

Northeast Ntrak, 41 Easy Street, Lowell, MA 01850-1731, Web Site - www.northeastntrak.org

President's Message



The Braintree show was a success. In my opinion we had the best looking layout there. Our next show is on March 27th and 28th at the Shriners Auditorium. Ernie Poole is the coordinator.

There is a project what we will be working on this summer. It will be a video on how to build you first module. The video will be on DVD and sold by the club. We will need volunteers to help build the module. If you have a skill in building we could use your help. The Worlds Greatest Hobby has a video on "Building Your First Layout".

I contacted Jim Fitzgerald and told him of the idea. He said he can give us free publicity in the newsletter and the module manual. I think if we can produce a good video we can raise more money for the club. I am open to all suggestions.

Until next Month, Mark



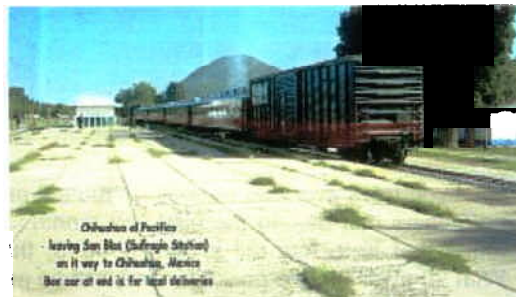
Chihuahua al Pacifico Mexico by Roland Kelley



Just returned from a train trip thru Copper Canyon in Mexico. This is a little about the public train that goes thru the canyon on a daily round trip relieving both passengers and freight. In fact returning for my horse back ride it was stopped at the station unloading the food for the hotel. They also supplied the power to pull the our private train from Sufragio Station to Creel and return. Hope you enjoy some of the pictures I took of the Chihuahua al Pacifico. Will put in pictures of the "Sierra Madre Express" that I rode from Nogales to Creel and return in the future.

The Chihuahua al Pacifico is a daily train between Los Mochis and Chihuahua City, Mexico.

The railroad was completed in 1961, brought world wide attention to this last Mexican frontier. This railroad is one of the engineering wonders of the world with 86 tunnels and 37 bridges along its 406 mile route.



Two other notable features of this railroad include the train looping over itself at El Lazo ("the loop") outside of Creel, and a 180° turn inside solid rock at Temoris. It took approximately 90 years and \$90,000,000 to complete.



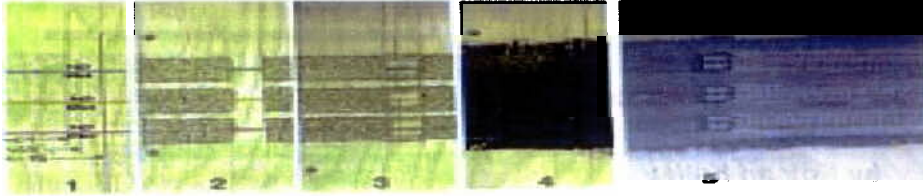
The *Reader's Digest* calls it "the most dramatic train ride in the western hemisphere.

Starting in July 1999, new train service on the Chihuahua al Pacifico Railroad. The private rail franchise - Ferromex - has made a significant investment in a total modernization program which includes: a thorough renovation of the train stations, reparation of the train track, remodeled passenger cars and new dining and lounge cars.

Schedule of Shows for Coming Year

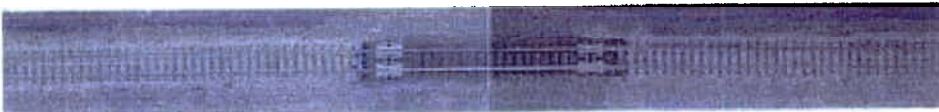
| Date | Set-up | Show Time | Show | Place | Show Coordinator |
|--------|--------|-------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Mar 27 | 8am | 10am to 4pm | Greenberg Show | Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA | Ernie Poole, 978-658-9563 |
| Mar 28 | 9am | 10am to 4pm | | | |
| Apr 25 | 8am | 10am to 4pm | Hooksett Lions Club | Hooksett Cawley Middle School, Rte 27, Hooksett, NH (New Location) | Ron Wood, 603-889-0741 |
| May 12 | 7am | 9am to 3pm | Children's Hospital | 300 Longwood Dr., Boston, MA | Robert Pawlak, 781-862-2485 |

Rail Connecting Made Simple by John Dunne



If you have ever had to hook up mutual modules you know what a task those little rail joiners can be. In the past few months I have tried to make it easier and have found that Kato has rail joiners (24-815) that will actually make the job enjoyable. With 20 pieces to the package there will be more than enough to hook up ends of your module.

1. After laying out Ntraks 3 main lines (red, yellow and blue), parallel with the end of your module, draw 2 lines, one at 3 1/8", the other at 2 1/4". Do not glue between these lines. This eventually will house rail joiners.
2. Lay your roadbed as you normally would. Go across the no glue area and let dry. Remove the road bed from the no glue area with craft knife and straight edge. Save cut outs for step 3.
3. Take the cut outs...and on the beveled edge cut back approximately 1/4" and glue into form a well for rail joiners to set in. Make sure that you have at least 3/8" opening either side of center line for a total of 3/4" opening.
4. Paint roadbed and all areas to be ballasted a color to match your ballast. Pay attention to coupler well.
5. Put track on road bed 2 1/2" from each end. Remove 3 or 4 rail ties on ends as necessary to install Kato 24-815 Unijoiners. Ballast if you like. Make sure unijoiners slide freely and the rails protrude when in the rear position.



Hard Times Ahead? by Bob Gatland

Two significant developments have arisen in the past few months that could greatly affect the hobby of model railroading. I'm referring to the strict application of copyright laws by the Union Pacific Railroad on their logos and the claiming of patents on certain aspects of DCC by MTH (Mike's Train House). The manufacturers and dealers I talked to at the Springfield Train Show are definitely concerned.

The Union Pacific Railroad has laid claim on all uses of its logos and designs not only for the UP but for all of its sub-subsidiaries past and present.

If a company is churning out thousands of toy cars the cost of

licensing fees can be readily absorbed and/or passed on to the consumer. For the typical N scale manufacturer where runs of under thousand units is common, the cost of complying with Union Pacific's demands can be time absorbing and expensive. One manufacturer told me that Union Pacific wants to see a sample of the finished product before they approve it. If they don't approve it, precious time and money gets wasted. Unfortunately, other railroads have been watching the Union Pacific and may decide to follow a similar path. The results of these action could stifle the industry. You may already be seeing higher prices on trains decorated for UP.

On the DCC front, MTH has taken out patents on certain DCC functions that are built into decoders. They are

telling other DCC manufacturers that they are violating patent rights by selling decoders that they have designed themselves to perform these same functions. The lawyers are getting involved with this one, and it may get ugly before it gets resolved.

The company reps at the Lenz booth were quite upset with MTH. After all, Lenz got the DCC ball rolling by allowing the NMRA to adopt its technology and to set standards for DCC. Now another company wants them to pay royalties to use certain functions. I don't think so!

Your Newsletter by E-mail by the Editor

This is the first issue to be sent out via E-mail as a .PDF file. Would like to thank all of you that have elected to receive it via e-mail. A special thanks to Doug Lawson for his help. Please consider this option if you have not already. E-mail me at: rkrbbb14@msn.com

Change in Children's Hospital Show

The Children's Hospital Show has been scheduled for **Wednesday, May 12, 2004**. This is a change from prior years when it was on Thursday.

Please note change.



Wire Car at Connecticut Electric Railway Museum, East Windsor, CT. The wire car rides on two axles - adequate for this short line. Note bundle on roof which are festive lights to be strung along the R.O.W. Photo by Dan Pawling Sr.