



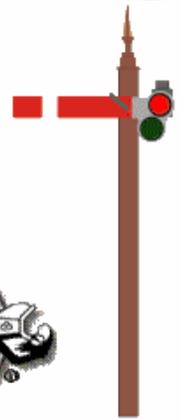
The Semaphore, The Official Publication of Land-O-Sky, Divison 15, Southeastern Region, NMRA



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
KEN GRAZIN, COMPANY CLERK
PENN BULLOCK, BARNMASTER
JIM FIQUA, PAYMASTER
DAVE ANDERSON, WEBMASTER



December 2008

VOLUME 38, NO.4

Our next membership meeting is on Thursday, December 4th 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.



Former Division Superintendent Charles A. Bryan with his late wife Jody.

Charlie passed away on November 8, 2008. A memorial service will be held this Saturday, November 22 at 11 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church in Asheville. See page 2 for a tribute.



From the Superintendent's Desk

By Fred Coleman, former Division 15 Superintendent

Charles Alexander Bryan - June 28, 1931 - November 8, 2008

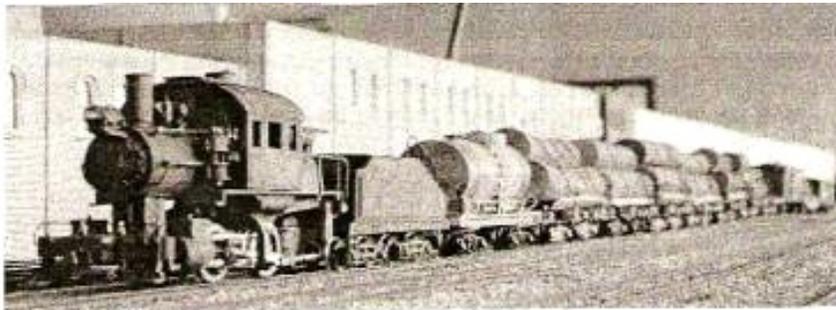
We have lost a true friend. Our dear friend Charlie will be missed and remembered by all that came in contact with him, whether you had known him very long or not. Charlie had not only shared his life with us but with his late, lovely wife for over 50 years, Jody, and with many others in the Episcopal Parishes that he ministered to over the years.



As superintendent of our division and club he worked very hard to make the hobby fun and interesting for all, something he personally accomplished with ease. He served us well as well as our superintendent, and after turning that job over to me, he stayed in the back ground and behind the scenes, remaining very supportive and helpful with anything his health would allow.

Charlie was always pleasant to be with. He was quick with his humor in any place or time, with anyone or everyone. He was also a talented modeler. His creativity showed not only his humor but his talent for the detail in modeling logging engines, rolling stock and anything you could imagine that fit the era of the logging industry as pictured below. I know I will cherish many experiences that I shared with Charlie and I am sure there are many of you who have a smile as you recall your own. He always signed his contributions to these pages and his eMail messages with "Blessings +."

Let the Angels welcome him into Paradise and may Light Eternal continue to surround him.



A celebration of Charlie's life will take place on Saturday, November 22, 2008 at 11 a.m. at Trinity Episcopal Church, 60 Church Street, downtown Asheville. A reception will follow the service. Burial will be private.

Flowers are welcomed at the celebratory service and reception. In lieu of flowers you may make a contribution to: Trinity Episcopal Church, Asheville, North Carolina (www.trinityasheville.org), or to Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (www.chadd.org) or to Paws With A Purpose (www.pawswithapurpose.org), or your favorite charity in honor of him.

For those wishing to contact the family:

Linda & John O'Brien, 40804 Cascade Dr., Sterling Heights, MI 48313. LINDAOB725@aol.com

Mary Bryan, 3005 Sagamore Lane, Weaverville, NC 28806. DAMEADVISE@aol.com

Linda and Mary are fine and happy that Charlie and Jody are together again.

Blessings+



IMPORTANT NEWS FOR OUR MEMBERS

Highlights of our November Meeting

BY KEN GRANZIN

Fred Coleman is organizing a trip to Johnson City, TN on Saturday, December 6, to visit the big layout at the Southeast Region Train Club. Members interested in making this trip should contact Fred ASAP. You can contact Fred at (828) 699-0983 or fred_coleman@bellsouth.net. The plan is to car pool, departing from the parking lot in front of our usual meeting spot at Eliada Home promptly at 9 am. All aboard!

Wally Brown reported on progress at the Barn, and invited members to participate in both the meeting on November 20, and the operating sessions (See schedule elsewhere for details). He is also asking for donations of decals and dry transfers of signs for use by the Eliada Youth. Please contact Wally for more information and for your donations.

We welcomed two first-time visitors, Chris Harley and Mike Nicoletti.

Our next meeting is Thursday, December 4, 2008 at 7:00 pm.

We will have a brief program, followed by food and friendship. Please bring something to good to eat and to share with others. Please call Fred Coleman to RSVP and to let him know of your food contributions (so that we can coordinate the food) by Saturday, November 29. You can contact Fred at (828) 699-0983 or [email](mailto:fred_coleman@bellsouth.net)

Operating Sessions on the LOST RR

Scheduled operating sessions start at 2:00 pm. Operating sessions are Sunday, November 23rd Saturday, December 13th and Sunday, December 28th. Also, the Module Committee will meet on Thursday, November, 20th at 7:00 pm in the "Barn" at Eliada. Anyone who is involved, (or wishes to be), with the scenery aspects of the new "Industrial District" should attend as we will be discussing standards to be used (types of ground foam, colors, how roads are built, etc.)

Getting to know you

Editor's Note: From time to time, we will feature a biographical sketch of one of our members. Michael Nicoletti was a visitor and joined us last month. We asked him to give us a short biographical report. As you will see from the following, his accomplishments are impressive.

Michael P. Nicoletti

Over the last 30 years I built three major HO scale layouts, 8'X24', 16'X24' and 15'X20'. Two of the layouts could be operated in a fully-automated mode by use of a computer interface. All of the layouts had Tortoise-operated turnouts and the last layout was fully signaled with a automated signaling system using JMRI and Layout Commander to monitor and control the layout via the computer

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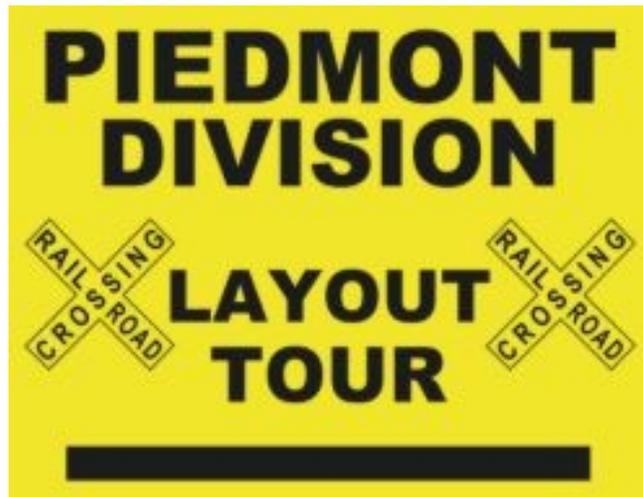


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screen. I built the scenery, bench work, electrical, electronics and some of the off line structures. When I switched over to DCC, I converted all of my engines. I built a PPR style train station from scratch, also a coaling tower and other kit-bashed buildings. I automated my turntable using engine decoders to control the table. I also made a device to control the room lighting via a Digitrax handheld controller. For this I have received MMRA Certificates of Achievement for Electrical and Scenery and was awarded the Golden Spike award for completion of my last layout.

I currently have a small 30"X 8' Demo layout that I use to give Clinics on Model Railroad Automation. It shows what can be done with a computer Interface, signal control, block detection and turnout control, all linked to a Computer Graphical Interface.

I have also received a Certificate of Achievement for NMRA Association Volunteer for my work in supporting the Hobby of Model Railroading. Before coming here, I did not belong to any R.R Club, but for over 10 years of was on the Board of the Central Indiana Division (CID) of the NMRA. I was also the photo contest chairman, and responsible for three major train shows. I was also Co-chairman of the National NMRA Convention committee for the Division. I was responsible for the very first 25-question membership survey. The format for this survey format was review and adopted by the president of the NMRA. I was also responsible for many of the photos that were used on the CID web site and used for other promotional events. I also set up the CID booth at all of the major vendor train shows that were held within the CID area. I also gave many Clinics on Model Railroad Automation and twice gave Clinics at Regional Shows.



Piedmont Division Layout Tours Well Worth the Trip

November is National Model Railroad Month. The Piedmont Division of the National Model Railroad Association celebrates November with a public tour of model railroads in the Atlanta Area. The Piedmont Pilgrimage tour is open to anyone interested in model railroading. Just come in anytime during the scheduled times for each open house. The cost for entry is **free!** This is the sixth year of this effort: It gets bigger and better each year. Children are welcome to attend with proper supervision from their parents. Bring your camera so that you can take home some great memories. We would love for you to join us as we celebrate National Model Railroad Month in November by visiting Atlanta's best layouts! Be sure to tell your friends.

For detailed information go to their [website](#).



Caution: Extreme Trains on Television!

A series of interesting television specials has started on The History Channel. The series will be hosted by Pan Am Railways Conductor Matt Brown, a "genuine insider with an infectious enthusiasm for trains," according to the press release. He will show how Extreme Trains played a key role in U.S. history from train robberies to World War II events and continue to be vital to the nation today. In the premiere episode, Matt joined the coal train hauling a cargo of coal through Pennsylvania from mine to power plant: Getting a train over the Allegheny Mountains can be quite a challenge. In addition to the coal train moving through Pennsylvania and the Allegheny Mountains, the program will feature an intermodal train making its way from Los Angeles to Dallas/Fort Worth and Amtrak's Acela Train running from Washington, D.C., to Boston. Also making the network's grade are a Union Pacific Railroad refrigeration train, Ringling Bros. circus train, Amtrak's Empire Builder, and the "Transcontinental" and a special on UP steam. All will be featured in separate episodes. Here is the schedule for the remaining programs: Norfolk / Southern on 11/25; Amtrak's Empire Builder on 12/2; BNSF Freight Train on 12/9; Union Pacific Refrigeration Train on 12/16; Amtrak Acela Train on 12/23; and Union Pacific Steam Train 12/30. Enjoy!

The Apple Valley Model RR Club Holds Open House During the Holidays.

The Apple Valley Model Railroad Club, located in the historic Hendersonville Railroad Depot on Seventh Avenue at Maple, will be open to the public on Friday, November 28 and also on Saturday, November 29th from 10 am until 4 pm. This is a great opportunity to visit this wonderful layout with family and friends.

Reminders:

#1

Our next meeting is Thursday, December 4, 2008 at 7:00 pm.

We will have a brief program, followed by food and friendship. Please bring something to good to eat that can be shared with others. Please call Fred Coleman to RSVP and to let him know of your food contributions (so that we can coordinate the food) by Saturday, November 29. You can contact Fred at (828) 699-0983 or [email](#).

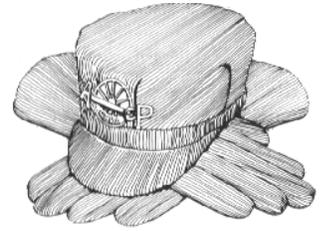
#2:

**OUR NEXT TRAIN SHOW IS
FEB. 20 & 21
AT THE ASHEVILLE CIVIC CENTER**



Merit-Award Winning Cars

BY DAVID HALPERN, MMR



Editor's note: This article continues (and concludes) the discussion on building award - winning model railroad cars.

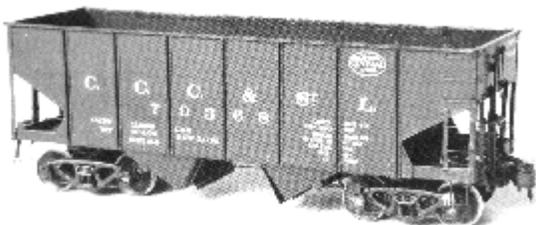
It's pretty hard to do with plastic models and it's very difficult to do with streamline modern passenger cars. Judges evaluate construction, in part, by the complexity of the model or the difficulty they perceive in building it. Heavyweight and old-time passenger cars, maintenance-of-way equipment, and cabooses are perceived as requiring more effort, and that may be true when the model is built from a kit. Such an assumption is not usually made when the model is scratchbuilt. The addition - or refinement of detail parts can improve the appearance of any kit model I've ever seen. And when you attend to these, you have opportunities to earn extra detail points and to try your hand at scratch building various components.

If your kit is made of plastic, began looking at the possibilities by examining the cast-on details. You may be able to substantially improve the car's appearance by grinding off the cast features and replacing them with parts you fabricate yourself. Very effective and accurately scaled grab irons, steps and railings can be made in all of the larger scales (HO and larger), and hinges, latches, corner straps, stake pockets, valves and other small parts may be improved with scratchbuilt replacements or commercially available detail parts. You might also consider scratch building a load for open cars, or an interior for a boxcar with a door open to reveal it.

Ladders are a detail that can be improved on virtually any kit. Much "ladder stock," particularly in HO scale, tends to be relatively crude and over scale. Fortunately for those who are not scratch builders, there is a wealth of replacement details available commercially. And take a careful look at the brake wheel; sometimes you can replace the ones that come with your kit with wheels that have better detail or ones that are more accurately scaled.

In S, O, G and larger scale, it is especially important to model as much prototypical detail as you can, because the absence of detail becomes increasingly obvious as models become larger and every part and its texture becomes more visible. Couplers, glad hands, uncoupling levers, underbody piping, brake cylinders, brake levers, chains, hangers, and even brake shoes, are all interesting features that are not essential on an operating model, but they significantly enhance the appearance of a contest entry and improve its merit score potential. On passenger equipment, such details as air reservoirs, brake components, generators, air conditioners, battery and tool boxes, air vents, radio antennae, and roofing fabric can make tremendous improvements in the appearance and authenticity of the model.

Up to this point, I haven't mentioned interior detailing, but this is a good way to improve any passenger car, maintenance-of-way or caboose model. Seating, Lighting, partitions, ceiling details, window shades and curtains, dining car and kitchen details, RPO details and the like significantly increase your point-earning potential and really add interest to your model's appearance. Most modelers who add interior details show their handiwork by making the roof of the model removable for display. This requires care to ensure a good fit between roof, car sides and the ends.



Jim Tangney's scratchbuilt HO scale 55-ton hopper won a first place award at the NMRA national convention. This model built of brass features fine scale detailing, operating doors and latches, operating journal box covers, and a brake system that operates completely from the hand-

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brake and cylinder down to the brake shoes at each wheel.

Anytime you can create scale details that operate - like hopper doors, ice hatches, hinges or brake systems you will improve your scoring chances. The accompanying photograph of Jim Tangney's 55-ton hopper is a fine example of this point.

And remember that no matter how much detail you put on a model, it only works to your advantage when it is a good, clean, accurately applied and accurately scaled detail. It can never be viewed as a substitute for quality construction. When a merit judge evaluates your model for detail and conformity, he/she does check the accuracy and quantity of detail, but if your work isn't clean, he/she may deduct as many points from the construction category as he/she adds under detail. You may earn little or nothing for your effort.

And speaking of basic construction, don't overlook kit bashing or kit-mingling opportunities. You can combine parts from different kits to produce a model for which no one kit is readily available. You can modify a kit to produce a special model that reflects a specific railroad's modifications. And you can produce a conversation piece for your personal railroad that serves a "unique" function. If you intend to enter the latter example in a contest, however, remember the conformity category. The judges will want to know if what you have done makes sense in prototype practice.

Finally, a few comments on painting, lettering and weathering your models. We all have seen models that were well constructed up to this point and ruined by uneven or heavy paint applications and thoughtless or sloppy lettering and weathering. Here are some tips:

First, learn how to use an airbrush. Nothing else works as well for finishing a model evenly. Spray paint cans can be used effectively, but the least expensive external mix airbrush will do a significantly better job. Some modelers are wizards with a brush, but most are not and even the best cannot match the results obtained with an airbrush.

Mix your paint carefully so that it is thin but opaque and sprays without excessive air pressure. Don't use the "brush" too close to the surface of the model, or the application may be too heavy and will run. If you spray from too great a distance, the paint may begin to dry before it bonds to the model's surface. This produces a stippled or lightly textured result that competes with small details like rivets.

The application of lettering must be done with care to keep it straight and to space it evenly. I realize that the prototype often did not space letters evenly, especially on ribbed-on-outside braced cars, but in recent years, their techniques have improved and modern equipment is generally well done with considerable attention to esthetics. Uneven lettering is even more distracting on a model simply because it is a model. You look at a model differently than you look at the prototype.

Dry transfers are burnished onto a model so that no "film" remains around the individual letters or logos, but decals are another matter. Even with careful trimming, there tends to be some relief that makes a decal more noticeable, unless the modeler exercises great care in applying final coats of lacquer.

After your decals are in place, "snuggled" down and thoroughly dry, they will still be noticeable because of their thickness and the contrast between their glossy appearance and the finish of the surface around them. This difference can't simply be hidden under a dulling spray. First you must spray the entire model with a clear glossy lacquer to make all the surfaces match. After that spray dries, a coat of a dulling lacquer will do a much better job of hiding the decals. I said earlier that I prefer dry transfers on wood, and the preceding paragraph helps explain why. I don't like to hide the texture of

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wood - even painted wood - under lacquers.

When you weather, approach the process cautiously. Of course, you don't have to weather your model at all, but understand that even a car that is recently out of the shops will have some dust on it. Weathering is always appropriate, but you need to understand how much is enough and where to apply it.

Your best reference is the prototype. If you don't have photographs of your own, look at those in the magazines (don't look at model photographs alone. Even those you may think are great will be overdone.)

Notice how road dust comes up from the bottom and often indicates the direction in which the car has been moving. The ends can reveal spattering from the wheels of the car just ahead. Streaks may run down the side from the roof. There may be dirt or grease around the grabs and ladders. The logo and car markings may be faded from age and exposure to weather and the sun. Dirt tends to accumulate on the roof and tank tops, end sills and door hardware. And, of course, don't forget the truck side frames and the wheels. Only the wheel tread is shiny where it is polished against the rail.

When you try to produce the effect of oil spills around the dome of a tank car, remember proper scale. Modelers often use thick paint to achieve this effect and apply it so heavily that the thickness is distracting.

The key to weathering is to use a light touch. Apply your medium sparingly, whether it's chalk, dry-brush, airbrush paints, sandblast or chemical bleaching. Often less is more.

A final word about merit judging, contests, goals and balance.

I'm always cautious, when discussing merit judging, to avoid overemphasizing the competitive aspect of model building. Many of us who participate in the AP do so out of a desire to compete only with ourselves - to improve over our own past efforts and not to accumulate trophies. The significant hurdle is the 87.5 point "barrier" that must be overcome to earn the merit awards needed for AP certification on the road to becoming a "master" of anything.

Moreover, the modeler who builds for his operation-oriented railroad knows the value of compromise and the process whereby the builder believes a satisfying overall effect in his or her modeling. To such a person, an attempt to make every piece of rolling stock a contest-winning museum piece seems impractical, for the time required in building would be an enormous imposition on the time that could be devoted to the satisfaction of operating. And so, to fulfill one's desire to achieve MMR status, this individual does what's required to earn the Master Builder-Cars certificate, content to set one's own car-building parameters. You build a model that looks good, operates well and exhibits obvious craftsmanship, but stops short of what may be required to win a contest at the regional or national level.

Good luck in your effort!

Further Information

For further information, check the National Achievement Program on NMRA's website, nmra.org, or contact the AP General Manager, Paul Richardson, MMR, [email](mailto:achiev@hq.nmra.org) him at achiev@hq.nmra.org

HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS