

The Local

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On The Road - Part 4 In the Age of Steam

By Mike White

PRIOR INSTALLMENTS have described how to make highway signs of the 1950s and 1960s during the railroads' transition from steam to diesel. Now, let's look at an earlier era – the 1930s and '40s – when steam ruled the rails and highways and highway signs were far fewer and varied. I saved this period to last because the Internet resources for this era are scarce and substantially more “customization” will be required to replicate the highway signs of this period.

As an example, Figure 1 shows State Route Markers from two sources. Shields Up produces the graphics for Delaware and Maryland only. The other four states are from a different source and are “static”. Although the sign shape and graphics are provided, changing them to your own route numbers will require “customization” with Paint NET. But we will get back to that later.

Figure 2 shows the yellow stop signs introduced in (March-April issue of **The Local**) part 1 of this series. However, the font on the Internet version [A] is different than that of the Maryland photograph [B]. The font used on signs in the 1940s had a more “blocky” look to it. This was a specialized font that is not available as a standard Microsoft True-Type font (.tff file). The closest standard font that I was able to find was “Arial Narrow” [C], but this is still not exact. If you are a stickler for prototypical accu-

racy, there is a shareware font available for download from http://pghbridges.com/hsotw/USHwy_font/. The font developer is asking for \$5.00 if you download and use it. The character set is shown in [D].

For our purposes, we'll use “Arial Narrow” because it is available to everyone. Let's make some yellow stop signs. Yes, signs – they came in two styles. Unless we get into new territory, I'm not going to go into step-by-step detail on how to do things you've already learned in Parts 1, 2 and 3. I will describe what to do – the how will be up to you based on your prior experience. We are going to start with a red stop sign from the MUTCD because the graphic is better. Open <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/kno-tutintro.html>, select Chapter 2B – Regulatory Signs, and “Save as” with a file name of your choice. Open the just saved PDF file, go to page 9, and draw a box evenly around the red Stop sign. Open Paint NET, Paste the graphic, and Crop to selection. Now is the time to use the Rectangle Select tool to adjust the borders of the selection if you need to. Use “Save as” to save the pasted graphic to a file name of your choice. See figure 3A.

In the Colors box, left-click on the 5th color from the left in the

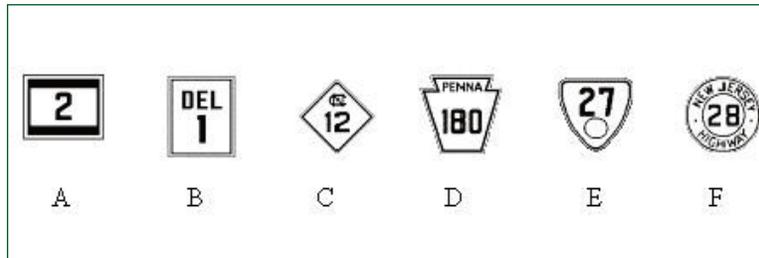


Figure 1: State Route Markers a and b are from Shields Up, while c, d, e and f are from www.routemarkers.com/states/1948/.

continued on page 4

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

I trust a good number of MER members got out to the National in Anaheim this year. I had to forgo the pleasure due to time and money constraints but I have heard from some members that it was a very good convention. I'm sure we will hear a lot more in the model press. Next year the convention will be in Hartford, CT. This will be a lot closer for MER members. The location should give access to a NMRA National convention for a lot more of us. If you haven't before; experience one of the best model railroading activities.

And speaking of conventions, the MER's fall convention in Reston, VA is coming up shortly. It looks like the folks in the Potomac Division have lined up a great array of things to do and see. If you haven't already signed up, take a look at the advertising here in **The Local** and look at all the latest details at the convention website: (http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008) or simply bounce over from the MER website.

I was surprised to see a photo of my traction modeling on the front page of the NMRA website. If you haven't visited the NMRA site lately I would encourage you to go and see the much-improved content and graphics display of the site: (www.nmra.org)

Hope to see many of you in Reston. (I'll be the guy with the conductor's hat.) 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.

NOTICE TO ALL MER MEMBERS: ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of MER members will be held on Sunday morning, October 19, in conjunction with the MER Fall Convention in Reston, VA. The exact time, and the location within the convention hotel, will be posted at the convention.

Roger L. Cason, MMR, MER Secretary

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

(Final)... President's Column

By Clint Hyde, MER President.

I DID NOT EXPECT to end up in this job, but some things are happy accidents. I have enjoyed working the issues, visiting the Division and meeting all the folks.

One of the best aspects about a Region-level job, especially that of President or Vice President, is the interaction with people across our territory. I have found this to be the most rewarding aspect over the past six years. And of course, if you are a watcher of electioneering (as one is forced to be when living in the DC area), you learn that the path to winning elections is to know people all over the electing area.

I was recently informed that an anonymous e-mail was circulated in early August complaining about a current MER Board election candidate. Well, that's one approach but not likely to accomplish much this year, considering there are no contested slots. Another, and far better, option is to run for office yourself. The MER can always use more participants, including for the elected offices. Don't forget, an elected Region role is worth AP Official points.



The question was raised recently to me of why doesn't MER have the Division Supers (or other Division officers) as voting members on the Region Board. I don't know the history on this, but we don't. It turns out that some Regions do, some don't. If it is important to change this, well, it will be my successor's worry. I am not convinced it's a great idea, if for no other reason than the difficulty of getting a voting quorum together (and the region board meetings are long enough already). Roger Cason and I have been discussing the possibility of a change because MER has a hard time finding candidates for MER President.

But no doubt about it: more participation is good. There are plenty of AP Volunteer opportunities, and a reasonable number of AP Official jobs. National-level offices also qualify for AP Official and Volunteer, but they are harder to get into—and your local folks need more immediate help.

My final thought as president: become an active participant in the organization. Go to your Division gatherings, meet the people, get involved, help out and make new friends. You never know where this will lead! 📧

How Our NMRA Liability Insurance Coverage Works

By Mike Brestel,
NMRA President

THE NMRA HAS BEEN GETTING an increasing number of questions lately about our liability insurance. For instance; who can use it, who it protects, when it goes into effect, etc.

In order to help answer these questions, we have just posted a new memo and other documents to where we supply plain-language answers to many of the questions we have been asked.

To access all the insurance information and forms, just go to www.nmra.org and click the "insurance" link that is under the "Resources" heading on the left side of the web page. Or you can go directly to this URL www.nmra.org/national/insurance/insurance.html.

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!! 📧

top color bar at the bottom of the box. This is now your left-click color. Using the Paint Bucket tool, left click in the red portion of the sign. Your sign should now look like figure 3B. As you did with



Figure 2: A is a yellow Stop sign graphic from the Internet, B is a photo by the author of 1940s Maryland stop sign, C is the common “Arial Narrow” font from Microsoft and D is a character set available online for a small fee.

the modern green destination and distance sign in Part 3, rectangle select and cut the “STOP” out of the sign. With the Paint Bucket tool, fill in the hole with the selected yellow color. See figure 3C. Change your left-click color back to Black in the Colors box, select the Text Tool, select the “Arial Narrow” font, set size to “72”, and

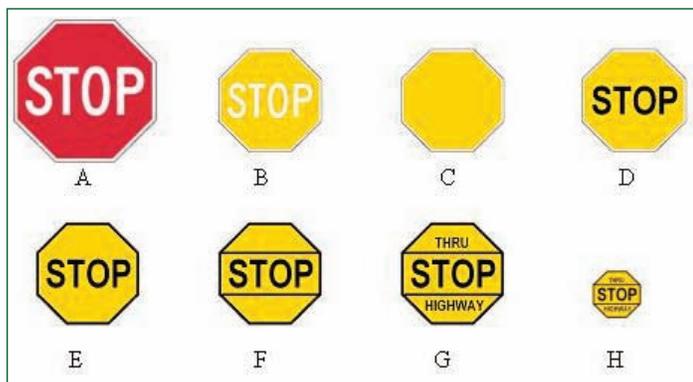


Figure 3: Developing the 1940s yellow Stop sign from red to HO scale.

select “Sharp”. Type the word “STOP” (in all caps) in the sign. Click “B” (bold) next to “Sharp” in the menu bar. Use the little box to center the result left to right and top to bottom. See figure 3D. While you still have Black selected, use the Paint Bucket tool to fill in the white border around the sign. See figure 3E.

The next step is something new. From the Tools box, select the “Line” tool (just to the right of the “Text” tool). In the third row of the menu bar, click the little arrow to the right of the “Brush Width” box and select “6”. Hold down the “shift key” on your keyboard and, starting at the top of the left vertical side, left-click and hold and draw a line to the top of the right vertical side. Do the same from the bottom of the left vertical side to the bottom of the right vertical side. The result should look like figure 3F.

Select the Text tool again, set the font size to “28”, and in the top 1/3 of the sign type “THRU”. Adjust to center, if needed. In the bottom 1/3 type “HIGHWAY”. “Save as” whatever you want to name it. Your sign should now look similar to figure 3G.

The Table 2B-1 in the MUTCD shows that the size of a stop sign for a conventional road is 30” x 30”. Resize your sign in Paint NET to Pixel Size to Width = 33 pixels. “Save as” but change the file type to “.gif” in the “Save as type” drop-down list. Until now, all of the basic files we have worked with started as “.gif” files. The red stop sign did not, so it is necessary to make it a “.gif” so that it resizes properly.

Let’s switch back to the State Route Markers for NC, PA, NJ and VA; these need to be “customized” with your own route numbers.



Figure 4: Examples of reworked State Route Marker signs.

You should be way ahead of me here, since you already have done everything you need to know to do this. Pick your state, Rectangle Select the existing number, Cut it, Paint Bucket fill after changing the left-click color to White. Change the color back to Black, and use the Text tool to type in your custom number. Up to this point, I have done all of the font sizing for you, but now it’s your turn. Notice that each of the signs has a different size number, so size selection will be different for each. It’s all trial and error. Try something – if it’s too large or small “Undo” it and try again. That’s what I did until now and then provided the result to you. See figure 4 for some of my versions.

Some states used a different version of the stop sign we made above. However, as you have probably figured out it is an easy change to make. Open the yellow Stop sign you saved that looks like figure 3G in Paint NET. Rectangle Select and Cut the word “STOP” from the sign. Select the yellow sign color in the Colors



Figure 5: In 1944 The Maryland stop sign substituted the word “Traffic” for “Highway”.

box and Paint Bucket fill the empty hole. Change the color to Black and Paint Bucket fill the area in the center of the sign. Change the color to White and, using the Text tool, retype the word STOP in the center of the sign. The Maryland sign substituted the word "Traffic" for "Highway". For an example, I made figures 5A and B.

You now have the knowledge, skills, tools, and resources to make any highway sign graphics you may need. The skills you learned in the use of Paint NET are transferable to just about any model railroad project involving copying, sizing, and altering graphics. Don't be afraid to try anything. Remember, "Undo" is your friend.

Now go make some great model roads!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the people at the Maryland State Highway

Administration for their courteous and enthusiastic assistance. Karen Saab and Claire DeBakey for pointing my request in the right direction. Paul Stout, Assistant Chief – Traffic Operations Division, for organizing my visit and locating the 1944 and 1955 Maryland Sign Manuals for my review. Sonny Bailey – Manager of the SHA Sign Operations and his staff; my host and able facilitator for all of my requests and questions. Felicia Hammond, Office of Supply, for yeoman service in pulling and displaying vintage Maryland traffic signs so that I could photograph them. Thanks everybody, you helped immensely in getting this project moving.

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

Let's Talk About Track Work

Article and photograph by Ron Baile

I HAVE LEARNED a few things about railroad track while working for a real railroad the last five years. The first thing was I don't ever want to do it again.

Another guy and I had to replace two bad ties at a rail joint. It was July or August in South Jersey. Needless to say it was hot and humid. We had shovels and other large heavy tools, no machines. It took us several hours, and I have back trouble to start with.

Recently, I had to help install a derail. I figured it couldn't be too difficult. It was May in South Jersey. It was still hot and humid. We had shovels and large heavy tools. What I didn't know about derails is that they have vertical pieces that slide down alongside the ties that they are mounted on. Therefore the ties that you intend to mount the derail on must be perfectly aligned. Ours were not. So why not pick two more? The derail has to go in at the fouling point of the siding. If it's too far north and if something derails the main line may be fouled. If it's too far south we lose precious track space on a short siding. Besides, all the adjacent ties were rotten.

The solution was to take a track jack (very heavy) and dig out around one of the ties, pull the spikes and jack one tie into position. As this was not a drive-to job all the tools had to be carried about 100 yards. It took two of us several hours to complete this job. Did I mention I had a bad back?

Derails make a neat modeling subject. Using them may tend to slow your operators down a bit. They have to stop and drop the derail, do the move then replace the derail when the move is over.

On the prototype they may be locked in the on or off positions. Why lock it down? On my part it's just a precaution against vandals and other "helpful" individuals. When the engineer asks if the derail is down I can answer with certainty. My model derailer's (seen here) are originally from the Alexander line, which is now produced by Tomar. It's a neat little kit and it actually works.

Despite actually having to do some occasional track work I have learned a few things. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that oversees all railroads in the USA has a rulebook. It's very thick. One interesting rule that was recently updated, was that track joints must be staggered by 19 feet. If you intend to use those Grandt Line joint bars to super detail some track now you know the official spacing. Of course block gaps and insulated gaps for crossing signals require special treatment, as they must be directly across from each other.



A layout scene of a worker switching a derailer.

RON BALIE lives in New Jersey Division where he models On3 and a small G scale railroad. 🚂

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 has been extended to the end of 2009, 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 MMRA
headquarters in Chattanooga, TN.

Date of form: 1/31/07

Vehicles and Your Layout

Article and photographs by Jim Allen

NO MATTER WHERE you turn when building your layout you will find the need to spend money. Everything cost money, and the nicer it looks the more it will cost. Vehicles are no exception. The average price for on car or pickup truck is about \$9.00. The average cost for a semi is about \$16.00 and so on, and so on.

The best piece of advice anyone has given me when it comes to purchasing vehicles, is to buy them at the shows. I would say about a third of my collection came from shows. The percent could be higher, but I can't always find what I am looking for.

At the model railroad shows sometimes you will get lucky by picking up a few deals on cars that are still available, and others that are no longer available.

On a few occasions I've been able to spot a few left on a clearance shelf at one of the many hobby stores my wife and I have found while out exploring the countryside.

I very much enjoy modeling so spending extra time on one vehicle won't deter me in the least. I hope to give you a few ideas on how you might take a few generic or low budget vehicles and turn them into something that looks like you paid a lot for. Here are some examples:

I bet you never have seen a Charlie Chips truck on a layout before. This really wasn't that difficult, that is if you or a friend can make your own decals. After first striping the original truck

truck. Once again simply strip the truck of any glass or decals, and then completely disassemble the truck. For convenience



truck. Once again simply strip the truck of any glass or decals, and then completely disassemble the truck. For convenience sake, you may want to paint two or three of these at a time. I selected some dark blue spray paint that I had on the shelf. The mixer itself was sprayed with a couple of coats of white. Spending a little extra time by painting each and every light, signal, and or reflector. The more small details that you paint the better. This truck does not have any decals applied yet, but you could easily add them later if you wanted. A CB antenna was added to the cab roof for an added effect. The antenna was made from a small thin piece of wire. Use your favorite weathering technique to finish it off. You could build yourself a nice fleet of these trucks for under \$10.00.



(Lifelike's Greenspring Creamery) of decals, tires, windows etc, a fresh coat of cream-colored paint is in order. You can find Charlie Chips graphics off of images on the Internet. Note that you will need to size them using your favorite paint or photo software. Next use a super fine sharpie to speckle the truck all over. Finish it off with a coat of chocolate brown painted rims, and you have a nice looking Charlie Chips Vehicle.

This IHC cement truck was purchased for a mere \$3.00. No additional parts were purchased to make this into a realistic

Carefully cutting the doors off of this Mini Metal express truck, and then adding some boxes definitely changes the whole look. One other small modification to this truck was shortening the bed itself at the end. These trucks come with an extra foot and a half of bed along with a hook sticking out the rear. The boxes were made from square dowels cut to various sizes and then painted.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is printed with the author's permission and first appeared on his website www.southernexchange.net.

JIM ALLEN lives in the Carolina Southern Division where he models HO scale. 

POTOMAC JUNCTION 2008

By Bill Demas

THE 2008 MID-EASTERN REGION CONVENTION, hosted by Potomac Division 2, “Potomac Junction ‘08,” will be held at the Sheraton Reston, October 16th through the 19th, and will feature many events designed to enhance your enjoyment of and participation in the model railroad experience.

An all-star lineup includes tours of nationally known layouts and their builders, clinicians and unprecedented access to a bevy of Master Model Railroaders, prototype tours, and the opportunity to visit sites in the National Capital Triangle area of Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis await this years attendees.

More than 30 clinics have been lined up featuring a wide range of topics, among which are Brian Scace’s Alternative Approach to Layout Design; The Art of Decaling by William Mosteller; Building In Styrene by David Renard; MMR, Building In Wood-The Post Office(*) by Clint Hyde and Martin Brechbiel; Building and Coloring Masonry Buildings(*) by David Emery; Cadrail Update by Dennis Vaccaro; Rich Mahaney’s Designing Industries for Your Model Railroad; Fine Scale Animation by Bill Day; Kit-Bashing Freight Cars by John Johnson; Operations Switchlist Software by Marshall Abrams; Weathering Rolling Stock by John Drye; Startup Ops Using Car Cards by Roger Sekera; Cheap and Easy Trees(*) by Chuck Hladik; Sawdust Scenery by Noll Horan, MMR; and Timetable and Train Order by Steve King, which will include hands-on operations to apply the lessons learned at a group of local layouts. The asterisk (*) denotes hands-on, extra fare clinics.

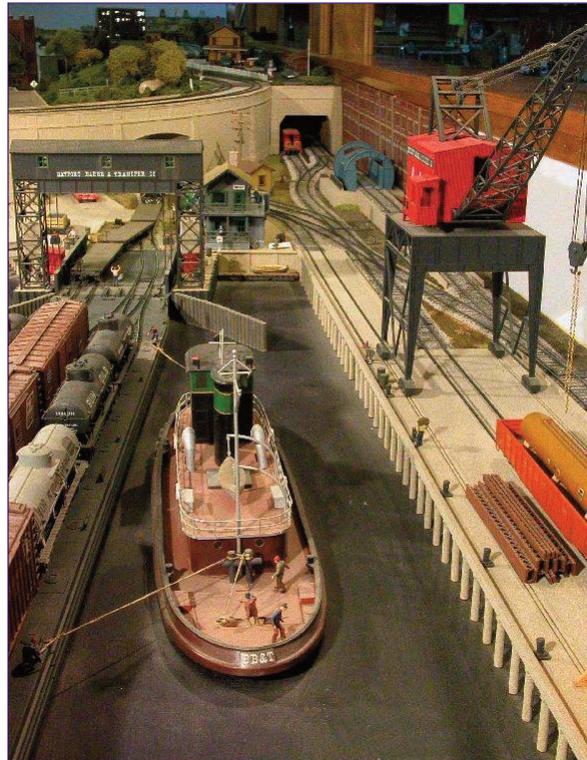
Layout Tours have been arranged by geographical clusters to allow attendees the opportunity to visit the wide range of layouts in as easy a manner as possible considering the reality of Washington area traffic. Many of the layouts on tour are nationally known and have been featured in the national hobby press. Brass Hats for more than 25 layouts have signed up so far, including Doug Kirkpatrick’s HO Virginia & Western; Rob Allbritton’s Z Gotthard Line; J.D. Smith’s Southern Railway “rathole division”; Dean Ripple’s HO B&O, Brian Sheron’s HO Long Island Railroad; Mat Thompson’s Oregon Coast Railroad, Bill Day’s two-in-one extensively animated D & D HO and Allisonville Short Line HOn3; Lance Mindheim’s HO tropical shelf layout, Howard Zane’s freelanced HO Piedmont Division, Arthur Boyd’s N Clear

Creek & Caldwell Mining & Railway Company; Richard Wright’s O Hi-rail Conus Lines, and many more.

In addition, several club layouts including Severna Park’s HO urban setting, the Northern Virginia Model Railroader’s Western North Carolina, and the Prince William Model Railroad Club will be open. In addition, the NVNTrak and HO Potomac Module

Crew, and Noll Horan’s HOn3 module layouts will be set up and in operation at the Sheraton Reston. Other modular groups have been invited, but we have not received a reply at this time.

The lineup of prototype tours includes a Friday visit to the Manassas Quarry and a Saturday tour of the Ivy City Amtrak yards and repair shops. Check the website for the latest prototype tour information. The best weather in the DC area is the Fall, right around the time of the Convention, and the Washington-Baltimore area have many rail and non-rail sites to be seen, such as the B&O Museum in Baltimore, the National Capital Trolley Museum in Silver Spring, MD, and the iconic tourist attractions of Washington, DC. Several of the layout tours are in the Annapolis area, which boasts not only the Naval Academy, but the oldest in-continuous service statehouse in the U.S. Many of you may want to plan the day in Annapolis and/or Baltimore. All three cities are less than

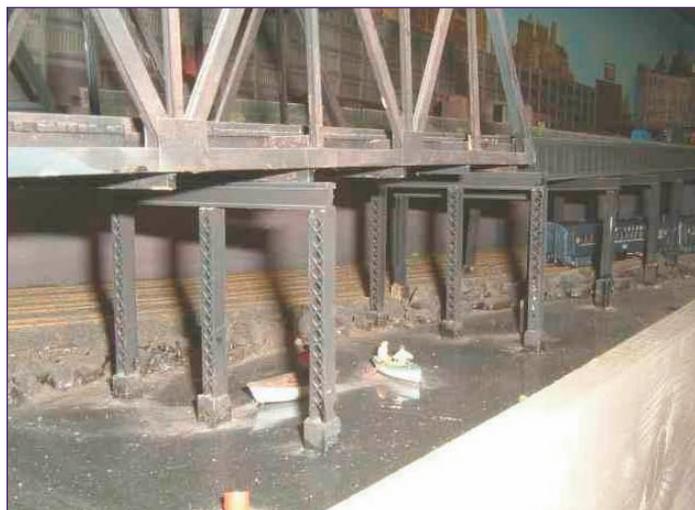


A scene from Dave Renard’s MMR layout – the Sylvania Central Railroad.

35 miles apart and are easily accessible to Reston and one another. There is free shuttle service from the hotel to the Reston Town center where bus service goes directly to the West Falls Church Metro station for easy access (and a great train ride) into downtown DC and the close-in suburbs. In the past, several attendees have come early to take advantage of seeing the sights without the crush of the summer tourist season and folded in a trip to Washington with attending the Convention.

One new addition of this year’s convention will be on Saturday night immediately following the banquet. A panel discussion featuring six or more of the MER’s Master Model Railroaders will be held, and this will be your chance to “ask the MMRs.” Convention Chairman Bob Minnis will chair the panel and this will be a great opportunity to “mine” the minds of these accomplished fellow MER members. The live auction conducted by Bob Charles will conclude the evening activities. A white elephant table will be operated during daytime hours on Friday and

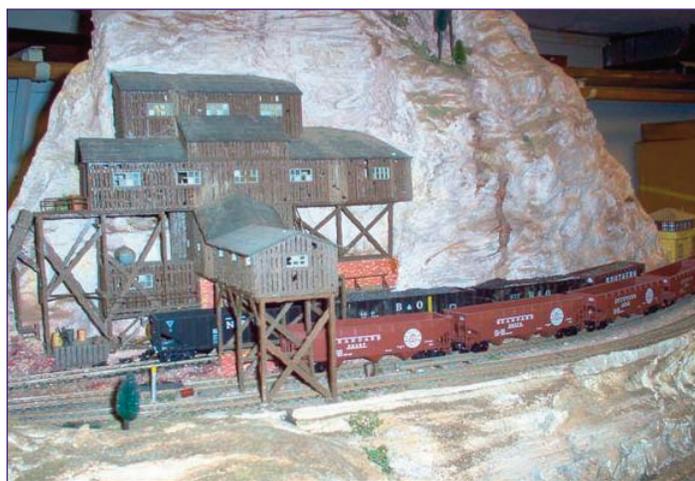
Saturday for those who chose not to participate in the auction.
 Martin Brechbiel, MER Contest Chairman, has written about the special contest awards for the model entries in the May-June



A scene from Brian Sheron's layout – the Long Island Railroad (LIRR), Port Jefferson Branch.

The Local issue. The convention urges all members to enter. Remember, it's not just models; but photos, arts and crafts as well that are eligible for entry and awards.

For a complete listing of all functions and their accompanying details, please check out the Convention website at



A scene from Bob Burrough's layout – the Second Division of the Shenandoah and Piedmont Railroad.

http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008/. This site will be updated on a regular basis as changes when new information becomes available.

Hotel reservations must be made directly with the Reston Sheraton at (703) 620-9000. The NMRA-MER room cost is \$99.00 per night and reservations must be made by September 16, 2008 to guarantee this rate.

BILL DEMAS lives in the Potomac Division where he models HO Scale. 

The Carolina Piedmont Division 13 Home Layout Tour

By Don Jennings, Home Layout Tour Coordinator

THE MID-EASTERN REGION'S CPD #13 Division located in Cary, NC is having another Home Layout Tour. The 2008 Home Layout Tour is scheduled for the first two weekends of October.

There are a total of eight home presenters this year. Each year we try to get different CPD 13 members to get involved and share their efforts by opening up their homes for this layouts tour. This gives everyone in the division a chance to see each other's handiwork of Model Railroading.

On October 4 there are five layouts and on October 11 there are three home layouts. Some of these might include operational running. The October dates for the tour are both Saturdays and are open between 10 AM and 5 PM. The one exception is the N Scale layout that will be open between 1 PM and 5 PM.

The majority of the layouts use DCC systems; some use the popular Digitrax while others have NCE as their favorite.

The range of the tour includes Raleigh, Cary, Apex, Holly Springs, Hillsborough, and Durham, NC.

<u>The Presenters:</u>	<u>Scales:</u>	<u>Dates:</u>	<u>Times:</u>
Ed Dougherty	HO Scale	October 4	10 AM to 5 PM
Steve Benezra	HO Scale	October 4	10 AM to 5 PM
Steven Wood	HO Scale	October 4	10 AM to 5 PM
Jerry Mersch	HO Scale	October 4	10 AM to 5 PM
Dick Buchan	HO Scale	October 4	10 AM to 5 PM
Jim Babcock	HO Scale	October 11	10 AM to 5 PM
Bill Aulicino	HO Scale	October 11	10 AM to 5 PM
Bruce Faulkner	N Scale	October 11	1 PM to 5 PM

All the layouts are deserving of your visit and you will enjoy a glimpse of the presenters who have many years experience in model railroading. Their scenery techniques, wiring practices or electronics involved are important factors that make the operational running of the layouts unique. Check out the car card systems used and the other fine points that make each layout special. Hopefully, you will learn some new things or ways of doing something that you can take back to your own home layout.

Don't forget to introduce yourself to the host and include a "Thank-You" when you leave. Please note these home layouts are not handicap accessible.

For further information about the CPD 13 Home Layout Tour layouts, please phone (919) 468-0910 or e-mail donj1044@aol.com. 

Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention
 October 16 – 19, 2008
 Reston, Virginia
ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM



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

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other (living at same address): _____

Children (Under age 16 – List all): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-Mail: _____ NMRA # _____

DESCRIPTION		COST	#	PAYING
Full Registration (until September 1)		\$45		
Full Registration (after September 1)		\$50		
Non-NMRA member (applied to Rail Pass Membership)		\$10		
Significant other		\$15		
Children		\$10		
Vulcan Quarry	201	\$35		
Amtrak Ivy City Maintenance Facility (Sat.)	202	\$50		
Banquet	401	\$40		
Cheap and Easy Trees Clinic	601	\$ 5		
Building in Wood Post Office Clinic (HO)	602	\$15		
Building in Wood Post Office Clinic (O)	603	\$15		
Building and Coloring Masonry Buildings Clinic	604	\$15		
Timetable and Train Order Clinic & Operations	605	\$15		
Wood Trestle Clinic	621	\$ 6		
* Call Board Abrams – Abrams Railroad Empire	801	\$ 5		
* Call Board Boyd – Clear Creek and Caldwell	802	\$ 5		
* Call Board Thompson – Oregon Coast Railroad	803	\$ 5		
* Call Board Sekera – Clinch Valley Lines	804	\$ 5		
* Call Board Warner –South Central Region	805	\$ 5		
TOTAL ADVANCE REGISTRATION PAID				

Payment must accompany registration.

Make checks payable to:

Potomac Junction 2008

Send all registrations to:

Potomac Junction
P.O. Box 447
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

For questions and / or additional information e-mail

MER-Registrar@comcast.net

* Optionally write in "2nd choice" but do not pay a duplicate fee.

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION: The convention will be held at the Sheraton Reston Hotel, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20191. The convention rate is \$99.00 (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at (703) 620-9000. When registering be sure to specify the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA to be sure you get this special rate. (<http://www.Sheraton.com/Reston>)

Additional events will be added when their cost is know. Please check the web page http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008/ for current information.

Mix-it Puzzles

By Dr. Charles Wood

These are puzzles of scrambled words. The letters on each line can be rearranged to form a word that relates to models or to prototype railroads. Answers below.

Puzzle #1:

- a. S T A G E
- b. L O Y T A U
- c. G A S L N I
- d. R E L I D A
- e. E W C R K

Puzzle #2:

- a. S X E S E P R
- b. R I A N T
- c. Y O B H B
- d. A R T W E
- e. S S C I N T O

DR. CHARLES WOOD lives in the Carolina Piedmont Division where he models HO scale. 

Answer to puzzle #1:

- e. Wreck
- d. Detail
- c. Signal
- b. Layout
- a. Gates

Answer to puzzle #2:

- e. Consist
- d. Water
- c. Hobby
- b. Train
- a. Express

Reading panel side hopper kit for sale



The Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA, is pleased to announce the release a model of a Reading panel side hopper kit. The model has a number used on the original USRA type hopper, Reading class HTj. Using the Accurail panel side twin hopper, the car is lettered to reflect the capacities and unique lettering scheme for a panel side car. The kit also contains and order form for extra numbers from Accurail.

Price is \$15 per car.

Add \$7 shipping for the first car;
\$3 each for two or more.

Make money order or check payable to: Philadelphia Division.

Send to:

Philadelphia Division Cars
308 W. Walnut Street, North Wales, PA 19454

Mid-Eastern Region National Model Railroad Association Advertising Policy

THE MID-EASTERN REGION (MER) publishes a newsletter entitled **The Local**, which is distributed to about 1000 people in the Mid-Atlantic area, and others via an electronic (e-mail) version.

The MER wishes to advertise those Manufacturers that reside within the Region. This would give both the Manufacturer and the NMRA member a "home" relationship.

The MER would like to publish articles on the Regions Manufacturers about their products and processes. This could include a history of the Company.

The current advertising rates for **The Local** are as follows and must include camera ready art:

1/8th page, roughly a business card — \$60.00 for 6 issues

1/4 page for MER Divisions (one time) — \$50.00

If you are interested in having an article about your firm distributed to your target audience, model railroaders, or just to place an ad, please contact the following,

MER Advertising Manager

Charles G. Hladik

198 Fireoak Lane

Rustburg, VA. 24588

Phone: (434) 821-4941

E-mail: rutlandrs@aol.com 

**MADE IN
THE MER**

Imperial Hobby Productions

By Mike Bartel

WHEN YOU THINK of model railroading, you usually don't envision layouts made up of commuter trains or subways. They aren't as nationally ubiquitous as freight trains or iconic as steam trains. Still, their limited appeal is stoked by a small but dedicated group of enthusiasts and modelers, and catered to by an equally dedicated small group of 'cottage' suppliers and manufacturers. One such manufacturer is Imperial Hobby Productions, a small model railroad manufacturer based in the suburban area of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

WHO IS MIKE BARTEL AND WHAT IS IHP?

Imperial Hobby Production's (IHP) owner and operator, Mike Bartel, was born and raised in Philadelphia and its suburbs. He rode the local transit and commuter lines in the 1970s and 1980s and wanted to have some models of equipment he rode for his own (eventual) model railroad layout. After graduating from college in 1993, Mike founded The Imperial Navy, producing 1:700 scale waterline warship models and accessories for one of his other interest areas. He realized that most of the railroad models he wanted to operate on his dream layout weren't likely to ever be produced in either plastic or brass. In 1995, Mike got into the HO scale model railroad market with a cast resin shell of a Kansas City Public Service PCC trolley body shell. The shell did well amongst traction modelers and three years later, Mike was producing a dozen HO products, covering locomotives, trolley cars and electric MU commuter cars. It was also in 1995 that The Imperial Navy became Imperial Hobby Productions, denoting the diversification into different areas of the hobby. IHP became a full-time operation in 2000, and expanded into the O and N scale markets during this time. Even so, HO scale was still the primary focus. The company's product range continued to expand in the ensuing years.

WHAT DOES IHP MAKE?

IHP's range is unique in that it is exclusively focused on USA-prototype commuter, transit and traction rolling stock models. IHP produces no freight trains, freight locomotives, steam locomotives or 'non-revenue equipment of any type. Many subjects produced have been made for the first time by IHP. IHP's range covers eras from before WWII to the present day. IHP's range consists of commuter cars, subway cars, trolley cars and LRV's and commuter locomotives. Very few of these are likely candidates for production by the larger plastic manufacturers because they don't have the mass appeal required for expensive mass production. IHP's chosen medium is resin, and in some cases, cast metal. Resin has become an ideal medium for limited production runs of specific models for a limited market on a limited budget, largely replacing brass for this purpose in recent years. Resin has been

around for a long time and many established and well-known smaller hobby manufacturers have been making short-run, limited interest resin products for many years.

IHP has several product ranges intended to satisfy different needs and budgets. The Apprentice Series is made up of body shells and craftsman kits for those with more time than money to pursue their hobby. The Standard Series is made up of kits that are more complete, with extras such as decals and trucks included so the modeler doesn't have to supply much more than their standard modeling tools. Some Standard Series HO models are powered and sold partially assembled as 'ready to finish' kits. Lastly, there is the Motorman Premier Series, which takes some IHP products and offers them built up and finished, with authentic paint and decals, and power drives. These items carry a premium price and are limited production, sometimes based on licensing of transit agency logos and graphics or availability of components.

HOW DOES IHP MAKE THEIR PRODUCTS?

IHP's production is done in the USA, bucking the trend of outsourcing production in countries such as China. Mike Bartel does almost all of the pattern making himself. For most of its existence, IHP subcontracted its resin production to different resin casters around the USA, but in the last couple of years, Mike has taken on the job of doing all of IHP's resin moldmaking and casting in-house, and has turned himself into a skilled moldmaker and caster, producing quality parts from his patterns. IHP subcontracts certain machined, photo etched and cast metal parts and custom decal printing to local and regional firms. Other components are obtained from US firms. Mike also does assembly, painting and finishing work. IHP has supplied models and souvenirs to local transit agency SEPTA for sale in their Transit Museum Store, and has also supplied souvenir tanker ship models to the Aker Philadelphia Shipyard. In fact, souvenir models are one future area into which IHP hopes to expand with some success.

Though IHP is a hobby supplier, the company functions more like a prototype car builder. Individual orders are obtained and customer relationships formed on a one-on-one personal basis rather than through dealers and distributors (though IHP does have a handful of longtime dealers through which the company does business). This results in a loyal customer base that continues to grow one customer at a time. The Internet has been key to this business model and Mike maintains the company's website himself. Visit <http://ihphobby.tripod.com>.

Models are made to order and can be customized to a customer's requirements. IHP can also do contract moulding and casting work, if you supply your own patterns. Unfortunately, Mike has no time to do custom patternwork or extravagant cus-

tom jobs. IHP demands long days and long weeks to do all this work. Mike says he hasn't had a vacation in years, and jokes that his wife still doesn't really know him, even though they married in 2006.

WHAT ARE IHP'S PRESENT AND FUTURE PLANS?

IHP is currently developing a range of modern LRV models to tap in to the future market that Mike and others in the hobby expect will be created by the resurgence of light rail in many large American and Canadian cities. Mike currently does most of the pattern-work by hand, but is teaching himself CAD/CAM to enable future IHP patterns to be made by computer. IHP still makes 1:700 scale ship models, but this range is becoming secondary to IHP's model railroad production. And, that railroad layout Mike hopes to build? Mike says that will happen someday, but at least for now he has some of the equipment he would like to operate. 🚂

Carolina Southern Division: Model Railroading University

By Steve Kindig

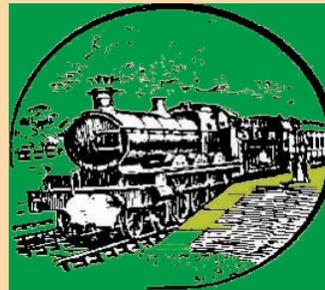
THE THIRD SEMESTER of Model Railroading University, sponsored by the Carolina Southern Division, will be held on Saturday, September 20th, 2008 at First Baptist Church located at 301 S. Davidson St in Charlotte, NC. Registration begins at 8:30 A.M. Clinics and activities begin at 9 A.M.



Some clinics include: Layout 101; Building Modules from the Ground Up; Light, Sound and Motion; Creating an Operating Session; How to use JMRI Panel Pro software; How to tune up a Basic train set; Building Realistic Model Railroad Crossings; Installing and using

Digitrax sound Decoders and Using your PC as a Model Railroading tool—with more to be scheduled!

The cost for this exciting day of learning is only \$5, but registration is due by September 8th! To download the registration PDF form visit: www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/RMU%20Main_files/Registration%20form-3rd%20sem.pdf. 🚂



19th Annual Tidewater Division Train Show

**Virginia Beach
Convention Center**
1000 19th Street
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

September 20–21, 2007
10AM – 4PM both days

- Operating layouts in various gauges (N, HO, O, G, LEGO)
 - Train Doctors
 - Test Tracks
 - Train Sets
 - Scenery Supplies
 - Books and Videos
 - Track Memorabilia
 - Tools
- White Elephant Tables

ADMISSION: \$7.00 FOR ADULTS

- \$1.00 from every paid admission goes to **Toys for Tots**
- CHILDREN UNDER 12 – FREE (With an adult)
- FREE FOR SCOUTS IN UNIFORM (With their Scoutmasters, Troop Leaders, Den Mothers or Brownie Leaders)

For more information contact show coordinator

Steve Prescott

Email: nawneycreek@msn.com

Phone: 757-426-2811

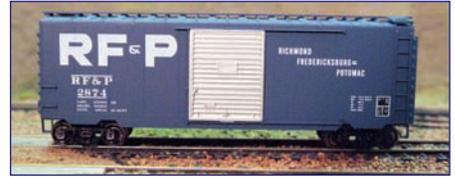
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COURTESY OF THE FREIGHT
These 40' Western Maryland N-Scale box cars are Micro-Train bodies custom painted by The Freight Yard. They are box car red with prominent white "speed lettering".



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



F.L. MATSON (2)

Milk station.
Simplified
structure.



CLINT HYDE

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



CLINT HYDE

WESTERN MD. N-SCALE CARS	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE*	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#29290	_____	\$19.95	\$23.95	\$_____
#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 # _____

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

MER HO-SCALE STRUCTURE KIT**	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE*	TOTAL
Milk Station	_____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____
Small Freight Station	_____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____

THE LOCALS** —	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE*	TOTAL
NEW! (all issues 1997–2007) on CD	_____	\$5.00 postpaid	\$_____

** Only available to MER members.

DONATION	_____		\$_____
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303 Winterhaven Drive
Wilmington, DE 19803

CALLBOARD Coming Events

August 31 and September 1 – Fairfax Station Labor Day Show with the Potomac Module Crew. 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station, VA. Sunday: 12 PM till 5 PM; Monday: 12 PM till 4 PM. Cost: Adults \$4.00; children \$1.00. Visit www.fairfax-station.org for more information.

September 13 – Wade's Train Town Open House operated by Carolina Southern Division members. Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center Street in Hickory, NC. Hours: 10 AM till 4 PM.

September 13 and 14 – Great American Train Expo held at North Carolina State Fairgrounds. 1025 Blue Ridge Rd in Raleigh, NC. 10 AM till 4 PM both days. Cost: Adults \$7; children 12 and under are free. For more information visit www.trainexpoinc.com.

September 20 – Third Semester of Model Railroading University sponsored by Carolina Southern Division. Register by September 8th. See inside for more information.

September 20 – James River Division meet at the Memorial Christian Church. 615 Perrymont Avenue in Lynchburg, VA. Clinics, Door Prizes, 50-50, White Elephant tables from 9:30 AM till noon. Layout Tours from 1 PM till 4. Contact: Robert Alvis at (804) 329-4060 or rwalvis@mac.com.

September 20 and 21 – 19th Annual Tidewater Division Train Show and Sale held at Virginia Beach Convention Center. 1000 19th Street in Virginia Beach, VA. 10 AM till 4 PM both days. See inside for more information.

September 27 – New Jersey Division meet at Deptford Municipal Bldg. 1011 Cooper Street in Deptford, NJ. Clinics from 9 AM till Noon. Layout tours from 1 till 4 PM. For more information contact: Mike McNamara at (856) 824-0871 or e-mail mikemcnh@comcast.net.

September 28 – Potomac Division layout tour in Gaithersburg, MD. 1 PM till 4 PM. Contact layout coordinator: Tom Brodrick at (301) 253-0558 or e-mail t.brodrick@comcast.net.

October 4 – Carolina Piedmont Division Home Layout Tours. Open from 10 AM till 5 PM. For more information contact: Don Jennings at (919) 468-0910 or e-mail donj1044@aol.com.

October 4 and 5 – Great American Train Expo held at Cabarrus Arena and Events Center, 4751 Highway 49 North in Concord, NC. 10 AM till 4 PM both days. Cost: Adults \$7; children 12 and under are free. For more information visit www.trainexpoinc.com.

October 11 – Wade's Train Town Open House operated by Carolina Southern Division members. Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center Street in Hickory, NC. Hours: 10 AM till 4 PM.

October 11 – Carolina Piedmont Division Home Layout Tours. Open from 10 AM till 5 PM. For more information contact Don Jennings at (919) 468-0910 or e-mail donj1044@aol.com.

October 11 and 12 – Great Scale Model Train Show held at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. 2200 York Rd in Timonium, MD. Saturday: 9 AM till 4 PM; Sunday: 10 AM till 4 PM. Cost: \$7. Kids 12 and under are free. For more information visit www.gsmts.com.

October 16 - 19 – "Potomac Junction 2008". 

Achievement Program Update

By Charlie Flichman, MER AP Manager

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

Division 2 – Potomac

Robert Minnis – *Model Railroad Author*

Division 3 – Philadelphia

David Bucher – *Model Railroad Author*

Division 11 – Susquehanna

Robert Beecher – *Electrical Engineer*

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

Here is the running total of how many Gold Spikes and AP Merit awards that have been earned in the last year. Since August 1, 2007, MER members have earned 14 Gold Spikes and 18 AP Merit Awards.

With the articles currently running on the "Year of the MMR" in **Scale Rails**, I hope we will see more activity in the Achievement Program. If you have any questions after reading any of the articles, please do not hesitate to e-mail me. Your Divisional AP Chair and myself are here to assist you in any way we can, but you have to ask. Thanks. 

NEEDED: Assistant Model Contest Manager for the MER

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

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

Please contact Clint Hyde, chyde@cox.net

or

Martin Brechbiel, martinwb@verizon.net. 

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**NMRA Included
 in 2008 Combined
 Federal Campaign**

*By Roger L. Cason, MMR
 NMRA Fund Raising Manager*

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) takes place in federal work places once a year. In many ways, this campaign is similar to a United Way solicitation. Employees can make contributions to charitable organizations of their choice via payroll deduction.

We have been notified that – for the first time – the NMRA will be included in the next CFC campaign – projected for the fall of 2008. This is in response to our application for inclusion (fifty nine pages, including attachments).

Bottom line: if you are a federal employee, and you wish to make a financial contribution to the NMRA, you may want to consider the CFC as the mechanism for making your contribution. We will be listed under “National/International Independent Organizations”. Our identification number will be 12286. 