



# Railroaders Memorial Museum

By Stan Knotts

I stopped off at the new Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum while in the area right after it opened. This is without a doubt one of the most impressive museums I have ever visited. It is not as large as such museums as the Smithsonian in Washington, DC but their multimedia and interactive displays are truly state of the art for a museum. The museum had opened only a week prior to my visit but appeared to have the kinks ironed out. This museum is well worth your time if you are in the area, and there is horseshoe curve to see also. I believe it will be on the tour for the fall convention. The museum is housed in two of the Pennsylvania Railroad Altoona shops, once one of the largest locomotive and car shops in the world. The main building is three stories with displays that include a complete locomotive

backhead with sound, a typical railroad workers home room, a newsstand with the newsboy shouting out bits of news to attract buyers, a classification yard exhibit that allows you to try your hand at recording car classifications from a video of passing rail cars, and many steam era rail artifacts and photos.

One well done exhibit is a reconstructed railroaders bar reconstructed from a bar in Pottstown, PA. When you walk into the room you trip a sensor that sets off a sound and light show. The mirror behind the bar becomes a live scene showing railroad workers discussing their days issues with the union, management and their co-workers. There is a table with a quiz about railroad terms and the bar has typical 1930's era furnishings.

Next to a poster boasting that "Not a Passenger Killed" – a logo that was part of a 1935 ad campaign – you see a door which leads to a re-creation of the Altoona hospital, where life size figures are being treated. The message is that although they were not killing passengers, they were killing and maiming workers by the hundreds. It was no coincidence the hospital was two blocks from the main shop gate, and no accident they put a cemetery behind the hospital.

For more information contact the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum at 814-946-0834. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. The Altoona Visitors Center has local information and can be reached at 1-800-842-5866, and on the web at

[www.Alleghenymountains.com](http://www.Alleghenymountains.com)

## MER LOCAL

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Stan Knotts, Editor  
19808 Falling Spring Court  
Laytonsville, MD 20882-1226

C. William Gruber, President  
79 Quaker Road  
Mickleton, NJ 08056-1306

Norman Garner, Vice President  
3408 Wilshire Rd.  
Portsmouth, VA 23703

Eric Dervinis, Secretary  
632 Bob White Road  
Wayne, PA 19087

Ron Schmidt, Treasurer  
7110 Riverdale Road  
Lanham, MD 20706-1130

### Contributing Editors

Roger L. Cason  
1125 Grinnell Road  
Wilmington, DE 19803-5125  
(302) 478-2550

John Teichmoeller  
12107 Mt. Albert Road  
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Ron Baile  
24 Hampton Road  
Westmont, NJ 08108-2202  
(609) 858-6644

### LOCAL Advertising Manager

Dick Foley  
2021 Wallace Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19130-3221  
(215) 232-4926

### LOCAL Publisher

Clint Hyde, 703-803-3068  
(ch Hyde@bn.com)

The MER LOCAL welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. 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. Editors, by definition, reserve the right—and have the responsibility—to make corrections, deletions and changes to accommodate space.

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### 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

## President's column

Bill Gruber

I am happy to report that the Region has a second freight car to offer in our fund raising program. It is a Central Railroad of New Jersey 40 foot boxcar that was built new in the 1950s. The model is an Accurail PS-2 boxcar and will be priced specially for MER members although offered to the general public as well at a higher price. Roger Cason has spent considerable time in researching this project, and it will be offered in two numbers. Additionally, Roger has accumulated much information for future freight car projects and it is rumored that one might even be a tank car! One of the criteria for our freight car projects is that the prototype must have been "at home" within the boundaries of the MER, so it will be interesting to see these future releases. If you'd like to help Roger out by serving on this committee, please contact either Roger or any BOD member. The Region is completely sold out of our first project, the RF&P gondola, so make sure you don't miss out on this one. Use the order blank in the *Local* or pick a set up at the Portsmouth Convention this April.

One purpose of the Region is to assist Divisions in gaining membership by providing tools within our means. This can include anything from Convention planning to providing help and assistance to a Division on the brink of collapse. With this said, I would like to take this

opportunity to ask for some help in reviving the Mt. Clare Division. Over the last few years, Superintendent John Foster has tried to revitalize the Division by hosting several meetings. To his (and our) dismay, no one has come forward to take over the reins and reorganize the Mt. Clare Division. It's hard to believe there is no "new blood" out there with the enthusiasm and willingness to bring the Division back to what it once was. Please contact Vice President Norm Garner, myself or John Foster if you'd like to get involved with this worthy endeavor. I might also add that those outside the Mt. Clare Division can volunteer help in ways they see fit as well; perhaps assisting in organizing a meet, giving a clinic, etc. Let's not see the Mt. Clare Division Charter surrendered to the Region!

Our greatest assets are the concerned members who many times work behind the scenes to organize events, publish our newsletters and plan for our future. Unfortunately all good things seem to come to an end as these faithful volunteers decide to take some well deserved time off. On the bright side, we have been fortunate in finding qualified replacements for most. Several of our volunteers have asked us to look for replacements in the not too distant future. Most of the positions opening are within our publication, the *Local*. Stan Knotts has done an admirable job over the course of the last few years and has def-

initely brought the content level up to standards not achieved before. While we think that special skills are required in this position, Stan has assured us that willingness is a much more important factor. Stan has expressed his desire to step down in the near future so we're looking for one of YOU to step in and fill his shoes. If interested, you might want to give Stan a call to see just what he does in editing each *Local*. Remember, this is an editing job only as our publishing is done elsewhere.

For those of you who do not read the masthead in the *Local*, we have a new Publisher. He is member Clint Hyde and his first issue was the January/February issue. I would say it was a "seamless" changeover and we look forward to Clint's contributions in the future. I'd like to thank Judy Foley (Penitentiary Press) who faithfully published the *Local* over the course of the last three years. I know both Dick and Judy spent countless hours with the *Local* for the good of the Region.

We've had several years worth of successful MER Conventions and this year promises to keep the streak going. It's getting closer than you think for registering for the Spring Convention in Portsmouth, Va. As always, Conventions in the Tidewater Division are some of the best and this one promises to be no exception. Let's show them support by giving them a record attendance!

## Editor's Column

*Stan Knotts*

As Bill Gruber mentioned in his column, I am looking for a successor to carry on as editor of the *Local*. I have enjoyed doing the *Local* for the last few years and appreciate the super help from the support staff, but my time is spread thin with increased hours at work and my editorial work on my other publication, the Railroad Industries SIG newsletter. I would be happy to discuss the requirements for *Local* editor with anyone interested.

### We received some letters:

Regarding John Teichmoeller's convention model contest report in the Jan-Feb 2000 issue of the MER *Local*, I would like to mention that I enjoyed his commentary and style of reporting. The traditional contest summary provided by John Johnson also has its place, but the descriptions and observations provided along with the photos made for interesting and informative reading. Sincerely, Jim Homoki

I was reading the [MER LOCAL 55-1], A report on the Hagerstown Convention, which alas I could not attend. In this article the author berates model contest entrants for not "documenting" their models, even though rules did not require this. And even went so far as to suggest that such be strongly encouraged in the future. Modeling is an art, not engineering. Some of my models I couldn't replicate myself, let alone write down enough to explain it to someone else. I think you need to encourage more models at the shows. There is enough paperwork in the form of books, magazines and newsletters to keep anyone happy. Sincerely, John Downing

**Correction:** (From John Teichmoeller) Member Leonard Beck enjoyed the writeup on the Hagerstown Contest in the January/-February 2000 *Local*. However, he pointed out that we had improperly given Ned Carey credit for the following fine models that Leonard built:

AT&SF # 10287 50' double door auto car

PMcK&Y # 83412 40' USRA single sheathed boxcar

PFE # 20071, R-40-2 reefer

B&O 175829 M15 40' wood boxcar

Leonard was the builder of the Quality craft N5c cabooses. He says the AT&SF boxcar was an Athearn (not a Varney as John guessed) kit and a real "dog to build." Our apologies to Leonard and a reminder to bring your well executed kits to Portsmouth.

# Achievement Program Roster

Jim Kellow MMR

Mid-Eastern Region Achievement Program Chairman

Any NMRA member who lives in the area of Hendersonville NC, Morganton NC, Newton NC, Greensboro NC, Hickory NC or communicates in these general area please let me know if you are interested in representing the Achievement Program in these areas. There is not an active Division in these areas and I am looking for someone to provide the services of the Achievement Program to NMRA members.

MER AP Chairman Jim Kellow, MMR, 104 Elizabeth Page, Williamsburg, VA 23185, (757) 258 4973  
jkellow@widomaker.com

Div 1 New Jersey AP Chairman, Ronald Baile, 24 Hampton Rd, Westmont, NJ 08108-2202, (609) 858 6644 rbaile@aol.com

Div 2 Potomac AP Chairman Open, formerly Ken H Berthoud Jr., deceased as of Feb 24.

Div 3 Philadelphia AP Chairman, David Messer, MMR, 263 Mingo Road, Royersford, PA 19468-3112, (215) 948 2191  
DMesserPRR@cs.com

Div 4 Tidewater AP Co-Chairman, John Johnson, 22398 Scojo Dr, Franklin, VA 23851, (757) 562 5917

Div 4 Tidewater AP C0-Chairman, Norman W. Garner, 3408 Wilshire Rd, Portsmouth, VA 23703-3940, (757) 484-0772  
NGrail@aol.com

Div 5 James River AP Chairman, Charles Hladik, PO Box 2822, Lynchburg, VA 24501-2822 (804) 821-4941  
RutlandCGH@aol.com

Blue Ridge At Large AP Co-Chairman, Bruce Herrick, 805 Stonewall St, Lexington, VA 24450 (540) 463-6962  
Herrick.B.H@wlu.edu

Blue Ridge At Large AP Co-Chairman, Edwin D Keith, MMR, 4586 Oakland Blvd, Roanoke, VA 24012-2531 (540) 362-0532

Blue Ridge At Large AP Co-Chairman, John W. Sours Jr., 5942 Coleman Rd, Roanoke, VA 24018 (540) 774-6130  
soursb@mindspring.com

Piedmont Crescent At Large AP Chairman, Al Phillips, MMR, 103 Cloverbrook Ct, Jamestown, NC 27282-9615 (336) 454 1058

North Carolina At Large AP Chairman, Vacant

Div 9 Mount Clare AP Chairman, Frank Winner, 283 Oak Court, Severna Park, MD 21146 (410) 647-3335 n3seo@aol.com

Div 10 South Mountain AP Co-Chairman, Frank Foight III, PO Box 340, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425-9802 (304) 725-4786  
BLUEGRAYF@aol.com

Div 10 South Mountain AP Co-Chairman, Arthur R. Thomas, 228 Lovely Road, Alum Bank, PA 15521-8448 (814) 276-3104  
athomas@bedford.net

Div 10 South Mountain AP Co-Chairman, Robert Hazard, 1111 Salem Ave Hagerstown, MD 21740 (301) 665-1133  
DHAZA@aol.com

Div 11 Susquehanna AP Co-Chairman, William Nesbit, 5760 Union Deposit Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17111-4708 Work (717) 605-2470 Home (717) 657-9476

Div 11 Susquehanna AP Co-Chairman, Jim Atkinson, 120 Coldbrook Road, Elizabeth, PA 17022-9318 (717) 367-5626 atkinson17022@juno.com

Div 12 Carolina Southern AP Chairman, Jim Teese, MMR, 5611 Farmbrook Drive, Charlotte, NC 28210-3713 (704) 553-0576 jimteese@hotmail.com

Div 13 Carolina Piedmont AP Chairman, Dick Genthner, 311 Highlands Bluffs Dr, Cary, NC 27511 (919) 362-5132  
argent1@att.net

Editor MERAP-Mailbag newsletter Rick Shoup 1810 Bunker Hill Dr Sun City FL 33573 (813) 633 1766 rshoup@juno.com

Assistant Editor MERAP-Mailbag Tommie L Phelps, 509 River Road, New Bern, NC 28562 (252) 637-4026  
wa4eme@coastalnet.com

Assistant Editor MERAP-Mailbag Arthur R. Thomas, 228 Lovely Road, Alum Bank, PA 15521-8448 (814) 276-3104 athomas@bedford.net

Assistant Editor MERAP-Mailbag Alan F Mende, 526 Pine Hill Road, Hummelstown, PA 17036-8020 (717) 566-9956  
afmende@tycoelectronics.com

MER Achievement Program Webmaster Patrick C. Kellow, 104 Elizabeth Page, Williamsburg, VA 23185 (757) 258-4973  
pkellow@widomaker.com

MER AP Assistant Webmaster Bill Mosteller, 2813 Hogan Court, Falls Church, VA 22043 (703) 264-8335  
bill.mosteller@sterling.com

MER AP Assistant Webmaster Clint Hyde, 13443 Brookfield Dr., Chantilly, VA 20151-2614 (703) 803-3068 chyde@bbn.com

Survey results  
**WHAT DO  
WE WANT?**  
**MER Survey Results**

*By Eric Dervinis*

Home Depot stock is up and Levitz has declared bankruptcy. Results of the MER survey tell the story: we are an active group of model railroaders, and not armchair modelers. Fifteen percent of the membership returned the survey included in the November - December *Local* and thanks to all that took time to tell the board what they want and need.

The *Local* itself received very high grades. Regular features and layout articles are in demand. Model and construction articles are the most desired (and the toughest to write, edit and illustrate). Budding authors, please contact the editor with your articles or ideas.

Conventions require thousands of hours of effort by volunteers. Three quarters of the membership attends and of that group, they average ten MER conventions. Future conventions committees take note: hands on clinics were the number one desire of the group, while local history tours can be de-emphasized.

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**MER Upcoming  
Conventions**  
Portsmouth, VA  
April 27-30, 2000  
Altoona, PA Tri-Regional  
Oct. 5-8, 2000  
Chadds Ford, PA  
Sprint 2001  
Lancaster, PA  
Oct. 5-7, 2001

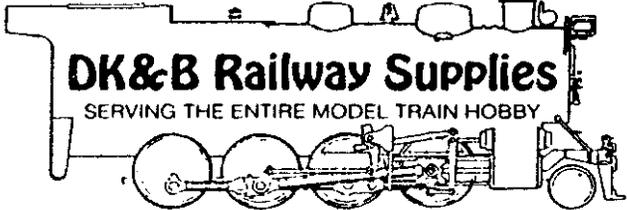
Forty percent of the membership are involved in the Achievement program, and half have entered a contest at one time. The biggest complaint about the AP program was the paperwork. The Golden Spike Award was an unknown to 30% of the membership—watch for more details soon.

At the local level, one third of the members have worked on a committee. Ten percent have served for the region and less than four percent have served in a national capacity. When asked why they have never served, the most common response was "I have never been asked". Do expect a phone call sometime in the future, the region can always use a few more good volunteers.

Two thirds of the membership has a railroad, and forty percent belong to a club. The popularity of operations was evident, as over 60% of the membership are involved.

Over a third of US households are linked to the web, and 70% of our membership has an email address. However, it will be awhile before the MER can consider electronic distribution of the *Local*.

Once again, thanks to every member that replied. The board will be reviewing the results and reading all of the comments. The feedback will be used in making decisions on future programs, allocation of resources and convention management.

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# Rails Meet Sails

MER Spring Convention — April 27-30, 2000  
Hosted by the Tidewater Division of the  
MER/NMRA  
Portsmouth, Virginia



*The Jan./Feb. issue of the MER Local described many of the events being offered at the upcoming Spring Convention. Here are some recent additions, changes and footnotes to the Rails Meet Sails program:*

**Saturday Layout Tour.** -- Saturday's tour of Northside (Peninsula) layouts will be run in the **afternoon**, not the morning as previously stated on registration forms. That means you'll be able to take either of the two prototype tours in the morning and also see the layouts in the afternoon, if you wish.

The Northside Layout Tour features the HO home layout of **Harry Werner**, the **Peninsula N-Scale Club**, and the **Chesapeake Bay & Western** HO club layout.

## Prototype Tours

**Navy Tour (limited to 92 participants) — Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** — This all-day tour will begin with the Naval Air Station Oceana, the world's largest Navy master jet base. The first stop will be the Landing Signal Officer School, where officers train to land a high-speed jet on the moving deck of an aircraft carrier.

You'll visit either an F-14 (Tomcat) or F/A-18 (Hornet) squadron, where your hosts will show you're their Maintenance Division and Ready Room. You'll go down the flight line where take-offs and landings occur every 2 minutes.

## Clinics

**William Mosteller:** Installing Flawless Couplers  
**John Teichmoeller:** Modeling Pennsy Hoppers  
**Monroe Stewart:** Ships in Railroading  
**Stan Knotts:** The Coke Industry: from Beehive Ovens through Modern Ovens  
**Jim Teese:** Kitbashing to a Prototype

**Bob Charles:** Conversations with the President  
**John Hammond:** Weathering with Pastels  
**John Johnson:** 50 years of HO Freight Cars

## How to Get There

**From the North:** Take I-95 South to Richmond. Exit on I-64 East toward Norfolk/Virginia Beach. In Hampton, Exit on I-664 South and cross the Monitor-Merrimac Bridge Tunnel. Take I-264 East into Portsmouth, exit at Crawford Street, and follow Crawford to the Holiday Inn Olde Towne.

**From the South:** Take I-85 North to South Hill and exit at Route 58 East. Or take I-95 North to Emporia and exit at Route 58 East. Follow Route 58 past Suffolk until entering I-264 into Portsmouth. Take the Crawford Street exit.

Alt. route: Take Highway 17 North to Dominion Boulevard (Route 104). Enter I-464 North to the Down-town Tunnel to Portsmouth. At the first exit after the tunnel (Downtown Portsmouth), bear right to Crawford Street.







**COMPILED BY  
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## CMR-CUSTOM MODEL RAIL- ROADS

It all started with strong encouragement from Howard Zane, organizer of the Timonium shows, and someone whose opinion on model railroading is to be valued. The encouragement was directed toward Jeff Springer, a then-recent graduate of the Maryland Institute, College of Fine Arts with a BFA in graphic design. Jeff was working full time in the Baltimore area as a graphic designer, and he had just made a display model for one of the Timonium scale train shows. The foregoing encouragement was like a small acorn. And from that small acorn, a well-formed oak tree (CMR Custom Model Railroads) is continuing to grow.

Jeff has been an active model railroader since he was nine years old. Each year until the end of high school, he would tear down his layout and build a new one. During most of this period, he lived in Switzerland (his father was in the Foreign Service). Jeff's interest in Swiss railroads still remains strong, and his personal 12' x 20' home layout depicts Alpine Swiss railroading. In addition to being a source of relaxation, this layout serves as a good R&D site for many situations.

Encouraged by Howard Zane, Jeff

*A feature profiling model railroad manufacturers located in the Mid-Eastern Region. To be included in a future issue, contact:*

Roger L. Cason  
1125 Grinnell Road  
Wilmington, DE 19803  
(302) 478-2550

started a part-time custom layout business in his basement. After about two years, he went into custom layout building full time, and shortly thereafter moved to the rented industrial space he now occupies in the Hampden area of Baltimore. Jeff does business under the name CMR Custom Model Railroads. He has been building layouts for others for over ten years, and has one part-time employee.

Jeff works in all scales from N to G, and will consider building any size layout, "brief case to club." Depending on the needs of the customer, he will do any and all phases of layout construction, including but not limited to benchwork, roadbed, trackwork, scenery, structures, wiring, signaling, and computer control. He can also perform regular maintenance where appropriate. All but the smallest layouts are modular to permit transportation from the CMR shop (where most of the work is done) to the final installed location. He particularly enjoys opportunities to build up rather than just out—shades of John Allen! His commercial jobs have included many store, mall, and train show displays, in addition to a 300' long #1 Gauge loop in a restaurant. The loop is suspended ten feet in the air, over the customers' heads. Surprisingly (to me!), most CMR customers are individuals rather than businesses. A few individuals, of course, are the "it's neat, gotta have one now" type of person. But most are more thoughtful, and quite knowledgeable about railroads and modeling. For example, some people want to have the fun of owning and operating a layout but simply can't take the time to build their own. Others may

have very specific desires. For example, suppose someone enjoys operating, and also building rolling stock, locomotives, structures, and scenery. But they just don't enjoy layout design, benchwork, trackwork, or wiring. They might logically contact CMR to get themselves in a position to do what they really enjoy, without having to slog through what looks like drudgery.

Where necessary, Jeff has custom-designed structures to meet specific customer desires. This is leading naturally into expanding his basic business to include marketing a line of laser-cut craftsman structure kits.

Three have been created so far:

- The famous Bromo-Seltzer Tower in Baltimore (full scale, no selective compression, over three feet tall!).
- The American Brewery in Baltimore.
- A generic factory, modeled after the building where CMR is located.

Jeff notes that a lot of work is needed to move from the first pre-production model to a kit you can sell to others. Writing the instructions frequently takes more time than preparing the design. In addition, the small design details such as supports must be more complete and carefully done if you expect others to take the pieces out of the box and go to work. He hopes to create three new kits each year, and will soon have a brochure describing them to prospective customers.

CMR has a display at all Timonium shows. The CMR website ([www.cmrtrain.com](http://www.cmrtrain.com)) includes seventeen color photos illustrating the type of work that Jeff does. It now also includes pages for the structure kits. Interested parties can also reach Jeff at 410-235-7624 (office/fax), or at 410-889-0100 (workshop).

# Old Point Comfort Line

Dave and Janet Spanagel

## Construction

Construction of the OPC was started in July 1976 and the golden rail spike was driven in November, 1978 at Balcony falls. At Hawk's Nest, the autumn trees are grain sorghum sprayed with a variety of Floquil mixes. All other trees are oak leaf hydrangea whose blooms are trimmed, dried and dipped in "Modpodge" and sprinkled with Woodland Scenics ground foam. The large forest near Loop Creek is polyester fiber sprinkled with ground foam.



## Operational Concept

The OPC runs on C&O and N&W trackage between Tidewater Virginia and Princeton, West Virginia. The time frame modeled is the mid-1960s as steam is being phased out and diesels are dominant. The majority of equipment on the OPC represents the N&W, Southern, and VGN railroads.

The primary goals of the OPC are to move freight traffic East and West and operate first class passenger service. The Old Point Comfort Line runs point-to-point and has reversing loops at both Old Point Comfort and Alleghany. The railroad can be run on time schedule operations with a 24-hour time scale schedule (not being done during tours, however).

## Facts & Figures

Except for the Old Point Comfort yard, the entire railroad is hand-laid code 100 rail, and it has 240 feet of double track mainline. The

branch lines provide another 120 feet of operating length. There are 73 hand-laid and 63 commercial turnouts on the 19' x 34' layout. The maximum grade is 2% on the mainline and 3% on branch lines. The minimum radius is 36 inches on mainlines and 30 inches on the branches.

All mainline and branch line switches are controlled by the CTC panel and/or tower panels. The CTC panel has the capability of assigning any of six mainline cabs to 43 different blocks.

Scenery is Hydrocal plaster on screen with a mixture of carved plaster, molded plaster and real rock formations.

## Tour the OPC

The Old Point Comfort Line will be open to visitors taking the Friday Afternoon (April 28) layout tour at the MER Spring Convention, "Rails Meet Sails" in Portsmouth, VA. The MER's Tidewater Division welcomes you to attend.



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## Kenneth H. Berthoud, Jr.

by Bob Minnis, past Superintendent  
of the Potomac Division

Ken died from cancer on February 24, 2000, at the age of 71. He was a life member of both the NMRA and MER. Ken was the Potomac Division

Achievement Program (AP) coordinator and a member of the Potomac Module Crew (PMC).

I cannot remember the exact date/time that I met Ken. However, I do know that it was at a PMC event. He expressed an interest in modules which led to several phone calls about their construction. Ultimately, he purchased one module from me and constructed a second. He first displayed them at the Division mini-convention in March 1992. Ken was an avid NYC fan and used a northeastern industrial scene as the theme for his modules.

We participated in dozens of PMC set-ups in the ensuing years. Sometimes our modules were next to each other, sometimes on opposite sides of the rectangle. The most memorable set-up was the NMRA national convention at Valley Forge, PA.

In the fall of 1995, Ken volunteered for the position of Division AP coordinator. He was responsible for the AP merit judging at the annual mini-conventions and the Golden Spike awards presented to home layout hosts. His dedication and hard work enabled many NMRA members to earn their AP certificates.

The best and longest lasting memories I have of Ken are the

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many MER conventions we attended together. In the hours spent in the car driving to the conventions, we would talk about our kids, the current politics of the division, region and national organizations. We also discussed many seemingly insignificant events of service life (war stories) so typical of military retirees. Evening conversations covered the clinics we visited--sometimes the same but often different; a prototype or industrial tour we took, the banquet speaker's comments or the auctioneer's antics. Homeward topics centered on the details of the home layouts we just left.

Ken was a fellow modeler and a good friend. Somehow, future conventions just won't be the same. He will be missed.

Publisher's note: If you're preparing a logo like "Rails Meet Sails" or an ad, please make it into an EPS drawing with text outlines before you send it to me (ask for help if you aren't sure what this is). This means I don't have to scan a picture, which results in much more readable printing and better looking pictures—clint

## 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 Stan Knotts, 19808 Falling Spring Court, Laytonsville, MD 20882-1226. E - M a i l t o [srknotts@erols.com](mailto:srknotts@erols.com).

**New Jersey, Winslow.** The Great Winslow Junction Scale Train and Railroadiana Meet will be held on May 7, 2000 at the Winslow Fire Hall, Hall and Hay streets. 10 AM till 3 PM. Adults \$3.00, children under 12 free with an adult. Contact Bill Powell, 306 Broad St. Williamstown, NJ 08094. 609-728-1327 till 9 PM.

**Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc. Open House.** April 15, May 28, July 15, September 16 and October 14, 2000. Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Station, 231 Dominion Road (at Ayr Hill Road), Vienna, VA 22180. 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm each day. Club meets on Tuesday evenings. For more information call (703) 938-5157 or web site: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Plains/6120>

## FROM THE MER SECRETARY:

The nominating committee chaired by Alex Pope will report a slate of candidates for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer on April 15. Nominations by petition for these positions will close on June 15.

Copies of the minutes from the 1999 Annual Business Meeting are available from the Secretary. Send a SASE to the address on page two.

### **Bob Hazard of Hagerstown Receives his Merit Awards for Structures**

Thanks to members like Bob hazard of Hagerstown, Maryland, the Achievement Program in the South Mountain Division is alive and well. Bob has now met all the NMRA requirements leading to becoming a Master Builder—Structures. At the SMD-MER January meeting in Dick McEvoy's home in Hagerstown, Bob received both his Golden Spike Award and his most recent three awards for scratch-building structures.

He was presented his Golden Spike award by Superintendent and Achievement Program Chairman Frank Foight. In the photo, Bob is shown being awarded one of his merit awards for structures by Art Thomas (left)—assistant to Frank Foight. Other South

mountain Division members look on in admiration.

who wishes to visit or give them a call. Bob's number is 1-301-



### **New Assistants/Judges Appointed to the NMRA Achievement program in the South Mountain Division, MER**

The South mountain division recently acquired two new officials for it's Achievement Program. They are Art Thomas of Bedford County, PA and Bob Hazard of Washington County (Hagerstown), MD. Art and Bob will be working as Assistants to Frank Foight of Harper's Ferry, WV, the current South mountain Division AP chairman. Bob has a super HO scale layout in his basement that is about 95% complete. It is called the Crabbit and Pitchihisee RR and depicts a fictional but very realistic logging operation in the mountains of West Virginia. Art models a section of the Canadian National Railway west of Lake Superior in HO scale. His layout follows the prototype for the eastern Prairie Region, Lakehead District of the CNR in 1955. Both Bob and Art invite anyone

665-1133 and his email address is [Dhaza@aol.com](mailto:Dhaza@aol.com). Art's is 1-814-276-3104 with an email address of [athomas@bedford.net](mailto:athomas@bedford.net).

More importantly, both Art and Bob would like anyone in the South Mountain Division who is interested in participating in the achievement program to give them a call. They'll try to answer questions, provide guidance on getting NMRA credit for modeling activities, recognition for work done, and even arrange judging for interested individuals. All it takes is a phone call.

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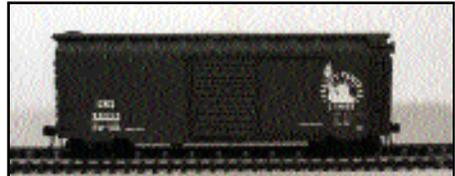
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**MER CNJ Box Car Order Form**



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**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/DUES RENEWAL NOTICE**  
YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION  
TO BE A MEMBER OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION

**Remittance Enclosed for:**

**NMRA Dues:**  New  Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 year: \$32.00  2 years: \$64.00  
*Life membership cost is based on your age.  
Send your Birth Date to the NMRA for a quotation.*

**Region Dues:**  New  Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 year: \$8.00  2 years: \$16.00  
*Life membership cost is based on your age. Send your Birth Date to the MER for a quotation. Only NMRA Life Members qualify for MER Life Membership*

MER Lapel Pin/Tie Tack @ \$6 each \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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