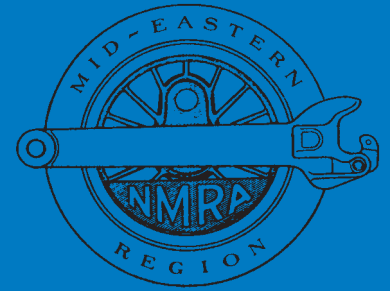


The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 61

MAY — JUNE 2006

Number 3

A Trip to The Round House Railroad Museum

By Fred Willis

DURING A RECENT TRIP to Savannah, Georgia, my wife and I stumbled on an interesting railroad museum located adjacent to the city's historic district. The Round House Railroad Museum is located in the old Central of Georgia Railway repair shop.

I had heard of the Central of Georgia Railway, but was completely unfamiliar with its location and history. The Central Railroad and Canal Company was chartered in 1853 to provide access to the Savannah port. Over the years, the name changed, its size grew and the repair shop was built in Savannah. In 1963, the Southern Railway purchased the Central of Georgia and the Savannah facility was closed.

In 1989, the Coastal Heritage Society reopened it and began restoring the repair shop. The museum covers a large area. Located within the museum's boundaries are an open roundhouse of about twenty tracks, a turntable, power plant and several shop buildings including a well-preserved machine shop and print shop. For anyone interested in belt driven

equipment, the machine shop alone is worth the visit.

The engines and cars are mainly Central of Georgia Railway though there is equipment from other southern railroads. The car roster includes an 1882 C of G inspection car, three circa 1920 C of G parlor cars, two circa 1930 cabooses, a modern boxcar, a modern hopper, a 1920 Savannah street car and a trolley from

Melbourne Australia. Engines include a GP-35, a 1907 2-8-0, two industrial 'goat' engines used for switching and an 1886 engine, whose wheel arrangement I forgot to record.

The restoration of the equipment is a work in progress. One engine has been restored and one is currently undergoing restoration. Most are quietly sitting in the engine house waiting for rust to consume them. No car has been restored and all will require substantial work.

The biggest disappointment was being unable to view the car interiors. No platforms were open to even peek through the windows. Despite the disappointment, the



A view of the turntable at The Round House Railroad Museum in Savannah, Georgia.

continued on page 4

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

AT LAST COUNT, the official (eligible voting) MER membership now stands at close to 2200 with another seven hundred NMRA members who join in our fun, but not as official MER members. The number of mailed paper subscriptions to **The Local** is again on an increase, now posted at over 700. We're happy that a number of our former paid "legacy" members who had let their subscriptions expire last September, have now renewed. And almost 200 members are now taking advantage of the electronic distribution of the **eLocal**. As noted in earlier columns, the MER's newsletter is the best way to keep in step with what's going on in the Region. Anyone reading this issue of **The Local** who is not already receiving the paper mailed or electronic distributed versions is urged to "sign up." Just give me a call, letter or email at my address shown to the right of this column.

Another way to "keep in touch" is to participate in your Division's activities. I am privileged to receive copies of many of the Division's newsletters and I am always amazed at the wide variety of interesting events that are conducted by the Divisions. Many of the Division meetings include a variety of helpful clinics, modeling contests and lots of local layout tours. If you have not been tuned into your local Division's activities, I heartily suggest you give it a try. If you need help in identifying your Division and its officers, give me a holler and I will be glad to steer you in the right direction. Even if you are not living within the territory of an organized Division, we can still aim you at a nearby Division. They would all welcome you to join in the fun.

As always, send a letter or email if you have questions about your membership, subscription or related issues.

The Local

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The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. Editors will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send originals without having back-up copies of both articles and photographs. Editors, by definition, reserve the right—and have the responsibility—to make corrections, deletions and changes to accommodate space.

The MER website is www.mer-nmra.org

President's Column

By Clint Hyde

THIS IS THE LAST TIME **The Local** can remind you about the 2006 NMRA National Convention before it starts on July 2nd and continues through the 9th.


I recently bumped into Steve Salotti at the GSMTS show in Timonium and asked how registration was progressing. He said the number is quickly approaching 1000 and also mentioned that tours and other popular things are starting to sell out. Therefore, I recommend you not wait any longer if you are interested in any of the special activities that are limited by space (like the bus tours—those buses only hold just so many, typically 40 or 50). Don't miss something you wanted to do by waiting a little too long . . . I still have a couple I want to register for. I will be there the entire week, so I hope that isn't going to be more model railroading than I can actually stand in a single week.

I missed the RPM gathering in PA. in March. However, I was in the general area and I attended the John Armstrong estate auction. For those who didn't know (which included me for a long time), John lived just outside D.C. I have been to his house to see his layout several times. I hope to follow up with an article on the auction soon.

On a more serious note, I was told that a few days following the auction, our auctioneer and former MER and NMRA President, Bob Charles, was in a car accident and in the hospital. I have no details beyond that, but we wish him a speedy recovery.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the 2006 MER convention substitute that will be the weekend of October 28 in Norfolk, VA, in conjunction with the annual Tidewater Train Show. For all the information on these and future activities, (Such as the 2007 MER Convention happening in Lynchburg, VA during National Train Month, November 1st - 4th.) keep an eye on **The Local** and the MER website.

If you know someone who's an NMRA member but has not heard from MER in a while, please let Business Manager, Fred Miller know about it. There continue to be errors in the membership database at HQ (like having someone who has rejoined get assigned to the wrong region) and Fred won't know because he only receives **the data for the MER, not all of the NMRA**.

Model Railroading is Fun—weather, rinse, repeat! 

SOMETHING NEW: It is my great pleasure to introduce a new feature in **The Local**. Following each article written by any member in the Mid-Eastern Region, there will be a brief biography about the author and their modeling interests. I hope you enjoy this new feature, and use it to your advantage to “get-to-know” some of the other members.

~Your Editor, **S. K.**

Railroad Museum continued from page 1

three baggage passenger cars, which were converted to parlor cars, provide a wealth of information for anyone interested in 1920's car construction and design.


The buildings are original and well restored. Located between the buildings and behind a wall is an unexpected garden. Railroad officials wanted employees to have some interests outside of work and encouraged employees to grow flowers there. During the depression, food was raised in the garden.

The most interesting aspect of the museum is the machine shop. The shop includes a variety of tools including a planer; two drill presses, each with two drills; and a lathe for machining wheels. All the equipment was belt driven. A power transmission shaft ran from the walking beam engine to the machine shop, making at least one ninety-degree turn.

This particular walking beam engine has an interesting history.

It was built in the 1850's for the repair shops; later it was sold to a company in Florida who eventually abandoned it and threw it in a swamp. In the 1930's, an industrial machine collector found and restored the engine. Eventually the engine was returned to Savannah and is now on display. The smoke stack for the power plant has one more interesting feature, actually several; it is surrounded at the base by built-in privies.

The museum is worth a visit if you are in Savannah and especially if Central of Georgia Railway equipment interests you. Additional information is at: <http://railga.com/oddend/roundhouse.html> and <http://railga.com/index.html>.

FRED WILLIS lives in the New Jersey Division 1 and has been building HO models off and on for 40 years. He began serious model railroading about 8 years ago. 

FYI: Snail-mail readers of **The Local** may have noticed a LONG delay last issue, which was caused by a mailing issue. We do apologize for any inconvenience or missed information. The mailing issue has been corrected and we anticipate no further problems. ~YOUR EDITOR, **S. K.**

Rail Facts

By David Jayroe

IN THE WORLD of N scale, our trains may be small but some of us like to operate as the prototype roads would. I wonder if anyone would ever attempt to model in N scale – N&W Extra 1737 as it ran on November 15, 1967? Why would I wonder about a specific train? Read on and I will give you the background to the question.

I, like some others in the club, like to run long trains. While running a 97 car train at the scale show about two years ago I was asked by a visitor what the longest full size train was. I remembered seeing a news item on TV about 30 years ago but could only remember that it was about 4 miles long. The details of the event eluded me.

I started doing some research on the subject and found nothing on railroad websites, in books or on NRHS chapter web sites. I finally thought to ask the editor at Trains magazine. He replied by e-mail and several months later with an article in the April 2001 issue of Trains. I thought I would share the information I received.

The longest train ever run on US rails was a 500 car N&W coal train called “Extra 1737”. The movement took place on November 15, 1967. The road had recently received its first order of 3,600 hp SD-45’s and was looking to lower costs of moving 2,500 cars a day from the Pocahontas coal fields to Portsmouth, Ohio. At the time, 240 car trains pulled by GP-30’s were typical, but the new power on hand inspired the road to try 400 and 500 car trains. In an effort to reduce costs even more, Clyde Taylor and the general foreman who was in charge of the long train experiments want to try a 500 car train with one crew using mid-train helpers controlled by radio from the lead unit.

The train originated at Iaeger, WV and ran west 47 miles to Williamson, WV; changed crews and ran west 107 miles to Portsmouth, OH. When the 500 car train was made up at Iaeger, the lead units and the first 100 cars stretched through the towns of Hull and Litwar. The next 250 cars and mid-train helpers wound through a dozen curves and two miles of mainline to Iaeger, then 50 cars curved around a tight curved bridge over the Tug Fork River and into Auville yard which held the rest of the train. Departure time was noon for the head end and 12:05 for the caboose due to the 500 feet of slack.

The train broke a coupler at Williamson on restart after the crew change and had a few sticking brakes that car men walking alongside the train released as it rolled by at five miles an hour. However when track conditions allowed “Extra 1737” maintained 20 miles per hour.

The run completed successfully at day’s end. However, the N&W management decided that trains of this length were too much trouble and required too many employees to oversee. They would not become the new standard for this division.

THE 500 CAR COAL TRAIN FACTS.

Manifest:

- 3 — SD 45’s (#1737,#1740,#1726)
- 300 — 70-, 80- and 100-ton hoppers
- 3 — SD 45’s (#1738, #1761, #1759)
- 200 — 100-, 82.5- and 80-ton hoppers
- 1 — Caboose (#518263)

Train Horsepower:

- 3,600 hp per locomotive
- 21,600 hp total (More than 1 hp per foot of train)

Weight of train:


- 48,584 gross tons
- 97.17 average gross tons per car
- 35,122 coal tons
- 70.25 average coal tons per car

Length over pulling face of coupler:

- 21,424 feet and 9 inches (for the math impaired is 4.058 miles)

Time for the train to pass a given point:

- 10 minutes at 42 m.p.h.
- 20 minutes at 12 m.p.h.
- 49 minutes at 5 m.p.h

EDITORS NOTE: *This article appeared in The Bantrak Newsletter in October 2001 and is reprinted with permission from the author. The Bantrak Newsletter is the official publication of the Baltimore Area N-Trak club.* 

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Filling Out The Judging Form Made Easy

By Kurt S. Kramke, MMR

ONE OF THE LEAST favorite things to do or the reason that I hear most often for not entering contests and participating in the Achievement Program is, “the judging form is too hard to fill out.”

I am here to tell you that it is not all that hard or time consuming. In fact it can be done in less than 30 minutes. First and foremost, you do not need to write the great American novel in order to enter a contest. My first two entries were hand written on the judging form in the space provided. But with the proliferation of computers, I now use a word processor to enter the information, but it still is on a single page. I have enjoyed judging over the years, I wish that more people would enter the contests. Hopefully this will take some of the mystery of filling out the paperwork.

CONSTRUCTION

- Remember to check off what you did.
- Then explain what you did in detail, but not in painful detail (I glued the six inch 2 x 4 to the 2 x 6 at a 45 degree angle and then...).
- The more you describe, the better you will score even on a kit.
- If you build from kit plans but use basic shapes, not kit parts, to build the model make sure you make note of that.
- If you made a mold to make a part, bring it so the judges can see it or a good photo and a sample part.
- The same goes for any jigs you used.
- Make sure you point out the complexity of the construction; some judges may not think some things are too hard to do.
- This is also where your modeling skills are judged; the squareness, joint tightness, glue marks, and appropriateness of part size used is judged.

DETAIL

- This is one area where the amount you add counts for a lot more than where it came from.
- If you scratch built it make note of it, but it does not add that many points here.
- Be sure to point out where you added the detail parts on the model.

CONFORMITY

- Section three deals with documentation. What is documentation? Plans, photos, or even an article that you used to construct the model.
- Your plans can be your own pencil drawings or out of a magazine or blueprints. Just include something so the judges know what they are looking at.
- If you include plans from magazines, I suggest that you do not modify the model from them. Some judges will

take off points because the model does not match the plans exactly.

- If you modify the model, I suggest using your own drawing and including other drawings and photos to support your plans.

FINISH AND LETTERING

- This is the area where you are judged on how well you paint or stain your model, apply lettering, and weather the finished model.
- You do not have to weather every model since at some point in time everything is new. However, if you are modeling a run down building, that would not be appropriate.
- Lettering is also not necessary, as many buildings do not have any lettering on their sides.
- Many narrow gauge railroads, particularly logging roads, do not have any lettering on their cars.

The most important thing to remember is to be very careful about applying your paint or stain.

- With lettering make sure it is straight.
- If using decals make sure that there is no decal film showing.
- If you weather, make sure that it makes sense and is evenly applied except where it needs to be heavier.
- One thing to be sure of that you have your entire model covered with paint or stain.
- Make sure to tell how you did the finishing and lettering. Do not make the judges guess.
- If you did something unusual, make sure you make a note of it.

SCRATCHBUILDING

- This where you get points for the items that you constructed yourself. You are receiving points for quantity not quality on a percentage basis.
- In each of the categories there are certain items that are exempt from the requirements for scratch building.
- You do not necessarily need to scratch build anything in order to get a merit award since there are only 15 points in this section.
- Even if you made note of these items in the construction section, you need to make note of them here because depending on how the judging system used the same judges may not be looking at both sections.

MERIT AWARD

- There are 125 points total available on the judging

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

- You need 87.5 points for merit award for the Achievement program. That is only 70 percent or a C an average grade.
- By entering contests your modeling will improve.
- Remember you are not competing against anyone but yourself.

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Do not look at the judging form with fear; it is not that difficult to fill out. The form is used to tell the judges

how you built and finished your model, not to help the judges criticize you.

- Follow the KISS principle, the simpler the better, most judges do not like books for simple models.
- If you write out your information, make sure that it is readable; judges do not like unreadable information.
- Documentation, is the key to getting maximum points as it covers all the areas of the form.
- Remember to ask questions after the judging is done to improve your modeling and find out what the judges did not like.

NMRA Contest Entry Form Entry# _____

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

NAME: _____ AGE: _____
 GROUP NAME: _____ NMRA #: _____
 ADDRESS: _____ REGION: _____
 CITY: _____ ST/PROV: _____ DIV: _____
 ZIP/POSTAL CODE: _____ COUNTRY: _____ SCALE: _____
 H (____) _____ W (____) _____ E-MAIL: _____

<p>Arts & Crafts</p> <p>GENERAL</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Kit Built <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Pattern <p>NEEDLEWORK</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Kit Built <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Pattern <p>RAILROADIANA</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Kit Built <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Pattern	<p>Model</p> <p>POWER UNIT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Locomotive <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel & Other Motive Power <input type="checkbox"/> Traction <p>ROLLING STOCK</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger Car <input type="checkbox"/> Freight Car <input type="checkbox"/> Caboose <p>OTHER</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-revenue Car <input type="checkbox"/> Structure - On Line <input type="checkbox"/> Structure - Off Line <input type="checkbox"/> Display - On Line <input type="checkbox"/> Display - Off Line <p>POPULAR VOTE</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Favorite Train <input type="checkbox"/> Thumbs <input type="checkbox"/> Photo Match <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity (Structures)	<p>Photo/Pass</p> <p>MODEL SUBJECT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Black & White <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Color Print <input type="checkbox"/> (C) Slide <p>PROTOTYPE SUBJECT</p> <input type="checkbox"/> (D) Black & White <input type="checkbox"/> (E) Color Print <input type="checkbox"/> (F) Slide <input type="checkbox"/> Pass Contest <p>MODULE CONTEST</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Module - Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Module - Group <input type="checkbox"/> Display Only (All Categories)
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DESCRIPTION: _____

JUDGES HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: _____

1. First Place or Gold Award (Best of Show) winning entries at this Contest level or higher are not eligible.
2. This *Entry Form* (Form 901) must be completed for all entries. The appropriate *Judges' Score Sheet* must be completed for contests requiring the judging form. (Model-except Popular Vote and Module)
3. Supplemental information, including plans and photos, may accompany your entry. However, the judges are under no obligation to consult this information. (The Contest Chair may limit this material.)
4. The Contest Committee reserves the right to determine how to display entries and Entries may not be removed from the Contest Room without notification of the Contest Committee and presentation of the claim check.
5. Be sure to declare a value on your Entry for insurance purposes.
6. After filling out this *Entry Form* and the *Judges' Score Sheet* (if applicable), return both to the clerk and receive the Entry Number for your *Entry Form*, *Judge's Score Sheet*, *Claim Check* and *Entry Identification Tag*. Place your Entry with the *Identification Tag* attached in the proper Category. Retain your "CLAIM CHECK". It **MUST** be presented to the Contest Committee to pick up your Entry.
7. I hereby certify that this Entry is entirely my/our workmanship or that the original exposure was made by me. I also hereby release the NMRA and all persons connected with this Contest from any liability due to damage to or loss of the Entry beyond that provided by the NMRA insurance coverage.
8. I agree that reproduction rights are granted to the NMRA for publication in the NMRA Bulletin or any other publication of the NMRA.

SIGNATURE: _____ VALUE: _____

NMRA Contest Claim Check

I hereby certify that Entry # _____, entered in the Contest has been returned to me in satisfactory condition.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

NMRA Form #901 Rev: B, 23 July 2000. All previous versions of this Form are obsolete.

2006 NMRA National Convention
July 2-9, 2006

- Over 110 layouts featured
- SIG activities
- Rail, industrial tours

Clinics, model contests, auctions, tours, non-rail activities, train & trade show, many local activities

Pennsylvania Convention Center

www.ij2006.org for info

This form is downloaded from <http://www.nmra.org/achievement/pdf/contest-entry-form.pdf> and for sample purposes only.

CALLING ALL READERS: We need to show our support for the NMRA and specifically the MER by producing the best and most informative newsletter possible, to do that I need your help. Our newsletter is called **The Local**, because local people benefit from reading it every time. Please write and submit any articles to the editor via e-mail: stevespressrr@yahoo.com or via the snail mail address listed on page 2. Don't pass up this great opportunity to help out and earn AP points at the same time!!

Train Humor

A bum, who obviously has seen more than his share of hard times, approaches a well-dressed gentleman on the street.

"Hey, buddy, can you spare two dollars?"

The well-dressed gentleman responds, "You're not going to spend it on liquor, are you?"

"No, sir, I don't drink," retorts the bum.

"You're not going to throw it away in some crap game, are you?" asks the gentleman.


"No way, I don't gamble," answers the bum.

"You wouldn't waste the money at a model train store to improve your layout, would you?" asks the man.

"No, never," says the bum, "I don't play with trains."

The gentleman then asks the bum if he would like to come back to his house for a home cooked meal. The bum accepts eagerly. While they're heading for the man's house, the bum's curiosity gets the better of him.

The bum asks, "Isn't your wife going to be angry when she sees me at your table?"

"Probably," says the man, "but it will be worth it. I want her to see what happens to a guy who doesn't drink, gamble or play with trains." 

Achievement Program Update

*By Charlie Flichman
MER AP Manager*


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

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Carl Baumgart – Gold Spike
Gilbert Brauch, Jr. – Scenery
Jack Monette – Gold Spike
Jack Monette – Electrical Engineer

Division 13 - Carolina Piedmont

David Derway – Association Volunteer
Gene Sing – Civil Engineer
Gene Sing – Electrical 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**. 

MER CONTESTS AT IJ 2006

*By Ray Bilodeau
MER General Contest Chairman
NMRA Contest Manager*


THE MID-EASTERN REGION of the NMRA will bring two contests to the national convention in Philadelphia this July.

The James Teese New Modeler Award, sponsored by the region and given to a first time modeler entering and achieving the highest score among first time entrants in the judged national model contest, will be given at the awards ceremony on Thursday, July 8, 2006. The award includes a plaque and a cash prize of \$25.00.

The second special award, the Ma & Pa Modeling Award, sponsored by the Ma & Pa Society will also be brought to IJ 2006. This privately sponsored award recognizes modeling skill relating to topics of the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad. A plaque will be given to the winner at the national contest awards ceremony.


I want to urge our MER modelers, especially those of you who have never entered a judged model contest, to build something and bring it to Philadelphia. Entries should be brought to the contest room on Monday and Tuesday. We open at 8 AM. Can't make it to the convention? You can submit your model and paperwork by proxy.

We have a once in a decade opportunity to participate in a national convention within our region...don't let this chance pass you by.

If you have any questions about either award please contact me at 302-636-0888 or **RaymondBilodeau@aol.com**. 

CORRECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS:

In the March/April issue of **The Local** there was an incorrect photo caption. Citizens Bank Park was incorrectly identified as Lincoln Financial Field. I wish to thank the sports readers that alerted me to this error. If you see any errors or have any other suggestions, please feel free to contact me at: **stevexpressrr@yahoo.com** or the snail-mail address listed on page 2, and I will take the necessary actions.

~Your Editor, S. K. 

Your Layout Is Done - Now What?

(Some Alternatives to the Chain Saw)

By: Roger L. Cason, MMR

YES. IT ACTUALLY DOES HAPPEN! People reach the point where their layout is essentially done. Trackwork is in place and operable. A full compliment of structures has been planted. And the scenery is pretty decent, with no plywood or Homosote showing.

Now what? Should you get out the chain saw, tear it all down, and start over? You certainly can, and lots of people do. There are many possible valid reasons to start over – change in your interest, operating problems with the track plan, change of scale, or just plain boredom.

But there are alternatives – in other words, ways to keep having fun with the layout you’ve got. Let’s consider some of them.

THE LAYOUT – IS IT *REALLY* DONE?

- If you’re like me, installation of scenery took several years. Good news: I learned a lot as I went. Bad news: As I approached completion, some of the early stuff suddenly looked pretty sparse. Might you have some places like that? Result: In three places (each about two feet square), I replaced the original scenery with something much more suitable.
- Is your track work trouble free? Or, are there a few spots (that you’ve been ignoring) where derailments and other mishaps keep occurring? Consider digging in and really fixing what’s wrong.
- Replace control panels that “just grew” with carefully designed panels – i.e. panels with consistent graphics, consistent color coding, and modern electrical controls?
- Even if your panels are well designed, additional information may be helpful. For example, would it help new operators to mark “east” and “west” on each panel?
- Add more and/or better trees and greenery.
- Add people, motor vehicles, and small structures such as tool sheds and fire hydrants.
- Add animation, such as signals, crossing lights, or advertising signs.
- Add trackside details such as yard limit signs, whistle signs, speeder setouts, dummy signals, junk, and more junk.
- Do your industries really fit your location and era? Changing the signs may correct the situation. If not, consider replacing the real misfit structures with something more suitable.

ROLLING STOCK AND STRUCTURES:

- Do some of your cars, locomotives, and structures still have that plastic shine? Weathering will significantly upgrade the layout’s realism at very modest cost.
- Consider gradually replacing your shake-the-box cheapo cars with rolling stock that is scratch built, kit bashed, built from a resin (craftsman) kit, or built from a highly detailed styrene kit. In the latter case, consider making your own wire grab irons to use in place of the supplied tiny plastic grab irons.
- Same as above, but for buildings and bridges.
- Add open loads to your flat cars and gondolas – scratch built or purchased.
- Paint the handrails on your diesels.
- Most of us eventually accumulate more cars and locomotives than the layout can possibly hold. It may make sense to have a few “ornamental cars” (example: a wreck train) that rarely move. But trying to store everything you own on the layout leads to choked up yards (think: Union Pacific on the Gulf Coast) and difficult operation. The solution: remove the surplus and store it somewhere – then “rotate the stock” on the layout periodically to add interest.

OPERATIONS:

- If you haven’t tried “operations” yet, work up a very simple schedule or operating plan and run it with a few friends. After you have some experience, expand it as appropriate. “Think outside the box” to create alternate schedules. How about an all-passenger session? An all-freight session? A session (using borrowed equipment if necessary) that captures a different era from your normal one? With a little care, you may be able to have operating sessions with different cars and locomotives, each keyed to a specific era. In other words, have a 40’s night, a 50’s night, a 60’s night, etc.
- When people arrive for an operating session, use some gimmick to get everyone to do a job they’ve never done before.
- Invite guest operators to accompany people in your regular crew. This could be informal, or formal as is commonly done with “Operations Callboards” at conventions.
- If you haven’t done so already, consider switching to DCC. Most people who take this step report very

positive results.

- Really participate in the NMRA.
- Attend a regional convention. If you are near a division, attend the next division meet.
- Offer to help with something – almost anything – with your local region or division. All nonprofit organizations have more work to be done than they have volunteers.
- You learned a lot while building your layout. Share what you've learned. Prepare a clinic for presentation at an appropriate NMRA gathering.
- Have you participated in the Achievement Program? For many people, this is the best feature of NMRA. Check the requirements for the various certificates on the NMRA web site. By doing a little paperwork, you probably qualify for the Golden Spike and several of the AP certificates.

GET OUT YOUR CAMERA:

- If your layout is done, it probably has some very photogenic spots. If you don't already own them, borrow a tripod and several photofloods. And then get out your camera and start shooting. Unlike photographing actual railroads, you can always go back and reshoot if you don't like your initial results.
- Enter your photos in a division contest, a regional convention contest, or a national convention contest.
- Submit photos for publication (for example, the NMRA calendar, the Model Railroader annual contest, or the Walthers catalog).
- Use photos to decorate the entryway leading to your layout.
- Use photos on your Christmas card or letter.
- Assemble an album of pictures to show to friends and family members who can't see your layout in person.

OTHER:

- Show off your handiwork by having an open house. In some areas, November open houses are an established tradition. Or, you might want to have your own invitation only open house with food and libations at some appropriate date (New Year's Day or the week between Christmas and New Year's come to mind).
- Join a modular group, perhaps one that uses a different scale than yours.

CLEAN HOUSE:

Now that your layout is essentially done, the phrase "might use it some day" takes on a new meaning. Or – more accurately – lack of meaning.

- Many model railroaders accumulate scrap cardboard, Styrofoam, or whatever to be used for (cheap) scenery. Can you now safely pitch all this stuff?
- What is all that stuff doing stored under your lay-


out? We tend to look at stuff and think: might I use this some day? This may be the wrong question. Instead, look at each item and ask; How long has it been since I touched this? Can you get rid of some of it? All of it? The hobby is rapidly moving forward, and the incentive to keep older stuff gets smaller every day.

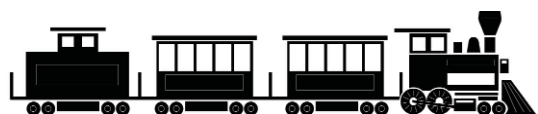
- As part of your house cleaning process, make an inventory of your cars and locomotives. This can be done by hand, or with the aid of one of the available computer programs. (You may be horrified at how much stuff you have.)
- As previously discussed, it's nice to have extra cars and locomotives to "rotate the stock" of stuff on the layout. But, structure kits? Now that the layout is done and populated with all the major structures, shouldn't you think about disposing of the unused kits you bought with only a vague end use in mind? There are many constructive disposal possibilities – eBay, regional convention auctions or white elephant tables, donation to your division for door prizes or benefit auctions, and gifts to friends who are new in the hobby and/or pressed for money.

AND FINALLY . . . REMEMBER THE CHICKEN DELIGHT TRUCK!!

An older friend of mine would occasionally ask: What happens if the Chicken Delight truck hits you? I don't know whether Chicken Delight is still in business, but my friend's point is well taken. Any of us could expire at any time with no warning. If this happened to you, would you be leaving a huge model railroad mess for your family and friends to straighten out? As a potential kindness to your family and friends, consider the following:

- Clean house (see previous section).
- Leave some suggestions on where to constructively dispose of the major categories of stuff. (My wife and I send a "death letter" to our children every year or two. It lists social security numbers, bank accounts, insurance policies, location of tax returns, etc. Most recently, I added my list of model railroad disposal suggestions to this letter.)
- Avoid creating the impression that your stash of stuff is worth a fortune. There may be some items which will have a significant value – for example, a collection of brass locomotives or significant books that are out of print. But much of the other stuff will be more like a used tooth brush – valued by the original owner, but not worth much to anyone else.

ROGER L. CASON *lives in the Philadelphia Division and has been active as an HO modeler since about 1992, but a railfan since the tender age of 5.* 



Volunteers for Independence Junction 2006

The NMRA exists for each of us not only to gain, but also to give. Volunteers make conventions work and you can earn AP points while performing this vital task. Everyone is encouraged to support the convention with a few hours of your time and effort. By volunteering, you not only keep costs down, but you help your fellow modelers get more from the convention. Volunteering is the ultimate step in becoming a full-fledged NMRA member.

BENEFITS

- Volunteers can earn credits for the Achievement Program Volunteer Certificate.
- You will receive a free "volunteer" T-shirt to help with identification.
- To defray transportation costs, a maximum \$20 reimbursement for actual travel expenses (parking fees and public transportation ticket costs only) will be issued after the convention. Prior approval from the IJ Staff Coordinator and completion of the form below is required.
- While wearing the volunteer T-shirt, you will be able to access the IJ Staff hospitality suite.



POLICIES

- If you are volunteering at the convention and not attending convention activities you do not have to register for the convention. This includes giving a clinic. Major social food events (like the banquet and the non-rail luncheon) are excluded from a registration requirement as they are a social event and the event is open to the volunteer and spouse as a guest (fee must be paid for the event).
- Tour bus hosts (one per bus) are not exempt from the registration fees except if they are not associated with the hobby and do not partake in the activities at the convention. They do not have to pay for the tour they are hosting. If the host has already signed up for the tour they are leading, they can exchange it for another tour, but not a refund. They are reminded that the bus drivers are receiving a 15% gratuity under contract.
- Volunteers are not required to be NMRA members.

We need volunteers to work all aspects of the convention, not only during, but also prior to the convention. Pick an area where you can help, fill out the form below or download it from our web page at www.ij2006.org. Send the completed form to the following address:

IJ 2006 Volunteer Coordinator
818 George Street
Norristown, PA 19401

You can also email our Volunteer Coordinator, Bill Palmer at wjp0268@comcast.net. The only requirement is that you maintain NMRA membership and register for the convention.

Independence Junction 2006 Volunteer Survey Form

Independence Junction 2006 needs a large group of volunteers to perform a host of functions in preparation for, and during the convention. Please indicate on the form below what you can bring to this effort. Thanks for your willingness to participate to make IJ2006 the best ever.

Administrative Functions

- Registration/Information _____
- Publications _____
- Door Prizes _____
- Publicity _____

Outside Activities

- Layout Tour Guides _____
- Prototype Tour Guides _____
- Railfan Tour Guides _____
- Tour Departure Mgr. _____

Inside Activities

- Clinics Staff _____
- Non-Rail Activities _____
- Auction Staff _____

To assist us in assigning volunteers, please indicate your previous convention (National, Division, and Region) experience, as well as professional skills (computer literacy, word processing, administrative, etc).

A Letter from the Editor

Story and photograph by Steve Kindig

TECHNOLOGY is amazing, but at the same time can become frustrating because of the new and improved formats and gadgets that accompany the increased technology.

I began the saga a few months ago when my VCR went kaput. I bought my first DVD player soon after, it also included a VCR combo feature that I loved. I have all the features of a DVD and VCR in one machine.

I was pretty happy until I was stopped short by the new remote. The new remote did not have a button to setup, power or control any of the functions on my TV, and my current TV remote was so old that it didn't have the DVD features of the new remote and would not even accept the code for the VCR since it was a combination player. So I began the quest (Yes, I called it a quest 'cause it seemed to take forever.) for a universal remote. Some remotes were too big, some were too small, some lit up, while others left me in the dark and some had zillions of auxiliary options; while others left me with none.

I finally settled on a backlit one, with an enormous amount of auxiliary features that I probably would never use but had the capability to "learn" from an original remote and featured an extra audio setup. I took it home, and after easily programming it, I went from a total of three remotes to one!!! I couldn't be happier.

Well now that I had my nifty DVD/VCR player, I needed a few DVD's. I got my start with some used ones that they resold at the rental store. I started playing around with the zoom, angle and chapter feature and I practically sat around all day figuring out all the functions I could do with them while enjoying the high quality, caption, audio options and "no-rewind" features. I still haven't sat through a whole movie with director commentary, but it's there if I ever need something to watch. But unfortunately I landed myself right back at the frustrating (almost downright plaguing) part with all of my "underused" VHS tapes.

Yes, I had a system for storage and even a master list with a corresponding number and title sheet. It probably annoyed some people that I was so particular with them; but hey it worked for me, and I always knew what videos I had and where the tape was

located. So I slowly started to cut back on the VHS tapes filled with movies that I originally taped from broadcast TV. They weren't always the best of quality, and had the commercials in; but they were the funniest movies, and ones I could enjoy over and over again. With wintertime slowly passing us by now, I sat down immediately threw out the older ones with no tracking ability whatsoever. I watched most of the other tapes when I should have been shoveling the snow and made a list of used DVD's to look for. I have a pretty good start, but still need some of my older

movies. This summer I plan on becoming a yard sale junkie, and maybe even break down and go to eBay for the more exclusive DVD's.

Enter my next frustration and a good reason for writing this column. (Maybe I can declare this purchase as tax write-off! Just kidding.) I have zero train DVD's. After looking through some catalogs and browsing online, I went to the hobby shop and found a DVD pretty close to what I wanted. Problem solved, and I'm as happy as a clam!! BUT WAIT, WAIT.....I didn't just go to the hobby shop and bought **one** DVD.....you don't think I'm that **crazy** do you??? I spent another good hour


wondering the shelves and ended up with two models and a list of possible gifts for my upcoming birthday. So I guess you can say.....

The price of two models: \$21.48

The price of my first DVD featuring trains: \$19.95

Spending an hour wandering the hobby shop and making memories: PRICELESS.

So if you are still an "old-school" train watcher, consider moving up to DVD quality!! As soon as this article prints, entire train videos will probably be available for download on iPod and I'll already be outdated again. I just can't win; but I'm sure going to have fun trying!

Model Railroading is Fun—especially when you know your stuff! 



My ever growing collection of VHS and DVD train videos surrounding my favorite hat.

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



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



F.L. MATSON (2)

This HO-scale building kit is designed around E.L. Moore's "Bunn's Seed & Feed" building which appeared in the 8/73 issue of **Model Railroader**. The kit features laser cut wood components as well as other parts and castings.



CLINT HYDE

Small Freight Station, Tichy windows and detail parts, laser-cut walls, roof, tar paper, and stripwood for the platform.



CLINT HYDE

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A Look into the Allegheny Western Lines AWL Lines West!

By Chris O'Brien, ATC

BEFORE MY SENIOR YEAR of college, some of my companions and I were looking for something new in model railroading. We wanted an outlet for maximum creative expression that would still allow us to run together. Finding a way to promote the hobby wouldn't hurt, either. We finally realized that a modular group would be the perfect solution!

With that, we started to research how to build modules. We chose to go with 2' x 4' NMRA style modules. Fellow conspirator Doug Baer is quite handy with carpentry and has a sizeable woodshop. He designed and built modules using poplar framing and a foam deck. They were light and very durable. The foam provided a handy basis for final construction.

We used Woodland Scenics foam roadbed with Peco Code 100 track. This has been a wonderful method as the foam roadbed and

Since then we have displayed at Greenberg Shows and the East Coast Hobby Show on several occasions. We have displayed with other groups several times, including the Harford County Modular group, Royersford Modular Model Railroaders and StARR. In all instances, we were able to setup a display based upon the NMRA standards. Preparing for a show, we draw out the entire layout with AutoCAD to ensure alignment and accuracy. Our DCC Master, Val, then breaks up the layout into booster districts to limit the current draw on any one section of the layout. A printed map of the display is given to everyone and modules are added to the layout as they arrive.

All modules are positioned, clamped to adjacent modules and leveled prior to any track or electrical work. The connector tracks are added and the track power and Loconet buses are then joined.



tack glue is fast and clean, and making changes isn't too difficult.

One of the many modules modeled by the Allegheny Western Lines.

Working in a piecemeal arrangement, the layout grows in segments. While


In the summer of 2001, I received two modules and started to design a Heinz Plant from prototype photos. Doug got four and started a medium sized yard with a junction. Fellow member Val Pistilli started working on an industrial switching area over three modules of his own. Doug also started looking into ideas for making some corners for an oval or square shaped setup. To make transportation easier, he chose to build compact 3' square corner modules.

In the fall of 2001, we set up our modules with a local modular group that we are friendly with, the Saint Alban's RR Club, or StARR. This gave us our first test with an experienced group. The layout was a hit and setup only took a third of the time as the other group—we were on to something!

Finally, in February 2003, we bit the bullet and committed to a Greenberg Train Show. The final corners and modules were constructed (some without any wiring) and we were on! That layout was 8' x 24'. There wasn't much scenery, but there was plenty of track, all controlled by Digitrax DCC. We ran a bunch of trains, many with sound, and had a lot of fun over the weekend. We did it again in December with a little more scenery done this time. In only our second full setup, from the time we opened the moving truck's door to full setup with trains running was only 90 minutes—with only three guys setting up!

the days of a 90 minute setup are over, the efficiency of a few people to setup displays that have grown to over 2000 square feet is still quite remarkable.

The AWL crew now consists of eight members with over 25 modules, and many more on the way. The modules have reached their initial goal of successfully providing a contact with the public. It's amazing how many people walk up to us and ask, "Is this HO scale?" At the same time, we have people asking us about the Digitrax DCC, sound decoders and weathering techniques. The Allegheny Western Lines is spearheading a large HO-scale modular setup for the 2006 National Train Show. There are 6 groups looking to join us from places as near as New York, to Wisconsin and even one gentleman from Seattle! We hope to showcase many other scales and styles of modeling to further educate and entertain the public. The AWL crew looks forward to seeing you there!

CHRIS O'BRIEN, ATC is one of the founding members of AWL. He has two modules and is working on a two-module set, complete with operational swing bridge. He is also an eight-year member of Gatsme Lines and serves as the Operations Superintendent. AWL and Gatsme Lines will be on display and open for tours during IJ 2006. 

Scale House: An Easy Addition

By: Phil Peters

IF YOUR RAILROAD involves operations and needs something to occupy its crews without long over the road hauls, or if you would just like to have one more excuse to take your trains and run them somewhere meaningful, consider some of the small line side jobs that are located near the yard. One that is often overlooked is a scale house.

Cars had to be weighted so the shipper, the consignee and the railroad knew how much material was being shipped and so that billing would be accurate. Many times even small yards had a scale house. They take up virtually no room and are relatively easy to model. They can be on the yard throat or off to one side of the yard. This latter position allows them to be ideal sites for those tracks that are right near the edge of the layout.

The scale house I modeled is, or rather was on a sidetrack that came off the main line into the small yard in downtown Hanover, PA. Since the scale house in Hanover was backed up to a rocky hillside it was an ideal subject. The model only takes up an area 2" x 10". This allowed me to place it on the foreground track of my new Hanover module and still have room between it and the face of the module for the rock outcropping. The fact that it was only a matter of yards from a busy street gave the scene even more appeal.

A scale house consists of a small shed that houses the operator and the scale mechanism. Outside, a pair of rails that are attached to the balance mechanism runs alongside the mainline rails and only several inches to one side of them – much like the gauntlet rails on bridges. A pair of switch points at either end of the scale allows the cars to roll onto the rails for weighing. The locomotive never runs on the rails that are attached to the balance beam.

To make my model, I began with two old broken switches and a section of straight track. The length can vary to fit your rolling stock. I chose a piece about a scale 80' long. Inside the outer rail, the one farthest from the scale house, I glued another straight rail to the

ties. I left an 1/8" space between the rails. I tipped each end of this rail with one of the movable point rails taken from one of the old switches. Since the scale was non-working, I glued these directly to the ties. Outside the inner rail, the one closer to the scale house, again about 1/8" from the inner rail, I glued another section of straight rail parallel to the inner rail and bent toward the inner rail. I filed the ends so that this would fit cleanly up against the inner rail. You could of course install the movable points of the old switches in the unit such that the inner rail is cut and appropriately tapered to receive the switch points and make a working scale where the cars can be shunted to the balance beam track. I have found that the illusion of the two non-working switch points is sufficient to make people ask me if the thing really works.

The space between the rails is covered with steel so dirt doesn't contaminate the mechanism. I fitted pieces of .010" styrene in between all the rails and strips to cover the tie ends on the outsides of the rails. Painting them a rust color makes the area look weathered and used.

I made a plaster base for the operator's shed and along the side of the track to serve as a work area. For the operator's shed I used one of the resin cast sheds painted MOW gray. Paint the trim white and the roof green or black. Position the shed along the right of way in the center of the scale area.

So give it a try. It will give you another switching job to do.




The tracks lead the way to the scale house.



A detailed view of the scale house.

Editors note: This article appeared in **The Bantrak Newsletter** in October 2004 and is reprinted with permission from the author. **The Bantrak Newsletter** is the official publication of the Baltimore Area N-Trak club

Phil lives in the Susquehanna Division 11 and is a life member of the NMRA. He has been involved in model railroading all his life, mainly modeling N scale.. 



If you would like to showcase an original drawing, photograph or painting, please submit them to the editor.

Upcoming Elections

Members now have until June 15 to submit a petition signed by 25 members to get their name on the ballot, per the bylaws. To submit your name, photo petition and position statement for election, contact:

John Johnson
22398 Scojo Drive
Franklin, VA 23851-2819
757-562-5917

Positions Available

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 Park Model Railroad Club Open
 House. 3 Riggs Road, Severna Park,
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 comed. Contact: Sam Shepherd (410)-
 647-6077.

May 20, 2006, New Jersey Division 1
 Meet. Monmouth County Mall. Rt. 35
 in Eatonville, NJ. Clinics and Meeting:
 9AM to 12PM. Layout Tours: 1PM to
 4PM. Contest: Caboose/Cabin Cars.
 Contact: Mike McNamara (856)-
 824-0879.

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