

Several times I have tried to make the point that the rules of operations are simple and common sense. Better yet, what you could consider the cardinal rules can be covered in a page or two. I did that with the Column "Some Handy Rules" (Potomac Flyer Summer 2016). Andy Sperandeo did the same thing in two columns, "Operate like an old head" in the April 2010 issue of Model Railroader and "Two useful rules" in the October 2013 issue.

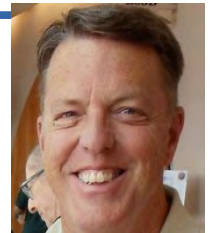
If rules don't scare away potential new operators, the paperwork does. I made the point that paperwork—schedules, orders, car cards, waybills, switchless, etc.—tell us what to do with our trains. Just like on the prototype, our trains don't have a purpose and aren't safe without the right documents. Think of it like the game of Monopoly. Without the instructions, deeds, and Community Chest cards, it isn't much of a game at all.

I spent some time on train handling. Besides slow, realistic speeds, I talked about how to switch cars. Sounds simple but it gets complicated. While I hope what I wrote is helpful, switching is a bit like bike riding. You just have to do it to get it.

Ok, that's the end of the review. What's coming next? Well, I never know until an idea pops up and I never know when that will happen, but I have some thoughts. "Mark Me Up" was started to encourage potential and new operators. Some future columns may be directed at more experienced operators and some will suggest what hosts can do to make the ops experience more satisfying and more fun.

If you have a suggestion, let me know, ocrr@comcast.net. ☒

Engineers and Firemen say "Mark me up!" to get their name on the crew Call Board for their next run. "Mark Me Up" is a quarterly column focused on how model railroaders can become operators and members of the operations community. Mat Thompson's Oregon Coast Railroad was featured in *Great Model Railroads 2014*. Building structures and scenery are his favorite modeling activities. He is also an avid model railroad operator and regularly attends operating sessions.



In the Winter 2017 issue of the Potomac Flyer I said the best reason to operate is the friends you will make. Here my friends Pete LaGuardia and Bryan Kidd are switching the meat packing plant on my railroad and proving me right.

[Return to Bill of Lading](#)