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JOURNAL

RAILMODEL

SEPTEMBER 1997 • \$3.95 • HIGHER IN CANADA



INDUSTRY

WOOD

N SCALE:

- NTRAK ORE DOCK
- BULKHEAD FLAT
- DDA40X TEST REPORT



LONG ISLAND RAILROAD, PORT JEFFERSON BRANCH

In HO Scale

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Track plan by Brian Sheron
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A seldom-modeled prototype, the Long Island Railroad is far more than just a commuter railroad. Brian Sheron has captured the extensive freight operations, as well as the passenger service, on the Long Island.

Change at Jamaica" is a familiar conductor's cry on the Long Island Railroad (LIRR). Before electrification began expanding east of Jamaica in the 1960s, passengers on the world's busiest commuter railroad would ride behind steam, and later diesel-powered trains from the Long Island suburbs to Jamaica station on their daily commute to New York City. Passengers would then "change at Jamaica" onto MU cars whose traction motors were powered through electrical pickups that glided along an electrified third rail. These MU cars would then travel through the East River tunnels to Penn Station in the heart of Manhattan. Today, electrification has extended east of Jamaica, and many passengers can now travel directly from the suburbs to New York City without changing trains.

While growing up on Long Island in the 1950s and 1960s, I lived very close to the Port Jefferson branch of the LIRR, and have fond memories, as I walked to and from school, of watching these trains, packed with the famous "Dashing Dan" commuters, head towards the city every morning and return every evening.

Although my earliest memories are of my dad taking me down to Greenlawn station and talking some kind engineers into allowing me to climb in the cab of a G-5 4-6-0, my most vivid memories of the railroad are of the time of the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadow, New York. To commemorate this event, the LIRR devel-



Photo 8. As a pair of C-420 diesels pulls a train load of commuters from the Long Island suburbs into Jamaica Station on the far track, we see the tail end of an MP-54 MU train pulling out of Jamaica toward Manhattan in the foreground. On the track behind it, MP-70 double-decker MU units wait for the passengers to depart the diesel-hauled trains and "change at Jamaica" onto electric MU trains that will take them through the East River tunnel to Penn Station.



Photo 13. Although Huntington actually lies some 25 miles or so east of Jamaica, the "magic" of model railroading in this case lets one view Main Street in Huntington (foreground) and Jamaica in the distance at the same time!

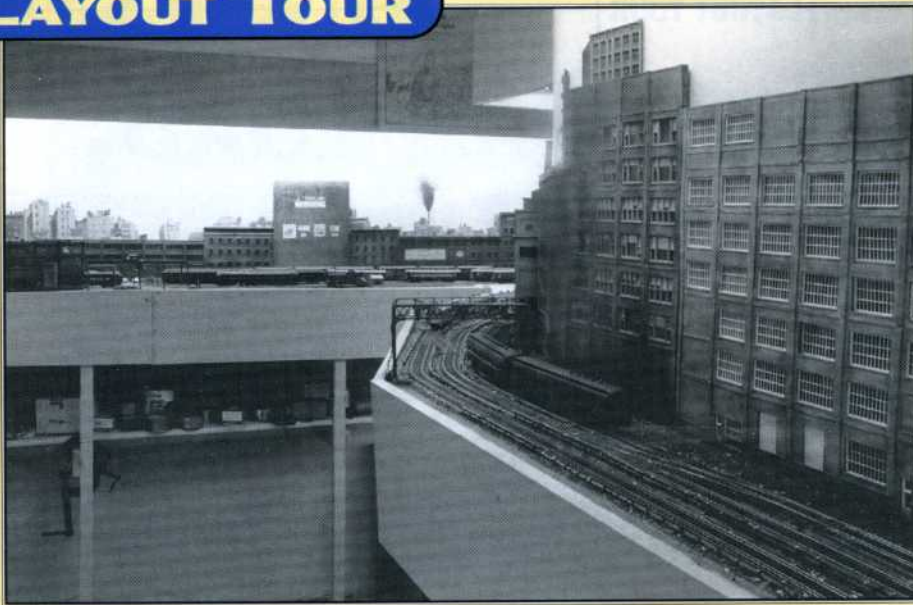


Photo 1. The industrial areas of Long Island flank the track on both the prototype and the model. This is the entrance to the layout, with the mainline leaving New York and heading for Jamaica.



Photo 2. The repair shops and industrial area across the aisle from Jamaica (right) are still under construction.

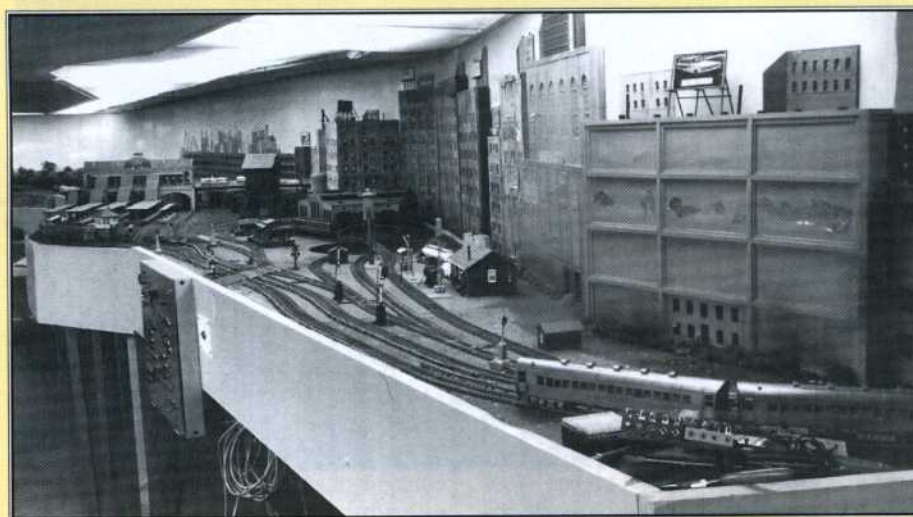


Photo 3. Jamaica, Long Island, New York on the Long Island Railroad in HO scale.

oped a new paint scheme, in which the Tichy light grey livery of the 1950s gave way to one of dark grey and orange. ALCO C-420s, FM C-liners, and RS-3s also sported an orange "sweep" on the sides. Even the passenger cars got caught up in the World's Fair excitement, with new orange window trim, and a world's fair logo that included an orange-lettered phrase on the side that said "Your Steel Thruway to the Fair Gateway." Also at that time, the famous "Dashing Dan" logo began showing up on engines and passenger cars alike. Given my strong memories of this era, along with a relatively attractive and exciting paint scheme at that time, I decided to focus on the New York World's Fair time period for the era of my layout.

The layout is in the basement, and the main part is in a room about 13 x 9 feet. A second, approximately 12 x 12-foot adjoining room is slated to become Brooklyn or Queens sometime in the future. Applying "lessons learned" from previous layouts, I concluded that my enjoyment of the hobby focused primarily on the construction side rather than the operation side. In other words, I was not interested in complex, point-to-point operation with lots of switching, prototype operations, etc. What I like to do when I am not building something, is to see long trains running that require minimal involvement on my part. Hence, I opted for the folded dog bone design.

For those of you unfamiliar with Long Island, it is about 120 miles long and about 20 miles wide at its widest part. With the exception of the north shore, the island is basically flat. While the Port Jefferson Branch runs relatively close to the north shore, for reasons best explained in Ron Zeil's book *STEEL RAILS TO THE SUNRISE*, it does not run near the waters of the Long Island sound. Since modeling a railroad that basically ran through potato farms is not exactly a modeler's dream, I boldly invoked artistic license and modeled not only a waterfront scene but even a tunnel! (This was necessary for the folded dog bone type of layout.) I also did not try to recreate specific scenes exactly, but rather attempted to capture the flavor and theme of two towns near the Port Jefferson Branch, namely Northport and Huntington. (The LIRR actually runs through the towns of East Northport and Huntington Station.)

Modeling the LIRR would not be complete without modeling Jamaica station. Jamaica is a town within the borough of Queens (which is part of New York City). For anyone who has been through Jamaica station, it is a dazzling maze of tracks, the



Photo 10. An MP54 MU unit pulls out of Jamaica Station with a load of "Dashing Dan" commuters en route to Penn Station in Manhattan.



Photo 14. S-2 switcher number 418 pulls a pair of tank cars into position to back them onto the siding that services the Citgo fuel depot in Huntington Station.

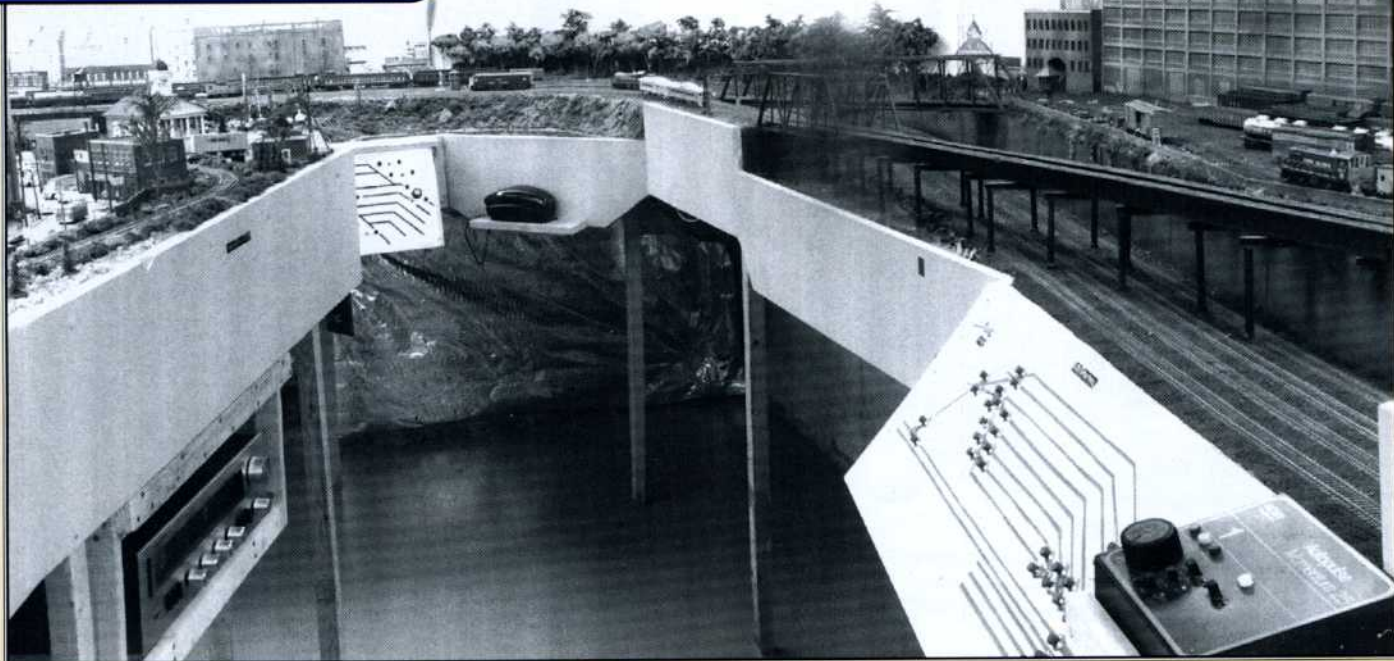


Photo 4. Jamaica's Sunnyside yard is on the right and a portion of Huntington is on the left.



Photo 5. Huntington, Long Island. The city helps to disguise the track forming most of a reverse loop.

exact recreation of which would be a modeler's nightmare. Having suffered through enough nightmares during the construction of the layout. I figured one more was not needed. Therefore, I decided to have two entrance tracks from the Port Jefferson Branch side, and three exit tracks that head west towards Brooklyn, Queens, or Penn Station. By locating my tiny representation of Sunnyside Yard behind the Jamaica Station, the extra track helps convey the image of a huge junction.

The benchwork for my layout is standard L-girder construction for the base. To ensure rigidity, all joints were both glued and screwed. T-shaped risers are then attached to the L-girders and support flakeboard which is used for the sub-base of the track. On top of the flakeboard, I used prebeveled Homosote roadbed from BO Manufacturing. This was glued and nailed to the sub-roadbed. It was then sanded, and a heavy coat of dark gray, water-base flat house paint was applied to

seal it. I hoped this would prevent track warpage due to any humidity variations, and it seems to have worked. In the almost eight years since I laid the first track, I have had no problem with warpage. The yards are all flakeboard base covered with BO Manufacturing Homosote sheets, which are cut to the same thickness as the roadbed. The mainline flex-track is all code 83 rail (either Railcraft or Walthers), which pretty much scales to the rail height on the Port Jefferson Branch. Turnouts are mostly all number 6, also from Railcraft or Walthers. With the exception of a small yard, all of the turnouts are powered by motor operators, either Fulgurex or Tortoise. In the small yard I used solenoid ("snap") switches because I had them from a previous layout. I use the extra terminals on both the motor-operated and solenoid machines to power-route my turnouts and control signal lights.

The layout is block-wired for two-train simultaneous operation. One throttle is a Catnip Enterprises infrared throttle. This seems to work fine once you get the hang of knowing at what point on the wall you need to aim the controller in order to bounce the signal off the wall to the receiver when you are not in a direct line with it. The other throttle is a Troller. One day while fooling with the Troller throttle (I am an electrical engineer), I discovered that if you removed the speed rheostat from the circuit, with the unit still on, the output voltage to the track would remain at the voltage it was at when the rheostat



Photo 7. Another view of Huntington with the Jamaica industrial area in the distance.

was removed. Eureka! The basis for a memory, walk around throttle! I did note that when the rheostat was removed, the track direction (output voltage polarity) always reverted to a single direction. I devised a simple relay circuit to eliminate that problem, and using a 6-conductor telephone wire along with some Radio Shack 5-pin male and female connectors, I now have a very inexpensive plug-in, walk around throttle that has served me well for about the past 6 years.

The motive power, passenger cars, and cabooses I use are all models of what was run on the LIRR during the early to mid-1960s. When I first started modeling the LIRR, two books helped me immensely. The first is Ron Zeil's *STEEL RAILS TO THE SUNRISE*, which gives an excellent pictorial history of the LIRR and how it came to be the railroad it is today. The second is *DIESELS OF THE SUNRISE TRAIL*, by John Scala, which is the authoritative work on paint schemes used by the LIRR from the start of the diesel era until today. Since the LIRR does not appear to be one of the more popular railroads to model once you get away from Long Island, I quickly found that the only way I was going to get a reasonable roster of motive power, passenger cars, and cabooses in the correct livery was to paint and decal them myself. Using Scala's book as a guide, I painted and decaled all of my engines, passenger cars, and cabooses in the World's Fair scheme.

To capture the bustle of suburban Long



Photo 6. Northport is close enough to Long Island Sound to have a small boat repair shop just below the railroad embankment.

Island towns, and in particular that of Jamaica Station, I decided not to spare any expense in providing the required number of autos on the streets. My last count showed something on the order of 170 vehicles on my layout.

Coming out of Jamaica, I of course had to model the third rail which powers the electric MU units headed for the city. This proved to be tricky, since even relatively large radius curves can still result in

enough overhang of the steps on the ends of the passenger cars to hit the third rail cover boards. This problem was solved by moving the third rail slightly further away from the main track and/or locating it on the inside radius of curves.

The layout, up to Jamaica, is essentially complete. My next goal is to expand into the adjoining room and model Queens and the tunnels to Penn Station.

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Photo 15. The main street of Huntington on a busy spring afternoon.

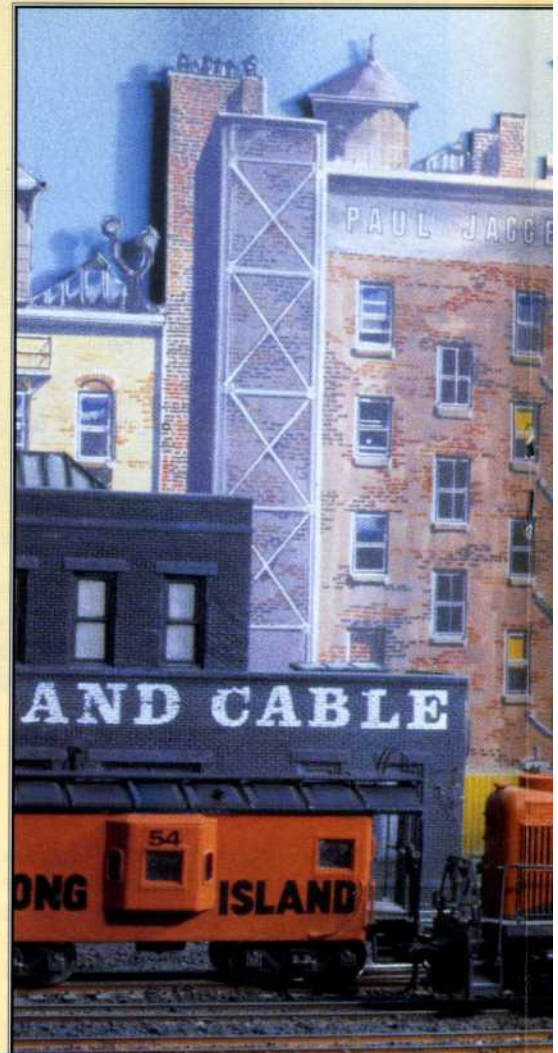


Photo 9. A commuter train of P-78 coaches passes in front of two FM Baby Trainmasters and an S-2 switcher doing yard duty in Sunnyside yard.

Photo 12. A pair of RS-3s creeps along the mainline into Northport, overtaking the N-22b caboose that is bringing up the rear of a freight stopped on the adjacent track.



Photo 14. A P-54 "ping-pong" passenger car awaits repairs at the shop. The nickname "ping-pong" came about based on their motion while being towed between two P-78 heavyweight coaches.

LAYOUT TOUR

