



The Carolina Piedmont Herald

Newsletter of the Carolina Piedmont Division, MER, NMRA

July 2012

Next Division Meeting

Tuesday, July 24, 2012

St. Michael Archangel Centre & Gallery

830 High House Road

Cary, North Carolina

6:30 PM – Board of Directors Meeting

7:00 PM – Membership Meeting

Popular Vote Contest

Sponsored by **Kim Parker** of

Train Buddy Hobby Shop

July – Any wood structure or rolling stock

©2012 Carolina Piedmont Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

The **Carolina Piedmont Herald** is published monthly by the Carolina Piedmont Division, Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association **Submissions:** Please send news items, inquiries and comments to the Editor of the **Herald** by the **15th** of the month:

Jack Dziadul, Clerk and Editor

dziadul@windstream.net

919-718-0368 - 919-721-8757 cell

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author of each article or the Editor of the **Carolina Piedmont Herald** and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Carolina Piedmont Division.

Membership Barometer

Division Membership	133
http://www.trainweb.org/cpd13/	
Yahoo Group Members	95
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cpd13/	
Meeting Attendance 6/26/12	24 members

In the Press

Congratulations to **Dick Buchan** for his fifth in a series of steel mill articles in "The Dispatcher's Office" publication of the OPSIG, and to **Don Jennings** for his "Hand-Held Throttle Attachment" article published in MER's "The Local".

July Program

T-Trak

North Raleigh Model Railroad Club

Financial Report

By **Jerry Mersch**, Paymaster

June 2012

Balance In Checking 5/31/12	\$7,794.76
<u>Income</u>	
Coaling tower kits	\$ 45.00
NS boxcar sales	\$ 115.00
Total	\$ 160.00
<u>Expenses</u>	
Meeting room rental Jul-Dec	\$ 240.00
May refreshments	\$ 27.09
June refreshments	\$ 30.09
Bank service fee	\$ 2.00
Total	\$ 299.18
Balance In Checking 6/30/12	\$7,655.58

White Elephant Sale

Plan ahead for the "more or less" annual CPD member white elephant sale. Any model railroad item that you would like to sell to a fellow member should be brought to the August 28th meeting. Tables will be available. Be sure to label each item with your price and your name.

The Name Game

Please wear your name tag to each meeting. See **Grif Bond** if you need to order one.

Board of Directors

Superintendent (term ending January 2014)

Grif Bond, Wake Forest, 919-556-7066
grifbond@embarqmail.com

Assistant Superintendent (term January 2014)

Jim Murphy, Cary, 919-460-7763
berkshireshort@yahoo.com

Division Clerk (term ending January 2014)

Jack Dziadul, Sanford, 919-721-8757
dziadul@windstream.net

Division Paymaster (term ending January 2014)

Jerry Mersch, Cary, 919-815-3528
jbmswow@nc.rr.com

Director (term ending in January 2013)

Vic Bitleris, Raleigh, 919-870-7558
vbitleris@nc.rr.com

Director (term ending in January 2014)

Rob Rousseau, Holly Springs, 919-368-0586
railroad@nc.rr.com

Director (term ending in January 2015)

Steve Milley, Garner, 248-421-6276
rsmilley@yahoo.com

Coming Events

August 28, 2012
 CPD White Elephant Sale

October 11-13, 2012
 The Fine Scale Model Railroader Expo
 Strasburg, PA
www.modelrailroadexpo.com

November 3-4, 2012
 Neuse River Valley Train Show
 State Fair Grounds, Raleigh, NC
<http://www.nrvshow.org/>

January 26-27, 2013
 Amherst Railway Society
 West Springfield, MA
<http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com/>

NMRA National Conventions

2012	7/29 - 8/4	Grand Rapids, MI
2013	7/14 - 7/20	Atlanta, GA
2014	7/13 - 7/20	Cleveland, OH
2015	8/23 - 8/30	Portland, OR

MER Convention Host Calendar

2012	10/18 - 10/21	Milepost 40 Suffolk, VA http://www.nmra-mer-tidewater.org/Convention/convention.html
2013	Potomac / Chesapeake	

Editor's note - Before traveling any distance to an event listed, it is recommended you verify the event is still scheduled by checking the event's web site or calling the local contact.

Monthly Contests

July	Any Wood Structure or Rolling Stock
August	Any Styrene Structure or Rolling Stock
March 2013	Coal Tower Diorama

Program Topics

July	T-Trak
August	North Raleigh Model Railroad Club
December	Operations - Rob Westdyke
January '13	Yankee Swap Gift Exchange
January '13	John Wallis' prototype quiz

Refreshment Hosts

July	Grif Bond
August	Marc Blaustein
September	Vic Bitleris
October	Joel McCurry
November	your name goes here
December	Grif Bond

CPD Meeting Calendar

Tuesday night's monthly 2012
 6:30 PM Board / 7:00 PM General Meeting

July 24	August 28	September 25
October 23	November 13	December 11

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Golden Spike

(second in a series)



Jack Burgess, MMR
Pacific Coast Region AP Chairman

Before getting deeper into the Achievement Program certificates, let me first discuss the Golden Spike Program. For some modelers, the requirements of the AP can seem too intimidating and/or too much work. The Golden Spike Program is much easier and requires demonstration of modeling skills in only three areas. The Golden Spike Program is thus a good way to get your "feet wet" with the Achievement Program and get some recognition for your modeling skills at the same time.

The Golden Spike application form is available on the NMRA website. The first category is "rolling stock". This category requires completion of six (6) models (motive power or cars) which can be scratchbuilt, craftsman kits, or detailed commercial kits. While using your Visa to pay for a ready-to-run Kadee PS-1 boxcar or adding trucks to an Athearn flatcar won't meet this requirement, building a resin kit or even a plastic freight car kit with possibly additional details and weathering and would meet the requirements.

The next category is "setting" and can be satisfied by constructing a minimum of eight (8) square feet of layout with scenery. Note that eight square feet is a scene only 4' wide by 2' deep! There must be at least five (5) structures on the layout, which must be scratchbuilt, craftsman, or detailed commercial kits. If there are less than five structures, additional ones separate from the scene can be used to fulfill the requirement. Remember that bridges are also structures.

Finally, the last category is "engineering" (civil and electrical). It requires the completion of three (3) types of trackage (turnout, crossing, etc.). Even track on a grade is considered a type of trackage. The three examples of trackage do not need to be different; a passing track and spur will require three turnouts which

will satisfy this requirement. All of the examples must be properly ballasted and installed on a proper roadbed which can be cork roadbed if desired. While hand-laid track can be used, commercial trackage is perfectly acceptable. All of the installed trackage must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously by using a double-track main, a single-track main with sidings, block control, or command control. Note that this requirement can even be met by having selective power to a spur so that one engine can be run into a siding, the power cut, and a second engine run over the main. Finally, one additional electrical feature must also be provided. This can be a powered turnout, a track signal, a turnout indication, a lighted building or campfire, etc.

Many modelers will quickly discover that they have already completed these requirements with their layout (even if it is still under construction) and need only to complete an application in order to be awarded a Golden Spike Award. The verification on the application can be by any other NMRA member in good standing.

Classifieds

ATTENTION CPD MEMBERS: Do you have a wanted or an item for sale? Are you looking for carpool options to our meetings, a train show event or options for sharing a hotel room? The Herald will publish a FREE classified section for all CPD members. Send your classified ad to the Editor at dziadul@windstream.net. The ad must include your full name and contact information and will be limited to one item per issue.

- Jack Dziadul has space available if you wish to carpool to the MER convention in October. Email address is above.

LAYOUT PLANNING

Jack Dziadul

Getting started on a home layout when we were young was quite simple. We just took the ping-pong table net down and laid the track. Scenery was also easy. The ping-pong table was already green, and the Life-Like pine trees came with a flat and wide root system. But, a decade or two (or more) later our play toys have morphed into the hobby of model railroading. Whether we are lone wolf modelers with a shelf, a module, a spare bedroom or that gleam in our eye is a vision of an operating empire with guest crews there is often some initial inertia to overcome. After all, we have been reading the colorful magazines, viewing the videos, visiting and maybe even operating on friends' layouts. But, getting started ourselves can seem to be a daunting task. To help us get from research and contemplation to what might be "someday" to actually starting construction this July issue of The Herald is re-printing with permission of the authors two approaches to getting started. Byron Henderson is a professional layout designer. Scott Perry is a former professional layout designer. Both are frequent contributors to the model railroad press as well as authors and clinicians.



BYRON HENDERSON
www.layoutvision.com

Suggestions to help organize your thoughts (answering all of these questions is not a prerequisite!)

Organizing your thoughts and materials can be a big help in getting the most from layout design or operations consulting. Here are a few suggestions for materials and information that may be useful. There is no requirement to answer all of these questions by any means, but the more clarity you have the more productive and interesting the consulting engagement will be.

Layout Design issues are discussed first on this page, then Operations issues, but there is obviously a lot of interplay between the two, so

all potential clients are encouraged to take a quick look at this entire document.

What's your layout vision?

This most important question is probably the vaguest. What's your vision for your layout or for your op session? If you close your eyes and imagine the perfect scene, what does it include?

- Space for detailed scenery or dense operations-oriented trackage?
- Mountainside, seaside, or granger? "High-iron" Class 1, urban switcher, or bucolic narrow-gauge shortline?
- Intense operating sessions governed by the clock, model railfanning 'round and 'round, or relaxed but purposeful backwoods railroading?

Try to jot down a few notes or pencil a few sketches that capture your vision -- it's the most important information we could have to allow us to work toward a satisfying layout design and/or operations plan.

Layout Design

Referring to any of John Armstrong's books which describe the process of determining the "Givens and 'Druthers" of a layout may prove useful, as may a reading of the Layout Design SIG's [Primer Chapter](#) on the topic:

Prototype (real or imagined)

Are you considering specific prototype (real railroads) for your layout? Which one(s)? Are these the focus of your concept or supporting players?

If you are free-lancing or proto-freelancing, what is the history of your imagined prototype? How does it relate (if at all) to nearby real prototype railroads? If you have chosen a smaller prototype or location that may not be well-known, some concise background information may be useful. Information on real and imagined prototypes might include:

- Map showing key prototype locations and track layouts. What length of prototype mileage are you attempting to capture? What degree of selective compression are you considering?
- Schematic diagrams of track in major operating locations (yards, interchanges, industries, etc.)
- Text description of the prototype (brief history, operations, major customers, interchange railroads, etc.)
- Timetables, lists of trains, etc. Copies of any other pertinent prototype paperwork such as: car location charts (similar to "SPINS" or "CLIC"); switchlists; Sanborn maps or other valuation data; etc., etc.
- Locale: specific ("Dunsmuir, CA") or generalized ("western mountain railroading") locations that interest you
- Era of interest, either specific ("Fall of 1955"), generalized ("steam-diesel transition", "1940s-'50s"), or "anything goes"

Opportunities and Constraints

Space

- An accurately-dimensioned diagram of the available space is very helpful (the general configuration and dimensions are much more critical than drafting excellence -- simple sketches are fine). Include obstructions such as windows, doors, heating and A/C equipment, etc.
- Identify existing or anticipated "political" boundaries negotiated with cohabitants.
- For multi-deck designs, ceiling height is also important.

Time

- How much time do you have for building and maintaining this layout?
- Is there a crew of helpers to assist?

Skills

- What layout building skills do you have today?
- Which are you likely to learn or find friends to provide?

Environmental issues

- Heating
- Cooling
- Dust, etc.

Ergonomics

- Any restrictions existing now or anticipated in the future around operator flexibility, reach, etc.?
- Accessibility for guests?

Layout type and concept

What are your preferences and purpose in building the layout? How would you prefer to set the balance between potentially competing needs like operations vs. prototype replication?

- Some of the key areas you might want to emphasize include:

- Operations, including the following areas of interest and trade-offs
 - Switching vs. mainline running
 - One-person vs. larger crew
 - Formal vs. casual operations
 - Degree of intensity desired
 - Style of train control:
 - Prototype: Timetable / Train Order, CTC, Track Warrants
 - Less formal: Sequence, "Holler and Hope"
 - Replication of prototype scenes, visual fidelity
 - Model railfanning, photography
 - Low cost or quick construction
 - Portability / reusability

Modeling preferences

- Scale and gauge
- Ideas on preferred and minimum radius curves and turnout size/number

- Hand-laid or commercial track components? Have you selected a manufacturer?
- Control of trains: DC (Block Control) vs. Command Control such as DCC
- What is your preferred balance between highly accurate fine scale models and less-detailed "representational" modeling of rolling stock, structures, track-work, etc. (i.e., what is "good enough" for you)?
- How important is scenery to your layout vision? Is natural and realistic scenery (e.g., fewer long retaining walls) more important than squeezing in more track? Or will "Plywood Pacific" style scenes be OK for now (or for a while!)?
- Is it important that the layout be designed so that parts could be put into operation in stages?

Layout and Operating Style

- Is continuous running a requirement?
- Is your preference for trains passing once-through each scene or two passes or more through each scene?
- Is your preference for a linear order of towns (A>B>C) or for multiple junctions and alternate routes (sometimes referred to as "spaghetti bowl")?
- Are you considering multiple decks? Are they to be connected? How will trains move between (e.g., helix, switchback, visible horseshoe curves, manual cassettes, etc.)?
- Is staging important to your layout concept to create an impression of the world beyond-the-benchwork?
- What types of staging are you considering?
 - Interchange or yard tracks
 - Stub-end, through or loop
 - Car-ferry or moveable cassette
 - Is staging to be visible, secluded but accessible, or hidden? Active (fiddle yard) or pre-set?
 - Have you considered the staging capacity (number of tracks) that

will be necessary for your operations concept?

- Do you have preferences on aisles, access space, walk-in, duck-unders lift-outs, etc.?
- What are your preferences for the typical and maximum length of trains?
- Would you like significant distance between stations / towns (train length or more), or are you willing to settle for "engine in one town, caboose in the next" to get more features?

Operations Issues

- What are the primary (and other) reasons trains will run on your layout?
 - Test-track/display of models
 - Model railfanning, just watch 'em run
 - Casual but purposeful operations
 - Attempting a strict re-creation of prototype operations
- Operations areas of interest (some repeated from above)
 - Switching vs. mainline running
 - Passenger vs. freight operations
 - One-person vs. larger crew
 - Formal vs. casual operations, degree of intensity desired
 - Style of train control: Timetable / Train Order, CTC, Track Warrants, Sequence, "Holler and Hope"
 - Recreating prototype crew roles and rituals
- Who and how many will operate the layout?
 - The owner alone
 - a consistent crew
 - visiting knowledgeable operators
 - family members or other casual visitors?
- Have you considered how you will generate car movements?
 - car card/waybill
 - hand-written or computer-generated switchlists

- tab- or tack-on car: "switch all the red ones on odd-numbered days", etc.)
- What density of train movements would you like to achieve (how many trains in a typical session, how many trains / operators active at a time)?
- How will you control movement of trains (dispatcher role, operators themselves, automated train control, etc.)?
- Are you considering other operating roles (station agents, yardmasters who don't run trains, clerks, etc.)?
- How will operators communicate (radio, phones, hollering, written orders, etc.)?
- Will you have active or passive interchange with other railroads?
- What are the key industries and traffic types in your concept (e.g., coal hauling, lumber, produce, grain, general merchandise, manufacturing plants, urban switching, passenger operations, etc.)?
- Are there any signature industries you would like to include (large facilities, regionally-specific, or requiring special procedures)?

Below is Scott Perry's approach to the same question of layout planning. Editor

Layout Design Questionnaire

SCOTT PERRY

scottgperry@comcast.net

Designing a layout is a very personal event and you need to understand as much as possible about what you want to get out of your layout so that you can develop the best possible design. You want to be happy with your railroad! So to better identify you, your needs, wants and vision, I have developed this questionnaire for you to complete. This is very long and difficult and you may not have all of the answers. However, the more you can learn about you and your dreams, the better the design of your railroad. If you don't have an answer (any you won't have all the answers) or don't understand a question or term, just skip

it and come back to it later. Be sure to save your answers to this document as the first step toward your layout design strategy.

Personal Interview

- What is your vision of a layout? Please be as detailed as possible and take as much space/time as you need. The more details the better. Imagine that you walk into your dream layout and are going to run trains. What do you see, hear, think, and feel? Take some time with this as it is very important. Take a copy of Model Railroader and look at someone else's layout. For instance, "I see a run down an old logging railroad just making it by with rusty equipment hauling huge logs out of the Washington State wilderness. I have a DCC throttle in my hand and the trains run flawlessly. There are lots of tunnels, and none of those terrible passenger cars."
- How long have you been a model railroader?
- Give a brief history of your model railroad hobby experience?
- Have you built a layout before? If so, please describe.
- For benchwork dimension calculations please provide your height, length of arm from armpit to fingertips and your body weight.
- Do you have any physical impairment (poor eyesight, bad knees, respiratory issues, etc.)?
- What is your favorite thing about model railroading?
- What is your least favorite thing about model railroading?
- When working on this layout, what jobs will you enjoy the most?
- Do you like to build model railroads with friends, or prefer to be by yourself?
- Are your spouse and family supportive of the hobby?
- Do you have a hobby budget?
- Have you considered the cost of building a layout and have discussed it with your family?
- Is cost of construction a major consideration?

- What personal professional skills do you possess that might be beneficial to the hobby? (Artist, Engineer, Electrician, Railroad Employee)
- Is there anything else about you personally that someone needs to know that might affect the design of the layout?
- Do you have access to 3rd Plan It CAD Design software?
- Do you scratchbuild?
- How much time will you allocate per week/month to work on the layout?
- Will others help you build the layout? What are their skills that you are relying on?
- Do you understand that even the most perfect layout design will need some adjusting and correcting, no matter how complete it is?

Skills Assessment

Please let us know what modeling skills you have by selecting a number between 0 (no experience) to 10 (highly experienced).

- Structure assembly
- Rolling stock assembly and detailing
- Locomotive detailing
- Locomotive maintenance
- Electrical control systems (DC)
- Electronic control systems (DCC)
- Benchwork construction
- Scenery construction
- Computer Use
- Track work
- Operations
- Room preparation
- Electrical wiring (lights)
- Painting and weathering
- Layout Design
- Photographing skills

Preference Assessment

Please let us know what is most important to you have by selecting a number between 0 (no preferred) to 10 (highly preferred).

- Scenery

- Watching Trains Run
- Operations
- Research
- Duplicating a Prototype
- Electronics
- Construction
- Model Building
- Train Friends
- Other (define)

Dreams and Heroes

- Which layout(s) in the model railroad press do you admire most?
- Which model railroaders do you like the most?
- When would you like to start on your layout?
- When would you like to complete your layout, if ever?
- If you could own someone else's layout, any layout in the world, who's would you have?

Prototype

- What is the name of the railroad are you modeling?
- What will you call your layout?
- What time in place/era will the layout be set? (today, 1930's, June 4 1945)
- What is the theme of the railroad? (Narrow gauge ore mining, etc.)
- What is the purpose of the railroad? (Hauling coal over the Alleghenies, etc.)
- Are you modeling a prototype(s) or freelancing? Combination?
- How closely do you want to model the prototype(s)?
- If freelanced, do you have a profile or history written for the railroad in mind? Something that tells about the railroad and its purpose?
- If freelanced, is there a railroad similar to your freelanced one?
- Do you just want the flavor of the railroad, or do you want to be very precise in duplicating the prototype?
- What season? (winter, spring, summer, autumn)
- What weather? (sunny, cloudy, rain, snow)
- What time of day? (morning, noon, night, variable)

- What area of the country? (the more specific the better)
- What railroads does your railroad interchange with?
- Is the railroad mostly steam, diesel, electric, or a combination?

Research

- Have you researched your railroad? Can you provide written information?
- Are you familiar with the geography of the region?
- Would you describe the line as Class 1, 2 or 3? (Union Pacific is a class 1, a small short line is usually a class 3)
- Is it a heavy mainline, a branch line, a switching district?
- Do you have information that you can share such as books, magazines, CD/DVD's, photographs, timetables, stories, etc.?
- Do you belong to a historical society?
- What books on layout design and construction have you read?
- Do you have a trackage map of the railroad?
- Do you have track schematics, railroad blueprints, or track diagrams?
- Do you have copies of railroad documents such as switch lists, rulebooks, or other documents?
- Do you know anyone with information or expertise on this railroad? Do you have contact information for them?

Layout Preferences

- What scale?
- What gauge?
- What layout design types do you prefer? (point to point, loop to loop, switching district, other.)
- What benchwork designs (train tables) do you prefer? (walk around, aisle, table top, shelf, mushroom)
- Single deck, double deck, combination?
- Hidden staging or special operations trackage?
- Modular construction? Dominoes?
- Should scenes be unique? (Train passes through only once)
- Do you have a benchwork height preference?

- Is continuous running of trains required?
- Are helixes ok?
- Is destination staging (hidden staging) ok?
- Is hidden storage trackage ok? (This is for holding cars, and not for staging for operations.)
- Do you have a preferred aisle width?
- Are duck-unders and lift out sections ok?
- Do you want to maximize layout space, or keep plenty of operating comfort space?
- Are there any specific layout design elements (LDE's) that you want to include? (Intermodal yard, lumber mill & cutting operations, passenger car service) Please specify.
- Do you want the layout designed to NMRA specifications?
- Name 10 things the layout absolutely must have designed into it.
- Name 10 other things you would like to have, but are not necessarily critical.
- Name 10 things you do not want on the layout and will not consider even looking at.
- What railroad materials do you already have in your collection? (Not detailed, just general. If you have specific models/equipment you want to use, please give details.)

Railroad Room

- Where will the layout be located?
- Can you provide a drawing of the room?
- Do you have ACCURATE measurements for the room?
- What are the rough dimensions?
- Is the room finished or does it need finishing?
- Are there any HVAC, plumbing or electrical fixtures in the room?
- Does the room flood or have moisture?
- Does the room have climate control/HVAC?
- Is dust, dirt, mold or pests a problem?
- Is there adequate lighting and electrical outlets for construction?
- Do you have drop ceilings or hard ceiling?
- Is the floor bare concrete, painted, carpeted?

- Is the electrical wiring in place?
- Do you have plans for a crew lounge?
- Ceiling height?
- Do you want curved back drops?
- Number of doors and windows?
- Do you have photographs (digital) of your future train area?
- What is the total square footage available?
- Is there anything you CANNOT do in the area? (breach a wall, block a window, run tracks over the dryer, etc.)
- Do you have/want carpeting?
- Do you want the layout to be segmented for easy removal?

Track Plan Design

- Have you drawn an initial track plan for the layout already?
- Have you done any initial design work?
- How many square feet of layout are you expecting to build roughly?
- Do you have any specific designs or configurations in mind?
- How do you prefer to turn locomotives; turntable, wye, loop, other?
- Does the layout need to be portable?
- Are interchange tracks needed? If so, with what railroad?
- How large do the yards need to be?
- Will yards be used to store unused rolling stock? Or strictly for operations?

Operation

- Is operating the layout important to you?
- Will you be operating the layout? If so, what operation systems are you familiar with? (TT/TO, Car Cards, CTC, etc.)
- Do you have experience in operations? Describe.
- If you operate, will it be alone, or with friends?
- How many operators do you foresee operating your layout?
- What jobs do you see on the railroad? (Engineer, yardmaster, dispatcher, etc.)
- Will you have an out-of-room dispatcher?
- Do you have enough fellow operators for a session?
- Will operating session be formal and regulated, or relaxed and un-structured?

- Will rules, rulebooks, switchlists and other documents be needed?
- Is heavy mainline operation or switching type operation preferred? Or some of both?
- Will operators communicate by headphone, radio, verbally?
- What type of operation control will be used? (CTC, TT/TO, Track Warrant, Verbal Block)
- Will you be using CTC machine or software?

Trackage

- What kind of track do you plan on using? (flex, sectional, Walthers, third-rail, hand laid, etc.)
- What rail height (code 83, etc.)
- Do you have any NEW track in your collection that has not been used?
- Do you have experience laying track? If so, describe.
- What type of roadbed do you prefer? (cork, Homosote, etc.)
- Do you have soldering skills?
- Do you have a minimum mainline radius for curves?
- Do you have a minimum non-mainline radius for curves?
- Do you have a minimum turnout size number for mainline track?
- Do you have a minimum turnout size number for non-mainline track?
- Do you have a maximum mainline grade?
- Do you have a maximum non-mainline grade?
- Do you need clearances larger than NMRA standards?
- What is the preferred distance of separation between parallel tracks?
- What types of locomotive service do you want? (Coal, repair, ashes, diesel fuel, none)
- Any special yard tracks? (Run around, wye, hump yard)

Trains

- What types of trains (be specific) would you like to run on the layout? (Passenger, Slow Freight, Unit Trains, etc.) List all that you want.

- What do you expect the average length of the trains to be?
- What commodities will be hauled? (Be specific)
- What types of locomotives will you run? (Be specific)
- Will they need decoders installed?
- What types of rolling stock do you want to run? (Be specific)

Structures/Industries

- What types of structures do you expect to see on your layout?
- What key structures do you see as a focal point? (bridge, building, tunnel)
- Do you have any kits that you expect to put on the layout?
- Do you have a list of key industries?
- Do you have an in/out list of raw materials going into industries, and finished goods coming out?
- Produce a list of necessary passenger stations.

Scenery

- What kinds of scenery elements do you like the most? (mountains, water, etc.)
- Do you have photos of specific scenery elements that you have in mind?
- Do you have any specific scenic elements that you want to provide for?
- Do you want a backdrop?
- Will you paint or use photographs for your backdrop?
- Do you need a backdrop surface, or will you be using the wall?
- Any preferred scenery techniques? (Hardshell, screen wire, geodesic?)

Control Systems

- Do you prefer DC, DCC, or other method of train control?
- Do you have experience with your preferred method?
- Do you have a preferred brand of control system (MRC, Digitrax, etc.)
- Will you be using sound systems?
- Do you want walk around control?
- Do you want tether (cable), infra-red, or radio control?

Signaling Systems

- Do you intend to use signaling?
- If so, what type of system?
- What type of signals do you need on the layout?
- Do you need fascia signals as well?

Lighting

- Is lighting already installed?
- Will you be doing photography or video on the layout?
- Will you be using a locomotive mounted camera?

Workshop

- Do you plan to have a workshop or workspace?
- If so, what size space are you allowing?
- Where will it be located?
- What large tools do you have?
- Will you want a paint booth?

Both Byron and Scott are very generous with their contributions to the hobby. They each welcome communication and their contact information is provided. Watch for a future article wherein I will use the concepts described by both Byron and Scott to outline the planning concepts for my Boston and Maine Eastern Route that is presently under construction.

MAY CLINIC



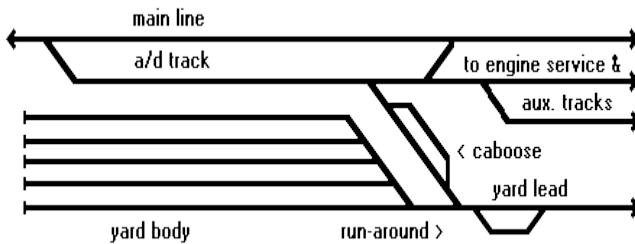
Kim Parker presenting his clinic on steam locomotives.

YARD DESIGN



Craig Bisgeier

Sample Yard Layout



You may find it helpful to print out this diagram before reading the article. Having a hard copy of the diagram to refer to as you are reading will probably be a big help for some of the more difficult concepts. This is definitely a case of a picture being worth a thousand words...

One of the most often modeled -- and misunderstood -- layout design elements is the yard. Nearly everyone has one on their layout, whether it's used simply for car storage or as an actual operating tool. Unfortunately, many of them don't work very well. Common design mistakes are made over and over again by beginner and intermediate modelers. They can't be faulted, though, because the info on how to design a good yard is very hard to find. Even when the hobby press gets it right, it's short-lived, because if you missed the issue you didn't see it. Most of the time you see poor examples ([like the hated Timesaver](#)) which are often published by the hobby press without comment, and therefore accepted by those who do not know better as good design.

So the "secrets" of good yard design are difficult to for most to uncover, because the good nuggets of information appear in wildly different places like out of print magazines or books, special interest publications, or even word of mouth among advanced modelers. Not many modelers have that kind of library or access. What is needed is a repository where all the good ideas can be collected, stored,

edited and presented as one all-encompassing primer on the subject. It is my hope that this article is one source of that information for you.

Note: For the most part, these ideas aren't mine, but those of leading modelers in our hobby and of other modelers I've read about, spoken to or communicated with, or ideas I've heard about even fourth or fifth-hand. The sheer number of persons responsible is far too large to acknowledge everyone, so I'll just say thanks to the community at large for sharing this knowledge with me, and allowing me to share it with you.

What kind of yard to model?

The educated student of yard design will realize there are as many types of yards out there as there are types of jobs that need to be done. From small weed-grown branch line yards where the main track is the only lead, to industrial yards used as parts or materials warehousing on wheels and rails. From dedicated coach yards where passenger trains and cars are serviced and lay over for their next assignment, to sprawling division point freight yards with humps that take up many square miles. Each is different in form and is designed to perform one or more necessary jobs the railroad needs done.

The design rules that follow apply primarily to flat classification yard design. 'Classification' in this context is defined as the sorting of railroad freight cars into like groups bound for one or more similar destinations. This is the most common type of yard found on model railroads, and is also one of the most interesting to operate -- when executed well. **If your interest is in a different type of yard, some or all of these commandments may not apply, and the designer is warned to carefully consider the purpose and operation of the yard to be built and what is expected from it.**

These "Commandments" should serve to drive and inspire the design process, rather than enforce blind obedience to an arbitrary list of commandments. In other words: Read these rules, understand the reasons why things work

the way they do, then apply the knowledge to your specific needs. Then apply them as you see fit, based on what you need done on your layout. Some compromise is inevitable. If you can do that, you'll never make a bad design.

1: Thou Shalt Not Foul The Main

Most modelers don't usually consider the main line as a part of the yard, but it is the most important track in it, or around it. The main line is the artery that carries the life blood of the railroad, passengers and freight. Just as in the arteries of a living thing, if the mains become obstructed it causes major problems to the system. Prototype railroads go to great lengths to keep the mains clear, and so should you. Therefore, when beginning the design of any yard, we consider the first commandment before any other design rule. Ideally the main line should only have two turnouts leading to the yard, one at each end. And they are only used when complete trains either enter or leave the yard. I cannot stress the importance of this rule enough! The yard designer would do well to obey this rule religiously.

Exception to Commandment 1: When planning a yard for a lightly used branch line, or a small stub-end terminal yard, it isn't always necessary to keep the main clear. If the branch only supports one or two trains a day, and trains must operate per rule 93 (Movements within yard limits -- all trains must proceed at restricted speed and ready to stop for any obstruction) there usually isn't a problem with using the main, even as a lead track (see Commandment 2). Like all things, use common sense. David Barrow's South Plains District layout in *Model Railroader* a couple of years back is a good example.

2: Thou Shalt Provide A Dedicated Lead Track

After the main line, the most important track in the yard is the lead. The lead is the backbone of the yard, it is the track all others either connect to or branch from. The yard switcher should always be able to get to any track in one forward move, and to escape back to the lead from almost anywhere in the yard in one

reverse move. Therefore, as many turnouts off the lead that can be arranged so should be facing-point turnouts.

Confused? Try this. Think of the yard as a garden rake. The yard lead is the handle; the various tracks that make up the yard are the tines. As you go forward up the lead (handle), all tracks (tines) radiate up and away from the handle. None turn back in the other direction (unless it's a really old rake...). In this example, all the turnouts off the lead would be facing-point turnouts, with their movable points "facing" the base of the yard lead.

Doesn't sound important? If you think about it, any track on a trailing-point switch that has to be served from the lead requires the switcher either to run around a car or cars, or to make a reverse move off of the lead to serve that track, and leave the lead. At the very least, this usually means two additional moves (delay), limited access to the track(s) being worked, and the possibility of fouling moving traffic across other tracks. As an example, see in the diagram below how the switcher would have difficulty serving the trailing-point turnout on the left. The switcher, while classifying railcars or building trains, should never have to leave the lead track under any circumstances and should almost always work railcars from only one end (the front) where possible.



Because the switcher uses the lead to "drill", or move railcars in and out of the body tracks, the lead must be as long as or longer than the longest yard track. This way the switcher never has to "double" a cut of cars to move it from one track to another. The lead can be disguised as a branch line or other kind of track if desired, but its true purpose should always be foremost in the designer's mind. Now, I understand it isn't always possible to have a full-length lead, but it is an important goal to

strive for and believe me, your yardmasters will thank you for it.

3: Thou Shalt Not Foul The Yard Lead

Now that we've cleared the main and given the switcher a track of its own to work from, we have to ensure the switching crew can do their job no matter what lunacy is going on around them. Therefore we try to keep the yard lead clear at all times. While designing the yard try to avoid including crossovers or other trackage arrangements that interfere with the yard lead or the switch crews' ability to keep on classifying indefinitely. Yards with active tracks that cut across the lead will constantly be delayed and in turmoil. It can't always be avoided, but if you start off with this in mind it will help you avoid situations where this becomes necessary.

4: Thou Shalt Use Arrival / Departure Tracks

OK, if we can't use the main for anything, and we can't use the yard lead to move trains in and out, how the heck do we get trains off the main into the yard, and vice-versa? We have to include a special track, or tracks, called arrival / departure, or A/D, tracks. A/D tracks are sidings off the main with a connection to the yard lead, where trains are stored -- temporarily -- while they are broken down or built up. The yard switcher should be able to cross over from the lead, grab a cut of cars (or the whole train sans power) from the A/D track and pull it directly onto the lead to classify it, or pull a cut from the yard body and kick it into the A/D track in just two moves. The A/D track should never be used as an extra classification track because this will subvert its purpose as a holding track off the main. It may work for a while but as soon as another train arrives or you need to put another one together, you have nowhere to put it.

If you have space, it's good to have more than one A/D track so you can handle making or breaking more than one train at a time. Just make sure you can get to each one via the yard lead in just one move. I find it usually works well to place the A/D access track from the lead

on the near end of the first A/D track, near where it joins the main, and then build a ladder track just beyond that for all the other A/D tracks.

5: Thou Shalt Provide A Caboose Track

Whether it's a double-ended siding or a stub, you need to have a place to store cabooses out of the way while classifying trains, but accessible enough to get to them fast. Usually the Caboose track is located off of the yard ladder, the yard lead or one of the A/D tracks. My personal favorite is off the A/D (where you are building or breaking a train anyway), but any easy to get to location will work. It's a great place to display all your caboose models too. If it is a stub track, make sure it is accessed easily from the yard lead and that it is from a facing-point turnout.

6: Thou Shalt Provide A Run-around

Somewhere on or off the lead, be sure to provide a short siding or set of facing crossovers to an adjacent track. This allows the yard switcher to run around a car or two, especially a caboose. If there's no run-around it can be very difficult to tack a caboose onto the back of a departing freight train without making the engineer back his whole train into the caboose track, which is not very prototypical and upsets all the other conductors. A run-around is also very important if you have yard or industry tracks with trailing-point switches within yard limits. Provide enough length to run around at least one passenger car if possible. The longer the run-around the better, and more than one is better yet. However, if space is at a premium, just enough space to run around one long car is probably enough.

7: Thou Shalt Be Able to Reach Everything

Hey - it's a fact of life, derailments happen. Regardless of how good your track work is, there's always a super-light flatcar being shoved behind a heavy boxcar, or a hopper with out-of-gauge wheelsets somewhere waiting to pick a switch-point or be forced off the track. S-curves conspire to

throw your passenger cars off the rails. Locomotives stall on spots of dirty track, or on turnouts that have insulated frogs. None of these things are much of a problem as long as you can reach the spot of the accident, because it's quickly and easily fixed. The trouble starts when you locate tracks and turnouts outside your reach. Placing a critical turnout 36" or more from the layout edge doesn't seem like a problem when you have pencil to paper, but once the yard starts to operate, I guarantee it'll be your biggest headache.

Save yourself a ton of trouble and misery by planning your yard (and the rest of your railroad) so that your operators can reach everything easily. 24-30" is about the realistic limit for most people to reach and manipulate objects, any farther and they are likely to do more harm than good. Cars on tracks near the front of the layout get knocked over and scenery gets damaged by leaning people. If you must have tracks that extend past 30" deep, make sure the turnouts leading to them are in reach, since that's where most problems happen. And just because you are tall and can reach farther doesn't mean your friends or visitors can. Layout height makes a difference too, as does distance between decks on multi-level designs. Plan for success.

If you must make your yard wider than you can reach from one side, all is not lost. Consider a shallow operators' aisle on the other side of the yard. This is a great solution for double-track layouts, and can allow you to split the yard into two manageable halves, and do more work with two switching crews. Just 16" of aisle is all that's necessary, and a few feet to either side allowing the operator to reach the critical points around the turnouts. This can be a duck- or crawl-under without access to the rest of the aisles, as a yard operator generally stays in one place during a session.

A pop-up, however, is not a substitute. Don't design a yard that needs one to reach distant tracks because you'll be using it far too often. Either have a permanent operator back there and give him space to work, or don't bother.

8: Thou Shalt Provide Auxiliary Yard Tracks

Some of the best local operation in a yard comes from the auxiliary tracks often found in yards that don't directly contribute to revenue-producing activities like classifying cars. For instance, a RIP track (Repair In Place) is a feature of every decent-sized prototype classification yard but is seldom modeled. Usually several cars each day come through that need minor repairs, like fixing dragging equipment, replacing worn brake shoes or a damaged wheel bearing, or changing a cracked air hose. These cars are directed to the RIP track, where the problems are corrected. A short time later the car is sent on its way. If you think of it as an industry track, it is an ideal element because it hosts any type of railcar, and is switched often. Other kinds of Auxiliary yards tracks are ready tracks for wreck trains or snowplows, icing tracks for reefers, a cleaning track for house cars, etc.. All of these make great additions if you can find room for them. And they don't need to be immediately adjacent to the yard either.

When you operate a classification yard set at a crew change or division point, you quickly find that a lot of engines spend a lot of time in your yard laying over -- especially in the steam era. Whether they are waiting for trains to pull out, getting much needed service, or just on standby, you need a place to hold them out of the way until they are needed. Your engine service tracks should allow direct escape from and to the A/D tracks so locomotives can get away fast and easily. These tracks can be dressed up with water towers or columns, coal docks, sand towers and houses, diesel fuel racks, ash pits and cinder conveyors, etc. You don't need to include a diesel house, roundhouse, or car shops (unless you have room for them!). These large space-hogging buildings can be implied by having the tracks run off the edge of the layout to where the building should be.

If you have more than one service track, concentrate the services along one of the tracks -- this will be the inbound lead.

Locomotives are generally serviced as they arrive at a yard, not as they are leaving.

9: Thou Shalt Not Overcrowd The Yard

All yards have a certain threshold number of railcars they can hold and continue to function well. Go beyond this threshold amount and the yard quickly clogs, making it very difficult to work with. Now, all yards have busy times where several trains arrive at once and the yard crew is overwhelmed for a short time. A clogged yard quickly becomes a bottleneck, brings the railroad to a standstill and frustrates everyone.

A good rule of thumb is to calculate how many average length cars you can hold in the body of the yard when all tracks are full, without fouling any of the turnouts. Then take that number and divide by two. This number is your threshold amount. Depending on your yard design it may be slightly higher or lower, but generally a yard that's half full -- is full. Start getting more crowded than that and things get clogged up fast. But don't be afraid if traffic surges now and then, driving the number of cars beyond the threshold -- as long as the yardmaster can clear some cars out of the yard in short order it isn't usually a big problem. If the condition becomes chronic, it's time to start pulling cars off the railroad.

A yard is a dynamic object, constantly in motion. Remember that the purpose of a classification yard is to collect incoming railcars, rearrange them and get them on trains that will take them to their destinations. But there is usually a limit to how many cars a yardmaster can classify in a set period of time, both on the prototype and model. If more cars are coming into the yard than the yardmaster can handle, the situation deteriorates and becomes unworkable fairly quickly. So, you could say there is a threshold amount of cars that can be run through the yard within a set period of time as well.

This threshold number depends upon the size and physical restrictions of the yard, how good the modeler is at classifying cars, and if the train schedules allow the yardmaster to get rid

of cars regularly on outbound trains as quickly as they arrive. The schedule, or timetable, becomes very important as you start pushing the upper limit of throughput. Remember that on a large model railroad layout a big yard might have as many as 300-400 cars through it in a four hour operating session -- but if nothing happens for 3 of those hours and everything converges on the yard at once, no yardmaster is going to be able to keep up with that. Scheduling carefully can keep things busy most of the time without overwhelming the crew.

10: Thou Shalt Make It Easy To Run

OK, let's say you've followed all the commandments and designed yourself a great yard. You owe it to yourself and others who will operate the yard to give some thought to making the model-human interface simple and easy to run. After all, the best yard in the world won't get used if no one can figure out how to make it work. Here are some things you can do that will really help operability:

- ✱ Provide a large, easy to read schematic control panel with color-coded track lines to differentiate what each track is. For instance, make the body tracks white, the yard lead red, the A/D tracks green, etc.. Label anything that might be unclear or vague. Physically separate adjacent tracks with different purposes to emphasize their difference.
- ✱ Keep the mechanical complexity down. Wherever you have a crossover where two turnouts always operate together, control them with one toggle switch. Use a diode-matrix panel or similar control structure to automatically throw turnouts in a yard ladder for a particular arrangement. "But isn't that complex?" you ask? Yes, but it makes a stressful job easier at ShowTime, so it counts as a simplicity plus.
- ✱ If the panel continues to be complicated despite your best efforts, think about breaking it up into two or more sub-panels, especially if there are distinct groups of turnouts more than 2-3 steps apart. For instance, I recently operated on a layout where the entrance to the yard, an area with

about 7-8 switches, was controlled by a separate panel from the yards' throat and ladder tracks. It helped keep the complexity on the main panel down, a welcome break.

- ✦ Be very careful with your trackwork. Good trackwork makes running a yard fun and challenging, but bad trackwork can take a good design and render it useless. If cars keep derailing every time they are pushed over a bad turnout, or over a spot that's out of gauge, neither you nor anyone else will want to work in your yard. As long as you're making an effort to design a good yard, put some effort into building it well too.
- ✦ Provide a handout with a schematic diagram of the yard and a line or two describing the different functions of each track to new operators. It will help them get familiar with the routine and up and running in less time than if they had to puzzle it out for themselves. You can also distribute this handout to visitors, allowing them to gain an insight into how the operation really works.
- ✦ Design to be able to reach everything easily, either from the front of the layout or from an operator's aisle behind. Derailing a few cars in a spot you can only get to with a long stick is sure to ruin your night and maybe other people's too. If you have to stand on your tippy-toes to reach and can only nudge it with your fingertip, it's too far away.
- ✦ Before operating sessions, try to provide a schedule to the yard crew describing the types of trains arriving and departing during the session, approximately the time they come and go, and what type of freight or passenger equipment they drop off or pick up. This will help the yard crew organize their work, and be able to properly block the cars in most trains. A properly blocked train is easier for the road crew to run, and gets its work done faster.

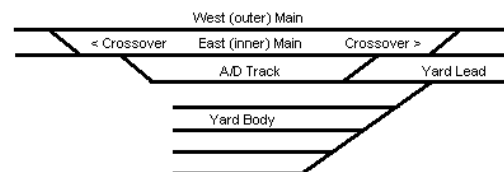
What about planning a yard for a double-track layout?

All of the examples thus far are based on a single-track railroad. Double track mains on the prototype often mean there are similar but separate yards on either side of the main, one for each direction of traffic. The only time the two yards interact with each other is usually on

transfer runs, where cars that have to go back the other way get handed off from one side to the other. This happens a lot, with backhauls often being the primary reason. On the prototype each yard often has its own set of crews, with one yardmaster who supervises both of them.

Track arrangements vary, but for the most part you find the main tracks usually both go through the center of the yard, or they split apart at each end and each goes around its own yard. Either method allows trains moving in one direction not to be fouled by trains moving in the other direction. Obviously this is impractical on the model railroad. Most of us can't model two separate yards in a space where we are hard-pressed to build just one (but there are notable exceptions). So the first compromise is often to use just one yard regardless of whether the railroad is single or double track.

The next question is likely to be where to place the yard in relation to the mains. Ideally, you would like to route each main around the outside of the yard (located in the center), with separate A/D tracks to either side, all of which are connected to the yard lead. However, like a separate yard, this is probably not practical because of space considerations. The second compromise is to have both mains pass on the same side of the yard, with a pair of crossovers from the far main to the near main at either end, which allow trains on the far main to cross the near main and move into the A/D track(s). See the image below:



It is not an ideal solution but is probably the most practical, taking up the minimum amount of linear space to accomplish (only 2 extra feet to either end assuming a pair of #6 crossover turnouts, in HO scale). If you can afford the space, by all means route the mains around either side of the yard and include the extra

A/D tracks. It's also a good idea to route the mains to the back of the yard, so traffic moving by will not be menaced by the ubiquitous stray elbow or shirtsleeve.

There are some other considerations to take into account in the interest of keeping traffic moving smoothly in your yard. Double track railroading means a significant increase in traffic over single track. The layout designer should keep in mind that unless separate directional yards are implemented a single yard will quickly be overwhelmed. As discussed earlier, most model railroad yards will have a cars per hour limit they can move successfully that won't change regardless of the number of mains in service. Consider having several through trains in the schedule that do not stop at this yard, but run nonstop through from staging at one end of the railroad to the other, or stop at a different yard. This will keep the traffic density on the mains high without slamming your yard personnel.

To help improve the cars per hour ratio, there are a few things you can do:

✦ Assuming you have the space, design the yard to be at least partially double-ended, and include a moderate length switching lead on the far end. Assign a switcher (and crew) there whose responsibility is to handle activity on that end of the yard, like pickups and setouts, picking and setting cabooses, blocking of outbound trains and other tasks that might be difficult for the primary switcher crew to get to. This allows the primary switching crew to focus more on classification. If the secondary lead has an escape track for the switcher, road engines can also use it to hook up to their trains or escape to service.

✦ A running track to get to the other end of the yard and a decent-sized runaround are absolutely essential. A double-ended caboose track that adjoins the running track is also very important.

✦ An answer to needed cars per hour improvements may be to have several leads that can switch different areas of the yard at the same time. Useful for very large yards, there may be a lead and ladder for tracks 1-

5, and another parallel lead and ladder for tracks 6-10. They would share an interchange track between the two body areas where they could switch off cars bound for the other's tracks. This doubles the amount of work that can be done, but suffers a bit from inefficiency, and it may be problematical to move cars in and out of A/D tracks. The net improvement is probably closer to 50%, assuming the crews can work in concert. A potentially serious drawback is the need for two switching crews to occupy the same space in the aisle. But with proper planning this difficulty might be minimized

Last Thoughts:

I realize that it takes a pretty fair-sized yard to fully implement many of these concepts. The modeler with a smaller space, however, still has much to gain by using these criteria to help design the small yard. Perhaps there isn't room for a full length caboose track. But an extra 18" track off the end of the ladder track will hold 2, maybe 3 hacks, and the inclusion of a short run-around, possibly also used for a nearby industrial switching area, lets you do quite a lot of operating within a little space. You don't need 2 or 3 A/D tracks, having one that also functions as a siding off the main line will work, even if it's not ideal. But no matter the size, you always need to have a lead as long as your longest body track. The trick is to be creative in how you design, and do the most with the space you have.

Both Byron and Scott are very generous with their contributions to the hobby. They each welcome communication and their contact information is provided. Watch for a future article wherein I will use the concepts described by both Byron and Scott to outline the planning concepts for my Boston and Maine Eastern Route that is presently under construction.

Train Word Puzzles

Dr. Charles Wood

Eighth installment in a series

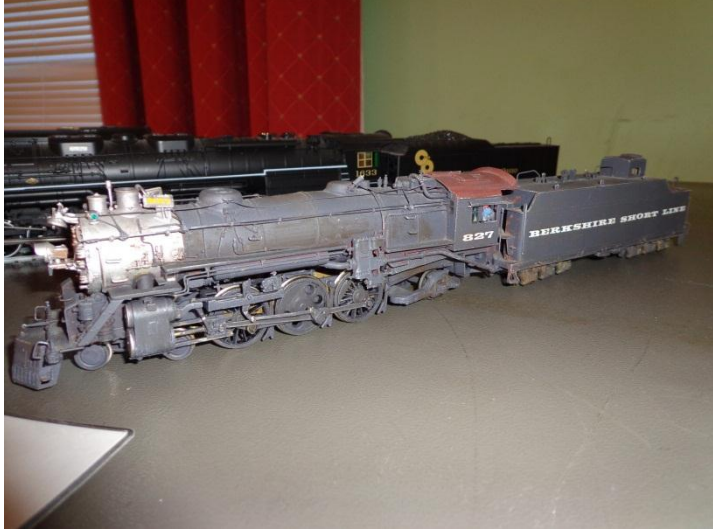
Solutions can be found on the last page.

D S E L I E
U R C E O L P
A A E Y T R C N
T L O A U Y
N L P A U M L

June Contest

Jack Dziadul photos

Jim Murphy's Berkshire Short Line 4-6-2 was the contest winner



Meeting Minutes

Jack Dziadul

Carolina Piedmont Division 13

June 26, 2012

Attendance: **Grif Bond, Vic Bitleris, Jim Murphy, Robert Rousseau, Jack Dziadul, Jerry Mersch** - Call to order 6:30pm

1. June meeting minutes approved **Vic Bitleris** motion, **Rob Rousseau** second.
2. Paymaster's report approved as submitted. **Vic Bitleris** motion, **Rob Rousseau** second. BB&T now charges \$2 / month.
3. Financial review of budget – no questions for **Jerry Mersch**.
4. White elephant sale – **Jack Dziadul** reviewed a proposed "white elephant" sale as suggested recently by **John Janosko** and as has been done in past years. It will be scheduled for the August meeting to provide sufficient time for publicity.
5. **Jack Dziadul** encouraged that car-pooling be encouraged for members attending various events, including the July 4th NS parade of locomotives at the NC Transportation Museum. **Rob Rousseau** mentioned that the museum has sold 10,000 tickets at \$25 each for the two-day event.
6. **Rob Rousseau** noted that there are eight remaining coaling towers kits to be sold.
7. **Grif Bond** turned over \$40 for NS box car sales to Paymaster Jerry Mersch.

Adjourned 6:46 PM

General Business Meeting

Convened 7:02 PM

Attendance: 24 members, no guests

1. **Grif Bond** reviewed the Board of Director's meeting.

2. **Jerry Mersch** distributed MER convention volunteer rebate checks.
3. A white elephant sale will be held at the August meeting.
 - a. **John Janosko** has donated items to sell. CPD will retain the proceeds of the sale of donated items.
 - b. Members can bring items to sell. Members retain proceeds of any items that they sell.
 - c. Tables will be available. Items should be displayed with prices and seller names clearly marked.
4. Achievement Program – awards not yet received from national, but Chairman **Vic Bitleris** noted that the following award applications have been submitted
 - a. **Dan Fisher** – Model Railroad Author
 - b. **John Janosko** and **Gene Sing** Volunteer
5. Coaling towers – members may now purchase remaining kits for \$5 each.
6. **Kim Parker** distributed clinic topic suggestions, requested input for future clinics.
7. Refreshment volunteers – September **Vic Bitleris**; October **Joel McCurry**.
8. Paymaster **Jerry Mersch** requested prompt cashing of reimbursement checks.
9. **Kim Parker** presented an excellent clinic on steam locomotives that included sound decoder demonstrations.
10. The contest had a three-way tie among **Jim Murphy, Rob Westdyke** and **Dan Fisher**. Jim's number was drawn to break the tie for the \$10 gift certificate to the Train Buddy Hobby Shop.

Word Puzzle Answers

Solutions: diesel, coupler, catenary, layout, Pullman

NMRA InfoNet News



By Gerry Leone, MMR
NMRA National Communications Director
July 2012

Welcome to the July edition of the NMRA InfoNet News.

- **The Board of Directors will meet in Grand Rapids** on Friday, July 27, Saturday, July 28, and Sunday, July 29. While the Friday meeting is a closed caucus, most of the Saturday and Sunday meetings are open to all members. At this time the meeting room hasn't been determined, so check with the convention hotel after you arrive if you're interested in attending.
- Very soon we hope to be announcing the name of the new **Director of Marketing and his team**. Those folks will be meeting with members of the NMRA leadership team in Grand Rapids to formalize the process of developing a program to recruit and retain members.
- The Standards & Conformance Department has an urgent need for an **ATA Certified Translator** to convert German documents into English. The work includes translating the Lenz document describing Railcom into an English version. If one of your members has the qualifications and is interested, contact Didrik Voss, S&C Department Manager, at davoss@pvmtengr.com.
- Atlantic District Director Nobby Clarke and his team have been invited to bring the NMRA Publicity Booth to the **last-ever U.S. Railroad convention in Switzerland** this October. This is a huge event, with attendance numbering in the thousands. More information at <http://www.trainmaster.ch/XCV-15-e.htm> .

As you know, the 2012 annual convention begins July 29. Here's some last-minute information!

- Grand Rails 2012's former **6-part ticket is now a booklet** containing maps, directions, descriptions and schedules for the self-guided layout tours. The booklet is attendees' single pass to all 70+ layouts on tour.
- **Sunset Valley Oregon System** passes are also still available. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see one of the world's most famous layouts.
- You can **put your hand on the throttle of the Coopersville & Marne Railroad SW-9** beginning Thursday morning at 9:00, August 2. Fifteen-minute blocks to operate the loco will be sold for just \$35 per person. Operations will go until noon, or longer if demand is high. Visit the tour desk at the convention to register. Participants must be over 21 years old, provide their own transportation (it's a 20-minute drive from the hotel), and be on-site 15 minutes prior to their scheduled time.

I hope to see many of you at the convention! If you spot me, please introduce yourself!

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You'll find those addresses at www.nmra.org or in NMRA Magazine.

Operations Opportunities

Jack Frame's Monon HO scale DCC layout. Second and third Friday evening slots are available. Sign on for one or both evenings.

For Sale

Norfolk Southern 40' box cars HO scale. The price is \$15 each and \$50 for a 4 car set to non-division members, \$12.50 each and \$40 for division members. There are about 70 left. To purchase see John Janosko or email johnajan@embarqmail.com.

From The Business Car

Grif Bond, Superintendent

As I write this column in mid-July, I'm traveling back to Raleigh aboard Amtrak's train 91, the Silver Star. My wife and I left "on time" from Alexandria, VA on a Wednesday afternoon with a train full of passengers. Good to see that a lot of folks are on the rails this summer. I had a few days of work in the Washington, DC area and Amtrak was a convenient and cost effective way to travel, \$120 round trip with the AAA discount. As we waited on the station platform in Alexandria for the return trip, it was interesting to note the train board on the platform said "southward" as compared to "southbound". The coach class car (# 25052) we rode in rattled and rocked like an automobile needing all four wheels re-balanced. It was a little difficult to type on the laptop on the trip home. No Wi-Fi on the Silver Star, maybe since it is a long distance train. Train 80, the Carolinian on the way up (northbound) did have onboard free Wi-Fi, but service was spotty and access dropped at times. More trains will get free Wi-Fi soon. Train speed was good along the way and we hit a few passing sidings for other Amtrak trains. Kudzu abounds in several locations along the right-of-way. We arrived about 10 minutes early into Raleigh on a Wednesday evening.

Recently I noticed the names of several Division members in issue of the online magazine *Model Railroad Hobbyist*...

- **Rob Rousseau** – submitted a tip about finding 12 inch squares of cork at Wal-Mart for those who might need an alternative to cork roadbed that may have been in short supply
- **Craig Zeni** – built a Seaboard covered hopper that is displayed in an advertisement for Microscale Decals.

It is a great online magazine and it is free. Check it out at <http://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/>.

I thought Mr. Cheap, aka **Jack Dziadul**, had a full plate as a busy real estate executive along with all of his Division duties, but he has taken

on another volunteer position as a proofreader for the monthly issue of The NMRA Magazine.

Hat's off to Rob, Craig and Jack! It is great to see the recognition of some Division members in hobby publications.

Mile Post 40, the MER regional convention is coming in October in Suffolk, VA. Hopefully your fall travels include a trip to Suffolk for the convention and supporting the Tidewater Division.

Well the dog days of summer have smacked us in the face in recent days with the 100+ degree days, so yard work has slowed down. Hopefully you found more inside time for railroad modeling.

Join us for the next Division meeting on July 24th. The program is on T-track and the North Raleigh Model Railroad Club. Be sure to bring a contest entry or two for the popular vote contest – any wood structure or rolling stock. You have to enter to win a chance to receive a \$10 gift certificate generously provided by Train Buddy Products.

From The Caboose



Jack Dziadul, Clerk and Editor

We hope that the contributions from Jack Burgess MMR, Craig Bisgeier, Byron Henderson and Scott Perry in this July issue are helpful. We are always trying to improve both the content and presentation of The Herald to bring more value to your membership. We also want to hear from you. Please email me at dziadul@windstream.net if you have any suggestions for articles or, even better, submit an article and photographs of your own. Members are always interested in layout progress photos, modeling articles or reports on operating sessions. CPD has seven members who have earned the Model Railroader Author AP certificate. **Danial Fisher** soon will be the eighth. Dan's award was recently announced in The Local, and AP Chairman Vic Bitleris is standing by his mailbox waiting for the arrival of Dan's certificate. Congratulations Dan!