

The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 65

MAY — JUNE 2010

Number 3

A Sign of My Skills

*Article and photographs by Seth Gartner
Carolina Southern Division/HO scale*

MODEL RAILROADING allows one to develop skills that may not be commonly used in life. A graphic artist I am not. So armed with the power of my computer and its factory loaded software I delved into my computer's world of graphic artistry to explain my latest scratch built creation. There are others more talented than myself who could have created a solution with different tools, I am sure. I would enjoy the opportunity to learn from them should they feel inclined to share their methods with us after reading this.

In my mind I knew the building I was creating was going to be the Corner Bar. I had drawn plans of it as faithfully close as my mind and the Microsoft Virtual Earth bird's eye zoom could get me. At least I would have a white building with its single ridge roofline. The three other people who model trains and know of this bar in Minerva, Ohio, would probably not see the fidelity in my efforts to call this structure by name upon seeing it on my railroad. I knew I was going to need a sign identifying this structure. I recall many businesses in northeastern Ohio from my youth using illuminated Pepsi Cola sponsored advertising signs with their business name below. If I could cre-

ate one of these signs, there would be no mistaking my building for its prototype.

(As an aside, if you have not used Virtual Earth, I encourage you to give it a try at www.virtualearth.com. A feature called bird's eye view is enabled in selected geo-

ever else is up there that we cannot see from ground level.)

I turned to Google Images for assistance finding an image of a Pepsi sign. The search term "Pepsi sign" produced just what I was looking for. The colors were not vibrant with the visible weathering of the sign and the viewing angle was lower than ideal. (See Photo 1.) I searched for Pepsi logo, but only after adding vintage to this did I find a vibrant red and blue logo that I could use. The red and blue bands were not as large as on the original sign, but this could be corrected. (See Photo 2.)

I opened Microsoft Paint, commonly found in the Accessories folder under My Programs to fine tune the colors. The view tab at the top shows zoom and then click on large size for the next steps. (See Photo 3.) I was able to extend the red and blue sides to their original sizes by drawing a rectangle adjacent to the existing color band. (See Photo 4.) I then picked up the color using the dropper tool and filled the rectangle with that same color. I had to use a paintbrush also to fill out some voids and also to give a homogeneous appearance to the entire colored band. (See Photo 5.) When the smallest paintbrush is used, the colors can be altered pixel by pixel when zoomed in to



Photo 1: This is a familiar advertising sign in northeastern Ohio found with Google Images. But the view angle is too low and the colors lack vibrancy.

graphic areas at higher levels of magnification. This allows the user to look down very much like viewing a model railroad from above. One can even rotate around the structure to see all sides. It can allow access to roofs for placing items like smoke stacks, vents, skylights, or what-

continued on page 4

The Local

Official Publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA A Tax-Exempt Organization

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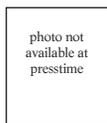
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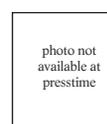
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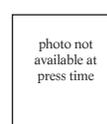
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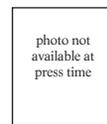
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The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. Editors will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should 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 <http://mer.nmra.org/>

Some Notes from the President

*By Roger L. Cason, MMR
MER President*

LOOKING AHEAD AT CONVENTIONS:

Plans are pretty much in place for the 2010 MER convention. Convention host: the New Jersey Division. Dates: 09/30/10-10/03/10. Location: Princeton NJ. I hope to see you there.

The Carolina Piedmont Division (Raleigh area) will host the MER convention in the fall of 2011. Thanks, guys and gals, for volunteering! I look forward to another great time in your area. Looking beyond 2011, I hope other Divisions will seriously consider hosting an MER convention. The question is not “Will we do it?” The question should be “**When** will we do it?” It’s a lot of work, but very rewarding. You don’t have to “do it all” – many of the functions are performed by people supplied by the region (for example, contests, auction, and registration). Importantly, if you are the convention host, NMRA members in your area can attend at minimum cost. And, what better way to show off the fine layouts in your area?

AP RESULTS:

I just received a report summarizing NMRA Achievement Program activity for the eight months ending December 2009. In the MER, a total of 36 Golden Spikes, AP certificates, and MMR’s were earned and awarded. Two Regions had more, but fourteen has fewer. The showing reflects the good work of AP Manager Charlie Flichman and many of the Division AP Coordinators.

People occasionally ask me why they should participate, and/or pursue their MMR. My answers include: acquire new knowledge, learn new skills, and stretch yourself. The requirements are significant, but not insurmountable. In some cases, the main requirement is to keep track of what you’re doing anyway (for example, Volunteer or Chief Dispatcher). In some cases, the AP requirements may influence your detailed path forward (for example, Civil Engineer or Scenery if you’re designing a layout). And a few will push you to do something you wouldn’t have otherwise done. That was certainly the case, for me, with Carbuilder – particularly the scratch building requirement. But I got through it even though I’m not all that good at “building stuff”. The moral of the story: if I can do it, you can do it!

NATIONAL NEWS MISCELLANY:

One hundred and fifty seven models were displayed at the recent NMRA convention in Hartford – the greatest number in ten years. The national Standards and Conformance Department is developing Large Scale Track and Wheel Standards, as well as Recommended Practices for Large Scale Couplers.

A recent survey was directed at people who didn’t renew their NMRA membership. One of the most frequently cited reasons was “No one from my local Division or Region ever contacted me.”

QUESTION:

Does your Division have a mechanism to facilitate “members helping members” – i.e. some sort of “member aid” activity? And, if you have something that works, could you describe it to me so we can share it with other Divisions?

EXECUTIVE HANDBOOK:

For years here in the MER, we have had something called the Executive Handbook (EHB). This is a rather pretentious title for something that is really a collection of useful “how to” information developed from the experience of many people over many years.

The EHB is maintained by MER Secretary Bill Roman. The MER Business Manager, every MER officer, every board member, and every division superintendent should have a copy. Other members can receive portions of interest to them on request. If you should have a copy of the EHB but don’t, or if you think portions of yours may be out of date, please contact Bill. He can send individual chapters out as e-mail attachments. (Back when, it was an all-paper process. We attempted to replace individual pages. But this was usually pretty inefficient and ineffective.)

Chapters that are probably up to date in Bill’s data base include: MER Bylaws, a chapter listing MER standing Policies, a division superintendents’ handbook, and a chapter on starting a new division. The convention handbook chapter is now being revised and updated.

COMPUTERS – ARRGGG!!

I recently suffered through a series of computer problems that involved my anti-virus, my e-mail, and my printer. After many hours on help lines talking to people in India, and a replacement printer, I think I’ve straightened everything out. Some of the problems were ordinary, but others were really weird. In the really weird category: sixty names were deleted from my e-mail electronic address book. There seemed to be no detectable pattern to the deletions, and my e-mail supplier (Juno) could offer no explanation. My reason for bringing this up: in the course of dealing with these problems, I could easily have let something slip through the cracks. So, if I seem to have left something undone, please let me know. I’m particularly concerned that I may have “left someone out of the loop” on some issue of direct interest to them.



Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

Our NMRA President's editorial, in the latest **Scale Rails**, explored the future of the NMRA and in particular the role the Internet will probably play in that future. The editorial suggested that the age group that roughly corresponds with our NMRA average membership is not completely immersed into the daily use of the Internet (and e-mail) but the numbers seem to be growing.

Those of you who do use the electronic world know that a wealth of information and communication facilities are available for model railroaders. Just entering a cou-

ple of key words into a Google search always brings up more information than one can digest. The Yahoo Groups have a large number of model and prototype railroad discussions going on at all times. At last count over 1,200 groups reference 'model railroading.'

The MER is participating in this electronic world as well. Our Region's website (www.mer.nmra.org) provides lots of information relative to the region activities, organization and even archived issues of **The Local**. Martin Brechbiel, the MER Contest Chair/Manager has started up a Yahoo Group: (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MERMailbag/>) which is intended to host Region and Division discussions.

And of course, our electronic version of **The Local (eLocal)** is distributed by email each issue.

But here's the thing... if you are interested in receiving email communication from other participants in the electronic world, and from the MER in particular, you need to keep your email address up to date in our files. At the present time I have email addresses on file for 1,746 of the 2,338 active NMRA/MER members. However, 217 of those addresses are marked INVALID because emails bounced at one time or another. If you haven't been receiving your **eLocal**, maybe it is your e-mail address. And don't forget, when you change your email address, let us know.

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 (*and gets you your email.*) 

A Sign of My Skills continued from page 1

the large size. This process was repeated on the opposite side with the other color. (See Photo 6.) Should any mistakes be made, they are easily corrected by clicking on edit and undo.

Modeled structures appear more realistic with weathering. I have learned that rarely do we find pure white or black in the world. Therefore, I could not print the sign on basic white paper. The next step was to create a background color that approximated



Photo 2: This artwork logo was the starting basis for modifications using Microsoft Paint.

the weathered off white of the sign. At the top of the screen in MS Paint, click on colors then edit colors and then select the button for define custom colors. Move the target around the color field, and don't overlook the slider on the right for adjusting the brightness. (See Photo 7.) I was then able to create a color close to what I felt was needed, given this sign would have no internal lighting. This color was then selected to fill the background. I had to paint with a brush to fill in any voids not painted by the fill bucket. Save your work at this time to change to a photo editor.

Microsoft Picture It! came with my computer as the photo editor. It has since been discontinued, but any photo editing software should be capable of adding text to a photo and cropping the final picture. I chose a font that was close to that on the original photo. Depending upon your printer's resolution and the scale in which



Photo 3: This shows the path for the highest magnification zoom.

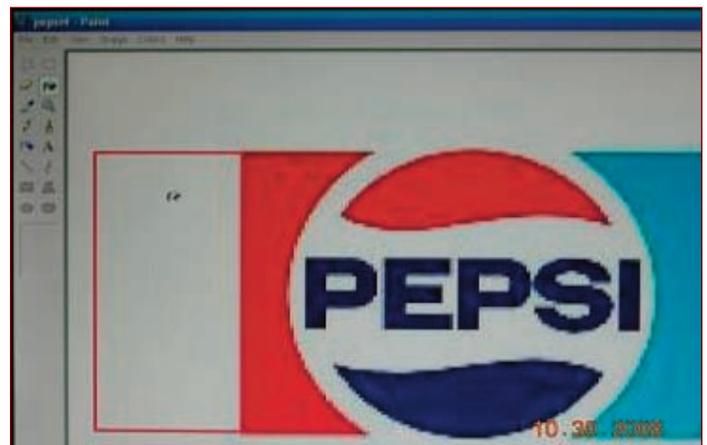


Photo 4: A screen shot of the new rectangle positioned to extend the colored band. I used the dropper to select red from the existing artwork and used the bucket fill to color the new red rectangle.

you model you may find a font without serifs will reproduce more cleanly. I created a text box under the Pepsi logo and typed “Corner Bar”. I had to play with the font sizes to find the right solution that filled the horizontal space. The final step was to crop the photo into a rectangular shape similar to the original.



Photo 5: A screen shot of the process coloring the new band. A paintbrush square is located above the artwork which is moved with the mouse to apply the red color to the remaining white areas.

I printed the project from MS Picture It! I found a scaled down size for printing by trial and error that produced a sign about four feet wide. My sign was printed with an HP Deskjet 970CXi which has served me well over its years. The resolution was adequate on the best quality setting. I darkened the overall print and decreased the volume of ink as I experimented with the print settings. Two copies were made, one for each side of the sign. I cut a rectangle from 0.04” styrene the same dimensions as my sign. White glue was used to fix the paper to the styrene. The final product lacks the relief of the real sign, but in HO scale, some concessions are



Photo 6: Under the highest magnification one can paint pixel by pixel. The saw tooth edges are not apparent when viewed at normal size.



Photo 7: Manipulation of colors is easy after accessing the color editor via the define custom color button under the Colors tab. Not shown is the brightness slide off screen to the right. The background has been colored in the same manner as the read band. The name has also been added with a photo editor and the photo is cropped to size.

made. I painted the edges of the styrene and weathered the image a little more to show its age. The sign’s pole is a styrene rod and it was attached to the bar during construction. I weathered it lightly and then attached my Pepsi sign to it with styrene cement.

My structure is now a landmark that is known by both locals and visitors thanks to its Pepsi sign. You are welcome to stop by for a drink sometime and watch the trains pass. 🚂



Finished Product: A new Pepsi sign completes the look for the corner bar.

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William Mosteller, P.O. Box 994, Herndon, VA 20172
 SASE for list, or see www.greatdecals.com

03/11

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, 333 W. Trade St, Unit #2504, Charlotte, NC 28202-1961. (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 initially allocated \$2,000 for this program. The Board recently allocated an additional \$1,000 to extend the program to the end of 2010, or when the funds are spent – 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, 704-332-1753, tractionfan@aol.com), or Roger L. Cason, MER President (410 Bayberry Lane, Jenner's Pond, West Grove, PA, 19390, 610-345-0901, 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 Sponsor: _____ (Required)
(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

=====

When this form is completed,
mail it to:

Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager
333 W. Trade St, Unit #2504
Charlotte, NC 28202-1961

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

Date of form: 1/31/07

News from the Contest Room!

*By Martin Brechbiel
MER General Contest Chairman*

AS SOME MIGHT REMEMBER from my last message, I mentioned my disappointment with what I described as inconsistencies in the judging in the contest room as well as what I term “weirdness”. I also noted that in response that a training regimen that will be required for all current and future Judges would be made available to all members and divisions this calendar year.

So, a comprehensive program for training judges for the AP program and Contest Room across the MER region that will travel to all of the divisions was presented to the MER Board of Directors. This program will include a series of presentations and lectures accompanied by hands-on practice sessions. These sessions will serve as entry points for the certification of all Judges for the MER. The intention is the achieve uniformity, consistency, and to provide a level playing field for all modelers and entrants participating in the AP program and thus also generate trained and certified judges for the entire MER Region. I’ve already contacted all of your division superintendents about scheduling a session at an event in your division. We have already traveled to Carolina Southern and New Jersey, and will be presenting this program to the Potomac and Chesapeake divisions at their upcoming joint minicon in April.

We are also providing a complementary clinic/program for modelers that want to participate in the AP program and enter their models for judging in contest rooms. The paperwork/forms are perceived as a real or imaginary impediment to entering models into the contest room. As previously noted, judges only have ~7-9 minutes per category per model. Having the “right stuff” on your paperwork can only help you, and we want you to get those merit awards! Remember, you only need 87.5 points out of 125 to get a merit award.

I am still waiting to hear from some of your division superintendents about our coming to an event in your division to present this program to everyone interested in judging and entering models in the contest room! I’ll be giving this clinic program at Princeton Junction convention, too, so anyone that wants to be judging in Princeton or be an apprentice judge should make plans to attend.

We are also making a number of operational changes to the contest room. Overcrowding, excessive noise levels, lack of room for both judges and visitors, and safe operations in general have been an issue. Keeping the room open is a primary goal to promote viewing the models and to allow viewing of the judging. However, I’ll close the room during judging entirely at my discretion if I feel that any of the above conditions are deleteriously impacting the operations of the room and it will close after lunch.

The judges are going to convene at 8:30 AM, 30 minutes earlier than in the past (routinely 9 AM) for a required “refresher” course

on judging. Judges are strongly encouraged to check in with the contest room upon arrival at the convention.

Wearing of gloves by all of the Judges will be mandatory. The judges will be required to provide meaningful constructive comments on the comment sheets for each of the categories that they are judging. We will be checking during the judging process!

With the exception of the judges themselves, no entrants will be allowed in the room once judging has commenced. Too many modelers compromised the anonymity of their entry were a distraction by either talking about or showing off their model during the judging.

Judging routinely stops for lunch in the contest room. This practice is the classic accident waiting to happen to someone’s model. The judges will adjourn for lunch to a suitable clinic room for lunch and the contest room will be locked.

On a trial basis, entrants are going to be provided with copies of the matrices with their scores noted on it per category to provide an additional measure of feedback, education and explanation.

We’re also going to establish a “help desk” to provide guidance to entrants with their paperwork in some space adjacent to (or within given adequate space) the contest room itself. Proposed hours of operation for this activity would be Thursday evening for 2 hours, Friday morning for 2 hours, and Friday afternoon for 1 hour wherein entrants might be able to obtain forms, have someone read over their paperwork, make constructive suggestions, look over the model itself if desired to provide suggestions to the paperwork. This is not to “pre-Judge” entries or to prepare the paperwork for others.

We have also initiated a new MER Yahoo Groups – the MER Mailbag – <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MERMailbag/> to replace the prior site. I encourage you all to visit, join, and make use of the site. Please pay attention to providing you name and NMRA number when joining!

Lastly, I sincerely encourage you to seriously consider bringing one of your models to **Princeton Junction** – the MER 2010 convention, September 30 – October 3, in Princeton, NJ. But to handle these entries, we’re also going to need great service of our existing cadre of experienced judges as well as our apprentice judges (volunteer points!). I do want to hear from previous years judging crews to confirm (at least tentatively...) who will be going to Princeton. I also want to hear from any modelers that would like to become Judges (martinwb@verizon.net). See you all in Princeton! 

Get Crankin'

Article and photographs by Mike White
Potomac Division/HO scale

SOME TIME BACK, I realized that I was going to have turnouts located in places where ground throws were not going to be an option. One alternative was under-the-table switch machines, but they were somewhat expensive in the quantity I needed, and, based on my own recent experience, were awk-

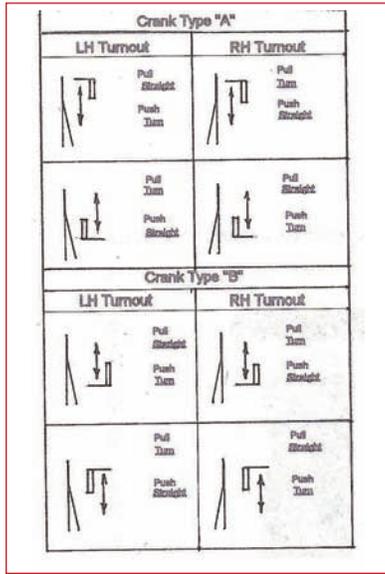


Figure 1: The two configurations of the cranks. The "A" version has the single arm on the left. The "B" version has the single arm on the right.

ward to install and maintain. One of my fellow Southern Maryland Operating Group members has some under-the-table push-pull rod turnout controls that work very well, so I began to look at them as an alternative.

Shortly afterwards, I ran across an article about model interlocking levers that could control turnouts for up to six feet away (supplied by Humpyard Purveyance of Roseburg, OR – www.humpyard.com). Since one of my major needs for remote



Figure 2: The three 1" pieces.

control of turnouts was going to be a yard spread over about eight feet of layout real-estate, I decided that these would be ideal (they also look really cool).

My layout is constructed of 1/2" homosote over 1/2" plywood

and I needed to find something that would extend more than 1" through the two surfaces and still be stiff enough to move the turnout points and hold them in place. That's when I hit a wall. The cable supplied with the interlocking levers could not be held in place firmly enough or provide the tension required. Clearly something else was needed.

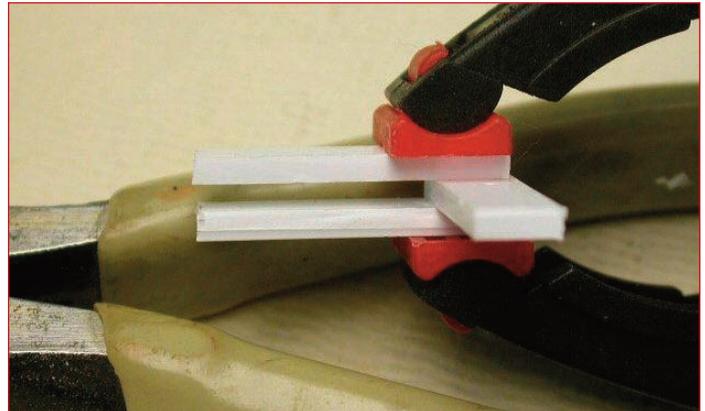


Figure 3: The glue dries.

My solution was to make some styrene bell cranks with a stiff pin extending up through a 3/8" hole in the layout to the turnout. The cable from the interlocking lever is attached to the home-made bell crank on the underside of the layout surface.

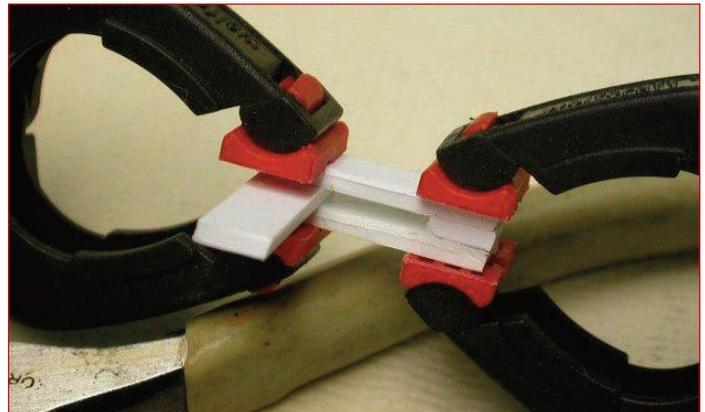


Figure 4: Leftover pieces are cut in half and glued between the double pieces at the opposite end where they are joined to the single piece.

I also set a standard that pulling the model interlocking lever towards you would always result in the turnout being set for "straight", while pushing the lever away from you would always set it for "turn". Which position is "straight" and which is "turn" is up to you, but I would strongly recommend that, whatever you choose, they all work the same way.

After making a couple of these cranks and attempting to install



Figure 5: A 1/8" hole is drilled in the center of the point where the two arms of the crank join.

them, I realized that they needed to be made in two configurations. Due to the width of the roadbed – 2 1/2" in some locations – I could not come into the turnout from the side, but had to install them in a way that would allow me to have the cable approach the crank parallel to the track. The direction that the crank moves is dependent on whether the control cable is approaching from the point end of the switch or the frog end; whether it is a RH or LH turnout, and; whether or not the operator's control is pivoted (If there is a pivot between the operator and the actuating cable or rod attachment, a "pull" on the control results in a "push" on the actuating mechanism). I named the two different configurations "A" and "B". See figure 1. The "A" version has the single arm on the left. The "B" version has the single arm on the right.

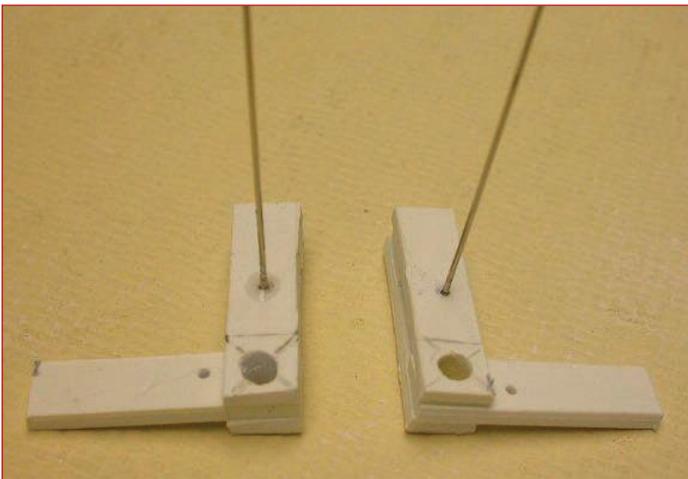


Figure 6: If you want an "A" version, position the completed crank so that the single arm is pointing toward the left. If you want a "B" version, just flip it over so that the single arm is pointing to the right.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- .080" styrene at least 3 1/2" long in one dimension*
- Steel pins – ~1 3/4" long (from a sewing or quilting supplies store)
- Styrene cement
- CA adhesive
- Aleene's Tacky Glue (or equivalent)
- #4 x 1/2" pan head Phillips screws
- Small washers

*(Each crank requires a strip of .080" styrene 1/4" wide and 3 1/2" long.)



Figure 7: After inserting the pin and applying CA adhesive, let it dry.

STEP 1: Score a 1/4" wide strip on the styrene several times along the same line then snap apart (you may need to use pliers to do this – 1/4" is a very narrow piece to bend given the thickness of the styrene stock).

STEP 2: Cut three 1" pieces from the 1/4" wide strip. See figure 2.

STEP 3: With a drill bit sized appropriately to the control you are going to connect, drill a hole 1/2" from the end of one of the strips.

STEP 4: Glue the piece with the hole between, and at right angles (90°) to, the other two 1" pieces (the end closest to the hole should be between the other two). Clamp, and let dry. See figure 3.

STEP 5: Cut one of the leftover 1/2" pieces in half and glue this 1/4" square piece between the double pieces at the opposite end where they are joined to the single piece. Clamp, and let dry. See figure 4.

STEP 6: Drill a 1/8" hole in the center of the point where the two arms of the crank join. Styrene is slippery stuff, so I drill a small pilot hole first with the #71 drill to provide a guide for the point of the larger 1/8" drill. See figure 5.

STEP 7: This is the point where you decide whether the crank is going to be an "A" version or a "B" version. If you want an "A" version, position the completed crank so that the single arm is

continued on page 10

pointing toward the left. If you want a "B" version, just flip it over so that the single arm is pointing to the right. What you are determining is which side of the doubled arm the pin going to extend from. See figure 6.

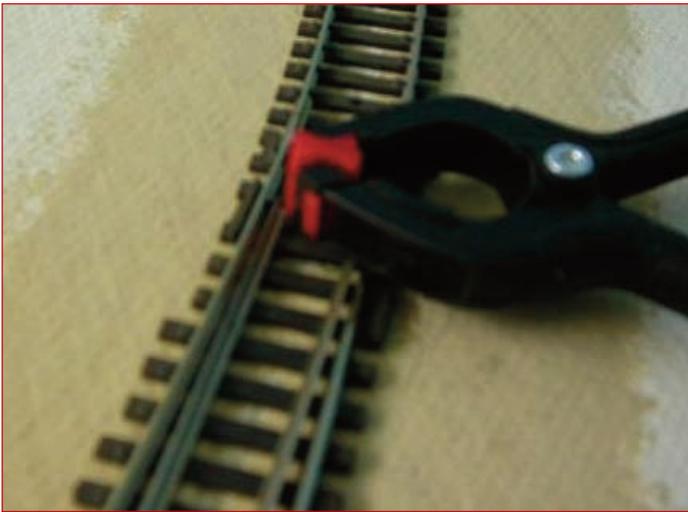


Figure 8: A clothespin or clamp holds the pin (and crank) in place. Center the points between the straight and turn positions and with a sharp pencil, mark the location of the pivot screw on the underside of the layout.

STEP 8: In the doubled arm, using a #71 drill bit, drill a hole 3/8" from the center of the point where the two arms are joined (the drill bit size may vary if the pin you are using is a larger or smaller diameter). Drill all the way through the top arm and about halfway through the bottom arm. Insert the pin, blunt end first, into the top hole and seat it in the bottom hole. Secure the pin with a drop of medium-viscosity CA cement on top and between the double arms where the pin seats in the bottom arm. See figure 7.

STEP 9: When the CA securing the pin is dry, insert the pin from underneath the layout through the 3/8" hole previously drilled

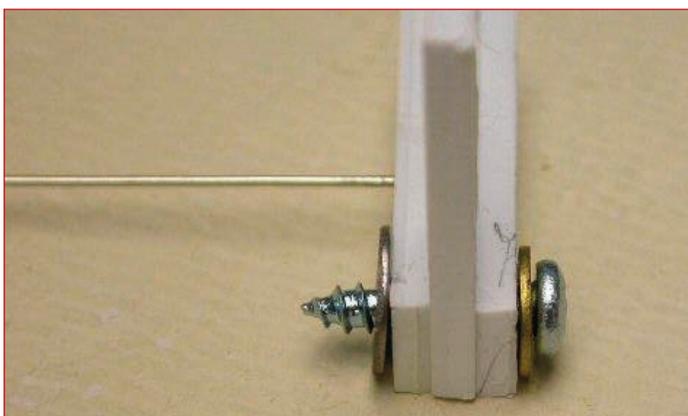


Figure 9: A small metal washer between the crank and the underside of the layout and another small washer between the screw head and the crank provide bearing surfaces and clearance.

and through the hole in the tie the at the points of the turnout. (I'm using Atlas turnouts. If you're using a different manufacturer or a scratch-built turnout, you may have to drill the hole yourself). Line up the doubled arm of the crank parallel to the track above and use a clothespin or clamp on top to hold the pin (and crank) in place. Center the points between the straight and turn positions and, with a sharp pencil, mark the location of the pivot screw on the underside of the layout. Using a 1/16" bit, drill a hole at the point just marked for the #4 pan head screw. See figure 8.

STEP 10: Assemble the crank screw with a small metal washer between the crank and the underside of the layout and another small washer between the screw head and the crank. The washers



Figure 10: The crank is attached to the underside of the layout.

each provide bearing surfaces and the washer between the crank and the layout provides some clearance as well. See figure 9. Note: It is next to impossible to insert the washer between the crank and the layout while you are trying to screw the crank to the layout. I use a little Aleene's Tacky Glue to hold the washer in place first, let it dry a little, and then put the screw with the second washer through the hole and glued washer.

STEP 11: Loosely fasten the crank to the underside of the layout, attach your actuating control at right-angles to the single arm, tighten the screw completely, then back it off just enough to allow free motion of the crank. See figure 10.

STEP 12: Test the motion and make whatever adjustments are necessary to insure that the points move freely and completely and rest firmly against each stock rail at the limits of the control motion. When you're satisfied that everything is working properly, use wire cutters to snip the exposed pin close to the tie and you're done. 🛠️



Election Nomination Update

By Bob Minnis

INFORMATION IN THE ARTICLE in the last issue of **The Local** concerning the election process requires a clarification. The article implied that one two year term was sufficient to meet the AP requirement for Association Official. That is only true for the office of President. All other offices require three years.

By the time you are reading this issue, either on a screen or in hard copy, the April 15th deadline for self-nomination has passed. The alternate method requiring the 25 signature petition is open until June 15th. You still have the time to submit the petition, candidate statement and photo to any member of the nominating committee.

(Chairman) Bob Minnis, kahlualab@aol.com, (703) 391-0675
Mike McNamara, mikemcnh@comcast.net, (856) 824-0871
Dave Chance, loconut@carolina.rr.com, (704) 933-4200
Stan Knotts, srknotts@comcast.net, (301) 990-7287. 

Princeton Junction 2010

By Bob Clegg

PROGRESS IS BEING MADE in building another great MER convention. The hotel has been secured. It is the Double Tree Princeton Hotel at 4355 US Route 1, Princeton, NJ 08450. The convention rate is \$92.00 per room (plus taxes) equaling \$107.64 per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at 609-452-2400. These rates are in effect until September 9th, 2010. When registering, specify the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA to get these special rates.

The banquet will include a cash bar reception beginning at 6 PM on Saturday evening followed by the dinner, which will be buffet style and include beef, chicken, and fish entrées as well as the usual array of side dishes. The price for the banquet is \$40.

We are attempting to secure a non-profit group sales tax exemption, and if that happens, the price will drop to \$37. Anyone who has paid the higher price will then receive the three dollar refund.

Our guest speaker has also signed on with us. He is Mitch Dakelman. Many of you from the area have seen Mitch in action with his seemingly unending collection of slides and vintage movies. The program will include a slide presentation and one of those short and entertaining movies.

Following the banquet will be the award presentations, a bit of administrivia, and of course the auction, so clean out that closet and bring those unneeded items for the auction, then be prepared

to bid on someone else's unneeded items to fill up those empty spots in that closet!

Our Operating Session program is now set. We have places for 68 operators, the most we have ever had at a convention in the MER, and you will get to operate on some of the best layouts. We even have some slots for Sunday afternoon. By the time you read this, the website registration form should be updated to include these OP Sessions.

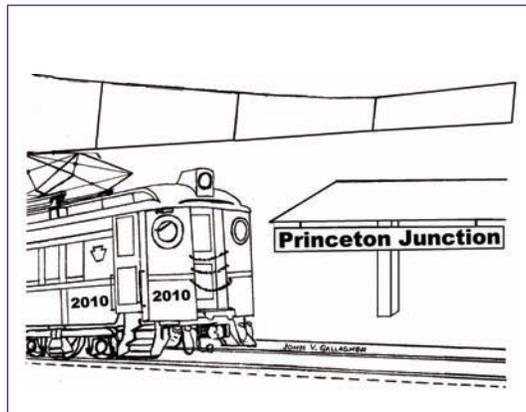
Planning for the home layout tours is coming along. Our goal is to have between 40 and 50 layouts for your viewing pleasure. The layouts will be open Thursday night, Friday afternoon and evening, Saturday afternoon, and Sunday beginning after the MER Business meeting.

We are trying something new with the layout tour, as well. We are arranging for layouts that would ordinarily be too far

from the hotel to see during a regular layout tour to be open on Thursday from 1 to 5 PM so you can stop to enjoy them on the way to the convention.

These layouts will not be published generally due to privacy issues, but if you're interested and registered for the convention, a list with maps and directions will be sent to you upon request via e-mail, or USPS mail if you don't have electronic access.

We are still in the process of finalizing the prototype tours, so keep checking the web site and the next issue for specifics on these activities. 



**Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention
PRINCETON JUNCTION 2010**

September 30th to October 3rd, 2010
REGISTRATION FORM
as of March 18, 2010

Please enter (print legibly) all names **as you wish them to appear on your registration badges.**
They will not be changed at the convention:

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other Attending (living at same address): _____

Children Attending (Under age 16 – List all): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-Mail: _____ NMRA # _____

Description	Cost	#	Paying
Early Registration (before Sept. 1, 2010 then the rate will go up)	\$40		
Non-NMRA member (applied to Rail Pass Membership)	\$10		
Significant other	\$15		
Children under 16	\$10		
Banquet	401	TBD	
Clinics:			
Building in Wood Clinic (HO) (Hyde and Brechbiel)	601	\$15	
Building in Wood Clinic (O)	602	\$15	
Tours:			
		TBD	
		TBD	
Call boards:			
CL&W (Rahenkamp) Thur. Eve.	801	\$5	
Harsco (Bickmore) Fri Morn.	811	\$5	
NT (Homoki) Fri Aft.	821	\$5	
NJW (Prokop) Fri Aft.	822	\$5	
A&W (Genthner) Fri Aft.	823	\$5	
CL&W (Rahenkamp) Fri Eve.	831	\$5	
D&H (Calderone) Sat Morn.	841	\$5	
Rocky Hill Club Sat Aft.	851	\$5	
A&W (Genthner) Sat Aft.	852	\$5	
SCJ&L (Howard) Sun Aft.	861	\$5	
Total Advance Registration Paid			

Additional events will be added when their cost is known.

Payment must accompany registration. **Make checks payable to: MER Fall Convention 2010**

Send to: MER Fall Convention
PO Box 447
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

Any questions and/or additional information email – MER-Registrar@comcast.net

Convention Hotel:

Double Tree Hotel
US Highway 1
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The convention rate is \$92.00 per room (plus taxes) equaling \$107.64 per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at 609-452-2400. These rates are in effect until 9 September 2010. When registering, specify the Mid- Eastern Region, NMRA to get these special rates.

Revised: 3/19/2010

Conventional Wisdom

By Jane Clarke
2009 MER Convention Chair

THE 2009 MER CONVENTION is over and I have recovered from the stress. I thank Eric Dervinis for his kind words in the January/February 2010 issue of **The Local**. Overall, it went smoothly, but I have some ideas for the next convention chairman.

I ended up with 3 places for recording dates and times and this caused trouble. I had an Excel file, the Google calendar on the website, and the registration form. For a couple of the callboards, I forgot to update the registration form. Some people were able to go at the new time, but others had to go to a different session or not at all. A more computer-savvy person might be able to link these together. The Google calendar provided instant updates on the web, but looked really ugly.

Sometimes the digital projectors and laptops wouldn't "talk" to each other. We had 4 projectors from different manufacturers, computers from the committee and each clinician, and cords too numerous to count. I recommend getting all PowerPoint presentations from the clinicians ahead of time and downloading the presentations on designated PC's. The projector-PC connection should be tested prior to the convention.

Our 6 operations callboards sold out quickly. For the extra \$5 registrants got several hours of on-the-job training at a local layout. The hosts were given a stipend to cover the cost of snacks and drinks. We probably could have supported 10 callboards.

We had terrific maps to the layouts created by Richard Lind, our clerk/newsletter editor. The only comment I heard was that an overall locator map would have been helpful, especially for the "going home" layouts. Richard reported that he wanted to do this, but ran out of time.

The banquet program went on a little too long. Again, there was some trouble with loading presentations on the PC. Everyone likes to get an award, but I think this portion could have been shorter. Perhaps all of the winners from each category could be called up at the same time. It was nice to have photos of the winning models; again, load the presentation on a PC and attach it to a projector that works with it.

Not enough happened on Sunday morning at the hotel. We had 2 clinics and a board meeting that all ended by 10:30 AM. The going-home layout tours didn't start until 1 PM, but people wanted to get on the road much earlier. I would recommend having some local layouts open from 10 AM till Noon. Also, the raffle results could have been posted Saturday evening.

Whoever comes up with a way to control the weather will be in great demand for convention planning! That being said, I think the folks that saw the EBT in the snow got a real treat.

Once the convention got underway, I enjoyed myself and met a lot of interesting characters. I look forward to seeing them again at future conventions and not having any responsibilities! 

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 #13:

- a. ISDLEE
- b. IEEENNRG
- c. UYSTCIER
- d. TCUKR
- e. CEUOLP

Puzzle #14:

- a. RONTTUU
- b. NGADLOO
- c. EECYSRN
- d. TOOOCELIVM
- e. LOTMPFAR

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

Answer to puzzle #13:

- a. Diesel
- b. Engineer
- c. Security
- d. Truck
- e. Coupler

Answer to puzzle #14:

- a. Turnout
- b. Gondola
- c. Scenery
- d. Locomotive
- e. Platform

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Coming Events

MAY 8TH. Wade's Train Town monthly open house. Operated by Carolina Southern Division members at the Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center St in Hickory, NC. 10 AM till 4 PM.

MAY 15TH. Sandhills Central & Aberdeen layout tours hosted by Carolina Southern Division. 9:30 AM until 1 PM. For more information visit www.bytedesign.com/CSDiv/.

MAY 15TH-16TH. ** MID CENTRAL REGION CONVENTION****** in Charleston, WV!! Visit www.coaldivision.org/coalfield_express for complete information and registration.

MAY 16TH. South Mountain Division open house, meeting and clinic in Rockville, MD. 2 PM until 5 PM. For more information visit www.smdnmra.org.

MAY 16TH. Potomac Division layout tour in Clarksville, MD. 1 PM until 4 PM. For more information visit the "Planned Layout Tours" tab at http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/.

MAY 21ST – 23RD. **SOUTHEASTERN REGION CONVENTION****** in Bessemer, AL!! Visit www.ser-nmra/2010_SER_Conv.htm for complete information and registration.

MAY 22ND. Multiple club and home layouts open in Anne Arundel County Maryland. 1:30 PM until 5 PM. For more information about the event visit: www.trainweb.org/chesapekemernmra/index.html.

JUNE 5TH. Joint meeting between Susquehanna and Chesapeake Divisions. Clinics will be held starting at 9:30 AM at the Giant Food Stores at 3301 Trindle Rd in Camp Hill, PA. Open houses starting at 1 PM will be announced there. For more information contact: Jeff Warner at (717) 932-9929 or jwarner@susquehannanmra.org.

JUNE 5TH. South Mountain Division visiting Strasburg Railroad. Advance registration was required. For upcoming events in the South Mountain Division visit www.smdnmra.org.

JUNE 12TH. Wade's Train Town monthly open house. Operated by Carolina Southern Division members at the Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center St in Hickory, NC. 10 AM till 4 PM.

JUNE 13TH. Two Potomac Division layout tours in nearby cities!! Clinton and Waldorf, MD. Both open 1 PM until 4 PM. For more information visit the "Planned Layout Tours" tab at http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/.

JUNE 26TH & 27TH. Great Scale Model Train Show at the Maryland State Fairgrounds located at 2200 York Rd in Timonium, MD. Hours: 9 AM till 4 PM on Saturday; 10 AM till 4 PM

on Sunday. Cost: \$9 for adults; kids 15 and under are free (admission is good for both days). For more information and directions visit www.gsmts.com.

TELL MEMBERS ABOUT YOUR UPCOMING EVENT!!

Send your free event listings to the editor (contact information is listed on page 2.) Be sure to include all the specifics for the event: including the date/time, place, cost, a contact person, and a means of getting in touch with him/her (address, phone, e-mail, etc.), and if available a web site for updates or to get more information. Due to publication schedules, please give plenty of notice before the event. 

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

Carl Corsi – *Gold Spike*
Michael Prokop – *Gold Spike*
Edward S. Sproles, Jr. – *Gold Spike*

Division 2 – Potomac

Martin McGuirk – *Model Railroad Author*

Member at Large

Richard Dietrichson – *Master Builder, Motive Power*

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**. 

IN MEMORIAM

MMR Pliny Holt passed away on January 4, 2010 at the age of 99. Captain Holt had a distinguished naval career. Among his many passions were golf and model railroading. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on March 25, 2010. 

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The ad must include full name and contact information and will be limited to one issue. Word count is also limited to seventy-five (75) words. Please include your NMRA number for verification purposes (number will not be published).

FOR SALE...

HO scale models for sale:

1) Unassembled 26' Caboose. Delaware & Hudson lettering. Roundhouse kit. \$6.

2) Unassembled 40' Boxcar. New York Central lettering. C&BT Shops kit. \$6. Contact Steve Kindig at (717) 825-5558 or stevespressrr@yahoo.com. 