

# 1. Alex Belida's Railway Post Office



This was a vintage LaBelle RPO (Kit HO-7) wood kit I acquired for my Master Builder-Prototype Models diorama of Woodsboro, Maryland and for my Master Builder-Cars. I filled in several windows with pieces of scribed siding to resemble the prototype Pennsylvania Railroad RPO Class BMC. Like other LaBelle kits, I was required to shape



the roof, cut and fit the doors, form tanks for the undercarriage from various scrap pieces of wood and plastic. For the interior, I added portions of an RPO interior from Gold Rush Bay. The stirrup steps at the ends and under the mail doors were cut from a metal ladder. I also installed mail catchers, hand grabs, brake wheels and chains, chimneys and air vents. I scratchbuilt from wire and scrap styrene a full brake system with train line and attached it to the undercarriage. Inside, I placed "fish cans" as the car was used to transport goldfish from Woodsboro for sale around the

United States in the early 1900s. Additional mail bags and bits of paper simulating letters or other documents were placed on the tables. Two maps of the Frederick to Pennsylvania Line route were added inside. I installed vintage Central Valley 4-wheel



HO passenger coach and baggage car trucks. I used Kadee #158 couplers for a more prototypical look. Tichy glazing was installed in all windows and the mail doors, with acetate strips used in the clerestory side window panels in the roof. I added window bars (from American Scale Models) for extra detail. Curtains made from used coffee filters were added to each door. The car was painted PRR Dark Tuscan Red with a Flat Black (removable) roof and undercarriage. The interior was painted Flat Brown. After painting, I added appropriate Microscale gold decals for the Pennsylvania Railroad. In addition, I applied gold U.S. Railway Post Office decals. I did some light weathering using Doc O'Brien weathering powders and Pan Pastels. When complete, the car received a spray of Dullcote. *Alex Belida, MMR*