

## NORTHERN Series Sleeping Cars

My first view of C&NW *Northern* sleepers came as a ten-year old watching the *Duluth-Superior Limited* blast through Barrington at what I still believe was far in excess of the 60 mph restricted speed. In those days any shiny yellow streamlined car was fascinating and exciting to a kid, but the staggered window arrangement of the 16-3-1 cars made them particularly exotic. It wasn't until later that I even learned that they were sleeping cars, later still, and the reason for the window arrangement. In August 1956, and again in December 1958 I was treated to nights in them, but unfortunately I didn't record the car names.

Since then, I've always wanted to build a complete model of the 1955 *Duluth-Superior Limited* but had been somewhat stymied by an effective way to acquire two of these sleepers (and the *Challenger* coaches, but that's an other story).

A CNW modeler basically has two and a half choices: First is to spend big bucks on a Railway Classics brass model. I did acquire one of these superb quality cars, but could not afford another and wasn't totally satisfied with the too-small radius of the window corners, the generic blue/gray interior, and the need to remove the rigid full width diaphragms to achieve reasonable coupling distance. Also, the window tint is much too dark, closer to the green curse "E-Z-Eye" sash first applied to the bilevel 400 cars and the fifty rebuilt original 400 coaches in 1958. The second choice is Brass Car Sides, more to follow. The second and a half choice is to cut the sides out of brass or vinyl, which I rejected because of the tedium and difficulty of even the best modeler's ability to achieve uniform looking windows.

So that leaves BCS, which comes down to choosing a core kit. I looked at all of the available kits and rejected them as having either too short or warped roofs. A very knowledgeable hobby shop denizen said "just get a Walthers sleeper, pop off the sides and glue on the Brass Car Sides." Seemed easy enough, if a bit expensive just for a roof. But, I thought, maybe it would save the time and cost of buying and installing all the detail parts. I looked for a postwar model, so it would have the correct 41N trucks, not the prewar 41HR as on the 4-4-2, 6-6-4, 10-5, and others. I couldn't find a postwar car with a two-engine Waukesha system (meaning both an "Enginator" propane engine powered generator and an "Ice Engine" propane powered refrigeration condensing unit), so I ended up buying a two engine 4-4-2 on sale with the idea I could easily replace the trucks with 41N's I had in stock. The Walthers 4-4-2 sides and 41HR trucks could be used in the future to build an *Imperial* sleeper. Unfortunately, the Waukesha pieces and most of the underbody details were somewhat crude and located all wrong for a *Northern* sleeper. So I ended up completely replacing all of those with Precision Scale, Cal Scale, Train Station and other parts. I also found out that the roof and body were a about a foot short, so I had to trim the brass a bit.

The exhaust fan outlets on roof are of the Pullman postwar type which are smoothly faired into the roof, unlike the prewar type that are set off from the roof sheets an inch or so. The only commercially available are from Custom Finishes and are "flat-bottomed,"

so either the roof must be filed to accommodate or the casting must be filed to fit the roof curve. I acc'd styrene strips to the brass and then plastic welded the sides to the Walthers body after cutting openings for the staggered windows. Interior partitions were made of styrene and painted in place. I couldn't remember if the duplex roomettes had brown upholstery with tan walls and the "big" rooms blue upholstery with blue walls or vice/versa, so I just flipped a coin on colors. All the tabs were removed from the roof and two .25" posts were cemented to the roof with screws threaded up through the floor just tight enough to hold the roof in place. The entire body was primed with Polly Scale yellow except the underbody and trucks finish painted with PS "Empire Green." This is not exactly the correct color for the UB and trucks, but I wanted the detail to show better. After thorough curing of the primer, I painted the body with DuPont Centari acrylic enamel code 1226 CNW (Penske) yellow and the roof and ends with code 1881 green. After that cured, I decaled with Microscale and after they were completely set and dried, I sprayed the sides with multiple coats of clear acrylic enamel and the roof with PS clear satin.

\*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*\*\* If you decide to use automotive/commercial finishes for accurate colors, be sure to follow all of the safety precautions on the labels, as these materials are not as benign as most model paints.

I wanted the car to look as though it were on its first trip after emerging from shopping at the Pullman Works and having its skirts removed in the mid-fifties, so I block sanded the sides with 1500 grit paper and then buffed lightly with very fine automotive compound. This gave about the correct amount of gloss—the clear acrylic was far too shiny!

Would I do this over again? Probably not. I think for the many additional streamlined cars I have to do, I'll use available core kits, and that will be ok, because the 400 cars are shorter than the full 85 ft so that core kits will work ok. To do full 85 footers, it's probably easier to trim the blind end of the sides to fit and hope no rivet counters notice. The window tint on the RWC cars is much too dark, more like the infernal, so-called "E-Z EYE" sash.

Beginning with the bi-level 400s and rebuilt original coaches in 1958 and subsequently applied to all CNW passenger cars, except sleepers, as far as I can tell.

I prefer to use a sandwich of two microscope slide covers with a "filling" of diluted blue stained glass color. It takes practice to get just the right very, very light blue tint. For shades, brushed aluminum sheet, coated with clear flat PS.

Happy Streamlining!



