

the Hotbox

Dec. - Jan. 1996

Issue # 307

The official Publication
of the Teen Association
of Model Railroaders



A CSX SD40-2 leads a train across the Farmington Rd. crossing near New Carlisle, OH on January 2nd on 1996.

Photo by Mike Riley

i n t h i s i s s u e :

Railroad Police returns!

Focus: Ritchie Roesch

Product Reviews:

Athearn's Dash 9, E&C Shops Coalporters

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Submissions

Submissions to the Hotbox will be accepted in any form, written or typed. Typed material is preferred, but not required. If you use a Macintosh with PageMaker or Quark X-Press, material on Mac-formatted 3.5" disks will be gladly accepted.

Articles should be model or train related. Model features need not be about trains, but anything that could be modeled.

Articles should be accompanied by photos or drawings or both. Drawings should be in dark black ink. The editor will draw artwork if you are unable to produce quality work. Photos should be prints, any size, slides will not be accepted. Photos should be accompanied by a description, name of the photographer, date and location of photo and any other information. They should have very good contrast, be more light than dark, be in focus, and have good composition. Write your description on the back of the photo, please.

Product Reviews should be accompanied by photos of the product, a brief description, steps of construction, any tips for construction or use, and the good

and bad points of the product.

Train Places need to be accompanied by a map of the area, directions to reach the site, a photo or two, a description of the area, approx. train frequency, good access locations, etc. For more information see the "Hot Spots" sections in *Trains* magazine.

A very welcome feature article is layout tours. Tours should be accompanied with a track plan, photos, a description of the layout, and any other information. If you want any material returned, include a self addressed envelope with proper postage.

About the TAMR

The Hotbox is published every month by the Teen Association of Model Railroaders. Membership to the TAMR includes a subscription to the Hotbox, an invite to all of the numerous conventions and outings we hold, and the opportunity to meet many new people and travel many new places.

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy New Year !! Congratulations to Brian Bingham, the new Southern Region Representative! Nominations were received from Brian and Ritchie Roesch. Both were equally well qualified. Since Ritchie is already very active in the TAMR, with four good columns in the Hotbox, Peter choose Brian to give him a chance to become more active. Thank you both for entering the election, and have fun Brian. Thank you ten times over, Ritchie, for being such an excellent member. Your work is greatly appreciated!!

I received a letter from Aaron Marcavitch, the old editor of the Hotbox and head of the Short Notes on Shortlines column of the Hotbox. After a short disappearance from the Hotbox, he has returned! His address is different, too, and it is listed on the previous page.

I am also initiating a new column in the Hotbox. It is similar to MODEL RAILROADER'S Model of the Month, except that it is not a contest because all entries will win. Send in good photos of a model you are proud of along with a short text of what you did to it, and it will be published. No prizes will be awarded because again, it's not a contest. For more about this, see "It's the Details That Make the Difference" on page 15. Please don't hesitate to make your model's famous!

Enclosed with this issue is the 1996 directory information form you MUST fill out and return to me no later than February 1st. This is NOT optional; **this is mandatory!!!** I would like to mail the directory with the February Hotbox issue to save money on postage and envelopesso please help me out! I need a form from everyone. Don't be left out of this year's directory - **RETURN YOUR FORM TO ME BY FEBRUARY 1ST!**

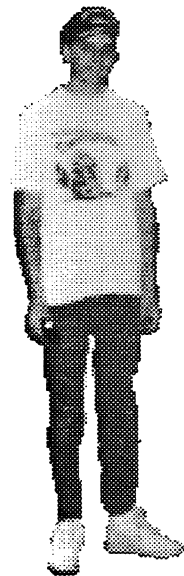
Till next month,

MIKE RILEY

My name is Ritchie Roesch. I live in Texas and am the Hotbox's Railroad Police and Train Places columnist. These two columns are new to the Hotbox so I hope you enjoy reading them.

I don't do much other than trains. Church is about the only other thing in my life that takes up a good amount of time. With the church, I do the following: vollyball, roller skating, football, sunday school, regular church services, Wednesday night youth group meetings, and I'm currently helping build an extension onto the back of the curch.

My HO scale layout is only 4'x10' but I have somehow crammed the UP, ATSF, SP, Amtrak and the fictional ore-hauling Pacific Mining Co. onto it. The layout is freelanced and is called Cleghorn Pass, which is very close to Cajon Pass (pronounced Cuh-hone) and was designed to relieve the busy traffic of Cajon. At this time, the layout isn't even halfway done, and I doubt it will make that mark anytime soon. Cleghorn Pass is set in the summer of 1994 but due to sharp curves nescessary on a 4' wide layout, I don't have much modern equipment.



I enjoy everything about the hobby. In fact, the only thing I don't like is the amount of money involved, but I guess the more money I put into it the more I will treasure it.

My address and phone numebr:
 2251 Thompson rd.
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 (817) 790-8629

SOUTHERN REGION

Congratulations to Brian Bingham, the new Southern Region Representative. Brian was chosen because he wanted to become active in the TAMR instead of an "idle" member. See the article on page 13 about Brian's layout. WELCOME ABOARD, BRIAN!!!

ON-LINE MEMBERS

We have alot of members on-line. Here are the e-mail addresses:

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Brian Bingham: Bingham_B@freed.fhu.edu

If anybody else has an e-mail address, please let me know.

THE DIRECTORY

It's January and that means that the annual member directory is coming out soon. With this issue you'll find a form asking questions about yourself. You MUST fill out this form and send it to Mike Riley by February First. Please HELP -This is MANDATORY, not optional.

TRAIN ORDERS MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Once again, I've presented the incorrect information about Norfolk Southern HO scale diesels. Bryan Malone told me that Athearn doesn't offer a GP40-2 but they do offer a GP38-2. Maybe one of these days I'll get this right!

Athearn has released it's GE 9-44CW (wide cab). They are painted for GE demo, ATSF, SP, UP, CNW, CSX, CN North America, BC Rail, Norfolk Southern and undecorated. Yes, for those skeptics out there, NS does have Dash 9 wide cabs. They haven't been delivered yet but are indeed on order. Look for a review of this locomotive in an upcoming issue. They are also introducing MP Canarie (UP grey and yellow colors) schemes on the GP50 and GP38-2, Lehigh Valley F7s, WP GP7 and F7 (green scheme), Florida East Coast 100th Anniversary set GP40-2, and a GATX leasing set. They are also painting their cabooses with UP's Safety Slogan scheme and SP's railroad police white scheme.

Atlas is bringing out a 60' double plug door boxcar, Bachmann Plus is introducing a B30-7 and an SD45, Life-Like Proto 2000 has released their SW9/1200 and a 52'6" drop end gondola (which has incredible detail: inside tie-down hooks, operating drop ends, add-on grabs etc.).

Kato has announced that it's new Dash 9-44CW will feature operating ditch lights. This is the first time this feature has ever been offered on a ready-to-run locomotive. They should be available by Spring.

Walthers has introduced the first complete model of a steel mill. It includes all the buildings: rolling mill, coke ovens and quencher, blast furnace and cast house, electric furnace, hot metal (bottle) car, thimble car, coke car, 65' mill gondola, new schemes on the steel coil car (not to mention round hoods), US Steel FM switcher, special figure sets and 40' scrap gons. It is also the largest mass-produced model in

any scale ever. Each item will be released each month of 1996. It's not exactly the cheapest model ever, weighing in at just under \$500.00!

We received one single letter this month:

Hi! My name is Chris McLaughlin. I am 16 years old and live in Stow, Massachusetts. I just joined the TAMR about a month ago and can already see how cool this association really is. I recently started building a small diorama since space is a problem right now. I call it the Searstown Junction. I'll send some pictures when I'm done. I suggest you build a small diorama if you don't have the space for a larger layout. Because they are small and inexpensive you can test track and scenery techniques so you don't mess up on your dream layout. [good idea-ed.]

Finally, I was wondering if anybody could give me some information on the Guilford Transportation Co., especially the line that runs through Sudbury, Massachusetts. I would like to know if there are any good railfanning spots around the area; a schedule might help, too. You can write to me for any other reason, too, so I can see just how many people there are in this great hobby.

CHRIS McLAUGHLIN
26 SANDY BROOK DR.
STOW, MA 01775

You are right, Chris, about building dioramas. I am planning one for the TAMR and will be discussing it in next month's Trains 101 column. Please do send me some photos of the diorama, or even better, a whole article!

As for the Guilford Trans. Co., I hope you get the information you need. I would help, but I am not that knowledgeable about the railroad. You may talk to NER representative Ole Bye about it, though. He is pretty knowledgeable about New England railroads and railfanning locations. His address is in the front of the Hotbox. Good luck, and keep in touch!

RAILROAD POLICE

Now that school is in you probably won't be able to go railfanning very often if at all. It can be very rewarding for those who get the opportunity to go. But it can be more dangerous to go at this time of the year due to weather conditions.

What sparked the thought about railfanning being dangerous at this time of year was photos taken in bad weather. I got to thinking about how dangerous it must have been to go railfanning in blizzard like conditions or in a thunderstorm or any other weather conditions you can think of (even in hot weather).

I also got to thinking about what can be done to make railfanning in bad weather safer. Here are a few things I came up with to make your next trip a little safer.

One thing you should do is take a friend with you. This will not only make your trip safer, but it will make it more enjoyable, too.

Another thing you should do is take your time getting to the tracks after parking your car. You never know if or when you will slip and fall and hurt yourself.

One last tip is to dress for the conditions. I can hear you saying "Of course, do you think I'm stupid?", but I'm serious here. I've seen lots of people got sick because they didn't dress for the worst.

It is very important that you go railfanning safely or you might just end up in a hospital. Nobody wants to see you end up there!

BY RITCHIE ROESCH

Coal hauling has become a very significant revenue generator for American railroads. Whether the cars used to transport the coal are railroad or utility company owned, mile-long hundred car unit trains can be seen on all major lines. Older coal cars are being rebuilt and newer, lighter aluminum cars are being added each month. These modern unit-train coal gondolas are manufactured by Johnstown America Corporation (formerly Bethlehem Steel Car Co.) under the trade name "Coalporters." Production started in 1982 and continues today. A similar aluminum car is made by Thrall Car Manufacturing Co. under the name "MaxiGon."

Modern cars, such as E&C Shops Coalporters, are a must for the modern day modeler. There are two styles of cars- the 13 panel rebuilt steel cars made for Conrail and CSX and the 14 panel aluminum cars made new for the other railroads and utility companies.

I built six kits in two hours, taking my time, of course. My cars are painted for Norfolk Southern.

These kits are fairly easy to build. Construction can go according to the instructions or in any order you wish. The cars don't include weights and are quite light. Even worse, there's no room to add invisible weights; if you wish to run the cars empty, the weights are right there and are somewhat unsightly. I suggest you put in A-Line self-sticking weights (part # 13000) and then making a new slope sheet to cover them up from 9' 7" x 12' 0" pieces of .020" styrene. If you follow the rivet pattern on the sides of the car, the slope sheet should have a slight bend where the vertical support sheet ends underneath. To give enough room for the weight, the new slope sheet needs to be flat. Support it on the low end with a .040"x.125" strip of styrene cut 9' 7" long.. You can fit about 2 1/2 stick-on 1/4 oz. weights under each slope sheet. You could also use Walthers Temp-Lo, a pourable metal alloy you heat on your stove. Another alternative, although not as good, is to add the weight top the underside of the car. The finished model should weigh 4 1/2 oz., the NMRA's recommended weight for an HO car that measures 6 1/2" long. (Another alternative to the weight problems with this car is to purchase the new Walthers "Bethgons". These are the exact same cars for the exact same price, but are easier to build because you won't have to mess with the weights. -Mike Riley)

When the slope sheet has dried, paint it to match your car. Now you can have a "real" empty car. You can take it anywhere and not have to worry about weight problems. -reviewed by Bryan Malone, TAMR Central region member and official TAMR Norfolk Southern historian.

In 1993 most railroads experienced a power shortage. General Electric Transportation Systems saw an opportunity and took advantage of it by introducing the C44-9W, or Dash 9. The Dash 9 is a heavily modified version of the earlier Dash 8. About the only real similarities is the basic appearance. Internally, the Dash 9 has a huge 16 cylinder powerhouse that boasts 4,400 H.P., 400 more H.P. than the Dash 8. The Dash 9s are DC powered, but GE has also introduced an AC version, the AC4400CW.

The Dash 9 rides on High Adhesion (Hi-Ad) trucks which are the instant spotting feature of them. The fuel tank has three angles on it, as opposed to the earlier two. I think this gives it a slightly larger fuel capacity, and it looks better! The Dash 9 utilizes a new technology called split cooling. This means that the radiator is divided into two sections, each with it's own water circuit. This gives the locomotive maximum cooling performance. This feature is spottable by a thicker cross section on the radiator and a different configuration of the intake grilles. Another new feature on the Dash 9 is the use of Electronic Fuel Injection (EFI). This is a more efficient method of fuel injection because the onboard computer controls the fuel output. EFI also produces less emissions.

Athearn has just recently released their model of the Dash 9 in HO scale. My first reaction to opening the box on Christmas morning was "Aaaaahhhhhhhhh", but it was a happy "ah"! To say the least, the model is incredible. Everything seems to be correct on the model, and comparing it to numerous photos, it looks perfect. Athearn strayed away from their norm on this model. For one, the fuel tank is three pieces, five if you count the air reservoirs. The sides are cast in styrene and slip onto the cast metal frame. They fit a bit loosely, but a piece of Scotch tape will hold them in place just fine. Instead of casting most of the details in place, most are separate pieces. In the box you'll find a few sprues of parts. Be careful with them, because they are extremely fragile.

You must add the air reservoirs, exhaust stack and base, brake wheel, cab sunshades, ditch lights and antenna. Yep, that's right, they give you sunshades, an antenna and even ditch lights! The trucks also require installation of the air cylinders and sruts. Be careful cutting these from the sprues because they are very thin and break with almost a touch. I found the holes for the air cylinders needed to be opened slightly. The cab and radiator sections also separate from the main body casting.

The overall detail casting on the model is well above excellent. The doors are very clean and sharp and thin. The grilles are deep and realistic looking. Athearn didn't overlook anything on the model, there's even an AEI (Automatic Equipment Identification) tag on each sidesill!

The model ran well. I noticed that on all three engines I ran, the motor was considerably quieter than most other Athearn units. I don't know why this is, but I'm impressed. The engine is heavy and will pull about fifty cars. The drive is the same as on previous models. One interesting new feature is the headlight mounting method. Instead of mounting it on that big metal post, it's on a smaller post. The bulb is recessed into a plastic tube which sits right up next to the clear headlights. The result of this is better looks: the cab is no longer lit up with the rest of the engine! On one of the engines, the rear truck was not running and was binding up when the motor spun. I disassembled the truck and found no burrs or flash in the gears. After closer inspection, I found that one of the wheels was extremely out of gauge on the tight side. It was so tight that it was squeezing the bearings against the

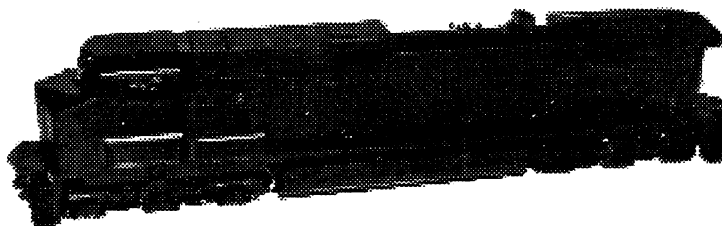
ATHEARN'S GE C44-9W



plastic axle insulator/gear and was preventing the wheel to turn. To fix this, gently rotate each wheel in the opposite direction while gently pulling outwards. Check the gauge with an NMRA Gauge every so often.

One thing I should point out about these engines is the way you remove the shell from the body. For one thing,

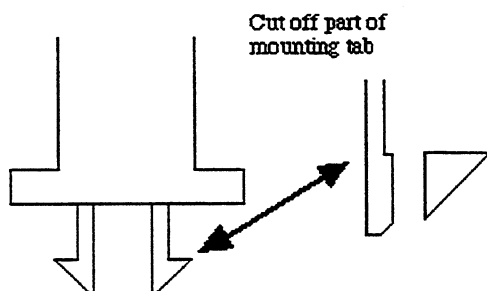
it is hard to remove it to begin with, and when you do, don't put it right back on. Use a knife and a file to cut away most of the angled part of the mounting pins. Since the fuel tank is cast different'y than usual, there is no room at all for the shell to be squeezed inwards for them. If you didn't understand that, see the drawing. Another unusual thing with these units is the new pilots and coupler mounting pads. Yes, the couplers are still mounted on the frame, but the pads have been redesigned with the box already cast on. All you have to do is drop in the included horn-hook couplers or Kadee #5 couplers and springs and screw the cover on. The screw hole is already tapped (that means the threads for the screws are already in it), a big step from the old cast-on dimples for you to do the drilling and tapping. Two 2-56 screws are included. The pilots have been filled completely, so you must install the couplers with the shell on the frame and you must remove the couplers to remove the shell. This is a little bit of an annoyance, but the looks of the pilots is much better, besides, if you use plows on your engines, you'd have to do that anyway.



My engine came undecorated, but I inspected a painted SP version at the hobby shop. The paint was good on one of the models. This one had a bit of a smudge where on the front right side on the "bloody nose wings". This was the only major problem.. The other one I looked at was fine. Athearn is now taking the liberties to paint the fuel tank and truck sideframes, too. One amazing never-before done thing by Athearn is painting the headlight casing silver. This makes a big difference in the overall appearance even though it's just a small detail. Unfortunately, the other parts you must add are not painted to match the body. The initial release consisted of units painted for SP and undecorated. More schemes will be released in the

following few months.

Overall, this latest release from Athearn is wonderful to say the least. I am very very impressed by the quality of the work in the model and I look forward to future releases by Athearn. -Mike Riley

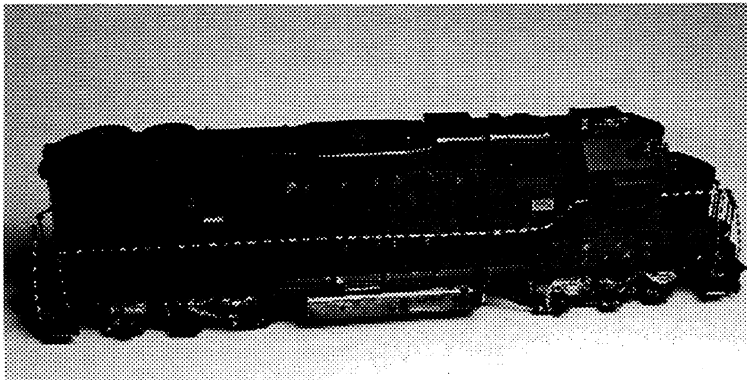
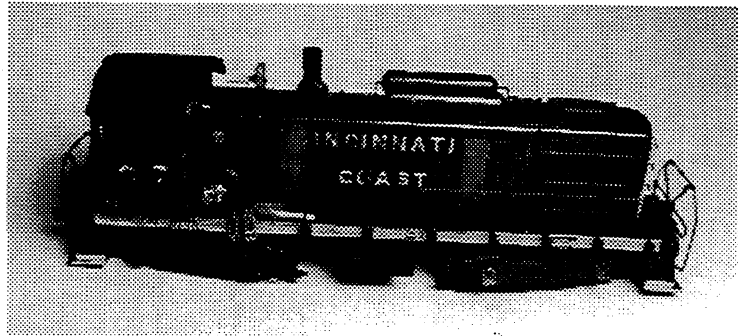


IT'S THE DETAILS THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!

When you go visit one's layout, what's the one thing you remember? Is it the way the layout was operated? No. Was it the control system? No. Was it the close attention to small scenic and other details? Bingo! Ever seen George Selios's Franklin and South

Manchester layout? It is said to be the world's most detailed model railroad in existence, and when you see photos of it, it's obvious why. If you are interested in this layout, there is a story on it in the February 1996 issue of *Model Railroader*. On his layout, the only thing you pay attention to is the overall detail of this great layout. Dave Frary put it best when he said "Imagine a layout on which you can read the text on an HO scale newspaper!" and he wasn't kidding! I've seen some pretty detailed layouts and rolling stock out there, but most of them in magazines.

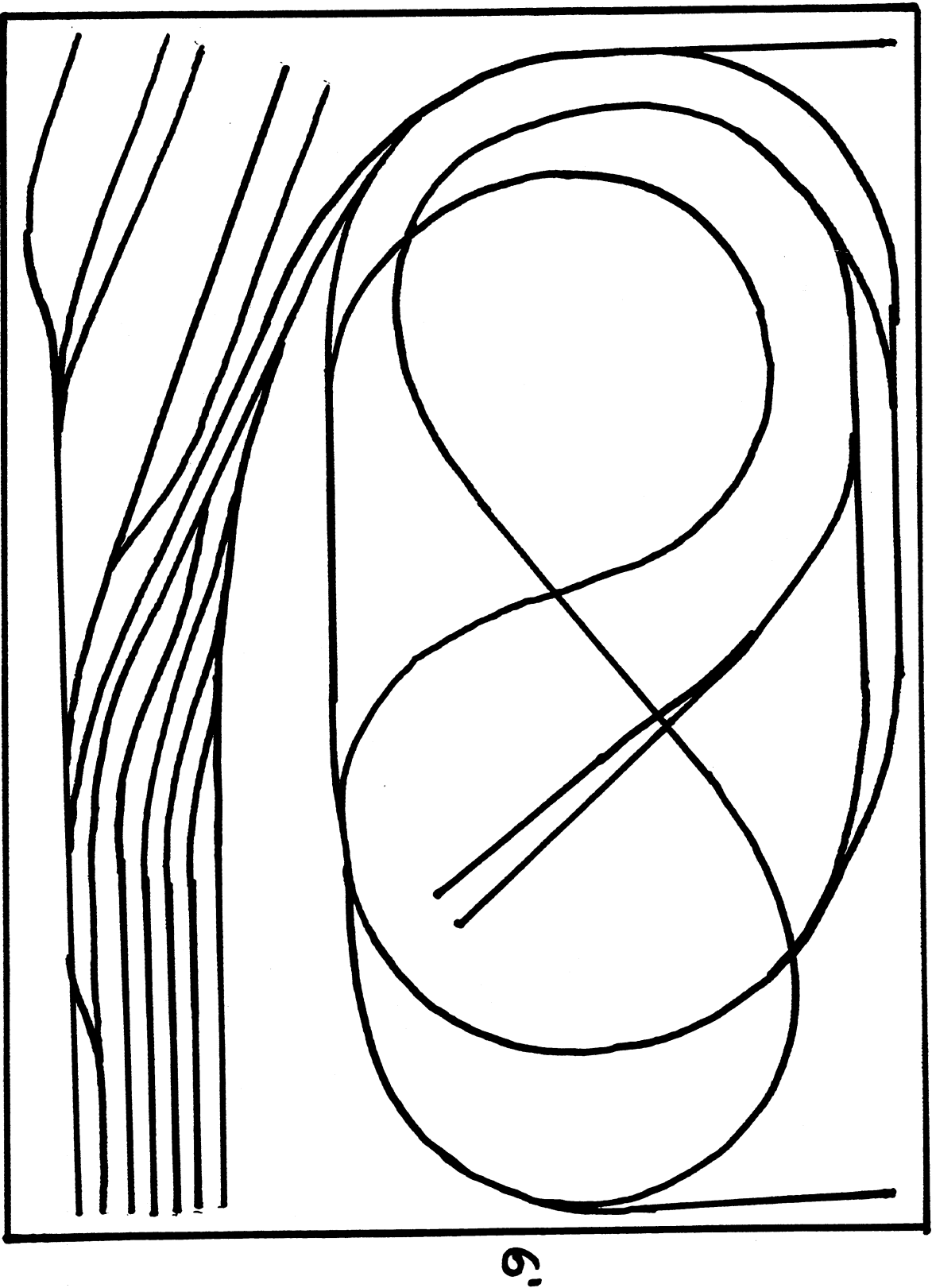
So how do these people create such detailed models? It's actually much easier than it sounds. Take my Atlas ALCo S4, which is pictured here. The spare tire, rerailing frog, and scraps of wood scattered about the deck of the unit are in themselves nothing at all to look at, but put them together, and viola! To do the detailing on that unit I spent about ten minutes! That includes painting and gluing! Like I said, it's much easier than it sounds. Sure, it's going to take you a lot longer than ten minutes to detail your entire layout, rolling stock and all, but here's my advice to you: don't do it all at once. When you buy your next locomotive, detail it. Add grab irons and lift rings and a plow and then weather it. That small



amount of detail will make such a big difference you won't be able to believe it! The next time you buy a building, add window shades and vines and a few people. It takes virtually no time and little if any money, and it's easy. This doesn't mean you should go and take each and every railcar on your layout and put

separate grab irons and stirrup steps and see-through walkways and separate brake gear, most car kits already have that. What I'm saying is add what's missing, not replace what's already there. I hope you all try my advice.

I am curious what kind of modelers are out there in TAMR land, so I'm going to start a new feature, a modeling feature. It's kind of like *Model Railroader's* Model of the Month page. Send me a few good photos of your models that you've done something to, along with a short text on what you did, and a prototype photo, too, and each month, I'll pick one which I feel is the best. Don't worry, all of the entries will win sooner or later, I'll keep them until they do. So start sending me some stuff, I can't wait!- *Mike Riley, editor*



8'

6'

PYNE & LAKE SHORE SOUTHERN RY.

THE PYNE & LAKESHORE SOUTHERN

BY BRYAN BINGHAM

SHORTLINE RAILROAD OF THE SOUTH

The Pyne & Lakeshore Southern Ry. is a shortline railroad that interchanges with CSX Transportation. The P&LS operates two local trains, one to the city of Pyne Valley and one to Eugene. An engine is also needed to handle the interchange traffic in Shannon Yard. The Pyne Valley train switches the Pyne Valley Canning Co., Bingham Fuel and Oil, and the Lakeshore Mine while the Eugene train handles Naird Industries (tent Co.), JW lumber yard, and Kenedy Fast Freight.

My layout is made up of a 4' x 8' sheet of plywood with a 2' x 8' drop down shelf. You may recognize the track plan because it comes from the Kalmbach book "HO Railroad That Grows" by Linn Westcott. This is my first layout so I decided that I should try a layout that someone else has worked on, too. The only similarities between the layout in Westcott's book and the P&LS is the benchwork and track plan; the buildings and scenery techniques are a little bit different.

Operation on the P&LS can be a two person party. I have two cabs with one set up to control a yard engine and the other handles the mainline operation. Since the P&LS operates two trains, you can take turns operating the mainline and the yard. I shuffle the cars around by using the index card system

described in the articles about the Cripple Creek beginners' layout in Model Railroader.

My layout is coming close to what you might call completion. There is plenty of small detail work that needs to be done when time and money permit. My layout needs more cars, trucks, people, and other small details to help make it come to life. The P&LS is also awaiting the arrival of the first engine in the newly formed paint scheme. The scheme is just like the CSX yellow, blue and gray scheme except that I have replaced the yellow with BN green. The new GP60 has been superdetailed and is currently waiting for it's paint.

Building the Pyne & Lakeshore Southern has been a wonderful learning experience for me. It is my first layout and it is not the best in the world. I find mistakes on my layout all the time and I can see where I could have made it better. These are lessons that I can apply to my modeling in the future. If I had not built the P&LS, I never would have learned anything about this great hobby of model railroading. If you have not tried a layout of your own, I strongly encourage you to do so. There is no better way to learn than to try and try again. Learn from your mistakes and do not get discouraged. Before you know it, you will have a model you can be proud of.

COME TO THE N.E.R.'S WINTER CONVENTION

TAMR North-East Region rep. Ole Bye is inviting all TAMR members to attend the NER's winter convention which will be held in conjunction with the Amherst Railway Society's annual Big Railroad Hobby Show which will be held Saturday, February the Fourth and Sunday, February the fifth at the Eastern States Exposition Grounds. This unique opportunity includes:

- ~A visit to the TAMR NER's regional layout
- ~4-1/2 acres of railroading fun
- ~more than thirty operating layouts
- ~manufacturers displays
- ~hobby dealers
- ~flea market
- ~live steam display
- ~Amherst Belt Lines HO scale modular railroad controlled by Dynatrol comand control
- ~A giant N-Trak system
- ~Also G, N, O, S, HO and Z scale displays
- ~Southern New England O Scalers
- ~Railrodiana and collectables

2 days, 2 buildings!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Don't forget the traditional TAMR pizza party!

For details, contact Ole Bye at (802) 875-4594.

HOSTED BY OLE BYE

The 1996 T.A.M.R.
National
Convention

The Hoosier Special

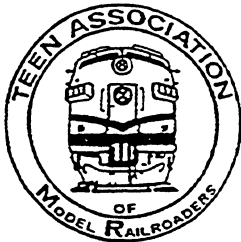
June 20-23, 1996
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ATTENTION TEENS!!

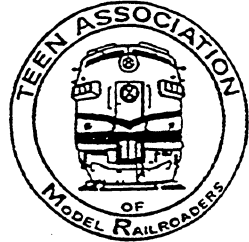
The **TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS** is an organization dedicated to helping teens with the hobby of model railroading and answering modeling questions. As a member of the TAMR, you will enjoy many benefits including:

- twelve issues of the official publication of the TAMR, the ***HOTBOX***
- the official TAMR directory of all members
- yearly conventions
- regional newsletters
- inexpensive modeling tips and ideas from other teens
- making new friends
- getting involved and most of all having fun!

If you are interested in becoming a member or would like to receive more information about the TAMR, simply fill out the bottom of this page and mail it to:



 **TAMR** 
c/o John Reichel
1800 E. 38th St.
Oakland, CA 94602



TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Prov. _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

There is no obligation to join. All you have to do is fill out the information, detach this half and mail it to the address above. You will then shortly receive more information about the TAMR and a list of members in your area.

What are you waiting for? Fill out the form and mail it today! We look forward to hearing from you!