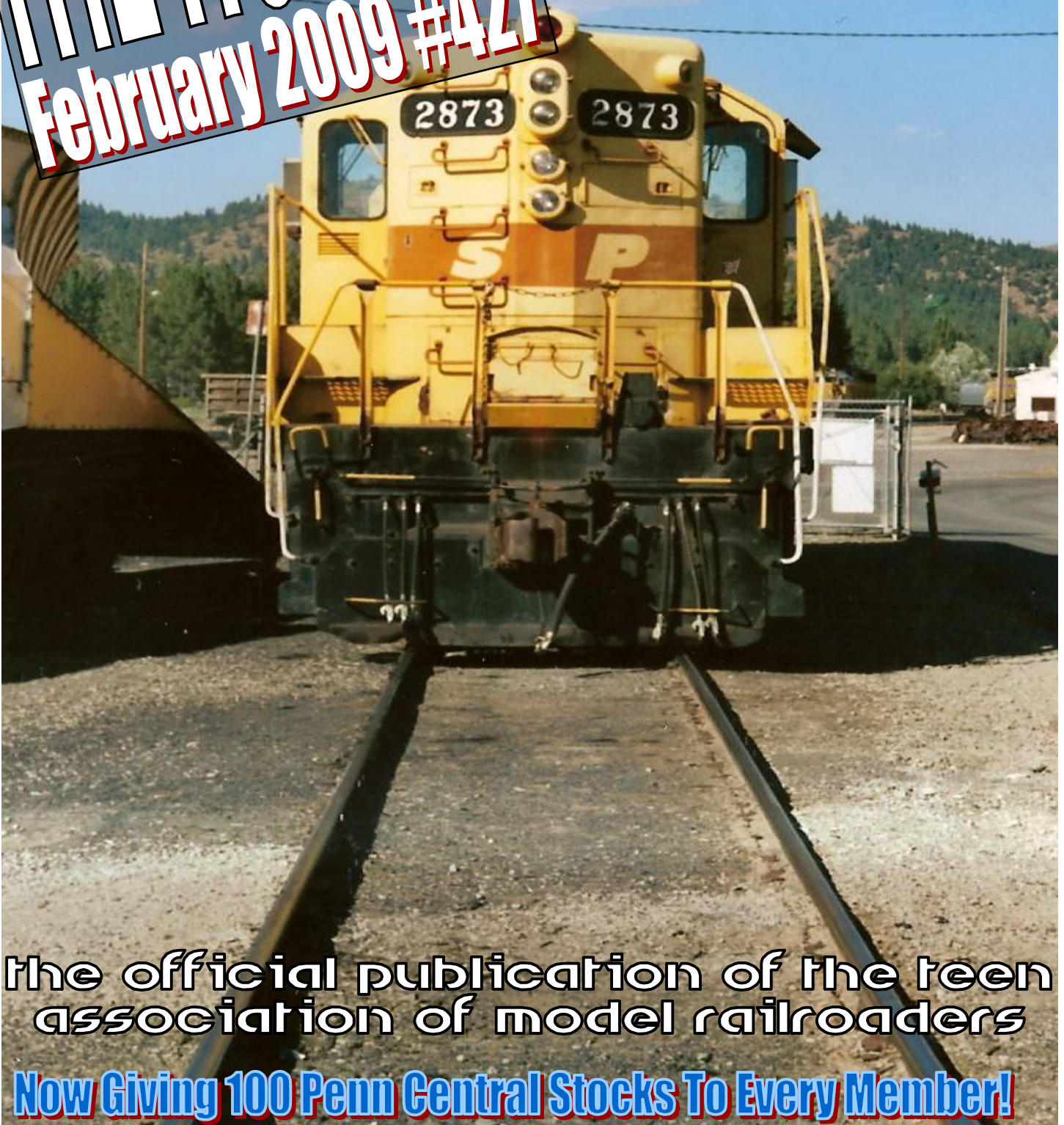


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# THE HOTBOX

February 2009 #427



the official publication of the teen  
association of model railroaders

**Now Giving 100 Penn Central Stocks To Every Member!**

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February 2009 Issue #427

On the cover: SP GP9E #2873 in the failed SPSF merger scheme sits in the evening sun at the Feather River Railroad Museum at Portola, CA in August 2008 *Photo By Ben Hawken*



## FORM 19

A message from your editor in chief.

Editor – Benjamin Hawken  
Publisher – Benjamin Hawken  
Contributing Columnist –  
Tim Vermande  
Art Director – Duh Vinci  
Photographer – Jay Vecce  
Librarian – Ready for St Valentines Day

### 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 ALCO 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:

Benjamin Hawken  
3366 WebWob Way  
Shingle Springs, CA 95682

Or email at: [new Email address!  
sd458853@gmail.com](mailto:new Email address!sd458853@gmail.com)

## GET WIRED

Check out TAMR on the web at: [www.TAMR.org](http://www.TAMR.org)  
Or Join our online yahoo news group, by contacting:

[pivotpin@TAMR.org](mailto: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](mailto:pivotpin@tamr.org)

Beam Me Up Scottiel!

The first HB was delivered to the mailed members in mid January and just finally the online members receive theirs. Sorry guys didn't have your e-mail addresses. Now I do so this won't happen again. I know this issue is late I am sorry for this, but my computer when hay-wire, and then I got pneumonia so I was totally down. I am making preparations for this not to happen again, if so I will hand deliver everyone of the Hotbox's and sing a song of your choosing! On to other things I need material! Tim

Vermande has sent me material, but I need more than one resource for material! It's nice to have more than just one member sending me stuff. Come on, I'm almost out of things that Peter had sent to me that he didn't use yet. The more I get, the bigger and better the Hotbox will be. There was a online discussion that had some pretty good ideas and I would like to see them in the Hotbox, like: do a review on a new product example; a new locomotive that has never been available in a scale or never in plastic. How about your fa-

vorite railfan spot, or maybe a how to for scenery, or a layout tour? Now lets make this work I didn't take over just so I can be the last editor, I took over to get a fresh head in, and in a few years I hope to see someone else take over and have this newsletter grow bigger and bigger and the group grow bigger and bigger! Now I want to see things start coming in ASAP. If you have any ideas just call me on my cell number it is (530)417-3922 anytime I maybe at either job of mine, so I will get back to you ASAP and if



you're on Facebook join the TAMR Facebook group, and add me as a friend. If I'm on Facebook send me an

IM I will gladly respond, or just e-mail me, and I will respond. If you want to see more of just my stuff then don't send anything and I won't bother to publish the Hotbox and you can just let the group die! It's your call, now make it.

# The Hotbox Layout Tour

By Sawyer Berry

This month Sawyer shows us how he made a car numbering system

Since I'd already created a history, purpose, and locomotive roster for my free-lance RR, the Aiken-Augusta Terminal Railway (read those bits of information and see the paint scheme on the Aiken Augusta Terminal's page on my free webs site <http://www.freewebs.com/sbpackernut/>), I created a freight car numbering system as well. Also, one of my friends wanted to patch a freight car for my RR, so I needed to get the system done quick. I started with the idea of using an eight digit number, with the first four digits describing the car type and the last four being that car's unique number. I then just got a chart drawn on Microsoft word and started typing in 0101, 0202, 0303, and so on, until I had enough numbers for

the car types (10). The system can also be expanded for other car types in the future.

As you can see, different car types can have the same number, because the first four digits are still different. However, two cars of the same type cannot have the same last four digits, because that would be a duplicate number. Also, cars can have a three, two, or even one digit number. It must be separated from the first number by how many zeros it would take to make four digits, like if I have boxcar #1, its number is 01010001, which means boxcar #1. Likewise, boxcar #11's number would be 01010011, and #111's would be 01010111. The chart for the whole system is below.

Whether you want to try creating your own, use my system but mix up the first four digits and types of cars the represent, or just use what I've made, it's up to

First 4 Digits	Kind of Car it is	Example
0101	Boxcar	01010698 is boxcar #698
0202	Reefer	02020698 is reefer #698
0303	Covered Hopper	03030698 is covered hopper #698
0404	Open Hopper	04040698 is open hopper #698
0505	Tank Car	05050698 is tank car #698
0606	Flat Cars	06060698 is flat car #698
0707	Gondolas	07070698 is gondola #698
0808	Auto Carriers	08080698 is auto carrier #698
0909	Intermodal Equipment	09090698 is intermodal car #698
1010	Steel Coil Cars	10100698 is steel coil car #698



# Railfan Trip Stories

Every month a member will tell us a railfan experience that can be about a great trip or even maybe a horrible one. This month's story teller: Ben Hawken

August 2008 a friend of mine, my dad and I decide to go on a trip up to Donner Pass for the day. I myself only rail fanned the entire thing once, and my dad has only done the eastside of the hill with me once. My friend has never rail fanned with someone else that is a railfan so he was in for a surprise, as all of us were. Raised by my dad on how to railfan, I knew what time we were to leave, 04:00! Most friends of mine say I'm crazy for that but hey, I'm hardcore! We get up, and I decide to call the Amtrak 1-800 number to see when the California Zephyr was to leave Roseville. Bad news, the train was only going to Sacramento for eastbound, and the westbound was stopping somewhere in Nevada! There was something going on between those two spots, a derailment!?! That meant no trains over Donner Pass today. We go to Roseville and we catch some early morning arrivals and a couple of departures including a ballast train. We circle the yard and while we sit at the station we caught the morning Capital Corridor from Auburn. After that I say "Lets go to Stockton." This is at 07:30, and I'm angry, my plans shot for the day. We see a couple of locals leave the yard, then we head up the valley line. The valley line goes from Roseville north, then turns into the Cascade line. The second local had some nice power on it, a UP patched, ex SP GP40M-2, an UP patched, ex DRGW GP40-2, and a UP, ex SP GP38-2. We decide to chase them up the valley to Marysville. Along the way my dad says this road can connect us to the Feather River line! So we decide to follow it. At Marysville we see a EB stack train but didn't see the power. Then at Oroville we saw it again, but didn't see the power after another stack train passed it left. We start up the valley and come across it again, this time my friend and I started walking the embankment to find

the power. Finally we find the power, but again it's sitting there. It's in the siding so we wait. A WB BNSF manifest passes it and it highballs out. We chased it up the canyon to Keddie Wye we get there here comes the WB California Zephyr! It was awesome! It was about 14:30 and we wanted to get to the Portola Railroad museum before they close at 17:00. We get to Beaverville, and see a WB UP manifest on the siding. We wait for five minutes, and here comes an EB Auto train that we saw in Roseville! It was awesome! I got a real great shot of it smoking it up heading up the grade. After that, we start toward Portola and as we pull into town both me and my friend scream out to my dad STOP! STOP! O MY GOD! LOOK! LOOK! PULL OVER, PULL OVER! My dad, almost having a heart attack, screams "WHAT!?! There's the Western Pacific (WP) Heritage Unit #1983!!!! I already have seen the SP one #1996 two years before but now the WP one was cool so we pull in to the yard and snap some pics of it. We finally arrive at the museum and hear a horn so we get on the platform they have so you can watch the UP action, and here comes the EB California Zephyr! This day is awesome. We left Portola about 17:00 and here come that EB stacker that we left west of Keddie about 3 hours before! It was crazy. We head towards Donner Pass and see there is track maintenance around Shed 11. That's what stopped the traffic for the day. Pulling into Pollock Pines about 23:00 to drop my friend off and he wants to do the same thing again tomorrow! Both my dad and I groaned and said "NO!" both of us were tired from a total of 600 miles round trip! But hey what a day!

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Here is some of my favorite Pics from the trip!



WB California Zephyr at Keddie Wye. Lucky Passengers!



Milwaukee Road U25B at the Portola Railroad Museum.



EB UP Auto rack lead by a brand new SD70ACe at Beaverville, CA.



UP SW1500 ex SP unit sits in the morning sun at the Roseville Shops

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# You can't make this stuff up!

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

## Third Trick

Another quick one, I hope (ten). The very first train that I was assigned to was a re-crew of the Q426, which in NORAC/Guilford speak is the SEAY or Selkirk to Ayer train that goes over the P&W and up the old B&M branch in Worcester, MA.

The engineer and I were called on duty for 1500 hrs (3pm) and were to re-crew the train at CP45 which is at the end of the B&M branch and is about 1 mile away from the Worcester

Yard office and only 5 miles from its destination as far as CSX is concerned. When I arrived at the Worcester Yard office, I called the Chief Train dispatcher, as we are supposed to

and his response was: "boy, you are early." "Well, we were told to report at 1500", CTD - "WHAT?!, the Q427 hasn't even started down the branch yet and you have to wait for that!" Well, needless to say, we didn't start moving until 2345. We get permission from the P&W and are told by the

Springfield Terminal District 3 TOM (Train Operations Manager, they don't like to be called dispatchers, YCMTSU) to stop at New Bond St at the ST Yard office and let the ST crew

get on board and would we do a roll-by please My engineer is new and is only moving at 5-7mph (the speed limit is 10), our head end is just passing the limits of the P&W at 0100 (yes

3.5 miles) and the P&W Dispatcher calls and asks if we have cleared their territory because they have a train to run and can't while we have the track, no problem, I say, we are almost clear, we will let them know shortly. Right around the

corner is New Bond St and neither my engineer or I have ANY idea where the ST yard office is and we don't see the crew. "You better call the Dist 3, the engineer tells me, I do,

busy, busy, then no answer. We have 1 mile worth of train with more than half of it hanging onto the P&W and the ST won't answer, I look at the engineer and say "keep going, I don't see the crew, take it to Burncoat St," 1.5 miles away.

The P&W is already irritated and I don't want them mad at us. Well, once we have passed the point of no return the ST Dist 3 calls us: "DID YOU STOP AT NEW BOND?!!!!", me -

"Ahh, no, we didn't see the crew, sorry." "AHHHHHHH!!!!!!" Fine, tie it down at Burncoat! I'll get the crew over there I guess, out!" By the time we got back to the Worcester Yard Office, after I had tied the handbrakes on the train and the ride in the taxi, it was 0230. Yes, 11 hours on duty to move a train 5 miles. The engineer looks at me and says - "welcome to the railroad kid."

No, you can't make this stuff up.

## The Extra Board

### New Memberships-2

Jeffrey Andreski  
Nicholas Keeling

### Renewals-2

James Lincoln  
Anthony Person

### Expiring Memberships- 4

Barry Simmons  
Andrew Matarazzo  
Mike Acree  
Austin & Jonathan Hight

### 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.*



Teen Association Of Model Railroaders



# Photography on a Shoestring Budget

Conducted By: Tim Vermande

## Camera Bags Part 2

Part 2: Do you need a “camera bag”?

It might seem obvious to some of you that, having decided that it's time get your photo stuff together, you would go to the camera store and get a camera bag. But that may not be the best choice, so here, we'll look at why you might want something else.

The first reason is cost. While there are some reasons that “camera bags” cost more, they are not always relevant to what you may need. Some bags are designed by photographers, some are designed by hikers, and some are designed by people who have never used a camera. So you may be just as well off to use something else. If you've been using lens cases and stuff like that to keep your gear safe, keeping it all in a non-camera bag may make perfect sense. One benefit of this is that if you don't need everything for a particular shot, you can take only what you want.

One of the better “camera bag” alternatives, to me, is an insulated bag or soft cooler. It won't work that well if you leave the camera in a locked car in the sun in Texas all day, but if you need to run into 7-11 for a drink (or to drain the drink), it will help. If you're in a cooler climate, you may want one to keep your camera warm, although you need to keep in mind that moving rapidly between warm and cold may cause condensation to freeze. And they're reasonable.

You can get a decent cooler for \$20 or less, sometimes even with a fairly innocuous logo on it, like this one from the BNSF Store (<http://www.bnsfstore.com/>).



Coolers come in several similar sizes, usually stated by how many 12 ounce cans they will hold. I have a couple of 24-can capacity ones like the BNSF cooler, along with a six-pack cooler. The 24-can size will hold a lot of gear, and usually hold up for a long time. I've had one for 10 years, and it's just beginning to wear. A six-pack will hold most SLR's and all-in-one zoom cameras, film or digital. These are often built more cheaply, especially inside. After 3 or 4 years, at most, they will usually start to come apart.

There are some unusual designs, like fold-ups or vertical coolers. The fold-up ones often have Velcro or other hook-and-loop strips on the outside that can catch on about anything, so check them out carefully. A traditional squarish cooler also works better than a vertical, as it's less likely to tip over. Some camera bags, such as the Lowe-Pro Nova 3, will fit inside a 24-can cooler. Now, of course, you don't want to just throw the stuff in there and let it bang around.

### Hard coolers

One of the benefits of a cooler or similar bag is that they are less tempting to thieves. You always need to be careful, but some camera bags practically shout “steal me.” Of course, a cooler can be tempting—especially to someone who is hungry or thirsty—but it's less likely to attract attention. I read once of a guy whose hotel room was ransacked while he was eating. The thief didn't pay any attention to a plain old cooler; but it had several cameras and lenses inside. A variation on this is to use a diaper bag. You may look a little silly, but very few people care to steal them!

(Next, we'll look at “real” camera bags)

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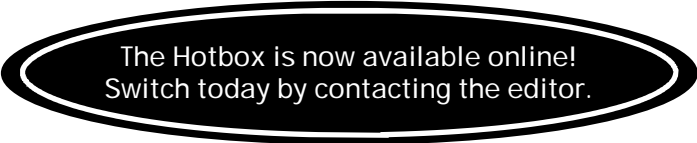
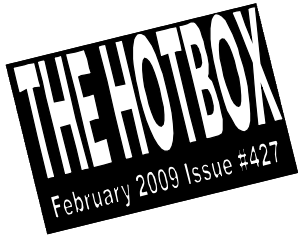




# The Teen Association of Model Railroaders

*"Putting the future of Model Railroading on the right track"*

Hotbox Editor  
3366 WebWob Way  
Shingle Springs, CA 95682



The TAMR is a non-profit organization created to promote, foster, and encourage young persons in the hobby of model railroading, the activity of model railroading, 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)-\$15, Associate (21 and over)-\$20, International (outside US)-\$18

To become a part of the RMAAT, or to renew, send your information to:  
Tim Vermande, TAMR, 11667 Tidewater Dr. Fishers, IN 46037.

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**COMING SOON TO THE HOTBOX:**

- James Lincoln takes for a ride along the CSX's Boston and Albany division.
- A new contest for all members.

**COMING SOON TO THE TAMR:**

- Your not so brand-new Editor!
- Summer National Convention 2009!