

HOTBOX

"THE MAGAZINE OF TEENAGE MODEL RAILROADERS"

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*** INSIDE : DOUBLE-STACK CONTAINER TRAINS ***



Presidential

Notes

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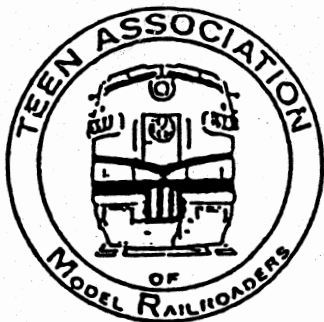
This issue was supposed to be the first one produced by the Teen Association of Model Railroaders' latest editor. Later in the issue, Brian Brush was named the new HOTBOX Editor. Unfortunately, Brian resigned in early February for personal reasons. This means that we are once again looking for a new editor. If anyone is interested in taking on the job, please let me know and send in a sample of your work. If you don't have the time or ambition to be a full time editor, we could certainly use your help as Assistant Editor. This job would entitle typing articles, and editing and retyping articles sent in by members. Layout and mailing will be handled by the editor. I hope to hear from MANY of you very soon. We NEED your help! GET INVOLVED!!

I will be acting as temporary editor until a new one is found. I do not have adequate time in my schedule of classes, track practice & competition, and other TAMR duties. I will however attempt the job ONLY as long as I have the support from the TAMR membership. This means a STEADY supply of articles!! The ONLY reason that this issue is coming out this soon and of this length is because of the support of ex-HOTBOX Editor Mark Kaszniak. THANKS Mark!! In order for me to produce the HOTBOX, I need your help.

You all should have received information on the upcoming TAMR Elections from TAMR Auditor Beth Wolstenholme. Please get involved as this is a very important part of the TAMR. Nominate people, accept the nominations and remember to VOTE!! Its very important!

The TAMR Executive Board realizes that the organization has not been providing its membership with many benefits over the past year or so. However, we CAN'T do it alone. We NEED your interest and most importantly your SUPPORT. Get involved! Give us a hand in getting the organization back on track! If you're not careful, you might have some fun!! Give it a try!

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The Teen Association of Model Railroaders has entered the new year with some new "crew members" and an ambition to succeed. Together with your help, we can get the organization rolling again.

In the last issue of the HOTBOX, (printed in December) I asked for volunteers willing to help out, and specifically members to enter the offices of Editor and Secretary. I only heard from a few members, but I am pleased and very confident in their abilities to effectively handle their duties. The new HOTBOX Editor is Brian Brush of Temple Terrace, Florida; and the new Secretary is Matt Heiman of Shelbyville, Kentucky. Matt is the acting Central Region Rep., and Brian was the Editor of the Southern Region's CRESCENT. I was impressed with Brian's work on the CRESCENT, and I feel he will do a good job with the HOTBOX.

Our biggest problem right now is to get the HOTBOX back onto something of a schedule. In order to do this, WE NEED YOUR HELP!! We have very few articles to print. We can use any type of original material. Write an article about your layout, your imaginary railroad, a modeling technique, a recent railfanning trip, or even a fictional story. Whatever you can do, long or short, typed or handwritten, we would very much appreciate. Send any material, even a handwritten note or a newspaper clipping to Brian Brush at the address below. We need your help!

I plan to assist Matt with his Secretarial duties until he can get settled in. I hope that Dee Gilbert will lend a hand in helping Matt get started. Our main priority in this area is to get all of the membership cards and perhaps promotional pens mailed out.

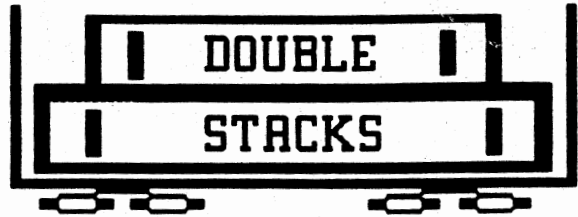
About a year ago, I brought up the idea of having a photo exchange. This would involve members trading photos they have taken while out railfanning. This would allow someone in New Jersey who liked the Rio Grande, to trade photos with someone in Colorado who liked Conrail. That way members could get photos of their favorite line's equipment while making friends and getting involved in the TAMR. Initial response to this idea was tremendous! I received several letters, notes, and photos from members who were interested in the Photo Exchange idea. I typed up two articles, with interested members' names and addresses, but these weren't recovered from the last Editor. However, anyone who is again interested in this idea, please let me know. It could be a great time, and you'll make some new modeling friends! Lets get this idea going!

The new Editor's address is : Brian Brush, 223 S. Riverhills Drive, Temple Terrace, Fl., 33617.

Thanks for your support!

A FEW FACTS ABOUT:

BY MARK KASZNIAR



DOUBLE STACKS! No, I'm not talking about your favorite kind of ice cream cone, but rather the hottest innovation to hit the railroad industry since the unit coal train. "Intermodalism" has become the latest buzz word; ushering in double-stack trains as the latest fad. Will continued growth in this area help to revitalize our nation's railroads? Or will the business begin to fall off as the new kid on the block grows up? Just where do these trains come from, and where are they going? In this article, I hope to tell you a little about how this type of service developed which will hopefully provide you with some tips for modeling along the way.

In 1981, Sea-Land Service, Inc. pioneered regular double-stack service out of Los Angeles via the Southern Pacific Transportation Co. In 1984, American President Companies Ltd. started its first double-stack *Linertrain* Service also out of Los Angeles via the Union Pacific Railroad. Today, over thirty double-stack trains are in operation. To understand how double-stack trains developed, it is essential to know how they are designed and run and most importantly who were the major players--railroad and steamship lines--that had a hand in making them happen. The Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Santa Fe and Burlington Northern all contracted with steamship lines to offer such service, and the BN, SP and Santa Fe now offer stack train service on a public basis as well.

Double-Stack trains are a major refinement of the landbridge concept developed in the 1970's for TOFC/COFC. The concept of landbridge uses railroads to bridge the overland distance between ports or a port and an inland destination. This concept works for high-value merchandise freight because final or intermediate delivery by railroads is as much as 10 days faster, although more expensive than all-water carriage via the Panama Canal. Steamship lines like the double-stack train concept because it permits them to guarantee door-to-door service.

However, long term profitability of this service for the railroads depends on generating western loads to balance the eastbound ones from the steamships. According to Donald C. Orris, President of American President Intermodal, development of western domestic traffic "has an equal hat in our endeavors at this point in time." While some carriers tend to handle loads in only one direction, Mr. Orris stated: "We're running a largely loaded system in both directions." To accomplish this, APC placed 1,500 new 48 foot containers into service in 1986. APC's activity in soliciting domestic service has allowed it to achieve a higher equipment utilization factor than any other operator in the inland intermodal field.

Another move to increase the competitiveness of double-stack trains in relation to other modes of transportation was the introduction of the 48-foot trailer. New double-stack cars capable of carrying 48-footers on the bottom and 45-footers on the top are helping to gain an edge into the large box domestic trade. This allows greater competition with interstate highway trucks, which have been using the 48-foot trailer successfully for some time now.

Part of the success of double-stack train service is the design of the unit cars, called "platforms." Two of the main manufacturers are Thrall and Gunderson. Gunderson, Inc., of Portland, OR, manufacturer of *Twin-Stack* trade-named cars, has had a flood of orders for new equipment in the past several years. In 1986, the company's first year in business, a total of 1,450 container carrying platforms (five platforms to a single, articulated rail car capable of carrying 10 containers) were built even though the company did not start manufacturing until March 1st! In the company's peak building period, *Twin-Stack* cars were being produced at a rate of 12 platforms per day to meet backlogs.

The *Twin-Stack* car's success is due to several design features and aggressive marketing on the part of Gunderson. A five-platform car has an overall length of nearly 264 feet, weighs 175,000 pounds light and has a net capacity of 491,400. This results in a gross rail load of 666,400 pounds for each five unit car. The cars were designed by Greenbrier Leasing Corp. of Lake Oswego, OR and became Gunderson's first customer. 100 platforms were ordered for short-term leases to Burlington Northern and Sea-Land.

Each car features steel bulkheads on each end of every platform for rapid, safe loading and unloading operations. The bulkheads improve aerodynamic flow around the containers being carried. According to C. Bruce Ward, Gunderson's president, "Fuel savings are of such significance that they more than offset the added weight of the bulkheads." Also, Gunderson's cars need no inter-box connectors, and can be loaded with or without ground personnel. This produces substantial labor savings and enhances handling safety in rail terminals. In order to accept both 45-foot and 40-foot containers on the upper tier, the tops of the bulkheads are equipped with patented flippers. For a 40-foot box, the retaining devices are activated with a track-side lever. 45-foot containers are held in place by the bulkheads themselves.

After completing the Greenbrier order, Gunderson received a Sea-Land order for 425 platforms and 500 platform order from the Burlington Northern. The new Sea-Land cars were placed in service between Sea-Land's new Tacoma, WA terminal with connections to Chicago and New York. The cars built for the BN went into that railroad's daily *Twin-Pack* service between the Northwest and Chicago. That service, which began in August of 1985, is designed for use by medium-sized and smaller container operators calling at the port facilities of Seattle and Tacoma.

Next Southern Pacific ordered 375 platforms for dedicated steamship line use via their railroad. The SP uses *Twin Stack* cars between Los Angeles and Chicago as well as between Los Angeles and Houston, Dallas and Memphis. Then 25 platforms were built for the Chessie System for use between Baltimore and Chicago for the benefit of steamship line tenants in

Baltimore. Santa Fe followed with an order for 150 platforms which are partially for Santa Fe's own use and to beef up Sea-Land service on Santa Fe's rails. These cars are operated between Los Angeles and Chicago. Sea-Land then placed an additional 200 platform order which it used to expand double-stack service into some new corridors.

As might be expected the sudden increase in demand for double-stack service has put a crunch on the available port facilities for loading/unloading these containers from steamships. Thus both the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA have been expanded to handle the increased business. In November of 1986, SP's Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) became operational. This 150-acre facility, owned by both ports and run by the SP, was constructed at a cost of \$54 million. ICTF, the largest intermodal facility in the United States dedicated to handling international traffic, is located about four miles from container terminals at both ports and it is helping both Los Angeles and Long Beach attract even more intermodal activity.

Before construction of the ICTF facility, the containers moved between the port and the rail facilities via Southern California freeway system. This facility allows movement of over 300,000 carloads per year. The ICTF is open around the clock and has parking spaces for over 1,600 containers. State-of-the-art container transfer equipment is employed to load and unload trains moving over five tracks specifically designed to handle up to ten double-stack trains per day!

At the port of Los Angeles, Berths 216-221 recently received 10 more acres of paved backland and 300 feet of additional wharf. Stevedoring Services of America now operates this facility as a public terminal. Mitsui O.S.K. Lines upgraded a 1,700 wharf at the site of a former automobile terminal that became operational in June of 1987. Berths 225-229 and 174-179 are also being overhauled to provide even more facilities.

In Long Beach, the new 88-acre Long Beach Container Terminal was opened. This complex is used by Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL), Neptune Orient

Lines, Y.S. Line, Zim Container Service and South Seas Steamship Co. Maersk Line, which had occupied 30 acres in Long Beach, now has its own 54-acre facility at the former terminal site. The Sea-Land terminal was expanded from 70 acres to 100 acres and the United States Lines terminal was re-designed for better use.

Although intermodal traffic now accounts for about 40% of the total container business, Travis Montgomery, director of trade development for the Port of Long Beach, expects that a 50-50 balance between intermodal and local cargoes will be achieved through the Southwest gateway within the next several years. In addition, the Southwest gateway is blessed with a "strong domestic return market," Montgomery noted. The area's large population/industrial base fills westbound containers with domestic freight, thereby holding down eastbound intermodal costs.

The increased dock space has resulted in increased intermodal business for area railroads, most notably the Union Pacific and the Santa Fe. For the UP, this business came from an on-dock facility at Long Beach as well as the railroad's East Los Angeles intermodal yard. Since May of 1986, the UP has been operating weekly "K" Line stack train service directly of "K" Line's quarters at Long Beach, leased to International Transportation Services (ITS). When the "K" Line started its own stack train, the company wanted to have the containers booked for that train transferred at the terminal rather than being trucked up to UP's East Los Angeles yard. According to Fred Johring, Los Angeles District manager of UP intermodal sales, "there's a pretty good savings for them in handling the containers at dockside." He also noted that this is the only dockside intermodal operation in the Los Angeles vicinity.

Union Pacific runs all of its double-stack trains on a contractual basis with steamship companies. In 1985, the UP entered into contracts with three major steamship lines. American President Lines signed a 10-year agreement to commit to the UP major percentages of its cargoes on designated routes served by the UP between Fremont, NB and the West Coast ports of Los Angeles, Oakland and Seattle. UP is now running six stack trains a week out of Los Angeles for American President Lines

The containers come in at APL's Port of Los Angeles terminal to the UP yard for transfer to cars destined for Chicago and New York. Business was so good that stack trains running between Los Angeles and Salt Lake City were restricted to 20 cars, capable of carrying only 200 containers, due to lack of rail siding capacity. Extensions were completed and now 28 car stack trains can be handled.

In June of 1985, Maersk Line and UP began a weekly train between Tacoma and Chicago with service on to New York via Conrail. The transit time between Tokyo and Chicago and New York has been reduced to 13 days and 15 days, respectively. United States Lines and UP, under a three year agreement, began weekly service between the Port of Oakland and Chicago. UP also provides a New Orleans-Houston segment for U.S. Lines stack service from the Port of Savannah.

Although UP does not plan to operate a full double-stack train on a public basis, UP is willing to tailor make a double-stack program for a customer's needs as part of conventional intermodal trains, according to Don Shum, UP's intermodal vice president. "The double-stack option is a big volume, corridor specific type movement," he observed. "It must be coordinated with the ship's arrival, moved inland and returned back to the port on a weekly cycle to meet the next ship coming in. So, it's a joint commitment between the steamship line and railroad to make it work,"

On the Santa Fe, intermodal business contained to grow as a result of the start up of its *EconoStack* service in the April of 1986 and weekly stack train service with Sea-Land in December of 1985. The *EconoStack* service put Santa Fe in the domestic freight side of the stack train business joining with APL-affiliate American President Companies (APC) in the Los Angeles area. Thus APC provides domestic service via the UP with 45-foot and new generation 48-foot containers with the Santa Fe providing 45-foot and some 48-foot containers as well. In addition to length, the width of the 48-foot containers is greater measuring 102 inches, compared to 96 inches for the 45-footers. *EconoStack* Service is offered between Los Angeles and Chicago and Kansas City. Over the road from Chicago, such

through-rate service extends to Cincinnati, Columbus and Indianapolis.

For international traffic, the *EconoStack* Service is offered on a generic basis for third parties as well as steamship lines with traffic loads too small to warrant a dedicated train. "We're mixing the stack cars with our conventional intermodal equipment" to provide stack service on a seven-days-per-week basis for both international and domestic customers,, stated Gary Williams, Los Angeles district intermodal manager for the Santa Fe. "With this type of system, we're moving this (stack) traffic twice a day. A lot of steamship lines have committed to a certain number of cars or spaces on a weekly basis. The more boxes they give us, the better price we'll give them."

Santa Fe was a late entry into the double-stack business as the company did not want to turn over its westbound domestic business to a maritime company. Santa Fe was afraid of an erosion of westbound domestic business if forced to dedicate to a steamship line. That changed when the railroad ran its first double-stack train under contract from Sea-Land in December of 1985. The agreement calls for operation of a 20-car double-stack train which accommodates 200 containers on a weekly basis. Traffic from the West Coast is being handled at Santa Fe's Corwith Yard in Chicago until a new Sea-Land terminal is completed. Some eastbound loads continue to the East Coast via CSX. However, in this case, Santa Fe is doing the westbound domestic marketing. "Sea-Land understands and allows us to market the westbound domestic business from the Chicago area," said John Grygiel, Santa Fe's acting Vice President of traffic. "That will be true with other maritime carriers that become involved in Santa Fe's new *EconoStack* service", he said. Santa Fe will develop its on double-stack service gradually as an integral part of its conventional intermodal program. That way additional double-stack equipment can be provided as the demand for it develops.

Public double-stack service on the Southern Pacific is being developed in the same careful manner as on the Santa Fe. As James L. Hovey, SP's assistant vice president for intermodal marketing, noted: "To make double-stack viable, you have to

figure out how to have this loaded in both directions." Although, double-stack equipment is more economical than conventional intermodal systems, an adequate return on investment is not generated if the stack trains are only loaded in one direction, explained Hovey. Although APC develops domestic as well as international traffic for SP's double-stack trains operated between Los Angeles and Houston/New Orleans on a weekly basis, SP performs domestic traffic marketing for all the other double-stack trains it is contracted to operate. The SP operates weekly stack trains for NYK Line, Mitsui O.S.K. Lines and OOCL-Seapac.

Burlington Northern was the first to offer public service double-stack train service in the summer of 1985. At that time, the *Twin Pack* program was established on a six days a week schedule between Seattle and Chicago. For this service, BN also spots double-stack cars at Tacoma and provides double-stack pricing via conventional equipment out of Portland. Between 9 and 15 (five platform, 10 container) cars run per day in this service. BN has also been experimenting with other routings such as Seattle to Memphis, Birmingham, Dallas, Houston and Kansas City. However, although volume is good, westbound marketing has been a problem. While the softening dollar has produced more export products to be loaded into containers and shipped to West Coast ports and onto steamships, the Northwest is not a large population center and thus is unable to draw the large volumes of westbound domestic traffic that southern California can. While BN plans to be more aggressive in its marketing strategy for the *Twin Packs*, it is being careful not to take away business from its TOFC business.

Following the above successes, other railroads and steamship lines introduced double-stack trains. Members of the industry feel that double-stacking is rapidly approaching a saturation point. If this happens, the resulting rate wars will make it difficult to maintain the profitability of these operations. Some trends are being made toward one-way rather than round-trip double-stack rates. More and more railroads are actively involved in obtaining westbound business. This situation will favor Southern California which has the population and industry to attract large volumes of

westbound domestic traffic. Proliferation of double-stack trains is also having an effect on regular TOFC traffic, the cost of doing TOFC business is up due to the need to reposition empty trailers. However, the railroad industry still sees TOFC being offered on a universal basis where double-stack service will be limited to heavy density traffic lines. The hope is that the new 45 and 48-foot trailers will attract more business from the motor carriers in the future. Roger Stiles, BN's intermodal hub manager at Seattle, noted that BN's new shorthaul *Expeditor* (TOFC) trains in the Midwest have attracted traffic from motor carriers, but it has held captive about 2,000 rail trailers. This is resulting in a spot shortage of rail trailers and the need for BN to better utilize its remaining trailer inventory for West Coast demands. However, the double-stack program has eased an intermodal equipment shortage problem that has traditionally plagued this railroad. When the double-stack cars can on the line, conventional flat cars were not

retired thus increasing the overall intermodal equipment pool. Just how things will turn out for the railroads with double-stack trains is hard to say, but they don't look like they are going to go away soon. At least until a new kid arrives on the block!

Reference Sources for This Article:

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Johnson, Bruce, "Intermodalism Railroad Style'" *Container News*, April 1986, pp. 12-18.

_____, "Double-Stacks For Big Stacks", *Container News*, November 1986, pp. 19-22.

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A MOMENT IN TIME

By Brian L. Brush

At dusk, a swarm of small black birds, delicate against a picturesque sunset, settles slowly onto a telegraph wire. Silence prevails; high, well-ballasted roadbed waits patiently, wooden ties and one-hundred-fifty-pound rail brace themselves against an unseen visitor.

Now...the long, sad, soft wail of a steam locomotive.

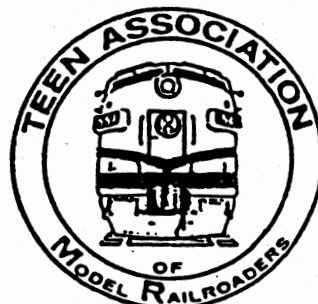
And a glimmering headlight leaps to the horizon. The birds depart; the air is strained with expectorant tension. The bass voice of the engine calls for sympathizers; no one answers, and the train looms inevitably straight ahead.

The soft chug of exhaust becomes apparent - throttle setting increases, and the beats become sharp and forceful.

Almost here.

A beating, clanging, screaming, hellish machine comes to a climax: Pennsy K4 Pacific #1361 steps high wide, and handsome across a level stretch of right-of-way in north-central Pennsylvania. The smell of her coal dissipates in hours....

But memories are immortal.



PIKE ADS

Take advantage of the HOTBOX's service for TAMR members. Here is your chance to tell others about your railroad, your modeling efforts or just your pike dreams.

These ads employ a reusable "Header" with the option of changing the text below as often as you desire. Your text can be informative, newsy, or tongue-in-cheek or foot-in-mouth. Funny or dead serious, that's your choice. It makes for very interesting reading.

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TAMR HOTBOX

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