Volume 51

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Number 5

Rail Car Supply - Will It Improve Soon?

In the December 1995 issue of the "Butane-Propane News" there was an interesting article on rail cars, pertaining to the propane industry.

History:

The first car, carrying oil, made it's maiden voyage in September 1865 according to Procor's president Frank D. Lester. The car was built by Amos Densmore. The base of the vehicle was a railway flatear, with two 45-bbl wooden tubs to hold the crude oil. A few hundred of these cars were built before 1869 when the first horizontal cast iron boilers of 100 bbl or 4000 gal capacity, were mounted/insert into flat cars. These were called "tank cars". In the early 1900s, steel tank cars were designed and manufactured. These were made with plates riveted together and supported by continuos steel beams or sills that ran the full length of the car. In the 1920s the first "pressurized" cars made their debut. They had a capacity of 11,000 gall of propane, were actually riveted and weighed 67, 000 lb. Current cars have 33, 800 gal. capacity and weigh 100, 000 lb. Through the 1930s and 1940s improvements were made in the process of constructing a tank car. In 1941 the Interstate Commerce Commission approved "fusion" welding over "forge" welding. Since World War II, tank car performance has improved because of better metallurgy and improved welder certification. During the 1950s the tank car profile changed significantly with underframeless or "stub-sill". and "domeless", using a percentage of the tank's volume for expansion. During this time there was a "bigger-isbetter philosophy" that led to cars carrying 50, 000 to 60. 000 gal., but derailments in the 1960s put an end to such large cars and capped the capacity of LPG cars at 34, 000 gal.

Today:

The rail car holds a great amount of propane, is economical, and can travel from nearly any part of the country to another. The only problem is that they are constantly in demand, making it a company priority to LPG cars, approximately 10% of the North American fleet. These leases are generally for 10 years. Every 10 years the propane tank car has to be leaked tested and its welds inspected. According to Procor, the average rail car has a economic life of about 30 years and must be retired in 40 years. Procor says it is expected that 5, 000 propane rail cars will be retired in the year 2000 and not enough are being built to make up the difference. Present North American manufacturing capacity for high pressure (300-500 PSI) propane rail cars is at the 2000 car per year level. Construction requires about six to eight weeks, and take six months from receipt of an order until a car is delivered.

So:

Get out those propane cars you have and get them leased to your favorite company or utility and let them roll.

Technical Note: LPG stand for Liquefied Petroleum Gas. This generally is associated to the most popular-propane, however there are many other liquefied petroleum gases such as butane, isobutane, ethane, propene and pentane, all shipped in pressurized tank cars.

Article submitted by: Robert D. Hubbard P.E.

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MER Local

Official Publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA A tax-exempt Organization

The LOCAL is published six times a year. The opinions expressed in the LOCAL do not necessarily reflect those of the MER elected officials or the editorial staff. Commercial suppliers, supplies and materials addressed in the LOCAL in no way constitute an endorsement by the MER. Copyright material that appears in the LOCAL is used for educational and historical benefit only and does not constitute infringement of the copyright holder.

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The MER LOCAL welcomes articles, photographs, artwork, cartoons and other model railroad related material as contributions to the mutual enjoyment of the hobby for the membership. The MER LOCAL assumes no responsibility for contributions. When necessary the LOCAL editor reserves the right to delete small portions of the text in order to accommodate the space allowed per issue. Photographs and artwork will be gladly returned ONLY when the author submits a self addressed return envelope of ample size and containing ample postage.

Dues: \$8. - year, \$16. - 2 years

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Apply to Office Manager with date of birth for quotation
Send all dues and Membership inquiries to the Office Manager:
Nelson D. Garber, Office Manager Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
13212 Bellevue Street
Silver Spring, MD 20904-1703



CALLBOARD OF COMING EVENTS

Notices must be typed and have complete address of the event. Notices will print in subsequent LOCALS before the event occurs. Use the style shown below and be brief.

CONVENTIONS

Mount Laurel, NJ, Mid-Eastern Region Fall Convention. October 3-6, 1996. Operations Lottery, Prototype Tours, Nationally-Known Clinicians. Contact: John A. Nawn PO Box 741, Paoli, PA 19301-0741 (610) 688-8517 (610) 461-8644.

DIVISION MEETS

Northfield, NJ (Atlantic City & Shore area) New Jersey Division Meet. September 28, 1996 from 9AM to 4PM. Layouts, clinics and swap tables. For location information contact the Division at (609) 927-0834 or Mert Gardner, 110 Otter Branch Drive, Magnolia, NJ 08049 (609) 784-4263. Virginia Beach, VA, Tidewater Division 7th Annual Tidewater Model Train Show & Sale. October 12-13, 1996, The Pavilion, Virginia Beach Convention Center, Contact: Norm Garner, Show Chairman, 3408 Wilshire Rd., Portsmouth, VA 23703 (804) 484-0772

OTHER EVENTS

Bordentown, NJ, Nothern Burlington Model Railroad Club Open House & Show, November 23-24, 1996 Saturday 10AM-5PM, Sunday 12PM-5PM, 28 Van Drive. Admission \$2.00 Contact: Bob Liberman, 28 Van Drive, Bordentown (609) 298-7337 or John Adams (215) 757-1937. Delmar, DE, Delmarva Model Railroad Club Holiday Open House, 12th Annual Open House Dec. 7-8, 1996 & Jan. 11-12, 1997 11AM-5PM Saturday and 1PM-5PM Sunday. 5,000 feet of operating railroads in N, HO, O LGB & Standard Gauge. 103 E State Street 2nd floor. For more information contact 410-546-2312 or 302-875-7043.

Greensboro, NC, Carolina Model Railroaders' Annual Open House. Nov. 23 and 30, 1996. Southern Railway Passenger Station, 300 E. Washington St. From 10AM to 4PM. Admission: Adults \$2.00 Families \$5.00. Info: Ben Stemkowski, P.O. Box 313, Jamestown, NC 27282, 910-656-7968.

Raleigh, NC, NRV 12th Annual Train Show and Sale, November 16-17, 1996. Saturday 9AM-6PM - Sunday 9AM-5PM Admission \$3.00 Adults 16 anu under Free with adult. Kerr Scott Building NC State Fair Grounds. Operating layouts in most scales. Contact George Lasley 919-834-5531 for additional details.

Southern Pines, NC, Sandhills Central Model Railroad Club Annual Show, November 23-24, 1996, 12PM-5PM both days. The Campbell House, 482 East Connecticut Avenue. Adults \$2.00. Contact: Jim Brown (910) 295-3700 days, (910) 295-6694 eves.

Timonium, MD, Ellicott City Scale Model RR Assn.'s Great Scale Train Show. October 19-20, 1996, 9AM-4PM Saturday, 10AM-4PM Sunday, Maryland State Fairgrounds (Exit 17 off Rt. 83) \$5.00 admission (come back Sunday Free) \$1.00 Children 6-12, Contact: Howard Zane (410) 730-1036 or Ken Young (410) 997-2166, 5236 Thunder Hill Rd. Columbia, MD 21045.

Upper Marlboro, MD, Southern Maryland Railroad Association, 3rd Annual Combined Train Show March 1 & 2, 1997 10AM-4PM at The Prince George Equestrian Center Route 4 & 301. For more information 410-535-3229 or 410-257-1033.

Vienna, VA, Nothern Virginia Model Railroaders, Open House, HO Scale September 21, October 19, November 16, December 14, 1996 1PM-5PM in the Vienna Railroad Station. For more information: (703) 938-5157.

Notes from the President

With this column, I wind up my term as President of the MER. I want to thank the other officers and directors of the Region for their strong support over the last two years. Particular thanks go to John Johnson for ably stepping in to run the last BOD meetings when business kept me on the road, John Long for promptly keeping the staff informed about the Region's business, and Cal Reynolds and Ron Schmidt for successfully managing our finances. I also want to extend my thanks to the many other committee chairman and volunteers who have kept the Region working for its members. Of special note are the efforts by Nelson Garber and Ron Schmidt to reorganize the Region's membership records from the former manual system onto a computer data base.

One last item of business is that I must correct an error in the preliminary election results I reported in the last issue of the Local. The final review of the ballots was made, and the results for Treasure were reversed from my preliminary report. This means that the Treasure for the next two years will be Ron Schmidt, who was appointed to fill the remainder of Cal Reynold's term. I apologize to Tim Atkinson for this error, and hope you will consider running for Region office again in the future.

In looking back over the last two years, your Board was successful in returning to a two convention per year schedule after the interruption for the National at Valley Forge. The Region sponsored really good conventions at Hagerstown, York, Hunt Valley and Pittsburgh, and has more quality conventions lined up for the future. As noted above the Region has totally revised its system for keeping track of membership information, both streamlining the effort that our volunteers must put forth to manage this important activity, and providing your Board with more accurate information for making future plans and decisions. We have also successfully made the transition to a new Local Editor/Publisher, which has resulted in significant economies to the Region and has been a major factor in our ability to hold the line on dues. While there were some initial bugs in this process as we learned to cope with the US Postal system, I hope everyone is now receiving their copies of the Local in a timely manner. The strong returns in the recent election seem to bear this out.

One other accomplishment of your Board during the last two years has been a disappointment to me. For a number of years, The Region has been very conservative in its funding sources and was relying primarily on your dues and convention revenues. Prompted by an incentive offered by the Valley Forge convention staff, the Region embarked on a new fund raising activity, and ordered a large quantity of very good quality Region logo shirts. I am sorry to say that the response to these has not been overwhelming. This seems to suggest that the more conservative voices who advised against taking the risk on shirts or Region cars or the like were right. I hope the members of the Region will take better advantage of this opportunity and prove the conservative voices wrong.

Let me end on my favorite themes. First, YOU are the best spokesperson for the NMRA and the MER, and the growth of these organizations depend more than anything else on you telling others in our hobby about the benefits you derive from your membership. Second, the benefits which you derive are a result of efforts of the dedicated volunteers who give of their hobby time to serve as officers and committee workers, and that we can only receive more or better service if there are more equally dedicated volunteers. So please help the new officers by doing your part to pass the word and bear a hand for the NMRA and MER! Dasvidanya! Gary Q

Welcome New Members

George Phillips, Devon PA; George W. Steckert, Dover PA; Brian T. McWithey, Newport News VA; Jeffery C. Greenwalt, Mechanicsburg PA; Michael Maline, Frederick MD; Richard A. Farrell, Virginia Beach VA; John M. Goto, Falla Church VA; Calvin G. Best, Havertown PA; J.H. Rigby, Liverpool PA; Chris Widmaier, Beverly NJ; Walter Babb, Jr., Philadelphia PA; John W. Widman III, Flourtown PA; By Ament, Dumfries VA; Wilbert L. Jones, Silver Springs MD; Monty Smith, Burke VA; Michael Teufel, Alexandria VA; Donald E. Bullock, Fuquay-Varina NC; Chuck Moody, New Bern NC; Vance Morrison, Alexandria VA; William Rutiser, Gaithersburg MD; Major Sansam, Nokesville VA; Jim Gilbert, Mt. Carmel PA; Michele J. Chance, Concord NC; Hans W. Verleur, Fleetwood PA; Richard W. Boone, Falls Church VA; Gregory S. Rogers, Alexandria VA; Walt Muren, Frederick MD; Stephen C. Canfield, Charlotte NC; Donald E. Stafford, Concord NC; Harold Huisinga, Mathews NC; William D. Wolf, Sr., Westminister MD; Charles Stringfellow, Jr., Vienna VA; Bruce Faulkner, Apex NC; Brad Bower, Wyomissing PA; Robert L. Mangels, Cherry Hill NJ; William R. Rauch, Edgewood MD; M. Eugene Rowley, Southern Pines NC; Jack Williams, Annandale VA; John R. Winkelman, Mount Holly NJ; Michael Rogan, Downingtown PA; Stephen Moats, Waynesboro PA; John A. Foley, Pottsville PA; Ronald V. Viers, Washington DC; R.E. Morrisett, Jr., Chapel Hill NC; Earl M. Custard, Greenville SC; John D. Mellinger, III, Lancaster PA; John J. Sterbenz, Crofton MD; Charles Hladik, Lynchburg VA; Robert Geyer, Warminster PA; Curtis N. Tammany, Fredericksburg VA; Thomas E. Brown, Absecon NJ; Eric Karnes, Cary NC; Harvey Feldman, Westmont NJ; Christopher W. Broden, Westminister MD; Alan Coleman, Hickory NC; Steve Austin, Alexandria VA; Mark Addison, Alexandria VA; F.S. McCutcheon, Shenandoah VA; Ronald L. McCraw, Salisbury MD; Grant J. Coward, Marlton NJ; Leonard E. Eddleman, Stanfield NC; Ronnie Poole, Kan-napolis NC; Carl J. Haslett, Hadden Heights NJ; Bill Jennings, Charlotte NC; Joe St. John, Concord NC; Gregg Datkos. Wash-ington DC; Michael R Caum, Shrewsbury PA; Darius M. Puff, Boyertown PA; Norman Gerstenzang, Washington DC; John H. Steitz, Arlington VA; John Ross Walker, Ft. Meade MD.

NOTICE!

The 50th Anniversary MER white golf shirts (color embroidered) have been reduced 1/2 price to \$10.00. Sizes are: 2XL, XL, L, M, S. Please add \$2.00 for postage.

To order; List Name, address, size, phone number and quantity. Make check payable to Mid Eastern Region and send to:

MER Office Manager 13212 Bellevue Street Silver Spring MD 20904-1703

Get them while they last!

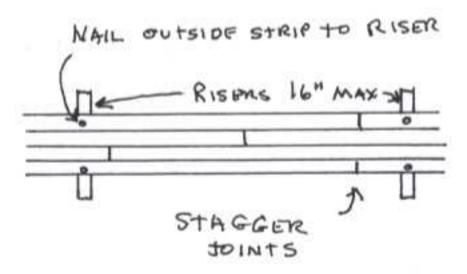
Homasote Spline Roadbed

by Chuck Lind

When I attended the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Colorado Springs in 1993 I noticed several people using a different type of spine roadbed. I started asking questions to several of the layouts I visited and discovered that they were using homasote strips glued together.

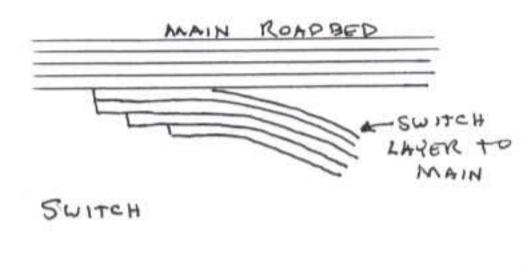
When I arrived back home I decided to experiment with using this type of roadbed on my On3 layout I was building. After securing 2 or 3 4'x8' sheets the real fun begin, cutting it into 1 1/2" x 8' strips. Don't try this indoors! Since I was living in the country I put my table saw outside and created a gray snow storm.

After cutting the strips I moved back into the railroad room to practice. What I found was the easiest was to apply carpenters glue to side of one strip and attach another strip to this edge being sure to stagger the joints. Then form it to my layout plan on my benchwork these two strips would then become the center of my roadbed. This process will use up C clamps since I placed them about every 8". I also used clamps to anchor it to the benchwork and risers since I didn't want to nail it down until I was satisfied. The homasote strips bend easily and I have cut several plywood curve templates that I can form the roadbed to. When this has set overnight and I am satisfied with the location of the roadbed I come back and glue another strip to each side of the roadbed giving me a 2" wide roadbed to work with. I also drive a nail in the outer strips to mount the roadbed to the benchwork.

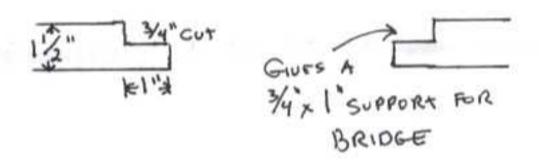


When you come to a location that you want to add a switch you can layer the strips to the edge of the roadbed forming the roadbed in the same manner. This type of system also makes it easy to come back and add a switch at a later date. When you want to locate a bridge you can notch out the homasote to support the end of the bridge or trestle giving a smooth sturdy approach onto the bridge. Attaching screen wire or cardboard strips for the scenery is as simple as stapling it to the side of the roadbed.

While this system of laminated roadbed is definitely not new I feel it is a very good system that will give you quite operation on smooth roadbed with curves that have a natural transition.



BRIDGE



When the roadbed is complete I come back with a coarse rasp to even up the top surface. If you have a belt sander with a sawdust bag you can also give the roadbed a quick going over. Be careful in these steps homasote is a wood and paper fiber board so you can create dips very easily.

Since I live in a more humid climate than Colorado I felt is was necessary to treat the roadbed before I begin laying ties. I brush a water sealer (lake those made for wood decks) to add four sides of the roadbed and let it dry. This has worked very well for me and I have not seen any signs of any warp-age or swelling even after I have applied ballast and wet the area down.

The roadbed supports itself very well with no additional sub roadbed. I brace it at approximately 16" intervals and have had no problems with sagging.

WEATHERING WITH ARTISTS-CHALK DUST

PREPARING THE CHALKS:

Grind up sticks of artists chalk into a fine powder (a mortar and pestle from a child's chemistry set is useful). Store up a range of dust colors, such as black, rust, at least 3 shades of brown and other special colors as needed: white (for flour and chemical spills); and yellow (sulphur loading).

FOR HEAVILY WEATHERED CARS:

Mix a small amount of dull varnish 50-50 with turpentine. Mix only what you need
for cars on hand - the thinned mixture can cause whitish streaking if not fresh when used.

2. Brush thinned varnish on car. Weather only one or two surfaces at a time (e.g., both ends, both sides), though you may want to do several cars at once. Do <u>not</u> touch surface until completely dry; fingerprints make a mess! Wait until varnish becomes tacky (about 10-15 minutes), then start brushing on dust with a soft 3/8" brush. Be very careful not to "load up" the brush with dust. Always dust conservatively at first. You can always add more dust (and other colors) later, but you can't subtract. Avoid splotches.

3. When varnish and dusting of car is complete and car is dry, spray with Testors Dullcote, preferably with an airbrush; it dries very quickly. By contrast, I've found Krasel Micro-Flat has a greasy texture until it dries completely (though Micro-Gloss doesn't). In a pinch, Dullcote can be sprayed from a can, but an airbrush offers much better control. Other choices are Grumbacher Picture Varnish or Tuffilm Fixative, both matte finishes. Both can be used right out of the can, however, they may "craze" unpainted plastic.

4. After Dullcote, touch up with a final dust coat. Dullcote has enough "tooth" that dust will stick to it permanently.

FOR LIGHTLY WEATHERED CARS:

Omit steps 1 and 2. Just spray with Dullcote, Picture Varnish or Tuffilm, and dust. Of the two Grumbacher matte finishes, Picture Varnish has a very slight gloss, and can be used for that "in-between" stage when a car or loco may have accumulated some road grime, but its paint finish has not yet seriously oxidized.

FOR NEW OR SHOP CONDITION CARS:

Spray with Krasel Micro-Gloss and let dry. Some dust can be applied afterwards for faint weathering, but the paint finish will definitely be glossy.

GENERAL DUSTING TECHNIQUES:

a. Dust vertically. Note that real dirt falls from top to bottom, collecting on top of horizontal surfaces. Note that the lower parts of cars are usually more heavily weathered.

Note the shadings of colors on prototype cars: rust on couplers; grease on trucks;
 loading spills by doors; dirt kicked up around trucks; etc.

c. Faded lettering can be reproduced by dusting car with same color dust as the car body (e.g., yellow dust will fade black lettering on a reefer; red dust will fade white lettering on a box car, etc.).

d. Dusts can be used to change a car whose color is inaccurate (e.g.brown dust can

make a Roundhouse express reefer a more prototypical pullman green).

e. When heavily weathering a model of a wood-sheathed car, individual boards can be wiped of dust after varnishing and dusting by using a tissue soaked in turpentine (pinch the tissue firmly in tweezers or pliers) to simulate a board that's been replaced. The same can be done to simulate patches that may have been repainted and restenciled (serial numbers, reporting marks, repair information, etc.).

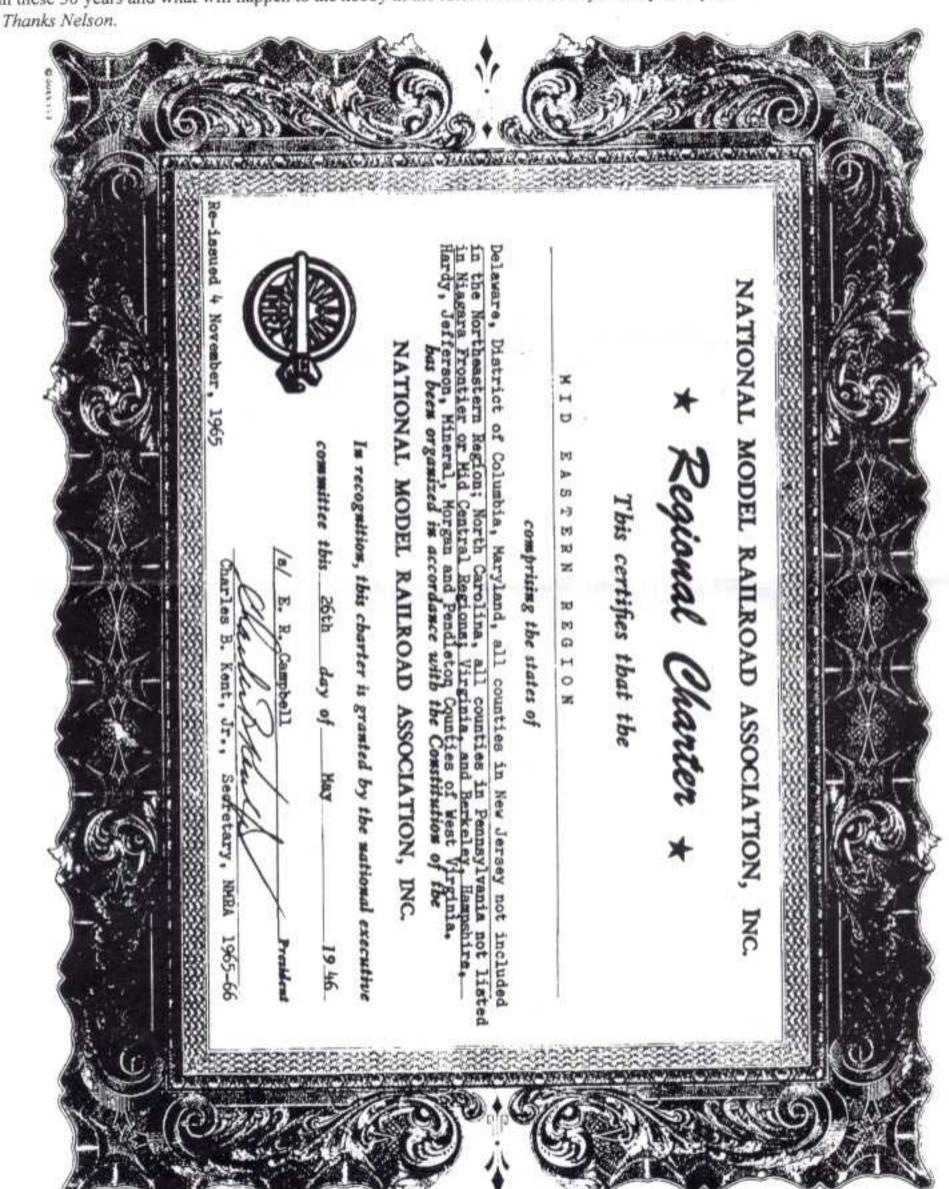
f. When dusting after applying Dullcote (<u>not</u> during the varnishing stage, however), fingers can be used to wipe dust off a car side; dust will be left untouched along a rivet line,

highlighting the rivets.

g. Special effects such as streaking can be rendered by painting varnish in a streak pattern, then dusting, for example, with white.

JOHN E. HAMMOND, Tidewater Division member

Nelson Garber, our Office Manager just finished preparing 50 years of Mid Eastern Region Locals, Minutes and Archives for delivery to the NMRA Library in Chattanooga Tennessee. Among the many items he found was this copy of our Region Charter from the National Model Railroad Association. We all need to think how the hobby of Model Railroading has changed in these 50 years and what will happen to the hobby in the future. The next 50 years is you to you.



Jersey Limited '96 Update

The Jersey Limited is pleased to announce the following additional clinics to our program... "Cab Ride to Sand Patch," Steve Stewart; "The NMRA Today," Bob Charles; "Super Detailing Plastic Freight Cars" Ken Montero; "Computer Generated Car Cards & Waybills," Robert Bucklew, "Modeling the Petroleum Industry," Stan Knotts; "Opportunities in Operations on a Double Deck Railroad," Jim Moir; "Forgotten Details," Terry Bacus; "Yard Operations on the New Jersey Northern," Jim Dalberg; "Bulletin Roundhouse Discussion," Terry Bacus; and "Photographing Models," Tommy Holt.

EXPANDED NON-RAIL ACTIVITIES

For those desiring to stray away from the tracks for awhile, the Jersey Limited Convention Staff has provided a full array of activities lasting through the weekend (and not having a thing to do with trains!). Friday morning will start off with a "day trip" to historic Philadelphia and a chance to visit the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and a host of other sites located in the country's most "historic square mile."

Saturday will be spent at the New Jersey State Aquarium and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Both tours will give you a chance to have lunch "on your own" and taste Philadelphia cuisine firsthand—at famous Reading Terminal Market and at the Art Museum. During the evening there will be many non-rail related clinics to choose from. These include Dried Flower Arrangements: Hedgerow Style, Backyard Birding, Stress Busters, Beach Combing, Wine Tasting, Cooking with Chef Steve and Pet Care. Of course, there's the Saturday evening informal get together with light snacks and entertainment.

TOUR UPDATES

Although they're filling up fast, there are several seats available on each of the Jersey Limited '96 rail tours. Somewhere in the deep farm fields of Southern Jersey, the Southern Railroad of New Jersey rail fan trip will take a siding where you'll be treated to a trackside Bar-B-Que. The cost is included in the price of the ticket. Did we mention a Cab ride in an F-3? Check for details at the registration desk. Friday tours have been scheduled so that those wishing can actually take two tours; one

in the morning and one in the afternoon. This includes the Layout Lottery. Don't worry, the Hotel has been put on a "hot standby" for a lunch rush on Friday! For those lucky enough to participate in the Layout Lottery (those selected will receive a special ticket in their registration packet,) there will be a Layout Lottery meeting on Thursday night. All those participating in the Lottery should plan to attend this meeting where a brief overview of each railroad, operating schemes and ground rules for the event will be explained. Sorry, NO extra Layout Lottery tickets will be sold after the Thursday night meeting, so get your order in now and be there for the meeting!

SWITCHING CONTEST

The Northern Burlington Model Railroad Club will be sponsoring the official Jersey Limited '96 Switching Contest. The club has been working on the project for several months using materials donated by Atlas. Rumor has it that Atlas has also provided the Switching Contest "Grand Prize" in the form of motive power! Be sure to get the rules and details from the registration desk! This is another "don't miss."

CONVENTION CAR

The Convention Car has been a "hot" item on registration forms. The Jersey Limited '96 Committee has had to stave off requests from those not coming to the Convention so that all JL '96 attendees will have first shot at this item. Make sure you pick up enough at the Convention because if there are any left over, they will be made available to the public. Since Atlas receives sporadic shipments from overseas, we doubt this car in this CNJ scheme will be offered again.



Registration Form

Mid East Region, NMRA Fall Convention

October 3-6, 1996



Address			
City	State	Zip	
Phone	NMRA #	MER #_	
Full Registration	@ \$34.00	SRNJ Fantrip (Sat.)	@ \$28.00
Non-NMRA member	@ \$39.00	PATCO Shops (Fri. AM)	@ \$15.00
Spouse	@ \$10.00	Conrail Control Ctr. (Thur. PM)	@\$ 5.00
Children (6-16)	@ \$ 5.00	Holt Cargo Term. (Fri. PM)	@ \$17.00_
Saturday Night Social	@ \$ 5.00	Historic Phila. Tour (Fri.)	@ \$18.00
Awards Breakfast (Sun.)	@ \$11.00	Aquarium/Art Mus. (Sat.)	@ \$22.00
Convention Car	@ \$15.00	Wine Tasting Clinic	@ \$12,00
Layout Lottery*	\$12.00	TOTAL ENCLOSED	

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