The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 143)

This month's report is a bit of a hodge-podge, covering three very different aspects of the EnterTRAINment Junction layout.

The first subject is the status of the aerial tramway. Both tram stations are finished, having received their interior lighting, platforms with railings, and figures of tram customers. Figure 1 shows the lower station, its lighting, and figures of waiting passengers. Locations for interior lighting were carefully selected, following our standard rule that individual LEDs must not be visible to layout visitors, neither from the aisle nor from the mezzanine. Similarly, locations of the figures were determined by whether they COULD be seen from the aisle or from the mezzanine. Putting figures where they could not be seen would be a waste.
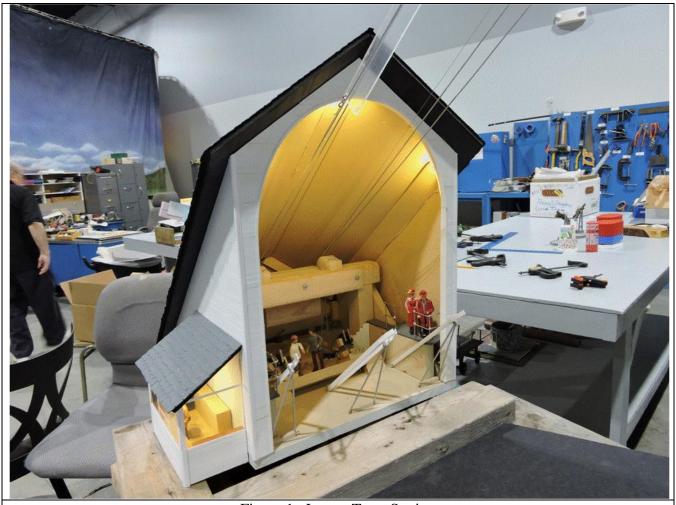

Figure 1. Lower Tram Station

Two customers on the platform of the lower station are very fancily dressed, in keeping with the high class nature of the restaurant that is their destination at the top of the tramway (Figure 2). The diagonal white strips in the picture are sway guides for the tram cars entering the station. For the model, they are purely decorative, because tests have shown that the model cars don't sway much from side to side.

Figure 2. Lower Station Waiting Passengers

Figure 3 shows the upper station with its lighting, platforms, railings, sway guides, and waiting passengers. The photograph was taken with the "passengers" on the wrong side relative to the visiting car, but had the car on the other side been in the station, the passengers would not have been visible in the picture. As it is, because these figures are static, they are doomed to forever await their ride back down, regardless of which car comes to the station. Note that the car is still in its undecorated, as-built, form, with its upper and lower Tyvek ® bands which help hold together its clear-plastic wall segments.
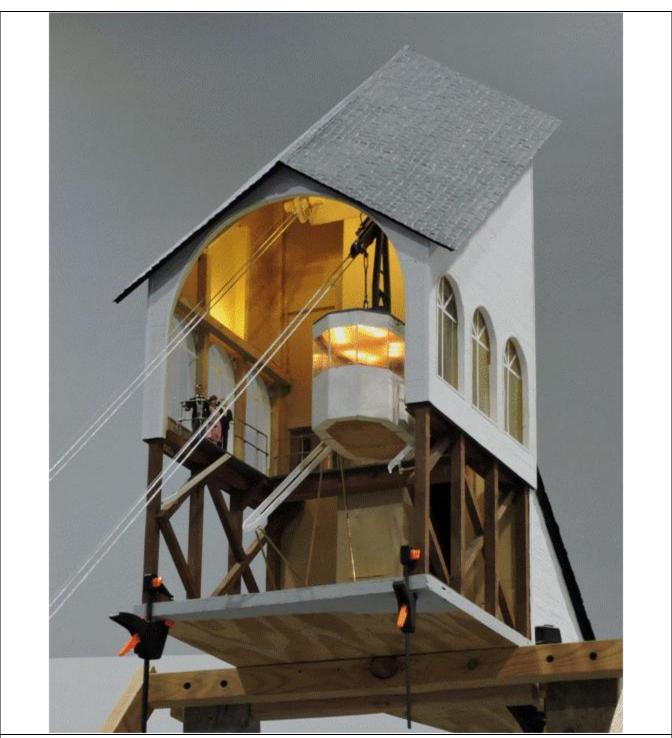

Figure 3. Upper Tram Station

Figure 4 provides a detailed view of the three figures on the upper station platform. I appears that the very formally dressed one on the left, with the top hat, may actually be the concierge from the restaurant, having guided his customers back to the tramway platform.
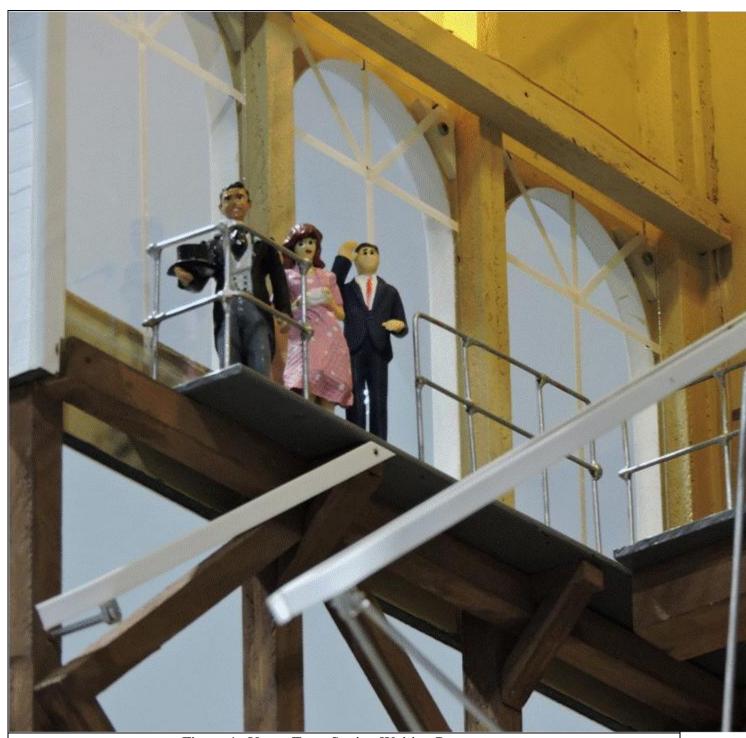

Figure 4. Upper Tram Station Waiting Passengers

Switching tracks to the second subject, I have to correct an oversight from Report Number 141 about the vehicles on the layout. In keeping with the occasional use of whimsy of items on the layout, I offer you a view of Doc and Marty's time machine (Figure 5). It appears to be a relatively recent addition of which I was unaware until I saw the picture of it in Michele (Oeters) Dodd's excellent book about EJ and its history (get your copy at the EJ gift shop). Though the car is reasonably well hidden on the layout, the deliberate lighting of it, in an area not normally lit, indicates that it was meant to be found by sharp-eyed visitors. As clues to its location, look carefully at the details of the brick work on the building and at the surrounding scenery. There are few, if any, others with that combination.

Figure 5. Doc and Marty's DeLorean

Track 3 takes us to another example of superb modeling. A recent addition to the Modern City's residential area near the lift bridge is a "designer's show house," with almost-floor-to-ceiling windows, bright interior lighting, and ample interior detail, reflecting carefully-selected and crafted décor (e.g., the chandelier in the front room). Also, it sports a large rooftop garden patio with barbecue and picnic furnishings currently in use by the residents. I do hope they have some form of window coverings that can be put in place when they want some privacy.

Figure 6. New Modern City House

As is usual, additions and changes are a way of life for the EJ layout – all meant to get your attention and awaken connections with your memories, which, hopefully are pleasant and will bring you joy in the recognition and in the recollection.

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