



**Don MacCormack**  
RM 20343

# HO Figures Create Perspective On My O Scale Layout

As did many of my contemporary model train enthusiasts and members of LCCA, my lifelong interest in model trains began when my wonderful parents gave me a Lionel train set for Christmas in 1948. Dad and I had a great time building a small train layout with scrap material from a nearby construction project. Fortunately, Dad was also a photo enthusiast and captured a picture of me with the completed layout. I entered the picture in the LCCA's "Who has the oldest Lionel layout?" contest back in 2015 and tied for first place with fellow member James Wozniak. See photos 1 and 2.



Photo 1

Photo by Don's father

## And the Winner Is (Are)...



**Jerry Dangelo**  
CM 67  
A few issues ago in this column we started a fun contest called "Who has the oldest Lionel layout?" The contest ended February 1 and to send behind, we have a tie!

**The winners are as follows:**  
**James Wozniak, RM #20499 of Crown Point, IN and Don MacCormack RM #20343 of Huntsville, TX**

Both submitted photos from the year 1950 and I will quote from the text they submitted.

**James Wozniak:** "The photo was taken in December 1950 of me and my cousin July. My dad bought a 4x8 plywood covered with green oil cloth and set it on our old kitchen table. The red rotary beacon and yellow floodlight tower in the photo are on my current layout, which was on the cover of The Lion Roars in June 2013. I also have the train and grade bridge in the photo. I was 10 years old at the time."



Photo 2

**Don MacCormack:** "The photo was taken in December of 1950 and the train were given me as a Christmas present in 1948. The photo shows a steam engine with tender, tank car, boxcar, gondola and caboose. It was a typical rectangular loop with an inner passing loop and associated switches. The layout was placed on a plywood table that my Dad and I built out of old scrap lumber we found at a construction site in NYC. We didn't have much money back then. Also included with the layout was a bridge, tunnel, search light beacon, train station, auto gas tank, water tower and various other accessories. Hanging on the wall was my "The Square" Cub Scout pennant. I was 9 years old the photo."

Here are the names of the other three that finished in the top-5 of the contest: **Mike Gawryniak RM #4524 of Geneva, IL, Joe Gill RM #11862 of Paris, IL, Jim Reed RM #963 of Blairsville, GA**

**A big thank you to everyone who participated in this fun event!**



Photo 3

Attendees at Roger Farkash's mountain carving class included three LCCA members (Don MacCormack third from left, Roger Farkash third from right, Bob Carter far right).

Photo by Dorcie Farkash

For many years, my family and career took priority over this hobby. As retirement age approached, I anticipated having the time, space, and funds to actively pursue this interest again. I began to think about building a permanent layout rather than just temporary train setups during the holidays. I joined LCCA around this time and attended my second LCCA Convention in Dallas, TX in 2011. I met Roger Farkash of TW TrainWorx at this convention and he invited me

to attend his Mountain Building Class at their McGowan Street facility in Dallas. See photo 3.

I shared my layout vision with Roger, and he created a fantastic design plan for my layout and allowed me to participate in its construction and the carving of the landscape and mountains. See photos 4 and 5.



Photo 4

Layout Design.



Photo 5

Don carving mountain

Photograph by Dorcie Farkash

Upon completion of the installation I said, "Ah, all done"! "No"! Roger replied, "This is just the basics of a layout. From this point, you will be personalizing your layout with its own humanity – Humanize it!" "Humanize?!", I asked. Roger replied, "Yes, add the Fourth Dimension – Time – to your layout by moving creatures (people, animals) in and out of scenes. Add or take way accessories (street lights, telephone poles, fences, mailboxes, etc.) and transportation (cars, trucks, bicycles, etc.) to make the layout REALLY COME ALIVE!"

So here is the first of what I hope to be a series of articles about how I have enhanced my train layout.

On my layout, I have two large carved mountains, one on each corner. The largest of the two has a summer day motif with a mountain rising above a deep gorge through which a waterfall falls to the bottom with a river stream flowing out at the base with trees, rocks, and greenery. At the midpoint is a wooden trestle spanning the gorge carrying my Lionel Big Boy Steam Loco and at two upper locations another pair of circular tracks, both with LCCA Train Products (NYC Lake Shore Limited Tinplate and the Prospector Tinplate) See **Photo 6**.

*Largest Mountain with Lionel Big Boy Steam Loco, NYC Lake Shore Limited Tinplate, and the Prospector Tinplate*



Photo 6

Photo 7

### So Now to “Humanize It”.

Installing O scale figures on the entire mountain did not seem right. How can the figures look the same size at the middle level of the mountain, as they do at the top or bottom? The solution was to use O scale figures at the mid-point of the mountain and HO scale figures near the top and bottom. This helped to create a perspective of the mountain rising to the sky as the figures were smaller at the peak. I use the same campsite setting for both the mid-part and upper part, simply different scales.

At the mid-point of the mountain it falls into a deep gorge across which was a wooden trestle for my trains to traverse, with a waterfall leading to a river below. Again, to create perspective I used “HO” figures at the bottom of the waterfall feeding the river below. People hiking, and fishing were added along the riverbank and canoers in the river towards the bottom, as shown in **Photo 7**.

The last piece to “Humanize” was my snowcapped winter mountain scene with a Lionel North Pole Central Christmas train running around the bottom featuring a winter home scene, animals, and skiers.

I used a Hallmark Winter House from one of its floral arrangement centerpieces at the base of the mountain and again to create perspective as the mountain rose to the sky, I added snow skiers at HO scale at the top of the mountain, as shown in **Photo 8**.

Surprisingly, when visitors look at my layout, they do not at first see these elements. However, upon closer inspection, they are delighted and exclaim, “Look at all that detail!”

*Photographs taken by  
Don MacCormack except as noted*

Photo 8

