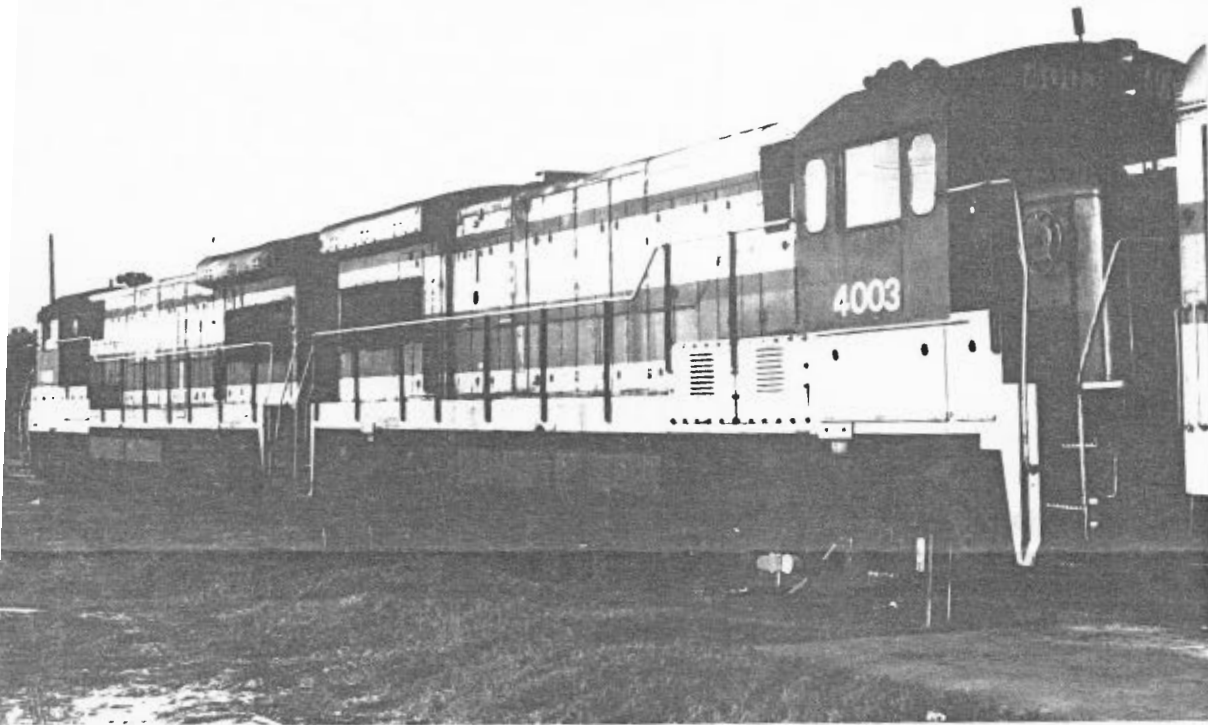


SOUTHERN



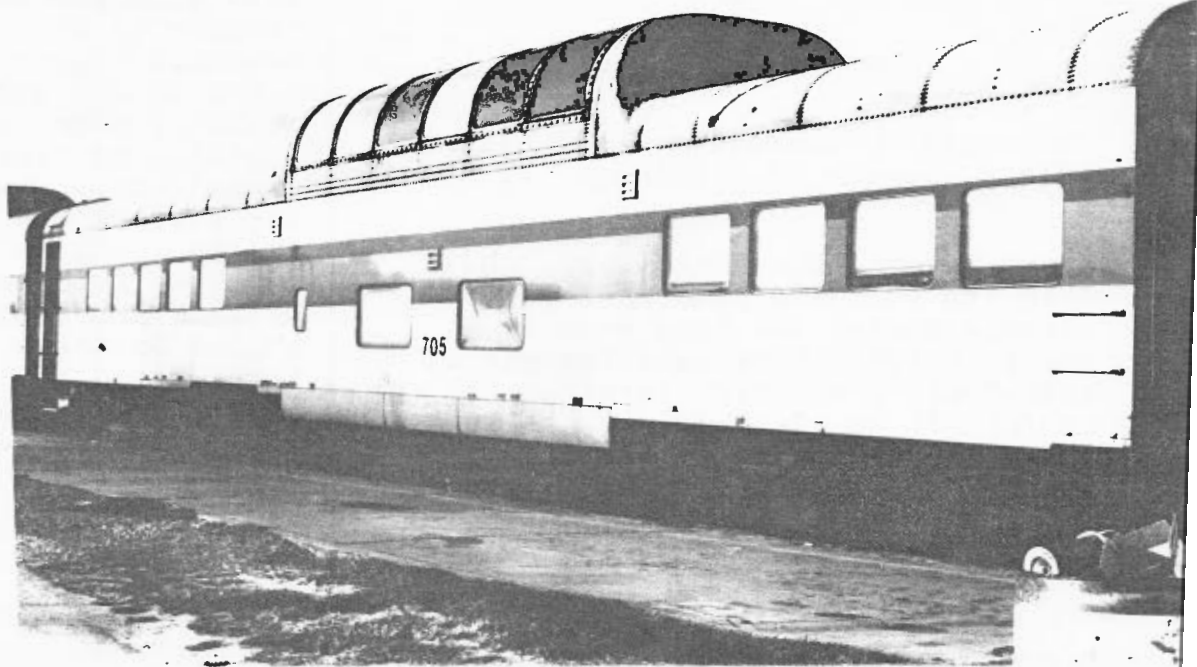
June - July 1982 VOL 2, no. 3



BYE -

BYE

AUTO



TRAIN

The SOUTHERN CRESCENT is the official publication of the Southern Region of the Teen Association of Model Railroading (TAMR). It is distributed six times a year to those who hold valid memberships in the Southern Region and for publicity purposes.

All CRESCENT business, unless otherwise noted, is handled by the editor. The deadline for submission of articles for publication is the first day of the month of the issue (i.e. June 1st for June-July issue). The CRESCENT assumes that all material is submitted gratis and is for the enjoyment of all region members. No payment will be made upon publication.

Annual dues for the Southern Region, which includes six issues of the CRESCENT, are \$3.50. Payment should be made to the Editor of this publication.

REGIONAL

OFFICIALS

Editor:

Dee Gilbert; Box 132; Harrison, Ark.
72601-0005

Publication Consultant: Mark Kaszniak,
4818 W. George St., Chicago, IL 60641.

Front Cover: Auto-Train Corp. - shut down its auto and passenger rail service during the last week of April in 1981. Mark Kaszniak was at Auto-Train's southern terminus in Sanford, FL on 12-27-80 when he took these shots of a scheduled early-evening departure being made up.

Our Name

Since a few of you have already inquired, we thought that we'd give the story behind our name. You should all know that the Southern's CRESCENT is the perhaps the South's most famous passenger train. It was one of the few trains that survived independently of Amtrak until it became an integral part of the Amtrak system. Even today, the name CRESCENT appears in the Amtrak timetable. We felt that such a long enduring name was suitable for the Southern region's publication, for like the train, we plan to be around for a long time to come.

By now, you have also noticed that our stylized "C" in CRESCENT is the same one used by Amtrak in their timetables and promotional literature. No, we did not steal it. Talmadge Carr, our former regional rep., was in our nation's capital last year and visited Amtrak to talk about rail passenger service and see if we could get permission to use their CRESCENT logo. Amtrak said: "Go ahead." and we wasted no time adopting it for our cover.

As you can plainly see, the Southern CRESCENT blends the old with the new to create a very unique image. It is one we hope that you will find pleasing and attractive because it stands for what the new Southern region is all about--a blend of old and new ways of rail-roading, model and prototype.

Still, no train can run if it doesn't have fuel and patronage. So far support has been good, but it has to continue. For our moderate fare, we hope to keep you informed of TAMR and prototype happenings in the Southern Region. So pay your fare, board the train and keep the Southern CRESCENT rolling a long time into the future. All aboard!

AUTO-TRAIN EULOGY

When I visited Auto-Train's facilities in Sanford, FL during late December of 1980, it appeared to me to be almost business as usual. I say almost because I sensed that something was wrong. Sure I knew that the corporation was having financial troubles and had declared bankruptcy a few months before. Yet from reports I had read, the efforts to reorganize the corporation seemed to be working and it would make a long slow recovery. Still as I walked around the Sanford facility taking pictures, I couldn't help feeling that things just weren't as they should be--the terminal facility was beginning to show signs of age, a large amount of motive power was in the shops and a dirty pair of U-boats were about to depart northward with yet another consist. These were vastly different impressions of Auto-Train from what I had previously read in the rail press. Those articles had always characterized the corporation as having new and clean terminal facilities, sparkling equipment and a well-maintained fleet of motive power. At the time of my visit, I had high hopes for Auto-Train's survival and thus attributed my impressions to the natural aging of the equipment and facilities experienced by all railroads. Little did I know that things would get much worse than what I saw and that Auto-Train would have to eventually lease motive power and finally terminate their operations on May 1, 1981.

In retrospect, the idea for an Auto-Train was a simple, but novel one. All it involved was the transport of both people and their automobiles from where they lived to where they liked to vacation (in this case, from the Northeastern states to Florida). In actual practice, the concept worked for nine years and five months saving uncountable gallons of gasoline and highway fatalities. Why the did the concept fail, especially after such a long track record of proven service?

Bad management is the usual cop out given for the failure of a corporation and unfortunately Auto-Train suffered from some bad managerial decisions. This isn't to say that the people who ran the operation weren't dedicated to the corporation--they were. Yet the corporation was under-capitalized and this hurt it, especially during its last months of operation. The service from Louisville to Sanford started in May of 1974 failed because of the poor track and bad location of the northern terminal. Derailments were costly and limited the amount of equipment available for revenue service. Finally, the big problem facing the corporation was the aging of its equipment which was ex-UP and WP from the 1950's. Replacement at current prices would be astronomical.

Outside factors also helped contribute to the corporation's demise. In an attempt to obtain operating capital, an apparent source of European funds turned out to be a scam. The Federal Railroad Administration rejected loan guarantees and the SCL and RFP--afraid of losing money carrying the trains--wanted the service to be discontinued.

From the railfan's point of view, Auto-Train was a very unique identity. Until it went bankrupt, the corporation was living proof that a passenger service could survive in the United States without a government subsidy. What makes this even more impressive is that Auto-Train was formed in the same year that Amtrak took over the passenger business in America--1971. A complete Auto-Train rolling on the main or sitting in the terminal is an impressive sight. All the equipment is painted in red, white and PURPLE and usually pulled by two diesels, U36B's (#4000 - 4012 with 4001 and 4004 wrecked and not rebuilt). The remainder of the consist includes auto carriers, dome coaches, food service cars, night club cars, more dome coaches and the sleepers with a heater car bringing up the rear. Average train length was usually 39 cars. (cont'd next page)

AUTO-TRAIN (cont'd from last page)

So Auto-Train's noble experiment with a different kind of rail-passenger-auto service has come to an end after almost a decade of service. To me the concept still seems very appealing, especially as a vacation mode of travel. Interstate highway driving is basically very boring (except for the assorted loonies on the road) and tedious. A mode of transportation that allows you to relax while getting to your intended destination as well as having the flexibility of your own automobile upon arriving sounds very inviting. In today's world of high energy costs, one wonders why there aren't more Auto-Train's popping up. Canada is talking about developing one and there still is a slight chance that Auto-Train might be resurrected here. Good ideas don't remain dormant for long and you can be sure there is at least one railfan out there who hopes its rebirth catches on in a way that few have ever dared to dream.

From Dee, Editor: With the issuance of this SOUTHERN CRESCENT, we will be the only Region of the TAMR that is on time.

Our membership is less than 20 paying members. And there has been quite a membership turnover in the national TAMR. Thus, follows below a few of the things which are either going to be done, or will be shortly, all which we hope will be a drawing card to increase the membership:

A).. Paul Ingraham's TEEN TRAK, a series of construction articles for building economical modulars for either the home, or the club, or both.

B).. Jim Kobrinetz is introducing the Layout Planning Service. The TAMR member sends him the space requirements and features wanted in a layout, and Jim will draw the layout plan. Some of these will be printed in the HOTBOX.

C).. I am introducing test results from actual layout testing of locos beginning with "N" scale. The results will be in easy to understand terms.

D).. Harry Loew will introduce a traction column.

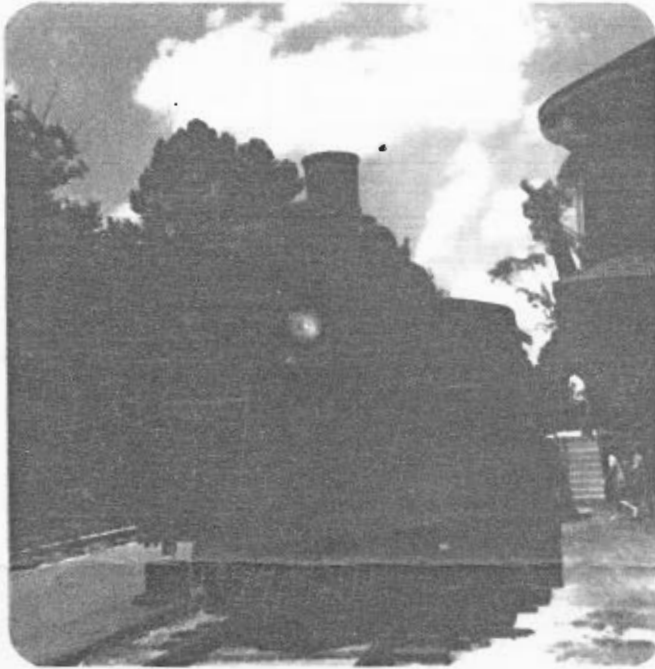
E).. In-depth coverage of model supplies and the like to make sure that members purchase good supplies with good quality.

F).. And I will be doing a test report on the MRC Tech II Railmaster 2400.

Thus over the next several months, I think we have some pretty good projects lined up. Tell a friend. Perhaps he will be interested enough to join us.

The Texas State Railroad

by Mark Karger



Engine 400, a Baldwin 2-8-2, is taking on water at the Rusk deopt.

The Texas State Railroad sounds like a railroad covering the state of Texas, yet only held trackage rights of 25.5 miles. The Railroad is located in the heart of the East Texas piney woodlands between Rusk and Palestine.

The railroad originally was begun in 1896 by the State Prison System as a plant facility of the Penitentiary to serve an iron furnace and other industries, at North Rusk. In 1913 the iron plant closed and after 1917 only intermittent service was furnished. On May 21, 1921 all regular train service was discontinued. Then in 1972 the railroad opened back up as a historical state park.

The railroad is a point-to-point railroad having a wye at the end of the line at Rusk and Palestine. Rusk (where we will be boarding) has a victorian type depot and the main engine facilities. The engine facilities include a workshop for the restoration, continued maintenance, and repair for steam and diesel locomotives.

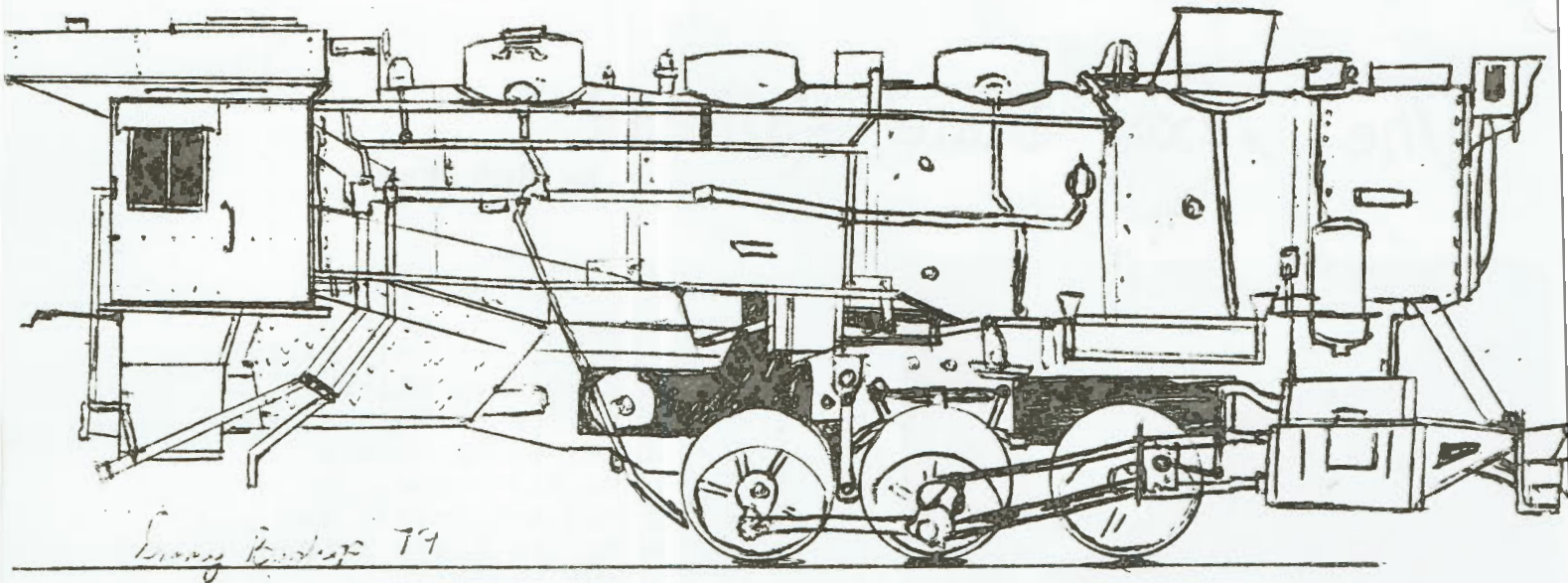
We board the train, engine 400, a Baldwin 2-8-2 built in 1917. Our train consisted of two coaches and a combination. Engine 400 ran reverse as we left Rusk. Only a few miles from the station, we cross the second longest of 26 timber trestles. It is the Bean Creek trestle, 803 feet. The track follows the gentle, rolling land of Texas. We enter Maydelle, where engine 400 is switched by a runaround. Soon they will be able to use a turnable that they are now building.

About 6 miles from Maydelle, is the longest and highest trestle on the line. The Neches River trestle is 1,115 feet long and 25 feet high. But we don't cross this because the trestle is slowly sinking into the river and must be re-built.

After we leave Maydelle, we stop for pictures. The train backs up around a curve, and then comes speeding by for photographers.

The Palestine run is the same way, having a runaround to switch back the engine.

Hopefully, the line will reopen between Rusk and Palestine by the summer of 1983. Until then, only half of the railroad is operational.



Ernie Budge 79

Southern CRESCENT, "Serving the South"
Box 132
Harrison, AR 72601



FIRST CLASS MAIL

