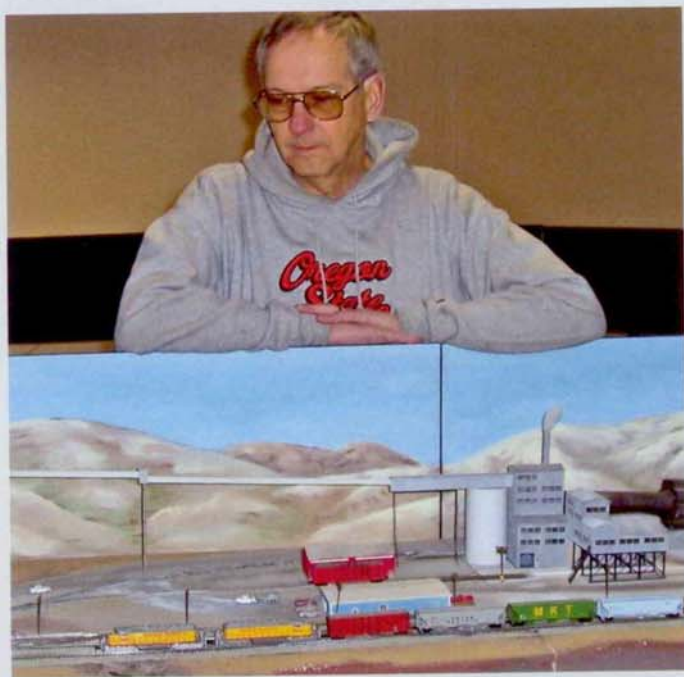




Collector in the Spotlight: Everett King



I have been interested in trains since I was big enough to tell Santa what I wanted for Christmas. I started out like many other train enthusiasts with a desire to have a Lionel train. However, my parents didn't see it that way, so my first train was a Marx train set. I enjoyed that set for many years, but I continued to ask for a Lionel. Finally, when I was about ten, I received the long-wanted Lionel train for Christmas.

I was happy with the Lionel train until a few years later when I saw an HO scale train with Kadee couplers at a friend's house. That encounter started a move into HO that was to last for the next 40+ years. Up until 2000 I had built several HO layouts. The last, and most successful was an HO modular railroad layout that pretended to exist in Eastern Oregon... in an area that no longer has railroad service. It eventually expanded into a 12' x 32' layout that I called the Oregon Western Lines. It connected the Union Pacific at Burns with the City of Prineville Railway in Prineville and the Burlington Northern near Madras. The OWL was established when a group of Grant County investors purchased the Oregon & Northwestern Railroad in 1984 and extended rail service to the John Day Valley and west to Prineville. The investors never saw a return on their investment because the trains ran when I felt like it, which was no way to run a business.

About 2000, I began to get interested in the possibilities presented by DCC operations. I started to consider converting my existing HO equipment and layout to DCC. However, with the improved reliability of N scale trains and the availability of DCC in N-scale, I decided it would be easier to start another layout in N-scale.

In January of 2000, I began to prepare a 20' x 44' room (warehouse space that had gone unrented for too long) to

receive my future N-scale railroad empire. The railroad envisioned would loosely represent a portion of the Union Pacific mainline through the Blue Mountains in Eastern Oregon. In the process of building this layout I discovered that I would need some special run rolling stock that no one was currently producing. That was part of the reason why I commissioned Micro-Trains to produce some special run cars such as the Oregon & Northwestern and Union Railroad of Oregon boxcars that I have been calling my Oregon Western Lines Collector Series.

A couple of things got me started in producing special run cars. The most influential factor in my decision was the desire of the John Day Dairy Queen's owner to have an N-scale display in his restaurant. It seemed only natural to model it after something local—the Oregon & Northwestern Railroad. The only problem was no manufacturer made any cars for the ONW. In the process of helping with the construction of the Dairy Queen display, I got to thinking that perhaps I could get Micro-Trains to produce a special run of these cars. Hopefully, such a venture would pay for itself, and I would also get some needed rolling stock for my own railroad. I approached Micro-Trains; and, eventually, the first car in the series—the ONW boxcar was released.

Well, you can't have a series of just one car can you? I also needed Union Railroad of Oregon boxcars for my 1985 era Union Pacific layout. Micro-Trains had done a UO boxcar with a Burlington Northern remark, but the car's color didn't suit me; and, of course, I didn't want the BN remark. The Union Railroad of Oregon became the second car in the series with a color to my liking and UO markings.

How many issues in a series? I was undecided, but I figured that there should probably be at least three. This got me to thinking about a third release....

Although the City of Prineville railroad didn't directly connect with the Union Pacific and the railroads I was modeling, I always liked their boxcars. Unfortunately, for my railroad's purchasing department, COP boxcars were nearly impossible to get—even on eBay! The ones that did come up for sale were so expensive that the price was out of reach for anyone but a hard core collector. I never saw a COP boxcar go for less than \$100.00! Micro-Trains hadn't produced the COP boxcar since 1983. There was apparently a high demand for the cars by others besides myself, and I definitely wanted some.... After painting and decaling some undecorated Micro-Trains boxcars myself, I decided that the third car in the series would be a COP boxcar. And, while I was at it, I would make it a 4-pack so I wouldn't have to renumber so many!

I received my COP special run cars from Micro-Trains in mid-December of 2005—about the same time as Athearn came out with their boxcars of the Union Railroad of Oregon and the City of Prineville boxcars. Had these cars been available when I started all of these special runs there probably would not have been an Oregon Western Lines Collector Series.



After the COP release, I was undecided for over a year whether I should produce any more cars in the Oregon Western Lines Collector Series. Eventually, I decided that I would produce a small run of Oregon Western Lines boxcars to represent the Oregon Western Lines, the namesake of the series and my personal railroad. It had always been in the back of my mind to produce OWL cars for my fictional railroad, and I figured that these OWL cars would be primarily for my own enjoyment. However, making OWL cars available to others who wanted to have their own piece of my fantasy empire was also a way of saying, "Thank you," to supporters who purchased my Oregon Western Lines collector cars.

Perhaps the timing of my special runs could have been better, but I did time my entry into N-scale at a good time. I started collecting some of the more unique special runs that suited my fancy, such as the Graffiti Collector Series by Mark Miller. I joined the N-Scale Collector Society, attended several conventions—had a good time, and bought more special run cars and collectible items.

As it stands right now, the Oregon Western Lines as a railroad may never turn a profit and the Oregon Western Lines Collector Series may be history; but I'm having a great time with N-scale—collecting, accumulating, buying, selling, and

meeting others with the same fascination by attending the national gatherings of the similarly afflicted. So, even if I never make a dime on own special run cars, I certainly expect to continue to N-joy my hobby. Furthermore, I don't see any shortage of special run rolling stock for my own railroad any time in the future.

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Oregon Western Lines Collector's Series -

These are the seventh through ninth cars of a series of special runs called the Oregon Western Lines Collectors Series in which Everett King, owner of Thinking Ventures and the Train Barn, is commissioning Micro-Trains to produce cars commemorating western shortline railroading in both prototypical and fantasy railroad schemes.

Road numbers 4217 and 4244 come as a two-pack for \$90. Road number 4204 comes as a single release for \$45. Shipping and handling is \$6 each for the two-pack and single release (\$12 overseas).

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