



The

Milepost

Volume 44, Number 11 – November 2024

The official newsletter of the Pikes Peak Division

Rocky Mountain Region – National Model Railroad Association.



NEXT MEETING:

Friday, November 8th, 2024, at 7:00 PM

The New Sand Creek Police Station 950 Academy Park Loop

(Northeast of the intersection of Fountain/Academy)

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Calendar of Events

January 12th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Show and Tell Program: {to be determined}

February 9th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Offline Buildings Program: Lionel – HO Vintage Trains

March 8th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: MOW Program: Harvey Houses of the Southwest

April 12th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Odd Ball Program: The Delagua & Bethua Railway

May 10th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Diorama Program: {to be determined}

June 14th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Rolling Stock Program: Charles Marchbanks

July 12th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Locomotives/Steam Program: Inventory Control Using Cards

August 9th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Photos Model/Layout Program: Circus Trains

September 13th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Photos Live Program: John Emmot

October 4th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Railroad Structure Program: Microcontroller Update

November 8th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting

Contest: Locomotives/Diesel Program: East Broadtop

December 13th, 2024 (Friday)

NMRA-PPD monthly meeting.

Program: Xmas Party



The Milepost, Volume 44, Number 11, November 2024, is published monthly, as an electronic document (Adobe PDF file), by, and under the authority of, the Pikes Peak Division (Rocky Mountain Region), of the National Model Railroad Association. Our meetings are usually held on the second Friday of each month at the Sand Creek Police Station, 950 Academy Park Loop (northeast of the intersection of Fountain and Academy), in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at 7:00 PM. Please come to one of our meetings. We would love to meet you. All scales are welcome. Besides our monthly meeting, we have swap meets, train shows, and other model railroads (and railroad) activities. Unless otherwise noted, all content in this journal is copyrighted to its respective owner. Please do not use content from this newsletter in other publications, newspapers, magazines, books, websites, etc., without explicit case-by-case permission. The editor of *The Milepost* is Mr. David Bristow. He can be contacted at the e-mail address: dave@bristow-family.org Thank you.

P.P.D Staff Members

OFFICERS

Superintendent:

Mark Fuerstenberger – (719) 491-1291

markf@classichomes.com

Assistant Superintendent:

Elizabeth Maline

eamaline@gmail.com

Secretary:

John Emmot – (719) 380-8421

jemmot@comcast.net

Treasurer (And Door Prizes Chairman):

Tony Pawlicki – (719) 687-2694

tonypaw1650@gmail.com

CHAIRPERSONS

NMRA Achievement Program:

Jack Sousa – (719) 576-7017 jackfrw@pcisys.net

Contest:

Kristin Phillips, and Jack Sousa

NMRA Membership:

Mike Maline

mcmaline2@gmail.com

Milepost Editor:

David Bristow – dave@bristow-family.org

Module Group (HO-Scale):

Mark Fuerstenberger – (719) 491-1291

markf@classichomes.com

Members Aid:

John Emmot – (719) 380-8421

jemmot@comcast.net

Monthly Meeting Programs:

Elizabeth Maline

emaline@gmail.com

Public Relations:

Kristin Phillips – kristin.phillips7099@gmail.com

Swap Meets:

Kristin Phillips – kristin.phillips7099@gmail.com

Webmaster:

[Open]

Next Meeting on Friday, November 8

Our meeting will be held at: The Sand Creek Police Station, 950 Academy Park Loop (northeast of the intersection of Fountain and Academy), in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Be sure to check out the Rocky Mountain NMRA Callboard:

<https://www.rmr-nmra.org/callboard.htm>

2024 Schedule

- Nov. 8th East Broadtop Jack Sousa
- Dec. 13th Christmas Party

Editor's Thoughts

Microcontrollers and Their Use in Model Railroading

Model railroading has evolved significantly over the past few decades, thanks in large part to advancements in technology. One of the most transformative innovations in the hobby has been the incorporation of microcontrollers, which allow hobbyists to create intricate, highly functional systems to control trains, lighting, and other layout features. This article will explore the role of microcontrollers in model railroading, discussing how they work, why they are advantageous, and offering examples of their real-world application in the hobby.

A microcontroller is a compact, integrated circuit designed to govern a specific task in embedded systems. These small but powerful devices contain a processor, memory, and input/output (I/O) peripherals, allowing them to process data and control devices. Examples of popular microcontrollers include Arduino, Raspberry Pi (which is technically a single-board computer but can function similarly to a microcontroller in model railroading), and ESP8266.

These devices are programmable, allowing hobbyists to write custom code to manage various operations such as turning on lights, controlling motor speeds, or coordinating complex operations like running multiple trains on a single layout.

Microcontrollers have opened up a wealth of possibilities for model railroaders by enabling sophisticated, automated control. Traditional model railroads are often operated manually, with hobbyists using electrical switches and controllers to manage trains and accessories. While functional, this method can be limited in terms of flexibility and scalability. Microcontrollers address these limitations in several key ways:

- Microcontrollers allow hobbyists to automate various tasks. For example, a microcontroller can control train schedules, operate turnouts (switches), and manage signal lights. By using sensors, it can also detect the location of trains on the track and trigger actions such as adjusting speeds or triggering sound effects at specific points.
- With a microcontroller, it is possible to precisely control train speeds, stop and start trains at specific points, and even simulate real-world operations like gradual acceleration and deceleration. This can create a more realistic and immersive experience for hobbyists.
- Microcontrollers can be programmed to respond to external inputs such as push buttons, infrared sensors, or light detectors, allowing hobbyists to interact with their layouts in real-time. This makes it easier to control multiple trains, operate accessories, or manage other layout features without needing to constantly adjust manual controls.
- As hobbyists expand their model railroads, microcontrollers can easily scale to accommodate additional tracks, accessories, and other systems. For instance, using a microcontroller to control lighting can allow for the simulation of different times of day or weather conditions.
- With microcontroller boards such as the ESP8266, hobbyists can introduce wireless control to their layouts. Wi-Fi-enabled microcontrollers can be controlled remotely using smartphones or computers, allowing for greater flexibility in managing layouts from a distance.

Common applications of microcontrollers in Model Railroading:

- One of the most popular uses of microcontrollers in model railroading is within DCC systems, which are widely adopted for controlling multiple trains on a single track. DCC systems allow each train to receive unique commands, enabling independent control of speed, direction, and lighting. Microcontrollers like the Arduino can be programmed to send DCC signals to model trains, providing a low-cost, customizable solution for advanced control.
- Microcontrollers are often used to control lighting in model railroads. For example, an Arduino can be programmed to simulate streetlights turning on at dusk, or house lights flickering on and off. With additional sensors, microcontrollers can be programmed to adjust lighting based on the time of day or the presence of trains in certain areas.
- Microcontrollers can also be paired with sensors to create responsive layouts. Infrared sensors can detect when a train passes a certain point on the track, triggering signals or activating crossing gates. Light-dependent resistors (LDRs) can measure ambient light levels, allowing the layout to respond to changes in lighting conditions.
- Sound is another area where microcontrollers can enhance model railroads. By integrating sound modules with microcontrollers, hobbyists can program their layouts to play specific sounds when certain events occur, such as a train passing through a tunnel or a bell ringing at a station. This adds an extra layer of realism to the experience.

Microcontrollers have transformed model railroading from a hands-on, manually controlled activity into a sophisticated, automated, and interactive hobby. By incorporating devices like Arduino, Raspberry Pi, and ESP8266, hobbyists can control trains, lighting, sound, and other elements with incredible precision. Whether automating train schedules, integrating sensors, or adding wireless controls, microcontrollers open up a world of possibilities, enabling model railroaders to create more realistic and enjoyable layouts.

As technology continues to evolve, it's likely that the use of microcontrollers in model railroading will only expand, offering new opportunities for innovation and creativity in the hobby.

For those unable to attend last month's PPD meeting the presentation I gave on microcontrollers is available, just drop me an email and I will send you a copy.

TECO Show

On Saturday I took my grandson to see the show and took a few photos, I'm sure John and others took a lot more photos, which I hope to include in next month's Milepost.





David

Keepin' it on the Tracks

By Mark Fuerstenberger

Rocky Mountain Train Show – Holiday Edition – November 30th & December 1st

The Rocky Mountain Train Show is coming up at the end of November. The show will be held at The Ranch Event Center in Loveland, CO. It is right off I-25 at Exit 259. This is a great show and always well attended, if you haven't been, I recommend you check it out.

December Christmas Party – December 13th

December is rapidly approaching, and Tony has been doing some gift shopping. Hopefully, everyone can attend, as December is more of a holiday party than a meeting. Even if you are not a regular

attendee, we'd love for you to show up. There will be a very short meeting, followed by food and presents.

BMRC Rocks and Rails - December 14th & 15th

If you're looking for another train show to attend, there is a train show in Longmont, CO at the Boulder County Fairgrounds.

Drawing Prizes Preview

By Tony Pawlicki

"Teaser" preview of some prizes available at the drawing during intermission at the November 2024 Pikes Peak Division NMRA meeting. The idea is to entice more members to our meetings. **HEY – feel free - encouraged, even - to bring/donate surprise items! The more the merrier! (Wade's and Mr. Lugg's and Alan Hutchins's donations won't last forever, folks – in fact, Mr. Lugg's donations were exhausted with the February 2023 drawing.)**

(SOME OF) THE NOVEMBER MEETING OFFERINGS (feel free to contribute more at the meeting; some more of Wade's freebies will also be available, free to good homes):

DRGW 01015. HO scale 35-foot steel cabooses kit. . Roundhouse (Model Die Casting) model, new in box, but lacking trucks and wheelsets.

- Dummy couplers.
- NO modern markings (no ACI plate, no Consolidated Stencils, no U1 wheel stickers).



ATSF 138083. Athearn kit for HO scale model of 40-foot boxcar with 6-foot single sliding door. Medium-sized ATSF herald, otherwise very plain.

- In original packaging.
- NO modern markings (no ACI plate, no Consolidated Stencils, no U1 wheel stickers).



KCS 20888. HO scale Life-Like 50-foot steel offset double sliding door automobile boxcar. NEW 11-41. Gift of Tony Pawlicki. (If this looks familiar, I won it at the October drawing, but sadly, though it's a fine model, it doesn't fit my post-1978 layout era. Here's hoping it finds a more appropriate home.)

- New-in-box (list price \$30.00).
- Metal wheelsets.
- Knuckle couplers.
- Southern Belle herald.
- NO modern markings (no ACI plate, no Consolidated Stencils, no U1 wheel stickers).



November Wavy Rails

Railfanning from Lamar

Two days after our road trip with little rest we had a bus driver Operation Lifesaver presentation. On the way east from Pueblo to Lamar (on US 50 again), an Amtrak zoomed by. On the drive back we captured these scenes in Lamar. In 1927, the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) erected 12 large markers called the [Madonna of the Trail Statues](#).

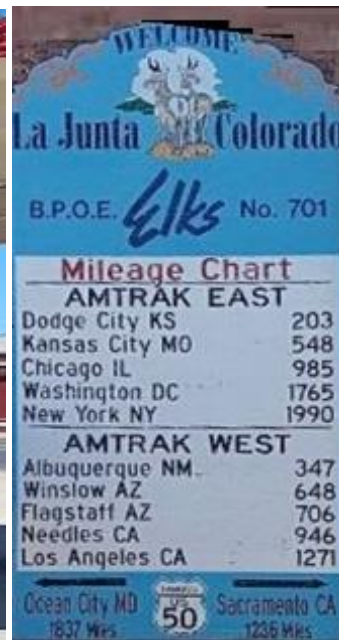




The welcome center station is the restored original. The Prairie loco got to its current location on movable sectional track.

La Junta with Caboose Bank

On the drive back we captured these scenes on the leisurely way back: wall painting on an Elk's Lodge, a caboose bank, and another steam engine.





The spliced “Frankenstein image” below is my attempt to show a side view of the locomotive above:



Back in the day, La Junta had a massive infrastructure as shown in this image from the Kansas Historical Society:



Whenever it Rains it Pours

We did a bus driver train safety presentation at Kristin's old school district and in Lamar. I even found the original USB drive with all our presentation material which was great because we have more time with this group.

To protect the privacy of school districts busses, we are substituting an image of Ground Force 1:



This Colorado School Bus made the national news.



It did NOT hit a train or any vehicle or any moving object and no students were injured.

Close Call for Thomas near Strasburg?



Actually, no. The Thomas train is reversing away. And, as I recall, those buggies zip through intersections at warp speed.

Alien Invasion?





Aliens can be a serious threat on model railroads just like in the real world. First, they stealthily scout the area, then they send in a capture saucer to abduct specimens.

These two black “craft” came from Target at \$5.00 each. The silver small craft has a hideous alien pilot. The background scout makes those strange alien sounds while the capture saucer energizes its transport beam which lights up.

Propane Truck Stops at all Railroad Crossing?



El Paso Street and Platte Bridge Incident



Multiple concrete barriers are on the north side of the bridge limiting drivers to hug the curve. Down below you can see where the truck hit the vertical wall on the north side of Platte. Up above, there are hard hat workers in the area. There was no place to safely stop and take any pictures.



In 1972, the Santa Fe tracks through Colorado Springs were removed and rail operations were consolidated on the former Rio Grande trackage on the west side of town.

This is where the Santa Fe used to run:



"AT&SF train passes through Shooks Run neighborhood" photo by Shirley Bonds

Shirley photographed the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe steam engine and train passing through the North 600 block of Middle Shooks Run neighborhood during the 1940's and the old Franklin Street neighborhood that was replaced by the Franklin Square Townhomes and North Shooks Run Park during Urban Renewal in the 1970's.

South of the old Harvey House is this Bridge.

Pardon the raindrops on the windshield.



October NMRA Magazine:



Cynthia Priest took this picture at the NMRA Convention in Long Beach

Cynthia also took a ground-level picture of the O-scale Olive Santa Fe depot in the NMRA Magazine which is much nicer than the one I took.

Wiring Correction Project on Home Layout

I have a crossover wiring issue I must straighten out before this next big project first.

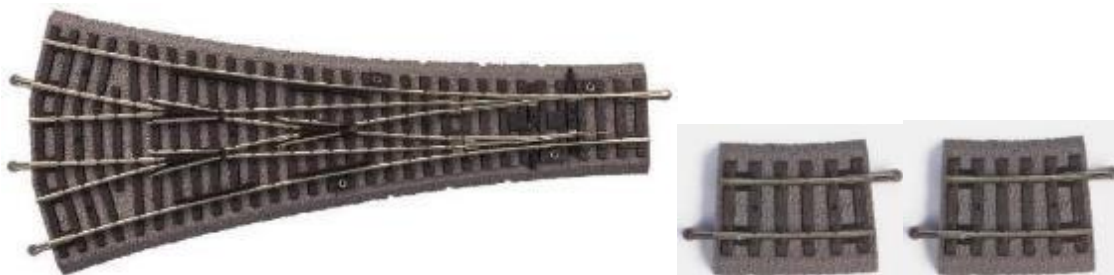
Colorado Springs Yard Deconstruction Site

The yard had a fifth parallel track and the two parallel curved tracks were more to the left. The yard track will join up to those curved tracks which will be replaced by 28" radius tracks. And then to the three-way turnout at the layout's edge.

Moving the modules out of the garage to join the rest of the layout will free up space there.

Module Home Layout Integration Project

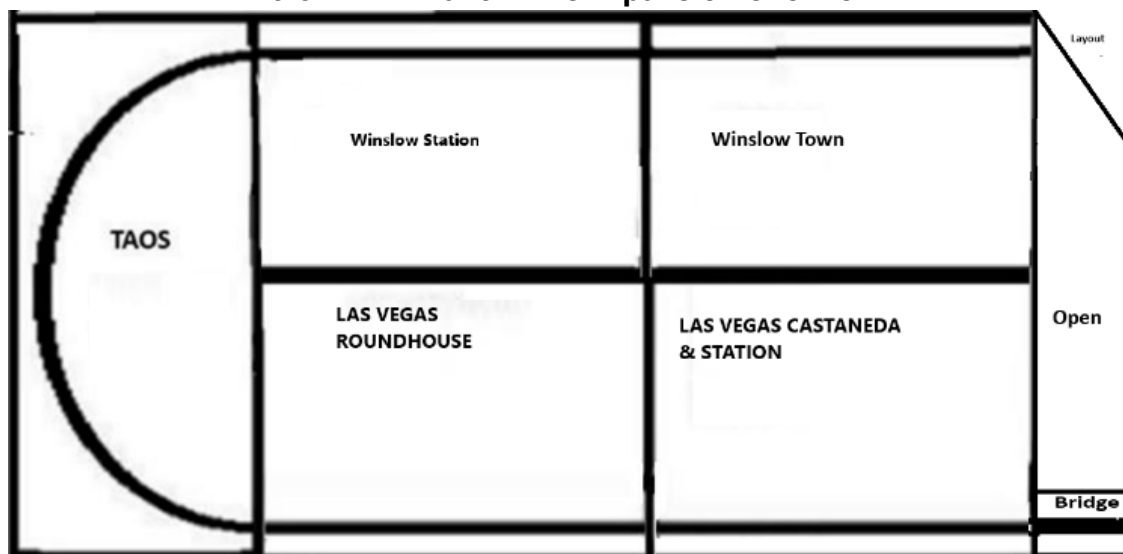
I actually have two functional modules, Las Vegas, New Mexico and Waterfall, two undergoing overhaul (Winslow, Arizona) and one under construction (Las Vegas Roundhouse). In addition to an EZ-track connection line on the home layout Colorado Springs section I am installing a Piko connecting track to the edge of the layout with a three-way Piko turnout to connect the two Las Vegas modules. Next there will be a 180-degree curve, then the Winslow Modules. The curve will be EZ-track but otherwise module compatible.



28" radius EZ-track will connect the fixed layout to the three-way switch from the Colorado Springs yard. That required moving the two curved tracks sections moving away from the edge of the layout. The 180-degree curve connecting the Las Vegas modules to the Winslow will also be EZ-track, probably 26, 28 and 33 degrees.

I chose Piko because they have better geometry options than Bachmann.

6.5' X 11' Branch Line Expansion Overview



Fortunately, the home layout is in a basement with ground-level access.

Colorado Springs peninsula has an angled connection to the track along the outside wall that will be parallel to the Winslow modules. An at least 12" permanent bridge will be attached to the Colorado Springs peninsula.

The Waterfall and Holbrook (unconstructed) modules will be stored under the Chicago portion of the layout. The modules will be periodically switched out in pairs.

Colorado Springs Yard Deconstruction Site



The yard had a fifth parallel track and the two parallel curved tracks were more to the left. The yard track will join up to those curved tracks which will be replaced by 28" radius tracks. And then to the three-way turnout will be connected to three tracks on the Bridge which will be permanently connected to the layout.

Moving the modules out of the garage to join the rest of the layout will free up space there.

- Stage One --- Reconstruct the Colorado Springs Yard. The new 28" and 33.25" curved track is on order. As soon as it comes in, I will install it.
- Stage Two --- Rewire the track between Chicago and Colorado Springs on the Layout. That will require taking off the Taos buildings currently stored in that area.
- Stage Three --- Test fit the EZ-track on the carpet before cutting the 4" X 8" base. The Taos curve track will be placed on the full-length wood sheet base before trimming the base.
- Stage Four --- Install the track and Taos buildings on the curved Taos module. Add legs to the new module. The last module will have EZ-track bumpers on the end and clamped to the layout for stability.
- Stage Five --- Connect Expansion to Colorado Springs Yard A short three-track bridge spacer piece will be attached to the layout to provide clearance between the last module and the angled track connection between Colorado Springs and the wall connection between Colorado Springs and Chicago. My guestimate is that it will be 8" long.

- Stage Six --- Create Holbrook module Several buildings already exist such as teepee hotel. Station must be assembled and the Dinosaur Rock Store must be designed and built.

Mobility Option

There will be more modules than available space. The Las Vegas modules will have bigger wheels on their legs as will the Waterfall and Holbrook modules. These two pairs of modules will take turns linking up to the main layout.

In the Overview image, the Waterfall and Holbrook modules will swap out with the Las Vegas modules.

WYE or WYE NOT on the Canadian Pacific



Brush Tunnel in Maryland



914 feet long, it bores through a promontory of Piney Mountain. Built in 1911, the tunnel was wide enough to accommodate the original double tracks of the Western Maryland main line. When I showed it to a TECO show participant, he told me the sign is real because he worked there.

Denver & Rio Grande Western - Alco PA's

By Mark Fuerstenberger

In 1939 the Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW), Western Pacific (WP), & the Chicago Burlington & Quincy (CB&Q) railroads got together to create a special train called the Exposition Flyer. It would run from Chicago, IL to Oakland, CA, and its purpose would be to take passengers to the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. The train was intended to be a limited time service, but its success led to continued operations. From 1939 until 1949 the railroads operated this train pulled by steam locomotives with older heavyweight passenger cars. However, seeing this trains success the three railroads decided to put together a new streamlined train and would name it the California Zephyr.

In preparation for the new California Zephyr, each railroad would need to share the burden of cost and equipment. Each railroad would need to provide cars, manpower & engine power. Two of the railroads, WP & CB&Q decided to go with new diesel locomotives manufactured by GM's Electro-Motive Division (EMD). They each choose the new F3 style locomotives (F-Units) in either the cab (A) or non-cab (B) versions. Each locomotive A or B type was listed by the manufacturer to have 1500 HP. WP choose an A+B+B combination and CB&Q choose an A+B+A combination.

Denver & Rio Grande Western on the other hand knew that it wanted more power as it would be pulling the train through the Rocky Mountains. So instead, they elected to purchase new diesel locomotives from the American Locomotive Company (ALCO). These engines designated as PA-1 (with cab) & PB-1 (no-cab) units were listed to have 2000 hp. Based on the horsepower ratings they would be able to achieve a combined 6000 hp with 3 locomotives from ALCO vs having to have 4 locomotives if they went with EMD. Seeing the savings of buying 3 locomotives instead of 4 they purchased 2 sets of PA + PB + PA combinations. The locomotive sets were numbered 600 & 601, with A & C being cab units and B designated with no-cabs.

	Manuf.	Serial #	Renumbered		Sold to / Year
600 A	Jan. 1947	74684	6001	3/13/1950	Precision Eng. / 1967
600 B	Feb. 1947	74702	6002	3/13/1950	Steam Gen. Car 253 / 7/1965
600 C	Feb. 1947	74685	6003	3/13/1950	Precision Eng. / 1967

601 A	Apr. 1947	74686	6011	3/6/1950	EMD / 1967
601 B	Apr. 1947	74703	6012	3/6/1950	Steam Gen. Car 252 / 10/1965
601 C	Apr. 1947	74687	6013	3/6/1950	Precision Eng. / 1967

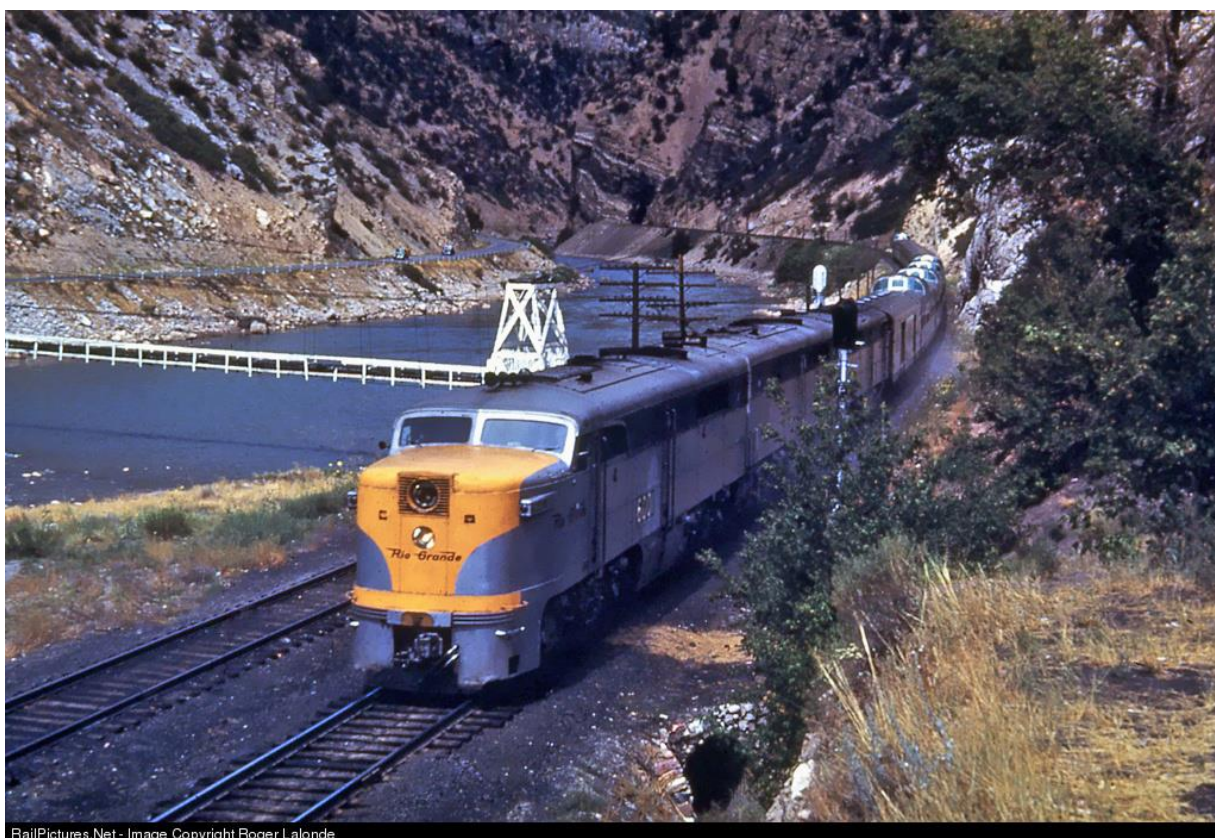
The new ALCO PA-1 & PB-1 locomotives were delivered to D&RGW in their paint scheme at the time which was black with three yellow stripes, and a yellow nose.



While this paint scheme and locomotive numbering seemed appropriate at the time when they were delivered to D&RGW in 1947 it would soon have changes made to it. On March 20, 1949, the inaugural train of the California Zephyr left Okland, CA, and met the D&RGW at Salt Lake City, UT. Very quickly into the operation of the new shiny silver train it was recognized that the black and yellow paint scheme on the PA's was probably not appropriate.



Just a few months into operating the California Zephyr the locomotives were repainted to solid aluminum with an orangish/yellow nose, and were called "Aspen Gold".



RailPictures.Net - Image Copyright Roger Lalonde

In early March of 1950 the ALCO units were then renumbered from 600A/B/C to 6001-6003 and 601A/B/C to 6011-6013.



Around September of 1951 the D&RGW had decided to again change its paint scheme and so the silver paint scheme was finished. The locomotives were then painted yellow with 4-black stripes.



RailPictures.Net - Image Copyright © Roger Lalonde

The 4-stripe paint scheme would last until around April of 1961, at which time they would then be painted in a single stripe paint scheme.



In 1967 the once famous ALCO PA locomotives for the D&RGW were sold off to a scrap dealer or traded to EMD for newer locomotives. The ALCO PB units were converted into steam generator cars and continued in service providing steam for heating passenger cars.

Show and Tell: Maintenance-of-Way and Free-form

By Tony Pawlicki

This note lays out rules for the Show And Tell session/contest at the NOVEMBER 2024 Pikes Peak Division NMRA meeting. Rules apply to the (normally) bi-monthly “*salvage and resurrection*” events. The event (sort of a second contest) was inspired by our late beloved Division Superintendent’s notion in his March 2023 Milepost Conductor’s Corner column.

This event is normally announced a bit over a month in advance in order to give folks enough time to prepare their entries. However, that would put it in December, conflicting with the Christmas Party, so here it is with just a week’s notice. not make up for the short notice, the salvage and resurrection topic is ANYTHING AT ALL.

Starting with the June 2024 meeting, we now have two parts to the event:

- The **theme-specific** contest/presentation (for November it is ANYTHING AT ALL).
- NEW FEATURE: **Free-form show-and-tell**, on any topic you choose. This feature is being added by popular request -folks have been suggesting this to our Superintendent.

GENERAL IDEA for the theme-specific part (ANYTHING AT ALL this month):

- Grab an old failed project you couldn’t bring yourself to discard (or a disaster picked up at a train show or store).
- *Plan a fix* (turning it into something good, though not necessarily creating what you originally planned), then *actually fix* it.
- Bring it, display it, then after regular model contest, stand up and tell us about your adventures.

- **The show-and-tell aspect is the main thing.** Given enough entries (3), there'll be a contest aspect too, but main goals are having fun salvaging something and entertaining the rest of us with the way you had fun.

THIS SESSION'S THEME: ANYTHING AT ALL, to make up for the short notice.

EXAMPLES:

- An example and the rules were provided in the April 2023 Milepost.
- To remind us that the salvage and resurrection project need not be a huge effort, **here is an example where just one major change was needed to "save" the model.**

Salvaging International Hobby Corporation (IHC) DTI 10175

IHC is (or was?) a prolific supplier of cheap HO scale model freight cars. I picked up DTI 10175 for \$3.00 (half-off the marked \$6 at the close-out of Roy's Trains in early August) without looking very closely at it, other than noting that it is a 50-foot high-side 3-bay Pullman Standard covered hopper. (I'm from Detroit and am a sucker for Henry Ford's railroad.) Upon closer inspection:

- It is rated at 90 tons, sort of an odd capacity (why not 70 or 100 tons?).
- It had plastic wheelsets. Well, easy enough to substitute weathered Kadee 36" (100-ton) wheelsets.
- It had truck-mounted couplers. Well, rail nippers can remove those, leaving just the truck.
- It had NO center sills forward of the truck bolsters. (I did say IHC made **cheap** models, right?)
- My favorite railcar photo Web sites had no photo of any such creature. Was this a "fantasy" model (you know the old problem, get more use out of the expensive injection molding dies by slapping on any old paint jobs)? Well, false alarm, there really was such a freight car! As of January 10, 1992 Official Railway Equipment Register (ORER), the Grand Truck Western still had 6 such cars in the series DTI 10100-10199, still wearing DTI reporting marks, though rated at 95 tons, not 90 tons.

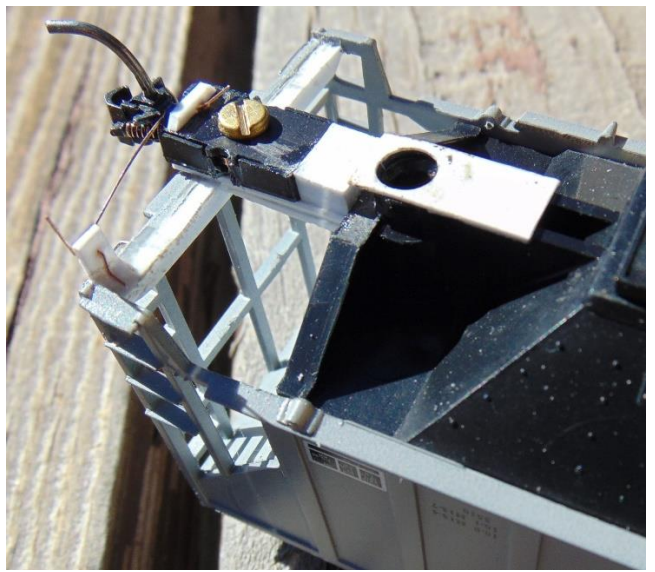
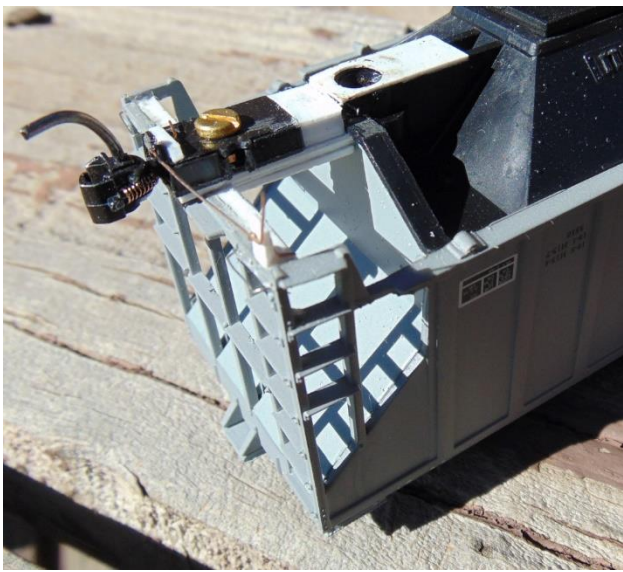
So, **just one major problem with doing the salvaging:** with NO center sills forward of the truck bolsters, there was no place to install body-mounted couplers. As the photos show, I beefed up the transverse end cage bottom member with styrene strip, then used various sizes of styrene strip to construct the missing center sills. Normal Kadee coupler pockets, with the "ears" trimmed off, mounted on these new center sills, using machine screws, not counting on glue for strength.

Minor changes were also made, as visible in the photos:

- Cut levers and brackets were added.
- Rooftop cast-on grab irons were replaced with formed metal.
- End cage cast-on grab irons were replaced with formed metal.
- Pulling loops (roping staples) just inboard of the truck bolsters were drilled through.

Curiously, the model is available on-line for \$14.99 new-in-box. Maybe this was a collector item?





Calendar of Future Train Show Events

Mark your calendars!

- **November 23 & 24**, Rails Along the Rio Grande (\$10) – Balloon Fiesta Park, Albuquerque, NM
Saturday 19-5, Sunday 9-4
- **November 30 & December 1**, Rocky Mountain Train Show Holiday Edition, The Ranch Event Center, Loveland, CO
- **December 14 & 15**, BMRC Rocks and Rails – Boulder County Fairgrounds, Longmont, CO
- **February 22 & 23**, 2025 TECO Model Train Show (\$11) – Colorado Springs Event Center, Colorado Springs, CO
Saturday 9-5, Sunday 10-3
- **April 5 & 6, 2025**, Rocky Mountain Train Show Spring Edition, The National Western Complex, Denver, CO



October 2024 Minutes

Secretary, John Emmot

The regular monthly meeting was called to order by Superintendent, Mark Fuerstenberger at 7:00 in the community room of the Sand Creek Police Station. This meeting was held one week early, due to room availability. The regular second Friday schedule will return for November. There were 18 members present. Glad to see Glen Hobbs, an Ngineers member, who was attending for the first time.

Secretary Report

The minutes of the September meeting were approved as published in the Milepost

Treasurers Report

Tony had hard copies of the treasurer's report. The statement reflected the interest payment and drawing receipts. The statement was accepted as presented.

Announcements

Bill LaFollete noted that OJ Rivas is having medical issues and would like to hear from other modelers.

Mark asked about the workday and Bar-B-Que at Calhan following the last meeting. John reported that several people attended, and some tasks were accomplished, but that the turnout was disappointing with no new members participating.

Kristin reported on the Estes Park show. She said that the Operation Life Saver booth had significant visits.

Mark noted that Kristin's picture was in the latest NMRA magazine as a clinic presenter at the National Convention in Long Beach, California.

Mark noted the next TECO show in November. He asked module owners to confirm their participation in the setup and had signup sheets for reserving running times on the modules. Elizabeth and Kristin also asked for volunteer workers including someone to host the Seek & Find activity.

Elizabeth announced that TECO would hold officer elections in December. New office holders are needed. She will not return as TECO chairperson beyond helping a new chairperson with the February 2025 show. All positions are open to interested parties.

Mark noted the Rails Along the Rio Grande show in Albuquerque, NM Nov 23-24. See RMR Region website for information.

He also noted the Rocky Mountain Train Show, November 30th & December 1st at the Ranch Events Complex, 5280 Arena Circle, Loveland, CO 80538

The Pikes Peak Division will announce candidates for the four Division offices in November and hold the election before the Christmas party in December. Interested parties should contact Mark.

Elizabeth had a signup sheet for monthly programs in 2025. Contact her if you are willing to present a program next year.

Tony discussed the technique of using zinc oxide oil paint to toned down the colors on model railcars. He had examples of the results for some different colors on plastic hoppers.

John described the in-progress model of the Tabernash engine-house he is building for the Moffat Road Railroad Museum layout in Granby.

Jack provided a verbal preview of the program he will present on the East Broad Top railroad in November.

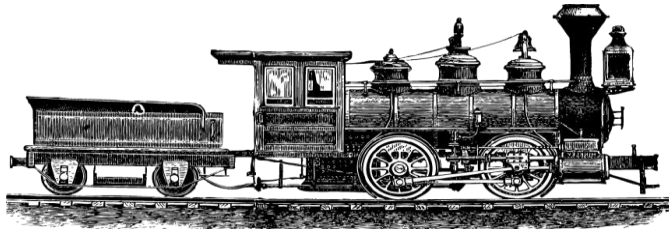
Contest

There was only one entry for railroad structure, by Tony.

After a short refreshment break, Dave Bristow presented a program on Microcontrollers and Their Use in Model Railroading. He discussed the three main brands of processors, their costs and their capabilities. He talked about the kinds of support they could provide from train and accessory control to locating individual cars on the layout.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29.





Notes from The Siding

By John Emmot

Once again, the calendar trips us up. Friday was the 1st so the meeting will come early, right on the heels of the TECO show. Due to my advancing age and decline in memory, I missed last month's Milepost. I will try to avoid that this time with David's prompting.

We have been getting some work done at Calhan. The Society hosted a Bar-B-Que cookout on September 15. Though workers did not attend it well, we got some work done and a few new folks did get to see the project. On October 26th a family from Loveland drove down with a carpentry trailer. Two of the group are high-end home remodelers and they 'knew what they were doing'. They started replacing the soffit boards on the northwest corner of the depot. While there is a long way to go, it is a start. I was able to remove another window frame from the wooden caboose cupola for them to take home. They will be able to create the new pieces at their leisure to bring back later. We can use them with our polycarbonate to make the new windows to paint and install. It will require some onsite frame repair of the car frames to put them in. They are well equipped to handle that. It is just too bad that they are so far away. Again, we invite some local craftsmen to come to help with the project. We still have broken windows to replace in the steel caboose. Some things require multiple agile workers to complete. Even if it is not you, if you know someone, point them our way. See the poster at the end of each Milepost.







I have made another quick trip to the Moffat Road Railroad Museum in Granby on October 17. I got to see the new 'park train' that will circle the grounds, the Dumont depot, two finished Moffat mallets and layout progress. The mallets were each configured at different times in the Moffat history. Both operate like museum pieces (Swiss watches). The builder now has two more locos in the que. Dave is gathering appropriate cars to use for the consists of the era. The depot was ready to start shingles the day after I was there. It should be finished by now. While the operating locomotive isn't much like the one that was contracted for, it will provide a new way to represent the Moffat Road. Dave is making good progress at growing the museum.



TECO will be over by the time you read this. With a little luck and planning, we may be able to sneak a few pix into the Milepost. The weather was forecast to be good show weather. Not too warm, not too wet. I hope ALL of you attended. It is one way to support your local railroaders. There was a good selection of vendors and local layouts scheduled.

November is the nomination month for PPD officers. If there is anyone who would like to take their turn at keeping the hobby alive in the Pikes Peak region, contact Mark or one of the other officers.

Hope to see everyone 'round the roundhouse on Friday and maybe some new faces from TECO.



Pikes Peak "N" Gineers Model Railroad Club

By Mike Peck



We're 35!!!!



Ben & Lucas with 4014

Superintendent's Corner

This November we'll be voting in the national elections as well as nominating club members for the 2024 board. During the November business meeting we'll be opening the nominations for the new board members. Those wishing to run please contact a board member so they can enter your name. It's been a busy year for PPNG, and we're not finished yet as we have four more events to participate in. Here's hoping we have continued growth and activities.

TECO 45

TECO 45 is just around the corner and the club's involvement is greatly appreciated. Those of you who can help TECO will be setting up the vendor tables on Thursday October 31 starting at 1:30 pm

and finishing by 4 pm. I will have the club trailer there to unload our tables, modules and sales items.

The layout setup will be on Friday, November 1st from 9 am till 4pm. Bring your T-TRAK modules at this time so we can place them in the layout. I'll help when I can as I'm doing double or triple duty on Friday, I'll be helping the vendors with their tables.

Saturday show times are 9 to 5, we can get in at 8 am.

Sunday show times are 10 to 3, we can get in at 9 am.

You may not bring food into the venue on Show days and will have to purchase food from the food vendor or eat outside the facility. You can bring water and coffee before the show opens.

Colorado Country Christmas

We will be setting up in the same location next to Santa. Our space is 10'X40' and we will use our own tables. We will be setting up on Wednesday November 13 from 12 noon to 7 pm. We'll have to roll everything in on carts, so have your modules there if you want them in the show. If we do not finish the layout we can come back on Thursday to finish.

Friday	November 15, 2024	10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday	November 16, 2024	10:00 am - 6:00 pm
Sunday	November 17, 2024	10:00 am - 5:00 pm

I hope to have information about where to park and bring in water, coffee, and snacks by show time.

PPNG is Known Around the world

John Grier is a member of this group and wrote the article that appears below. I hope you can expand the pages so you can read the article. Great job John.

The Globe
On the right track with N scale

**WORLDWIDE GROUP
of the
N Gauge Society**

For All N Scale Enthusiasts modelling other than British Outline.

RAIL FORCE ONE

21st to 24th November 2024
The International N Gauge Association Convention,
Stuttgart Messe

October 2024 (Nr 98)

The Globe Number 98, October 2024 Page 1 of 41 Copyright: Worldwide Group of the NGS

On Display at The Dinosaur Resource Center
WWG Member John Grier

John is a member of Pikes Peak N Gauge Society whose TTrak layout was on display at the Dinosaur Resource Center which is done occasionally when invited to display.

The Pikes Peak 'N' of model railroading by providing a meeting place for N Scale Model Railroaders, to learn and foster interest in the hobby/Gensets Model Railroad Club was founded in 1989 to share the fun. Where else can you run a long train, except in N Scale? All types and nationalities of trains are welcome.

The club has a permanent layout in Colorado Springs and a portable one for shows. The travelling layout is built to N Scale module standards and has been displayed all over Colorado and even Kansas.

The pictures show the travelling layout being set up and below are various scenes from some of the modules.

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Saying Goodbye to One of Our Own

A few of the PPNG members, family, and friends from the Calvary Methodist church were on hand for Bob's military funeral. It was a beautiful day except for the wind, which blew the display around a little.



The flags



The Honor Guard



The bugler that played taps. The Honor Guard is getting ready to deploy the flag.

I will miss my friend and brother in model railroading, goodbye Bob.

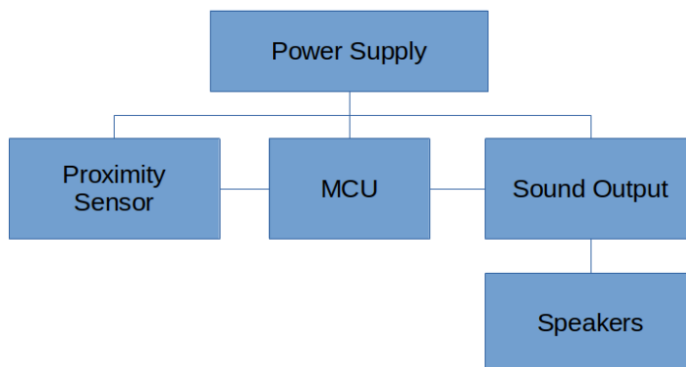
Moosetta (Cow in a Box)

By David Bristow



In June of 2022, I started a project to create cow sounds when someone was near the cattle scene module. I reported the approach and progress in July Milepost. However, for many reasons, it got put aside. In preparing my presentation about microcontrollers to our PPD October meeting I resurrected the project, which I've named Moosetta. Unfortunately, I ran into a problem, I could either have the "moo" sound or I could detect distance, but not both, and I didn't have time to solve the issues before the meeting.

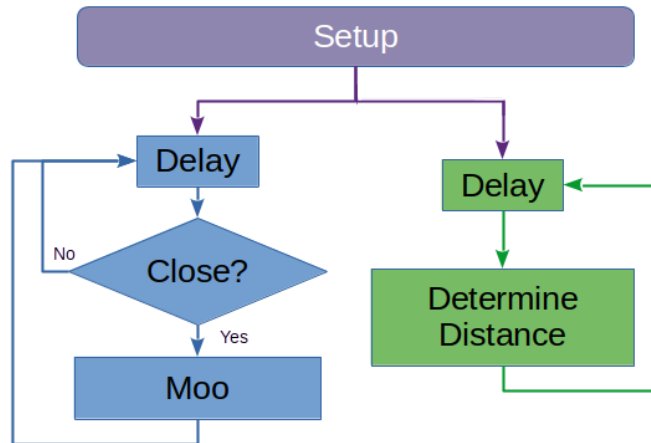
The solution came from switching the hardware, instead of an ESP8266 I used an ESP32, and the audio component became a MAX98357A. The hardware design remained principally the same as shown in the following diagram.



The hardware components:

- The microcontroller – ESP32
- The sound output - MAX98357A
- The proximity sensor - HC-SR04

The major software design change was to use tasks rather than a single loop. As the ESP32 has two cores, a task can be assigned to each core; thus, the “Moo” can run on one core, and the distance measurement can run on the other core. The high-level design is shown in the following diagram where the blue items represent a task and green the other task.



The software design details are as follows:

The Setup function:

- Initializes
 - serial communication
 - GPIO pins for the ultrasonic sensor
 - I2S interface. For the audio amplifier
- Creates two tasks:
 - measureDistance task runs on core 0.
 - playMooSound task runs on core 1.

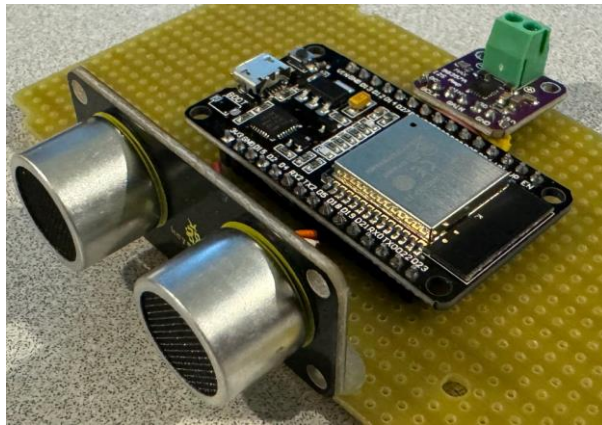
The measureDistance() Task:

- Continuously triggers the ultrasonic sensor
- Measures the echo time
- Calculates the distance.
- Updates the distance variable.

The playMooSound() Task:

- Continuously checks the distance value.
- If the distance is within the specified range, it writes the "moo" sound data to the I2S interface.

The hardware components were installed on a perforated circuit board as shown in this picture:



The software was developed using Visual Studio Code with PlatformIO. The following image shows screenshots of the code.

```

/****
 * Moosetta - A cow that moos when you get too close!
 * Copyright 2024 David J Bristow
 * Version 1.0.0 - 20224-10-28
 ****/
*****
 * Licensed under the Apache License, Version 2.0 (the "License")
 * you may not use this file except in compliance with the License.
 * You may obtain a copy of the License at
 * http://www.apache.org/licenses/LICENSE-2.0
 * Unless required by applicable law or agreed to in writing, software
 * distributed under the License is distributed on an "AS IS" BASIS,
 * WITHOUT WARRANTIES OR CONDITIONS OF ANY KIND, either express or implied.
 * See the License for the specific language governing permissions and
 * limitations under the License.
 ****/

#define I2S_NUM I2S_NUM_0
#define I2S_BCK_IO 27 // I2S BCK - Serial Clock-Max98357 BCLK
#define I2S_WS_IO 14 // I2S WS - Word Select-Max98357 LRC
#define I2S_DO_IO 26 // I2S DOUT - Data Out-Max98357 DIN
#define TRIG_PIN 18 // ultrasonic sensor trigger pin - HC-SR04
#define ECHO_PIN 19 // ultrasonic sensor echo pin - HC-SR04
#define SOUND_VELOCITY 0.01718

volatile float distance = 0;
// Task handles for running on two cores
TaskHandle_t ultrasonicTaskHandle = NULL;
TaskHandle_t soundTaskHandle = NULL;
// Function to setup I2S for audio output
void setupI2S()
{
    i2s_config_t i2s_config = {
        .mode = (i2s_mode_t)(I2S_MODE_MASTER | I2S_MODE_TX),
        .sample_rate = 16000,
        .bits_per_sample = I2S_BITS_PER_SAMPLE_16BIT,
        .channel_format = I2S_CHANNEL_FMT_ONLY_LEFT,
        .communication_format = I2S_COMM_FORMAT_STAND_I2S,
        .intr_alloc_flags = 0,
        .dma_buf_count = 8,
        .dma_buf_len = 64,
        .use_apll = false,
        .tx_desc_auto_clear = true,
        .fixed_mclk = 0;
    };
    i2s_pin_config_t pin_config = {
        .bck_io_num = I2S_BCK_IO,
        .ws_io_num = I2S_WS_IO,
        .data_out_num = I2S_DO_IO,
        .data_in_num = I2S_PIN_NO_CHANGE;
    };
    i2s_driver_install(I2S_NUM, &i2s_config, 0, NULL);
    i2s_set_pin(I2S_NUM, &pin_config);
}

// Function to measure distance using ultrasonic sensor
void measureDistance(void *parameter)
{
    for (;;)
    {
        digitalWrite(TRIG_PIN, LOW);
        delayMicroseconds(2);
        digitalWrite(TRIG_PIN, HIGH);
        delayMicroseconds(10);
        digitalWrite(TRIG_PIN, LOW);
        long duration = pulseIn(ECHO_PIN, HIGH);
        distance = duration * SOUND_VELOCITY;
        vTaskDelay(200 / portTICK_PERIOD_MS);
    }
}

// Function to make the "moo" sound when distance is less than 125 cm
void playMooSound(void *parameter)
{
    for (;;)
    {
        if (distance > 0 && distance < 125)
        {
            size_t bytes_written = 0;
            int audio_wav_len = sizeof(audio_wav);
            i2s_write(I2S_NUM, audio_wav, audio_wav_len, &bytes_written, portMAX_DELAY);
        }
        vTaskDelay(200 / portTICK_PERIOD_MS);
    }
}

void setup()
{
    delay(1000);
    Serial.begin(9600);
    printf("Setting up to play moo sounds\n");
    pinMode(TRIG_PIN, OUTPUT);
    pinMode(ECHO_PIN, INPUT);
    setupI2S();

    // Create tasks to run on different cores
    xTaskCreatePinnedToCore(
        measureDistance, // Task function for ultrasonic sensor
        "Ultrasonic Task", // Name of the task
        10000, // Stack size (in bytes)
        NULL, // Task input parameters
        1, // Priority of the task
        &ultrasonicTaskHandle, // Task handle
        0); // Run on core 0

    xTaskCreatePinnedToCore(
        playMooSound, // Task function for sound generation
        "Sound Task", // Name of the task
        10000, // Stack size (in bytes)
        NULL, // Task input parameters
        1, // Priority of the task
        &soundTaskHandle, // Task handle
        1); // Run on core 1

    // No code in loop, tasks are running on separate cores
    void loop()
    {
    }
}

```

The Lighter Rail

By Kristin Phillips

Giving Thanks

Thanksgiving Day, the fourth Thursday in November is a national holiday and a paid day off for many to celebrate. In modern times, we have tables piled high with food and, for some, a day of nonstop football. The Detroit Lions and Cincinnati Bengals always play on Thanksgiving Day. However, while the custom of giving thanks started with the Plymouth Colony in 1691, there have been other ways of "giving thanks" from its humble beginnings to today. One of these was the Merci Train.

The Merci Train consisted of 49 French boxcars one for each state in the Union at that time and a shared car for the territory of Hawaii and Washington, D.C., filled with gifts handmade by French citizens for the American people in gratitude for the American Friendship train which sent more than 700 American box cars of relief goods to France and other European countries after World War II. Most of the gifts were sent by individual Americans in 1948. The Merci Train arrived by ship in New York Harbor on February 2, 1949, and one car loaded with gifts was delivered to each state. Welcome parades and ceremonies occurred in the state capitals and prominent cities. The largest parade and ceremony occurred in New York City where more than 200,000 people gathered to welcome the state's boxcar.



The Amusing Planet website [The Merci Train: 49 Boxcars Filled With Gratitude | Amusing Planet](#) continues the story.

"The 700-car Friendship Train sent by the Americans was the brainchild of Drew Pearson, an American newspaper columnist and nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. Pearson was in Europe when he noticed that the Russians were being lauded and 'thanked' for their contributions of a few carloads of grain delivered to Europeans. Being a staunch anti-communist, the great fanfare celebrating these meager gifts rankled Pearson. He believed that the United States could surpass the communists in sending food to the desperate, hungry Europeans."

"At Pearson's initiative, a country-wide effort was launched starting from Los Angeles. A train with a dozen boxcars filled with macaroni, sugar, flour, and other food supplies left Los Angeles on an eleven-day journey across eleven states stopping at more than thirty cities and towns along the way. Newspapers, radios, and local organizations including schools and churches helped spread the concept of Pearson's Friendship Train and urged Americans to donate food and supplies. The response was overwhelming. Food, clothing, fuel, and other supplies began to pour in from all states."

“When all trains originating from different parts of the country converged in New York, more than 700 boxcars loaded with \$40 million worth in relief supplies had been collected. Once in New York, the supplies were unloaded and shipped off to France to be distributed directly to individuals throughout the country.”



A boxcar from the Friendship Train. Photo credit: www.thefriendshiptrain1947.org

Amusing Planet continues, “The following year, Andre Picard, a French railroad worker and war veteran suggested that France reciprocate by sending a gratitude train filled with gifts and mementos from his countrymen. Much of 1948 was spent collecting gifts from individual citizens. They ranged from art, wine, needlework, local specialties, furniture, books, homemade toys, and children’s drawings, including a jeweled Legion of Honor medal that reportedly belonged to Napoleon. All in all, over 52,000 gifts were collected. These were crammed into 49 railroad cars, meant to be divided amongst the 48 American states with the remaining car to be shared by Washington D.C and Hawaii. Each boxcar was decorated with a painted 'Gratitude Train' ribbon and with 40 coat-of-arms representing the provinces of France.”

“The boxcars were the same infamous ones used to transport American troops fighting in Europe during World War I and World War II. Each was about 20.5 feet long and 8.5 feet wide and could hold forty men or eight horses. Hence the boxcars were also called “forty and eight”. There were no seats, no windows, no toilets, and no sleeping or dining accommodations. Each man had barely enough space to sit down and they had to fit their bodies in rows to have enough room to lie down for sleep. The journeys were up to a week long”

“A description of all of the gifts that were in the box cars would fill many books, and the stories of the origins of those gifts would fill many more. To view an exceptionally well-presented pictorial sample of the gifts that each of the 49 little French boxcars carried when they arrived in the USA, visit the online exhibit at the web site of the [State Historical Society of North Dakota](http://www.statehistoricalsocietyofnorthdakota.org). Upon arriving there, click on the words "Launch Interactive Exhibit", then follow directions to photos of the gifts (*Objects*). The box cars themselves were antiques by 1949, having been built between the years of 1885 and 1901, which means that those still surviving today (2021) are more than 120 years old.”

“This site has a photo of each of the remaining box cars and pictures of some of the more than 52,000 gifts that the train originally delivered to America. To view photos of any of the surviving boxcars, visit the "Merci Boxcars by State" link at the top of the page, then click on the links to the individual states. In addition to the photographs of the cars, the viewer will also find significant facts about each state's boxcar, photos of the gifts (*if any are known*), and the location, address and local contact information. If you find that our information is out of date, please let us know by contacting our Website Correspondent using the link below.”

“The Merci Train played an important, but little known (*today*), role in the historical friendship that has existed between our two nations since before America gained its independence. In fact, the French people fought with us to achieve that status, and also gave us another gift which has become an important symbol of America's freedom around the world, The Statue of Liberty. It is our

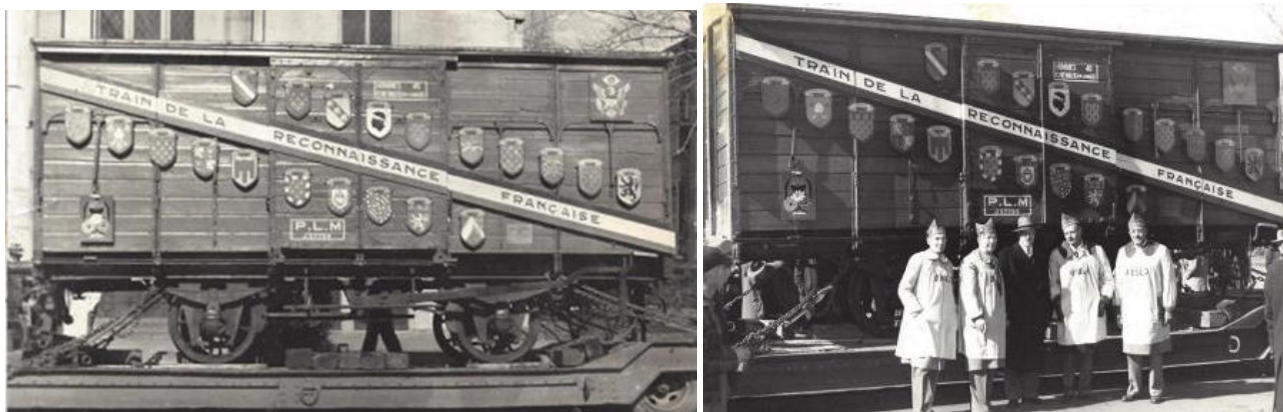
hope that this work about The Merci Train will revive interest in the story and remind people on both sides of The Atlantic that international friendship is an important commodity, and well worth the effort it requires to preserve it.”

“The French, however, were not the only people of Europe to receive food from the 1947 Friendship Train, nor were the people of France the only ones to express their gratitude to the people of America in a meaningful way; soon after the first shipload of donated food arrived in Italy (*on Christmas Day of 1947*) an Italian film company made a documentary film showing the distribution of that food to their destitute citizens. The movie was sent to America with a request that copies be made and that it be shown in theaters across America, which request was complied with. A couple of years later, the Italian government sent a gift of four huge bronze sculptures in gratitude to America for help in ridding their country of their dictator, Benito Mussolini, and also for aid in recovering from the devastation the Nazis had visited their nation. The statues were placed on the Washington, DC end of the Arlington Memorial and Theodore Roosevelt bridges (*two on the abutments of each bridge*).

Also, sometime later, the people of The Netherlands expressed their gratitude to America by sending a gift of a large carillon, which is now located near the National U.S. Marine Memorial in Arlington. The carillon is played every few minutes during visiting hours. We believe that the Netherlands, Belgium, and other countries also benefited from the Friendship Train.”

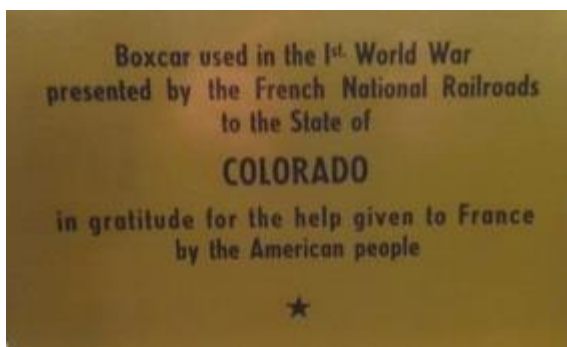
Merci Train – Colorado ([Merci Train - Colorado Page](#))

“The Colorado Merci car has been missing for many years. 43 of the original 49 cars still exist. The photos below show the car just after it arrived in Denver. There were two small brass plates on each car. The Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden Colorado has one of the plates. The Voiture97 of the 40&8 Society has the other.”



The pictures above show the Colorado car and Art Haynie, and Len Carlon of the LCW, Drew Pearson, Larry Brewster, and Harold McConnell.

The photos are credited to the American Legion Leyden-Chiles-Wickersham Post One and the Voiture 97 of the 40&8 Society.



Plaque from the Colorado Merci Car at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, CO.

“In August of 2010, we ([Merci Train - Colorado Page](#)) received an email from Ms. Sara Williamson, an employee of the Woodruff Memorial Library in LaJunta, Colorado, saying the library had a collection of six dolls, and that she had been told by Sandy Messick, Director of Library Services, that she believed the collection was part of the gifts that came from France in the Colorado boxcar of the 1949 Merci Train. Ms. Williamson's father told Sara about our web site, and following her visit to the web site sent us the aforementioned email. Sara then mentioned to Ms. Messick of her contacting us and of our eagerness to know more about the collection. Needless to say, we were thrilled when Ms. Messick soon sent us an email offering photographs of the dolls, of which photos taken by Gena Williams, are displayed below.

We are very grateful to all three of these named ladies for their willingness to help us bring you news of a few more of wonderful gifts from the (1949) grateful people of France. Ms. Messick has told us that the museum hopes to soon have a display case to house dolls so that visitors to the library will be able to see them. For further information as to directions to, and hours of operation of, the Library Contact:

Sandy Messick - Director of Library Services
Woodruff Memorial Library
522 Colorado Ave
La Junta, CO 81050
(719) 384-4612 - FAX (719) 383-2514
lajunta.colibraries.org”

Here are a couple of links to a recently written article by Olivia Lowe for a Loveland, Colorado newspaper.

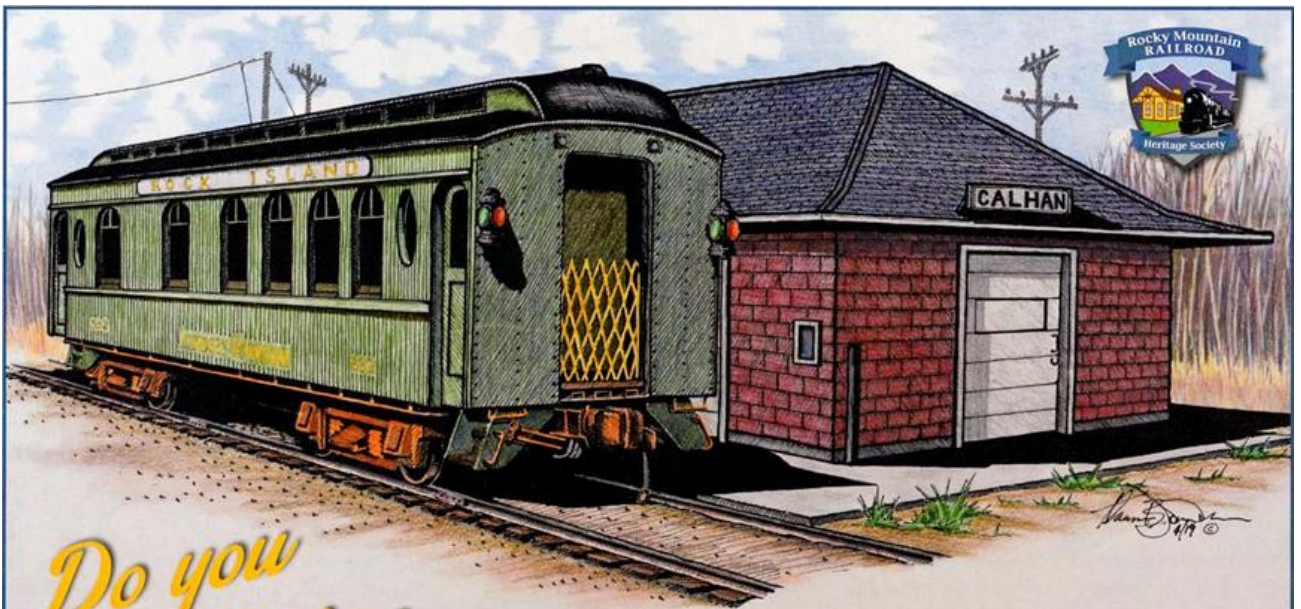
- [A WWII-era valentine of friendship and gratitude – Part 1](#)
- [A WWII-era valentine of friendship and gratitude - Part 2](#)

Happy Thanksgiving!



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THEN WE ARE LOOKING FOR YOU!!!

We are recruiting volunteers to help us build a Railroad Heritage Center in Calhan, CO honoring those who operated the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad in El Paso and Elbert Counties from 1887-1968.

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