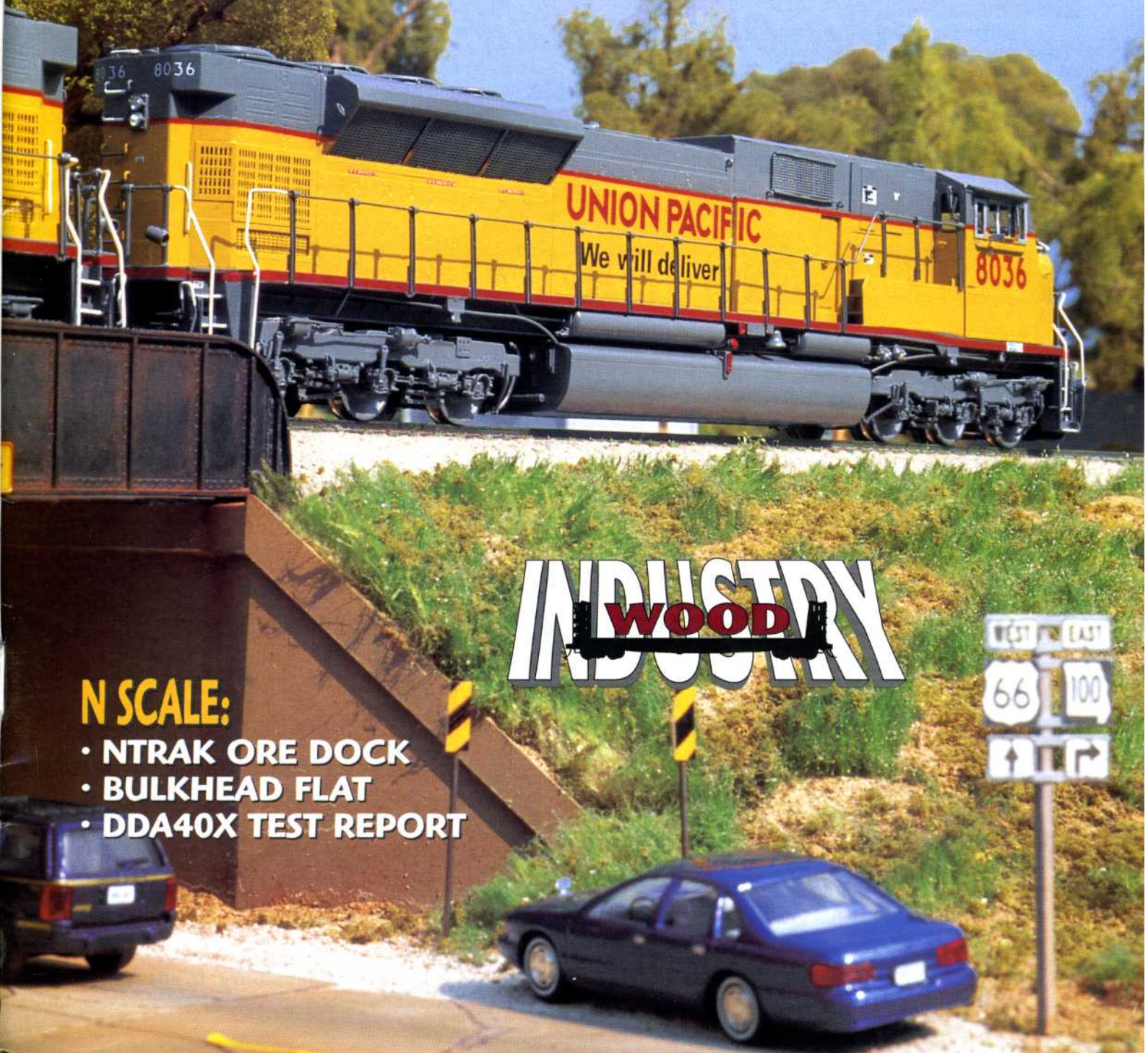


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# LONG ISLAND RAILROAD, PORT JEFFERSON BRANCH

In HO Scale

By Brian Sheron  
Track plan by Brian Sheron  
Photos by Robert Schleicher

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.

**C**hange 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-

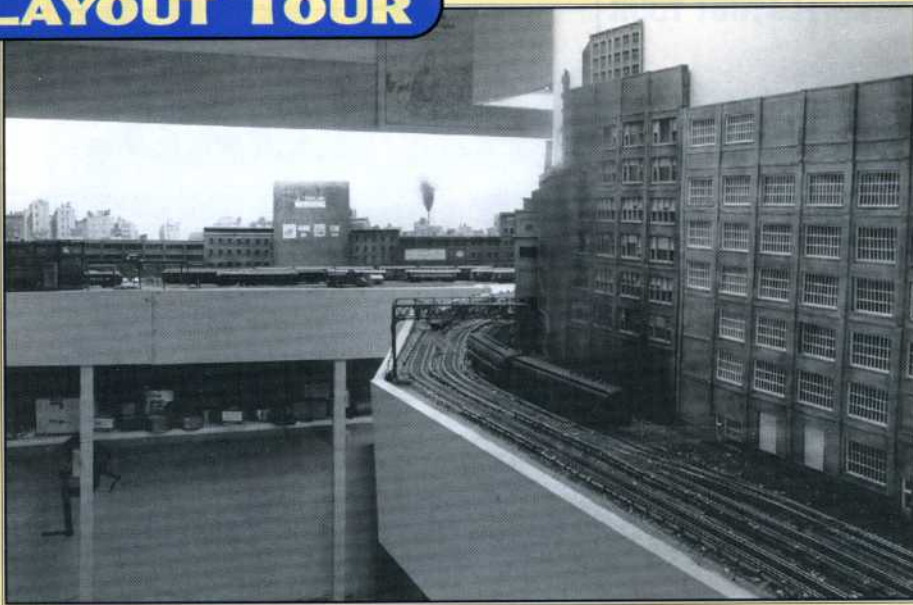


**Photo 8.** As a pair of C-420 diesels pulls a train load of commuters from the Long Island suburbs into Jamaica Station on the far track, we see the tail end of an MP-54 MU train pulling out of Jamaica toward Manhattan in the foreground. On the track behind it, MP-70 double-decker MU units wait for 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!

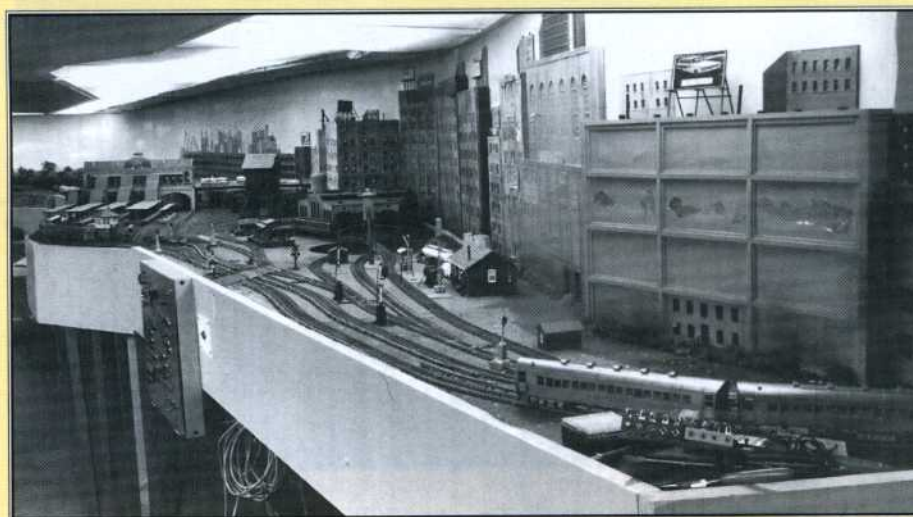




**Photo 1.** The industrial areas of Long Island flank the track on both the prototype and the model. This is the entrance to the layout, with the mainline leaving New York and heading for Jamaica.



**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.

