

HO diorama of a typical small central West Virginia town. Businesses from left to right are a Bait & Tackle store, Cobbler's shop, barber shop, the "Corner Tavern", empty lot, and the "Emerald Cafe". Each business has a finished interior and the Emerald Cafe features customers sitting around at tables and the bar watching operating Go-Go Girls on the dance floor in the middle. Built and photographed by Harry C. Rice — Clinton, Maryland



Cass Shay #5 being boosted by Cass Shay #4 heading up a work train just east of Cass, West Virginia — ca. 1980. Photo by Harry C. Rice — Clinton, Maryland.

## MER LOCAL

Official Publication of the  
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA  
A Tax-Exempt Organization

The MER LOCAL is published six times a year. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of MER elected officials. 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 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.

## President's Column

Norm Garner

I hope everyone in the Mid-Eastern Region had a good and safe holiday. As we embark into the New Year I want to announce that we now have a new Business Manager. It is Rita Lynam of the renowned Ray and Rita Model Contest and Arts and Crafts Team. She is taking over the reins from Nelson Garber after his many years of faithful management in this position. On behalf of the MER I know I speak for all of us in sincerely complimenting Nelson for his many years of devoted service in this key position. The new Business Manager's office address is 9 Roosevelt Ave., Wilmington, DE 19804-3044.

As the administrative officers of the MER we often hear critics who say we (i.e., the NMRA) are a one-dimensional organization heavy into HO scale with a few narrow gauge enthusiasts. In the way of refuting this, the October 2000 issue of the Bulletin features an article on a Lionel layout. It's an excellent treatise about Vince and Cindy Capatosta's V&C R.R. It truly illustrates and describes the fine artistry and modeling that can be accomplished in any scale, particularly the larger ones. This is just another way that the NMRA is expanding its efforts to reassure every modeler that no matter what scale you're in, you are encouraged, welcomed and needed as part of the national organization. I would go a step further and say the same is true about regional and divisional participation. Consistent with this, our recent Juniata Junction Convention in Altoona featured several N-scalers who won awards for their excellent workmanship.

For our own benefit, it's going to take all of us to continue promoting our hobby and in order to keep it strong and dynamic. This year I challenge each of you to make a commitment to recruit at least one more person to become a member of the NMRA and also, hopefully, the MER. It would contribute to ensuring that the heritage of our hobby will be sustained for coming generations. We, the NMRA/MER members are the best and only ones who fully realize the profound benefits accrued by the organizational aspects of our wonderful hobby and who can best promote and guide its destiny. Don't just be a team member. Be an active team member.

Norm

I can be contacted on line at [Ngrail@aol.com](mailto:Ngrail@aol.com), by phone at 757-484-0772 or by mail at 3408 Wilshire Rd., Portsmouth, VA 23703.

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## The Trustee's Column

*Eric Dervinis*

The first of October brought a change to the Mid-Eastern Region. Monroe Stewart stepped down after more than six years as your representative on the NMRA board, and I became your new trustee. First, I wish to thank Monroe for serving the region and its members for the past six years. He served on the operations committee and provided his expert assistance to the Howell Day Museum. Monroe will now have more time for his railroad empire except, of course, when I'm calling him for counsel and advice.

Let me introduce myself. I've been involved in various NMRA and MER activities for the past eleven years. I served as the clerk for the Valley Forge Express, spent three years as clerk/paymaster for the Philadelphia Division, two years as assistant to the secretary for the national and three years as the secretary for the MER. Not only have I attended more than 100 meetings but, as secretary I had to pay strict attention all the time. That experience will prove very beneficial in my new position.

Thanks to everyone who voted for me. As your trustee I will work to serve all our members and the hobby as a whole. There are many issues that need to be addressed in the next two years: achievement program, single dues, standards updates, judging, and special interest groups.

In future columns I plan to touch on these important topics involving the NMRA and the future of model railroading. To most effectively complete my duties, I need to hear from you. Whether at conventions, division meets, via email, letter or phone; I want to know what you think. Keep in touch.

### MER Upcoming Conventions

Frazer, PA  
March 29-Apr 1, 2001

Lancaster, PA  
Oct. 5-7, 2001

Wash DC  
Fall, 2002

## Editor's Column

*Art Thomas*

Before long it'll (it'll?) be a stretch to refer to me as "your NEW editor". In fact, this may be the last time I can expect any merciful or forgiving treatment from you readers if I fail to produce. However, while I still have a modicum of "newness" left about me, I might as well make a little confession. I like pictures; lots of them. The more the better, either prototype or modeling, especially the panoramic ones of railroad action. Whoever it was that said a picture is worth ten thousand words sure knew what he was talking about (I know, I know. I ended that last sentence with a preposition). You've undoubtedly noticed that there haven't been many pictures in the first three issues of the LOCAL with which I've been involved. Sure, the immediate past issue (Nov - Dec 2000) included a lot of photos from the Juniata Junction contests. Ron Baile, Ray Fisher and, most of all, the fine work of our publisher Clint Hyde, are responsible for them. But those weren't action shots and most of them, except for the modules, dioramas, and some structures, weren't very panoramic.

I don't know about you but the most interesting articles I find in NMRA Bulletins and commercial model railroad magazines are the ones showing and discussing selected layouts and unique models built by members (including structures, scenery, and details). I'd like to start including similar articles as regular features in each of our LOCALs, but with one exception. Our stories would only feature models and pikes currently existing within the MER. It wouldn't be unreasonable to reserve at least twenty-five percent of each newsletter for layout and model pictures and associated descriptive narrative (articles, captions, etc.), possibly coupled with Achievement Program progress when appropriate. However, to accomplish this initiative two fundamental ingredients are obviously desired and needed. First, a consensus of the membership concerning this objective would be helpful in ensuring that this is the type of thing the majority of you want in your magazine. Either send a note by USPS or an e-mail to share your opinion with me. Second, and most importantly, material will be needed in the form of either brief or lengthy write-ups of your layouts or models along with descriptive discussions about them. I'm sure that practically everybody will be in favor of routinely publishing such articles. The basic question is how much of the LOCAL should be devoted to them? Take a minute to share your thoughts and opinions; your concurrence or objections.

A few photos from the layout of our “Made in the MER” correspondent, Ed Kuser...

The Eagle Crest and Keystone R.R. is a fictitious eastern Pennsylvania bridge route. Motive power is primarily a mix of EC&K and Reading, with rolling stock limited to companies which operated in the Keystone state and to individual modelers’ and model railroad clubs’ fictitious railroads. The following are some “on site” photographs taken at various places along the right of way.



Anyone who knows amateur baseball in the Keystone State knows that Boyertown is known for its championship teams—especially in AL baseball. So, of course there had to be a team in Helarwy, and there's always a good crowd on hand to make certain the umpires are unbiased!

The skyline of Panelton Ridge rises beyond the arch truss bridge spans. Although appearing to be a busy industrial area, this tony yard is, as yet, undeveloped and is simply a “holding area” for otherwise unused structures and items, such as the overhead crane and the abandoned Eagle Crest freight station. The skyline of Panelton Ridge was cut from a college poster—in the prototype world, the buildings are in Boston.





The location is the anthracite region of the Keystone State sometime just before the onset of the great depression. EC&K 4-6-0 camelback #456 coasts past the busy Stanley Mines #3 complex where coal is king.

Ah, the liberty one can take with freelancing a railroad. In actuality, the mine is a Colorado gold mine (a gift from my stepson), but the mine-head fit this spot just fine, and the mine must have provided a good living for the owner. Certainly, in the late 1880s, the picket-fenced German I-house was not the typical working-man's home.



Modeling Pennsylvania landscape is easy. The scenery shown here starts with a painted sky, pasted on mountains, some dried weeds for foliage, and a harvested field made of clipped fake fur glued to the insulating foam base at the base of the large hillside, which is forested with balled pillow-stuffing dipped in ground foam. At the very top of the hill is a wheat field ready for harvesting.

# NMRA InfoPaks

By John A. Dorsam  
Past President - MER

[Ed: This is a story written by one of our former MER Presidents, John A. Dorsam. It's intended to motivate our MER Members into getting involved in helping the NMRA to develop InfoPaks -- supplemental information that provides tips and "how to" descriptions (narrative and pictorial) of useful modeling procedures. It also relates some of the trials and tribulations John has confronted during his past forty-five years or so of sharing his talents with the hobby. Nobody has ever said that unselfish contributing of one's time comes without occasional setbacks. But the most important thing, if and when setbacks do occur, is how they're handled and how well the volunteering individual perseveres with the task at hand. To think that any effort is going to be successful without an occasional modicum of difficulty is naive. With what is undoubtedly more model railroading expertise in the MER than in any similar sized group in either the U.S. (or the world for that matter), our membership stands in an enviable position to fulfill the adage that "It is much more rewarding to give than to receive." Perhaps John's experiences will persuade some of you to get involved in this aspect of our hobby and share your expertise just as he has. Here's what he had to say: ]

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Did you know that the MER is active in the production of the NMRA Infopaks? Well, we are; or, more correctly, some of us have been. It all goes back to 1956 shortly after I joined GATSME Lines in Fort Washington, Pennsylvania and some of us got together for a convention in Elizabeth, New Jersey. That's also when I joined the NMRA. It was shortly after this that the NMRA published one of its first Data Sheets - the one on Switch Machines.

In my opinion, I didn't think that those early data sheets had given rotary-type switch machines the credit they deserved. I shared my concerns with Data Sheet Chairman Bob Johnson and, coincidentally, so did another fellow with similar concerns. The other person was John Seehaver of Detroit. Bob Johnson shared our letters with one another and issued this challenge, saying, "Okay, if you two guys think you can do better . . . be my guest!" So John and I undertook the task and quickly began to find out how much work was involved in producing a data sheet. I hasten to add that during the ensuing years all three of us have become good friends. We have jointly produced Data Sheets both as primary authors and as co-authors. As a trio, we had excellent backgrounds for doing this. Bob was an executive in a printing company, John was a Rules Examiner on the New York Central and I was a supervisor with an electric power company.

From this modest beginning we jump ahead thirty-seven years. By 1993 the NMRA had reorganized the Data Sheet Committee and the new Chairman had begun a very aggressive program. As part of it I was asked to develop a

data sheet on Relays. This appealed to me because I was deeply involved with such devices at work and also on the GATSME Lines. I like to think that the NMRA as a whole reaped many benefits from the knowledge and experience I brought from the hobby and from my employment. As it turned out the Data Sheet about Relays became a "work in progress" for about six years! It is the only totally new D7 Data Sheet. Typically, a completely new subject can be finished in about two years or less. But this one was impacted and delayed by a rash of unforeseen setbacks. First, a number of changes were made on the Data Sheet Committee. Then the Chairman began suffering a long and serious illness which was followed by his unfortunate demise. This was compounded by ongoing difficulties in contacting his family in trying to retrieve his Data Sheet records. It was beginning to look as though it would be necessary to begin the project all over again from scratch. We had almost given up hope of ever being able to complete the effort when out of the blue the missing records were finally retrieved. Mine had survived my move into a retirement community and one day I noticed a phone number pencilled on one of the sheets. I took a chance and guess what? Bingo! The wife of the now deceased former chairman answered the call. I explained what we were searching for and she found the rest of the records and sent them to me. Eventually the long lost information was turned over to Pete Moffett (NMRA Achievement Program Chairman) who was assembling the NMRA Infopaks and the rest is history. Project completed!

As said at the beginning, my involvement with the DataPaks initiative began in 1956. It's hard for me to believe but I've now been a member of the DataPak Committee for forty-four years! During that time, among other things, I also upgraded the two Data Sheets on Meters. Originally, back in 1969, I had been the co-author of these sheets but since then many technological advances have taken place in this field. Also, thirty years ago most hobby shops carried and sold meters suitable for model railroads. Now I don't know of a single shop that has them in their inventory. Radio Shack stocks a 1.5v DC meter, which is the most useful size. I also served as a "reviewer" on some other updated D7 (Electrical) sheets for which I was the original author back in the 60's. It also seems that no one builds his own power-pack any more. GATSME LINES still uses about 10 power packs with meters that were built back in the late 50's and early 60's.

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[Ed: Although this has primarily been an historical narrative, its purpose is to motivate you into becoming involved in the DataPak program or other such endeavors for the perpetuation of the hobby and vitality of the MER and the NMRA. Every month more and more of our "old timers" are finding it necessary to pass their wands to the younger swifter runners. Ask yourself if you'll be one of those who keeps alive these beneficial projects of the hobby or if you're just "going along for the ride" as long as somebody else does it? ]

# Guess Who's on the Internet?

by Ron Baile

While at the MER's Juniata Junction Convention in Altoona in October I grabbed the opportunity to tour the Norfolk Southern's car shops in nearby Hollidaysburg. There I saw a newly painted Union Pacific Railroad locomotive. I don't model the UP but it was pretty so I photographed it anyway. Then I really looked at it. I was fascinated by the fact that they had the address of their web site printed on the cab. Just under the numbers were the letters UPRR.COM. Customers can go to this site and attempt to track their shipments. The UP's employment situation can be checked out there also.

I generally dislike the Internet. It contains too much trash that has a way of insidiously getting into the way of the "good stuff". Besides, it tends to take my time away from my hobby. As luck would have it though, it was raining one workday and I couldn't go outside on my lunch hour to watch trains as I usually do. So instead, I decided I would check out UP's web site and I'm glad I did. They actually have on it a color chart featuring paint chips from their depots dating as far back as 1887. If you want to know what color those windows were really painted in that black and white photo click on paint chips. Of added interest to any modeler is the UP's photo collection. These photos are from the UP archives. Yes, the depots shown are probably as clean as they ever would be having been spruced up for

their official photos but despite that it seemed to be business as usual. While you can download them, all the photos and posters they have listed are also for sale. I thought they were rather pricey but I guess they have to pay for that third track across Nebraska some way.

A particular photo that really caught my eye was a shot of the Hays, Kansas depot. The order board is set to the stop position. There are three visible freight doors and there are double stacks in the picture (i.e., milk cans). I wasn't aware they were stacked the way they're shown. Then there's Minidoka, Idaho. While you don't really see the entire station you do get to see how the people were dressed who are standing on the platform. Wow, look at the coaling tower straddling the two tracks as well as the position of the huge water tower. The placement of the light poles and the fencing all add up to an invaluable modeling reference regardless of which railroad you model. My favorite though is the depot at Abilene, Kansas. This giant-sized mansard-roofed beast cries out to be kitbashed from several kits of mansard roof houses. All you'd have to do would be to add windows and chimneys until it's the right length. This style of architecture was used by many railroads.

Perhaps I was premature in my disregard for the Internet. Maybe your favorite railroad has a web site that will be able to provide you with valuable modeling information. Nah, probably not. But go ahead and take a peek at UPRR.COM anyway. Along with everything else it contains they also advertise coffee mugs for sale too. Pleasant surfing!

## Mid-Eastern Region Web Page Policy

### FOREWORD

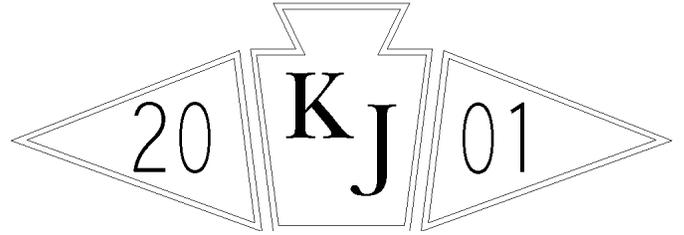
Recognizing the importance of the Internet, the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. resolves to provide a web site with current information on the organization and its activities.

### POLICY

1. The President will appoint a webmaster to create and manage the official web site of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc.
2. The web site will not contain copyrighted or trademarked material without the express written consent of the owner.
3. All content is to be related to the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) and its goals as a model railroad fraternal organization. Nothing offensive or obscene will be posted to the site.
4. The MER site may contain hyperlinks to other model railroad related sites, but the MER will be in no way responsible for the content on them.
5. The MER site will be copyrighted by the MER and all of the contents are the property of the region. The region reserves the right to move the site onto its own server in the future.
6. The President will review the web site for compliance with our goals. He will direct the webmaster to remove/change any portion of the site that does not conform to our policy.
7. The webmaster will update the link on the NMRA Region page to keep it current at all times.

Effective October 5, 2000.

# Keystone Junction '01



Mid Eastern Region, NMRA

Frazer, PA

March 29 - April 1, 2001

Hosted by the Philadelphia Division

The Philadelphia Division is proud to sponsor the Spring 2001 Mid-Eastern Regional Convention which will be held on March 29<sup>th</sup> - April 1<sup>st</sup> in the beautiful and historic Great Valley of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Just a short drive from Interstate 95 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike, Keystone Junction '01 will be hosted by the Sheraton Great Valley Hotel.

Visit our web site at: <http://www.kj2001.com>

**Clinics:** KJ 2001 will feature clinics that will cover a broad spectrum of modeling and prototype interests. In addition, there will be a hands-on extra fare (\$10.00) DCC clinic on Friday morning. This will be an opportunity to work with various systems and see how easy and realistic DCC is. **Check the web site for an updated clinicians schedule.**

**Prototype Tours:** There are many opportunities for you to view the prototype at KJ 2001. These include: SEPTA's Frazer Shops, Lukens Steel in Coatseville and PECO's coal fired Eddystone power plant.

**Fan Trips:** 30th Street Station Tour: This tour will include a train ride to 30th Street station and a walking tour of this monument to the mighty Pennsylvania Railroad. The tour will include AMTRAK's CETC control center.

New Hope & Irvland Railroad: This trip will include a tour of the railroad's shops and equipment collection, a ride on your choice of two steam runs plus, as an added bonus during the bus trip, four lucky names will be drawn for a cab ride in the locomotive!

**Home Layout Tours:** KJ '01 will feature over 35 of the areas finest home layouts, both large and small, including several that have been featured recently in the model railroad press. Registrants will provide their own transportation.

**Buffet:** Rather than have a traditional banquet as we've come to know them, KJ '01 will feature a come-when-you-want, with whom you want, and eat all you can eat "Taste of Philly" buffet - featuring Tastykakes, soft pretzels, and real Philly Health food. Awards activities are planned to begin at the conclusion of the buffet.

**Off-Line Activities:** Exciting off-line activities are planned so bring your spouse and kids along for a memorable weekend. Among the activities planned are: Longwood Gardens, QVC Studio Tour, Brandywine River Museum, New Hope, and the King of Prussia Mall.

**Contests:** Judged contests, including the normal classes and the Blue Lantern Award for branch line equipment, will be held at KJ '01. We encourage all members to bring out their best works and enter them into the various categories.

**Auctions:** There will be a silent auction beginning Thursday evening and running until approximately noon on Saturday. Then, after the Awards Presentation in the evening, a live auction will be held.

**Operations CallBoard:** Continuing the tradition of hands-on activities, the Philadelphia Division is pleased to offer its extremely popular Operations CallBoard. Registrants will be assured of an opportunity to operate one of several local high quality layouts. First time operators are particularly encouraged to participate in this activity.

**On-Site Train Show:** We are pleased to once again include an on-site Sunday Train Show with over 70 dealer tables. The show, sponsored by the Philly Division, will be open to convention attendees for one hour before the general public is admitted. It will also include our signature Kids Korner, a place to bring the kids for various children's activities while you shop for trains! And, best of all, it's FREE to all convention registrants.

THURSDAY  
March 29, 2001

# Keystone Junction 2001—current schedule

4:00 PM	Registration Opens	Lobby
4:00 PM	Contest Room Opens	Windsor
4:00 PM	Auction Room Opens	Cambridge
6:00 to 10:00 PM	Home Layout Tours	
6:30 PM	Clinic Session One	Astoria, Oxford N & S,
7:00 PM	Company Store Opens	Lobby Room 1
7:00 PM	Door Prize Room Opens	Lobby Room 2
8:00 PM	Clinic Session Two	Astoria, Oxford N & S

FRIDAY March 30, 2001		
8:00 AM	Registration Opens	Lobby
8:30 AM	Clinic Session Three	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster
9:00 AM	Company Store Opens	Lobby Room 1
9:00 AM	Door Prize Room Opens	Lobby Room 2
9:00 AM	Auction Room Opens	Cambridge
9:00 AM	Contest Room Opens	Windsor
9:00 AM	Longwood Gardens, Brandywine River, QVC Tours	
9:30 AM	Amtrak C-TAC Tour Departs	
10:00 AM	Clinic Session Four	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster
1:00 PM	Clinic Session Five	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster.
1:00 PM	Longwood Gardens, Brandywine River, QVC Tours	
2:00 PM	SEPTA Frazer Shop Tour Departs	
2:30 PM	Clinic Session Six	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster
4:00 PM	Clinic Session Seven	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster
6:00 PM	Operations Call Board Departs	
6:00 to 10:00 PM	Home Layout Tours	
6:30 PM	Clinic Session Eight	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster
8:00 PM	Clinic Session Nine	Astoria, Oxford N& S, Westminster
9:00 PM	Company Store, Contest, Auction, Door Prize Closed	

SATURDAY March 31, 2001		
8:00 AM	Registration Opens	Lobby
8:00 AM	Operations Callboard Departs	
8:30 AM	Clinic Session Ten	Astoria, RegencyS, Westminster
8:30 AM	New Hope Tour Departs	
9:00 AM	Eddystone Power Station Tour Departs	
9:00 AM to Noon	Home Layout Tours	
9:00 AM	Company Store Opens	Lobby Room 1
9:00 AM	Door Prize Room Opens	Lobby Room 2
9:00 AM	Auction Room Opens	Cambridge
9:00 AM	Contest Room Opens	Windsor
10:00 AM	Clinic Session Eleven	Astoria, Regency S, Westminster
Noon	Contest Room Closes for Judging	Windsor
Noon	On-Site Layout Opens	Oxford N & S
1:00 PM	Clinic Session Twelve	Astoria, Regency S, Westminster
1:00 PM	Auction Room Closes for Settlement	Cambridge
1:00 PM	Operations Callboard Departs	
2:00 PM	Door Prize Room Closes for Drawing	Lobby Room 2
2:30 PM	Clinic Session Thirteen	Regency S & Westminster
3:00 PM	Company Store Closes	Lobby Room 1
4:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Taste of Philly Buffet	Regency N & Astoria
7:00 PM	Door Prizes, Guest Speakers & Live Auction	Regency
9:00 PM to 11:00 PM	Silent Auction Pick-up	Cambridge
9:00 PM to 11:00 PM	Contest Room Pick-up	Windsor
9:00 PM to 11:00 PM	Door Prize Pick-up	Lobby Room 2

SUNDAY April 1, 2001		
9:00 AM	Clinic Session Fourteen	Westminster
10:00 AM	Layout Open	Oxford N & S
10:00 AM	Train Show Opens (Convention attendees only)	Regency/Astoria/Windsor/Cambridge
10:30 AM	Clinic Session Fifteen	Westminster
11:00 AM	Train Show Opens, General Public	
Noon to 5:00 PM	Home Layout Tours Open	
4:00 PM	Layout, Train Show, Convention Closes	

Keystone Junction 2001  
 Mid Eastern Region, NMRA Spring Convention  
 March 29, 30, 31 & April 1, 2001 Frazer, PA

Names as you wish to have them appear on your badges:

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Address Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA# \_\_\_\_\_ MER # \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

	Amount	Total Cost
Full Registration _____	@ \$35.00	_____
Non-NMRA Member Fee _____	@ \$10.00	_____
Spouse _____	@ \$15.00	_____
Children (under 12) _____	@ \$ 5.00	_____
151 Taste-of Philly Buffet (Adult) _____	@ \$20.00	_____
152 Taste-of Philly Buffet (Child) _____	@ \$10.00	_____
153 Optional Box Lunch _____	@ \$ 5.00	_____
301 Septa's Frazier Shops _____	@ \$15.00	_____
302 Amtrak 30th Street Station _____	@ \$10.00	_____
303 NH&I Fan Trip (Adult) _____	@ \$25.00	_____
304 NH&I Fan Trip (Child) _____	@ \$15.00	_____
401 Lukens Steel _____	@ \$25.00	_____
402 PECO's Eddystone Station _____	@ \$15.00	_____
501 Convention Car (Single) _____	@ \$15.00	_____
502 Convention Car (3 Pack) _____	@ \$40.00	_____
503 Additional Convention Pin _____	@ \$ 5.00	_____
504 Convention Shirt _____	@ \$10.00	_____ S M L XL XXL
601 Operations Call Board (Fri-PM) _____	@ \$18.00	_____
603 Operations Call Board (Sat-AM) _____	@ \$18.00	_____
604 Operations Call Board (Sat-PM) _____	@ \$18.00	_____
701 Longwood Gardens (Adult) _____	@ \$20.00	_____
702 Longwood Gardens (Child) _____	@ \$10.00	_____
703 QVC Studio _____	@ \$15.00	_____
704 Brandywine River Museum (Adult) _____	@ \$10.00	_____
705 Brandywine River Museum (Child) _____	@ \$ 7.50	_____
706 New Hope (Adult) _____	@ \$15.00	(No Train Ride)
707 New Hope (Child) _____	@ \$10.00	(No Train Ride)

Total FEES Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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# STOP THOSE ROLLING CARS

By Ron Baile

Many of us tend to try and utilize every square inch of the available benchwork to lay sidings and spurs. We all know that on an operating railroad you can never have too much staging and you can never have too many sidings. I'd like to address the siding issue. Sometimes we manage to shoe-horn a siding into an area that perhaps we shouldn't have. I'm talking about the ones that are built on a slight grade. No, it's not just the boneheads like me who do it. I've seen slanted sidings on some of the best model railroads that I have visited.

It's all in how you deal with the slope. The real railroads often spot a car and wedge a piece of two by four between the wheel and rail. This may not sound like much but it usually does the job of preventing the car from rolling. I believe that it would be quite difficult to duplicate this as you can't really scale down weight, inertia and gravity. The weight of the car just wouldn't be enough to keep a scale piece of lumber wedged between rail and wheel.

If it's not too steep a grade you could model a working derail. The car could just butt up against it to prevent it from rolling. The ones that Sequoia and Alexander make can, with a lot of patience, be made to work. I've seen stiff brush bristles (wallpaper brush bristle works nicely) glued

into a hole between the ties and protruding just above axle level. This hangs up on the axle and prevents the car from rolling while it allows powered trains to pass through. Bill Gruber uses a little mechanical wheel stop that appears to be about a 1/4 inch long piece of brass tubing with a lateral slit in it and a short brass rod "handle" soldered to it. It clips to the rail and keeps cars from rolling down the incline. Painted yellow, they are easy to see.

Some people use a manual anti-gravity device that consists of a brass rod attached to a bell crank (shim brass, piece of tin can, hardboard, etc) which changes the direction of the thrust. These are fairly simple to make and have been covered in the model press more than once. Some years ago, on the Gateway Model RR Club layout, I installed what I referred to as the GAD or Gateway Anti-gravity Device. It was simply a switch machine mounted on a wooden bracket in such a manner that the rod went up and down through a piece of brass tubing force-fitted in a hole through the roadbed. This could then be activated electrically, thus adding flexibility to the original idea. Just don't forget some sort of flashing LED or other warning device to let your operators know that the thing is activated. Let's face it. The politicians may repeal a lot of old laws but they can never repeal the law of gravity.

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## Problems with NMRA Bulletins

The following message was received from William B. Seaver (NMRA Life Member 02469), NMRA Member Air Chairman. It is quoted here in part to keep MER Members abreast with the situation about current NMRA Bulletins. I quote:

"I am sorry to say that everyone's November, December Bulletins and the 2001 calendar are very late. There is a problem with the former printing establishment. Once the new one was identified and selected, the usual start-up problems have been occurring. I do know the November issue should be arriving shortly. I audit the advertising and have received the invoices over a week ago. The advertisers are never billed before the issue is ready for mailing." End of quote.

I might add that the January 2001 issue is also detained at this time. Above quote received by e-mail dated Wednesday, January 3, 2001 at 11:46 A.M. Art Thomas - Ed.

### **Publisher's note:**

Please, when you submit electronic images to be published with an article, send me the highest resolution version you can, I can deal with it much more effectively myself to make it fit, and be sure it will print the best we can achieve.

As was mentioned in the President's column recently, I am also creating MER web-pages.

**<http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/MER/MER.html>**

is the address. As publisher of *The Local*, I get access to stories and photographs of interest to the entire MER, and they will end up on the web-site at some point after being published in *The Local*. Articles like the "Made in the MER" series...

And therefore that web-page policy applies exclusively to me right now...If you're interested in having your article appear on the MER website after publication, let me know, it's very easy for me to do.

— clint hyde, [chyde@cox.rr.com](mailto:chyde@cox.rr.com)

# Detail Sanders

*Peter K Suhmann*

Copyrighted 10/2000

Model building and kitbashing often require that the joints and surfaces be cleaned, filled and sanded. Unfortunately, the “cast on” or applied details limit the size, shape and area of the sanding. The current sanders on the market are often too large or incorrectly shaped to fit the limited area to be sanded. While paging through a wood working catalog, I spotted an electric detail sander with its various sanding platens. My design is based on the device and the sanding platens but you supply the power to move the sanding heads.

The trick was to find a commercially available item that could be adapted to make the platen. I needed a shape that was flat and could be shaped to fit the size of the area in need of sanding and be adaptable to a cheap or readily available handle. Rooting through my shop, I found resin-coated sheetrock nails with large thin heads and long shanks.

To make the sanding platens, (Fig.1) I bent the shank at an angle that would reach the area, place the head flat against the surface and angle the handle away from the model. I shaped the heads by grinding or filing (Fig.2). For a handle, I used a substantial pin vice that was capable of chucking the nail shank.

The next challenge was to attach the various grades of sandpaper, aluminum oxide, or wet/dry papers. The wood-working platens are not rigid but not soft and they adjust to the contours to be sanded. The pad must also be stiff enough to apply even pressure throughout. You need to sand down the high spots but not sand the low spots deeper. The double adhesive faced foam mounting tape is ideal

for this job. I purchase the tape in roll form which is handy for mounting weights to cars and motors to locos. Measure the width of the foam tape and cut strips of sanding material to the same width or just slightly a hair wider. Laminate the sanding material to the adhesive side of the foam.

I find strips of 2 to 3 inches in length laminate more uniformly. Then, cut the laminated strip to the size of the sanding platen. Remove the paper backing that protects the adhesive and apply the piece to the platen. Or, you might apply the uncut piece to the platen and then cut to



Figure 1

shape using the platen as a guide. Chuck the platen shank in a pin vise and sand away. Apply enough pressure to do the job but not load the sandpaper. Short strokes seem to work the best for me. By experimentation you will develop the proper technique.



Figure 2

## “Gauging” Credibility

**C**redibility! When I look at an advertisement in a model railroad magazine or other such hobby-related publication, one of the first things I ask myself before I delve into the details of the products is: Is this vendor credible?

If I see misspelled words, a big red warning sign is raised in my mind. If I see grammatical errors, another large red flag is mentally hoisted. When a vendor cannot even bother to verify that his ad is stated in correct English with the words spelled properly, I become very leery. If he doesn't care enough to present himself in his best light in the advertising window through which the public — his customers — first sees him, how knowledgeable and dependable can he really be? Does he know his products? Can he assist and guide and answer questions? I must assume that he cannot. I can't force myself to trust him. With me, he has no credibility. I'm persuaded to spend my hobby dollars elsewhere.

But then you may say, “Maybe it's not his fault. Perhaps the publisher of the magazine in which he advertised may have caused the error.” True. Publishers, however, have their own credibility to maintain. Newsletters and bulletins of local, regional, and even national hobby organizations have to protect their own image and credibility. Publishers know that if they don't provide credible services to their advertisers, they will wind up with fewer pages in their magazines and lost revenue will result. If the publisher makes an advertising mistake the advertiser then has the option of taking his business elsewhere. There are many competitors available who print error-free copy. By using them the advertiser then protects his own credibility.

Let's take a slightly different tack. There are some terms and definitions in every special interest field, such as model railroading, that have very important and specific meanings. Someone outside the field can be excused for not knowing the subtle details and distinctions. Insiders, however, had better be experts with these terms. (Are vendors insiders? They better be.) Well, maybe vendors don't have to know all the terms, but they should know the top two or three. If they don't, can they be considered credible?

The terms gauge and scale are good examples of terms specific to the model railroading hobby. Near my home, there is a vendor who distributes a card that states: “ALL GAUGES”. When I see this, statement, I think: Oh good, standard and narrow — and do they have something in a wide gauge too?” But the next line on the card is the clincher. It says: “G - O - 027 - HO - N - Z”. This guy doesn't know what he's talking about. He's trying to convince me that he deals in all scales but doesn't know how to tell me. He has lost credibility with me.

Vendors aren't the only ones who misuse the word gauge. Sometimes a supposed hobby “insider” will even express something that, at the very least, causes one to pause and ponder what was really meant, such as: “We cannot afford to ignore anyone, no matter what the gauge.”

Take a look at some of the ads in a major model railroad magazine. You will note that a lot of the reputable advertisers correctly use the term scale when that is what was meant. But not all of them do! (One full page advertiser offers to sell the Walthers “HO Scale Catalog” and the “N & Z Scale Catalog” listing them as the HO Gauge Catalog and the N Gauge Catalog.)

Also, look at the state by state list of dealers in some magazines. Interspersed among the properly worded listings you will all too frequently see many statements such as these:

Complete stock N gauge  
Specializing in HO and N gauge  
Parts for all gauges  
Repair, restore & custom painting - all gauges

Ask yourself, “Would you let one of these vendors repair the pride of your locomotive fleet?”

There are many measures of credibility. Another vendor near my home has a store that smells so bad that the one time I made the mistake of entering it, I couldn't walk back up the aisle fast enough to get out of the building. How could I ever buy anything there without fear that I might contaminate my clean equipment? Incredible!

Obviously, you can pick your own vendor. But the next time you consider to whom you want to hand dollars in support of your model railroad needs, you may first want to gauge that vendor's credibility.



COMPILED BY  
EDWIN C. KUSER



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

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Boyertown, PA 19512  
Telephone 1-610-367-8368  
ECKRY184@aol.com

## Micro-Scale Models, Inc.

Don Reed will tell you he's been a model railroader since he was two. He'll also say that, until ten years ago, it was his relaxation. But now it's his work. However, if you watch his face and eyes as he tells you this you realize his current "work" is really his relaxation.

Don Reed was a businessman in the construction field primarily. Then, ten years ago, he decided he was tired of managing his multiple businesses so he sold them. In order to fill his days he joined some model railroad clubs and spent time working on his own model railroad. But, by his own admission he's: 1) a "structure freak", and; 2) he's a workaholic. That mixture of time, interests and traits led to the start of Micro-Scale Models, Inc.— a one-person business (he doesn't want anything to do with employees these days) creating HO and a few O scale "state of the art craftsman kits."

"Micro-Scale Models are not 'Campbell' kits nor are they 'laser-craftsman' kits," says Reed. They are highly detailed "museum quality" structures that will add to the quality and appearance of a model empire of any size. Reed feels his style and quality of products are equaled by less than a handful of companies around the world and, yes, one of Reed's creations can be found in the Smithsonian Institution — a specially commissioned model of a clothespin factory. But don't let the term "museum quality" squelch your interest. His guiding philosophy is "what's in the box people must be able to be put together. If you can read, you can build the model as well as I did," Reed says proudly. He supports his "anyone can build them" claim citing that his son at age ten (but now in college) took kits and created the finished products. If, at least in part, customer satisfaction equates to ease of construction, i. e., directions which are clear and easy to understand and follow, then Reed must have done a good job for he has sold more than 21,000 kits in ten years with only one complaint. That complaining customer was upset because the windows, which came from a well-known model parts producer, didn't open. Except for adhesive and paint, the kits contain everything needed to create a finished model.

Reed gets his ideas for new products from the world around him. He has a collection of hundreds of photographs of structures that form the basis for product development. Almost as a way of confirming that he is a workaholic he is currently starting production on his sixty-fourth kit. To date only fourteen models are no longer available. The normal "production run" for a model varies from 350 to 1,000 kits, although some have gone as high as 2,000. The most popular models have been those of early gas stations. There are three of those currently available and a fourth is on its way. At any given time, Reed has about 600-800 kits in stock to fill his customers' orders without delay. In the development and quality control process each new model is built from ten to fifteen times. Reed has no difficulty selling his factory-built structures so he's expanding the business into a line of finished, ready-to-use models.

The major part of Micro-Scale models are produced in Reed's home workshop/ warehouse, although he does subcontract for a variety of detail parts with Grandt Line and other manufacturers. The products, along with a variety of glues, paints, roofing and other detail items, are displayed at about 25 shows per year. Among those he usually attends are the scale shows at Timonium and Gettysburg, the large show in Berea, Ohio, and the Great American Train Shows in Fort Washington, Chicago, Syracuse and Springfield, Massachusetts. Only one distributor and a dozen dealers carry his models but everything is available directly from the manufacturer himself.

If your modeling has reached the point where it's time to try a "state of the art craftsman kit" and you haven't seen Micro-Scale Models at a train show or dealer, you can contact Reed directly. The phone/FAX number is (215) 679-3838. If he doesn't answer, his recorder will and he'll then get back to you promptly — that's how I arranged to meet him and get information for this article. You can address mail to

Micro-Scale Models, Inc.,  
1476 Markley Road  
Pennsburg, PA 18073-1924.

# Master Builder - Motive Power

*Conducted by Clare Gilbert*



Pretty impressive title-Master Builder. It conjures up images of a modelmaker hidden away in a basement, equipped with every machine tool known to man: turning wheels, milling chassis and soldering bits and pieces together to create a miniature locomotive that looks like a piece of jewelry and runs like a fine watch. To be sure, there are Master Builders like that, but for everyone like that there are a dozen who are mere mortals like you and I - modelers who still have trouble soldering two pieces of wire together and who don't have anything more complex than a Dremel tool in their machine shop. But they have the desire to become a Master Builder-Motive Power in the NMRA Achievement Program. If you fit into this category, read on. I'll tell you how I attained my Master Builder-Motive Power certificate, and maybe I will inspire you to go after yours.

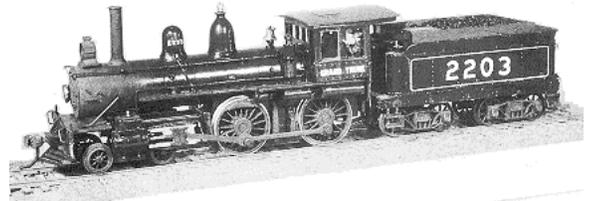
First, obtain a copy of the NMRA Achievement Program Regulations from your region or division AP Manager. Then read them completely and be sure you understand them. If in doubt, ask the Manager to clarify any questions you may have. Remember the first step to winning in anything you do is to fully understand the rules.

What qualifies as motive power?

The rules state, "Motive Power is defined as steam or diesel locomotives, traction motive power or self-propelled vehicle." This includes anything that ran under its own power, on rails, from a track speeder to a Big Boy. You must build three scale models, one of which must be scratchbuilt, the other two can be modified kits.

In my case, I model the Grand Trunk Railway, circa 1920. Since I had to either kitbash or scratchbuild anyway to get the motive power needed, I figured why not go for my AP certificate.

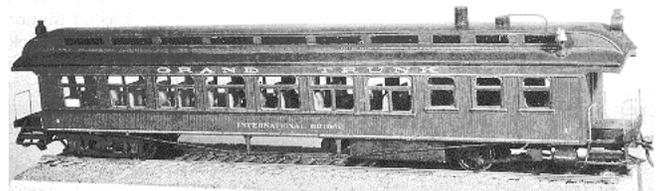
The first model is a GTR 4-4-0, No. 2043. This is built from an AHM Genoa. The chassis and drive are pretty much the way they came from AHM, but the boiler, cab and tender body, as well as most of the details, are scratchbuilt or extensively modified using styrene. Remember, I said I couldn't solder two weeks together. I entered this engine under "crosskit" category.



The second engine is practically all scratchbuilt. It too is a GTR 4-4-0, No. 2203. This engine is built on a modified MDC 2-6-0 chassis, with Bowser drivers. The entire superstructure from the pilot to the rear tender deck is scratchbuilt from styrene. It has features like a working firebox door, complete backhead, scratchbuilt cylinders, domes, stack and air pump, but because the chassis and rods are commercial, it too fits the "crosskit" category.

How could you get that totally scratchbuilt engine to qualify?

Well, I sort of stumbled on the answer accidentally. I was building the steam powered passenger car shown here for my passenger car requirement for Master Builder-Cars, when the division AP Manager informed me that because it was self-propelled, it qualified as motive power, and it was totally scratchbuilt! Aha! I should have read the rules. The car is fully detailed inside and out. The boiler, cylinders, cross heads and main rods, pilots, and even the bell are scratched out of brass. I finally learned to solder. The rest of the car, including the body, roof, steps, frame, passenger truck and details are styrene. The bulkheads and interior walls are wood-painted in the engine room and varnished in the passenger compartment. The windows are real glass. The power unit is a NWSL Flea hidden completely inside the boiler. Drivers are from an old Bachmann O-6-OT that had seen better days. The water tank behind the drivers contains two slabs of sheet lead to give it traction and is removable to get at the motor mounting.



I had a lot of fun building these models. I got the motive power I needed for my layout and earned my Master Builder - Motive Power certificate while doing it. It wasn't nearly as formidable as I had imagined. Would I do it again? You bet. The little bit of extra effort required to make these models merit quality has paid dividends in my other modelmaking. With a little effort, you too can become a Master Builder-Motive Power.

**NOTE: this is a reprint from the NMRA web-pages:  
<http://www.nmra.org/achievement/ms-mbmp.html>**

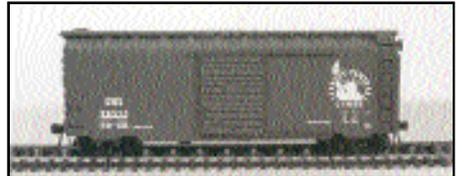
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*Send your Birth Date to the NMRA for a quotation.*

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*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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