



Last Chance Gas

Connie Sauve continues to share her “On the Road Again” vehicle series. In this issue Connie makes an old abandoned gas station.

BY CONNIE SAUVE

This old, abandoned gas station scene started when I took a class to make a vintage, aged gas pump with two sparrows nesting on it. It was a three-day, two-part class, where half of the students worked with Michael Yurkovic to make the aged gas pump, while the other students worked with Beth Freeman-Kane to paint two sparrows and the cutest tiny mouse. On the second day of class, all the students swapped their teachers.

I'm the kind of person who can't leave well enough alone, and I like to add my own spin on class projects. I knew before the class started that I wanted to make a larger scene, with the gas pump being the main focus. I finished the gas pump, birds, mouse and accessories in class, but left the

main components loose until I was ready for them.

I had a vague idea of what I wanted the finished scene to look like. I wanted it to be an old gas station that has been abandoned and decaying for years. After some online research of old, vintage gas stations, I decided I wanted to include an old, rusty vehicle. This ties in with all my other vehicle projects I have made, using inexpensive vehicles as the main focus of the scene. A tow truck seemed appropriate for an old gas station and I remembered seeing a tow truck I had always liked, so after purchasing it online, I went to work on the rest of the scene while waiting for it to arrive.

While working on the project, I came up with a lot of fun ideas for different items to include in



the scene that would have been at an old abandoned gas station. I remembered I had a couple outhouses in my mini stash and had always wanted to make a crappy, aged and weathered bathroom. This was the perfect time to try it.

For the walls of the bathroom, I started with Random Wood Flooring





1 An inside look at the old filling station bathroom. **2** A pile of junk is behind the gate up against the outhouse, including an old tire. **3** The before photo of the outhouse showing the frame work. **4** The finished outhouse with a tin roof and a vent.





Plus, I like to have a tiny bit of space between each board when making a wall or fence. Once the bathroom walls were finished, I was able to make the door with the classic crescent moon cut out, to show it was a converted outhouse.

Using 1/2" scale corrugated metal was the perfect scale for the metal roof. I always use 1/2" scale roofing materials like shingles, on my 1" scale structures. The smaller size makes for a much more realistic looking roof. I cut pieces of the corrugated metal into random sizes, sprayed it flat black first, then aged it with Rustall. The ventilation chimney is from a plastic dropper I had sprayed black and aged, then finished it by attaching a little roof to the top. I used blackened nails on the outside of the outhouse and roof for added details. The bathroom has a wonderful rooster copper weathervane which fits in perfectly with the Hancock rooster logo on the gas pump and sign.

I had an set of Chrysnbon bathroom fixtures that already looked old, but still added additional aging to the

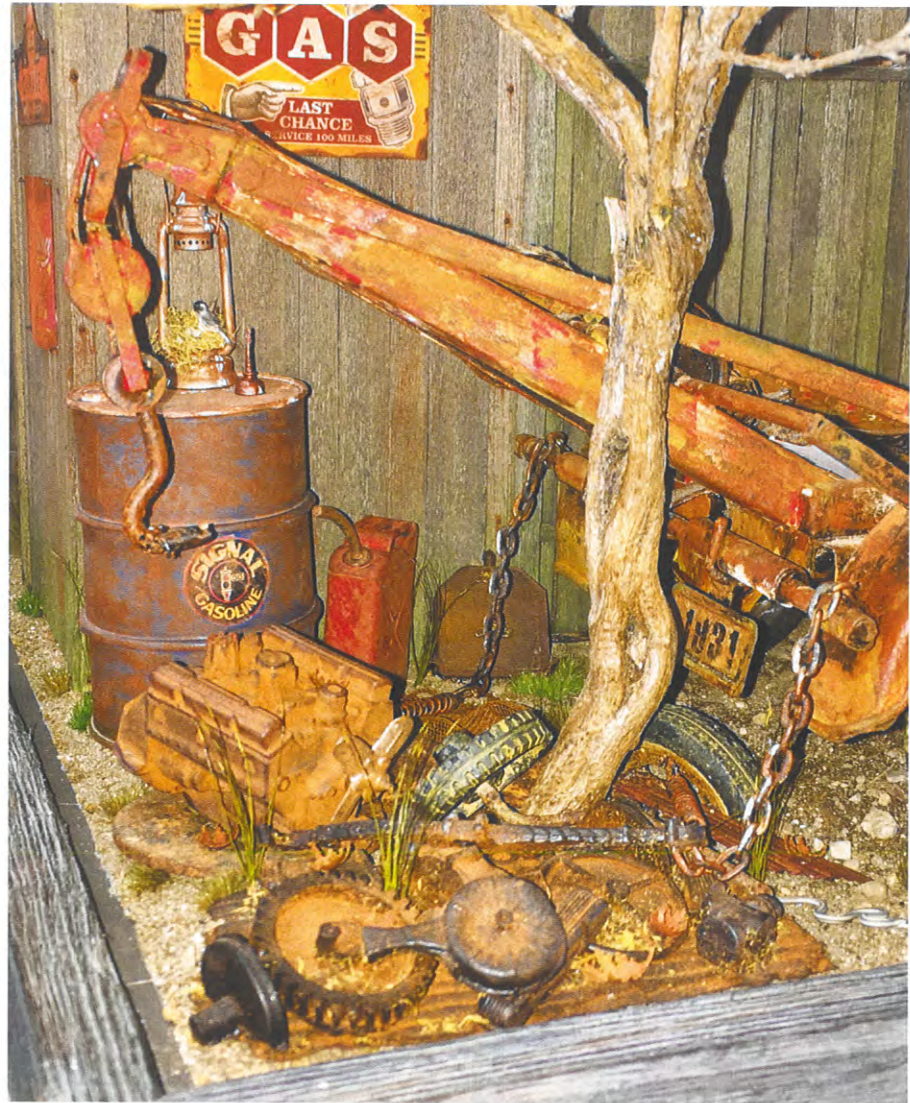
Above is a look at the pile of old vehicle parts that have rusted over the years.

stripwood from Northeastern, which is perfect for creating random board widths for walls and fences. By using this particular stripwood, you get four different widths of wood. Using a wire brush on the wood raises the grain and makes new wood look old. I brushed on Famous Thomas Bug Juice to age the individual pieces of wood. After the Bug Juice had dried, I also used a dirty water wash on all the pieces. The reason I cut the random widths apart, instead of using it 'as is', is there is an overall grain to the whole piece of board. When it's cut apart into individual boards and mixed up, the grain disappears.





A bird makes a nest in the old oil light.



sink, cabinet and toilet. I cracked the mirror and dirtied it, and added a bird nest to the top. For the porcelain sink and toilet, I added some touches of black paint to the edges where a porcelain sink might get chipped, rusted the faucets and pipes, and dirtied the sink. To finish off the interior of the bathroom, I applied aging chalks to the floor and fixtures, added leaves, dirt, a crumpled newspaper, rusty bucket, toilet paper and of course, bird poop dripping down the mirror and onto the sink!

Now that I had the base ready and also the bathroom, I was able to start making the fence. The fence was going to divide the scene in half lengthwise and connect at the back of the bathroom. For the fencing, I used the same method as I used for the bathroom walls, except I used narrow width stripwood sheets, and the "boards" are all the same width. The fence was fairly short in length,

so I only needed to make two sections of fence, plus a gate door.

Every gas station needs signs to attract customers. To add some height to the scene, I made a tall sign using the Hancock gas station brand, which is the same brand that is on my gas pump glass globe which actually lights up. I used a wedding cake column and the center hoop from a 3" wood embroidery hoop for the large round sign that sits on top of the column. To make the tall main sign more interesting, I made two signs to hang off a horizontal cross bar. The sign turned out rusty and aged, and will be a fun addition to the scene.

The next large project was to age the tow truck. I first took a hammer to it and added a few more dents. I sanded areas all over the truck and took off a lot of the original candy-stripped paint on the tow arms. Next, I used Sophisticated Finishes Iron Paint and Rusting Solution on a lot of areas around the truck. I imagined where rust would naturally accumulate, also referencing online pictures of really old rusty trucks. I added Rustall over the whole truck as well as rubbed in aging chalks and dirt. I even glued on dirt and leaves in different spots. Not forgetting the interior, I added dirt inside the cab, and a newspaper and some leaves to finish



Above shows the before and after of the Vespa. Connie has a magic touch when it comes to aging new vehicles.

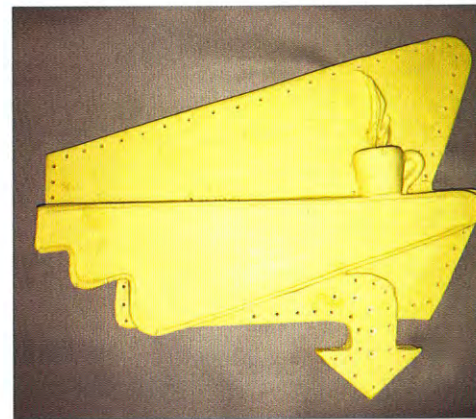
off the interior. The truck didn't come with windows, so I cut some plastic from packaging to fit each window. Then added cracks, bullet holes and dirtied the windows. Using bubble plastic forms from packaging, I added cracked "glass" headlights to the front of the truck. More old junk and signs were added in the back of the truck and two rats have taken up residence back there too. The truck turned out great! Abandoned looking

and rusty! Just the way I wanted it!

Another small abandoned and rusty vehicle was needed for the scene. I looked on eBay and found a 1/12" Silver Vespa. The Vespa was a plastic model, so stripping all the accessories off was very easy. I removed all the parts that would normally break off or disappear from an abandoned vehicle, like the lights, trims, seat and wheels. Any old vehicle needs dents on the body, so

using a lighter, I carefully heated up a couple spots and pushed the hot plastic in with a metal tool. A couple times the Vespa started on fire in the spot I was heating. No problem! I just blew it out and it added to the aging. I used the same techniques I used on my truck to age the Vespa. It looked great in the scene, leaning

The progress photos of the diner sign.





against the fence and slightly buried in the dirt.

I had a resin, unfinished sign in my stash. It looked like a large 1950's coffee shop sign that used to be lit with light bulbs. Referring to vintage lighted signs online, I designed the lettering on my computer. Enamel paints were used to paint the sign and lettering. Once the paints had dried, I then aged, rusted and weathered it. I blackened brass rivets and added those to all the spots where I wanted to add light bulbs. While shopping during the Christmas season, I found a string of plastic icicles that were made up of four sizes of clear plastic balls. I cut each size off and sanded, then buffed the cut area. Then I Super



Glued them in place leaving some empty spaces for the broken bulbs. For the broken bulb spots, I added wires sticking out of the rivets. I used a hammer and broke a few of the balls to represent broken glass shards laying under the sign, for when it was finally set in place.

I decided at this late date to add

a tree behind the tow truck. When looking at the real pictures of old abandoned vehicles, I kept seeing trees growing out of the vehicles. This was a fun idea, so I planted the tree, which is a piece of sagebrush, in the middle of the pile of junk. I didn't want to block the view with a big tree with leaves, so I made the



There are many little side stories in this piece such as the cat chasing the mouse and the other mouse hiding inside an old concrete block under an old fashioned gas can.

scene in the Fall, after all the leaves had fallen, so was still able to see through the bare tree. I did leave one, lone leaf hanging on the tree. The bare tree also helped with the feel of overall abandonment of the gas station.

Next came the fun part of adding the gas pump, bathroom, tow truck, signs, Vespa, rusty accessories, landscaping, critters and fun extra details. On top of a barrel, I made an old lantern that a pair of birds have taken over to build their nest in. Several cinder blocks were used to raise the 1950's sign off the ground, prop the gate open and

a couple laying by the gas pump. A couple of mice are using the cinder blocks to live in. For the final touches to complete the scene, I added fall leaves, six birds, two bird nests, four mice, two rats, a cat and a snake.

All in all, this was such a fun project! I love aging and weathering in miniature scenes. The aging in this scene is over-the-top, but conveys the feeling I wanted of a very old gas station that has long been abandoned and forgotten.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me Connie Sauve at cmsauve2@gmail.com.

