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# THE HOTBOX

March 2009 Issue # 428



the official publication of the teen  
association of model railroaders  
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**ON THE COVER:** . A Westbound NS freight passes the local yard switcher in Durham, NC. *James Lincoln, photo.*



## FORM 19

*A 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 shining her emerald tophat.

### 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](mailto:TAMRHotboxEd@sbcglobal.net)

## 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)

Build a little birdhouse in your soul.

Hello everybody! You may be wondering why I'm here, at least you had better be! I've come out of semi-retirement because Ben's been having some computer issues as of late, and I offered to fill in till he can get all that stuff straightened out. Plus, it seems to be the trend these days, I mean, if Brett Favre, can do it, why can't I? Although, the tentative plan is for me only to be here for two issues, not an entire "season". Till the April issue is in on the newsstands



send any and all material to me at the addy's show to the left. In the meantime, we still have an organization to run here and to that end we need some more officers. The reason this Hotbox is in your hands is because I was here to step in for Ben when he needed help. Sadly, most of our other positions have no back-ups or, for that matter, anyone in the positions at all. We need you!

Here's a great way to contribute, and make some new friends at the same time. All you need is a positive attitude, some time and effort,

and a love of all things trains (that should be a given for all of you!). Stop sitting around, and start making a difference in this group, you've got nothing to lose, but your boredom.

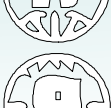
To find out more including what positions are available, you can either contact me at the addys to the left, or President, Sawyer Berry at the addy below:

[sbpackernut@gmail.com](mailto:sbpackernut@gmail.com)

In other news, I'm currently taking nominations for this years Payne Awards, and the winners actually get some honest-to-goodness prizes! Categories are:

Best Member, Best Supporting Member, Best New Member, Best Hotbox Photograph, Best Hotbox Article/Column. You can email me your nominations at the addy to the left and the winners will be announced next month with their chance to pick from the TAMR prize vault, including products from Atlas, Kato, Athearn, Walthers, etc. in HO, and N, scale (there is a little On3 as well). Get Nominating!•





**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 is the worst locomotive ever built?

**Willie Roberge, Wareham, MA:** "I would have to say the worse locomotive ever built (despite my love for Union Pacific's Double-Diesels) was General Electric's U50C. The U50C's were a flop because of thier poor performance. They were plagued by mechanical problems and Electrical fires. The electrical fires literally exploded thier Aluminum primary cables away (most locomotives used copper but to save weight these used aluminum). This class had according to the 1981 book *Giants of the West, a Pictorial Presentation of Union Pacific's Super Powered Locomotives* by George R. Cockle, "The Dubious Honor of having the shortest service life of any locomotive in Union Pacific's history. There were locomotives with less service life, but those were strictly experimental models!

Another nomination for worse locomotive: EMD's SDP40F built for Amtrak in 1973 and 74. The SDP40F was basically FP45 style body with the standard components of EMD's successful SD40-2 with provisions in place for passenger service. The reason these were a horrible locomotive is they were not the locomotives that Amtrak really needed to do the job. They were a compromise based on the idea that "locomotives could be converted into freight engines should Amtrak fail." Well Amtrak did not fail but these locomotives did.

**Sawyer Berry, Aiken, SC:** "There was a steam locomotive that was jacked up on extra wheels, but was probably just a stock scam. Don't know where the link is. However, the worst diesel loco? Probably the "track straightener", or the DD40AX. Yes, I know they are like the big old Big Boys of the diesel era, but COME ON UP, that's a bit much. You're just putting two locomotives on one common frame. That's what I think is the worst loco made."

**Ben Hawken, Shingle Springs, CA:** "I would have to say it's the SD40M-2. Just the thought of a SD45 20-cylinder getting cut down to a 16-cylinder is gross to me, although it was the SP that made the first SD40-2 from a SD45 which was called a SD44R #7399."

**Charles Warczinsky, Sandusky, MI:** "The worst locomotive ever made (in my opinion) is the Dash 9. GE finally(?) built a quality locomotive and sold so many copies that it's hard to spend a day railfanning along side most Class 1s without seeing at least one of these units. Probably more than one. And if you're 'fanning Norfolk Southern's Chicago Line, east of Chicago, you might only see one or two locomotives that aren't Dash 9s. In a way, I almost wish GE had left the locomotive business a long time ago...but from what I hear, the Dash 9 isn't too bad as a work platform."

**Jeffrey Andreski, Loveland, CO:** "I have to tend to agree with Willie about the U50C's being the worst locomotive built. But to give some variety to this question I would have to say the H-24-66 Fairbanks Morse 2400 horsepower "Train Master"(1953) . It can be considered the first true second generation locomotive: High horsepower, six axles, road switcher layout. The downside to the locomotive was that the F-M's opposed-piston engine was too expensive to maintain. Also the locomotive was built 15 years ahead of its time. Sales were a disaster: only 127 units. I also picked this locomotive because I just got a model of it, a SP paint scheme and I have to say it's rather a strange looking locomotive.

**Steven Goehring, Nazareth, PA:** "There have been a lot of badly designed locomotives over the years, but I'd have to give the Alco C636 as one of the worst. It inherited (and exaggerated) the C628's notorious habit of destroying track, and it was one of the hardest-riding locomotives out there. I read an account of Illinois Central crews trying to make their C636's behave, and they rocked so violently between 8 and 22 MPH that they were known to rock right off the tracks! And the unconventional starters made such a racket that whenever they had to restart a dead unit (which was often,) they'd wake up entire towns! They might've been decent, had Alco still had the influence to redesign, improve, and properly support them. But instead, they went out of business."

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



TEEN ASSOCIATION OF MODEL RAILROADERS



What can I say, it's back! Layout on a Shoestring Budget, or LOASSB as it's known, had been a Hotbox staple for ten years. Taking on this job as editor kind of put a crimp on it, but with a shortage of material, especially of the modeling nature, I see fit to dust it off and drag it back out one more time. Anyway, on to what I'm known for, giving model railroad tips using everyday, common, and most important-cheap, items! For this month I'll touch on some quick fixes you can use to spruce-up the scenery on your layout.

## Tip #1

Details, details, details. Nothing disappoints me more than to see a nicely detailed train rolling past a town of windowless buildings and empty streets (well except when they canceled Joan of Arcadia, but that's for another time). Save some of that money you would use on cab sunshades, and invest in your towns. Take some time to detail the structures. I find if you give the buildings a story, it's make the detail process a lot easier. Instead of it being just a generic storefront. Let it be a department store built in 1920, that closed in the 70's was divided-up and now serves as a trendy new nightclub with some spare retail space. Yes, I just came-up with that, and it's really quite simple. Most of it comes from the prototypes I see everywhere. That's where your inspiration should start. Check out the real things. What's on a city street, what's around a railroad yard, how is that factory laid out. Then get a story in the back of your mind. It need not be 100% accurate and can change at any-time. This method can also be applied to the streets and surfaces around that building.



The devil's in the details. They can make or break a layout, especially an urban scene like this. Lots of action, without overdoing it, can really dress it up and draw lots of ooh's and ahhs.

## Tip #2

Keep it clean. Cobwebs and dust can quickly put a damper on a detailed scene. The best way to stay ahead of that is to vacuum, but if you'd rather not lose half of your scenery in the process try this. A short section of flexible hosing no more than a 1/2 inch in diameter (mine's a scrap piece from an old washing machine, cleaned of course) that you can blow into blasting away dust in tight or delicate spaces. Just be sure you don't hyperventilate or pass out in the process, and chewing gum is not recommended.

## Tip #3

Vehicles and people. Two most often overlooked details and frankly essential for a detailed layout. Imagine what the above scene might look like without all the traffic and pedestrians. If you want to avoid your city or rural scene from resembling downtown Gary, IN add

plenty of cars trucks buses, semis and service vehicles, along with the people to support them. "Oh but it's too expensive right?, wrong. Start by buying people in bulk unpainted from Prieser. You can get a legion or two quickly and then custom paint them to fit your scenes, and stories. Vehicles can also be found fairly cheap in packs from companies like Model Power, and Bachmann, they may be older models, but will fill in nicely in a pinch (you always wanted to model the 70's didn't you?). With a little paint and some windows they clean up nice and give your layout that lived in look.

*Well I'm pretty much out of space, expect me to cover much of what I discussed here in detail in future issues. Either bimonthly, or whenever-theres-a-freespace-monthly. Till then, happy noodling!●*

# YOU CAN'T MAKE THIS STUFF UP!

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

## Fourth Trick

Well it is 3:30am now and I continue to try to hammer out some material for Peter so we can keep the Hotbox filled and I hope, interesting. (That's (11) and tell whoever has this mosquito generator on to turn it off!)

Last month I told you about what I am doing here at East Brookfield and the first train I took as a conductor. Up until that time I had worked on yard jobs, but mostly as a flagman out of Beacon Park extra board, in fact, for my first three to four weeks, just about the only thing I did was flag jobs, which is funny because, I never was trained how to do it (not that it is that difficult), nope, not a single day on a flag job just to see how it was done. No, you can't make this stuff up.

Working on the extra board is interesting because, for the most part, you do different things, the bad thing is that you really have no set schedule. You can have a basic idea of what is going to happen, but there are no real guarantees except that you will have a particular day off, but even that is not certain because, if you get called on a road freight the day before your day off, you will work through your off day and be given 22 ½ hours of rest after you sign off your time slip, which might not be until the day after your off day. Then, you might want to turn your rest day off and work if things are going well, or if things are really slow and you know that you probably won't work anyway. The problem is that if your rest day works as it should (12) at 8pm on the previous day if the crew caller calls you for work, you do not have to answer the phone and you will not be penalized and then you do not return to the board again until 4am of the day AFTER your rest day, so in reality, if your rest day works as it should you have 32 hours per week where the company cannot call you for work. If you work into your rest day, however, they only have to give you 22 ½ hours off, which doesn't really make any sense, but



that's the way it is.

If you have ever thought about working for the railroad, I will say this, it is a good job and it pays really well, if you are looking for a 9am-5pm job that works 5 days a week with weekends off, don't even apply. The reality is that sometimes you will not work much at all, two weeks ago I only worked one round trip to Selkirk. With CSX, however, I'm guaranteed to receive a paycheck a certain amount every two weeks. At my seniority level that's \$1650. So, if I were to do NOTHING, no work at all for 1 year, I am guaranteed to make around \$42000 per year. What that demands of me, however, is that I am tied to the phone 24/6. So it can be a very good job, but it can be very hard as well. Most of the time, to be honest, we do not do a whole lot of work and we get paid quite well. Then there are days like last Friday (9/26/08).

I was called as the conductor for the B723 out of Framingham at 8 am. The B723 is usually a very good job with not a whole lot to do, except on Fridays and Saturdays. On Fridays and Saturdays, the morning switcher at Framingham as well as the B722 are not called, so you have to do their work, which means you have to do some of the switching in the yard as well as serve B722's customers in Westboro, all without a brakeman. Well, how bad can that be? You ask. Not that bad, actually, except that last Friday it was pouring buckets. Let's put it this way, my engineer looked at me and said, "hmmm, you've got the y120 and the b722's work to do, without a brakeman" he looked outside ... "stinks to be you." Yeah. We had to wait for the B725 to come up from Walpole so that we had our engines so we didn't walk out the door until 9am, by 9:45 I was soaked. By 10am I was soaked from the top of my head, down to my boots. My boots were so wet that my feet went "squish, squish" when I walked, miserable does not really begin to describe how I felt. Did I have a raincoat on? Yes, but I didn't have the pants and even if I did, my boots were not waterproof (I wasn't sure at the time, I am now) and the problem with rain gear when you do the type of work that you do on the railroad is that it makes you sweat so much that it is hard to say whether you are better off with it or without it. I just resigned myself to being wet, because really, at that point,

*Continued on next page.*

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*From previous page*

had I changed (13) the new clothes would have gotten just as wet. Well, after going to Westboro and doing our work, we did not get back into Framingham until 7pm, and I ended up signing out at 8pm after doing the necessary paperwork, so I spent 12 hrs soaked, head to foot, if you count the time it took me to drive home. I think that was the wettest I have ever been, and that includes taking showers (you laugh ... I'm not kidding). If you are not willing to deal with THAT, don't apply to the railroad. It gave ME second thoughts.

I write the above and yet, at the end of the day, both the engineer and the yardmaster told me I had done a good job, even though I had made a bunch of mistakes. I had gotten the major customer done and had not derailed anything, which considering I am so new, is all they ask of me. It was a good day's work under terrible circumstances and I take pride in that. No, you can't make this stuff up. (13 and 14)●

## The Extra Board

### New Memberships-0 Renewals-1

Mike Acree

### Expiring Memberships-13

Austin and Jonathan Hight

Brian Kulp

Benjamin Hawken

Barry Simmons

Gregory Jackman

Willie Roberge

Jacob Gray

Daniel Adams

Chris Burchett

Mark MacDougal I

Austin MacDougal I

Andrew Matarazzo

Douglas Engler

### 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 Top 7 CLASSICS

By: Peter Maurath

## Top Seven comments you don't want to hear on a passenger train.

#7. "Wow, that is one big cockroach."

#6. "Look, milepost 151,... 151.2... 151.4...151.6..."

#5. "I think there's part of a minivan in the vestibule."

#4. "Man the food from the vending machines is awesome!"

#3. "You think all the dark signals we keep passing mean anything?"

#2. "I dunno, the conductor just keeps looking at his watch and mumbling like it's the end of the world or something."

And the number one comment you don't want to hear on a passenger train.....

"Walk towards the bright light!"

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# Trains to Nowhere

By: Steven Goehring (photos by author)

few made up trains from Amtrak or an upstate New York commuter agency.

## Following a Freight

For a closer look at the Wellsboro Branch, we'll follow the first freight train out of Wellsboro in the morning.

In Wellsboro Yard, engine no. 1846, a C&O BL2 donated by CSX, powers up



## Wellsboro Branch: a rural Pennsylvania electric shortline

### The Prototype

The only currently active rail service in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, is the Wellsboro & Corning Railway, a tiny shortline that runs several trains a week. Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a coal railroad known as the Fall Brook Coal Co. ran coal and passengers through Wellsboro. Today, there are far fewer trains than during the Fall Brook's time or the NYC's and its successors' brief presences. However, since the scenery along the W&C's route is so beautiful, an excursion train company called the Tioga Central Railway runs regular excursion service on weekends. Layout Overview



The Wellsboro Ansonia & Galetton is a fairly new, but rapidly progressing N scale model railroad. The Wellsboro Branch is the first of four branches, (loops of track,) and is currently the only area of track with scenery. The prototype depicted is an enhanced and compressed version of the Wellsboro & Corning Railway with the addition of overhead catenary wire support poles to justify the presence of electric locomotives.

The track layout is a backwards L shaped dogbone which turns around inside a tunnel at one end and a dense forest at the other to allow for continuous running. Diverging tracks form the connection with the rest of the layout at the northern end of the Wellsboro line and a long siding represents a long coal branch leading south from Wellsboro. The Trains

The Wellsboro Branch plays host to diverse traffic. Keeping with the prototype, agricultural products and sand for the glassworks are the main commodities. Coal from the mines south of the layout funnels onto the layout at Wellsboro, often pulled by CSX diesels or Pennsy electrics. Passenger service includes the prototypical TC operations as well as a



and prepares to leave for the day's chores. Just outside the yard, we encounter the Corning Glassworks' switcher, a Pennsy B1 boxcab. It has a few loaded boxcars of glass and some empty covered hoppers. We pick up its consist and wait for a GG1-hauled commuter train to clear the main and proceed north with a few loads of grain from the Wellsboro freight house and the glass loads & empties.

Our BL2 stops at the point where the Antrim Coal Branch meets the Wellsboro line and wait for a CSX SD-40/GP-38 powered coal drag to clear our path. With the coal train long gone, we throttle up and move north.

As our train crosses US Route 6 crossing, a small factory is visible through the dense Spruce trees. This is a division of Elk Tanning Co., one of 3 tanneries on the layout. Shortly after, our train dives into a tunnel to continue its trip north to the interchange near Corning, NY, a very empty area in real life, which is beyond the end of the layout. BL2 #1846 truly is pulling a train to nowhere.●

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To become a part of the TAMR, or to renew, send your information to:  
Tim Vermande, TAMR Pivot Pin, 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 Westerville, 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:**

- We dig deep into the Article file to unearth a few gems.
- It's April, you know what that means.

## COMING SOON TO **THE TAMR:**

- Seeking Summer Convention Ideas.



### **The Teen Association Of Model Railroaders**

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

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Before I go...

