modelers throughout the world closer together, inspired modeling and creativity, and enhanced the hobby. Here are three examples:

In last September's **NARROW GAUGE ANNUAL**, Dave Fletcher (in Australia), Peter Bunce (in the United Kingdom), and Jim Wilke (in the United States) used e-mail to share drawings, photographs, and historical information about Cooke and Baldwin locomotives from 1880 to 1900. The result was a pair of accurately detailed Cooke Mogul models and a refinished Rio Grande Consolidation, each with a historically correct paint scheme exemplifying the most current information available worldwide.

Had Peter and Dave relied entirely upon the post office, it is likely they never would have built models of such high caliber or accuracy. The ease and speed of sending digital images and daily or hourly correspondence stimulates enthusiasm and friendly competition. Think about it: If you and a friend were to build similar locomotive models but the cab on his engine looked better, wouldn't you ask him what he did and rebuild the cab on your own model?



Dave's model.



Peter's model.

Dave Fletcher and Peter Bunce simultaneously built 1:20.3 scale Cooke Moguls by collaborating on the Internet. Their article appeared in last September's **NARROW GAUGE ANNUAL**.

On a few occasions I have mentioned the Terrapin Narrow Gauge Society, an outstanding group of modelers foolish enough to include me as a member. Bill Davis began the aggregation as handful of very good Southern California hobbyists who kept in touch by e-mail. Recently Bill moved to Arkansas but, via e-mail, remains an important member. In the past three years, the e-mail network has expanded to include a couple of dozen hobbyists living as far apart as San Diego and Anchorage. And, yes, *all* of us get together at some meets.

Every week, one of us seems to post photos of a technique or model in progress to elicit comments or assistance. Some respond with words,

The May/June 1977 *Narrow Gauge & Shortline Gazette* ran Russ Simpson's drawing of the Annapolis post office. Annapolis is a tiny community in the redwoods on California's northern coast. Jerry Lawrence, from San Juan Capistrano, California, scratchbuilt a 1:48 scale Chili Creek post office following Simpson's drawing. Construction consists of individual strips of Mount Albert stripwood over a 1/16-inch thick basswood sub-wall. The windows and door are from Grandt Line.



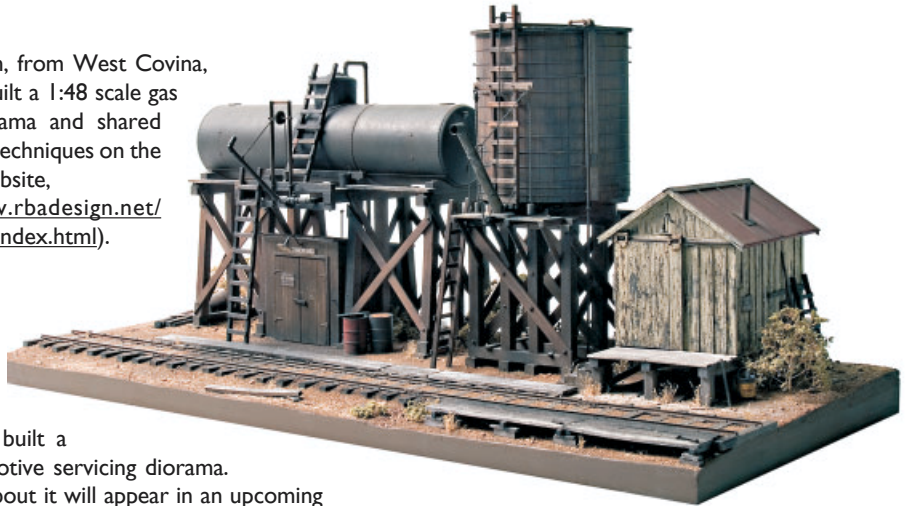
others with an image of an actual building or freight car, others with an image of a similar model. That always seems to inspire somebody else to build or paint something and share a new idea. The result has been a recent handful of contest quality modeling. The photos show some examples.



Chuck Doan, from West Covina, California built a 1:48 scale gas station diorama and shared many of his techniques on the Terrapin website, (<http://www.rbadesign.net/TERRAPIN/index.html>).



Chuck also built a small locomotive servicing diorama. An article about it will appear in an upcoming **FINESCALE RAILROADER ANNUAL**.



Jerry Kitts, the owner of Foothill Model Works in Willits, California, corresponds with the Terrapin group. The photo of the 16 ton Shay bringing a log train down from the woods on his On3 layout was part of a post about new rolling stock he had added to his line.



Marc Reusser's 1:48 scale scratchbuilt boilerhouse diorama won second prize at the 2004 National Narrow Gauge Convention and appeared in **FINESCALE RAILROADER's** March 2005 **LOGGING, MINING & INDUSTRIAL ANNUAL**. He unselfishly shares his techniques with other modelers on the Internet to encourage Terrapin members to build more realistic models.

As you may recall from the December 2004 editorial, I am trying to improve cardstock modeling techniques. It seems an overlooked material with enormous potential. One area where it can excel is door and window fabrication. The cross sections of some cast metal and molded styrene parts are a little heavy, the grain in laser cut wood parts often runs in the wrong direction, and I find both objectionable. So, in March, I consulted with my friend Tom Fitzgerald, the owner of Crystal River Products, e-mailed him some CAD drawings, and he shipped me some 1:48 scale laser cut cardstock components.

It was necessary to e-mail three attempts, over about ten days, before I designed the parts correctly. Had we sent information through the post office, those ten days easily could have become a couple of months and the delay might have killed the project. The photos illustrate the results of our collaboration.



Computers and the Internet have done as much to enhance railroad modeling as any tool or publication—including my own. I would encourage anyone to add e-mail to his collection of resources. At the very least it will maintain your enthusiasm.

*Uncle Russ*