

THE HOTBOX

October 2003

Issue #364

ISBN: 1093-622X



**THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEEN
ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS**

Now with patented touch-matic drive!



THE HOTBOX

October 2003, Issue #364

Editor/Publisher-Peter Maurath

Executive Editor- Gen. Peter F. Maurath

Managing Editor-Peter F. Maurath II

Senior Editor-Peter F. Maurath III

Associate Editor- Sr. Peter Maurath Esq. IV

Art Director-Lt. Peter Maurath

Graphic Designer-Dr. Peter F. Maurath

Technical Illustrator-Bo the TAMR Wonder Dog

Photographer- O Winston Maurath

Librarian-"Worth about 25 points in Scrabble."

CONTRIBUTIONS

Send your check or money order to my ,... oops sorry,... you mean that type of contribution. We here at the Hotbox are always in need of new material. Here are a few examples:

FEATURE ARTICLES:

This is what we're always looking for. From a railfan trip, to your home layout's story, or your own story. Size can range from a paragraph to a full page. Pictures are always appreciated.

COLUMNS:

Full of great tips on layout improvement? Got a million reasons Alco is better than Baldwin? Start a monthly, or bi-monthly column. Size same as features.

PHOTOS AND DRAWINGS:

Got a great photo collection you want to show off? Got a notebook full of rr cartoons, or unique logos, send them to the HB staff for consideration.

Send all submissions, or Hotbox questions to: Peter Maurath

Or email at:

TAMRHotbox@aol.com

GET WIRED.

Check out TAMR on the web at:

www.TAMR.org

Or join our newsgroup at:

TAMR@yahoogroups.com

(you'll receive updates on TAMR events, and news, and connect to dozens of other members)

ON THE COVER: CP 9596 leads a consist east across the continental divide in Alberta, CA, July 4th 2003.

Photo by: Dave Honan



You're not hallucinating, this is the third issue, for the third month in a row, that you hold in your hands. You've probably already noticed that it's gained a little weight. Due to the outpouring of material from members, I decided to add a page. This will save me from having to chop-up material across several issues, and allow more variety of articles to be published. With this extra page, I'll be going thru material a bit faster, so contributions will be needed for the November, December issues.

You may have noticed a blurb in last month's Hotbox about the 40th anniversary. Come January the TAMR will be a ripe 40 years young. Seeing as this is a milestone for the group (that most thought would never make it to it's first year) I decided to celebrate with a special anniversary issue for January. Ideally, it's going to be eight pages long, if enough material surfaces. Don't get used to that size, it's only for the anniversary. In order to fill these eight pages I've enlisted the help of veteran members Tim Vermande, Newton Vezina, and also put in a call to Archivist Mike Acree. I still need a lot more input, though. I've only been a part of this wonderful group for ten years, leaving thirty years of convention activities, elections, and the occasional TAMR scandal, unaccounted for. If you've got a story tell it, otherwise this could turn out to be a very lopsided celebration. Don't think you have to be ready for the old railfan home to qualify. Five years, ten years, even the new guy who joined yesterday. If you've got a great idea or story I'll welcome it. This celebration is covering all forty years, so don't be afraid to speak-up. Below are some of the columns that will be featured in that issue. If you have a submission for any of them, or an idea for a column, please send it my way. •

Top 40 greatest moments in TAMR history

Top 40 funniest moments in TAMR history

TAMR Timeline

TAMR conventions thru the years

The Hotbox, then and now

STAY TUNED FOR AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM TIM VERMANDE:

Arcadia (www.arcadiapublishing.com) publishes a variety of regional interest books. Many of these include railroad topics, covering most of the United States. We have recently received some of their titles for review, so if you order one from them, be sure to mention that you heard about it here in the Hotbox.

ASK THE NOODLE GUYS

Starring Pete and CZ
Starring Pete and CZ

Pete: Hello and welcome to the inaugural column of *Ask the Noodle Guys*. A column in which we answer, you the members, questions concerning model railroading, railfanning, and other subjects pertaining to trains. When I say we, I mean me, and my questionable partner CZ.

CZ: Does that mean I have to respond to everything in the form of a question, just like Wheel of Fortune?

Pete: Anyway, lets get to our first letter. It comes from Carlton Cornelius, of Jupiter, FL.

Carl asks: "I just want to take this moment to tell you guys what a good job your doing, and I love all the great ideas. My question is: What's a cheap way to get signs for my layout buildings? I don't have access to a computer to make them, and I can't afford to buy them in a hobby shop, since I'm saving-up to deck-out my Honda Civic with some neons, and stripes, once I get my license. Any suggestions?"

CZ: I know a cheap way, just wear a really big coat when you go to the store and...

Pete: That's enough CZ, I don't think we want to be accessories to a felony, though Carl, you should be put away for thinking you can make a race car that way, hee hee, just kidding.

CZ: I hope you were kidding, I just love what's it done for my Ford Festiva, just watch out!

Pete: "Sigh", anyway, back to your question, try the Sunday paper. It's usually filled with a small ton of color adds that have logos of all shapes and sizes, products you could cut out to make billboards, company names for storefronts, the list goes on and on.

CZ: That's how I did my Oscar Mayer factory, really looks sharp, in fact, I feel like singing the theme, "I wish I were an Oscar Mayer...."

Pete: Anyway, I hope that answers your question. If you will all excuse me, I have to duct-tape my partner, so long.●

If you have a question for the noodle guys, send it to
Noodle Guys

Or email at: TAMRHotbox@aol.com

One Member's One Perspective

By: Doug Engler

Hello fellow TAMR members. Some of you may know me and some of you may not. My name is Douglas Engler and I live in Wareham, MA. I am one of the original members of the famous "One Mile Division" in Mass. The reason I am writing this article to you is because I noticed this group is in trouble. I have been a member for about 8-9 years now and this is the worst I have seen it.

I know that there are a lot of things changing in the TAMR right now. With the internet yakking, no Hotbox for 8 months, older members losing interest, and regular TAMR events and Conventions not going on due to lack of interest. I would like to step in as an advisor to the group and remind everyone why they joined in the first place. I felt it may have slipped the minds of some.

The whole reason for this group is for teens that like trains to get together and hang out with other teens with the same interest. We're here to have fun, exchange ideas, and enjoy the hobby of railroading (all aspects of the hobby).

In my time with the TAMR I have been a RBU for the New England area, Member of one of the most successful divisions in group history (the OMD), Vice President, and President (for a month). I have witnessed alot of up's and downs with the group and right now is an important time for the group.

Some of you may not know that next year the TAMR turns forty. Yes the big 40. It's lasted so long because of the members... you guys and girls. I have not been in the spotlight in a while, but I can't just sit idly while the group is at the lowest number of members in a long time.

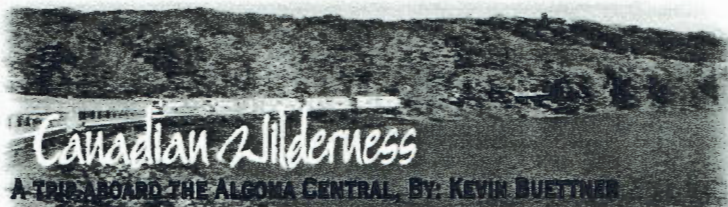
Now I know this wasn't the nicest article to read, but it is an important one that you need to know. I feel that some of our younger member don't fully understand the history of the group and some members may have forgotten why they joined in the first place. I hope this inspires you to enjoy the hobby and the group... lets see more conventions and activites with you guys.●

THE OPINIONS AND BELIEFS STATED IN THE ABOVE COLUMN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE HOTBOX STAFF, SO IF YOU HAVE A BEEF, YELL AT DOUG!



(Above) Iowa Shortline Action caught by Lewis Abieldinger.
(Right) 0-4-0T #17 on a test run at the New Hope Valley Railway in Bonsal, NC, Summer 2002. Josh Trower, photo.





Recently, my family went on a trip to the wilderness of Canada. The main event, an excursion into a remote canyon. This all being courtesy of the Algoma Central Railway.

The Algoma Central Railway was founded by Frances Hector Clergue in 1900. After fourteen years, it finally reached it's destination in Hearst, Ontario, 296 miles away. The ride originates in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada, directly across from the city of the same name in Michigan. Since Canadian National bought Wisconsin Central (who bought the Algoma Central), the motive power was from CN.

We left the station at 8 AM. We pass the various industries (logging mills and steel corporations) as we leave the station. After winding through town for fifteen minutes, we begin to see more "natural" surroundings. Various suburbs flash by as we pick-up speed. Soon after leaving, we cross the first of many trestles. The Bellvue Trestle is 810 ft long, only to be dwarfed by following bridges. We cruise toward our destination, still three hours away, it becomes obvious the logging remains a very important industry along these lines. Clearings come into view with long trains parked along side the main line. At times, you can watch the logging operations take place.

Various lakes begin to appear. These lakes are connected to each other by a little stream. Four lakes are seen in particular. Rivers begin to be crossed with increasing regularity. Occasionally, you can glimpse Lake Superior through the trees (It may look small on a map, but it's huge... and cold). Little track-side villages are spotted as we near the Montreal River. At one, Montreal Falls, there is a hand-cart shed still in operation.

The highlight of the trip comes as we cross the Montreal River. The trestle is 130 ft high and a quarter mile long. It is crescent shaped, and offers a breath-taking view of the lake and falls. There is a power station at the base of the falls, creating a dam and reservoir. The train slows not only for safety, but for picture taking opportunities.

After the falls, comes the Horseshoe. The line continues to curve, creating another view of the trestle. It nearly doubles back toward itself, but turns and heads for the canyon.

Following the Horseshoe is the summit of the line. At 1660ft, it's the highest point we encounter. You can view the canyon from here. Sheer rock cliff faces are somewhat common on this part of the trip. Within twenty minutes, we are in the canyon and the train stops for two hours. Here the engines come around to the front of the train and prepare for the journey home. Once off the train, there are many things you can do. There is a souvenir car full of gifts and memorabilia, trails to see local waterfalls, a set of steps you can climb to a vantage point over the train, and where you can see most of the canyon. You can eat breakfast and lunch on board during the trip. 1:30 PM, we depart the canyon. We enter Sault Ste. Marie at 5 PM. That is, if the train doesn't break down on the way back. A brake line ruptured on the way back, resulting in a thirty minute delay. •



Scott Willett's (center) busy trying to make order out of chaos during a recent operating session on the Shenendoah Valley & Gulf, the Willetts home layout. Craig Willett, photo.

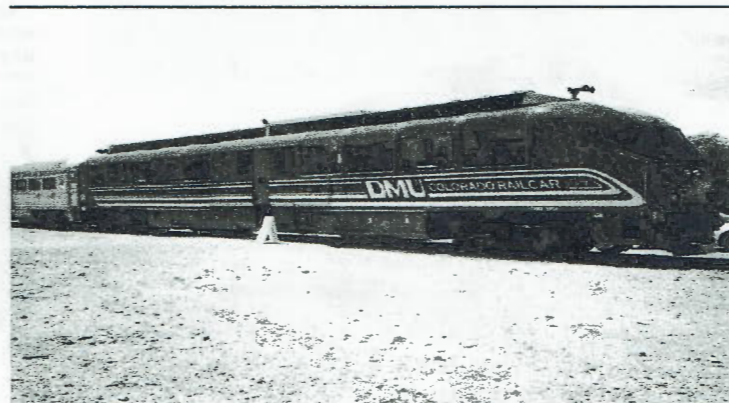
The Top 7

BY: PETER MAURATH

"From the home office in Cleveland, OH, it's tonight's Top Seven List..."

THE TOP SEVEN LEAST VISITED VENDORS AT A GATS SHOW.

- #7. PENN CENTRAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY.
- #6. THE "BUILD YOUR OWN BENCHWORK OUT OF HALF-EATEN WAFFLES", TABLE.
- #5. ADOLF'S HOBBIES.
- #4. AL'S WORLD OF "TT" GAUGE.
- #3. EDDY'S "OVERPRICED, POORLY BUILT, OUT OF PROPORTION, BADLY PAINTED, TWO-DAYS-AFTER-YOU-BUY-IT-IT'LL-BREAK," HOBBY SHOP.
- #2. THE MIME SCHOOL MODULAR RAILWAY.
- #1. RAILFANS ANONYMOUS.



Experimental Weinermobile for the rails. Tim Vermande, photo.



CONDUCTED BY: TIM VERMANDE

Welcome back to my clinic on basic photography. This month we'll start-off with "sharpness." This term usually includes contrast, color balance, and a host of other factors besides resolution, all of which point to how good a picture looks. Traditionally, slide film produced "sharper" results than print film. However, in the last ten years, print films have improved rapidly, closing the gap. Today, you would be hard pressed to find a difference under typical conditions (note this carefully before you slide-lovers scream). To project well, a slide must be focused precisely behind a good lens. A slide must also be flat. When you drop a slide (which takes on a curve in the typical mount) into the wide gate of a projector with a \$40 plastic lens, you are not doing any of those.

One area that should draw more concern than it does is exposure. Slide films are persnickety about exposure, and many in-camera meters cannot handle them properly. If you are going to use slide film, you need to develop a good sense of exposure. The overwhelming majority of film used is print film, so naturally, that's what cameras are going to be adjusted for. So it doesn't hurt to have a hand-held incident light meter (the kind with the white half ball on the end). These meters measure the light falling on the subject). Because a slide is viewed by light projected through it, it will look better when exposed for such light. A print is viewed by light that is reflected off a print, and thus, an in-camera meter, which measures light that is reflected off the scene, will work better.

All film suffers greatly when underexposed (not enough light on the film). Unfortunately, it is very easy to underexpose! In previous columns, we've covered some common problems that lead to underexposure (and we're not done). With slide film, if you overexpose, you wash out the brighter, lighter colors, and they are lost. However, print film can stand several stops of overexposure. As do many people, when I shoot print film, I routinely overexpose it a little, because it produces better colors. Some print films are now even rated at a lower speed than they would have been several years ago: Kodak 400 is widely reported to actually be a 500 speed film. I find this believable, because (to me) it does work best at 400. Kodak 200 works well at 160, Fuji 200 at 120-160. If you have a "DX" camera that sets the film speed automatically, you can make these changes by setting the exposure compensation dial to +1/3 or +1/2.

We'll never resolve the slide vs. print debate. It's something you have to decide for yourself and your situation, and keep an open mind to those who've chosen otherwise--because you might someday change your mind, too. Another debate that won't be settled any time soon is which brand to use. The big names in film are Kodak and Fuji. You'll also hear from Agfa, Konica, and private labels. Kodak was long the leader, but a combination of cheap imports and apparent shortsightedness (probably the source for a lot of Dilbert cartoons) has eroded that. [next column]

You're just as likely to find Fuji at the big stores these days, although the others tend to stay with specialty stores or smaller chains. The scene here changes too rapidly to try and put anything into print (although we'll probably have our own reviews from time to time, and photo magazines always cover new films). You'll find what works best for you by trying several kinds, and then choosing a primary group and staying with it. Don't experiment with a new film on a once-in-a-lifetime trip or other event. If I'm trying something new, I try to shoot a known film in another camera at the same time, not just for back up, but for a better comparison.

How you get your film processed is important too--but it's also going to be the subject of another column. Other columns will deal with processing, which includes scanning as well as developing, and the mechanics of dealing with digital capture media. I'm also looking at discussing color and black & white sometime. Until then, questions, photos, and column assistants are welcome. Contact me at pivotpin@tamr.org for more information. •

THIS HOTBOX IS SPONSORED BY:

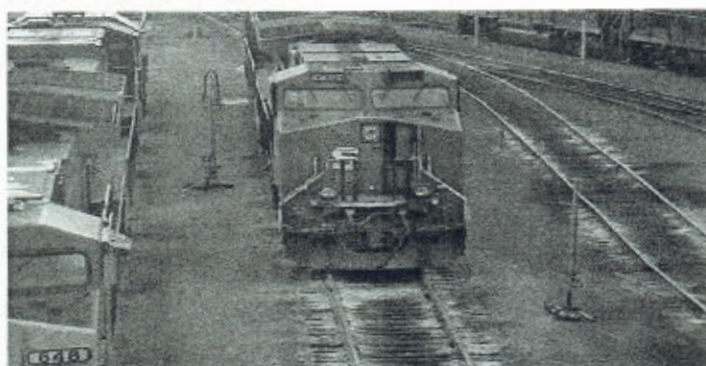
The Great American Train Stores

"Offering you the best quality and selection in model railroading since before we went broke."



**The Teen Association
Of Model Railroaders
1964-2004**

HELP THE TAMR CELEBRATE IT'S FORTIETH BIRTHDAY BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE UPCOMING ANNIVERSARY ISSUE.. THE HB STAFF NEEDS YOUR STORIES, MEMORIES, AND PICTURES OF THE TAMR'S LAST FOUR DECADES, HELP OUT TODAY!



Looking a little out of place, an SP unit idles at Selkirk, NY, July 2003. Doug Engler, photo.

THE TAMR IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION CREATED TO PROMOTE, FOSTER, AND ENCOURAGE YOUNG PERSONS IN THE HOBBY OF MODEL RAILROADING, THE ACTIVITY OF RAILFANNING, AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE HISTORY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THEREOF.

MEMBERSHIP TO THE TAMR INCLUDES AN ELEVEN MONTH SUBSCRIPTION TO THE HOTBOX, THE ANNUAL DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS, QUARTERLY REGIONAL NEWSLETTERS AND AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN ALL TAMR EVENTS. THE AVAILABLE MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES ARE AS FOLLOWS: REGULAR (UNDER 21)-\$15, ASSOCIATE (21 AND OVER)-\$20, INTERNATIONAL (OUTSIDE US)-\$18

TO BECOME A PART OF THE TAMR, OR TO RENEW SEND YOUR INFORMATION TO:
NICK WILSON, TAMR TREASURER,

OFFER GOOD WHILE SUPPLIES LAST, SEE STORE FOR COMPLETE DETAILS, NO PURCHASE NECESSARY, VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF RULES, REGULATIONS, AND THE BEST DARN RESTAURANTS IN LOGAN, OH SEND A SSAEBDR TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS. IF YOU ARE AT ALL UNSATISFIED WITH THE HOTBOX PLEASE RETURN UNUSED PORTION FOR A COMPLETE BLOW-OFF BY OUR STAFF. THANK YOU!

COMING SOON TO THE HOTBOX :

Lewis A's, *Last Train to McHenry*, a story of love and betrayal set against a rr line abandonment.

Nick Wilson's, *Colored Lights & Flexible Steel*, a story for all times, though mostly it's about building signal bridges .

COMING SOON TO THE TAMR:

This February, West Springfield, MA will once again be the host for the TAMR Winter National Convention. It will be held in conjunction with the Amherst Railway Society Train Show January 30-February 1. For information contact: Doug Engler @ Nastrn3@yahoo.com or snail mail



TAMR HOTBOX