



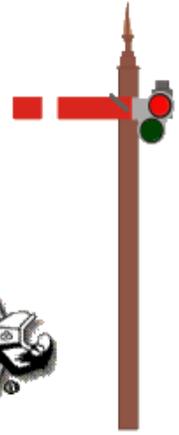
The Semaphore, The Official Publication of Land-O-Sky, Division 15, Southeastern Region, NMRA



The Semaphore

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

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April 2007

Our next membership meeting is on Thursday, April 5 at 7:00 p.m.
See page 3 for more information.

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.



Are you taking your hobby too seriously?



The Fireman's Seat

By Robert Bell, Division 15 Assistant Superintendent



Greetings! It is with sadness that I must announce that I will no longer be able to write the *Fireman's Seat* column, ---APRIL FOOLS!!

(I am sure some of you were hoping this was true...sorry!)

Model railroaders in general, seem to have a healthy sense of humor and have had since the beginning of the hobby. Medical studies of late, state that people who laugh a lot and have a good sense of humor, tend to live longer. They say laughter relieves stress. It is also widely accepted that a hobby that involves somewhat tedious work with one's hands also relieves stress. So, it would seem the two naturally go together. Many times our humor is "in the details", be it a name on a sign, the name of our pike, or the implied action of a figure (or figures) on our layout.

Model railroad manufacturers, past and present, have tried to capitalize on our sense of humor. The HO-scale, 'Gruesome Casket Company' was produced many years ago and is still available through Walther's. The Woodland Scenics' kit titled 'Outhouse Mischief' and 'The Bare Hunter' are funny and have been around quite a while, and are both still in production. Several manufacturers have made, and Woodland Scenics still makes a dog lifting it's leg on a fire hydrant. Hamm River Model Products sells a set of 'Flatulene' decals for the Bachmann On30 tank car, and I have successfully adapted these to an HO-scale Proto 2000, 10K tank car for a friend. One of the 'Flatulene' decal slogans is: "The Only True Natural Gas!", while another is "Ignites with a Bang!" (Shown on page 1.)

Some model railroaders have named their railroad humorously. The late John Allen's Gorre & Daphetid (pronounced: Gory & Defeated) is probably the best-known example. John Allen even had a child's plastic dinosaur, with a number stenciled on each side, pulling logs out of the woods. Recently, in the *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette*, there were two articles on Al Askerberg's Owen Thurteah & Weystead On30 railroad. According to these articles, the official photographer of the line is a Mr. Otto Fauxcous.

My own venture into On30 several years ago started with a single Bachmann 0-4-0 Porter. But, I was at a loss for a place to run it. I decided to build a small (30x30") layout, and then I had the bright idea to eventually build it as a 'coffee' table. What to call it?? Well, the "Java Southern" was born. "The Route of the Espresso" is not complete, but it will have a station named "Foldger's", and a house labeled "Maxwell's". The planned vertical shaft mine will be the "Sanka Mine". There will be more, but you get the idea. Also, at the 27th National Narrow Gauge Convention last August, I took second place in the geared locomotive category of the model contest, with my On30 "Respite & Rountuit Railroad" shay #3, the "Bea Tardee". The Locomotive's engineer, R.E. Lackson and fireman, Lee Thargy are in no hurry; as they haven't moved, yet.

Some modelers like to play jokes on each other. Some years ago a friend, Mike Brock first posted a sign on Lou Ullian's Coon Creek Lumber Co, prohibiting logging do to spotted owls. Later, a spotted owl showed up on the big trestle on Lou's layout. Not long after that, a bear was seen in the woods near one of the logging camps. This all took place without Lou's knowledge; it's a good thing that Lou has a sense of humor.

Back in the April 1981, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, there was an article on EMD's BL-2 locomotives. In this article was a drawing for a high, short hood version, labeled as the N.& W./Southern Ry. variant. When the first offering in Life-Like Proto 2000 line was a BL-2 back in 1989, I ordered the extra parts and built a N.& W. high short hood BL-1, (the BL-1 was the prototype demonstrator for the BL-2). The very month that I finished this project (April 1996), *Model Railroading* ran an article by Jim Teese, MMR on his Southern Railway's BL-3, a dynamic brake version.

These are all humorous versions of a "never was" engine. But every once in a while, when I dig the engine out, someone will say "I didn't know they ever made one of those!" Sometimes I tell the truth, other times, well...

Many model railroaders have a sense of humor. Usually on the subtle side, but at times it can be "in your face". Either way, it comes out. We may snicker and nudge our buddy while pointing, or laugh right out loud. Or, we may laugh to ourselves, tickled that we "pulled one over on him". Humor can be found on many model railroads, even our own when and where we least expect it. Other model railroaders and non-modelers alike, seem to enjoy our humor. Model railroading is an outlet for stress relief. Humor also relieves stress. They go together. The two together, therefore, are healthy.

In the May *Fireman's Seat*, I'll talk a bit about my recent experiences with some resin freight car kits. Until then, remember: It's your club - get involved! Let's play trains, and have fun with our hobby!



Of Trains and Time

By Daniel Pinelli

Authors note: I am writing a fictional story about a boy who lives in the 1930's and is a train freak (like me). The "Time" part of the title is because he eventually travels into the 21st Century to find an answer to a baffling question. Editor's note: The author is 14.

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA. 1936 AD

It was a week I would remember for my entire life. After my 14th birthday celebrations, I walked to the train station to meet my dad who was a locomotive designer for Electro-Motive Division of General Motors Corporation. He had been away on a business trip in La Grange, Illinois. What he was doing there, I wasn't to know. As I walked through a lazy rainstorm across the Swannanoa River, I wondered if what he was working on was exceptional or not, if anything.

I entered the station, which was a slight relief from the cold, and sat down on a bench. With consistent glances at the clock, I waited. Pa's train was due to arrive at 5:30. I amused myself by watching other people. One man was picking his nose, and a young woman in the seat beside him was caring for her youngster who was getting restless waiting for the train. Suddenly the low, mourning wail of a steam whistle cut through the drizzle. A plume of smoke darkened the sky, accompanied by a steady chug-chug-chug of the special, roaring up the tracks in front of the station. She came to a stop as air brakes screeched on the wheels. People started disembarking as I pushed open the door and emerged onto the platform, and I saw a familiar face emerge from the crowd that was descending from the café coach.

"Hello, George!" A black beard and glasses combined to make the likable face of my father.

"Hi Pa."

"Why the long face? I got a surprise for you!"

"You do?" I said, brightening up.

"You'd better hope I do!" he laughed.

"What is it?" I asked. Pa gave no response, but opened a large portfolio and took out some drawings. Being the son of a locomotive designer, I could read blueprints, but what I saw before me was so extraordinary that I had to ask what it was.

"E. M. D's newest!" he grinned. "The 103 – a diesel electric locomotive!"

"What's...?" I began. I then realized that Pa had told me about the locomotive just before he left.

"Oh yeah! You told me a bit about this!" I exclaimed.

"That's right. However, there's a serious design hitch. We can't figure out how to provide adequate suspension for the locomotives. All of our tests have proved unsuccessful, some with fatal results."

"You're joking!" I gasped.

"No, and we need to design a body, but I think you are smart enough to come up with an answer to both questions. Do you think you can do it?" he asked. I sometimes came up with answers that completely baffled Pa's company.

"What? Me? Wow... I could never do that much, Pa!"

"Never say 'never'." By this time the special had left the station and the platform was rapidly clear-

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ing.

"How much will I get paid?" I joked. We both burst out laughing, All along the way home we talked about the 103 and completely forgot about my birthday. Pa gave me a set of blueprints for the EA, a passenger locomotive that the Electro-Motive Division was soon to manufacture.

"Don! You're here!" It was my mom, Laurie.

"Pa!" said a voice. Becky, one of my little sisters, seemed really happy about her father's return. She had missed the moments of parenting that only a dad could offer. Amelia, my youngest sister, was enjoying a snack of bananas and yogurt. It was one of hers favorites, but most reached the extremities of her face instead of her stomach.

But where are Maia and Victoria?" Pa asked. As if in reply to his question, a scream came from my oldest sister's room. My family's reaction was one that I had endured many times; Pa rolled his eyes, my mother turned to me and told me to stop playing jokes on Maia, and Amelia laughed and asked me what joke I had played.

Just then, Amelia accidentally upset her snack onto the back of Pa's pants. We all laughed, and Pa helped Mom clean up the mess and he then went to change his pants.

Later that evening, we were all sitting in the parlor, with the exception of my sisters (they were having too much fun by themselves and had no interest whatsoever for trains), and Pa was giving us the details about the 103. I learned some useful facts about the locomotive. It was very practical, with a greater efficiency than a steam locomotive. The driver sat in a cab towards the front, providing much better vision than a steam locomotive. The controls were much simpler as well.

Suddenly, Mom realized time had flown, and I was soon in the bathroom brushing my teeth and washing my face. I got into bed and tucked myself in. I went to sleep in my clothes, thinking all the time about the 103.

From the Greenville Chapter, NHRS

The Greenville chapter of the NRHS is hosting the April NRHS Board of Directors meeting from Thursday, April 19th to Sunday, April 22nd. Friday and Saturday will be devoted to rail-fan activities, and are open to everyone. Friday's activities include a bus trip to the Greenwood Train Museum, which is said to have some interesting stuff but is seldom open at convenient times. From there the tour will go to the South Carolina Railroad Museum, with lunch at the museum. Cost is \$70, with the bus leaving from the Greenville Hyatt. An alternative activity on Friday, unlikely to appeal to anyone in Asheville or Hendersonville, is a bus from Greenville to ride the Great Smoky Mountain Railway.

Saturday's activity includes open house at Republic Locomotive Works in Greenville. Republic produces small, 70 ton, 2 axle switching locomotives. They are remote controlled and variable frequency AC driven, using commercial components. There is also mention of the local NRMA group having a train show at the Hyatt, and clinics and layout visits, but no details, or even verification of anything except the train show. Saturday night is a banquet at the Hyatt, \$36 to \$40, with Roger Grant, RR author as a guest speaker.

For more information, check Greenville Chapter web site [http://web.mac.com/salrwy/iWeb/Greenville NRHS](http://web.mac.com/salrwy/iWeb/Greenville_NRHS) and click on the "NRHS spring directors meeting" heading at the top of the page.