



Welcome To The Wyoming Division Historical Society

Modeling the Union Pacific from Cheyenne, Wyoming to Ogden, Utah.

KIDS AND LADIES ON AND ABOUT THE WYOMING DIVISION

Don't Tell Me Kids and Ladies Ain't Interested in Model Railroading

By
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We often think of model railroading as a solitary hobby punctuated by a few fleeting moments of showing off our work to visitors who come to admire and see the progress on our layouts.

Even if one is building a large home layout and has friends who visit and help with the construction and modeling, these times of working together and sharing are often truncated to one or two days or nights a week. But if one wants to go to the layout at odd times, it is always there to work alone on if desired.

Participation in a club layout is usually the same, except one cannot go to the layout whenever there are a few minutes to work and enjoy the hobby. It takes more time at such odd times, because one must drive to the club, often taking a toolbox or supplies.

At first glance we may overlook the advantages of group membership in the NMRA. In Arizona we have the Arizona Division of the NMRA, which has many meetings each year. To see a calendar see <https://azdiv-nmra.org/home/index.php> which shows over 20 meets for the coming year. At these we get together and have contests of models, displays, talks, and socialize with other modelers, often getting great ideas for our own layouts.

All of the above forms of model railroading indeed make it the "World's Greatest Hobby," but there are some concerns. They are

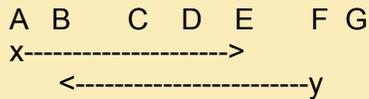
- The lack of younger modelers in the hobby, and
- The Model Railroad Widow Syndrome.
- The loss of the LHS—Local Hobby Stores

Briefly, these first two concerns are caused by the very exacting, time consuming, and expensive aspects of our hobby, and we could have a whole lengthy discussion of them, but we all know the reasons, and we would still have them at hand, unless we looked beyond the layout as the only purpose to our hobby.

There is one aspect of the hobby that features all the flavor and savor of real modeling, is consistently a social activity, and is great fun with trains, because we see them run like real trains run, and what is more, we get to do the running. **In addition, young folks can be attracted to this feature, and it need not exclude the ladies in our lives.**

That activity is *operations*, and I mean formal operations that occur on a layout regularly with a group of "operators" that assume "jobs" patterned after those on real railroads, for the purpose of running trains with a purpose, and the purpose is always meant to mimic real railroad operating methods. These methods involve

- Point to point train movements to
 - deliver passengers and freight as if to make a profit
 - make such deliveries with an organized pattern of
 - pickups of passengers or freight from logical places, and
 - delivering them in a timely manner to intended places, such intended places having been planned and contracted for in advance.
 - Make multiple and simultaneous deliveries and pickups with several trains at once
 - according to a schedule, or
 - at least a plan: x goes from A to E, and y goes from F the other direction to B.
 - or in symbols:



and so on.

- Such train movements and "work" picking up and delivering freight and passengers also require
 - Prototypical simulated fuel stops, including coal or diesel fuel, sand, and water and ash dumping and other support and maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock (cars washing, RIP tracks, commissary, icing reefers, stock yard animal resting and feeding, etc.).
 - They may be on a formal schedule of a Timetable, but not necessarily, and
 - should include a "car forwarding" system and
 - a train control system for "safety," for although lives are not at stake, the model pike should be operated as if they are--train wrecks should be avoided even on our small scales,
 - maintenance of the road and rolling stock may be simulated with work cars and trains
 - and a host of other simulations of the activities of real railroads.

In other words, not just running a train around the Christmas Tree, but running many trains at once with individual purposes, as if to make a profit from railroad operations, with or without a formal schedule, but with rules that govern how the trains run, who is in overall control, and other lifelike issues.

Lest you be frightened away from operations by the natural fear of "looking bad" or "looking foolish" if you make a mistake in front of others, rest easy. Everyone makes mistakes, and besides, it is no big deal if you do. After all you only operate once or twice a month, not 40 hours per week plus overtime, and furthermore, you do not have a wife and 3 small kids at home that depend on your paycheck! So, give ops a try!!

Back to the central topic: the logical question is "Where do the kids and ladies come into this?"

On the Wyoming Division we have 3 high school students from Sedona's Red Rock High School who have operated 7 months in a row. They work as road Crews or in yards as Classification Foremen helping YM's or on the "Nebraska Job" a Road Switcher job bringing whole trains up the staging helix from staging to ready them for Road Crews leaving Cheyenne westbound, or returning eastbound trains down the helix to staging for reforming into new trains by the staging YM and his Classification Foreman.

Danny and Steven Hill, 12 and 10 years old operated about 30 months in a row with their grandfather and a neighbor, and once their father operated with them. At the end of the October session, acting as Call Boy, I sent Danny out with a train on his own and he completed the whole 1 hour+ run across the layout (it is a BIG layout) by himself! I meant to "work" with him, but soon said to myself, "Shoot, this kid does not need me," and I sent him on alone, and he did well. One of my veteran operators whispered to me once, "I'll rather have Danny help me with yard work than most of these men." "Sure," I thought. "Kids listen and follow directions." And they do not have that fear of looking foolish we grownup men have.

We have two ladies who operate regularly. Sandy has operated about 6 times, and Linda, who embroiders our shirts, has operated several times in a row. They both work as road crews operating trains over the layout making stops and pickups and setouts as determined by my car forwarding system (about which I have written here before).

Darlene Ferguson and her husband, Bob, have both operated both days of the 2019 and 2020 Invitationals.



Darlene with her freight train leaving Wamsutter, WY heading east across the Red Desert

Wives and significant others are always invited to Wyoming Division sessions to operate or watch or to meet with my wife, Sharon, who tour guides them to and through Sedona (shopping and the sites) and other local spots. Once she treated them to Out of African tours at that wild animal park in Camp Verde, AZ. Sharon usually treats them to lunch at a favorite local restaurant, and has led them to Jerome for the history sites and museum there, and quaint shops, and on November 15, she took them to Terrie Frankel's home, the so called "Lucy's House" in Sedona. Terrie's house was once owned by the Lucille Ball family, and Terrie is one of the original TV Commercial Doublemint gum Twins. She is a player in Hollywood, on the Academy of Motion Pictures Board, and her home is filled with many Hollywood mementoes and treasures. She is also a dear and a real character.

We have biannual BBQ's at Sharon and my home following sessions in the spring and fall, and several wives come to the layout to see it or deliver their men, and then go on with Sharon. Then at the BBQ they eat and visit with us.

Finally, I have a free Open House policy at the Wyoming Division, and we are available Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 3 to show the Layout and Model Railroading to visitors who drop in. The Wyoming Division has become one of Sedona-Cottonwood-Cornville's important sites to see when visiting the area. Many out-of-state visitors find us by reputation or are brought by the locals they are visiting, and we always take a lot of time to give them the whole tour, especially if they have kids. And no matter how young—if they can walk—we put a throttle in their little hands and let them run a DCC train over a lot of the layout. If they are too little to see the top of the 42-inch-tall benches, we have a rolling 3 step ladder we push around for them to stand on. (Now I have the "Kiddy Kart." See below.)

They usually run a train while I throw turnouts ahead of them for 100 to 200 feet. Often, we need to move that train somewhere else before the next session, so this is a good time to do it. And we put a track cleaning car or cars on it as we go. We don't waste any opportunities! We just remember to move the car and block cards with the train, so it is still viable for the next session from its new place where the children leave it.



This is the "Kiddy Kart" I built for small children to ride on while they operate the throttle. The small child, as young as 5 or 6 years, holds and operates the throttle standing on the shelf while the parent pushes him around from the open end. The parent is responsible to see the child does not fall. The concrete block on the dolly gives ballast so it is very hard to tip over given the weight and the wide dolly base. I walk in front of the child and throw the turnouts and give him throttle instructions.



Dad is pushing and making sure the child does not fall, and Mom follows. I was walking ahead until we passed my camera. I grabbed it and stepped back to take photos.



Most subsequent photos used in this article except the last one were taken by Lorne Noyes of Prescott during Wyoming Division Operating

This young couple with the clipboard and throttle lives in Cornville and visits frequently. They each “grew up with trains.” I got them to operate one in October. Their run lasted over an hour.



Allen Montgomery with Operator Sandy at BBQ of 11/15/14



Fred Eisenthal and Wife at BBQ of 111514



Linda who embroiders our shirts with Sharon's brother from Canyon Country, CA



Joseph, James, and Spenser of Red Rock High School operating in their 7th session in a row. They started out with passenger trains, then as Road Crews, now working Cheyenne as Classification Foremen and on the Nebraska Job



Spencer in Green River



Joseph and James working Frontier Refinery in Cheyenne



Danny and Stephen, 10 and 12 years old, run trains across the 1,006 foot mainline alone!



This is Isaac. His folks brought him by in 2017 and I got him to operate a train, and after guiding him along one long bench, I realized he did not need me, so I left him to run alone. Now he operates *completely on his own* for a few hours most monthly sessions. He is holding his throttle, and his clipboard for his train is probably hung on a bench front with Velcro (see the black Velcro strips? He is intensely watching his train moving toward Laramie. Guy Forsy the with the tethered throttle is the day's Laramie YM. Allen Montgomery is behind them with the cap.



Danny Hill age 12



Bob Ellis with a really good Passenger Train Engineer!



Some Operators and Wives at BBQ



Fred Shinn and Terrie Frankel (Doublemint Twin and Lucy's House) with LOML (Love of My Life) Sharon

Final thought: you think some of these kids won't take up model railroading at some point in the future? The hobby won't die if we care for it by sharing it with all kids in a meaningful way. Let them run trains! --Verryl

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