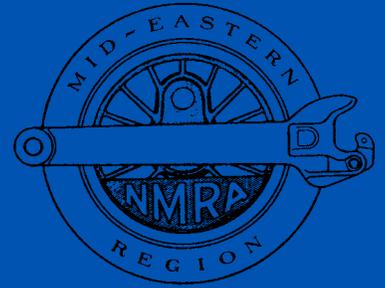


The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 59

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MER Spring Joint Convention 2004

Story and photographs by Clint Hyde

IN LATE 2003, MER got invited to participate in a joint convention with the Mid-Central Region (MCR), in Pittsburgh, PA, in spring of 2004. It wasn't really "joint" in the way I'd have thought that meant; the real agreement was that we'd advertise it to our members and get a kickback to cover that cost. Pittsburgh is close enough to our territory to be interesting, especially since the MER is not trying to hold a spring convention anymore.

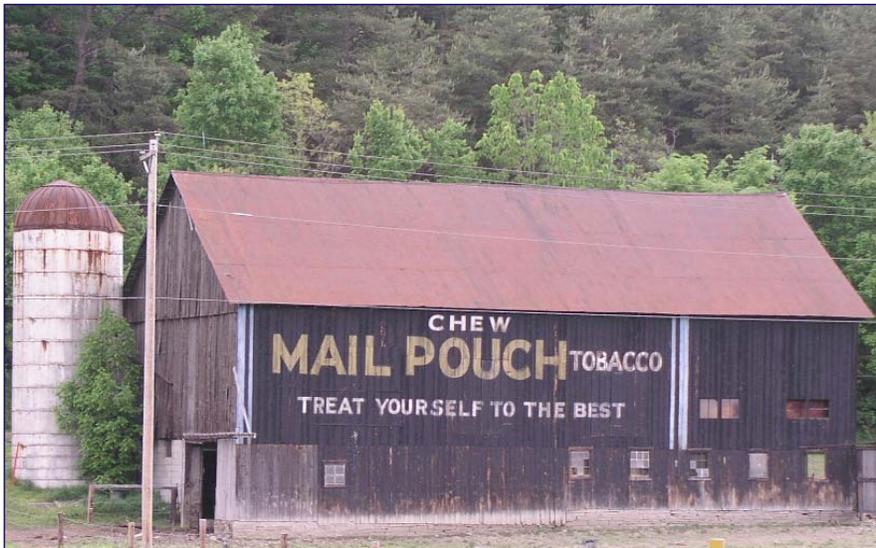
The MER turned out in noticeable force, 86 of about 250 total registrants (including the typical 50 or so walk-ins). Without our participation they would have had to consider canceling things the week before, so we helped out quite a bit. The spread of attendee hometowns was excellent—there was a good crowd from Charlotte, NC (now that's a drive), New Jersey, Richmond, around DC, etc. I'm sure there were plenty of folks I don't know

from the MER and didn't meet—say hi next time!

Paul Dolkos, an MER member I think we've all heard of, was the guest of honor. I got to sit next to him at the banquet table. Mike Brestel, MCR Trustee and NMRA Executive VP-elect (I can say that since he's unopposed, even though we haven't voted yet) was also there where I met him for the first time. Likewise, John Roberts, NMRA President-elect, who is going to be at the fall 2004 MER convention in Hager-

stown (info later in this issue of **The Local**, and on the Web site). Both officials attended our board meeting Friday evening.

I did get to talk to a number of folks about one thing or another during the weekend, and longer conversations with some folks—generally late nights you can find me in the bar with the usual group of bar-goers, which includes some NJ folks, some Richmond folks, and a few others from



We stopped to take photos of a couple of really interesting barns along the PA turnpike, one of which had the classic black "Mail Pouch tobacco" ad (above) on the side

continued on page 4

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 backup 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*

The Mid-Atlantic Narrow Gauge Module Meet was a great success! Several members stopped by to say hello or to save postage by renewing their membership at the MER table. It was great to see so many MER members at the module meet in Kimberton, Pennsylvania. It was fun watching MMRs help other members doing scenery for their modules. While I was there, I was able to issue membership cards for renewing members as well as talking to several people about our divisions, showing them the articles in our newsletter and in **Scale Rails**. We had a great couple of days at the module meet making new friends and renewing old ones.

Just a reminder! Look at the back of any newsletter. There is a membership renewal form. On the bottom right-hand side of this form under the area for joining or renewing membership with the MER, there are a few lines I want to promote.

The MER sells:

- MER lapel Pin/Tie Tack for only \$6 each.
- MER cloth patch (with the outline of the MER boundaries) for only \$3 each.

There is also space for sending any size of donation. We are grateful for any donation and issue you a letter thanking you for your generosity. You can keep this letter as proof to the IRS of your donation.

To place an order, send me the form and I will ship out the item or items you want. There is no additional charge for shipping. It is included in the price of the item. I look forward to processing your membership, your order for MER products, or your donation.

Be sure to send me your change of address.

We are thankful for your support of the MER. Have a great summer! We are looking forward to the fall convention in Hagerstown, Maryland.

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MER web-page URL is <http://members.cox.net/chyde/MER/MER.html>

President's Column

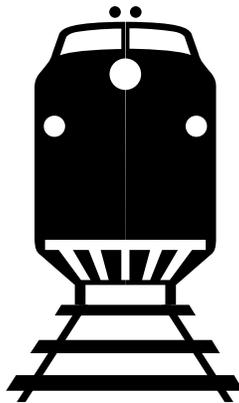
By Norman W. Garner

I WANT TO THANK the Mid-Central Region for inviting the MER to be a part of the Three Rivers Transfer 2004 convention. The convention was held at the Four Points Sheraton Pittsburgh, North Cranberry Township, PA. Dick Flock and his staff did an outstanding job of putting on this convention. I also want to thank all of the MER members who helped make this convention a success. The MER was well represented at the convention with approximately 80 members attending the four-day event. All of the feedback I have received has been positive, and I am sure we will look to the future to have another joint convention with the MCR.

Pete Shatswell has had to resign as Photo Contest Chairman and Arts and Crafts Chairman because of health reasons. Pete came to the MER when change and innovation were needed and gave us new guidelines for the photo contest. His efforts and expertise are gratefully appreciated by the MER. I have nomi-

nated Roger Ossman to fill the vacancy, and the MER/BOD has approved. Welcome aboard, Roger.

On June 1, 2004, the NMRA Trustees approved the Rail Pass Membership program. This program is aimed at recruiting new members. This program will allow a new member to come on board the NMRA for six months for only \$9.95. This is a once-in-a-lifetime offer. The only restrictions that will apply are that the new member cannot vote or hold an office. The benefits include a copy of the **Scale Rails** each month, an electronic copy of **The Local**, plus the benefits of the local division. I hope that every division will take advantage of this most generous offer and recruit new members. This program is a win-win recruiting innovation that will benefit the entire organization. Let's get behind this and make it a success.



Remember, model railroading is fun.
Norm

New Chairman

Photo and Arts & Crafts Contest Chairman

By Roger L. Cason,
MMR

PETE SHATSWELL has regrettably stepped down from his positions as both Photo and Arts & Crafts Chairman due to health and time difficulties. However, Pete will be at the Hagerstown convention. He hopes you will support the new chairman by bringing photos, arts & crafts, and passes to the event. He hopes to see you there.

We greatly appreciate the work Pete has done in these positions, particularly his updating of the photo contest rules.

Roger Ossman, of Wilmington, DE, has agreed to serve in these two positions. Roger, welcome to the wonderful world of volunteering for NMRA!

So to all readers of **The Local**, bring those photos and craft items to the MER convention in Hagerstown. Railroad photography is phun, oops, fun!

(FYI, 48 color prints and 10 black and white prints were entered in the photo contest at the MCR/MER convention in Pittsburgh. Participation by region seemed to be in proportion to the number of attendees from each region.)

Letters – We Get Letters

Wanted to pass on that I enjoyed Martin Brechbiel's truss rod flatcar scratchbuilding article. It's not often that you see scratchbuilding articles nowadays, as the trend is strongly towards RTR models in today's marketplace. However, there is one anachronistic detail: AB brakes are really too modern for a truss rod flatcar. Fortunately, excellent K brake detail castings are available in styrene from Tichy (#3005 KC Brake, #3034 KD Brake, \$2.50 ea.) and in brass from Grandt Line (#86040, \$12).

Best regards,
Ben Hom



here and there. This will undoubtedly be true in Hagerstown, too.

As usual, I attended very few clinics. Sigh. One of these days . . . well, I did hear parts of some. Terry Bacus did a good one about signs-n-details-stuff on your layout. Our own Martin Brechbiel reprised his Scratchbuild an O-scale flatcar clinic (he's going to do it one more time, in Hagerstown, and that's the last one; he'll begin planning a different one after that; one guy finished it in an hour, he told me). Martin and I drove up together, only a four-hour drive from Northern Virginia, and shared a room. I overslept badly Saturday morning, and missed Lance Mindheim's clinic, darn it.

MER supplied a good number of clinics for this convention, which was great, but where we really excelled was in the model contests. The photos with this story are ones I took of everything that looked even slightly interesting in the model room. And let me tell you, some of them were REALLY interesting. In particular were the Mercke Lumber sawmill and the Stamp Mill. Both of these had audio and animation. Mercke had synchronized audio, so that as the log went back and forth past the blade, you'd hear the cutting, and when it was beyond the blade, you didn't. The stamp mill had all sorts of things moving, including the stamps. I don't know the builder on these two, he's not from MER (yes, same guy did both!), but Ray Bilodeau has the complete listing elsewhere in this issue.

Having used up all the time we could afford, Martin and I didn't try to see any layouts on the way home Sunday. We did stop to take photos of a couple of really interesting barns along the PA turnpike, one of which had the classic black "Mail Pouch tobacco" ad on the side; the other barn had some funky decorative work above the windows, and hanging from the end eaves. There was also a really interesting looking old-style seed/feed store in a little town further west which we saw, but I didn't get my camera out fast enough.

These are the contest awards won by MER folks:

CABOOSE: Noll Horan

TRACTION: Fred Miller, sweeps 1st, 2nd, 3rd places (in addition, these all got Merit Awards, thereby qualifying him for AP Locos, and MMR as a result—and not one of my photos turned out to be in focus, time to read the camera instructions again)

FAVORITE TRAIN: 3rd place, Noll Horan

STEAM:



**2nd Place,
Noll Horan for a Shay**

ONLINE STRUCTURES:



**1st Place
Rich Newmiller, coal tower
(Rich was the big winner in Cherry Hill in 2002)**



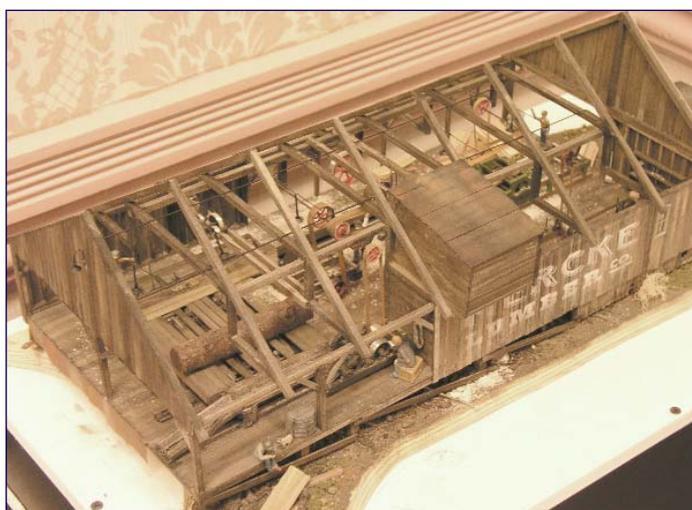
**3rd place,
Noll Horan, water tank**

OFFLINE STRUCTURES:

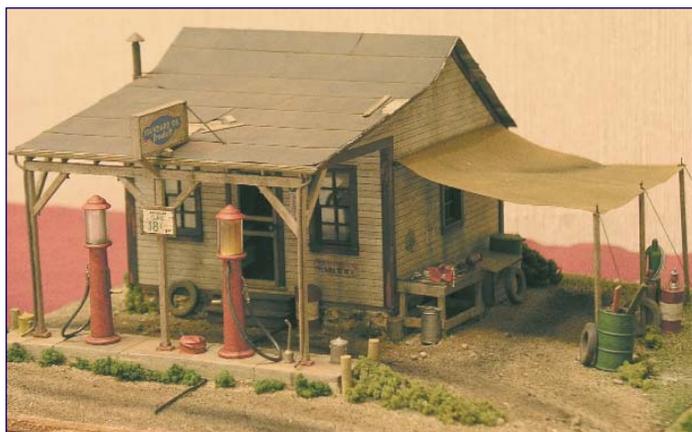


1st Place
John Griffith, Dunmore Lumber sawmill

OFFLINE DISPLAY:



1st place,
Michael Harmon, Mercke Lumber Co. Sawmill



3rd place,
Doug Kirkpatrick, gas station

ONLINE DISPLAY:



1st place,
Michael Harmon, Mining Operation Stamp Facility

CHESTER MUSZALSKI AWARD for the best steam entry: Some guy named Noll Horan, for the Shay. (This award is open to any steam engine model which best represents the spirit of fine modeling. It is awarded in honor of MCR member and outstanding steam engine modeler, Chester Muszalski).

Who is this Horan guy? Hope he brought a wheelbarrow with him for all those awards.

The **BEST-IN-SHOW** car shop is a multi-structure diorama about 2 feet x 3 feet, beautiful. I took a bunch of photos, email me if you want to see one.

Calling All MER Members!

Don't forget about Independence Junction (<http://www.ij2006.org/>), the NMRA's 2006 National Convention. The Mid-Eastern Region will host it July 2 to July 9, 2006 in Philadelphia, PA. There is a great need for volunteers to help at the convention. If you would like to help out, go to <http://www.ij2006.org/volunteer.html> and fill out the volunteer survey form. Be a part of this amazing event! It could get better with your help! Not only will you get great satisfaction from participating, you'll also qualify for AP Volunteer points.

The Contests at Three Rivers Transfer NMRA MCR/MER Regional Convention

Pittsburgh, PA May 13 - 16, 2004

By Ray Bilodeau, MER General Contest Chairman

The Pittsburgh convention this past May brought out quite a few MER modelers to the judged model contest. MER photographers also turned out bringing lots of railroad-oriented prototype and model entries for the judged photo contest. Although Rita and I were not able to attend the festivities out “west,” reliable sources have told us that close to one hundred MER members attended what was a really enjoyable convention. Congratulations to our brothers from the MCR!

The contest schedule included judged model, photo, and arts and crafts contests, and a popular vote favorite train contest. Noll Horan, MMR, won the MCR’s Chester Muszalski Special Award

for his On30 two-truck Shay with sound. Noll also placed third in the popular vote Favorite Train with his On30 Porter-headed passenger train. Soon-to-be MMR, Fred Miller won three traction awards for Locomotives. Fred, please bring us something for the Hagerstown convention! Rich Newmiller, from the Philadelphia Division, scored 120 points with his on-line structure, Dresher 150-ton coal tower; and one of our modelers from Bear, Delaware, John Lofland, placed second in Freight Cars and earned six merit awards for rolling stock. John Griffith from Lorton, Virginia, also won first place in Off-Line Structures.

MODEL CONTEST

STEAM

1st	Michael Harmon	Louisville, KY	On30 Dunkirk Locomotive
2nd	Noll Horan	Annandale, VA	On30 2-truck Shay w/sound

DIESEL

1st	Steven Raque	Morgantown, WV	P&LE U28B #2819
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FREIGHT CARS

1st	James Ferguson	Pittsburgh, PA	PRR F30E Flat car
2nd	Joseph Lofland	Bear, DE	Erie Lackawanna 53’6” Bulkhead Flat
3rd	Bob Frankrone	Louisville, KY	89’ flat car with Pipe Load

NON-REVENUE CARS

1st	Ray Persing	Tipp City, OH	G&LR Pile Driver
2nd	Bob Fark	Pittsburgh, PA	Logging Tool Car

CABOOSE

1st	Al Cap	Chesterland, OH	C&PA Bobber
2nd	Noll Horan	Annandale, VA	Narrow Gauge Caboose

TRACTION

1st	Fred Miller	Charlotte, NC	H&F Ry Electric Locomotive
2nd	Fred Miller	Charlotte, NC	Freight Box Motor
3rd	Fred Miller	Charlotte, NC	Electric Steeplecab Motor

ON-LINE STRUCTURES

1st	Richard Newmiller	Dresher, PA	Dresher 150-ton Coal Tower
2nd	James Ferguson	Pittsburgh, PA	“John Allen” Engine House
3rd	Noll Horan	Annandale, VA	Branchline Water Tank

OFF-LINE STRUCTURES

1st	John Griffith	Lorton, VA	Steam Powered Saw Mill
2nd	Noll Horan	Annandale, VA	Sloan's Building
3rd	Bob Frankrone	Louisville, KY	Two-Story Rural Residence

ON-LINE DISPLAYS

1st	Michael Harmon	Louisville, KY	Mining Operation Stamp Facility
2nd	Sam Swanson	Cincinnati, OH	Coal Yard
3rd	Jim Grell	Fairview Park, OH	R. Goldberg Mfg – Boiler House

OFF-LINE DISPLAYS

1st	Michael Harmon	Louisville, KY	Mercke Lumber Co. Sawmill
2nd	Michael Harmon	Louisville, KY	Dolbeer Donkey Logging Scene
3rd	Douglas Kirkpatrick		Falls Church, VA 1930s Gas Station

FAVORITE TRAIN

1st	Jim Grell	Fairview Park, OH	Pun Train
2nd	Bob Fark	Pittsburgh, PA	NG Passenger Train
3rd	Noll Horan	Annandale, VA	

BEST OF SHOW—MODEL CONTEST

Sam Swanson	Cincinnati, OH	Car Shop
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PHOTO CONTEST

B&W MODEL

1st	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	Coal Northbound
2nd	Ray Persing	Tipp City, OH	Box Motor at Dye Mill Road
3rd	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	H10 Helper

B&W PROTOTYPE

1st	John Polyak	McKees Rocks, PA	East Broad Top 2-8-2 #17 Oct. 11, 1999
2nd	Earle Stevens	Tinton Falls, NJ	Connection I
3rd	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	Deadman's Cut

COLOR MODEL

1st	Roger Cason	Wilmington, DE	RDC Picking Up Branch Line Passengers
2nd	Earle Stevens	Tinton Falls, NJ	Last Run
3rd	Earle Stevens	Tinton Falls, NJ	A New Day

COLOR PROTOTYPE

1st	David Arday	Fulton, MD	Western MD Scenic "Eastbound at Sunnyside" Jan 10, 2003
2nd	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	Greensburg, PA Courthouse
3rd	Neal Schorr	Wexford, PA	Conway Scenic Railroad

COLOR SLIDE MODEL

1st	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	RSD12 8667 Northbound
2nd	Sam Swanson	Cincinnati, OH	Hall Hollow Coal Run
3rd	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	H10 PRR Southbound Mty Hoppers

COLOR SLIDE PROTOTYPE

1st	Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	CR 6190 Eastbound Sunset
2nd	Jim Sacco	Pittsburgh, PA	Trolley on bridge
3rd	John Birchnall	West Chester, OH	Cow & Calf hump power

BEST OF SHOW—PHOTO CONTEST

Rob Enrico	Greensburg, PA	Drilling Southbound Yard – B&W Model Print
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One final note: the Blue Lantern Award was awarded to Michael Harmon from Louisville, Kentucky. The Best in Show went to Sam Swanson, from Cincinnati, for his HO scale Car Shop.

Well, that about wraps it up for this joint spring convention in Pittsburgh. Our MER modelers and photographers did very well . . . Thank you all for upholding the honor of the MER! Thanks to Clint Hyde for taking digital photos of the contest entries.

For those MER members who are planning to attend the NMRA national convention in Seattle in July, you are only travel-

ing cross-country—bring us a model, some photographs, or an arts and crafts item for our contests. I will personally check in your entries! Having problems with the paperwork? I can help you with this too.

Several new special awards will be inaugurated in Seattle, including a Narrow Gauge Award sponsored by Bob Brown and the Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette, and a special award from the Mt. Albert Scale Lumber Co. for those of you building with scale wood.

Until next time—any questions, comments, ideas, or whatever, please write...raybilodeau@comcast.net.



South Mountain Express Mid-East Region 2004 Fall Convention Hagerstown, Maryland November 11-14, 2004

Sponsored by South Mountain Division - MER

THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION invites you to come to Western Maryland for the Fall 2004 MER Convention to be held Veterans Day weekend (November 11 through 14). We have scheduled four days of model railroading activities: clinics, contests, module displays, manufacturer's displays, SIG and Historical Society activities, a live auction, layout tours, prototype tours, railfanning, a banquet, awards presentation with featured speaker, and more. If you have been to a convention before, you know what to expect; if you haven't been before, you are in for a pleasant surprise. There will be lots to see, lots to learn, lots to do, and lots to enjoy.

There may be one downside. So many fun things can get a bit overwhelming. What should be a respite from hectic lives can become stressful. With that in mind the South Mountain Division has carefully organized the convention activities so as to reduce stress and increase enjoyment. First and foremost, the convention is scheduled in early November so that it will not conflict with all of the other fall activities that seem to fill up the months of September and October. In addition, we have taken the following steps to make this convention lots of fun and at the same time relaxing.

1. Our convention committee is experienced. We have put on two other highly successful conventions in the last 10 years. We know what it takes to make things run smoothly.

2. We have set up two ways to register: by mail (use the form in **The Local**) or by e-mail. Pay by check or by credit card (electronic registration using PayPal), whichever is easier for you.

3. We have scheduled the convention for a 3-day weekend and even included a limited Thursday night schedule for you early birds. Spend Friday with trains instead of at work.

4. We have structured the registration fee to get a good room rate at the convention hotel (\$65.00 per night). A slight increase in the registration rate to pay for the convention facilities resulted in a much better rate for rooms. Not only is that less effort for finding an affordable place to stay, but staying at the convention hotel eliminates the driving hassles for early tours and late night bull sessions with friends.

5. Hagerstown is outside the metropolitan area. So expect less traffic for layout tours and other out-of-hotel activities.

6. The convention hotel is close to a wide range of restaurants. Eat what you want at a price you can afford.

7. The early bird layout tours (Thursday night) will be in Hagerstown close to the hotel so you don't have to drive far after you register to see some layouts.

8. We have scheduled a clinic on local railroads presented as an introduction to local railfanning opportunities.

9. Many clinics will be presented more than once. You can catch the later presentation if you have to miss the first.

The South Mountain Division wants you to have an enjoyable convention filled with fun things to do. We want you to come home reinvigorated and inspired—ready to tackle your winter list of layout projects—not weary from hassles at the convention.

SCHEDULE: South Mountain Express activities will start on Thursday evening (registration opens at 4:30 PM). Thursday evening activities will include both a limited number of clinics and local layout tours. Friday and Saturday activities will start at 8:00 AM and run till 10:00 PM both nights. Sunday's official activities will start at 8:00 AM and run through Noon. A number of area layouts will be available for going home tours Sunday afternoon.

CLINICS: The South Mountain Express will feature in excess of 30 different clinics covering topics such as prototype information, scenery techniques, operations, detailing of models, and more. Additional information will be provided in the next issue of **The Local** and will be posted on the MER web site as the details become available. Notable clinicians include the esteemed Mr. Bob Charles, Tony Koester, Bob Prehoda, Alan Frame, Eric Dervinis, John Roberts, Stan Knotts, and John Teichmoeller.

Extra Fare Clinic—Martin Brechbiel will be presenting a clinic on scratchbuilding with wood. The cost for this clinic is \$10.00 and is limited to 10 participants.

Additional extra fare clinics may be scheduled. When plans are finalized, individuals who have already registered will be contacted (via e-mail when possible) and given first choice based on their original order of registration.

CONTESTS: The MER will conduct the usual series of model, craft and photo contests in conjunction the South Mountain Express convention. See the May-June issue of **The Local** and NMRA/MER web sites for additional information concerning the model contests. In addition, there will be open voting for the viewer's choice model award with all convention participants eligible to vote.

MODULE DISPLAYS: The convention hotel features a large area that is available to us to set up a modular layout during the convention. We had over 75 individual modules on display during the 1999 Hagerstown convention and hope to top that number this year.

DISPLAYS: We have invited a number of regional manufacturers, historical societies and SIGs to participate in the South Mountain Express convention. Plans are not finalized at this time, but more information will be provided in the next issue of **The Local**.

AUCTION: We will be conducting a live auction on Friday evening, so be sure to bring your surplus items to sell. The auctioneer for this event will be the ever-popular Mr. Bob Charles of

derby hat fame. Items having an estimated value of \$10.00 or less will be sold at a White Elephant table rather than being auctioned. The auction will start around 8:30 Friday evening so that the participants can go to bed at a decent time.

LAYOUT TOURS: All South Mountain Express layout tours will be self-guided (no bus crowds and fixed schedules to contend with). We will have in excess of 30 layouts available for your viewing pleasure including several well-known layouts that have been featured in the commercial press. Various layouts will be available for tours on Thursday night (Hagerstown area only), Friday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday afternoon (going home tours). Maps, written directions and schedules will be provided when you register.

PROTOTYPE TOURS: As many of you have discovered, the current national security situation has made it very difficult to arrange prototype tours, but we have been successful in setting up one tour for Friday morning, November 12th, and we are still working on a Friday afternoon tour. We will be revisiting the St. Lawrence Cement plant and quarry. This is a very large facility, with a huge rotating kiln, producing a quarter of all the cement produced in Maryland. It is served by CSX (formerly Western Maryland). There is “new stuff to see” since the Region’s last visit in 1999. This visit is timely given the recent release of the Walthers cement plant series kits. Closed-toe shoes are required. Hard hats and safety glasses will be provided. This will be an extra-fare bus tour. Allow approximately 2 to 2-1/2 hours.

In addition, if there is enough interest, we will run a charter bus from Hagerstown to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum on Saturday. The B&O Museum in Baltimore, severely damaged by a roof collapse in the 2003 President’s Day snowstorm, will officially re-open on Saturday, November 13th, during our convention. The restored roundhouse will be open, and the Museum will provide the opportunity for train rides on historic equipment. The restoration is a massive undertaking—some \$30 million has been budgeted—and not all the exhibits will be fully restored as of the re-opening. Because of the distances involved and to provide time for a train ride as well as viewing the exhibits, this will be an all-day tour (approximately 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.) Please note: The Museum will not be able to provide special arrangements for groups at this event. Therefore our fare covers only bus transportation. In addition, participants should be prepared to pay \$12 admission to the Museum (\$10 for seniors over 60).

BANQUET, AWARDS & GUEST SPEAKER: The traditional Saturday night banquet will be a buffet event with a choice of three entrees (details to follow). The buffet will be informal and will be held in the hotel atrium (same as 1999 convention). It will be preceded by a social hour with a cash bar. After the banquet we will reconvene in the main convention area for the presentation of awards. Our guest speaker will address the group following the conclusion of the awards presentation.

DOOR PRIZES: A drawing will be held Sunday morning to award the many door prizes that have been donated by various vendors (must be present to win). Door prize tickets will be sold in the company store area on Friday and Saturday (15 tickets for \$1.00 or an arm span for \$2.00).

ANNUAL MEETING: Immediately following the door prize drawings, the convention will finish up with the annual MER business meeting which will be held in the main convention room.

The 2004 South Mountain Express offers something for every modeler. Additional details will be posted on the MER web site as they become available, and an update will be provided in the next issue of **The Local**.

Save Money; Recruit A New Member!

By Eric Dervinis, NMRA Trustee, MER

Do you want to conserve some scratch? Are you a thrifty modeler? Would you like to do something good for the NMRA and yourself at the same time? If you are anything like the modelers I know, you answered those questions – yes, yes and yes!

You ask how! Sign up a new member in the NMRA. Bring your fellow modeler to the next division meet and sign ‘em up. If you are in an unaffiliated area, register your friend for the Hagerstown convention, and secure a membership at the same time. And our Business Manager is always willing to take new memberships at any time – look for her name and contact information on page two.

Your prospect is on the fence, and wants to know what the benefits are. You as a longtime member can best explain how to enjoy all the services of the NMRA. Plus you know what your friend likes and can “sell” membership in terms he or she will understand.

Then your friend, says “I would like to try the NMRA,” but is hesitant about the cost. You have an “ace” in your back pocket. Tell your friend that a six-month Rail Pass is available for only \$9.95. Yes, this is a once-in-a-lifetime offer. These special members cannot vote or hold office, but they will get a copy of the **Scale Rails** each month, an electronic copy of **The Local**, and the benefits of the local division. This new class of membership became a reality on June 1, 2004, approved by the Trustees and the MER.

I bet you have not forgotten that YOU would save money. HOW? Think of the NMRA as your local hobby shop—both corporate structures with goals. The NMRA serves its members as a nonprofit, while the hobby shop serves its customers while making a profit for the owners. They are identical in many ways. Each has fixed costs that do not change whether the NMRA/hobby shop has one or 100,000 members/customers. Examples: the lighting bill, permit fees, salaries for the staff, etc. I will let you complete the list. My model of our cost structure is simplified to serve as an example. If you want to learn more about fixed and variable costs, speak with a CPA.

That is the secret of signing up a new member! You have added to our membership and increased the total dues collected, without increasing the fixed costs of the NMRA. If every current member signs up one new member, the NMRA will grow to 40,000 members. Our fixed costs won’t increase one penny, and the need to increase dues will be pushed off into the future.

I know you can do it. Go ahead, bring in a new member and let them see how much fun we have. Get all of your modeling friends on the right track – the NMRA main line.

DETAILS: Individuals signing up new members and division membership chairs will send \$9.95 and the membership form to the MER Business Manager. The new member will be entered into the MER database, an electronic copy of **The Local** sent and the funds forwarded to Chattanooga.



South Mountain Express Fall 2004 MER Convention November 11-14, 2004

**Clarion Hotel & Conference Center
Hagerstown, Maryland**

<http://members.cox.net/chyde/MER/SMJ2004/SM-Express.html>

Please enter all names as you wish them to appear on your registration badges—one primary registrant per form:

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other (living at same address): _____

Children (Under age 16 – List all): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-Mail: _____ NMRA # _____

Full Registration (\$50 after September 30th):	\$45.00	_____
Non-NMRA Member Fee (primary registrant only): (Includes 6 month NMRA trial membership)	\$10.00	_____
Significant Other:	\$15.00	_____
Children:	\$10.00 x _____ =	_____
Saturday Evening Buffet Banquet (choice of 3 entrees)	\$25.00 x _____ =	_____
Car Building Clinic	\$10.00 x _____ =	_____
Cement Plant Tour	\$15.00 x _____ =	_____
B&O Museum Tour (transportation only)	\$25.00 x _____ =	_____

Total Advance Registration Charges: \$ _____

Payment must accompany registration. Make checks payable to: South Mountain Express

Send all registrations to: South Mountain Express
3052 Oak Hill Road
Waynesboro, Pa. 17268

For questions and / or additional information e-mail: PDRAUSCH@innernet.net

Prototype Tours: The South Mountain Express is planning on conducting a number of extra fare prototype tours on Friday, November 12th. At this time, the final arrangements have not been completed but we anticipate that the cost per tour will be in the \$15 to \$25 range. If you are interested in participating, indicate below and you will be notified when the final arrangements are completed. Tours slots will be allocated based on your order of registration.

I am interested in participating in the prototype tours (does not obligate participation): _____

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION: The convention will be held at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center (former Ramada Inn), 901 Dual Highway, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. The convention rate is \$65.00 (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at (301) 733-5566 (do not use the Clarion 800# or on-line registration system). When registering be sure to specify the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA to be sure you get this special rate.

The Veep's Corner

By Clint Hyde,
MER VP

MAY WAS A BUSY MONTH, too much traveling. Visited NJ Division first, at a meet that was held in Monmouth County, where our newly transferred members live. Met at the underground meeting room in the Monmouth Mall.

It was a good-sized room, saw a couple of slide-presentations, took pix of a couple of good models in the back room. There were some interesting layout tours in the afternoon. The photo of is Bob Liberman (below, 2nd from left) et al. I stayed overnight with

me—I hope to do some modeling again one of these days, who knows when that will be—right now it's a vicarious pleasure).

You can now register online for the MER Fall 2004 Hagerstown, MD, convention, at <http://members.cox.net/chyde/MER/SMI2004/SM-Express.html>

I've done it myself; it worked fine. This uses a PayPal shopping cart, which will be visible in a separate window. When you're done, click on "checkout." You'll then do your PayPal login. On the next page there's a



Bob, one of the VP candidates in the upcoming election (ballots coming soon), whom I had not met before. Saw his pretty big layout and display cases—man, that's a lot of brass.

A week later was the joint convention in Pittsburgh. I've written about that elsewhere in this issue. Everyone from MER I talked to had a good time there, so that was worth doing. Fred Miller, of the Carolina Southern Division, Charlotte, NC, swept the traction awards, with three scratchbuilt locos, all of which also got AP Merit Awards, enough to qualify for Master Builder Motive Power, and MMR. He'll probably receive the MMR plaque at the Hagerstown convention in November. In addition, Fred has volunteered to take over the Business Manager's job from Rita Lynam, which is great (load off my mind). The transfer becomes effective January 1, 2005.

In August this year, right down the street from me, is the huge N-Scale annual convention. Noll Horan will arrange for AP judging there for anyone interested, so MER folks are welcome to bring a model along if you missed Pittsburgh and don't want to wait until Hagerstown in November (once again, that **still** won't include

field near the bottom for the registration names. A printable form is nearby on the same web page.

I again encourage you to get an electronic copy of **The Local**. Email me a chyde@cox.net to try this out. Fred Miller will officially take over sending this out the beginning of next year, but in the meantime, I'll continue to do it. Paper copies will begin to cost \$6/year next year (for those paying annually), if a vote for changing the MER dues structure passes at the November board meeting.

The laser-cut kit is proceeding nicely. We will make our first test cut of wood in July. Next issue of **The Local** will have a story with a photo, I think.

Eric Dervinis has a write-up about a new membership program from national—this is the trial membership we've asked for. This is a one-time, 6-month membership for someone to try us out. New "recruits" will get **Scale Rails** and admittance to any and all activities as a member (not that we are in the habit of turning folks away, but non-members are generally paying something extra), but no voting rights, no office-holding rights.

Achievement Program Statistics—FYI

By: Roger L. Cason, MMR
Regional AP Manager

For the fiscal year 2003-2004 (5/1/03-4/30/04), a total of 228 Achievement Certificates were earned by NMRA members. Of these, 37 were by MER members – the largest number for any region. Nationally, 13 people became Master Model Railroaders. Two were in the MER. Only one other region had this many new Master Model Railroaders. Seventy-six people earned their Golden Spike award, of which nine were MER members.

Achievement Program Update

By Roger L. Cason, MMR
MER AP Manager

Since the last report in **The Local**, the following Achievement Program certificates were earned and awarded:

Division 2 – Potomac

Bob Rosenberg – Golden Spike

Division 4 – Tidewater

Gary Brown – Golden Spike

William Miller – Golden Spike

H. John Cryderman – Golden Spike

Jim Kieper – Golden Spike

Robert Doss – Golden Spike

Division 5 – James River

Bill McMillan – Prototype Models

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Dave Lynam – Author

Dave Lynam – Volunteer

In a perfect world, this information will appear soon in the **NMRA Bulletin**. This should not deter you from giving recognition locally. Normally you will be able to recognize AP accomplishments long before the names appear in the **Bulletin**.

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 \$_____

* 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 car red 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

They're Here— Order Now!

By Roger L. Cason, MMR

WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED the latest HO-scale MER car for sale, and are ready to start selling and shipping them. You will find pictures of it and an order form on the last page this issue of **The Local**.

The car is an Accurail PS-1 RF&P box car, custom painted for us by Accurail. Body color is blue with aluminum col-

ored doors. The white lettering is very prominent.

The two car numbers being offered are part of a series of 100 RF&P boxcars listed in the 1953 ORER reprint. The specific paint scheme on our offering car came from a photo at the bottom of page 14 of **Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac in Color**. The photo was taken about 1977. Readers who went to the MCR/MER convention in Pittsburgh may have attended John Wesner's clinic, "When Boxcars Became Pretty." The car we are offering is a good illustration of this phenomenon. See a summary of John's clinic on this page.

This is a high quality, eye-catching car at a price competitive with other club and convention cars. So help your layout and your Region by ordering now.

When Boxcars Became Pretty

Changes in U.S. Railroad Freight Car Lettering in the 1950s

By John W. Wesner

ANYONE WHO WAS WATCHING trains in the United States in the 1950s could not help but notice a significant change in the appearance of the freight cars plying America's railroads. In the space of a very few years, the typical drab black-and-oxide-red freight train turned into a wondrous mix of eye-catching paint schemes with bold letters, heralds and slogans. Even the staid Pennsy gave up its keystone-in-a-ball in 1954 for a five-foot-tall keystone with a black drop shadow.

The late 1950s were an interesting time in general for railroading in the United States as steam gave way to diesels and extraordinary efforts like the Aerotrains were tried as ways to retain passenger traffic. I wondered how this freight car "style change" fit into the overall picture of the changes the railroads were undertaking? It seemed to me that there surely were some psychological roots behind the changes—the new paint jobs must have cost more than the old, so there must have been some other motives. Needing a topic for a research paper in Industrial Psychology in the spring of 1957, I decided to look into just what had happened to cause this visual revolution in the subjects of my favorite pastime.

In those days, the railroads were very supportive of rail fans (especially engineering students). I wrote to 67 railroads and other owners of freight cars—and got replies from 48 of them—an amazing 72% return! I explained that I was doing a research paper for a college class in Industrial Psychology and asked three questions:

- 1) What is the present policy of your company, i.e., are your cars painted in the traditional red or black with small lettering, or do they feature bright colors and/or eye-catching lettering?
- 2) What sort of plans do you have for the near future with regards freight car painting and lettering?
- 3) In brief, what reasons lie behind your present and/or future policy on this matter?

My answers came from people with titles like Mechanical Superintendent, Chief of Motive Power and Rolling Stock, and Chief Mechanical Officer. They sent me photos and prints, and one even asked if I were interested in applying for a job when I graduated!

Who did not respond? While most of the companies who did

respond had made changes in the way they painted or lettered their freight cars, almost the same percentage of those who did not respond had not made changes. It thus appears that companies who had made changes were more likely to respond, and that my results were biased towards those who made changes.

What did I learn?

During the 1950s, 72% of my sample had made changes in the painting and lettering schemes used on their boxcars. The most common change was to large "display" lettering. Forty-eight percent made this change; 32% made only this change. Twenty-six percent switched to a new color, and 17% opted for a large, bold herald. Some roads made complete changes from the older "traditional" freight car red with small white letters, to bright colors together with large letters and heralds. Five changed both colors and letters, two changed color and herald, and two changed letters and herald. Think of well-known schemes like the Rutland's green and yellow, the Boston & Maine's blue and black, and the Bangor & Aroostook's red, white, and blue "State of Maine" cars.

Thirty-four railroads said that they changed to bright, modern designs for their freight cars for advertising value—including advertising their home states, or the railroad industry in general. Six roads actually claimed that changing was the economical decision. Two of these lines expected the distinctively marked cars to be returned to their home road more quickly, while others said that the paints they used were more durable than the oxide red they had used before. Aesthetic considerations and a "clean" appearance were also identified as reasons to change.

The availability of more durable paints in bright colors may have been a critical factor in making the changes feasible.

The most common reason given for not changing was also economic: the initial cost and the maintenance costs were felt by many railroads to be too high. Several roads felt that their current designs provided sufficient identity together with a clean appearance. Six roads believed that the older style stayed better looking longer because of the dark colors.

Two especially interesting reasons not to change were:

- Good service is more important than a fancy paint job.
- The psychological value of the modern designs had yet to be proven.

A Simple Scratchbuilding Tool

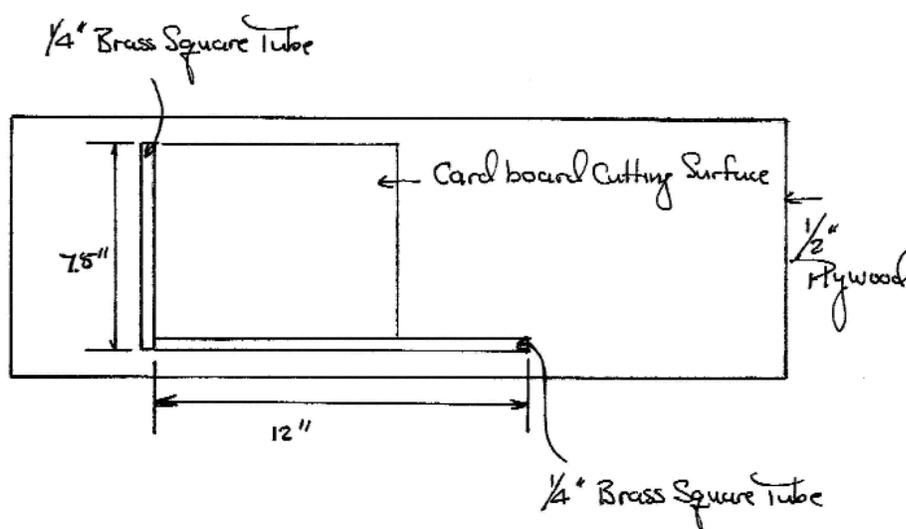
By Fred Willis

MY ENTIRE MODEL railroading “career” has involved scratchbuilding cars and structures. Therefore, it was a pleasure to see Martin Brechbiel’s article on scratchbuilding a flat car in the March/April 2004 issue of **The Local**. I have a few suggestions to amplify Martin’s excellent article.

There is a simple jig that is very useful in aligning and measuring parts. It is cheap, easy to make, and ensures parts are aligned properly. You need a piece of flat plywood and two straight pieces of 1/4” square brass tubing or channel. The part alignment is critical, not the dimensions. See Figure 1. Glue the brass channels or tubing, for their entire length, to the plywood. Ensure the two tubing pieces are at right angles to each other, this is critical. Use a square to line up the pieces. Use glue that bonds wood and brass together and scrape away any glue that bubbles up from beneath the tubing. The model pieces must be able to butt up against the brass tubes when the jig is used.

The jig can be used for measuring and cutting pieces as well as aligning and gluing them. To cut pieces, make a cutting surface from the cardboard backing of a writing tablet. It is easy to obtain and disposable. When gluing them remove the cardboard and cover the plywood with wax paper. This prevents gluing the pieces to the plywood base. This simple jig allows alignment of pieces, and ensures they remain square or straight.

Two additional comments: Stain all wood before beginning assembly. It is easier to scrape away excess glue from stained wood than it is to remove glue to permit staining. A simple method of staining wood is to use brown leather dye. Use 10 or 15 drops per 2 ounces of rubbing alcohol. Let this dry for 12-24 hours; then stain with dilute India ink at the concentration of 5 drops of ink per 2 ounces of alcohol. This method does not produce quite the detail Martin’s method does, but it is simpler for a first time.



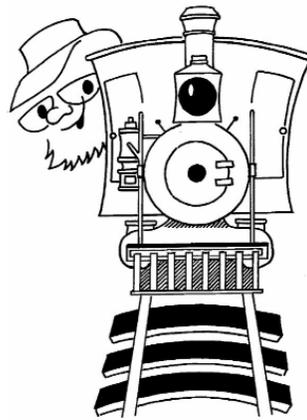
Ensure the brass tubes are at 90°.

Figure 1

Don't Forget To Vote!

Shortly, you will be mailed your ballot to vote for the MER's officers. This time around, with the exception of the offices of President and Treasurer, you will have the rare opportunity to determine the outcome of contested elections. The offices of Vice-President and Secretary have more than one candidate. (Of course, you will also have the opportunity to write in your choice for all of the positions, so you can make it a real horse race.)

When your ballot arrives, please take the time to vote. If you don't vote, you have no right to complain about who gets elected and how they discharge their respective offices.



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we have lots of trains.
And we do not
stock just trains,
we have all
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Phone: 703-426-0700,
Toll-free Number: 877-426-0700,
Fax: 703-426-0702

CALLBOARD Coming Events

July 11, 2004, 1 PM to 5 PM. Susquehanna Division 11 meet at the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad Preservation Society's Muddy Creek Forks, PA station. For more information and directions, please call Dolores Krick (717)-927-6023, e-mail brighterisbetter@blazenet.net or call Craig Sansonetti (301)-963-2841.

Aug 5 - 8, 2004. The big N Scale convention in Chantilly, Va. Open Houses, clinics galore, more NTRAK than you've ever seen before. For more information, see <http://www.bigtrainlayout.org/>.

August 14, 2004, 9 AM to 4 PM. The Blue Ridge Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society presents the 26th Annual Rail Day at the Forest Recreation Center in Forest, VA. Admission: \$5.00, children 12 and under free with paying adult. Bargain train market with vendors from around the region. Exhibits and model railroad layouts on display in O, S, HO, and N scales. Home layout tours, clinics, door prizes, food & beverages, and a white elephant sale table. For more information, please contact the Blue Ridge Chapter, NRHS at P.O. Box 11731, Lynchburg, VA 24506. (434) 239-6159 or (434) 239-8377 www.mindspring.com/~brc.nrhs/.

October 2, 2004, 10 AM. James River Division meet. National Radio Observatory Auditorium on the University of Virginia campus, Charlottesville, VA. There will be clinics, a laser cutter demonstration, contests, layout visits, door prizes, a 50/50 raffle, and a white elephant table. Admission: Division members and first time visitors—free. Others—\$5.00. For information and directions, contact Bill McMillan, (804)-379-7904.

WANTED:

ADVERTISING MANAGER

Ed Gumphrey has had to step down as Advertising Manager for **The Local**. We need someone to volunteer for this position. The job is worth AP Volunteer points. The duties include contacting large and small manufacturers within the Mid-East Region (a preliminary list of manufacturers will be provided), suggest they advertise and have a "Made in the MER" article written about them in **The Local**. (Note: the Advertising Manager does not have to write the article if he or she isn't comfortable doing so. Just find someone willing to write it.) The articles are worth Author points. For more information, please contact Clint Hyde at chyde@cox.net.

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

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These 40' RF&P PS-1 box cars are Accurail bodies, custom painted by Accurail. They are blue with aluminum-colored doors, and feature prominent white lettering.

MER Special HO-Scale Box Car Order Form



PI. MATTHEWSON (2)

Car	Quantity	Member Price*	Non-Member Price	TOTAL
#2836	_____	\$11.95	\$14.95	\$ _____
#2874	_____	\$11.95	\$14.95	\$ _____
SUBTOTAL				\$ _____
SHIPPING: \$2.00 for each car (not for each order)				\$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED				\$ _____

* My MER # is _____

Make checks payable to:
 MID EASTERN REGION.

Ship to: NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

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

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*

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

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

Make checks payable to the Mid-Eastern Region