



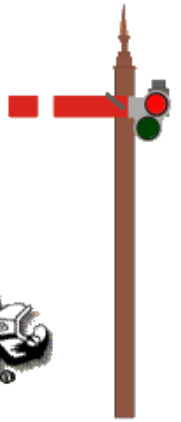
The Semaphore, The Official Publication of Land-O-Sky, Division 15, Southeastern Region, NMRA



# The Semaphore

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

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



## March 2007

Our next membership meeting is on Thursday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m.

Send comments about and contributions to this newsletter to [chsmoke@bellsouth.net](mailto:chsmoke@bellsouth.net).  
Please keep us informed of changes in your address, phone number or email address.

**Don't forget; it's this weekend!**

**WNC Model Railroaders 17<sup>th</sup> Annual**

## Model Train Show

**Haywood County Fair Grounds**

Take Exit 27 off of I-40

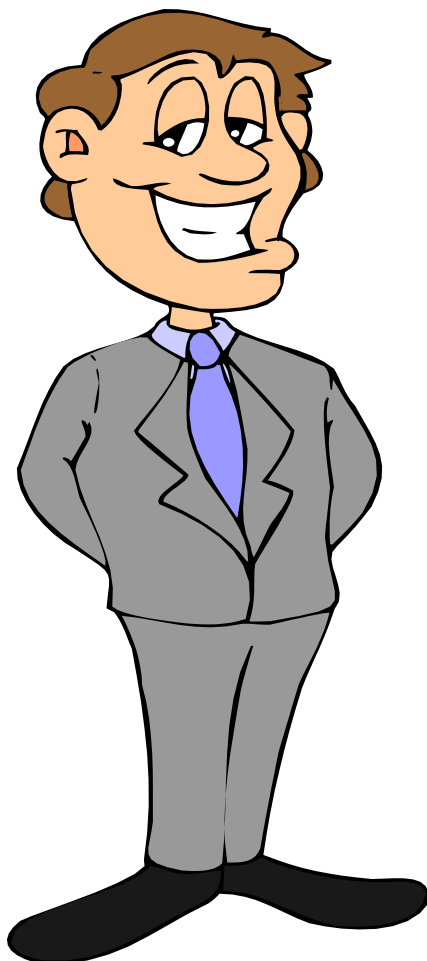
Then exit 104 and follow the signs

Friday Feb 23, Noon to 7 PM

Saturday Feb 24, 10 AM to 7 PM

Free Parking

Support your club; Participate and wear your club  
tee shirt and name tag.





# THE FIREMAN'S SEAT

By Robert Bell, Division 15 Assistant Superintendent



**Greetings!!** I hope everyone was able to attend our recent train show, bought lots of railroad related goodies and had a good time.

There are two divisions of model railroaders out there, "Rivet Counters" and "Freelancers", sort of the Yen & Yang for our great hobby. Without either one, our hobby would suffer. The two create a balance in the model-railroading hobby. And, I believe that that there is a bit of both in most of us. Some of us may lean more towards one or the other, so let us take a closer look at each.

A "Rivet-Counter", (taken to the extreme) may be defined as a modeler who follows a specific prototype railroad, during a certain year, month and/or day, maybe even a particular time of that day. He/she will attempt to replicate that point in history as closely as possible, down to what cars were parked on the street at a quarter-after-the-hour as the local freight rolled through town. These modelers that can tell you how many rivets were around the top row of rivets on the tender of a Denver & Rio Grande T-12 type 4-6-0, on May 9<sup>th</sup> of 1936; hence, the term "Rivet Counter". These people are a GREAT source of information about whichever railroad suits their passion.

In the truest sense, a "Freelancer", on-the-other-hand, follows no one, single prototype. This person may build or modify a locomotive to suit his fancy, knowing full well that there was NO exact prototype for his model. Or, this modeler may like to run trains around an oval of track nailed to a slab of plywood, just to see them go. He runs what he/she wants, how he wants and the fact that there are only two car lengths between the nose of his Mikado and his caboose 18 cars back doesn't bother him at all. Hey, don't laugh – my five-year old does it with his Thomas stuff. No, I am not saying that freelancers are a bunch of kids, after all, we all are. Aren't we?

Oh, the rivet-counters have fun with the freelancers, "That *ain't* prototypical!" they say. The freelancer will answer, "But, it could've been!" But, the reality is that even the rivet-counters are forced to make compromises in their modeling. When they shrink the distances between their towns, it is referred to as "selective compression". That *ain't* prototypical, either. But, after all an HO scale mile is a little over 60 feet, so this tends to be a necessity. Then *they* use another term, "modeler's license"; to eliminate a town, reverse a curve, shorten a passing siding, or whatever. Again, not prototypical. I have a friend afflicted by "flumen duco", (Latin for rivet counting), who just bought quite a few N&W hoppers, knowing that they were not the exact type of hopper that the N&W used. He knows this, accepts this, and says, "Hey, they just look good in a long train". He's happy, who can argue? Maybe there is hope for him, after all. Also, he will not spend the next 6 ½ years super-detailing them; he can run the flanges off the wheels instead.

There were (and are) real railroads that seemed to have had the freelancer in mind when they were built and operated. Steep grades, sharp curves, short mainlines and a mix of motive power made up a lot of the railroads here in WNC. The Murphy Branch of the Southern had grades that exceeded four-percent. The Graham County RR, that ran from Tipton, NC to Robbinsville, NC, had both, a couple of Shay geared locomotives and a GE 70-ton diesel as late as the early 1970's. My "serious" modeling in HO<sub>n3</sub> is of a real narrow gauge railroad that, at least to me, is a perfect "freelance" prototype: The White Pass & Yukon Route in Alaska. However, the freelancer in me really comes out when I "rubber gauge" over to my On30 modeling.

Some of us model a railroad as it appeared at a certain point in time. Some modelers follow a specific prototype, but give their railroad a fictitious name. Others may model a fictitious branch line of their favorite railroad. And others just make it all up and end up the most famous of all model railroaders. Who? How about the late John Allen? The point is, we can all have fun doing what we love: model railroading.

In the April *Fireman's Seat*, I'll we'll talk humor and our model railroads. Until then, remember: It's your club - get involved! **Let's play trains!**



## Needed: Good used cars!

Penn Bullock is looking for a few good cars to add to the module layout put. Flat cars, gondolas and box cars (both 40 and 50 foot for all of these) and hoppers are desired.

If you have a couple of cars in good condition, please donate them to Penn.

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## Help Wanted

Penn could also use some help in maintaining the module layout. These sessions are usually on Tuesday afternoons. Get in touch with Penn if interested. His phone number is 253-9643

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## Operating sessions

**A**nd don't forget the regular operating sessions of the club's layout. We have settled on the 2nd Saturday (1pm - 3pm) and 4th Sunday (2pm - 4pm) for our operating sessions. So that means that this month, we will operate on Saturday, March 10 and Sunday March 25.

If you have never participated in operations it doesn't matter as one of our goals is to work with the new operator, and help them learn some basics. What you will discover is that it is quite fun to run trains in a prototypical fashion. Probably more important than anything else is the enjoyment of the fellowship with other model railroaders.

For anyone who has questions or comments concerning any of our sessions please feel free to contact us so that we can continue to improve what we do. Email **Wally Brown** at [wbrown243@bellsouth.net](mailto:wbrown243@bellsouth.net)



## Working on those Certificates

*Editors Note: During the past several months we have provided information about becoming a Master Model Railroader. We hope that this information will inspire members to work on becoming a Master Model Railroader. This article also fits with our efforts to expand interest in our operating sessions.*

To qualify for the **Chief Dispatcher** certificate you must have participated in the operation of a model railroad, either home or club, for not less than fifty hours. A minimum of ten hours each must have been served in three of the five categories listed

below, one of which must be #5, Dispatcher:

[Engineer \(mainline freight, passenger, or wayfreight\)](#)

[Yardmaster \(or station master\)](#)

[Hostler \(or power desk\)](#)

[Towerman \(or traffic manager, or road master\)](#)

[Dispatcher](#)

This experience shall be accumulated on one or more model railroads having at least two mainline trains plus yard switching in simultaneous operation. Some system of freight and passenger car movements, including

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road switching, shall be used for controlling train activity.

**Engineer:** Mainline Passenger or Freight Engineer: Shall run their train in a manner that simulates the prototype, following the rules of the model railroad being used, and operating according to the signal system (if present) or by direct instruction of the Dispatcher.

**Wayfreight Engineer:** Will meet the requirements of Mainline Engineer. In addition, he or she shall perform all required switching with approval from the Dispatcher in a manner not to adversely affect the overall railroad schedule or operations.

**Yardmaster:** Runs the freight yard. He or she makes up trains with the appropriate cars in the desired numbers to have trains ready when the timetable or Dispatcher requires them. Generally, the Yardmaster operates the switch engine, but in a large yard could direct other yard engineers.

**Station master:** Is in charge of the passenger station and all passenger switching. He or she makes up trains with the appropriate consists so that the trains are ready when the timetable or Dispatcher requires them.

Terminating trains are broken down appropriately and the cars are serviced and stored as needed. Through train switching is accomplished.

**Hostler:** Shall run the engine facilities. He or she shall have each locomotive facing the correct direction, double-headed or lashed up, ready for the Engineer to easily leave the engine area. Service to locomotives shall be simulated. Returning locomotives are placed in their appropriate stalls or tracks. On layouts with advanced control systems, the Hostler can handle assignment of locomotives to the appropriate engineer's throttle.

**Power Desk:** Decides the correct motive power for each train. Assigns throttle control to motive power. When assignment is finished, he or she returns control of that motive power to the Hostler, or to off.

**Towerman:** Operates one or more towers (control panels) on a layout. He or she sets up appropriate routes at the correct time under direction of the timetable or the Dispatcher. Reports train passings to dispatcher if required.

**Traffic Manager:** Determines which cars come and go from each industry, and the amount and location of traffic, and specifies the route. May create a computer program to do this automatically.

**Road Master:** The operating trouble-shooter and repair person. He or she keeps things moving smoothly. Can take track in or out of service.

**Dispatcher:** Coordinates all train movements, either by sequence, timetable and fast clock, or other operating system.

**Documentation:** The applicant shall also do the following: (please note that the use of a computer to accomplish these requirements is acceptable)

- Prepare a schematic drawing of a model railroad layout meeting the operating conditions and indicating all pertinent simulated distances.
- Develop a timetable appropriate to this model railroad, simulating prototype time, covering a period of eight hours or more, during which at least three scheduled mainline trains move in each direction.
- Develop an operating train chart (graph) which interprets the above schedule for timetable operation of the model railroad. Indicate at least one train meet on the schematic drawing required above. Show the position of the trains involved and describe the action, giving pertinent time and movement data to effect the meet.

Develop or adapt a system of operation for the layout including all the necessary forms and explanations for their use for controlling car movements, train makeup, and operation in a prototypical manner.

**Statement of Qualification** The applicant must submit a completed Statement of Qualification (SOQ) which shall include the following:

- The forms and drawings meeting the requirements above.
- Description of the jobs held and the approximate number of hours in each.

The signed witnessed "Certification of Operation" showing that all the requirements have been met and the applicant has operated a model railroad in a prototypical manner.

**NOTE: Please refer to official current NMRA sources for a complete list of requirements for this award.**





# Twelve Ways To Get Smoother Operations

## (CONTINUED)

By Jim Hediger, Senior Editor at *Model Railroader*

### Check and adjust wheelsets

Wheelsets that are in gauge and centered on the axles are essential. I check every wheelset on every piece of equipment before it goes on the railroad. Most model manufacturers work to reasonable tolerances, but variations in gauge do occur. Two notches on the side of the NMRA gauge make it easy to check this dimension.

Wheelsets that are out of gauge can generally be adjusted by twisting a wheel along the axle until they match the gauge. Just be careful to keep the pair of wheels centered on the axle or you'll wind up with a dogleg truck, where both axes may be in gauge, but the truck's angled tracking forces the flanges into the rails making them very prone to derailment.



### Inspect and adjust the trucks

Inspect the trucks carefully and make sure all of the wheels contact the rails with even pressure. Cast, rigid truck frames sometimes warp slightly during shipment or storage. If so, they can be warmed under hot tap water and gently twisted until they're square again. If sprung trucks do not equalize smoothly, look for casting flash on the moving parts and carefully remove it.

### Adjust truck mounting

The trucks should be mounted on the car so they swivel freely. Any stiffness here forces the wheel flanges into the railheads; where they'll find any imperfection. Both trucks must rock a little under the carbody to handle slight irregularities in the track.

I've also found that one truck can be kept fairly tight to keep the carbody from wobbling from side to side, but then it's essential to leave the other truck fairly loose.

### Use minimum lubrication

Couplers should be lubricated with powdered graphite Teflon as those don't attract dirt. A little puff of lubricant does the job and lasts a long time.

Needlepoint wheelsets running in acetyl plastic sideframes seldom need lubrication unless they make noise. In such cases a puff of powdered Teflon does the job. Oil isn't recommended as it dries out and turns to a gummy residue that adds a lot of drag. Some petroleum-based oils will also damage the plastic in the sideframe.

Brass or metal trucks get a drop of light oil only if they make noise (the squeaky wheel gets the oil). Over lubrication seeps out and may damage the paint job.

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## **Make running repairs**

Everything I've covered so far can be done as you build your equipment fleet. But what about the cars already on the layout? A hard-nosed inspection of every car about once a year will reveal all sorts of things that have changed due to the wear and tear of an operating layout. The last time I did this major inspection only about ten percent of my veteran cars passed all of the standards!

To repair the numerous bad order cars (a prototype term for cars needing repairs), I sort them by the degree of work required. You'll find most require only minor repairs like adjusting the couplers, loosening a truck screw, or adding a bit of lubricant.

## **Maintain the fleet**

Now that everything is up to standard, the trick is keeping your car fleet in top shape. On the Ohio Southern I'm now following a one-strike maintenance policy. If a car derails for any mechanical reason it's bad-ordered at the next terminal for delivery to the car shop (workbench) for further inspection and repairs.

## **Stay hard nosed**

Many experienced modelers remain willing to put up with derailments as the price of running trains, but that's a rationalization to avoid investing the time it takes to make the necessary adjustments. Observe what's happening as the trains run and be hard-nosed about taking care of problems as soon as they're identified. After a while, you'll find fewer problems which need attention.

With the quality of the equipment we have today, there's no reason to put up with derailments any more. Putting in the five or ten minutes required to eliminate specific track problems, change-out bad wheelsets, and adjust each car makes an amazing difference in how your railroad performs - even when visitors are present.



## Sign up soon for the SER 2007 Convention

EARLY REGISTRATION DEADLINE MARCH 15, 2007

Registration Fees: Regular Attendee (must be NMRA member) - \$35 (\$45 if registration received after March 15, 2007) Non-Rail (Spouse) - \$25 (\$35 if registration received after March 15, 2007) Kids Under 12 – FREE. NMRA Member Day Fee; Sat. Only, WITH BANQUET - \$25 NMRA Member Day Fee; Sat. Only, NO BANQUET - \$20 Convention Web Site: <http://www.piedmont-div.org/ser2007/>

### LOCAL HOTELS

Cartersville has a variety of great hotels and motels in a range of prices. For a list of hotel choices, please check the Cartersville Visitor Bureau Motel List.

#### CARTERSVILLE HOLIDAY INN

We recommend the Cartersville Holiday Inn. The lobby bar and cafe is suggested as the local "gathering place". The Holiday Inn is offering a special rate of \$65/night. Please use the code "SER RR Convention" when making reservations. Location: I-75 & US 411, Exit 293 Cartersville, Georgia 30120. Website: <http://www.holiday-inn.com/cartersville> Hotel Reservations: 1 888 HOLIDAY (888 465 4329) Hotel Front Desk: 1-770-386-0830