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Developing a Prototypical Roster: The process of creating a locomotive roster for your layout

By Scott C.R. Henry

WITH SO MANY LOCOMOTIVES on the market, how do you decide which locomotives to buy for your layout? A good solution is to develop a locomotive roster for your layout based on your prototype and then look for models which fit your roster. The first step in developing a prototypical roster is to research your prototype, keeping in mind a few key questions. While this might be obvious, it is worthwhile to outline the key pieces of information to focus one's research. With proper research it becomes possible to develop a prototypical roster that adds to the realism of your layout. This article will examine what kind of research is needed to develop a roster based on the prototype of your choice by completing an example analysis for the Norfolk Southern.

Two key drivers of your locomotive roster will be the time and place one has chosen for a layout. However, most modelers have not been precise in selecting the time period of the layout. Such was the case for the development of my Scottsdale Division, as you will see. The process of developing a prototypical roster can help you better define the time period of your layout. Regarding the place, most layouts are more precise in the selection of locale, as it is a driver of layout design. Many modelers have not considered the impact of their choice of place on their locomotive roster. Mainly because the locale

is generally well defined, I suggest starting your research with developing the timeline of your layout. Be as specific as possible, but if one does not know, then continue with a broader definition. In order to develop an accurate timeline for your railroad, you'll need many pieces of information. We'll use the Norfolk Southern as an example and outline key types of information needed.

COMPANY MERGERS & MAJOR ACQUISITIONS

Mergers have been common to railroads since the early days. It is easy to understand that an acquisition would have a big impact on how you would model the acquired railroad. How-

ever, a merger will have a larger impact on the new parent railroad. For example, there are still Conrail painted locomotives on the NS and CSX, even though they

bought Conrail 10 years ago. Another example is the N&W and Nickel Plate Road. The N&W converted to diesel very late and thus did not own F units. The Nickel Plate converted to diesels early and brought F units to the N&W roster when they merged. To develop a prototypical roster, you need to know the mergers before and after the time period being modeled.

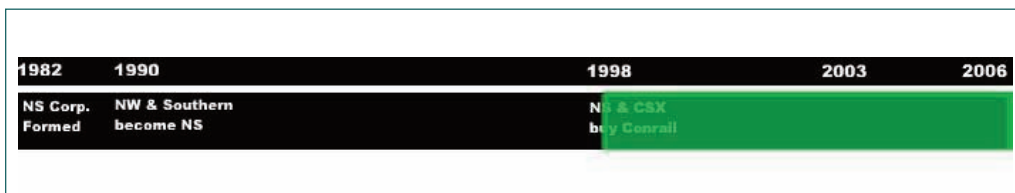


Figure 1: A timeline for the Norfolk Southern including Mergers & Acquisitions. The green shows the narrowed down time frame.

continued on page 4

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager


YOU'LL SEE A NEW address on the MER Products ordering page. Bill Willis has volunteered to be the MER Merchandise Sales Agent and therefore all your orders for merchandise such as HO/N scale cars, building kits, pins and patches and our new **The Local** CD-ROM should be mailed to Bill in Wilmington, DE.

Rita Lynam had been performing that role for the past several years but she is no longer able to continue. We thank Rita for the time and effort in receiving the Merchandise orders over those years as well as her years as MER Business Manager before that time. Thanks, Rita!

I have continued to send letters or e-mails to MER members whose NMRA membership is about to expire. I hope this is helpful for those who simply forget, or file the notice from National Headquarters in a deep file of "to do's." And please, let me know if you have NOT received the usual notices from National so that I can check up on possible mailing problems. Remember I am not collecting NMRA dues but simply providing an additional reminder as a service to our Region's membership.

Our subsidized NMRA RailPass program continues to flourish. As I indicated in the last issue, the MER Board approved continuation of the subsidy program so be sure to pass the word to your fellow modelers who have not had the benefits of NMRA membership. See instructions elsewhere in **The Local**.

A special alert to Division Brass: if you would like to monitor the NMRA status of modelers who regularly attend your Division's functions but reside outside of your Division's territory, or even outside of MER, let me know. I can have the member listed (as a visitor) in your regular monthly membership report.

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

The MER website is www.mer-nmra.org

President's Column

By Clint Hyde, MER President.

FOR VARIOUS REASONS, I've been thinking about detail parts in recent months. What's available, where you get them, what they cost, etc....

Your layout can't have enough trees, cars, people, signs, weeds, telephone/power poles and little details of man-made detritus. Mine certainly doesn't. A good article on this was in the April '08 MR. "Less is more" as the saying goes, but most of us have something like "none is more", and it shows. Just think about the Sellios FSM pictures of his kits, and the amount of little details. I expect this is cost-related for most of us. Those detail things are not cheap—MOST of the time.

As a result of wondering about this, I came across an Internet discussion group about signs, where there were online resources for the actual images. It was amazing—I have downloaded more signs than I can possibly ever use, and there are a lot more than I didn't even get to. Here is the link:

www.railroad-line.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=9280.

There's quite a bit to go through there and a lot of other links to other sign sources. I have a list of all the URLs I found there. E-mail me if you want a copy. Here is another good one, www.trainsho.com/Signsdownloads.htm. I don't have a tool to un-skew a cockeyed image, so I didn't grab any like that. But even so, I got a couple thousand over a few days with no trouble. Some will come in zip-file bundles.

If you have an urban area, you really need signs. You need wall signs and billboards, commercial signs for businesses, and traffic signs of various styles. Part of my layout is/will-be 1980s Dallas, around where I lived then, and there were A LOT of signs and billboards all over town. The above URLs don't even touch traffic signs (Mike White's article on page 8 talks about them). There are plenty of commercial sources for those things, and now you can make your own without much trouble. There are also a couple of software power tools for grabbing entire websites that can glom onto all these images for you. There are a couple of different ones I have used. If you have an older business/industrial area, you almost for sure should have a "ghost sign" or two—that's one that had been painted directly onto the brick, and has weathered badly since then, becoming almost invisible, thus a "ghost". Here is a good website for finding them, www.roadsidepeek.com/signage/ghostsign/index.htm.

Conveniently, it is really easy to make billboards; you can print your own signs with a decent ink-jet printer on some sticky-back paper. KingMill Enterprises (Charlottesville, VA in the James River Division) has a little billboard kit in several scales that you can stick your own signs on easily.

Old magazines are also a good source for ads you could turn into signs, and you could take pictures of current ones yourself. Double-sided tape works pretty well with these types. Last year an article in RMC discussed various double-sided tape adhesives. The one thing I haven't figured out is: why everything costs 5 cents in these signs?

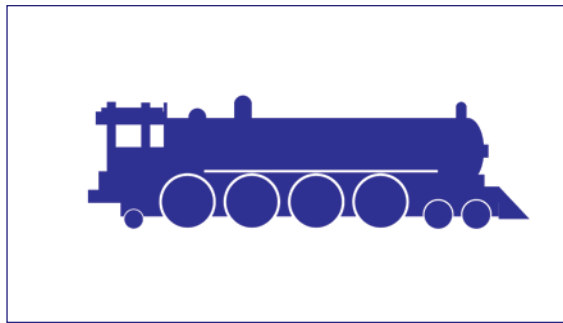
If you have any special expertise in this area, I would like to see a convention clinic from you. Knowing how to do things like this could solve some of your needs, especially when it comes to cost. For 2008, we were planning a hands-on clinic series on making castings, from John Griffith, who has

made some for me. He has had to bail out for work travel reasons, so it may be next year.

For those interested, a Tomalco kit would be satisfactory for a model for the President's Challenge "ventilated car" contest at the convention this fall.

And I've just learned about a "barrel car" (used for shipping empty barrels, appears to hold 100 or so) that I think might be ok—I need to find a real photo; it was mentioned in the Washington Post a couple of days ago.

I'm told a new Narrow Gauge modular group, from the James River Division, will be showing a new running modular layout at the convention in Reston—yet another fine reason to attend. 🏠



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the latest information, contacts and archives
www.mer-nmra.org.

That way, if you see the equivalent of an N&W F unit, you know whether it fits in your model. Figure 1 shows the timeline for the Norfolk Southern including Mergers & Acquisitions. My Scottsdale Division layout will be Norfolk Southern post-Conrail merger, so that has narrowed down the time frame to the range of 1998 to 2006.

LOGOS & LOCOMOTIVE PAINT SCHEMES

Prior to locomotives converting to diesel, paint schemes on locomotives were limited to a select few passenger engines or electrics. Because paint schemes were not as critical to railroad marketing, they changed less frequently. Since conversion to diesel, paint schemes have been used as a marketing technique and subject to many more changes. Again, to set your layout in the proper time period, you need to know the paint scheme for before, during and after the chosen time. As noted in the Conrail example,

locomotives are not converted to the same paint scheme at once, or even in the same year. If you choose a time period when the current paint scheme is fairly new, then it is likely that older locomotives still had the previous paint scheme. The quantity and type of locomotive with the older paint scheme on your roster will help pinpoint the time period of your layout. Buying locomotives with a paint scheme that is later than the following paint scheme will look out of place and visitors will be confused about the time period of your layout, thus it is wise to know the paint scheme following your time period so that it can be avoided. Figure 2 expands on the same timeline for the Norfolk Southern, with paint schemes added. As you can see, my decision not to buy locomotives without the Horsehead paint scheme has narrowed my choice of time periods. Again, the paint scheme would not have immediately appeared on all locomotives, so the end date of my time period is not precise.

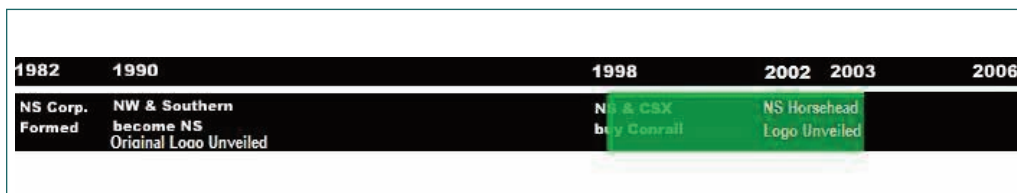


Figure 2: A timeline for the Norfolk Southern highlighting the paint schemes and narrowing down the time frame even more.

locomotives are not converted to the same paint scheme at once, or even in the same year. If you choose a time period when the current paint scheme is fairly new, then it is likely that older locomotives still had the previous paint scheme. The quantity and type of locomotive with the older paint scheme on your roster will help pinpoint the time period of your layout. Buying locomotives with a paint scheme that is later than the following paint scheme will look out of place and visitors will be confused about the time period of your layout, thus it is wise to know the paint scheme following your time period so that it can be avoided. Figure 2 expands on the same timeline for the Norfolk Southern, with paint schemes added. As you can see, my decision not to buy locomotives without the Horsehead paint scheme has narrowed my choice of time periods. Again, the paint scheme would not have immediately appeared on all locomotives, so the end date of my time period is not precise.

KEY LOCOMOTIVE CLASSES

Many modelers choose their prototype based on a particular class or classes of motive power. Some typical examples are: Union Pacific and the Big boys; N&W and the Class Js; PRR and the GG1's, just to name a few. When developing the supporting cast of other motive power, it is useful to understand the history of the class that interests you the most. Many of the large steam locomotive classes were very short lived as the railroads converted to diesel engines. Thus the range of time you model will be short. Likewise, the assignments for these classes changed over time. If you're modeling late steam and build an accurate time period, you need to know when the locomotives were shifted from mainline operation to branch

lines or yard helper service. Knowing the timeline of these events helps to select proper assignments for the main classes and define the supporting motive power that you need.

Figure 3 shows the same timeline for the Norfolk Southern with the date of introduction of GE C40-9W locomotives added. This is the primary class of locomotives for my layout. As you can see, NS took delivery of their first units well before 1998 and by 1999, they owned more than 600 units. Thus the date of delivery for the C40-9Ws will not impact my time choice.

LOCALE OR PLACE OF LAYOUT

The choice of locale that one is modeling also has a significant impact. If one is modeling the N&W near Norfolk, VA in the flat Tidewater region, then there should not be many Y6bs

(the mountain locomotives for N&W used for coal drags) on the roster. Likewise, the PRR in Western Pennsylvania would not host GG1s because there

was no electrification west of Harrisburg. Thus, locomotives on the roster should reflect not just the time period of a layout, but also a place.

For steam locomotives, you should research where the classes of interest were based. For railroads with classes bought for specific terrain, all of the locomotives would be operating on the same division and therefore based at the same yard. That will be a good indicator of what type of terrain the locomotives operated. For diesel engines it is less obvious. In the early generations of diesels, high horsepower six axle locomotives would be found in more mountainous regions. Currently, only six axle diesels are being built and thus six axle units are found throughout the country. One way to learn about your locale of interest is to watch operations or find videos from the time period of interest to gauge what are the more frequent types of locomotives in a location.

FINDING ROSTERS

Now that you have narrowed in on a time frame for your layout, it is time to begin researching the prototype's roster. There are many sources for locomotive rosters of a particular railroad. One of the best places to start is the applicable railroad historical society. It is very likely that they will have the appropriate roster within their library, or can point you in the right direction. For some railroads, there are publishers who publish a locomotive directory every few years. If available for your prototype, this type of book is a great source of information. Finally, there is the Internet and personal web pages. Many railfans have websites with locomotive rosters. The information I have found on such websites is quite good,

but I try to verify it with another source to ensure the accuracy. Also, it is a good idea to learn the names of the more notable railfans for your prototype, and then see if they have a website.

Ideally, one could find a roster that corresponds exactly to the time frame they are considering. However, such good luck is unlikely. What is far more likely is that one will find a roster or rosters before or after the time of interest. If you can find two rosters, one before and one after the period of interest, then it is possible to create a pretty accurate roster by comparing the two.

ROSTER ANALYSIS

Now we will examine how to use the roster you have found to create your prototypical locomotive roster. In this example, we will use two rosters. Roster #1 is Norfolk Southern post-Conrail merger (<http://www.geocities.com/lvrailfan/nsroster.htm>) and Roster #2 is the Norfolk Southern roster by Christ Toth, as of June 1st, 2006 (<http://www.nsdash9.com/roster.html>).

The Norfolk Southern post-Conrail merger roster provides: road numbers; model number; builder; horse-power rating; and notes for each range of

road numbers. The range of locomotives (rows) is based on both the model number and previous ownership. It provides the range of numbers, but not the total count of locomotives within that number range. The model number includes subclasses, some of which I've not seen elsewhere. The notes provide information on previous ownership, previous road numbers, and unique features such as high hoods.

The first step in the analysis is to determine the total number of each locomotive model, for example there are four separate listings for EMD SW1500 locomotives (quantities 1, 43, 5, and 45), in total there are 103 SW1500s on the roster. Once the total number of locomotives is determined for each model type, the grand total is determined. For the post-Conrail roster, the grand total was 3,880 locomotives. Knowing the grand total and the total for each type it is possible to determine the percentage of locomotives from each type as shown in the table. The total shown is 3,747 or 96 percent of all the locomotives because I chose to ignore the slug units.

As can be seen in the table, the C40-9W is the most common locomotive on the Norfolk Southern in 1999, but it only represents 16 percent of the total number of locomotives. The SD80MACs, which are a popular locomotive among modelers, are less than 1 percent of the total Norfolk Southern roster. Thus, the odds of actually seeing one of these locomotives are quite low. A model roster made up of rare locomotives

would not be plausible, because it does not represent a statistical sample of the real railroad. Therefore, the modeler should make every effort to collect the typical locomotives for his layout. Special locomotives, such as the SD80MAC, will stand out much better if they are just one locomotive in a roster filled with more typical locomotives.

The next step is to evaluate the impact of one's layout "locale" on the roster. For the Scotts-dale Division the locale is mountainous West Virginia. Thus it is reasonable to expect a disproportionately high number of high power, six axle locomotives to be seen. Conversely, one could expect to see more four axle locomotives on a flat branchline. Thus, the next step was to break the roster into two groups: six axle and four axle locomotive classes. Six axle locomotives represent about 60 percent of the NS roster, while four axle units are about 40 percent. Since the Scotts-dale Division is in West Virginia, it can be assumed that there would be more six axle units than the average of the entire Norfolk Southern roster. However, four axle units can be expected as switchers, substitutes on main-

line trains or as transfer units. In addition, not every train will always have the optimum power assignment and some extras will be stuck with "leftovers". Thus

I assume that it would be about an 80 percent/20 percent split between six and four axle units. In other words out of 20 locomotives, I would expect 16 to be six axle units and 4 to be four axle units.

Given that six axle units should make about 16 out of every 20 locomotives, the next step is to determine which models they would be. I assume that any model which represents <1 percent of the roster, would be too rare to ever see on the railroad. That eliminates the SD9M, E8A, and SD70M models. Since the C40-9W class is about 30 percent of the six axle units, I would expect that 4 or 5 out of the 16 would be this class. Similarly, the SD40-2s should be 3 out of 16, the C40-8Ws 1 or 2, and the SD60s would be 1 or 2. By percentage, the remaining models would be <1 out of every 16. Thus the roster is as follows:

C40-9W	5
SD40-2	3
C40-8W	2
SD60	<u>2</u>
Total	12

Since the C40-8, C40-9, and C39-8 are similar locomotives, I would pick one or two of this group bringing the total to 14. For the last two I would pick a couple of my favorites from

1982	1990	1996	1998	2002	2003	2006
NS Corp. Formed	NW & Southern become NS Original Logo Unveiled	NS receives first order of C40-9Ws	NS & CSX buy Conrail	NS Horsehead Logo Unveiled		

Figure 3: The timeline for the Norfolk Southern is completed as locomotive classes are added.

the remaining classes, for a total of 16 six axle diesels.

A similar effort could be completed for the four axle units to develop a roster totaling 20 locomotives. The result is a model roster that represents the prototype's mix of motive power as of the date of the roster.

NS ROSTER COMPARISON			
	Post Merger	2006	Roster Change
C40-9W	645	1089	444
SD40-2	424	385	-39
GP38-2	389	476	87
GP38	296	44	-252
C-40-8W	178	154	-24
SD60	168	166	-2
C-39-8	149	81	-68
C-40-9	125	125	0
B-23-7	121	0	-121
SW1500	103	48	-55
GP50	90	70	-20
C-40-8	89	88	-1
MP15DC	87	87	0
SD50S	6	1	-5
C-30-7	79	0	-79
SD50	78	55	-23
SD40	73	40	-33
GP40-2	71	71	0
SD70	70	80	10
GP15-1	58	58	0
C-36-7	57	0	-57
GP60	50	49	-1
C-30-7A	50	0	-50
SD60I	46	46	0
B-32-8	45	45	0
SD60M	44	44	0
GP59	35	35	0
GP40	30	17	-13
B-30-7	22	0	-22
SD38	21	21	0
B40-8	18	18	0
SD80MAC	17	16	-1
SW1001	12	10	-2
SD9M	9	8	-1
SD45-2	6	6	0
GP49	6	0	-6
GP40X	3	3	0
E8A	1	0	-1
SD70M	0	68	68
ES40DC	0	165	165
SD70M-2	0	130	130
GP38-3	0	19	19
SD38-2	0	1	1
Grand Total	3,771		3,819

CHANGES OVER TIME

Over time, the prototype's roster will change as new locomotives are purchased, old ones retired, and some are wrecked. Since the post-Conrail roster provides the information at the beginning of the time range for the Scotts-dale Division, I

found another roster near the end of the time frame. Chris Toth keeps an up to date Norfolk Southern roster on his website, www.nsdash9.com. Reviewing his site and comparing it to the post merger roster, I found retirements and additions also add key changes to a roster.

RETIREMENTS

In the eight years between the two rosters, a number of locomotives were retired. First, all of the GE Dash 7 classes were retired between 1999 and 2006, these include classes: B23-7, B30-7, C30-7, C30-7A, and C-36-7. In addition, the few (6) EMD GP49 were retired, as was the single E8A inherited from Conrail. Also, a number of classes were significantly reduced especially the four axle EMD classes: including the GP38, GP40, GP50, and SW1500. Six axle units from both GE and EMD were retired including the GE C39-8 and C40-8W classes, as well as the EMD SD40, SD40-2, and SD50 classes. Other classes lost a few locomotives such as the SD60s, C40-8, GP60, SD80MAC that would seem due to either especially poor performers or wrecks as these are fairly new classes. The SW1001 and SD9M classes lost a couple of locomotives, but these are old classes in which only a few are left.

ADDITIONS


The single biggest addition was 444 new Dash 9-40CWs or C40-9W which were ordered and delivered from 1999 to 2004. Following the Dash 9s, were the ES40DC from GE that total 165 units from 2005 to date, with more on order. Orders were placed with EMD for additional SD70s (10 units), and new classes SD70M and SD70M-2. All together these classes account for 208 new units. Norfolk Southern shops capital rebuild program also took a portion of the retired 252 GP-38s and converted them into 87 new GP38-2s and 19 GP38-3s. Also, one SD40-2 was rebuilt as a SD38-2.

MODEL ROSTER			
	1999	2006	Roster change
C40-9W		5	7
SD40-2		3	2
GP38-2		2	3
GP38	1	0	
C40-8W	1	1	
SD60	1	1	
C39-8	1	1	
C40-8	1	1	
B23-7	1	0	
C40-8	1	1	
MP15DC	0	1	
C30-7	1	0	
SD50	1	0	
SD40	1	0	
ES40DC	0	1	
SD70M-2	0	1	

The result for the sample roster would be a rebalancing of the roster over time. To keep our roster in the same proportion as the prototype, the roster would also change. The GE Dash 7s would be retired, eliminating the B23-7 and C30-7. The retirements of the SD40s, SD50s, and GP38s would make them too rare to be included in our roster. The rebuilding of the GP38s as GP38-2s would mean that our “retired” GP38 would be kit-bashed and returned to service as a GP38-2 and would increase the numbers of these units by one. Two C40-9Ws would be added to the roster. Also new classes ES40DC and SD70M-2 would now be large enough to be represented on our roster. Thus, to keep up with the changing times from 1999 to 2006 on the NS one would sell four locomotives, kit-bash one, and buy four new ones. Alternatively, one could

assume that it is 2003, and that the SD50 and C36-7 have not yet been replaced by the new classes ES40DC and SD70M-2. Thereby halving the number of locomotives to be sold and replaced with new models.

I hope this article has been helpful to you and demonstrates how to more accurately represent your prototype through the selection of models for your layout.

SCOTT C.R. HENRY *lives in the Potomac Division where he models HO scale.* 

The 6th MER State.

A Correction to the Series Article: On The Road - Part 1

By Mike White

THERE ARE SIX MER STATES, not five as I mistakenly stated in Part 1 of the article “On The Road” – and I knew that. But somehow that fact got lost in the throes of putting the article together and for that I offer my sincere apologies to our members from New Jersey.

As it turns out, “Shields Up” at <http://www.kendrick.org/shields-up/> generates a New Jersey state highway route marker that is exactly the same as that of Delaware. See figure 1. However, and this is sort of a sneak preview of Part 4, as the 1940s



Figure 1: New Jersey's state highway marker.

marker is substantially different. See figure 2. The 1940s marker is not from “Shields Up”, but from James Lin’s “Highway Route Markers” at <http://www.routemarkers.com/states/1948/>.

The “On The Road” series article, contains all of the rest of the information you need to make any states’ highway signs from either era so I won’t repeat any more of it here. However, New Jersey’s highway history information needs to be covered.

I found an excellent web site on NJ highway history at <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/pdf/People/people.pdf> for a comprehensive look back, beginning with the

Indian trails. If you just want to zero in on just the 20th century history, check out <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/publicat/pdf/People/people20th.pdf>.




Figure 2: The 1940s era highway marker for New Jersey.

I hope this makes amends for my earlier oversight - there was no slight intended.

Go and make some great signs.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The editor and team of proofreaders' also apologize for not catching this important piece of fact checking.*

MIKE WHITE *lives in the Potomac Division where he models HO scale.* 



On The Road - Part 2

A series article

By Mike White

PREVIOUSLY, (see the March/April 2008 issue) we learned how to use the “Shields Up” program to create an HO scale State Route # sign. Now let’s explore what else we can, and can’t do with this program. In our first use of “Shields Up”, we selected “primary” as the sign type, and ignored the Banner, Shape, Font and Scale selections. Let’s look at Banner and see what that does.

Open the “Shields Up” link in your browser, (<http://www.kendrick.org/shields-up/>). Select any one of the choices under Banner, and set everything else as you did for making the HO



Figure 1: Using the banner option allows for directional signs, here is an example of North.

scale State Route # sign. I chose “North”. Click on the “Shield Up” button. See figure 1. Now set Banner to “Alt”, Route # to 40, Type to “US”, and Shape to “Default”. See figure 2. Prior to 1955, US highway shields were of the ‘cutout’ variety. “Shields Up” can also make these for you if you want an older US highway sign. Setup is the same as the last sign only change Banner to “none” and Type to “US Throwback”, and State to your choice. See figure 3.

Try out other options. Most of the choices are either obvious or intuitive. This can be a very useful program for sign modeling



Figure 2: Using the banner option also produces this alternate Route 40 sign.

graphics. If the program is unable to create the combination of features you choose, it will either ignore the inapplicable choices, or advise you that the result cannot be generated (some 1940s State Route # signs will do this).

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE NEEDED FOR THIS PROJECT:

- A PC running Microsoft XP or higher.
- Microsoft Word 2003 or higher.
- Adobe Reader (available free on the internet).
- Paint NET v3.20 (available free on the internet).
- Color printer.

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THIS PROJECT:

- Evergreen #9010 0.010 sheet styrene – Plain, white
- Kappler #KP1149-HOP12 Scale Lumber 4” x 4” wood (or equivalent)
- Model Master “Aluminum” (non-buffing) metallic paint (or equivalent)
- Thinner/brush cleaner for above (Model Master or DioSol)
- Scrap wood block (to pin paper to while applying spray adhesive)
- Straight pins (to hold paper to block)
- Saran Wrap (or equivalent, to protect surface from adhesive over spray)
- Old newspaper
- Spray adhesive
- Medium viscosity CA (Cyanoacrylates) cement
- Hobby knife or new single-edge razor blade
- Small sharp scissors

What about all of the other signs out there that you might need? Open the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices – (MUTCD) at http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno_2003r1r2.htm (PDF version). Open “Part 8 – Traffic Controls for Highway –



Figure 3: An example of a cutout style highway sign.

Rail Grade Crossings”. We can’t work directly with the Internet version, so click on the second icon (the “floppy disk”) in the toolbar and save this section to a convenient place on your computer.

In Windows Explorer, go to the location that you saved the file above, double left-click (or “open” it from the “File” menu option) to open the file in Adobe Reader. The fourth item (right arrow) on the toolbar allows you to click from page to page. Go to page 13. The first graphic on the page is the familiar circular RR Crossing sign. Click on the “Tools” item on the Menu Bar, mouse-over “Select&zoom”, and select (left-click on) “Snapshot Tool” at the bottom of the list that opens.

Your cursor now changes to a “crosshair”. Starting on the upper left, left-click and draw a box as closely as you can around the sign. Release the mouse button and you should see a dialog box telling you that the “selected area has been copied”.

Open the Paint NET program and from the start bar, select “Edit” and then “Paste”. From the “Image” menu bar selection, select “Crop to selection”. From the “Image” menu bar selection again, select “Resize”. In the “Width” box, type “26” (without the quotes). Click on “OK”. The result is an HO scale RR Crossing

sign). It is much easier to repetitively paste the same graphic than to do each individually.

Do the same for each Route Number sign (and/or whatever else you’ve made). I’ve chosen the MD RT # 2 sign as the example

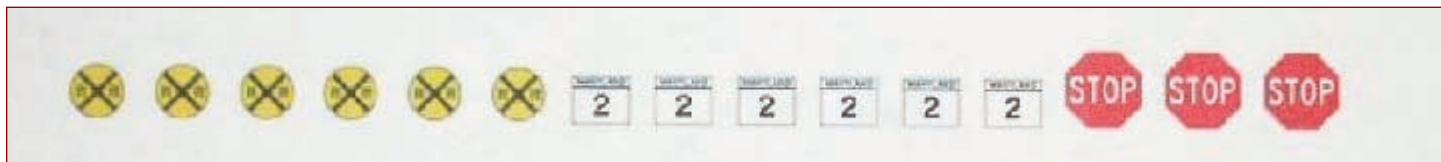


Figure 4: Repeated copying will enable dual sided signs.

advance warning sign. “Save As” to a folder and file name of your choice. The same process can be followed with any graphic in the MUTCD PDF file – there are hundreds of them!

here. Continue this process until you have all of the signs you want to make copied into the Word document. I added 3 stop signs. See Figure 4.

Our prior efforts have been directed at locating, sizing, and saving graphics for highway signs to use on our layouts. It’s now time to use the results to actually construct the signs themselves.

If you haven’t saved it already, “Save as” (I called mine ‘Word Sign Sheet.’) in a folder of your choice.

In Windows Explorer, open the folder on your computer where you saved the HO-sized graphics. Click on one (I chose the RR Crossing.) then either right-click and choose “Copy”, or left-click

The next step is to print the document using a color printer.

Carefully trim the printed document to just that portion containing your sign graphics. See Figure 5. In order to make a realistic

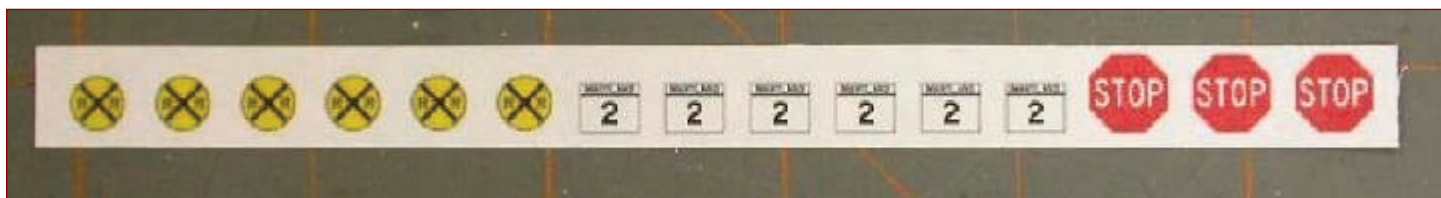


Figure 5: This shows how trimmed down the portion of your newly created highway signs should be.

on the “Edit” selection on the Menu bar and select “Copy”. Either will work.

sign, you should paint one side of a piece of 0.010 white styrene sheet (trimmed to approximately the same size as the trimmed graphics portion) with a metallic paint such as Model Master “Aluminum” (non-buffing type). Allow it to dry according to directions before proceeding. See Figure 6.

Then open a “new” file in MS Word and within the document space, either right-click and choose “Paste”, or left-click on the “Edit” selection on the Menu bar and select “Paste”. Press the



Figure 6: The white styrene sheet with a metallic paint (trimmed to approximately the same size as the trimmed printout) dries.


spacebar twice to move the cursor to the right a little then “paste” again. Paste will continue to replicate the same graphic until you use copy to select something different. You will need two of each sign for every grade crossing or intersection (one in each direc-

Turn the trimmed graphics over on a flat surface, (I used a scrap wood block.) that you have covered with the Saran Wrap or some other non-paper covering and pin it down. Cover the area sur-

continued on page 10

rounding the block with newspaper to catch the over spray. Give it a light coat of spray adhesive. See figure 7. Turn it back over, being careful not to let your fingers transfer adhesive to the front of the paper. It is important not to let the sign side of the paper come in contact with the over spray on the Saran Wrap. Apply it to the trimmed non-painted side of the 0.010 white styrene. See figure 8.

process is a little more complicated than what we've done so far, but now that you have the basics down, we will build on these skills to do something a little more involved.

MIKE WHITE lives in the Potomac Division where he models HO scale. 

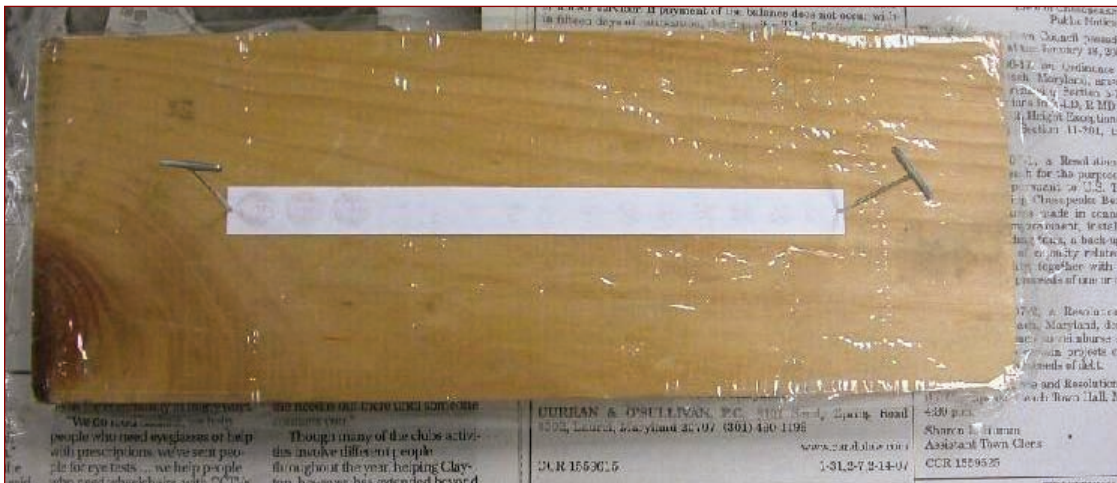


Figure 7: The newspaper protects the work area while applying the adhesive.



Figure 8: The highway signs are applied to the trimmed non-paint side of the 0.010 white styrene.

Using a hobby knife or single edge razor blade, carefully cut out each sign. For round signs it is easier to use a small, sharp pair of cuticle scissors.

Cut your 4"x4" lumber to an HO scale 7 feet plus the necessary additional amount to insert into your scenery. Most signs are mounted along the side of the road with approximately 5 feet between the ground and the bottom of the sign. The extra 2 feet is the sign itself. The exception is in urban areas where there is foot traffic near the sign. In this case, cut the post 9 feet long to provide a clearance of 7 feet to the bottom of the sign.

Glue the post to the painted side of the sign so that the top of the post is at or just below the top of the sign. Finally, let dry. See the completed signs in figure 9.

Now you have a good start on the making you model roads as interesting and eye-catching as your model railroads. Next time we'll work on custom-made destination and distance signs. The

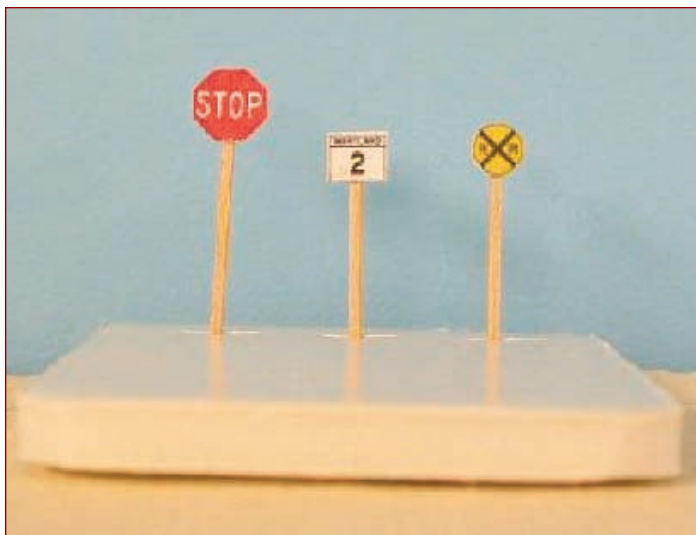


Figure 9: The completed signs await installation.

Potomac Junction 2008 Special Contest Awards

By Martin Brechbiel
MER General Contest Chairman

POTOMAC JUNCTION 2008—“Crossroads of the MER”, the MER 2008 convention on October 16 through 19, in addition to the range of the standard Contest Room awards and Categories will feature the following Special Awards:

THE BEST OF SHOW AWARD is given to the model that scores the highest point total in the judged model contest.

THE PRESIDENT’S AWARD is chosen at each convention by the MER President who names the specific topic. For 2008, President Clint Hyde has announced a contest wherein the award will be given to the modeler that enters 3 different ventilated cars such as a stock car, watermelon produce car, or a poultry car, (there are other possibilities!). The winner must receive a Merit Award with each of their 3 entries and also have the highest combined entrant judged score for their 3 entries. In addition to being awarded the President’s Award plaque, the cost of registration will be reimbursed! If you have any questions about this contest and award contact chyde@cox.net.

THE PRIDE of DIXIE AWARD is sponsored by the James River Division. In 2008, it will be awarded to the winning model in the judged category of “Roadside Vendor”. This might be a farmer selling stuff from a truck or some sort of roadside stand.

THE CHAIRMAN’S AWARD will be presented by the Convention Chairman to the model of his favorite passenger car equipped with truss rods, past or present, any scale. The model can be either a Merit Award judged entry or a popular vote only entry!

THE CLYDE GERALD AWARD is sponsored by the MER and named for the late Clyde Gerald, former MER Business Manager and long time modeler. It is awarded to the kitbashed model which scores highest in the judged model contest.

THE BLUE LANTERN AWARD is privately sponsored and chosen by long time MER modeler Terry Nesbit and his Narrow Gauge Car Shop. The Blue Lantern is given to a model best representing branch or private line equipment or facilities, which contain no more than forty percent commercial parts. The prize—a genuine railroad lantern—is presented to the winner by Mr. Nesbit.

THE PHILADELPHIA DIVISION MODELER AWARD rewards excellence in model building by first time entrants in an NMRA sponsored judged model contest. The highest score achieved by a new modeler in the contest is worth not only a



plaque, but a cash prize of twenty five dollars!

THE MER NARROW GAUGE AWARD is also privately sponsored by a group of narrow gauge modelers, and encourages building models depicting aspects of narrow gauge railroading. The narrow gauge model that scores highest in the model contest is presented a handcrafted plaque.

THE MARV KERSHNER CREATIVITY AWARD sponsored and chosen by the South Mountain Division, rewards creativity in model building. The award is named after Marv Kershner, a gifted modeler who urged others to be creative and venture “out of the box” when approaching a modeling subject.

THE MA AND PA MODELING AWARD is sponsored by the Ma & Pa Society. The winner is a Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad model, which scores highest in the judged model contest.

THE FAVORITE TRAIN AWARD sponsored by the Tidewater Division, is a popular vote award and will be included on the Popular Vote ballot. Yes, members who can find their way to the contest room, get to choose this one!

These special awards, and the 1st through 3rd place awards for all of the categories in the Model, Photo and Arts and Crafts contest, will be presented by the contest staff at the convention banquet on Saturday evening. Awards and other contest information available on the Potomac Junction 2008 website, http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/MER2008/.

Additionally, in my new role as MER General Contest Chairman I’d like to encourage everyone to consider bringing a model to enter into the various NMRA contest categories. I’ve found from personal experience that participating in the AP program and Contest room has improved my modeling skills over the years, has been very educational, and has been of great general value. I would not have considered taking on this role unless I did not feel this to be a valuable part of the MER and the NMRA, and I also know that the MER has a great number of truly outstanding modelers out there. So, bring your models to the contest room this fall in Reston, VA! If you have any other questions, contact me at martinwb@verizon.net. 📧

SUPPORT YOUR NMRA REGION AND PURCHASE THESE GREAT PRODUCTS FROM MER



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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platform.



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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 2008, 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), or Roger L. Cason, MER Secretary (1125 Grinnell Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803-5125, 302-478-2550, 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 NMRA
headquarters in Chattanooga, TN.

Date of form: 1/31/07

Artist/Layout of the Month

Reading Gem 0-6-0

by Deane Mellander

This photo of the Reading Gem 0-6-0 ran on Rick Shoupis (MMR 234 and Life Member of the MER) layout around 1982. The layout was featured in Model Railroader in June 1985. Rick currently lives Florida.

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



NEEDED:

Assistant Model Contest Manager for the MER

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

Humor, scale blindness, patience,
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Please contact Clint Hyde, chyde@cox.net
or
Martin Brechbiel, martinwb@verizon.net.

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.

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 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!!



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CALLBOARD Coming Events

May 3rd. New Jersey Divisional meet at the Knights of Columbus building located at 15 East Lacey Road in Forked River, N.J. Clinics from 9 AM to Noon. Layouts from 1 PM to 4 PM. Contact Mike McNamara for more information at (856) 824-0871 or e-mail mikemcnh@comcast.net.

May 3rd and 4th. Fairfax Station Spring Show with the Potomac Module Crew. Located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station, VA. Saturday 12 PM to 5 PM; Sunday 12 PM to 4 PM. Cost: Adults \$4.00; children \$1.00. Visit www.fairfax-station.org for more information.

May 10th, Hours 10 AM to 4 PM. Wade's Train Town Open House operated by Carolina Southern Division members. Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center Street in Hickory, N.C.

May 10th. James River Division Meet at the Church of the Redeemer located at 2341 Winterfield Road in Midlothian, VA. Clinics, Contests, Door Prizes, 50-50 raffle, White Elephant tables from 9:30 AM to Noon. Layout tours from 1 PM to 4 PM. Contact Robert Alvis for more information at (804) 329-4060 e-mail rwalvis@mac.com.

May 18th and 19th. The Great Lehigh Valley Train Meet located at the Merchants Square Mall, 1901 South 12th Street in Allentown, PA. The Saturday show from 10 AM to 4 PM, is dedicated to HO, ON3O, Brass, N and Z gauge. The Sunday show from 10 AM to 3 PM, is dedicated to O, 0-27, S and G gauge. Cost: \$5 for adults; children 12 and under are free. Visit www.lehighvalleytrainmeet.com/coupon.htm for a dollar off admission.

June 7th. Visit the Narrow gauge East Broad Top Railroad (EBT) and the Rockhill Trolley Museum with the Susquehanna Division, Rock Hill Furnace, PA. The train departs at 11 AM and the ride lasts about 1 hour, 15 minutes. The roundhouse and shop tour will follow the train ride at 1 PM and the tour of the trolley car barn and restoration shop will be after that (depending on staffing). The EBT ride costs \$11.50 for adults; \$7.50 for children 2-11 years old. The roundhouse & shop tour costs \$7.00 for both adults and children. The Rockhill Trolley activities cost \$5.50 for an adult; \$2.50 for children. **RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED.** Contact Bob Martin no later than May 31st at (717) 848-3640 or by e-mail cprrboss@comcast.net.

June 13th – 15th. Tidewater HO Module Group is displayed at Oakdale Heights, a Senior Home in Virginia Beach, VA.

Callboard continued on back cover

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 1 – New Jersey

John Rahenkamp – *Scenery*

Division 2 – Potomac

Martin Brechbiel – *Motive Power*

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Dick Bronson – *Volunteer*

James Allen – *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**.

The running total of how many Gold Spikes and AP Merit awards have been earned in the last year. Since April 1, 2007, MER members have earned 15 Gold Spikes and 20 AP Merit Awards. 🚂



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CALLBOARD
 Coming Events

Callboard continued from page 15

June 14th, Hours 10 AM to 4 PM. Wade's Train Town Open House operated by Carolina Southern Division members. Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center Street in Hickory, N.C.

June 26th - 29th. Tidewater HO Module Group is displaying Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a Health Center in Virginia Beach, VA.

June 28th and 29th. The Great Scale Model Train Show. At the Maryland State Fairgrounds located at 2200 York Rd in Timonium, MD. 9 AM to 4 PM on Saturday; 10 AM to 4 PM on Sunday. Cost is \$7 for adults; kids 12 and under are free (admission is good for both days). Visit: www.gsmts.com for more information and directions.

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 editor 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.