

The Pilot



Editor Chris Burchett

Issue No. 9

May/June 2000

*The official publication of the Teen Association of Model Railroaders'
Central Region*

On the Cover: Amtrak P42 (Genesis) #61 is stopped in front of the Kirkwood (MO) Depot with a train of Horizon cars and RoadRailers. *Photo by Joel Durfee - St. Charles, MO*

Table of Contents:

Message From the Central Region Rep.	Page 3
Goodbye Hill City Line, Hello Mankato Branch!	Page 3-4
The History of Amtrak - Part 1	Page 4
Central Region News	Page 4
Photo Time	Page 5
Conventions	Page 5
Message From J&J Basic HO Layouts	Page 6
Top Seven	Page 6

Contributions:

The Pilot depends on its readers for material. All railroad- and model railroad-related articles, drawings, cartoons, and photographs are welcome!

Feature Articles:

The Pilot needs feature or lead articles the most. They should be roughly a page long, typed, and possibly accompanied by a drawing or photograph. Feature or lead articles can be on any number of topics such as:

- Members' layouts
- Railroad news
- Railfan trips or travel
- Modeling projects, etc.

Columns:

Columns are needed. Please contact the Editor to conduct your own column.

Photographs & Drawings:

Photographs of railroads and model railroads are needed. You can submit black & white and/or color prints - any size.

Drawings, cartoons, and artwork should be well done, in black ink, and on white paper (no lines).

Send All Articles To:

The Pilot
30150 Ilesboro Road
Logan, Ohio 43138

Message From The Central Region

Rep. -

Spring is here, and summer is right around the corner! And you know what that means! The *Valley Flyer* (2) is back! Please come be a part of this convention, as this will be a slim preview of the TAMR's 2001 national convention, *Ohio State Limited*. The "OSL" will be the first national convention held in Ohio in 7 years, and the first held in the Central Region itself in 5 years!!

As most of you may have heard, the official regional convention of the Central Region will be hosted by Heartland Division director and Vice Presidential candidate Joel Durfee in St. Louis, Missouri, July 12-17. This will be an action packed convention, and will offer all of the "rail-fun" St. Louis (and vicinity) has to offer!!! So please be a part of this convention!!

We have also received a new member! Check out "Central Region News", and drop him a line!

An updated directory of the Central Region has been sent out with this issue of the *Pilot*. As soon as I sent out the last issue of the *Pilot*, I found out that I had left a couple people out, and so that has been corrected.

Have a great summer, ya'll, and keep sending in those awesome articles and other contributions!!!!

**Goodbye Hill City line,
hello Mankato Branch!**
By Richard A. Krebs

It took me just one weekend, with the help of my brother and my dad, to take down my old layout. That weekend was February 12-13, of this grand year of 2000.

Shortly after 11 a.m. on the 12th, as some snow was falling outside, I went downstairs to where the old layout sat in our basement. I had my camera with me, and proceeded to take some photographs of the old pike to preserve it on film for posterity.

Once I was done with that, I started to dismantle the old pike, but before I get on to that, here is how my old layout was built.

It consisted of a 4x8 sheet of plywood fastened to a small table with four homasote slabs placed atop the plywood. The pike sported very large, space munching curves, homasote roadbed, brass track, a town, a river

(unfinished), and a mountain at one end. It was called the Hill City line of the Minnetonka & Illinois Northern (later Lake Minnetonka & Northern). So called after the town, which was named Hill City.

The pike was half-finished, and it was to remain so until it's demise. I wouldn't say that this pike was well-built. Quite the opposite. It was very poorly built. Hence one of the reasons it came down. Experience is a good teacher, however, so now I know how **NOT** to build a pike!

The Hill City line saw its last train on Saturday, February 5th, 2000. When Chicago and North Western F7A #4073A with CNW bay window caboose #11190 at the end of a general merchandise job of boxcars (and a reefer), led the last train ever to glide upon the brass rails of the Hill City line over the pike.

Then came the demise a week later.

The demolition of the layout went more or less like this: buildings, trees, vehicles, figures, and reusable scenic material came off first and were salted away. Then came the removal of the ol' brass track and homasote roadbed. Then off came the homasote slabs that had been put over the four-by-eight sheet of plywood. I needed to chisel away at the ground foam and other scenic material where the pike had been scenicked to get to screw heads so the homasote slabs could come off. The fact that the homasote was painted to seal it so scenic materials could be added helped hide them, too. Making those screw heads mighty hard to find, but I kept at it, and it was quite satisfying to see the plywood emerge from under all that homasote, let me tell you! When the mountain, which was made of wood, chicken wire, and plaster-soaked newspaper came down, **LOTS** of plaster chips got loose, and man, was the vacuum cleaner ever needed to clean that up! Friends, plaster sure is mighty messy when you take apart something like that mountain, let me tell you.

As I said, my dad and my brother helped me out with this project, especially with the mountain, but I did the lion's share of the work. By late afternoon on the 12th, all the chicken wire and plaster-soaked newspaper had been removed from the mountain and all the homasote slabs up to where the mountain sat had been removed.

Then it was time to quit until tomorrow. Or so I thought, for that night I did some more work which cleared off the skeleton of the mountain and the last of the homasote slabs. Now the pike was ready for the final phase, which was removing the plywood sheet and removing the legs from the table. That was done the next day.

And so the Hill City line met its demise. In its place will be a new pike, which is set at the midway point of a Lake Minnetonka and Northern branch to Mankato,

(Page 3)

Minnesota. To be four-by-eight feet of size and be a well-built type of model railroad, too!

Some materials for that project are on hand (including the plywood sheet from the old pike), with more to follow. I intend to get started on the new pike soon.

Look for an article about the LM&N's Mankato branch to be coming soon, folks!

The History of Amtrak Part One

By Joel Durfee

Amtrak, throughout its history, has played a big part in North American passenger railroading. While it has been crucified by both the public and the media, Amtrak has reasonable and sensible explanations.

And now I will discuss the overall history of Amtrak in 3 parts. Part One - *Journey to Amtrak*: In this chapter, we will discuss why Amtrak came to be, and pre-Amtrak years.

Part Two - *Reconstruction of the American Passenger Train*: In this chapter, we will discuss what the government did to try and re-ignite the fire on passenger trains, once again. Topics will include: the F40; Amfleet and Superliners; and the refurbishing of Heritage equipment.

And the third and final chapter in this saga - *Amtrak - A Railroad for the New Millennium*: In this chapter, we'll discuss the steps that Amtrak took to make rail travel faster, safer, and more reliable. Topics that will be discussed are as follows: the B32-8WH's (Pepsi Cans!); Genesis units; Horizon cars; F69PHI's; and the Northeast Corridor.

That just about sums up all the chapters of the Amtrak story. And now, I am pleased to bring you.....*Journey to Amtrak*.

In the post-war years, passenger travel was at its pinnacle. Through out the '50's, railroads were making big profits from their hot passenger trains. People of all sorts were riding the rails throughout America including: movie stars, politicians, and average people in general. Railroads, at the time, thought that this zenith of passenger railroading would last forever. Unfortunately, they were wrong.

As the sky-ways and by-ways developed, they left the railroads staggering behind. With all the new

innovations in Interstates, and with Boeing making top-of-the-line jets, railroads had no passengers left. People thought of railroads as a nuisance more than a form of transportation. Once gleaming passenger trains in great length, were now old, short, and inefficient.

As the railroads were losing profits, the trains they ran became shorter and shorter, and they even took some drastic measures as to cancel trains and run mixed trains (these were trains that consisted of both freight and passenger equipment). Major railroads were seen doing this kind of stuff, including Union Pacific, Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, and many others.

The government saw all of this activity and began to worry about the direction in which this country's rail passenger travel was going. They didn't like it. So in May, 1971, they solved the problem. Congress came up with Amtrak, which supposedly was going to be able to boost up traffic.

As it turns out, the government really didn't show much care. They didn't bother to buy new equipment from the aging counterparts and canceled a lot of key trains. One would find an Amtrak train looking like a rainbow. Passenger equipment was all in a big pool - they just basically put anything they had available on a train. They didn't worry about color coordination - they just put stuff together. This in turn, turned many people away from Amtrak, thinking that it was just another "government failure."

How long will it take Congress to get Amtrak back in shape and making profits again? This we will discuss next time. Until then, happy railroading, and stay cool! - Joel Durfee

central region news

A new member has joined! Say hello to Philip Kemp of Doon, Iowa!!! Address is as follows:

Philip Kemp, 601 Hubbard, Doon, Iowa 51235. E-mail address is Rathekemp@rconnect.com. Phone number is (712)726-3556. DOB is 03/30/84.

Drop him a line (or give him a phone call) and welcome him to the group!! Welcome aboard Philip!!!!

Conventions are being held left and right all over the TAMR! Many are scheduled and being planned in the Central Region! This is the most activity the "CR" has seen in quite a while, not to mention the fact of the tremendous membership "jump"!!

Photo Time!!

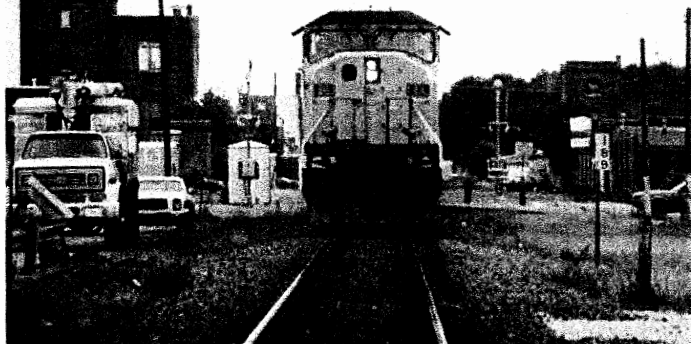
This is where Central Region members can show off their photos!! E-mail or snail-mail your photos to me!! If snail-mailed, I will send them back upon request. So, here are some photos!!!



A Santa Fe merger "Kodachrome" C30-7 is caught on the Soo Line in Minot, ND, on March 14, 1999. Photo by Lewis Abledinger.



PC E8A #4287 and a very small passenger train at DELCO Tower, Indiana. Photo by John Fuller; Chris Burchett collection.



UP-SD90MAC #8111 is a DPU (helper) on this train as it rolls through Sedalia, MO. Joel likes to call these types of photos "suicide shots," as it looks like the train is heading toward the photographer. Photo by Joel Durfee.

Convention News

Division: The Great Lakes Division will be hosting the *Valley Flyer 2*, based out of Logan, OH, the preview to next year's TAMR national convention in Ohio! Many Ohio spots will be visited including Columbus, Galion, Sandusky, Cleveland, Dayton, Toledo, Cincinnati, and many others! Layout tours include Peter Maurath's N scale "What If" Penn Central, Chris Burchett's HO scale Logan Southern Rail System, and Bill Evans's HO scale Evans Rail System. Dates are June 5-11 (Mon. thru Sun.). Contact Chris Burchett for more info!

Regional: The *MoPac Flyer* Central Region convention will be held July 12-17 in St. Louis, MO. Many awesome activities are planned, including yard tours of Amtrak, BNSF, and Alton Southern. Couple layout tours as well! For more info, contact Joel Durfee at (636)477-0582 or via e-mail at Amtrakp42804@aol.com!

Message From J&J Basic HO Layouts, LLC

Good morning, TAMR readers of *The Pilot!* :-)

How fortunate we are to have Chris Burchett as our Central Region TAMR Representative!

For almost 3 years now, J&J Basic HO Layouts, LLC of Ada, MI, has been seeking approval and permission from TAMR to help organize and establish an Ada, MI Unit of the Great Lakes Division - Central Region - of TAMR.

On January 19, 2000, that approval was granted and permission granted J&J by TAMR's elected officials and appointed advisors to do just that. We are very thankful, for we've got over 100 teen-age consumer/customers - many of whom have already indicated interest in the possible group.

J&J is excited and looking forward to getting the group up and running. We're thankful, too, for offers of help making this happen, and commitments of assistance to help the future group "get off the ground" have come from several of J&J's adult modelers (customers), the Battle Creek Model RR Club, Coopersville & Marne Railway Co., the Grand Rapids Model RR Historical Society, the Riverbend Model RR club, and others.

TAMR's Chris Burchett and Newton Vezina were in Ada, MI, on Wednesday, March 15th, to meet some of the Ada, MI, folks, check out J&J, and see the Ada group's possible club/meeting/layout room. And I promised Chris that I would keep Michigan TAMR members informed about what's going on in Ada.

Thanks *Pilot* for allowing me to share these few words with Central Region members.

See ya next time! :-)
J&J Basic HO Layouts, LLC

Grandpa David



Top Seven Ways to Get to the 2000 National Convention in Bakersfield, CA

7. Hi-jacked golf cart.
6. FedEx yourself.
5. Very nicely ask your parents for a lift.
4. CZ's got plenty of room in the Weinermobile.
3. Ask Amtrak if you can borrow an AMD-103 for the week.
2. Click your heels three times and say, "There's no place like Bakersfield."

And the number one way to get to the national:

1. There's always the transporters on the *SS Enterprise*.

