



The Engine That Came Back Home

By Tony J. Bowen

The other day I was surfing the Internet highway checking out some N scale items on e-bay. I like to check out e-bay once in while to look for those hard to find railroad items that you may not find at the local hobby shops or train shows. When all of a sudden my surfing of the Internet came to a halt when I came across an item that was once in my possession, or at least I thought it might have been.

In the fall of 1992, I was a junior at the University of Northern Iowa and was working part time at a local hobby shop. Like many college students coming up with extra money was always a challenge. So in addition to working at the hobby shop I also did some custom painting on the side to help put a little extra coin in my pockets. Now I wish I had kept track of all of the different O, HO and N scale items that I painted or worked on during my college days. However, at the time it did not seem all that important to keep track of some of the custom painted work that I did. After a while of working on many of these items it was hard to part with them as I had invested many hours completing the models for other modelers.

Then during my search on e-bay a few weeks ago I came across an item that looked so familiar to me, that I was pretty sure that it was some of my handy work that I had done many years before for a gentleman who lived in the Chicago area. So I contacted the e-bay seller and asked if there were any initials that appeared anywhere on the inside of the shell. Sure enough the seller got back in contact with me a few days later and said the initials TJB 11/1992 were painted in the shell.



Kato F-3-A that was custom painted 15 years ago during my college days for another modeler, made its way back to the to the original custom painter after locating it on e-bay for sale.

I responded back to the gentlemen that this was an item I had custom painted back in 1992 for a gentlemen who lived in the Chicago area. I was surprised when the seller contacted me and said that this Kato F-3 engine was no longer in the Chicago area but was in California where the seller lived. The only explanation that the e-bay seller and I could come up with is that this engine must have been passed from one modeler to other modeler and so on. However, now having this engine back in my possession, I think I will hang on to it for a while.