



THE BRASS POUNDER

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

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ON THE ROAD AGAIN

By Rick Knight

Makin' music with my friends and havin' fun. A couple of weeks back, Chris Christenbury and I took off on a Saturday morning and headed westward and found our way to the old Seaboard Air Line Depot in Cherryville. The Cherryville Model Railroaders have an Open House every Saturday, 10:00 AM to mid-afternoon. The old Depot is looking real good inside and outside. There's a small museum – and, in the large baggage shed, a lot of layout construction. The club used to have a layout shoehorned into one of the waiting rooms. After a bout with a sawz-all, the layout is now in the baggage shed and undergoing major renovations and expansion. A 'G' scale track is being installed overhead. There's an active CSX track right outside the large sliding doors. It's a neat place to spend an hour or two.

We followed NC 150 westward through Shelby. Shortly after we merged with Highway 74 we turned northward on NC 226. A few miles later we were in Metcalfe, standing next to a wooden narrow gauge boxcar. It was part of the rolling stock of the Lawndale Railway and Industrial Company.

Henry F. Schenk built the railroad to service his cotton mills in Lawndale. The railroad operated from 1899 to 1943. The station at Metcalfe was later converted to a Texaco station. It is standing next to the boxcar and also has been restored. The station/museum is open on Sundays from 2 to 4 PM.



Lawndale Rwy Boxcar at Metcalfe

Then it was off to Hendersonville and the Autumn Rails Train Show hosted by the

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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French Broad eNpire N-Trak Club. There were a lot of vendors – and shoppers – packed into a compact area, plus the N-Trak modular layout and an HO modular layout. The real hit, for me, was the HO modular – because of the operators. Every time I looked at the layout the majority of train operators were under the age of 18! The adults present were fraternizing with the show attendees and answering questions, leaving the fun of running the trains to the coming generation of model railroaders. My hat is off to them!

Chris and I paid a visit to the Apple Valley Model Railroaders, located in the old depot in downtown Hendersonville. If you haven't been there in awhile, it's worth a visit. The club was limited to a small part of the old depot where they constructed a great layout that is set up for both operations and public viewing. In the last year the club has taken over the whole building. The interior renovations are done and they have a track plan for a major expansion, modeling the Murphy Branch in great detail. It's on my calendar to check back at this time next year to see their progress.

On the way back we poked around Bostic and Forest City trying to stumble across the small Bostic Yard. It's off the beaten path and you almost have to find it by accident – I did once, but I just couldn't make it happen this time. But, gee, a whole day of chasing trains... what's better than this? Maybe a whole weekend of chasing trains?



WEIGHTING YOUR CARS FOR BETTER OPERATION.

by Ed Locklin

Good operation of your railroad will depend on several factors. I believe you can't put too much effort into your track work. After all, that's where your trains will be running. Your cars must be able to negotiate any and all curves and undulations you give it, whether you've planned for that or not. Sprung trucks will definitely help. Correctly weighted cars will probably help even more. The NMRA Recommended Practice RP-20.1 defines

what each car should weigh according to scale and length of car in terms of inches. I'm only going to address the weighting of cars in HO scale.

For HO, the NMRA recommends that you start with 1 ounce for each car and add a half-ounce for each inch of length the car measures. In other words, if I have a 36-foot hopper car, it will

measure about 5 inches in HO. Therefore, the weight for that car should be **one plus five half-ounces**, or **one plus 2.5 ounces**, or a total of **3.5 ounces**. I've drawn a scale for myself that makes it easy when I'm weighting cars. It is as follows:

<u>Prototype Car length</u>	<u>Model Length</u>	<u>Recom weight</u>
36'	5"	3.5 oz.
40'	5.5"	3.75 oz
50'	7"	4.25 oz.
60'	8.25"	5.125 oz.
85' – 89'	12"	7 oz.

In almost all cases, I glue my weights in place using an adhesive called "Black Silicon Adhesive Sealant". It's an automotive prod-

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UPCOMING EVENTS (See Web Site for details <http://www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/>)

- Charlotte Southern Christmas Show, Nov 10-20 (The Belmont Club needs help running trains at the show!!)
- Open House at the Knight Bros. & Dad Railroad (Rick Knight), Dec 18, 3-7 PM
- Open House at P&W (Jack Parker), Dec 3, 3-5 PM
- Carolina So Div—Annual Business Mtg & layout tours, Jan 21 (See details in Meeting Announcement)

WEIGHTED CARS

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uct made by Permatex available at auto stores such as Napa, Pep Boys etc. I like it because it never gets real hard when it dries. It sort of stays resilient and flexible but holds the weight well. It also has never warped the bottoms of any of my cars like Ambroid or Goo.

If you are just adding a little weight, you might get by with steel washers glued over the trucks. That works a lot of times especially when the weights won't be visible. If you are adding weight to an open car such as a flat car, try gluing buckshot under the car in between the floor ribs. I use Number 9 Buckshot because it's very small. Buckshot is lead so be careful when handling it. It's also difficult to manage so I only use it as a last resort.

I've found that if I add weights to a lot of cars/trailers in a small amount of time, it pays to purchase a roll of lead flashing for roofing. It comes in 30" X 30" sizes and is about 1/16" thick. I think I paid about \$24 for the sheet about 15 years ago. I lay it out on the floor and take a box-cutting knife and start scoring a seam for 1" strips. When the seam gets about half way through, I'll flex the lead at the seam so it breaks off the rest of the way. With a 30" long 1" wide lead strip, it's quite easy to just cut off whatever I need for a trailer or car. Before I install it in a car, I'll press the lead strip so it's very flat. I usually end up with ridges after cutting it off the mother piece. Just place the strip in between two pieces of stiff metal and insert all three pieces in a vice. After you've tightened up on the vice, you'll end up with a very flat piece of 1" wide lead weight. Use the Black Silicone for this project as well. I use wooden clothes hangers to keep it in place when gluing to the car floor.

Lead is a dangerous material to handle.

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Report on the MER Fall Convention

By Rick Knight

I'd never been to an NMRA regional before, so I was really looking forward to the Mid Eastern Region's Rails to Raleigh convention. It was a hoot! I arrived just before 11 on Friday morning with enough time to check into the hotel and to pick up my registration packet from the convention desk before sliding into my first Clinic – *Light and Sound*

Animation, by Fred Miller. Right before the hour was up Martin Oakes was at my elbow – we had to leave! We were on the Call Board and there were trains



MER Convention Hotel at Cary, NC

waiting for us.

We were off down the Interstate to Hillsborough and Ed Dougherty's Eno Valley PRR layout. The book said "this is a MUST SEE layout." The book was right! The visual was magnificent – but the operations were over the top! The layout had over 1450 feet of track and about 165 turnouts – all protected by 135 signals. The mainline signals are under the control of the Dispatcher. He's hidden under the helix and has four flat-panel touch screen monitors, with several hidden video cameras. I have a great deal of fun operating on my own layout and on Jack Parker's Piedmont & Western, but it's great to play an "away game" every now and then!

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WEIGHTED CARS

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Take necessary safety precautions. I use leather gloves when I'm handling it. Never use a power saw to cut it. It will spray too much lead in the air you will have to breathe.

Sometimes, lead by itself, won't do. Suppose you have a passenger car with a floor length of 12" and the floor piece flexes. Don't use lead in this case. Lead won't stay true. I've successfully used the ruler from a carpenter square for this but I had to cut off about one inch. A good carpenter square will cost about \$15 so it may not be cost effective. Right now, I'm experimenting with bar steel. I picked up a piece of bar steel for about \$24 that will give me enough steel for four car floors (4 pieces at 9" each totaling 36"). The reason you want steel instead of lead is that steel will not only give your car the weight it needs but it will also give your car floor the rigidity it needs. Believe me, it will stay straight. That's just as important as the weight it gives the car.

The photo shows my car-scale fixture. As you can see, there's nothing extremely pretty about it but it is very functional. I took



a piece of 1x8 shelving lumber about 36" long and spiked a piece of flex track about 15" long. I put a Kadee coupler height gauge on

one end and marked off a scale along the track in one-inch increments. This lets me quickly measure car length. I glued an old postal scale using two-sided tape to the right

end of the board. This car-scale fixture serves not only as a car-weight scale but also as a coupler height gauge.

In the years I've been in the hobby, I've found that there are probably as many ways to solve a problem as there are modelers. We should all be able to learn from each other. I hope this little item will help you improve your railroad operation as it has mine.



Nov CSDiv Meeting Report

By Rick Knight

On Saturday, November 12th, a few of us (Gil Brauch, Jack Parker, Dave Thrans, Jack Haynes, Jim Harrison – an NMRA member from Ohio wintering in Charlotte, and Rick Knight) took to the road to visit the Carolina Model Railroad Club. For many years the club's layouts were located on the lower floor of the Southern Railway Depot in downtown Greensboro. The City of Greensboro renovated the Depot, making it a transportation hub with both Amtrak and local bus service. After several years away, the Club is back at the Depot, but now in the former REA premises, sharing it with the local Railroad Historical Assn. Chapter.

The N scale layout is up and running, with some new additions being constructed. The HO scale railroad is presently in the early construction stages: track is down and trains are running, but the eventual layout will see some major modifications to what is presently on view. The Club is open for viewing every Thursday evening, Saturday day (10-5) and Sunday afternoon.

2006 NMRA National Convention

July 2-9, 2006

An extensive selection of layout tours:

- Over 110 layouts
- 39 bus tours
- Theme tours (e.g. PRR East)



Clinics, model contests, auctions, tours, non-rail activities, train & trade show, many local activities

www.ij2006.org for info

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Carolina Southern Division – Annual Meeting – January 21, 2006 Directions to Boxcar Grille in Claremont, NC

From Charlotte and Points Southeast:

Drive north on I-77 to I-40 junction in Statesville. Go west on I-40 to Exit 135 (Claremont). At the top of the exit ramp, turn left. The Boxcar Grille is just across the interstate on the left. You can see it clearly from the bridge across the interstate.

From Charlotte (alternate) and Points Southwest:

Come north on US 321 out of Gastonia to the I-40 junction in Hickory. Go east on I-40 to Exit 135 (Claremont). The Boxcar Grille is right in front of you across the road at the top of the ramp.

NOTE: The Boxcar Grille does not normally open for business until 11 AM, but they will let us in at 10:30 to start our meeting. We just won't be able to order food or drink until after 11 am. If you get there a little early, just wait in the parking lot until they let us in. Our intent is to start the meeting promptly at 10:30 AM so that we have ample time to do necessary business, eat, and then start the layout tour on time.

Catawba Valley Layout Tour

After the business meeting and lunch at the Boxcar Grille, we will have the opportunity to visit three layouts: Bob Weaver, Gil Brauch, and Scott Teague.

We will travel in convoy to each layout so that our hosts can also enjoy the visits at the other layouts. Driving directions will be provided at the meeting. Our plan is to leave the Boxcar Grille no later than 12:30 pm, so if you want to come on the tour, but not to the meeting, be at the Boxcar Grille by noon.

Bob Weaver's layout is mostly complete HO point-to-point, Gil Brauch's layout is N and a work in progress, Scott Teague's is mostly complete, also N, and has been featured in two national magazines. Because of driving distances, the tour will last to about 4 PM, but you can "bail out" at any time.

Gather up the friends and relatives – and especially the kids...



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
KNIGHT BROTHERS & DAD RAILROAD
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE ANNUAL

OPEN HOUSE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH

1:00 TO 7:00 PM

16631 GLENFURNESS DRIVE
HUNTERSVILLE

From I-77 (Exit 25 – the Birkdale exit) go WEST on Sam Furr Road (NC 73)
After passing the traffic lights at Birkdale, stay in the LEFT HAND LANE
At the top of the hill, there will be a LEFT TURN LANE
Into the NORMAN'S SHORE neighborhood
16631 is the second house on the right
Look for the sign on the mailbox

The trains are located in the garage, behind the house –
Just follow the driveway through the gate....

MER FALL CONVENTION

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Before we got back to the hotel, eight hours later, we had visited several more layouts, each one large, unique, and dazzling. Dick Genthner's Arpee & Western, set in the 1930s in upstate New York, was hours away from being dismantled in preparation for his relocation to New Jersey. Dil Huey's Brandywine Valley will remain in Apex for some time, and is a computer geek's paradise. These layouts were virtually 100% complete; Steve Benezra's Carolina Western, on the other hand, was just starting out. Steve constructed a 24 foot by 46 foot building for the railroad. The bench work is in place and most of the track is down. I was afraid to ask how much track was on the layout, but let's just say



Lots of activity at the Convention Hotel

that Atlas and Peco probably had to put on another shift just to keep Steve busy laying track. I made a note on my calendar to drop Steve a line in a year or so to arrange another visit!



Contest Judging Begins

Speaking of notes - the more I saw, the more notes I had to scribble here and there.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. My own layout will benefit from ideas generated by these other layouts.



Train Show at the Convention

The clinics/seminars were all excellent. It was great to have the opportunity to get input from a wide range of veteran modelers.

And there was a wide variety of topics on the menu -

literally something to appeal to each person. Fred Miller shared his talents for incorporating lighting and sound



Fred Miller's Trolleys draw attention and sound

effects to enhance his models. Steve Barry spent an hour talking about the process of



Gil Brauch's N-Scale modules won awards

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MER FALL CONVENTION

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submitting articles and photos to Carsten's Publications. Dick Bronson held several clinics on JMRI applications for model railroads. Kim



Hotel Amenities

Parker went into the details of installing DCC decoders.

Did I mention the train show? It wasn't the biggest from any standpoint, but it would be hard to think of a show with better content. There were two large operating modular layouts, and Fred

Miller had two of his trolley dioramas on display. And there was a great mix of vendors. I didn't see many folks leaving with empty hands – most had several bags full of "finds." I stayed within budget, but was sorely tempted to really go overboard. Several of the vendors I talked to were very impressed with their sales, wishing that every show was as good as this one.

All in all it was a GREAT weekend in Cary! Next year there won't be a formal MER fall convention because the NMRA National Convention and Train Show will be in Philadelphia, sponsored by the Philadelphia Division of the MER. So we'll just have to make plans to be in Philly.



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