

Photo by David Heinsohn

THE BRASS POUNDER



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Kansas Central Division
Mid-Continent Region of the **National Model Railroad Association**

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Timetable

The next KCD meeting will
be at David and Chris
Heinsohn's

Join the KCD on Facebook!

Kansas Central Division-NMRA has a Facebook page and is for NMRA members only. It is a place to share model railroading adventures, post pictures, tell tales of woe in building your empire, post obstacles you have overcome, and ask questions. Have fun. Simply enter Kansas Central Division - NMRA in the Facebook search block and select request to join. See you there.

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Join the KCD Yahoo Group!

Kansas Central Division has a Yahoo Group. To join the KCD Yahoo Group, send an email to KCD-NMRA-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. You will be automatically subscribed to the group with the email address from which you sent the message. Or, go to groups.yahoo.com and enter KCD-NMRA in the search window to find the group and to join

<i>Call Board</i>	Director David Heinsohn Kd0r@fhrd.net	Superintendent John Snell bellibros@cox.net	Clerk Tom Katafiasz	Paymaster Larry Tiffany
	THE BRASS POUNDER Editor and Publisher Ray Brady	THE BRASS POUNDER Associate Editor Christine Heinsohn		

Minutes of Last KCD Meeting

June 10 2017

The August meeting of the Kansas Central Division was held in Abilene, KS at the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad. The meeting convened at 11:05 am by Superintendent John Snell.

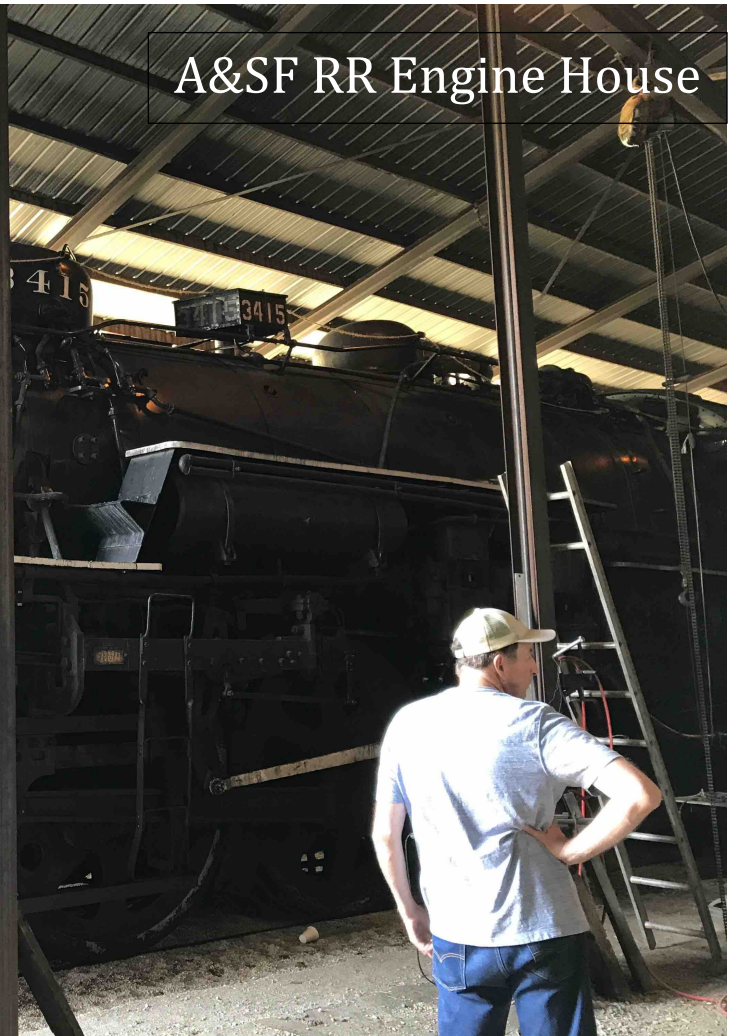
Those in attendance were Ray Brady, John Snell, David Heinsohn, Alan Meinhold and his wife, and Tom Katafiasz. We ordered lunch and ate at the Hitching Post Restaurant in Old Abilene Town. John Snell conducted a drawing for two tickets to ride the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad. The winners were Ray Brady and Alan's wife. There was no treasurer's report, but we are still solvent! The October meeting will be held at David and Chris Heinsohn's home in Elmdale, KS on October 7, 2017. David stated that it would be a three part meeting dealing with items to discuss at the meetings, concrete dock (N & HO-for HO bring a flat car or box car) and switching on the switching layout.

Joe Minnick, who was instrumental in founding the Abilene & Smoky Valley RR, conducted a tour of the engine house where the A&SF RR's operational ATSF 3415 steam locomotive is stored. Joe's extensive knowledge of the history of the steam locomotive provided a very informative tour. Joe discussed how the project began, how many man-hours were involved in the restoration of the locomotive (12,000) and where the railroad is today. There are plans to obtain an Alco S-4 from Southeast Kansas and transport it to Abilene. And A&SF RR is constructing a special trailer to carry it over the road. Plans are to do this in September. After the engine house tour the members visited the museum of the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad. The meeting concluded at 1:45pm and some rode on the afternoon A&SF RR train to Enterprise behind the diesel

Thank you, John.

Respectfully submitted
Tom Katafiasz, Clerk, KCD







Agenda for October 7, 2017 Meeting

Kansas Central Division - **NMRA**

October Meeting

Saturday, October 7, 2017

1:00-3:00 PM

At Chris and David Heinsohn's

Short Business Meeting

Building a Concrete Team Track

Break

**Hands-On Operating Session with
"TimeNook" * Switching**

Break

**Look Over David's efforts towards
Civil and Electrical Engineer AP
Certificates**

What's happening at our October meeting?

The meeting will be at our house near Elmdale, KS. There are some good places to eat in Strong City and Marion depending on which direction you're coming from. There's also some good rail-fanning coming to or going home from here. Anyone who'd like a really nice spot in Peabody to watch trains, let me know and I'll give you the location.

The program will be our normal short business meeting. This meeting will likely include the collection of ideas for next years meetings. After the business meeting I'll be doing a presentation on building a concrete team track loading dock. If someone can bring an HO flat car we'll build both an N and an HO dock. After the presentation we'll do some

switching on Timenook and look over my efforts toward the Civil and Electrical Engineer Certificates. I might even bring my FreemoN module out of storage and dust it off.

We'll probably have some snacks available as well.

Our address is 2346 C Road, Elmdale, KS. If you've not been here before, please call or email me for detailed driving instructions. Our address is still new enough the many GPS systems will not lead you here. The last person who didn't believe me followed the GPS to the Post Office ten miles away. Fortunately, she could laugh about the mistake.

Looking forward to seeing lots of folks for the meeting.

David Heinsohn, KCD Director

Superintendent News

From the **KCDivision NMRA**

Greetings from McPherson! It sure does feel like fall here in central Kansas and now that outdoor projects around the house begin to wrap up, my mind starts to think of projects in the basement. I have some goals in mind but I really hesitate to state those goals for fear of jinxing them! Does that happen to you?

In October my wife and I will be traveling to Carson City, NV for the annual Virginia & Truckee Railroad Historical Convention. I seem to make this event about every other year and never fail to come back with inspiration. I need to start back up on my V&T pike. I always look forward to the clinics (modeling and historical) and the vendor room. Can't wait!

We had a great time in Abilene for our last meeting in August. Joe Minick, founder of the Abilene & Smoky Valley RR, gave us a lot of information about the restoration of the ATSF

steam engine 3415 and answered a lot of great questions. After we were finished at the engine house we checked out the special 20(?) axle trailer that Joe designed for bringing back an Alco S-2 switch engine from southwest Kansas. We then adjourned to the depot and toured the museum. I think a few of us rode the train! This was a little different type of meeting for us, but I think everyone enjoyed it.

Our next meeting will be held at David and Chris Heinsohn's. I don't know what David has in mind but I'm sure it will be well planned and informative. I look forward to a little switching on David's N-scale layout. David and Chris live quite a ways away from civilization, but it is worth the drive. Look for driving instructions elsewhere in this newsletter. Bring a friend! Hope to see you there.

John Snell, KCD Superintendent



Director News

From the **NationalMRA**

I hope many of you will join Chris and I at our place for the next meeting. I have more notes about that program elsewhere in the BP.

It's hard to imagine, but we're coming up on the end of our 2017 program year. That means two things to us.

1. Please come to the meeting and let us know the kinds of programs you'd like to have at our future meetings, or between meetings. Volunteer to give a clinic if you've got something you'd like to share.

2. The end of the year also means that it's election time! In the case of your director to the regional board of directors, I am willing to continue, but it's really time for someone else to take on this job. It's not a hard one. You need to attend two meetings, one in Kansas City in January, and one at the regional convention,

usually in May or June (the next summer meeting will be at the 2018 National NMRA convention in KC). These meetings take about 1/2 day. And it's best to write up about a one-page summary of what the KCD has done since the last Director's meeting. This is not hard, as the notes in the BP about our meetings will pretty much take care of it. Since serving on the BOD for three years qualifies the director for the Organization Officer certificate, the usual term is three years, or six meetings.

I'll keep it short this time around. Hope to see lots of you at our place for the Oct meeting, and at the shows between now and the end of the year.

David Heinsohn, KCD Director



An Editors View



A VIEW LOOKING OUT

Where is KCD Headed

As I start the journey into the second year as editor of the Brass Pounder, I continue to wonder about where the Kansas Central Division is headed. What does the future hold?

For me, this last year's journey as editor has been very rewarding.

1. I have had the opportunity to interview 6, now 7 fellow model railroaders to be able to tell their story here in these pages. Every one of the stories is unique – and rewarding for me to hear about, and hopefully for you too, the reader.
2. I have had a chance to get to know more about others in the Division via phone calls to talk about future interviews and articles.
3. I have had a chance to stop and reflect on my model railroading adventure, and where down the tracks I am headed (more on that in my article on ballasting elsewhere in this issue.) It has made me more aware of the tremendous spectrum of disciplines that can be found in model railroading.
4. And, I look forward to putting the copy together. It has been a learning experience. It allows me to sit down for about a week every other month to get my thoughts organized so that you, the reader may learn from others.

But, the journey as editor has also been one of questioning the importance of the Brass Pounder in the overall scheme of things. The thing that I keep wondering about is the membership we do not see. With a membership of approximately 25, and with an average attendance of 5 regulars, I wonder if we, the elected leaders of the Kansas Central Division, are meeting the needs of the membership.

In the reprint from the 1990 Caboose Kibitzer by Marty Vaughn found in the "Modelers from the Past" section on page 24, his **Manhattan Area Report to the MCoR Board of Directors meeting** expressed the same issue about the activities of the different geographic "groups" in the Division. It seems that far-flung distances and communication have been a part of the DNA of the KCD all along. We probably have been a Division where members kinda do their own thing.

As I have heard in many of the interviews, each modeler's expression of their interests is different. And that translates to modelers that may not want a group experience, but want the association with what the NMRA does and with it's other opportunities.

At the October meeting at David and Chris's, we will be doing some planning for next year 's (2018) activities. Are we doing what you want? Do you want something else? What type of meeting would you prefer? How can we serve you better in your enjoyment of the hobby?

We will also be holding the annual election for officers for 2018, so this is your opportunity for other participation.

So, I am asking for feedback from all of you. What are your desires for the Kansas Central Division? Where would you like us to go?

Send me an e-mail, or call me and give me some feedback. Or, better yet, how about a drive in the beautiful flint hills of Kansas to come to the October meeting.

My phone and e-mail are on the cover page, or call David or John if that is more convenient.

Talk to you soon.

Ray Brady

KCD Associates in the NMRAssociation

Activities and Interests of the Division's Members

As a way of introducing each of us to each other, the **BRASS POUNDER** is talking to members of the Kansas Central Division about the exciting things that each is doing in the Model Railroad world that would be of interest to all the membership as a whole. We hope you enjoy reading about what other model railroaders are doing.

In this issue, The Brass Pounder talked to John Snell, Superintendent of the Kansas Central Division of the NMRA. What follows is this discussion.

BP: What got you into Model Railroading?

John Snell: It really is a typical story of a ten-year old kid. My dad picked up some used HO trains from some friends of ours and we got excited about building something. We added on a big room to the garage and we started building. That was back when there were no ready to run cars. You had to build them. It was in southern California in 1961.

BP: You couldn't go into the basement because SoCal doesn't have basements?

John: No one has basements in southern California so that is why Dad had to build the addition onto the garage.

BP: So you didn't take over the garage?

John: No, it was a 2-car garage and it was filled with cars so we added an addition. We did have a pool so later the train room later became a dressing room for the pool. That is how I got started and how I continued that for 3 or 4 years. Then my interests started changing. I think it a pretty typical story - in it for 2 or 3 years as a kid and then your interest changes. And then you get back in it as an adult.

BP: What all did you do?

John: We took a plan from the "101 Layouts" book and we started building. We had a framework and I learned a lot about carpentry. It was an open grid framework. We built sub-roadbed that followed the plan and we used True-Track for the roadbed. It had the ties and rail spaces milled into the roadbed. And we had 3ft lengths of rail - probably code 100 - and spiked it down. We also had hand built turnouts. So it was quite the experience.

BP: What scale?

John: HO. It was pretty early in that scale. I remember building car kits - wood with paper sides. I don't remember engines. I do remember heavy body Santa Fe F-units. I think that was all we had - maybe two of those. So, yeah, there was nothing to just take out of the box and put on the track. You had to build it all.

BP: So you wound up with basically an oval layout. Did you do any switching or any operations type of things?

John: We got it to the point where you could run trains over the entire layout. It wasn't a real fancy layout at all. We never did get to the point of scenery. I think I remember some trains that hit the floor. But, it was a lot of fun and I remember spending a lot of time together with my dad.

BP: Good bonding time?

John: Yeah. I think that was his intention. I don't know if he had any particular interest or passion about model railroading. It was just something he and I could do together.

BP: The fact that he added onto the garage indicated he was serious about time with you.

John: Yes, he was. I kind of think he thought I wouldn't last long and that the addition was something he wanted to do anyway.

BP: At that point could you see you had favorite aspects of model railroading?

John: Yes, I had been building plastic car kits – airplanes and model ships but nothing too elaborate. But the railroad car kits were a little different. I did not use styrene cement but something like Walther's Goo. Maybe Ambroid. So, at that time I think building car kits was my favorite thing to do. We had a local hobby shop that wasn't too far from our home and I'd go there quite often. With money I'd earn from my paper route I'd buy a car kit for \$1.25 or something like that.

BP: Hang out with the other kids? Or adults? Or both?

John: I think I probably went in there with my dad. And, I'd go by myself too. I'd ride around with my bicycle and go quite a ways away from home. There were always both adults and kids there. I later got into slot cars in junior high but by that time the layout had gotten torn down. So after 3 or 4 years, model railroading kind of took a back seat. I had a friend that lived behind us over the back fence and we got into slot car racing. In fact I still have my toolbox that says Snell-Doman Racing Team. I don't know why I keep it. So I enjoyed that hobby for several years.

BP: Then you went into other endeavors after that?

John: After that I got into guitar playing and girls. So hobbies like trains or cars were little kid things that I felt like I was growing out of.

BP: Where did the guitar playing take you?

John: It started in late high school – senior year – and into junior college. But I really did not like junior college. It felt too much like high school. So I only did a semester and did not go back. I just started working full time. I finished my college degree at McPherson College in the seventies.

BP: Did you play professionally?

John: No I did not play professionally. Not then anyway. I never got paid for anything. But, a fellow was teaching me blues and I did play with his band a couple of times. We went to a place in Laguna Beach. It was a basement under a store – not a music store. His band played there and he invited me. So I played and sung a little. I love to sing. So that is when my life long passion started. But I didn't get back into trains until I came here to McPherson. I met Larry Kitzel here who was the band director at McPherson College.

I came here to go to school in 1973. Larry was into N-scale so he and I would start talking about model railroads. And then we went to a train show in Kansas City and that is when I really fell in love again with model trains.

BP: The model railroad experience had grown internally over 10 year, together with the new technologies that had come along.

John: Even the technologies in the late 70's was such as the Athearn kits were easy. You could put one together in an hour. So, that is when I came back to it as an adult. And at that point I hadn't really focused on one particular thing. I just what did what I found interesting. At one point I was trying to gather as many passenger train sets as I could – just because I liked the looks of them.

I think a lot of people buy trains because of the colors – the color combinations - not because of

the history. I think the history comes later. For me it did. When I finally learned about the *Virginia and Truckee Railroad*, I really got started into finding out where they were and then my interest just grew and grew and grew.

When I had the layout at the basement of the store, I didn't have a real focus. But I set it in the transition era so I could run both steam and diesel. And it was a freelance so I did not have to follow any particular plan. And, that layout was so big that I didn't have to draw any track plan. I just let it happen. I figured that I'd put the big yard here, the passenger station there, etc. Then I had places along the layout. It was 77ft long and 25ft wide so I had room to make some mistakes and I could correct them later. I had the track all laid out and working before I did any scenery. That was one thing I learned was to make sure that the track work is good.

BP: Were you the owner of the store?

John: I owned my business but leased the building. But, I had intention for staying there for a long time. The store was successful. Yes we had a few down years, but by and large it was successful. And the basement was available and could not be used for store purposes. So, I invited Larry to build an N-scale layout in the middle, since my HO layout was around the outside. The HO was attached to the walls, and the N-scale was attached to 2X4's in the middle.

But by 2006 I was so sick of the retail business. You had to be there all the time. And finding help was a problem. I wanted people that could help my customers like I could and did. That was tough, but I was able to take one day of week off so I started going to the Abilene & Smoky Valley Railroad. Larry and I had found out about it and we went up there, received training, and became trainmen and then engineers. So that was the day I would get away. So, in 2006 I sold everything and moved the repair shop home. My wife was all for it so it worked out.

BP: So you can call your own time now?

John: Yes, but there are still some constraints, but very few.

Back to the *V&T*. After doing some reading on everything I could find, I went out to Carson City several times and walked the right of way. And, I brought back cans of dirt from Carson City, Virginia City, including some mine tailings. So, even though the layout will be high desert, it will be colorful because of the variety of colors in the dirt.

When I got back into the hobby, I was never very particular about the prototype. I was not a rivet counter. But with the *V&T*, I am. I insist on the proper rolling stock, and the engines. I have gotten brass models of the correct prototype engines. I have had a friend in Arkansas paint them for me. He also added DCC and sound to them so I am anxious to see them operating on my pike.

BP: This is Hon3

John: No, this is HO standard gauge. There have been people that have made mistakes about that. From Moundhouse, they went down to California and built the *Carson and California* in narrow gauge. And the interchange was at Moundhouse. So, I will have some dual gauge track there. I have a brass *Carson and Colorado* caboose that I will put on the layout as scenery. The *C&C* never really paid off for the *V&T* so they sold it to the *Southern Pacific*. And just a few years later they hit gold or silver at Tonopah so the *SP* made a ton of money off it. The *SP* called it their "Slim Princess".

BP: What drew you to the NMRA?

John: When I first joined, I think it was in the early 90's. What drew me to it was the fellowship and a national organization. I think I have learned a lot at the national and regional meetings. I think the meeting that Larry and I went to in Kansas City was NMRA. I think the NMRA is a wonderful thing for the hobby. Probably the best thing is the standards that have been established and manufacturers have pretty much followed. When Dad and I first started, I bet the couplers that we used were the horn-hook couplers. But then Kadec came along a little later. So standardization in

rolling stock, locomotives, track, and lately the DCC will be pretty much compatible across the lines.

BP: What I am seeing among the decoder manufacturers is that sound control is diverging between decoder manufacturers so that people are starting to make choices to limit their learning curve. But yes, the standardization that NMRA has brought has been exceedingly beneficial.

John: In all the years I have talked to people about this hobby, is that you can have fun at any level. Whether it is just track on plywood and running trains around in a circle - that is fine. The hobby is to be enjoyed. And, I've never had the feeling from the NMRA that you have to do this, or do that, or that all your cars have to be weathered, or anything in "only one way." You see a lot of that in Model railroader and other magazines but I have never felt the pressure to do all that. I think the only pressure I feel is the pressure I put on myself to do what I want to do. So, that is the main feeling I have about the NMRA – that there is no pressure and that you are in this for fun.

BP: And there are so many facets to the hobby. Just look at the certificates for MMR. What do you think would make the hobby better?

John: Well, finding a way to keep prices down would make it better. I think that is a big issue. There are always going to be people that price is not a concern. But I know there are many people that just cannot afford to do a lot. I don't know how manufacturers would do it, but if they could find a way to make stuff more affordable that would be great. I think that we could get young people in the hobby if we could make it more affordable,

When I started with my Dad, it was easy because he supported it financially. But when I came back into it as an adult I was at the point where I could foot the bill. Maybe they need to focus on the 30-40 year olds - people that have an established career and need a stress-relieving outlet.

I'm sure you have read the articles about the hobby dying. Well I'm not so sure about that. I don't have any empirical data. It is just a gut feeling. But I don't think the hobby is dying. I think it has changed a lot. And, I think we'll see more of the 30 and 40 year olds with the advent of electronics. They have grown up with it and they know about what can be done.

Battery power will be in the future. I think that is going to be the next big thing.

BP: What do you feel about the meeting location for our division?

John: I don't have any objection to what we are doing. I think it is good to mix it up. By the way, we are going to Larry Tiffany's in December.

BP: So we are not coming here [McPherson] then?

John: No. I really am sorry I missed the meeting when he did the airbrushing thing. I have talked to him and he has agreed to do it again. I would like him to talk about maintenance of airbrushing and he can go from there if he wants.

Yes, because we are so spread out that I am sure location is a problem for some people. You know, looking at a list of members, I cannot see more than 8 or 10 that would be active. There are probably some that do not want to go to meetings. I think we should just continue the way we have been. I think every other month works out well. I know that David wanted to do odd month activities, but I don't think they have been well attended have they?

BP: Personally, none of the meetings have been well attended – even the scheduled meetings. If we get 5 people there, we have a crowd. 5 people out of 25, to me, personally, says we haven't found the magic formula for getting people out – to get people to travel as much as 2 hours to go to a meeting.

John: I think this would be a good subject to bring up to talk about. So, let's leave it at that.

BP: What kind of meeting do you like?

John: When I first joined, business meetings were quite lengthy. So, when I run a meeting, I want to give everyone a chance to talk. But let's get it done and go on to the meat of the meeting. I enjoyed the meeting with Alan Meinhold and the making of trees. So, I have had so much difficulty airbrushing that I am really looking forward to Larry talking about that in December.

For me, my big issue with airbrushing is maintenance. I can clean and clean and clean the airbrush. And, when I pick it up the next time it is clogged up. I enjoy the clinics. And, when they are small attendance, we can ask and receive more personal attention.

BP: Anything you want to say about your layout?

John: My goal is to get it to a point where I can operate it. It is not very big, and it will not accommodate many operators. My goal is to model the *Virginia and Truckee* at Reno, Virginia City, Moundhouse, and Carson City. It is a point-to-point layout with selective compression and can have multiple crews.

BP: Time table and Train Orders, or Track Warrants?

John: I'm not sure how I am going to do that. That is something I need to learn more about. I started the layout before Lisa passed away and then that year she got sick and I just didn't get anything done down there [train room]. But, now I am getting to the point where I can spend time with it.

BP: And what about the McPherson Museum Layout? You've spent a lot of time with it.

John: When we started building there, we would typically have 8 guys show up and sometimes a dozen. That was when we were doing the carpentry construction work. But once we got to the point of it being operational, attendance dropped off. And now, we are lucky to get 4.

BP: Are they there now as we speak [Editors Note: This interview was on a Sunday afternoon.]

John: Well, John (Madden) for sure.

BP: So where do you see that club going?

John: John and I have talked about that recently. We are coming to the point on the layout where there is not that much work left. There is at least one member that is tired of what we are doing now. He wants fellowship, so we are making the layout more accessible to members. Let the members bring their trains and run them around and around. We are working on the computer to make the layout accessible to the members whenever they want to come in and run trains.

BP: So it sounds like you have the same issue with MKMR that we do with KCD – we need something that pulls us together for a common goal.

John: The goal was to build the MKMR layout. That goal is coming to completion. So, now what do we want to do next is the question.

BP: How about operating sessions? Cut in some industries with sidings?

John: When we had the planning sessions for the Museum layout, we all agreed that it would be a display layout for the benefit of the museum visitors. Well, I guess we didn't look far enough ahead- what do we do when it is done? Do we disband? I hope not, because there is always going to be maintenance. And, we have to find someone that is interested in computers so there is more than one person that knows what to do.

BP: Well John, thank you for your time. I enjoyed the conversation.

John: Thank you!

KCD Modeling in the NModelRA

Our Member's Modeling Activities

Ballasting By Ray Brady

Please note that this is not an endorsement of any particular product. This article is written to provide an awareness of alternatives to commercial model railroad ballast material.

In my journey rolling down the tracks (pun intended) to build my model railroad, each phase of the endeavor has led me to ask the question – “What’s next and how will I do it?” Thus, I find that my mind wanders to step 2 and 3 and 4 into the future to try to anticipate what supplies will be needed. You see I do not like “DO-OVERS.” Anticipation is part of my dreaming so that I can do it once and move forward to the next step.

One of those anticipations has been the issue of ballasting the track on my layout. I still have track to install in the yards, and spurs to put in at industries along the main, but I see ballasting in the cards shortly.

I have read the usual flyers, looked at samples of ballast in hobby shops, and looked online. I have even bought some “samples” of ballast to see how they look when installed and how they will go down. I have not been too enthusiastic about what I have seen. Each sample I obtained has advantages and disadvantages. But the most significant disadvantage I have found is the cost that will be involved for the material.

With 600 feet of mainline track, eleven-10’ long passing sidings, and 6 switching yards with about 100 feet of track each, I knew that I would need a LOT of ballast. And while I had not done any ballasting, I keep reading and hearing about the significant time involved with it. I want to do the ballasting ONCE. (To paraphrase Sean Connery in *The Hunt For Red October* – “One Ping (Ballast)! One Ping (Ballast) ONLY!”) That means research to get the color and texture right the first time. Additionally, since I model Union Pacific, Colorado Midland, and Denver and Rio Grande Western over the prototype’s 2000-mile geographic area, I have real prototype ballasting to try to match. That means that color and texture will be everything when it comes time to start the ballasting process.

Thus, I began looking at where to buy ballast in bulk – i.e., I needed to buy in volume. The obvious place was the local big box store. There I found mason’s sand and it seemed to be the right size and texture for what I needed (remember, I am in N-scale). Some had spilled out on the shelf at the store and looked good. So, a \$7 bag later and I had something close to the right size ballast. The journey had started. Yes, it seemed to look right when filled in around the ties. But, the color was a light tan – not what I wanted. And, all 3 of the Big Box Stores I went to had the same brand of mason’s sand. Not promising!

Enter now a local concrete company here in Salina. Again, the same thing – good price for volume mason’s sand, but the wrong color – tan.

Then, on a road trip to Dodge City, I went past a landscaping business. And there in the yard was a pile of river run gravel in just the right color for the UP main line. The only problem was that it was much too coarse - it would make fine prototype ballast. But I stopped in and I asked where did this come from, and can it be obtained in finer size. She said “Colorado” and “Probably not. And you must buy it by the TON.” AUGH!! But, getting closer.

With the UP Historical Society convention in Denver coming up the end of July, I said maybe I could locate some of her “Colorado fines” in the Denver area. So before the convention I let my fingers do the walking and called a landscaping company in Denver to see if they had what I needed. They said “nothing that fine, but go talk to the folks at United Western.”

Looking at their website, United Western is a supplier of sand blasting and media blasting media for the industrial community. OF COURSE! WHERE WAS MY HEAD! (I had completely forgotten about my experience in the aircraft engine business and the frequent use of media blasting of engine parts). United Western's website described many forms of media in their inventory that they sold to the metal processing industry. They had various sizes and colors (types) of media. Some looked like what I needed - a lot of colors and a variety of "screened sizes".

So, upon arrival in Denver, my first stop was at United Western – interestingly only 2 blocks from the convention site. And this is the selection I found:



Some of the media were artificially colored (third and fourth column from the right), but most were the natural colors that nature had given the media. (Note, the colored samples are used in mortar to yield the desired uniform color specified by the architect.) But now I had confounded the problem – over selection. I had too many colors, and too many media sizes. After pondering for a while, I guessed on the “right media size” and I settled on 4 examples to bring home – 200 pounds.

So the next page shows the 4 selections I settled on, as well as the Mason's Sand from the local Big Box store.

First, I offer a word of explanation.

1. I took these pictures outdoors in the Kansas sun. The colors (as you will see in later pictures) will change depending on the “temperature” of the lighting you have in your layout room. So be forewarned – light “temperature” effects can be significant.
2. The numbers identified with the samples are the “screened” size of the particles. This has become part of my learning experience as I delved into this subject. The suppliers of commercial

model railroad ballast have already considered size when they package their product for the modeler.



Mason's Sand – Quickrete brand. Approximately \$7.00 per 80-pound bag. Conforms to ASTM C-144, which means that the particle size is screened to a sieve (or mesh) size of approximately 30 to 50. More on sieve (mesh) size later. I have found that this color is not correct for any of the prototype RR's I am modeling.



Nickel Slag – Green Diamond 30/50-mesh screening. \$7.70 per 50-pound bag. Other mesh sizes that are available: 40/70, 50/100, 115. When I got home, I found this color has a lot of green in it when viewed in outdoor sunlight or daylight fluorescent lights. It may work with the 3000 degK lights that will be used for my layout lighting. We'll see. It may need to be mixed with something else.



Coal Slag – Black Magic 20/40 mesh screening. \$7.40 per 50-pound bag. Other mesh sizes that are available: 16/40, 30/60, 40/60. When I spread this on a sample track, some of the particle sizes were too large to go between the ties. Thus, a 30/60 mesh screening is more appropriate for N-scale Peco Track. This Coal Slag would also have a use in "coal loads" either in a tender or in a coal car, as well as mixing with other colors to darken the texture. It was much used by the D&RGW and presumably the Colorado Midland around Leadville (and Hagarman's Pass) for ballast.



GMX Garnet 36 mesh. \$18.70 per 55-pound bag. This, to me, is the most pleasing in the sunlight and 3000 degK lighting. A combination of brown with a purplish cast similar to the UP line here in Brookville. I'll probably use this for the UP main line



Garnet 36 Mesh. \$19.00 per 50-pound bag. A more purplish cast – would need to be blended with other colors to achieve what I want.

So here's what these materials look like when ballasted on Peco Code-55 N-scale track. All pictures were taken under the 6500 degK "temperature" of my layout room's fluorescent work lights.



Mason's Sand



Nickel Slag



Coal Slag



GMX Garnet 36



Garnet 36

Now, a little about particle size. Mason's sand will normally be sold conforming to ASTM C144, which means that the particle size will meet certain size restrictions. From the *grading* table to the left (taken from ASTM C144), masons sand will be in the range 30-50 sieve size for the majority of the particles (less than 25% of the particles will be above No. 30 sieve, and less than 10-15% of the particles to be smaller than No. 50 sieve.)

4. Grading

4.1 Aggregate for use in masonry mortar shall be graded within the following limits, depending upon whether natural sand or manufactured sand is to be used:

Sieve Size		Percent Passing	
		Natural Sand	Manufactured Sand
4.75-mm	(No. 4)	100	100
2.36-mm	(No. 8)	95 to 100	95 to 100
1.18-mm	(No. 16)	70 to 100	70 to 100
600-µm	(No. 30)	40 to 75	40 to 75
300-µm	(No. 50)	10 to 35	20 to 40
150-µm	(No. 100)	2 to 15	10 to 25
75-µm	(No. 200)	0 to 5	0 to 10

4.2 The aggregate shall not have more than 50 % retained between any two consecutive sieves of those listed in 4.1 nor more than 25 % between 300-µm (No. 50) and the 150-µm (No. 100) sieve.

Translating that to particle size in inches, the table below shows the corresponding size of the mesh opening for mesh sizes of 4-2500. As you can see, the mesh sizes 30-50 that "seems right" for my N-scale layout ballasting translates to particle sizes of .0232" - .0116", or 3.712" - 1.856" N-scale inches - **Not Bad!** (If one were

modeling in HO scale, mesh size 16 - 30 translates to 4.002" - 2.014 HO -scale inches - again, about right for modeling) So, the selections I made in my purchases in Denver yielded the proper scale size ballast for everything except the Coal Slag. That, as I found out, was a little too coarse for my ballasting as there were some particles that would not fit between the ties.

One final note! This discussion in no way is a commercial for United Western. They just happened to appear on my radar as I searched and they had a sizeable selection of media displayed for me to pick and choose from.

A search of the web will yield suppliers in Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City that provide the same media (including the brands I encountered such as Green Diamond, Black Magic, and GMX). Just type in "abrasive blast media - city" and let Google lead you there.

They also show up in national retailers such as Graingers, Harbor Freight, Tractor Supply, and Northern Tool. Selection for these last national retailers appears to be much restricted, but you may find what you want at your local tool store.

So, I offer this insight that I discovered in my journey down the tracks. Buying in bulk is a cheaper way to ballast if you have considerable track to model. And, there are various colors that will match your needs. HAVE FUN MODELING.

Mesh	Micron	Inches
4	4760	0.185
6	3360	0.131
8	2380	0.093
12	1680	0.065
16	1190	0.046
20	840	0.0328
30	590	0.0232
40	420	0.0164
50	297	0.0116
60	250	0.0097
70	210	0.0082
80	177	0.0069
100	149	0.0058
140	105	0.0041
200	74	0.0029
230	62	0.0023
270	53	0.0021
325	44	0.0017
400	37	0.0015
625	20	0.0008
1250	10	0.0004
2500	5	0.0002

Kansas Central Division **NMRA**

Extra Train

Section 1

Down the Tracks

This issue of the Brass Pounder is the first anniversary edition since I took over as Editor in July of 2016. I've published six issues over the last year, and have included interviews with six of the Kansas Central Division NMRA members – their journey in Model Railroading.

I have found that model railroading is a journey that really has no end. Like they say, a Model Railroad is never finished. Similarly, the Modeler's Journey is never finished. We are always finding something new and different as we journey down the tracks.

As a logical extension of the interview, I have given the interviewees an opportunity to continue their story of where the "tracks" have taken them since I talked to them for the interview. - things they have learned, taught, experienced, built, traveled, photographed, or whatever they have enjoyed since the interview.

What follows is the continuation of the interviewee's story.

Section 2

David Heinsohn's Journey

1. At the time of the interview I'd thought I would have finished up two more AP Certificates. I have managed to move forward on them, but procrastination set in, so there's still a ways to go on them.
2. I attended the regional convention in Ames, IA in the late Spring. One huge surprise from that was getting three hours of Dispatcher time on an ops session layout. I was really surprised, to say the least. While folks were still arriving, I was asked if I'd take on the job. I laughed and said something like "I've not even walked around this layout yet!" They told me about the dispatcher from the previous session who had even less ops experience than I. So I took it on and managed to keep things running, sorta. :-)
3. Chris, Ray, and I attended the show in Deshler, NE in the early summer. Nice trip talking railroading, and family history with friends.
4. The last KCD meeting was a really good one. I'm sorry more folks were not able to attend. Being free to crawl all over a fully operational steam engine doesn't happen very often.
5. There is a group of N-scale operators in the KC Metro area that have opened up ops sessions to its members. That group has allowed me to attend three ops sessions on N-scale layouts, with another one the day after I'm writing this. It is really nice to get some repeat ops time on a layout. I think? My ability to get the job done right improves with repetitions.
6. I have written more articles for the BP and Caboose Kibitzer than I expected at the time of the interview.

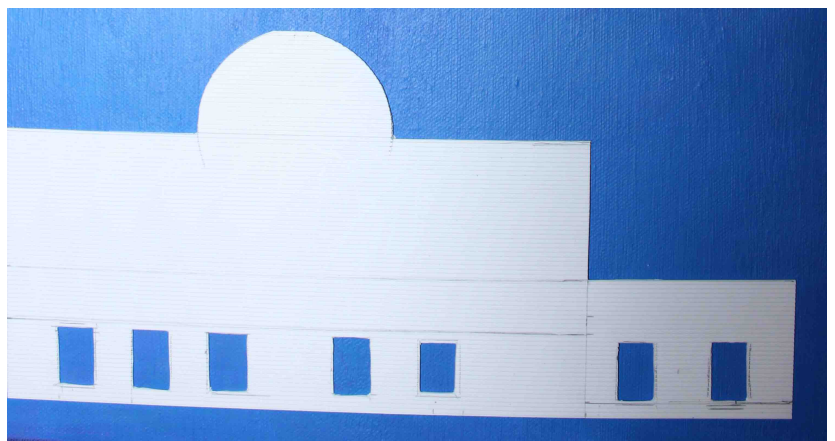
Section 3

Tom Katafiasz's Journey

Since I didn't attend any NMRA conventions this year, I thought that the UP Historical Society Convention in Denver would be a good choice. This was the first UPHS convention that I attended and the tour of the steam shop was the highlight of the convention. I also enjoyed the banquet and the speaker who was a past president of the UP. Very entertaining!

As far as modeling, I have been working on a few projects for the Mid Kansas Model Railroad group out of McPherson. [ED: See John Snell Interview] Probably my biggest project is the modeling of the Brookville Hotel to occupy a blank area on the layout. I have enclosed a photo of the hotel and the beginning of the model (Very beginning!!).

There are a few other projects, namely to work with decoder pro and to finish more scenery, that I would like to accomplish. Other than that model railroading continues to give me great satisfaction and relaxation.



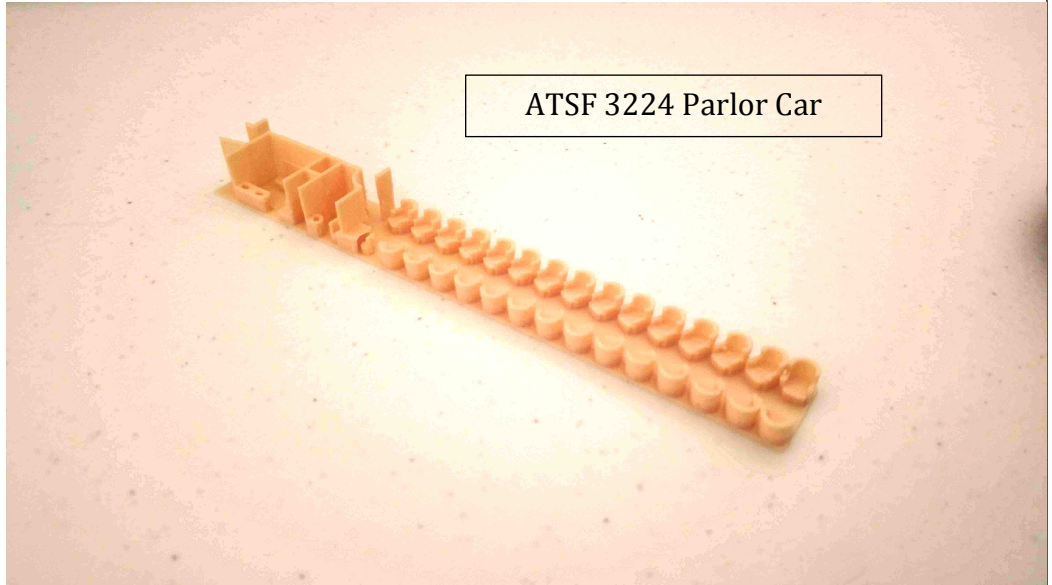
Section 4

Larry Shankles Journey

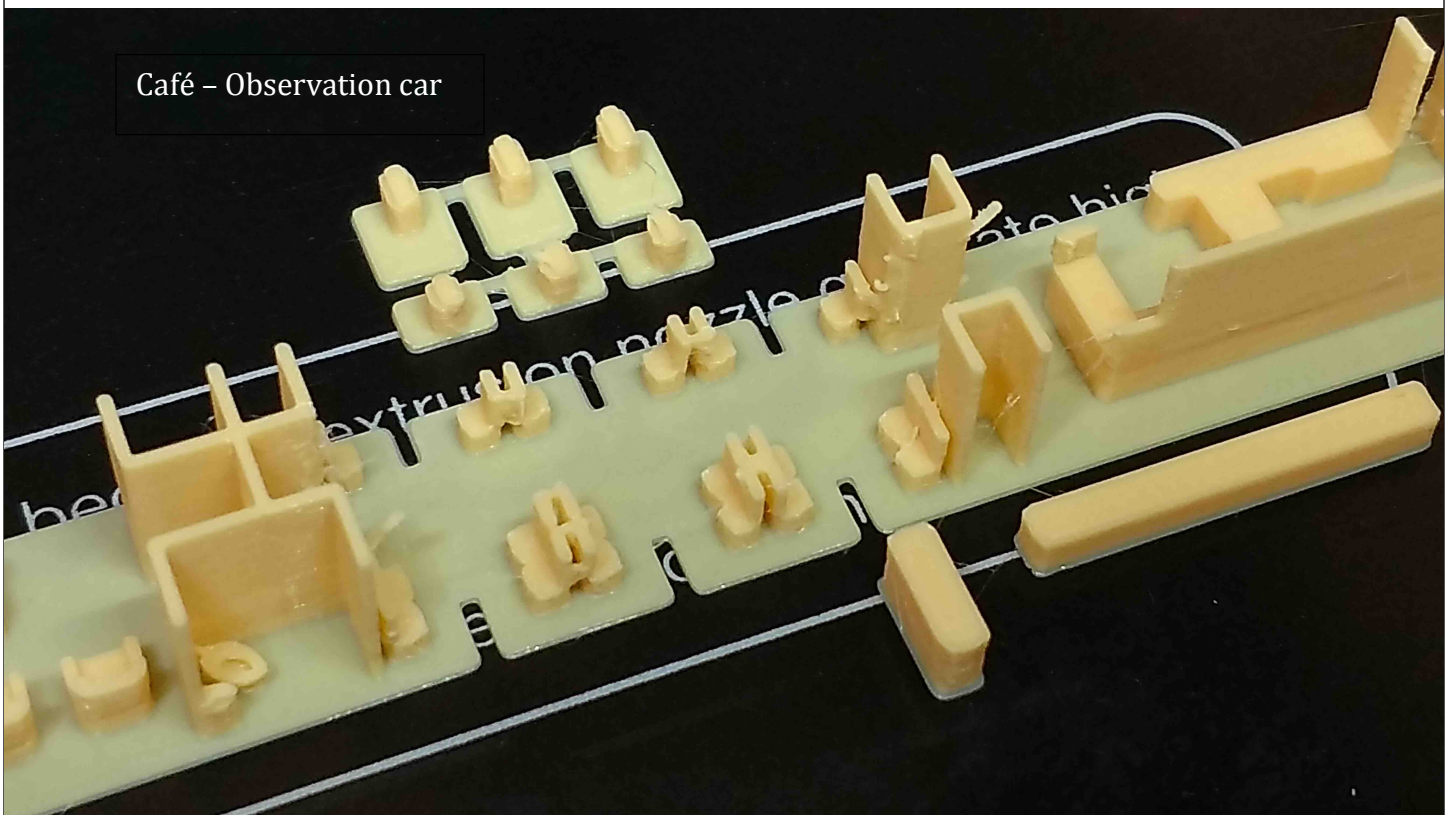
Since the interview, I have gotten into 3D printing. I have been doing 3D CAD work on numerous passenger car interiors and a friend does the printing. All of my previous car interiors, made with sheet styrene and with resin castings of the furniture, are obsolete. I can do a much better job via 3D printing.

To the right is a photo of a typical car interior - in this case, an ATSF HW parlor car #3224. I have also done passenger car under frames with the correct appliances, and in the correct places. And I have done an interior for the Atlas-produced ATSF 8 window steel caboose.

Below is a Café - Observation Car interior close up.



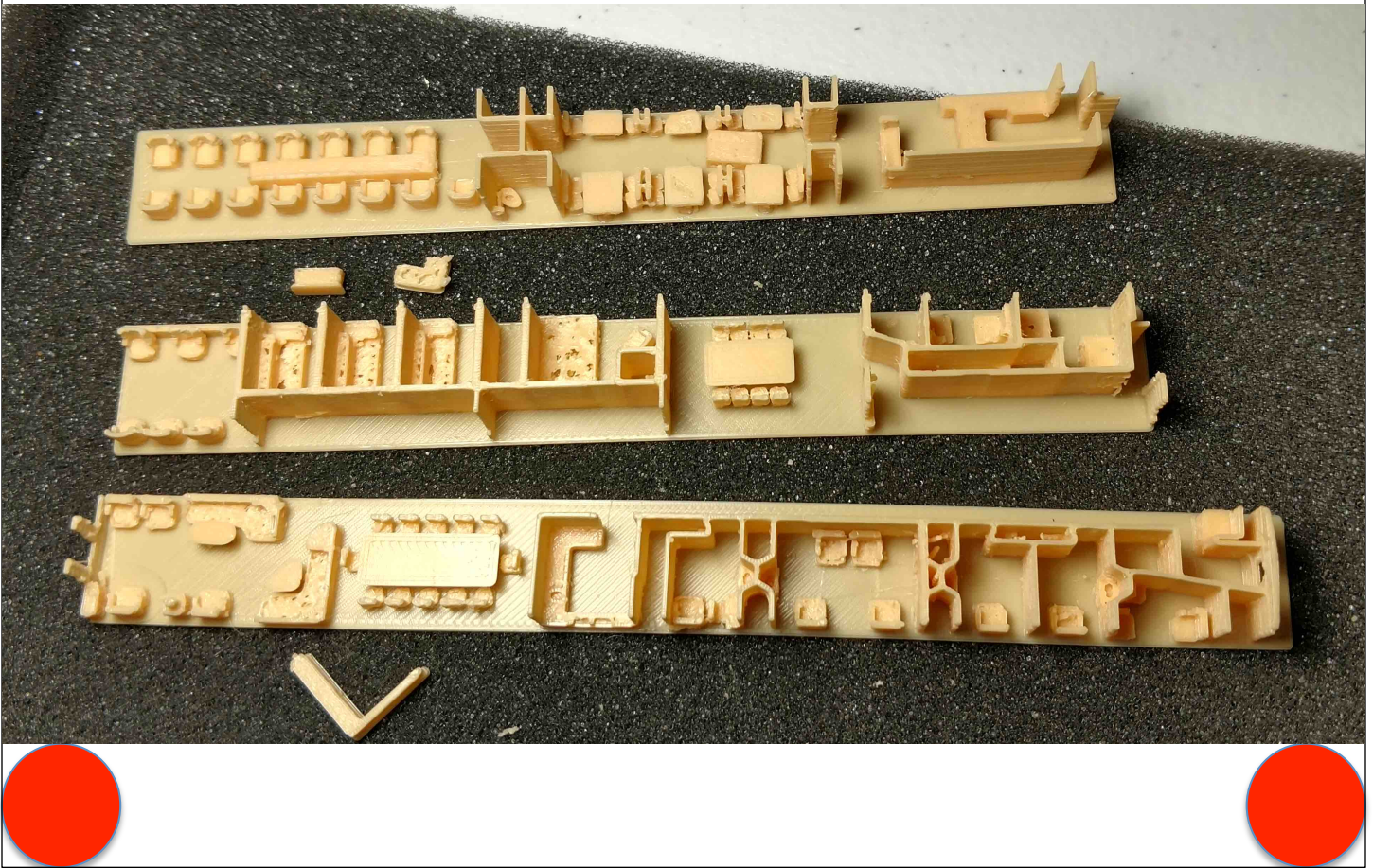
ATSF 3224 Parlor Car



Café - Observation car

In the picture below, the top car corrects the Rivarossi Heavyweight observation car (ATSF #1513). The center car is an imagineered interior to make a Rivarossi Heavyweight observation into a fair facsimile of the C&O business car #17. And, the bottom car replaces the interior in the Rowa made C&O LW sleeper observation car to convert it into the C&O business car #29.

Please note that all of what I do is N-scale and the detail is exceptional.



KCD *Modeling* in the NModelRA

Modelers from the Past A Look at the KCD of Yesteryear

The following two articles were first published in the December 1990 issue of the MCoR Division publication Caboose Kibitzer and are reprinted here.

Train Nuts Are Born, Not Made

By Betty Robertson

Many wives have wondered how their husbands become so absorbed in this hobby of model railroading. The question is often pondered but no one really has an answer to this old question. I, however, am beginning to have a theory about it.

Two years ago a son was born to our son. That's right, a very first grandson, Adam. From that day forward we have seen a "train nut" in the making. Some of his first outfits had trains on them. Grandpa and Grandma brought him a little toy on their first visit. You guessed it, a plastic train on the order of the old pop beads.

He loves visiting Grandpa's house and the train room. Some of his first words were "Pa-pa's choo choo", "choo choo train", "choo choo track", and now he has advanced to "back upstairs train." That is where Grandpa's train room is, one of the few that is upstairs, not downstairs.

When Adam arrived this week, ready for the promised trip on the Smokey Hill train from Belton to Harralson Crossing, he was appropriately dressed. He had on his striped overalls, his striped railroad hat, blue shirt and socks with "choo choos" running around the tops. He, along with the rest of the family,

Mom, Dad, Aunt Carol, Grandma, and Pa-Pa fully enjoyed the trip.

There is no doubt in my mind that Adam will continue to be a crazy about model trains as he is about the real thing. He has picked out his first train layout. This one will be wooden with a wooden track. He is eager to show any and all, the picture of it in his well-worn catalog. So well worn in fact, that is parents have been driven to hiding it from time to time.

Adam recognizes a caboose on the layout or in real life no matter where it is placed. He knows a railroad crossing sign anywhere he sees one as he rides down the roads and highways. He shares a passion for railroading with his Grandfather that never existed in his father, although he too was around it from birth.

I think Adam is the proof to my theory that there is nothing that can be done to cure a "train nut." So ladies you might as well just love them as they are – there is no hope for a cure. Train nuts are born that way and sure as the world the love of trains will be with them for life.

I'm beginning to feel like an authority on this subject. For you see, I am the wife of Joe Robertson and grandmother to Adam Robertson, the other "train nut." *[Editor's Note: Joe Robertson was Turkey Creek Division Director and MCoR Publications Department Calligrapher at the time Betty wrote this article.]*

Manhattan Area Report to the MCoR Board of Directors meeting

By Marty Vaughn

The first five months were very active for the area in terms of earning awards. In February, the following four individuals received Golden Spike Awards:

Don Clagett
Richard Napper
David Ahrends
Marty Vaughn

Also during this period two of the area members qualified for the Association Volunteer Achievement Certificate. As of the end of May 1990, both Don Clagett and Richard Napper have served five years on the Region Achievement Program committee. Both Don and Richard were first appointed to the committee by the previous AP chairman Ron Williams at the region convention in Little Rock.

On April 7, the Manhattan Area Rail Joiners held their annual swap meet at Pottsdorf Hall in CiCo Park in Manhattan. Although not a 100% NMRA organization, the club did give a 50-cent discount to NMRA members.

Attendance was good with over 300 paid and almost 70 tables sold to vendors. In addition to the usual door prizes for paid admission tickets, this year the club also gave out door prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10 to those vendors who bought a table and stayed until the end of the meet. A popular-vote model contest was held with engraved brass plaques awarded to first and second place winners in 11 model and photograph categories. In addition, NMRA merit judging was available upon request and 6 merit awards were earned at the meet. Next year's meet will be held on the same weekend.

The proceeds from this year's meet were donated to the Riley County Historical Society to help pay for the cost of repainting a Union Pacific caboose. This caboose is the first of hopefully many more railroad display items for a proposed transportation museum that is being planned for the vacant Union Pacific depot in Manhattan.

The Abilene Model Railroad Club continues to be active. This club meets in a round robin fashion in member's homes 9 months of the year.

I have not been able to get any more information concerning the Emporia Club. If anyone knows of anyone in this group or if anyone is interested in either of the other two clubs listed above, please contact me.

Timetable

A Look Down the Line beyond the October 2017 Meeting

Mark Your Calendars
December 2, 2017
1:00 PM



The December Meeting of the Kansas Central Division – NMRA

Hosted by
Larry Tiffany

This meeting is a “second section” of the meeting held in February at Larry’s. At that meeting, we talked the basics of airbrushing, but did not get into any detail. This meeting will be a more in-depth look at airbrushing, including actual spraying, as well as the details of cleaning of the equipment.

Please come to Larry’s on December 2 to learn more about AIRBRUSHING.