



# THE HOTBOX

**Issue No. 444**

**December 2011**

The Official Publication of the Teen Association of Model Railroaders

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## **2011 Election Results Inside!**



At sunset on April 14, 2009, a westbound CSX autorack train speeds into Churchville, New York with an antique SD-40-2 leading a GEVO. Courtesy Charlie Wood of Churchville.

**TAMR Membership Dues-**

**Regular: \$15 Outside the United States: \$18/ Associate: over the age of 21: \$20/ Iron Horse: Extra Contribution: \$25+**



**Contributions:** Any material that you wish to contribute is welcomed. If you have a million reasons Alco is better than EMD (and it is!), start a monthly column. Photos and drawings just waiting to be shown to the world are very welcome here as well!

I can accept material submitted on DVD, CD, USB drive, Memory Stick, xD, Smart Media, Compact Flash, SD/MMC or paper copy. I can no longer accept floppy disks.

To see your work published, send all material to:  
Daniel Fiala

Questions? Ring up the Editor at

As I said last time, I would have more on the healthy benefits of the railfan hobby. This time we're in Superior, WI on the waterfront. Your Editor is staked out on the hillside waiting for the BNSF local. There it appears, click goes the camera, and off I go in hot pursuit. One fellow I met on the trail just gave me a quizzical expression, as I roar full bore past him on my mission. Oh, I got to the spot all right, well in front of the train which was moving at yard speed. Just to show, that if there's a train to see, jogging is all worth while!

A very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all,

*The Editor*



## Hotbox News



### ATTENTION! All memberships expired December 31, 2011

We have adopted a new system wherein memberships will run from January 1<sup>st</sup> - December 31<sup>st</sup>. Forms are enclosed in this issue of the *Hotbox*. It is requested that all information be filled in on the forms, especially the telephone number and your house address or P.O. Box number, so we can easily contact you if necessary and that all TAMR publications will be sent by postal mail. Complimentary and lifetime memberships are not be affected.

**In this new system**, it is required that you have your renewal forms with the Treasurer **no later than January 7, 2012**. The membership forms go to the Treasurer, and he sends the information to me as regards who is an active member or not. This is done in order to prevent waste of TAMR money, as the *Hotbox* can be sent only to those who paid their yearly dues.

**ATTENTION! All members!** If you are going to move or have a change of address, please contact the Editor by postal mail or telephone. We've had three returns of mailings marked "Return to sender: unable to forward" or "No mail receptacle." I cannot send these newsletters to addresses that are not active. If you don't update your information in my file, I cannot insure prompt reception of the TAMR's publications. Thank you for your cooperation.

**The TAMR is looking for a new secretary.** If you are interested, contact Tim Vermande at: [kd5urs@gmail.com](mailto:kd5urs@gmail.com).

President-	Radisson Mc Guire - 5 votes Sawyer Berry - 1 vote
Vice-President -	Josh Cohn - 1 vote
Central Region Representative-	Daniel J. Fiala - 1 vote
Northeastern Region Representative-	Jamie St. Onge - 2 votes
Southern Region Representative-	Radisson Mc Guire - 1 vote
Western Region Representative-	Jeff Andreski - 1 vote Benjamin Hawken - 0 votes
International Region Representative-	No one running. - 0 votes

Congratulations to all you winners out there! Just to make note of it, anyone may decline their position, and the runner-up will take office.

**President - Radisson McGuire**

**Vice President - Josh Cohn**

**Central Region Representative - Daniel Fiala**

**Northeastern Region Representative - Jamie St. Onge**

**Southern Region Representative - Radisson McGuire**

**Western Region Representative - Jeff Andreski**

**International Region Representative - Open**

### Election Results November 2011 Election

Central Region - 1 Votes - 1% reporting ☹

Northeastern Region - 2 Votes - 2% reporting ☹

Southern Region - 2 Votes - 2% reporting ☹

Western Region - 1 Votes - 1% reporting ☹

International Region - 0 Votes - 0% reporting ☹

# *The Hotbox Photo Gallery*

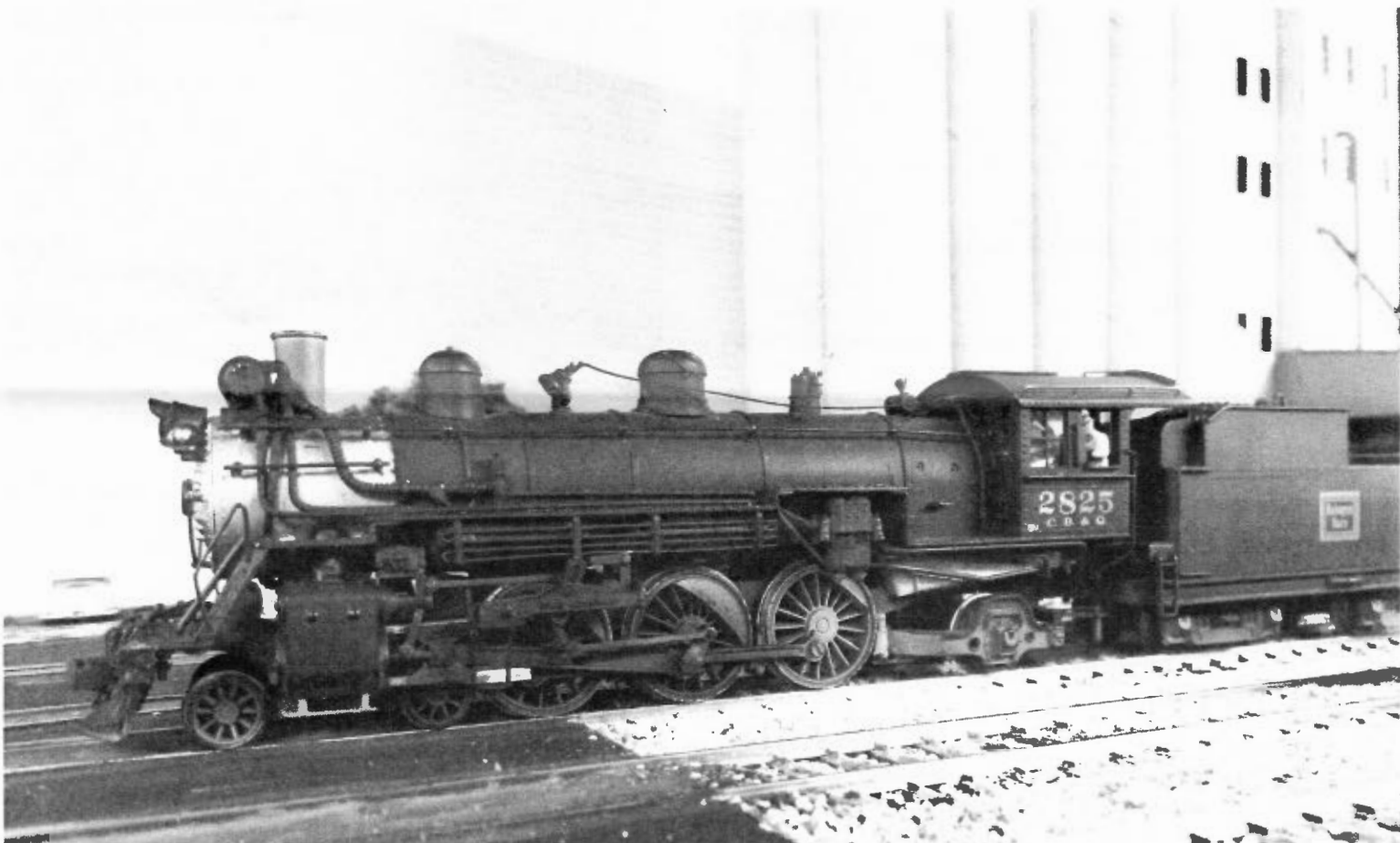


Canadian National 5672, a SD75I, (class GF-643a on the CN), passing under Mason St., Sunday, August 14, 2011.

## *The Railroad Pun of the month.*

The Chicago & Alton, dating from 1847, the road which accommodated George Pullman's first sleeping car and diner and which in 1946 was acquired by the Gulf Mobile & Ohio, was known humorously as The Carry-All. That's all for this month, tune in next time for more laughs!

CB&Q Pacific 2825 "rods down" in Norwood Yard, April, 1944. The model is brass with lighted firebox. Thanks to Andy Breaker for allowing me to photograph this fine model on my layout.



## *The Jean Association of Model Railroaders - Established 1964*

The TAMR crew are as follows: President - Radisson McGuire; Vice President - Josh Cohn; Treasurer - Will Ebbert; Editor & Central Region Rep. - Daniel Fiala; Pivot Pin - Tim Vermande; Northeastern Region Rep. - Jamie St. Onge; Southern Region Rep. - Radisson McGuire; Western Region Rep. & Promotional Director - Jeff Andreski; International Region Representative - Open.





## This month: Introducing Moringham Junction, a layout you can build

I intentionally made this layout compact 38"x43" for ease of transport, so that anyone can easily move it in the trunk of an auto. One may ask, why such an odd measurement? Well, that is the usable trunk space in a 1998 through the year 2002 Buick LeSabre which my parents own. Also, a 18" radius curve requires 36" for a complete circle, but 38" gives you a bit of space on the edge for scenery, while 43" gives space on the ends for more scenery. Assemble the side and end rails to form a box. The end rails should fit inside the side members to form a rectangle 38" x 43". Then screw on the plywood top. Next assemble the control panel, aligning the components so they form an 8" x 8" square and attach the top to that. After that, clamp the panel to the main layout and drill two holes through the rails. Then, run the bolts through, with one washer at the head, and the threads pointing at you, slide on another washer, and twist on the wing nuts. Glue on your 2" foam with foam safe adhesive, lay your roadbed, and carve to your heart's desire. Just don't forget to leave room for the village of Moringham! Next time, I will give the instructions on scenery, track and structures.

### Materials List

- 3) 8' 1"x3"
- 4) 8' 1"x2"
- 2) 8' 2"x2" (this allows for legs up to 48" tall)
- 1) 4'x4' sheet 1/4" plywood
- 1) 36"x48" sheet of wainscot paneling
- 1) 1 package of no. 6 x 1 5/8" screws
- 1) 4'x8' sheet of 2" insulation foam (blue or pink board)

Cut this lumber to the following dimensions:

### For the main layout:

The 1"x3" lumber:

- 2) 43" side rails
- 2) 36 1/2" end rails
- 1) 38"x43" sheet of plywood

### For the leg assemblies:

The 1"x2" lumber:

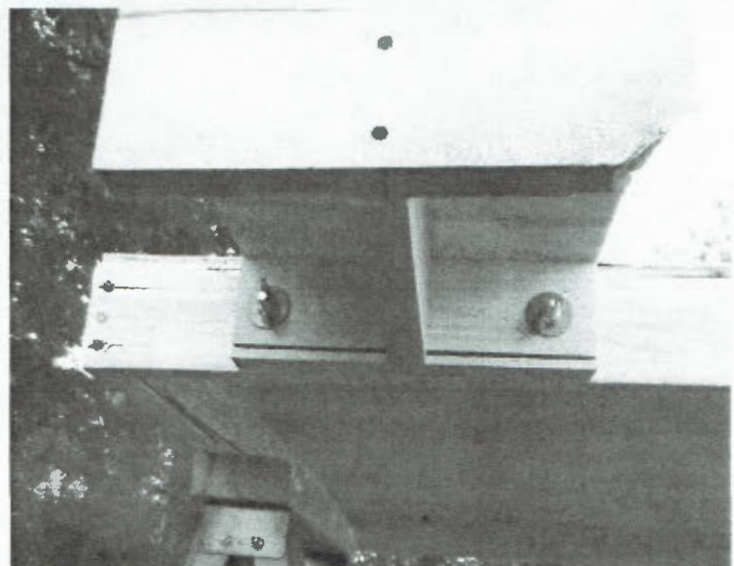
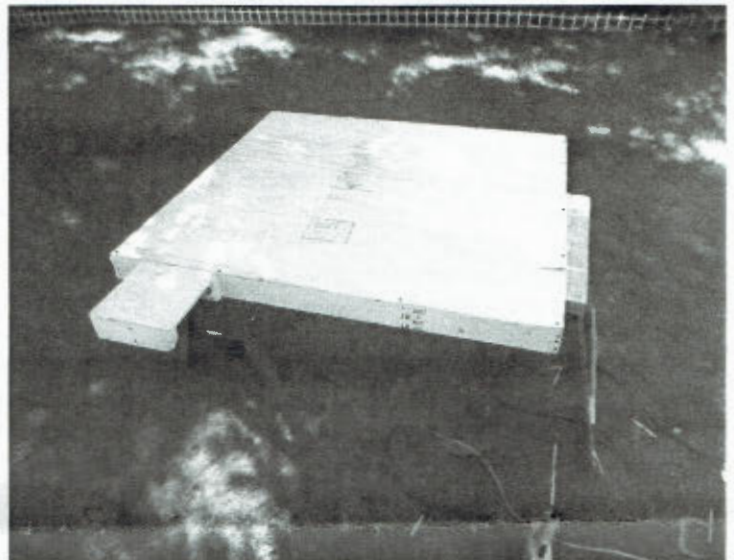
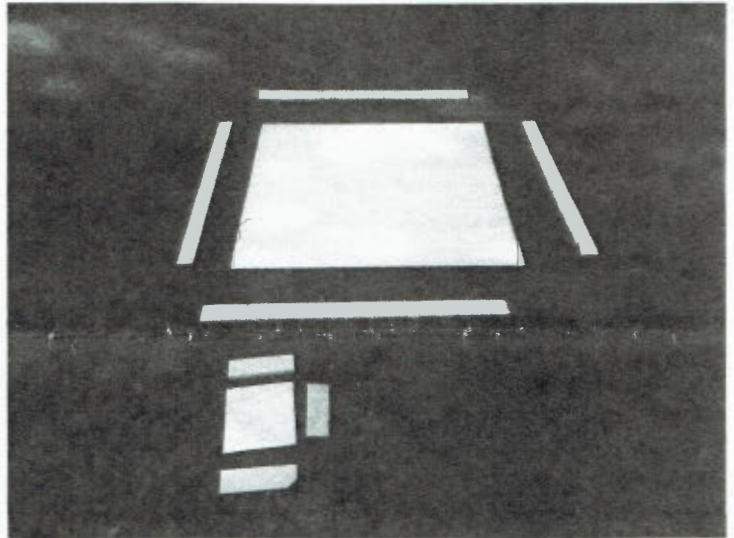
- 4) 36 1/2" end stringers

The 2"x2" lumber:

- 4) 36" legs (30" if you are going to sit by the layout like a desk.)

### Control Panel:

- 2) 8" end rails
- 1) 6 1/2" spine
- 1) 8"x8" piece 1/4" plywood (cut-off from your scrap)
- 2) 2" bolts with 2 washers and 2 wing-nuts each



Top Right: the lumber all cut and ready for assembly.

Middle Right: The assembled bench work.

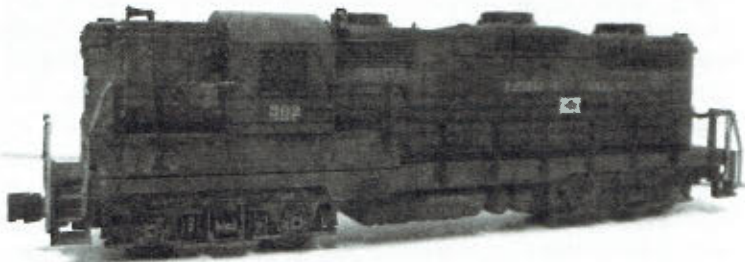
Bottom Right: Close up of the control panel.



# Lehigh Valley GP18

By: Steven Goehring

Sometimes, I'm amazed at how fast things can happen on a model railroad. I notice a locomotive in the hobby shop, buy it, change couplers, detail-paint it, weather it, and put it into service, all in under 24 hours. I guess some of the more smug ones among you could call it love at first sight, but I know it by its road number- 302. 302 is a Lehigh Valley Railroad GP18, bought by the LVRR in 1960, along with 3 sister locomotives. 302 was the class unit, since the numbers 300 and 301 were already taken by GP9s. 302 remained mostly unchanged with the LV until the Conrail takeover, wearing a smart looking Cornell red with black stripes scheme. The Life-Like model of the GP18 in N scale was introduced in 1994, and by looking at its mechanism, you wouldn't think it was anything special. Most Life-Likes of the time had plastic chassis, open-frame motors, single light bulbs, and wires for electrical pickup, and the GP18 was no different. But somehow, the mechanism came together beautifully. It outperforms all previous plastic-frame locomotives by far, and I swear it's smooth enough to trick you into thinking it has flywheels on it. The best part: the price tag. The original version carries a list price of \$60 today, and you'll easily find it cheaper at hobby stores or train shows. So I picked one up at work (Trains N' Lanes Hobbies) for a great price. (If I remember correctly, I was talking to Mark MacDougall and his dad at the shop and I might have mentioned that the GP18s were nagging me...) I checked out my options and had to decide between the \$100 listed new GP18, with metal mechanism and flywheels, and the \$60 listed older version described above. Well, you already know which one I chose;



anyway, I liked the black stripe scheme better than the yellow on the updated version. Since it had the obsolete Rapido coupler on it, I had to find a simple solution for running it with knuckle-equipped cars. I had the correct Micro-Trains coupler kit on order that would provide a permanent body-mounted coupler solution, but for the time being, I settled for Bachmann knuckle couplers. Some people may not even know that Bachmann has knuckle couplers in N scale. They introduced a simple 1-piece "dummy" knuckle coupler on their N&W J-class 4-8-4, and now it's appearing on B23-7s, H-16s, and freight cars. I got an LV covered hopper with the new couplers, and by trimming a bit of plastic to make them fit in the GP18's truck-mount coupler pocket, I had the engine ready to work right away. And those couplers sure did work. They are the best dummy coupler in all of N scale, working nicely with Micro-Trains and Accumate couplers. With the couplers installed, I started to weather the loco to match a color picture that I have of the 302 itself. I added grease spots and exhaust stains with black, then gave it a light fading/dusting with a sandy tan color applied very sparingly. With that done, I added an often-forgotten detail: safety rail painting. I have the ladder handrails a quick coating with a yellow paint pen, then brushed off some paint to darken the color and give it a consistent "weathered" look. I finished my GP18 project breaking in the locomotive by applying gear grease, then running it for 10 minutes in each direction. After applying a second very light grease job, I turned the locomotive

around and ran it in forward for another 10 then reverse for one last 10-minute stretch. So, aside from building on the excitement of a great-running, beautiful looking new diesel, what's the point of me writing this? It's really a sample/inspiration for all of you. Many of you have model railroads, so why not review one of your favorite locomotives? You can tell interesting stories about the prototype, you can discuss the work that went into making the model, or you can talk through your process of customizing it. I did all of the above, and it was a lot of fun. So why couldn't you?●



Regarding what I've heard, I have to point out that there is no reason the Union Pacific, or any other American railroad for that matter, should not apply the Flag of the United States to the flanks of its locomotives. In the case of the Union Pacific, they are the oldest surviving American railroad company and as such, I believe that should allow some pride and patriotism to flow. The American banner should be proudly displayed, even if it is on a locomotive. If we start saying that this should not be, would that not lead to saying that this banner should not be flown from a flagpole because it is not appropriate?

On another front, the "Shield" emblem on the front of all Union Pacific locomotives is a representation of the American Flag. This just goes to show that the Union Pacific was very patriotic long before September 11, 2001. This emblem is meant to show that this railroad is to join the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans with a ribbon of steel over which the commerce and people of this land flows. If this emblem has such representation, it simply reflects what the American Flag does for the people of this Nation: it binds all together "From Sea to shining Sea."

File Photo; Daniel Fiala

On July 10, 2011 William D. Middleton passed away at his home in Livonia, New York, at the age of 83. He was the co-author or author of twenty-three railroad books, more than eighty features in *Trains Magazine* and twenty covers on the same publication. His name appeared hundreds of times in the photo credits of *Trains*. - Courtesy *Classic Trains Magazine*.





# The TAMR Extra Board

## Showcasing the work of our members

### Part III of Charles Warczinsky's series: Elkhart, Indiana

Home to Norfolk Southern's massive Elkhart Yard, Elkhart has lots to offer railfans. Following the NS mainline east from South Bend, one can see most of the action from Indiana State Route 933. SR 933 is also probably the best way to get a glimpse of the action within the yard as well. SR 933 actually forms the yard's north border. Although no tracks cross 933, two mainlines run directly parallel to 933 until 933 veers away as it enters downtown Elkhart. In addition to an extremely wide shoulder on the south edge of 933, there are several other spots at which one can quickly pull off the road to get quick photos of some of the rare (or not so rare) power on the through trains, such as the many blue Conrail units which still pass through Elkhart on a regular basis. One specific location is a dirt lot across the road from the fuel pads, just west of the point at which 933 veers away from the tracks to enter the city. Following 933 on into the city, one passes through several traffic lights enroute to the center of the city. The downtown Elkhart area is nice enough, with several (occupied) multi-story buildings lining Main Street. Taking a right onto Main, and passing through more traffic lights, one passes the post office, and comes to a small fork in the road. By taking a right at the fork, and entering the parking lot on the south side of the road, you will wind up in the parking lot of the Elkhart Depot. The depot is an old building, slowly deteriorating due to lack of funds and a not-yet-begun restoration by the City of Elkhart, which also owns the building. In fairly recent times, the building housed the Amtrak station for the Elkhart stop, but not much else. Both the east and west ends of the depot building have parking spaces, although some is allotted to overnight Amtrak guests. The depot's platform affords a very nice view of trains passing into and out of Elkhart yard, although one needs to be careful as the brickwork is less than 100 percent complete these days. Just across the tracks from the Elkhart depot is one of Elkhart's finest museums. The National New York Central Railroad Museum is housed in the former NYC RR freight house. The museum has many interesting displays, but some of the highlights include the restored E8 locomotive (complete with accessible cab, from which passing trains can be viewed), and the Penn Central GG1 on the property.

Elsewhere in Elkhart, shortline, Elkhart & Western's locomotives can be viewed relatively easily. The E&W "terminal" consists of three tracks behind a shopping plaza just north of downtown. Although a construction company's office building shelters the locomotive storage area from a nearby parking lot, the two GP units can typically be seen quite well from other parts of the lot. One of the nicest things about Elkhart (from a railfan perspective, anyway), is the steady stream of trains in and out of town. Elkhart lacks quiet zones (at least, the last time I checked there were none), so if you're at either the depot or the museum, you can hear trains coming and going. Although it's often times hard to tell (at first) if the train you hear is coming or going, the audible whistle signals add a nice touch to the railfan experience. Just outside of the yard, to the east (within a couple miles) is a location (I believe it's called Hadley) where the outbound tracks leading the way east of the yard are often used to hold trains waiting to get into the yard. On a not-so-nice day a couple months ago, I caught three westbound NS trains parked here, all viewable from a nearby parking lot, and all with NS wide cab

locomotives leading. The extra advantage to the location is the 7-11 behind which the locomotives are parked. One extra benefit to railfanning in Elkhart is an agreement with CP Rail in which CP's trains from Canada to Chicago cross the Michigan-Ontario (Canada) border in Detroit, and hop on NS rails to Chicago, passing through Elkhart. These trains used to cross Michigan on CSX, and the switch resulted in several additional daily trains through Elkhart.

### Chesterton/Porter/Wellsboro, Indiana

South Bend is within 100 miles of downtown Chicago, Illinois. Although the word 'Chicago' brings a lot of different things to mind for many people, for most North American railfans, "Chicago" means lots of trains (and lots of congestion). Although Chicago has, among other things, a significant amount of heavy industry, much of that heavy industry is not in Chicago at all, but rather in such locations as East Chicago, Hammond and Gary, all of which are not in Illinois, but rather extreme northwest Indiana. The steel mills, refinery and other large industries are not only railroad customers, but very heavy users of rail transportation. Unfortunately, just as a strong railroad presence in an area has a tendency to drive down property value; heavy industry has an even stronger tendency to drive down surrounding property values. For this reason railfanning in certain areas east of Chicago is not something I'd recommend. The danger in getting into certain areas is not worth what you might catch, especially if you are not familiar with the areas you're getting into. Additionally, many of the largest railroad customers have heavily secured and guarded facilities which are not welcoming to railfans. Closer to South Bend and in some of the nicer Chicago suburbs are several safer locations to watch trains in, although common sense is required in these locations as well.



Elkhart & Western power parked at the E&W terminal in Elkhart, Indiana.





BNSF 7640 westbound at Elkhart, Indiana.



This photo was taken from the grounds of the National New York Central Museum and features Norfolk Southern #9004.

## THE TOP SEVEN

By special permission of Peter Maurath, here's the return of a *Hotbox* classic.

### *Top Seven rejected Model Trainsets*

#7 The Amtrak Lakeshore Limited Set (never delivered to stores in time).

#6 BNSF Freight Hauler Set (cancelled due to lawsuit from Nike Trainset people).

#5 Union Pacific Challenger Set (overpriced due to trademark agreements).

#4 U.S. Army Combat, C4 included.

#3 ZZ gauge train set, microscope included (for those REALLY limited space).

#2 Penn Central Roach Coach Express Set (complete with missing parts).

*And the number one rejected Model Trainset...*

#1 The rail-trail, trackless, equipment less train set, cyclists included.



Norfolk Southern lineup at Hadley. Three NS trains wait to get into the Elkhart yard, early March 2007. All photographs by Charles Warczinsky.

## There's a prototype for everything...

Hmm... looks like another one of those pesky coupling accidents. I think the railways are going to have to adopt Kadee's instead of using those 'knock-offs.'





## KEEPING ON TRACK:

### TIPS FOR LAYING A BETTER RIGHT-OF-WAY

By: BJ Karnavas

Track is the defining part of a model railroad, the unifying feature that distinguishes it from a dead diorama with some models on it. If laid well, it will provide years of happy operation and work effortlessly. It takes work to do badly, but care shows. Nowadays, so much is done for you it seems almost as if the track lays itself . . . almost, but not quite.

If you are using one-piece track with roadbed molded on (which I sometimes wish I used) then just put it down according to plan. Sectional track and flex track are trickier. Step one is a detailed scale plan, allowing for easements on curves for flex track and precisely plotting sectional track. Working carefully from the plan, **lay your roadbed so that the track sits neatly centered on top.** There's nothing I hate more than track off-center on the roadbed, but a good plan and experience will eliminate it right away.

While planning and laying, be very mindful of the "grade" of your track - that is, its slope. Grades are measured by the number of feet risen in a hundred feet, and are shown as a percent. Keep in mind that small scale trains are **much** weaker on grades than real life locomotives (my calculator says that a locomotive 1/160th of the original in length is over *four million* times lighter if it is scale!). Even real railroads take great pains to keep their track as flat as possible. I would suggest a gentle grade for N scale trains of 1%, a steep one of 3%, and being very careful and testing anything steeper than that with your own locomotives. **When in doubt, smooth it out** some, and your trains will thank you. Turnout is another name for a switch, used to differentiate the track-piece from, say, a light switch. Whatever you call them, turnouts are nasty biters sometimes, especially in N scale. Luckily there are some things you can do to make them run better. File the points (moving rails) of the turnout if they are blunt. Clean turnouts extra-thoroughly because trains love to stall there. But the most effective thing you can do is this: not select a brand of turnout simply because it is the cheapest (like I did)! \$12 vs. \$30 may seem like a lot, but the difference is between fun and frustration. Cheap, cruddy turnouts will curse your operations forever, while good ones work so well you forget they are there sometimes. Trust me, if you use just one tip from this article, **buy good turnouts!** It might be the best deal in the entire hobby.

In summary, your trains will run better on carefully laid track that is high-quality and relatively flat. I only have a few paragraphs to discuss a deep topic; I can't possibly cover it all here. I would recommend reading some of the many brilliant books on the subject that can be easily found at your local library or bookstore. But while there is a lot you can learn from reading about model track, ultimately you just have bite the bullet, get messy, and just lay it. Good luck, and have fun!



## A tip from Jeff Andreski...

"Cattle yard: When you have cows that need painting and there is no paint to be had, you have to improvise with liquid paper and a Sharpie."



Rio Grande Southern Galloping Goose rail bus at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, Colorado. Jeff Andreski, who is a volunteer at the Museum, is the photographer.



Ex-Defense Logistics Agency/ US Army Fairbanks-Morse switcher shunts in Ogden, Utah, June, 2009. Wilfred A. Roberge, photo.

**Thank you for tuning into this month's broadcast and see you next time!**