



Detailing and Weathering the MER's CNJ PS-1 Boxcar

by Mike McNamara

Did you pick up one of the MER's limited run of CNJ 40-foot PS-1 boxcars? If so, you know this is a good-looking model with a nicely done paint job. But, what if you model the 1970s to early 1980s, like me, and would like to place this mid-1950s car in service on your layout?

Recently, I came across a photo of a Jersey Central PS-1 boxcar in the November/December 1986 issue Model Railroading magazine. Now, I wasn't specifically looking for this picture. I just happened to see it while looking through some older magazines. The picture, in color no less, shows car number 23502 in October of 1982. With this photo, I now had the means of modifying my model and placing it in service on my layout, knowing that it had at least one prototype in service as late as 1982. I'll describe my modifications, and you can choose to do some or all of them as you wish.

The caption with the prototype photo gave some history on these cars. Numbered 23502-23549, these cars were built in October of 1957. I don't know if this was a typo with the number series starting at 23502 instead of a more usual 23500. Maybe there were 2 other cars from a different, earlier order. In any event, this doesn't matter with the MER cars, as they are numbered 23506 and 23515. (*Editor's Note: The CNJ PS-1s were numbered 23500-23549.*)

The first most noticeable change is that the ends of the car should be black. I don't know if this was true for all cars in this number series, but I decided to paint mine. I masked off the sides and roof with masking tape and sprayed the ends black. When dry, I applied decals for the reporting marks to the ends to replace those painted over. I used some leftovers from other sets to get all of the lettering and numbering for "CNJ 23515". I also installed a Kadee No. 2042 black brake wheel, which has finer detail than the part in the kit.

With this complete, I turned to the roof. Because I model an era when most roofwalks are gone, I like to upgrade the



roofwalks on the few cars that still have them. Carefully pry up the Accurail roofwalk. Slice off the two center mounting pins and reinstall them in their holes, flush

with the roof, applying a small amount of glue from the inside of the car. Leave the two end holes open for now. Also trim off the molded on roofwalk supports at the end of each car. Install a Kadee No. 2001 40-foot roofwalk. These are great items, and you get two in a package for half the cost of an etched metal running board. Plus it is already

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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

As I am sitting here writing the column, I can hear the whistle of the Wilmington & Western Railroad. The shed that holds the steam engine is not far from our home, and we often can hear the whistle – especially when the day is calm and the weather is clear. We are also close to the Wilsmere Junction where we can hear the CSX diesel horns blow when crossing by the old GM Boxwood Road plant. When I go to bed on Sunday night, I can hear the horns while the CSX crews are switching to get the cars ready for their journey. To other people it is an annoyance to be stopped by a train. To us railfans it brings smiles to our faces and we start spouting TOFs, FREDs, etc. It is so easy to make a railfan happy, isn't it?

Now to MER business: Thanks for your phone calls, cards, and emails about changes of address. Be sure to include the zip+4 when available. That makes it easier to process.

The November-December 2002 issue of the newsletter had several returns from the post office. Please be sure to send a change of address as soon as you know of it so that we can get your copy of The Local to you on time.

The Anchor Tanker has sold out. Next is an N-scale Western Maryland boxcar. Stay tuned for information from Roger Cason on the next car.

Wishing you a great spring and listen for the whistles or horns!

Recently Deceased Member

Patrick L Pritchett, Bowie, Maryland. Born August 1946. Joined the NMRA in 1973. Joined the MER in 1987. NMRA # L04646. MER # 5584.

Don't forget to let me know if your address changes. We want you to receive your LOCAL.

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President's Column

Norm Garner

Just before we had to go to press on the last Local, we received good news that a contract had been signed for the fall MER convention. I had already submitted my article when we got the good news. I want to thank our Convention chairman, Brian Kampschroer, for working so hard to get this convention for us. The Potomac Division will sponsor the convention. One of our MER/BOD members, Bob Minnis, from the Potomac Division, has stepped forward to be Chairman of the convention. I hope every one in the MER will support this convention since we have gone to one convention a year.

I have appointed two new committee chairpersons, one for a vacancy and one for a newly created position. The new position is the Regional Modular Railroad Coordinator. Bruce Strickland has agreed to take on this task to add some enthusiasm and fun to the modular layouts at our conventions. Pete Shatswell has agreed to come on board as our new Photo Contest Chairman and put some new life in entering our contest. I want to thank both Bruce and Pete for volunteering as new people to support the MER.

Dick Genthner recently retired as superintendent of the Carolina Piedmont Division 13. I want to thank Dick for his hard work and leadership to his division and to the MER. He took over a division that had lost half of its members. Dick worked very hard and brought the division back as an example of dedication and perseverance. I know Dick is working on becoming a Master Model Railroader, and I wish him all the best. Thanks Dick for working so hard for the MER. Dick's replacement is Dave Lynam.

I have previously stated in The Local that recruiting new members has to be a major challenge for the MER this year. The NMRA Bulletin has reported that in October 2001 the membership was 23,708 and that as of October 2002, NMRA membership had fallen to 20,804. I have suggested to Eric Dervinis, our MER trustee, that the BOT/NMRA consider a three to six month RAILROAD PASS for new members attending division meets to help recruit new members. Since the NMRA has required the three-tiered membership it has become increasingly harder to get new members. It is going to take a great deal of effort from every division and the MER /BOD to keep our membership numbers up. In closing, remember MODEL RAILROADING IS FUN.

And Since We've No Place To Go...

As I write this, the Middle Atlantic states continue to dig out from the biggest snowstorm in years. And for the first time in many years, the company I work for closed due to the weather. I did a bit of snow shoveling, but with some drifts four feet high, I soon called it quits and retreated into the warm house. My wife and I are fortunate in that our son plows our driveway. But even so, our philosophy has always been, why kill yourself shoveling stuff that will eventually melt anyway.

Winter is a great time for model railroading. Even our chilly basement is a lot warmer than our snow-filled drive-way. I suspect your basement or train room is, too. So what are you doing looking out your window at the falling snow? You probably have rolling stock that has been sitting on the rip track because of drooping couplers that snag turnout frogs. What about that dusty scenery that could use some sprucing up? How many kits are sitting in your stockpile that you've been meaning to build someday? Have you been meaning to start converting your layout to DCC? Follow Win Gross' lead (remember, he wrote about how he converted his layout to DCC in the last issue of *The Local*). After staring at a bare backdrop for a long time, I finally started scratch-building a five-foot-long backdrop model of the Art Color Printing Company plant that was sited along the Central Division main line of the Central Railroad of New Jersey, in Dunellen, NJ. It's a complex model, and I have a long way to go to complete it, but scratchbuilding multiple saw tooth skylights sure beats building piles of snow on either side of my sidewalks.

All too soon spring will have sprung, and the warming weather will have us thinking about planting a garden, cranking up the old Studebaker for the old car show season, or heading to the ballpark. Now is the perfect time for model railroading. Recall the tag line from the running shoe commercials: Just do it.

Alan

PS: If you received The Local late this time, I accept full responsibility and apologize. We had a death in the family the end of January, and that delayed me in getting content to Clint for formatting.

Here's another one of those embarrassing empty spaces. I could have left it blank, then it would REALLY be embarrassing. But YOU could have filled it, too. Only takes a moment. Look at Alan's story last year "How to ryt gud", and then email him something 50 words long. Fits right here!

WEATHERING THE CNJ BOXCAR

painted boxcar red! You'll need to trim off all of the mounting pins except the one at each end. They will fit into the existing holes. You'll also need to trim a little bit off of the angled supports at each end of the roofwalk to get a good fit. Install the roofwalk, using very small amounts of CA to attach it. I then had some fun weathering the roof by dry brushing various Polly Scale paints, including silver, boxcar red, grimy black, and railroad tie brown.

For the car sides, I installed the 5 panel doors. Neither door included in the kit seems to match the prototype picture exactly, but the panel door looks closest to the door in the photo. Door variations may have existed, of course. I then weathered the car using light sprays of rust, dust, earth, and grimy black. I sprayed all areas, including the roof, to help blend in the dry brushing. I also used a mixture of Polly Scale boxcar red and rust to highlight some weathering shown in the prototype photo. This included the panels on the door and small areas on the sides. I used very small amounts of paint on the brush to slowly build up the color effect.

With that complete, I turned my attention to the painted squares on the sides. These squares generally represent a later paint-over of changed data from servicing or rebuilding. I brush painted these areas with a mixture of Polly Scale boxcar red and rust, using the photo as a guide for the color and placement. There is also a black area next to the wheel dot on the right side of the car that I painted grimy black.

When the paint dried, I added some decals for the painted over data and some other missing elements. I added the white car data and the wheel inspection dots from Microscale set 87-193. The consolidated lube stencils are from set MC-4126, while the ACI plates are from set MC-4280. Finally, I added some chalk marks to the door from leftovers in set 87-81. These decals really bring the car into my time period. After the decals dried, I washed the car gently and sprayed on a flat finish of Dullcote.

For the underframe work, I installed Kadee No. 5 couplers and KD 33-inch wheel sets. I painted these items with a mix of rail tie brown and black. I added two-tenths of an ounce (.2) of extra weight to the car by using two 3/4" washers, one over each truck, glued atop the kit's weight. I have found that Liquid Nails in the small tube with a twist-off cap is real handy for this type of bonding. This brings the car up to 3.8 ounces, very close to the NMRA recommended 3.75 oz.

Putting the shell back on the underframe, I had one last detail item to add. On all of my cars, I like to install Detail

Associate No. 6215 coupler lift bars. To mount these, I had to glue a small block of styrene to each end under the ladder in order to mount the shortened eye bolt in a hole drilled with a No.78 bit. I then threaded the bar through the eye bolt and glued the end under the coupler pocket. I painted the bar and the styrene block a mixture of boxcar red and rail tie brown. I was now ready to place the car in service on my layout, an old warrior still hanging on in the age of 50-foot Plate C boxcars.

Even if you don't want a heavily weathered vintage 1982 car like mine, I hope you will still consider some of the upgrades, such as the roofwalk, brake wheel, and perhaps some weathering. These techniques also apply to other cars as well. A few simple upgrades like this will really set a car apart from the normal plastic model kit.

I have uploaded some photos of this car as well as one of the prototype boxcar to my website. You can find them at <http://home.earthlink.net/~mikemcnh/flatcar/art-mer0303.html>. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to e-mail me at mikemcnh@earthlink.net.

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 – Volunteer

MER – No Division

Charles Flichman – Master Builder – Cars

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**.

Editor and Publisher's note: You see this space? See the other little empty spaces? We hate that. Those are spaces where YOU could have written something and gotten published, picked up an AP point. Not hard to do, not even time-consuming—maybe five minutes. Help us out!

Achievement Program - Part Two

By Charlie Flichman

Are you working on your Gold Spike Award yet? Oh, you have already applied for it? GREAT! Did that motivate you to continue with the formal Achievement Program (AP)? It's just a continuation of what you have already done.

A modeler may work toward a certificate in any one of the 11 categories listed to the right. You may obtain one certificate or all 11 certificates or any number in between. Not everyone has to be a Master Model Rail-roader (MMR). But once you get started, I am sure you will want to go as far as you are capable. In mentioning MMR, you need at least seven certificates, with at least one from each of the four areas.

I will attempt to briefly cover the requirements of each of the categories under the 4 areas as listed and add some notes to help in the categories that I have familiarity. To get all of the details go to www.nmra.org/achievement/ or contact Roger Cason (address in box on page 2) for the same information.

We start with Master Builder - Motive Power. The requirements are as follows:

- A.) Build three scale models of railroad motive power, one of which must be scratch built.
- B.) Earn a Merit Award for each of the three models.
- C.) Submit a Statement of Qualification (SOQ).

(More on the SOQ in a later article, let's get the models built first).

B&O Railroad Museum Collapse

This really was a big loss, both to the structure and to the collection it housed. They now have a place set up for donations to the restoration fund.

All proceeds from your donation will be tax deductible and will go directly to the Restoration and Re-building of The B&O Railroad Museum and it's collection.

I hear the comments already. In today's world, scratch building ANY kind of model is something very few people do. But, some of you have already done the next closest modeling to scratch building - putting together a craftsman kit. There all of the parts are provided for you in one box. What happens if you provide the strip wood, make the plaster walls, etc? That's scratch building. I, working in a minority scale, enjoy building models from scratch. Therefore, my layout has cars and structures that aren't on everyone else's layout. Try it, you might even enjoy it.

Note that only one model has to be scratch built. It could be a super detailed track speeder that operates and will earn a Merit Award. The other two models could be super detailed commercial models that will also earn Merit Awards. The three models don't have to be from the same scale. Two could be HO and the third G scale.

The AP consists of four areas with eleven sub-categories:

- A. Model Railroad Equipment
 - 1. Master Builder - Motive Power
 - 2. Master Builder - Cars
- B. Model Railroad Settings
 - 3. Master Builder - Structures
 - 4. Master Builder - Scenery
 - 5. Master Builder - Prototype Models
- C. Model Railroad Engineering & Operation
 - 6. Model Railroad Engineer - Civil
 - 7. Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical
 - 8. Chief Dispatcher
- D. Model Railroad Service
 - 9. Association Volunteer
 - 10. Association Official
 - 11. Model Railroad Author

What is a Merit Award? Most of you probably already know, but we will review it again. To earn a Merit Award means that your judged model has earned at least 87.5 points out of the total of 125 points. The judging can be in an MER regional or divisional contest or by an AP person coming to your location to do the judging.

OK, you have to start some where. Maybe Motive Power isn't your starting point. By the time we get through all of these articles, I hope you will find your starting point. Everyone has a favorite area of modeling, be it cars, structures, scenery or whatever. Stick with us in these articles and let's see if we can't find your starting point in the AP.

Please make all checks payable to:

The Roundhouse Restoration Fund
C/O Mercantile Bank & Trust Co.
409 Washington Avenue Suite 100
Towson, MD 21204

If you have any questions, please contact Stefanie Fay at sfay@borail.org, or 410-752-2462 ext. 204

Contests at the National Convention in
Toronto, Canada – July 13-19, 2003

By Ray Bilodeau
MER General Contest Chairman

The Toronto NMRA national convention, (Maple Leaf, 2003) is only a few short months away. Have you thought of entering a model, photograph or two, or a craft item? Cold weather and winter definitely are hanging on; spring perhaps, is only a distant thought. Modelers, are you still hibernating? Take up your modeling tools, don't let dust gather on that camera, work on that quilt, sew, stitch, or whatever, but, please, bring your stuff to Toronto this July!

If you have access to the Internet, go to the NMRA website. Over on the left side of the page, click on contests, check out the rules and regulations for model, photo, and arts and crafts contests. See what special contests are available; check out the forms that you need to fill out, download them, and do your paperwork. That is all there is to it.

Too much paperwork here? I don't think so. If you are having problems filling out the entry form or want to be sure of just how much accompanying documentation needs to go with your model, just let me know. I can answer your questions, and help you fill out the forms. You can contact me by e-mail: raybilodeaujr@aol.com. My phone number is (302) 636-0888.

As we get into spring, the NMRA Bulletin will run a series of articles on the national contests, written by Marty Vaughn, MMR, the National Contest Manager. We hope these articles will clear up any misinformation that has been associated with all contests.

Just one last point of information – Marty Vaughn, Allen Gross, MMR, and this writer handle the model contests, and Paul Voelker, oversees the photo contest. We are currently searching for someone to work with arts and crafts. Anyone interested? Just let me know. We would like to have someone in place for Toronto; our current Gang of Four could once again become the Infamous Gang of Five!

Mid-Eastern Region Statement of Financial Condition (As of December 31, 2002)

Assets (excluding inventories – See Note 1)

Item	\$ Amount
High Point Bank Checking Account	10,124.18
High Point Bank Money Market Account	4,176.34
High Point Bank 9 month CD - matures 4/03	11,989.72
High Point Bank 12 month CD - matures 1/03	44,231.28
Total Assets	70,521.52

Liabilities 0

Net Assets (excluding inventories – See Note 1)
70,521.52

Breakdown of Net Assets

Restricted Assets	
Life Member Fund	44,231.28
Pre-Paid Dues	2,010.00
Assets restricted by Board of Directors	
Car Sales Fund	5,847.38
Donation Fund	958.85
Unrestricted Assets	17,474.01
Total Net Assets	70,521.52

Note 1: As of December 31, 2002, we had an inventory of 18 tank car kits, 59 pins, 57 patches, 10 Local CDs, and 10 coffee mugs.

The Life Member Fund covers our liability to provide services for our Life Members. It consists of fees paid by Life Members and interest earned on that money. Pre-paid dues are those collected in prior years and held for use in the designated years.

The Car Sales Fund is a revolving fund for the car kits that we sell. Proceeds from cars sold are used to buy new cars. Surplus proceeds may be used for purposes designated by the Board of Directors (BOD). This year the BOD has directed that \$1800 be transferred to the Operating Budget in lieu of considering an increase in member dues.

The Donation Fund collects the donations made by members. Since we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization, these donations are tax deductible. The BOD may direct the use of these funds for special projects.

Ronald G. Schmidt
MER Treasurer

Green Ridge & Big Spring Railroad

By William S. Moyer, NMRA and MER Life Member

Green Ridge Village, a Continuing Care Retirement Community here in Newville, PA formally organized the Green Ridge and Big Spring model railroad club on February 25 with 14 active members. The layout will be housed in a specially constructed building here on the campus. While the building was dedicated in late January, we are hopeful of having one phase of the layout completed in time for a public open house in the early or late spring of 2003.

Membership is open to residents, employees, and their families, and any other interested persons. The layout will be primarily HO scale. The methodology will be to develop the entire layout in seven phases with each phase being fully completed before moving on to the next. A number of the residents are working with the art club of Big Spring High School to provide appropriate background scenery on two of the walls which will augment and enhance the layout.

General Design

1. Overall concept is a single gauge HO scale (1/87) free lance design in traditional period with both steam and diesel trains operating.
2. Platform arrangement provides accessibility for observation and participation by persons in wheel chairs and multiple operators.
3. Track layout is generally very simplistic and symmetrical and is designed to provide opportunity to just watch the trains run.
4. Track layout provides separate right-of-way loops for continuous or independent operation of multiple trains in opposite directions.
5. Track layout provides sidings and spurs for point to point switching operations between industrial, yard, maintenance, and staging areas.

Platform Design

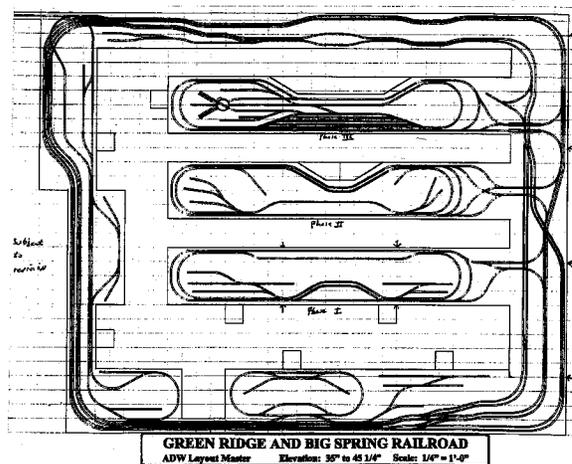
1. Overall size of combined platform sections is 29.5 feet wide by 37 feet long with viewing area on 2 sides and access area only at one end.
2. Platform bench construction is based primarily on multiple exterior and interior platform sections 4 feet wide by 8 feet long.
3. Lift-out section at one side of exterior platform provides access to interior walkways and permits continuous main line right-of-way loops.
4. Lowest exterior perimeter platform sections are 35 inches high to accommodate persons in wheel chairs and viewing by children.
5. Interior walkway between platform sections near lift-out section (36 inches wide) is 4.5 feet wide to accommodate wheel chairs.
6. Maximum width of most platform sections is 4 feet and minimum width of interior walkways between platform sections is 2 feet.
7. Limiting width of platform sections to 4 feet reduces construction and operating arm-reach requirements to about 2 feet.
8. Platform sections rise in tiers from 35 inches high on side

near lift-out section to about 45 inches high against wall on far side of room.

9. A Lucite protective shield attached to the walkway edges of all platform sections extends 6 inches above the top of the platform

Track Design

1. Minimum distance from edge of platform to center of track is 3 inches with Lucite protective shield along edge of platform.
2. Minimum distance center to center between side by side tracks at same elevation is 2 inches, except 18-inch radius curves are 2.5 inches.
3. Minimum distance center to center between side by side tracks of different elevations is 2 times vertical separation.
4. Minimum vertical distance between overhead tracks is 4 inches less thickness of supporting roadbed constructions
5. Maximum grade is three-sixteenths of an inch per foot or 1.5625% (i.e., one and one-half inches elevation in 8 feet).
6. Track elements a part of main line are minimum 30-inch radius curves, Customline #6 switches and a lot of flex track.
7. Track elements a part of branch lines are minimum 18-inch radius curves, #4 Snap-Switches and some flex track.
8. No turnouts are hidden in tunnels to minimize access requirement problems associated with rare accidents or derailments.
9. Layout is designed for trains on each main line loop to operate primarily in one direction, 2 clockwise and 2 counter-clockwise.
10. There are reversing loops and crossovers, which can be used to reverse direction of rolling stock on main lines and branch lines.
11. Each of 2 main lines is about 125 feet of double track for continuous movement of multiple trains in opposite directions.
12. Each of 8 branch lines is 25 to 50 feet of single track in a loop for access to industrial, yard, maintenance, and staging areas.
13. A large staging area is partially hidden on a lower level across room and out of direct view of visiting observers.
14. There is a master control console and 9 other sectional control consoles for power packs, switch controls, block controls, etc.



sorry about the small print, story doesn't fit otherwise

Trustee Report

By Eric Dervinis

It was that time of year again. Your Board of Trustees (BOT) met February 13 to 15 for the Mid-Year Meeting. The board meets twice a year, once at the annual convention and then again in February. The name, Mid-Year Meeting originated, because the NMRA fiscal year ends on August 31. Seattle was our choice of venue, as the annual convention will be there in 2004. We conserved travel dollars by also meeting with the local hotels, and conducting other pre-convention business.

A detailed report of the meeting will appear in a forthcoming of the **NMRA Bulletin**, and the actual meeting minutes will be available on our web site. This column highlights important topics and decisions made.

The Internet has been fully embraced by our membership, and it improves communications while reducing expense. In the future, we are going to publish an abstract of proposed standards in the **NMRA Bulletin**, and place the detailed pages on the web site. This frees up space for more editorial content and eliminates pages of dry facts that few wish to read. Of course, printed copies will be available by mail for those without Internet access. Visit our site, and see what else has been added over the last few months – it will surprise you.

An important topic at the meeting, woven into many of the discussions, was the headquarters building. This is an important asset of the organization that costs significant dollars to maintain and upgrade. We own the building and land, and we have a mortgage for improvements made a few years ago. As a board, it is our responsibility to look at this asset and its future. The Kalmbach Library is located in half of the building. Have we planned properly for their future? Should they get more space, by moving the office staff to another location nearby? Or should we move the library and expand staff space? There are many questions to be asked and hard decisions to be made.

At present the Howell Day Museum is located in the basement of our building. It is not open yet, as we do not have staff or dollars to open the doors. Thanks to the large donations from Mr. Day, our museum committee has been able to select a museum architect. The architect will study the why, where, how and what. A progress report will appear in the future. The architect may advise us to move to another site vs. our basement. And to reassure all of you, the dollars for ALL museum expenses come from Mr. Day's generous donations or other contributors, not from your dues.

Strong non-profit organizations have large endowments to provide for consistent income streams. At present, we do

not, but thanks to the work of Roger Ferris we are beginning the solicitation process. Once we build a base, each year the income will flow to the operations. This will reduce our dependence on dues, and make budgeting far easier. If you want to learn more about the endowment and the tax benefits, contact me directly.

The 2003 NMRA calendar is receiving kudos from many members. Most of the work was done by a small group of volunteers in Madison, Wisconsin – congratulations to all of them. If you have comments or ideas for 2004, contact your trustee (me). If you have slides to contribute, send them to Gordon Belt in the library – sorry – we cannot accept digital images. And some news – later this year we may test the idea of selling the 2004 calendar in stores as a fund raising initiative.

The new director of the Technical Department announced a number of changes in the department's structure. He is reorganizing with a chair and deputy in each area. That provides a fall back if the chair has to resign. A new Conformance and Inspection team is in place, and warrants should start being released soon. Volunteers with engineering or electrical experience are still in need – contact Allen Pollock directly if you would like to serve.

And then the **NMRA Bulletin** came up. Yes, the membership has been heard loud and clear regarding typos, late issues, the editorial mix, and layout mistakes. Some volunteers have started to help with proof reading, and the editor is making some changes to correct other problems. The board decided to combine two issues in the near future to get caught up. The new goal is to have the **Bulletin** in your hands the first of the month, in the month of the issue. Additionally, the board created a group to study our periodical and create a plan for the future. This is a big improvement over just complaining about the problem – now we are looking into the solutions.

What about the dues increase? Well, it hurt membership renewals over the past year. The end result was a 10% drop in membership, almost exactly what was projected. Unfortunately, the 2002 budget was overly optimistic, and we spent more than we brought in last year. The board required more cuts in department budgets this year, and the president cut most budgets by another 10%. Our goal is a balanced 2003 – the BOT will be watching this very closely. Some good news – membership has grown in the last two months.

The wrap up to the meeting was the Long-Range Plan (LRP). Charlie Getz, a former board member and a lawyer, continues to head up the committee writing the LRP. The most amazing fact is that the BOT started LRP discussions in 1989, and only put the LRP on paper in the last year. We passed the conceptual plan last summer and agreed to

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Upcoming MER Conventions

2003 — Potomac Division.
Sheraton Reston, Northern
Virginia. Columbus Day
weekend

2004 — South Mountain
Division. Hagerstown, at the
same place as last time.

Model Railroading is fun!

Pete Shatswell is the new Photo Contest Chairman. He'll have some explanatory information on how he wants to do this in the future in the next issue. In the meantime he wants your input: pasowl@aol.com

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Trustee's Report

much of the legal language at this meeting. Our lawyers are continuing to study Ohio law to make the new Bylaws a legal document. This work should be done by the time we get to the summer meeting. A series of articles will be placed in the **Bulletin** with a member vote held later this year. If approved, they will go into effect summer of 2004.

All of this and more were covered in two and one half days. It was exhausting but satisfying to see progress made in a number of areas. The Long-Range Plan, the new Technical Department structure, the improvement in headquarters operations, and the end of membership declines are all very positive. Much remains to be done, and I want to hear from everyone. So write, email, phone, volunteer, or talk to me at a division meet or a convention. Your thoughts and ideas can make a difference.

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.

March 15-16, 2003, 10 AM to 5 PM. Carolina Coastal Railroaders 2003 Train Show. New Bern High School, 4200 Academic Drive, New Bern, NC 28562. Admission: \$4.00 each, under 12 free with adult. Contact Tommie L. Phelps, 509 River Road, New Bern, NC 28562. Phone: 252-637-4026, e-mail wa4eme@coastalnet.com.

March 15, April 12, May 24-25, and July 12, 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 or by calling 703-938-5157 on the day of the open house. The club meets on Tuesday evenings.

March 15, 2003. New Jersey Division Meet, Trenton, NJ. Contact: Carl Haslett, (856) 546-9230

Saturday, March 15, 2003, 10 AM to 5 PM and Sunday, March 16, 2003, 1 PM to 5 PM. 5th Annual Model Train Show & Railroading Merit Badge Workshop sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 964, Dale City, VA. Admission: Adults \$4.00, Students \$2.00, under 6 free. Location: Saunders Middle School, 13557 Spriggs Rd, Manassas, VA 20112. We've awarded over 300 Railroading Merit Badges in the 4 years we've hosted the show. Operation Lifesaver, refreshments & door prizes. Railroading Merit Badge information and registration: (703) 680-9758, or email Troop964Trains@aol.com. For train show information: (703) 730-1296. Email: Troop964Trains@aol.com. Web Site: <http://www.troop964.org>.

Friday, March 21, 1 PM to Saturday, March 22, 2003, 11 PM. Prototype Modeler's Seminar - East, Holiday Inn, Monroeville (Pittsburgh), PA (Exit 6, PA Turnpike). Registration \$40. Hotel \$69/night. For more information, contact Dick Flock, 337 Elm Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601. (724)-850-8882. E-mail: rflock@worldnett.att.net.

May 16-18, 2003. 20th annual Narrow Gauge Module Meet to be held in Kimberton, PA (just west of Valley Forge Park). This meet is sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Narrow Gauge Guild. At this meet, narrow gauge modules in numerous scales, Nn3 through G, will be assembled for a weekend of operation. A raffle will also be held for a framed and mounted Ted Rose print "Mount Union Train". Proceeds benefit the Friends of the East Broad Top restoration fund. For additional details, log on to our web page at: <http://midatlanticng.railfan.net/modmeet.html> or contact Bob Beebe at Ngrailroad@aol.com or by phone at 610-666-6711 (leave message).

POTOMAC JUNCTION 2003

October 10-13, 2003

Reston, Virginia

October 10-13, Columbus Day weekend (yes, same weekend as Timonium--we may have a bus trip).

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

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. Spouses can go to the Reston Town Center for shopping, or a movie, or someplace different to eat, with a shuttle bus provided by the hotel. (Trip to Leesburg?)

Clinics: (planning stages)	Ballasting
Building brass structure kits -- Kempinski	Resistance soldering
Scratch-building wood, O/On3 -- Brechbiel	Hot wire foam cutting
Scratch-build in styrene -- Nicholson (?)	Scratch-build track turnouts
Freight-car weathering (incl airbrush?)	Bar Mills one-kit builds
Painting backdrops	Hand-laying track
Making trees	Making castings
Making open loads	Making rocks
Painting signs and people	Making water
	DCC things like how to program a decoder

The venue space is excellent, LOTS of room.

Dining: expect a banquet. Details not yet worked out.	Nearby:
Adjacent:	Macaroni Grill (Italian)
Chili's	Rio Grande Café (tex-mex)
Charlie Chang's (Chinese)	Pizzeria Uno
Reston Kabob	Lee's deli
Bar&restaurant: breakfast buffet every day, lunch buffet M-F	Clyde's (steaks)
	Paolo's (Italian)
	Panera (soup, sandwiches, salads)
	On the Border (tex-mex)
	La Madeleine (bakery/sandwiches)

The auction: there will be an auction, and a white elephant table. The White EI table is for those cheapie items, under \$20, which shouldn't go into an auction. Over \$20 only, for the auction. We will have credit card use available for the auction—BUT—you will have to create a PayPal account in your name and give it your credit card number, in advance. This process takes about a week, so don't expect to do it at the last minute. You can sign up at <http://www.paypal.com/> (you can use paypal to pay for EBay auctions as well, and other online things). If you already have a PayPal account, great—we will also try to have online registration available this spring—details in the next issue of the LOCAL.

We are contemplating having a co-sponsorship with NTRAK for this convention. Reasons: primarily, it will help with the room-nights requirement. It will provide for a MUCH larger modular layout.

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Potomac Junction continued

And speaking of modular layouts: we are going to try to have some real-live operation sessions. Bruce Strickland (formerly head of the Potomac Division's HO Module Crew) is taking the lead on this and the Modular Groups coordinator for the region.

The address for registrations for the convention will be:

Potomac Junction
PO Box 447
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

The telephone number will be:

856-467-3385

That is PJ Mattson's number, and he is the registrar-for-life, since he knows how to do that job best.

As you can see on the previous page, there will be lots to do at this Fall's convention. Members of the committee and the Potomac Board are hard at work planning a great weekend of railroad activities. Now is the time to start planning your participation. The Monday Columbus Day holiday will allow most families to spend an extra day in the nation's capital participating in the MER convention or some other activity in the capital area. One could spend weeks in just the Smithsonian Museums. The hotel is located next to a major access road. The METRO is easily reached and an all-day ticket costs only \$5. The contest room will be in operation for those of you looking for AP points. The President's Award category will be a Maintenance-of-Way car. The home layout tours are going to be tops. There are several layouts in the Potomac Division area that have appeared on the covers of national magazines. We hope to have these available for convention attendees. Watch for the details and registration forms in the next issue of *The Local*. The web site is

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

Details will be published there as they become available. Hope to see you in October.

Bob Minnis
Chairman

Another blank space! Ack! **You** could have put an advertisement here.

The Veep's Corner

by *Clint Hyde, MER VP*

MER Elections:

Elections in 2003 are for the three Director positions. Nominations must be received by April 15. You need to send a picture (electronic preferred, it's way simpler on the publisher), and a short resume, length max 250 words. Send these things to:

John Johnson
22398 SCOJO DR
Franklin, VA 23851-2819
(757) 562-5917

In 2004, we will be electing Officers again. The President and Secretary are term-limited out of office this time, per the by-laws. The region needs members to step forward and run for office—in particular I want to see at least two candidates for all four positions (including mine). You know the saying, "Ask not what your Region can do for you, but what you can do for the Region." JJ will be calling around, too.

Up close and personal:

I hope to visit each of the Divisions in 2003, if my schedule can work out that way. So far I've been to visit New Jersey and Carolina Piedmont Divisions. Please help me out here and keep me informed of your meetings. I'd appreciate the offer of a bed/shower for times where I need to stay overnight. I'd like the opportunity to talk to the members as a group, if that's possible; if not, I'll talk to folks individually.

Notice to the members: in a 1996 photo in *The Local*, I saw a couple of members with an official MER banner (you know the kind, two feet high by mumble-feet wide), at the Timonium show, where they had a table for advertising/recruiting. Do we still have this banner? Who has it? Please contact me if you know about this—I'd like to have it get used during recruiting episodes.

Other work:

In order that I not short-change this new VP job, I need to have someone new take over the publishing job on *The Local*. It's good for AP Volunteer Points, and you know about MER things a lot sooner than most folks. I will be happy to support the transition, explain exactly what software I've been using, what substitutes could be used, etc. Contact me, Bob Minnis, or the Editor at our addresses on page 2.

As always, you are welcome to call me or email me about anything at all to do with MER; email is preferred, I'm a computin' kinda guy. If I can help, I'll do what I can, or find out where to get more help.

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MER Special Tank Car Order Form

Car	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE *	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#2960	—	SOLD OUT! KEEP WATCH-		
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MARYLAND BOX CAR				



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 YOU MUST BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
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 City _____ State _____ Zip (+4) _____
 email _____
 NMRA # _____ Expire Date _____
 MER # _____ Expire Date _____

 Scale _____ Birth date _____
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Remittance Enclosed for:
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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.*

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

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