

# The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



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Number 6

## The 2013 NMRA Convention

By John Drye

**A**S MANY OF YOU HEARD at the Mini Convention annual Meeting, the 2013 NMRA National Convention is slated to be in the Atlantic Area, which includes our Division. Over the past months, members of the Potomac Division and the Mid-Eastern Region Board of Directors have discussed the possibility of holding the 2013 National Convention here in the Washington Metropolitan Area. We have talked to the staff of the 2006 Philadelphia Convention; to Mr. Henry Jordan, who is the Manager of the Meeting & Trade Shows Department of the NMRA; to some of the other Model Railroading organizations in the area and to lots of our members.

For a National convention, the NMRA provides a staff that performs many convention functions: registration, marketing, clinics, contests and most “indoor” activities. The host organization assists with this process; suggesting local clinicians, for example, and providing publicity contacts. The chief responsibilities of the host organization are to identify local “outdoor” activities: rail (layout and prototype) and non-rail tours (tourist sites). We ought to be able to offer a pretty impressive slate, since the DC area includes some spectacular layouts and impressive attractions. During the week of the convention, the host organizations supply about 200 volunteers to operate with these tours, assist with other convention activities such as registration, clinic coordination and the company store. One of the advantages of “co-hosting” the convention with other organizations is the large pool of volunteers available.

We are still very early in the process. The decision on a location will be made at the 2008 NMRA Convention in Anaheim, CA. [it’s not clear just what it means that the convention and this decision will be made right next to Disneyland]. So far, we have begun investigating interest among area model railroad organizations, taking a quick look at possible venues (both in and near Washington, DC) and, most importantly, asking you,

local NMRA members about your interest and your questions.

The first, naturally, is “why would we want to do this?”

The National Convention is a spectacular event, bringing together Model Railroaders from all over, to share ideas, techniques and stunning models. The National Train Show, with modular layouts, vendors and manufacturers presents our great hobby to the public. This event is great for our hobby. The folks in Philadelphia told us that the last convention they had (back in the 90s) reverberated thru the hobby for years.

Our area has hosted a number of conventions. The MER has held conventions here for years (with another one slated for 2008). Various scale-specific groups, including G, O and N, have hosted National conventions at least three times in the past decade.

There is a host of expertise in our area, with a reputation for putting on spectacular shows. We would certainly do a superb job on this.

Finally, there is the tremendous satisfaction in doing such a great thing for our hobby, and doing it well. No doubt, there remains a host of questions. To address these, the division has set up a Yahoo Discussion group: **PD\_NMRA@yahoo.com**.

This group exists to address these questions, share opinions, and evaluate interest. The Division and Region directors will also be watching and participating in the group. We will continue to attend Division and Region events (layout tours, conventions) to discuss the convention face to face. This is a tremendous opportunity. Your participation and support is key to making it all happen.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *This appeared in the August-October 2007 issue of The Potomac Flyer, and is reprinted with the author’s permission. The Flyer is the publication of the Potomac Division in the Mid-Eastern Region.*

# Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR  
MER Business Manager

SEVERAL MEMBERS have asked if the MER program to subsidize NMRA Rail Pass membership is still available. The answer is a definite YES. To date, we have paid the \$9.95 membership dues for 69 Rail Pass applications. A little math shows that sufficient funds have been allocated by the MER Board to subsidize almost two times more memberships. The Board will be reviewing the results and perhaps even extend the program beyond this year.

What are the initial results of the Rail Pass Program? It's a little early to tell but of the 69 memberships, three of the earliest Rail Pass members have not renewed their NMRA membership into the regular member class. We are all hoping, of course, that a good number of the Rail Pass members have found the rewards of NMRA and MER membership are sufficient to continue with us and "sign-up" for the regular membership. Hint, hint, hint to the current Rail Pass members.

By the time you read this November-December issue of **The Local**, the 2007 MER convention called The James River Flyer, will have come and gone. I hope you were able to attend and enjoy a great meet. At the time I am writing this column I know the Convention Committee and the host Division folks at James River, are working hard to provide a fun and informative time for all of us. I hope we were able to say "hello" – I am always the guy in the Trolley Conductor's cap.

On a separate note, don't forget to send me your address and e-mail changes. A current address on file saves the MER some money in returned and remailed **Local's**. Also let me know if you would like me to forward those changes to NMRA National Headquarters. We recently sent out an email regarding an addition to The James River Flyer tours, and found out a number of e-mail addresses we have on file are obsolete. If you have changed your email address recently, or would like to let us know of an email address not previously on file, please contact me at [merbusmgr@aol.com](mailto:merbusmgr@aol.com).

As always *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. 

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

# President's Column

By Clint Hyde, MER President.

Congratulations to our election winners this year:

**Herb Gishlick**  
**Chuck Hladik**  
**P.J. Mattson**

**T**hanks for everyone who voted. There were 346 ballots returned and each winner got about 250 votes.

The 2007 convention will be finished as you read this, although as I write, it hasn't even started. Thanks go out to Ken Montero, Divisional superintendent as he has done an exceptional job on leading the charge for the James River Division.

Ray Bilodeau, our contest manager was not able to attend the convention to run the model contest, as he was hospitalized recently and was not well enough to travel. But Dick Landt, his deputy has handled things just fine. Thank you to Dick and Get well soon Ray!

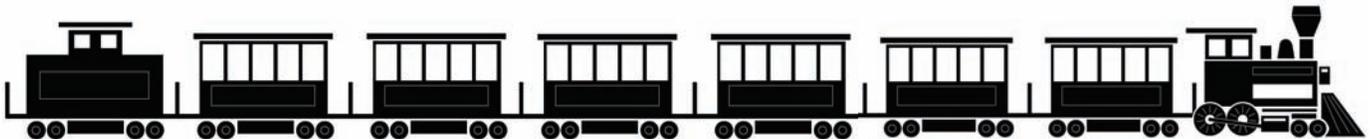
The 2008 convention will be in Reston, Virginia at the same hotel we used in 2003. I hoped to go to a different venue, but this hotel continues to be affordable where others are not.

I need to know a few things from the membership about some

things going forward on future conventions. We have worked to keep the room rate costs under \$100 in recent years, but the time is coming when we aren't able to do that anymore. I know there are other hotels that don't cost as much, but they tend to be cheap or out of the way, and additionally do not have the required meeting room facilities. We are trying to keep the registration cost of the convention down, but upward pressure costs come from things like the rental cost for the facility. So my questions to you are: What are your pain thresholds on those prices? And how much smaller a convention would you tolerate to keep the cost down? There are tradeoffs possible, like higher room costs which means lower facility costs which equal lower registration costs (we did a little of that for 2008).

The next challenge car, for 2008 modelers, is a ventilated something. Examples include cattle stock car, a poultry car, a watermelon car and those sorts of things. Here are two examples from **Rio Grande Models**: <http://www.riograndemodels.com/Images/LargeHO/3099.jpg>. There will be an extra incentive when the time comes. I will be including awards for each car I can think of and Merit Awards for all.

Congratulations to Bill McMillan of the James River Division for becoming Master Model Railroader #401! 📧



## **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, [ch Hyde@cox.net](mailto:ch Hyde@cox.net)  
and  
Ray Bilodeau, [raymondbilodeau@aol.com](mailto:raymondbilodeau@aol.com). 📧

## Participate in National Model Railroad month!

I am looking for stories about what you did during November. I am also looking for photographs of your models at work. These will be featured in **The Local** in upcoming issues. Contact the editor – Steve Kindig at (717) 825-5558 or [stevesexpressrr@yahoo.com](mailto:stevesexpressrr@yahoo.com), with your story and photographs! A postal address can be found on page 2.

# 2008 NMRA REGIONAL CONVENTIONS:

*Soak up some modeling and clinics from different areas!!!*

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This is an overview of upcoming regional conventions through 2008. This list is as complete as I can get it by deadline time and I take no responsibility for incomplete information or moved web links.*

<u>DATES:</u>	<u>REGION:</u>	<u>CITY:</u>	<u>WEBSITE:</u>
Spring 2008	Midwest Region (MWR)	More information to come	www.mwr-nmra.org
April 26th – 28th	Niagara Frontier (NFR)	Ottawa Ontario, Canada	http://bytownbobber.cee.carleton.ca
April 30th – May 4th	Pacific Coast Region (PCR)	Fresno, CA	www.pcrnmra.org/conv2008
May 15th – 18th	Mid-Central Region (MCR)	Cleveland, OH	www.mcr-port-city-meet.org
May 15th – 18th	Mid-Continent Region (MCoR)	Branson, MO	www.mcor-nmra.org/MCoR_Region_Meet.html
May 23rd – 25th	Southeastern Region (SER)	Lake Junaluska, NC	www.landofskydiv.org/ser2008.htm
May 29th – June 1st	Rocky Mountain Region (RMR)	Albuquerque, NM	www.neighborhoodlink.com/org/rarg
June 2008	Lone Star Region (LSR)	Houston, TX	www.lonestarregion.com/convention.html
June 12th – 15th	Pacific Northwest Region (PNR)	British Columbia, Canada	www.chilliwackinterchange2008.com
June 12th – 15th	Thousand Lakes Region (TLR)	Duluth, MN	www.thousandlakesregion.org/pages/conventions.html
<b>July 13th- 19th</b>	<b>Pacific Southwest Region (PSR)</b>	<b>Anaheim, CA</b>	<b>“Anaheim Special” – www.nmra.org/2008</b>
September 19th - 20th	North Central Region (NCR)	Toledo, OH	www.divisiononencr.org/conv2008.htm
October 16th-19th	Mid-Eastern Region (MER)	Reston, VA	www.mer-nmra.org
October 26th - 28th	British Region (BR)	Copdock (near Ipswich)	www.nmra-br.org.uk/convention.asp

## Add Some Interest to a Yard

*Article and photograph by Ron Einarson  
President, NMRA-Canada*

Here is a simple way to add interest to a yard. Place a semi-trailer perpendicular to a boxcar, as shown in the accompanying photograph. It is simple, yet very effective and certainly piques one's curiosity as to what is being unloaded or loaded.

In earlier days, the major railroads had large freight sheds in every city and large town where less-than-carload (LCL) freights were unloaded. Hundreds of men were employed to load and unload cars. Merchandise trucks would pull up on one side of the sheds and rolling stock on the other. The tracks were usually in pairs and you could load the second track via the first track with the use of plates between the docks and cars. My father-in-law was one of thousands employed to do this type of work. I remember one story of how he dreaded Eaton's furniture sales. He would be unloading sofas for days. It seemed like whole trains would be assigned to bring in the goods. There was no Trans-Canada highway then and everything went by rail.



**Add interest to a yard with a simple trailer and boxcar.**

As the years passed the freight sheds were closed down. They said it was less traffic, but more likely it was more unit trains and a desire to get out of the LCL business, since labor costs were too high to make it profitable. Now we find lots of scenes like these throughout every corner of the country.

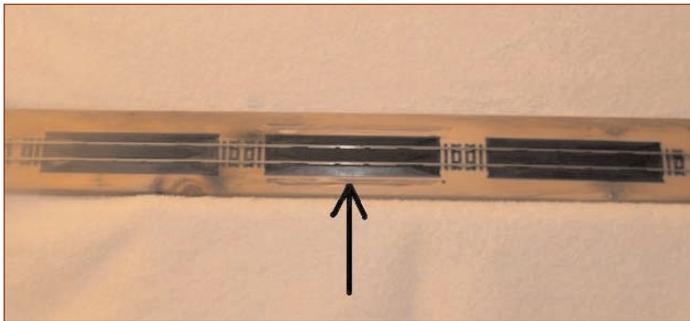
While this scene is very basic but could be spruced up very easily. Add lots of junk around the scene - loose scraps, small pieces of wood, an old pallet or two, etc. What would really set this scene off would be a trailer with some sort of advertisement on the side. Don't forget to open the trailer and boxcar doors (unless it was just spotted or it's finished being unloaded).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This appeared in the Fall 2007 issue of The Fusee, and is reprinted with the author's permission. The Fusee is the official publication of the Thousand Lakes Region.* 

# A Steam or Diesel Model Locomotive Wheel Cleaning Station

Article and photographs by Don Jennings

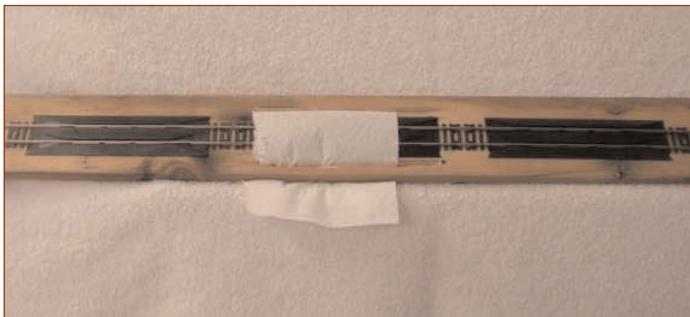
I AM WRITING this about my HO scale Atlantic & Western Railroad in Cary, North Carolina. However, this can be modified for any scale model trains you operate. The steam or diesel model locomotive wheel cleaning station, (is an idea I got from someone else and is NOT my original idea) can be made from any piece of lumber and cut to a length suitable to fit your



**Figure 1: The completed wheel cleaning station.**  
Notice the cuts.

train layout. I used a one by four piece because my layout has a four-foot wide aisle and the cleaning station fits between the two table sections. On this piece of lumber are several rerailer track sections with two regular track sections; one located at each end.

The main part to this wheel cleaning station is two circular saw cuts about SEVEN to NINE inches long made parallel and in-



**Figure 2: This is how the soaked paper towel cleans the wheels.**

between the edges of the lumber and the track used. See figure 1. This is important, because the purpose of the saw cuts is to place a half sheet piece of paper towel down through the two slots so it covers the track.

The piece of lumber may or may not be attached to the layout. If you decide to attach it to the layout, hinges will lift up or fold down the cleaning station and allow it to be stored out of the way.

Another possible way to attach the cleaning station to a layout would be to use hooks or screw-eyes hooks on one end of the board. Whichever method works in your space requires the use of wires (or jumper cables with alligator clips) long enough to reach the layout's tracks.

## To use the cleaning station:

First, moisten the paper towel with your favorite track cleaner fluid. Place the half sheet of paper towel down through the two slots so that it covers the track. See figure 2. Then place your locomotive on the wheel cleaner track and connect the wires on the ends to each track (or the jumper cable wires with alligator clips) with powered track. Now, run the locomotive back and forth on the paper towel. Move the towel through the slots to continue having a clean sheet. The sheet will clean and dry the wheels. The locomotive does not have to be rotated to clean the other set of wheels, simply use the other end of the cleaning station.

There you have it, now go build it. Use this regularly to ensure clean wheels on a smooth running track.

**DON JENNINGS** lives in the Carolina Piedmont Division where he models HO scale. Don is also the current Boy Scout railroad-ing merit badge coordinator. 📧

## Custom Layout Building

By Lance Mindheim

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# Letter from the Editor

By Steve Kindig.

**DON'T HAVE MUCH** to say in this column but everything I say **IS** important. Since this is the last issue of 2007, I want to give a final reminder on a few things. I still need plenty more stories, summaries, articles, scratch building how-to's, step-by-steps, and hints and tips, artist of the month items, future callboard items and news from divisional events (especially these items!!) to fill the 2008 issues. I have gotten some positive feedback from members throughout the year and I want to continue to inform, entertain and keep everyone as up to date as possible. Send me any items or ideas for publication or if you just wish to comment, correct or suggest something you have seen or would like to see in **The Local** contact me. All my contact information is located on page 2.

**Season Greetings from your Editor and the staff that helps put The Local together every issue!**

**May your Christmas train run smoothly under the tree.....** 

# The 100% NMRA Clubs

By Gerry Leone, MMR  
Deputy Chair of NMRA Membership Services  
and Promotion Department

THE "100% NMRA CLUB" web pages on the national NMRA website has been completely revised and updated by the program's new coordinator, Chuck Diljak.

The "100% NMRA Club" pages now contains a listing of benefits clubs receive by having everyone as an NMRA member. In addition, the web page contains a listing of the qualifications clubs need to meet in order to be eligible, and frequently asked questions about the 100% Club.

On the page you'll find a link to the "100% NMRA Club" application form, and a link to a listing of all the "100% NMRA Clubs" in the country, organized by state. There are even handy links to those clubs' websites.

If your members are in clubs that could use the insurance benefits (and other listed benefits) of being a "100% NMRA Club", be sure to let them know about the updated web pages.

Find the main "100% NMRA Club" web page at [www.nmra.org/100Club/100Club.html](http://www.nmra.org/100Club/100Club.html).

If you have any questions about the program, contact Chuck Diljak at: [club100@hq.nmra.org](mailto:club100@hq.nmra.org) or write to:

100% NMRA Club  
National Model Railroad Association, Inc.  
4121 Cromwell Rd.  
Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119. 

## NEEDED: Someone to run the MER Convention Auction Team (CAT) beginning in 2008

**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! 

# Build an Inexpensive Sand Blasting Cabinet

Article and photographs by Craig Dunn

**Y**OU JUST SPENT A PILE of money on something no one in the family knows you have. Now you need a tool for your shop that only a very few people, if any, possess to move the project on to completion.

This is the project for you, a very low cost, build it yourself, sand blasting cabinet. It is assumed that most modelers in need of a sand blaster already own a compressor for painting. All you need is a sand blasting tool. The cheapest one I found available is from Princess Auto for \$14.95 with sand included then all you need is a safe place to work.

The first step is to get some foam board—the type used to insulate houses as they are constructed is best. One sheet of 4' X 8' is more than enough. At the same time get some Bulldog Grip Foam Board adhesive, and some #8 2 1/2" screws, and two panels of clear acrylic. These last items will allow you to see what you are doing when using the cabinet to blast.

The general concept here is to create a box with three openings. The first opening will be in the lower part of the front to allow your hands access into the box while working. This needs to be large enough to allow freedom of movement (at least 10" high is suggested) but small enough to minimize the open area for dust control. It should also have a lip on the bottom to retain grit and debris inside the box. The acrylic panels will cover the other two openings, one on the upper front as a viewing window and the other on the top to allow light to enter.

Our prototype cabinet was 19" X 19". You may choose to make a larger version if you model in scales above HO. We started with the base and attached the two side panels with the back panel inset between, forming an open box. A sheet of foam board was placed on the inside bottom of the box, 2" shorter than the original floor of the box. This will create a depression at the back of the box, which will catch the sand. Then the sand can be used again if you run it

through a sieve. To get access to the sand cut a small hole at the base of the box's second level. When it is time to remove excess sand, the box is light enough to lift and clean by tilting to the side

The front was constructed with two pieces of foam board, both have the access and viewing openings cut through them, leaving at least 2" on all edges to attach the acrylic panels to. The inner board was inset into the box and the second overlaid the front, this construction provided ample attachment surface and thickness for the acrylic panels on the front and top. The construction was finished off with a foam board panel covering the rest of the top of the box. See figure 1 for a completed box.



**Figure 1: The front view of a completed sand blaster, with an opening for working at the bottom and a viewing window at the top.**

Having created a box you will need to cut an opening in the back wall (or the side) where you have the room to install a 4" X 4" surplus computer fan. The fan used in the prototype box is a 12-volt unit that cost \$7.95 at a surplus store. The fan can be powered by any old power pack. A Tyco pack was used on this unit because it produced more than 12-volts. If you do not have access to an outside air vent, as was the case of our prototype, direct the exhaust air using some PVC pipe to a vacuum cleaner bag attached with duct tape. See figure 2. With the fan running at capacity, there was no dust to be found coming out of the box.



**Figure 2: A side view of the cabinet with a vacuum bag taped to a PVC pipe for those with no outside ventilation.**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article appeared in the September 2006 issue of **Frontier Flimsy**, the official publication of the Niagara Frontier Region and is reprinted with the author's permission.

**FRED THOMPSON** made the prototype cabinet, because he wanted to refinish a brass GP 9. It worked very well with brass. With plastic, it was found that the paint was only dulled, not removed with the sand blaster. If you decide to build such a device, wear gloves on your hands and protective glasses for your eyes. 🛡️

# Layout Details Made Easy: Use Simple Materials to Detail Your Layout in an Evening or two.

*Article and photograph's by Larry Cannon*

**O**NE OF THE CHEAPER MODELING materials for details is leftover pieces of rail. If you are a normal model railroader, you probably have plenty lying around. Either the rail is too good to throw away or too bad or short to use. The prototype has historically felt the same way and has had some inventive ways of putting used rail back in service.

## GUARD RAILS

If you have ever rail-fanned at places like Palmer, Massachusetts or White River Junction, Vermont, you know that rail often ends up as posts to separate autos and trains. These posts keep autos from running down embankments, out of turntable pits, protecting train clearances at stations, or just are a way of saying, “stay out”. Most of the remnants of these barriers are now weathered (well past “new” rust), but in the past they were painted yellow, white or other colors. Local highway departments sometimes acquired rail for posts too, sometimes painting the exposed top half white and bottom half black.

Sometimes they burned holes in the rail web and strung cable through the posts or drilled holes to bolt on plank railings.

## SIGN POSTS

Why buy signposts if you have pieces of rail that would serve just as well? Railroads tended to use lighter rail that was no longer heavy enough for any service need for this purpose. Crossing signs, flanger signs, and whistle markers were some of the uses for old rail. In more modern times, “derails” were marked on short lengths of rail. I modeled these signs using styrene cut and shaped accordingly, painted and then lettered with black, computer generated, decals. In the case of the derail posts, just print them on heavy white paper and use a yellow

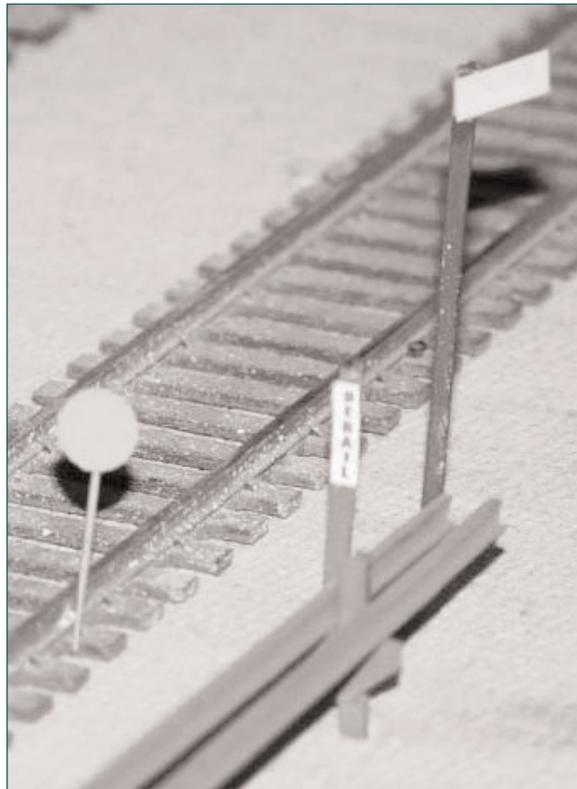
highlighter to make the yellow signs to glue on the rail. See photograph 1.

## REPLACEMENT RAIL

For new modelers and those who don't recall this fact, rail used to be manufactured in 39-foot lengths and railroads attempted to install rail with staggered joints so that on 40-foot cars, a

truck wasn't on the rail joints of both rails at the same time. That happening wore out rail ends and broke rail bars sooner if they didn't stagger the joints. If you want to model those two or four rail replacement rail holders along the right of way before welded rail came along, 39 feet is the right length to model. The horizontal “holders” were bolted or welded on to short lengths of rail. I use small pieces of styrene attached to the rail with ACC. The shape of these “holders” is dictated by personal preference or the railroad that you model. If you are a detail purist, get out the Dermel tool and drill the two or three holes in the ends of each rail. If you are safety orientated, paint the rail ends yellow or white to gain points with the company safety department or OSHA!

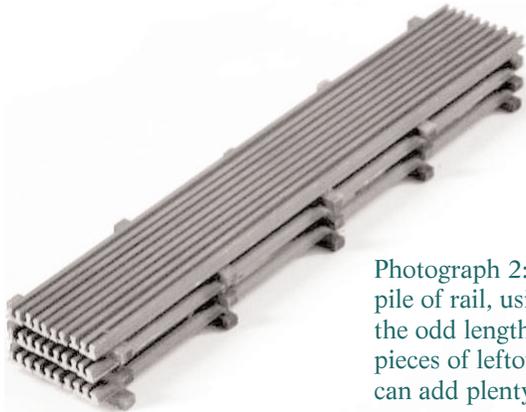
If you want to make a large pile of rail, here is a chance to use up all those odd length, small pieces of rail. Visualize a large pile of 39-foot long rail or look at a prototype photograph. You see all the rail ends, the top layer of rail, and no more than two rails into the pile from the side. Model only what you can see and you need far fewer pieces of rail 39 feet long. You might need to add more “stickers” (the pieces of wood that separate the layers of rail) but you will finally find a use for all those small pieces of rail you have been saving for the core of the pile. See photograph 2.



**Photograph 1: Seen here are just some of the simple wayside details you can create in an evening or two. From left to right, a blue flag, a derail sign, a replacement rail rack and a flanger warning sign.**

## CONSTRUCTION TIPS

Rail nippers are definitely the easiest way to cut rail. For 39-foot lengths cut one piece, double check that it is the right length, put a piece of tape to identify it as the master, and then cut the rest of the pieces you using it as your gauge or “stop.” To cut posts, cut a



Photograph 2: A large pile of rail, using all of the odd length and small pieces of leftover rail can add plenty of detail.

slot in a piece of scrap lumber as deep as you want your posts tall. Insert the rail into the slot and the edge of the piece becomes your stop to make all the posts the same height. The rough end becomes the buried end of the post and only one cut per post is needed.

## PAINTING TIPS

Spray-painting rail is easier if you take a kit box and punch a number of holes with an awl or if you don't own an awl, an 8d nail. I try space and place the holes so I can spray two or three-dozen pieces at a time. Life is easier if the rail is placed in roughly the same alignment so that your air brush is painting all rail bottoms, sides or heads at the same time. The yellow or white safety marking for rail ends is easily done by dipping the ends in a shallow puddle of paint in something like a paint jar cover.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This article appeared in the October 2007 issue of **The Coupler**, the official publication of the Northeastern Region and is reprinted with the author's permission. 📄

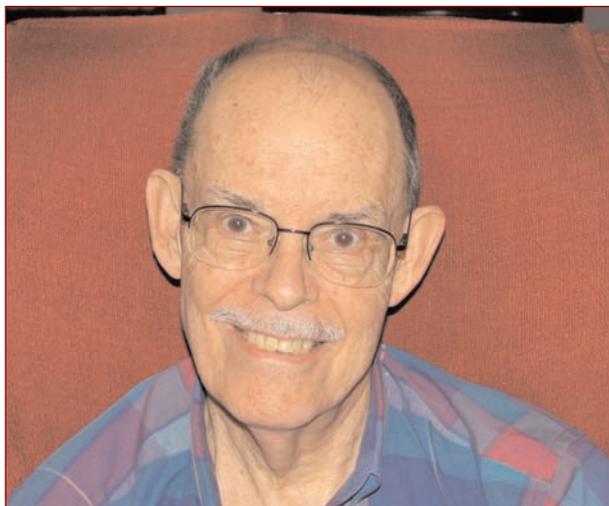
**TAKE YOUR  
MODEL TO WORK DAY  
IS NOVEMBER 16TH!  
NOVEMBER IS HERE!**

## Congratulations, Bill McMillan. The Mid-Eastern Region's newest Master Model Railroader!

**W**ILLIAM “BILL” MCMILLAN of Midlothian, Virginia (a suburb of Richmond) has been presented with the 401st Master Model Railroader certificate. Bill is the first MMR in the James River Division. Bill models the Ma & Pa railroad in HO scale and received his first AP certificate in 1991 for Scenery. Since then he has also earned certificates in Cars, Prototype Modeler, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Volunteer and Author.

A biography of Bill that will appear in an upcoming **Scale Rails** will tell a lot more about his personal history in model railroading. However, there is also a lot that he has done locally. He has served as superintendent of the Division. He has provided volunteer support to both the 2002 Richmond Rails Convention and the recent James River

Convention in Lynchburg, Virginia (continually opening his layout for the layout tour, among other things). For the latest convention, he was also the layout tour committee chair -- recruiting layouts, designing layout maps for the layout tour book and organizing the Operations Callboard portion of the convention. In addition, he promotes operating sessions on his layout and participates in a round robin operating group. Bill is also the current e-mail distributor of the Division's newsletter, **Crossties**.



All of the members of the James River Division and the MER are proud of what Bill has accomplished. Bill was formally recognized at the Lynchburg Convention, but if you are just learning of his achievement now, please offer your congratulations to him. 📄

# Constructing an Inventory for a Model Train Collection

By Neil Humphreys

**T**HIS ARTICLE EXAMINES the process for constructing an inventory for a model train collection. What is the purpose of a model train inventory? Basically, it allows a collector to keep track of each of the items in the collection. Each inventory would depend on the needs and the philosophy of the train collector to a large extent. Some collectors also keep an inventory for the car numbers so that they do not buy duplicates. Other collectors want to follow a certain railroad or group of railroads in a particular section of the country. One per-

son has been “nailed down.” There are many software programs that can provide advantages for the inventory record. Some software options are Word and Excel, but look over your available software that will make the job easier. Figure 2 shows a different inventory printed from a Word program, however it still contains the same basic inventory categories.

An inventory list should contain these basic items: sequence number; storage box number; type; manufacturer; road name; description; date and purchase price.

XXXX	XX	XXX	XX	XXX	PLASTIC/ BRASS	DESCRIPTION	XXXX COST
EQUIP	TYPE	NUMBER	MFG	ROAD			
111	08	02	004	01	001	BASECAT #2241	
112	06	01	002	09	001	#3629 PACIFIC	50.00
113	04	06	008	10	002	GP7 PII, PRR #8549	
114	09	06	009	11	002	EMD F7A, PRR #9666A	
115	09	06	010	11	001	EMD, F7B, B+0, #251X	
116	09	06	011	11	002	EMD, F7B, PRR #9666B	
117	09	06	012	11	001	EMD, F7A, B+0 #231	
118	09	06	013	11	002	EMD, F7B, PRR #9666B	
119	09	06	014	07	001	F3A, PII, HIGH FAS, B10	
120	09	06	015	10	001	SD-7, B+0, #764	
121	09	06	016	10	001	SD-7, B+0, #763	
122	09	06	017	10	008	GP30, PII, CSX #422C	
123	07	06	018	10	002	PB, PENN, #5754B	
124	07	06	019	10	002	PA, PENN, #5753A	
125	04	06	020	10	002	PA, PENN, #5755A	

**Figure 1: This handwritten figure shows that you don't need a computer to construct an inventory. It can be converted to a computer format at a later date, but for now it meets all the necessary qualifications.**

son that I know will only buy items from western railroads. When questioned about it his reply was that, “he only wanted to run railroad equipment from railroads that were financially healthy.”

One of the best reasons to have an inventory is to insure proof of the items. Each item then can have an established value for insurance purposes should there be a loss.

When starting an inventory record, I have two recommendations. Start with a pencil and paper, and then move up to a computer. There are many advantages to the pencil and paper especially when you are in the early stages. Since you will probably be working in a small space on the inventory pages, pencil is the preferred method. Along with the pencil it is good idea to have a soft eraser. Figure 1 shows a handwritten inventory page showing all of the information discussed in this article. It is simple, but somewhat difficult to read. However, it does the job and may be sufficient for your individual needs.

A second stage inventory may use a computer when the infor-

## SEQUENCE NUMBER

The sequential number is unique to each inventory item. The number begins with the first item and runs, in sequence up to the last item. The number may never be used, but if necessary it can be found and printed along with the accompanying information in the inventory item. It would not be wise, in my opinion, to attempt to build an inventory display without the use of the number.

## STORAGE BOX NUMBER

Transporting your collection to shows or clubs make this an important part of an inventory. A storage box number will allow easier searching and faster storage for a specific item in an inventory.

## TYPE

This collection is heavily weighted toward passenger car rolling stock and other passenger-related equipment. Here are some suggestions on inventorying items that are similar:

- 01 Locomotive, Steam
- 02 Locomotive, Electric
- 03 Locomotive, Gas/Electric
- 04 Locomotive, Diesel
- 05 Trolley Car or Light Rail
- 06 Heavyweight, Passenger Car
- 07 Smooth Side, Passenger Car
- 08 Corrugated, Passenger Car
- 09 Superliner Car, (Amtrak)
- 10 Rail Diesel Car
- 11 Freight Car
- 12 Acela Car
- 13 MHC, Material Handling Car

## MANUFACTURER'S NAME

The next column is for manufacturer name. The current manufacturer's name category has 44 entries as of this date. Here are some suggestions on listing the manufacturer's names:

- 01 International Hobbies Company (IHC)

- 02 Rivarossi (RIV)      07 Stewart
- 03 Spectrum            08 Bowser
- 04 AHM Models        09 Sunset
- 05 Atheran             10 Proto2000
- 06 Walthers

**Road Name**

The name of the railroad and/or company where freight cars appear is the next category. The current road name category has 48 entries as of this date. Here are some suggestions on listing the road names:

- 00 Unpainted
- 01 B&O (Baltimore and Ohio)
- 02 PRR (Pennsylvania Railroad)
- 03 N&W (Norfolk and Western)
- 04 NYC (New York Central)
- 05 AMTK(Amtrak)
- 06 NS (Norfolk Southern)
- 07 VIA Rail (Canada)
- 08 CSX (CSX Transportation)
- 09 RF&P (Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac)

**DESCRIPTION**

Each inventory item also has a BRIEF description of the item. I try to put as much as possible in this space so that it will be easier to remember the exact item. Normally this is not a problem if there are only two locomotives and 20 cars. But one inventory that I deal with has over 400 items, so you can see why it would be important to put as much information as possible in each item description. Here are some suggestions in putting some order to the description of your items:

- First – a one or two word description of the item. Example: box car
- Second – the name of the railroad or company. Example: B&O
- Third – a car or locomotive number, if available.
- Fourth – color(s) of the item.
- Fifth – any other description as room permits.

**DATE AND PURCHASE PRICE**

These are optional items but potentially good ideas to include. Sometimes it may be practical to keep two inventory reports. On the one sheet, price may be omitted for privacy concerns. However, it can be shown on the second copy of the inventory listing. There are various reasons for this decision, most of them depending on privacy concerns and the collector. Obviously, the person insuring the collection would also need to know price information.

If there are warranty concerns or for example if problems occur within a warranty time frame, a correct date would mean the difference between being reimbursed or not. The items manufactured today are for the most part, quite reliable. If you are a steady customer of a particular vendor it may be possible to extend the time frame that a company would be willing to correct a problem.

It also pays to shop with reliable manufacturers and hobby shops. When something goes wrong you may stand a better chance of having the problem resolved to your satisfaction. If you have purchased the item from a store or through the mail or the

Internet, it pays to have any documentation that confirms the date of sale and the price paid. If things were purchased from a table at a meet like the Timonium meet, it will be more difficult to get satisfaction.

Finally, I want to add a few words on the finished inventory. It makes sense to protect it as much as possible. There should be at least three copies of the finished product. The first copy is for the originator of the inventory. It should be kept in a safe place either at home or nearby. The second copy should be in a bank safe deposit box. It should be listed in the inventory of that box. The third copy should be given to a friend or family member who is familiar with the contents listed in the inventory. If the decision is made to sell either part or all of the items, it should be completed by someone who knows the value of the train items.

The purpose of this article has been to let the train collector

NO	BOX NO.	TYPE	NUMBER	MANUFACTURER	ROAD NAME	BRASS	DESCRIPTION
1	2	SMOOTH SIDE	1 IHC	B&O	NO	DINER, "PITTSBURGH"	
2	2	SMOOTH SIDE	2 IHC	B&O	NO	OBSERVATION-NATIONAL VIEW	
3	2	SMOOTH SIDE	3 IHC	B&O	NO	ROOMETTE-"PAW-PAW"	
4	2	SMOOTH SIDE	4 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	ROOMETTE-"SHENAGO"	
5	2	SMOOTH SIDE	5 IHC	B&O	NO	ROOMETTE-"PAW-PAW"	
6	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	1 IHC	B&O	NO	DINER, "MARGARET CORBIN"	
7	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	2 IHC	B&O	NO	RPO #232	
8	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	3 IHC	B&O	NO	OBSERVATION-"SUSQUEHANNA CLUB"	
9	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	4 IHC	B&O	NO	DINER, "MARTHA WASHINGTON"	
10	2	SMOOTH SIDE	6 IHC	B&O	NO	ROOMETTE-"PAW-PAW"	
11	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	5 IHC	B&O	NO	PULLMAN-#3612	
12	2	SMOOTH SIDE	7 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	DUPLEX-"SHENAGO"	
13	2	CORRUGATED	1 IHC	B&O	NO	ROOMETTE-"ELLCOTT CITY"	
14	2	SMOOTH SIDE	8 IHC	B&O	NO	DINER, "PITTSBURGH"	
15	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	6 IHC	B&O	NO	PULLMAN-ROSEBANK	
16	2	SMOOTH SIDE	9 IHC	B&O	NO	COACH #5483	
17	2	SMOOTH SIDE	10 IHC	B&O	NO	COACH #5483	
18	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	7 IHC	B&O	NO	BAGGAGE CAR-#208	
19	2	SMOOTH SIDE	11 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	OBSERVATION, "NATIONAL VIEW"	
20	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	8 IHC	B&O	NO	PULLMAN COMBINE #1201	
21	2	SMOOTH SIDE	12 IHC	B&O	NO	COACH #5483	
22	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	9 IHC	B&O	NO	COACH, #5810, DARK GREEN	
23	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	10 IHC	B&O	NO	RPO, #742, DARK GREEN	
24	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	11 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	DINER, "MOLLY STARK," DARK GREEN	
25	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	12 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	CAPITOL LIMITED, COMBINE, DK GRN	
26	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	13 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	PULLMAN, "WASHINGTON MONUMENT"	
27	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	14 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	OBS, "NATIONAL VIEW", DARK GREEN	
28	2	HEAVYWEIGHT	15 RIVAROSSI	B&O	NO	PULLMAN, "LINCOLN MEMORIAL," GRN	
29	10	HEAVYWEIGHT	16 IHC	B&O	NO	COACH #5810, DARK GREEN	
30	1	HEAVYWEIGHT	17 SPECTRUM	B&O	NO	OBSERVATION, #900	
31	1	HEAVYWEIGHT	18 SPECTRUM	B&O	NO	OBSERVATION, #900	

**Figure 2: A printed inventory from Microsoft Word that contains the same basic categories.**

begin to organize and classify the items in his/her train collection. Is this the end of the exercise? Certainly not. Nothing has been said about pictures for each of the items. That is taking the process to the next level. It may be presented in another article some time in the future.

**NEIL HUMPHREYS** lives in the James River Division where he models HO scale. 



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# An Editorial on the Benefits of the NMRA

By John Griffith

**S**INCE I BECAME editor several years ago, I haven't used my editorial license until now. At several Board meetings the fact that we are not growing and what to do about it has been discussed. This discussion has almost always led to the statement, "what does the NMRA do for me?" This question is ascribed to many people who are or are not NMRA members.

These discussions got me to thinking. The NMRA has a great library, a great website, and speaks to the hobby industry like no individual can. It represents the member. The NMRA is made up, as you know, of members in Divisions and Regions. It is here that the real benefits of the NMRA are found. There are things that in my opinion we should "sell" when some one asks the "what does the NMRA do for me?" question. May I suggest that the three things that the Potomac Division has no match for are our layout tours (monthly), our Minicons, and our tours when everyone wants to participate. If you aren't a member its hard to participate in these venues.

We should be pushing the fact that there are ways to meet life long friends and the skills that will come along as a bonus. That MMRs and newbies all have something to bring and share to even those of us that are becoming armchair modelers. All of these activities are usually within a 50-mile radius of the Washington Monument.

The Division gives access, though layout tours, to layouts that otherwise people would only see in the magazines and then only in small parts. Not to mention the layouts are of the same caliber that might or might not have ever been seen in the magazines. Also the guest can ask, "how did you do that" of the great, the not so great and all those who struggle. Everyone has some thing to offer even if it's something you didn't want to do a certain way. You get a resource and a friend.

At least once a year we assemble and provide information on a wide range of subjects. You may not care this year, but next year you may be ready to hear what the instructor was trying to say. He/she isn't giving that clinic this year? So what, they are probably there and will be willing to answer all your questions. All you have to do is ask. You get a resource and a friend.

Our tours put those who "know it all" with those who have never seen a steam locomotive except in a western movie. This is a great way to learn, even if you don't model anything except traction. Standing at Horseshoe curve in Altoona, PA and watching trains go by is an experience. To have someone tell you about the train going by or the history is priceless. Or going to places you can't get into on your own like the shops at Strasburg. I am still

kicking myself when I didn't get into the EBT shops when I had the chance.

I have a lot of friends that I didn't have seven years ago when I went to my first minicon. Some have left and some are still close. The NMRA is graying just like the rest of the population and trains are no longer as available as when we grew up. The NMRA however, allows us to introduce a new generation to the pleasures of sharing history, our accomplishments, and a love of rail-roading.

I started with a question, "what does the NMRA do for me?" I believe the answer may be nothing. It's more what you put into the NMRA that you get back. If you don't participate, the NMRA can't do much for you. Just a thought.

*Editor's note: This editorial also appeared in the November 07-January 08 issue of **The Potomac Flyer** and was reprinted with the author's permission. **The Potomac Flyer** is the official publication of the Potomac Division.*

**JOHN GRIFFITH** lives in the Potomac Division modeling both HO and HO<sub>n3</sub> scales. John is also the editor of **The Potomac Flyer**, the official publication of the Division. 

## Carolina Southern Division: Model Railroading University Activity Report

Superintendent Rick Knight reported, "Many thanks to everyone who participated in MRU 2007! There were 20 current NMRA members in attendance and 16 prospective members. Not a bad turnout for a first year event. A special thanks goes to Carl, Fred, Dick, Frank and Gil for taking parts of the program and passing along their knowledge to fellow modelers. A special thanks also goes to Jack and Chris for handling the registration process. And a definite big time thanks to Colonel Bob for taking flyers and posters to every train store, hobby shop and craft shop in Mecklenburg, Union, Stanly, Iredell, Cabarrus, Catawba and Gaston counties."

Anyone interested can see a few photographs from the day's activities at <http://www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/MRU%2007%20Report.htm>. 



# 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

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structure.



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and stripwood for the  
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#29299	_____	\$19.95	\$23.95	\$_____
Shipping: \$2.50 for first car, + \$1.50 for each additional car				\$_____

RF&P HO-SCALE CARS	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE*	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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Milk Station	QUANTITY _____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____
Small Freight Station	QUANTITY _____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____

<b>THE LOCALS**</b> — (all issues 1997-2006) on CD	QUANTITY _____	\$5.00 postpaid	\$_____
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# HUMOR

An American, an Englishman and an Australian were traveling on a train from Melbourne to Sydney. The trip which normally takes over 10 hours could be boring and tedious, so the Aussie asked his companions if anyone was carrying a packet of playing cards to while away the time. No one had the required ingredients to be able to play poker, but the American suggested that a game of charades would help to pass the time.

“What is charades?” queried the Australian.

“I will give you clues about a popular film by miming and doing hands gestures, while you will try to name the movie. The main rule is that the person doing the charade must remain silent,” explained the American. He then started the game by getting a piece of paper from his briefcase and throwing it out of the window of the moving train.

“I know, I know,” said the Englishman. “Gone with the wind.”

Now it was the Englishmen turn to have a shot at charades. He stood up on his seat and with both fists he started to hit his chest and pulling his face.

“Oh that's King Kong,” quickly uttered the American. He then got of his seat and started to kick frantically with his hands and feet.

“That's easy,” interrupted him the Englishman. “The Karate Kid.”

Charade after charade, the train had arrived at its halfway stop at Albury. The Australian guy did not manage to guess any of the titles and felt quite inferior. As the train stopped at the station, he quickly grabbed his companion's suitcases and bolted to the door.

“Hey! What do you think you're doing?” screamed the other two in one voice.

“The Great Train Robbery,” he informed them and the Aussie disappeared out of the train. 

# 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 5 – James River

William McMillan – *Civil Engineering*

William McMillan – *Cars*

William McMillan – *MMR # 401*

## Division 12 – Carolina Southern

James A. Allen – *Gold Spike*

## Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

James P. Murphy – *Gold Spike*

Joseph Kananowicz – *Chief Dispatcher*

Gene W. Sing – *Scenery*

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**. 

**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!! 

**HEY MEMBERS,** are you too busy modeling, operating, scratch building and even kit bashing railroads to print and then whittle away precious minutes filling out the Achievement Program forms??? Simplify your life by downloading the AP forms from the NMRA website (<http://www.nmra.org/achievement/apforms.html>). The forms are available in several different formats including MS Word documents. You can add your own information by editing the forms on your PC. 

## CALLBOARD Coming Events

**November 3rd and 4th – 10AM – 4PM both days.** Greenberg Train show at Greater Reading Expo Center in Reading, PA. Adults: \$7; kids: free.

**November 3rd and 4th – 9AM – 5PM both days.** Neuse River Valley Model Railroad Club Trains and Railroadiana show and sale at State Fairgrounds in Raleigh, NC. Adult: \$6 (for both days); kids: free. For more information visit: [www.nrvmrcc.org](http://www.nrvmrcc.org).

Callboard continued on back cover

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**CALLBOARD  
 Coming Events**

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**November 11th** – Susquehanna Division Layout tour in Allentown Area. Contact Scott Turner for more information. (717)-991-3771 or e-mail: [scottturner@comcast.net](mailto:scottturner@comcast.net).

**November 10th and 11th – 10AM – 4PM both days.** Greenberg Train show at Pittsburgh Expo Mart in Pittsburg, PA. Adults: \$7; kids: free.

**November 16th – Take your model train to work.**

**November 17th** – New Jersey Division Meet at the Walnut Street School. 411 Walnut Street in Delanco, N.J. Clinics: **9AM – 12PM.** Layouts: **1PM – 4PM.** Contact Mike McNamara for more information. (856) 824-0871 or e-mail: [mikemcnh@comcast.net](mailto:mikemcnh@comcast.net).

**November 24th & 25th. Noon to 4 PM.** Cheltenham Model Railroad Club Open House. 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge), adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA 19027. Admission free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information, call (215)-635-9747, or visit: <http://www.cheltenhammrr.org>.