

The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



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Number 6

Layout Ideas From The Opera

By John Pursell

AS A PROFESSIONAL TRUMPET PLAYER for over 30 years, I've had occasion to play in the "pit" for many operatic and theatrical performances. Part of working as a trumpet player in an opera is frequent long periods of time when you aren't playing. It's then that I was able to observe more closely the various tricks and techniques that went into stage scenery, and over the years I have tried to incorporate some of them into my modeling. Here are some of the ideas and techniques I have learned.

1. LIGHTING IS PARAMOUNT.

Without good lighting, even the best production will fall short. But it's not simply a matter of throwing as much light on the scene (or the model) as possible, but rather how it's used. In the theater, lighting is used to accent certain elements or performers, hence, the "spotlight". It's also used to draw attention away from a particular element. By spotlighting a performer on an otherwise dark stage, all kinds of things can be going on in the dark—scene changes, etc.—while your attention is elsewhere. Can we use this in modeling? Sure. In a rudimentary form, increase light on your more highly detailed areas; reduce it slightly on the less-detailed or unfinished areas. The viewer's attention will automatically be drawn to the highly lighted areas.

Stage light is also rarely a pure form of white light. Most general stage lighting is a mixture of white, red and blue bulbs, in roughly a 5:2:2 ratio. This helps more closely approximate natural sunlight. Increasing the blue light and reducing the white also helps develop a nighttime scene. The blue light still allows visibility, but it's obvious that it's night. They don't simply turn off the lights and leave everybody groping in the dark.

2. SHADOWS ARE THE BIGGEST DESTROYER OF REALISM.

It does little good to paint a backdrop of a mountain that's supposed to be miles away, and then have a cast member (or locomotive) cast a shadow on it. An easy way to eliminate this is to make sure that any object close enough to throw a shadow has a dark background. This leads us naturally to the next point.

3. COLOR GETS LIGHTER AND GENERALLY GRAYER THE FARTHER AWAY YOU GO.

And while it may seem obvious, details disappear the farther away they get. Yet we often forget this and spend hours detailing individual trees on a backdrop that's supposed to be miles away. My favorite trick for distant hills is to paint them a single color, usually a medium gray, and then over-spray them with a 9:1 thinned mixture of my sky color. This imparts that hazy look that is so typical of distant scenes.

If a background scene is supposed to be a mile or more away, I dispense with all the details, except perhaps a slight variation in color now and again. Buildings a few blocks away are indicated only by a shadow profile.

Keeping the background simpler also has the effect of accenting the more highly detailed scene in front; again, the theater does this as well. For example, many years ago, I performed for a production of Verdi's opera *Aida*, which is set in ancient Egypt. The stage sets were little more than large geometric shapes, painted in a sand color, and then rearranged for different scenes. Cheap and easy. But with the money the company saved on scenery, they were able to provide incredibly ornate costumes for

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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 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*

Dear Members, MER Board and Division Superintendents,

My time as Business Manager has been very rewarding. I have had the chance of meeting more of our members and linking a name with a face; that makes my day at an MER convention. I know that you all will be in "good hands" with Fred Miller taking over the job. I look forward to still seeing each of you at our conventions each year. So be sure to say hello. I will be the one with the walker, or in the future, maybe a motorized wheelchair.

When the national convention comes to Philadelphia July 2006, be sure to stop by the contest room and say hello—I will still be doing paperwork, and smiling.

So continue to listen for bells, whistles and horns! They are music to the train enthusiasts' ear. Thanks again for all your help and support. "Keep In Touch!"


My personal email address is
RitaLynam@comcast.net.

Truly yours, Rita!

Recently Deceased Member

James Lemman Teese, MMR #190. Born November 8, 1924, died October 3, 2004. NMRA member since January 1964 Life Member #L05579. MER member since 1975 Life Member #L-287, Division 12.

Jim Teese was an avid model railroader and a former director of the region. In the Charlotte, North Carolina area, he was instrumental in establishing several model railroad groups.

Every convention that Jim attended, he would head to the contest room and see if judges were needed. He was always there to help out when necessary. The last time he attended an MER convention was in Norfolk, Virginia in the spring of 2000. I remember him examining the models - the smile on his face showed he was enjoying his work as a contest judge. We will miss his spirit! 

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

President's Column

By Norman W. Garner

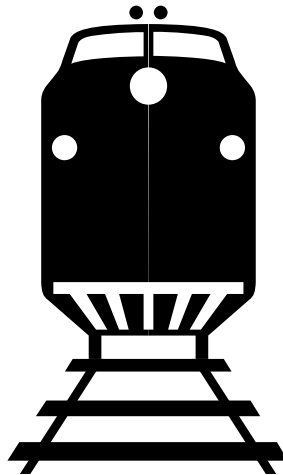
THIS IS MY LAST ARTICLE as President of the MER. I have been on the BOD for six years, two as Vice President, and the last four as your President. I look back on the last four years and I am thankful for all the support from the Divisions, their Superintendents and the many members that have served on the BOD during this time. I have traveled several thousand miles across the Region meeting you and representing you. From New Jersey thru North Carolina it has been an exciting journey and one that I will never forget. I appreciate the trust you have given me.

The most difficult thing I had to do was to get all the division members as members of the MER and NMRA. With the support of the majority of you this was accomplished and today we are stronger. The BOD supported me when I had a CPA come in and audit our books, something that had never been done in the MER. A number of by-laws were approved to improve the MER and services to you. The BOD and I have worked very hard to improve the support to the divisions with conventions. This will be an ongoing program in the future.

One thing I did as President was to appoint people who volunteered or whose arms I twisted and begged for them to come on board. My first accomplishment as President was to appoint Rita Lynam as Business Manger. Rita works harder than anyone in the MER for all of us. Thank you, Rita, for making the MER run so efficiently. Communication is paramount in any good organization and I was fortunate to have Alan Mende recommended to me for **The Local** editor. Alan has done one whale of a job for all of us. Thanks Alan for all your editing and making me look so good. With Julianne Smith as Publisher and Alan as Editor, **The**

Local is the best News Letter in the NMRA.

The contest room has really improved under the leadership of Ray Bilodeau and his staff. Thanks Ray, Rita and Dick for your support. As President, there have been times when I needed advice from more experienced people in the MER. I have been fortunate enough to have Eric Dervinis, Ron Schmidt, Dick Higgins, Brian Kampschroer and James Kellow to give me advice over the last four years. Thanks gentlemen for your help. The BOD has a bunch of fine people to work with, and I have enjoyed working with all of them. Bill Roman has been an outstanding Secretary along with Ron Schmidt as Treasurer. The Directors are supportive and work very hard for the MER. I will the miss the fellowship of Bob Minnis, Roger Cason and Noll Horan. Roger has been our



Region AP Chairman and has done an excellent job. I have to say thanks to P J Mattson for all his support with the car project and especially for volunteering for the conventions.

As I depart the BOD you will be in good hands with Clint Hyde, your newly elected President. Clint has been an outstanding Vice President and a pleasure to work with. Clint is young and full of energy with exciting ideas to improve the MER. Clint will need all of our support with the new changes that will take place next year. Please give him the same support you have given me over the last four years.

The last person and the most important one to thank is my wife, Vikki, for putting up with me over the last six years. Thank you honey, for all of your support.

See you in Hagerstown and remember Model Railroading is fun. 🚂

the singers. The contrast between the stark stage and the costumes was dramatic.

By the same token, urban scenes can benefit by this idea. Even though buildings to the rear of your scene may only be a theoretical block or so away, try painting them in a color that's a shade or two lighter than your foreground buildings. For trim, use muted light grays or tans, avoiding greens and other bright colors. Use a little less detail, as well. You'll be amazed at the depth it imparts, and the attention it draws to your more-detailed front buildings.

4. PERSPECTIVE CAN BE AN ENHANCER OR DESTROYER OF REALISM.


Make buildings smaller as they go back and you have an excellent forced-perspective that says "distance." But then put a backdrop behind them that has printed trees far too large and you've just destroyed the illusion. If you have a scene that's only viewed from the right, and you use a printed backdrop that's obviously viewed from the left, your viewers will instantly know something's wrong. They may not be able to put their finger on it, but they'll know.

5. IF YOU CAN'T SEE IT, WHO CARES?

Earl Smallshaw is a big proponent of this idea. In the theater, backdrops are called "flats." There's a good reason – they're almost always flat and there's nothing behind them. If your buildings are only viewed from the front or side, why model the rear? I just substitute a sheet of plain plastic and then use that extra piece to kit-bash another building.

And speaking of buildings: nothing gives away the illusion quite so fast as having a building that's not sitting perfectly level, or has gaps around the foundation and the ground. In the theater, buildings or building fronts that are leaning or tilted are usually used for a caricature effect. We don't want caricatures – we want realism!

Certainly there are other lessons to be learned, but those are some of basic ideas that I have gathered during my career. Even today, when playing a show or opera, I keep my eyes open for scenery ideas.

So, go to the opera! You'll be surprised what you might learn! 

Crew Change: Roger Cason Replaces Eric Dervinis

*By Eric Dervinis,
NMRA Trustee MER*

Four years? Have I served four years as the Mid-Eastern Trustee? Yes! Has it been an honor to serve the membership? Yes! Did the Board of Trustees move the NMRA back onto the main line? Yes! Have we done enough? No!

A friend half-jokingly asks how many days, hours, and minutes until the end of my second term. Yes I am relieved to move onto other interests, but I will miss the personal e-mails, the friends that I will see less of, and the camaraderie developed as the board worked to make this a better NMRA.

Officially, my term ends September 30th, however the delayed election means that the results will not be known until October some time. I will continue to serve until my replacement (Roger Cason running unopposed) is ready to assume my duties. And I will answer e-mails, phone calls, etc. that are directed my way in the future.


I feel very confident about my replacement, Roger Cason. He is an extremely competent and hard working successor. Roger has years of not-for-profit experience, years of management experience at Dupont, and five years of volunteer service in the MER, currently as an MER director. He will step down from the MER Director and MER AP Chair when he assumes the Trustee position.

Many, many volunteers have stepped forward or agreed to serve the MER and NMRA during my time as Trustee. I thank every volunteer for his or her service to the organization and the hobby of

model railroading. My special thanks go to MER Presidents Bill Gruber and Norm Garner. Both served as sounding boards, challengers, motivators, and passionate supporters of the hobby.

What did I learn? There is a steep learning curve to becoming an effective board member. My MER board experience helped, but I had to step it up to reach a level I found acceptable. Gaining agreement between different groups – SIGs, manufacturers, modelers, members, non-members, etc. – is far more difficult than imagined. It took the NMRA fifteen years to create the Long Range Plan and write new Bylaws. The NMRA has a bright future, and the new board has been given the tools to make that happen.

Thanks for your support. It was an exciting, sometimes bumpy ride, and I hope that when you look in the rear view mirror, you will find an NMRA you are more proud of. Fading slowly away, I am continuing to help the national organization by serving on two committees. Modeling-wise, I hope to get closer to starting my dream DL&W layout.

I want to ask you for one small favor. Please do something (big or small) to support the hobby and the NMRA. Give of your time, your talents, or whatever you can. It will be endlessly rewarding and the hobby will benefit from your efforts. Trust me, I know! 

Achievement Program

Part 10

By Charlie Flichman

THIS MONTH we will investigate the requirements for the Achievement Certificate Association Volunteer. Again the complete set of requirements can be found at the NMRA Web site www.nmra.org/achievement/apc9.html. The requirements for this certificate are lengthy, as they have to cover so many different aspects. The one remark made on the Web site is to **KEEP TRACK OF YOUR SERVICE AS YOU DO IT**. I can attest to that. As mentioned back in Part One of these articles, I joined the NMRA in 1965, participated in many functions and dropped out in 1988. I rejoined in 1994 and at that time decided to try to earn some of the AP certificates. Finding someone to document my volunteer activities from the 1965-1988 period was a little bit of work. So, heed the above remark!

To qualify for the Association Volunteer certificate, you must:

1. Have served actively on one or more NMRA committees at any level long enough to accumulate sixty (60) certified time units (TUs). The TUs you receive for various types of service are as follows:

A. Active satisfactory service as a General Manager of a National committee (4 TUs per month).

B. Active satisfactory service as a National committee Manager (3 TUs per Month).

C. Active satisfactory service as a Region Committee Manager or on a National committee (2 TUs per month).

D. Active satisfactory service as a Region Committee Member, a Division Officer or Committee Manager (1 TU per month).

E. Active satisfactory service as a Division Committee or Board Member (1/2 TU per month).

F. Editors of an NMRA publication shall receive credit at the same rate appropriate for the Chairman at the same level.

The comment here on the web site is "So what exactly constitutes a committee?" The reply is, basically just about any office or function that isn't covered under the Association Official certificate. Most other officers in a Division or Region are considered Committee Chairmen.

Conventions at all levels are chock full of committees. Only the convention General Manager receives "Committee Manager" points; all others receive "Committee Member" points, even if their title includes the word "Manager." Individuals who work just the day of an event, receive one month's worth of credit as committee members.

G. Service as a Division officer or director, other than at the Regional level (1 TU per month).

H. Newsletter Editors of 100% NMRA clubs having 10 or more members may earn 1 TU per issue of the club newsletter,

providing it is four pages or more. There must be four issues of the newsletter on file at the Kalmbach Memorial Library, edited by the person applying for this credit in order to earn these points.

I. Official judges at NMRA sponsored model contests shall be given the following TUs as a one-time service credit per contest:

- a.** National Contest Judge – 3 TUs.
- b.** Regional Contest Judge – 2 TUs.
- c.** Division Contest Judge – 1 TU.

J. Individuals and their crews who open their home or club layouts for layout tours in conjunction with NMRA conventions or other NMRA sponsored events earn the following credits:

- a.** National Event – 3 TUs per day (Max of 12 TUs).
- b.** Regional Event – 3 TUs per day (Max of 6 TUs).
- c.** Divisional Event – 3 TUs per day (Max of 3 TUs).

K. Individuals who participate in modular layouts in conjunction with NMRA sponsored events earn credit for each day the layout is opening for viewing at the event:


- a.** National Event – 3 TUs per day (Max of 12 TUs).
- b.** Regional Event – 3 TUs per day (Max of 6 TUs).
- c.** Divisional Event – 3 TUs per day (Max of 3 TUs).

L. Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Counselors who are NMRA members can earn 1 TU per month and 1 TU per Scout that qualifies for the badge.

2. Certification of these accomplishments shall be by the Committee Manager, for committee members, or by the appointing officer for Committee Chairmen. A Regional or National President or Secretary may certify when many positions will require several signatures.

3. As always, a Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) itemizing evidence of completion of these requirements, along with the signed record of service must be submitted.

Points can also be earned for Association Volunteer in the Model Railroad Author category. When you present a live clinic the first time, it earns points for Model Railroad Author. Each additional time you present that clinic it earns the following points for Association Volunteer – National level – 3 TUs, Regional level – 2 TUs and Division level – 1 TU.

Many people are volunteering at all levels. Keep a record of your volunteering at the times you do it and get it signed by the proper person. Before long you will have the required 60 TUs to qualify for this certification. 

Rail Modeler John Armstrong Dies

By Patricia Sullivan
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, August 12, 2004; Page B05
(c) 2004, **The Washington Post**. Reprinted with permission.

(Editor's Note: By now, most of you have already learned of the passing of John Armstrong, whom many considered the dean of layout design. This article from The Washington Post illustrates just how widely regarded John was. It is reprinted with permission.)

JOHAN H. ARMSTRONG, 83, who earned a living working for the Navy but who spent his life working on model railroading, died July 28 of complications due to pulmonary disease at Laurel Regional Hospital. He lived in Silver Spring.

Mr. Armstrong was widely known in the field of model railroading as a designer of layouts, which include both the track and its surroundings. He began working on a layout in his teens, his son John Armstrong said, when "the hobby was really primitive. Everything had to be built from scratch."

Mr. Armstrong's lifelong project was the "Canandaigua Southern," a 1/48-scale model of an imaginary railroad in Upstate New York and western Pennsylvania. He began the railroad in his teens and continued working on it, with help from other modelers, until shortly before his death. The railroad completely filled a 24-by-36-foot basement and attracted thousands of visitors over the years.

A hobbyist newsletter called his Canandaigua Southern "arguably the most well documented layout in O Scale." O Scale is the 1/48 size model layout. The track was so popular at the O Scale National Convention in Arlington in late July that convention-goers were asked to get time-stamped tickets to view it.

Mr. Armstrong was the subject of a number of feature stories in Model Railroader magazine over the years, and in his retirement he designed and built custom track plans for model railroaders.

"His most significant impact upon model railroading was his ability to create track plans," said Brent Lambert, library director for the National Model Railroad Association in Chattanooga, Tenn. "He definitely had a significant impact upon the hobby that way. He was not only an expert in model railroading but also in creating the prototype."

Mr. Armstrong was born and raised in Canandaigua, N.Y. He graduated from Purdue University with a degree in mechanical engineering and soon began working at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory at the Naval Gun Factory in Washington. He moved with the laboratory, later known as the Naval Surface Weapons Laboratory, to White Oak in 1948.



John H. Armstrong was known among model railroad enthusiasts for his 1/48-scale "Canandaigua Southern." (Family Photo)


After his retirement in 1979, he was a contributing editor for the trade publication *Railway Age* for 10 years. He wrote scores of articles for various publications and published 13 books, mostly focused on model railroading. He also wrote "Railroad: What It Is, What It Does" (1978), a standard text widely used in the railroad industry.

Mr. Armstrong was active for many years with various railroad-related organizations including the National Model Railroad Association, Capital Area O Scalers and the Lexington Group. He was named to the O Scale Hall of Fame in 1998 and was a two-time recipient of the National Model Railroad Association's Distinguished Service Award, in 1968 and 1997.

He was a member of Northminster Presbyterian Church in Washington, and later, Northwood Presbyterian Church in Silver Spring.

An insatiably curious man, Mr. Armstrong also enjoyed classical music, art, science and history and the cultural resources of the Washington area.

His wife of 44 years, Ellen Palmer Armstrong, died in 1994.

Survivors include four children, Mary Ellen Curtis of Towson, Md., Andrew Armstrong of Orrtanna, Pa., Peter Armstrong of Silver Spring and John P. Armstrong of Gettysburg, Pa.; a sister; and six grandchildren. 

THE FUTURE OF MODEL RAILROADING

By Rick Knight

NOT A SINGLE ONE of us is getting a day younger! Where is the future of our hobby—the World’s Greatest Hobby—coming from? Once upon a time, when many of us were young, there were massive Lionel layouts on display between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day at the “big store” downtown. We could stand for hours watching the trains run round and round, and we went home with dreams of how we could transform our basement or attic into a railroad wonderland. But where does the young boy of today go to get excited about our hobby? Department stores long ago stopped selling trains and their displays are mere memories. Most local train stores don’t even have a respectable layout.

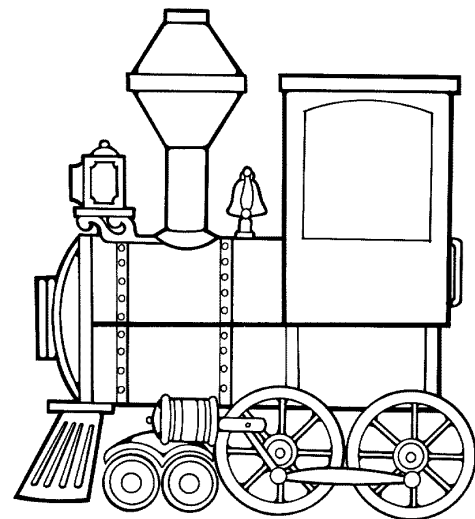
On Saturday, November 6th, I’m inviting Boy Scout troops from four local councils to come to the Amtrak station in Charlotte in the morning. I’m suggesting that they go up to Salisbury and ride the Piedmont into Charlotte—probably their first trip on a revenue railroad. At Charlotte, the Norfolk Southern Exhibit Car with all of its interactive simulators will be parked on the coach track. The Lancaster & Chester Railroad will have a private car open for tours. An “Operation Lifesaver” locomotive has been requested, and there will be an on-going Operation Lifesaver presentation.

Then the Scouts will be given a list of major model railroad layouts that will be open for tours in the afternoon. Already on the list are the Charlotte Trolley Museum; the Belmont Museum; the Cherryville station; the Lancaster & Chester museum; the Metrolina Model Railroaders (who will be setting up

their modules at the Southern Christmas Show that afternoon), the Piedmont & Western; the Knight Bros. & Dad. More are being added as we speak!

I’m one who, as a boy, had a 4’ x 8’ sheet of plywood with a loop of 027 track. Up the street, one of my friends had an older brother, Bill, whose huge HO layout took up almost the entire basement. I was dazzled. It was a spark that never really went out. Today I have a 24’ x 24’ garage with over 800 feet of HO track on three levels. And I’m trying to pay back my dues – repay Bill for the kindness of introducing me to the World’s Greatest Hobby. It’s up to us – those of us who truly love this hobby – to plant the seeds and ignite the sparks.

Three or four decades from now, will one of today’s Scouts be organizing a Railroad Day to introduce young people to “his” hobby? Only time will tell. 🚂



MER Membership - Prorated Cost Explanation

SEPTEMBER 1, 2005 is the “stake-in-the-ground” date. This is the date selected by National as the completion deadline for Regions (and Divisions) to be in compliance with new NMRA Regulations. We chose to match this date because it gives exactly 12 months to deal with the most awkward issue, that of who pays what for Region membership for how long during the transition period. You may have already received a renewal notice with this same info.

1. Membership in MER continues to cost as much as before, but is to be paid on a pro-rated basis decreasing to zero by 9-1-2005. Notifications will contain the exact remaining amount, which will decrease by \$1.30 or \$1.35 every two months (effectively corresponding to one issue-cycle of **The Local**). This results in a consistent and clean end-point for everyone during the transition.

2. No membership renewals for beyond 9-1-05 will be accepted. At that point you will be able to subscribe to **The Local**, so in essence there’s no break in your receiving it.

3. Both one and two-year subscriptions will be accepted after 9-1-2005. Notices for this will be mailed to all MER members in July and August.

4. If you send in more than the amount on your renewal notice, the excess will be considered a donation to MER.

5. For those who have already paid in advance for beyond 9-1-2005, that extra amount will be converted in months of subscription to **The Local**, rounded up to the next whole issue. The Business Manager, who maintains the database, will compute this for members in this situation.

6. NMRA members who are not MER members may become MER members by paying the prorated amount up until 9-1-2005

7. After 9-1-2005, any NMRA member may subscribe to **The Local**, for \$6/year.

8. Life members have already paid for a lifetime paper copy subscription to **The Local**. They will continue to receive this as they have all along.

9. Any NMRA member may request getting an electronic copy of **The Local** at any time, even if they choose to continue to receive a paper copy.

10. You may also subscribe to **The Local** beyond Sept 1 , 2005, when you receive your renewal notice. The table (right) does not include this option.

Rita’s (and then Fred’s) renewal letters will need to reflect these prorated amounts. In July and August of 2005, they will also need to include the opportunity to subscribe to **The Local** in addition to the remaining prorated amount.

It is our expectation that this will result in a large bulge in renewals around the September 1 time each year, but also that this will flatten out some over time. New subscribers will be able to do so at any time during the year, for either 12 or 24 months

(effectively 6 or 12 issues), and will be notified about needing to renew 30 to 60 days in advance.

Members receiving electronic-only delivery of **The Local** won’t receive renewals.

| Renewal Month | Member/ LOCAL \$ | LOCAL subs. | Begins | Ends |
|---------------|------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Sep. 04 | \$8.00 | 0 | Sep. 04 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Oct. 04 | \$8.00 | 0 | Sep. 04 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Nov. 04 | \$6.65 | 0 | Nov. 04 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Dec. 04 | \$6.65 | 0 | Nov. 04 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Jan. 05 | \$5.35 | 0 | Jan. 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Feb. 05 | \$5.35 | 0 | Jan. 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Mar. 05 | \$4.00 | 0 | Mar. 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Apr. 05 | \$4.00 | 0 | Mar. 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| May 05 | \$2.65 | 0 | May 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Jun. 05 | \$2.65 | 0 | May 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Jul. 05 | \$1.35 | 0 | Jul. 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Aug. 05 | \$1.35 | 0 | Jul. 05 | Aug. 31, 05 |
| Sep. 05 | 0 | \$6.00 | Sep. 1, 05 | Aug. 31, 06 |
| Oct. 05 | 0 | \$6.00 | Oct. 1, 05 | Sep. 30, 06 |
| Nov. 05 | 0 | \$6.00 | Nov. 1, 05 | Oct. 31, 06 |


A couple of examples:

Clint’s membership expires in April 2005. He would renew with MER for May through August for \$4. In July he will receive a notice about signing up for a paper-copy subscription to **The Local**, for \$6 or \$12. He will choose to forgo the paper copy, and take the electronic delivery instead (he could have done both). Or he could include the subscription amount on his renewal.

Bill has paid in advance, and his membership expires on May 31, 2006. Sometime between Jan 1 2005 and Aug 31 2005 the MER Business Manager will compute the amount left over beyond Sept 1, 2005, which will be \$6 (3/4 of an \$8 year), which will be rounded up to \$6, which is converted to six issues of **The Local**. His "expiration" date will be adjusted to 12 months past 9-1-2005, to Aug 31, 2006. His next renewal will be sent in July 2006.

John is a life member of MER already. He continues to receive a paper copy of **The Local** until he dies. He can elect to also receive it electronically, but will continue to receive the paper copy anyway.

For clarification: the subscription referred to here means receiving a paper copy of **The Local**. The proratings, renewals, etc., don’t apply to electronic delivery, which costs nothing.

Effective immediately no more MER Life Memberships will be sold. 

The Veep's Corner

By Clint Hyde,
MER VP

FALL IS ALWAYS A TIME of transition, from warm weather to cold, green leaves to yellow/orange/red, from working on the garden railroad to working on the indoor pike. A time of transition is upon the MER as well. As you're reading this, there will be new officers (and Directors) and maybe some new committee chairs.

Over the next 12 months, there are other large changes coming, too. One is that because of the new NMRA bylaws (now called Regulations), MER's bylaws must also change. By the time you read this, a draft of these bylaws will have been voted on by the MER Board at their meeting at the Hagerstown convention, and available for downloading on the MER web site. It will also be published here in **The Local**. Current MER members will have to vote to approve the draft bylaws because they must be in effect by September 1, 2005, to conform to requirements set forth by National. So if there's something you think needs to be changed, please let us know quickly.

Another big change is that the definition of membership is changing. All the NMRA members in our territory are going to be members of MER, and some will be members of your Division. Essentially the membership is going to double. This will mean a lot more people becoming aware of and attending our activities. That will mean more work for all of us – inviting, welcoming, and engaging them. An upcoming issue of **The Local** will address this more directly, and will be sent specifically to all these new members. Another transition is that **The Local** will no longer be an automatic part of your membership; it will be offered on a subscription basis (Life MER Members will continue to receive a paper copy of **The Local** as always). Also, **The Local** will be available for free electronically instead of by paper if you so choose to receive it that way.

Another transition during this time is the ramp-down of MER dues. The idea is that when your renewal comes up prior to September 1, 2005, your membership cost will be the prorated fraction of the year that remains until September 1. You'll also be able to pay for a year's worth of subscription to **The Local** at that same time. If you have paid ahead beyond September 1, the excess will be converted into issues of **The Local**, and you'll get a renewal notice at the appropriate time. You'll see the actual amount when the notice arrives – \$6 per year to get a paper copy of **The Local**, plus whatever \$8 prorates down to for your remaining months. Past September 1, 2005, the renewals will only be for paper copies of **The Local**.

Your renewal notice will also include the opportunity to sign up to receive **The Local** electronically instead of, or in addition to, the paper copy. Any NMRA member may receive an electronic copy. So if you'd prefer to not get the paper copy, and not pay the \$6, you now have the chance to do so. I advise you to try it before stopping delivery of the paper copy

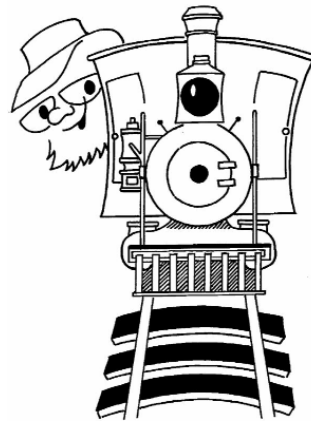
to be sure you can receive and open the electronic copy correctly. (I urge this because I know there will be a few of you who will have trouble with this, for reasons that won't be trivial to figure out.) The electronic copy will use Adobe Acrobat Reader, a free software application available at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

The plan, as of this writing, is to get the MER bylaws published in **The Local** for all to see in the March-April 2005 issue, voted on in May and June, and to take effect on September 1, 2005.

Thanks to all who donated computer stuff following my request. We have been very successful. If you need an official receipt with an EIN for tax purposes, let me know. I need someone around DC with some computer skills, with Excel in particular, to participate in the budget process to convert the existing budget data ("wk1" files) to Excel, and deal with any conversion issues (I've looked at the data; it looks clean.), so that next year's budget work by the committee is a clean transition.

Editor's note: This will be Clint's last "Veep" column, as the MER election votes have been tabulated. With 390 ballots returned, our new officers are:

President – Clint Hyde
Vice-President – Noll Horan
Secretary – Dick Foley
Treasurer – Ron Schmidt



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we have lots of trains.
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stock just trains,
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Transition: National Governance and Elections

By Roger L. Cason, MMR

THE NEW national Regulations (a.k.a. Bylaws) were approved by a large majority of the voting NMRA members several months ago. As a result, we will be in a transition period from “old” to “new” for the next year or so. Here’s the situation and path forward for governance and elections.

Under the old Bylaws, each region elected a Trustee. Terms were two years, with one quarter of the Trustees’ terms ending every six months. In particular, on September 30, 2004, the terms of five Trustees ended. One of the five was our MER Trustee, Eric Dervinis. Having served two terms totaling four years, Eric chose not to run again. I was the only person brave (foolish?) enough to agree to run for the resulting MER Trustee vacancy. The ballot in a recent **Scale Rails** covered the election to fill all five of the foregoing Trustee positions.

Now for the transition – the ballot and election just described will be the last one under the old governance arrangement. All Trustees under the old Bylaws will serve only until early July 2005, the date of the next national convention in Cincinnati.

Between now and July 2005, the several different Nominating Committees will lead the process of selecting nominees for the next election, i.e., the first one under the new Regulations. We anticipate that the ballot will be published this winter and the election will be held several months before July 2005. Under the


new Regulations, NMRA will have a total of nine Directors (the new title for Trustee). As a member of the MER, you will vote on three of these:

- A Director elected from the Eastern District of the U.S. (approximately, the eastern third of the U.S.).
- An At-Large Director elected by NMRA members worldwide.
- An At-Large Director elected by NMRA members in the United States and Canada.

Under the new Regulations, the foregoing applies to all NMRA members living within the Eastern District, whether they have been dues paying Region members or not.

In July 2005, in Cincinnati, the newly elected Directors will take office. Initially, one-third will have terms of one year, one-third will have terms of two years, and one-third will have terms of three years. At the first meeting, lots will be drawn to determine who has which term. After that, Director terms will be three years.

From July 2005 on, the NMRA policy setting body will be the nine-member Board of Directors, replacing the eighteen-member Board of Trustees. The title, “Director” is widely recognized and far less confusing than the often-misunderstood “Trustee.”

So, there you have it. Aren’t you glad you asked? 

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

CALLBOARD

Coming Events

November 20, 2004, 10 AM to 4 PM. Southbound Model Railroaders Holiday Train Show. Located at the Dixie Classic Fair Grounds, West 27th Street, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Admission: \$5.00, those under 12 free. For more information, call (336)-767-6104.


November 27-28, 2004. Noon to 4 PM. Cheltenham Model Railroad Club Open House. 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge) adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA 19027. No admission cost; donations gratefully accepted. For information, call (215)-635-9747 or go to <http://www.cheltenhammrr.org/pages/595161/index.htm>.

December 4-5, 2004, Saturday 10 AM to 4 PM, Sunday Noon to 4 PM. Southbound Model Railroaders Open House. Located at Southfork Park, Country Club Road and Park Circle, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. No admission charge, but donations will be accepted. For more information, call (336)-767-6104.

January 8-9 and 22-23, 2005 (snow dates January 29-30, 2005). Noon to 4 PM. Cheltenham Model Railroad Club Open House. 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge) adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA 19027. No admission cost; donations gratefully accepted. For information, call (215)-635-9747 or go to <http://www.cheltenhammrr.org/pages/595161/index.htm>.

March 11-12, 2005, 1 PM Friday through 11 PM Saturday. Railroad Prototype Modelers Seminar - East. Sponsored by Division 2, MCR-NMRA. Holiday Inn, Monroeville (Pittsburgh), PA (Exit 57, PA Turnpike). Registration fee: \$30. Hotel: \$69/night - (412)-372-1022; mention "Prototype Modeler's Meet." For more information, contact Dick Flock at (724)-850-8882, rflock@worldnet.att.net or Larry Kline at (412)-422-0678, Indkline@verizon.net.


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. 

John M. Johnson

MMR #339

Roger L. Cason, MMR

CONGRATULATIONS to John Johnson! He recently completed the requirements for his Prototype Models AP certificate. This is his seventh certificate and qualifies him for MMR status. Many readers have seen John's outstanding car and structure models. They frequently win awards in National and Regional contests. John now serves as one of the AP Coordinators for the Tidewater Division. A listing of his past volunteer work for the hobby and for NMRA would be too long to include here. Thanks, John, and again...our sincere congratulations! 

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 1 – New Jersey

William J. Blackburn - Golden Spike
Peter N. Butler - Scenery

Division 4 – Tidewater


John M. Johnson - Prototype Models
John M. Johnson - MMR

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Rick Knight - Scenery

Division 12 – Carolina Piedmont

James R. Matthews - Chief Dispatcher
David H. Lynam - Electrical Engineer
David H. Lynam - Civil Engineer

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

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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

| 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 _____

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



PI. MATTHEW (2)

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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