



an estimated

# 342

wall posts on the  
TAMR facebook  
group this year  
AS OF DEC 4th

think we can make 400 by New Years?

December 2012

# HOTBOX



The Official Publication of the Teen  
Association of Model Railroaders

Amtrak AEM-7 941 in New Haven, CT by Rigel Janette



## FEATURING

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### Working on the Railroad

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## A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Hotbox Readers -

So far, it has been a pretty busy winter! Here in the Northeast, we've already experienced our fair share of storms. There has not been so much going on otherwise, though. I don't have so much to say, really, so with that - I'd like to leave you with the most of a seasons greetings! Whichever holiday you celebrate - enjoy it! Have a good time with your friends and family. Eat a lot of good food. Maybe even get some rest. It's been a long year, and you deserve to spend some good quality time just chillaxing on a station platform and watching the trains go by.

Happy Holidays! (Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Happy Kwanza, etc. etc.)

- Rigel Janette, Editor

## CONTRIBUTING TO THE HOTBOX:

The Hotbox is always in need for new material; your contributions are what make the magazine great! Any submitted articles, photos, or videos are welcome, and greatly appreciated!

The Hotbox is made up of anything that TAMR members wish to share. This can range from a railfan trip, to your home layout's story! Sizes can range from a paragraph, to a feature story!

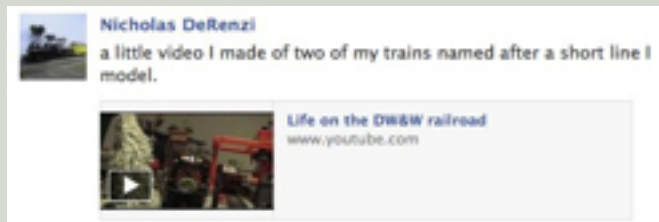
Do you have any ideas or tips on layout improvements? Got a million reasons why EMD is better than Alco? Sounds like you need to write a monthly or bi-monthly column for the Hotbox!

Got a great photo collection that you want to show off? Got a notebook full of railroad cartoons, or layout logos? Get them published in the Hotbox today!

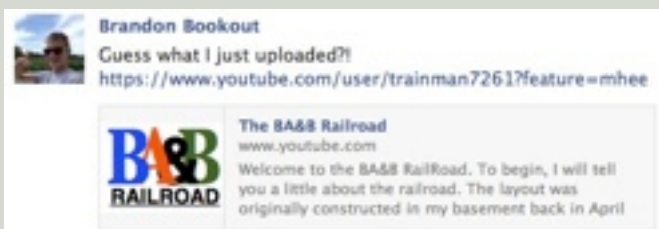
Catch any Heritage units lately? Got a video on YouTube of your newest ballast set up, or maybe some highlights from your latest railfanning adventure? Send a link!

SUBMISSIONS CAN BE SENT TO [TAMRHOTBOX@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TAMRHOTBOX@GMAIL.COM)





<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83hNG-ohmz8&feature=share>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/trainman7261?feature=mhee>



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnXJc2rjZU&feature=plcp>



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvyIrsZ7Zhs&feature=youtu.be>



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzXM4WNmuiU>



Last years TAMR North East meet up at the Shore Line Trolley Museum (12/29/11)

## Adding Scenery!

By Lukas

Hello! I am rather excited, because I have finally started to add some scenery to my Mountain/City themed Railroad. First, here is an overall picture (it's rather blurry, so it's just to give you an idea of what this section will look like).



You can see that there will be a small river/stream running through the center, between the two mountainous banks.

The next picture shows a front view of the scenery. The pine-tree-looking trees are Noch pine trees, with a little dark green Woodland Scenics ground foam. To tell you the truth, I was not very impressed with these trees, but I made them work. To layer the ground, I mixed a little blue with a lot of orange paint to make a dark brown base color for the ground. Then, I took the finest real dirt from my yard, and sprinkled it on the wet paint. I then sprayed it with Woodland Scenics diluted matte medium to secure it in place. While the matte medium was wet, I sprinkled on Woodland Scenics "Earth" colored fine ground foam. I then added rocks, deadfalls, and small bushes.

Lastly came the trees. The poplar in the center right is from Faller. The pinkish deciduous tree on the right was made from a plant that grows in my backyard. The small flowers in the bushes were from the same plant.



The next picture depicts the deadfall, flowers, homemade trees, and rocks in the front:

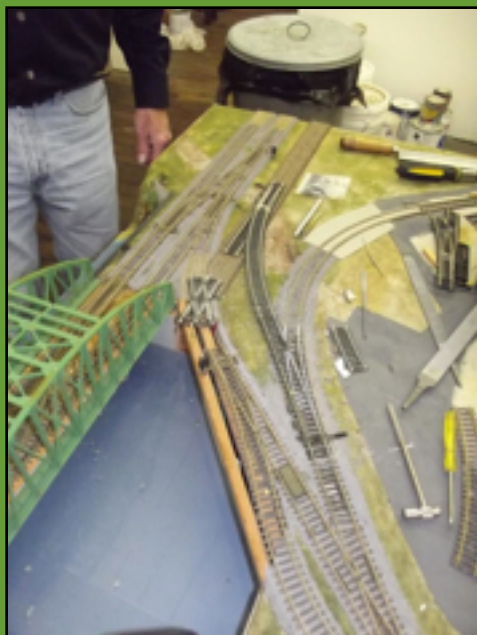




Lastly, I'll show a shot from behind. The deciduous tree in the foreground, along with the other small trees are from Woodland Scenic's "Starting Modeling" kit. I was lucky enough to pick the kit up at a Garage Sale for only \$2:

Thanks for taking a look!

### Wilfred A Roberge's shots of his HO Layout



The rebuilt in progress.

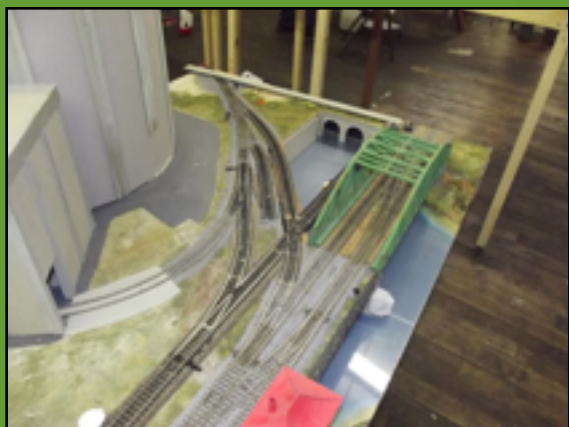
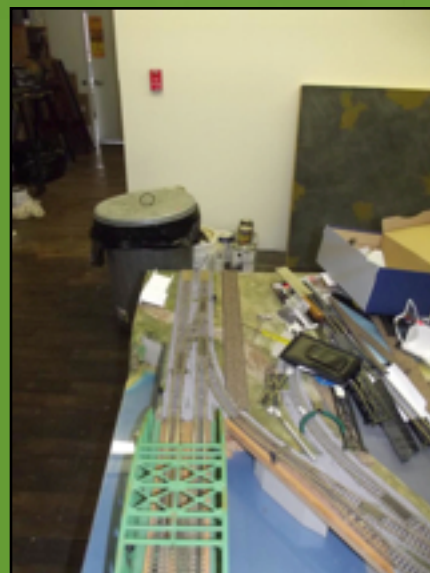


Photo of my HO Scale Module showing "final" Track configuration after adding a third main track and reconfiguring spur to allow access from Track 2 + 3. To allow Track 2 to access spur a crossing of Track three was needed so a 30-Degree Diamond was in order. reconfiguration of the spur also allowed access from the newly laid Track 3. Track 3 needed a bridge to cross the water so I used Atlas Pier Girders spliced and reinforced to carry Track three across. The module will be going to a show in 2 weeks so we'll see how it runs.



Looking down the newly laid Track # 3, over the bridge towards diamond.



The Showing the "as built" spur before Track 3 was added before we decided how to reconfigure.

# PICTURES



any RDG fans out there? – By Nicholas DeRenzi



An old picture of my HO layout around 1995 in Oakland, Calif. It was kind of big for a home layout. (Ask Omer Joe Bohannon...) It was essentially a big dogbone with one end of it twisted over itself like Tehachapi loop, and then there was a branch (which you see rising in the back) extending to another section.  
– by John Reichel.



Ma & Pa hauls a special holiday excursion passed a crossing blasting it's whistle.  
– By Nicholas DeRenzi



So, I just figured that I should post a picture (an update of sorts) on the bridge I am scratchbuilding. It's a twist from the Zakim Bunker Hill Bridge (much simpler) and I still have a ways to go. I have only just begun weathering (the bridge is going to be "old," if you can count 30–35 years as "old.") and you can see the walkway is stained with "coal dust" that has fallen off of the coal trains that pass through these parts. There is a rust dribble on the top of the pillar, where the steel beams connect with the pillar. I put too much rust color at the base of the beams, so I am going to spread that out. Also, I am going to add "chain link fence" (screen material, which really does look like chain link fence when cut right) to the railings to hide the small beads of glue that bind the poles of the railings to the railings. At first I was going to ballast the bridge, but I'm going to lay planks over the ties in the center to keep the white appearance of the bridge. (though they will be heavily weathered.) Though I am still working on it, and the appearance will continue to improve, I think my first scratchbuilding attempt has been a success.  
– By Lukas



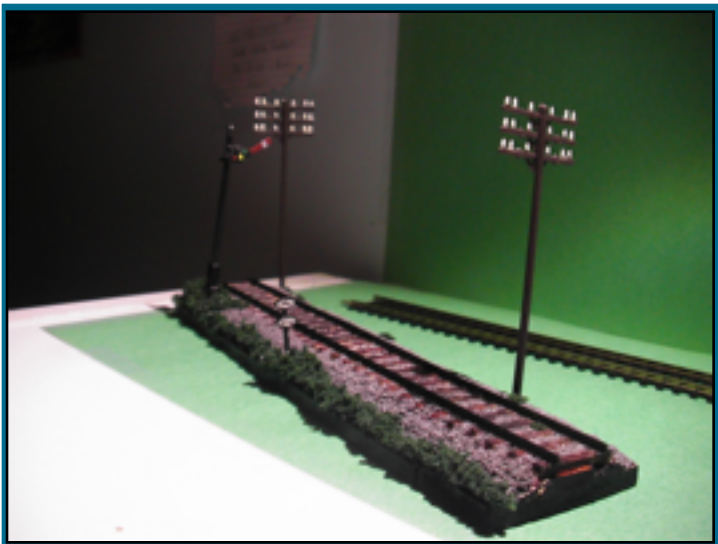
# "Working on the Railroad:

## Tools That Make It Easier"

By William Karnavas

Certain tools can make model railroading more fun. Especially in smaller scales, the correct tools let you make fewer mistakes and do things faster. Its always tempting to blow your money away on rolling stock (I personally always ogle the locomotives on every trip to the hobby shop), but you might take a look around your hobby shop for some of these tools, too, which I wish I knew about when I began modeling.

By far my favorite tool that I have used has been my trusty pair of rail shears. First off, they trim rail instantly. Before, I used a cheap "razor saw" from Atlas to cut track, and the results were messy, even after a minute of frantic hacking, leaving gouges in the rail when the saw skipped off the proper grove.



I would like to submit a photo of my recently built display in Ho-scale. Personally I think it turned out pretty well.  
- By Nicholas DeRenzi

**What do you think?**  
Discuss this on [Facebook](#)

Furthermore, the shears do more than just cut rail. I have used them extensively to cut Masonite and very thin wood, open those annoying plastic blister packs, trim my fingernails, remove plastic kit pieces from their molding, and shorten wires. And that's only the beginning. In summary: Best. Tool. Ever.

After the rail shears, tweezers are my most useful tools. If I modeled in O scale, or G, I suppose I wouldn't need those as much. But I model N -- well, you get the (tiny) picture. Also, I love to make every detail on my layout perfect (granted, at that scale I can only have so much detail anyway; all the more incentive to get it right). But in HO, too, you've just got to have something smaller than your fingers to manipulate items with.

I started with just an old pair of cross-locking tweezers I found lying around the house. The cross-locking tweezers press themselves closed unless you squeeze them open; sometimes useful, but often a (crushing) nuisance. Recently I bought a five-piece set of tweezers, which gave me a more balanced assortment of tweezers for different uses. In addition to the cross-locking tweezers, it had some regular tweezers, fine tweezers, bent nose tweezers (great for reaching tight places), and flat-ended tweezers. The latter instrument is excellent for holding little figures when placing them in a scene. I've found uses for each pair of tweezers -- especially when I've gotten splinters from the wood in my layout!

And speaking of fine points, my third favorite tools have to be a couple of fine paintbrushes I happened to buy just a couple weeks before writing this. I am still painting track on my layout, and used to use an old Crayola watercolor-kit brush with large, plastic bristles to do the job. I had to wedge the bushy bristles in between ties when painting, which slowed me down. Finally, on a lark, I bought some slender, fine-tipped, one dollar brushes at the hobby shop, and they sped things up tremendously. I could control where the tip went more easily, and now I'm painting many times faster, speeding up the rails like a runaway locomotive. Plus, I'll probably use these brushes again when I build kits, weather railcars, or paint anything with any detail. And the price... best three dollars I've ever spent on the right tools.

While these three tools aren't the only ones you need to build a layout, they will enhance the experience like a video game power-up, giving you more control over your layout while building. The shears let you cut things quickly and accurately, while good tweezers allow you to place the fine details (like tiny tie ends glued on the outsides of flex-track rail joiners) that can complete a scene. The fine brushes were cheap, but still improved the quality of my paintwork over crude, improvised brushes. If I had to restart from scratch, and choose brand new tools to work with, these three would certainly top the list.

# THE TAMR HOTBOX

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NS 9788 at Arnold St., South Bend, in November. – By Tim Vermande

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Membership forms are available online at [www.tamr.org](http://www.tamr.org)