



I'm washing my wife's car the morning after (which was only fair since we rolled over to Palm Bay to run on Ken Farnham's FEC and hit all sorts of bugs on the way). Even waxed the hood and roof for her – she earned it. She (and buddy Bruce) rolled over to run a railroad. It's not what she chooses to do but she's a good sport and, yes, she has fun after a fashion. So she was yardmaster again, and I was right next to her working the classification end, sorting cars off inbound trains. It's fun and I like seeing her push out of her comfort zone. Once she gets rolling, she's fine.

Fine was not the word our dispatcher would use for her first time on the panel. Yes, I can sympathize – right [HERE](#) in my first session at Ken's panel back in 2010. Yes, I thought I was going to piss in my pants (and I'd been dispatching for years). Bonita is going for her NMRA qualification on this effort (and she sure picked a king-sized layout for her first attempt). Poor thing – she was hammered by the complexity of the massive sweep of toggles and buttons. I've done it many, many times and every so often, I start to slip (especially when Ken breaks a rail or dumps a hopper, those superintendent pranks). But she did fine for a first time. Trains got through (we've had sessions where the FEC actually locked up). In the yard, the departure tracks were filled and I'd broken up my trains (and tidied things up) so there wasn't much to do.

However, there is a comradery on a layout like this – we've all run together for years and so if someone is learning a new position (be it the rocket-science DS panel or the Eau Gallie cement plant (first time I did that one, I also nearly peed in my pants)), we all understand. Everyone accommodates. In this instance, Ken shifted over to assist her on the panel and his wife Beverly took over the hostler job (along with doing the trim shift). On the outbound side, JB just called the crews and lined up the trains and passed the cards to the DS desk and didn't comment about the stack up. We knew it was difficult work, just overwhelming, and so everyone cuts the slack for that.

Even with all this, we had a great time. Looking forward to the next session. Even if I have to

wash the car again.

**>>>WHEN WASHING THE CAR AND NOT MENTALLY WRITING BLOGS,
I’M SOMETIMES WORKING ON BOOKS. YOU CAN SEE THE RESULTS (IN BOOK
FORM) HERE!<<<**