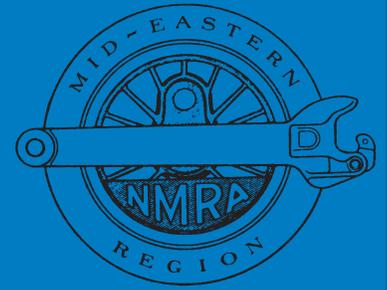


The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 66

MARCH — APRIL 2011

Number 2

Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad

*By Frederick Willis
New Jersey Division/HO Scale*

LAST MAY I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to ride on a small narrow gauge logging railroad in California. The atmosphere is amazing. The railroad, Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad, is a three foot narrow gauge railroad, about five miles south of Yosemite National Park in Fish, California. This is Sierra country with steep mountains, densely covered with Ponderosa pines and Sugar Pine trees. The Railroad operates on the right of way of the abandoned Madera Sugar Pine railroad.

We spent an afternoon at the railroad, but it deserves more time. The YMSPRR is a small family owned tourist railroad. Situated parallel to Highway 41, as the highway cuts down the side of a mountain, the main yard, ticket office and engine house are located on the only level ground in the area.

The railroad yard is about a hundred yards long with a two stall engine house at the north end and tracks entering the forest at the south end. Two tracks run the yard's length merging into one track as it enters the forest.

Located in the middle of the yard is a ticket office and general store. Behind the ticket office the ground drops away steeply. Further down the slope are a bookstore and rest facilities. Except for the rail yard, trees tower everywhere.

The buildings are wood and well maintained, as are the rolling stock and engines. At the south end of the yard the tracks swing left, head into the forest and make a four-mile twisting and turning run down a 4-7 percent grade to the site of the abandoned Madera SPRR saw mill. The tracks loop around the sawmill site and the return run becomes a 4-7 percent climb with one section having an 8 percent grade.

Rod engines need not apply for a job on the railroad, the grades preclude them. Instead two Shays and a Model-A railcar move tourists through the forest. Rides are about an hour, the Model-A railcar ride slightly under, the Shays slightly over.

The Madera Sugar Pine railroad existed from 1874 to 1931. Although still a profitable railroad in 1931, it had logged its timber holdings and was facing the depression. Its owners liquidated the company and sold off the equipment.

During its existence the railroad logged 30,000 acres of timber and extended tracks for 140 miles. Logs were transported to the sawmill where rough cutting was done. For finish cutting, the logs floated down a fifty mile flume, the second longest flume in the country, to Modesto. Leaving the Sierras, logs reached 50 mph before slowing down as the flume entered more level land near Modesto. Both the sawmill and flume were removed upon the company's liquidation. All equipment, cars and tracks were removed and sold.

In 1961, a restaurant owner bought Westside engine #10 and needed a place to run it. Thus the Yosemite Mountain Sugar Pine Railroad was born. Well-constructed, well-ballasted, three-foot wide tracks were re-laid for four miles on the right of way of the abandoned Madera railroad. Additional engines and rolling stock were required. These were purchased from the West Side Lumber Com-

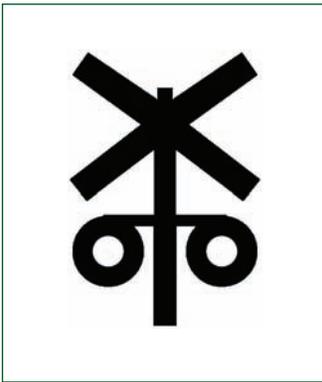
pany thus helping to preserve that company's history.

Three engines and a railcar comprise the motive power. Two Shays pull the tourist trains and add to the railroad's logging atmosphere. A center cab GE diesel provides switching capability and for small group excursions there is a model A railcar.

Both Shay's came from the West Side Lumber Company and still carry the WSLC numbers. The engines are three truck shays appearing to have the 70 ton design; neither is identified as Pacific Coast Shays.

Engine #10 was built by Lima (SN 3315) in 1928. It went to Pickering Lumber Company, then to the West Side Lumber Company and on to the YMSPRR. Oil fired, weighing 83 tons fully

continued on page 4



The Local

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

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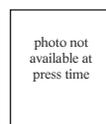
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All subscription information, advertising rates and publication deadlines are now located on page 16.

The MER website is <http://mer.nmra.org/>



From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President

ON JANUARY 8TH, the MER board met for our annual meeting at Thomas Buckingham's place in Upper Marlboro, Md. I really appreciate all of the trouble he and his wife went to so we could have our meeting at their house. Some of the highlights were that: We approved a budget for 2011; the 2011 convention in Cary, NC is on schedule; we have the 2012 convention set for the Norfolk/Virginia Beach area (dates and hotel still need to be set); and the 2013 convention will be up in the Northern Virginia/Maryland area.

For the past few months we have not had a convention coordinator for the MER. I am happy to say that Kevin Feeney has accepted the position and will report to P.J. Mattson. Kevin has past experience with conventions at the national level and is a past Director of the NMRA. He recently moved from Connecticut to the Philadelphia area. With his experience, I believe he will be able to not only help the MER but also the divisions that will be putting on our MER conventions in the future. Welcome aboard Kevin, I hope you have an enjoyable time in your new position and I am looking forward to working with you.

The NMRA is mostly run by volunteers and the Region and Divisions are exclusively run by people who are willing to give up some of their personal time to help run our organization. We are no better than the people who donate their time. I know most of us like to gripe about what we could do differently and I have no room to talk. I was complaining years ago at an SER convention and the then President (Bob Beatty) said you have no one to blame but yourself! If you want to change things, get involved. I

took that to heart and got first involved with the Carolina Piedmont Division and then later at the MER. It has involved quite a bit of work, but also a lot of enjoyment. We are in the process of having an election for MER Directors this year. There are 3 Director positions up for a 2-year term. If you want to make a difference you should apply. It would be great to have more than just three people running for the Director slots.

Our Treasurer, Tom Buckingham brought up the fact that we presently lose money on **The Local's** we send in the mail. At this time the MER does not spend a lot of funds to subsidize **The Local**, but in the future with postal rates going up about every two years we may have to raise the rate from \$6.00 a year to \$7.50. I will keep you abreast of any changes in the future in my column. At least this is something we do not have to worry about in 2011.

Talking to a few people about the upcoming convention in Cary, there is some concern about the rising gas prices and how it affects your wallet. Have you given any thought to taking the train to the convention? Amtrak runs right through our Region and the train stops both in Raleigh and Cary. It is a comfortable way to travel and beats the mad rush you have on Interstate 95. Since I work part time for Enterprise Car Rental, I can see about getting some weekend rates that would not put too much pressure on your pocket books. Also one of the branches is within one block of the Embassy Suites. Let me know what you think. It is an option that might make sense to some of our members.

Until the next issue, I hope you have a great time in all of your model railroad endeavors. 🚂

Happy 90th Birthday Jake!

By P. J. Mattson
New Jersey Division/HO Scale

ON JANUARY 1, 2011 Jake Evaul turned 90 years old. On Friday, January 7th the South Jersey Rail Operators had an operating session on Jake's "Camden and South Jersey" HO model railroad. In honor of his birthday, we had cake and ice cream and gave Jake a surprise birthday party at the beginning of the session. He was very surprised and I think it made him very happy.

Jake maintains, does the paperwork and restages his layout every month for the operations session. He also drives to all the other Friday night sessions during the month. Jake is widowed but that doesn't stop him. He has a lady friend and they play bridge, go out to dinner and do other things together.

The members of the South Jersey Rail Operators wish Jake a Happy Birthday.



Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

MANY OF YOU KNOW that I am a traction fan. For the past 10 years or so I have limited my model building to the world of trolleys. The older members of our modeling community will recall that the principal model magazines of 30 or 40 years ago each month always carried an article or two about streetcars or interurban rolling stock. Several vendors carried brass imports of a variety of traction equipment. (Those yellow Suydum boxes still make an appearance at train shows at prices ten times as much as original.)

But somewhere along the line, traction modeling seemed to lose favor and the number of articles and available equipment faded away. But have you noticed that three major model train manufacturers have recently introduced streetcars in their “high-quality” lines. Bowser and Con-Cor have very nice PCC cars and Bachmann introduced a Peter Witt and now a Birney Safety car.

These are all nicely detailed and well performing cars. Maybe more modelers of today will be at least tempted to add a streetcar line to their layouts, if not join the traction modeling community.

And speaking of “niche” modeling interests, there is a group of model railroaders who are interested in Circus equipment. That comes to mind because when I woke up this morning and looked out my 25th floor condo window at the Norfolk Southern mainline just a few blocks away, what should be passing by but the *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus* train leaving Charlotte after their last performance. I had noticed a few of the circus cars on various sidings in Charlotte but when that train of over 70 cars passed by it was pretty impressive. Over half of the train was specialized passenger-car like equipment in various formats while the remaining half carried the multitude of different circus wagons and service equipment.

However, I think I will stick to my traction modeling. I’ve still got lots of Sound decoders to program and add to my rolling stock.

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. 

Yosemite Mt. Sugar Pine RR continued from page 1

fueled, it is the larger Shay. According to the YMSPRR railcar operator, the engine has no problems pulling the tourist trains up the grades.

Engine #15 is older and smaller. Built by Lima (SN – 2645) in 1913 its weight is 60 tons with smaller dimensions. It was built for the Sierra Nevada Wood and Lumber Company. After moving to several logging railroads it arrived at the Westside Lumber Company in 1939. It remained with WSLC and its successors until 1986 when it was placed on static display in Tuolumne, California. In 1988, the YMSPRR purchased it, restored it and made it an operating engine. Also oil fired, it struggles up the YMSPRR grades with a full train. A much more interesting operation to watch than engine #10, the rail car operator told me.

While the Shays and the ride are the dramatic and memorable railroad aspects, the stored cars are a historian’s treasure. All cars were purchased from West Side Lumber Company. Four flat cars #218, #236, #259 and #311 were modified for tourist use.

However, while the operating flat cars are interesting, the real jewels lay along side the tracks heading into the forest. There, unfortunately off limits to tourists for close up inspection, is a wealth of abandoned WSLC cars. Unprotected, un-restored and slowly decaying are snow plow #2, tank car #7, a gravel-ballast car and several logging cars.

Snow plow #2 is 21’6” long. It is composed of a 45 degree angled plow blade and a small rectangular tank both sitting on a steel frame. This is an unpowered snow plow; the blade is supported by 8 x 8 timbers. Two arch bar trucks, almost touching each other, support the steel frame. The iron blade stands about six feet high and is rusted to a brilliant orange with rust flowing down through the supporting timbers turning them orange with a black under tone. The three foot high black rectangular steel tank is badly faded with small sections of rust appearing. Its supporting timber frame is black and decaying. The supporting steel frame is a bright orange attached to faded black trucks.

Tank car #7 is 32’ long with an approximately four-foot diameter steel tank sitting on a wooden frame and flatcar. Steel bands circling the tank anchor it to the flat car. Painted a grayish black the tank appears to be in good condition with only minor rust locations appearing. The frame and car have turned a faded pink with some wood bleached white, while green mold grow on sections. Supporting the car are arch bar trucks. Overall the wood appears to be in fairly good condition.

Sitting behind the tank car is a gravel-ballast car. The rectangular gravel box of well bleached wood and rusted iron work sits on two pedestals anchored to an approximately 10 x 10 wood frame. This in turn, sits on a single arch bar truck.

The Model A Jenny railcar has a roof, open sides and holds nine passengers, one adjacent to the driver and eight in two rows of four sitting back to back down the center of the car. Instead of facing forward the passengers sit on a bench facing out the side. Step on the running board, turn around and sit down is the entry method with a chain as the simple safety device. While questionable for small children, the railcar provides the ride closest to the forest.

Riding the railroad is entering another world for a brief time. It is the world of towering trees, dark shadows and a sense of isolation. A single track enters the forest and weaves it way through the trees. There is only one grand view, only one dirt road is seen, no actors or actress “rob” the railroad or sing songs. Instead there are towering trees, 150’ to 230’ high; creating deep shadows with sharp lines of light as occasional light beams find their ways through the leaves.

We rode the railcar, which runs more frequently than the Shays. The rail car is lower and narrower than the Shay pulled flat cars and gives the feel of walking on a trail rather than riding above it. The right of way is slightly wider than a trail and the rail car moves along at less than ten mph.

Trees crowd the right of way; there are no shoulders or open spaces adjacent to the roadbed. The track snakes its way through the ponderosa pines and sugar pines; finding openings between trees and passing close to them. Nothing is straight or level in this

world. The forest seems dark, dense and extending forever but occasionally a break in the trees occurs and mountains are seen in the distance. Isolation is broken at one point when an old logging road appears adjacent to the tracks through the trees. Together they run generally parallel for a mile then the tracks again entered the dark and dense forest. The three-foot gauge emphasizes the tree sizes and the railroad diminutive size.

After 15-20 minutes the railcar arrives at the abandoned saw mill site where nothing remains. In its place is a small amphitheater and picnic area. The railcar stops and it becomes very quiet and peaceful.

The ride up the mountain is even more interesting than the ride down. Riding the railcar up the mountain allows you to see the ground rise before you, making you wonder if the car will make

the climb. After another 15 minute climb the railcar emerges from the forest and returns to the rail yard. Your first reaction is let's do the ride again.

INFORMATION SOURCES:

- www.ymspr.com
- www.shaylocomotives.com
- www.gearedsteam.com

- The Shay Locomotive: Titan of the Timber** by Michael Koch
- Pacific Coast Shay** by Dan Ranger
- Logging, Mining and Industrial Annual Spring 2009**
- Logging, Mining and Industrial Annual Spring 2008**
- Logging, Mining and Industrial Annual March 2003**
- Fine Scale Molder January 2001** 

Statement of Financial Condition Mid-Eastern Region As of December 31, 2010

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
<u>Assets (excluding inventories)</u>		Breakdown of Net Assets	
High Point Bank Checking Account	\$4,421.91	<u>Restricted Assets</u>	
High Point Bank Money Market Account	\$14,667.57	Life Member Fund	\$42,516.95
High Point Bank General CD 1	\$12,055.94	Life Member Fund Interest	
High Point Bank Life CD	\$42,516.95	(paid to Money Market Account)	\$1,847.08
High Point Bank General CD 2	\$15,000.00	Pre-paid Subscriptions	\$3,593.50
 <u>Liabilities</u>		 <u>Assets Restricted by Board of Directors</u>	
None		Donation Fund	\$11,886.69
		Kit Fund	\$5,568.02
Net Assets (excluding inventories)	\$88,661.65	Unrestricted Assets	\$23,119.41
		 Total Net Assets	 88,661.65

The Life Member Fund covers our liability to provide services to our Life Members. It consists of fees paid by Life Members and interest earned on that money. Pre-Paid Subscriptions are those collected in the current and prior years and held for use in future years.

The Donation Fund collects the donations made by members and other donors. Since we are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit educational organization, these donations are tax deductible. The Board of Directors may direct the use of these funds for special projects.

The Kit Fund is a revolving fund for the car kits and building kits we sell. Proceeds from the kits sold are used to buy new kits. Surplus proceeds may be used for purposes designated by the Board of Directors.

If you have any questions or comments please contact the MER Treasurer (contact information is listed on Page 2).

Respectfully Submitted by
Thomas R. Buckingham, MER Treasurer

Attention members: Are you interested in presenting a clinic at Piedmont Crossing??

We have already started to fill a number of time slots for the next convention with some excellent clinicians. Many of our MER members have signed up or have indicated their intention to do so. This is your opportunity to make Piedmont Crossing a memorable event and to earn some AP Author or volunteer credits in the process. The convention will be held in Cary, NC (just south of Raleigh) from October 27 to 30, 2011. Contact Jack Dziadul at (919) 721-8757 or dziadul@windstream.net with any questions.

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 **NMRA Magazine**, 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 two years.

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 John Janosko, MER President (see contact information on page 2). 

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 **NMRA Magazine**, 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 two years, 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)

=====

Date of form: 1/31/07

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.

PIEDMONT CROSSING 2011: Special Contest Awards

By Martin Brechbiel
MER General Contest Chairman

PIEDMONT CROSSING 2011, will be held October 27 through October 30 in Cary, NC. In addition to the range of the standard contest room awards and categories will feature the following special awards:

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

THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD for 2010 will be chosen by MER President Janosko and given for an "Engine Service Facilities" – Diesel or Steam.

THE CLYDE GERALD AWARD is sponsored by the MER and named for the late Clyde Gerald, former MER Business Manager and long time modeler. It is awarded to the kit-bashed model which scores highest in the judged model contest. Be sure to check the definition of kit-bashed for this award!

THE BLUE LANTERN AWARD is privately sponsored and chosen by long time MER modeler Terry Nesbit and his Narrow Gauge Car Shop. The Blue Lantern is given to a model best representing branch or private line equipment or facilities, which contain no more than forty (40) percent commercial parts. The prize, a genuine railroad lantern, is presented to the winner by Mr. Nesbit.

THE PHILADELPHIA DIVISION MODELER AWARD rewards excellence in model building by first time entrants in an NMRA sponsored judged model contest. The highest score achieved by a new modeler in the contest is worth not only a plaque, but a cash prize of twenty-five dollars!

THE PRIDE OF DIXIE AWARD sponsored by the James River Division, this year will be awarded for a freight car for any railroad or private business that operated from the Southeastern (South of the Mason-Dixon Line and East of the Mississippi River) United States.

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

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

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

NEW!!!

THE HENRY (BUD) KAISER AWARD sponsored by the Philadelphia Division, will be awarded to the best-detailed and weathered piece of rolling stock model in the opinion of the judges of the model contest.

These special awards and awards for all of the categories in the Model, Photo, and Arts & Crafts contests, will be presented at the convention banquet on Saturday evening. 📄

Mix-it Puzzles

By Dr. Charles Wood
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

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 #19:

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

Answer to puzzle #19:

- a. Wigsaw
- b. Kitbash
- c. Insulator
- d. Handrail
- e. Safety

Puzzle #20:

- a. T E V O I M
- b. E E B T T M L I A
- c. E E T H R P L A G
- d. A L E C D
- e. S S C L O A Y E R

Answer to puzzle #20:

- a. Motive
- b. Timetable
- c. Telegraph
- d. Decal
- e. Accessory

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07/11

Dispatching by Telegraph...(Dad Did It)...

A series article – Part 5

Article and photographs by Mike White
Potomac Division/HO scale

WHILE THE USES of Morse Code for dispatching described in prior parts of this article are sufficient to run trains, they are not complete in all conditions that will occur by the methods described so far. For example, there is nothing yet to handle the occurrence of a meet, where it is to happen, and which train takes the siding and which holds the main. Also, there will be occasions where the ability to OS (on sheet) will be valuable. And finally, identification of stations by means of station codes will be of great assistance to the Dispatcher in keeping track of the location of trains on the layout.

I am repeating the caveat for using this system as first presented in Part 1 of series (Jul/Aug 2010 issue): *Use of the telegraph system described here presupposes a dispatching method that allows and requires the dispatcher to know where each train is located at any point in time. Our group uses a method of dispatching developed over 30 years ago by Charlie Kilbourne, which Bruce Chubb once labeled “manual CTC”. It uses a large schematic of the railroad on the dispatcher’s desk with tokens that are moved across the diagram to keep track of train location. It is a very simple, inexpensive, and effective tool for doing the dispatcher’s job. However, any other system that keeps the dispatcher advised of each train’s location could be adapted and used with telegraph dispatching.*

All of these are Intermediate uses of Morse to control the running of trains on the layout and should not be introduced into your operation until your crew has mastered the basics described in prior parts of this article. For my operators, I have developed a ‘Telegrapher’s Handbook’ which provides instructions and examples on each of the message formats to be used. It is divided into Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced message formats for gradual development of the complete Telegraph Operator training. The job assignment of Station Agent previously mentioned to assist others in operating the telegraph takes on a special and significant importance when you reach this point.

The learning curve here is steep. It is best to introduce the fea-

tures described here over time to enable your crew to master each of these gradually (Intermediate first, then Advanced).

MEETS (INTERMEDIATE)

The telegraph work associated with meets requires the operator to learn two new letters – “M” and “S”. Both are simple to learn and easy to remember. M is two dashes, S is three dots. They are used in conjunction with each other to specify which train takes the siding and which train holds the main as follows - “MM” means

“meet Main”, “MS” means “meet Siding”. Each of these orders is given to the trains involved at the station prior to where the meet is to occur. These orders are occasioned by one of the two trains involved requesting clearance from where he is currently located to the station where the meet will occur. The first order occurs when the first of the two trains makes the

request to “Run” and follows the normal Operator Call and Dispatcher ACK format. The second order is Dispatcher initiated by a broadcast call to the second operator involved followed by the “meet” order. See figures 1 and 2.

OSING (INTERMEDIATE)

There are times, especially when there may be a long run between stations, that it would be helpful for the Dispatcher to know when a train arrives at a station. In the prototype world this was accomplished by the station operator telegraphing the Dispatcher that a given train was OS (on sheet) at or by the station. This involves learning one new, and again simple, letter “O”. “O” is three dashes. The two letters are transmitted back-to-back as “OS” when a train arrives at a given station. See figure 3.

STATION CODES

The Advanced messages and formats add Station Codes to the Meet and OS messages to provide definitive information to the Operators and Dispatcher as to where activity is occurring. To keep this as simple as possible, but also to provide distinctive

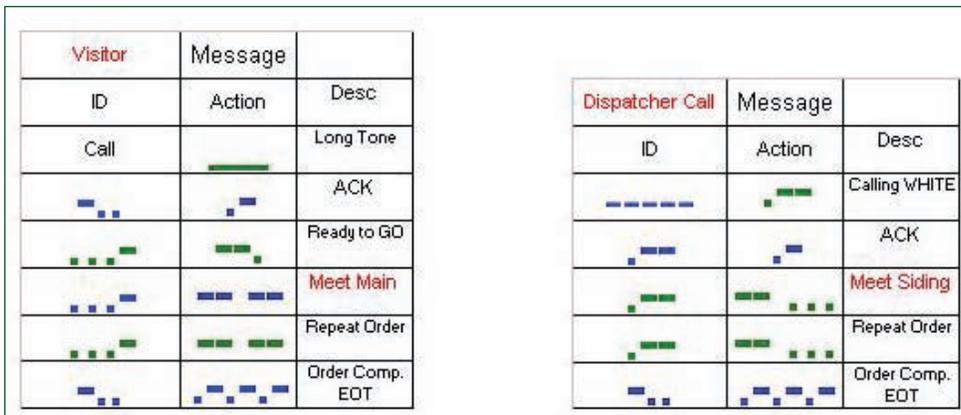


Figure 1 (left) and Figure 2 (right) “MM” meaning “meet Main” and “MS” meaning “meet Siding”. Each of these orders is given to the trains involved at the station prior to where the meet is to occur. These orders are occasioned by one of the two trains involved requesting clearance from where he is currently located to the station where the meet will occur.

Visitor	Message	
ID	Action	Desc
Call		Long Tone
		ACK
		OS
		Order Comp. EOT

Figure 3: When a train arrives at a given station the two letters are transmitted back-to-back as “OS”.

identification for each station, I used two letters for each station identity – usually the first and last letter of the station name. Putting the station code information on the edge or fascia at each station in both the letter and Morse versions can substantially flatten the learning curve. If space is available, it is especially helpful, but not necessary, to put the last, current, and next station code information at each station. My S&P/SMRR layout has 13 stations requiring codes. See figure 4.

MEETS (ADVANCED)

The advanced message format for meets adds the Station Code to each message to provide specific information as to where the meet is to occur. See figure 5.

OSING (ADVANCED)

The advanced message format for OS adds the Station Code to each message to provide specific information to identify the station where the train is stopping or passing. See figure 6.

The concept of Advanced message formats can be extended to

Station	Code	Name	Station	Code	Name
...	SS	Solomons	..	IK	Island Creek
---	DL	Dowell	---	BD	Broomes Island
..	LY	Lusby	---	LO	Lower Marlboro
---	BA	Bertha	---	CH	Chesapeake Beach
...	SD	Saint Leonard	---	OS	Owings
---	PK	Prince Frederick	..	UO	Upper Marlboro
...	SD	Sunderland			

Figure 4: My S&P/SMRR layout has 13 stations requiring codes. I used two letters for each station identity—usually the first and last letter of the station name.

other messages such as “Run” and “Meet Siding”, examples of which are provided. See figures 7 and 8.

CONCLUSION

Like a lot of other activities associated with operations on a model railroad, this is one of those things that are a whole lot more difficult to describe than to do. Also like those other activities it can add immensely to the realism and enjoyment of your operating sessions.

Initially, there are two areas where you and your operators may experience some difficulty – learning to understand audible code and using a telegraph key. Remember when you first used a mouse with your computer how strange it seemed? It’s the same thing with a key. It is hand/brain coordination that nothing else in your experience has prepared you for and just has to be learned with practice. It’s not difficult, just a little awkward – but it can be learned quickly. Understanding audible code is just an ear-train-

Visitor	Message	Station	Desc
ID	Action		Long Tone
Call			ACK
			Ready to GO DOWELL
			Meet Main DOWELL
			Repeat Order
			Order Comp. EOT

Figure 5: The advanced message format for meets adds the Station Code to each message to provide specific information as to where the meet is to occur.

ing thing and can only be gained through repetition. You will find out quickly that most of any Basic message is the same code over and over with just one or two variations. After the initial learning curve, you will find yourself internalizing most of each message

Visitor	Message	Station	Desc
ID	Action		Long Tone
Call			ACK
			OS DOWELL
			Order Comp. EOT

Figure 6: The advanced message format for OS adds the Station Code to each message to provide specific information to identify the station where the train is stopping or passing.

and just listening for the one or two differences. When that becomes the standard for you, you are ready to move on to the Intermediate and Advanced formats and content. Don’t rush it and get frustrated. You’re supposed to be having fun.

In order to help my crew with getting started, I made up cheat sheets that fit in a pocket on the back of the clipboard they use to hold and carry their car cards and waybills. In addition to a “quick

continued on page 10

and dirty” listing of how to handle the car cards and waybills at each industry, I included a Basic Format message and the standard codes used to move trains as a handy reference. See figure 9. You can adapt this for your own operations. I hope you consider this

for your model railroad. Telegraphy is quickly becoming a lost art that was vital to operating prototype railroads for almost 100 years. It was for many their ticket for admission to a railroad career. Keep the fires burning. 🚂

Visitor	Message		
ID	Action	Station	Desc
Call			Long Tone
			ACK
			Ready to GO DOWELL
			Run to DOWELL
			Repeat Order
			Order Comp. EOT

Dispatcher Call	Message		
ID	Action	Station	Desc
			Calling WHITE
			ACK
			Ready to GO DOWELL
			Meet Siding DOWELL
			Repeat Order
			Order Comp. EOT

Figure 7 (left) and figure 8 (right): The concept of Advanced message formats can also be extended to other messages such as “Run and Meet Siding”.

continued on page 11

MER Matching Grant Helps Local Kids

By Bob Clegg
Superintendent, New Jersey Division

THE NEW JERSEY DIVISION is pleased to announce that at the Division meet held January 15th at Haddon Township High School, the division presented a check in the amount of \$1,000 to the Atlantic County 4-H Model Railroad Club. This was made possible by a grant from the Mid-Eastern Region Matching Grant Program that was approved by the MER Board of Directors at their January meeting. With the \$500 grant, and with the matching \$500 from the NJ Division, we were able to make the donation.

The 4-H Model Railroad Club is comprised of about thirty young people between the ages of seven and 18 who live in and around Atlantic County, NJ, and a volunteer staff of about ten adult mentors. The kids are from all backgrounds, but all have their interest in model railroading in common. Weekly meetings are usually held on Friday nights in the Atlantic County 4-H building on NJ Route 50 in Mays Landing. During the meetings the members learn about all aspects of the hobby including, but not limited to, construction, scenery, electrical, and operations under the supervision of the club’s mentors. Each year the club also sets up their modular N scale and more recently, their HO scale modules for two train shows and a holiday season display at the Shore Mall in Egg Harbor Twp.

New Jersey Division member and the group’s leader Wayne Richter, has informed me that the grant will be used for various projects including purchasing a few pieces of equipment for those



Pictured accepting the donation check are 4-H Model Railroad Club member Ethan MacFarlane (left), 4-H Club mentor and NJ Division member Nick Caccavo (center) and presenting the check Assistant Superintendent Chris Widmaier.

members who do not have the financial wherewithal, and to help pay for field trips and entrance fees to places like the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum in Strasburg, PA.

Again, the members and the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Division, extend our thanks to the Mid-Eastern Region for making this donation possible. 🚂

The Henry (Bud) Kaiser Award

By Martin Brechbiel
MER General Contest Chairman

1) WHAT IS THE AWARD?

This award is named for the late Bud Kaiser, a member of the New Jersey and Philadelphia Divisions, the committee of the Railroad Prototype Modelers, Valley Forge, and long time modeler. It is awarded to the best-detailed and weathered piece of rolling stock model in the opinion of the judges of the model contest.

2) SPONSORS:

The Bud Kaiser Award is sponsored by the RPM Valley Forge, Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA.

3) WHO CAN COMPETE FOR THE AWARD?

Any NMRA/MER member in good standing who chooses to enter a rolling stock model in the official NMRA/MER sponsored judged model contest at an MER convention may compete for the award.

4) MODELING PARAMETERS – THE BUD KAISER AWARD MODEL IS DEFINED:

The Bud Kaiser Award model is defined as any model entry that qualifies as being a piece of rolling stock, that is highly detailed and properly weathered. The model may be a kit, scratched built, or a ready to run car that has added detail and weathering to increase its prototype appearance.

5) HOW THE CONTEST WILL BE JUDGED AND THE WINNER CHOSEN:

The model will be judged as part of the regular judging of the model contest at an MER convention. The judging guidelines will be those established by the NMRA for the model contest and the Achievement Program. The Bud Kaiser Award model achieving the highest scoring for the best detailed and weathered piece of rolling stock in the model contest or Achievement Program judging will be the winner. In case of a tie, the Chief Judge will choose the winning entry.

6) THE BUD KAISER AWARD:

Once the winning entry has been decided, the sponsor of the award will contact the winner. At the official MER awards ceremony, the Bud Kaiser Award plaque will be presented to the winner. The award will be handed out when the other official awards are distributed. The MER General Contest Chairman will present the award or a designate can announce and hand out the award plaque.

7) SPONSORS (ORGANIZATION AND CONTACT PERSONS) AND FUNDING:

The Bud Kaiser is funded by the RPM Valley Forge, Philadelphia Division, NMRA.

8) TIME LIMIT FOR THIS AWARD:

The sponsors of this award understand that in order for it to be placed into the Special awards given at a MER sponsored convention that this award must be approved by the MER Board of Directors. If approved, the award can be given at every MER sponsored convention over a two-year period. In order to continue to presenting this award, the sponsors must seek approval from the MER Board of Directors every two years. 

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

Thomas C. Griffiths – *Model Railroad Author*

Division 2 – Potomac

William Lyders – *Association Volunteer*

Division 4 – Tidewater

Gary Brown – *Chief Dispatcher*

Gary Brown – *Association Volunteer*

Nelson Clarke – *Gold Spike*

John Cryderman – *Chief Dispatcher*

William Bill Miller – *Chief Dispatcher*

Division 10 – South Mountain

Richard Lind – *Association Volunteer*

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Jack Dziadul – *Association Volunteer*

Stephen C. Wood – *Gold Spike*

Stephen C. Wood – *Chief Dispatcher*

Division 14 – Chesapeake

Robert T. Mohr – *Gold Spike*

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

News from the Contest Room!

By Martin Brechbiel
MER General Contest Chairman

ONCE AGAIN, I would sincerely like to take this opportunity to encourage you bring your models along to Piedmont Crossing 2011 and to enter it into any one of the contest categories! Beyond the standard Contest Room categories, there are a number of special awards that some of you might want to consider bringing that “special” model to place into consideration. I would like to point out that in addition to being published throughout this issue of **The Local** all of the information pertaining to the special awards, criteria, qualifications, judging, etc are now available on the MER website (<http://mer.nmra.org/Contests.html>). Just click on the name of the award to be linked to that award’s information!

All of the forms that you need are available on the NMRA web site in both pdf and Word format (www.nmra.org/education/achievement/apforms.html). Downloading and filling these out in advance is well worth your time & effort. If you need or cannot locate the forms, please contact me. We will also be instituting a “Help Desk” for entrants for that final “tune-up”. There are a number of other operational changes being instituted that should improve that aspect of the contest room. The crafts contest will not be offered this year; the photography contest will continue for another year, but the future of this contest is not bright. If you are a photographer, or have any interest in this contest, this year is one to show your support by some serious participation. In addition to the popular vote special award “Favorite Train”, we will also have a “Favorite Model” popular vote category!

I hope to see a healthy bounce back to our normal numbers of models this year since the MER has a high number of truly outstanding modelers. We are also going to need great service of our existing cadre of experienced judges as well as our apprentice judges. In that same light, I want to hear from last year’s judging crew to confirm (at least tentatively...) who will be going to Cary, NC. I also want to hear from any modelers that would like to become a judge.

Last year in Princeton, due to a low number of entered models, we were able to do a dual blind judging of every model to check on the calibration of our judges. The results of the exercise demonstrated that our judges are surprisingly consistent and that should ally continued concerns about that aspect of our contest room. It is my hope that my traveling around the MER doing clinics on judging is having some impact on establishing a level playing field for all members of the MER.

As it is becoming more and more clear that the paperwork/forms are perceived as a real or imaginary impediment to entering models into the contest room, I’m going to start focusing more on our complementary clinic/program for entrants in addition to the judging. As noted by both Charlie Flichman and Bob Hamm, judges only have ~7-9 minutes per category per model. Having the “right stuff” on your paperwork can only help you, and we really want you to get those Merit Awards! By the way, remember you only need 87 1/2 points, which out of a possible 125 calculates out to be a C grade.

Finally, I have found that participating in judging is a great way to learn and improve your modeling skills as well as gaining a “hands-on” practical understanding of how the judging matrices are applied. On top of that, judging is another activity that counts towards your Association Volunteer category in the AP program! And, having now mentioned the AP program, I would like to invite any and all of the Divisional AP coordinators to drop by the contest room, take a look at the entries, and even participate in the judging session! Come to Cary and come on into the contest room! If you have any other questions about awards or are interested in judging please contact me at martinwb@verizon.net. 

Election Time!

By Bob Minnis

HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY for you to contribute to the NMRA at the local level – a chance to “give back” something to this wonderful hobby of model railroading that we all enjoy. Volunteer to run for a Director position in the MER. Since this is an odd numbered year, the three Director positions on the MER Board are up for election. The successful candidate(s) will serve a two (2) year term beginning at the annual MER convention, this year in Cary, NC.

To be eligible, a candidate must live within the Region boundaries and submit a candidate’s “Statement of Qualification” along with a head and shoulder photo prior to the April 15th deadline. If you miss this April date, you must include a nomination petition signed by 25 current members in addition to the statement and photo and submit them prior to June 1st. These documents can be sent either by regular mail or electronic means to any member of the nominating committee prior to the deadline. The members of the committee are:

(Chairman) Bob Minnis – kahlualab@aol.com (434) 589 3011

Mike McNamara – mikemcnh@comcast.net (856) 824 0871

Dave Chance – loconut@carolina.rr.com (704) 933 4200

Election as a Director will satisfy some of the requirements for the AP’s “Association Official” award. Ballots will be mailed separately to the membership in late August or early September. 

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Coming Events

March 5th and 6th. GATSME Model Railroad Club Open House. Located at Prospect and Madison Aves in Fort Washington, PA (Just off exit 339 (old#26) PA Turnpike). This is a 40' x 50' museum-quality HO layout, based on Pennsylvania during the steam-to-diesel transition era of the early to mid 1950s. During shows, the mix of trains may include more modern equipment as well. Up to six trains (sometimes more) operate simultaneously on the East-West mainline, plus locals over multiple branch lines. Over 50 years of model railroading on display! Hours: Noon until 4 PM. Admission is free but donations are appreciated. For more information visit www.gatsme.org or call (215) 646-2033

March 5th and 6th. The Carolina Coastal Railroaders 16th Annual Train Show held at New Bern High School located at 4200 Academic Drive in New Bern, NC. Hours from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday; and 10 AM to 4 PM on Sunday. Cost: \$6 for ages 12 and up; kids under 12 are free with an adult; ticket is good for both days. For more information visit <http://carolinacoastalrailroaders.com/default.aspx> or contact Joe Hoffmann at (252) 638-8872 or e-mail southernrr@suddenlink.net.

March 12th. New Jersey Divisional meet held Ocean Fire Co. 1 located at 400 Arnold Avenue in Point Pleasant Beach, NJ. Clinics from: 9 AM until Noon. Layouts from: 1 PM until 5 PM. For more information contact Bob Clegg at (856) 696-0463 or bobcatcs@comcast.net.

March 12th. Philadelphia Divisional meet held at Montgomery Baptist Church, north of Montgomery Mall RT. 309. For more information contact: Greg Shindledecker at (610) 383-7767 or greg@shindledecker.com

March 19th. Carolina Model Railroaders Train Show & Swap meet at the J. Douglas Gaylon Depot (Formerly Southern Rwy Station) at the corner of Washington & Church Sts in Greensboro, NC. Hours: 10 AM – 3 PM. Cost: \$5 Adults, under 12 Free. Dealers will be present. The Club's large "HO" layout (under construction) and "N" scale will be operating. For more information contact: Ben Stemkowski at (336) 540-1543 or e-mail stemjobe@bellsouth.net.

April 2nd. The Potomac Division Spring Minicon held at St Mathews Methodist Church located 8617 Little River Turnpike in Annandale VA. Registration will begin at 8:30 AM. For more information visit http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/Minicon%202011/Minicon-2011.html.

April 2nd. James River Division's spring meeting. Held in the auditorium of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory, 520 Edgemont Road, on the Campus of the University of Virginia. There will be Modeling Clinics, Modeling contest and layout tours. Door prize and Contest Certificates will be presented. For

more information contact Robert Alvis at (804) 329-4060 or rvalvis@mac.com.

(Advance notice!!) May 13th and 14th. 20th National Model Trolley Meet. Sponsored by the East Penn Traction Club at The Greater Philadelphia Expo Center in Oaks, PA. Modular layouts in O, HO, N, and 3/4". Clinics, movies, slide shows, contests, displays, trolley/traction dealers, swap/sell tables, home trolley layouts open, Registration \$18 [\$20 after May 1st]. Theme: Nearside Trolley Cars. Information and printable registration form www.eastpenn.org/meet.html or contact Charles Long – Registrar, 227 Locust Rd, Ft. Washington, PA 19034-1425 or phone (215) 247-1951.

Divisions and Clubs tell MER 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. Please see the publication deadlines on page 16 to make sure your event is published on time. 

MER Archivist Update

By Bob Price

DURING THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting held in January, I reported that the effort to digitize **The Local** archives was ready to begin. Each archive copy of **The Local** from 1949 to 1995 will be scanned into an individual pdf file. This is the same storage format used for the **eLocal**. After scanning, copies of the pdf files will be provided to the Business Manager for membership distribution on compact disk and possibly the web. This setup also allows the Business Manager to become the holder of an electronic backup copy of archives. These electronic copies would provide preservation of the archive collection in the event the physical collection was to suffer loss or damage. So the final result, from my viewpoint is that the collection will be further protected. From the member's viewpoint, those with computer access will be able to easily reference past issues. At the time I am writing this, the issues from 1949 to 1963 have already been scanned.

In the future, I want to explore indexing the modeling and prototype articles from **The Local**, possibly in a web site such as the one being developed for the NMRA. I have already had some high level discussions with the manager of the **NMRA Magazine** index website and he was very excited at the prospect of including **The Local**. The Business Manager has also requested that I look into collecting and preserving our division newsletters. That seems like a great idea and I will start that effort with my own local division leaders and then reach out to the other divisions. 

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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. The editor 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. Upon receiving any submission the editor will also confirm receipt and at a later date indicate the anticipated edition the submission will appear in **The Local**. If you do not receive a postcard or e-mail within two weeks please resend your submission or contact the editor by phone.

<u>Publication Schedule:</u>	<u>Articles/Callboard items due to Editor by:</u>
Jan/Feb	December 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr	Feb 1st
May/June	Apr 1st
Jul/Aug	Jun 1st
Sept/Oct	Aug 1st
Nov/Dec	Oct 1st

If you are interested in advertising with the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association please contact the Editor, as listed on page 2. The current advertising rates for **The Local** are as follows and must include camera ready art (jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats):

Callboard Ads (30-50 words) (Div. and Clubs Only)...	Free
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Half Page ad (6 issues).....	\$225.00
Half page ad (per issue) (Div. Only)	\$25.00