

Layout People Bridge

(for many layouts)

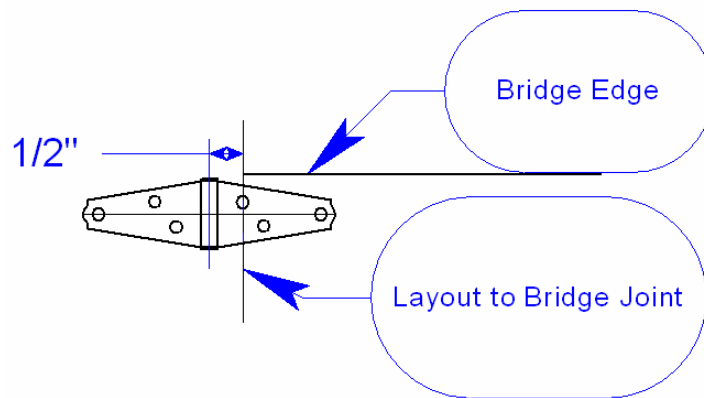
By Susan Deats

This article provides some tips you can use when installing people pass-through bridges on your layout. The photos show three of my bridges designed with the strap hinges. My Dad built our "people" bridges with this method.

Bridges are numbered 1, 2, and 3. Number 2 bridge utilized the 317 bridge without a plywood base. Number 3 bridge was created when I tired of crawling under and took a Skilsaw to the train table.

Spans that are 4 ½" to 24" wide by 2' to 3' long can quickly be converted to an access opening. Refer to the photos below.

Use two lightweight strap hinges, 1" wide x 3 ¾" long, placed as illustrated.



Lionel's 317 bridge will bridge a 24" gap without a base. For wider gaps mount track with or without bridge on ¾" plywood or 3/8" plywood with 2" x 2" frame.

Cut the bridge track at the hinged end at a 45 degree angle to clear the track on the table (see Photo #1). If using the 317 bridge alone, cut away a portion of the metal base under the angled track so the bridge base will clear the track on the table (see Photos #7 & 8). With a plywood bridge, carve out the plywood.

Stop blocks can be fabricated with whatever is available to keep bridge track from crushing table track and holding bridge in "up" position. I used wood blocks and part of a magnetic cabinet hinge to hold bridge in "up" position. (See Photos #1 through 4.)

If you wire the bridge as an electrical switch for safety, be sure the center rail insulated pins are far enough back from the opening to keep the train from coasting into the hole.

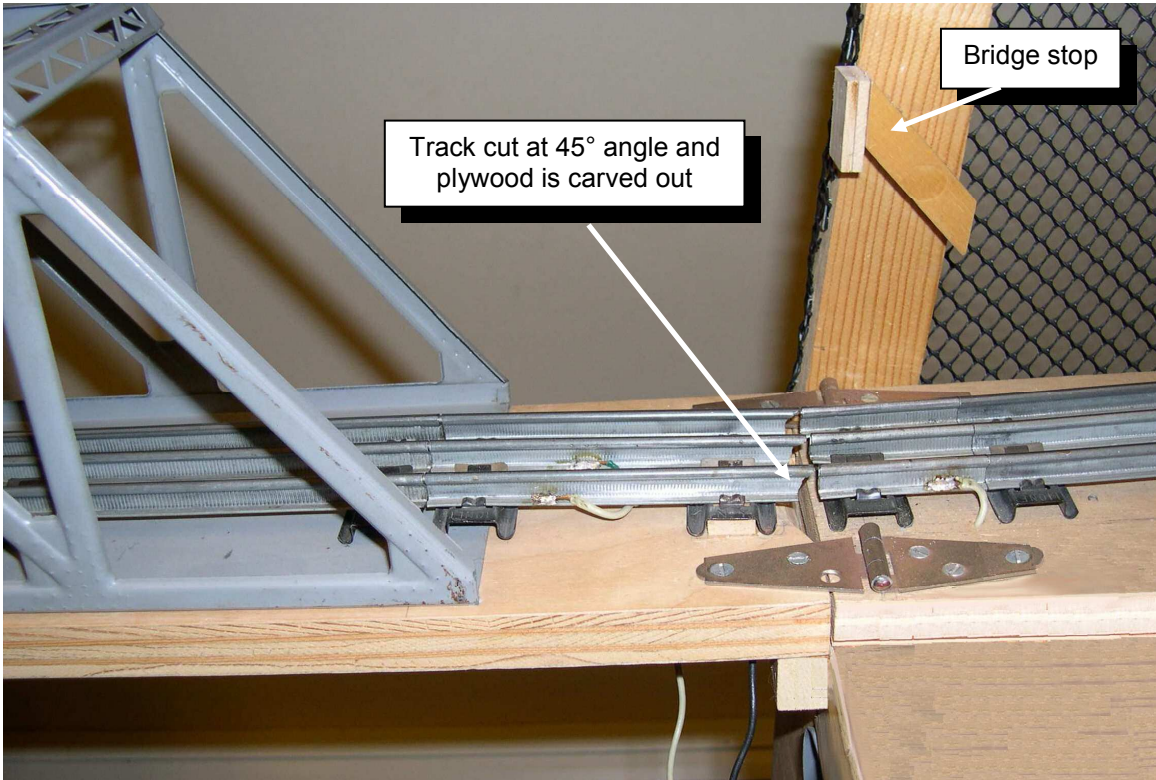


Photo 1 -- Bridge #1 - Hinges

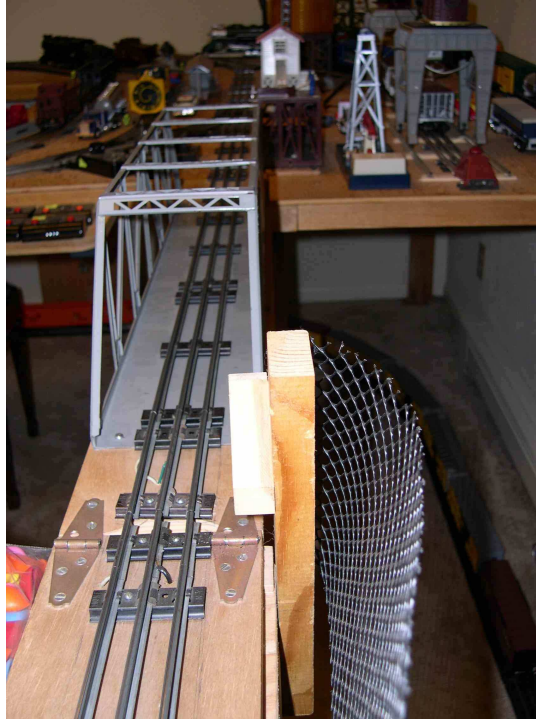


Photo #2 -- Bridge #1 – In down position



Photo #3 -- Bridge #1 - Open on stop (wooden block used for stop)

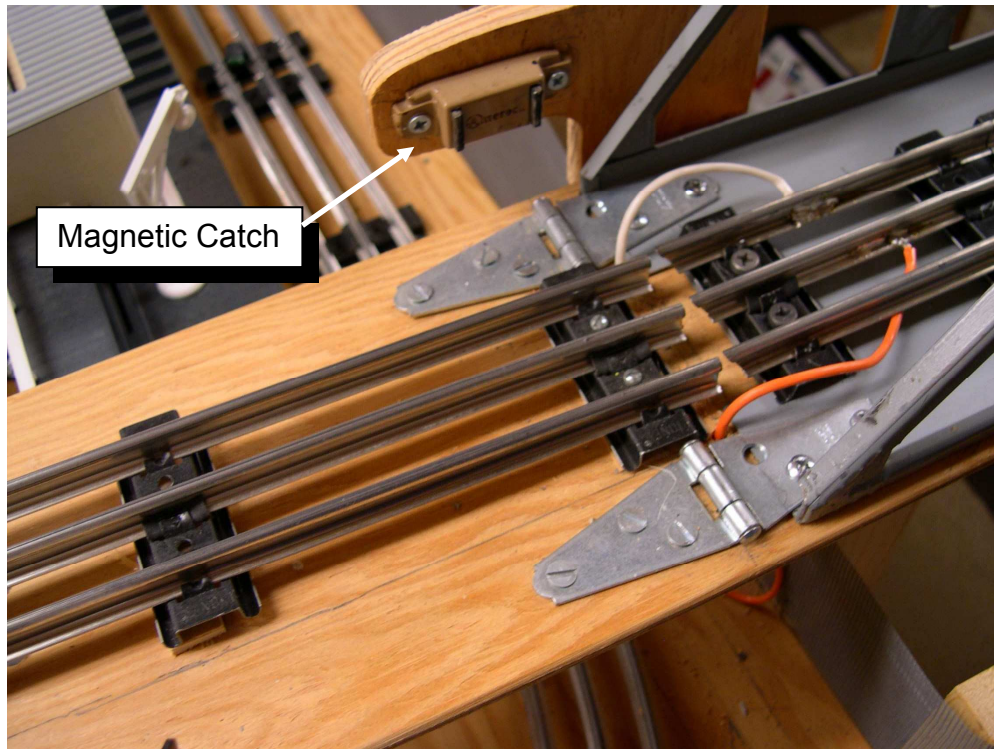


Photo #4 -- Bridge #2 - Hinges (with magnetic catch)



Photo #5 -- Bridge #2 (with Bridge #3 on right in the background)

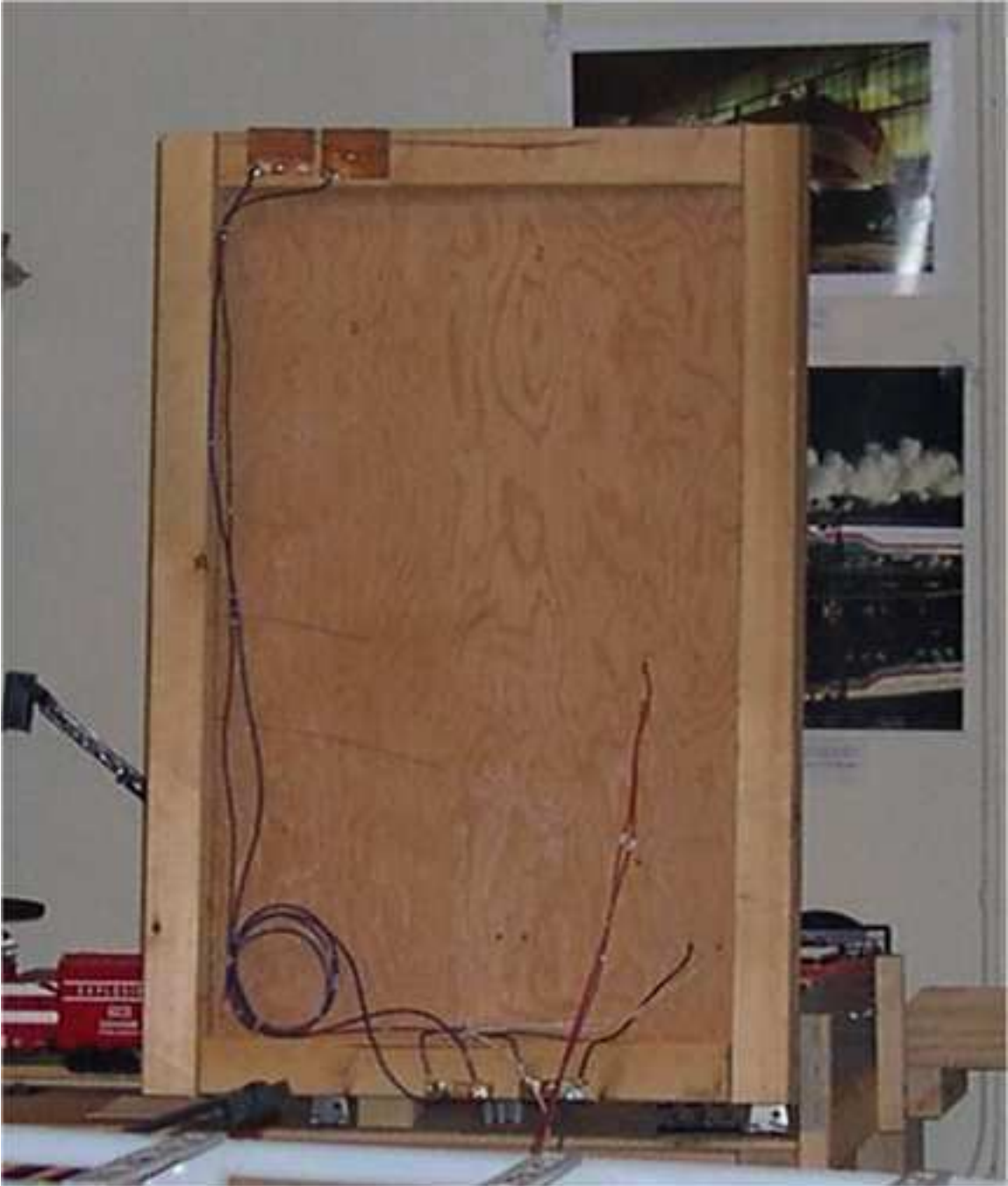


Photo #6 -- Bridge #3 - Up (showing bottom)



Photo #7 -- Bridge #2 – Lionel #317 – Note cutout below the track



Photo #8 -- Bridge #2 – Lionel #317 – Bottom showing cutout

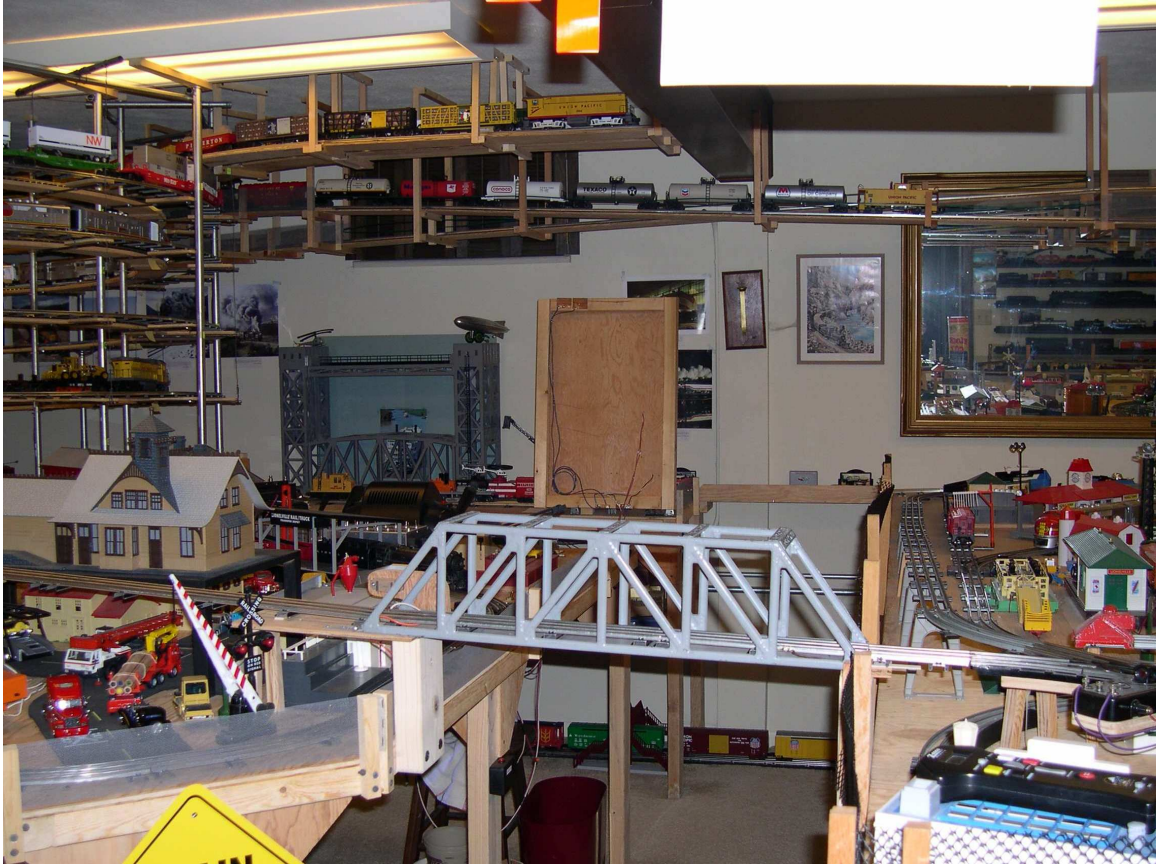


Photo #9 -- Susan Layout showing bridges #2 (foreground) and #3 (background)