A Kaleidoscope of Crummies, Hacks, Bobbers, and Cabooses I’ve Built

Clinic Prepared for the NMRA MCR Convention
Louisville, KY
May 18-21, 2017

By Philip Gliebe
Introduction

• This clinic is dedicated to the memory of my good friend Ed Andres, a model train collector, music lover, philosopher, and the original “crummy dummy.”

• Over the years, I have built, assembled, kit-bashed, or scratch built several “caboose” of various sizes, scales, and types.

• I thought it would be interesting to you to share these “experiences.”

• The “Kaleidoscope” covers HO standard gauge, HO narrow gauge (HOn30), and O scale narrow gauge (On30) samples.
Some HO Standard Gauge Cabooses

Maine Central Wide-Vision Caboose
Wisconsin Central M.O.W. Caboose
CB&Q Transfer Caboose
CB&Q Drover’s Way Car
Typical Athearn HO Caboose Kit

- Body Shell Assembly
- Floor and Chassis
- Brake parts
- Trucks and Couplers
- Hand Rails and Ladders

Relatively Easy to Assemble – but it takes more than shaking the box!
Maine Central Wide Vision Caboose

- Built from an Athearn “Blue Box” kit
- Minimal detailing added – metal wheel sets, Kadee No. 5 couplers, weathered underside, window glazing, painted handrails
Wisconsin Central Work Caboose

- Built from an Athearn “Blue Box” kit
- Extensive detailing and weathering applied
- Caveat – No known prototype!
Wisconsin Central Work Caboose, Cont’d

- Added work crew and equipment – rail, ties, barrels, etc.
HO Transfer Caboose

- Kit-bashed from a MDC-Roundhouse Overton Combine
- Body shell shortened to typical transfer caboose length
- New end platforms added
- Interior details added
HO Transfer Caboose, Cont’d.
HO CB&Q Way Car

- Kit-bashed from three MDC-Roundhouse Overton and Old Timer kits – coach, combine and caboose
- Attempted to add details as close to prototype as possible
- Details can be found in my clinic: Kit-bashing MDC-Roundhouse Passenger Cars into “Something Else” (Also in NMRA magazine, January 2016)
- Added full underframe brake detail
- Added Interior detail
- Added express trucks per prototype
HO CB&Q Way Car

Pieces from Combine, Coach, and Caboose (Roof) make up the Way Car
Cupola and clerestory were modified to reflect the prototype.
HO CB&Q Way Car, Completed

- Molded-on hand rails removed, new separately-applied hand rails made and added
- Cupola guy wires with turnbuckles added
- Smoke Jacks and clerestory vents added
HO CB&Q Way Car, Completed (2)
Some HO Narrow Gauge Cabooses

Two Railway Recollections HOn30 Short Cabooses
An HOn30 4-wheel “Bobber” Kadee kit bash
A Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Caboose
Two HOn30 Short Cabooses

- Built from Resin casting kits by Railway Recollections
- Trucks are Microtrains N-scale Arch Bar type with metal 36” N-scale wheel sets
- Couplers are Microtrains N-scale no.1023 style couplers
- All hand rails, grab irons, were steps made from phosphor-bronze wire
- Windows were glazed, light weathering applied
Typical Railway Recollections House Car kit

- Resin Body Shell
- Resin Chassis/Floor with imbedded weight
- Roof walk
- Two pieces of wire
- Piece of thread

- Make your own grab irons, hand rails and truss rods
- Add your own trucks and couplers
- Cleaning, priming, and painting of parts required
Two HOn30 Short Cabooses

- Microtrains trucks and couplers added
- Smoke stacks, brake wheels, extra grab irons added
- Decorated in caboose red with black underbody and roof
Two HOn30 Short Cabooses, Cont’d.

- Additional roof and side ladder detail added to cupola model
- Window glazing added
HOn30 4-Wheel “Bobber” Caboose

Started with a Kadee HO Logging Caboose
Narrowed the body shell and roof castings
Constructed an underframe from styrene
Used a 4-Wheel N-scale passenger truck
Installed Microtrains N-scale knuckle couplers
Added Details, window glazing, etc.
Bobber caboose modifications

Body shell sectioned and middle section removed

Roof also sectioned and middle section removed
Underframe Modifications

Styrene strip end beams added, Microtrains passenger car couplers and passenger truck installed
Completed Model
Comparison with Standard Gauge Version – HO vs. HOn30
The Bobber compliments the Porter Locomotive and fuel tender
F&C Resin Kit HOn30 Caboose

- Patterned after the Sandy River & Rangley Lakes Railway, Maine 2-ft. gauge caboose
- These are the only pictures in the instructions that came with the kit
- Resin castings for each wall, ends, roof, floor, etc.
Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Caboose

- Built from a Funero and Camerlengo Resin kit
- Lots of detail parts had to be added
- Separate ladders, hand rails and grab irons
Completed Model and comparison with the Maine Central Standard gauge caboose
Some O-scale Narrow Gauge Cabooses

A Chivers cast resin kit On30 Short caboose
A Boulder Valley Models 4-wheel On30 “Bobber”
A kit-bashed On30 logging caboose or “crummy”
A scratch-built On30 logging “bobber”
Underframe and Floor Assembly

Drill the brake pawls .6mm (#73) for the brake wheel.

Drill

Glue the side sills and end beams to the floor and check for alignment. Handle the end beams with care.

Glue the main underframe beams into the slots in the ends and across the floor and add the truck mounting pedestals to the floor between them. Guide strips are moulded on the floor.

Rectangle longways

Attach the truck mounting beam (body bolster) with the hole in line with the hole in the truck mounting pedestal.

Cut wire to the length, and attach the brass brake wheel to one end with ACC. Fit these into the holes in the brake pawls at each end. If you want to paint or detail the interior complete this now and then add the roof. You have a choice of a long or short stock moulded in white metal. Fit your preference into the hole you have drilled in the roof with ACC.
Short On30 Caboose

- Chivers (England) plastic (styrene?) kit
- Build up body with 4 walls, roof and floor
- Includes arch-bar trucks – need to be assembled
- Added wire hand rails and grab irons
On30 4-wheel Caboose Kit

- Resin kit by Boulder Valley Models
- Relatively easy assembly of sturdy, detailed part castings
- Added extra details – grab irons, hand rails, tools, etc.
- Uses a 4-wheel MDC Overton passenger car truck
On30 Logging Caboose

• A kit bash from Boulder Valley Models 4-wheel caboose and flat car kits
• Added brake details, tools, additional hand rails, crew member, etc.
• Installed Kadee couplers and metal wheel sets on MDC Arch Bar trucks
On30 Logging Caboose Construction

- Two 4-wheel chassis were glued together
- Added bolster pads and coupler pads
- Added center beams
- Installed arch bar trucks and Kadee couplers
On30 Logging Caboose, Cont’d.

- Cabin mounted on one end, remainder covered with board decking
- Hand rails made from Phosphor-Bronze wire
- Door steps, Grab irons and stirrup steps added
- Tool box, tools, etc., crew member added
Completed On30 Logging Caboose
Scratch-built On30 “Bobber”

- Designed as an O-scale, narrow gauge version of the Kadee 4-wheel logging caboose
- Completely scratch built, mostly from bass wood
- Chassis made from styrene with wood beams, commercial wheel pedestals
- Doors and window frames made from laminates of card stock
- Made interior detail parts – Grandt Line Stove, scratch built bench, coal box, wall posters, etc.
- Exterior details include hand rails, grab irons, door steps, tools, uncoupling levers, etc.
On30 “Bobber” Construction

- Chassis built from Styrene & wood, commercial brake parts added.
- Cabin walls and roof made from wood, doors made from laminates of card stock.
- Roof made removable
On30 Bobber Interior Details

- Floor made from wood siding material
- Interior walls painted tan
- Coal box, bench made from wood strips
- Stove made from a Grandt Line passenger stove kit
- Windows glazed
- Added “posters” to inside walls
Completed On30 Bobber
On30 and HOn30 “Bobbers” Compared
Summary Remarks

- Inspired by my good friend Ed Andres, I took all the cabooses I have built, and looked at them from the perspective of construction methods, difficulty, style, and uniqueness.

- I tried to extract “lessons learned” from each project:
  - Thin resin kits are not my favorite construction material
  - Wood is fun and easier to work with (I love the smell of sawdust!)
  - O scale size makes adding details easier than HO scale size
  - Kits can be modified and “kit-bashed” into significantly different models
  - The idea that you can take an Athearn kit and “shake the box” and it will assemble itself is a myth!

- I see at least two more cabooses in my future!
The End!