



Vol. XXV No. 2

website: [indylargescaler.org](http://indylargescaler.org)

March/April 2014 2013

## ILSR Annual Spring Banquet - April 5th

You Should Receive Your Reservation Form In The Mail By Mid-March

### Your 2014 Membership Dues

**J**acquie Banks wants to **welcome everyone** to the first ILSR Club event of 2014. It's our Annual Spring Banquet celebrating our Club's 25th year! The date is **Saturday afternoon, April 5 at the Indian Lake Country Club** (*not far from Jacquie & Randy's home on the east side of Indy*). It is planned as a "late luncheon" event rather than an evening event.

We realize that this date is a little earlier in the year than in the past, so our "snowbird members" who winter in Florida and Arizona may not be able to attend, however, we sure hope that the majority of our Club Members will still plan to be there! This is especially true for our new members who have recently just joined our Club.

Everyone should receive you reservation forms in the mail in the next couple of weeks. Please fill out and return to Marion Hensley. See you there.

### 2014 Membership Dues

**A** reminder that your membership dues are now past due if you have a **RED CIRCLE** drawn around your address label on this Newsletter. The last thing we want to do is terminate someone's membership, so please get yours turned in to Marion Hensley ASAP if you have not already done so. Everyone will receive your 2014 Membership directory in the May Newsletter. So far, six member families have decided to receive their Newsletters electronically via email.

### MODULAR GROUP GOES ON THE ROAD

- by Jacquie Banks

**O**n Friday, February 21, our Club's Modular Group took its first out-of-state road trip to Dayton, Ohio for their Great Train Expo. "Our crew" consisted of Jacquie & Randy Banks, Dave Beck, Jeff Carter, James Driesbach, Paul George, Tom Huckleberry, Andrew Jones, Doug Lynn and Paul & Becky Williamson.

The morning was bright and clear, for which we were all thankful, as three trailers and the big box truck started their journey to Dayton. However, the roads between here and there were like washboards, as the severe winter weather had pretty well destroyed them. (*cont. on pg. 2*)

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*(Modular Group Goes On The Road - cont....)*

Roads were filled with potholes - - you might say they were giant sinkholes connected by occasional strips of pavement! We arrived in Dayton, with some minor damage, but nothing that couldn't be repaired.

After arriving at Hara Arena, we were a little disappointed to learn that we were assigned to a back room, behind the food court, with NO heat! But, in time, we came to realize we had the best location of all! The room was huge and we were the only ones in it, so not only could we set up our full layout, in any configuration we wanted, but we could also leave our trailers parked in the back of the room as well.



We found a perfect location to hang our big sign and there was a constant flow of traffic the entire weekend. We were the only "G-Scale layout and I am sure we had more visitors than any of the other clubs! Just to make sure everyone knew about our layout, Paul and Dave sat guard in the warm Cafe to point people in the right direction.



Chris and Leslie Schultz were nice enough to lend us a "Big Boy" locomotive, which we placed at the front of our display. It was very popular and definitely a "conversation piece"!

**Thanks Chris and Leslie!** It brought many "oohs and aahs" and was a great addition to our layout for the weekend.

It all turned out to be a terrific weekend! They did turn up the heat for us by Sunday and the weather held out for our drive home. We had so many compliments on our layout, met lots of new train enthusiasts, and even gained a new member!

But most of all, we enjoyed the camaraderie "after hours" that we don't normally get to enjoy at home. We especially had fun relaxing, laughing and getting to know each other better over a couple of nice dinners. (as well as breakfast and lunch. No pictures here - you will have to attend the next out-of-town event yourself to see what you missed!)

**A great big THANKS to James Driesbach for putting together another Super-Successful event and getting us another invitation for next year!**

### *2014 National Garden Railway Conv. Tampa, Florida*

It is that time of year when folks are contemplating summer vacation plans and whether or not to include the National Garden Railway Convention, which most of you know is in Tampa, FL. May 5-12. I always get an adrenaline rush when in this hyped atmosphere, which validates for me that I am in the right hobby - GARDEN RAILROADING!

As Nancy & I are making our own plans to attend, I invite as many of you as possible to consider likewise. You will be GLAD YOU DID!

I came across this 2007 picture just today of 5 of us that attended the 2007 Convention in Las Vegas. These are memories you just never forget!







Rick Whitt

Deb and David Watt have decided to close their train business. They want to thank all of their past customers for all the support they have received over the past many, many years. Long time friend and employee **Rick Witt** has started his own train business called **Zionsville Train Depot, LLC**. After April 1, Rick's business will be located at **5082 West 106th Street, Zionsville, IN.** (the business will temporarily be located at 165 West Sycamore St. (Zionsville) until the move to the new location)

Watts Train Station repair guru **Ross Buttrum** will continue working for Rick at the new business. (Repairs on all brands of G-Scale locomotives and rolling stock; adding lighting; installing decoders, Phoenix sound systems and installing smoke generators.)

Rick says that he will attempt to carry the following "in stock items" at all times for his customers: LGB track and switches; Split Jaw rail clamps; Smoke fluid. Pre-owned collections will be brought in as well as new items will all be stocked. Rick wants to service every railroader's personal needs, so he will special order anything from LGB, Bachmann, or Aristo that is available.

A new website is under construction and should be online in the near future. Look for it at

[www.zionsvilletraindepot.com](http://www.zionsvilletraindepot.com)

Some further good news. Rick will give a **10% discount for any ILSR Club member, including repair work.** If anyone has any questions, please feel free to call Rick at **(317) 873-5507.**



**Serious Smoke** - Rex Bowman lamented that his LGB Mikado locomotive never really smoked much, even when new. However, last fall, Rex had Watt's Train Shop install a new Aristo smoke unit (with built-fan blower) and **NOW** look at it! It is never too late to upgrade one's railroad.



# Flangers, Spreaders & Rotaries, Oh My!

- by Jerry Tarble

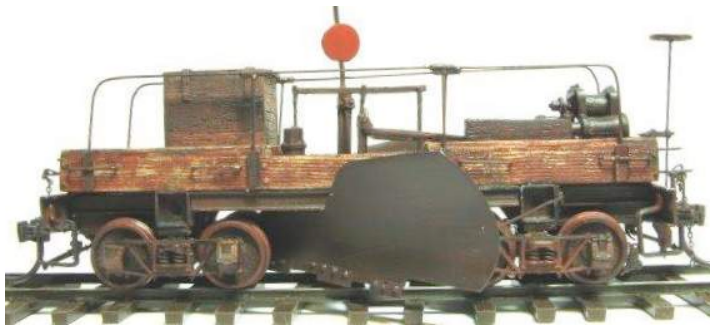


Jerry Tarble

Now that all of us ILSR Members have had our winter quota of roadway and residential snow removal, let's switch the subject to something more appealing. Perhaps Lions and Tigers and Bears? No - way too soft and cuddly for a TRAIN FAN! Let's make it **snow removal on mainline and model railroads** with flangers, spreaders and rotaries - the three main snow fighting weapons in the railroad's arsenal.

I'm sure we are all familiar with the small vee plow mounted on the front of most modern diesel locomotives. This is good for breaking through a drift every now

and then, but for long stretches of rail covered by very much snow, it's just not enough to get the job done. The primary snow fighter for most railroads is the **flanger**. It is so named because it removes ice and snow from between the rails where the the wheel flanges of the rolling stock and locomotives run. If snow and ice are allowed to accumulate between the rails, the buildup can eventually raise the wheel flanges above the rail head and cause a derailment.



Model of a small, early railroad flanger



Jordan spreader. Blade on the front can be raised or lowered. Wings on the side of flanger clears right-of-way on either side as needed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Flangers come in several configurations, but typically are not self-propelled railroad cars (*must be pulled by a locomotive*) with either open or closed bodies. They are fitted with a blade that fits between the rails and can be raised or lowered mechanically or hydraulically. The flanger blade is extremely effective at removing things between the rails, so it must be lifted for any structure between the rails such as road crossings, switches, guard rails and passenger platform crossings. Marker signs are normally placed along the track to tell the flanger crew to raise or lower the blade. The flanger is towed behind one or multiple locomotives at speeds of 30 to 40 MPH.

When flangers can no longer keep the main-line open, the **wedge plow, vee plow or spreaders** are called up for action. The wedge plow is basically an inclined plane attached to the front of a railroad car. As the inclined plane angles up from the track, its surface curves outward right and left so the snow removed from the track is thrown to both sides.



Aristo model of a wedge plow



A vee plow sits on a siding and looks like it has “seen better days”.

The **Vee plow** looks similar to the wedge plow, except much larger. The wedge and the Vee are limited by their ability to get the snow far enough away from the tracks. When the snow depth reaches a point when there is no place to push the snow without it falling back upon the rails the problem is solved with a spreader. A **spreader** is a Vee plow fitted with adjustable, expandable wings to push the snow even farther away.

The Vee front spreader is called a **Jordan spreader**. It has a wing on each side that swings out to the degree and height desired by the spreader operator. This design allows snow to be pushed a much greater distance from the track. When used in conjunction with only one wing, these spreaders can work double tracks or single track with severely restricted side clearance.



a Jordan spreader

Sometimes, Mother Nature can make more snow than even the Jordan spreader can handle. (*think mountain passes*) When this happens, it's time to call upon the heavy artillery of snow removal machines - the **rotary plows**.

A 10 or 11 foot diameter cutter wheel is

in a metal ring called the hood and the cutter wheel can turn either clockwise or anticlockwise. This allows snow to be thrown to either side of the track as long as the diverter chute in the hood is changed accordingly. When working, the cutter wheel is spinning at 90 - 130 rpm and will throw snow over 100 feet from the track.

Steam powered rotaries were built very similar to standard rod locomotives. Within the car body of the rotary would have been two steam cylinders, one on each side. A connecting rod ran forward from each cylinder with a crank connected to the main gearbox/transmission. A single shaft emerged from the front of the gearbox/transmission that was directly connected to the cutter wheel.

As diesel power was replacing steam power on the mainlines, the same transition was occurring with the rotary plow. Modern rotaries are diesel/electric just like the locomotives that push them. The rotary plow is effective until the snow depth reaches approximately 12 feet. At that depth, the hood of the rotary becomes covered and snow cannot enter or exit the wheel. If the track must be kept open, the snow must be knocked down to less than 12 feet. Back in steam days that meant armies of men equipped with shovels. Today it is almost always done with bulldozers.

Rotaries are kept in reserve most of the time due to their extremely high operating and maintenance costs. But just like the cavalry, they are there when nothing else can come to the rescue.



Steam is up on the “White Pass RR” rotary

\* Jerry took this photo in Skagway, Alaska



There are large scale replicas of both push and rotary plows in our model railroad world. **Aristo** makes a nice wedge plow that works well if snow is only 2 to 2½ inches deep. Two locomotives can push it through that much snow rather handily. One trick to help make it work is to put as much weight as possible inside the plow to keep the nose of the wedge down on the track. A couple of small sand bags works well. **USA Trains** builds a very nice looking steam rotary plow in several roadnames, but I would definitely classify it as non-operating as the cutter wheel is very fragile.

As far as a true operating rotary model, I am only aware of two. I have been trying for several years to acquire one from Randy Lee at Grissly Mt. Engineering in Colorado, but so far without success.

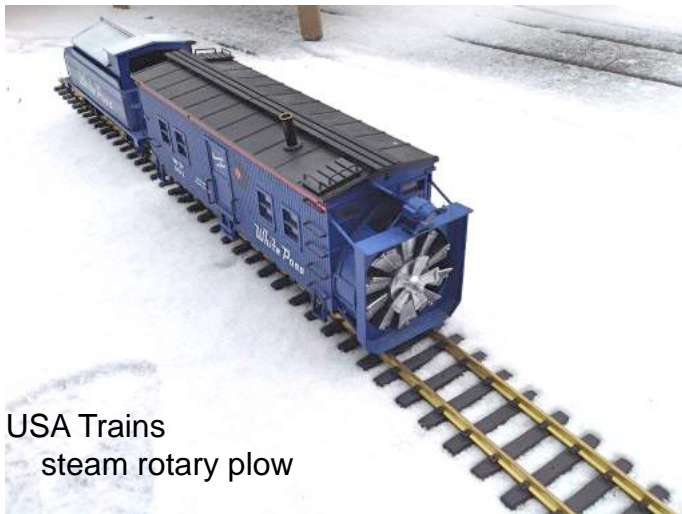
Ken Orme of the Denver Garden Railway Society did actually build some custom made models

around 1990. These were powered by a small electric motor that used a 6 volt rechargeable battery similar to those found in kid's electric powered vehicles.

They seemed to work well with any snow, wet or fluffy, and would handle snow depths as tall as the hood. The secret seems to be to keep the rotary outside so it is always outside ambient temp. so warm cutter blades don't melt the snow.

Now that you are relaxed while reading this article, get out of the chair, go to the window and look out at your garden railroad covered with all that wonderful snow! Just imagine the fun you can have clearing it away in prototypical fashion. Just think what those folks in Florida and Arizona are missing out on right now.

Gotta love our winters in Indiana and Illinois!



USA Trains  
steam rotary plow



Custom-built Ken Orme G-Scale rotary ready for work



Cutter wheel and hood  
steel with a small electric  
all made out of  
6V motor.



The Ken Orme G-Scale rotary has just cleared  
a 3 inch snow fall off of the track right-of-way.

## DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME

Many of us Model Railroaders are fascinated by some of the railroad stories that come out of earlier times in our nation's history. It gives us all somewhat of an appreciative perspective of so many improvements that we "take for granted" in the 21st Century.

I was reading an article recently from a "Scott County Historical Society" newsletter (Huntsville, TN). An article was written concerning an accident that took place on the O&W Railroad sometime estimated during the 1930's.

*The O&W Railroad (Oneida and Western RR) was a short 38 mile railroad that ran from Jamestown, TN. to Oneida, TN. Basically it was built to connect the Stearns Coal and Lumber Company to Oneida, TN. which at that point, junctioned with the Southern RR. The O&W was chartered in 1913 and operated until 1954.)*

According to the story, in the early 1900's, section crews used lever hand cars to inspect and do repairs to the tracks. Later on, gasoline-powered motor cars were used. Railroad officials used automobiles outfitted with railroad wheels to make inspection tours of the line. A "Model A Ford" so equipped figures in this most frequently recounted O&W Railroad story.

It seems that high water washed out a trestle bridge on the line and left the suspended track sagging. O&W RR officials doing an inspection tour were afraid to drive across the sagging track, and decided that they would let the car go over the trestle track in low gear without a driver. One man walked across the sagging rails to the other side to "catch the car" once it made it safely to the other side.

As the "Model A" idled across the bridge, the combination of slack and pull on the transmission caused the car to jump from low to high gear. The car zipped across the trestle past the man who was supposed to catch it, and continued driverless several miles into Oneida, where it crashed into a standing boxcar.

Fortunately, nobody was injured in the incident, but "old timers" still relish telling this story on the "big shots of management".

With today's modern technology and safety regulations, can anyone imagine this story taking place today?

### DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

In the last Newsletter, reference was made concerning new membership into our ILSR Club. This is always an important, ongoing activity for each and every member of any organization. For any NEW member that you are responsible for them joining, the sponsoring member will receive a **\$5 discount off of the following year's Club dues!**

It was incorrectly misstated in the Jan./Feb.

Newsletter that the sponsoring member would receive a "free" membership the following year.

**Everyone - Please Note This New Policy. - Bud**

### Welcome New Members

We would like to officially welcome new members

Jeff and Alecia Larkin - Carmel, IN.

Richard & Marty Fair - Indy (*reinstated*)

Rick Whitt - Indianapolis (*reinstated*)

We welcome you all "aboard" and look forward to seeing and visiting with you at the Annual Spring Banquet April 5, 2014.

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# 2014 Club Event Calendar

April 5          Annual Spring Banquet - Indian Lake Country  
Club; Indianapolis (*see RSVP insert*)

May 2, 3 & 4 Orchard in Bloom      Indianapolis

May 4 - 10      National Garden Railway Convention  
Tampa, Florida

May 31          Club Open House    Bill & Betty Harryman  
Taylorville, IL.

June 14          Berries & Bloom Festival; Depot Park Upland, IN.  
**PLUS** RR Open House at Geoff & Carolyn Schwartz'  
home from **1:00 - 3:00 P.M.**

July 12          Castleton Christian Church Modular Show  
(*Trains, Planes and Automobiles*)

Dec. 6          Christmas Party Open House - Home of Jacquie  
and Randy Banks

\*more garden railroad visits are pending and will appear in May Newsletter



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