

# The Roundhouse

<http://www.lnwrr.org>

The newsletter of the Lancaster & Northwestern Railroad Club



February 2006

The next meeting of the group will be March 3 at 7 p.m. Contact Christian Andrews at (661) 533-1532.

By Doug Arnold  
Editor

As the temperatures climb in the Spring it's time to do some maintenance on the right-of-way in your yard.

Since I have battery power I don't have to troubleshoot and clean my rails but I still have work to do.

First, need to collect my tools which include a four-foot level, a four-inch level, rubber mallet, pliers, a trowl, ballast,

## It's time to go to work

shovel and plastic buckets. You'll also want something to lay on and maybe knee pads.

It's time to go to work. I start by picking an 8-foot section and go through and weed the right-of-way. Despite weedcloth a lot of weeds have taken root and Spring is a good time to get rid of them. Use one of the buckets or a trash can but it's a lot easier with a bucket. After that is done I check to see if the outside rail is level. Use your four-foot level. I found a few humps that I leveled with a rubber mallet but mostly I found dips. A little ballast under



*This engine doesn't really lean when it crosses the bridge!*

the ties brought it up where it belonged. Make sure you sight the bottom of the level because even an eighth of an inch is too much.

**(Part II in the next issue. This should keep you busy!)**

## Bring an LGB Genesis to your layout

Amtrak's modern "Genesis" series of diesel-electric locomotives can be seen in several color schemes. The livery known as

"Phase IV" has been in use since 1994 and still can be seen on many Amtrak locos and passenger cars. This LGB model is an

authentic replica of the AMD103, as the Genesis is formally known, in Phase IV colors, and with it, you can model American passenger traffic on your layout. Twin Bühler motors provide the pulling power, and automatic directional lighting illuminates the way. The model is also equipped with a "DCC" interface for simplified installation of a digital decoder for operation on DCC/MTS layouts. Use the MTS Decoder III (LGB 55027) for easy installation or a third-party, DCC-type decoder.



# Keep those wheels clean

This article came from Aristocraft's website. Keep those wheels clean!

By Ron Wenger

Forward: This is one of those things that just won't go away. Every time that I think that the whole world should have one of these the old question pops up, "how do I clean those dirty wheels?"

I first wrote an article on this several years ago, and I cannot find the original text so I am going to do it all over again for those that missed it and for those of you who have forgotten it.

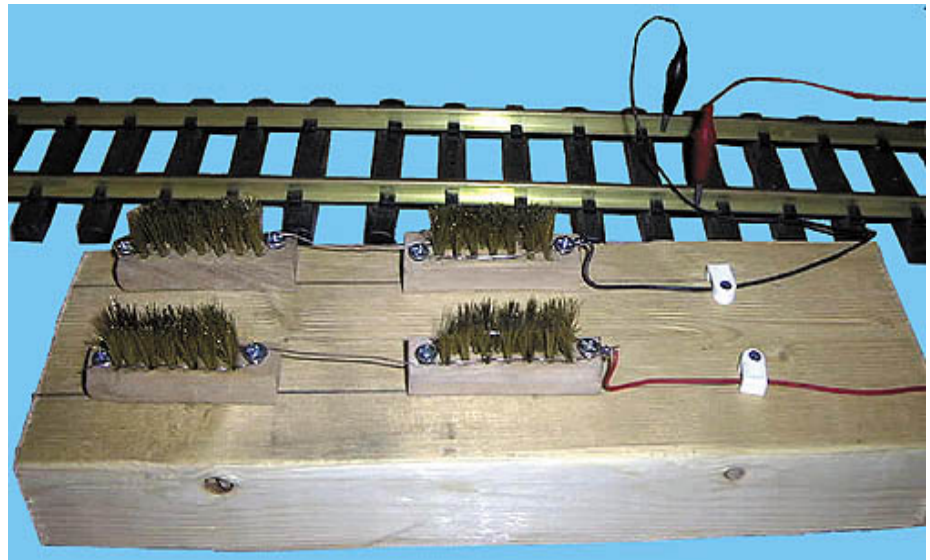
Ordinarily I would not do this. As with other things in this hobby you have to be careul or things can get repetitious and then boring. However since clean wheels are paramount to a good running well performing locomotive I am going to make an exception in this case.

The Bill of Materials (BOM) that your going to need for this project is simple. Some of these items may even be laying around your house or shop as scrap or flotsam from other projects.

## Bill of Materials:

1 ea. 1 foot long section of 2x4 lumber or other suitable section of wood at least 3.5 inches wide.

4 ea. Small brass brushes. These can usually be obtained in a bag of three for a dollar or so at the home improvement stores, usually in the paint area. It is



important that they do have a wood handle, I have not tried the plastic and I am not sure if they can be used.

- 10 ea. Small wood screws, you will need at least ten, and if necessary you can use drywall screws.

- 2 ea Radio Shack jumper wires, these are not necessary but come in lengths of at least a foot long with alligator clips on each end. You can just use two sections of wire but these will make a nicer job and you can then just clip on to terminals or the track itself.

-1 ea. Roll of small gauge wire, must be single stranded and copper or brass works the best but steel will do.

-2 ea. Insulated staples or other means of se-curing the wire hook ups to the wood.

## Tools:

-A small saw of any type  
-A screwdriver  
-A drill  
-A small straight tipped screwdriver  
-A small hammer or mallet  
-A pencil

## Here is How:

Ok I could do this with photos only as this is really a visual thing but I am going to write all of this out for those who need the words. Your first step is to cut the handles off of the four brass brushes, making sure that you leave enough room to put a screw in each end.

Then drill a hole in each end of the brush with at least a 1/8th inch brush, you want the hole to be larger than the screws your going to use so you do not split the brushes when they are screwed down.

You then want to take a locomotive or four axel motor block, an O40 works about as well as anything as that is the same spacing for most axels on all motor blocks.

Set the O-4-0 or motor block on one end of the 2X4 and mark the location of the brushes with a pencil. You want to make sure that the wheel spacing is the same as that of a section of track so that when you set a locomotive on the track the flat section of the tire and the flange is getting the full face of the brush.

Screw these brushes in place with the small wood screws

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# Put ladders on the layout

The Lone Pine & Grizzly Flats Railroad was created by Dean Whipple of Corona. It can be found on the internet at <http://4largescale.com/trains/>

He has written some excellent articles that he has put on his website and that I will be using in the bulletin. Thanks Dean.

By Dean Whipple

After looking for commercial ladders and not finding a very good selection I decided to make my own ladders and have used them on many of my tenders, cabooses, and buildings, and although when I have used a curve at the top of the ladder, it has been the same diameter curve, the other dimensions of the ladders, width of the ladder, height of the ladder, diameter of the rungs, spacing of the rungs, etc., will vary according to the individual situation.

The bending jig is made using 3 washers the middle washer is slightly smaller than, the size of the inside diameter of the ladder curve, and just slightly wider than the ladder stock width, the outside washers diameter is the diameter of the inside washer plus twice the width of the ladder stock.

The 3 washers are then bolted to a piece of "T" angle iron so that the middle washer is just far enough away from the web that the ladder stock just fits.

Clamp the jig in a vice and bend the stock, I use the sides of



(1) the bending jig. The finished ladder I just glue the rungs in using "Zap". Rods are paired when drilling the holes so the rungs on the finished ladder are straight.

(2) the rod bent on the jig to the desired curve.

(3) the brazing rod.

(4) The ladder installed on a water tank.

wire cutters to create the bend by starting at the side next to the web and just slide the side of the wire cutters around the washers bending the rod as I go.



## **Cleaner/from Page 2**

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taking care not to split the wood handles.

The next step is to take the small wire and go along the outer edge of the brush and punch the wire in each hole. You do not need to cut the wire, it is best to leave it on the roll and unroll it as you punch it in. If you do cut it with the screwdriver just start again in the same hole where you cut in and punch another wire in. You can try and wrap the wire around the bottom of the brass bristles where they come out of the brush but that is often hard to do. You can also try and solder the wire on but that may break off later. I have found that punching is quick and for the most part permanent. I am still using the first of these that I made 10 years ago.

Once you have one brush done go on the to second brush on that side using the same wire. I usually give the wire a wrap or two around the wood screw at the end of the brush and then go to the next brush these wires do not need to be insulated. Do the next brush the same way, wrapping your wire around the screw at the end the same as you did at the other screws.

The next step is to put another screw into the 2x4 and use these as terminals for the wires coming from the brass brushes and remove one alligator clip from each of the jumper wires and either solder or make a mechanical connection to the wire wrapped around the screw that you just installed as a terminal.

At this point you can start cleaning wheels.

Best method is to put some WD-40 on each brush and set the wheels lightly on the brush with the wheel cleaner hooked up to power and let the cleaner do the work. No need to push down on the locomotive just let the weight of the locomotive and the wheel cleaner do the work.

One improvement that I have made in some of the last of these that I have made is to glue a section of the non slip shelf liner to the back of the wheel cleaner to hold in place.

This is not rocket science and if you see a way to improve it share it with us. This was created to make railroading more fun and less

## **Lancaster & Northwestern Railroad Club**

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