



The Short Line

February
2025

I hope spring is right around the corner as the weather report for most of the last week was for a trace of snow, but it seems like I shoveled at least 1 to 2 inches every day on Wednesday, Thursday and could have Friday and the previous 10 or so days we had 4 ice/snow storms. I gave up of hope of seeing the raised layout as every day I watched the sleet and snow get higher the structures.



I hope spring gets here soon as I am sure you are tired of winter as I am.

Southern NW2 cow and Calf

I did finished the Southern NW2 cow and calf and I thought they turned out nice. They will now be running in sunny warm Florida.



While not directly related to garden trains, I did buy from Lowes (and I imagine other big box stores have them) - a battery powered snow shovel which I didn't use yet even though we have had light snows all week, but there is ice underneath the snow. It does say not to run it through water or in rain as you could get electrocuted. The price seemed nice, so I ordered one. It came on the 12th.

<https://www.lowes.com/pd/SuperHandy-48V-17-in-Adjustable-Angle-Snow-Blower-48-volt-17-in-Single-stage-Push-Cordless-Electric-Snow-Blower-Powered-Snow-Shovel-2-Ah-Battery-and-Charger-Included/5015010079>

I assembled mine last week, but couldn't find the screws to add the wheels to the shovel, so I took it to Lowes and they found stainless steel screws that fit. The other day I was getting ready to take the huge box to recycling and under a flap of a little box of parts that parts came in inside the big box, I found the screws.

Here is what it looks like:



The 48 volt battery is on my coffee table in front of the caboose.

Here is what the actual shovel part looks like:



There is a handle off to the left behind the shovel section that you can turn left or right to angle the out going snow. Many cheaper battery powered snow shovels send the snow out straight out in front of you. I am waiting for grass to appear and then have a nice 5-6 inch snow storm to try out the machine. If it works like it is advertised, my larger snow blower will go to my daughter as they live on a 3 lane highway and their snow blower broke last year. I can handle a 19 pound rolling machine compared to my 80 pound snow blower which is difficult to get on and off the porch.

A week or so ago, I was rereading the GR News for November and December 2024 about the new American Main Line GP60 on page 28 which rldhobbies.com sells. I thought it be nice to try one out, so I bought the Norfolk Southern Operation Lifesaver GP60. It is very well built and it weighs 9.8 pounds. All 8 wheels are powered and unit doesn't have traction tires. The detail is very good. The beacon light on top of the cab doesn't light and neither are the number boards lit. The engine comes in a box within a box. The box that holds the engine has 1/4 inch plywood sheets the length of the box on both sides of the locomotive and one under the locomotive. The side boards have hard styrofoam packing to keep the engine rigid while it is being shipped. The engine comes with a 5 page booklet with exploded sheets showing every part of the locomotive and how it connects to the locomotive.

If you buy one, do not pick it up by the dynamic brake blister which is held in place by tiny magnets. You can run track power by just setting it on the track and it will run or you can have battery set up done for you by Robby at rldhobbies.com as there isn't any documentation on how to run the locomotive. The engine, under the dynamic brake blister, has switches for track power or battery. I had to ask Robby about the switches as I will run my engine track powered. The engine also lacks an engineer although the reviewer in GR News said the shell comes apart easily by removing screws under the engine and one doesn't have to remove the fuel tank to get at the screws. He said his track is a bit rough and the engine lacks a lot of lateral motion on rough track, so he showed in the article how to modify the screws holding the powered trucks in place by making a wider hole on a plate that the

screw goes to the truck. My raised layout should be pretty flat, so I don't anticipate having to make this modification. The engine also lacks smoke. It comes with the front and rear hand rails place and all you have to do is add the side handrails. I took a thin drill bit and widened all the holes that the end of the step wells and the yellow handrails went in the step wells to hold the railings in place. I followed his advice and used canopy glue (available at Hobby Lobby and most hobby shops) to anchor my side handrails in place as then you can remove the handrails if you need to.



I can't wait to watch it run on the layout.

Special Project

I was asked by Mr. Charles (Chuck) Ro, Jr to paint 2 GP30's and an extended vision caboose for a special project they were working on.They sent me the 2 GP30's and I added the caboose as I have quite a few new extended vision cabooses. They sent the artwork and we finally agreed on a color yellow. It took a week to paint the engines and the caboose into first primer as the GP30's were PRR and the caboose was NYC. After the primer was dry, I waited a day as I other things to do. Then I painted all 3 pieces into the yellow. The yellow was masked off and the black applied to the GP30's. The railing and grab irons were painted into black on the caboose as well as the grab irons on the diesels.

I am not permitted to say anything else about the project and I can not show the finished pieces, but you can see the pieces before I decaled them. The yellow is True Line British Columbia Rail yellow (Poly

Scale sold in Canada). The background lighting on the left picture is too dark as the caboose is the right shade.



I felt quite honored that they asked me to participate in their special project.

I was told to mask the number boards and let the existing numbers remain on the engines. I find the hardest part after painting is reapplying the windshield wipers especially the 2 in the middle windows as the wipers are hard to handle with a small pair of pliers. They said they would add the detail parts on the pilots which I had painted for them.

I also decaled two more of the undecorated hoppers sent to me by a friend in Minot, ND where last week the high temperature for the day was -31 degrees for 3 straight days and the low was -65. Not a great day to run a train outside. Two hoppers were decaled into SOO LINE a few weeks ago and I have the last 2 hoppers here to decal for him this weekend. The last 2 cars will be numbered 60347 and 60349. He said he could run a 12 car SOO LINE hopper train when he rebuilds his garden layout.



New USAT Cars Redone

The new 42 foot and 55 foot tank cars are at USATrains.com and came in some nice paint schemes which I think they had in the past. I am pondering buying a 42 foot Sunoco tank car as I have a 29 foot Sunoco car. If I buy the 42 foot car, I will run it on the raised layout with the GP60 and a few more modern freight cars such as the AML Gunderson boxcar and AML 3 bay covered hoppers. Look up the tank cars offering. My friend in ND got 3 cars this week and he said they were very cold to touch

as they are made of aluminum when he opened the boxes to look at them.

We need more modern G scale freight cars

You do realize that there not many new freight cars offered in G scale, but O scale seems flooded with new freight cars. It would be nice if manufacturers would offer some new cars such as 57 foot insulated reefer with a wider door, a modern 50 foot gondola, a single and double bay Airslide covered hopper, a pulpwood hopper, a modern 89 foot piggy back flat with trailers that could be converted into hauling containers with a stronger metal folding 5th wheel, a modern coil car, a modern 70 foot center beam flat car, an all door boxcar, and others. You could probably add a few cars to the list that you have always wanted.

I wish Piko would come out with a larger diesel engine like the C415, C420, C430 or the GP35. I am sure in Europe where folks small layouts in their houses, the 25 ton GE switcher that can haul 2-3 cars is fine, but I doubt a lot of folks buy them to run in their garden railroads in the USA especially like the Clean Machine which isn't heavy enough to really clean the track. Piko needs something with 2 powered trucks that could be run on 4 foot or larger diameter curves with a track cleaning pad under it.

A few weeks ago I almost bought the LGB track cleaning car, but decided not buy it.

Train Shows

The ECLSTS Show is being held in Annapolis again this year the first weekend in April.

Then there is the <https://greatlakestrainexpo.com/attending-the-show/> outside of Youngstown on May 9 and 10th. I am going to that show and will take anyone in the club that wants to go with me on May 9th.

Decal Paper Woes

I was running out of decal paper, so I searched the internet as my supplier had run out. I found a company in California that offered water slide paper. The company's name is Hayes Paper. <https://www.hayespaper.com/> They sell packs of 20 sheets for \$15.99 so I bought 2 packs of laser waterslide decal paper. The paper came the other day and I tried it out last night. You can run the laser paper through a laser printer or in my case an Alps 5500 micro dry printer that uses resin cartridges. The paper is a hair smaller than Tango Papa decal paper from CMRproducts.com as the sheets are 8.3 x 11.7 and while the paper is clear, the background on the paper is a white tint, so one can't print a white decal, but if you have color images, it will print fine. They do sell white laser decal paper so if you could match the paint of a freight car or locomotive, you could leave the area of white text clear (set up as white) and the white would show through. It would be great for printing building signs. They also sell clear and white inkjet paper which you can run through any inkjet printer.

Then I asked one of the moderators of the Alps@Alps.groups.io which I have belonged to for years

and he told me he uses Bare-Metal water slide paper which has a slight bluish tint. Bare-metal.com

So I contacted them. It is a small husband and wife business that has been in business for 70 years I think started by the owner's father. Today I ordered 90 sheets from them as it is cheaper in bulk. You might think that is an awful amount of paper, but on the special project I just did - I had to print the decals on 4 sheets to do the 2 engines and the caboose and then I discovered an error as I thought the decals needed to be smaller for the caboose on one of the sheets, so I printed a smaller sheet which I later discovered I didn't need. But it is saved in case USA needs something else.

For the Soo Line hoppers, for my ND friend, I at first printed several sheets which I shipped to Minot as my friend was going to decal his own cars. Then he decided he didn't have time and he changed the numbers and sent the sheets back to me with 2 cars to be decaled. So I needed to change the decal master and printed out 2 more sheets. I have since printed another sheet with the text SOO LINE to use on the last 2 cars of the 12 cars order. We discovered it was cheaper to send just 2 cars at a time.

I normally go through 50 sheets of decal paper every 2 or 3 months as I also print a lot of custom decals for folks in all scales.

My original source got some paper in. I think they get it in rolls as they are decal printing business. CMRproducts.com and I have no idea how long it takes to cut 40 sheets of decal paper. They must have have gotten a lot ready for sale as they only had a few packs left of 10 sheets in a pack. I like their paper, so I bought 4 packs last night and are located in Harrisville, PA which is about 100 miles SW of here. They shipped my paper today, so I should have it Monday.

Now the Hayes paper is interesting and I will use it for printing other kinds of decals that I just need to print color images on the sheet like signs for a building. I wanted to try it, so I don't think I wasted \$31.98 on 2 packs of 20 sheets each. I just have to adjust my master to fit the smaller sheet.

I am still looking for articles about a garden railroad you are plannig to build, a special structure you built for your layout, a scratch built car, some new idea relating to garden railroading. I am open to any ideas that you have. I am interested in anything that you might be doing in large scale, but if you make a car in another scale, the readers might be interested in that.

Cheers,
Jeff