



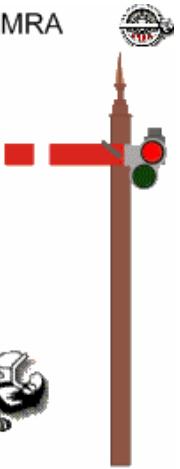
The Semaphore, The Official Publication of Land-O-Sky, Division 15, Southeastern Region, NMRA



# The Semaphore

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

JOHN WILLIAMS, SUPERINTENDENT  
ROBERT BELL, ASST. SUPERINTENDENT  
KEN GRAZIN, COMPANY CLERK  
PENN BULLOCK, BARNMASTER  
JIM FIQUA, PAYMASTER  
DAVE ANDERSON, WEBMASTER



## November 2008

VOLUME 38, NO.3

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

Send comments about and contributions to this newsletter to [the editor](#).

Please keep us informed of changes in your address, phone number or email address.



A sample of the fine modeling presented at the 2008 Narrow Trak Convention.  
See page 4 for Frank Pearsall's report.



## From the Superintendent's Desk

By John Williams, Division 15 Superintendent

Although we are model railroaders, we sometimes forget that we "model" a prototype. This could be a current railroad or a fallen flag, or even a foreign railroad. We have some wonderful opportunities in western North Carolina and beyond to explore. Many of these are an easy day's drive and back. As a non-native I for one would love to explore the railroad attractions of this region. I would like to set up some day trips to do some railfanning. So if you have some suggestions let me know. Better yet if one or more of you would like to take charge I would provide my full support. Think about it if it weren't for the 12 inches equals a foot scale we wouldn't be model railroaders

So until next month, remember **Model Railroading is Fun.**



Two of the many vintage locomotives, a beautifully restored Pennsy E8 No. 5711 (upper left) and ACL E3 No. 501 (upper right) on display as Amtrak hosted the 100th anniversary celebration of Washington Union Station October 4-5, 2008. Six historic passenger diesels including GG1 No. 4935 and Southern Railway E8 No. 6900 (lower right) were on hand to help recreate the ambiance of rail travel from the early years of the station. Amtrak displayed an *Acela Express* trainset (lower left), three superliner cars, an Amcafe car and a Viewliner sleeper.



# IMPORTANT NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS

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## Highlights of our October Meeting

BY KEN GRANZIN

Penn Bullock talked about what our club is doing in the barn with the Eliada kids. He gave some background on how we got into the barn and what we have been doing during our "trains" sessions with the kids. He explained that this work is how we "pay the rent" that allows us to keep our modules and other equipment and supplies in the barn, as well as use the cafeteria for our monthly meetings. He told those present that we have too small a staff and we need more of our members to step up and become involved with this activity. He outlined what must be done to qualify with the Eliada management to work with the kids.

Wally Brown talked about what is being done with the collection of modules in the barn. He mainly talked about the work with the new industrial district that runs down the middle of the layout. These modules will not be carried to showings, but will be held in the barn to be used during operating sessions.

Ben Bartlett received the NMRA Award for Chief Dispatcher from John Williams. Ben reported on his plan and actual activities in which he participated to earn the award. He also described the judging process he underwent to win the award. Members can go to the NMRA website and look under Achievement Program for information on what is necessary to win awards such as this one. John Williams also encouraged members to qualify for this and other NMRA awards.

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**Our next meeting is Thursday, November 6, 2008 at 7:00 pm.**

The program this month will be on rail operations by Terry Harrison

## Operating Sessions on the LOST RR

With cooler days we can resume our normal schedule for operating sessions meaning we will start at 2:00 p.m. Operating sessions are Sunday, October 26. In November: Saturday, the 8<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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## Getting to know you

*Editor's Note: From time to time, we will feature a biographical sketch of one of four members. This month we talk about Ken Granzin, our newly-elected clerk. Ken is a frequent contributor to these pages. He usually sits in the back, and is quiet, but as you will note here, he is an interesting and talented guy.*

Ken Granzin was born in Chicago. As a child during WWII he made model airplanes. His involvement with model trains began as a teenager in Rock Island, IL. His mother granted him a spare second-floor room in their rented home for the project. So he built table work and on it constructed a three-rail O-gauge tinplate operation, using whatever Lionel and Marx equipment he could scrounge from various sources. Dissatisfied with its appearance, and influenced by current guru Frank Ellison, he then worked at converting the track to the outside third-rail format. Before he could complete the project, he graduated from high school and moved forward to secondary education and the Navy in Maryland. He found no time for modeling at that stage in his life. Subsequently, his mother

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decided to leave that house; she found buyers for the railroad who cut the layout into sections and lowered them through the upstairs window.

Ken tried modeling again in about 1966, working in a rented apartment in Urbana, IL. Having learned his lesson about permanency, he used very little space in building a *portable* 2 1/2' by 4' HO layout that pivoted to fit vertically against the wall, taking little floor space. This compact layout had an over-and-under design with a minimum 13" radius. Nonetheless, using short rolling stock, it worked.

After a move to Salt Lake City, UT, and a lot of "spare" time devoted to other pursuits, for years Ken regrettably did little railroading but build model buildings and a train board for his son. In 1998, when anticipating retirement, Ken decided "it's now or never," invested a chunk of money in materials and equipment to motivate his commitment, and built the HO layout he had planned for many years. He used three tables, each 7' by a bit over 3', joined on the long sides. Track laying, wiring, and scenery construction were made with a long-distance move in mind.

In 2000, Ken and Sharon moved the 2050 miles to Hendersonville. The layout was caged with wood strips for protection and made the trip in excellent condition. Here, Ken finished 600 sq. ft. of basement to provide, among others, a room for his layout. His layout now comprises the three tables from the late 1990s and the original HO layout from the 1960s (brass track and all). Work has progressed well over the past four years, but the scenery part of the layout isn't completed yet. Will it ever be? Probably not. But Ken gets plenty of modeling done working with club projects. He worked on the club's HO modules from their inception, and can currently be seen working on two N-scale layouts in the barn. He also very much enjoys working almost every Tuesday night with the Eliada kids on their T-Trak modules. For Ken, the process of modeling itself, rather than its achievement, is an important part of what our hobby is all about.

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## NARROW TRAK 08 CONVENTION

BY FRANK PEARSALL

On the weekend of October 10th and 11th, 2008, the annual Narrow Trak convention was held in Brevard, N.C. We were most fortunate in that we had some fine seminar presenters. Dean Odiorne started us off on Friday afternoon with "Simple, manual switch machines." These little devices are almost foolproof and it's a wonder someone else hadn't thought of it. Dean was followed by Bruce Seaton who showed us easy it is to weather motive power and rolling stock using artists oils. Next up was Mac McDonald. Mac talked about Eastern North Carolina logging railroads. A former teacher, Mac made a great presentation without the use of slides or a computer. After the evening dinner break, we started off with our own **Ben Bartlett** who did his very well-received "Scratch-building in Styrene" seminar. Ben was followed by Ray Montgomery who talked about his trip to Ecuador. This involved his still pictures and videos of Baldwin and Alco steam engines which are still running today.

On Saturday morning, our first presenter was our own **Joe Norris**. Joe made his usual excellent presentation, this time on building a narrow gauge turntable. Of course, these techniques would also apply to standard gauge turntables. Following Joe was Ron Schmidt from Ohio who talked about logging railroads on the Little River in Tennessee. Ron has also written a book on the subject, which he offered to attendees at a special price. Next up was Johnny Graybeal from Boone, N.C. Johnny talked about Eastern Tennessee & Western North Carolina 10-wheelers, both model and prototype. He had some great pictures of the upcoming brass HOn3 model that's being imported before the

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Examples of the fine models displayed at the 2008 Narrow Trak Convention in Brevard.

Photographs by Frank Pearsall



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year is out. And of course, Johnny got in a plug for the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Hickory in 2011.

After lunch, Asheville's **Jim King** showed us how to cast detail parts in Urethane. His seminar was so popular, we extended his time so he could show the techniques again. It truly is a fairly simple process that only benefits you modeling efforts. The next seminar was Frank Pearsall's World War One Trench Railroads. Finally, we still had some time, so we ran Dean Odiorne's manual switch machine seminar again for the Saturday "day-trippers."

All the seminars were full and a lot of excellent prototype and modeling information was passed along. As a result, we've already got some good seminars lined up for next year (October 9th and 10th, 2009, same location). There will be more information published as time goes along. We had built enough time into the Saturday afternoon schedule, so that folks could now go out to Ben Bartlett's layout, take their afternoon nap, go to dinner and return for the Saturday evening activities.

As is common practice, we held a popular-vote model contest. The winners were:

Motive Power - Bruce Seaton for his On30 Shay.

Rolling Stock - Bruce Seaton for his On30 caboose and ore car

Structures - **Jake Jacoby** for his O scale locomotive servicing facility

Diorama - Dean Odiorne for his free-lance Sn2 flag-stop station scene

Beloved Founder Award - Dean Odiorne for his Sn2 diorama

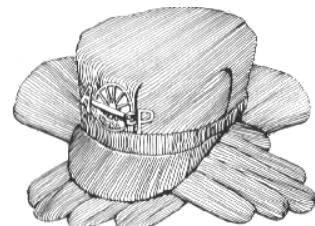
The last award is one I give and it's entirely subjective. I give it to the model that most captures my attention. Dean's diorama was very eye-catching. Not many guys model in S scale and I cannot imagine how few individuals there are in Sn2.

To cap off every Narrow Trak, we have Saturday evening music. This year we had local legend Roy Chapman and his band, "True Bluegrass." Well received by those in attendance, we hope to have them back next year. Narrow Trak 09 will be held Friday, October 9th and Saturday, October 10th. We open the doors at 2:00 p.m., with the first seminar beginning at 2:30 p.m. If you need a registration form, just ask. For their invaluable help, big thanks go to Ben Bartlett and Bruce Seaton. Without them, I couldn't have pulled it off.

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## Merit-Award Winning Cars

BY DAVID HALPERN, MMR



*Editor's note: This article continues the discussion on building award winning model cars.*

For merit award or contest judging, models are evaluated on the basis of construction, detail, conformity, finish, lettering, and scratchbuilding. It takes 87.5 of the 125 available judging points to win a merit award. Having served as my region's AP Manager, I know from the mail I received and the comments made directly to me at contests and meetings that the prospect of having to vie for merit points is intimidating to many modelers, including some very good ones. It can be particularly forbidding to those who prefer to build from kits. Without scratchbuilding at least a portion of any model, these modelers must earn all their points from a total of only 100, inasmuch as they will not be eligible for any of the 15 points allocated to the evaluation of "scratchmanship." So let's see if we can help some of you overcome your fears of being judged, and we'll do it by pointing out some of the areas of car-building that deserve attention and by help-

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ing you understand how judges look at models.

To begin with, please remember that when you submit a model of any kind for merit judging, you should never assume that the judges will know the prototype, or that they will understand what you did, or why you did it. Especially when the model is a freelance version, you need to offer a rationale for its existence. If you have pictures of the prototype, or drawings that you can "lend" to the judges for reference, attach them to the judging form. At least write (legibly) supporting statements to attach to the judging form and please keep your notes to the point and as brief as possible.

Some modelers write long essays that consume far too much of the judges' time without providing an equal volume of illumination. I concede that I have been guilty of this myself, and once, when I entered three similar cars in a contest, the judges candidly told me that they had read one of my "term papers" and ignored the other two, figuring - since the cars were similar - that there wouldn't be that much difference between the documents. In fact, there were significant differences, because I had used the three cars to experiment with methods of construction, scratchbuilding and detailing. (Fortunately, I earned the required points on all three models, but the difference between the scores was minuscule and my excessive verbiage cost me bonus points for extra fabrication work.) I learned my lesson.

It will help you to understand and be considerate of the merit judges if you remember that they are themselves merit award-winning, and often contest-winning, modelers. If you tell them the materials you used or that you made jigs, molds or patterns, they will understand the terminology. They may not know the specific difference between a hopper manufactured by ACF for the L&N Railroad and another one made for Burlington, or that your specific prototype modified the car you are modeling in their own shops to fit an unusual application. That is the kind of support information they need from you if they're going to evaluate you properly on conformity and detail.

I was very timid about entering cars in contests for a long time. I was cured of my timidity when my first entry earned 103 points and second place at a regional convention, but I really struggled with that one. I knew the judges were tough, so I planned ahead and built an HO scale 36 foot wood box-car almost entirely from scratch. I didn't go so far as abandoning scribed siding for individual board construction (though I've done that since), but I sheathed the box (inside horizontally and outside vertically), built my own doors and the channels in which they operated, formed my own steps and grabirons, reworked some old metal queen post castings, made my own bolsters, installed full brake rigging using only one reworked commercial casting that was drilled to accept all the required piping, and disassembled the trucks to clean up the castings. I also researched old construction drawings so that my frame details and all safety appliances would be true to the prototype.

I made sure the construction details were clean and neat. No glue showed anywhere. All joints were tight, grabirons were straight and there was no 'fuzz' on any of the boards. It was very important to me that all of the truss rods were evenly aligned for appearance. I painted the model very carefully, applied dry transfer lettering (which I prefer to decals on wood) with attention to spacing, and weathered the finished car moderately.

I was very careful with the attachment of the trucks to the bolsters to ensure the car would ride level and naturally, I made sure the truck truss rods would not foul the trucks when the car negotiated a short radius. This may seem an obvious, essential point to many of you, but I have judged a lot of contests, and you might be amazed to find out how many modelers are not attentive to this detail.

Please note that the AP requirements for Master Builder-Cars state that the applicant must build "operable" scale models. Once, I almost granted a merit award to a really fine-looking model car that

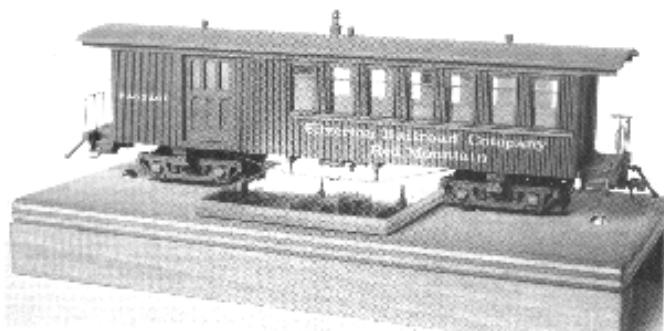
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not only wouldn't negotiate a reasonable radius, it wouldn't even roll. I discovered the problem when I lifted the model to examine the truss-rod detail.

Many judges are reluctant to lift a model from the contest table to examine it closely (sometimes they're specifically instructed not to). They never know when or if a part will fall off, and accidents do happen. But when you've gone to the trouble to build a car with a lot of good underbody detail, you want to be sure this is seen by the judges. One way to ensure that the judges will be attentive to your work is to make a note on the judging form explaining that the model may be lifted for inspection.



*Bruce Nall's award winning passenger car is displayed on a stand that includes a mirror to allow judges to examine the underbody details without lifting the model.*

My 36-foot boxcar was displayed on a small piece of mirror that I had cut to size by a local glass dealer. It was inexpensive, and I have since had a number of pieces cut for displaying different size models.

I am a strong believer in being my own harshest critic. I figure that if I am not self-critical, I'm going to get a double dose from someone else. And frankly, I'm not sure I would have given my boxcar 103 points. I've included a picture of it with this article so you can judge it for yourself, but first, listen to my own criticisms. (Ignore the coupler size, please; I built it to run on my layout where Kadee is standard.)

The glaring fault is with the doors. The channels on which they slide are out of scale, and I should have installed more hardware. The truss rod turnbuckles are a bit larger than would be prototypical, and look at the space between the roof and roofwalk. I don't especially like the way the weathering looks in this photograph, but I went into the layout room to check it out a while ago, and it looks a lot better on the actual model. My friends who are Santa Fe buffs may take me to task for not adequately researching the car markings and logo style, and I confess that I did not consider their sometimes fragile sensibilities. I apologize.

*The Author's HO scale scratchbuilt model of a 36-foot boxcar was his first car entered in an NMRA contest. It won a merit award and second place, helping him to overcome his reluctance to enter contests.*

Indeed, this model has its flaws, but it did earn a merit award and, even more importantly, I learned something from building it. I had fun building it, and it helped me overcome my reluctance to enter contests. As a result of my work, I produced a car that operates extremely well - better than many kit-built models. Let's turn our attention now to building and super detailing models from kits. (to be continued.....)

