

THE HOTBOX

Youth Model Railroading at its Finest!

March 2001 ²

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Issue #356



**Classic Loassb and Top 7
Real Operations
Rail Tales premier**

**THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS**

The HotBox

March 2002

Issue 356

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Contributions!

We always need contributions in all forms. Please send the following in if you wish for the staff to consider for an upcoming issue of *The Hotbox*.

Feature Articles:

This is what we really need. They can be from a half page to two pages typed on anything related to railroading, railfanning, model railroading, you get the idea. Accompanying pictures are also welcome.

Columns:

Another thing we can always use! If you wish to start one, please drop us a line. And if you like a current column, please let the staff know, we like the feedback.

Photos and Drawings:

Do you have great pictures collecting dust? Railroading cartoons just sitting around? Drawings just waiting to be great works of art? We'll send them in for consideration by us! Photos should be 3in x 4in minimum. Artwork should be on plain white paper with black ink.

Questions?

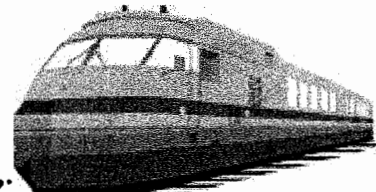
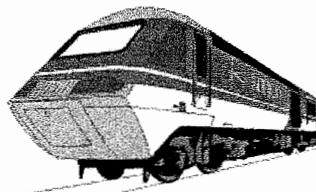
Ask the editor for more info.

On the Cover:

CEFX SD40-2 #3107 leads a CSX C30-7 and SD40-2 northbound into Hamlet Terminal.

Inset: The old Seaboard Airline Station to be moved 200 yards to the southwest and rotated 90 degrees within a few months.

Both by Corey Vernier.



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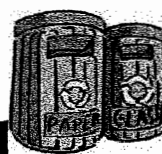
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Please Read and Recycle

Thanks to rrhistorical.com for some of the railway clipart.

The TAMR is a non-profit organization created to promote, foster, and encourage young persons in the hobby of model railroading, the activity of railfanning, and the preservation of the history, science and technology thereof.

Membership to the TAMR includes an eleven issue subscription to the *Hotbox*, the annual directory of members, quarterly regional newsletters and an invitation to participate in all TAMR events. The available membership categories are as follows:

Regulars (under 21).....\$15
Associate (21 and over)....\$20
International (outside US)..\$15
Sustaining.....\$20

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From the Tower

By Chris Burchett

President

Hello everyone! I'd like to take this time to welcome new member Erik Romatowski of Highland Park, New Jersey to the TAMR. Welcome aboard, Erik!!

On another note, certain members need to start conducting our railfan behaviors much better. This next piece was written by Trainorders.Com member "CSX_CO" and is a wake-up call to all TAMR members. This was written in response to the topic "Deshler Crossroads Park Safety", which is where the TAMR 2001 national convention stopped at on Thursday July 12th.

"The only time I've ever seen a problem at the [Deshler] Crossroads Park was when the TAMR Group came up to watch trains. They were EVERYWHERE, and most of the time it was in places they should have known they shouldn't have been there...'DERF' has posted signs warning people to stay back from the tracks."

This was the only problem he has seen, making this a very serious matter. We don't need to be making a name for ourselves this way. We need to obey all posted signs, even if it means we don't get that once-in-a-lifetime picture that will most definitely get us on the cover of *TRAINS* magazine. I hope that this will help everyone to become safer railfans, as only being safe will gain you more respect than that awesome photo will.

If you have any questions or comments on anything you just read above, contact me. Contact info is, as always, available below. Practice safety, TAMR! From the tower, this Chris Burchett, signing off

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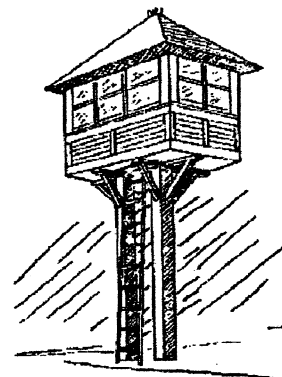
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Minnesota Northern SW1 904 [owned by ILSX] seen by Lewis Ableidinger



A Word from the Editor

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to yet another issue of the Hotbox. I assume that you have the Feb. issue of the Hotbox right now and I'd like to take the time to reinstate that we sent the two together again so that you will get them faster, and so that we don't have to run the treasury dry. For those of you that are new, and for those of you that aren't, please remember that we can always use your submissions and maybe if we get enough submissions, we may be able to add another couple of pages, REMEMBER THIS IS YOUR PUBLICATION. WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITH OUT YOUR WORK. Please send us your pics, cartoons, articles, jokes, hints, etc, so that we can share them with everybody in the T.A.M.R. [and so that you can see your name in print]. It is neat to get an issue of the Hotbox and see your work in there. Trust me.

-Charles W

A word from the Layout Design Artist

Hi everyone!

Well, we're slowly catching up again and I'm very pleased to announcing something that we haven't seen for some time now, a full 16 pages of pics, Loassb, and much more! But we can't do this without you, the readers. We need your stories, articles, photos and more! Railtales, debuting this month, is the best way to tell us about those crazy railfanning trips – Dave and Corey are all ears and want to hear from you! So send that stuff in, we need it! Till next time, see you trackside.

-Andy Inserra

Thanks to this month's contributing editors:

Peter Maurath

Dave Honan

Lewis Ableidinger

Corey Vernier

Josh Miller

Editor of the Month: Josh Miller for his great article on realistic model railroad operations. We're looking forward to more on this!

CLASSIC Top Seven Rejected Names for the Santa Fe, Burlington Northern Merger.

Debuted in the April 1996 Hotbox by: Peter Maurath

#7. SantaCentralNorthernFePacificBurlingtonWestern R.R.

#6. Burlington Santa

#5. The Really Big R.R.

#4. The Our engines will always be much cleaner then Southern Pacific' ever will be R.R.

#3. The Multi-colored mess R.R.

#2. Zehner Railway Systems

#1. Santa Buffet

Celebrating Ten Years of Noodlemania it's....

Layout on A Shoestring Budget Est. 1992

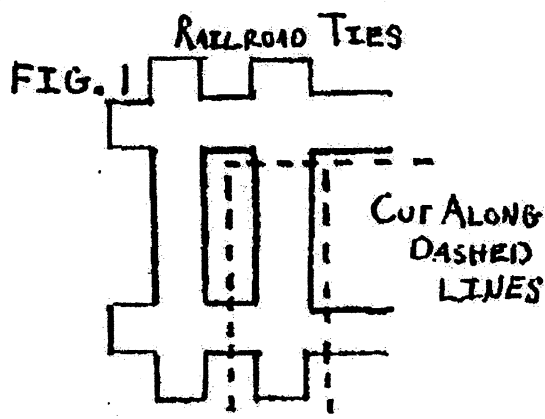
Conducted by: Peter Maurath

Welcome to this month's trip into the Hotbox vault. It's January 1993; Phil Michaels would be beginning his final year as HB editor. The cover that month featured several shots of Lake Superior and Ishpeming's RSD15. It also featured an article on the same RR by TAMR president Jeremy Amudsen. Brad Beaubien was beginning his first full year as Treasurer along with Mike Thideman as Northeastern Rep., and a certain well known TAMR videographer, then promotion director Newton Vezina. A report from our TAMR secretary David Thompson listed the recent renewals and the success of a campaign/contest for each region to win the most members. Central won with 15 new members for 1992. Sadly, of that 15, I know not of one left today.

HOTBOX #277, JANUARY 1993

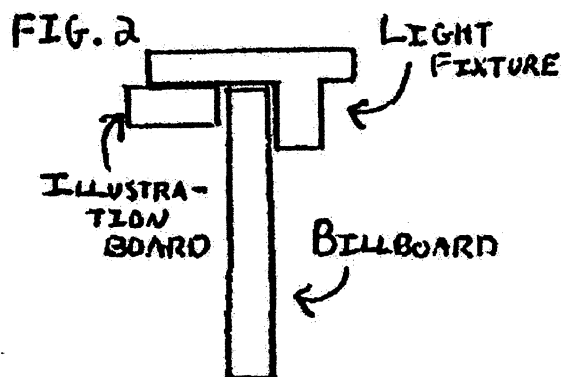
Hello, this month's article is about how to put all those signs you've collected to good use. We will start on how to build the basic billboard.

The first thing you will need is a good, stiff, backing for your billboard base. The best thing for this is illustration board; it's available at most craft stores and has many uses. To start, you should have a design in mind. Will it have a logo only, or a logo and a saying? Will it have other words? Once this is complete you can begin.



Start by attaching your logo to the backing. Elmer's glue seems to work best, but any glue will work well. Then, if you want to add a slogan, leave some room and draw some guidelines very lightly, so that your letters won't go crooked. Then add the letters in whatever way you wish, and the ad is finished.

Now is the time to add the support for your billboard. N-Scalers can use the creative spaghetti noodle [see the November 1992 HOTBOX, issue 275—Ed.] and the rest can use whatever pole is usable for you. Simply attach them to the back with a little overhang on the bottom to prop-up the height. It doesn't really matter, as long as it's suitable.



Most billboards now-a-days are lit and this is also easy. What you need is some old railroad tracks. Then remove the rails. Then cut it down as shown in figure one. Attach a piece of illustration board to the end, as in figure two and leave a space so it can fit snugly on your billboard.

Next month we will be fencing in your layouts with some very basic materials. All questions and suggestions are always welcome. That's all for now, see you next month.



Upcoming Events

A bumper crop of activities this year!

March 22-24 (Western NY) – Western New York Divisions' Spring Convention! Activities include railfanning, hobby shops, RIT Model Railroad Club show with a table, the great annual pizza party and more! For more info, be sure and contact Nick Wilson at emdsd40-2@juno.com or Hope to see you there!

April 26-28, 2002 (Sandusky, MI) So far I'm planning to show videos [Newton's] on Friday night, go railfanning all day on Saturday, and attend a show on Sunday. Start time is between 4 and 6 Friday afternoon, then maybe a pizza party, and videos. Saturday, the railfanning is between Port Huron and Durand [Mi]. If you get a map, find Detroit, then look north near the mouth of Lake Huron. From Port Huron, look west and find Flint, then look a little south and west along Interstate 69. Durand is about 10 miles I think west of Flint. It bills itself as a rail town. There are a lot of trains on this corridor, and the tunnel in Port Huron is usually busy, I think. Sunday, the train show. It's also a swap shop, and you can usually find some pretty good buys. Also planned for Sunday is some railfanning around the CSX yard in Port Huron. It happens to lie right next to the St. Clair River, and is kind of difficult to access, so that may be a short trip. Come to think of it, we could probably railfan it on Saturday, or save it for Sun. if we want to. The show runs only on Sun. so there is no Sat. option. I didn't plan the convention in time to get a table, so we'll only be attending. I'm holding it in Sandusky, because there is a short line that runs through the thumb that we could go see on Fri. night [if you don't mind the lateness] or sometime on Sat. If you want hotel info, let me know, I don't have rates yet, but these aren't chains and Sandusky isn't that big. In other words, they probably won't be booked.

JUNE 13-20, 2002 – Official Central Region Convention! This year it is a huge 8-day convention split into two sections, ND and MN.

JUNE 13-16, 2002 (Kensal, ND) The current dates I am planning for the "Mountaineer" are Thursday, June 13-Sunday, June 16, 2002. Here is a rundown of planned events

June 13: Head for Harvey, ND, railfan the CP/Soo - Tour Ray Kuntz's HO Soo Layout - Slides/Clinics

June 14: Railfan BNSF between Jamestown and Bismarck, ND - Dave's Hobbies - State RR Museum - Huge HO Layout (uncontested, largest in state) - Spend night in Bismarck

June 15: Morning railfan BNSF west to Judson, ND - Tour of Wilton, ND, HO Club layout - Convention dinner - Clinics/Slides

June 16: Morning - Open, probably will be filled with railfanning - Ride McHenry Loop
Afternoon - Railfan Valley City, ND

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

JUNE 17-20, 2002 (Minneapolis/St Paul, MN) The second half of the "Mountaineer"

Monday, June 17 - Gang arrives from ND. Railfan University, Northtown, and surrounding areas. Wing it depending on arrival times from ND. Hit up Krispy Kreme in Maple Grove [count on this a lot!].

Tues - Railfan the Midway area, Amtrak, MNRR [early morning, trackside by 730]
Bandana Square area, railfan Soo, BNSF, CNW, see their monstrous O scale layout
Jackson St. roundhouse tour
Scale Model Supplies to stock up on all those essentials
Black Bear Crossing for a break, coffee shop with a deck for railfans to watch the BNSF/Soo main, rail theme inside
Hoffman, Pig's Eye, and South St Paul for more railfanning
Bob Rivard's terrific Soo layout

Wed - Layout tours, Andy Inserra and Josh Miller
Open to revisit more railfan spots or local hobby shops like N Shop, SMS again, etc. or even Ax-Man, everything you could want - dirt cheap stuff that is great for the layout [toggle switches, lights, toxic waste trash bags, street sweeper brushes, etc]
Catch MILW 261 as it comes in from Duluth around 3-4 pm

Thurs - chase UP 4-6-6-4 3985 up the Spine Line to St Paul!
Railfan some more or hit the road for home...
For info contact Andy Inserra at Andy_Inserra@tamr.org

June 20-23, 2002 The TAMR Southern Region will be hosting its annual Summer convention June 20-23. The meet will be based out of Spencer, NC. Plans for layout tours, railfanning, and steam excursions are being ironed out. If you're on your way to the National, how bout stop by NC? For further information contact Southern Region Rep. Josh Trower(GG1_4935@hotmail.com) or convention director Hayes Smith(cookiemonster@rrmail.com).

JULY 10-18, 2002 (New Jersey / New York) The Broadway Limited 2002. With it 4 months away, the 2002 TAMR National Convention is scheduled to be held in New York and New Jersey, hosted by one of the TAMR's fastest growing, and active divisions! Get ready for the best model railroading and railfanning in New York and New Jersey! For more information, contact The Drew Crew, 2002 Andrew Matarazzo, Convention Director. E-mail: TAMRnymets@aol.com and Northeast Region Rep., Andrew Sabens, (Convention Director) E-mail: TAMR13@aol.com

THIS JUST IN!!! The 2003 TAMR National Convention will be held in northern California during the month of July 2003!! For more information, contact Ross McKnight, E-mail: TAMR4449@aol.com

Have a big railfanning bash coming up? Tell us here at the Hotbox and we'll let the world know about it!

Like new products? Want to review them? Model Railroad News needs you to help them review new products! If you are interested in this great opportunity please let Andy know, he'll get you all the details!

TAMR ON THE WEB

What could be better than free stuff?

The TAMR has an active presence on the Internet, and we hope our members will take advantage of what we have to offer. All of this is included in your membership, so it is free. Yes, that's right, it won't cost you a dime!

First is our own site, www.tamr.org. Here you can find out what's going on and see pictures from conventions. If you have a picture to add, or would like your own web site linked, contact us. We are also always looking for members who would like to help with the site (no experience is required). If you would like to have your own page at the site, we'll help you with that, too. For more information, contact webmaster@tamr.org.

Second is our e-mail list. The list does not replace the *Hotbox*, but does provide a fun way for members to get the latest news and make new friends. You can join the list in several ways:

- send a blank e-mail to TAMR-subscribe@yahoo.com
- on the web, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TAMR>. (This is most useful if you are already registered with E-groups or Yahoo).
- send an e-mail to pivotpin@tamr.org and request an invitation.

Note: Yahoo has recently bought E-groups. Most URL's will take you to a Yahoo page. Until things settle down, you may experience some difficulty using the site. Contact the Pivot Pin if you have a problem.

Yahoo also has a "files" area where you can find the TAMR logo, some more pictures, and other information. Note: the list is only open to TAMR members, although a few exceptions occur for former members or industry contacts.

Third, you can have an e-mail address "@tamr.org." This is a forwarding address, so the e-mail is sent to another address that you already have. (It is possible to get a POP or stand-alone account, but there is a charge associated with this). For information, contact treasurer@tamr.org.

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PHOTOS!!

PICTURES BY LEWIS ASLEIDINGER



A CP30 REBUILD, KNOWN TO BNSF AS A CP30A, TEAMS UP WITH A STANDARD CP40 TO SWITCH SOME GRAIN HOPPERS.

BELOW - THE LINEUP OF UNITS STORED AT 500' THIEF RIVER FALLS SHOPS. SEEN HERE ARE A PAIR OF CP40s AND CP40 #4506



RAILTALES

A forum for members to share their stories of railfanning adventures

Edited by Dave "Turbo" Honan and Corey "The Real CV" Vernier



Welcome, fellow railfans, foamers, FRNs, whatever be you called! This is the first-ever edition of *RailTales*, a column written entirely by *you*, the members of the TAMR. This column will be a forum for you to share your railfanning adventures with the whole of the TAMR. We'd like for it to be a monthly effort, but this goal can only be achieved if *you* write down your adventures and send 'em in! So, take a break from March Madness and while away those miserable April Showers and spin a tale or two!

Now, this won't be a place for mere spotting reports or stuff like, "uh, yeah, I went down to the tracks for a couple hours and saw a few trains." We want to hear some adventures! We want to hear about how your car died in the middle of nowhere, Nebraska, and while waiting for the tow truck to arrive, that trio of UP flags went by just as the sun was setting and you nailed a perfect shot. Or the time when you were on some podunk shortline and NS detoured a Triple Crown train over it at 20mph and you chased it for 50 miles. Or the time you were trackside in Roswell, NM, and a BNSF train flashed past with some weird-looking flatcar loads, and moments later your camera, scanner, and clothing were confiscated by guys in suits wearing sunglasses. You know what we're talking about!

[Slave monkey editorial: Dave has babbled on enough about the concept of the column, so we're withholding his hamburgers until his gets on with an adventure.]

I can't ignore that threat, so let's get this thing rolling! On February 02, I went railfanning in Illinois with another transplant from the Northeast, a guy named Lou who goes to Indiana U. After meeting up here in Terre Haute, IN, we chased CSX hotshot Q131 to Effingham, IL, where we met up with my pal Chad. We headed west for Altamont, where we found the UP main to Chicago and turned north, destination the large trestle at Shelbyville. About halfway there, Chad happened to glance out the window: "Yo, *stacks southbound!*" I whipped a three-point turn out of my pocket and we chased the train all the way back to Altamont, where we were able to set up for a classic Midwest shot: cornfield, train, sky. UP 4017 on the point brightened up my spirits, though!

After catching a southbound manifest at Shelbyville Trestle, we headed north to Findlay, determined to hike in to the shore of Shelbyville Lake to get some shots of the graceful arch bridge northeast of town. A distant horn alerted us to the presence of a northbound, so we broke broken-field-running records to get down to the shore with barely enough time to get shots. An hour of waiting produced no more trains (thanks in part to a broken rail just to the north), so we headed back to the car to go back to Shelbyville for lunch.

Now, we'd driven down a fisherman's access road that had two deep ruts where previous travelers had ventured to drive. Four days of rain the previous week had turned those ruts into pudding-lined troughs. We three piled into the car and I carefully headed back up the hill, risking my paint to the bushes to avoid losing my car to the mud. However, about halfway up the trail, a sickening

thwack was heard from the general vicinity of my roof-mounted antenna, so I slammed on the brakes to make sure that I wouldn't lose the antenna...

...and the car slid down into the mud. O boy. Some throttle jockeying produced about five feet of forward movement before the little-car-that-would could go no further. Chad and Lou kindly got out to push, and I carefully got on the gas. Sitting there with the wheels spinning in first gear wasn't producing any torque, so I shifted into second and let 'er rip. Mud went flying everywhere but finally (with the able efforts of Chad and Lou) the car began moving in the proper direction -- so I laid on the throttle and literally made tracks for dry ground!

Now, Chad learned two valuable lessons from this adventure. First, if mud starts flying, don't merely turn around and duck, because your back will get splattered with mud. Of course, he did this, and got his jacket dirtied up. Second, if you're going to bend over to avoid this flying mud, be sure that you're wearing a belt. I don't think Chad will ever forget the day he got mud down the back of his pants.

And now, for something completely different...

Murphy's Law Strikes Again by Corey Vernier

The weekend of January 19th was a beautiful-looking four-day break on the calendar. So a week beforehand I kicked around the idea of taking the two-hour trip down to Hamlet NC to do some serious railfanning. After rounding up my brother Ryan and few friends, Tom Walker and Josh Trower, we settle on striking out early on Saturday the 19th. As the weekend neared and the four-day forecast revealed one day at a time, we realized that Saturday was going to be a complete washout after being dry for three weeks. Back to planning. Well, Sunday was out of the question because of church, Tuesday was dropped because school was the next day, so we settled on Monday the 21st. Naturally, Sunday and Tuesday were absolutely beautiful days, and there was a chance of rain on Monday. At this point, rain or shine, we were Hamlet bound.

I questioned my sanity as I was crawling out of bed at 5:00 am on a free Monday, but we were on a mission. Josh couldn't go, so after a well executed stop and go at Tom's house we were out of town by 6:15. The sun came up about halfway there, and the clouds were looking fairly tame, but solid. A total of 95 miles later, we arrived at the five-mile-long Hamlet Terminal. After a quick trip to the hump we found ourselves at the engine facility. Tom was on visual overload, he'd never seen so many engines in one place. We had been there for maybe 10 minutes before the clouds just opened up. We swore they were just waiting for us to get there. It was a mere 38 degrees most of the day and it might as well have been snowing, but nothing was going to stop us!

As usual, trains were coming out of everywhere and we barely had time to dry off and warm up in the car before the next one showed up. Highlights included two pairs of SD70MAC's and a wonderful GCFX SD40-2/CSX C30-7/CSX SD40-2 consist that caught us very much by surprise. After awhile we decided to wander over to Laurinburg, NC and check out the resident shortline, the Laurinburg & Southern. First, we scrounged around for our railfan lunch hangout, Arby's, and scored one after asking a local. Satisfied, we meandering around town for a few minutes searching for the L&S facility and found it tucked away off of the CSX mainline. I nailed several of the red and white SW1500's, SW1's, and 70 ton GE's hanging out all over the place despite the fact it was pouring at nearly an inch per hour.

Back to Hamlet and a miracle happened. It stopped raining! After being pounded for seven hours, it sure felt good to get out and walk around. A grain train was parked on the Monroe line just west of the wye, perfectly spotted a few yards west of a bridge. Just as I was about to click the shutter

from that bridge, the sun came out and the yellow noses shined like jewels! Score one...two...three, and then the sun went back in the clouds for another 2 hours. By this time it was 2 pm, time for the mandatory midday lull. We resorted to the traditional boredom-beating activity of throwing rocks at the same telephone poll that has entertained us for three years. Finally the sun came back out around 4 pm and it was time to pay homage to the old SAL station. The DOT is going to move the station across the diamond, rotate it 90 degrees and plop it down on the other side! I took several photos from all sorts of angles, making sure I will be able to remember the station in its original place and what its new location looks like now. The construction crews preparing the new location blew a water main while we were there, so we watched from a distance shooting photos and video (not to mention mumbling about the intelligence of the workers) of their attempts to solve the problem.

The sun angle was starting to get low, and we were getting tired. One last memorable train roared around the wye which had another GCFX ghost and CSX C30-7 in the consist; then it died. Back to throwing rocks, we waited in vain until dark. Even without trains, things got very interesting. Because of the rain during the majority of the day, a heavy fog formed on the ground shortly after sunset. It was only about 5 feet deep and fairly isolated. We hit up Burper King, then headed up to the engine terminal hoping the fog would bury the lower parts of the engines, but found that the fog was restricted to a nearby field. I tried a time-lapse exposure of this field using the light from the yard and the dim moonlight. That should be interesting!! All in all, it was a good day. 15 trains total, although only 2 or 3 were in the sun. Even with the rain, you can't beat a day chasing trains with your bro and a friend.

[Slave gorilla editorial: Thanks Corey, that's exactly what we're looking for!]

Well, that'll do it for this month. Unfortunately, Dave's secretary ran away with The Little Engine That Could, so he can't take your dictations over the phone. Please mail your tales to Dave Honan

or send by email (preferably in plain-text format) to David.Honan@Rose-Hulman.edu. Corey & I look forward to your writings!

Turbo, out!



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At the beginning of February, I ventured into Illinois with my new pal Lou to hook up with Chad and railfan the UP for a day. The first UP train we caught was southbound ZYCMX (Yard Center-Chicago to Mexico) approaching the north end of Altamont Siding. UP 4017 and a newer cousin were the power for this Mexico-bound Z train. (Altamont, IL, February 02, 2002)

LoassB- *special edition!*

Conducted by Peter Maurath

How to freeze your layout: as found under a snow mound somewhere near Buffalo by Nick Wilson

Hello all! My name is Nicholas Wilson and I am writing for L.O.A.S.S.B. this month. I plan to start a 4 issue series called "The Four Seasons". This month's theme is winter! In this edition, we will show you how to make cheap snow, make snowmobile tracks, make foot tracks in the snow, make realistic piles of snow plowed by a snowplow, and how to make tracks look realistic in the snow. Well, here goes!

To model cheap snow, all you need is baking soda! Baking soda, as I have found out, is almost identical to the Woodland Scenic's artificial snow. The only difference, however, is that when the "scenic spray (1 part glue to 4 parts water with a couple of drops of detergent added.)" is added, the snow turns yellow after drying. My solution is to soak the snow in this spray and then apply a decently thick top layer of about 1 millimeter or so. Now that you have your snow, time to move on to snow details.

Obviously, you're going to want your city to look inhabited! In order to model foot tracks, simply take a toothpick and make holes in a pattern (left, right, left, right, left...). Now that you have people in your city, you are going to have to make it look like they're having fun in the snow. A modern past time for such is snowmobiles. Snowmobile tracks are easy to make. Simply take a ladder in the modeling scale and press it down into the snow in a repeating pattern (Fig. 1). When finished, take a railroad tie with the stubs connecting the next tie left on and make lines in the snow so that the ladder prints are in between either of the stubs (Fig. 2).

Now, your little people on your layout aren't going to want to drive through all that snow! In that case, your roads need to be plowed. To do so realistically, take a piece of thin cardboard, about 1-inch wide and 1-centimeter tall, and bend it in half the long way. When this is done, you're ready to plow your roads! Simply take the piece of cardboard, holding it at a 45° angle to the outside of the road, and push it along either side to clear all the snow off of the road. Keep in mind to hold it barely above the road since snowplows don't scrape along the bottom of the road. When this is done, soak it in the "scenic spray" while making sure it doesn't run all over the place. After that is done, apply a thin layer of more baking soda on top so you don't have yellow snow lining your streets!

That's all for this edition! Stay tuned next time when we do summer time themes for those of you who aren't a big fan of the white stuff! Thanks for reading and Happy Railroading!

Fig. 1

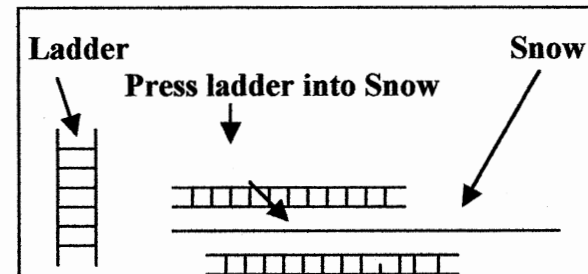
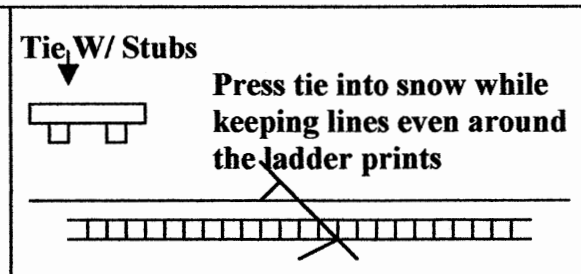


Fig. 2



Introduction to Railroad Operations Vol. I

By Josh Miller

We all love our railroads; they are truly our own little empires. We all love to watch the trains move around the track, many of us enjoy running the trains. But let's take it a step farther. Let's make our railroads function like real railroads, not just toys. This may be a complex idea, and if you are the type who just likes trains to go around in circles, this is not an article for you, although any of these ideas can be incorporated to almost any style layout. Model Railroad operations are a reason for you to invite friends over to see your layout without just "stopping by". Entire social events are planned around operating someone's railroad. It's all quite simple really, once you get the basics down. But the bottom line is, railroad operations creates purpose for the time we spend on our empires! There are several ways to improve your layout for operations, in the following issues; there will be complete explanation of each. We'll start simple, and get more complex. Starting with the basics of switching and car cards, in later issues, we'll move to order of operations, timetables, scheduling, dispatching, and the roles each person operating the railroad takes.

Switching

Switching on your railroad is an all too new concept for all too many model railroaders. The key to any railroad, as you know, is moving cars (which carry cargo and make the railroad money) and delivering them to a place to be loaded and unloaded. Let's face it, railroads are businesses in it for money, a true model railroad should be no different (except for actually making money) model railroads need to operate the same way as real railroads. Switching is the key to this. First of all - turnouts (or switches). It is the opinion of most true model railroad fans that you can never have enough turnouts on your layout. Turnouts originate from a mainline, move into yards (for switching and organizing cars), then tracks find their way to industry loading dock sidings where the actual money making happens (the cars are loaded or unloaded). This concept of moving cars around to destinations all of their own, is perhaps the most basic of ideas to bring to your layout to life, and this is the fundamental idea that you need to understand before moving to our next concept, car cards and waybills.

Car Cards and Waybills

Car cards are a way to visually organize your railroad cars and assure that they are all in the right place. It's also a way to remember where they all are, and what they are doing in each location. A Car card is simply a card, any size you want, most commonly about 3x5 card, with a small folder on the front of it. Each card is addressed to a certain train car.

The folder holds a weigh bill, it is optional how it is made, but most commonly, the weigh bill never actually leaves its car card folder, since it can be double sided. The weigh bill has all the information on where the train car should go, how fast it needs to get there (higher priority for freight cars holding perishable foods), and any other information you need to put on it.

On many layouts, one side of the weigh bill states the destination of the car to a specific industry on the layout (ex: a boxcar could be destined for a lumber yard somewhere on the layout to be loaded). On the other side it says to send the car to some fictional city off of the layout, usually in staging. The weigh bill is flipped after the car reaches a destination. On larger layouts, a car could actually move from town to town being loaded and unloaded (fictionally), and move freight around. For example: a boxcar could start at logging yard where it is loaded with logs, its next destination is a sawmill, elsewhere on the layout. Now the boxcar is loaded (also fictionally

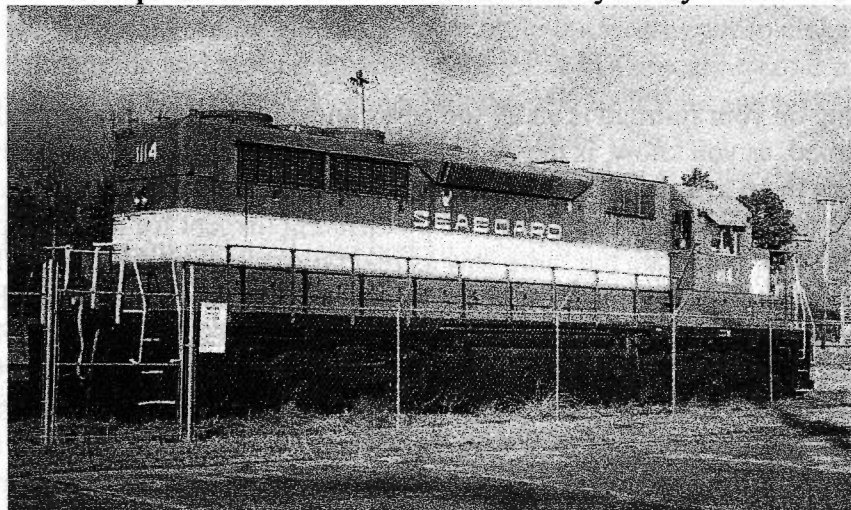
since the doors are closed) with processed lumber, and it is connected to a mainline train till it reaches a small lumber yard, somewhere else on the layout, where it is unloaded and the boxcar's cycle starts all over again. It is simply connected to another train and sent back to the logging camp. This is quite simple and with a lot of cars all going to different places the possibilities are endless. As you can imagine, it is feasible that there could be hundreds of car cards on the layout. Where do you keep them all? To keep from spending too much time away from the trains, build cardholders on the front of the layout. This is easily done with some balsa wood that mounts easily onto the layout. Each cardholder is addressed to an industry, or track where the train cars sit until their next move.

When a switching train arrives at the various industry siding, the engineer (or brakeman (model railroading operating rolls in issues to come)) reaches into the card slot to see what cars they need to pick up, and sorts them into the slot where they are going to be moved to.

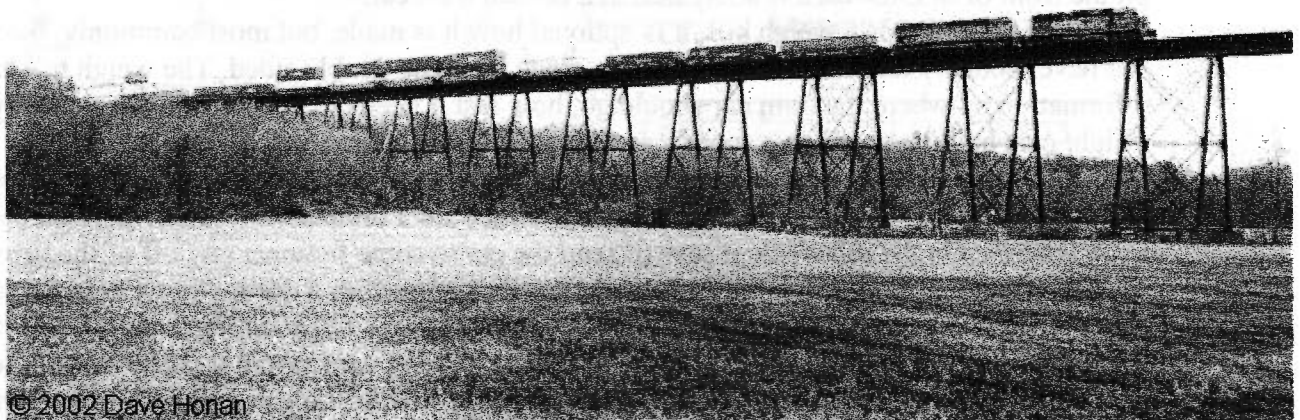
This all may seem a little complicated, and true operations isn't for anyone, but it's a great way to improve your layout's potential greatly. Have fun, remember, that is what its all about!

RAILTALES PHOTOS!

The Seaboard Airline SDP35 on display on the grounds of the NC Transportation Museum / SAL Station. By Corey Vernier



A little while later [see page 13's photo], we caught another southbound Z train crossing the big trestle at Shelbyville, IL. Note the power: an SP GP60 and an ex-SP tunnel motor. (February 02, 2002) – Dave Honan



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