

The Lantern

Official Publication of the Winnipeg Model Railroad Club
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NMRA



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THE LANTERN

*Official publication of the Winnipeg Model
Railroad Club (WMRC) established April 1955*

October 2026

Vol. 71 No. 1

The Lantern is the Newsletter of the Winnipeg Model Railroad Club Inc and is provided electronically to members prior to the monthly club meetings from September through May. Our address is WMRC, 20 Keelegate Pl, Winnipeg MB, R2N 3V7.

The Lantern is published monthly from September to May (nine [9] times per year). The Club's official Room is located at Charleswood Legion, 6003 Roblin Blvd in the Tank Room, (basement), with meetings on the second Friday of each month, September to April beginning at 19:30 hrs unless otherwise posted. Guests are always welcome.

Submissions to The Lantern are preferred via e-mail in a plain text or MS Word format preferably in "Arial" font. Images are preferred in 'jpg,' 'tiff,' 'eps' (Postscript), or 'png' formats. Image resolution should be a minimum of 130 dots per inch. Contact the editor with any questions. Deadline for submissions including executive reports is two weeks before the next meeting - NO EXCEPTIONS. Opinions expressed in the Lantern are those of the authors and not necessarily the policy of the Winnipeg Model Railroad Club Inc. Note: The Lantern editor reserves the right to edit, reject, or ask that any submission be revised for any reason. ADVERTISING: The Lantern will accept advertising on a yearly basis for nine (9) issues. Changes in advertising must be submitted no less than three (3) weeks before meeting day to be included in that issue and following issues until changed. For info on rates on a less than yearly basis, contact the Editor. Rates: 1/16 page - \$10; 1/8 page - \$20; 1/4 page - \$40; 1/3 page - \$50; 1/2 page - \$75; 2/3 page - \$90; Full page - \$135.

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ON THE COVER – Cliff Davidson was able to photograph CPKC 6222 (SD 60) at the east end of the Winipeg terminal in the "new" paint scheme that pays tribute to the two previous railroads. Will this paint scheme become another classic like the Tuscan red and maroon script from the 1950's.

FROM THE EDITOR – I would like to thank Bart Hasselfield for taking over the Annual Photo Contest for the past year. Also, a big thanks to Bob Harrison for acting as Editor for the past year. Bob was able to produce 10 editions while I was away. The new design of the cover layout along with the revised WMRC logo was a pleasant surprise. Again, thanks to these two gentlemen for stepping up and filing these positions.

Manitoba Hobby Expo is over for its first year as a morphed version of Mega Train. In my opinion it was a huge success drawing a new group of people

to attend. Still model railroading took up most of the space and it was interesting to see all the other types of hobbies. My person opinion is thankful that we were not responsible for helping with the setup and takedown of the show, but the club will miss the money that this endeavour generated. In previous years. Take down would last to about 9 or later on Sunday evening. This year I did not arrive home till about this time but instead I enjoyed a wonderful time over pizza at Santa Lucia with members that had helped with the WMRC table. Again, thanks to these people for helping. Without people volunteering at the WMRC it will not be a success.

- Larry Leavens, Editor

Material for the Lantern

This is your Club's newsletter. Why not let others know what you have been up to. A short writeup describing what you have built or done on your layout may inspire others. Pictures are always welcome, either model or prototypical. You never know they may end up on the cover of the Rolling Stone, oops, sorry, Lantern.

Winnipeg Model Railroad Club Mission Statement

1. The Winnipeg Model Railroad Club, (WMRC), is a non-profit model railroad club that offers fellowship, education, and fun to anyone interested in the wonderful hobby of model railroading whether they are a beginner or expert. We strive to promote the hobby through our monthly meetings, our public shows, and other activities throughout the year.

2. The Purpose of the Club shall be the uniting of its members to promote interest in the hobby of scale model railroading; to increase the knowledge of its members: and to foster and promote construction and operation of all phases of scale model railroading. None of the activities shall be carried on for the profit of any individual member.

WMRC Code of Conduct

The function of the Winnipeg Model Railroad Club, (WMRC), is to promote fellowship within the hobby of model railroading. Anyone who has an interest in model railroading is welcome. The Club will refrain from publicly criticizing any individuals, group, organization, or business.

EXECUTIVE

President - John Bate - batefamily@shaw.ca

Vice President - Marvin Fetch – mfetch@shaw.ca

Secretary - Brent Karr - dogwny@hotmail.ca

Treasurer – Khirad Dhabhar -

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APPOINTMENTS

Program Director- Ian Plett –

rrclub76@gmail.com

Lantern Editor - Larry Leavens –

larry.leavens@gmail.com

Canteen - Mark McLellan

merrickmclellan@shaw.ca

Librarian – David McNeil

dmcneil@mymts.net

Social media - Paul Ullrich pullrich@mts.net

April Open House and Model Contest Chair -

Murray Brown murraygto@shaw.ca

Photo Contests Chair - Larry Leavens

Manitoba Hobby Expo Laison - Gino Kost

gkost@shaw.ca

Gateway Western Superintendent- Gino Kost

gkost@shaw.ca

Monthly Model Display - Gary Stempnick

garymst@mymts.net

Club E-mail - wmrc.trainclub@gmail.com

Club Website - wmrctrainclub.ca

Club Blog - winnipegmodelrailroadclub.blogspot.ca

Club Facebook -

facebook.com/WinnipegModelRailroadClub

Executive Reports

President's Message

The 2026 Manitoba Hobby Show is now complete, and I think I can say that a good time was had by all who attended. A lot of shoppers picked up some bargains at our sales tables, and the proceeds will form a good portion of our income for the year. Many thanks to Gino Kost, who once again managed these tables. Our two small hands-on layouts - the Timesaver for adults and older kids, and the Thomas circuit for the little ones - were busy with enthusiastic operators. And we handed out many magazines, locomotive trading cards, flyers, and our club brochures, to the passers-by. I think we may have picked up a few new members along the way. Our tables looked better than ever, thanks to new black table skirts with the red club logo, which were expertly produced at short notice by Brent Karr and his skilled seamstress friend Dolores.

A big thank you to all of the club volunteers who make it possible: Gino, Brent, Darrell, Murray, Khirad, Larry, Ken, Gary, Rob, Marvin, and our newest and youngest members, Finn and Ethan. Most of us enjoyed some food and drink at Santa Lucia afterwards. Why not consider joining us as a show volunteer next year?

Close on the heels of the Hobby show will be our next regular meeting at the Charleswood Legion on October 9. Larry Leavens will give a live in-person demonstration of adding scenery to a layout. This will not lend itself well to Zoom, so you'll have to attend in person to watch. Hope to see you there.

-John Bate, WMRC President

Vice President's Report

Welcome everyone to a new season of model railroading. I will be selling the 50/50 draw tickets again and I want to have large pots of cash every meeting (only once a month), so that someone can go home very happy. Let's make this season a fun one.

- Marvin Fetch

W.M.R.C. General Meeting Minutes, September 11th, 2026 Charleswood Legion, 6003 Roblin Blvd, Winnipeg, R3R 1X1

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

There were 29 members and 4 guests present.

Guests present were Joe Brunen, Finn Tran, Ethan Vernon, Peter Mitchell and Bonnie Snow.

President-John Bate

John asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 2026 meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Cliff Davidson and seconded by Alan Graham. The motion was approved.

John reminded members present to please pick up their name tags if they haven't already, and also to pick up their NMRA membership cards.

John mentioned that club member Gino Kost's wife has recently passed away and that a private service is planned. John also mentioned that Gino's wife's name is Susan Fair and that a full obituary is in the Winnipeg Free Press.

John advised the members present that WMRC meetings will be held the second Friday of every month September through April, with the only possible exception being December 11th, which may be pre-empted by the day care that shares our meeting space holding their Christmas party. Members will be advised if the December 11th date needs to be changed. John also advised everyone that the spring show will be held April 17th & 18th, 2027 at this location and that the date and location of the May AGM is still to be determined.

John mentioned the stash of books that were in a second locker located behind our storage locker and that some of the books found are here on a table and are priced to clear out at \$1.00 per book. John encouraged members to help themselves.

John advised everyone that Mark McLellan has noticed a lot of HO items currently listed on Facebook Marketplace.

John mentioned the Manitoba Hobby Expo being held October 3rd & 4th and that although the name has changed under the new management, there will still be lots of train items there. John advised members of the signup sheet up front and asked members to please volunteer to help sell donated

items and work our Timesaver layout and Thomas layout at the show. We are no longer required to work the entry area.

John asked Brent if he had anything to bring up. Brent mentioned that he had received a couple of emails on the WMRC email address that he wished to share with the members. The first email was concerning a gentleman named Douglas that has his boyhood Hornby model train set that he would like to find a good home for. Brent also made note of an email regarding a collection of approximately 1000 model and prototype railroad magazines that they are looking for a home for. Brent asked members to please see him if they are interested in the Hornby train set or a collection of magazines and he would pass the contact details on.

Vice Presidents Report-Marvin Fetch

Marvin reported that he has 50/50 tickets available and to please see him to get your tickets.

Financial Report-John Bate (filling in for Khirad Dhabhar)

John brought the club financial report for last year and asked for a motion to approve as published in the Lantern. A motion was made by Felix Lesiuk and seconded by Dwayne Miller to approve the 2025-2026 budget as published in the Lantern. John noted that we went approximately \$30.00 over the Administration budget line. Approval of the report will imply approval of this over-expenditure. The motion was carried.

John brought up the 2026-2027 budget on the screen and reviewed it with members. John noted that there would be no income from the gate of this years Manitoba Hobby Expo as we aren't involved in running the show this year. John also mentioned that we are reducing our commitment to St. Amant to \$1000.00 from \$3000.00 last year due to the drop in income from the Manitoba Hobby Expo. This could be adjusted according to the financial situation at year end.

John asked for a motion to approve the 2026-2027 WMRC budget. A motion was made by Marvin Fetch and seconded by Larry Leavens. Darrell Brownlee asked about the \$100.00 for the Manitoba Hobby Expo on the budget. Khirad, who was present via Zoom, noted that the \$100.00 is for

a club table at the show. The motion to approve the minutes of the 2026-2027 budget was carried.

Program Director-Ian Plett

John asked Ian to tell us about tonight's program. Ian advised everyone that tonight's program would be by Fred Headon on his trip on the Rocky Mountaineer. Ian also mentioned that we have done some publicity for the Fall Show and have some radio exposure.

Lantern Editor-Larry Leavens

Larry thanked Bob Harrison for filling in for him as Lantern Editor for the last year and asked members for articles to help fill up the pages of the Lantern. Brent is to send copies of the Lantern to the guests present.

Library-David McNeil

David was not available tonight, therefore John filled in for him. John mentioned that maybe we can have a large selection of books and DVD's out next month and reminded members of the \$1.00 books that we have available tonight.

Social Media-Paul Ullrich

Paul presented the Social Media stats as follows:
September stats:

Facebook:

September 2 post on tonight's meeting: 657 views

August 29 post on tonight's meeting: 1,884 views

August 13 post on Dunnottar Station Museum: 8,668 views

July 27 post on Manitoba Hobby Expo: 3,910 views

An event was created for tonight's meeting on Facebook.

8,890 views in past 28 days

2,160 total followers

Blog:

September 2 post on tonight's meeting: 42 views

August 29 post on tonight's meeting: 46 views

August 13 post on Dunnottar Station Museum: 79 views

July 27 post on Manitoba Hobby Expo: 89 views
1,072 posts archived

83 referrals in the past 90 days from wmrctrainclub.ca, second only to Google at 499 referrals

Spring Show-Murray Brown

Murray mentioned the Spring Show which will be held on April 17th-18th, 2027 and that the special event for the model contest would be the Square Foot Challenge. Murray encouraged members present to look this up for more details.

Website-Murray Brown

WMRC Website Stats

November 2025 to September 10, 2026

After just under 10 months the website has had 1,004 individual visitors looking at the website 1,473 times.

89% of the visitors were from Canada

The "Manitoba content" was 73% of the total

95% of the Manitobans were from Winnipeg and surrounding communities

How have they all been getting to the website?

Direct www.wmrctrainclub.ca... 40%

Google search 38%

WMRC Facebook page 11%

WMRC Blog link 3%

What devices were they using?

50% were Mobile users

Around a 50/50 split for Android versus iOS

47% were desktop and laptop PC/Mac users

About 2/3 use Chrome/Windows and 1/3 MacOS

3% used a Tablet. Assumed all iPad

Annual Photo Contest-Larry Leavens

Larry thanked Bart Hasselfield for looking after the Monthly and Annual Photo Contest last year. Larry advised everyone present that this year's theme would be Maintenance of Way (M.O.W.) equipment at the Spring show.

Monthly Photo Contest-Larry Leavens

Larry mentioned that there were four entries in tonight's photo contest and thanked everyone for their entries. Cliff Davidson was tonight's winner.

Khiraad mentioned that Darrell Brownlee won twice last year and didn't get paid as he wasn't at the meetings, therefore is owed \$40.00. John paid Darrell the money that he had won.

Monthly Model Contest- Gary Stempnick

Gary mentioned that there were some really nice models displayed tonight and drew the winner, which was Rob Sarna. Gary also explained how the model contest works for new members and that there is information published in the Lantern.

John mentioned our club layout at Union Station Museum and asked for an update. Gary advised everyone on what we have in the museum and that it was shut down about 5 years ago by a new building inspector. Gary went on to say that repairs have been completed and that we are now in the process of getting a few work items done and that he expects we will be back up and running within a year. Members can go up and run trains with an executive member of the Midwestern Rail Association.

Cliff Davidson mentioned that the Countess of Dufferin and an old caboose from the same vintage are two of the items of interest in the museum.

Canteen-Mark McLellan

Mark mentioned the usual assortment of donuts, cookies, drinks and coffee all priced at \$1.00 each.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

New Business

Marcel Blair mentioned that Richard Ireland, a fellow model railroader, must move out of his house and has a large collection that he needs to sell in a short time. Marcel asked members to please see him for details and Richard's phone number.

Cliff Davidson mentioned that one of the monthly photos being displayed on the projector screen is a railroad track vacuum cleaner.

Khiraad made mention of the savings when you renew your WMRC membership and that you get a NMRA membership at the same time for a \$5.00 savings.

John mentioned that he has membership forms up front to renew and for new member signup. John also mentioned that the Children's Hospital Book Market is the last weekend of September and will not conflict with his presence at the Manitoba Hobby Expo.

The next meeting will be on October 9th, 2026

A motion to adjourn was made by Christopher Robinson. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The 50/50 was won by Marvin Fetch.

October Program

Plywood Prairie to Prairie Green

Tired of the plywood prairie look of your layout? How often have you watched a video of a layout that is perfectly flat and covered in monotone green? Larry Leavens will demonstrate various techniques to change that look. Adding simple landforms will add interest to the look of the layout because even what looks like flat ground will have some rises and falls. Using various colours and textures of ground foam will break up the monotone look of a finally manicured golf green and make it look more like a realistic pasture or road side ditch as seen track side. Various ground foams and static grasses will hopefully achieve these wonderful results. Installing ballast has to be one of the hardest and boring activities of scenery making. Larry will demonstrate his two-stage technic to make it a little less difficult. Creating a pleasant scene is easy, you just have to do it.



- Ian Plett

Spring Show

The Spring Show and Open House will be held on April 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and April 18 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

– Murray Brown

Annual Model Contest

The Special Event for 2027 will be a Square Foot Challenge, one of the more popular contests held by NMRA Divisions and Clubs. Create a diorama on a 12x12-inch platform that must include a piece of railroad track. Some use a square piece of foam insulation; others, plywood, or even heavy cardboard.

Easy to understand Rules:

- 1-foot square footprint
- Any arbitrary shape as long as the footprint is 144 square inches
- The smallest side must be a minimum of 4 inches
- Railroad themed
- Must contain a piece of rail
- No limit on height
- Can be whimsical or prototypical

– Murray Brown

WMRC Website

Did you know that the Club's Constitution and all the Model and Photography Contest Entry Forms are on the Club's website?

Go to the website and click on Forms.

Or just click here:

<https://www.wmrctrainclub.ca/forms>

There you will find everything you need. The Forms can all be filled in and then printed by yourself to include with your entry(s). Save tons of time by not having to print or write. Do it right from your keyboard!

– Murray Brown

Books Books Books

At the November meeting there will be more books that were discovered this past spring in one of the Club's storage cabinets. Like last month these will be available to Members at \$1 each.

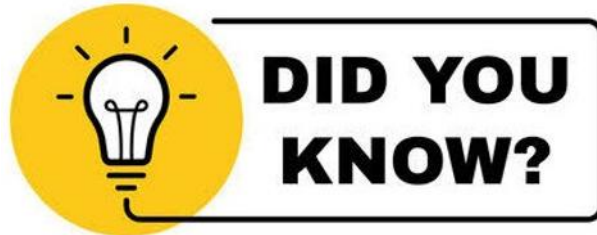
Members who will be unable to be at the Meeting can contact me at murraygto@shaw.ca one week in advance of the next Meeting and ask for a list that will be available; Members can then pre-advise of their interest in purchasing.

Annual Photo Contest

As usual the annual Photo Contest will have the usual 3 categories, Model, Prototype and the Special Event. This year's Photo Special event is Maintenance of Way. This is can be either machines or people.

– Larry Leavens

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– Murray Brown

The Gateway Western Railway

The Gateway is still closed.

- Gino Kost

Manitoba Hobby Expo

The Manitoba Hobby Expo dates was October 3 and October 4, 2026. It seemed to be a great success. More details to follow. Thank you to all that helped with the WMRC tables, Thomas, Time Saver and the sales table.

- Gino Kost

		WMRC October 2026 Report	
		2025-26 Budget	As of Sep 29, 2026
Income:			
	Memberships	2,500.00	1,230.00
	Public Shows Spring show	2,500.00	0.00
	Lantern Advertising	270.00	0.00
	Merchandise Sales (Net)	2,500.00	36.00
	Canteen (Net)	100.00	-28.25
	AGM Tickets Sales	300.00	0.00
	50/50 Draw	250.00	21.00
	Interest	10.00	1.74
	Total	8,430.00	1,260.49
Expenses:			
	Lantern	100.00	0.00
	AGM	1,300.00	0.00
	Public Shows Mega train	100.00	0.00
	Public Shows Spring show	400.00	0.00
	Donations to Charity	1,000.00	0.00
	Gateway Western	0.00	0.00
	Library (Net)	0.00	0.00
	Hall Rental	840.00	0.00
	Insurance	80.00	0.00
	Monthly Model Displays	320.00	40.00
	Administration / PO Box	1,000.00	0.00
	Incorporation	40.00	0.00
	Purchase of NMRA membership	2,750.00	0.00
	Capital purchase	500.00	0.00
	Total	8,430.00	40.00
	Net Change	0.00	\$1,220.49
	Current Bank balance	\$16,344.47	
	Current Petty cash box	\$244.60	
	Owing/Owed	\$0.00	
	Current Club Assets	\$16,589.07	
	Cash Assets on July 1, 2025	\$15,368.58	
	Net Change	\$1,220.49	
	Capital Assets Purchase Fund	\$11,048.11	
	Current Club Assets	\$16,589.07	
	Total	\$27,637.18	

April Monthly Photo Display

Monthly Photo Display, remember to send your photos to photo.wmrc@gmail.com by 4PM on Friday of our monthly meeting. Winners are picked in a random draw and awarded a small cash prize. By enter in the monthly display you give the WMRC the right to use the photos in the Lantern and on social media as the Cub sees fit.

Four individuals entered a total of 17 photos. The lucky winner of the random draw of the entries was again Cliff Davidson.

Some pictures from the Monthly Photo Display



Felix Lesiuk



Felix Lesiuk



Cliff Davidson



Felix Lesiuk



Cliff Davidson



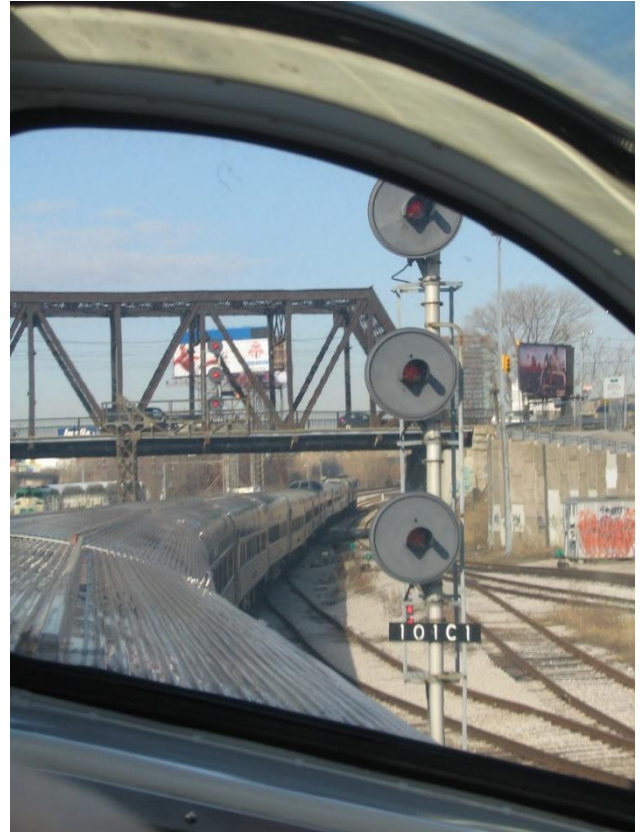
Cliff Davidson



Cliff Davidson



Cliff Davidson



Dwayne Millar



Dwayne Millar



Dwayne Millar



Dwayne Millar



Dwayne Millar



Dwayne Millar



Dwayne Millar



Bob Harrison

April Monthly Model Display

Monthly model display, remember to bring a model to the meeting to show members your modelling skills and be entered in a random draw. Please include a short write-up on what you did including any tips so it can be included in the next Lantern.

The models set out for our monthly model display are **not available for touching**. The members who have brought models deserve your being a polite observer, and nothing else of their efforts. This means keep your hands off their models. The models are for your eyes only.



Should you be curious about anything on any of the models, the owners of the models are identified on the information sheets so you can find them at our meeting, and ask them. Most certainly these members will offer explanations to satisfy your curiosity.

Four members entered excellent models at the September 2026 model display. The lucky winner of the random draw was Rob Sarna.

The following models were entered in the monthly display.

Wharf by Doug Ritter



(Due to the poor quality of the information photo I am unable to provide any description of the model or techniques to build it other than most/all is scratch built – The Editor)

C.N.R. Interlocking Tower at Woodman Jct. by Fred Headon



Scratchbuilt from CNR plans and on-site measurements
 Interior – Main and second floor super detailed.
 (Editors Note – I had the pleasure of examining this model up close and in great detail – FANTASTIC!!!)

CN 3rd Class Station by Larry Leavens



A resign kit by ALDER MODELS. The kit had been sitting on the shelf for many ears. As a result, the walls had warped. This is easily fixed by soaking the part in hot water and then putting them on a flat surface with a flat weight on top to straighten them. I did this in the horizontal direction but not in the vertical. This led to difficulties in the assembly later on. Some of the corners and roofs did not match exactly. The kit was assembled as per the directions. The platforms were constructed from coffee stir sticks cut to size and stained with dilute India ink.

Rapido GP9u's Numbers 1544 & 1595 by Rob Sarna



These two models are a part of my small nostalgic fleet of CP/SOO locomotives. A fond memory of seeing the different paint schemes of the CP fleet over the years, here in

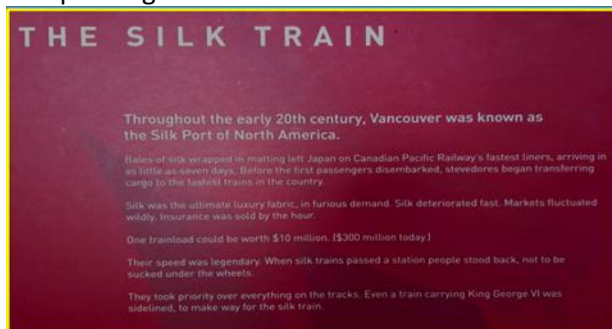
Winnipeg. For this project, I chose two HO Scale Rapido GP9u locomotives, with the small multimarks. The plan was to weather them, but not extensively. For the used, not abused look.

I first carefully taped over the windows, number boards, all lights and any surface that I didn't want weathered. After taping, I carefully applied a couple of light coats of Vallejo Matt Clear, from a rattle can, onto the model to give a base for the weathering to adhere. I applied a thin coat of my whitewash (a couple of drops of white paint in 70% isopropyl alcohol) through my airbrush. Then another thin coat of Matte Clear. I used Tamiya Panel Line Accent Black to highlight details like doors, latches, grills, etc. I airbrushed very light coats of thinned black paint and added Pan Pastel chalks onto the roof, paying close attention to the area around the exhaust. After airbrushing Tamiya Flat Clear (dries thinner than Vallejo Matte) onto the model, the tape is removed and loose parts glued back onto the model. The project was complete and the units were ready to roll on my layout.

The Silk Trains

by Murray Brown

At the September meeting, Fred Headon NMRA-MMR showed Club Members a wonderful presentation of his trips on the Rocky Mountaineer. Perhaps missed by some Members, Fred included a photo of a plaque at the former CPR passenger station in Vancouver.



Today the silk trains are unknown or forgotten by almost all.

Canada's special silk trains operated from Vancouver between 1887 and the late 1930s to Montreal and Buffalo, N.Y. Bound for the National Silk Exchange in New York and the mills of the eastern seaboard, the perishable silk, used to make luxury items like scarves, ties, shirts and dresses, was given the ultimate priority over all rail traffic, even express trains, and royal trains.

Silk was such a valuable cargo that it had its own place on the New York stock exchange, called the National Silk Exchange, which was established in the late 1920's. Not only was the silk valuable and, perishable, but it was covered by high premium insurance.

A bale of raw silk could easily fetch more than \$800 in the 1920s. A full trainload was worth upwards of \$6 million. Insurance rates were charged by the hour from the time the cargo left the boat until it was unloaded at its eastern destination.

The silk business was so lucrative for both Canadian National and Canadian Pacific railways that every minute counted. Freight agents would board a ship in Victoria and complete their paperwork so unloading could start the second they docked at Vancouver.



Silk bales were streaming off by conveyor belt even before passengers stepped on the gangplank. Stevedores manhandled the 200-pound (90 Kg) bales onto the dock and into the warehouse for

waiting customs agents, who cleared them on the spot. Then the burlap-wrapped 12 x 24 x 36-inch (0.3 x 0.6 x 0.9-metre) bales were wheeled onto specially built rail cars, which were sealed and panelled with wood.

These special cars were built shorter than normal boxcars, to take curves at higher speeds. Mounted on passenger car trucks. Because bare steel would sweat tight-packed skeins of raw silk inside their bales, the cars were lined with varnished wood and sheathed with wrapping paper. About 470 silk bales fit in each car, which would then be made airtight and sealed. The cars were also almost half the length of the standard rolling stock allowing the cars to take curves at greater speed.

For one eight-car train, a typical regimen was: ship docked at 15:42, commenced unloading at 16:13, train loading completed by 17:45 and train left dock at 17:52 — total time from ship tie-up to train departure of 1 hour 39 minutes.

Sustained high speeds could be taxing on the locomotives and cars, so stops were made at every divisional point. “Pit stop” times averaged about seven minutes, with a new locomotive snapped on; fresh crews took over at each stop.

CNR silk trains completed their race against time crossing the border over the Niagara suspension bridge to Buffalo. There, U.S. Customs quickly sampled the bales, and the train was handed over to the New York Central Railroad, to finish the trip at Manufacturers Terminal in Hoboken, New Jersey.

The most dramatic record for speed was set by Canadian Pacific’s Empress of Canada and train that made the trip from Yokohama to New York in just 13 days. CPR’s longest train ran in 1927, consisting of 21 cars, and containing 7,200 bales of silk worth \$7 million.



Silk train accidents were few. In one instance 10 railway cars went off the rails east of Yale. Five ended up in the Fraser River and at least one car spilled its contents into the river.

The first shipment of raw silk arrived at the port of Vancouver soon after the last spike of the CPR was driven. 65 bales arrived on the afternoon of June 13, 1887, aboard the 3,600-ton Abyssinia from Hong Kong. In 1919 the arrival Empress of Asia had 10,000 bales of raw silk valued at \$8,500,000.

CPR with its fleet of transpacific steamships maintained domination. CNR ran its first silk run in July 1925. Their best time of 83 hours 56 minutes was a day faster than their transcontinental passenger train. But CNR lacked the ocean shipping advantage, relying on the British Blue Funnel Line or Japanese ships to bring the raw product from the Orient. The CPR, which had the lion's share of the traffic for many years, even took silk business away from the Great Northern and other American railroads.

With two railroads putting silk traffic ahead of every other shipment, business boomed in the 1920s, and the profits rolled in. But 1929 was tumultuous — silk shipments peaked, then came Black Friday in October; stocks plummeted, and the world fell into depression. Consumer demand flagged; luxury items such as silk were soon out of reach for most. Prices crashed — by 1934, raw silk was \$1.27 a pound, down from \$6.50 a decade earlier. That precipitated a tumble in insurance rates, so speed became less of a priority and soon Japan was shipping silk in its own vessels through

the Panama Canal, which had opened in 1914. Although the trip via the Canal took about a week longer, the lower cost in comparison to the water-rail route appealed to shippers, and as silk gradually declined in value the time element lessened in importance.

The change was rapid: in 1928, 94 percent of all silk from the Orient to New York had crossed North America by train; just 6 percent went through the canal. The Nippon Yusen Kaisha Steamship Line of Japan started Panama service in 1929. Results for the railways were disastrous: by 1931, their share had dropped to just 40 percent; ships through the Panama Canal handled the rest.

CPR stopped running single-purpose silk trains in 1933, instead hitching two or three silk cars onto their regular trans-Canada passenger runs. Trips for both railways continued sporadically until the late 1930s, and by 1940 CNR shipped just 504 bales. War with Japan was the final blow, killing all trade between the two countries. As well, the U.S. government ordered all silk futures trading and production to cease as demand for silk changed from fashion runways to airfield runways — silk was used to make the parachutes for aircrew members.

Today, synthetic silks (rayon) pervade the market. Although it represents a minute percentage of the global textile fibre market, silk is still a multi-billion dollar world trade item. China leads the world's production, and with more processing into fabric done closer to where silk is grown, far less raw silk is shipped across seas.

For an unparalleled history of silk train operations in Canada and the US, complete with copious photographs, diagrams, and statistics, read this 123-page book *SILK TRAINS OF NORTH AMERICA* by Alan Vanterpool and published by the Alberta Pioneer Railway Association in Edmonton, Alberta. <https://albertarailwaymuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/silktrainsna.pdf>



Andy Wegmuller, owner of Andy W. Scale Models in Vancouver, has created models of the CPR silk train cars; all are now sold out. More information be found at this website link: https://readytrain.com/catalog/cpr_silk/cata/index.html

Several sources were used for this very condensed history of the silk trains:

- Canada's Silk Road by Graham Chandler – Canada's History, August 2015
- Silk Fishing in the Fraser by Monique Keiran – Times Colonist, September 2025
- Silk Trains by Colleen Palumbo – Golden BC Museum, July 2026
- The Romance of Canadian Silk Trains by Bernard Webber – B.C. Historical News, Spring 1994
- Fifty-Five Years Ago – Canadian Rail, January 1981
- The Silk Train Story by Martin L. Erickson – TrainOrders.com, February 2024

An AWESOME Way to Remove Paint from Your Trains

By Paul Ullrich

I've never found a satisfactory way of removing paint from my rolling stock. Brake fluid is oily, messy and not environmentally friendly. I once tried soaking them in Pine-Sol, but that took weeks and it stained the plastic. 99% strength rubbing alcohol is flammable, it evaporates too fast, and I was never comfortable going up to the pharmacist counter and asking for the stuff, not wanting to explain to them that I don't want to drink it or sell it to someone who wants to drink it. Or worse yet,

having to reveal to them that I'm a model railroader!

But I've finally discovered a great paint remover for models, and I had been using it for something else for years!

On the Lionel Trains Facebook page an article was posted from "The Lion Roars" magazine, a publication of the Lionel Collectors Club of America. The page revealed that you can easily remove paint from your model with Awesome Orange all purpose degreaser. It's available at the Dollar Tree in a 22-ounce spray bottle or in a 64-ounce jug. They both sell for two bucks.

I've been using Awesome Orange to clean my tracks and the wheels of my rolling stock, and it works better than anything else I've ever used. I had some trains that I've been wanting to repaint, so I went to the Dollar Tree and picked up a jug of Awesome Orange.

I have two die-cast locomotives and a plastic tender shell that I painted 40 years ago in the CP 2018 paint scheme, more or less. I got tired of looking at them and wanted to go back to basic black. I poured the Awesome Orange into a bucket and placed them into it. The article said that the process could take anywhere from a few hours to a few days depending on the paint, so I gave it 24 hours.

24 hours later I checked them and found that the paint was still on them, so I gave it another day. They didn't look any different the day after, until I picked one of them up. The paint literally fell off! It probably took just the 24 hours to remove the paint as the article stated.

On one of the engines and the tender all I had to do was to wipe it off with a rag soaked in Awesome Orange to remove the residue. Some parts on the locomotive needed a bit of scrubbing with a toothbrush to remove the rest of the paint. The stuff leaves a residue, so after all the paint was removed, I washed them off in a bucket of soapy water that I made with a few drops of dishwashing detergent.

The second locomotive was a lot more stubborn when it came to removing the paint. This was because I spray painted the boiler chrome. I was going to paint the boiler grey, but then I spotted a

Testors chrome spray bomb and decided to make it shiny. I bought it in 1986 at Eaton's downtown, which had a small hobby supply section in their toy department. It didn't have any model railroad equipment, just model planes and cars, but they did have a good supply of Testors spray paints. The chrome spray was intended solely for painting bumpers, grilles and other chrome parts on model cars, until I came across it.

Metallic paint takes a bit longer for Awesome Orange to remove. After soaking it for another day in a fresh solution, I had to scrub the engine with a soft bristle household scrub brush soaked with the stuff for almost an hour to remove it. I resorted to wet sanding to get some of the last really stubborn bits off. So as long as you don't have anything painted in chrome, it shouldn't take you more than 24 hours to remove the paint.

If you do want to paint one of your models in chrome, I still have the Testors pray bomb. I tested the 40-year-old can of chrome spray paint and it still works! I wish I could say the same about a can of Rustoleum primer that I bought a year ago that fizzled out. Ironically, Testors was bought out by Rustoleum years ago. Too bad that they didn't learn how to make a better spray can from them.

Awesome Orange is odourless and non-toxic. You can use it with your bare hands, and you don't have to dispose of it, or its containers, over at the hazardous waste depot. You don't have to wear gloves. In fact, I use it on my hands to clean grease and paint off of them. But you should wash your hands off with soap and water afterwards, as it does leave a residue.

The only warning it had on the label is that you shouldn't get it in your eyes. If you're either super cautious or super sloppy (or both) you might want to wear a pair of safety glasses while you're using it. But after all of the vigorous scrubbing that I did, none of it splashed on my eyes, my face or my clothing.

It's great for cleaning paint brushes and it also removes stains, just like it says on the label. I had a couple of stains on the carpet in my basement and tried it out. I sprayed it on, let it soak for a few minutes, then scrubbed them out. It worked great!



WMRC Merchandise

The Winnipeg Model Railroad Club has several Gear items available for sale. The Inventory changes so always check our website <https://www.wmtrainclub.ca/store> for updates. Current gear includes WMRC ball caps and toques, 70th Anniversary T-shirts and mugs. Fill in the details of what you want using the Order Form and the Gear Store manager will arrange to receive your payment in cash or by cheque at the next meeting. If you require these items before hand, please include a note to that effect and you and the Gear Store Manager can make alternate arrangements.

Ball Caps are solid on the front and mesh on the rear. Available black only, Size is fully adjustable at rear. Material is 65% polyester and 35% cotton. Hand washable. \$25 CAD each.



Toques are super warm – they have a Coral Fleece inner lining! Designed and Swiss Embroidered in Canada, they're perfect for those cold winter days! One size fits all. Outer material is 100% Acrylic; 100% Polyester inner ling. Hand Washable. \$25 CAD each.



T-shirts to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Winnipeg Model Railroad Club; limited quantities and sizes. Available light blue only. Material is 100% cotton. Machine Washable in cold water.



Our two new members, Eathan and Finn working the Time Saver Railroad at Manitoba Hobby Expo

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2026

October 8-10, 2026	Grand Rails 2026, Zeeland, MI (NCR)
October 9, 2026	WMRC Meeting
October 15-18, 2026	Iron Horse, Ocala, FL (SSR)
October 15-18, 2026	Eyes on the NER, Southbridge, MA (NER)
October 15-18, 2026	Tracks to Tidewater, Virginia Beach, VA (MER)
October 23-25, 2026	BR Annual Convention, Cookham, Berkshire, UK (BR)
November 7-8, 2026	Trainfest 2026, Baird Center, Milwaukee, WI
November 13, 2026	WMRC Meeting
December 11, 2026	WMRC Meeting (dependant upon arrival of Santa Clause at Nursery School)

2027

January 8, 2027	WMRC Meeting
February 12, 2027	WMRC Meeting
March 12, 2027	WMRC Meeting
March 31-April 4, 2027	Silver Rails 27, Reno, NV (PCR)
April 9, 2027	WMRC Meeting
April 17 -18	WMRC Spring Show
Nay 8-9, 2027	Regina Railfest Caledonian Curling Club 2225 Sandra Schmirier Way, Regina, SK
May 13-15, 2027	MCoR/RMR Convention, Cheyenne, WY (MCoR/RMR)
May 14, 2017	WMRC Annual Baquet , Location to be announced
May 20-23	TLR Convention, Sioux Falls
August 10-15, 2027	Puget Sound Express, Tacoma, WA (NMRA National)