

# MINI-BUNCH NEWSLETTER

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The Mini-Bunch Newsletter is usually published 4 times a year on an irregular schedule. Membership and a subscription to the Newsletter are \$8.00 for 2 years or with Registration at a recent Mini-Bunch meeting.

Web site: <http://www.narrowtracks.com/minibunch>

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**JUNE 2005**

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## SNIPINGS

by Jim Foster, King Snipe

## MOTOR VEHICLES

From time to time I speak to undemanding audiences about “Creating an Ambiance,” or more specifically how to translate what you see in the field to a believable model. I touch briefly on modeling motor vehicles as a part of the mood of a place, but I’d like to suggest to all of you that the vehicles on your layout not only set the time period in a way most folks can understand, but also that those vehicles are often one of the weakest elements of an otherwise satisfactory scene.

How often have you seen a wonderful layout in a magazine that has the jarring element of a cheap plastic unpainted vehicle, set in an otherwise beautifully weathered environment? How often have you visited a layout that is set in a modern era but has cars from the 1940’s represented as being in everyday service? Even though this is a hobby and whatever gives you pleasure should be okay, I am going to argue that a little effort in understanding vehicles can improve the appearance of anyone’s layout.

Depending on the part of the country (I am presuming U. S. here, but the comments are applicable to other places) being modeled, its climate determines how long cars and trucks are regularly used. Here in the Ohio Valley the climate is reasonably benign, but salt is used in the winter to clear roads, and Ohio has had a “bare roads” policy since about 1960. This has had a dramatic effect on how long cars last, especially prewar vehicles that had almost no rust protection. When I was a little boy in the 1950’s and even into my high school years in the mid-1960’s, prewar cars were common in everyday service. However, when I lived in upstate New York where the climate was much more brutal, it was unusual to see a car more than about ten years old, and those had just about disintegrated even though they ran

well. For those of you modeling a dry area, cars lasted much longer in those places. A car from western Kansas or Colorado or from a desert environment, or any place that is dry and not salty, will have almost no rust on it, and, therefore, be in use until it gives out mechanically.

The point of all this is to pay attention to the age of vehicles on your layout. For a scene in 1952 a Model A Ford would be okay in everyday use with even an *occasional* Model T, with many cars from the 1930’s and ‘40’s in various stages of deterioration. A 1951 Chevrolet would be essentially a new car and represented as such. For a scene in 1925 the Model A could not be used; the Model T would be everywhere and certain other Teens’ and Twenties’ cars would be around. Many farmers would still be using horses. My home layout is set in Eastern Ohio in 1970, so vehicles here are disproportionately from the 1960’s, and anything from the 1950’s is modeled as an older car. I also try to think about what my citizens were likely to buy: almost exclusively American and more than likely one of the “low-priced three” (Plymouth, Chevrolet, Ford). A Cadillac or Imperial would be seen in front of one of my shacks only as a used car on its fourth owner. A VW Bug *might* be okay.

One final point: cars in regular service did not commonly have whitewall tires in the 1930’s, even though most restored survivors do now. Your layout will be more believable if they all have blackwalls.

Trucks were generally were used longer than passenger cars and therefore you can use older ones on your layout. Again using Eastern Ohio in 1970 as an example, pickup trucks from the 1950’s and ‘60’s would be everywhere, with an occasional one from the 1940’s or even late ‘30’s. A Model A would be a stretch, however. Some of these trucks are also appropriate for a later time period. The Chevrolet/GMC pickups from 1948-54 must have been a tremendous value, as they were commonly seen as a working truck until about 1985. These are readily available as models,

too, at least in HO.

Big trucks can be used over an even greater time span. The W-Series White was built from about 1940-58, and would be an "old" truck on my layout but not necessarily a derelict. The AC Mack [Bulldog] would be appropriate up until the early 1950's and perhaps later in certain types of service, as these things were built until at least 1938. The B-Series Mack from the 1950's and '60's is, of course, one of the most commonly seen trucks ever built and is perfect for any time up until about 1990 as a working truck, especially in the coalfields. I have several. The R and U-Series Macks were introduced in the mid-1960's and this body style is seen every day in 2005.

Think about the kind of environment in which your vehicles operate. Since our little narrow gauge trains turned out not to be competitive with paved highways, I suggest most of your roads should be dirt or gravel. I have seen numerous layouts with dirt roads on which every single vehicle is spotlessly clean. The only time a vehicle operated on dirt roads is clean is the moment its owner is washing it. Those of you modeling New England in the spring should be aware of "mud season" and what it does to cars, and those modeling a desert environment should of course have every vehicle appropriately dusty. Vehicles in wet or salty places also rust, especially in their lower extremities. Anything that's supposed to be over a few years old should reflect this.

Working trucks don't regularly get washed, so they shouldn't be modeled that way unless they are represented as being brand new. It is difficult to make a truck in mining service too dirty, but easy to make it not dirty enough.

How do you find information on how your vehicles should look? Old photographs in railfan books are perfect. I also highly recommend two books entitled "Big Rigs of the 1950's" and "Big Rigs of the 1960's." These two have not only helped me determine what's right for what date, but also helped on detailing and weathering. There are also great books on old dump trucks that show them in service. Most books on old cars, however, have photos of restored survivors and I will suggest that while that can help in detailing, weathering should be based on period pictures. And finally, travel to the area you model and look at the vehicles there.

I believe these techniques can significantly improve the appearance of your model railroad, and I am going to conclude this column with a challenge: think about how sheet metal folds up when hit in various ways, and try to come up with a good way to model a wreck!

His Royal Snippiness,

**Jim**

**NARROW GAUGE HUMOR** by Boxcar Red

Talking dog gets on a narrow gauge train, asks the conductor to bring him a pillow with whipped cream

and cherries on it. Conductor gets the pillow and the dog lies down. Dog says, "Don't you find all this a bit odd?" Conductor says, "No, I like my pillow the same way."

Wino on a narrow gauge train being obnoxious and bothering the passengers. Then he sees a billboard that says, "Drink Canada Dry." So he goes up there.

Ham sandwich gets on a narrow gauge train. Conductor says, "Hey, we don't serve food in here!"

## **National NG Convention nearby:**

### **Mini-Bunch meet in Dearborn on thursday at 4PM in the Bugatti Royale Room**

Don't forget the 2005 National Narrow Gauge Convention will be held in our backyard in Dearborn MI. The meet will be at the Dearborn Hyatt Regency from August 31 to September 3, 2005. On Tuesday evening there will be a special trip on the Huckleberry Railroad near Flint MI. The K-27 #464 will have a special run and there will be a tour of the shops at the railroad.

We have updated our web page to include Spouse activities, Layouts and Special Events that include "The Henry Ford" tour information.

The Spouse activities include several workshops along with a lunch and tour of the Henry Ford estate "Fair Lane". The workshops may include fees that will be collected at the time of the workshop. However, the luncheon and tour need to be reserved and paid by August 1.

Also, there is a 1 or 2 day "Fun Pass" available. The 2 day Fun Pass includes unlimited access to both the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village over 2 days and a tour of the Rouge Assembly Plant. The tour of the assembly plant MUST be reserved in advance. (Don't plan to take the Rouge Tour on the weekend since if the Plant is not working, it will be closed!) The Fun Passes are available through the Convention Committee at a savings! The regular price is \$48.00 for a 2 day and \$26 for a 1 day Fun Pass. If you buy from the Convention, prices are \$40.00 and \$22.00. (We will send the tickets to the individuals who need to make arrangements with Ford for the plant tour.) The tickets are good for 1 year from the date of purchase.

Registration forms for meet and for volunteering are included in the newsletter. See the web site or Gazette ad for information on the 464 trip, special model building clinic and more detail on spouse activities.

Reserve your room NOW!

Web site: <http://www.25nngc.com>

Registration is \$75 before the end of July, 2005. Send to Bob Haar, Registrar at: 19948 Pollyanna

Livonia, MI 48152

## Fall Mini-Bunch Meeting

Jim Eakin has planned a whole weekend of events for the weekend of October 1 and 2, 2005, in Canton, Ohio. Besides the usual clinics and contest schedule, there will be at least two actual narrow gauge lines running on Sunday. More details in August.

Marge Eakin is scheduling a "Stamping" class for the non-rails in your family. Something for the wives (or girlfriends) without having to hit the mall. A summary:

### Rubber Stamping - All Occasion Greeting Cards

Nothing says "I care" more than a handmade greeting card. If your looking for a fun, easy way to create memorable all occasion cards, look no further! Come join us in making fabulous hand stamped cards using Stampin' Ups!'s exclusive rubber stamps and accessories. This class emphasizes quick and elegant card designs which will incorporate various stamping techniques. No experience necessary. There will be a fee (\$10) for this class. Your wife will have to sign up in advance. More details in August.

### Members' Layouts

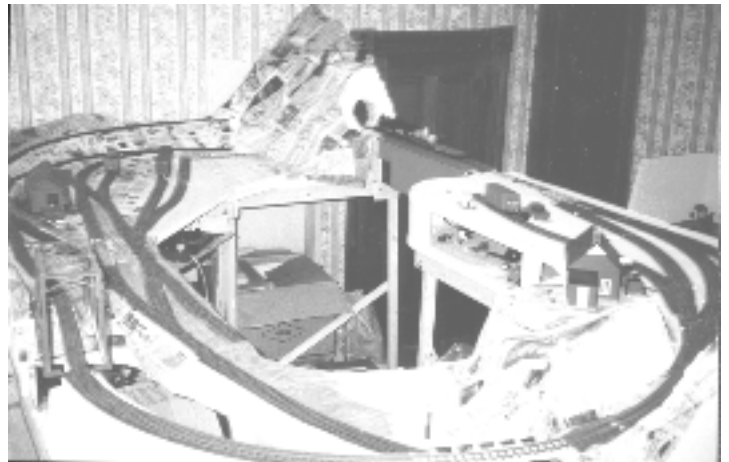
Bill Vollmar sent the following information on his layout:

The Doe River and Eastern Railroad is an On30 layout based on the ET&WNC. The layout is built in 4 sections so it can be moved and is based on an Ian Rice plan from the January 2000 issue of Model Railroader. I modified it by adding 12" to the length, 6" to the width, changing the curves from 18" radius to 22" radius, and changing the dead end branch line into an upper loop. Some of the yards by were modified by adding or removing sidings; that is how I turned Ian Rice's 5 x 10 foot Elk Creek and Western into the 5 1/2 x 11 foot Doe River and Eastern. The upper and lower loops cross a removable double deck bridge, the bridge is simply an open ended wooden box that the lower track passes through and the upper track is on top. The lower track is a hidden track from the staging area of the layout. The top of the bridge has simulated tin sheet roofing on each side of the track, and the sides have a built up silhouette of a covered wooden deck bridge and is made to resemble the covered deck bridge on the ET&WNC.

Lets take a ride on the DR&E! The train starts in the hidden staging yard on the lower loop, passes through the covered deck bridge on hidden track, and after a short stretch emerges from a tunnel. The train comes to a depot and a small yard serving an industry or two. At this point the train can be switched onto the upper loop or continue on the lower loop where it will eventually enter a tunnel and be back at the hidden staging yard. If the train is switched to the upper loop it will cross a through truss bridge, and enter an area that looks like the Doe River Gorge with a retaining wall. After this, it passes over a deck truss bridge, through a rock cut, and enters a small mining town with a depot and a yard that serves an iron mine. The train then crosses over the

covered deck bridge, dives through a tunnel and comes back to the interchange with the lower loop. I have trains running and have started on the more simple scenery like mountains and the river. After visiting the Doe River Gorge and seeing the unusual rock formations nothing seems simple about modeling "the wicked ditch of the East!" I have to get back to scenery work, hope you enjoyed the ride!

Bill Vollmar.



## Notes from the Editors

Thanks to Jim Foster who supplied information, articles or photos.

## HELP NEEDED!!!!

We plan to send out 4 newsletters per year. We are looking for articles on model building and prototype that will be of interest for the members.

## Narrow Gauge Web sites

### Mini-Bunch

<http://www.narrowtracks.com/minibunch>

Anyone can join any of the following special interest groups. Some require proof that you are really interested in the subject by asking questions. (That it to prevent spammers from joining and hijacking the mailing list.)

You can subscribe to daily or summary emails which may range from 3 or 4 to over 100 emails per day depending on the activity of the group. These are only a small sample of the groups for railroads. Groups may have as few as 10 members or as many as 1,500 members or more.

Butch Sage sent this group information:

### Bash and Scratch Loco

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bashandscratchloco>>

### ColoradoNarrowGauge

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ColoradoNarrowGauge>

### FinescaleOn30

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FinescaleOn30>

### gilpin-gold-tram

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/gilpin-gold-tram>

### MaineTwoFooters

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MaineTwoFooters>

### One-20point3

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/One-20point3>

### Scenery

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SCENERY>

### Scratch-building

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Scratch-building>

### Silverton

<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/Silverton>

If you know of others that may be of interest to the rest of the membership, please submit them, and we will publish them.

## Name Badges available

Some members have never received a name badge since they were not available for a number of years. Others have lost theirs. Jim Eakin has a vendor who can make badges that are nearly the same as the previous design. So send \$10 to Ted, and we will send a new badge for you by the next meeting. **(Tell us how to spell the name too - nickname - or whatever.)**

LAST COPY

?????

If your label has "last copy" written on it, then we would appreciate your sending \$8.00 to Ted for the next 2 years. If you register at a meeting, then you will receive the newsletter for the next 8 issues (2 years).

## Mini-Bunch Newsletter on Internet

Thanks to David Keith, our webmaster, we have the chance to see the photos in color. Generally, there will be additional photos that are not in the newsletter.

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Photos: <http://photos.yahoo.com/ngtrtrains455>

## Narrow Gauge Timetable

### National Narrow Gauge Conventions

25th - 2005 August 31 - September 3 - Dearborn, MI

26th - 2006 August 21 - 26 - Durango, CO

27th - 2007 August 29 - September 1 - Portland, ME

28th - 2008 September Portland, OR

29th - 2009 Colorado Springs, CO

### Midwest Narrow Gauge Meet

2006 - April 15 - 17 Greenford, OH

### Sn3 Symposium

Feb 2006 - Seattle, WA

Feb 2007 - Denver, CO

**NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE  
CONVENTIONS**

Dearborn, MI - Aug 31-Sept 3, 2005  
Durango, CO - August 21-26, 2006  
Portland, ME - Aug 29- Sept 1, 2007  
Portland, OR Sept 2008  
Colorado Springs, CO Sept 2009

**Mini-Bunch Meeting  
Fall 2005**

**Canton, OH  
October 1 & 2, 2005**

**Bill Vollmar's layout**



**Doe River & Eastern**



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