

A Review of *19 East, Copy Three*

By Mat Thompson

Model railroad Operations is running trains on a model railroad in a prototype manner. So how does a Boomer (new guy on the railroad) ever learn all that stuff? One thing you could do – well, actually one thing that you should do is attend Steve King’s clinic, Timetable & Train Order Operations, at the MER Convention this October.

The other thing is to buy the first book from the National Model Railroad Association’s Operation Special Interest Group (OPSIG) *19 East, Copy Three*. The book is a compilation of Time Table and Train Order articles written by Steve King and David Sprau that originally appeared in the OPSIG’s magazine, *The Dispatcher’s Office*.

TT&TO operation was the predominate system for dispatching trains on American railroads from after the Civil War until the mid 70s. It is now just as common on model railroads so if you are an operator or hope to become one, you need to understand TT&TO. Even if you happen to run only on a layout that doesn’t use TT&TO, the concepts, definitions and procedures in this book will help you understand how railroads run.

The first ten chapters (Part I) are by David Sprau. He was a dispatcher in the Pacific Northwest so it’s not surprising he writes from the perspective of a professional railroader. If you are an experienced operator and especially if you sometimes fill the position of Dispatcher or Operator, this approach is like learning the trade at the elbow of a master. If you are new to operations, you might find this a bit too much to chew. Start your reading at Part II of the book and come back to David Sprau as you gain experience and can appreciate what he has to teach you.

Steve King is well known in model railroading circles for TT&TO clinics that he has presented around the country. His Part II of the book is a written version of his clinic including the wit and personality he adds to keep the topic interesting. After introducing you to train schedules and a few orders, he applies TT&TO to model railroads in a series of situations that are exactly what you will see during an operating session.

Steve uses rules and problems to help you think through engineering a train across the East & Western Railroad. Having attended his clinic twice and reading this book, I can tell you it an exciting trip. When you finally get to the end having arrived safely, you will be ready to operate anywhere.

My only complaint about the book - you will have to read it. Flipping the pages while looking at the pictures and resting your throttle on it overnight, won’t teach you much. David Sprau writes that learning the TT&TO system “...takes time, patience, perseverance and practice.” But you don’t have to know everything. As Steve King says, it is not like quantum physics, “Have some fun with it; don’t be afraid to keep trying, and learn as you go.”

Both of them are right. This is not a book to read in a sitting or two. Every chapter is short and focuses on a few key points, perfect for learning in steps. Both authors write clearly in a conversational manner. The pictures, charts and forms are just right to illustrate the text. So, read and study a chapter and then read and study another chapter.

19 East Copy Three is softbound which holds down the cost but I see myself referring to it often and wonder if the binding will stand up to the use. I am already thinking of buying a second copy for a spare. Better yet, maybe the book will be so popular the OPSIG can offer a revised version with even more information.

Books can be ordered from Phil Monat, 3215 Independence Ave, The Bronx, NY, 10463 (phil@philmonat.com) Cost is \$29.95 plus \$5.60 shipping. I happened to know Steve will have copies for sale at the MER Convention.

Finally, just so you know, Steve King, Dave Sprau, and Phil Monat, who put the book together, have donated their work. All the book proceeds go to the OPSIG and the Bill Jewett Memorial Fund to use in continuing to promote model railroad operations.

{The following is offered as a sidebar to the book review}

Rule and Forms – Oh No

Don't let all the talk about "rules" scare you off. TT&TO rules are simple, precise statements made by railroad men with experience and common sense. If you worked on a railroad or just spent some time thinking about it, you would come up with many of them yourself. Here's one –

RULE 105: Trains and engines using a siding or any track other than the mainline must move at restricted speed and be prepared to stop short of a switch not properly aligned.

Pretty easy to understand, pretty logical, and easy to use on a model railroad. Here's another you'll think about a lot as you operate –

RULE 99: When a train is moving under circumstances in which it may be overtaken by another train, a member of the crew must drop lighted fuses at proper intervals and take such other action as may be necessary to insure full protection.

There is a bit more to this rule but the point is you must provide flag protection for your train and approaching trains so you don't have a collision if you are stopped anywhere other trains would not expect. It's a simple and obvious rule.

Rules are numbered but there aren't hundreds of rules - blocks of numbers are set aside for certain subjects. Even with the rules there are, as a new train crewmember you'll use only a dozen or so. And just think - know you know two of them!

You will also hear about forms. Form 19 and Form 31, are actual numbered pieces of paper and you probably will only ever see Form 19, the one Train Orders are written on. The word "Form" is also used to describe the format of an order for a particular purpose that is written on a Form 19. You won't need to know which form is what, all you need to know is what the words mean. *Read 19 East Copy Three* and you will.