

THE HOTBOX

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEEN
ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS

"Constructed from new revolutionary quiet paper"

Editor -Peter Maurath
Publisher-Peter Maurath XI
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 Jonathan Schoen
 Steven Goehring
Art Director- Duh Vinci
Photographer- Ken Ahne
Librarian- Always has a dish
 of candy hearts out.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Send your check 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. New officers are too

COLUMNS:

Full of great tips on layout improvement? Got a million reasons FM is better than Alco? 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 railroad cartoons, or layout logos? Send them to the Hotbox staff for consideration.

SEND ALL SUBMISSIONS, OR HOTBOX QUESTIONS TO:

Peter Maurath

OR EMAIL AT:

TAMRHotbox@sbcglobal.net

Thrill as she thinks!

GET WIRED

Check out TAMR on the web at:

www.TAMR.org

Or join our online yahoo news group, by contacting:

pivotpin@TAMR.org

(By joining you'll receive updates on TAMR news and events, plus be connected to dozens of other TAMR members. There's no cost to join this group, do it today!)

If you have a web site relating to trains or model railroading, why not join the TAMR web ring. It costs nothing, and provides a link for all TAMR members to find other TAMR sites. To join, send your e-mail address and web site URL to:

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ON THE COVER: . Another day of fall tourist trains comes to a close at the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway. Photo: Peter Maurath

FORM 19 A message from your editor in chief

February already! That means the Winter National Convention is upon us. You should be getting this issue just before the big show kicks off. That means if you still want to be part of the fun all you have to do is contact Newton Vezina, the convention director for more info at:

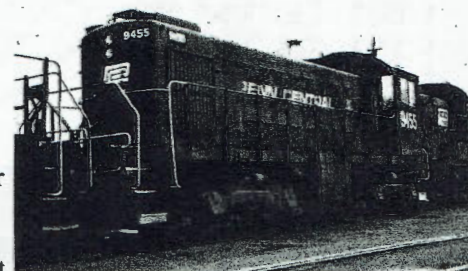
TAMRVideo@aol.com or 413-739-1949. At the very least you can come out to the show at the Eastern States Expo center in W. Springfield, MA, and check out the TAMR table as well as the hundreds of vendors, operating layouts, and clinics. Then you'll see why this is the second largest show in the U.S..

If you can't make that one and happen to be on the east coast, join the NY/NJ division crew as they host a table and small meet around the Greenberg Train Show at the Raritan Convention Center in Edison, NJ in March. Check out the ad on the next page for more info.

While I'm on the convention subject here we are two months in and still no Summer Convention bid. Unless one is made asap they'll be little chance of a successful one happening. This is the

time of year when everyone starts to look to summer vacation plans. Wouldn't it be great if we had a Convention to offer them? I won't kid you, it's a lot of work, but you don't have to go it alone, that's what the guys like myself and the rest of the board are here for, not to mention the support from MRN. A convention need not be some week long extravaganza crammed with non-stop activities. We're a small group. Some of the best conventions were the smaller ones no more than three-four days. Those that had breaks in the schedule and balanced the railfanning with models. To borrow a popular slogan (but it fits). You can do this, we can help. If your interested please contact myself (info to the left) or Jonathan Schoen, TAMR president at : jonathanhtd@yahoo.com

Lastly just so everyone knows, copies of our constitution are available free to any member who wants one. Contact me and I'll send you a copy. Back issues are also available for members.



Tim Vermande, photo.

The first two issues are free, after that it's a dollar a copy. Any issue is available going back to August 2003 in like new condition. Beyond that, copies of the copies are available going back to January 1992. Condition will vary on these 2002 and back, issues as these are not masters but issues out of my collection (i.e. photocopies). Issues availability will vary also with more than a few of those years seeing sporadic printings of the HB. Back issues are also available to non-members at two dollars a copy, sorry no freebies, perk of being a member. If your interested please contact me with the month's requested and I'll take it from there. •



Railfan Rantings

Welcome to Americas soon to be fastest growing article sensation, *Railfan Rantings*. In this column I pose a question to our members via the TAMR online group at Yahoo., and hopefully come away with some insightful, amusing and possibly silly answers. This month's question:

What is, in your opinion, the greatest locomotive ever built (it can be steam, diesel or electric), and why?

Scott Willett, Lomira, WI- "I think the SD40's-2 is the best locomotive ever built. The 40-2 is a good puller and is okay for switching, but when it comes to mainline trains a 40-2 just rides good at 50 mph."

John Sommer, East Brunswick, NJ- "The greatest loco ever built would have to be the Pennsy GG-1. Immensely powerful, fast, and huge, they were the workhorse of the NEC, the GG-1 has NEVER been out done."

Nick Wilson, Hamlin, NY- "I'm going to go ahead and say the AC4400CW. It's by far the best coal hauler out there. A pair of them can pull virtually anything, and have no problems when creeping along at 1-1/2 miles per hour (whereas it's DC equivalent, the C44-9W, would stall to prevent frying the traction motors."

Jesse DuBois, Lakeville, CT- "The Alco RS3. One of the original diesel workhorses that are still in service on many railroads today. Whether it be passenger, freight, MoW, or yard work, they always got the job done."

Dave Cenci, Peck, MI- "The GP38 line. Everyone says the SD40-2 was the most reliable locomotive EMD had built after the GP9, but nobody remembers the GP38's. They can be used in local jobs,

heavy switching, lower priority drag freights. I have even seen a set of 4, I believe, GP38's on the point of an NS eastbound coal train while in Indiana this last summer! GP38's."

Chris Barany, Edison, NJ- "N&W's home built J class of 4-8-4 Northerns. N&W constantly rebuilt and refined the locomotives to where they ran passenger and later years in life, freight when diesel took over."

Mark MacDougall, Stockertown, PA- "My choice is EMD's SD40-2. Nothing beats four Conrail SD40-2's pushing on the rear of a coal train around Horseshoe Curve in Run 8!"

Doug Engler, Fulton, NY- "I would say the "F-Series" loco's (Ex F7, F40PH, F9, etc...). They were great passenger loco's. The F40PH is the engine that saved Amtrak. The F7's were great for speed and looks and were more reliable."

Andy Inserra, New Hope, MN- "Gotta be the C636 - seeing one of those work is unreal. The sound, the power, the style - they are something else. Certainly one of the greatest of all time."

Willie Roberge, Wareham, MA- "I would have to say (to me) one of the most successful locomotives of all time would have to be Alco's RS-1. It had one of the longest production runs without any major design changes (19 years). It is also the locomotive that set the standard for almost all locomotives to follow."

Jonathan Schoen, Simi Valley, CA- "Hmm, that's a hard one. I'll probably have to go with the SD40-2. Though not my favorite locomotive (the SD45), the locomotive was released by EMD in the 70s as a mainline hauler and is now used on both BNSF and UP for just about any kind of job out there. It outlasted the '45s and all older GE's, so yeah, I say it's the greatest."

ALL MEMBERS INVITED!

COMING UP ON
MARCH 4TH AND 5TH
IN THE RARITAN
EXPO CENTER IN EDI-
SON, NEW JERSEY.
COME OUT TO SEE
THE TAMR WITH: VP
JOHN SOMMERS,
AUDITOR ERIK ROMA-
TOWSKI, NE REP.,
CHRIS BARANY, AS
WELL AS MEMBERS
GLENN PAPP, JOHN
REHUS, AND PAUL LI-
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ALL MEMBERS INVITED!



Railroading Over There

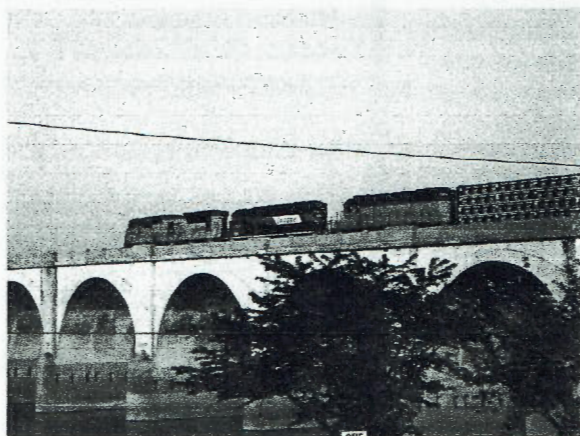


By: Jonathan Schoen & Mark MacDougall

Good evening, or afternoon, or morning, or night, whatever. Good day, all, welcome to the second issue of Railroading Over There. Have you ever wondered why writers must have some sort of bizarre intro to columns? The intros go on and on and your just wondering when the column is going to start because I have other things and oh look a monkey and is that a train horn and.....oh right, trains. With that, we begin our column today President Jonathan Schoen of Simi Valley, California and Mark "Slide Master" MacDougall of Allentown, Pennsylvania will answer the following question:

What are the three best railfanning locations that are close enough to your area for a day trip?

MARK MACDOUGALL, EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA



A TRAIN WITH TWO UP UNITS AND A MEXICAN LOCO ROLL ACROSS THE ROCKVILLE BRIDGE IN HARRISBURG, PA. MARK MACDOUGALL, PHOTO

The third favorite location of mine is in the small town of Macungie, a few miles west of Allentown, on Norfolk Southern's Reading Line. At this location, about 30-35 trains pass through daily. On an average Saturday, it's possible to see about 8-10 trains in 7 or 8 hours. The town has built a small park next to the tracks that is very popular with local railfans. With signals in both directions, (and a defect detector 5 miles eastward) it's easy to tell if something is coming in the next few minutes.

Number 2 is Wyomissing, Pennsylvania, just west of Reading, on Norfolk Southern's Harrisburg Line. About 30-40 trains a day roll through the interlocking at Wyomissing. In my three trips to this location, I saw a lot of variety. The best spot is in a coffee shop parking lot (there is a "Customers Only" sign, so we always get something first). As with Macungie, there are usually other railfans present as well.

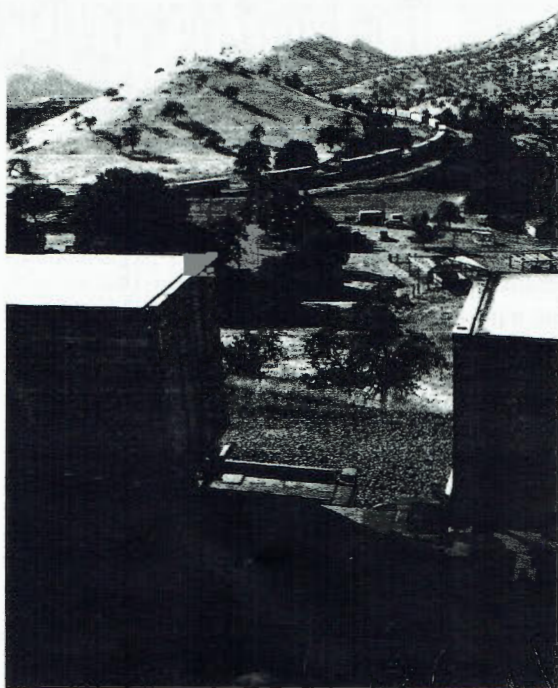
In my opinion, Harrisburg is the second best (only to Altoona) railfanning location in PA. There are many locations on all 6 main lines that are great. My favorite two locations are the two long bridges across the Susquehanna River. The first is the ex-PRR Rockville Bridge, which is the largest stone arch bridge in the world. There are many locations to view the bridge on both sides of the river. This location also sees more trains than any other location in PA but the North East Corridor. The second, lesser known bridge is the ex-Reading bridge on Norfolk Southern's Lurgan Branch (which is the site of my winning photo in the TAMR Photo Contest last year). This bridge is right in downtown Harrisburg, and is great for photos. Unfortunately, only 6 trains or so operate through here in daylight.

JONATHAN SCHOEN, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

By far the most famous place in the area is the Tehachapi Loop. The location is roughly around 100 miles north, northwest of Los Angeles and is part of the ex-Southern Pacific line over the Tehachapi Mountain Range. Assuming that most know about the Loop, I won't spend much time describing it. Despite the Loop's remote location deep in the mountains, it remains a hotspot because of the constant flow of BNSF and UP trains, but more importantly because of the nearly unlimited locations for photographing and watching. From different locations, the trains can pass above, below or around you. Also, it's just plain fun to see a train go in a circle and cross over itself, or be able to see the front and rear of a train side-by-side.

Another spot is not as well-known as the Loop, but certainly is a fun place. Colton Crossing is the location of where the BNSF (ex-Santa Fe) Chicago to Los Angeles 2-track mainline intersects with the UP (ex-SP) Los Angeles to New Orleans 2-track mainline (aka the "Sunset Route"). The crossing is located in Colton, CA, about 95 miles west, southwest of Los Angeles.

Continued on next page →



THE SAME TRAIN IN THE FOREGROUND AND BACKGROUND, AN INTERMODAL ROUNDS THE TEHACHAPI LOOP. JONATHAN SCHOEN, PHOTO

The crossing gets plenty of traffic from both railroads, most of which is containers, followed by trailers, autos, and general merchandise trains. Because both mainlines are double tracked, trains often pass each other. There are two transfer tracks connecting the mainlines of the railroads, making for further interesting operations.

The last place is one that is very well-known to California railfans. The station in Fullerton which is about a 30 minute train ride from Los Angeles Union Station in downtown LA. The station features 3 tracks; the outer ones each serve a platform while the middle one is reserved for freights. Like Colton Crossing, Fullerton is located on the BNSF mainline from Los Angeles to Chicago. (By the way, a few miles north of Fullerton is the BNSF Hobart Yard intermodal facility, where most of BNSF's Los Angeles bound and originating freights begin and end

their journeys respectively.) In addition to serving many freights a day, Fullerton is also part of two Metrolink lines and Amtrak's Pacific Surfliner corridor between Los Angeles and San Diego. It's easy to tell when a train of any kind is coming as the signals for all three tracks in both directions can be seen from the station. These signals can be seen from the platforms or even better from the pedestrian bridge over the tracks. Hunger is never an issue in Fullerton, as there is a small cafe at the station for food and beverage. You can* enjoy your food on outdoor tables in view of the tracks.*

Fast Facts

Tehachapi Loop (T) vs. Harrisburg (H)

Most Attractive Aspect

T: Trackage loops over itself while gaining elevation.

H: Two long bridges across the Susquehanna River.

Railroad Companies

T: Union Pacific (owner) and BNSF Railway (trackage rights).

H: Norfolk Southern and Amtrak (owners), Canadian Pacific (trackage rights), CSX and CN (Harrisburg run-throughs)

Trains

T: Containers, trailers, oil, general manifest (no passenger).

H: Intermodal, Freight, Coal, Ethanol, Passenger.

Continued on page 115

HaHa made you turn, just kidding!

The Top 7

By: Peter Maurath

"From the Home office in Cleveland, OH, it's tonight's Top Seven List!"

Top Seven signs you're at a bad train show.

#7. It features TT and #1 gauge exclusively.

#6. Instead of a stamp on your hand as you enter, you get a kick in the groin.

#5. It's sponsored by an airline.

#4. Their concession stand is a half-empty Diet-Rite vending machine.

#3. The main vendor is a guy named "Vito" working out of the back of his car.

#2. Your entrance ticket is actually half of some business card.

And the number one sign you're at a bad train show...

They offer a "how-to" clinic hosted by David Gunn.

Photography on a Shoestring Budget

Conducted By: Tim Vermande

On Entering Contests, Photo Advice

Now for some advice on how to get your photos noticed. The typical photo contest is inundated with entries, with the result that there are a lot of choices for the judges. If you haven't noticed, just about everyone has a camera, and there's no shortage of people who think they can take pictures well, even if they can't.

So the first step is to make sure your photo is technically well-done. In a contest, there is usually a first round, where unsuitable entries are weeded out. This starts with the previously mentioned wrong formats, and then turns to gross errors.

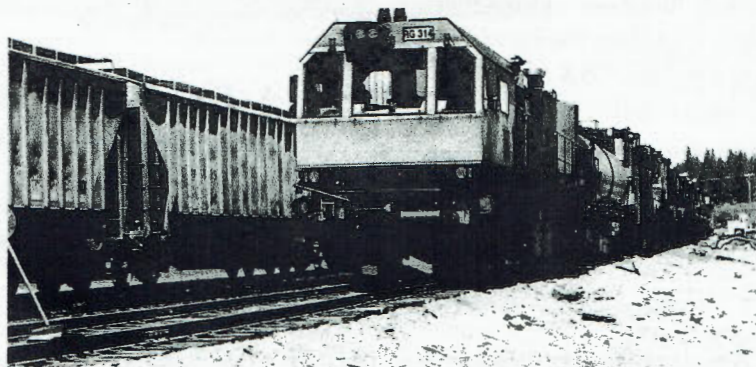
However you may feel about a photo, perhaps because of the subject or the trip you were on, you need to look at it carefully. It might help to get a friend to help. Pictures that are blurred, out of focus, badly exposed, and so on, will not make it past the first round. If you deliberately intended to do something along those lines, such as a pan shot,

selective focus on an unusual feature, or a silhouette, make sure it's clear from the picture itself what you are doing. Other flaws are a tilted horizon, a background that distracts from the photo -- like a pole growing out of an odd place, a cluttered foreground, the subject too small (or cut off).

After that point, the more serious discussions begin. Although there are many guides and "rules" of composition and technique available, judges are looking for something that stands out, and just what that means cannot be defined easily. A good photo tells a story about itself, and will often have some display of technique or composition that sets it apart. Some of it is also personal taste.

You shouldn't take it hard if you don't win, because judges may be looking for something else: a favorite road of their own if you've entered a rail photo contest, or a car instead of a train if you've entered a more general contest. For all the bad photographers out there, there are also a lot of fairly decent ones, so the competition is stiff. •

Working on the railroad.



LORAM RAIL GRINDING TRAIN RESTING ON A SIDING JULY 10, 2005
LOCATION UNKNOWN. PHOTO: BEN HAWKEN.

The Hurd Monthly Tips

By: Andrew Hurd

#1

With any old wood kits you may have, especially box-cars to make them stronger add 1/8 thick pieces of balsa wood as sub-sides inside the car. They can be spaced apart by blocks across the car. You can get balsa wood at your local hobby shop.

#2

A nice cleaner: Fiber-glass office erasers are good for cleaning scum and paint from wheel threads as well as for polishing metal parts. They are also useful to smooth rough spots in paint surfaces before a second coat is applied.

Trains to Nowhere

BY STEVEN GOEHRING

WAGON-TOP WARS

Think of a diesel engine. Which loco did you think of? F7? E8? C-liner? FA-2? Chances are, you thought of a so-called "Wagon-top".

Let me explain how I got that weird name. I was searching the Internet for information on Pennsy P5a electrics and I came across a forum in which one member was discussing the huge numbers of carbody diesels available in N and HO scales.

(Don't ask what this has to do with P5a's.) That forum member referred to the competition for the best F unit as "Wagon-Top Wars", a throwback to round-topped diesels being called Wagon-Tops.

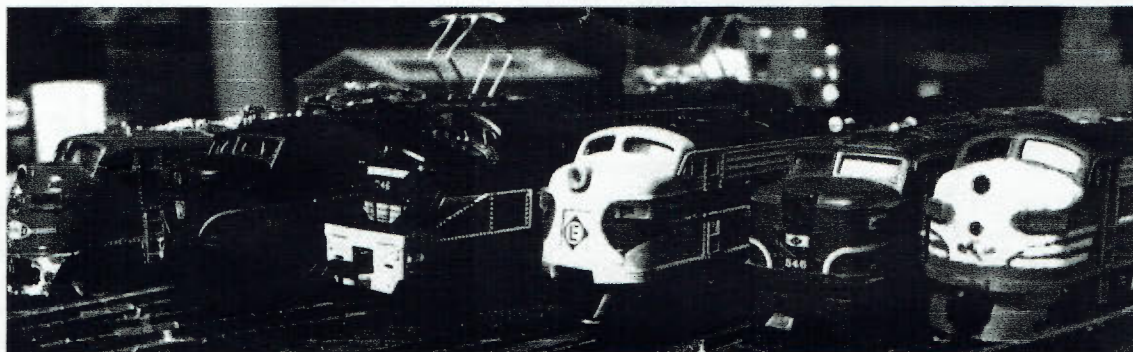
Ya know, he was right. Let's look a HO scale for a moment. How many F units are there? Bachmann has one or two, Athearn has regular F3's and '7's, and then they've redone them in the Genesis line with more detail. Not to mention Intermountain. Those F7's built from actual EMD drawings are really sharp. Life-Like has always

been rooting for the underdog of diesels, so you'll find great C-liners, Erie-Built's, and other less common wagon-tops, along with new C-liners and more F3's coming due to the Walthers influence.

Need I say Broadway Limited? ARE YOU

KIDDING? Five different types of E-Unit, all with sound, DCC and all sort of cool "bells and whistles."* Anybody want another F7? BLI's developing one.

When glancing at the O scale cases at the local hobby shop, I see enuff F-units to flatten an elephant. E-units, Alco's, you name it, they've made it in O scale. How many F7 releases will it take before the O scale F-units are more detailed than the prototypes?



N scale is full of competition for the best carbody diesel too. Intermountain and Micro-Trains are dueling over FT's, while Bachmann, Intermountain, and Kato battle for the title of "Best F7 or F3 in N scale". Life-Like and Kato are competing for the best E-Unit and PCM is about to enter the fray with a sound equipped E7. Anybody wanting to make any ALCO wagon-tops has Life-Like to contend with. Life-Like has also put out C-Liners and Erie-Built's, but they more or less have a monopoly on those.

Now why can't they fight over GE cen-

tercabs or ALCO centuries? Better yet, anybody want to try to beat Arnold/Rivarrossi on the N scale GG1s? Any new electric engine will be well received by N or HO scalers. (A big "Thank you" to Bachmann for the new Acelas.) I know a lot of folks clamoring for Reading T1's or other engines, but another F or E unit? Awww, come on! You know it's all been done before.

And besides, if some fine model train firm fixes their offerings to feature further F-units, for sure, there would be few fully interested fellows because remaking a model formerly fabricated for the same scale is fully foolish. Fortunately, there seem to be more steamers and more obscure diesels being produced lately.

Maybe next time I search for data on P5a's, someone will please be making them in N scale?●

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COMING SOON TO THE HOTBOX:

- More of the riveting material you've come to love!.
- Ben Hawken talks about oddballs.

COMING SOON TO THE TAMR:

- Winter Convention time, seeya there!
- Waffles, lots and lots of waffles!.

We're on the web!
www.tamr.org



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