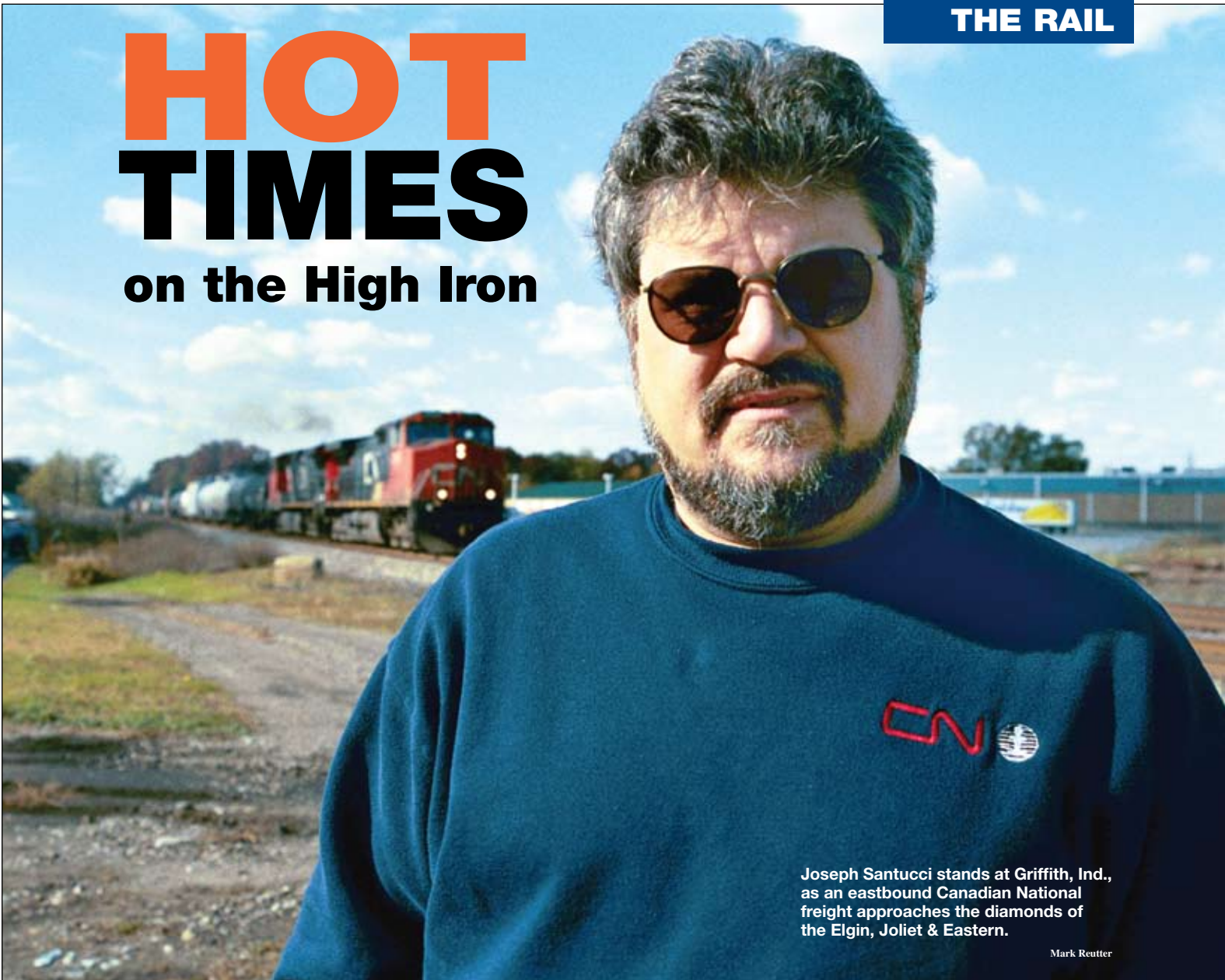


HOT TIMES

on the High Iron



Joseph Santucci stands at Griffith, Ind., as an eastbound Canadian National freight approaches the diamonds of the Elgin, Joliet & Eastern.

Mark Reutter

In which Engineer Joseph Santucci tells stories about his world and wins a worldwide audience on the Web • By DAN CUPPER

A railroader's way of life is the thread that links scores of historic writers of the rail, from Allen Chapman's Ralph Fairbanks to Harry Bedwell's Eddie Sand. Those fictional heroes of book and pulp magazine laid the groundwork for a new kind of writer, one who's working primarily in a new medium, the Internet.

Joseph Santucci of Schererville,

Ind., hired on with Missouri Pacific in 1978 as a 22-year-old trainman, and was promoted to engineer in 1981. Now 50, he's a true boomer in the tradition of yesteryear's railroaders who bounced from one railroad to another as circumstances, traffic, and labor shortages or surpluses dictated. Santucci – who prefers the nickname Tuch (pronounced “Toooh”) – counts no fewer than 10 railroads on his

resume.

In addition to MP, he's worked for Chicago South Shore & South Bend; Guilford; Central Vermont; Chicago Central & Pacific; Wisconsin Central; Metra; Indiana Harbor Belt; Elgin, Joliet & Eastern; and Illinois Central (now Canadian National).

Railroading has been a part of Santucci's life ever since childhood, when his family lived in Chicago