

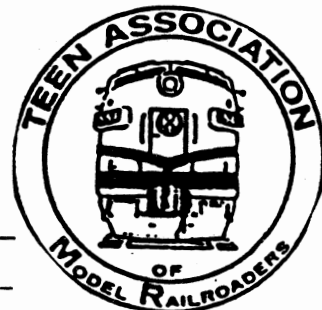
HOTBOX

"The Magazine of the Teen Model Railroader"

Issue #242

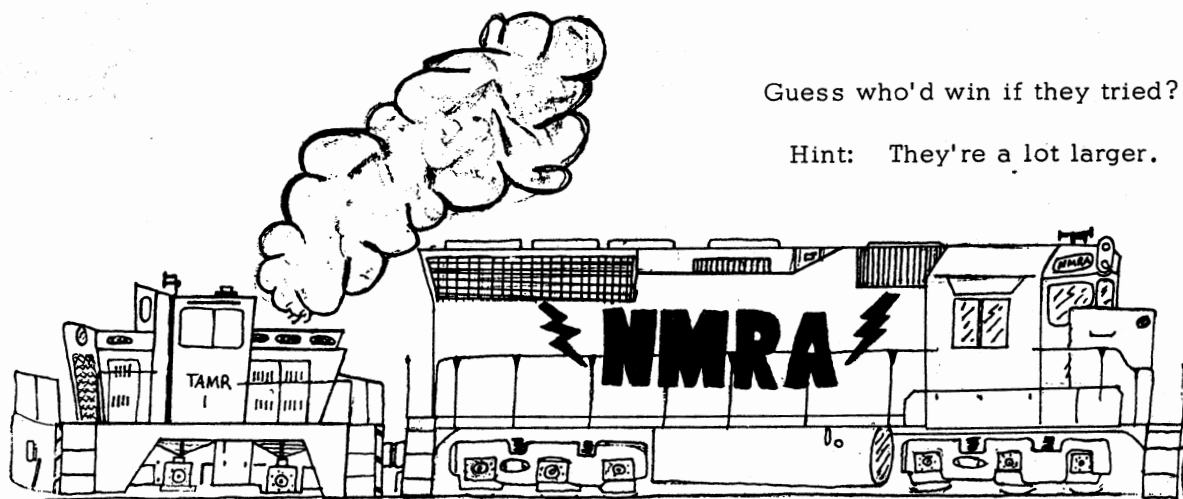
July, 1989

\$1.25



ANTRAK'S KEY

CONTEST RULES
INSIDE



Guess who'd win if they tried?

Hint: They're a lot larger.

TAMR vs. NMRA tug-of-war ??

NMRA Committee: "Hey-- Let's take these kids for a ride"

Is this the end of the TAMR? Will the TAMR prevail? That's smoke
worthy of an Alco! ARE WE going to let this happen.

cartoon by Dave Valentine June '86

MORE INSIDE

AMTRAK'S NORTHEAST CORRIDOR --

Believe it or not, push-pull passenger equipment is beginning to find its way back on Amtrak rails again. It is making quite a comeback to say the least. Between late 1987 and early 1988, Amtrak converted ex-'Metroliner' M.U. electrics to 'Cab-control cars' which began operating on the 'San Diegos' on the Santa Fe Surf Line located in California, and in February 1988 Amtrak quietly began operating a few passenger-trains with similar equipment on its Philadelphia-Harrisburg "Keystone Service" Corridor located in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Usual Amtrak motive-power for these runs are either F-40PH's, AEM-7's or, once in a while, an E-60CP electric specially designed for push-pull service. What began as an experiment, the entire "Keystone Service" operation could be expanded to bring push-pull passenger equipment to all Harrisburg local service.

While the metropolis of San Diego was busy celebrating fifty years of the "San Diegos" (March 23, 1938-1988) with its new push-pull trains, the city of Harrisburg was celebrating fifty years of electrified service (January 15, 1938-1988). Slightly more than one month later, the Philadelphia-Harrisburg Corridor relieved its first push-pull passenger service, but by no means is the push-pull idea new. Main line push-pull operations date as far back as the mid 1960's when the Chicago & North Western Transportation Company began operating a couple of its Chicago-Milwaukee and Chicago-Upper Michigan Passenger trains with bi-level '400' commuter coaches, and cab cars. When Amtrak was created in mid 1971 to 'relieve' 95% of freight company's passenger business, the segments of this particular service that did in fact remain, were operated with 'conventional' passenger equipment. However, in 1981, that all changed. Amtrak decided to add 'control-cabs' to four ex-C&NW long distance bi-level coaches that it had acquired throughout the previous years and instituted push-pull operations on passenger trains out of Chicago-Valparaiso, Indiana; Springfield, Illinois; and again to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Current push-pull equipment definitely has some "economic sense" in terms of turning trains at stations and terminals, but, on the other hand, this has a drawback in its potential problems with grade crossing accidents. Mainly for this reason, the push-pull equipment will unquestionably be restricted to fairly well-developed passenger routes with a minimum level of grade crossings on

"KEYSTONE -

SERVICE"

BY JEREMY AMUNDSEN

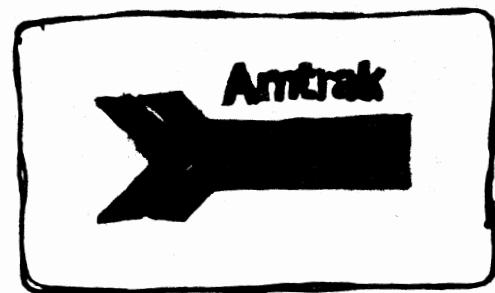
the passenger routes they traverse on. The old ex-Pennsylvania Railroad electrified main line extending from Philadelphia to Harrisburg fits nicely into the category of a well engineered high-speed railroad. Since there are only four grade crossings on the line, most of the electrified line is "grade seperated" in the congested metropolitan regions and by doing so has established an excellent safety record using multiple-unit passenger equipment as well as the standard locomotive hauled consists.

The ex-Metroliner M.U.'s that have, and in a few cases still are being converted to cab cars was developed in 1967 by the Pennsylvania Railroad to be the U.S.'s first truly high speed trains, operating exclusively on the New York-Washington Corridor at speeds up to 125 mph. They entered service in 1969 for the new Penn Central Corporation and served faithfully for many people as, America's fastest trains until GE's swedish AEM-7's teamed up with Amfleet I and II passenger cars (at that time the infamous name "Metroliner" was instituted to the New York-Washington express service and the coaches themselves were transferred over to the 104 1/2 mile Harrisburg line beginning on February 1, 1981).

Although Amtrak never came close to pushing its Metroliners up to projected speeds of 160 mph in revenue service, they did run for at least 10 years in the 125 mph range; On the Harrisburg line the speed limit is 90 mph which does not allow three digits. By October of 1981, the "Capital Liners" (as Amtrak preferred to tag them in their Pennsylvania capital city assignment) had completely replaced the older leased NJ Transit "Jersey Arro" m.u. passenger cars, which in turn replaced the leased Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA for short) "Silverliner m.u.s which Amtrak still had in service on the North Corridor until mid 1982.

The Capital Liners continued to carry on with there business for several more years to cruise through the lovely intriguing Amish farmlandsof Lancaster County around the booming city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, which is a major stationstop for Amtrak's Silverliners and long distance trains like the Broadway Limited; but local and long distance Conrail freights which own trackage on and around the Amtrak mainline. They stay over between runs in the enormous shadow of the 1906 built Pennsylvania Capital Dome.


In doing so, Amtrak has continued the



tradition of providing a two-way commuter and business/travel rail corridor, rush hour service and fairly good over all on-time performance to and from Philadelphia or Harrisburg was excellent there for awhile. But, eventually old age, road failures and delays on the route rose so sharply that Amtrak put AEM-7's on the route more and more to haul the crippled Capital Liners. When old old ex-Metroliners were used as 'coaches' behind AEM-7's, they (the Metroliners) had run with there pantographs up to collect current to operate a 'motor-alternator' set which supplies power and electricity for lights, heating, and air conditioning. Unfortunately, the cars are not equiped to accept head-end power (HEP for short) which is passed from a locomotive. This particular pattern of passenger haulage became more popular and routine, Amtrak decided to remove the old Capital Liners traction motors. In the fall of 1987, the lucky few Capital Liners still wearing there traction motors where not in operation and were disabled without additional motive-power. This sadly finished chapter in the infamous Metroliners Career that began in mid 1969 when they where prematurely touted as being the high-speed sprinters of the future. The Metroliners are dead at the age of twenty.

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MORE CHANGES

BY JOHN REICHEL

Welcome to the new and improved HOTBOX! I am happy to be one of the crew helping to get the TAMR's newsletter back on schedule.

At 29, I am one of the more "mature" members in the TAMR, yet I am still well below average age for model railroaders. For about the past year and a half, I have become quite busy again with my railroad. This time, the LaPorte & Nevada is finally going to be built, and it is going to be built RIGHT!

My initiation into the world of model railroading came at the tender age of two, when my father took me shopping for my first train set. I was fascinated; the store featured (and still does) a lengthy right-of-way suspended over the customers' heads. My mom thought my dad crazy to get a two-year old a train set; She didn't know that almost all Christmas train sets are commandeered by fathers until the kids get big enough to assert their ownership rights! That first Tyco set was sturdily constructed compared with most of today's sets, although the engine never really ran right.

Thus began a string of problem locomotives: an AHM Kraus Maffei had a bad motor, then the F7 from and Athearn freight set developed mysterious mechanical problems and stopped running, leading me (at age four) to abandon the layout and push the poor engine on the sidewalk. Amazingly, despite the damaged wheels, it runs better now than it ever did, thanks to a good oiling and cleaning. (Now probably to compensate for the poor-running locomotives of my early childhood, I have more smoothrunners than I have room for!)

At about age 10, I won a coin toss with my dad which led to a new layout board and a space in the garage. My enthusiasm grew with the layout until I was about 15, when I got more interested in model ships. But the train bug hit again in college, leading to various half-baked layouts, then again thanks to the encouragement of my sister's model railroading boyfriend (now fiance).

In returning to active model railroading, I have noticed a few changes. One is poor quality of much trainset equipment. I was amazed to see how cheaply some turnouts are constructed. Derailments are common with cheap equipment and can turn potential model railroaders against the hobby before they've even really started. One hobby shop owner in my area is commendable for packaging an Athearn locomotive and freight cars with an MRC power pack at a discount price, with an Atlas track planning booklet thrown in.

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ATLAS

A more positive change is the boom in applications of electronics and computers to model railroading. Carrier control is especially revolutionary. As it develops and becomes less expensive, I am sure it will be used more. And since radio-controlled cars have become quite popular among young people, I think this interest can be successfully channeled into radio-controlled trains. So show your friends who like RC cars your layout and maybe you can convert some into model railroaders!

Another positive change is the vast increase in the amount of supplies available. The Walthers catalog is many times larger than it once was. You can now spend more on detail parts for one plastic diesel than a brass diesel used to cost. Perhaps 10 years ago, the phrase "parts for scratchbuilders" was controversial for its apparent contradiction; now, builders seem more willing to use some commercial parts instead of trying to scratchbuild everything. Many of my train books are hand-me-downs from the '50s, and I was accustomed to seeing detail parts expertly carved from blobs of solder, or window frames painstakingly built up from laminated cardstock. Who has the time for that anymore? With such excellent commercial parts available, why bother? Some scratchbuild mainly to save money, but for others, the satisfaction of building everything (even the motor!) is well worth all the trouble.

All in all, it is a great time to be a model railroader, and it keeps getting better as interest in the hobby grows. There are more ways to have fun than ever before. In another issue, I will bring up some of the other changes I have observed.

WANTED WANTED

anyone who wants to contribute
any kind of artwork to the HOTBOX

send any work to the editors

The 25th Anniversary Contest will be a contest for a TAMR Anniversary Engine, Boxcar, and Caboose. We will be awarding some kind of prize for first and second place.

****RULES****

1. Open to all TAMR members.
2. Simply design a 1/4" scale engine, boxcar, and caboose.
3. The plans must be on tracing, or artist paper, done in black ink, with all dimensions, scales, lettering, paint schemes, and name and address of entrant.
4. The deadline for submissions for the contest is October 31, 1989.



The Prizes will be awarded based on originality, and what best represents the TAMR.

****So come on lets start designing, let it be you who comes up with the TAMR engine; Hurry time is running out.**

**SEND ENTRIES TO: JOHN J. ROSSI III
6 BEECH COURT
COLLEGE POINT, NY 11356**



**Deadline For
August Issue
Early September
Send in Articles Now!**



1989: YEAR OF THE TRAIN?

By Steve Shoe,
MRIA Executive Secretary

This year is sure to be the best year for model railroading since the end of World War II. Maybe we should call it -The Year Of The Train. "People, it seems, are falling in love with trains again," says Jim Doherty in the December issue of *Smithsonian* magazine. He goes on to state that "Americans are buying around a million train sets a year..." This is probably a very conservative estimate, since H. Lee Riley, Vice President of Bachmann, states that they sold 200,000 G scale Big Hauler train sets at Christmas.

During the past three years, the revitalized Lionel Corporation, now owned by Richard Kughn, doubled its business the *Smithsonian* article reports. Doherty states that model railroaders spent \$180 million on trains and accessories last year compared to \$133 million five years ago. "Sales this season are significantly better than last season," according to Eric Smith, Marketing Director of Kadee Quality Products.

Two different manufacturers said that they were unable to take a vacation during their slow time this summer because the slow time never came. A leader in the industry when asked how things were going, took a deep breath, and said with a smile: "Exciting things are happening!" At the Model Railroad Industry Association (MRIA) office, we have identified over 625 model railroad manufacturers, packagers, importers and publishers. MRIA membership has grown 50% in the last year.

The number of serious modelers has also increased. *Model Railroader*

magazine had a record year. ABC auditing figures show that the first six months of 1988, they sold an average of 196,530 copies of each issue. In January, they broke all records by selling 210,660 copies.

The National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) shows increases in membership each month. As of December 1, 1988, the membership was at 22,417 and increasing by five members a day. The model railroader continues to come from many walks of life and little attention is given to celebrities that enjoy the hobby such as: Raymond Burr (Perry Mason), Gary Coleman, Michael Gross (*Family Ties*), Frank Sinatra, Ward Kimball (Disney Producer), Stephen Spielberg, and Philip Anschutz (owner of the SP and Rio Grande railroads).

In 1989, there will probably be more model railroad shows in the country than ever before. MRIA has a new booklet, "Model Railroad Show Guide", that is available to anyone planning a model railroad show or open house simply by requesting it from the MRIA office at P.O. Box 28129, Denver, CO 80228. The Citicorp Center model railroad display in downtown New York City last Christmas drew well over the 125,000 that saw it in 1987. There are large shows now every year in Wheaton (IL), Aurora (CO), Roseville (CA), Wilmington (MA), Timonium (MD), King of Prussia, Pittsburgh and York (PA), Ft. Lauderdale and Tampa (FL) just to mention a few. Last October, at the Chicago Model Hobby Show, 15,500 people came to see almost 100 model railroader manufacturers display thousands of model railroad items. *The Hobby Book* called it the "one and only national hobby show".

There are now no less than 56 magazines published for the model

railroader/rail buff. If this isn't enough reading, the modeler can join the NMRA and subscribe to more than 30 regular newsletters that NMRA regions publish. Then there's the Special Interest Group (SIG) publications to read. Add to that the hundreds of railroad and model books that flood the market and you see the modeler has more to read than ever before.

Model railroading is receiving national recognition. I've already mentioned the cover story in the December issue of the *Smithsonian* magazine, which looked very positively at model railroading. Millions of Americans watched in December, as Doug Thompson, President of the Toy Manufacturers Association, showed the Marklin Digital System and the Lionel Railscope on the NBC *Today Show*. USA Weekend (28.3 million readers) featured a cover story about Frank Sinatra's hobby of model railroading in December of last year. The exposure to the general public is another positive sign that this is the "Year of the Train".

The number of model railroaders attending national conventions is probably at an all time high. Besides the NMRA convention, there are now conventions for the narrow gauge modeler, the N scale, the O scale, and the S scale modeler, the train collector, the Santa Fe, C&NW, Rock Island or UP modeler (and many other groups formed to model after a specific railroad), the big train operator, the live steamer, garden rail-roader, logging railroader, and the traction modeler. The industry has changed dramatically in

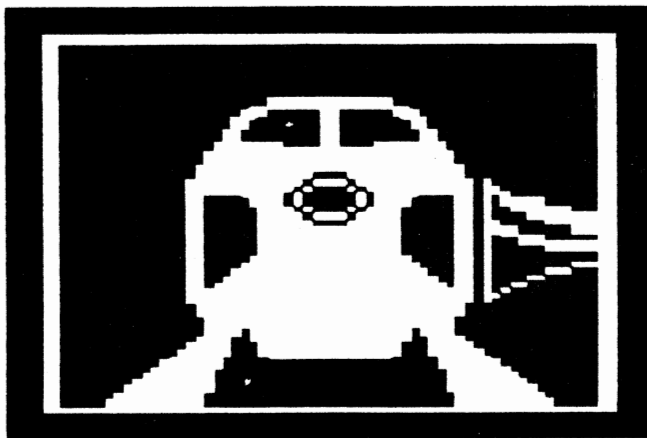
the last five years. With the Lionel Railscope, a tiny video camera in the boiler of a G, O, or HO locomotive, the engineer can now look down the track as if he was sitting in the locomotive cab. The Marklin digital system allows you to program into a computer a variety of activities that the modeler wants the train and other automated pieces to do. Radio control operating of the new G scale Bachmann Big Hauler will revolutionize model railroad controls. As frequencies expand, this added control system will bring additional people into the hobby.

The increase in companies making parts, accessories and even ready-to-run equipment for the G scale model railroader will encourage people to launch into indoor modeling in G, as well as, garden model railroading. Garden rail-roading now has its own national convention and national magazine. It's showing phenomenal growth. Highly detailed, mass produced HO and N equipment of Kadee Quality Products, Precision Masters, Stewart Hobbies

diesel line, Bachmann's new Spectrum series, Walthers' and Front Range's modern cars, and KATO's drive equipment will keep interest in these scales growing.

Due to the increases in model railroad shows, conventions and publicity, there are many more consumers who are buying more models. Tie that fact with increases in manufacturers who are producing new innovative products, and you can see why 1989 truly will be the:

"YEAR of the TRAIN"



WANTED:

Anybody in the Northeast looking to receive or contribute to a monthly railfan newsletter. Please write to Jon Webster

PO Box 743

N. Conway, NH 03860

SLIDE/PRINT EXCHANGE

Jon Webster is looking for someone in the midwest or west to trade photos with. To write to him see address above.

The SLIDE/PRINT EXCHANGE will be a regular feature of the HOTBOX; It will be a place for all of you dedicated railfanners to list the pictures you have and what type of pictures you are looking for. If any body else is interested in this please send your information to the Slide/Print Exchange Editor Jeremy Amundsen

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