

Basic Electricity Primer - Part 2

by Jim Atkinson

(This article is a continuation from Page 15 of the March-April 2001 Local)

Volt- and amp-meters should be a part of every power supply circuit. The ammeter (with a 5-amp range) is put in series with the power circuit. The voltmeter (with a 20-volt range) is put across (in parallel with) the power circuit. These meters help to quickly determine the power situation if a problem occurs (i. e. - an open circuit or a shorted circuit). Connector blocks are needed at junction points. Many modelers use the standard screw-down type connector blocks with the wires hooked around the screws. I prefer the newer Euro-connectors with the wire going straight in and being clamped down in a well insulated hole. I do recommend soldering the ends of multi-strand wire to create a solid end for a better connection. Electrical switches are needed to operate manually controlled circuits.

The simple single-pole/single-throw switch (SP-ST) is used to control a light circuit for example. I recommend a heavy duty version SP-ST switch with a pilot light as a master on-off switch at every panel. The double-pole/double-throw switch (DP-DT) has two common uses.

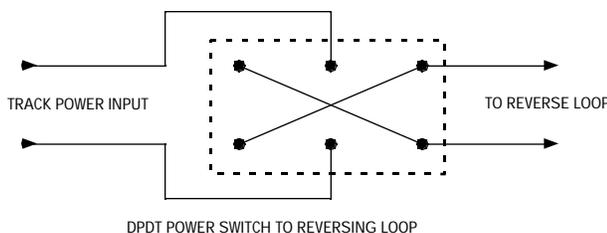


Figure 1 DPDT Power Switch to Reversing Loop

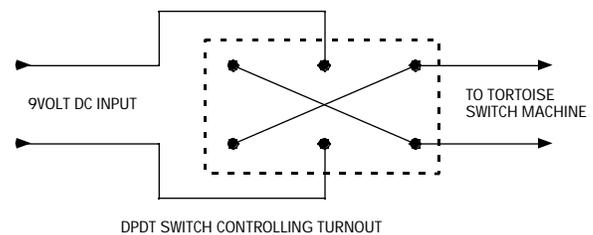


Figure 2 DPDT Switch Controlling Turnout

One is to reverse power separately from the power source for reverse loops and wyes and the second is to control continuous power switch machines like the Tortoise machine. The double-pole/double-throw center off switch (DP-DT-CO) is used to bring power from two sources to one track block. The DP-DT-CO in this situation allows you to have a 'power supply 1 - off - power supply 2' in the three positions. Rotary double throw switches with up to six poles, available from Radio Shack, allow up to six power supplies to one output. This situation can arise

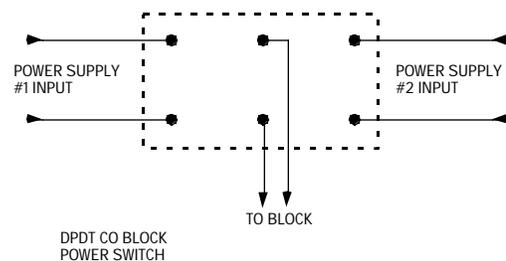


Figure 3 DPDT Block Power Switch

on a large layout where a block(s) might be controlled from multiple panels with multiple power supplies. I use them to

continued on page 6

MER LOCAL

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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.

Keeping In Touch...

by Rita Lynam
MER Business Manager

Let me introduce myself as your new MER Business Manager. I took over this responsibility a few months ago and am dedicated to keeping in close contact with you, the membership. In the way of some background, I was born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware. I migrated to Chicago where I met and married my husband, Ray Bilodeau, our MER General Contest Chairman. We returned to Wilmington when Ray was offered a teaching position at a local college. We've been married for 26 years. In those 26 years, Ray's interests in modeling the Colorado Narrow Gauge and doing extensive railfanning have rubbed off on me. Together we've spent a lot of our time riding trains and meeting fellow modelers around the country.

I have worked in non-profit organizations for 10 of my 33 years business career. I am an Accountant and have worked extensively with computers since 1977. Because of this and my organizational skills, I accepted the position of Business Manager in January. As an integral part of that job I plan to utilize this column to keep you informed of what this office is doing to support the MER and what it's doing to help you at the local level. At our recent regional convention, I met many of the Division Superintendents and other key officers. The main concerns they discussed related to the need for better information about the MER and NMRA Members that reside in the various divisions. I will be compiling and providing these data both to regional management and in all likelihood to you too. In the meantime, if you have any questions about your membership, contact me by phone or at one of my addresses listed on the masthead of this Local.

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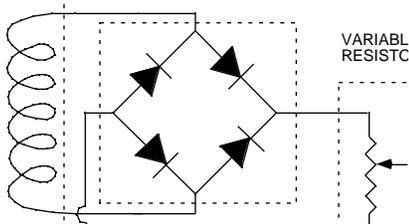
President's Column

Norm Garner

I can be contacted on line at **Ngrail@aol.com**, by phone at 757-484-0772 or by mail at 3408 Wilshire Rd., Portsmouth, VA 23703.

Errata for Vol. 56, No. 2

Page 1: the drawing is wrong. the bottom two diodes need to be reversed:



If you were to build it as originally published, you'd burn up two diodes instantly.

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 Art Thomas, 228 Lovely Rd, Alum Bank, PA 15521. E-Mail to **athomas@bedford.net**

May 12th, 1 - 4 P.M. Trenton Division Meet. Christ Presbyterian Church, Klockner Road, Trenton, NJ. Clinics, layouts, contest. Contact: Michael McNamara - **mikemcnh@earthlink.net**

May 20 - Great Stroudsburg Train Show. Stroudsburg, PA. Contact: Pocono Rail Historical Society. Ph. 570-226-3206.

May 22, 7PM. Carolina Piedmont Division 13 Monthly Division Meeting. Old Apex Seaboard Depot - Contact: Division Clerk, Karl Kleeman at **trainsnc@cs.com** or Ph. 919-782-1533

June 2nd, 10 A.M. - 3 P.M. Southern New Jersey, Garden Layout Tour. Throughout the area. Drive yourself - maps provided. Contact: Michael McNamara at **mikemcnh@earthlink.net**

June 3 - Hamburg Dutch Train Meet - Hamburg, PA. Contact: Ralph Maurer at 610-372-2364.

June 9 and 10 - Hagerstown (MD) Roundhouse Museum - Prototype displays. Contact: Bill Knode, Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum, P.O. Box 2858, 21741-2858. Ph. 301-739-4665.

June 16 - Altoona Model Train Museum Assn./Toy & Model Train Show - Altoona, PA. Contact: Greg Miller at 814-942-1848 or visit the web page at **http://www.trainweb.org/altoonatrain/**

June 23 - 24 - Great Scale Model Train Show - Ellicott City Scale Model R.R. Assn. - Fairgrounds, Timonium, MD. Contact: Howard Zane at 410-730-1036 or **http://www.gsmts.com/**

July 8 - 15 - NMRA National Convention - St. Louis, MO. Contact: Registrar, Gateway 2001, P.O. Box 6846, Chesterfield, MO 63006. Web Page: **www.gatewaynmra.org**

July 24 - 28 - NASG (Natl. Assn. Of S-Gaugers) Annual Convention - Radisson Lackawanna Station Hotel, Scranton (Steamtown), PA - Contact: Jim LaRoche at 570-622-3413; or John Foley at 570-622-3413 or **foley164@ptd.net**. Info. available at **http://www.trainweb.org/steamtown2001/**

July 29 - All Gauge Train Show - Scranton (Steamtown), PA - Natl. Assn. of S Gaugers. Contact: John Foley at 570-622-3413 or **foley164@ptd.net**

October 5 - 7 - MER Fall Convention, Lancaster, PA - Contact: Brian Brandt, 337 Bracken Drive, Lancaster, PA at **trains@redrose.net** or 717-560-9542.

(Thanks to James Ingram [JamesIngram@track2.com] for providing much of the information above.)

Editor's Column

Art Thomas

(This month we have a guest writer for the Editor's Column, Noll Horan, of the Northern Virginia NTRAK Modelers. Noll's article has universal appeal and should serve as a "Clarion Call" for each of us if we are to remain true, not only to the legacy of our hobby but to its enrichment and endowment as well. Read on.)

"Teach Your Children" by Noll Horan—MER Director

This hobby we call model railroading is amazing. So many different things can be associated with it including rock 'n' roll. For those of us who can remember back to those infamous "hippie days", there were the sing-along harmonies of Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young (the good ole CSN&Y). In particular, on the album "Deja Vu" (yes, that seldom seen black vinyl disc), was the song "Teach Your Children". David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Neil Young sang of the importance of teaching, training, and nurturing your offspring. The song goes on to say that the children reach a stage in their lives where they "teach your parents well".

This brings me to the point of all this. WE NEED TO TEACH THE CHILDREN, and the parents for that matter. Northern Virginia NTRAK was recently one of the participants at the Saunder's Middle School Boy Scout weekend program during the weekend of March 17-18th. Along with several other club layouts on display were NVNTRAK Member David Freshwater's OLI presentation, structures and freight car clinics. These were all part of the Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Program.

Folks, I was appalled. This generation and I'm sure future ones are being held hostage by a keyboard and a mouse. Some of these kids had no clue as to how to read kit instructions or assemble a simple Bachmann Snap-Fit gas station or train station. Donated by Bachmann, these HO kits were basically four walls, a base and a roof which all snapped together—no glue required. I never saw so many blank faces at one time as I did when these scouts, those who at least figured it out, opened their kit boxes. Granted, not all of them were interested in model railroading. I'm not interested in animal husbandry either, but you got a free toy. Just seems to me that even if you weren't into structures the challenge of assembly would be enough to pique the interest. I guess it's just simpler to key in or scroll to some www.time-waster.com. And that goes for some of the parents as well.

That's where we modular clubs and modelers have to take the initiative. We as club members are out there in the public eye, not just to run trains, but to educate as well. We need to take that extra step to answer or even ask the questions. If we don't have the answer, I'm sure there is a member nearby who can. Within these organizations is a cornucopia of knowledge regarding railroading—both model and prototype.

Let's face it, folks, this hobby ain't growing. The NMRA has held steady at about 22,000+ members for several years now. We modular-types are out there with our displays as opposed to home layouts which few people get an opportunity to visit. The modular clubs have the expertise to educate so in the lyrics of CSN&Y—let us teach the children and the parents.

And a tip of the ol' engineer's hat to that burned-out, middle-aged hippie, Neil Young, for pumping his funds into Lionel to keep it afloat. Who knows where Lionel would be today if Mr. Young hadn't done his part in teaching the children. I still remember my first Christmas and that 6-8-6 running around in circles under the tree. It's up to us to keep that tradition alive, regardless of scale. (And yes, I still have the album. *[your publisher went so far as to attend a CSNY concert a year ago, their first tour in 25 years!]*)

Learning to Judge

by Dick Landt

Instead of sitting in on two or three clinics at the next MER convention, how would you like to spend that time one-on-one with a Master Model Railroader talking about model building and finishing techniques? That's exactly what I did at the Altoona Junction convention. How did I arrange that? By volunteering to serve as an apprentice judge for the model contest.

At this convention, Contest Chairman Ray Bilodeau Jr. invited five individuals to begin learning the skills of judging models. The MER is interested in training judges so that they do not become a scarce commodity. Our task started at 9:30 on Saturday morning. I was teamed with Dave Renard, a Master Model Railroader who was responsible for judging "painting and finishing". I was given a handout prepared by the NMRA that provides a set of guidelines for judging models and includes specific items to consider when evaluating finishing. Each of the other four requirements of construction, detail, conformity and scratchbuilding each have similar written judging criteria. There are two basic questions to answer when judging a model; 1) what did the modeler try to do (how difficult was the model or technique), and; 2) how well did he do it? The guidelines include a chart that assists the judge in scoring the model based on these criteria .

At first I simply reviewed the modeler's notes provided with the model and then watched and listened. Dave explained what he saw that was well done and what could be improved. He first looked at all of the models entered in a given model category, for example steam engines, and recorded a rough score for each model. Then he went back over all the models to make sure that the scores were consistent with how he would rank the models. Finally he wrote comments for each model to help explain the score.

As the day progressed, we each did our own evaluation and compared notes. It was interesting to see that in most cases the guidelines put us in the same ballpark on scoring. Although at this point I was judging on the impression that the model gave, Dave was able to explain the technique that the modeler used or give me pointers on alternate methods that could have been used in building the model. If you are familiar with the "Modeling with the Masters" program, this was like a mini-version of the program. How often do you get this opportunity? Hopefully, Dave enjoyed the experience as much as I did.

Did this one day qualify me to judge on my own? No. But I hope that over a period of time to be able to repeat the experience and eventually be qualified to judge. I certainly benefited from the experience. Here is what I gained: I made new friends, I learned some new painting and finishing techniques, I gained a better understanding of the judging process, and I got a close look at some very good models and was motivated to improve my own skills.

If you have an interest in model contests, the AP program or judging, you might want to consider giving it a try as I did. Just contact Ray Bilodeau at 1-302-636-0888 and let him know you're interested. I'll vouch for the fact that it can be an enjoyable learning experience.

Basic Electricity

manually control some three light station signals too. Buildings are commonly lighted by bulbs in the 12 to 16 volt range. I like to use 16 volt bulbs with a 12 volt (AC or DC) power source, to extend their life and give a more pleasing lighting effect. For signals, I use T1 LEDs. They work off of a 9 to 12 volt DC source at a constant brightness. They **MUST** be used in series with a 680 ohm resistor. They will burn out without the resistor. Used properly, LEDs have a very long life and use little power. Large T1 3/4 LEDs make nice panel lights and they come in a variety of colors. Again, don't forget the 680 ohm resistor in series with the LED. The resistor literally eats power, allowing the use of lower voltage items (like LEDs in series with it) in a circuit with voltage too high for that item. There are several types of quality switch machines that can be used. I prefer the Tortoise because (1) it mounts under the table, (2) it's a slow motion machine, (3) it's virtually indestructible, (4) it's a positive pressure machine and (5) it includes a pair of built in relay points useful for panel and signal lights and powering switch points.

The multi-meter is a tool that can be very useful. This meter is vital for tracing problems while wiring and during operation of your layout. A multi-meter can help find open or shorted circuits, measure AC or DC voltage, determine positive and negative power, measure current (amps), and measure resistance (ohms). A small inexpensive meter works as well as an expensive one. Wire strippers also come in handy when wiring panels and blocks.

Before you progress too far on the layout you should install proper overhead lighting, a drop ceiling if appropriate, and wall receptacles spaced about 8' apart around the layout room. This can be very difficult to do once your track and scenery are in place. Any special overhead lighting should be done beforehand as well. For the receptacle that powers the layout, add an on-off wall switch with a small red indicator light. This provides one switch control for the entire layout. It also has a warning light to provide a reminder to cut the power when a session is finished. If you are building a large layout I recommend running a 120 volt 15 amp AC circuit around your entire framing, including strategically placed lights on cheap pull string bases, and installing receptacles every six to eight feet. All layout power can be on this circuit too. The improved lighting will be appreciated when working under the scenery as will the receptacles for plugging in electric hand tools. Wiring a layout requires a major amount of time underneath it. So, one last 'tool' to consider is a homemade 'low rider' chair on rollers. It can take a bad situation and actually make it comfortable. A cheap old kitchen chair angled back on a piece of plywood with rollers works for me.

The 120 volt AC wiring needs to be done strictly following the standard electrical code. Hire a licensed electrician if necessary.

Also keep areas of wiring connections and panel areas as accessible as possible. I designed my panels to tilt down, giving me a table like work surface, where I can work comfortably with decent lighting. Like trackwork, the more difficult that wiring is to access, the more problems you tend to have. I route 120 volt AC to a master switch with an indicator light at each panel and from there go to a four-outlet receptacle box. All power supplies for that panel are plugged in there. In this way I have only one switch control for that panel.

Do all wiring with the circuit power turned off to prevent a shocking experience. Be careful not to short out any wall transformer supplies. They burn out quickly when shorted. A fuse added in the output circuit could help prevent that problem. Limit exposed wires to a minimum. Insulate connections as much as possible, especially if they are not anchored down. Exposed wires are also a potential short circuit.

Proper soldering is essential. For heavy work, like the #14 gauge wire, a soldering gun ranges from practical to essential. For the smaller gauge wires and electronic components a 30-watt soldering pencil is best. Make sure your iron is hot, hot enough to do the job properly, and the surfaces to be soldered are clean. A tiny touch of paste flux on the surfaces will ensure a good solder joint. Using 60-40 solder, touch the iron to the solder to deposit some melted solder on the iron. Holding the two surfaces to be soldered together, touch the iron to them until the solder flows onto both. This should only take a couple of seconds; short enough to prevent heating to adjoining items. Withdraw the iron and let the solder set. The finished product should be solid, smooth, and shiny. If it's rough and/or dull it may be weak. You may want to solder every rail joint to prevent open circuits from occurring in the future.

If a problem occurs during operation, trouble shooting is necessary. If your engine stops, a check of the power supply meters will indicate the problem. Voltage normal - amps zero: the problem is probably an open circuit at the engine or the track under it. Voltage low - amps high: there is a short / look for a derailment or the train entering a block with the wrong power supplied to it. If you still can't find the problem, turn off blocks one at a time until the problem disappears. The problem is in the last block turned off. This works for open-circuits and short circuits. Your multi-meter can be used to trace an open circuit too. Using the DC voltage scales (set for 25 or 50), check connections and track to find where the power stops reaching. Your problem is

HOW DO I HOST A CONVENTION?

This is a re-print of a LOCAL article published several months ago. Why? Because we have only one convention “in the bag” right now! We have nothing firmly scheduled after October 2001. So come on folks, take the plunge—host a convention. It's a lot of work, but it's a blast!

OK, you ask, what's first? Well, actually it's pretty simple. First, you need to make a phone call or send an email to your MER Executive Convention Committee (ECC) Chairman, Bob Martin, who will be glad to explain what's involved in hosting a Regional convention. A successful convention requires about 18-24 months of planning effort and a core committee of four to six dedicated people. Of course when you get closer to the convention date, you'll need to expand your core committee a bit. Of course, a hotel is required. It must have at least 150 rooms, four to six meeting rooms for seminars, and a banquet room. As local host chairman you will not contract with the hotel. Bob will sign the hotel contract on behalf of the MER so you don't have to worry about financial liability. Any other contracts such as for buses will be the responsibility of the host committee. The MER will stand behind your committee financially as long as you comply with the terms of the MER agreement which will be given to you. You will also be given a convention handbook. It contains detailed instructions on what is expected of your committee and what you need to do to have a successful convention. Bob Martin will meet with you and your committee during the planning process and provide advice and guidance.

The MER holds two conventions each year—one in the spring and one in the fall. We try to alternate the location between northern and southern MER whenever possible. Right now we're looking for locations for the Spring 2002 convention and beyond. If you're interested, contact Bob Martin at 717-848-3640 or at cprbross@aol.com.

Bob Martin - Convention Chairman

continued from page 6 **Basic Electricity**

between the last powered place and your train. The power supply needs to be “on” for this check. My most common problem has been solder joints breaking loose at panel switches and at very small panel light wires, despite my efforts at solid soldered joints. If I get an open circuit indication or a faulty panel light I look at my panels first. At least with my tilt-down panels it easy to do. I have had a ‘wire to rail’ solder joint break loose too. That's the second place I look for open circuit problems.

This concludes my “*Basic Electricity Primer*”. I hope it gives you a better understanding of electricity as it relates to your modeling endeavors. In subsequent issues of the Local I will discuss “*LEDs - Little Marvels*”, “*Simple Signaling with LEDs*”, “*Semaphore Signals - Construction*”, “*Semaphore Signals - Installation and Control*”, and “*The Right Tool*”.

(Note. Congratulations to Jim Atkinson for his article in the April 2001 NMRA Bulletin on the subject of Plaster Rocks. It's well-done, well-illustrated, and informative. All MER Members are encouraged to read it. Editor).

MER Upcoming Conventions

Lancaster, PA
October. 5-7, 2001

Richmond, VA (tentative)
Spring, 2002

Washington, DC (tentative)
Fall, 2002

National Model Railroad Association Achievement Program

Introduction

In simple terms, the Achievement Program (AP) is a travel guide, to help you on your journey through the world of model railroading. The AP also provides incentive to learn and master the many crafts and skills necessary in the hobby of model railroading. With the completion of each category, you will be issued a certificate acknowledging your achievement.

The AP requirements are a set of standards, but they can also serve as a set of guideposts for those who are new, near-new, and not-so-new to the hobby. Not because they lead to some sort of official pat-on-the-back, but because they are a source of ideas for projects that can help us learn to become better modelers.

Briefly, the AP is a system of requirements for demonstrating a superior level of skill in various aspects of our hobby. It covers not only building various types of models, but also building other things which are important to the hobby, such as scenery, structures, track work, and wiring. It also recognizes service to the hobby and the NMRA, which are important as well.

I hope that you will soon find just how easy it is to participate in the Achievement Program, and if you are not yet involved start you off on the right foot. Please visit the AP Staff Roster page to find contact information for your Regional AP Manager.

Master Model Railroader

An NMRA member qualifies as a Master Model Railroader when he or she has obtained at least seven of the eleven Achievement Certificates provided that he or she has earned at least one Achievement Certificate in each of the four areas of the Regulations. Earning the title of Master Model Railroader is the ultimate goal for many participants in the Achievement Program.



Golden Spike Award

Some people may be reluctant to participate in the AP, because the rules seem difficult to understand. The following pages explain each of the different categories in the AP, and what the exact requirements are.

If you are new to the AP, the NMRA recommends that you take a look at the Golden Spike Award. Although not an actual AP category its requirements are structured along the same lines.



Requirements for Completion

Basic to each Achievement Program category are specific requirements pertinent to that category, these requirements are described in detail on the following pages.

The following requirements are pertinent to all categories. Each member who has been granted an Achievement Certificate must:

- Have completed all of the requirements for that category
- Be a current NMRA member at the time of requesting certification.
- Request certification on the official AP Statement Of Qualification form (SOQ) and submit two copies to the AP Manager of the Region (By way of the Divisional or Area Manager.) in which the member currently resides.

Note: Any member who resides outside their "Home" Region, for less than six months of the year, and who participates in the second region's contests, or has Merit Judging done there, but wants the certificate credited to the "Home" Region, can submit the SOQ to the second region's AP Manager with explanations.

- Submit a typed or legibly printed SOQ and the required supplementary attachments.

Note: Association Official, Association Volunteer, and MMR Categories specifically provide that the SOQs may be initiated by others.

- Include on or with the SOQ all of the following:
 - Evidence of technical or service accomplishment.
 - Attachments of all supplementary material necessary to fully meet the stated requirements of the category.
 - Attachment of Merit Award Certification forms if required.
 - Certification by the Regional Manager.

Categories

Model Railroad Equipment

Master Builder - Motive Power.



Master Builder - Cars.



Settings

Master Builder - Structures.



Master Builder - Scenery.



Master Builder - Prototype Models.



Engineering and Operation

Model Railroad Engineer - Civil.



Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical.

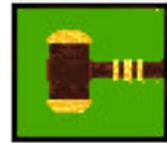


Chief Dispatcher



Service to the Hobby

Association Official



Association Volunteer



Model Railroad Author



Other information available from this web-site...

Definitions of many of the AP terms can be found on the Definitions page.

All available online Achievement Program forms (as well as Contest Entry/Judging forms) can be found on the Online forms page

For in depth information regarding AP and Contest Judging parameters take a look at the Judging Guidelines pages.

Additional helpful interpretations are available within category specific articles converted from The Bulletin series "The Masters" This series further explains Category requirements, and what it takes to earn an Achievement Certificate.

Bill Porter's Achievement Program Checklist is available online. Print out the checklist and use it to keep track of what you've accomplished.

For more information about the Achievement Program, contact the National Manager: Pat Harriman, MMR phbay@aol.com. Or find contact information for your Regional AP Manager in the AP staff roster (available on the MER web-site).

Electronic Publishing note:

As was mentioned in the President's column a couple of issues back, I have also created MER web-pages, at

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

The AP web-pages which used to exist separately have now been incorporated into the above site. All the AP Certificate and Merit award listings are there. Check 'em out!

Recently I was asked if I could produce the MER LOCAL in electronic form, since I already do that for the Potomac Division Flyer. The answer is yes, I can produce an Adobe Acrobat "PDF" file, and email it anyone who's interested. What are the advantages to doing this? You get it immediately after I send the camera-ready copy to the printer, which means that instead of waiting 2-3 weeks for it to arrive at your home, you have it immediately. The pictures are in color. You can print it if you want to, and if you lose that printed copy, you can print it again (the likelihood of getting an extra printed copy is nearly zero—we don't print extras), and if you lose the electronic copy, I can send another one! So try it! It works pretty well...send me your email address, and I'll send you a PDF. If enough do this, MER can reduce printing costs.

— clint hyde, chyde@cox.rr.com

The Mid-Eastern Region — Achievement Program

by Rick Shoup

The MER AP Emailbag has been slow recently. Jim Kellow MER VP reports many Merit Awards were earned at the Spring Convention. If you took photos of any of the models and/or winners, please identify them and send a copy to the *Local* Editor. The Editor really needs to have photos of the models and the entrants for every convention (the Region will pay for film and developing) so if you are going and would like to help out, contact Ron Baile, MER Official Photographer, listed on the masthead of the Local. Coordinate your presence at the convention and let Ron know that you'll be able to provide photos. The Local Editor would also like to receive articles and photos from Division Meets and other MER activities.

Those Divisions that have websites should report them to the Local for appropriate advertising. Please be sure to keep them updated when changes occur. Those without websites are encouraged to establish them. [*clint hyde sez: contact me if you need help with this.*] Shown below are the names and e-mail addresses of all the Divisions AP Chairmen/Superintendents. If any errors or omissions are noted please inform me at NMRA-AP@juno.com. Following is an abbreviated list of MER Officials and Divisional AP Contacts:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>E-MAIL ADDRESS</u>
Eric Dervinis	MER Trustee	MERT@hq.nmra.org
Norm Garner	MER President	MERPREZ@hq.nmra.org
Jim Kellow, MMR	MER Vice President	Jkellow@widomaker.com
P. J. Mattson	AP - Div. 1, New Jersey	Pj_mattson_rvr@yahoo.com
Ed Price	AP - Div. 2, Potomac	edmund.w.price@usace.army.mil
Bill Roman	AP - Div. 2, Potomac	wroman@starpower.net
Clint Hyde	News Ed. - Div. 2, Potomac	chyde@cox.rr.com
Dave Messer, MMR	AP - Div. 3, Philadelphia	DMesserPRR@cs.com
Dan Taber	Supntndt. - Div. 4, Tidewater	
Celeste F. Robbins	News Ed. - Div. 4, Tidewater	Calamity@pilot.infi.net
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Pete Shatswell	News Ed. - Div. 5, James Rvr	PASOWL@aol.com
Frank Winner	AP - Div. 9, Mount Claire	n3seo@aol.com
Bill Mosteller	AP - Div. 10, S. Mtn.	wsm@greatdecals.com
Jim Atkinson	AP - Div. 11, Susquehanna	atkinson17022@juno.com
Jim Teese, MMR	AP - Div. 12, Carolina South AP -	jimteese@hotmail.com
Dick Genthner	Div. 13, Piedmont	argent1@att.net
Bill Cox	News Ed. - Div 13, Piedmont	freeby@aol.com
Art Thomas	News Ed. - Mid-Eastern. Region.	athomas@bedford.net

* Note: P.J. Mattson replaces Ron Baile as the Division AP Chairman for the New Jersey Division

RECENT MER AP AWARDS AND AWARDEES

Master Builder - Structures

Herbert Gishlick - MER #529

Association Volunteer

Clinton Hyde - MER #530

Model Railroad Engineer - Civil

Robert Hazard - MER #531

Model Railroad Engineer - Civil

Fred Miller - MER #534

Master Builder - Scenery

Sonya McKinney - MER #535

Clarence Nissley - MER #533

Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical

Clarence Nissley - MER #532

S-Scale Modeling

By Bill Fraley

S'Comin' Out

This commences a series that we intend to become a regular feature of the LOCAL -- S-scale among our membership. Because S-scale is one of the more minority scales of model railroading compared to N, HO, O, and now even G, its activities are often overlooked or under-publicized. For this reason we are going to devote space to S-scale to keep others informed about our S-scale brothers' activities and to arouse interest among those who may be trying to decide in what scale they'd like to model. Read on!

S.I.G. in our model railroading terms as well as with the N.M.R.A. identifies Special Interest Groups as a group of independent, not for profit, membership group organized to provide a forum for the exchange and collection of railroad prototype and/or model railroad information about specific topics.

The same thought holds true for different scales in model railroading. Many times when reading a model railroad advertisement it will state the gauge it is representing. That is fine, but when it is a multi-gauge advertisement, many times they omit S scale. Over the years we have grown accustomed to this practice. However, in recent years S scale has been on a major upswing. We now have an entirely different perspective on advertising and it's negative effect that it has on all minority scales.

When A.C. Gilbert went out of business in 1967 it sounded like a death knell to the S scale community and in particular, to the American Flyer collectors. But somehow we in S have survived. Thanks to Lionel Corp, American Models, S Helper service, brass importers, small manufacturers, many no longer in business, who hung in there through the lean years and put S scale where it is today, a thriving 3/16th modeling community.

What has brought all this to mind, is that I just received a new 2001 S Scale catalog in the mail. I remember back when I was an American Flyer collector and how we wanted nice new catalogs for our collections. Well, AC Gilbert never offered anything like this SHS catalog and this is a company that I would like to tell you about. It is a story of a few dedicated people who second mortgaged their homes, an S scale "Venture Capital" if you will, and started a business that today is doing an outstanding job in marketing their S scale models.

Don Thompson and Michael Ferraro in 1989 wanted to develop and market injection-molded equipment. They went to Ron Bashita of American Models and asked him to do a road-specific caboose. Ron thought it wouldn't sell. So they offered Ron a deal he couldn't refuse. They would do the research, the marketing, and furnish enough money to get 500 models made in various schemes.

After much consideration, they chose an ERIE bay-window caboose. In addition, they also offered the caboose in several first-run-only color schemes that would never be offered again. The cabooses were a big hit.

Their next project was an eight-car heavyweight passenger train. That also was a very successful venture. The SHS/AM relationship ended in 1994 when SHS began working on producing a car of its own; the very successful PS-2 two-bay covered hopper car.

Since then SHS has offered S gauger's every item needed to enable a model railroader or collector to set up and run a layout. Locomotives, rolling stock, track, turnouts and boxed sets. An adventure that 12 years ago most thought would be impossible. For more information on this company, go to their web site www.showcaseline.com or they have an 800 number. 1-800-465-0303. Ask for their 2001 catalog, you will be so glad you did!

(Special thanks to fellow S-scaler, Richard Karnes, who helped in the research for this article.)



NMRA Mid-2001 Semi-annual Business Meeting

Eric Dervinis - MER Trustee

The NMRA's home is in Chattanooga, which was the principal reason for holding the mid-year semi-annual business meeting in this old railroad town this year. Our Executive Director and the Past President have been comparing notes with other non-profit organizations. The goal is to learn the best practices of the industry and find ways to apply them to our own group. At an industry meeting, they met Consultant, Bud Crouch, who helps non-profit organizations redefine plans and goals for a better future. They contracted him to meet with a small group of officers, department heads and trustees last summer. As a result, our core values were defined and a mission statement was prepared. Both were presented to the board in San Jose. To follow-up on that effort, Bud also met with the trustees on Thursday in an all day working session. He spoke of the direction non-profits endeavors are moving, how the NMRA can re-invent itself and what exactly the board should be doing to accomplish it - such as setting policy based on our vision of the future.

On Friday morning President Pollack called the general meeting to order and immediately turned it over to Charlie Getz, Pacific Coast Trustee and Chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC). Starting with the Strategic Long Range Plan developed last summer, the LRPC designed a new structure for the NMRA. It includes changes to the board, the officers, the administration department and virtually every part of the organization. The exact details are available to anyone who is interested. The board must now study and review the document and prepare motions to implement these changes at the meeting in St Louis. The board reconvened after lunch for discussion of the administration department, the executive committee and their objectives for the rest of this fiscal year. The discussions were open, honest and very productive. All attending now have a much better perspective of past events and future procedural changes.

In mid-afternoon the board recessed to tour the headquarters building. Major renovations have been made in the basement. It has now been partially converted into the Howell Day Museum. Mr. Day has contributed significant dollars to make this happen and many members are contributing dollars and models for the museum. The museum and exhibits are very impressive. Members can visit when they are in the area, but the museum itself is not yet open to the general public. The Kalmbach Library comprises one half of the Building on the first floor and in the basement. It continues to receive contribu-

tions of books, photos, etc, and is always seeking more. Also on the first floor is the Administration Department. We met the employees who showed us how they conduct the business of the organization.

After dinner on Friday evening we reconvened to continue our agenda. VP Roberts discussed the new insurance program and answered questions. It is a significant improvement over the last policy. Development Chairman Bob Charles is working on labels and a 2002 calendar. Slides for it are needed and must be submitted before May 31, 2001.

Saturday morning was filled with more dialogue as the board asked further questions. Good news abounded as we learned that Microsoft would be a sponsor of the Junior College Program (JCP) at the St Louis Convention. The JCP is an introduction to modeling for children of ages 6-12. It has been very well received and will be open to the public this summer. We have a new discount program with Hertz and an official travel agent who promises a 5 percent discount on the best fare. Details on all these programs will be published in the BULLETIN. And speaking of the BULLETIN, we have discovered the reasons behind the delayed publication and have changed procedures to prevent future occurrences.

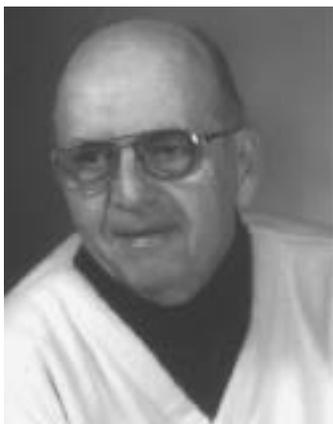
The new MAP department has been running very creative ads in the hobby press. I was very impressed with our quarter page in the April Model Railroader. Take a look for yourself. The Education Department is also new and its Chairman, Rich Coleman, spoke about the need for regional education volunteers. Please contact Rich or myself, if you know of anyone who is interested.

Many reports, primarily of a housekeeping nature, were considered by the board. We approved a SIG policy that re-defines their role within the NMRA and at the conventions. This has been well received by the SIGs and will provide guidance to future conventions.

The board members left the meeting having accomplished much of their stated goals. Communication was improved, relationships were strengthened and expectations were defined. It was my first board meeting as a trustee and I left feeling very positive about our future.



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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Bruin Harbor Corporation

Delran, New Jersey

At a big train show, such as Greenberg's, you'll find a range of dealers that covers the spread from the guy who took a small table to sell his current collection because he's changing scales, through the weekend merchant who buys collections to resell for the best price he can get, to a few of the nationally known hobby houses. Somewhere in the middle of that spread is Bruin Harbor Corporation, which features specialty decals and custom decorated HO cars produced in the Delran Car Shops.

Bill Blatchley started this business in 1986 when he wanted some dedicated freight cars to handle Cobb's Corn on his HO Cape May and Seashore RR. To satisfy his need, he purchased some custom-made decals from Rail Graphics. The decals were really good-looking and the CM&S didn't need a fleet of Cobb's Corn cars, so Bill decided to see if he could sell the extras (he had to buy a minimum of 25). It was so easy, he decided to do it again. At the same time Bill's involvement with the "original" Bruin Harbor Corporation --a group specializing in software for home computers (remember the Commodore 64?) ended, as did the business. He decided to use the few available funds to have more fun with the creation of custom decals and the current Bruin Harbor Corp. was born. Fun translated into combining model railroading interest with computer graphics skills and creating decals to illustrate the Bruin Harbor slogan "Prototypes which should

have been--and some that were." This led to a bevy of decals for local businesses such as the ever-popular Tastykakes (still a big favorite -- in HO and in the tummy), Sears Roebuck, Bachman Pretzels, Keller's Butter, Hatfield Meats, and many Jersey and Maryland local products such as cranberries, oysters and clams. Bill still uses Rail Graphics for decal production runs.

The business grew further when Bruin Harbor began selling custom decorated cars produced by the fictitious Delran Car Shops. Now modelers could enjoy the "prototypes which should have been--and some that were" without the bother of painting and lettering the cars themselves. The employees of Delran Car Shops produce excellent custom-decorated cars. As a result, no one hesitates to purchase a Bruin Harbor car because of poor workmanship. A line of circus cars enhanced sales, but the addition of brewery cars really found a big audience. Bill decided on the brewery cars because he liked the colorful artwork available--and he knew a lot of modelers liked what the products represented. Today he has a collection of more than 1500 businesses, products, and breweries available. Most of them representing companies--real or fictitious--whose home territory is the MER. The majority of the artwork represents breweries.

Just how big is this business? Well, Bill, who graduated as an electrical engineer from Drexel, '63, has no intention of quitting his day job. While working as an electrical engineer, he added an MBA from Drexel in '72. Since 1988 he has been

employed as a mechanical engineer at inTest Corporation. Bill says Bruin Harbor is and will continue to be a "fun business." So, custom-painted cars are produced in the Delran Car Shops (i.e., his home) in runs of a dozen -- two cars each of one company -- by he and his wife, Betty. They comprise the entire Bruin Harbor work force. The largest production run ever was for 75 personalized observation cars for a distributor of alcoholic beverages to use as gifts for customers and suppliers. During his best year he sold about 350 cars. The tough part of the business is getting a supply of undecorated cars from the manufacturers, especially passenger cars, for use in the circus trains.

If you have a desire to spice up your fleet of rolling stock with the addition of MER "prototypes which should have been -- and some that actually were", possibly including a current or long-gone favorite brew, see Bill Blatchley. As part of keeping it fun, Bill and Betty do only five shows per year, three in their back yard at the South Jersey Expo and two at Timonium. They admittedly do Timonium just for an excuse to enjoy Maryland soft-shell crabs! If you can't get to any of these shows to see Bill sporting his straw hat and chatting with friends and customers (it's hard to tell the difference), he'll do business via long distance. You can contact him via e-mail at bruinharbor@earthlink.net (Bill Blatchley); or by snail mail Bruin Harbor Corporation., P.O. Box 934, Delran, NJ 08075.

(Note: We are still in need of a "Made in the MER" correspondent for the southern part of the MER to assist Ed Kuser with this column. Ed lives in Pennsylvania. He needs a helper who lives in or near the Carolinas. This is not a highly demanding task and would probably only require one, or at most two, interviews a year. It's a good opportunity for a volunteer to work toward obtaining an Achievement Program Certificate as a Model Railroad Author. Contact Ed Kuser for details if you're interested.)

This *Made in the MER* story is also available on the MER Web-site, along with other recent ones.

WHO'S WHO IN THE MER?

Don't let this photo of long time member Charles "Chuck" Hladick fool you. He's not as sad as he looks. Why? Because, in reality, he's happy to not only be an NMRA Life Member but also a member of the MER, the James River Division, the National Railway Historical Society, and the Rutland Historical Society. On top of all that he's commissioned as a full-fledged Kentucky Colonel. Currently Chuck is employed manufacturing acrylic wood flooring and works part time at Trains Unlimited in Lynchburg, Virginia, where he now lives.

This Navy veteran and former police officer was born in Painesville, Ohio toward the end of WWII but hasn't returned since 1966. He currently models the Rutland R.R.,



circa 1948, primarily in HO scale and to some extent in O scale. He's a Regional Contest Judge, MER Model Contest Chairman, James River Division AP Chairman, and Past Divisional Superintendent. He currently holds the NMRA Volunteer Certificate and is working on additional ones. He once ran for election as the MER Regional Director.

Chuck says that although he really enjoys the camaraderie at the Regional Conventions he feels that holding only one regional convention a year would be enough. Although he hasn't done so yet, one of his goals is to sometime attend a national convention whenever one is once again held within reasonable proximity to where he lives.

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