Dear Contest Judges…

Help me learn from the AP process

article by *Scott Povlot*

First, I want to say that I appreciate all the time that you take at conventions and division meets. I know that you could also be enjoying clinics or going on tours. But you volunteer your time to sit in a small room for long hours looking at tiny models.

I think the NMRA's Achievement Program and contests are great. Personally, I would rather earn an AP merit award than win a contest blue ribbon. But that is just my personal preference. The best part of the judging process is the comments that you judges provide. This is the educational part of the program. I know that when I enter a model to be judged that I have to be open to your comments. Since the judges are experienced modelers, I know that you will be able to give me feedback that I can use to improve my skills. So, here are a few comments that I would like you to consider when judging for contests or AP.

Write comments — lots of comments. Since I won't be in the contest room when you are judging, please use the comment sheet to let me know what you are thinking. Let me know where I stand on the score matrix for each category. Are you rating my model as simple with quality workmanship? Or a complex model that is poorly done? Please tell me how I could improve my model or make the next one better.

Be available for questions. Although you are writing lots of comments, there may be details that are hard to explain on paper. So, please give me five minutes to talk to you about my model and the comments you made.

Encourage others to model. Sure, that means more time judging. But new contestants could be future judges. Mention the Achievement Program and model contests at division meets and in newsletters and *SCALE RAILS*.

Keep on judging. You are doing a great service to the hobby. Contests are not about competition. Contests are about teaching modelers how to do the best they can and better. Judging is part of the education that you can get through the Achievement Program.

Thanks,

Scott Povlot
Model Contestant