



THE BRASS POUNDER

Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Div, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Assoc
 Volume 5, Number 2 April 2005

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Superintendents Notes

JUST HOW GOOD ARE YOU?

When I started to build the Knight Bros. & Dad Railroad in January of 2001, it was with modest goals. It would be my second 'real' layout. I'd had a 4'x8' sheet of 3/4" plywood with one oval of 0-27 track when I was a kid – I'm not thinking that it counts as a layout. The first 'real' layout was another 4'x8' sheet of 3/4" plywood, this time with a 1/2" sheet of Homasote on top that I assembled for my two sons in 1995. It was a pretty simple arrangement with two ovals of track and a couple of sidings. I looked at it as a learning curve – and took note of a whole lot of lessons in the process.

The planning process for layout #2 took a few months (October to January) and a couple of pads of graph paper. I'd done a bit of reading in advance – about anything I could lay my hands on that had anything to do with building a layout. I assembled a three ring binder with lots of ideas – and my "givens and druthers" list.

Still, through all this, I really wasn't thinking about building a "Great Model Railroads" layout. I don't ever think I'll find Tony Koester or Andy Sperandeo wanting a photo spread of the KBDRR. I'm reasonably sure that Allen Keller's truck won't be

parked in my driveway. This was just going to be a railroad that my sons and I could enjoy and share with friends.



Member Martin Oakes studies Rick Knight's layout

One thing high on the list was membership in the NMRA. I've always believed that I should be involved in "the" trade organization – years ago, as a restaurateur, I was very active in the restaurant associations. NMRA membership brought a whole lot of new materials and publications – *Scale Rails* and *The Local* and *The Brass Pounder*. I began to notice all the references to the NMRA Achievement Program (AP) and I finally got curious enough to start

The Division Brass

Superintendent	Rick Knight
Asst. Superintendent	Jack Parker
Clerk.....	Fred Miller, MMR
Paymaster	Dick Bronson
Director 2005.....	Dave Chance
Director 2006.....	Bill Jennings
Director 2007.....	Michele Chance
Membership Chair	Jack Parker
Fund Raising Chair.....	Bob Johnson
AP Chair	Fred Miller, MMR
Newsletter/Web.....	Fred Miller, MMR

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poking around the edges.

At first glance, it was intimidating. Earning the Master Model Railroader designation seemed about as possible as having lunch on the top of Kilimanjaro. The more I looked and read, the more I wondered. Just how good am I? While the MMR was out of reach, maybe I could earn a few of the various AP components. Using the links on the website, I printed out all of the materials on each of the AP components, including the reference articles. I made notes from the articles in *Scale Rails* articles. In my usual fashion, I started a three ring binder with tabs for each section. I spent some time with each section, thinking about what I had already done on the KBDRR and what I had planned for the future. Could I use any (or all) of it for a particular AP certificate? Could I modify my plans to have my efforts apply? I made a lot of notes.

Several of the AP sections looked like a breeze. One of two of the sections looked (and still look!) like nuclear medicine. But taken as a whole, the MMR designation no longer looked like lunch on Kilimanjaro – more like lunch on Mount Mitchell. Burnsville is a heck of a lot closer than Tanzania!

I worked out a plan.

The Golden Spike Award was first. It's technically not an AP component; it does not count towards the MMR. But it's a great foundation. Think of it as an inventory of the basics of model railroading. Half a dozen pieces of rolling stock. Eight square feet of layout and five structures. Some ba-

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TIMETABLE FOR 2005
(See Web Site for details)

- GATs Train Show April 2-3, Columbia, SC
- Railroad Historical Assn. Train Show, April 2 Hickory, NC
- CSDiv Meeting—May 21 at Dick Bronson's house
- GATs Train Show June 4-5, Raleigh, NC
- Model Train and Railroadiana Show June 25, Concord, NC
- Great Scale Model Train Show June 25-26, Timonium, MD
- NMRA National Convention and Train Show July 3-9, Cincinnati, OH
- CSDiv Meeting, July 16 at Martin Oakes house
- CSDiv Meeting, September Annual Picnic at Jack Parker's house
- Autumn Rails 2005 Oct 8, Hendersonville, NC
- Great Scale Model Train Show October 8-9, Timonium, MD
- MER Annual Convention October 28-30 Raleigh, NC
- CSDiv Meeting, November TBD

Clerk's Notes

On March 19th the Carolina Southern Division met at Fred Miller's house. The meeting was attended by eleven members and two guests. While waiting for all to arrive, we had a tour of the latest developments on Fred's Gotham City (HO trolley layout).

- At about 10:30 AM Rick Knight convened the meeting. Treasurer Dick Bronson reported the finances remain unchanged, namely \$308.15 with no income or expenses.
- Rick reported that the Division's layout project was delivered to the Spencer folks and was much appreciated.
- According to Rick, no interest has been generated from hospitals or similar organizations for the larger layout available for donation.
- Agreement was reached on the idea of distributing our "help brochure" at upcoming



Division Members listen attentively

- shows and conventions.
- Rick reported that MER trustee, Roger Cason, was asking Division Superintendents about their current and future expenses. This is in relation to the NMRA re-

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turn of funds to Regions and Division from the “single NMRA dues.”

- A brief discussion about the pros and cons of sponsoring a train show was again entertained, but Martin Oakes was not available for comment.
- Rick described plans underway for the April 30th Cherryville Model Railroad show and invited all to attend. More details to follow.
- Fred Miller, Division AP Coordinator presented Rick Knight’s Electrical Engineering AP Certificate. Congratulations, Rick!
- Jack Parker raised a question on possible help in dealing with a valuable railroad photography and model collection of a deceased individual. Some suggestions were offered.

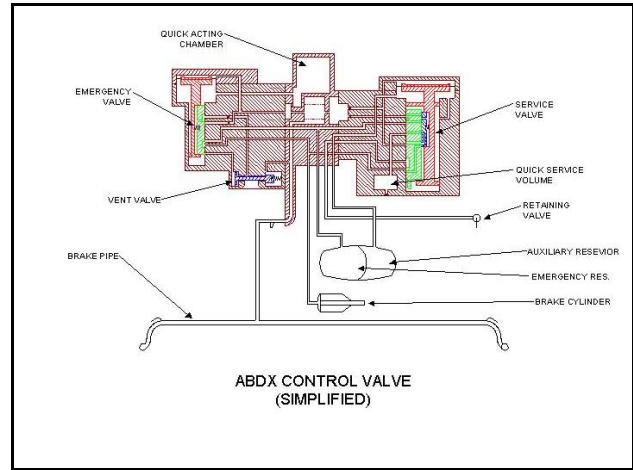
Two informative Clinics were conducted at the conclusion of the formal meeting

- Michele Chance presented a clinic on the use of photography in our model railroading activities and with a suggestion that other Division members present their photography and ideas in the form of a clinic, noting that this leads towards points for AP Author certificate.
- Michele displayed a number of photographs, both her own and commercial, which were helpful in her modeling.
- Fred Miller presented a DVD slide show of some of his prototype and model photography as used in his modeling.
- Tim Rumph presented the second clinic. It was a very informative discussion on the



Tim Rumph responds to questions

development and operation of railroad air brake systems. Tim used a slide presentation to demonstrate the step-by-step operation of the various components as the brakes are



The Air Brake in action as described by Tim Rumph

applied, held and released.

- Tim’s presentation generated a considerable amount of discussion and was well received.



Superintendent's notes

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sic track and wiring. It was already in place in the KBDRR – all I had to do was the paperwork.

It was on to Scenery. Thirty-two square feet of scenery, to be exact. The first question was which section of the “finished” portion of the layout would I use? Once that decision was made, the real work began. I had to look at the designated area a whole lot more seriously – what improvements could I make to enhance the presentation? What had been ‘good enough’ now became a basic foundation to build upon. I added more details – lights, people, more trees. I landscaped the cover for the access hatch right square in the middle of the section. It was something that had been on my “to-do” list forever. The AP moved it up to priority number one. Maybe that’s one of the great benefits of AP participation – moving items from a “wish list” to a “been there, done that”

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status. The kit that you've always intended to build; the extra special details that you planned to add to make the scene come alive; the inspiration you needed to push you to find out just how good you really can be.

Electrical Engineer. Now there was a leap. Several of the articles I'd read strongly suggested drawing a schematic of the layout's electrical components and keeping it in a file. The memory can be a fleeting thing and time plays nasty tricks. Five years down the road



Rick Knight shares his model railroad experiences

are we going to remember just how we wired a particular section? With a schematic we don't have to. So you make one copy of the schematic for the AP submission – and one for your files. The Electrical Engineer requirements also challenged me to better understand the way several of the components actually functioned. It stretched me, but in very positive ways.

Volunteer. Think of this one as a way to give back something to the hobby that we love so much – the World's Greatest Hobby. Get involved and take credit for the time well spent. For me, one of the things I really enjoy is working with Scouts, helping them to earn the Railroading Merit Badge. Those points alone will earn me the Volunteer designation in 2005. But it's only one of more than a dozen ways to get involved. Find a niche and get into it!

Chief Dispatcher. Building the layout is great, no doubt about it. Operating on it really brings it to life – and brings a whole lot

NEXT MEETING

Date: May 21st 2005, 10 AM

Place: Dick Bronson's House

Clinics: TBD

Check our website for further details, maps, etc. <http://www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/>

of neat folks, with a bunch of different perspectives, into the picture. Visitors will bring out the best – and the worst – in your layout. If there's a flaw, an operating session will find it! Home games are great – but so are "away" games. A number of us operate regularly on other layouts, the Piedmont & Western in particular. Every operating session brings us points closer to the Chief Dispatcher designation. Get out and do something on someone else's layout! Start hosting your own operating sessions – and find out just how good your layout really is....

Gosh. Two certificates hanging on the wall and two more within easy reach. More than half way to the magic seven. I've got my eye on the three that I think I can conquer. None of them will be easy, but I think I'm up for the challenge.

Master Builder – Structures. OK, so I can put together a kit and have it come out just like the instructions suggest. And I've become reasonably good at kit bashing to disguise the basic "Waltherstown" look. Can I design and build from the ground up a unique structure? And have it earn 87.5 points in a judging? And do it five more times? In my case, time will tell. It will be a stretch – one that I need – one that will make me a better modeler.

Master Builder – Prototype. Can I take a neat scene - with structures and rolling stock, and a caboose or a passenger car, and some motive power – and reproduce it in 1/87? And have it earn more than 87.5 points? I've got an idea – and I've taken some pictures. I do have to go back and do some measure-

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ments. Then I've got to spend some time sketching it all out. And so on... After this stretch I may look like Gumby...

On it goes. One step at a time. Each step closer to lunch on Mount Mitchell. They're not getting any easier, but I don't fear them like I once did. There are a lot of other fellow modelers out there I can lean on for advice and assistance. No need to be a 'lone wolf' in this.

Right now there are only eight members of the Carolina Southern Division enrolled in the AP – and only one Master Model Railroader (Fred Miller). I've been to a lot of super model railroads within the geographic boundaries of the Carolina Southern Division. Each of the Superintendents could be several steps closer to the MMR designation with a little bit of paperwork and a couple of digital photos.

Just how good are you as a model railroader? The AP will help you explore the possibilities!

- - - Rick Knight

Editor's note: Rick won his Electrical Engineer AP Certificate earlier this year and his Scenery AP Certificate last year. Congratulations to Rick Knight!

Check out our website for links to the NMRA AP Program description and forms.

<http://www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/>

Here's the Division's achievements scorecard:

Name	GS	MP	CR	ST	SC	PR	CE	EE	DP	OF	VO	AU	MMR	APC	Total
Bostian, Phil *										'92	'89				2
Brauch, Gill	'02														
Chance, Dave									'03						1
Chance, Michele									'03						1
Knight, Rick	'04				'04			'05							2
Lau, Larry	'01														
Miller, Fred	'98	'04		'03	'03		'01	'00			'03	'99	'04		7
Oakes, Martin									'03		'04				2
Parker, Jack	'97			'03	'03		'03	'03	'03						5
Teese, Jim *	'93	'91	'91		'91	'91	'91	'91				'92	'92		7

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