

THE HOTBOX

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

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THE HOTBOX

December 2003, Issue #366

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Librarian- "She's a stuffy old lady, but we like her."

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 GE is better than FM? 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:

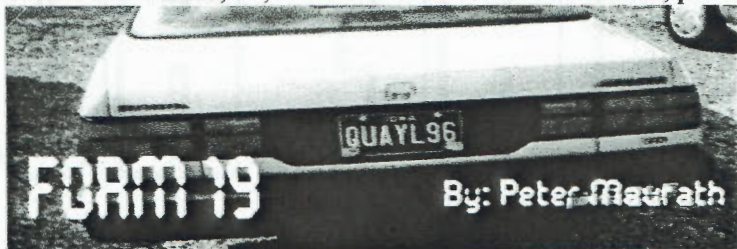
www.TAMR.org

Or join our newsgroup, by contacting:

pivotpin@TAMR.org

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

ON THE COVER: Penn Central #3254 is caught in a squall outside South Bend, IN, in the mid 1970's. Tim Vermande, photo.



Happy Holidays to everybody out there in TAMRland! I hope you all get the Athearn F59's, Kato Superliners, and Cornerstone building kits you asked for. This year I'm asking for your continued support of this fine publication, and the group behind it. Material is still being taken for the upcoming anniversary issue (I know I sound like a broken record, but this is important) which is right around the corner. Plus I'm always looking for some fresh faces and regular columns other than mine. Speaking of regular columns. I'd like you all to welcome two new regular features of the Hotbox: *87 Times Smaller*, and *Trackside Fans*. They are both the brainchild of Jonathan Schoen. You may recall seeing his name just last month in this very column, as a new member. Jonathan's really stepped-up to the plate, by not just doing one, but two articles. He'll have a third next year with the addition of a member photo page he'll assemble. This page had been planned for this issue, but due to computer hiccups, will be delayed till January. It's meant to feature member photo's only (no text, aside from captions) and will boost the Hotbox's size to a plump (for me anyway) eight pages. Look for an announcement elsewhere in this issue for more info (While I'm on the subject of HB articles Nick Wilson's *Colored Lights* and *Flexible Steel* will return in Febuary). Let Jonathan be an example to you all. If only half of you were half as active as he is, my hard-drive would be melting from all the material and we'd be a force that would get the NMRA worried. All it takes is sending in some material to the HB, telling a friend about the group, or putting a few fliers out at a train show. We're coming into our fortieth year, so lets make the most of it. •



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

CHICAGO NORTHWESTERN UNITS MAKE A RARE APPEARANCE ALONG THE PENN CENTRAL RIGHT-OF-WAY, SOMEWHERE IN ILLINOIS. TIM VERMANDE, PHOTO

ASK THE NOODLE GUYS

Starring Pete and CZ
Starring Pete and CZ

Pete: Hello and thank you for joining us. You have found the column in the Hotbox that will not only school you on the finer points of saving a buck when it comes to layouts, but will, dare I say, enlighten you.

CZ: Darn tootin! All it takes is a few flash lights and you'll enlighten all up!

Pete: You told me you took your medication, right? Argh, anyway on to our letter, it comes from a Rachel Beemer of Seguin, TX..

Rachel writes: "I liked the answer you had for the guy who wrote last month, but I want to know more about converting those telephone poles. What about transformers, and how do you create the different pole designs."

Pete: Well to answer your first question I just take a small section of spaghetti noodle paint it silver or gray then trim it to about 1/8" and glue just under the arms.

CZ: I used to put spaghetti under my arms, helped with the smell, like this one time I...

Pete: Stop. Remind me again why you're here?

CZ: Someone's gotta be the punchline with this funny-man/straight-man format, plus I make killer pop tarts.

Pete: Of course! How silly of me! But why don't you amuse yourself with this hole-puncher while I answer the nice lady's question. Rachel, for different pole designs it's just a simple matter of taking a hobby knife and doing some creative splicing. If you want to simplify, just cut away several arms, or insulators. If you want them going at different angles, simply cut them away and glue back on. You can even twist the arms in some cases, just be careful not to go to far and break it. The prototype is your best example, check on the poles in your area, then copy what you see to get the desired effect. Cut away the excess arms and insulators and add it where you want it. I hope that answers your question.

CZ: You hungry? I'm making some strawberry ones with icing and sprinkles

Peter: Snacktime, that's all for this month•

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

Or email at: TAMRHotbox@aol.com



CENTRAL OREGON AND PACIFIC GP38 #3838 HEADS NORTH PAST THE DEPOT WHILE SWITCHING AT CROSWELL, MI, ON THE HURON AND EASTERN AUGUST 2003. DAVID GENCI, PHOTO



A Book Review

Historic Railroads of Nebraska

BY: ANDY INSERRA

Arcadia Publishing's newest rail book, *Historic Railroads of Nebraska* by Michael M. Bartels and James J. Reisdorff will interest anyone that wants to learn about the railroads of Nebraska. With over 200 photos covering steam right up through the latest SD90 units, it is great for gaining a basic knowledge of the state's rail lines. And for \$20, it is a real bargain.

Divided into nine sections *Historic Railroads of Nebraska* covers the early days, passenger service, preservation, and more. Much of it is based in the steam era, when railroads had stations in every town and life often revolved around the trains. The photos depict much more than just trains. They also include the accompanying stations, roundhouses, and water towers. This is quite helpful for modelers as there are lots of ideas for things to build. The book even shows railroad buses and the early attempts at high-rail vehicles. Think of the family station wagon on rails and you get the idea of what some lines tried!

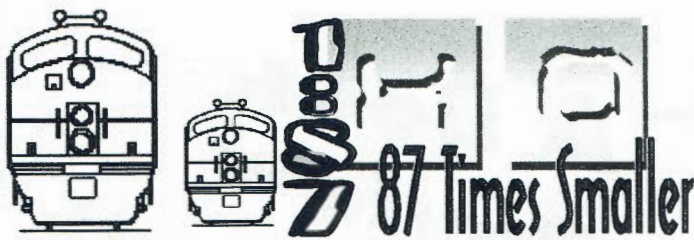
The photography is sharp; some publications have fuzzy or distant pictures but these are all clear and offer good details. The photos (all black and white) are all accompanied by captions that are often very informative. This isn't one of those books that reads like a textbook. It is photo-intensive and meant to be an overview, not something you would use to study for Jeopardy. From the early Union Pacific lines on the transcontinental railroad to the last run of Chicago and North Western's Cowboy Line and the latest SD90 units shoving heavy coal trains, this book covers the importance of railroads throughout the state of Nebraska.

So if you thought Nebraska was all corn and flat lands pick up this book. It'll show you the variety in trains that have run across this state. On top of that you'll be getting quality photography and information for a great price.●

Andy Inserra is a veteran member having served as Layout Design Artist for the Hotbox, and presently serves as TAMR Promotions Director.



AMTRAK #68 HEADS EAST ACROSS THE BRIDGE AT NIMROD, MT, JULY 3RD. DAVE HONAN, PHOTO

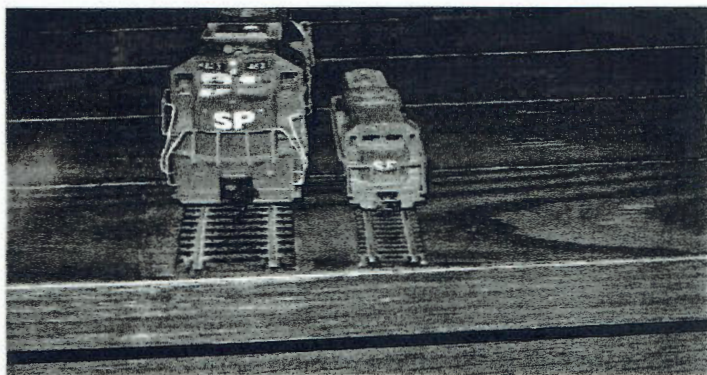


CONDUCTED BY: JONATHAN SCHOEN

I am Jonathan Schoen; a new member of the TAMR and fellow teen model railroader. I have already come to appreciate TAMR's many aspects and the fact it serves young railfans and modelers like myself. I have a small, 4x6', double tracked layout my dad and I own called the Schoen & Son Railroad. I run Santa Fe, Southern Pacific, and BNSF diesels. I live in Simi Valley, CA, through which part of the Union Pacific Coast Line runs. I see UP freights, Amtrak Pacific Surfliners and Coast Starlights, and Metrolink commuter trains. I love photography and always take my Toshiba digital whenever I go to watch the iron horses.

I am starting a monthly column called *Eighty Seven Times Smaller* to discuss the most popular scale in the model railroad world; HO. HO scale serves about 74 percent of all model railroaders. Its scales ratio is 1:87. That is 87 times smaller than the prototype; hence the column heading.

This column will serve you as a guide to buying and shopping for models. Which locomotives will serve you best? Which locomotives have the best deal? I will also give you tips on realistic operation. Everything from slow acceleration, to switching, to realistic car consists will be discussed.



AN HO GP38-2 (LEFT) AND AN N SCALE GP40-2 SIDE BY SIDE TO DEMONSTRATE THE SIZE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO MOST POPULAR SCALES. JONATHAN SCHOEN, PHOTO.

Most of you probably have seen ads for that new Athearn Genesis F7A&B set with more details than you knew the prototype had. Once you've finished marveling at it, you see that the price is way out of your range. Does that mean you can never have a couple of Fs pulling a train on your layout? Of course not! There are cheaper locos you can buy and have the same amount of fun. One of the main things I will show you is that by sacrificing some detail you can save a lot of cash.

Now because I hope to discuss these things does that mean that I'm a professional modeler? Of course not. Does it mean that I'm some sort of model railroad historian?

Far from it. Does it mean I'm closed to suggestions or help from you? Never! Does it mean I'm a teen modeler willing to lend his knowledge to help you get the most out of your money and models? Yes, most definitely. I'm only 14. Though I have had experiences with models I don't know everything. Feel free to contact me if you have any info or questions regarding HO scale.

That's it for my beginning column. Next month I'll discuss why HO scale is so popular among model railroaders. So look forward to learning more, getting tips and having more fun with your trains that are eighty seven times smaller than the prototype. ●

Contact me at TAMR87@yahoo.com or:
87 Times Smaller

Jonathan a new member, was also recently featured in MRN Letter's section. This is one of two of his soon to be regular features.



BY: PETER MAURATH

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

THE TOP SEVEN THINGS OVERHEARD AT THE TAMR CHRISTMAS PARTY.

- #7. "IS THAT CZ WITH HIS HEAD IN THE PUNCHBOWL?"
- #6. "OKAY, WHO BROUGHT THE DOZEN LOCOMOTIVE SHAPED FRUITCAKES?"
- #5. "WHOMEVER OWNS THE P42 OUTSIDE, YOUR LIGHTS ARE ON."
- #4. "I DON'T KNOW NEWTON, WHAT DID THEY GET FOR A PERFECTLY GOOD D-6-D?"
- #3. "WOW, A CHRISTMAS TREE MADE ENTIRELY OF WOODLAND SCENICS FOAM."
- #2. "I WONDER WHAT CHRIS IS TALKING ABOUT WITH THAT GUY FROM THE NMRA?"
- #1. "MERRY RAILFANNING EVERYBODY!"



GREAT MIAMI RY #35 APPROACHES BYERS TUNNEL NEAR WELLSTON, OH, SPRING 2003. CHRIS BURCHETT, PHOTO.



The Last Train to McHenry

By: Lewis Abeildinger

A little over 20 years ago the last Burlington Northern train rolled into the tiny community of McHenry, ND, located at the end of a former Northern Pacific branch line that came up from Sanborn, ND. It was 1982, and judging by the greenness in the grass, I would say it was early May and most likely on a Thursday. The train consisted of three GP9s and an ex-Chicago Burlington and Quincy caboose. The only pickup was a flatcar that had the former Northern Pacific depot on it (not much of a depot, mostly a shack. It replaced the original depot sometime prior to the fifties, but I'm unsure why).

As I stated early, McHenry was the end of a former NP branch line, which reached there in 1899. What makes McHenry interesting is the fact that instead of using a wye or turntable to turn locomotives, the construction engineer in charge, E. H. McHenry (for which the town was named) instead built a mile long reverse loop just west of town. This way the entire train could be turned. To my knowledge it is the only reverse loop built specifically for this purpose (meaning it did not serve a certain industry, such as the reverse loops used in some coal mines). That is what has made this end of the line town so much more distinct than any other.

The flatcar was positioned on the "main" so the depot could be loaded directly from the foundation to the flat car, so the train pulled onto the elevator track and cut the caboose off just after it cleared the main. They then backed up to the loaded car and proceeded out around the loop, picked up the caboose, then headed east, ending 83 years of service to the small hamlet.



RAILS BEING REMOVED, 1982

Since this occurred a year before my time, I cannot claim credit to the pictures. They were taken by a local named John Aarestad (or possibly Robert Ramey, however Aarestad was the donor to the museum up there, more on that later) who knew the train was coming and waited up there for it. Luckily someone had the foresight to capture this. Later that year the trackage would be removed from McHenry to Bimford, the next town to the east.

However, that is not the end of the McHenry story. Avis Lowe, another local, was able to save the McHenry trackage and the loop with a dollar a year lease agreement with the BN. She and others worked to get a caboose and engine to give rides and did so a few years later.

They also moved in the ex-Great Northern depot from nearby Glenfield to serve as a new station. That is now also filled with lots of artifacts and photos. Also on the ground is an ex-NP Russell Snowplow and a speeder shack and speeder.

McHenry today looks almost exactly as it did in 1982 when those photos were taken. About the only difference is a new depot that's been moved in and some aging to the elevators and fence (plus a lot of water not seen in any of the photos).

Time moves slow in North Dakota.●

Lewis is a longtime contributor to the Hotbox as well as the TAMR, having managed to start his own division out in plains of N. Dakota.



Welcome to the premier issue of *Trackside Fans*. This column is designed so that each month you can meet another teen railfan through their views, opinions and stories on being a teen railfan. This month, I have chosen an email that Joel Flasschoen sent me. Joel is a good friend of mine and is a huge railfan and modeler just like most of us.

"In a world dominated by video games and sports, a few good hobbies are easily overlooked (or in many cases looked down upon). Being a railfan is not as easy for teens as it is for adults. Most teens are the same in one aspect; they all want to be accepted by their peers. It is my opinion that teen associate railroads with the 'choo-choo trains' they may have received when they were younger. They link the thought of immaturity of childhood with the interest in railroads a few of their peers may have. (Believe me, being thought immature by your peers is one of the worst things a teen can experience.) A teen railfan's response most often will be to hide their hobby from their friends in fear of scorn and being an outcast.

"Because of this and many other factors, railroads are losing popularity among teenagers. Many teens would rather play video games, which often include violent animations and obscene language, because they provide 'action' and 'suspense'. But as far as I'm concerned, no matter how good the graphics or sound affects, pixels are still pixels. I would much rather be viewing something in real life, something not confined to the programming of a game, something with 3000 plus horsepower, and rumbles the ground when it passes you by, something that is often unpredictable; that's my opinion of excitement."

Want to see your story in *Trackside Fans*? Send submissions to:

Trackside Fans

or email to TAMR87@yahoo.com.

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 WHY SUPPLIES LAST, NEGATIVE EQUITY APPLIED TO NEW LOAN BALANCE, SEE STORE FOR COMPLETE DETAILS, NO PURCHASE NECESSARY, VOID WHERE PROHIBITED. FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF RULES, REGULATIONS, AND THE BEST DARN RESTAURANTS IN WILMORE, KY 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 :

-The TAMR kicks-off it's fortieth anniversary in style with an issue dedicated to the association's last four decades.

-The Photo Special, a page done by Jonathan Schoen is dedicated solely to member photos. Get yours in today by sending them his way (you'll find the address at the end of either of his two features).

COMING SOON TO THE TAMR:

-We're approaching that time of year again! The TAMR will, for the upteenth consecutive year, be hosting a TAMR table at the Amherst Society's Big Train Show, February 7th & 8th, 2004, in W. Springfield, MA. Come out and join the insanity!



TAMR HOTBOX