

The Big Train Project Status Report (Part 158)

This month's report goes back to a previous style, reporting things that are new or interesting at EnterTRAINment Junction (EJ) since the last such report, which was well before the Covid19 shutdown.

One of the last events before that shutdown was the EJ Modeling Expo, which included a large number of 1/6th scale models, some of which in impressive dioramas. One such, a portion of which is shown in Figure 1, included a fascinating freeze-action scene. In addition to the interesting way the cloud of combustion gasses from the gun is modeled, the frozen-in-flight projectile from the just-fired gun is shown pulling the combustion gasses out of the cloud with its wake. Great modeling!



Figure 1. EJ Model Expo, 3 March 2020

A new addition to EJ's marble museum is the marble roller coaster shown in Figure 2. It's another beautiful John Kitterman creation. The red ring rotates, bringing marbles collected at the bottom up to the very top, where they are deposited on the track and selected for their subsequent path by one of several such selecting mechanisms along the available alternate paths. Adults and children alike stand mesmerized by it as they figure out which path the marbles will take and watch them traverse all of the twists, loops, and waves on their way down. If you haven't had a chance to see it yet, it's a must see!



Figure 2. Marble Roller Coaster

Two of the last features needed to finish lower Aerial Tram station (Figure 3) have been added. They are the automobiles in the station parking lot and the safety fence in front of the station opening. The fence is there to assure that tram customers can't get close enough below the tram car's angled path to where they can get hit by an arriving or departing tram car.

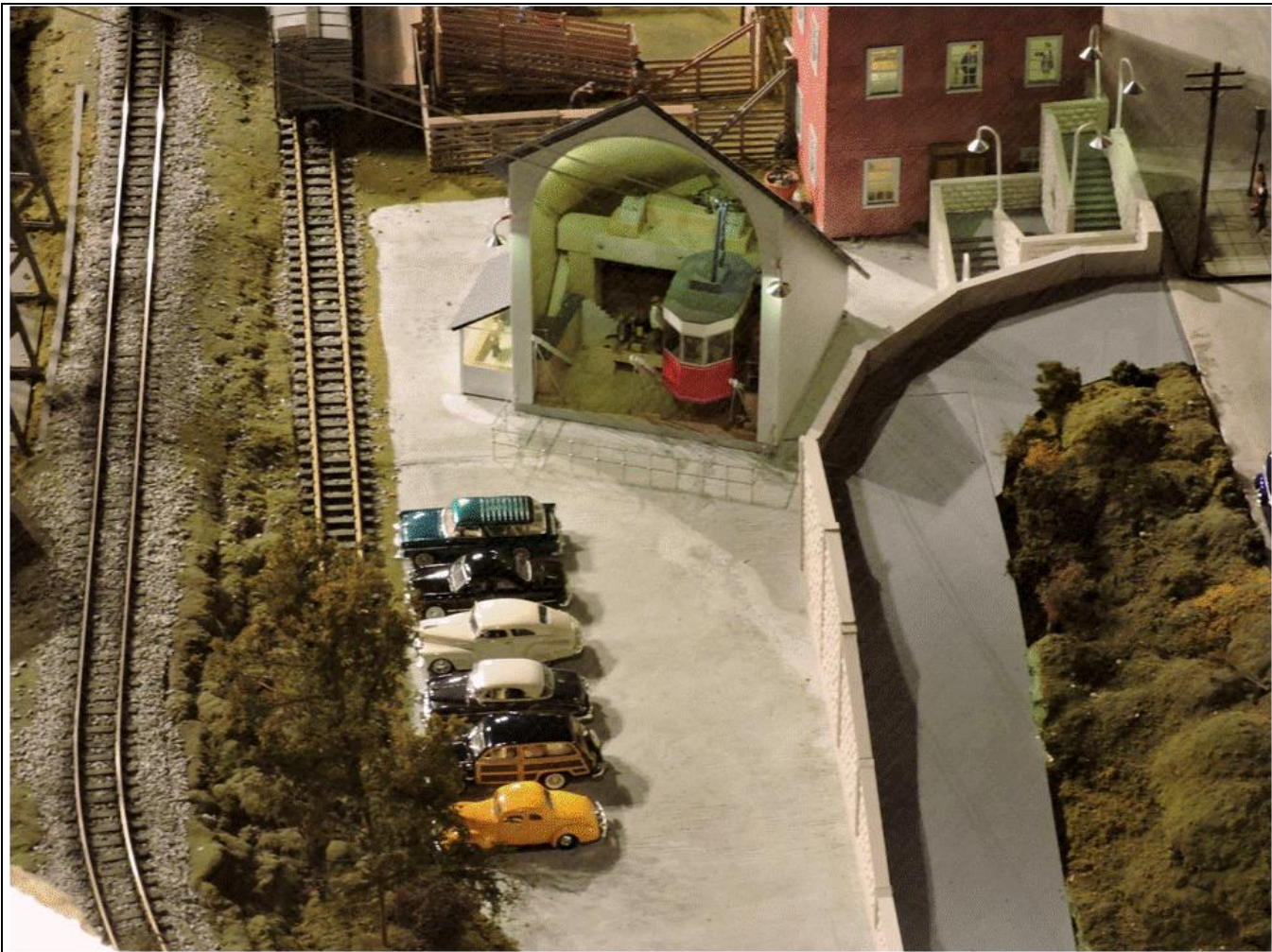


Figure 3. Aerial Tram Customer Parking Lot

New in the Modern Period, straddling the ridgetop between the balloon area and the plastics plant is a new restaurant (Figure 4). This has been an unfinished project at EJ for a long time, waiting on some key decisions and some finishing touches. One problem was the question of how customers would get to the restaurant – solution, by train, via the line that comes off or goes on the “Hells Gate” bridge partially shown at the right of Figure 4. Needless to say, this would require a passenger train to stop, but that hasn’t yet been modeled.



Figure 4. New Modern Period Restaurant

A key feature of the restaurant is that the dining area (but not the entire building) rotates to give customers a spectacular view of the surrounding scenery. That's why, in Figure 5, the building is clearly in focus, but the interior diners are not. They're suffering from photographic motion blur (the dining area doesn't really rotate very fast, the blur was caused by the fairly long exposure time of the photo).



Figure 5. Revolving-Interior Restaurant

The final new feature in this report is new only in that a new lighting and a modified lighting control system has been added to the replica Eiffel Tower (Figure 6). This now has changing colors, chasing lights, and even the ability to add moving messages. It is again located above the EJ aisle tunnel leading from the Middle Period to the Modern Period. The best place to view it in all its glory is from the aisle next to the open air subway station.



Figure 6. Light-Show “Eiffel” Tower

So, the work of continuing upgrades has resumed after the Covid19 shutdown, perhaps at a somewhat slower pace, given the necessary Covid19 precautions. Also, the EJ Display Area has already undergone its Halloween conversion, which will then be followed by the annual Christmas displays after Halloween is over.

If you haven't been to EJ in a while, please, come back. Be aware that EJ is following all of the required Covid19 precautions. That said, it would also be an appropriate courtesy to EJ employees, volunteers, and other customers if all visitors wore appropriate masks while visiting.

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MVGRS Big Train Project Coordinator