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What's in a Label? Lots!

The first line of your LOCAL mailing label (*at right*) has a wealth of information about your status with the NMRA if you know how to read it. Here's an explanation of how to decode a sample top line provided by Business Manager Nelson Garber.

MER 3002 R R 2178 9808 207

1) MER is the owner of the mailing list

MER 3002 R R 2178 9808 207

2) 3002 is a two-part identification. 30 is the NMRA number for the Mid East Region;)2 is the division identification, in this case, "Potomac." Members who live outside the boundary of any organized division are assigned "00."

MER 3002 R R 2178 9808 207

3 & 4) The first R is the NMRA's designation for Regular Member. Others are L for Life Member and FM for Family Member. The second R is the Region's number for the same information; this can also be LA for Life Associate subscriber to the LOCAL.

MER 3002 R R 2178 9808 207

5) This is the Regular Membership number; others may include L-71 for Life Member or LA-245 for Life Associate subscriber.

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6) This is the membership expiration date-this one is 1998, August. Life Member and Life Associate expiration dates are

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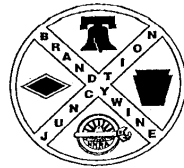
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9999. And, like your banks and your credit cards, NMRA hasn't determined a number for the new century.

MER 3002 R R 2178 9808 207

7) These are the first three digits of your zip code for mailing purposes.

Get to know what your label means. It's an instant reference to your membership status every time you receive a copy of THE LOCAL.

Notice!

If you've not received the latest issue of the LOCAL, please check your mailing label to see if your membership has expired. If you discover that your membership is current, contact Nelson Garber, MER Office Manager at 301-572-2482.

(Don't call Bill Gruber or Ron Baille!!)

Uncommon Trains

continued from page 6

Most of these trains ended operation by the late 1950's. In addition to the locomotive, mixed trains consisted of 2 to 10 cars. On some railroads, an aging combination baggage-passenger car was used, while other railroads simply outfitted a standard caboose with a few seats. The combine or caboose had no particular location in the train. It may have started out at the rear, but as freight cars were set out and picked up, the car might find itself in the middle of the front.

Reprinted from *The Philadelphia Dispatcher*, March 1997

I've got the blues

by Ron Baile

When your scale model people are working around your model locomotives and cars, are they protected? According to the Standard Code adopted by the American Railways Association, rule 26 states that: "A blue signal, displayed at one or both ends of an engine, car or train, indicates that workmen are under or about it; when thus protected, it must not be coupled to or moved. Workmen will display the blue signals and the same workmen are alone authorized to remove them. Other cars must not be placed on the same track so as to intercept the view of the blue signals without notifying the workmen."

I don't know how long the blue signal has been in use, but several documents in my collection of rulebooks and timetables date from 1910 and 1915. Most railroads in this country as well as Canada and Mexico pretty much all adhere to the exact same wording though the Victorian prose has been tidied up a bit. Other railroad documents

often give a better description of exactly what a blue signal is. The Reading Company's SAFETY RULES of July, 1955 dedicates nine pages which explain the proper use of the Blue signal. It has some very nice drawings that show exactly what the rule books are talking about.

While some blue flags are actually made of cloth and are identical in size to the ubiquitous red flag, most of them are made of sheet metal. They are being handled by dirty, greasy mechanics so they must be able to stand up to rough use and abuse. The Association of American Railroads, AAR, has set standards for the Blue Flag for rail attachment. This is a sheet metal flag mounted on a pipe that runs at 45 degrees to vertical. The pipe is about 3' long. It has a clamping device that fits on either side of the rail and may be locked in place with a switch lock. Car inspectors often had their own special locks to use on these.

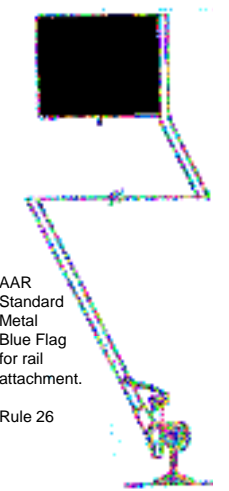
According to the Reading Company document, they had their own "Reading Company Standard Metal Blue Flag for Rail Attachment at Engine Terminal and Shop Tracks." Theirs was a round disk about 16 or 18" in diameter which was lettered around the disk: "Stop-Men At

Work." Theirs was mounted on flat bar stock which easily could have been made at the company blacksmith shops. The Reading also documents a blue flag for attaching to locomotive cabs. It was a rod or pipe about 8'

long with dual hooks at the top and a flag about one third the way down. These would be hung on the window sill of the locomotive's cab. The bottom was forged into a handle. They went so far as to put a little hook towards the bottom where the person responsible for hanging the blue flag would hang his own personal disk bearing his name so everyone knew who was working there. At night there would be a blue lantern attached to the blue flag. There is usually a notch cut in the sheet metal flag where the bail of the lantern would hang. Today the lantern would be battery powered.

These would be a snap to model using some brass wire and some shim brass. Solder it together and paint the whole thing Conrail Blue. I have been experimenting with one of Digi-Key's blue LEDs and some fiber optic material. You drill a hole through a block of wood as big around as the fiber optic. Then you drill part way through the same hole as big around as the LED. Stick one in one end and one in the other end and add a touch of GOO. Feed the fiber up through your locomotive servicing area and have it come out near your locomotives. Consider using one for each loco storage track. If you use a toggle switch to control their power, use a DPDT switch and wire it so the blue light comes on when the power goes off.

Try modeling a blue signal for their locomotive servicing area. Keep your mechanics safe. Let them have the blues.



AAR Standard Metal Blue Flag for rail attachment.
Rule 26



Jim Atkinson and Fred Voelcker man the table for the NMRA-MER at the Timonium, Maryland, Show on March 23 where the new Region banner was used for the first time.

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The MER LOCAL welcomes articles, photographs, artwork, cartoons and model railroad related material as contributions to the mutual enjoyment of the hobby for the membership. Materials should have a wide appeal. Editors will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send originals without having back-up copies of both articles and photographs. Materials will be returned only when a self-addressed, stamped envelope of ample size is included with submission. Editors, by definition, reserve the right—and have the responsibility—to make corrections, deletions and changes to accommodate space. Aware of how much enjoyment readers get by discovering someone else's mistakes, the editors will include at least one in each issue!

DUES: \$8 per year; \$16 - 2 years

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership in the MER is ONLY available to NMRA Life Members. For quotation, apply to the Business Manager with your date of birth.

Send all dues and membership inquiries to:
Nelson D. Garber, Business Manager
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13212 Bellevue Street
Silver Spring, MD 20904-1703

Presidential Pennings

Come share the fun of modeling

by *Bill Gruber, President*

We're coming into one of the most beneficial and informative times for model railroaders. Twice a year the MER offers weekends of "abundant knowledge" for those wishing to enhance their model railroading skills. The biannual weekend conventions offer more in three days than a year's worth of magazines can! I can honestly say that if it weren't for various Regional and National conventions, my layout might still have a tree in the middle! The first MER convention of the year is a joint venture this month with the SER in Asheville, SC. It promises to be one not to miss. We hope you'll rethink your Memorial Day plans and "Look Ahead, Look South," as one railroad used to say! (See page 7 for details).

In the last year or so, both the NMRA and the Mid Eastern Region have plowed head on into some feather-ruffling subjects. As we try to clarify some of these issues, many Division officials claim we are interfering with their efforts to conduct meets and attract modelers to their events. The main concern seems to be where the line is drawn between being a bona-fide member and supporter of the NMRA, and someone who takes advantage of the organization's events with no intention of ever belonging. To bring the matter in perspective, it is important to understand the NMRA's purpose and structure.

Regions were created to further the goals of the NMRA on a more geographically convenient level. Regions provide the means to maintain, promote and expand National programs such as the Achievement Program, NMRA contests and Conventions, and to offer opportunities for more members to attend, participate in, or contribute to these National programs. The NMRA also gave each Region the latitude to subdivide into Divisions to promote the organization and provide for model railroading needs on a local level at timely intervals.

The NMRA estimates that we are directly and indirectly serving from 65,000 to 75,000 people on these various levels. Yet NMRA membership has hovered around 25,000 for many years. So why don't these 40,000+ people who attend these events see the need to support the hobby through NMRA membership? Are the Region and its Divisions responsible for the lack of positive recruitment programs? Are the Divisions operating autonomously and don't feel or see the need to promote NMRA membership? What can we do to help Divisions pursue new members at these important grassroots level?

During the last several months, the MER has taken a proactive role in promoting more Division contributions to Region affairs. Some of these include encouraged participation at Region Board meetings and dedication of a page or two in THE LOCAL to share activities. We have more to do and hope to do it in the near future. Do you have solutions to offer in the meantime? Why not do so?

Congratulations, Charles Evans!

CHARLES L. EVANS is the latest member of the MER to become a **Master Model Railroader**. Evans, who lives in Hampton, Virginia, has his "around the wall" On3 "Craig Valley" in his garage where it occupies a space of about 10' x 15'. Evans earned certificates for Cars, Structures, Scenery, Civil, Electrical, Chief Dispatcher, and Volunteer. Many were earned when he was building an HO model of the C&O from Clifton Forge to Alleghany, Virginia, in the 60s and 70s. He switched to narrow gauge about 11 years ago and has seven brass steam locos, two scratch-built diesels, and a gas-electric. Most rolling stock is scratch-built, with 75% being hoppers and gondolas. Regular operating sessions are held Sunday afternoons. Evans, who received his MMR wall plaque and certificate from Bob Charles and Pete Moffett, National AP Chairman, earned his 7th AP certificate (Chief Dispatcher) last summer. Others from the Tidewater Division who also earned Chief Dispatcher certificates at the same time were Richard Hudson, Jeffery Witt, Sam Heatwole, and Brian McWithey.

Reported by J.M. Johnseon, Tidewater Division, AP Coordinator

Make Tracks to Asheville for

Land O' Sky Railfest '97
ASHEVILLE, NC, MAY 23-25, 1997



JOINT MIDEASTERN & SOUTHEASTERN REGION SPRING CONVENTION

NMRA members from 11 states are expected to converge for:

- Operating modular layouts in both HO-scale and N Gauge
- John Armstrong, dean of America's layout planners, will discuss model railroad tracking planning; Randy Lee, Editor of *Model Railroading*, shares the finer points of model photography; & Allen McClelland, "Brass Hat" of the Virginia and Ohio provides a behind-the-scenes look at one of the hobby's most famous layouts.
- Many other clinics on subjects from painting backgrounds and car-building to making awnings for trackside buildings.
- Layouts include The HO Apple Valley Railroad, The Southern Depot at Hendersonville & Dennis Mueller's Burlington Northern.
- Modeling competition open to all registered NMRA members..
- One of the largest Train Shows in the Southeast with over 100 tables of merchandise
- Sunday Morning Breakfast panel discussion on "Model Railroading: Beyond 2000"
- A Fan Trip to the Great Smokey Mountain Railroad, scene of the train wreck in "The Fugitive"
- Visit to the 250-room Biltmore Estate, former home of John Vanderbilt

Convention Headquarters is the Asheville Radisson Hotel

(Mention South Eastern Region Model Train Convention for Special Rates)

For Convention Information, call 1-800-333-3333

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'97 Railfest Short Form Registration, Asheville, NC, May 23-25, 1997

Full Registration: NMRA# _____ \$60x _____ = _____
 Spouse (name) _____ \$40x _____ = _____
 Youth Under 18 (name) _____ \$35x _____ = _____
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Registration includes unlimited entry to the Train Show entrance to all Clinics, Awards Banquet on Saturday night and the Convention Breakfast on Sunday.

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For information, call Henry Danis (864) 576-2614

CORNER UNCOMMON TRAINS ADD VARIETY TO MODEL RAILROADS

by Bob Motter

They say variety is the spice of life. Adding variety to the operation of a model railroad layout will certainly build interest. It can also create challenges and provide a new dimension of fun. The following three trains are not often modeled, but easily can be. When completed they can supplement and compete with the running of other freight and passenger trains on the layout.

The Night Train: Prior to the mid-1970's these trains were made up in classification yards of major cities and leaving after dark, rushed to this destination at express speeds. Night trains consisted of 25 to 50 cars that rode on high-speed express trucks. These trains moved through the night in order for their perishable and package cargoes to reach their destination in the morning.

This type of train can be duplicated in model form rather inexpensively through the ownership of several baggage cars, a few express-refrigerator cars, and some boxcars equipped with high-speed trucks. While many night trains operated with solid blocks of the operating railroad's equipment, it was not uncommon to see a mixture of equipment lettered for other railroads

within the consist.

The makeup of a night train involved placing the baggage-express cars directly behind the locomotive. These cars carried overnight express packages, newspapers, and the latest weekly magazine editions direct from the printing plant. Behind the baggage-express cars would be a string of refrigerator cars riding on high-speed trucks. The major roads (in particular the Pennsy, NYC, B&O, and Santa Fe) coupled boxcars (specially equipped for express service) behind the reefers. Since these boxcars did not require heat, there were no steam lines.

A caboose was coupled to the consist, the air test made, and the highball sign given. Night trains operated at passenger train speeds behind high-speed steam engines or multiple-unit diesel lashups

The Mail Train: This type of train was operated by nearly every major railroad and many narrow gauge lines under contract with the United States Postal Service. Not to be confused with Railway Post Office (RPO) car cut into a passenger train, the mail train was a solid train that carried nothing but the U.S. Mail. Mail trains varied in length from 6 to 25 cars. They operated on a particular schedule, usually over several divisions, and made both set-outs and pick-ups of car while en route.

Adding a mail train to your layout would require at least one RPO car and several baggage cars for the storage of mail. The RPO would be coupled behind the locomotive and the mail storage cars coupled to it. In actual operation, a U.S.

Postal Service mail clerk would collect mail from the storage cars, then sort and dispatch it to cities along the route of the train. Additional cars (either baggage cars or boxcars riding on high-speed trucks) were coupled behind the mail storage cars. These cars were sealed by the U.S. Postal Service with their entire loads bound for either the terminating destination of the train or to be switched out at major cities along the train's route. In addition, some railroads added a coach or combine to the rear of the train to provide a riding place for the train crew and any employees travelling on passes.

Mail trains used heavy passenger steam engines or multiple diesel units and ran at passenger train speeds. However, mail trains, unlike passenger trains, did not reduce speed on curves any more than safety required.

In many small towns, locals would gather to watch the daily ritual of the town's postmaster carrying the locked leather postal pouch down to the depot. The pouch was attached to a mail crane located at the end of the station platform. As the mail train roared past the depot, a hook on the metal arm at the side of the RPO extended. Inside the speeding car, a postal clerk's right hand aimed the hook at the mail crane. In the blink of an eye the hook grabbed the pouch while at the same instant the clerk's left hand tossed off a leather pouch contain mail sorted for that town.

The Mixed Train: This train was one that contained both freight and passenger equipment. Often called a "peddler freight," it operated primarily over secondary trackage, or where meager passenger traffic existed. Speed was not the hallmark of this type of train.

Continued on back page

Delaware Valley Railroad

BY TOM BROWN



Railroad Name: Delaware Valley R.R.
Location/Era Modeled: N.J. & Eastern Penna.; Era #8 Conrail/Amtrak of August 1984

Theme: Bridge Line Jointly Owned
Physical Properties of Railroad: The layout depicts a jointly owned bridge line similar to the PRSL system. It was originally owned by the Penna. R.R., Reading Lines and Balt. & Ohio, however, as years passed and mergers happen, it is presently operated by Conrail with Amtrak having trackage rights over needed routes. The route runs from a major yard in Camden, NJ to Princeton Junction and then on west to Doylestown, Pa. There are major interchanges at Camden with the Seashore Division, Conrail and CSX from Philadelphia, Princeton Junction with Conrail/Sews Corner, Pa., with Conrail and Doylestown, Pa., with Conrail. The Delaware Valley Short line maintains a small yard at Doylestown and is responsible for working the line and industries to Hopewell, Pa. Conrail works from Camden yard to Princeton Junction. All inter-yard traffic is handled by Conrail. A tower operator is located at Princeton Junction to coordinate all traffic under the control of a dispatcher. The staging tracks are located in Camden from the Seashore Division, Maple Shade Junction from Philadelphia, Princeton Junction from New York City and north, Sew Corners from Wilkes Barre, Pa., and Doylestown from all points west.

Operation: The Delaware Valley is operated on a monthly basis with an operating crew of six to eight people. A pair sequential schedules is used portraying two full days from 6 am to midnight each. The schedule lists trains that are to be run during an operating session without regard for timeclock. The dispatcher controls all movements on the railroad. All communication is with 5 channel radios. traffic is generated from the many interchanges located throughout the railroad. Car forwarding uses a 4-sided way-bill

and car card. This includes both passenger and freight. All main line switches are controlled by the Princeton tower operator and industry sidings are operated with ground throws by the road crews. The total crew consists of eight positions; yardmaster in Camden and Doylestown, two road crews with two men each (engineers and conductor), Princeton tower operator and dispatcher.

Control System: Delaware Valley R.R. uses conventional Cab Control with transistor throttles for the road crews. Princeton tower and both Camden and Doylestown yards use I.T.T.C. Innovator throttles. All main line switches are electrically controlled by Princeton tower and sidings are manual ground throws.

Miscellaneous Facts on the Layout: The Delaware Valley was started in 1983 and the Golden Spike was laid in 1984. The scenery, wiring and such commenced after this. Overall size is 11' x 20', plus a 4' x 11' main yard. The height starts at 43" and rises to 52". The benchwork and L-Box sections bolted together with carriage colts. This allows the benchwork to be reused in another configuration if needed. The roadbed is Homasote with Code 100 track of approximately 750 feet. Switches are a combination of Atlas, Peco and Shinohara. The minimum radius is 24" and maximum grade is 1.25%. All scenery is plaster over paper bags. Buildings are a combination of kits, scratchbuilt, and kit-bashed.

Equipment Running: All locomotive equipment operated during this time era is owned by Conrail, Amtrak and Delaware Valley Short Line. The breakdown is as follows: Conrail = SW1 001, SW1 200, SW1 500, GP-38, GP40-2, SD-40-2, B23-7; Amtrak = F40-PH, E-60, GP-9; Delaware Valley = GP-38, GP-9, SW-7, GE-70TON.

Era Changes: A major feature is the fact that we change eras every summer moving from 1938 to 1984. We have 8 railroad eras and 5 scenery eras to work with. Staging in 1938/1940, we use scenery era #1 and run all equipment appropriate to this time frame. As we move through the time frames, each era changes equipment as required and the scenery and buildings also change along with schedules and trains until we end us at 1984. Since each era is run for one year, it takes 8 years to return to the original. Some of our operators have never been around long enough to say they have been through all 8 time changes. This allows for a great deal of interest in all phases of railroading. The following are the railroad eras operated: 1. Early steam 1938/1940; 2. Late steam 1948; 3. Late steam/First generation diesel 1954; 4. First Generation diesel 1960; 5. 2nd Generation diesel 1964; 6. Late diesel 1968; 7. Penn Central/Amtrak 1972; 8. Conrail/Amtrak 1984.

The scenery changes are as follows: 1. 1935 to 1948; 2. 1949 to 1960; 3. 1961 to 1968; 4. 1969 to 1976; 5. 1977 to 1996.

Visits are welcome. Call me in New Jersey at 609-235-2112.



The Mid-Eastern Region Inc., NMRA
Business Manager
13212 Bellevue Street
Silver Spring MD 20904-1703

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Make checks payable to the Mid-Eastern Region

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION TO BE A MEMBER OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION

Remittance Enclosed for:

National Dues: q New q Renewal _____
q 1 year: \$30.00 q 2 years: \$60.00 \$ _____
Life membership cost is based on your age.
Send your Birth Date to the NMRA for a quotation.

Region Dues: q New q Renewal _____
q 1 year: \$8.00 q 2 years: \$16.00 \$ _____
Life membership cost is based on your age.
Send your Birth Date to the MER for a quotation.

Lapel Pin/Tie Tack @ \$6 each \$ _____
Region Cloth Patch @ \$3 each \$ _____
Donation \$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

CANDIDATES FOR MER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JIM ATKINSON

I am running for the position of director because I believe in

the NMRA and want to help it flourish.

My modeling interests started in the mid 50s and I first joined the NMRA in 1960. Though family interests intervened, I kept up my modeling interests. Two years ago I finally started my long-time dream of a large layout and renewed my involvement in the NMRA. Since then I have earned the Golden Spike Award and the Electrical Achievement Award.

In the past I have been Vice President, President and served on numerous committees of Baltimore's Box 414 Association, and the local volunteer fire department and am presently President of the Central Pennsylvania Fire Buffs.

I am presently the Photo Contest Chair for the MER and am Membership Chair for Division 11, the Susquehanna Division. I thoroughly enjoy model railroading and the camaraderies of NMRA members.

I am 53 years old and married. We have two grown sons and a granddaughter. I am a US Army veteran and was a journeyman machinist. Since 1992 I have been a realtor.

I believe in the necessity of the NMRA to set industry standards and to unite modelers with manufacturers and I want to help further the process.

ERIC DERVINIS

Fellowship and fun, that is why you belong to this organization.

Unfortunately, in this complicated

world, this group cannot continue to prosper without addressing certain legal and social issues. Discussions at division meets and regional conventions revolve around insurance, lack of interest and Special Interest Groups (SIGs). It is no surprise that all three feature the letter "I." As politics change, we ask "What is in it for me?"

The answer is a better, strong Mid Eastern Region prepared to move into the future. As your director, I can facilitate that process by keeping the lines of communication open. The LOCAL, division meets and regional conventions offer a forum for questions to be asked, issues to be discussed and concerns to be followed up. My experience working in this organization has always involved improving communications. From 1990-1993, I served as the Clerk for the Valley Forge Express, producing the minutes and writing a newsletter that was distributed to more than 300 volunteers. Presently I am serving as the Clerk for the Philadelphia Division, which will be sponsoring the Fall Mer Convention, Brandywine Junction. I also edit a newsletter for the national, the SNL which is distributed worldwide. When I find time I enjoy operation on a number of layouts and adding to my collection of D, L & W models.

The MER can solve the "insurance problem," it can improve relations with other model railroad groups, and it can increase membership. I will work hard to address those issues and will be

YOUR CHANCE AT FAME!!

Help us select a car for the MER to have made up for sale. Submit your suggestion and photos of a prototype car that ran somewhere in the MER territory. This car must use existing manufacturers' product lines. It would be great if we could use a company located in Mer territory. If your selection is used, you will receive a prize to be announced later. Submit before June 1, 1997, to Bill Gruber, President, c/o THE LOCAL

available to answer your questions by phone, mail, fax or email. I solicit your vote for director of the Most Enthusiastic Region.

NICHOLAS "NICK" KALIS

I have been interested in model railroading

since my father introduced me to the hobby with the proverbial train set under the Christmas tree when I was about 10 years old. My interest in the prototype may have been sparked when I was asked to pose for a *New York Daily News* photographer who was chronicling the move of New York City's last trolley care to a museum.

I am building an HO scale, double-deck layout in my basement with a help of a few friends. We are modeling Sunnyside Yard and Yard A in the early 1960's. Some of you may have seen my layout during a Potomac Division Open House in early 1996. Additional helpers are always welcome.

I am married with three children. As a professional property manager, I believe I can bring good insights into the administration of the Mid-Eastern Region.

W. TERRY NESBIT

I am presently Superintendent of Division 11,

the Susquehanna Division and also serve as Achievement Program Chair. I am a Life Member of the NMRA since 1964 and hold Master Building Certificates in cars and structures.

I have won numerous awards for models at convention, the most recent being first and third place in the category of Favorite Passenger Cars at

the NMRA convention in Atlanta in 1995. I also authored an eight-part series on "Nonmetallic Minerals as a Source of Revenue" and several one-evening model-building projects to be published in future issues of the NMRA BULLETIN.

I am a pioneer in the model railroad industry as an inventor, developer, and manufacturer of model railroad equipment. I am proprietor of Narrow Gauge Car Shop, manufacturer of HO n3 rolling stock and HO and O scale scratch builders parts. This firm was the first in the industry to produce R-T-R plastic HO n3 rolling stock that holds an NMRA Certificate of Conformance. Narrow Gauge Shop and I are the sponsors of the Blue Lantern Award first given at the 50th Anniversary MER Convention at Hunt Valley in 1995. The Blue Lantern Award is for a judged model containing no more than 40% commercial parts that best represent an example of either branch line, short line, or private line operating equipment or facilities.

I am also part owner of the only fully operational former PRR steam locomotive, an O-6-0, which can be seen at the Williams Grove Historical Steam Engine Association at Mechanicsburg, PA. I also own two track speeders, both made by Fairmont Motor Car Co. one was formerly a Ma and Pa car and the other is from the C & O.

PAUL RIVERS

My philosophy for the NMRA and the MER— Get as many

people actively involved as possible.

My present involvement in the NMRA includes Assistant WebMaster - Operations, Host of NMRA on the Web Achievement Program and Standards and Recommended Practices Sections, and Assistant Division Superintendent Division 12, the Carolina Southern Division.

I have been interested in trains

and model railroading since age four when my father gave me an Arnold Rapido N-Scale starter set for Christmas. With some temporary interruptions, model railroading has been an integral part of my life ever since.

During the seventies, my brother and I built several N-scale layouts together, culminating in a 12' x 14' L. In 1986, I purchased a condominium and proceeded to build a bi-level N-scale layout in a spare bedroom. Because the layout contained some hefty grades, helper operations were required and I installed a Dynatrol system to facilitate helper operations. After dropping in on a DCC Working Group meeting at the Valley Forge Convention, I took the plunge and purchased a DCC system. Construction proceeded on the layout for several years until I was running trains on both levels. Not even a week after the first complete run, I purchased a house with a finished (so I thought) basement. After two, plus years of construction, I finally had a 20' x 20' finished room with an adjoining 10' x 40' area for future expansion. At present the rough benchwork is in place supporting 60' of track and DCC components have been wired in. Work is progressing as time allows. The era is 1940's and my favorite prototype is Southern Railway. It's in N-scale, of course.

Votewith Enclosed Ballot

MER COLLECTIBLES

50TH ANNIVERSARY WHITE GOLF SHIRT.....	\$13.00 each
Red, gold, and blue embroidered 50th Anniversary	
Sizes: XL, L, M, and S (includes postage)	
MULTI-COLOR MER 50TH ANNIVERSARY PATCH.....	\$ 2.00 each
REGION POCKET BLUE GOLF SHIRT.....	\$17.00 each
Gold silk screened MER Logo	
Sizes: 2XL, XL, L, and M (includes postage)	
REGION LAPEL PIN.....	\$ 6.00 each
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 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone () _____
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Make checks payable to the Mid-Eastern Region and send to:
 MER Business Manager, 13212 Bellevue Street, Silver Spring, MD 20904-1703.

CALLBOARD

Coming Events

Notices must be typed and have complete addresses. Use the style shown below and be brief as possible. Be sure to include a contact telephone number. Send items for CALLBOARD to Ron Baile, 24 Hampton Rd, Westmont, NJ 08108-2202. E-Mail to rbaile@aol.com

New Jersey, Winslow Junction or Salem. **New Jersey Division Meet, May 17, 1997** from 9 am to 2 pm, at the Southern Railroad of New Jersey. Ride a working prototype, modeled in one-to-ne scale. For more information, contact Division Superintendent Mert Gardner, 110 Branch Drive, Magnolia, NJ 08049, or Division Clerk Carl Haslett at (609) 546-9230.

Wilmington, Delaware: **Delaware Transportation Festival** sponsored by Delaware Department of Transportation/Delaware Transit Corporation, Saturday, **May 17**, The Wilmington Amtrak Station from 10 am to 4 pm. The event and most activities are free. Contact: Julie Theyerl, 400 South Madison Street, Wilmington, DE 19801-5114, (302) 577-3278, Ext 3405; FAX: (302) 577-6066.

Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc. **Open House, May 25, July 12, September 13**. Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Station, 231 Dominion Road (at Ayr Hill Road), Vienna Virginia 22180. 1 pm until 5 pm each day. Club meets on Tuesday Evenings. contact: (703) 938-5157.

Wilmington, Delaware: **Rail to the Fair '97** sponsored by the Delaware Transit Corporation/Delaware Department of Transportation, Saturday, **July 19**. Philadelphia, 9 am; Claymont, 9:16 am; Wilmington, 9:38 am, Newark 10:16 am; Middletown, 10:59 am; Dover, 11:48 am; and Harrington, 12:37 pm. Prices range from \$22.50 to \$67.50. Reduced prices for children under 10. Contact: Christie Hoffmann or Doug Andrews, (302) 577-3278, ext 3412 or 3451.