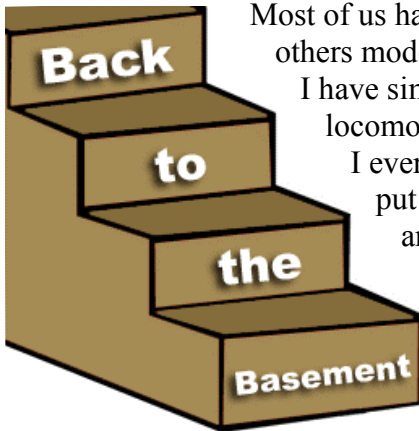




The View from the Caboose

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. †



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