

The Pilot

Issue Number 18

Winter 2001/2002

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In the background...
"The Pilot" of 4-6-2
#2417 Canadian
Pacific at Steam-
town in Scranton,
PA.

-Photo by Louis
Granato III

Editorial

Message from the Central Region Rep.


HELLO TO TEEN MODEL RAILROADERS, one and all!

Welcome to the latest issue of *The Pilot*! This time I have combined two of the issues since I did not have enough material. But YOU can help! Just send in articles about anything trains. I would also like to run more member interviews. Please contact me using the contact info on the last page.

This year the Central Region is having a lot of awesome conventions. Two of them are listed on the Central Region News page. I'm sure we will have more this year in addition to those two. If you would like to host a convention, it's easy! You don't have to do anything fancy, it's just like having some friends over for a good time. Let me know ahead of time and we can print the dates and some information about your convention in the *Hotbox* and/or *The Pilot*. These types of events are always a lot of fun for everyone.

I hope everyone had an awesome Christmas, and will continue to have a Happy New Year!

Happy Railroading,



Louis Granato III
Central Region Rep. of the
Teen Association of Model Railroaders

Central Region News

The Bluewater Limited Convention — April 26-28, 2002 —

The Bluewater Limited Convention will commence at 1600 hours Friday afternoon, or whenever most people have arrived. There are two different hotels in Sandusky, The Westpark Inn, and the Thumb Heritage Inn. Contact me for the phone numbers. Neither are chains, both are locally owned. All that is planned for Friday is maybe a pizza party, and a movie, or something like that. There is a fairly busy line about a half hour south that could be visited if we left early enough. Saturday is the first big day, with railfanning from the Port Huron to Durand and maybe further planned. If you look at a map, you will see that Durand is about 15 miles west of Flint, or Buick City. Port Huron is right on the Canadian border, and features a tunnel. Approximately 27% of all North American freight traffic flows through this tunnel. I don't know where the tracks are from Flint to Detroit, but I do know the route to Flint and will be finding the route to Durand soon. From Flint we can either go north to Saginaw/Bay City, or south toward Detroit. Or, instead of that line or in addition to it, there is a short line that has tracks that run through a town about 10 miles east of Sandusky. It runs to a sugar plant in Croswell, Mi. It's base is in Vassar, but the tracks run from Bad Axe. Get a map of Michigan, most of these towns should be on it. It is the Huron and Eastern, owned by Rail America, in case you are wondering. I've scheduled all of Saturday for this. On Sunday, there is a train show/swap shop in Port Huron. It runs from 10 AM to about 4 PM. I need to apply soon, but if many people are coming I'll get a table. I was thinking that anybody who wants to could leave Sunday morning, and miss the show, or stay and leave after the show. Also, after the show we could go railfanning in Pt. Huron. After the show is over, the convention will be over.

Overview:

April 26-28

April 26 4:00-5:00 PM start time

April 28 4:00-6:00 PM end time

Contact Charles Warcinsky at
charleswarcinsky@mail.com

or

389 Gates Road, Sandusky, MI 48471

or

(810) 648-4736

Official 2002 Central Region Convention

JUNE 13-16, 2002 (Kensal, ND)

The current dates planned for the "Mountaineer" are Thursday, June 13 through Sunday, June 16, 2002. Here is a rundown of the planned events.

Date	Description
June 13th	Head for Harvey, ND, railfan the CP/Soo. Tour Ray Kuntz's HO Soo Layout. Slides/Clinics.
June 14th	Railfan BNSF between Jamestown and Bismarck, ND. Dave's Hobbies. State Railroad Museum.
June 15th	Railfan BNSF west to Judson, ND. Tour of Wilton, ND, HO Club layout. Convention dinner. Clinics/Slides.
June 16th	Open, probably will be filled with railfanning. Ride McHenry Loop. Railfan Valley City, ND.

Of course this is subject to change, and probably will. For more info contact Lewis Ableidinger at soo201@hotmail.com.

JUNE 16-18, 2002 (Minneapolis/St Paul., MN)

A 2 or 3 day post-convention is in the works for the "Mountaineer" in Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota.

Activities being planned:

Railfanning (obviously!).

Bob Rivard's HO Layout (see Great Model Railroads 2001).

The O scale layout at Bandana Square.

MN Transportation Museum at Jackson St. Roundhouse (well worth the trip right there!)

For more info contact Lewis Ableidinger at soo201@hotmail.com.

New Central Region Members: None

The Recycle Railroad

— By Don Masso —



Model railroading can be fun and inexpensive. There are many ready-made quality products on the market to detail a layout or enhance the play value.

These products are highly detailed but may be expensive if you are on a tight budget or need a large quantity of items. Most model railroads are fortunate to be of a size where they can utilize discarded material from the home or office. I have always enjoyed looking at an item and asking myself, "Can I use that on my layout?"

I have always enjoyed looking at an item and asking myself, "Can I use that on my layout?"

It all started, at the office, with the early roll-type fax paper. The paper was on a thin plastic tube (32' x 6"). I started saving them, as they appeared to be a nice size for a large pipe. Later the plastic was changed to a cardboard material but it still had the same potential. They can be cut shorter and painted for use on a flat or gondola car, a drainage pipe coming out of a hillside, a construction project for underground pipe installation, a concrete support column or whatever else you can imagine.

I next gathered the bright blue plastic tube (9' x 3.5') from the adding machine paper. This had the same potential as the fax tube but on a smaller scale. These are small enough for a truck load and are a great no-cost play item for a child, big or little. People in my office are always leaving them on my desk, I think I have enough now!

The wooden coffee stirrers (21' x 10.5") look like lumber, which can be as car or truck loads, enhance a building construction scene, and reinforce a bridge brace or filler between the tracks.

I have two sources for small reels. The plastic center of the cellophane tape (6' x 3") can be painted black or whatever your color preference and it can be used on your rolling stock or trucks. The adding machine has two small black spools that hold the ribbon. These are nice size reels (5' x 2.5') and look great on a delivery or utility truck. There are plastic filler blocks that my friend found protecting the corners of a pair of shutters that he bought. They fit in a gondola car and look like a coil cover.

We recycle in my hometown so I always look for acceptable code numbers or if it can be used with the trains.

We used to throw away the water filter cartridge to the water pitcher. Then one day I cut it open to see what was inside. It is a combination of carbon and silica. I let them dry out. I then empty the contents into a larger container and now use the material as ground cover around the tracks. The plastic cartridge looks like a cooling unit that may be next to a factory. Some piping and weathering gives it character and enhances a plain building.

Some medicine bottles contain a small plastic cylinder (2' x 1.5') that helps absorb moisture and keep the medicine fresh. The ones that I have are gray but also can be painted. They can be used as skid loads, on trucks or on loading platforms, etc. They are a nice size and look like barrels or shipping containers. These are very small so be careful around small children.

Large pump mechanisms for shampoo or food containers can be disassembled into various little parts. The parts look like small stacks or pipes that would complement the roof of a building. Some black paint and weathering will help your buildings look more realistic. Aerosol containers and round cereal containers make great storage tanks. CO2 cartridges make shiny cylinders for truck and car loads.

Two-foot fluorescent bulbs are packed with a cardboard separator that appears to be a gray arched and block wall. A row of these makes a low cost but realistic wall.

I had to replace the toilet tank mechanism that affects the water level. The plastic device has a threaded end and a vertical piece that looks like a reinforced girder. The treaded end can be cut off or you can cut a hole and mount it through the table. It makes a nice yard crane or watch tower support when accessories are added to it.

This is a short list of simple fun items. It may not satisfy everyone but it is workable. The items that we throw away are endless. There are always little clips, brackets, spouts, tubes, etc. that may be useful on our railroads.

Remember to look before you toss!

Don Masso is not currently a T.A.M.R. member, but was generous enough to share his talents and write this article for the association. He currently lives in Stratford, CT.

RAILFANNING

— By Andy Inserra —

Welcome to another edition of Raillfanning-made fresh to order! Once again I'll be covering the hot spots of the Twin Cities and where to catch the best action.

You always see the little biographies in the magazines like *Trains* and *The Railroad Press* (shameless plug!) about the author and where they are from, etc. So I decided to do a whole column like that, but just the trains related stuff. So here are the railfanning possibilities of the New Hope – Crystal area of the Twin Cities. We'll begin in New Hope where I live. In New Hope we have two distinct lines, one industrial park and a few spurs. Both of these lines are used by Soo (or if you're a Canadian, CP Rail). The main line is very busy; it is the only link between Canada and Minneapolis for Soo. We can easily see over 20 trains a day, some running within as little as 5 minutes of each other on this one track line. Most are long distance but we also see the local service to the steel plant and industries in the area. This is usually a few times a week and between three and twelve cars long and one of the most interesting operations in the area. Most often two MP15ACs are in charge but sometimes a GP40 helps out. The crews have perfected the flying drop, a move that is time saving and traffic clogging. They use this to switch the steel mill. To drop off the cars for the steel mill they first need to haul out the cars that will head back to the yard. Keep in mind the switch is feet from the busy grade crossing. They do this first and then stop just clear of the switch and realign it so it is straight. Now the locomotive is squished between cars bound for Humboldt yard and those bound for the mill. One of the crew members is on the ground at the switch stand, another at the control stand (preferably the engineer I assume), one in the locomotive's stairwell fac-

ing the deliveries with his hand on the pin-puller, and a fourth riding the cars they will drop off. As they are ready to start (and traffic backs up) the engineer moves forward and after the slack runs out the fellow on the loco steps uncouples the cars that they will drop off. The engineer then notches up the throttle as high as needed to clear the switch. As soon as the locomotive clears, the switchman throws the switch and the cars glide onto the siding. The two crew members not on the locomotive then set the brakes on the cars they just dropped off, go back into the street and the engineer moves the loco by slowly and they swing aboard. After that they head back to Humboldt yard and traffic through New Hope gets back to normal. The whole move takes less than five minutes but is pretty impressive.

Our other line is the old MNS line that runs south from the Soo mainline we just talked about. Both the Soo and the Twin Cities & Western (TCW) use this line. Soo sends one or two trains per day down the line, each return after doing switching chores. The TCW runs one train up for Hopkins to Humboldt in the morning and returns later in the afternoon or evening. A pair of GP30C's or GP20C's powers these trains, almost exclusively for grain cars. The Soo trains are the 0630 MNS and 1201 MNS, so numbered because it is the time they are called at Humboldt. They rate one or two MP15AC's for power depending on the train size. They usually are between one and two-dozen cars long. If only one train will be needed for the days work, only the 0630 will be called. No trains currently use the line on weekends.

Over in Crystal we find MNS Junction, where the MNS line and Soo main meet. For all of you sweets fans, this is also right next to the Mello Honey plant, where those little

honey bear bottles are filled. Only a mile east is the Soo – BN junction. Only one BN train a day uses this line, it crosses the diamond twice a day and often has a caboose on the end of it. Currently this routine is a bit messed up as the bridge over the highway down the line is being replaced. It should be back to normal in the spring.

So now you want directions right? Coming from downtown Minneapolis, take 394 west to 169 north. On 169 look for 49th Avenue., get off there. At the top of the ramp, take a right and head to Boone or Winnetka Avenue. Taking a left on either will get you to the Soo main, Boone is where the steel mill is. If you keep going straight on 49th you'll cross the MNS line and head into Crystal. At the end of 49th you'll see the main on your left. Head that way to get to the junction and diamond.

That's my hometown, where you can see trains while just waiting for the city bus to come (I do my railfanning that way, twice a week on average I get to see a train on the main while waiting to get my bus to the U of M.) If you have comments or questions about the trains in the Twin Cities or will be in the area and want more information on the best places to railfan, please feel free to email me at:

Andy_Inserra@tamr.org

Or snail mail me at:

Andy Inserra
4940 Xylon Ave N
New Hope MN 55428

Till next time, see you trackside!

Improving Vehicles Part 5i(2-24x)-6r=10

Convertibles

— Conducted by Peter Maurath —

Featuring 20 original hits, it's **LOASSB!** This issue we'll turn some ordinary N scale sedans into open-top cruisers.

LET'S MEET OUR GUESTS—The techniques described here can apply to just about any vehicle, even in scales other than N. For demonstration purposes I'll be cutting up a Model Power Mercedes Benz (MB) sedan, the kind mentioned in previous parts of this series. All you will need is a sharp hobby knife, some super glue, paints (colors for detailing the car's interior and exterior), and a few scrap pieces of either illustration board (IB), or styrene.

PILLARS OF STRENGTH—Each car has what's called "pillars", or vertical frame members that holdup the roof. Labeled alphabetically from front to back (figure 1),

they'll be where most of the cutting takes place. Start at the front of the MB roof gently scribing a thin line across the roof between the two "A" pillars (fig. 2). This will serve as the windshield frame for the convertible. If you cannot save the thin section of the roof, cut it off where it meets the "A" pillars and later glue a thin section of styrene (less than 1/16"), or IB between the pillars.

INSTANT CONVERTIBLE—Next, cut-off the "B" and "C" pillars where they meet the body. The roof should now lift off. Complete the windshield frame, if necessary. With the roof out of the way some detail can be added to the interior. Being this is N scale it will be kept simple, though I recommend a set of tweezers and some extra patience. Start with a section of IB or styrene under the windshield to serve as the dashboard no larger than 1/8". Next add a seat

with a piece of IB stood-up going between the doors. If you're really patient you can choose bucket seats by gluing in two separate pieces. Finish the interior with a cover for the top that would be stowed behind the seats. At this size, a square section of thin styrene (or even card-stock) with rounded corners towards the trunk will do for a cover.

WRAP IT UP—Finish the vehicle as you would any other. Painting the body, tires, trim, and lights. The interior will normally be one of three colors: black, tan, or gray. Don't worry about the lack of an actual windshield. It would be very difficult to install at this size, and I think it looks great even without it.

That's all the space for this issue, stay tuned next issue when we'll turn some tow-trucks into ambulances.

Figure 1

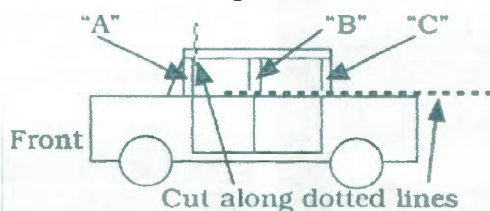
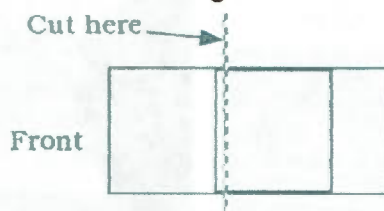


Figure 2



Extra Extra

By Dave Honan

Ok, I know this has next to nothing to do with railroading, but how cool is this? AMAX (huge coal mining company) moved their dragline from Chinook Mine (Riley, IN) to Black Beauty Mine (Farmersburg, IN) in October. It's tough to comprehend just how **big** the machine is. The main boom, if stood vertically, is 60 stories tall. In the second photo, look closely for the three men standing between the dirt piles in the center of the photo—that should give you an idea of the sheer immensity of the beast.



RAILROADING IN THE WHOLE DARN EASTERN TIME ZONE (I'm not kidding this time)

— By Dave Honan —

Freshly regurgitated by CZ, it's this month's LOASSB! Oops, wrong column...the slave monkeys have been berating me so hard this last week that I got confused.

Well, I'll be honest and tell ya'll beforehand that there won't be much of a discussion about railroading this time—it's all railfanning!

Since Louis did such a spectacular job with the last issue, I'm going to go bananas here and show off what I've been doing with my "new" camera—yeah, that Pentax ME Super that's older than Peter Nar-tooth's wooden leg. So, let's start off with some early work, not to mention taking a tour of my railfanning activities the past three months. See what happens when I have nothing important to write about?

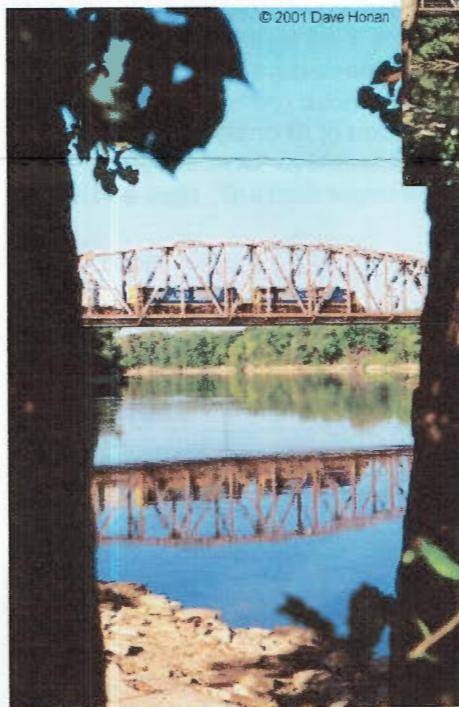
Ok, as soon as I looked at my photo collection, I realized I do have something important to say. The events of September 11 hit me

a loved one, but my deepest condolences if such a tragedy did occur.

The HTH&TS had the flag flying high on the morning of September 29, and a crisp breeze allowed me to capture this patriotic image.

The bridge at Clinton is a great spot to railfan. There's a public park on the south side of the bridge, so access isn't a problem. Oddly, for such a great spot, I've never seen another railfan there.

First up is a vertical shot taken through the twin trunks of the tree I sit under; two CSX C40-8s are on the point of a southbound intermodal.



Next, UP 6519 and SP 230 head



up Z459 on the afternoon of September 12th (yes, I spent that entire day at Clinton... had to get away from the TV).

Lastly, this is one of my favorite photos: Three CP SD40-2s are on the point of K855. Everything just came together for the shot; the sunlight was perfect, the train was perfect, the river was smooth, and the flowers caught just enough sun.



How about some Alcos? The Kankakee, Beaverville, and Southern still has a number in service; seen here are C424 315 and RS11 321 at the KBSR shop in Iroquois,



IL. Just to the south, 309, 318, and 301 rust away in the deadline.



Over my fall break, due to truly miserable weather, I shot a roll of



hard, especially considering I'm not only a native of Albany, NY, but I have family on the Lower East Side of Manhattan (they're all fine). I sincerely hope nobody reading this lost

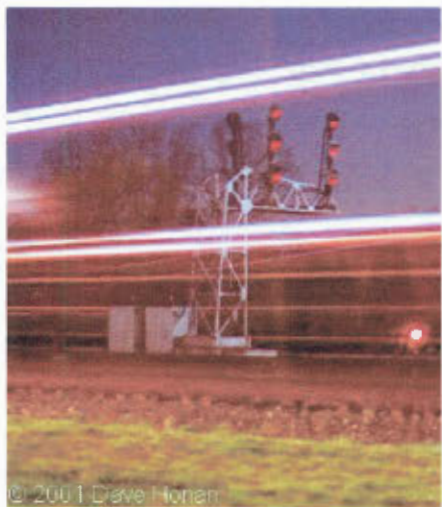
B&W. At Papineau, IL, UP 3538 leads seven other SD40-2s and a SD70M north towards Chicago. The next day, UP 4260 and 5269 are on the point of a runthrough train on the old B&O at Salem, IL.

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On my trip home for Thanksgiving, I returned to the home of Pirate Peter Nartooth in Cleveland, OH. We peglegged over to Berea for a little bit before bedtime, and on this occasion I was quite highly impressed—to the tune of 11 trains in 50 minutes! I tried a few night shots and obtained some interesting results, which I'll discuss in a future issue. However, two of the better shots are shown below.

First, a westbound NS train knocks down the clear signal as it slides past Berea Tower.



© 2001 Dave Honan

Next, another westbound NS train slides through the interlocking, and moments later one of six eastbound CSX trains that we saw flew by with its ditch lights flashing.

Hey, guess what—more Alcos! (You ok up there, Andy? I know this is tough on you...) After escaping



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from the vile clutches of Pirate Nartooth, I continued home and spotted two Bath & Hamondsport Alcos pulling a short eastbound along the Southern Tier of New York State. No. 431 is a C430 and No. 4, *The Champagne Trail*, is an ancient S1.

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These last two photos were taken while I chased D&H train 216 with two friends from home. The first shot was taken at Richmondville, NY, as the train was climbing up Richmondville Hill. For those who are counting, there are 18800 horsepower in that lashup of five SD40-2s and an SD60!



After meeting 413 at Richmondville Siding, 216 rolling south through East Worcester, NY; this view is from a hillside across the valley. Interstate 88, visible on the right, makes



chasing this line quite easy!

Well, that's about it for this time. I hope everyone had some great holidays, and please take all necessary precautions for staying warm while railfanning this winter! (Hey Andy, is it true that it'll still be snowing up there next May?) Remember: Look, Listen, Stay Warm, Live!



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As ever, please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments that you may have. (I should note that although I've published my contact info here in every column

I've done [this being the seventh], the only people I've heard from are Andy begging for more photos and Louis screaming at me for missing yet another deadline. C'mon folks, I know somebody out there is reading this and is desperate to know something!) As ever.

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The Pilot depends mostly on its readers for material and we are always looking for more contributions. If you would like to conduct your own column or submit a feature article, please contact the Editor.

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Please visit our new and updated site!



***Top Seven wrong things to say
when caught on railroad property***

Found in a CSX operations rulebook by Nick Wilson

Mixed in baked at 350 by Peter Maurath.

- #7. "My Frisbee is stuck in those trees."
- #6. "Look, a pigeon."
- #5. "My trucko is el broken downo."
- #4. "Your fly's open."
- #3. "I'm taking pictures of the trees."
- #2. "I'm not really here, I'm just an illusion."
- #1. "Nice pants."