

THE BRASS POUNDER

Newsletter of the Carolina Southern Div, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Assoc.
Volume 8 Number 1 March 2008

Superintendent's Message

BY RICK KNIGHT

Scale Rails! Wow – what a magazine it has become! I don't know about you, but I look forward to each issue and generally read it cover to cover. I hope that you are looking at (and reading) each of the articles on the Achievement Program. The way I look at the AP – it's a great program to help each and every one of us to improve our skills. And it forces us to become better modelers and to try our hand at things we might not otherwise touch.

As many of you know, I have been very involved with the Boy Scouts for the past dozen years. Part of the BSA program is the merit badge requirement. Each Scout working his way to Eagle must earn eleven "set" merit badges – First Aid, Personal Fitness, etc. A total of twenty-one merit badges are required for Eagle, so the Scout has ten additional merit badges of his choice, from a selection of about one hundred and ten. The choices range far and wide – gardening, coin collecting, wilderness survival, chemistry and, yes, railroading. The real purpose of the merit badge program is to give the young man a brief introduction to a wide variety of subjects. The national organization has done studies over the years and found that many Scouts get so interested in a particular subject that they pursue it after earning the merit badge and eventually incorporate it into their career. For other Scouts, it takes the form of a hobby they pursue later in life. (Hopefully, some of the lads that have taken the Railroading Merit Badge with me will be future members of the NMRA.)

The AP certificates are our merit badges. I've never been the least bit interested in hand laying track. But I'm looking at the Civil Engineer certificate – and it looks like I need to hand lay a little track. So I'm thinking it would be a good idea to hook up with someone who knows a lot about hand laying track and work with him (or her). It's going to force me to work with someone else – not just be a closet modeler. And maybe I'll get good enough and comfortable enough with hand laying track that I'll do some on my own layout – and someone else will want to work with me on their Civil certificate. It's been my experience that the "teacher" learns a whole lot more than the student. So... I'm looking forward to something I once dreaded.

We're growing in membership! In the past few months we have been joined by: Alan Buseman (Waxhaw), Michael Graves (Charlotte), Michael Lethcoe (way out in eastern Lincoln County), Richard Oglesby (Charlotte), David Smyth (Huntersville), Jeff Turbyfill (Charlotte), Doug Wilson (Mint Hill), Rick Beam (mayor of Belmont...) and Wolfgang Schulz (Naples, Florida). You probably will not see Wolfgang – it's a long story. He was featured in the Naples newspaper in early January with some excellent pictures of his two level all Marklin layout. My Dad sent me the article and I contacted Wolfgang and he invited me to stop by – so I did last weekend when I was in Naples. We had a great time together – and after a bunch of questions on just what the NMRA was all about, he asked how to join. I just happened to have an application – and he emailed to tell me that he sent it to Nashville on Monday. So we're taking credit for him! The bottom line is – when you're talking



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trains with someone, ask them if they're members of the NMRA. If they're not.... Well, you know what to do....

Calendar of Events

March 28-29 Southeastern Railway Prototype
Modeler's Meet
Rea Building
234-B E Washington St
Greensboro, NC
Clinics, demonstrations, historical info
Contact: c9dash40@carolina.rr.com for
registration info

April 5 Train Show
Hickory Metro Center, Hickory, NC

April 19 Division Meeting
Location to be determined

April 26-27 Rail Days at Spencer Shops
NC Transportation Museum
Spencer, NC

May 22-25 NMRA SER 2008 Convention
Lake Junaluska, NC

June 25-29 National N Scale Convention
Louisville, KY

July 13-19 National NMRA Convention
Anaheim, CA

October 16 - 19, Potomac Junction
NMRA MER 2008 Convention
Sheraton Reston Hotel
Reston, VA

Next Meeting

Date: March 15 2008 10:00 am

10:00-12:00 Newton Depot
N Main St (old Rt 16)
Newton, NC

12:00-01:00 Lunch

(times approximate)

1:00-2:00 Wades Train Town
Brookford Town Hall
Brookford, NC

2:00-3:00 Layout Tour
Scott Teague's home layout
(map available at meeting)

***Clerk's Report - Carolina Southern
Division Annual Meeting
January 19, 2008***

Jack Haynes

The Division held its annual business meeting January 19, 2008 at Jillians Restaurant in uptown Charlotte.

Preceding the business meeting, we held our second Railroad Modeling University (RMU). Steve August arranged for us to use the facilities of the First Baptist Church in uptown Charlotte for the clinics. Three meeting rooms were in use for a variety of clinics addressing interests from novice to advanced.

Jim Allen showed how to build railroad street crossings using several techniques. Rick Knight discussed building a first layout. Jack Haynes showed how to identify and fix common causes of operating problems on layouts. Fred Miller discussed using electronics for adding lights, sound and animation, and using a PC as a modeling tool.



Illustration 1: Rick Knight tells how to get from train set to layout



Illustration 2: Fred Miller works modeling magic with his PC

After the RMU, we adjourned to Jillians Restaurant for an excellent lunch and the Annual Business Meeting. While the weather outside was wet and cold, the windows of our dining area were popular spots for waiting around for lunch or taking a break from the meeting.



Illustration 3: Division members prepare for Annual Meeting with lunch at Jillians. Why are those guys hanging out be the windows on such a rainy day?



Illustration 4: Jillians was chosen for a reason. It affords an excellent view of Charlotte's new light rail Lynx line.

The minutes for the Annual Meeting and the reports presented there are available on the Division web site.

Elections:

Rick Knight, Dick Bronson, and Jack Haynes were reelected as Superintendent, Paymaster, and Clerk, respectively. Steve August was elected Assistant Superintendent, and Roy Becker was elected Director 2010.

Designing and Constructing Custom Trackwork

By Fred Miller, MMR

My modeling interest is in the world of HO trolleys. Unfortunately modeling HO traction means I have to build most of my trackwork from scratch. As a result I have developed a set of techniques that work for me and may be of interest to other modelers including those interested in building custom trackwork for traditional railroads.



Illustration 1: Some custom traction trackwork built with this technique

1. I have found that using an image scanner and a graphics-drawing program on my PC gives me a great set of tools to develop plans and templates for my custom trackwork. I use one of the earlier versions of Jasc's PaintShop Pro[®]. The key to developing a plan which can be used later as a construction template, is to figure out the appropriate match between the drawing scale and the printed paper template. Scanning a piece of model track can make a good start at this match. For example put a piece of flex track, or even a whole turnout, in a scanner and copy it into your drawing program. Draw some lines into this scanned image to represent rails and do some trial printouts,

varying the print scale. Keep track of each test print until you find the scale that produces a printout that matches the actual flex track and then mark that scale in your drawing. You should save this drawing to use in future projects so you do not have to repeat this “scaling” step.

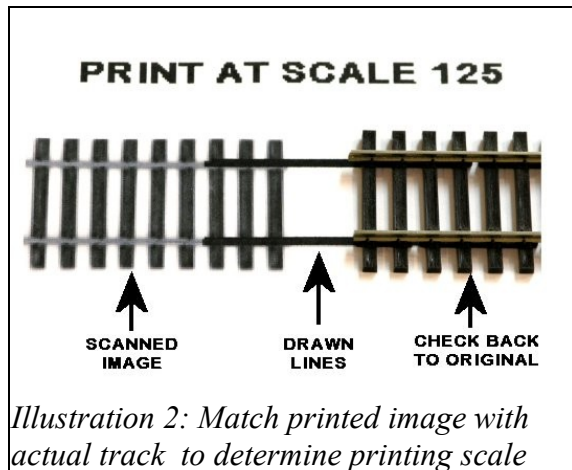


Illustration 2: Match printed image with actual track to determine printing scale

2. Now using the drawn track lines, create your custom track design. You can use the drawing program's tools to rotate and cut/copy/paste to build up the design starting just from those original drawn track lines. One of my custom track work designs is shown here.

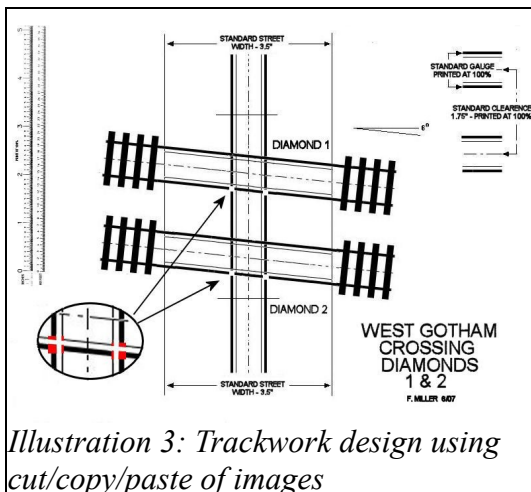


Illustration 3: Trackwork design using cut/copy/paste of images

3. I use a printed copy of the design as a template for construction. I tape down the printed page to some Homosote and then

start cutting and filing rail to size and shape. I spike the rail into position right over the printed template, soldering when appropriate. Use of a track gauge would be a good check on positioning. I use temporary soldered brass strips to hold the custom trackwork rails in position when moving the assembly to the layout.

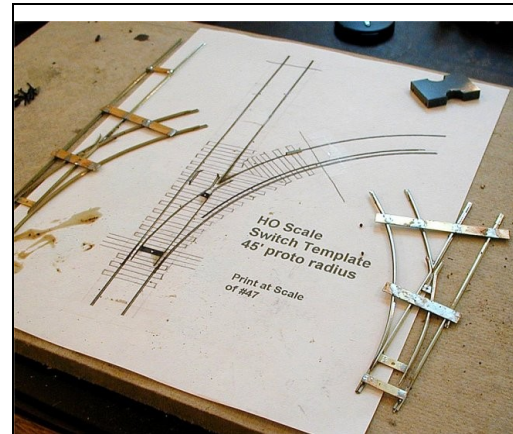


Illustration 4: Printout of custom trackwork used as template for assembly

This discussion did not go into the shaping of custom rail work such as points and frogs which has been covered in the modeling press. But it has instead focused on a way of developing the custom trackwork plan and a working template.

NMRA Resources

By Jack Haynes

Have you visited the NMRA web site lately. It has been redesigned to provide easier access to the various resources available there.

One service I recently used is the Kalmbach Library surplus book sale pages. When the library receives donations of books and other documents, they often receive duplicates of things they already have in the collection. They list these duplicates on the web site for sale.

They have books, periodicals, and Official Guides. Many are old books and periodicals that are out of print.

Here's a sample of some titles I saw on a recent visit:

Tweetsie Country: The East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad

How to Build Model Railroad Benchwork

Trolley Car Treasury

Railroading in the Carolina Sandhills: Vol. II: The 20th Century (1900 - 1985)

If you are looking for some publication

about railroad history or modeling, give the library a try; get a hard-to-find book, a deal on information you want, and benefit the NMRA all at once.

<http://library.nmra.org/>

The Division Brass

Superintendent.....	Rick Knight
Asst. Superintendent.....	Steve August
Clerk.....	Jack Haynes
Paymaster.....	Dick Bronson
Director 2008.....	Fred Miller
Director 2009.....	Jack Monette
Director 2010.....	Roy Becker

AP Chairman.....	Dave Chance
Webmaster.....	Gil Brauch
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Division Website:

www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/

Submissions For Brass Pounder

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