



Bringing Up the Rear

By Tony Bowen

A few months ago I was over at a friend's house that enjoys his cabooses as much as I do, and like me has many cabooses of various types. I started to share how I was dressing up some Atlas cabooses in a pretty inexpensive way.

First I started with the basic caboose that Atlas puts out. These cabooses have come along way with nice crisp lettering and graphics. Not like some I have from years ago where it looked like they put the car body in the box before the lettering was dry. Anyway I took the ordinary red Rock Island caboose and took the car body off the undercarriage and started to mask off the roof. Once that was completed I air brushed the roof a basic flat black. I have used weathered black also on other projects, however I wanted this caboose to have that "just new look," as if it was just delivered to the railroad and ready for road service.

While the roof was drying I moved to the underbody of the caboose. The step sides were red and most of them would have been black. Carefully I painted the sides of the steps, but left the actually steps and treads red. Atlas even has the small graphic on the steps "Watch Your Step." I did not want to lose that small detail.

Once the caboose car body was dry I started to paint the handrails white. Now in some scales you might be able to use a paintbrush to complete this task. However, in N scale I still find the tip of a toothpick to be the most useful tool to complete this task. It does take time as you will have to dip the toothpick into the paint several times, and you

don't want to rush this stage as the white paint can end up on the car body if you are not careful.

After the handrails on the car were painted I moved to painting the toolbox black instead of the red. When everything was completely dry I assembled the caboose by snapping the car body back onto the undercarriage.

Finally to add just a few other details I order some non-operating Sunrise Enterprises caboose markers. These come four to a package and the alloy metal comes pretty clean and usually does not require a lot of shaving of the metal pieces from the mold. I painted the caboose markers black like the roof of the caboose. While the caboose markers were drying I drilled the tiny #76 holes into the car body of the caboose for mounting the lamps. When the caboose markers were dry I used a pair of tweezers to insert the mounting stems of the caboose markers into the caboose car body. A person



could use glue to hold them. However they usually fit pretty snug and glue may not be necessary.

To finish this off I used tweezers and placed an N scale figure on the back of the caboose. Certainly there are more details a person could add to this project. Such as glass in the windows, or JV Model lens for the caboose markers. Those extra details can always be added later on without taking away from the current modifications that have been done.