



The Semaphore

North County Model Railroad Society (NCMRS)

President's Message: NMRA Achievement Program

Work Schedule

Thursday and Saturday are work days at the club. There are plenty of tasks to perform.

Visitor Schedule

Thursday 3 - 8:00PM
Saturday 9:30AM*- 4PM
*11:00AM meeting days

Upcoming Operations Dates

Tuesday, April 7
Setup time 1:00 pm
First Departure 4 pm
Last Departure 7 pm

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The National Model Railroad Association has much to offer. Some of the things and programs that the NMRA supports are very visible and well known to most of us. We accept and use its standards. We participate and attend local, regional and national, conferences and clinics. We may or may, not use the multitude of services it offers, including the Kalmbach Memorial Reference Library, Scale Rails monthly magazine, and liability insurance, to name a few.

One significant part of the NMRA that I am just learning about is its very comprehensive achievement program. The AP is a system of requirements for demonstrating a superior level of skill in various aspects of our hobby, such as scenery, structures, track work and wiring. It also recognizes service to the hobby and to the NMRA.

The program is divided into eleven categories. Completion of seven of the eleven achievement categories allows you to gain the title of Master Model Railroader (MMR). Only 414 model railroaders worldwide have completed this program to date.

They are a very accomplished group. For me the program is a bit daunting. Having said that, learning and stretching our modeling skills should be important to all of us. Our own club gives us all plenty of opportunities for learning. We have many members who are expert in various aspects of our hobby. From my experience they are all willing to share their skills. All we have to do is ask.

If you are interested in participating in the NMRA achievement awards program in a limited way consider working for the Golden Spike Award. Although this Award is not an actual awards program its requirements are structured along the same lines.

Roger Gredvig, MMR #238, wrote an article a year ago in the San Diego Division newsletter "Mail Hook" which outlined the Golden Spike award requirements and explained some common misconceptions. After reading Roger's explanation of the requirements, I decided that getting this award is something that I could do. In fact, I believe that I have already completed a large

percentage of the things that are required for the award. I have completed an outline of all of the requirements and have begun to check them off one by one.

If you are interested in pursuing this or any other AP award I suggest you get started. As they say, we are never too old to learn.

With permission from Gary Robinson, the Mail Hook newsletter Editor, we reprinted Roger's Golden Spike Award article in the January, 2009 edition of this newsletter.

All aboard , Dick Miller 3/09/2009



The Chicago El by Howard Levine

One of my favorite streets is Wabash Avenue in downtown Chicago it is part of the famous "Loop", so called because a bidirectional circle line of the elevated passenger railway encompasses it.

Like adjacent (and more famous) Michigan Avenue, Wabash is lined with elegant shops, restaurants, hotels, and department stores. However Wabash has an important distinction that Michigan lacks — namely the presence above of the noisy, ancient, and adoringly beloved Chicago Elevated Railway.

This bit of local nostalgia has been rolling above ground here for over 100 years, give or take. Once in a while a foolhardy soul has made the suggestion that the El be torn down and replaced by a subway, in keeping with such "modern" cities as London, New York, Vienna, and many others. Whenever this happens the news media reports a violent influx of objections to this dastardly scheme, and the suggester is subject to insult, ridicule, and threats. For, in fact, the El has been serving Chicago reliably for a long time, and deserves high honor rather than discard. So, in recent years the adverse suggestions

have diminished (some believe the suggesters have disappeared courtesy of displeased local mobsters), and appreciation of the El has risen to higher levels than ever. More to the point, the city (through the Chicago Transit Authority) has been investing billions in enlargement and improvement: station platforms lengthened to accommodate longer trains, air conditioning, new routes, parallel tracks, etc.

So the El will be around for a long time to come, and we may well imagine the day of its 200th anniversary. Wabash Avenue will remain as it always has been (well, almost always, as Marshall Field's wonderful department store — back entrance on Wabash — is now just another Macy's), hard to drive on because of the El's pillars, but easy to ride on when you are elevated above ground.

Best of all, the views of the city, as you ride along, will remain, to the delight of generations yet to come. Because, an elevated line, despite the age of its concept, has major advantages over a subway line. You can see the world go by, participate in a historic adventure, and peek into neighbor's windows.

If you go to Chicago, make sure you ride on it!



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Progress on the Business District by Tom Bernhardt

Since the restructuring of the Scenery Committee scenery development has stepped up. The vigor and drive of several members in the Scenery group can easily be seen in the business of peninsula "C".

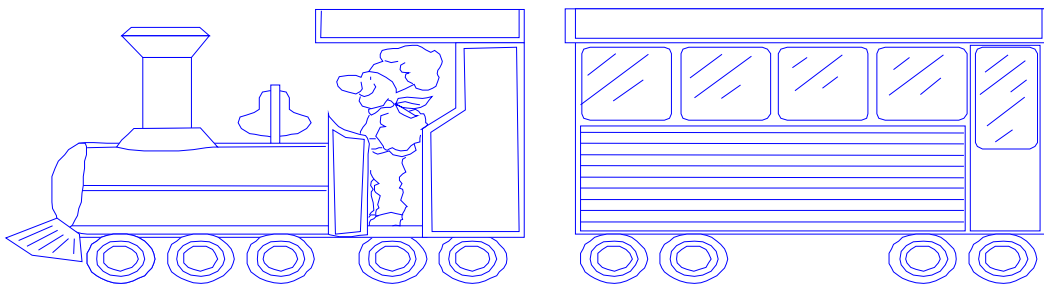
Placement of many buildings has been firmed up and new structures have been added. Three new high rise building kites have been purchased. These structures will be assembled and weathered this winter.

The main street of the business area is being refined with curbs, sidewalks and walls. Many HO scale auto and trucks are now on the main road.

Note the fine detail along the tracks in the photographs to the right.

As fine detail is added to a layout the exactness lends to the believability of the scenery.

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Happy NCMRS member "pulling" an uncoupled car!



The long view above is very inviting: it lends adventure and runaway imagination, and just makes you want to go there. Shown below is a view across three peninsulas. It presents a breathtaking view all the way to the far mountains.



Above we have a nice view of a coal supply facility, so very reminiscent of the late thirties or early forties. This stirs memories in many senior citizens who visit our model railroad facility.

