



# THE HOTBOX

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**The Official Publication of the Teen  
Association of Model Railroaders**



# The Hotbox

Editor: Ben Rechel

Contributors: Hopefully you!

## Contributing to The Hotbox :

**We are always in need of new material; your submissions are welcome!**

## Feature Articles:

This is what we're always looking for. From a railfan trip, to your home layout's story, or your own story. Size can range from a paragraph to a few pages. Pictures are always appreciated.

## Columns:

Full of great tips on layout improvement? Got a million reasons EMD is better than Alco? Start a monthly or bi-monthly column.

## Photos and Drawings:

Got a great photo collection you want to show-off? Got a notebook full of railroad cartoons, or layout logos? Send them to the Hotbox staff for consideration.

Send all Submissions or questions to:

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On the cover: Canadian Pacific 4-6-2 # 2317 sits on the turntable at Steamtown National Historic Site in Scanton, PA. Ben Rechel photo.



## FORM 19

From the Editor

Greetings, all. My apologies for the long absence of *The Hotbox*. For those who don't already know, I'm an 18 year old from West Hartford, Connecticut working on a waterfront-themed layout modeling the New England coast in the late 1920s in HO scale. I'm a new member to the TAMR and I hope to ensure *The Hotbox's* continued success as the new editor.

As the winter hits, I find myself trying to steal more time to go down to the basement and work on my layout. But no matter what the season, it's time for model railroading! Go up to the attic, down to the basement, or over to the empty bookshelf-turned layout. Do something, even if it's only for 10 minutes a day. Install a turnout, paint some rusty streaks on a boxcar, or dig out that old tag sale tank car kit you've been meaning to build. Trust me, I'm plenty busy. Hopefully you all have an interest in model trains as a hobby; otherwise you probably wouldn't be reading this.

A hobby is by definition relaxing, so go have some fun! Hope to see you at the winter convention!

Happy Holidays and happy model railroading!

Ben  
Rechel

Tim Vermande photo



# **All aboard for the 2010 TAMR Winter Convention!**

Hosted by the Northeast  
region coinciding with the  
Amherst Railway Society's  
Railroad Hobby Show,  
January 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup>, 2010 in  
Springfield, Massachusetts.

TAMR room/gathering place  
at the Marriot Residence Inn.

For more details, contact  
Newton Vezina at (413) 739-  
1949 or [TAMR19@aol.com](mailto:TAMR19@aol.com)

## **Happy Holidays from the TAMR!**



The Teen Association of Model Railroaders:  
Putting the Future of Model Railroaders on  
the Right Track!



Matt Martin photo (above) ; Ben Rechel photo (below)



# Scratchbuild a Silo for under \$15

By Paul Moses (photo by the author)

Tools used:

NWSL Chopper

Hobby Knife

Hacksaw or tube cutter

Sandpaper

Airbrush or paintbrush

Blue painter's tape

Scissors

Materials used:

4' PVC pipe, 1 1/2" wide

Evergreen styrene: #4528 Metal siding

1/4" foamboard

Walthers Cornerstone sash windows

Walthers blank decal paper, one sheet

Testors Dullcote

Testors plastic cement

Gorilla Glue

Wal-Mart ColorPlace gray automotive primer

ColorSmart brown acrylic paint

Rubbing alcohol, Paint thinner, or Lacquer

Powdered pastel chalks

Krylon Almond #53511 spray paint

Engler Photo



Silos are a significant part of industrial America, because they store large amounts of bulk materials like grain, coal, and plastic pellets. Silos can be found at grain elevators, ethanol plants, food manufacturing factories, power plants, and almost any other industry. They can be concrete or made from modular corrugated steel, though concrete construction is most common. An industry can have anywhere from a single silo to more than 50. Best of all, silos are served predominantly by railroads.

In the southern and western regions of the United States, grain silos are the most common type. Many towns in the southwest



have at least one grain elevator, so a concrete silo would fit almost any locale, from the 1940's to the present.

There are numerous silo and grain elevator kits available to the modeler today. However, because of the injection molding process and the fact that styrene is so thin, all of these kits share a seemingly unavoidable flaw: two visible seams run the vertical length of the assembled silo, unlike the prototype. However, one can create a seamless silo by using a common, inexpensive builder's supply: PVC pipe.

I scratchbuilt a string of four grain storage silos for a flour mill on my HO scale model railroad. I used PVC pipe, strip styrene and foam board for the basic construction of the model.

The space the flour mill occupied on my layout has little room for a silo - I took measurements and determined that the four silos would have to be about a foot high and 2" wide. I went to my local hardware store and purchased two 2' lengths of PVC pipe. PVC pipe is a great choice for modeling silos because it is produced in one piece, and therefore doesn't have the aforementioned seams. If you're making a significantly larger silo, it would be less expensive to purchase 10' lengths of the pipe. For modelers modeling in a scale other than HO, PVC pipe is offered in 1" to 4" wide widths, so you should be able to find the right diameter for your project. Keep in mind that the width measured is the inside diameter, not the outside.

I cut the pipe I purchased into 1' increments with a fine tooth hacksaw, although you could also use a tube cutter. Cutting the thick pipe sounds much harder than it actually is, and making the two cuts in the PVC pipe took less than five minutes. I discovered that it's easier to mark off your measurements on the pipe by wrapping blue painter's tape around the circumference of

the pipe, instead of making a mark with a permanent marker.

Now that you've cut the silos into their proper length, it's time to add a roof to the silos. I used 1/4 " foamboard to create the roof because I had it on hand, although you could easily use flat styrene. I traced the outline of the PVC pipe onto a scrap of foamboard, and then cut it out with a sharp hobby knife and scissors. I then glued each roof to its silo with Gorilla Glue. [In the editor's opinion, Gorilla Glue must be used extremely carefully in model railroad projects-it has a tendency to foam and expand as it cures-*Ed.*] Remember to follow the instructions on the bottle and wet one of the bonds before you tightly clamp it. Do this for all the silos you're creating. After adding the roofs to the silos, I glued them to a base, made out of a piece of foamboard, in the configuration I needed.

Once you've made the main silo structure, it's time to paint it a concrete color. Be sure to remove the manufacturer's lettering so it won't show through. You can use paint thinner, rubbing alcohol, or lacquer, wiped on with a soft cloth. After removing the lettering, spray the entire concrete silo model with flat concrete-colored spray paint, in this case Krylon #53511 Almond, although you could substitute another similar variety of spray paint.

Andy Inserra photo



Now that the main silos are complete, the model will need a headhouse, which is the shed on the roof that spans the length of the combined silos. I chose to portray a headhouse made out of metal siding, which is fairly common for grain silos. I cut the pieces out of Evergreen #4528 0.8 x 0.4" metal siding styrene using the score-and-snap method. For shorter cuts, I used my handy NorthWest ShortLine Chopper II, a tool that seems to be useful for almost any kitbashing or scratchbuilding task. I chose to cut space for two windows on one of the long walls with a hobby knife. After gluing together the walls and roof to the headhouse, I sprayed the headhouse with gray automotive primer spray paint.

After the headhouse had been painted, I installed Walthers Cornerstone sash windows, which I had on hand, leftover from a kitbashing project. You could also use any separately available sash window casting. I had previously painted the window frames brown, to match the color of the flour mill's window frames.

Once the paint had dried on both the concrete silo and the metal headhouse, I glued the two together. I lettered the back wall of the headhouse for "Midas Flour" in red lettering I printed onto decal paper off my home computer, and weathered both the silo and the headhouse. The silo was weathered with various colors of powdered pastel chalk, while the headhouse was drybrushed with rust-colored paint. After the completed silo structure had been weathered and secured with a coat of Testors Dullcote, I installed railings on the outermost silos.

Silos are common structures that can be found in many industries. They generate a lot of railroad traffic, and are therefore worth modeling. Modeling a silo using PVC pipe and strip styrene is not only easy, but inexpensive, as I spent less than \$15 for materials to build this silo. By simply

varying the width of the PVC pipe used, a similar silo can be built in any scale from N to G. -Paul Moses, Fort Worth, TX

## Railfan Rantings

### **#1. If you could operate any great model railroad, past or present, what would it be?**

**Chris Burchett, Charleston, WV:** "Hands down, this would have to be the classic and iconic Virginia & Ohio, created by Allen McClelland. I never got to operate or personally see it, but the pictures and articles alone were enough for to see it. If memory serves correctly, attendees to the 1994 TAMR National Convention did get to do so though."

**Sawyer Berry, Aiken, SC:** "No doubt in my mind, the Colorado Midland. Where other RRs went narrow gauge, the Midland was crazy enough to use standard gauge. Breathtaking scenes, great locomotives, and STEAM!!!!!"

**Jeffrey Andeski, Loveland, CO:** "I would love to see the The Great Train Story exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. That layout has to be one of the coolest ever. Although it's a pubic layout, it's still one of the best layouts around today. I could have said several other past and present layouts but I couldn't come to a definite decision on one."

### **#2. Which state do you think has the best railfanning?**

**Chris Burchett, Charleston, WV:** "This has no bias whatsoever, but I'd have to give my number one vote to the great state of West Virginia. Mountain railroading at its finest, some of the best eateries along the roads, the friendliest folks this side of

Mississippi, and sweet iced tea. Add in the numerous curves, tunnels, high speed mainlines (70 mph isn't just for the flat lands), and of course the mountainous backdrop, it's hard to beat. The South without being too far south. Without a doubt, the Mountain State, which I call home, is ruled by one ruler alone: King Coal. Not many hotshot intermodals (unless you're along the N&W's Pokey); the money here is in black diamonds. I should also mention the three words that might just push West Virginia over the top: Tudor's Biscuit World."

**Sawyer Berry, Aiken, SC:** "It'd be a tie between Colorado (beautiful scenery and the narrow gauge museums) and Pennsylvania (Horseshoe curve and the mountains)."

**Jeffrey Andeski, Loveland, CO:** "There is only one answer to this question: Colorado. This state has 3 active narrow gauge railroads with steam running daily on all of them during the summer months. It also has a standard gauge tourist rr that operates steam almost daily also. Where else can you go and railfan like that? For modern day railfanning there is the Joint Line south of Denver. To the west is the Moffat Sub. A really cool railfanning area was Tennessee pass before UP shut it down over a decade ago. But by far, the best railfanning state, and you can't disagree, is Colorado."

**Charles Warczinsky, Sandusky, MI:**  
"Indiana. Between the lines radiating throughout the northwest corner of the state from Chicago to various other locales, and the various shortlines/regionals scattered throughout the state, you can find just about every kind of railroading...kind of. There are hills in the south part of the state (along with the requisite coal mines producing those black diamonds)

and fields as far as the eye can see in the north (which means lots of covered hoppers). Not into unit coal or grain trains? They say just about everything goes through Chicago and it's hard to go anywhere east of Chicago without spending time in Indiana, which translates into lots of mixed freight and intermodal traffic."



Tim Vermande photo

#### **An important note from the Board of Directors:**

**To reduce postage costs to the organization, we are switching to an online version of *The Hotbox*. If you would like to receive this newsletter via postal mail, please contact the editor. Thank you.**

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. Reprinting of the Hotbox is prohibited without the express written consent of the Teen Association of Model Railroaders.

Membership to the TAMR includes an eleven month subscription to the Hotbox, the annual directory of members, quarterly regional newsletters and an election to participate in all TAMR events. The available membership categories are as follows: Regular (under 21)-\$15, Associate (21 and over)-\$20, International (outside US)-\$18, and Iron Horse-\$25+

To become a part of the TAMR, or to renew your membership, contact:

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