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THE HOTBOX

December 2008 Issue # 425



**the official publication of the teen
association of model railroaders
Not to be sold individually.**

THE HOTBOX

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ON THE COVER: . NS 3005 an Ex-Conrail GP40, switches cars at Buffalo Creek Jct. destined for the Buffalo Color Corporation's Lee St. Plant in Buffalo, NY at CP Draw. *Matt Martin, photo.*



FORM 19

A final message from your editor in chief.

Editor –Peter Maurath
Publisher-Peter McRath II
Contributing Columnist–
Steven Goehring
Art Director-Duh Vinci
Photographer– Jay Vecce
Librarian– Is busy working on her snowman
sugar cookies.

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.

Columns:

Full of great tips on layout improvement? Got a million reasons EMD is better than GE? 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
13212 Wilton Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44135

Or email at:

TAMRHotboxEd@sbcglobal.net

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:

pivotpin@tamr.org

This is my room Laurie, no one said you could come in here!

This is it. Welcome everybody to my final issue as your editor-in-chief. We've come along way since I took the reins back in August 2003. At that time the TAMR had been without a Hotbox for nearly a year. I started out with a two-page issue, cobbled together with my own material. It was a rough start, but I was a quick learner and pretty soon was adding pages, lining-up regular features, and special issues, along with the most recent edition of an online version. Sadly I only wish our membership could have grown as I have over the last five years. It's one of the



reasons why I feel the need to step down. Along with growing schedule conflicts, the continued decline of memberships has always bothered me and despite my best efforts to drum-up enthusiasm within this group and grow our ranks, we continue to backslide. Perhaps a fresh face can come-up with some ideas that I haven't thought-of. I guess maybe I'm getting too old for this job and it's time to bring-in someone a little closer to his teenage years

than I.

As of January, Ben Hawken will be your new Editor. He plans, for now at least, to maintain the present look of the Hotbox as it is. So hopefully if everything works you won't even notice my departure next month.

Not to worry though I'm not leaving the group. I plan to stick around as Treasurer for as long as the group needs me, and I'm sure I'll be contributing now and again to

future Hotbox's

All in all, it's been a fun ride. I've really enjoyed the work I did, at least when

computers weren't crashing, or copiers weren't jamming. Even then I suppose, it was all part of the adventure. I'm thankful to all the great friends I've gotten to know as contributors and officers over these last five years and I'm honored to have served them and all of you the members as your Editor. Thank You, God Bless and have a Merry Christmas. PC-1, you have the clear, highball! I'm outta here!•



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 articles would you like to see in the 2009 Hotbox?

Willie Roberge, Wareham, MA: "Many modelers starting out don't know a lot about all of the different types of locomotives, especially the unusual types. Also, many of the unusual types lack modeling tips to accompany an article if a full scale model is not available. I would also say *Question and Answer*. Maybe tools you can use; recommending simple tools every model RRer should have, like jewelers screw drivers etc. *Recommended websites* (for modeling and prototype), and a short summary of the site and why it is good. Pictures of TAMR member's model RR's. *Model Reviews*: If you buy a locomotive write down what you think about as well as the "Going Price." If you write an article about say a Proto 2000 SW-9 write a little blurb about the prototype and when they were built and how many, include a prototype photo if possible. I may write a review on an HO Trackmobile as well as a little history of the prototype! If there is a convention or get together: **WRITE ABOUT IT AND DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET, OR TO YOURSELF!!!"**

Matt Martin, Fairport, NY: "How about a 12 part series (one for each month) of railfanning your area of the country. Everyone writes a little about railfanning in their area and we can go by region. In your writing tell

us about the location(s), railroad(s), driving directions, a little bit of history, etc. Just an idea."

Sawyer Berry, Aiken, SC: "Yeah, that would be good Matt. I could do one on the scene here in the Aiken-Augusta area. I'd definitely like to see more layout tours as well. I can probably do one for my 4x8 towards summer or fall on what I'm currently building. Also, some how-to tips and such. Maybe start our own scenery step-by-step. Really, the best thing though, would be if everyone wrote at least one article about their favorite part of the hobby, like a scenery trick, or some wiring, or maybe their observations of a DCC system."

Ben Hawken, Shingle Springs, CA: "I really like that idea. It would be nice also if a member or members like to go and visit that area, the writer could possibly be a tour guide of the area."

WANT TO JOIN IN THE RANTING? THEN JOIN THE TAMR ONLINE GROUP AT YAHOO GROUPS.COM. SEE PAGE TWO FOR MORE INFO.

The Hotbox tip of the month

FORGET THE SMALL SETS OF PREISER FIGURES. BUY THEIR BULK PACKS, AND PAINT THEM YOURSELF. YOU SAVE A TON OF MONEY, AND GET GREAT FIGURES. THOUGH YOU MAY ALSO GET A BAD CASE OF EYESTRAIN IF YOU DON'T USE A MAGNIFIER (CAN BE FOUND AT MOST CRAFT STORES).

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TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS



YOU CAN'T MAKE THIS STUFF UP!

Days in the life of a CSX Employee, by: James Lincoln

First Trick

As some of you may remember from my last piece in **The Hotbox**, "Tips For Railfans From a Professional Railroader", at the time I was a conductor trainee with CSX. Of course I might suppose that some of you would say, "well, you weren't REALLY a railroader yet", to which I would say, in some ways you would be right, being a conductor trainee is a downright PICNIC in comparison to being an actual conductor, but I was being paid to work for the railroad, so TECHNICALLY I was a professional railroader. As of March 28, 2008, however, I can truly say that I am now, a professional railroader ... and at this point, after having typed that more times than I ever really want to, if I use the term, I will try to use PR instead. Anyway, I digress ...

To say that the past six months have not been interesting would not be true, but to say they have been fun, well ... let's just say that you would have to work for the railroad to understand. There are times that this is the greatest job in the world: there are spots along the Boston and Albany (B&A)

where the track is straight and the speed limit is 50mph and you are sitting in the cab of an AC6000CW with another behind you and 8000 tons and 8000 ft of train behind you, the window open, the sun shining that I can honestly say, it is seriously cool. Now, when that same train gets to Washington Hill and you are only going 15 mph (or less) for 17 miles, umm, that is less cool. I have, however, been able to learn some things and have some experiences that I am willing to share with the rest of you.

A little while ago, I promised Peter, our illustrious editor that I would start writing this continuing column, and I, ah, well, have been lackadaisical about doing so (obviously). The problem stems less from lack of desire to do it, but from the fact that I have two small dogs that DO NOT like me working at

the computer, they have no problem with me working on my trains (go figure), but when I sit down at the computer to accomplish anything, they basically tell me that,"ahh, Papa, you are gone a lot at work and if you think we are going to let you work here and not play with us or go to sleep, you had better break out the treats or we are NOT going to leave you alone." Not much of an excuse, but it is the truth. So, you might say, how is it, then, that you are writing this NOW!!! Ha, ha!!! We've caught you slacker! Don't you be blaming your dogs when, in truth, you are really just a lazy bum! That might be true and I would agree with you were it not for an interesting perk of being a conductor on a large railroad ... the "flag job", or Flagman assignment. Right now I am being paid a ridiculous amount of money to sit in what is essentially a large parking lot (the East Brookfield auto unloading facility, home of the East Brookfield and Spencer Railroad, EBSR) and monitor my trusty railroad radio and tell oncoming trains that it is okay for them to pass the work area (the EBSR) and continue without having to stop. Yes, my job is to sit in my



car, or in this case the EBSR office, and listen and talk on a walkie-talkie maybe ten times a night. "Why?" you might ask ... a fair question, and one that when I was first told about this, was much on my mind. Simply put, I am here for political expediency. Now that opens up a whole lot of questions, doesn't it? That is something I will have to get into in the next installment, and you will have to agree with the title of this column, "you can't make this stuff up."

Now if you are thinking that I came up with that kind of cutesy title just for **The Hotbox**, you would be mistaken. In fact, I won't even take credit for it, nor can I give credit for it to a railfan, but the first time I heard it was from my engineer at the time, a very good engineer. I modified it a little, just to say that CSX should change its slogan from "CSX - How Tomorrow Moves" to "CSX - You Can't Make This Stuff Up."

So as I sit here at 1:15am, I will keep working at my laptop, thinking of what I can say in my next installment, which I will probably be writing momentarily just to make sure that it gets done and I don't fall asleep. Till next time, be careful out there and have a "Safe CSX Day."●

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EXTREME MAKEOVER,

LAYOUT EDITION

BY: Andrew Matarazzo

Currently, the layout features two individual loops. The lack of switches takes away from any realism, and therefore I will add a crossover switch in front of where the station currently is. In addition I plan to add remnants of a third mainline track as part of the new industrial spur. The switch from main loop to this track will be hidden behind the factory backdrop.

The main industry spur will come under a new connecting bridge between the factory buildings. This will hide the track as it goes through the backdrop. The spur will serve the factory and lumberyard. Both industries will require a reverse move in order to be reached. A scrap yard will also be built on the outside of the mainline, with disconnected tracks that run off the end of the table that would provide service to it.



The author works on the layout during the 2007 Big Rail road Hobby Show, as spectators watch. Peter Maurath, photo.

Another way to add realism to a layout is add an abandoned line and junction. The abandoned line would have crossed the main tracks at a long-gone diamond, had its own station platform, and would connect into the existing industrial spur. An abandoned trestle over the existing culvert, and old signals will add to the illusion of a forgotten right-of-way.

One last simple addition is to create a small railfan park/museum. This will be accomplished by moving the station structure back and adding two display tracks. One track will follow the path of the abandoned line perpendicular to the mainline. The other will be located where the third mainline track would be. Add a restored switching tower, and the scene tells a story of a once large junction now reduced over time due to mergers and decreased rail traffic.

As work progresses on the layout, I will provide step-by-step procedures for each improvement made so that you could possibly do the same to add realism to your own layout. ●

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Celebrating over twenty years of attendance, the TAMR will once again be hosting a table at the Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show, in Springfield, MA. You know what that means, Winter Convention Time! Come join us January 23-25, 2009 for a weekend of trains, slide-shows, trains, pizza and did I mention the trains? Meet TAMR members Newton Vezina, Peter Maurath, Chris Burchett, and more, tour the second largest train show in the U.S., check out slide-shows, and just have fun hanging-out with other young railfans and hobbyists.

Back again after a six year hiatus, The *Winter National Convention Photo Contest*, will be held during the convention. Offering you a chance to show off your shutterbug skills and win some awesome prizes. All host Peter Maurath asks is that the shot is your own, taken by you, and is free of excessive digital editing. Subject can be either model or prototype related. Five prizes will be awarded ranging from locomotives to rolling stock vehicles, etc.

We will once again be offering hotel accommodations at discounted rates to our members. For \$25 a night you can stay at the palatial Marriott's Residence Inn, Springfield, in the "TAMR suite" with plenty of room the spread out, an indoor pool, and free FULL breakfast every morning! To reserve your space contact the Convention Director at the info below.

For more information on anything above, please contact Newton Vezina, Convention Director at:

Newton Vezina,
76 Roy St. Springfield, MA 01104
Ph: 413-739-1949
Email: TAMRVideo@aol.com

NEW!!

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WINTER NATIONAL CONGRESS 2009
TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS

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The Top 7

By: Peter Maurath

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

Top Seven things I will miss about being Editor.

#7. Being able to force my marxist dogma on an unwitting public.

#6. That cute girl at the Fed-Ex Kinkos.

#5. The mega calories I would burn folding and stapling Hotbox's.

#4. The sweet corner-office with the private bath at 1 TAMR Plaza.

#3. Being able to dodge annoying people with, "Sorry, gotta work on the Hotbox tonight".

#2. The corporate jet.

And the number one Thing I will miss about being Editor!

All of you.

"awwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww"

The Extra Board New Memberships-0

Renewals-2

Charles Warczinsky
Andy Inserra

Expiring Memberships-1

Matthew Roberts

Present Member Count- 51↓

Editors Note: This will be a feature every month showing everyone, who's joining, who's staying and who's going. If your name is up there I hope it's in the renewal section or will be next month.

The Hot box Funny name of the Month

Pulled at random from the Lake Region Telephone Directory of the Penn Central Telecentral Phone Network, "There is always time for courtesy."

J.E. Quinlaven

This concludes the Hotbox funny name of the month, Provided by the Penn Central, Telecentral Phone Network. "when you answer the phone you are the company."

PENN CENTRAL



TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS



Photography on a Shoestring Budget

Conducted By: Tim Vermande

Giottos Rocket

Benjamin Franklin wrote to one of his friends that “our new Constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency; but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”

True enough, but he forgot something: dust. Of course, there wasn't any photography in 1789, so we can probably forgive Ben for his oversight, since dust wasn't quite such a problem then. And he did give us a lot of useful stuff, like fire departments, libraries, printing franchises, and some principles of electricity. Where would we be without all of that?

So back to where we were. Dust is everywhere: on your lens, negatives, slides, sensor, grinding your hard drive to bits, freaking out your memory cards--is that enough melodrama?

You need to be able to deal with dust. A lot of different ideas have come and gone over the years, but one that has stuck around is the blower. Point it at the offending dust, squeeze the bulb, and it sends a burst of air. It's a simple idea, but there are blowers and then there are blowers.

You can buy a blower for \$5, small enough to fit in a pocket, and then buy another one shortly after that because the one you bought doesn't put out any air to speak of. You can also spend a little more and get one with a brush on the end, so that you'll have either little hairs all over or spend more time cleaning up the junk that the open brush picks up. And if you avoid all of that, you can buy another one shortly thereafter because the thing didn't hold up. A blower with cracks in it won't work.

Or you can spend \$12 on the Giottos Rocket. One of the premises of this series is that it's worth while to spend a little more if the product works better in the long run. This is one of those times; here is a well-designed blower. It's well past time that someone put some thought into one.

I haven't had the Rocket for too long, but its functional aspects are well ahead of those cheap blowers. It's the proper size for most people's hands. It stands on a flat surface--no more rollaways! You can even carry it around your neck--there are strap holes on each of the “fins.” With the tip out of the way, you don't have to worry about it getting some sort of crud on it, or getting it caught somewhere. It also seems to be designed robustly enough to hold up for a very long time. And with that good-sized bulb, it puts out enough air to shake the dust loose. Highly

recommended--you may even see me at the store getting another one!●



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The TAMR is a non-profit organization created to promote, foster, and encourage young persons in the hobby of model railroading, the activity of rail fanning, and the preservation of the history, science and technology thereof. Reprinting of the Hotbox is Prohibited without the express written consent of the Teen Association Of Model Railroaders.

Membership to the TAMR includes an eleven month subscription to the Hotbox, the annual directory of members, quarterly regional newsletters and an election to participate in all TAMR events. The available membership categories are as follows: Regular (under 21)-\$150, Associate (21 and over)-\$200, International (outside US)-\$180

To become a part of the TAMR, or to renew, send your information to:
Tim Vermande, TAMR Rock-God, 11667 Tidewater Dr, Fishers, IN 46037, USA

Offer good why supplies last, negative equity applied to new loan balance, must take delivery of dealer stock, see store for complete details. No purchase necessary, void where prohibited. For a complete list of rules, regulations, and the best darn restaurants in Bite-me, OH send a SSAEBDR to the above address. If you are at all unsatisfied with this hotbox, please return unused portion for a complete blow-off by our staff. Thank you!

COMING SOON TO **THE HOTBOX:**

- Stuff, stuff, and more stuff.
- Blah, blah, blah, yada, yada, yakitty-smackity.

COMING SOON TO **THE TAMR:**

- Your new Editor!
- Winter National Convention in Springfield, MA, January, 09.



The Teen Association of Model Railroaders

"Putting the future of model railroading on the right track."

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Before I go...

