

# The Local

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## MAKING YOUR OWN DECALS

*Article and photographs by Edwin C. Locklin*

**U**NTIL RECENTLY, CREATING your own decals at home was an almost impossible chore requiring artwork and expensive equipment. Now, with home computers, scanners and color printers, making your own decals is much simpler. There are limitations, but there are many things you can accomplish with the average family computer and equipment. I'm going to share with you some ideas I've come up with using just that equipment.

First, you need a computer, either a laptop or a desktop. I would suggest something that Windows XP will operate on, as I'm not familiar with Macintosh. Next, it helps if you have a flatbed scanner. This will allow you to import images into your computer from a flat page like a book or magazine. The software I use is Adobe's "Elements 3". It works well for anything I've tried. It will really help if you have a full-featured word processor such as Word or Word Perfect. Last but not least, you will need a color printer. I use an inkjet printer because that's what I've already got. If you use a laser color printer, your decal sheet will run through a fuser in the printer which is a high-heat device that fuses the toner to the page or, in this case, the decal sheet. I've tried printing on decal sheets using a color laser printer and it just doesn't work as well. The toner doesn't fuse as well to the sheet and the sheet will tend to warp because of the heat. On a similar note, I have successfully made decal sheets using my black and white toner printer. A slow printer (i.e. 6 or 8 pages per minute) will not create nearly as much heat as a faster printer (i.e. 24 pages per minute), which

may explain why I was able to successfully print to a black and white laser printer.

Using an inkjet printer works well but it really helps if you buy a decal kit because a can of fixing spray is included. Mine was sold under the name of "VitaCal". It's a package of about four large decal sheets and a can of fixing spray. Two of the sheets are clear and the other two are white. This kit can be ordered through most hobby shops.

If the image you want is already on paper such as a photograph, you will need to scan the image into your computer. Once it's scanned in, you can select only that portion of the image you want by using the selection tool offered in Elements 3. Most of the time, the image I want doesn't have a white background so I just use a sheet of clear decal sheet to print on. Sometimes, I want the background of the decal to be white. I will then print on a white decal sheet. White is the only color I cannot print because my printer doesn't have any white ink.

There are times you may want to just print something like passenger car names. This isn't too difficult, but it requires some personal judgment on your part. Pick a font that is similar to that on the prototype car and print it out on a piece of paper first. Cut out the image and hold it up to the model car while looking at a photo of the prototype car. Keep changing the font size until you get it to look just like you want. If you need the image to look stretched



**Photograph 1 – Southern chip wood hooper showing special lettering in yellow.**

continued on page 4

# Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR  
MER Business Manager

THE RESPONSE to the MER sponsored NMRA Railpass program has continued nicely. Many may recall that the MER Board allocated up to \$2000 to subsidize NMRA RailPass memberships. We have now processed over 50 applications, which means there is still plenty of opportunity for additional subsidized membership. We are all hoping, of course, that those folks who benefit from the special program will come to appreciate all that the NMRA and MER has to offer. Then continue their membership with a regular paid membership.

Just a reminder note about the process: the subsidized RailPass application forms are to be signed by the applicant and the sponsoring Region or Division officer before forwarding them to me. The NMRA conditions for the RailPass membership is that the applicant must not have had regular membership for at least two years prior to the application, and only one (lifetime) RailPass per customer. NMRA HQ in Louisville is monitoring those conditions.

Some MER members, who move to a summer home or other temporary address, elect to have their regular mail forwarded by the Post Office. Unfortunately our Postal Permit for mailing this newsletter does not pay for that forwarding. As a result **The Locals** are returned to me marked "Temporarily Away" with a charge of 74 cents (new postal rates). If I resend those newsletters it now costs another 97 cents. All of this is presented to the membership in the hopes that you will let me know of either a temporary address or a request to hold your issues while you are away. I would be glad to send your back issues when you are ready. If that "summer retreat" provides you with Internet Access, you can always read the current, or past issues of **The Local** on our website. The website address is: <http://www.mer-nmra.org>.

I hope to see a good number of MER members at the NMRA Annual Convention in Detroit this July. If you haven't been made aware of the big happening, check out <http://www.nmra.org/2007/>. It's not too late to also start your planning for our Regional Annual Convention in Lynchburg. Lot's of information at [www.mer2007.org](http://www.mer2007.org).

As always, *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. A current address on file saves the MER some money. 📧

# The Local

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A Tax-Exempt Organization

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## Editorial Staff

**Editor:** Steve Kindig  
1701 Taxville Rd., Apt 17F  
York, PA 17408-4461  
(717) 792-7720, [stevesexpressrr@yahoo.com](mailto:stevesexpressrr@yahoo.com)

**Advertising Manager:** Vacant

**Webmaster:** Martin Oakes  
8057 Lucky Creek Lane  
Denver, NC 28037-8004  
(704) 483-7972, [martinoakes@charter.net](mailto:martinoakes@charter.net)

**Publisher:** Julianne H. Smith  
12020 Greywing Square, Apt. T2  
Reston, VA 20191, [dragonjuls@comcast.net](mailto:dragonjuls@comcast.net)

## Administrative Staff

**President:** Clint Hyde  
13443 Brookfield Drive  
Chantilly, VA 20151-2614  
(703) 862-4056, [merprez@hq.nmra.org](mailto:merprez@hq.nmra.org)

**Vice President:** Noll Horan, MMR  
8316 Tobin Road, Apt. T2  
Annandale, VA 22003-6835  
(703) 207-4744, [nhoran@earthlink.net](mailto:nhoran@earthlink.net)

**Secretary:** Roger Cason  
1125 Grinnell Road  
Wilmington, DE 19803-5125  
(302) 478-2550, [rogercason@juno.com](mailto:rogercason@juno.com)

**Treasurer:** Thomas R. Buckingham  
7216 S. Osborne Road  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-4206  
(301) 952-0427, [tombuckingham@juno.com](mailto:tombuckingham@juno.com)

**NMRA Director - East:** Kevin Feeny  
831 New Norwalk Road  
New Canaan, CT 06840-6443  
(203)966-5175, [eastdir@hq.nmra.org](mailto:eastdir@hq.nmra.org)

**Director:** Dick Genthner, MMR  
21 Yates Road  
Manalapan, NJ 07726  
(732) 462-0216, [argent1@att.net](mailto:argent1@att.net)

**Director:** Herb Gishlick  
18 Greenbrook Drive  
Cranbury, NJ 08512-3002  
(609) 448-5148, [gishlick@rider.edu](mailto:gishlick@rider.edu)

**Director:** Chuck Hladik  
198 Fireoak Lane  
Rustburg, VA 24588-4149  
(434) 821-4941, [rutlandrs@aol.com](mailto:rutlandrs@aol.com)

**Achievement Program Manager**  
Charles Flichman  
6909 Crandall Court  
Clemmons, NC 27012-9056  
(336)-766-8353, [cwflich@aol.com](mailto:cwflich@aol.com)

**Business Manager:** Fred Miller, MMR  
8960 Challis Hill Lane  
Charlotte, NC 28226-2686  
(704) 752-5158, [merbusmgr@aol.com](mailto:merbusmgr@aol.com)

## MER Division Contacts

New Jersey Division 1  
**Superintendent:** Mike McNamara  
(856) 824-0879, [mikemcnh@comcast.net](mailto:mikemcnh@comcast.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/njdivnmra/>

Potomac Division 2  
**Superintendent:** John Drye  
(703) 922-8131, [jdrye52@aol.com](mailto:jdrye52@aol.com)  
Division web page:  
[http://home.comcast.net/~potomac\\_nmra/](http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/)

Philadelphia Division 3  
**Superintendent:** Dick Foley  
[rlfoey4@verizon.net](mailto:rlfoey4@verizon.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://www.phillynmra.org/>

Tidewater Division 4  
**Superintendent:** Jim Keiper  
(757)-548-3234, [keiper1@cox.net](mailto:keiper1@cox.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://groups.hamptonroads.com/TDWDMER/>

James River Division 5  
**Superintendent:** Ken Montero  
(804) 794-5704, [va661midlo@comcast.net](mailto:va661midlo@comcast.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://www.trainweb.org/jrd/>

South Mountain Division 10  
**Superintendent:** Bob Johnson  
(301) 371-9129,  
[rcyrlj@aol.com](mailto:rcyrlj@aol.com)  
Division web page:  
[www.fred.net/richardb/smd.html](http://www.fred.net/richardb/smd.html)

Susquehanna Division 11  
**Superintendent:** Scott Turner  
(717)-991-3771, [scottturner@comcast.net](mailto:scottturner@comcast.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://moosevalley.org/nmra/index.htm>

Carolina Southern Division 12  
**Superintendent:** Rick Knight  
(704) 895-8751, [rghkiii@adelphia.net](mailto:rghkiii@adelphia.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/>

Carolina Piedmont Division 13  
**Superintendent:** John Janosko  
(919) 562-0260, [johnajan@earthlink.net](mailto:johnajan@earthlink.net)  
Division web page:  
<http://www.trainweb.org/cpd13>

**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](http://www.mer-nmra.org)

# President's Column


*By Clint Hyde, MER President.*

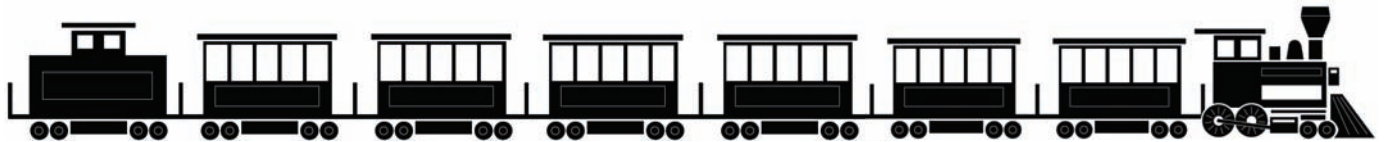
**A** FEW WEEKS AGO, one of my college fraternity brothers passed away after a brief battle with cancer. He was only three months older than I am, so I felt a bit mortal. At the wake I saw some of my other fraternity brothers whom I hadn't seen since college. I sure hope no one else has to die before I see them again.

A few years ago, I received a call from a nearby widow asking for help in disposing of her deceased husband's model railroad stuff. She had been given the run-around, so I went to have a look at the stuff. There was some really nice layout work, and a bunch of nice stuff to sell (including some brass steam). He had been working solo for a long time, and although he did have a couple of Merit awards from MER, for some very nice models, I had never met the man. I was very sorry we couldn't have had an open house there before he died, there was some interesting work on his layout, worth showing off a bit. Later I wrote about it, and want to reiterate here: I don't want the first time I find out about and see your layout or models to be when your widow calls me to ask

about disposing of things. Please don't wait that long, eh? I doubt she's going to put your brass engines in the casket, so you aren't going to get to take any of it with you. (Although I know there is a cartoon with an open casket, a guy's lying in it, and there is a small around-the-inside-edge train running.) So please, don't be afraid to show off your work at your local division meets or have an open house.

One last related topic: Potomac Division Superintendent John Drye's townhouse burned down over Memorial Day weekend. There was some recovery of stuff and luckily no injuries to anyone. Another illustration on how easily things can come to an end.....

*Hey! The MER needs **YOU** to register for the convention. The Registrar is starting to get a bit twitchy. The coverage in this issue includes information about the clinics. There are a variety of new things, and some familiar ones. Keep an eye on the website for updates [www.mer2007.org](http://www.mer2007.org). *



## Convention Contests Approach!

*By Ray Bilodeau  
MER/NMRA General Contest Chairman*

**J**UST A WORD about the model contest for the upcoming fall MER convention, you may have heard some of this before, so if you choose to do not to read on. However, this is a worthwhile reminder on how easy it is to enter the model contest—by building something.

Visit either the NMRA website to download and print forms 901 and 902—the NMRA Contest Entry Form and the NMRA Judges Scoring Sheet, or go the MER website and download the zipped batch of document forms. Fill out the information required on all forms. Remember to use the Judges Scoring Sheet to give a description of what you have built. If you need more space just add another sheet (or two) and hand it in with the forms and model.

For those people who are modeling the prototype, a reminder to please provide a photograph (or two). Anything that shows that

you have actually modeled a prototype helps. Try to fill out these forms before you get to the convention and the contest room. It saves a lot of time and your modeling thought process will not be as blurred and jumbled. Think carefully about what your model is worth to you and then enter a dollar figure on the entry form. Do this when you are filling out the 901 and be honest with yourself.

These same basic ideas hold true for the Photo, Arts & Crafts, and Pass contests. Judges are looking at popular vote venues. However, you still must be precise, descriptive and accurate when you fill out any entry forms.

If anyone out there needs help filling out the forms, or has questions about the contests, awards, or procedures we use; please contact me at [raymondbilodeau@aol.com](mailto:raymondbilodeau@aol.com) or (302) 636-0888. 

like on the letter board at the top of the car, you may try creating a text box and typing the name inside the box. Then, while still in the edit mode, stretch the box left and right until it stretches the lettering inside the box.

Another idea is for making stripes. I've tried that trick using the "draw line" feature in any word processor program. Then it's just a matter of choosing the line width and changing the color of the line to fix your needs.

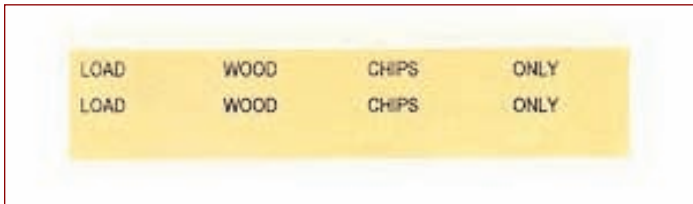



Figure 1 – Words typed on the yellow stripe to be cut.

I created a decal the Southern Railroad used on their '89 wood chip hoppers. See figure 1. By first making a yellow stripe, changing the width to about .5 inches and then typing "LOAD WOOD CHIPS ONLY" right over the stripe. See figure 1. When printed out on a decal sheet, the stripe is solid with those words across the sheet. When I want to cut the decals out, I cut the yellow stripe so each word is on a different decal.

Another idea is to place a set of commercially made decals on the glass of a copy machine and feed a sheet of decal paper into the bypass inlet. I've done this only to get a decal sheet I liked with black lettering instead of whatever the decal maker made. Again, you have to be careful using any machine with a fuser in it. Damage to the printer or copier could result.

All the decals printed on an ink jet printer will have to be sprayed with a can of decal spray I mentioned earlier. This "sets" the ink so when you immerse it in water, it doesn't smear the ink on the decal sheet before you even get a chance to place it on your model. It will have to sit overnight before it's fully set.

I've just scratched the surface with this article. You'll probably come up with a lot more ideas than I've suggested above and I hope you share them with us when you do. I've tried different company logos, different lettering and different colors. White lettering is the only technique I've yet to figure out. Perhaps one day, some company will offer white ink for printing white on colored paper. Until then I'm not holding my breath.

**EDWIN LOCKLIN** lives in Carolina Southern Division and models HO scale. 

## Visit Our Website

Visit the MER's website for all the latest information, contacts and archives [www.mer-nmra.org](http://www.mer-nmra.org).



## TIDEWATER ANNUAL SHOW

Presented by the Tidewater Division

Virginia Beach Convention Center  
1000 19th Street  
Virginia Beach, VA  
Sat.–Sun., September 22–23, 2007 — 10 AM–4 PM

- MODEL RAILROAD EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, TOOLS, VIDEOS, BOOKS, PHOTOS, MEMORABILIA AND TRAIN SETS ON SALE
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Email: [nawneycreek@msn.com](mailto:nawneycreek@msn.com)

Phone: 757-426-2811

# The Rest of the Story.....

By: Robert J. Thomas.

**D**URING THE PERIOD 1962-1966, I was a single graduate student at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.

The campus had the Chicago and Northwestern running west to east through the campus to an armstrong controlled tower at the west end of the CNW yard in downtown Ames. This yard was a junction for a CNW line from the north and passed to the south.

The campus was south of the CNW tracks with Pammel Court, the married student housing, to the immediate north of the CNW main line.

About 1963, the CNW went through a six to nine month strike with the cessation of trains. After the end of the strike (plus nine months) a grad student in Statistics, with his wife was in delivering their first child in the town's hospital, noticed the number of grad student wives who were also delivering children. He did an inquiry and learned that there was a burst in the birth rate within the past month or two of his wife's delivery. The comment from the staff was that for the previous six months or so the Labor and Delivery section of the hospital had reached new population lows.

As a good grad student, he was able to inquire as to the rates before, during and after the CNW strike. The lower rate and then the resumption of a Labor and Delivery population was statistically significant.

The practice of the CNW was [I visited the tower when it was only manned from 2300 to 0700 hours while waiting for experiments to proceed.] that a peddler from the north came to Ames


about 0500 hours and used the main line to the west of Ames as a switching lead for the small yard. They brought pies in several reefers for trains headed east to Chicago and west to Council Bluffs.

The switching car noise in the west of Ames woke the married grad student population, hence the story of "too early to arise, and not enough time to get 40 more winks!"

The natural experiment of the CNW strike reducing the birth rate coupled with the birth rate increase nine months after the strike proved the case.

So though the story is humorous, it is based on fact. As many have said when presented with an unusual modeling situation, "there is a prototype for everything!"

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *In the May-June issue of The Local there was a humorous joke about noisy early morning trains. Here is "the rest of the story".....*

**ROBERT J. THOMAS** lives in the South Mountain Division and models HO scale. 

## Are You A Modeler and A Camper??

Perhaps these campgrounds within 30 minutes of the convention hotel will help you fulfill both your passions!

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Appomattox, VA  
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Wildwood Campground  
6252 Elon Rd.  
Monroe, VA.  
(434) 299-5228



## Attention Members Of The MER

This fall, **Railroad Model Craftsman** will publish an article by Ben Hom describing MER member Nick Kalis's Lower Montauk Branch HO scale layout. Nick models the LIRR as it appeared in 1963. Editor Bill Schaumburg has promised Nick the front cover. Nick is also tearing down this layout in anticipation of a move.

Congratulations! 



Photograph by Ben Hom, V.I.C.X. 1003 – The Van Iderstine Car, modeled by Nick Kalis.

# A Personal Narrative

By: Anthony Boyette.

I AM A DISABLED VETERAN of the 1991 Gulf War. America still has tens of thousands of Veterans returning from South-west Asia, many of whom are or will be suffering the psychological effects of combat and the stress of living in an environment where death could come at any second of the day or night. I hope that my experience can be used to help those Veterans.

My railroading days began in my early teens. My first after-school job was at an old feed mill turned antique shop. The old man that owned the place had collected trains for 50 years and had an inventory of thousands of O gauge Lionel, Marx, and other trains. My job was to patch the roof, general maintenance, and clean and repair old trains in between. Naturally it wasn't long before I loved trains. My first layout was an HO scale layout in my bedroom. It was about 26 square feet. This was where I first learned to assemble buildings, lay track, build bench work, and ballast track. Many late nights I spent unsuccessfully trying to hammer, saw, or drill "quietly" so as not to wake my parents who were sleeping up the hall. This all came to an end when I turned 19 and went into the Army. I'm not sure whatever happened to the layout; the last time I saw it, it was in my bedroom. My collection of dozens of locomotives, and hundreds of pieces of rolling stock ended up at the local pawnbroker. But I was off to Fort Benning to "*Be All I Could Be*".

I went to Germany, Iraq, back to Germany, and Fort Hood Texas. I knew I'd given up model railroading for good since continually moving didn't fit the life of a model railroader. But I still had to stop in the train section at the German department stores to appreciate the well-made and very inexpensive German-made HO trains that cost hundreds of dollars over here. But I was just looking. I'd given up the hobby long ago.

After the war, and after I was honorably discharged I returned home. I still picked up the occasional **Model Railroader** magazine on the newsstand, but I was older then, and too busy with college, family, and life-in-general for model railroading...until the war came back to me. I spent some time in Psychiatric wards, spent a lot of time talking to different doctors about my nightmares, my responses to certain smell, sounds, and situations, and problems with my anger and suicidal thoughts. After being diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), I began to research the disorder on the Internet to learn how to control it and try to live a more normal life. That was when I found an article about a doctor up north who used an N scale model railroad as "distraction therapy" for his patients suffering from PTSD. This doctor had build his N scale railroad in his waiting room inside a Plexiglas enclosure and his patients could throw turnouts and control the trains remotely. The doctor explained how model railroading could help those suffering from PTSD. In a nutshell, while ones mind is busy building structures, building scenery, laying track, and learning


about model railroading, one is not reliving the experience that caused the trauma. At the time I thought it was neat, but didn't give it much more thought.

At that time I was, and still am, taking several different prescription drugs, going to PTSD groups, and keeping regular scheduled visits with V.A. doctors. During my 80-mile round-trips to a V.A. doctor's appointment I regularly passed a model railroad shop. One day I decided to stop in "just to look". I thought I would see how model railroading had progressed since my childhood days. That day I left with a single 3-bay covered hopper car in N scale. I didn't have any track, locomotive, or other equipment. I just sat the hopper on a shelf and looked at it for a few weeks.

As time progressed, I went back to that doctor's article about PTSD and model railroading. I researched other forms of distraction therapy, and did a lot of reading about N scale model railroading. From then on, each trip to the V.A. clinic ended up with another piece of rolling stock sitting on the shelf. Eventually I had a train but no locomotive or no track for it to run on. It wasn't long before this problem had been fixed.

Today I have a full N scale model railroad. It is detailed to the point that I often wear a magnifying visor to make sure the details are "right". I probably have thousands of hours in just the scenery details alone, as well as a roster of eight locomotives and dozens of pieces of rolling stock. Not a day goes by that I am not somehow "working on the railroad" or working on my personal model railroad homepage on the Internet. While I am busy with the details, I'm not concerned about the bombs falling, the bullets kicking up sand, and I don't panic when the jets fly overhead from our local Air Force base here in town.

We're going to have many, many vets coming home in the future with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other disorders related to their service to our country. Maybe some of them will, like me, pick up the occasional model railroad magazine at their local news store and read this article. If you are out there and reading this, I want you to know that there is a place where the bombs don't fall, where the F-15's don't streak overhead, and where the artillery doesn't make the ground tremble. It's on piece of plywood that can be as little as 3 by 5 feet, and you make all the rules and create the environment. It's a place where you can go into your own miniature world and leave all your experiences behind, if just for a few hours each day. Just stop by the nearest hobby shop or go online to one of the many model railroad stores. You don't have to spend a lot of money but the therapeutic value is worth millions. My railroad can be seen at [www.pecr.org](http://www.pecr.org).

**ANTHONY BOYETTE** lives in the MER where he models N scale. 

**NEEDED: Someone to run the MER Convention Auction Team (CAT) beginning in 2007.**

RESPONSIBILITIES include making sure that auction items get recorded properly in the auction software, making sure the auction-team volunteers are available, that there is an auctioneer available (normally the inimitable Bob Charles), and that sales info is recorded properly during the auction and that checkout is handled completely and correctly.

**NEEDED:** Someone to be in charge of MER Convention door-prize/raffle items, beginning in 2008. Responsibilities include contacting potential donors (existing list available) and requesting donation items, making sure that there are raffle tickets present at the convention, and little boxes to put the tickets in, bringing the items to the convention, setup, and final distribution of the items near the end of the convention.

**NEEDED:** Someone to be in charge of the Made in the MER Trade Show, beginning in 2008. Responsibilities include finding potential participants, talking to them, convincing them to participate, getting them to give a clinic at the convention, organizing their space at the convention, making sure that part goes ok. If you are interested in doing this, you can assist this year, as we smooth out the process.

Contact MER President, Clint Hyde (all contact information is listed on page 2) if interested! 📧

# NC RAIL RUN

THE 2ND ANNUAL NC RailRun will be held on Labor Day weekend from Friday, August 31 through Sunday, September 2, 2007.

“Op ‘till you drop” on layouts in four different time slots during the 3-day NC RailRun. For those of you who want even more operations, there is also a special “early bird” session.

There are a limited number of slots available, so please register early. August 10th is the registration deadline. The weekend was



LOGO COPIED FROM WEBSITE

sold out last year, and a waiting list for this year’s NC RailRun is anticipated.

If you enjoy model railroad operations, or want a chance to learn more about the fun of operating, then you’ll want to register for this weekend!

Visit [www.ncrailrun.org](http://www.ncrailrun.org) for registration information and read all the latest information the layouts, the schedule, hotel information and frequently asked questions. 📧

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# HO POWERED UNCOUPLING RAMP

Article and photographs by Fred Miller, MMR.

**M**ANY MODELERS seem to like using little sticks or screwdrivers to perform the uncoupling action while switching their model rolling stock equipped with couplers manufactured by Kadее and others. However, there are times when the reach to slip that little stick between the cars becomes difficult. In my traction modeling case, my overhead wire is another challenge to reaching between cars. Of course, an old tried and true solution to this difficult location problem is the under-track uncoupling magnet. Kadее and other manufacturers offer these magnets for use in several modeling scales. These might work well in areas where there will be little train movement over the magnets to cause inadvertent uncoupling. A better solution caused by inadvertent magnetic uncoupling is to use an electrically powered magnetic uncoupling device, which can be activated only when needed.

Kadее has recently upgraded its product and offers the new #309 Magne-Electric Uncoupler. See figure 1. This new offering seems to work well in a completely under the ties mounting. See figure 2. The uncoupler can also be completely hidden under the ballast. This new powered uncoupler requires 3 to 4 amps of DC current at 16 to 18 volts. If that amount of power is left on for more than a minute or two at a time, the device may overheat and be damaged. This operating characteristic encouraged me to develop a power source that:

- Did not use an on-off toggle that could be inadvertently left on. A push button switch was the better alternative.
- Did not require the full 3 to 4 amps to flow through the controlling switch, which would exceed the rating of many smaller push buttons. I like the Kadее #160

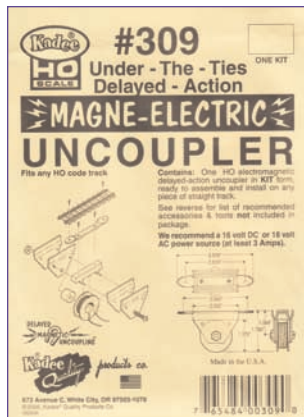


Figure 1: The new #309 Magne-Electric uncoupler package.

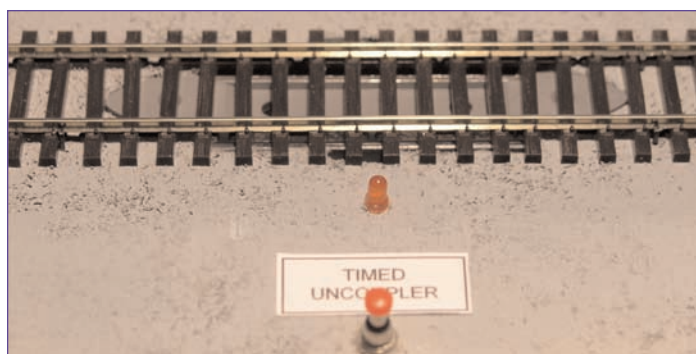


Figure 2: The Kadее uncoupler.

“Quickie Switch” panel button for panel mounting but they have a suggested maximum current rating of 1 amp.

- Did not require holding the push button while performing a switching move. One hand on a controlling push button would leave only one other hand to manipulate the controls on the locomotive throttle.

I designed my powered magnetic uncoupling control circuit to meet those requirements. The circuit will activate the uncoupler for a 5 to 6 second period after a brief tap on a small panel mounted push button. The activation time is easily adjusted to accommodate requirements. A LED lamp is also activated near the uncoupler to indicate the power is on.

## UNCOUPLER CONSTRUCTION

The Kadее #309 Magne-Electric Uncoupler kit comes with instructions to build and mount the device. My installations include the Bridge Rectifier and capacitor as referenced in those instructions. I used an LED with resistor instead of the lamp suggested in the Kadее instructions. I also use a 16VAC, 4A power transformer available from Jameco to power all my ramps.

## CIRCUIT DESIGN

My circuit design makes use of a handful of electronic components and resistors and capacitors. See figure 3. The operation includes a 555 IC device, which provides the 5 to 6 second time pulse when activated by the pushbutton. A Triac device is used for the solid-state on-off control of the 16VAC. The timer and Triac are isolated from each other with an opto-isolator IC. The AC is then converted to DC with a Full Wave Bridge. The circuit in figure 3 shows a self-contained power supply for the 555 Timer. This power supply could be separated from the pulse circuit and used to provide the 5VDC power for several pulse circuits.

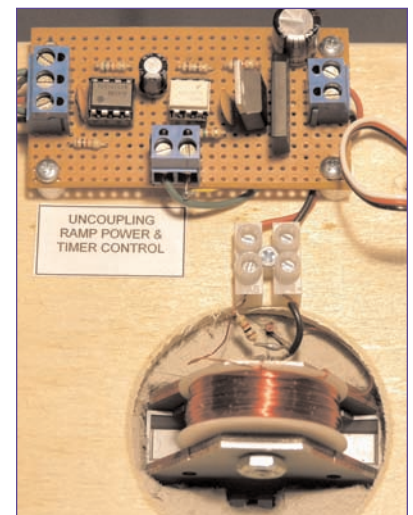


Figure 3: The complete electronic control circuit for a powered uncoupler.

## CONTROL CIRCUIT CONSTRUCTION

Most of my electronic circuits are constructed on perf-board available from Radio Shack as shown in the figures. I always start construction using a drawing program on my computer. Paint Shop Pro from Jasc Software is my favorite. First, I can lay out the com-



ponents on a graphical grid, representing the perf-board, with the parts arranged similar to the actual circuit design. Then I draw lines representing the wiring connections. I do this on a *top view* as shown in figure 4. Then I use the drawing program's ability to flip the drawing. This gives me the *bottom view* as shown in figure 5. This represents the actual wiring side and is used as a guide for the physical wiring.

Care should be taken to draw (and later solder) the components that have a polarity marking. This includes the capacitors,

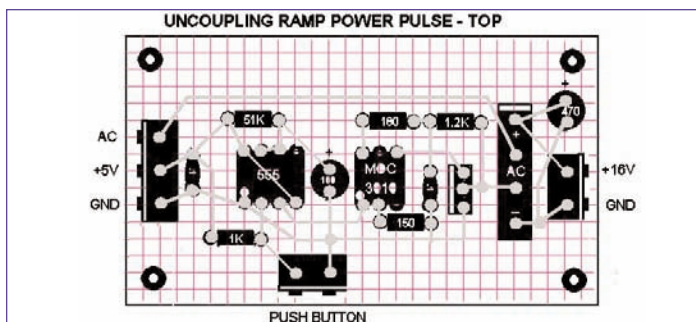


Figure 4: Top view

diode, ICs and voltage regulator. Drawing the components in the top view and marking the leads helps in the later construction.

I always use sockets for IC devices, which in this case would be the 555 timer and the 3010 opto-isolator. My construction sequence generally follows this approach:

- Cut the perf-board to size and epoxy the screw-terminal blocks.
- Mount the other devices in an approximate location.
- Start establishing the wiring connections using the leads from the resistors and capacitors as most of the connections. Small (#22 gauge) solid wire is used as necessary. The insulation from the wire is used only when wires cross over each other.
- After all connections are soldered I clean the board of any remaining rosin using alcohol or lacquer thinner.

Then test all connections from the top with a continuity tester. I made a simple battery powered one many years ago which sounds a tone when a tested connection is complete. Many inexpensive meters also have continuity testing capability. After the wiring is confirmed as above, apply power to the circuit to test that the voltages are appropriate for the locations. Note that I have NOT yet inserted the ICs into the sockets. I only do that after the voltages appear correct.

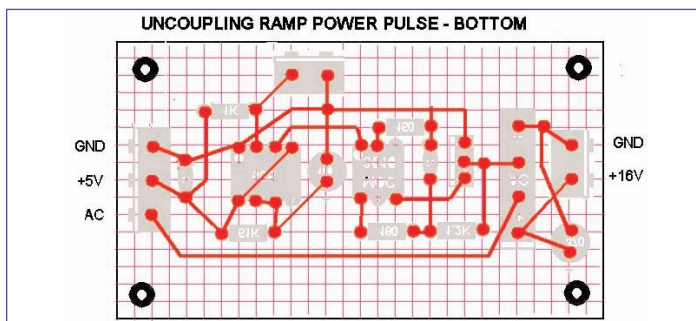


Figure 5: Bottom View

If all of the above looks good (and sometimes I have to correct a mistake in wiring) I then test that the circuit is behaving as it should, looking at the voltages at various points. In this case I tested that the 16VDC develops on the coil for the 5 to 6 seconds after pressing the push button. Of course, a good “smoke test” is appropriate at this time.

I have found the Uncoupling Ramp Power Pulse circuit to be a reliable piece of electronics. See figure 6. Since there are no mechanical contacts used in the power circuit, it should last for a long time. I mount the circuit boards close to the ramp coil to prevent power loss in long wiring runs. The control circuit (push button on panel or layout fascia) can be long and need not have heavy wiring since minimal voltage and current flows in the momentary contact.

### PARTS LIST

Many of the parts can be purchased from Radio Shack. However the availability is sometimes limited and the prices are substantially higher than a mail-order electronics supplier. I like Jameco

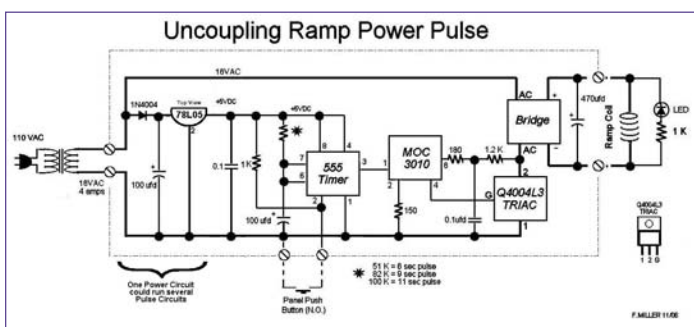



Figure 6: A reliable piece of electronic equipment is the uncoupling ramp power pulse circuit seen here.

([www.jameco.com](http://www.jameco.com)) for good prices, wide availability and good service. Those items which can be purchased from Radio Shack, albeit higher prices, are marked below with (RS).

- Kadee #309 Magne-Electric Uncoupler kit
- Jameco 16AC, 4A Power Supply (Model No. BHU160400)
- 7805 5-Volt Regulator (RS)
- Full Wave 4 Amp AC bridge (RS)
- 0.1uF disk capacitors (x2) (RS)
- 1K(x2), 82K, 150, 180, 1.2K resistors (RS)
- Perf-Board (Radio Shack sells this in multiple sizes.) (RS)
- 1N4004 Diode (RS)
- 555 Timer IC (RS)
- MOC 3010 Opto-Isolator
- Q4004L3 Triac
- 100uF capacitor (RS)
- 470uF capacitor (RS)
- Screw terminal blocks
- 8 pin IC sockets (x2)
- Push Button (RS)
- LED (RS)

Anyone interested in further information, please contact me at [tractionfan@aol.com](mailto:tractionfan@aol.com). If there is enough interest, I would be glad to develop and make available, on a cost basis, a printed circuit board along with a complete Jameco order sheet.

**FRED MILLER**, MMR lives in the Carolina Southern Division and models HO scale. Fred also is the current business manager for the MER and writes the monthly column Keeping in Touch. 

# THE JAMES RIVER FLYER



Arriving in Lynchburg, Virginia at 7 PM on Thursday, October 18, 2007!

Departing Sunday, October 21, 2007, at noon. All Aboard!

The convention will be held at the:

**Kirkley Hotel**  
**2900 Candler's Mountain Road**  
**Lynchburg, VA 24502**

The convention rate is \$89.00 (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at (866) 510-6333. When registering please be sure to specify: Mid-East Region, NMRA to get the special rate. Website: <http://www.kirkleyhotel.com>.

A Lynchburg-area railfanning presentation will be made Thursday evening, so you can get out and watch over the weekend.

Activities available during this excursion: a side-trip on Friday, October 19 to Roanoke, Virginia to visit: the Roanoke Transportation Museum, Freight Car America and the O. Winston Link Museum.

Instructional and educational clinics will be taking place throughout the trip, a large schedule is planned, including such topics as: scene animation, how models get AP judging, working with CADRail (bring your laptop; this clinic includes a free copy of a recent version), making trees, working with decals, hands-on building of the new milk station kit, or a flat car, or the convention special billboard (featuring the convention logo). There is plenty of modeling goodness!

There are at least 15 open houses planned, and if we're really lucky, a downloadable group of GPS waypoints for them.

Register now to assure a seat for the extra-fare items. Keep an eye on **The Local**, and most importantly the convention website for more details, an updated registration form with any new extra-fare items, important changes, and the official schedule <http://www.mer2007.org>.

# Convention Clinics

*Weathering Paper Signs on Buildings*  
by Bill McMillan.

In this hands-on clinic, the attendees will learn how to find good paper signs and how to both weather the sign and apply it to a structure.

*Locomotive Sound Systems – DCC and non-DCC* by Ron Gareis.

The focus of Ron's clinic will be on the QSI, LokSound, Soundtraxx Tsunami, and the new PCM "Blueline" sound system. The clinic will concentrate on adjustments that will enhance both sound and motion operation of any of those systems. Sound decoders have many adjustments, upwards of 260 CV's! This complexity discourages most from making any changes. This clinic will address both DCC and non-DCC (traditional DC) sound systems. Ron will show a few changes to allow you to set your personal preferences. His layout (which will be open on Sunday on the way back from the Convention) has been the main evaluation site for new models.

*Building a Laser Kit Billboard*  
by Chris Jessee.

Build a wood roadside billboard structure kit featuring the MER convention logo. The billboard can be used on your layout. Participants should bring their own hobby knife. **NOTE:** This is a \$10.00 extra-fare clinic limited to the first 25 people who register. Please indicate your scale, Z through O when registering.

*CadRail Basics – CadRail as Electronic Paper* by Dennis Vaccaro

The first half of the clinic will be program command structure and operations. The second half will be applying this knowledge to designing a small layout and a module. Bring your own notebook if possible. Copies of the program will be provided. **NOTE:** Participants should bring their own laptop computer. This two-part clinic will be separated by a lunch break.

*Build a Wood Milk Station*  
by Martin Brechbiel.

Construct an HO or O Scale milk station. Participants must bring their own tools, but

the model kit and glue will be provided at the clinic.

**NOTE:** This is a \$15.00 extra fare clinic is limited to the first 15 people who register.

*Kit-bashing a Norfolk Southern Dash 9-40C Diesel* by Walter Strohecker.

This clinic will take you through the steps Walt used to kit-bash a standard cab dash 9 starting from an Athearn C44-9W. A model of this locomotive is not available commercially.

*Hardware and Software for Model Railroad Controls* by Dick Bronson.

Dick Bronson owns RR Cir-Kits, "Specializing in Affordable Electronics for Model Railroads" and is an exhibitor at the "Made in the MER" at this convention. His website is [www.rr-cirkits.com](http://www.rr-cirkits.com).

*Animation* by Bill Day.

Following a visual presentation of a variety of animated structures, participants will build the "key mechanism" of a warehouse roll-up door, using two Design Preservation Module panels, styrene sheet, rods and H beams. Participants will need to complete the model at home and provide a Tortoise switch machine to make it work. Working models of two coaling docks, a diesel repair shed and a warehouse with roll-up door will be used as instructional aids.

**NOTE:** This is a \$10.00 extra fare clinic is limited to the first 20 people who register.

*Judging Models in the MER and NMRA*  
by Ray Bilodeau.

Examine and analyze the scoring models entered in the NMRA sponsored judged model contest. Both experienced judges and novices (members who have never tried but want to help judge the model contest), are invited to participate in our discussion to find out what really goes into judging a model.

*Painting a Backdrop* by Mark Chase.

Mark's website is <http://homepage.mac.com/jmchase87/Menu10.html>. To see his backdrop, go to his website, then click on "My Model Railroad".

*Digital Scratch Building* by Daniel Cyrus and Chris Wiley.

*Build a Wood Flat Car* by Martin Brechbiel. Construct an O Scale flat car. Participants must bring their own tools, but the model kit and glue will be provided at the clinic.

**NOTE:** This \$15.00 extra fare clinic is limited to the first 15 people who register.


*Working with Decals* by Bill Mosteller.

Owner of Great Decals, Bill is a manufacturer and distributor of model railroad decals, and is an exhibitor at the "Made in the MER" at this convention. His website is [www.greatdecals.com](http://www.greatdecals.com).

*Light and Sound Animation, Part 2*  
by Fred Miller.

Fred will talk about using Model Airplane Servos, and some simple electronic controls, to inexpensively run crossing gates, semaphores, etc.

*Pine and Cypress Trees* by Mike Hart

Construct Pine and Cypress trees of the southeastern U.S., using stick, clay and caulk techniques together with tree root branches. Build a model from scratch following four easy steps to create a very realistic looking tree. Mike Hart is the owner of Hart of the South Models, and is an exhibitor at the "Made in the MER" at this convention. His website is [www.hartofthesouth.com](http://www.hartofthesouth.com). 

## **NEEDED:** Model Contest Manager for the MER

Convention attendance,  
computer wizardry, keen eye and  
modeling skills a must.

Humor, scale blindness, patience,  
fairness and impartiality will  
take you to the top!

Please contact Clint Hyde,  
[chyde@cox.net](mailto:chyde@cox.net)  
and  
Ray Bilodeau,  
[raymondbilodeau@aol.com](mailto:raymondbilodeau@aol.com).



# JAMES RIVER FLYER

Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA Fall Convention

October 18 – 21, 2007  
 LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA  
 ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please enter all names as you wish them to appear on your registration badges:

**Primary Registrant's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Other (living at same address):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Children (Under age 16 – List all):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **NMRA #** \_\_\_\_\_

Full Registration (\$45 after September 30th) – \$40.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Non-NMRA Member Fee (primary registrant only) – \$10.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Other – \$15.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Children – \$10.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

201	Bus Trip—Roanoke Museum, Winston Link, FCA (Sat.)	\$35.00	x	_____	=	_____
202	Bus Trip—non-rail. Friday.	\$65.00	x	_____	=	_____
203	Bus trip—non-rail. Saturday.	\$62.50	x	_____	=	_____
401	Saturday Evening Banquet Buffet	\$35.00	x	_____	=	_____
601	KingMill billboard clinic scale Z	\$10.00	x	_____	=	_____
602	KingMill billboard clinic scale N	\$10.00	x	_____	=	_____
603	KingMill billboard clinic scale HO	\$10.00	x	_____	=	_____
604	KingMill billboard clinic scale O	\$10.00	x	_____	=	_____
611	Milk station clinic scale HO	\$15.00	x	_____	=	_____
612	Milk station clinic scale O	\$15.00	x	_____	=	_____
621	Flat car clinic O scale only	\$15.00	x	_____	=	_____
631	Animation clinic	\$10.00	x	_____	=	_____
801	Operations Call Board	\$ 5.00	x	_____	=	_____

**Total Advance Registration Charges:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment must accompany registration. Make checks payable to: **James River Flyer**

**SEND ALL REGISTRATIONS TO:**

James River Flyer  
 PO Box 447  
 Swedesboro, NJ 08085

For questions and / or additional information Email – [pjmattson@comcast.net](mailto:pjmattson@comcast.net)

**HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION:**

The convention will be held at the Kirkley Hotel  
 2900 Candler's Mountain Road  
 Lynchburg, VA 24502.

The convention rate is \$89.00 (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at (866) 510-6333. When registering be sure to specify the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA to be sure you get this special rate. Website – [www.kirkleyhotel.com](http://www.kirkleyhotel.com).

# New Membership Recruitment Program

As an aid to membership recruitment, NMRA recently instituted a six month "Railpass" trial membership program which costs the applicant \$9.95. Building on this idea, the MER is instituting a program whereby it will pay the \$9.95 Railpass fee for interested applicants in the MER. In other words, we are making available FREE six month Railpass trial memberships to encourage recruitment of regular members.

## What's covered?

Same as Railpass—receive six issues of **Scale Rails**, three issues of **The Local**, eligibility to attend conventions and meets, eligibility to participate in contests.

## What's not covered?

Same as Railpass—applicants cannot vote or hold office, and will not receive the New Member Pak from national (it's rather expensive).

## Who can be recruited?

Anyone living within the MER who has not been a member of NMRA during the past thirty months.

## How will the recruitment process work?

(1) The prospective member fills out the MER trial membership application form which was sent to all division superintendents (not the standard NMRA Railpass form) (2) The "recruiter"

should also sign the form, and then forward it to: Fred Miller, MER Business Manager, 8960 Challis Hill Lane, Charlotte, NC 28226-2686. (3) Fred will record the information he needs in his data base, and will forward the application to the MER Treasurer. (4) The Treasurer will add the necessary check and forward the application and check to the national headquarters in Chattanooga.


## What happens after the member's six month trial period?

The Railpass trial member will receive a standard dues notice from national headquarters. We hope a substantial number of Railpass trial members will sign up to become regular members.

## Are there limits on the program?

The MER has allocated \$2,000 for this program. The program will stop at the end of year 2007, or when we have spent \$2,000 – whichever comes first. When and if we approach either limit, Division Superintendents and members of the MER Board of Directors will be notified. At that time, the program will be evaluated by the MER Board of Directors. If successful, we will try to continue it.

## For questions?

Contact Fred Miller, MER Business Manager (mailing address is above, 704-752-5138, [tractionfan@aol.com](mailto:tractionfan@aol.com)), or Roger L. Cason, MER Secretary (1125 Grinnell Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803-5125, 302-478-2550, [rogercason@juno.com](mailto:rogercason@juno.com)). 

---

## National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

**YES**, please sign me up for a free six month Railpass trial membership in the NMRA—which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region, and in my local Division. During this six month period, I understand that I may attend conventions and meets, and participate in contests. I will receive **Scale Rails**, the monthly national magazine, and **The Local**, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office, or receive a New Member Pak.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six month Railpass trial membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Regardless of who pays, six month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person.)

At the end of the six months, I may join NMRA, paying the regular active member dues.

During the past thirty months, I have **not** been a member of NMRA.

=====

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Scale(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of "Recruiter": \_\_\_\_\_  
(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

=====

When this form is completed,  
mail it to:

**Fred Miller MMR**  
**MER Business Manager**  
**8960 Challis Hill Lane**  
**Charlotte, NC 28226-2686**

Do **not** mail it directly to MMRA  
headquarters in Chattanooga, TN.

Date of form: 1/31/07

# SUPPORT YOUR NMRA REGION AND PURCHASE THESE GREAT PRODUCTS FROM MER



COURTESY OF THE FREIGHT YARD  
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.



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CLINT HYDE

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#2836	_____	\$11.95	\$14.95	\$_____
#2874	_____	\$11.95	\$14.95	\$_____
Shipping: \$2.00 for each car (not for each order)				\$_____

\* Please list your MER or NMRA Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

MER CLOTH PATCH**	QUANTITY _____	\$3.00 including S&H	\$_____
MER LAPEL PIN/TIE TACK**	QUANTITY _____	\$6.00 including S&H	\$_____

MER HO-SCALE STRUCTURE KIT**			
*** NEW! Milk Station	QUANTITY _____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____
Small Freight Station	QUANTITY _____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____

THE LOCALS** — (all issues 1997-2006) on CD	QUANTITY _____	\$5.00 postpaid	\$_____
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\*\* Only available to MER members.

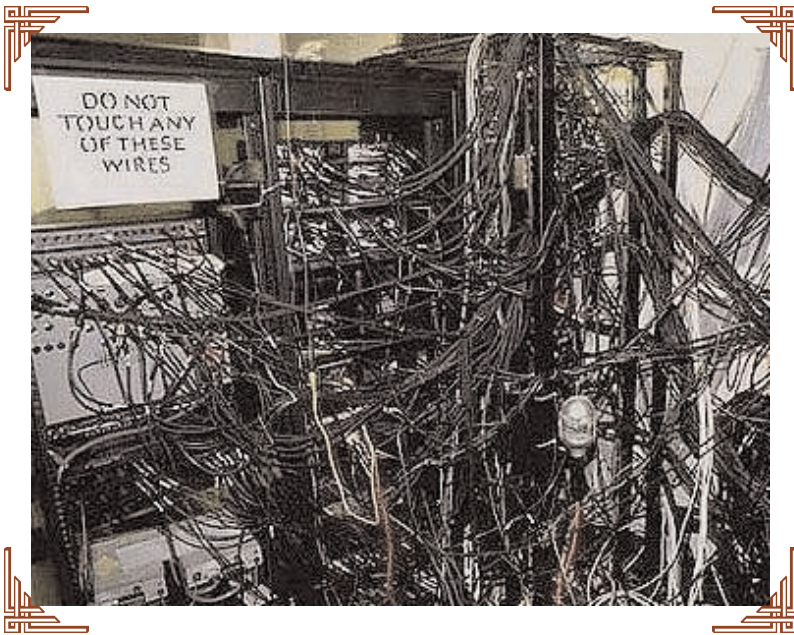
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# Humor in Photography

## New Innovations in Wiring

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

**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 (with or without photos) to the editor via e-mail: [stevespressrr@yahoo.com](mailto: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!! 📧

# 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 2 – Potomac

Murray Michael White – *Gold Spike*

### Division 3 – Philadelphia

Brian E. Good – *Gold Spike*

### Division 5 – James River

John Siegle – *Gold Spike*

### Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Peter H. Slugg – *Gold Spike*

### MER At Large

Alan Anderson – *Gold Spike*

Anthony Boyette – *Scenery*

Anthony Boyette – *Engineer – Electrical*

Stephen Fisher – *Gold Spike*

Gentry Hayes – *Gold Spike*

David A. Zimmerman – *Gold Spike*

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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Scale \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to the Mid-Eastern Region**

**CALLBOARD  
 Coming Events**

**July 22 – 28. GREAT LAKES EXPRESS 2007.** National Convention in Detroit. Visit [www.nmra.org/2007](http://www.nmra.org/2007) for the latest information.

**August 11th.** The 29th Annual Lynchburg Rail Days. 9 AM – 4 PM at the Boonsboro Ruritan Club in Lynchburg, V.A. Admission: \$5. Kids free with paying adult. For more information visit [www.blueridgenrhs.org](http://www.blueridgenrhs.org). Contact Norris Deyerle at 434-237-4912, [railcow@msn.com](mailto:railcow@msn.com) or John Tanner at 434-525-1318, [flytrains@verizon.net](mailto:flytrains@verizon.net).

**August 31 – September 2.** NC Rail Run 2007. Op Sig regional event. For more information visit [www.ncrailrun.org](http://www.ncrailrun.org). Call Mike Pennie (336) 393-0552.

**Tell us about your upcoming event** and we will publish it here. Due to our publication schedules, please give us a couple of months notice before the event. Thank you.

Send them to the deditor and make sure to include all the specifics for the event, including the date, time, place, cost (if any), a contact person and a means of getting in touch with him or her (address, phone, email, etc.) for more information.