



## Back on the Main Line

*By Richard Newmiller*

**A**bout two years ago I found myself in a slump. I was no longer working on my layout or running trains. Instead, I was spending all of my hobby time reading publications, surfing the web, visiting local hobby shops, and attending shows. Now these are all good activities, but I was not making any progress on the layout, and I was becoming more dissatisfied and restless. My first railroading passion is building, which includes designing the track plan, installing the track work, constructing bridges, electrical wiring, and building structures. At this point I had completed 95% of the track work, including all of the bridges. The cab control and block wiring was installed and operational. I had started constructing several buildings but had finished none. The layout was a true plywood city with no scenery, no ballast, and no backdrop. So why had I stopped working on the railroad?

In my earlier days, I worked as an electrician and built two new houses. This experience made electrical and carpentry work as it relates to model railroading easy, quick, and very satisfying. During that time I made a great amount of progress on the layout in a short period of time. Family members and relatives commented on and marveled at the miniature world under development in the 11' x 14' spare bedroom. But as I tried to expand my modeling skills to include weathering, detailing, and scenery (trees, rocks, ground cover, etc.), I became frustrated with the results and rework became the norm. How do the authors in the periodicals get that realistic look? Where do they buy or how do they make all of those neat details that complete the scene? How are they able to select the colors, decals, and signs to duplicate a given time period? Do those super-detailed steam engines actually run? Can they pull more than six freight cars and go around the track without derailling? I did not like the way my buildings looked. I was unsure of how to do scenery, and the future conversion of

the layout to DCC with sound decoders was like a journey into the deep and dark unknown.

During lunch at work, several modeling friends and I were discussing our layouts and equipment rosters. None of us had completed our layouts, and none were active in any of the NMRA, MER or Divisional programs. I mentioned that I had logged onto the NMRA web site and read about the Achievement Program (AP), which reminded me of Scouting. I told them that the AP is a structured approach to develop modeling skills and the web site has some amount of written instructions and links or references to other sources of information. Best of all, there are AP Coordinators, other modelers in the program and Master Model Railroaders (MMR) available for help, advice, and general guidance. In addition, the structure provides an incremental method to develop skill sets and earn certificates that demonstrate a level of ability. This approach allows the modeler to break up the often-overwhelming task of completing a layout into smaller, discrete projects that have a specific end point with the associated sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction. I stated my interest in the program and that the ultimate goal of someday earning the MMR designation was very appealing.

Boy, you should have heard the responses! "You have to be dreaming, only retired railroad employees can get into that program". "I'll bet you need to own at least a dozen brass engines to be accepted". "You have to be able to name all of the different types of rolling stock and engines from memory!" "Even if you do get to the point where your work is being judged, you will never make a passing grade. They'll nit pick your track, scenery, cars, weathering, etc. to the point where you'll just give up" "Forget it; just go buy

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## 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

Just a note about some MER business, when a notice is sent out for our members to renew, the label prints with the year first then the month. For example, 0307 means your membership expires July 1, 2003. Your membership card has the date the way we are used to it – 07/03. If you are confused, just email or call me.

### Recently Deceased Members

Norman L. Buchwald, Fort Washington, MD. Born April 1929. Joined NMRA in 1962 #L02357. Joined MER in 1982 #L096 Division 02 – Potomac.

Raymond F. Price, West Reading, PA. Born October 1933. Joined NMRA in 1980 #L05157. Joined MER in 1986 Division 11 – Susquehanna.

Tom Meredith, Big Pine Key, Florida. Born Nov 1927. Joined NMRA in 1950 #L00248. Joined MER in 1959 #L00026. Division 02—Potomac.

Art Thomas, Alum Bank, PA. Born April 1930. Joined NMRA in 1971 #L02341. Joined MER in 1972 #L-203 Division 10 – South Mountain.

We send our sympathy to the family members of our recently deceased members.

Tom Meredith, who passed away April 19<sup>th</sup>, served as MER Vice President from 1972-74 and as President from 1974-76. Although he and his wife moved out of the MER after retirement, he came back to MER conventions whenever he could. Those of us who were in the same model railroad club with him will greatly miss his humor, dedication and knowledge of our hobby.

Bill Roman, MER Secretary

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# President's Column

*Norm Garner*

Division Superintendent Larry Lau invited Vice-President Clint Hyde, Director and AP Region Chairman Roger Cason, and me down to the Carolina Southern Division (CSD) for a weekend. We were invited to judge models and layouts and conduct classes on the Achievement Program and how to judge. We awarded many AP Merit awards, and several members qualified for Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Scenery Certificates. I brought three different models that had already been judged in previous MER conventions for them to judge. After the class, we had CSD members judge the models. Clint, Roger, and I critiqued their results with the actual scores. We had lunch at Jack Parker's and spent the night at the homes of Larry Lau and Martin Oakes. I know I can speak for all three of us that we thoroughly enjoyed their gracious hospitality. All of their wives are excellent cooks and made our visit one to remember. If any other divisions want similar programs to assist their members on the Achievement Program or classes on how and what the judges are looking for, please contact Clint, Roger, or me to set up a date for you. Remember knowledge is power and will get results.

The MER Board of Directors held a regularly scheduled meeting on May 31 and spent a great deal of time discussing the NMRA Board of Trustees' Long Range Plan (LRP) which is currently up for review and available for the members to consider at

<http://www.nmra.org/news/LRP.pdf>

The latest **NMRA Bulletin** Membership Thermometer figures presently reflect how bad the organization is doing. The Lifetime members make up 23.3%, and the regular

members make up 64.5% as of March 2003. Between March 2002 to March 2003 the NMRA has lost 1845 regular members as reported in the May/June issue of the **NMRA Bulletin**. Our organization also lost members as the result of the dues increase several years ago. I agree that the NMRA needs to be reorganized to correct outdated business procedures and bylaws. I am also of the opinion that the present one-dues proposal by the NMRA's Board of Trustees (BOT) will result in higher costs to the division members as well as to the regions. I urge every MER member to read the proposed Long Range Plan thoroughly. If you don't have a computer, please ask your division to provide a copy for the division members to read.

The LRP talks about "core values" for members but states nothing about checks and balances for the trustees. For example, it doesn't say the trustees will not run a deficit budget for the NMRA without informing the membership. The trustees will not use the funds paid by lifetime members to run the organization as done in the past. The trustees should make full disclosure of all financial transactions by the organization once a year so upon request any member can have access to a copy of their report. The trustees should not have secret meetings except those pertaining to salaries of employees of the NMRA. The trustees should have recorded minutes of every meeting, and those minutes should be available to every member upon request. In the past when minutes of BOT so-called closed-door meetings were requested, the excuse given for not doing so was that corporation trustees do not have to divulge what was said. This organization of ours is about model railroading, and I think the trustees need to get some core values and remember what we are all about. I know that the present LRP is just a proposal and not in its final form. That will be forth coming at the next BOT meeting. When this proposal is put to a vote for the members of the NMRA, it will affect every one of us and should be taken very seriously. I urge each and every one of you to review this carefully.

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## AP All The Way

I know, I know. Any publication is supposed to have a mix of subject matter, or it runs the risk of not appealing to the wider readership. So how come this issue of **The Local** has so many articles about the NMRA Achievement Program? The short answer is it just turned out that way. We can only publish what our members send us – unless of course, you all just want to read what I write. (I didn't think so.) In the past month or so, I've gotten several articles on the AP. And since I still don't have a large backlog (or *any* backlog) of articles for **The Local**, I decided I might as well put the AP articles all in the same issue.

Regardless of whether or not you're already involved in the AP, have ever considered getting involved, or are currently dead set against the program, I urge you to read all of the AP-related articles in this issue. Like Richard Newmiller, you might find the Achievement Program helps to get you back on the right track

(pun intended). Get your questions answered by Frank Koch's **Achievement Program Questions and Answers** (an appropriate title, eh?). Need some help getting started? Take a look at Roger Cason's **An AP Jump Start**. Oh, and if you dread filling out the necessary forms for the AP, contact MER General Contest Chairman, Ray Bilodeau. He'll help you.

In short, there is no reason you shouldn't get involved in the Achievement Program. Don't say you're not a good enough model builder. Involvement in the AP will help you to become a better one. Don't say you don't have the time. As an active model railroader, you are already doing 90% of the work required for the AP. And if you're stuck in the armchair mode of model railroading, reread Richard Newmiller's article. Recall the tag line from a famous running shoe manufacturer's commercials: Just Do It.

Alan Mende

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yourself a new engine." "The NMRA has what, over 20,000 members and only 300 or so MMRs. What are your chances of getting into that elite, inner circle?" Well, I nodded at most of the comments because I really did not know, but still there was that lingering thought.

Several months later I finally decided to make a change. I was going to get back into working on the layout and I would use the Achievement Program as I went along. I printed out the requirements from the NMRA web site and after reading and rereading the forms and associated instructions, I contacted the Achievement Program Coordinator for the Philadelphia Division, Dave Messer, MMR. Dave answered my e-mail within a few days and offered some advice and, if needed, his phone number for more support. We communicated several times over the next few weeks. My plan was to start with the Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical certificate. I was comfortable with this work because of my background, and there was just a small amount of wiring items that needed to be completed. I did have to go back and document the wiring plans to be able to submit an accurate drawing of the installed system (this drawing has been a great help for both trouble shooting and making revisions). I gathered all of the paperwork, made copies, and sent the originals to Dave. We agreed that the physical inspection of the layout would take place on a Sunday in the early afternoon.

Inspection day arrived and I have to say that I was a bit nervous. Even my wife and daughter wanted to know who were these two men (Dave was bringing another modeler to co-judge the work, George Weissgerber)? What were they going to do? Would they be just in the train room? How long would they be at the house? They arrived on time and went straight to the layout. Their mannerisms were both courteous and business like. They asked enough questions to confirm that I had completed the work and understood the operation of the electrical components and the wiring. Both gentlemen got down and looked under the layout to inspect the physical wiring on one of the automated turnouts and compared the diagram to the installed wiring. They stayed for about an hour observing the trains operating, inspecting the wiring, taking pictures, and asking questions. They completed their inspection by informing me that their results would be sent to the AP Chairman for review, and I would receive formal notification by mail.

Before they left, we spent some time talking about my next application, which would be Model Railroad Engineer – Civil (track work). One of the requirements is to hand lay track that includes three types of switches or crossings. I expressed my apprehension with regards to scratchbuilding a switch using individual wooden ties, rail stock, and spikes. Here again I was offered encouragement and advice. I was

invited to one of the local club layouts where most of the track work had been hand laid, and invited to meet other modelers by attending an upcoming Philadelphia Division meet. In addition, they referred me to a very thorough 5-article series by John Ostler in the **NMRA Bulletin**, which ran from January through May 2001. These articles provided a wealth of detailed information on layout, tie placement, spike selection, soldering techniques, shaping the point rails, and building frogs.

Well, I earned the Electrical and Civil AP certificates (two down and five to go), and I am currently working on the requirements for structures while I complete the transition from block/cab control to DCC. I have attended several Divisional meetings and one Regional meet. They usually include modeling clinics and open house tours of local layouts. These meets are an excellent source of ideas and techniques, meeting other modelers, and getting answers to your questions. The Achievement Program has given me the encouragement and resources to take on challenges I otherwise would never have attempted.

My enthusiasm for Model Railroading has returned – I am off the RIP track and back on the main line!

### CALLBOARD — *Coming Events*

Notices must be typed and have complete addresses. Use the style shown below and be as brief as possible. Be sure to include a contact telephone number. Send items for CALLBOARD to Alan Mende, 526 Pine Hill Road, Hummelstown, PA 17036-8020 E-Mail to [afmende@amp.com](mailto:afmende@amp.com).

**July 12, September 13, October 18, November 15, December 13, 2003, Noon to 4 PM.** Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc. open house. Located in historic Washington & Old Dominion Railroad station, 231 Dominion Road (at the intersection with Ayr Hill Road), Vienna, VA. There is no admission charge, though donations are accepted. More information can be obtained by going to our web site at <http://www.nvmr.org>, by e-mail at [nvmrinc@hotmail.com](mailto:nvmrinc@hotmail.com) or by calling 703-938-5157 on the day of the open house. The club meets on Tuesday evenings.

**August 9, 2003, 10 AM to 4 PM.** Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club Open House. 5905 Triangle Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina. Located in the Unstead Industrial Park, off Highway 70W in Northwest Raleigh. Admission free, donations accepted. Peter K. Hansma (919)-217-0407 P.O. Box 19573, Raleigh, NC 27619-9573. Club website: <http://www.nrvmrrc.org>.

**November 15 - 16, 2003, 9 AM to 5 PM.** Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club, Inc. Nineteenth Annual Train & Railroadiana Show and Sale. Kerr Scott Building, NC State Fairgrounds, Raleigh, North Carolina. \$5.00 for both days. George W. Lasley (919) 834-5531 or Peter K. Hansma (919) 217-0407 P.O. Box 19573, Raleigh, NC 27619-9573

# Achievement Program Questions and Answers

By Frank Koch

*(Editor's note: Rick Shoup forwarded these Achievement Program (AP) questions and answers collected by Frank Koch in the past few months. In an effort to build interest in the AP in our region, we're reprinting them in **The Local**.)*

**1. What is it – structure or car?** I am considering modeling a grain elevator that had several buildings running (moving) between the elevator and quayside. These buildings ran on freight car trucks on standard gauge track. The tower leg buildings measured 33' x 22' x 145' high, each running on four freight car trucks on two standard gauge tracks. The freight trucks were used to allow the tower to be moved to unload grain from a ship's hold. The towers were moved by a system of pulleys. Therefore, the towers had no couplers on them to allow movement by locomotives. So, are these marine towers structures or cars? I realize this is a (rare) variant of the age-old problem about a vehicle being a structure in the AP.

**Answer:** This falls into the category of structures under the classification of stationary or mobile cranes, derricks, gantries, etc. Have fun building it and I look forward to seeing photos when you submit your structures SOQ (photos are not required, but they are always interesting when someone has done something unusual).

**2. Author:** A member has submitted Author forms to me. He did not, however, supply any hard copies of the articles. He told me that all the division newsletters were sent to the NMRA Library and he hoped that would serve as documentation. Also, 30.5 points are from the Region web site. How is that to be documented and counted? Are hard copies required of all of this stuff? I believe it is but would like your view.

**Answer:** Division newsletter submissions – one point per page of about 1200 words. No more than 21 points total from division publications. If newsletters are on file in Chattanooga, then there is no need for copies to be submitted with SOQ. But tell him to obtain conformation from the Kalmbach Memorial Library to be sure. Web uploads require the site URL address, a hard copy of the upload, and confirmation from the site administrator or local AP manager that upload has occurred. NO MORE than 21 points can be counted for uploads. Text uploads at any public site are credited at two points per page of 1200 words, and photos receive credit at 1/3 page rate (0.67 points each) each regardless of actual size.

**3. General AP Question:** I am an NMRA Life Member. Many years ago a friend and I decided to have a contest to see who could become a Master Model Railroader (MMR) first. Shortly after that I changed employment and moved.

I then packed away my models and spent my time with my small children and traveling on business. My friend succeeded and I stopped trying for a while. I returned to active model railroading some seven years ago and am now building my railroad in a 40 x 40 room. I also became active in the local division of the NMRA and I am now a member of an On30 modular group.

I came out of retirement to work as a consultant for a very large new museum. My assignment is to design and build a large HO layout of the Providence & Worcester RR just prior to World War I. I feel that it would be both fun and educational to try and complete the challenge I set for myself years ago. Back then I earned the certificates for Motive Power and Cars, so I can now start working on the others. Back in the middle Fifties, I was very active with the Northeast Region, and believe I did things that could be considered for additional achievements. I was Chairman of the convention held in Albany, New York in 1955 as well as being involved with the Board of Directors at that time. I have spent a total of 62 years in the Boy Scouts and, among many other things, I was a counselor for the Railroading Merit Badge. My question is whether any of this can be used to earn additional certificates?

**Answer:** I see many opportunities to earn additional certificates if you can provide documentation. Regarding Volunteer, as long as you were a member of the NMRA during the periods you would claim credits, they can count as long as someone will verify your service. Positions as officer or chairman of a committee or service as a BOD member are either documented via a letter from a Superintendent/Trustee or someone similar or via a blurb from a publication of the time. Credits for Railroading Merit Badge are awarded based on how many scouts earned the badge.

As for your work on the new railroad, I'd think Civil, Electrical, and Scenery are all within reach if you do the work and provide the documentation as specified in the requirements. A full copy of the requirements can be found on the NMRA website under AP Program. Good luck. If you have any questions as you progress, feel free to contact me.

**4. Volunteer:** I'm confused by this sentence in the Volunteer Certificate requirements: "Editors of an NMRA publication shall receive credit at the rate appropriate for Committee Chairmen at the same level." I'm considering taking over as the Division newsletter editor, and while the Volunteer Certificate and points don't have anything to do

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with my decision, it piqued my curiosity. Also, if the newsletter editor is also a Board member, does that additional responsibility earn additional points?

**Answer:** You can earn Volunteer points for both positions since they are independent. Division Newsletter Editor earns credits at the rate of one unit per month of satisfactory service. Division BOD member earns credits at the rate of 0.5 credits per month. Go for it!!

**5. Question on Author:** The requirements in my files and those on the website don't match. Which should I be using, and are any credits subject to "grandfathering?"

**Answer:** The Author requirements were simplified, debated, and changed via NMRA BOD vote in about 8/99 as I recall (it was before I took over this role.). The changes were published twice in the **NMRA Bulletin**, most recently as an article by Rich Coleman. The NMRA AP website has had the modified requirements for a long time. There is a provision for "grandfathering" which never really runs out, but I don't expect any Region manager to keep track of changes that were made several years ago. My records are spotty, but I have records back a few cycles.

The changes were made to eliminate the single point for any submission, add more detail around web-based submissions, and to reduce the total number of points required from 48 to 42. This latter change was done after an analysis of SOQs showing about how many submissions were made. The simplification was done because most SOQs contained the same kind of errors in counting.

For credit, a text submission is now a minimum of 1/4 page (300 words) to move away from the mere listing of events or announcements as single line items. Photos in print media are credited at the fraction of a page (minimum of 1/4 page) and photos posted on the web are credited at 1/3 page each regardless of actual size (0.67 points each). All photos claimed must be the original work of the author to be counted.

No more than half the points, or 21, may be garnered from Division publications. Twenty-one points may also be gained from region/national web sites. So one could satisfy the requirements via these two means.

All work done prior to 8/99 may be counted via the old or new methods. Work after 8/99 should be counted using the new method. For all the SOQs I reviewed, it did not make a difference which method was used. Since it may for some unique situation, I am always willing to review any SOQ and calculate the credits for any member.

Clinic handouts do not have to be original work or even prepared by the clinician as original material (it would be nice if they were). The handouts do have to pertain to the subject matter.

**6. Structures:** I completely understand the "scratchbuilt" requirement for structures – use commercial window castings, for examples, and cut the maximum scratchbuilding points down to ten. What about commercial details that are not an integral part of the building? For example, I built a 100% scratchbuilt creamery and thought it would look nice to put some milk cans on the dock, so I added a figure and some purchased milk cans. Will that detract from the scratchbuilt score?

**Answer:** To be considered completely scratchbuilt for maximum points, only the exempted items can be purchased, so the model should not receive quite the full number of points. On the other hand, it should get more detail points. My experience is that this sort of small difference rarely has an impact on whether a model receives a "Merit" score or not. In a contest, it may be a different story. If another modeler built the same model to the same quality and detail and scratchbuilt the milk cans, and that was the only difference, the other model would probably score a point higher. Remember that qualifying for a Merit Award only requires a minimum of 87.5 points.

**7. Civil Engineer:** Can I get some guidance on what a judge looks for when judging track work for the Merit Award requirement in Civil Engineer? Under construction, I'd guess that a double slip switch would be viewed as more difficult than a spring switch, so does it matter which track I choose to model? Under detail, how can I help score enough points? I can think of ties, rail, spikes, ballast, signals, and switch stands. What else will help score points? Conformity is pretty clear to me. Finish and lettering is a mystery if it is more than painting and weathering the rail. For scratchbuilding, it seems it either is or it isn't – what am I missing? I have one other question; I built a crossing and a crossover. Can they count as the three examples, or should I build another single turnout to make three independent examples?

**Answer:** This is a good question and you've pretty much answered it yourself. Let me start with Conformity. Establish what standard you are matching, so if there are any special features, the judge can give credit for them. Finish and Lettering is essential and mostly consists of tie, track, and ballast weathering. If it looks realistic, it gets many points. I judge Construction by running cars in all directions through the track work. If it is smooth and the work is clean, it gets lots of points. There are many Details that can be added to the track work that can earn more points. I suggest you refer to Paul Mallery's Trackwork Handbook for examples.

As for the last part of your question, I expect to see three different examples or variations that demonstrate the ability to build well-functioning track work for a variety of uses. One of the most complicated examples I've seen was a dual gauge wye with two curved dual gauge crossings on two legs

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of the wye – it was impressive and much, much more than the minimum requirements. You’ve got the essence of the requirements so go build three examples. One last point is that you can build the track examples separate from a layout if it is more convenient to do so.

**8. Dispatcher:** I operate on a modular railroad and it changes from session to session. We operate in public and the railroad can vary from ten modules to over forty modules. How do we document the time people spend operating when our public sessions get hopelessly clogged or we just run “round and round” to appease the public. We then go back to “operation” when things slow down.

**Answer:** “Operation” connotes an organized system for running trains and moving freight over the railroad in prototypical fashion. Any set-up that meets all the specifications in the requirements can be used as documentation. The timetable and train graph requirements can be met by operating without distractions, or by combining several blocks of time together. During the times you are actually operating, count the time for those actually performing the specified jobs. When there is a disruption or interruption to your operation, “suspend” the clock. I’d suggest you try to find times and places you can set up and run interruption-free operating sessions.

Watch for more questions and answers in future reports. Please contact Frank Koch (fjkoch@hotmail.com) if you have AP questions.

### Achievement Program Attaboys By Roger Cason, MMR

Since my last report in *The Local*, the people listed below have been awarded the following Achievement Program certificates:

#### Division 5 – James River

Bill McMillan – Model Railroad Engineer Electrical

In a perfect world, all these names will appear in the *NMRA Bulletin*. This should not deter you from recognizing them locally. Normally you will be able to recognize an accomplishment long before the name appears in the *Bulletin*.

## An AP Jump Start By Roger L. Cason, MMR

### The Problem

Suppose a Division has a lot of talented and hard working people, and many of them are interested in earning Merit Awards and Achievement Program Certificates for their work. But for a variety of reasons, the Award and Certificate process just isn’t happening. What to do? This was the situation in the Carolina Southern Division (CSD).

### The Plan

In the fall of 2002, Larry Lau asked Clint Hyde (MER VP) if he could arrange a visit by some MER leadership to CSD for an AP model-judging event. Clint then emailed Norm Garner (MER President, and also Tidewater Division AP Coordinator) and me, Roger Cason (MER AP Manager), regarding our willingness to do this. We all agreed immediately that this was a good plan, and in early 2003 CSD discussed it and selected a date that was agreeable to everyone.

As the date approached, email exchanges continued as the planning grew more precise regarding the timing of the visit, exactly how many models were going to be available to be judged, and whose layouts needed a visit for on-site judging.

Superintendent Larry Lau invited a Regional team to Charlotte, NC for the weekend of May 16-18 to help jump-start the process. In this case, the team consisted to Norm Garner, Clint Hyde, and Roger Cason.

### The Results

A clinic on “judging” was presented at the Saturday morning Division meet, with examples that had already been judged.

- Four layouts were visited.
- Merit Award certificates were presented for eight structures, six items of hand laid track work, and one area of scenery.
- One certificate for electrical was checked off all the way to the end, and is essentially complete awaiting one piece of documentation.
- Problems were discussed, solutions were suggested, and (occasionally) tall tales told.

All in all . . . lots of hospitality, good food, fellowship, and fun.

### Possible Path Forward

Any other Division interested in holding a similar event should contact Norm, Clint, or Roger (contact information is on page 2 in this issue of *The Local*). One of the three will make certain that a team will be available at the right time.

# Ten Ideas for Summertime Model Railroading

By Mike McNamara

Usually when the weather gets nicer, model railroading takes a back seat to other activities. Spending time in the basement seems fine when it is 20 degrees outside with snow on the ground. But when it is 75 and sunny, well, you want to get out and do some other things.

I think the challenge is to find ways to enjoy the hobby during the summer season, integrating it into other activities away from the basement and the workbench. Things you can do while watching the baseball game, or sitting out on the deck. And things that are model railroading-related away from the home and can involve other family members. So, here are ten ideas for things you can do this summer to keep model railroading activities going until fall and the cooler weather inevitably return.

1. Stop by the hobby shop and pick up or order Micro-Scale decal sets MC-4168 and MC-4149. These are automobile license plates (in HO; check other manufacturers for your scale). Gather up the cars and trucks on your layout and spend some time while watching the game placing these decals on them. This is an easy to do project and the plates really stand out, especially in photos.

2. An obvious one might be to build a garden railroad. Instead of a full-blown, labor intensive layout, start small just to get your feet wet. Perhaps build just an oval of track or a point-to-point design in an existing flowerbed. To start, just put down some track in the gravel and get the family involved in planting the garden, everyone spending time outside. Have fun just running the train and enjoying the nice weather. If you like it, a bigger, permanent railroad can always be built later.

3. Pick up a box of unpainted figures and some paint from the local craft store. Stores such as Michael's or A.C. Moore often have sales on the craft paint, two or more bottles for a dollar. These go a long way and can be mixed to get custom colors. Get white, black, red, yellow, blue, brown, green, and a flesh color. This can be fun for the family—an assembly line of different colors. Leave them on the sprue for easier handling. Come fall, you'll have a population explosion on the layout!

4. Collaborate with a model railroading friend or two to have a family operating session. Plan a barbecue and get the families together. Spend some of that time having family members run the trains like you do in an operating session. A nice relaxed pace with some coaching will keep it fun. Allow plenty of time for some socializing, not a 4-hour marathon of trains.

5. Pick up some stripwood and use a hobby knife or NWSL Chopper to create lumber loads. These can go on cars or flatbed trucks and also be scenic details around structures. Paint the ends colors to match real lumber.

6. On a similar note, how about using some of the sticks and branches that get raked up in the yard to create realistic pulpwood loads? Use a hobby knife, NWSL Chopper, or Dremel tool to cut the sticks to length. Determine the length based on your car, be it a pulpwood car, a flatcar or gondola. Pulpwood carloads were short lengths (i.e., four feet) on a v-deck, while others were full width with vertical pieces acting as bulkheads on the ends. Some special cars were loaded lengthwise with longer pieces. Use regular glue or CA to keep the load intact. Nothing looks like wood more than real wood!

7. If you model in HO, pickup some new scale-size couplers and sit out on the deck or patio converting some of your favorite cars. These smaller couplers look great and conversion is an easy task.

8. Get out the map and plan a little railfan trip. This can usually be combined with a family outing to a park or scenic area. Something like a fishing trip near an active mainline. Or perhaps an overnight trip that includes a train ride on a tourist line.

9. Cut some rail to 39-foot lengths for use on the layout or as a load. Use a pin vise or Dremel tool to put two or three holes in the ends to represent the bolt holes found on real rail.

10. Get organized. Gather up all those articles, photocopies, pictures from the Internet and such, and put them into binders. A 3-hole punch, some index tabs, and a cool beverage are the only things you'll need. I keep this data arranged by topics like Freight Car Projects, Structures, Locomotive Projects, and Prototype Data by railroad. I also make nice label inserts for these so they look good on the bookshelf. Then next winter when you are working on projects, it will be easier to find the information you are looking for.

11. I said ten, but here is one bonus idea (sure to make the editor happy!) Get a pen and paper, or your laptop, and write an article for **The Local**. Everyone out there has got at least one tip, railroading story, model project, or a layout tour that they can share with the group. Spend a little time on it and pick it up now and again during the summer. When it's done, send it in to Alan!

If you do one of these items each week, you'll have gotten through the whole summer doing a little bit on your hobby and having something to lead you back into the next model railroading "season" on the right foot. Have a happy and safe summer!



# Achievement Program

## Part 4

By *Charlie Flichman*

As we continue to review the certificates for the Achievement Program (AP), this month we move to a new area, Model Railroad Settings and cover the certificate Master Builder – Structures. Here again, to get all of the details go to [www.nmra.org/achievement/](http://www.nmra.org/achievement/), contact your Division AP Coordinator, or Roger Cason (his address is on page 2) for the same information.

The requirements for Master Builder – Structures are:

- A. Build twelve scale model structures.
- B. These twelve structures must be of at least six different types with one being a bridge.
- C. Six of the twelve structures must be scratchbuilt.
- D. Six of the twelve structures have to earn a Merit Award.
- E. Submit a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ).

You must build six super-detailed and six scratchbuilt structures of at least six different types. One of your structures must be a bridge. For example, some structure types are: a house, city building, on- or off-line industry, railroad structure, and a bridge. These can be made of wood, brick, or masonry, which will give all kinds of combinations. The bridge does not have to be a model of the Golden Gate bridge. The intent is to show that you know how to build a bridge that is appropriate and will support the load it has to carry. The bridge does not have to be a railroad bridge; it can be a highway bridge or a footbridge over a railroad. A turntable is also a bridge. Six of these structures have to earn Merit Awards. Here again, the other six structures do not have to be judged. All twelve structures have to be described in detail for the SOQ.

The issues covered in the last AP article concerning judged models also apply to structures. Rather than repeat them

here, reread that article and apply the same criteria here. If you have access to back issues of the **NMRA Bulletin**, two excellent articles to read are “Category 3, Master Builder Structures” by Jim Packer, MMR and “The Building Inspector” by Gil Freitag, MMR. Both are in the August 1991 issue. These articles are also available at the NMRA website under the “Masters” category. They provide a lot of good food for thought.

Not trying to be redundant, but the term scratchbuilt appears again. There is a list of parts in the detailed description of this category that are excluded from the scratchbuilt requirements. I think that scratchbuilding a structure is easier than building a piece of rolling stock. I tend to copy a prototype in rolling stock, whereas a structure may be more generic. A boxcar has to look like a boxcar, but a structure has a lot more latitude in its design. Scratchbuilding is NOT that hard, and I am sure that most of you have saved an article or two that you would like to try and build a model from someday. You don’t have to scratchbuild every model, but once you try it, I am sure you will do it again. To paraphrase a statement I saw in a recent commercial press article, there are approximately 2000 structure kits on the market being shared by 100,000 layouts. Kitbashing or scratchbuilding can produce a structure for your layout that is different from everyone else’s structures. Having an individualistic structure on your layout that doesn’t appear on half of the other layouts in the MER will cause visitors to notice your efforts.

I hope that these articles are providing some kind of inspiration to spur you to try and enter a model or two in a contest. Take a model to your next divisional meeting; if a qualified AP judge is there, I am sure they will critique your model to see if you want the formal judging. There have been clinics at some of the recent MER conventions where you could have a model critiqued. Look for the next time this subject is presented in a clinic. Keep up the good work and let’s see all of those models in the contest room at the next convention!

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## The Veep’s Corner

by *Clint Hyde, MER VP*

### Up close and personal:

We had an excellent time down in NC visiting the Carolina Southern division, for the AP-judging visit described by Norm and Roger. Suggestion: don’t drive through the Greensboro area when it’s Winston Cup weekend.

**Recruiting in person:** I’ve had a banner made, it’s pretty. If you were at Timonium on June 21, you should have seen it and me at a table. I got a very good price on it (\$7/sq ft, the sign/banner competition here is high). You are welcome to borrow it for use at an event in your area, or we can arrange for you to get another one. I’d like to have

each of the divisions get one made. I can supply a good EPS file of the NMRA logo. In general, the whole episode went well, I gave away many Bulletins, and some registration forms, and talked to a variety of folks.

### Other work:

I can now more conveniently email the electronic version of **The Local** to folks who are interested. You will continue to receive a paper copy, but with the email you’ll get color photos, and it will arrive a lot sooner. Send me your email address if you are interested, [chyde@cox.net](mailto:chyde@cox.net). There will still be a 5MB limit on what I can send. At some point in the future, the paper **Local** will be an a la carte choice.

Still need someone to take over the publishing job on **The Local**.

# POTOMAC JUNCTION 2003

## October 10-13, 2003

### Reston, Virginia

**Guest of Honor:**  
**John Armstrong**

**October 10-13, Columbus Day** weekend  
(yes, same weekend as Timonium).

**Venue: Sheraton Reston, Fairfax County, Virginia.** It's just off the Toll Road on the Reston Parkway. \$89/night double occupancy. See the Registration form for details.

**The plan:** hands-on activities from end to end, including clinics and running trains. Fabulous home layout tours, a proto tour or two, maps to railfanning locations.

**SPECIAL EVENT:** for early registrants only.

**DINNER WITH JOHN ARMSTRONG.** Ten of the **early** registrants will be selected at random to have dinner with John Armstrong Saturday night (hotel restaurant, you pay for your meal). Following this dinner, there will be a guest speaker presentation by Mr Armstrong, followed by the Auction.

#### Home Layout Open Houses:

Lance Mindheim	N	
Paul Dolkos	HO	Others still
Pliny Holt	N	being
Monroe Stewart	N	planned!
Don Watson	G	
John Armstrong	O	

**You might have heard of them before...  
Now's your chance to see them all on  
the same weekend--hard to beat that!**

**This will be a self-guided deal. Each  
day there will be 3 or 4 open houses  
geographically near each other, so you  
aren't driving all over town. We will  
provide a good map.**

**Prototype tours:** (details next issue)

**Manassas Rock Quarry: Friday morning,  
since that's when they're actually dri-  
ving their trains around doing stuff.**

**VRE tour: piggy-backs off the Rock  
Quarry.**

**Alexandria Power Plant: Saturday.**

#### Railfanning:

**Where to go in the area to watch trains,  
safely and legally. Maps for a number  
of interesting places around DC where  
you can see something interesting.** (My  
wife says 9AM in downtown Manassas is guaranteed  
to stop traffic).

<http://members.cox.net/chyde/PotomacDivision/Potomac-Junction.html>

(updated regularly)

Send registration for the convention to:

Potomac Junction  
PO Box 447  
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

The telephone number is: 856-467-3385

email is:  
potomacjunction2003@yahoo.com

paypal registration will be available soon from the  
website above. check there if you'd like to do that.

Convention planning is in high gear. Most of the preliminary work and inquiries are starting to fall into place. Registration will open Thursday night for those attendees who want to take the prototype Quarry/VRE tour early Friday morning. Registration will continue through Sunday morning. Adjacent to the registration activities will be the company store and door prize ticket sale. Saturday will include a second prototype tour to view a power plant operation. Be sure to include

*continued on page 12*

**Potomac Junction 2003**  
**Mid Eastern Region, NMRA Fall Convention**  
**October 10, 11, 12, & 13, 2003**  
**Reston, Virginia**

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

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Address Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA# \_\_\_\_\_ MER # \_\_\_\_\_ NVNTRAK # \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

	Quantity		Total Cost
Full Registration (early, by Sept 1), NVNTRAK		@\$40	
Non-NMRA Member Fee		@\$15	
Non-MER Member Fee		@\$8	
Spouse		@\$15	
Teenagers (12 to 16)		@\$5	
Children (under 12)		free	
101 Styrene scratchbuilding clinic (limit 15)		@\$10	
102 Wood scratchbuilding clinic (limit 10)		@\$5	
103 Brass kit clinic (N) [bring soldering iron]		@\$20	
104 Brass kit clinic (HO) [bring soldering iron]		@\$30	
301 Rock Quarry & VRE Proto tour		@\$20	
302 Alexandria Power Plant		@\$20	
401 Sunday Brunch		@\$20	

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

Make Checks payable to: **Potomac Junction 03**  
 All Activities are a la carte including the Brunch.

Payment must accompany registration form. Bounced checks will not be put through twice - you will be required to pay your entire fee by money order or cashier's check through the mail or in cash at the convention. You will be responsible for all bank fees charged. DO NOT enclose hotel room reservation requests with your registration. If you pre-register and later need to cancel, a full refund will be given only if the request is received by the registrar in writing by September 10, 2003. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for processing of your refund. DO NOT mail a registration after September 10, 2003; register at the door. DO NOT staple your check to your registration form. Call (856)-467-3385 for a recording of current changes and updates. All activities are subject to change, substitution, addition or cancellation.

**The Hotel registration form information:**

Deadline for room reservations is **September 17**.

Group name is Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA.

Sheraton Reston Hotel

Attn: Reservations

11810 Sunrise Valley Drive

Reston, VA 20191

Telephone reservations are accepted at  
 703-620-9000 or 800-325-3535.

The sooner you register for a room, the sooner we know whether we are going to have a problem about insufficient room registrations.

Late registration will be \$45.

**Online registration will be available soon, perhaps as you read this.**

continued from page 10

## Potomac Junction continued

your camera when you pack, as both tours will include live rail activities. Your convention packet will list many excellent train-watching locations.

Within the hotel will be both N and HO scale module layouts. Both are planning to offer several hours of operating sessions. There will be the usual Saturday night auction activities with Bob Charles doing the calling. The auction will be after the keynote address presented by John Armstrong. Of course, the contest room will be a focal point for both the AP and popular vote model contests and non-rail entries. The Presidents Award entry is a Maintenance-of-Way car, not what was previously announced. The awards for all the contests and door prizes will be presented immediately after the Sunday Brunch banquet. The annual business meeting follows the awards.

Clinics are always popular at any convention, and we will have some excellent hands-on presentations. You will have the opportunity to construct a styrene building, a brass signal tower, or a wood structure/car. These items will be yours to take home to your own layout. Other clinic presentations are being planned and will be announced in **The Local** or on the Mid-East Region web site

(<http://members.cox.net/chyde/MER/MER.html>) as soon as they are finalized. What about home layout tours you ask? We will have them also. Again, the details are still being finalized for the majority of them. Both Monroe Stewart and Pliny Holt will have open houses. The current schedule has clinics and home layout tours planned for Friday, Saturday, Sunday and a few on Monday for those who are able to take advantage of the Columbus Day holiday and do not have to hurry home.

For those who wish to take in some of the local sights, there is DC with all the historic memorials, museums, and government buildings. METRO sells all day unlimited ride passes for \$5.00. For the history buffs, Manassas (or Bull Run) battlefield is a short drive away. Other Civil War locations such as Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, Ox Hill, Fairfax Station, and Alexandria are all within a few hours drive from the hotel. If shopping is your thing, plan to visit Potomac Mills, Reston Town Center (hotel runs a free shuttle bus), or Leesburg Outlet Mall. I won't even begin to start on all the great restaurants in the local area.

October is a great time of year in the DC area. Plan to come, bring the family, and enjoy yourself. Watch the web site for the latest information on the details of the convention. Hope to see you all there.

Volunteers are needed. We need Convention reps at each home layout tour, folks to spend time at the Company Store, the White Elephant table, Registration, etc. Please contact Bob at [kahlual-ab@aol.com](mailto:kahlual-ab@aol.com)

# Model Contests

By Ray Bilodeau, MER General Contest Chairman  
And NMRA Assistant Contest Manager

Oops! Those of you who have the last issue of **The Local** have noted the discrepancy concerning the modeling topic for the President's Award to be given at the MER convention in Reston, VA this October. Those of you building **maintenance-of-way** car, keep on working. Anyone who started on an open load, stop! Think about it, then try and find a way to place the load in your maintenance-of-way car. If this doesn't sound doable, save the load and somewhere in the near future perhaps we can have a contest and award dealing with open loads. Let me know what you think of this for a contest topic.

Moving along here, I am sure all of you have a particular reason for building a model. So too, many of you enter model contests in order to test how you have matured in your building skills. One reminder though – the models you work on and enter into NMRA, and MER judged model contests are eligible for merit awards in the Achievement Program. If your model scores 87 1/2 out of 125 possible points, you will receive a merit award. This is one step towards earning a certificate in an AP category such as cars or structures, which in turn counts in the fulfillment of the requirements for Master Model Railroader. Build on!

Finally, I want to hear from narrow gauge modelers out there. It makes no difference what scale you represent; drop me a line and let me know if you feel we are serving your needs in the contests. We narrow gauge modelers are a minority of modelers in the NMRA and MER. But over the years I have seen only excellence in model building from our narrow gauge brotherhood. Are there enough of us to warrant a special contest and award at MER conventions? Do you think we should organize specific events, clinics, roundtable discussions, and layout tours at sponsored MER events? When you come to Potomac Junction this October, stop by the contest room and we can talk. I want your ideas and input. You can also reach me at: [raybilodeaujr@aol.com](mailto:raybilodeaujr@aol.com) or (302) 636-0888

## Election for MER Directors

Candidate for Director of the Mid-Eastern Region

The following individuals have agreed to run for reelection as MER Directors. Vote for only three by marking an X beside any of the three names and/or writing in the name of the person or persons you want to be Directors. Your ballot must be received no later than September 5, 2003 – no photocopies accepted.

\_\_\_\_\_ Roger Cason

\_\_\_\_\_ Bob Minnis

\_\_\_\_\_ NoII Horan

### BALLOT

Please fold your ballot as indicated by the dashed lines on the reverse side, making sure the MER address is visible. Tape your ballot closed, and place a 37-cent stamp in the upper right corner.

\_\_\_\_\_ write-in

\_\_\_\_\_ write-in

Candidate positions were in the previous issue of the LOCAL.

\_\_\_\_\_ write-in

Stamp  
here

Dennis Masters  
15 Harvard Road  
Hagerstown, MD

21742-6510

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**PUBLISHING THE LOCAL:** THE LOCAL STILL NEEDS A NEW PUBLISHER VOLUNTEER. WE THOUGHT WE HAD ONE, THAT FELL THROUGH. NEED A REPLACEMENT SO CLINT HYDE CAN CONCENTRATE ON THE VP JOB. IF YOU HAVE AND CAN USE QUARK EXPRESS, YOU CAN TAKE OVER WITH GREATER EASE; IF YOU DO NOT HAVE QUARK: PAGEMAKER, MS PUBLISHER, OR ADOBE IN DESIGN WILL ALSO WORK (MS Word isn't the right tool). PLEASE EMAIL CLINT at [chyde@cox.net](mailto:chyde@cox.net). **You do get AP Volunteer points.**

## ART THOMAS

As our May-June issue of *The Local* was headed for the printer, we learned that Art Thomas died on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Art had been our editor of *The Local* before Alan Mende took over in January 2002. He joined the NMRA in 1971 and the MER in 1972. Art volunteered for several positions on the regional and divisional level—as the editor of *The Local*, a member of the committee for the Tri-Regional convention held in Altoona in 2000, and as Division 10 Achievement Program representative just to name the ones I know. We became friends when the Board decided that the Business Manager should have a column in *The Local*. So Art and I came up with “Keeping in Touch.” Art was a good friend by email and I am glad we had the chance to talk.

When Don Florwick, the superintendent of Division 10, emailed us of Art’s death, I asked if there was any information that I could incorporate into my column about Art. One of Art’s friends, Bob Hazard, emailed me the following information. Bob filled in the blanks about names and dates that I didn’t remember.

Art, while still in school, became a hostler for the Canadian National RR. Many of his family members worked for the CN. He joined the Marines in 1947. After his discharge, he joined the Army Air Corps where he advanced to master sergeant. With his zest for life and learning, he became a commercial pilot and flight instructor then a quality control meteorologist for 20 years until his retirement. While he was the editor of *The Local*, Art also edited a newsletter about the Canadian National.

As Bob said, Art will be warmly remembered for his kind and generous ways, his zest for life, and ever-willing spirit of “being there” with anything he had to give in the interest of others. Art is survived by his wife of almost 50 years, Dorothy. They had 4 children, 10 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

Art, Bob, my husband Ray, and I had dinner the Friday night of the Juniata Junction convention in Altoona. We had a great time trading stories and just learning about each other. In my view, the best part about our conventions is the time we spend meeting with other modelers, whether they are friends or new acquaintances in the MER.

-- Rita Lynam

## Standard or RP – What Is A 501c3?

*By Eric Dervinis, NMRA Trustee*

Do you know? Some of our members have experience with this term, and for the rest of you, read on.

The National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) and the Mid-Eastern Region are both incorporated, the former in Ohio and the latter in Maryland. The incorporation process is a long, complicated task that was undertaken by both bodies for a number of significant advantages. In a nutshell, these are:

- Tax-free status for dues and income that is related to our goals
- Accept donations that are tax deductible
- Liability protection for our members
- Recognized status by our government
- Proven framework in which we can conduct our business

The state and federal governments long ago recognized that there are organizations with goals that simply did not fit the for-profit status of the usual company. The best examples are churches and charities. Both groups provide tremendous value to us as a society. How can the government recognize these groups? What regulations should apply to them? What monies are considered income, and

what taxes will they pay?

Over time, the law evolved so that groups that fit the not-for-profit description would be able to incorporate. The organizations would have to prove their goals in advance and then continue to advance their objectives in the future. The legal authorities have to be constantly vigilant to see that for-profit corporations do not hide their income by converting to not-for-profit status. Today, there are over one million not-for-profit corporations in the USA.

Think about the goals of the NMRA and the MER. What happens every time we gather as a group? Someone provides education to the rest of us, usually in the form of a clinic. Thus we preserve and improve upon the art and craft of model railroading through education. The MER Clinics chair and the NMRA Educational Department track and record these educational efforts. In that way, we insure our continuing not-for-profit status.

The US Congress amended the IRS code creating not-for-profit corporations. They detailed the different goals, and provided a “test” that groups must pass before they are deemed “not-for-profit” corporations. The groups with charitable goals fall under section 501c3. And now you know the rest of the story.

Next issue, more information on how we benefit from our 501c3 status.



## The MER's Photography Contest Expands

By Pete Shatswell, MER Photography Contest Chairperson

Grab your camera (digital or conventional) and start shooting. Search your photo files and start preparing your best efforts. The fun (and awards) of the MER convention's photography contest is increasing for sure. Starting with the fall 2003 convention, there will be several substantial changes in the MER convention photography contest that should encourage every convention participant to become active and display their photographs. These include a new category labeled "Artistic Photography," a new "Best of Show" award, and a new popular vote judging system. The three traditional categories and the new Artistic Photo category are:

**Prototype Photos, Steam Related** – images of prototype steam engines.

**Prototype Photos, Non-Steam** – images of any prototype engines, rolling stock, structures, etc. except for steam related.

**Model Photos** – images of model railroads and related model items.

**Artistic Photos** – pictures that have been substantially changed in terms of composition or content through computer modifications and similar processes.

The Artistic Photo category includes pictures or images whose details or the overall image have been manipulated beyond the capabilities of usual modeling techniques or beyond truthful prototypical reference possibilities. The category also includes images that have had substantial changes such as cloning, layered images, collages, etc. performed. (This does not include minor modifications such as contrast, brightness, gamma, cropping, and similar corrections. Digital or film pictures with these minor corrections may be entered in any of the first three categories above.)

With one exception (described in the next paragraph), judging will now be by popular vote. Instead of just one vote, you will be voting for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in each of the four categories. When the votes are counted, 1<sup>st</sup> place votes will count as 5 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> place as 3 points, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place as 2 points. This system will aid in evening up possible differences created by varying convention localities and possible tilting of scores away from recognizing the quality images our members produce.

In addition to the regular awards, a Best of Show award will also be chosen from all of the entries. A three-person panel, chosen at the convention from people who have experience in photography and/or publications, will select the winner of this award. If the Best of Show is one of the category winners, the rest of the images in that category will be upped one slot to fill all awarded slots.

Here's what you need to know to show up at the convention with your best images:

Registered convention participants who are NMRA and

MER members are eligible to enter. Participants may enter up to five prints in each of the four categories. (We are not equipped to deal with slides.) The maximum size for each photograph is 80 square inches (i.e., the equivalent of an 8x10 photograph). The minimum size is 35 square inches (the equivalent of a 5 x 7 print). All prints must be mounted on a stiff mounting board. Maximum size for the mounting board is 154 square inches (equivalent to 11 X 14). Entries may also include an appropriate mask surrounding the image, not to exceed the mounting board dimensions. Entries may not be framed. Each participant must fill out the proper entry forms upon bringing the photos to the contest room. Participants should try to bring their photos in as early as possible within the convention's announced hours to facilitate the popular vote process. No entries can be accepted after the contest room closes for the standard model contest judging. Do not enter the same image(s) in more than one category. This includes changing a color image to gray scale or vice versa. Any image that won a first place or a Best of Show award in a previous MER photography contest cannot be entered again. If you change a previous first place-winning image from color to gray scale, or vice versa, it is still the same image and cannot be entered again.

The participants of the photography contests will be completely responsible for their images and will not hold the MER or people connected with the contests liable for damages or losses.

The Photography Contest Chairperson or an appointed representative shall make the final judgment on questions or questionable entries dealing with the Photography Contests.

For more information or a full set of more detailed rules, contact Pete Shatswell at [Pasowl@aol.com](mailto:Pasowl@aol.com) or at 12312 West Catharpin Road, Spotsylvania, VA 22553. The rules will also be posted on a web site and that address will be announced later. A copy of the complete rules will be sent to each division newsletter editor as soon as possible.

These changes should provide expanded possibilities for you and increased enjoyment of wonderful images by the convention participants. Besides being awarded their plaques, the top winners will be further recognized at the awards banquet as the top winning images will be displayed in the banquet room so all may see which ones won. Hopefully the award winners might also have a chance to chat with the other conventioners concerning the images afterwards.

So start shooting and sorting, as photography is a great activity that adds a lot to the enjoyment of the hobby. Now you can show off your talents (or luck if that's the case) to your fellow modelers. You may even get to brag some when you bring home that Best in Show!

The photography contest rules have been reviewed this past month, and will be reviewed on a continuing basis by the Photography Contest Chairperson. If you have any suggestions, please let Pete know at the addresses above.

**MID-EASTERN REGION INC., NMRA**  
**9 Roosevelt Ave.**  
**Wilmington, DE 19804-3044**

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**MER N-Scale Special Car Order Form**



Car	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE *	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#29290	_____	\$19.95	\$23.95	\$ _____
#29299	_____	\$19.95	\$23.95	\$ _____
TOTAL				\$ _____
Shipping: _____ Cars, @ \$2.50 for first car, \$1.50 for each additional car				\$ _____

\* MY MER # IS \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Ship to:** NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

These 40' Western Maryland box cars are Micro-Train bodies custom painted by The Freight Yard. They are box cars with prominent white "speed lettering".

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO MID EASTERN REGION.

MAIL TO:  
 THE MID-EASTERN REGION INC.  
 Business Manager  
 9 Roosevelt Ave.  
 Wilmington, DE 19804-3044

The Mid-Eastern Region Inc., NMRA  
 An IRS Tax Exempt Organization  
 Business Manager  
 9 Roosevelt Ave.  
 Wilmington, DE 19804-3044

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip (+4) \_\_\_\_\_  
 email \_\_\_\_\_  
 NMRA # \_\_\_\_\_ Expire Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 MER # \_\_\_\_\_ Expire Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scale \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel # \_\_\_\_\_

Remittance Enclosed for:  
 NMRA Dues:  New  Renewal \_\_\_\_\_  
 1 year: \$45.00  2 years: \$90.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*Life membership cost is based on your age.  
 Send your Birth Date to the NMRA for a quotation.*

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

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

Make checks payable to the Mid-Eastern Region