



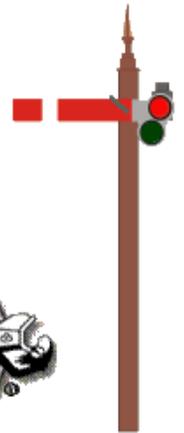
The Semaphore, The Official Publication of Land-O-Sky, Division 15, Southeastern Region, NMRA



The Semaphore

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

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



June 2007

Our next membership meeting is on Thursday, June 7 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.



Assistant Superintendent Robert Bell won several awards at this year's SER Convention with his On30-scale Shay #3, the "Bea Tardee," of the Respite and Roundtuit Railroad Co.

CONGRATULATIONS!

A report on this year's SER Convention starts on page 4



The Fireman's Seat

By Robert Bell, Division 15 Assistant Superintendent



Greetings!

Modeling is a real joy when one has the tools to do the job at hand. I like tools; they are extensions of my hands and make some modeling jobs easier. One cannot build even a simple "shake-the-box" kit without certain tools, and I will not talk about those; we all know what we need for those kits. I will mention some of the tools that I have found that are useful, not necessarily required, but useful. Some were very cheap; some of these are what I consider pricey. Several get used on almost every project; a couple of them get used only rarely. But, I like them all and want to share some of them with you.

First up is the set of 12-inch brass bar clamps that I received these as a gift some years ago. These work just like the 4-foot versions I use in woodworking. They are helpful when I am assembling a freight car or a structure. They do not get used that often, but when I need them...you get the idea.



Next is my oil applicator. Originally this held an ink or paint used on electronic printed circuit boards for marking either bad components or anti-tamper marking screw heads. I cleaned the handle/reservoir and needle applicator out, filled it with oil and, viola! I know most good hobby oils come with the needle part, but this has a cap (not in the photo) that covers the entire needle. This tool gets a lot of use.

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The “ear polypus” came from *Micro-Mark*, about \$10 as I recall. This does not get used much at all, but it is neat. Actually, it is useful for threading wires through tight places and retrieving small parts through windows and such. The jaws are serrated, so the gripping power is much better than that of the average pair of tweezers. Also, since the jaws open only at the tip, it will fit through smaller holes than tweezers.

The bow sander is great for finish-sanding curved surfaces, such as a locomotive boiler or a tank car where one is changing or eliminating details. It came with several “micro-fine” grades of sanding strips. This gives a much better finish than rubbing with sandpaper on your finger.

The two plastic clothespins are about an inch long, and a good handful of these were given to me. You will note that the one on the right has the jaws reversed. This allows use in tight places. These are great for clamping or holding all sorts of stuff. Be careful with plastic cement around these or you might glue these to you work...ask me how I know.

The hole-punch came from a home improvement center and does what its name implies: it punches holes in plastic and thin metal. The head rotates for different sizes of holes. Again not terribly expensive, but doesn't see a “whole” lot of use, either.

The tubing cutter is great if you do any work with brass or plastic tubing up to about 3/8's of an inch in diameter. It makes very nice straight cuts faster and easier than a razor saw. This is a real time saver; since there is very little clean up needed around the cut.

Last, we have a fiberglass brush from the electronics industry. It cleans metal for soldering, distresses wood, removes paint from small areas, and adds wood-grain to plastic. I find this is a very useful tool to have at the workbench. *Micro-Mark* carries similar products. Be warned though, as this tool is used, tiny pieces of the fiberglass break off. You do not want to inhale this dust. So use this tool, and all tools for that matter, responsibly and safely.

Tool, tools, tools. Can we ever have enough? That is like asking if we can ever have enough trains. Never! I am always looking for more. They make my modeling time more efficient and enjoyable, and I'm sure yours as well.

In the July *Fireman's Seat*, I'll briefly review the new *Blackstone* On3 D & RG K-27 locomotive with the *Soundtraxx* Tsunami DCC sound. Even if you aren't a narrow gauger, you will want to “hear” about the latest from *Soundtraxx*. **Until then, remember: It's your club - get involved! LET'S PLAY TRAINS!**

Operating Sessions

Operating Session for the club's layout will be on Saturday, June 9 and Sunday, June 24. Contact Wally Brown for more information at wbrown243@bellsoputh.net.

Because of travel commitments, your editor may not be available to produce an issue next month.



A report on 'Trax To The Max' (the SER Convention)

BY CLINTON SMOKE

Several Div 15 and WNCMRR club members attended this year's SER Convention in Cartersville, GA. They were treated to good southern hospitality and an extensive array of activities. The convention included three prototype tours, 14 home layout tours, 24 clinics, a banquet and auction. All of the activities were well worth the time.



The convention was held at the Komatsu Training Center in Cartersville, Georgia, a beautiful, functional facility that is normally used for training Komatsu employees and customers. The company kindly turned their facility over to the members of the Piedmont Division of NMRA for the weekend. The clinics, contests and Train Show were held at the center.

On Saturday morning we had the choice of two prototype tours: a power plant and rail-car manufacturing facility. Both looked interesting. The Bowen Plant of Georgia Power is one of the largest coal-fired power facilities in the county; they consume a train of coal daily! The other tour was to Trinity Rail Group, one of the nation's largest rail-car manufacturing facilities.

Both tours looked inviting, but, unfortunately, one can only be in one place at a time. I took the Trinity Tour.

Trinity Industries, Inc. is one of the nation's leading diversified industrial holding companies with a subsidiary group that provides a variety of high volume, repetitive products and services for the transportation, industrial, construction and energy sectors of the marketplace. Trinity's subsidiary group operates in five distinct business groups: The Trinity Rail Group, Trinity Railcar Leasing and Management Services Group, Inland Barge Group, Construction Products Group and Energy

Incorporated in 1933, Trinity Industries, Inc. began as a Dallas-based manufacturer of storage tanks, truck tanks and transports for the LPG industry. In the mid-1960's, TrinityRail capitalized on its manufacturing expertise to begin producing tanks for tank-car manufacturers. This evolved into finished tank cars. As demand for railcars grew in the late 1980's and 1990's, TrinityRail emerged as a leading provider of rail equipment through internal expansion and a series of key acquisitions, first acquiring the railcar-design and manufacturing assets of Pullman Standard, followed by Greenville Steel Car, and Ortner Freight Car. TrinityRail entered the railcar-components market through the acquisition of Standard Forged Products, the leading industry supplier of railcar axles. In 1998, they expanded into the foundry business by acquiring McConway & Torley, the leading manufacturer of railcar couplers.

Today, Trinity's rail manufacturing businesses include the largest volume producers of freight and tank railcars in North America. Trinity North American Freight Car, Inc. manufactures a full line of railcars, including box cars, gondolas, intermodal cars, covered and open hoppers and auto carriers. The latter two are manufactured in Cartersville, Georgia.

The Cartersville facility has about 1000 employees. They build auto carriers and two kinds of hoppers. The hoppers include a conventional four-bay hopper and a not-so-conventional rapid-discharge hopper used primarily in colder regions. These hoppers have two pairs of large doors that run parallel to the center sill, allowing coal to be dumped, even if partially frozen. The auto carriers are pretty standard.

On page 6 and 7 are pictures taken at the facility. Starting on page 6, the lower left, and continuing down the page, we see auto carriers in the erection shop and in the paint shop. On page 7 we see hoppers in production line and the finished product. Our tour guide explains how the car's rotary coupler works. Finally we see the Rapid-Discharge car, a Trinity exclusive.

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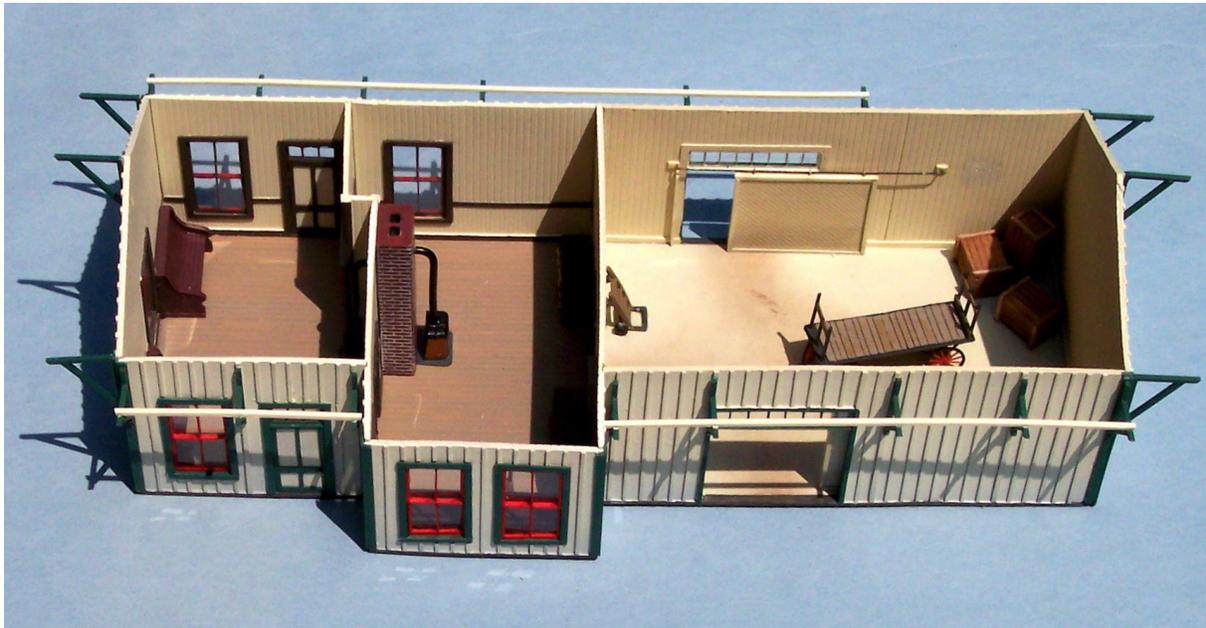


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Working in four 10-hour days, the Georgia facility makes about 100 cars a week,. They work as teams, with every aspect of their work measured, including safety. This facility has an accident rate that about 1/5 the industry average. In case you are interested in buying one of their products, you can pick up a nice hopper car for about \$80,000, not a bad price as you can expect to get about 40 years of service from the car.

The convention concluded with the traditional Saturday-evening banquet, this time held out doors, at the historic depot, next to the CSX tracks in Cartersville. The weather was perfect, and the trains were numerous. During my 4-hour visit, I saw 9 trains pass, all long trains with mixed freight, auto carriers, and hoppers, some no doubt built in Cartersville.

After a great meal, our superintendent was introduced. **Fred Coleman** invitingly talked about next year's SER Convention and the many rail-related, and some not-so-rail related attractions here. Following his presentation, the contest winners were named. Our division did quite well with three winners: **Robert Bell** won two special Regional Awards with his scratch-built *Bea Tardee*, shown on page 1. **Ben Bartlett** received honors for his scratch built Erie Railroad station, scoring 114 (of a possible 125) points. Ben's wife, **Jan Bartlett**, won First Place in the Art and Crafts competition with a beautiful sweater. Congratulations to all!



Ben Bartlett's scratch-built HO scale Erie Railroad Station at Akron, Indiana

The convention's featured speaker was **MMR Leslie Eaton** of Houston, Texas. She shared some interesting and humorous experiences, starting with her early interests in model railroading, "playing with trains" as she called it, with her dad. She challenged the members present to work on becoming Master Model Railroaders, and to help market the hobby. She suggested that we should occasionally open our layouts to our friends and neighbors, just as we do to fellow model railroaders, and let others see and enjoy what our hobby is all about. She does this on a regular basis and has recruited several to the hobby as a result. There are more pictures of this year's SER Convention on next two pages.



Structure contest entry



Passenger car contest entry



Cartersville Depot



CSX train by Cartersville Depot

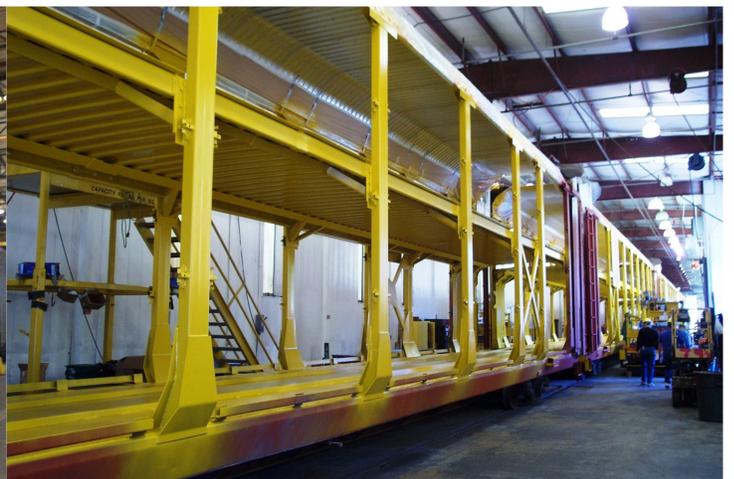


Judging at the contest room



Banquet at the Cartersville Depot

TRINITYRAIL TOUR





NMRA National Convention, Sunday July 22 thru Saturday July 28, 2007

The members of the North Central Region, located in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana will present the 2007 National Model Railroad Association Convention. The convention will take place at the Detroit Marriot in the Renaissance Center Building. Located on the river in downtown Detroit, this facility offers modern accommodations and complete convention services under one roof. Minutes from countless entertainment and food establishments, this site will fulfill any and all requirements.

The North Central Region is the home of many Master Model Railroaders (MMR) and they will open their layouts for your pleasure. Dr. Bruce Chubb (Sunset Valley), Jim Clemens (Sugar Springs Mining Co. RR) and Dan Lewis (The North Montana Lines), renowned authors and modelers, will be part of the layout tour. The layouts available have been chosen from a selection of over 100 layouts. You will get a chance to see the best of the best at this convention. The Convention Committee has also arranged a selection of over 20 prototype tours, and given the locale, sites with heavy railroad activity will be paramount. For more information go to the NMRA website: www.nmra.org.