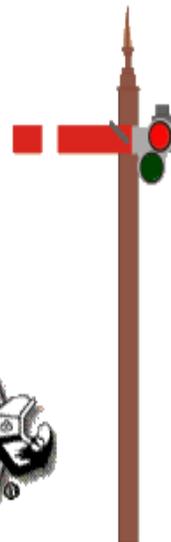




The Semaphore

LAND-O-SKY
DIVISION 15, SOUTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
AND
WNC MODEL RAILROADERS, INC.

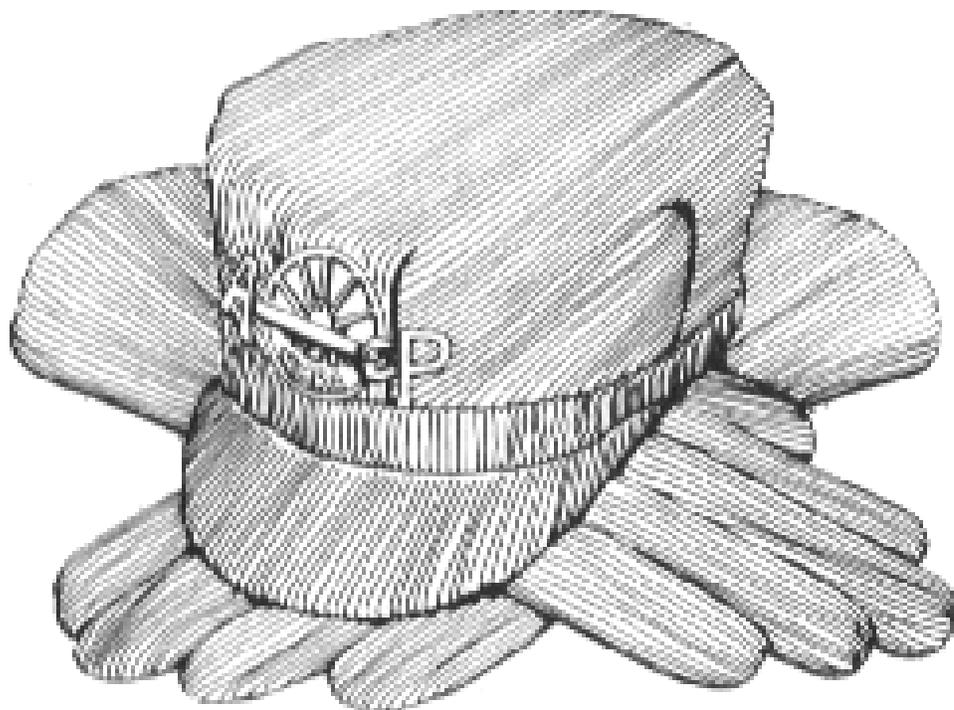


FRED COLEMAN, SUPERINTENDENT
ROBERT BELL, ASST. SUPERINTENDENT
BILL SIBERT, COMPANY CLERK
PENN BULLOCK, BARNMASTER
JIM FIQUA, PAYMASTER
DAVE ANDERSON, WEBMASTER

February 2008

Our next meeting is on Thursday, March 6th, at 7:00 p.m.

Send comments about and contributions to this newsletter to chsmoke@bellsouth.net.
Please keep us informed of changes in your address, phone number or email address.



The Year of the Master Model Railroader
“Participate in 2008”



The Fireman's Seat

By Robert Bell, Division 15 Assistant Superintendent



Greetings! Hope all of you had a great New Year's. Due to some personal reasons, I am going to start writing the "Fireman's Seat" in alternate months for a while.

Continuing where we left off in January, with more on-line resources for our modeling, www.index.mrmag.com is a great place to find what magazine issue that article you saw 30 years ago is in. Then, if you do not have it anymore, (I can't imagine why you would have gotten rid of it), a good place to try and order the magazine is www.railpub.com

If you are doing track work, www.railwayeng.com, is the web site for a manufacturer, but Mr. Hatch, (the owner) has a load of tips for you.

If you are just looking to buy something, check out www.walthers.com, before you order it through your local hobby shop, to see if it is currently in stock at Walthers. If it is not in stock with them, try www.caboosehobbies.com, they seem to try to stock everything. Many other hobby shops also provide a mail order service, so look in your favorite model magazine and look them up on-line.

And last, go to www.ebay.com, not just for some item that was produced thirty years ago, but for modeling ideas, photographs, and the like. A while back, I needed pictures of moose antlers for a project. I searched Ebay and "left-clicked" on several pictures with the mouse and then saved the pictures to my computer. Later, I resized them to my scale and printed them out, and used them as templates for modeling.

I will see you all here in the May "Fireman's Seat", and hopefully see ALL of you at the *Smokey Mountain Rails* that same month.

Until then, remember: It's your club - get involved: Become a convention volunteer!

Let's play trains! 

From the Superintendent's Desk

Submitted by Fred Coleman

We are another month closer to the *Smokey Mountain Rails Convention*. The announcements will be coming out in *Model Railroader*, *Trains*, *N-Trak* newsletter, *Scale Rails*, and the *Southerner* to mention a few of the publications that have been confirmed. The Convention website is growing with the listings of events and clinicians. Also, for those that are interested the op session for the convention is now on line for registering. If you haven't signed up for one of the many jobs needed to filled please contact us and let us know what times you will have available.

I attended the SER BOD meeting on the Feb 9 in Pensacola, FL where the 2009 Convention will be held in the Civic Center, which is across the street from an old L & N Station that is now a motel.

Our program for March will be presented by Frank Pearsall on World War I equipment which should very interesting. I hope to see you on the March 6th meeting.



Important stuff for members!

The dates for March Operating Sessions on the LOST RR are March 9th at 2pm and 24th at 2pm.

Awards Night



Division 15 Superintendent Fred Coleman presented several NMRA awards at the February meeting.

At left, Joe Norris received two Merit Awards for his entries at the December Train Show. These entries were shown in last month's Semaphore.

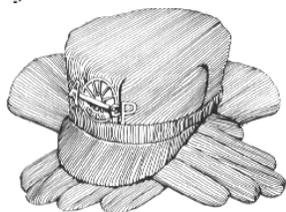


The center picture is of Jack Mershon who won an award for his entry at the Train Show. His display was shown on the cover of last month's Semaphore.



And in the lower picture, *Semaphore* editor Clint Smoke receives his award as Model Railroad Author. His writings and photographs have appeared in the *Semaphore*, SER's *The Southerner*, and the Norfolk and Western Historical Society's magazine, *The Arrow*.





Master Builder – Scenery

Editor's note: During the past several months we have provided information about the NMRA's Achievement Program with the hope that this information will inspire members to work on their projects with the goal of becoming a better modeler and a Master Model Railroader.

The intent of this category is for you to demonstrate "the prototypical rendering of scenic effects from the ground up." The type of scenery that you choose to model is entirely up to you. An urban landscape involves just as much scenery (if not more) as a mountain or desert landscape.

1. To Qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery Certificate: Construct a completed section of a model railroad of at least sixty square feet in O scale, or forty-five square feet in S scale, or thirty-two square feet in HO scale, or eighteen square feet in N scale or other scales in proportional relationship to HO scale. This completed section must contain the necessary scenic elements of Terrain, Structures, Background, Lighting, and Realism/Conformity as combined to achieve a realistic effect using applicable NMRA standards in that particular model railroad scene. The intent of this category is the prototypical rendering of the scenic elements from the ground up.

It is not necessary to qualify for this certificate by constructing a single section of layout. You can construct several different scenes (such as modules), each of which must be at least eight square feet and of Merit Award quality. Note that modules which earn 87-1/2 or more points using the NMRA's Module contest judging sheet count toward the Master Builder Scenery certificate.

The definitions of the various elements (which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad) shall be:

Terrain (35 pts)

- The ground and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills and depressions, as well as man made features such as railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads, etc.
- Also remember different types of vegetation and the effects of weather and of animals. Remember the detail on streets and roads, whether in urban or rural areas: sewers / storm drains, man-hole covers, shoulders, drainage ditches, cracks, patches, road wear marks, oil stains, and tire ruts in dirt roads.

Make the transitions between different types of terrain as smooth as possible. Avoid glaring inconsistencies such as a New England Farm house surrounded by palm trees. If you are going to have different scenes on your layout use backdrop dividers or other vision blocks to separate them.

Structures (20 pts)

Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement, and appearance as scenic effects - NOT as to construction (which is covered under Master Builder - Structures). This includes bridges, trestles, and culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, retaining walls, etc.), track and right-of-way features such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties, turntables and other service structures, etc.

These are but a few examples - additional features are encouraged. Also remember that structures should be in the ground, not sitting on top of it. Make sure that the appearance of your structures is consistent with your scenery. At the very least, weather it enough to take the "out of the box plastic shine" off of it. Switch machines, if not under the table, should be well disguised (this is one detail that will cause your application to be returned if it is not done). Remember details such as lights over the doors of commercial buildings.



Background (25 pts)

Treatment of the wall, backdrop, and/or ceiling to realistically depict depth, distance, horizon, and sky. This doesn't mean that you have to have a photographic or landscape artist quality background. Your background should continue the 'illusion of reality' that you are trying to create with your scenery. The background should match the scenery, and the transition where the two of them meet is smooth and/or hidden. One good question to ask is: Is there enough good background to allow a photo to be taken without showing other parts of the room?

Lighting (20 pts)

- Illumination effects from three aspects:
- railroad cars, signals, etc.
- buildings, streets, and roads, etc.
- overall lighting effects - day and/or night.

An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. Note that a fully day lit scene is perfectly acceptable (although you may get more points for a scene that allows you to show off more lighting elements). However, even in a day lit scene, there may be evidence of lighting - even if it is not operational (non-illuminated street lights, for example.) Also note that not every scene will contain all of these elements. If the scene you are modeling is in the middle of the desert, there may not be any buildings or streets there to light!

Realism / Conformity (25 pts)

In the other four judging areas, the judges evaluate what you were trying to do - what you remember-ed to include in your scene. In this one, they evaluate how well you did what you were trying to do.

Your entire layout does not have to be completed to be judged - just enough to meet the minimum space requirements given above. However, the areas which are not to be judged should be blocked off (visually) from those that are.

2. Prepare a set of photographs (video tape presentation is acceptable) and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details including towns or cities in the area being judged. These photos don't have to be professional quality - that isn't what is being judged. However, there should be at least one over-all picture of the layout, and pictures of all the parts which are being judged. Each picture should have an accompanying description.

3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of Terrain, Background, and Lighting. These can be simple statements - nothing elaborate is required. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the Statement of Qualification (SOQ) for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.

Earn a Merit Award of at least 87.5 points on the section of layout being judged. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed merit judging forms and/or copies of the Merit Award certificates.

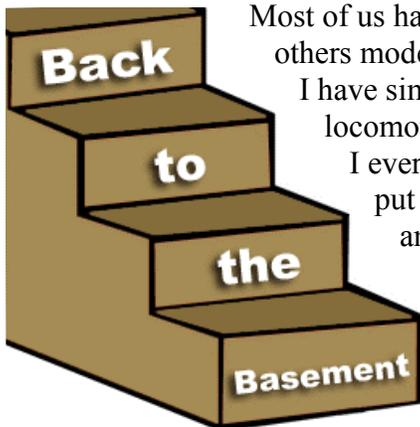
This information was adapted from the NMRA website and is offered for the information of our readers. For the most complete and current information, go to nmra.org. Additional information is part of an ongoing series in *Scale Rails*, NMRA's membership magazine. †



The View from the Caboose

Opinion by Clinton Smoke

The football season is over. Spring yard care and baseball seasons haven't started yet, so now may be the time to work on your railroad. Maybe you have a structure that needs building or finishing, or a section of your railroad needs scenery. Now is the time to "Get 'er done!"



Most of us have been in this hobby for a while. In my conversations with others modelers, I hear about projects that are dreamed of and even sometimes underway. I have similar plans and projects: I have half dozen buildings awaiting my time, several locomotive awaiting detailing and painting jobs, two cabooses to paint, etc. How will I ever get them all done? The sad reality is that we are all running out of time. To put our lives in a sports perspective, most of us are in the second half of our lives, and some in the last quarter. A scary reality, but one we should face and accept.

What shall we do with the remaining time? Well, for starters, we need to focus and set priorities. If we are really interested in this hobby, we should get started on some significant undertakings instead of just piddling along. One way to accomplish this might be through participation in a program

that provides tangible recognition for your accomplishments, namely the National Model Railroader Association's Advanced Participation program.

We have been talking about participation in the Master Model railroader program for sometime now. We have had speakers and demonstrations at our meetings and countless articles in this newsletter and elsewhere. The NMRA has announced that this is THE year of the Master Model Railroader, and is presenting a series of informative and hopefully motivating articles on this topic in the great magazine, *Scale Rails*. We should also be participating starting by our membership in both NMRA and SER. (See the bargain offer on page 7 of last month's *Semaphore* if you are not presently a NMRA member.) And we can start working on our own projects that will help us earn some or all of the certificates needed for Maser Model Railroader.

Another significant opportunity for participation is though involvement in your division's activities. In May we are privileged to host *Smokey Mountain Rails* the Southeast Region Conference right here in our own backyard. We should all be there, and we all should be working be now to help make this event a success. We should all sign up for event and be willing to pay full price not only to participate, but to be good hosts. The price is a bargain, and unlike most who are attending, we don't have to drive far or pay for hotel accommodations. We will have the advantage of knowing many who are there, and we will have an opportunity to meet many others with similar interests. We will benefit from a full schedule of interesting presenters, several tours, and a great banquet speaker. It's our moment to shine, and we all need to do a little of the lifting if we are to enjoy the event and bask in any glory that follows.

The registration form is attached as page 7 of this newsletter. Tear it off and mail it along with two box tops (from your recently completed projects) and your check to Jim Fuqua at 2813 Hampton Drive, Hendersonville, NC 28791, or bring them to the next meeting. See you there.

Its time to get started if you are going to Participate in 2008. †



Support your hobby
and the NMRA