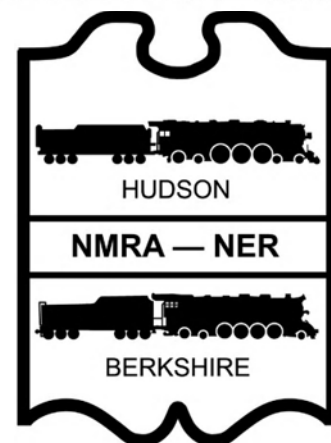


# FORM 19

**The Official Newsletter of the  
Hudson-Berkshire Division  
of the NER NMRA**



**Order Number 361**

**December 2020**

## No December Meeting

### From the Editor . . . . By MARK SKLAR

It's December and 2020 is almost history, which is more than OK with me. We had our first virtual meeting last month. There were up to 17 participants and it went well with a short business meeting and a presentation. A big THANK YOU to James Lauser for setting up the meeting and Irwin Nathanson for presenting his clinic on Miniatur Wunderland, an attraction in Hamburg, Germany. Well done guys!

It would be nice if more members participated. If you don't have a camera or microphone on your computer don't worry. You can just listen and watch. You only need a computer with headphones or speakers and any internet browser. You can also use a tablet or smart phone. The next virtual meeting is January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please join in.

The division election results are done. Irwin Nathanson was reelected as HBD Division president and James Lauser was elected to the Board of Directors. Congratulations and thank you for volunteering!

In this issue:

- Bill Doyle presents the other half of his speeder story from the September issue. Bill writes about the historic Union Depot of Canaan, Connecticut.
- Experienced and excellent modeler Ken Nelson starts part 1 of a 10 part series called "TIPS FOR OPERATION".
- Lloyd Coon presents a kit bash project of two box cars that became two flat cars with generator loads.
- Irwin Nathanson presents a new product from WiFiTrax to give your DCC system WiFi connectivity.

Thank you to all the contributors this month!

For anyone interested in 3D printing, I wrote an article for the New York Central Historical Society publication "NYC Modeler". The article is about 3D printing a NYCS signal bridge. It is a free download at: [https://nycshs.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/nycentralmodeler\\_2020\\_4q.pdf](https://nycshs.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/nycentralmodeler_2020_4q.pdf)

Whatever you celebrate, have a happy holiday and stay safe!

That is all for this month. See you next year.

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## Form19

The *Form19* is published eight times per year for members of the Hudson Berkshire Division.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Division. Products and publications mentioned in *Form19* in no way constitute an endorsement by the Division.

### Contributing to the Form19

The *Form19* staff welcomes all contributions. Letters, articles, photos, and other items may be mailed or e-mailed to the editor. Please include a note if you would like materials returned. Suggestions also welcome.

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# The Ready Line

By Irwin D. Nathanson

I guess the theme of this month's column is Good News ☺ / Bad News ☹!

As I write this on the first Saturday in December, I am reflecting on a few things:

1. I should have been at the Empire State Plaza today, helping the set-up for GTE 2020 ☺
2. Although I really enjoyed the NERx "Virtual" Convention which ended last night, it sure would have been nicer to attend the "real" event which had to be postponed from October 2020 to October 2021 ☺ and ☹

Wow, COVID-19 has certainly changed our lives. ☹ But we humans are resilient, and we have learned to deal with the hand we've been dealt. Luckily, I can hear the bugle sounds ("Charge!") of the cavalry regiments coming to our rescue: Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna! ☺

Given the demographic of most of our members, I believe that most of us will be able to be vaccinated by March. And the rest of us by about June. ☺ We just need to continue playing it safe until then. We know what to do, we understand the protocols. To me and my family, these are *inconveniences*, designed to protect ourselves *and others*. We do not view these rules as a form of *oppression*.

Sadly, this timing may be too late for the National Convention, scheduled to be held in June in California. I suspect the National will need to be canceled,

the second year in a row. ☹ But I *do not* think it will be too late for HBD to safely resume in-person meetings by the summer, to perhaps hold our annual Family Picnic, to attend in person the NER Regional Convention in October and to host a rejuvenated GTE 2021 next December. ☺

Going back to NERx, overall, I thought it was excellent. Great clinics and great layout tours. There were a few technical glitches, but they were quickly resolved. ☺

Our own Doug Dederick presented not once, but *twice*:

- A clinic covering some really nice scenery techniques. I have long been a big fan of static grass. But I never thought of using taller grasses in the foreground and shorter grasses in the background as a technique to force perspective. Thanks for the great tip, Doug! ☺
- A video tour of his great N Scale layout. I have been to Doug's home many times for operating sessions, but not since the pandemic hit us. I sure noticed a lot of scened areas I've not seen before... ☺ But I really miss the camaraderie, Nadine's home-made cookies, and Doug's two French Bulldogs, Milo and Logan! ☹
- I also presented, my Miniatur Wunderland clinic. I was the next to last presenter of the entire event!

(Continued on next page)



(Ready Line Continued)

I am very pleased to announce that during NERx, the following HBD members were recognized for earning the following Achievement Awards ☺:

**Doug Dederick**

Golden Spike  
Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical  
Master Builder - Scenery

**Andrew Clermont**

Association Volunteer

**Joe Kavanagh**

Master Builder - Structures

**Benjamin Maggi**

Master Builder - Cars  
Model Railroad Engineer - Civil

Our Division AP Coordinator, **Kevin Surman**, was also recognized for his on going efforts to help our members on the road towards attaining their Master Model Railroader certifications. ☺

Congratulations guys, well done indeed!

I hope you all had a nice/safe Thanksgiving! We certainly did! This was the first time we have been with our sons (and their spouses) for the holiday in decades! And to top it off, we finally got to be with our first grandchild, born in June, who is a real charmer! (We self-quarantined for two weeks upon arrival in California, got tested, and then spent a lot of time the last two weeks with our family.) ☺

Well, Christmas is almost here (and Chanukah for some of us). I have a hunch that this year will be much less consumer-oriented and much more about appreciating life and family and less about material things... ☺

Mentioning Christmas, I would like to personally thank all the members who so kindly donated to our U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots campaign! This year:

- Our members donated \$1,475 (and counting) ☺
- We donated 10 train sets to TtT ☺
- We still have \$750 in our TtT account for 2021 ☺

And a BIG "Thank You" to Paul Werschler at JP's Trains and Hobbies who, as tradition, gave us great/discounted prices on the train sets and who absorbed the shipping costs as well! ☺

So, until next year, may I wish you all a safe, warm, and traditional Holiday Season. *2021 will be better!* ☺

Irwin

P.S. I just reviewed my column and counted all the emojis. Final counts:

☺ = 17  
☹ = 6

Hooray, Good News wins out! ☺



## HBD Upcoming Events/Meetings

HBD Vice President Doug Dederick has planned virtual meetings for January and February. Mark these dates on your calendar.

### Virtual Meeting January 22nd 7PM

#### Layout tour of Bob Hamm's HOn3 Iron Gorge Subdivision.

Bob's beautiful layout was featured in Model Railroad Magazine, September 2017.

### February Virtual Meeting Friday the 19th 7PM

#### More information in our January Form 19





## New Wi-Fi Interface for NCE DCC Systems

By Irwin D. Nathanson

MRC has a wi-fi interface which allows users of their DCC system to use IOS devices (such as iPhones and iPads) and Android devices (such as Samsung Galaxy) as hand held, wireless Throttles to control DCC decoder-equipped locomotives and accessories. The same is true for Digitrax. Up until now, no such interface has been available for NCE systems. I'm not talking about the wi-fi interface that NCE has, been promising for several years. Rather, I am talking about a brand-new product, available now, developed Down Under in Australia.

The product is called WFD-30. It's a module which translates proprietary NCE signals to open-source signals used by third-party Throttle Apps which are readily available for iOS devices (WiThrottle) and Android devices (Engine Driver). The WFD-30 also works with the new TCS UWT-100 Universal Wi-Fi Throttle which was recently reviewed in *Model Railroader* magazine.

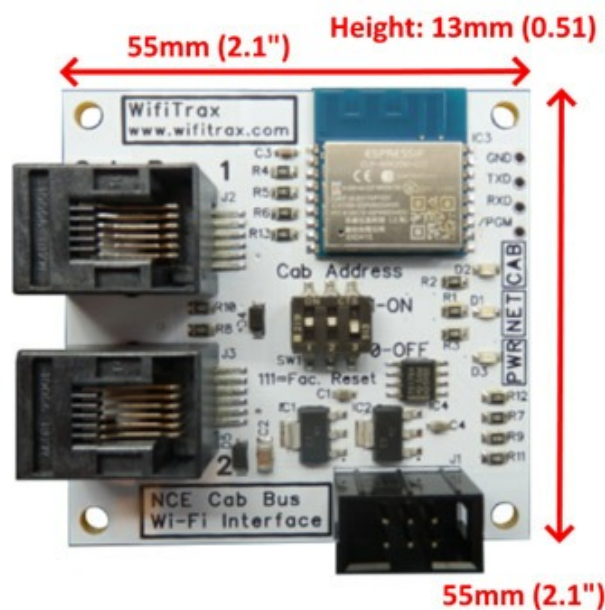
A PC or MAC can also be used as a throttle. (And JMRI isn't needed!)

The Australian designer/builder, Steve Shrimpton, has been extremely helpful. He promptly answered my several questions. (And he has also edited this article.)

Complete details regarding the WFD-30 (and other hi-tech products) can be seen at: [www.wifitrax.com](http://www.wifitrax.com) The site includes links for downloading the easy-to-follow Quick Start Guide and comprehensive Manual.

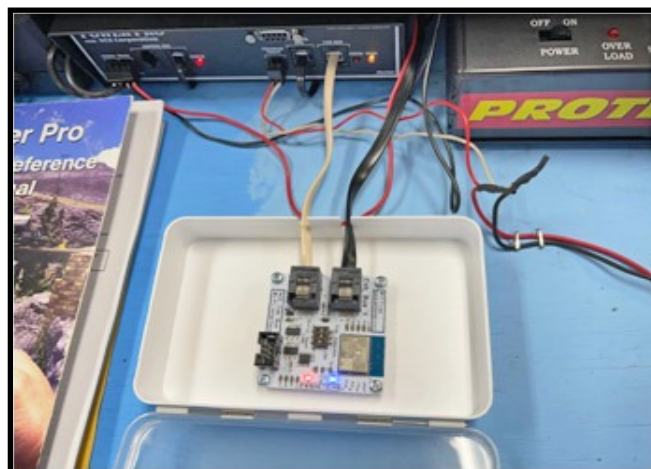
In the U.S. the product can be ordered from Iron Planet via their web site: [www.ironplanethobbies.com](http://www.ironplanethobbies.com) for \$110. Here is a screen shot of their advertisement in the December, 2020 issue of *Model Railroader*:

Here is what the WFD-30 looks like:



Following the instructions in the Manual, I mounted the WFD-30 in a plastic box I obtained at Hobby Lobby. First, I cut out two notches in the side for the cables to pass through. Then I drilled four holes in the bottom of the box using the template included in the Manual. I mounted the module using the screws, spacers, nuts, and washers supplied with the module. Finally, I used a few layers of double-sided foam tape to fasten the box to the bottom of the pull-out drawer which houses my NCE Command Station, Power Supplies and Programming Track.

Here is what my installation looks like:



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On the left of the WFD-30 are two sockets. I used a flat, non-reversed cable with RJ-12 6P4C connectors to connect one of these sockets to the Cab Bus socket on my Command Station. (Initially, I used one of the round, coiled cables which came with one of my NCE hand-held Throttles. But this is rather bulky, so I ordered the flat, non-coiled cable from Steve in Australia, essentially for the price of postage.) I've suggested to Steve that he include cables with the WFD-30 as standard, even if he needs to increase the price a little, since, as in my case, these can sometimes prove difficult to find. I used the other socket to plug in the cable from my cab bus which, in my case, is the cable leading to my NCE (radio) Antenna. For those not using the *Radio Power Pro* version, this would be the cable leading to the bus connecting the panels into which the wired NCE hand-held Throttles are plugged.

The WFD-30 also works with other NCE systems, including the self-contained Power Cab (combined throttle/command station). But the Power Cab must have the latest software version which is 1.65B. (On the Power Pro, the latest version must be 2007C. This can be checked when turning on a connected Throttle which will, on boot-up, display the current software version.) If needed, updates can be ordered directly from NCE for about \$25.

Next, I downloaded the WiThrottle app onto my iPhone. There is a free version. Following Steve's advice, I opted to pay the \$15 one-time fee to get the full version which contains a lot of extra features. The WiThrottle Manual can be viewed at: <https://www.withrottle.com/html/manual.html>

I then turned on the power to my NCE system. Immediately, the first of three LEDs on the right of the WFD-30 turned red, indicating it was receiving power from my NCE system. Then, a blue LED illuminated once the NCE command station began polling the module on its Cab Bus. The third, green LED, flashes when the module is receiving signals from my iPhone.

The next step was to go to Settings on my iPhone and look for what looks like a network called "wfrx\_WFD30..." and then connect to it. I say "looks like" because WFD-30 uses the same technology as the internet, but an internet connection is not needed. In effect, the WiThrottle on my iPhone

recognized the WFD-30 as a WiThrottle server that it could connect to.

All I needed to do then was to tap on the Throttle Tab at the bottom on my iPhone screen and – voila! – there was a Throttle. I entered a loco address, hit "Set," and I was able to select FWD or REV, adjust speed, hit function keys and more! At least on the full WiThrottle version, I had several throttle layouts to select from, one of which allowed for simultaneous control of two locos.

There is another version of the WFD-30 which replaces the PCB behind a Power Cab Panel (PCP) or Universal Throttle Panel (UTP). It looks like this:



My experience really was plug and play! And there were no issues using my legacy, wireless NCE hand-held throttles at the same time I used my iPhone WiThrottle!

There's lots more I can do with this system, but I've not explored those features yet. I strongly recommend this great product to all my fellow model railroaders who have NCE DCC systems!



**There is No December Meeting.**





## The Union Station

By: Bill Doyle



Better known as the oldest operating Union Station in the United States, the historic Victorian era Union Depot of Canaan, CT. continues to be known as the heart of the town. This grand, wooden structure was born in the heyday of the development of railroads in New England, and miraculously had survived until fire caused it to almost be completely destroyed on October 13, 2001.



In 1872 the Housatonic Railroad and Connecticut Western Railroad constructed the building at the junction in North Canaan. The Housatonic ran generally north to south, following its namesake river through the hills and valleys of western

Connecticut and Massachusetts. The “Western” later became the Central New England, and eventually both railroads fell under the dominance of the New York, New Haven and Hartford. The “Western” ran from Hartford west to Poughkeepsie, NY and the important high level bridge across the Hudson River. This link created an all rail route north of New York City, and connected the coal fields of Pennsylvania to the factories of New England. Coal could flow northeast, manufactured goods from the many mills and forges of New England would move west and south. The Canaan depot is a Victorian era gem. It was designed by the chief engineer of the railroad, but it’s the wooden carpentry that makes the building exceptional. G. H. Bundy, a cabinet maker and builder of coffins, of Lakeville, CT, is credited with this craftsmanship.



The building featured exterior walls of board and batten siding, and two long wings that are at right angles to each other at the diamond. A distinctive three story tower (topped by a locomotive weathervane) allowed railroad telegraph operators a clear view down each the right of way. Each wing was 90 feet in length and was occupied by the respective railroad companies noted above. Graceful rounded arch windows were used throughout, and neat wooden brackets supported the roof and track side canopies. Old curved back benches once occupied the platforms for patrons who were changing trains here.

(Continued on next page)





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On the second floor was a large room that functioned as the station restaurant. It had a twenty foot long semicircular counter in place. In the days before railroad dining cars were commonplace, the Canaan depot lunch room satisfied many a hungry rail patron.

In 1971, passenger service was discontinued. Freight service would remain only until 1974, and the station was closed. It was saved from demolition by a former Amtrak executive who purchased it and converted it to a flourishing retail center, which until recently also included a very popular railroad theme restaurant in the Central New England wing of the building. In 1980, the state "rail banked" the Housatonic track, and since 1983 a short line by the same name operates on the upgraded trackage, which is seeing increasing car loadings. Occasional rail fan excursions still operate on the historic and scenic right of way. Many other stations still exist along the old Housatonic track, and countryside of western Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The Connecticut Historical Railroad Association, Inc. purchased the station after the fire in October, 2001 severely damaged the historical landmark. This not for profit charitable organization worked to raise funds and reconstruct the station back nearly to its original state. The project cost was close to 2.2 million dollars in work and labor.

The picture of the station after the fire looks like it was destroyed, but not even half of the depot burned, thanks to an amazing effort by local volunteer firefighters. The signal tower remained structurally sound and was shortly restored. The north/south wing was barely touched. The rebuilt station now houses a museum, restaurant, the businesses, and is a station on the Harlem Line of Metro North, and retains its distinction of "oldest continuously operating union station." The union designation remains despite the loss of the east/west line. Note that the depot is actually in North Canaan, CT. Anyone who uses a GPS to find it will end up one

town south if they just enter "Canaan."





## TIPS FOR OPERATION

### Part 1

By: Ken Nelson

When we operate our model railroads, or those of a friend, we want to be as efficient and realistic as possible. At the same time, we want to be as close to prototype as possible and we can accomplish all of these objectives by following just what the prototype does. Yes I know there are certain things that we cannot or do not do. For example, when we are preparing to spot a car at a local industry, we don't really climb down from our model engine or caboose to do our work, we don't actually pump our cars with air or turn a brake wheel to hold the brakes, and while we may be operating as our favorite railroad did many years ago, we aren't working with a crew of five or more people.

But there are several things we could and should do to be more realistic. Over the next several issues, I'll cover some of the things we try to do on my Poco Valley Railroad in HO gauge. In most cases, these tips are based on what I personally did when I was working on the prototype New Hope and Ivyland Railroad in Pennsylvania, as well as the Delaware and Hudson Railroad in New York. Keep in mind that my experiences took place in the 1960s, but while some things may have changed a bit since then, most of the tips I mention are still worth thinking about as you operate.

Let's begin by making up our train in the yard. In most cases, the crew that will be running the train will not be making it up. That will be done by the yard crew. But one way or the other, whoever makes it up, we want to remember our first tip:

#### BE AWARE OF YOUR SPEED

One thing I (and possibly you too) have noticed over the years of visiting other model railroad layouts is that most modelers run too fast. Prototype railroads set speed limits varying from a crawl to rather fast. There are sections of the main line that can handle speeds up to 60 or even 70 miles per hour. And there

are other sections of the same railroad in a town or near a yard perhaps that limit that speed to much slower. Of course Amtrak's Acela may run much faster, but that is a unique train that most of us probably don't run on our railroads.

One thing we must remember is that the faster we run, the smaller our layout seems to be, and by the same token, if we want to imagine that our railroad is bigger than it actually is, running at a slow speed will help. Another important point is that switching cars, whether in a yard, or out on the main at an industry, takes about the same time as the prototype would take making the same move. But if we run a train on our model railroad from its starting point, such as a staging yard, to the other end of the layout, it will take a very small amount of time compared to the prototype running a road freight or passenger train. We don't have eighty or ninety miles on our model railroads.

The next time you are out watching the prototype, look at the side of the train and count how many seconds it takes for each car to pass. It may be one second per car, or two seconds per car. Different trains will take different times. Now try the same thing as you run a train on your layout. You will probably find that you are running much faster than you thought.

The switching speed in a yard is even slower, and is usually set at 4mph. This is a fast walk. If you run on DCC, you can set your yard switcher to run at a slower speed than your road engines. You may have seen a modeler banging his engine and cars together at speed, immediately changing direction, sometimes without even stopping, and continuing in this fashion to make up a train. This is not only hard on the equipment, but drastically hard to watch. Take your time and give the little figures on the ground, who are throwing switches and uncoupling cars time to do their thing.

In our next issue, we will discuss the beauty of empty yard tracks.



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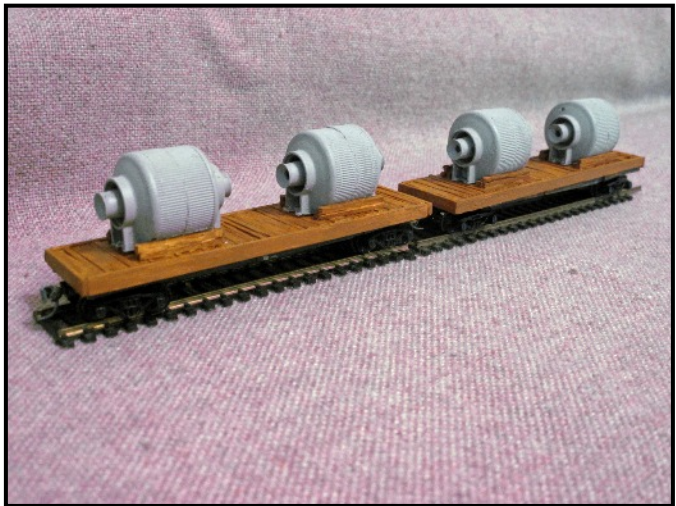
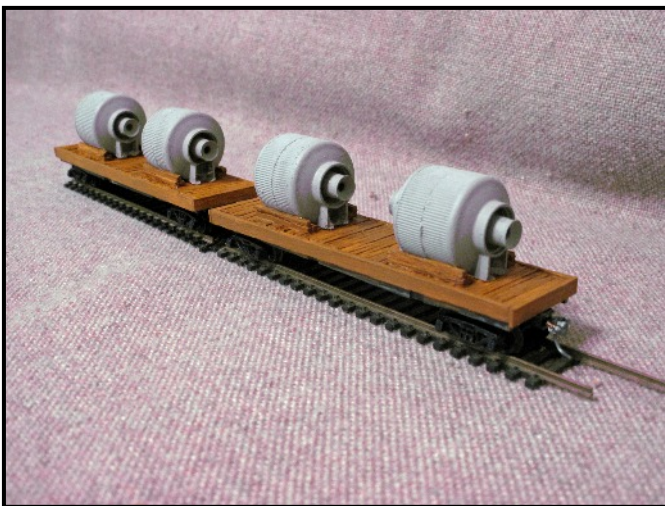
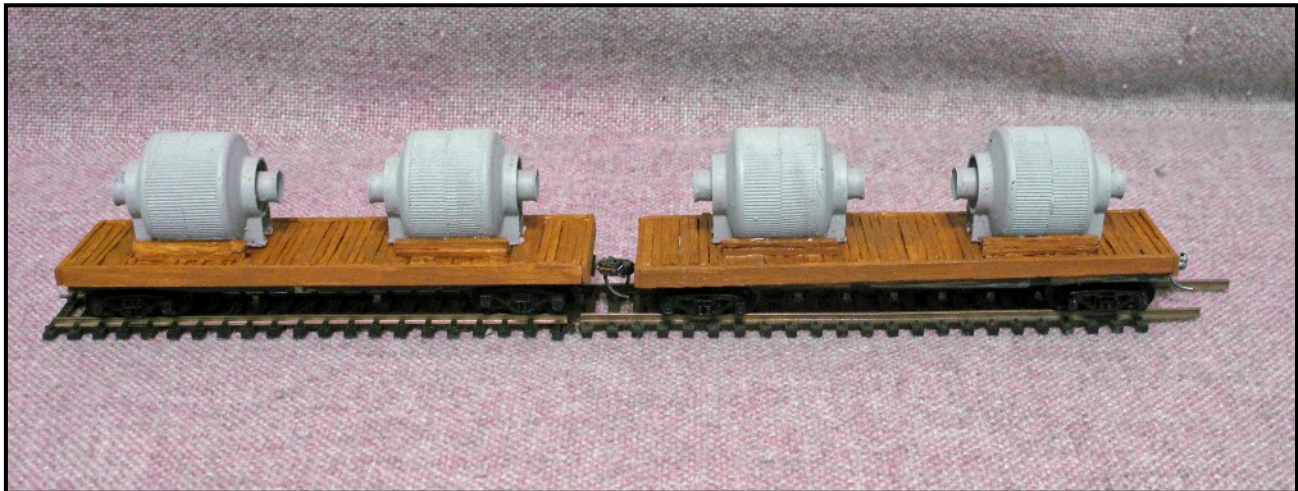
## HBD Member Projects and Photos

By Lloyd Coon

Hello HBD members,

Even here in my winter home of Chattanooga, Tennessee we were locked down for a bit during the height of the virus. I thought I would try my luck at reworking two cars in my scrap pile. They were two TYCO boxcars that I had no use for at all. I cut the tops down to the frame and discarded them. Then the old truck mounted coupler mounts were reworked and then I fashioned the frame-mounted coupler pockets. I installed Kadee # 148 Whisker couplers to the adjusted pockets, which worked better than I thought. Now on to the flat car decks. I wanted a rustic appearance so I fastened wood runners to the old boxcar frame and glued individual sticks crosswise on the runners to create a rustic-looking wood deck. Then I made aprons for the deck out of thin wood strips to hide the ends of all the cross deck pieces. After painting I felt comfortable with the look. I also built, fastened and painted bunk mounts to hold the generators on the flat car deck. The generators themselves are made from dish soap squeeze bottle tops, cut down and glued together. A little silver/gray paint made them look new.

The pictures below show two flat cars now ready for use made out of basically junk. I hope to run these cars at our next modular show here in the Tennessee/Georgia area.





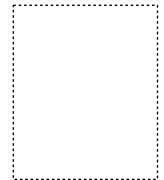
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