

The Local

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History of the Achievement Program From 1965 through 1995

By Rick Shoup, MMR
MER at Large/HO Scale

THE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (AP) has continued evolution from its start in 1961. Hal Carstens had suggested it in 1958 but the committee took awhile to develop all the requirements. The concepts were voted upon mid-1960 and at the 1960 National Convention before final vote in 1961. In 1977, we were the Executive Presidential Committee 220 reporting to Craig Brown. In 1979, when Craig became National President he appointed the AP to become stand-alone Department 200.

I assumed MER AP Chair in 1965 from Claude Owen and stayed until I was elected Region President in 1974.

Starting in 1967 the category logos had been pen and ink sketches done by Milt Moore during the time Whit Towers was National President. From the beginning the Category Certificates had the NMRA official gold seal on them. The National Secretary, Bill Becker, was the keeper of the seal-imprinting machine. Each was impressed (squeezed) by hand. As you can imagine, it was hard work and you needed to have a strong hand.

When I was appointed National AP Chairman in 1987 after being AP Vice Chair from 1972, we started approving at least 50 SOQ's a month. I had to sign each certificate. The certificates were hand lettered by a calligrapher and mailed to me so I didn't dare make a mistake. Try writing your name the same 40-60 times every month in a few hours without mistakes. I wore out 5 calligraphers and then a computer wiz volunteered to do the lettering. What a relief. All I had to do was sign them. No more almost missed deadlines. For several years March and September had at least 80 certificates. So I found a company that would make a pressure sensitive seal that was almost the same as the official seal. I bought 5,000.

In 1988, just shortly after I was appointed National AP Chairman by Bob Dupont, Pat Harriman, MMR and I came up with some of the awards. I asked Deane Mellander, MMR to create the Hat and Gloves logo that appears everywhere. He also conceived

the artwork for the Gold Spike. The "First Timers" cloth shoulder patch is of the hat and gloves.

In about 1991, I asked 2 MMR's Charlie Hansen, #160 and Don Buckley #199 to develop the logos shown on the web pages for all of the 10 Categories. This took many months to develop and for all the workers to agree to. I never knew who all helped.

I retired at the 1995 National in Portland, OR and Pete Moffett assumed the position. When Pete was appointed by President Bob Charles he changed the logos to what you see now. The numbers of certificate approvals didn't slow down for several years.

In about 2003 Pat Harriman who then was National Chair ran out of pressure seals and had to find another company. I assume he bought about 10,000.

In 2007 the MMR e-mail list was formed by Di Voss and The AP email list was formed by Scott Perry in March 2010 and it is over 100 members and still climbing.

Recently with the help of John Johnson, MMR and current AP chairman Charlie Flichman I have complied a list of all the MER AP Chairmen. The first five of us were from the Potomac division. Note: the division wasn't official until 1969. Charlie also sent me the names of the first 16 MER members who qualified for a certificate. Charlie has a spreadsheet of the over 980 MER Certificate holders.

Along with the list of AP Chairmen I have also included the list of the 45 members of MER that earned the title of MMR.



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

From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President

IT SEEMS HARD TO BELIEVE that 2011 is almost gone. Where did the year go? When you read this it will be Model Railroad Month and a lot of our members will be having open houses to let some of the neighbors see what you do late at night in your garage or basement. If you are lucky you will see the light in someone's eye and now you have a new potential model railroader. This should be one of your aims.

By now you know who the new Directors are especially if you attended the Convention in Cary last month (more of that in my January report). I would like to thank Steve August for serving as a Director and sorry to see that his company has transferred him out of our region. May you find another good group of modelers in Arkansas and let us know how you are doing. Bob Price and Don Jennings have won reelection and I know they will keep up the good work that they have done in the past. Marty McGuirk is our newest Director and I am hoping he will bring some new ideas to the board. If you run into any of these guys, tell them you appreciate the time they are dedicating to the MER and if you have some ideas, ask them to bring them up at our January board meeting.

Some sad news is that Dennis Masters, who has been our Ballot Registrar, had a massive stroke on July 13th. I talked to his step son Preston and he said that Dennis was now in a nursing home and was very limited in his functions. He was able to feed himself and talk, but was unable to move around on his own. Preston did not think things would improve in the foreseeable future. You may want to keep Dennis in your prayers.

Now that the days have grown colder and shorter, we now have more time to work on our models and our layouts. As you finish these projects you may want to get in touch with your divisions Achievement Program person and ask them to judge your effort. You may get enough points to earn a certificate. If you happen to be in the MER and not in an active division, contact Charles Flichman and he can contact the judges closest to your area to set up a judging.

I would like to wish each and everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas and may you see only green signals ahead in 2012. 

2011 Director Election Results:

A total of 372 ballots were received and 12 were disallowed because they either voted for 4 directors or were postmarked after the cut off date.

The numbers were as follows:

Marty McGirk.....249
Chuck Davis.....187

Bob Price.....245
Martin Brechbiel.... 169

Don Jennings205

Editor's Mailbag

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Occasionally, besides the article submissions in my mailbox a member will write and share some more history. Here is one of those letters:*

Dear Sir:

Perhaps some readers might be interested in a bit more of the history behind the "Open House" activity described by Pat McTeigue in the September/October Local.

The start was a group of Wilmington, DE area modelers who met periodically at the houses of members with layouts. We wanted to reach out to other modelers in the area by holding open houses during "National Model Railroad Week". One of the group hand-drew maps for each layout and wrote up the list (remember, this was before computers were popular!).

The earliest list I have is from 1969, when the last week in February was National Model Railroading Week. We had 5 Wilmington area layouts open, and placed the list and maps in local hobby shops, which I think numbered three at the time. By 1978 we

were up to 8 layouts, and Ken Donahoe began to manage the activity. Under his able stewardship the list grew to 20 layouts by 1990, when Bruce took over, and as Pat noted the activity has now become a huge and very successful undertaking.

One feature we used to help guide visitors was a white RR cross-buck (no lettering), about 6' tall, placed at the roadside in front of each layout. It was a readily visible clue to the location, and may still be done (it has been several years since I last visited Delaware!).

Regards,
Jay Barnum
Goffstown, NH

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

BY THE TIME you are reading this newsletter, I hope you have experienced a great MER annual convention in Cary, NC. While I am writing this column, I am just anticipating that convention. Based on the last convention the Raleigh-Cary group put together in 2005, I know this will be an outstanding event, complete with clinics, tours, auctions and a 3-day train show.

Perhaps some of you who attended the convention in 2005 will remember my several HO traction modules on display. Unfortunately, I will not be able to exhibit that work this time around. After my "downsizing" from a house to a condo, I donated the traction modules to our local Charlotte Trolley Museum for all the

kids, big and small, to enjoy. Next time you run by Charlotte, drop in and take a look.

I trust most of you received your MER Ballot in early September. We sent out 1,988 ballots to eligible MER members. As usual, about two dozen ballots got bounced back to me by the Post Office for such reasons as bad addresses (members moved and did not update the records), temporarily away, etc. And of course there are those members who had difficulty following the directions, and mailed the ballots to me, or neglected putting a stamp on the ballot. When I can, I forward completed ballots back to Dennis. But by the time many of these get to me because of Post Office "processing" the voting deadline has expired.

The cool weather, Model Railroad Month and the holiday season are rapidly approaching. This will be just the time to jump into your active model railroading. Maybe even build a kit or two. It might be good practice in reading directions <G>.

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. 

MER AP History Through the Years

Article by Rick Shoup
Photographs provided by past newsletters and NMRA Library
MER at Large/HO Scale

ALL OF THE MER AP MANAGERS.

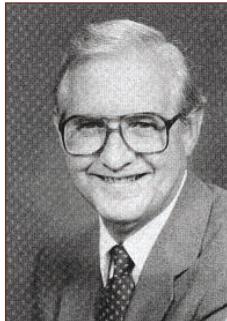
1962 to 1965	Claude Worth Owen*
1965 to 1974	Rick Shoup, MMR
1974 to 1976	George R. Johnson, MMR*
1977 to 1979	John Glaab
1980 to 1981	Paul Locher [served twice]
1982 to 1985	John David Spanagel, MMR
1986 to 1987	Paul Burger*
1988 to 1990	Bill H. Miller, MMR*
1991 to 1992	Paul Locher, MMR
1993 to 1999	Allan C. Phillips, MMR
1999 to 2001	Jim Kellow, MMR
2001 to 2002	Graham Harvey, MMR
2002 to 2003	Roger Cason, MMR
2004 to present	Charlie Flichman, MMR
* (Deceased)	



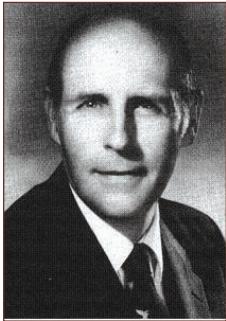
Rick Shoup



George Johnson



Paul Locher



Dave Spanagel



Bill H. Miller



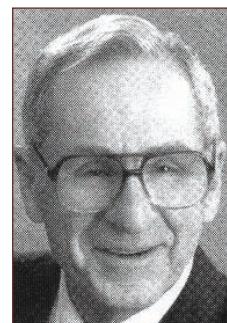
Allan C. Phillips



Jim Kellow



Graham Harvey



Roger Cason



Charlie Flichman

continued on page 5

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF MER MMR'S FROM FIRST TO LAST:

1967 – Walter Olvesky*	MMR 19	1993 – Kent S. Roberts*	MMR 195
1971 – David E. Renard	MMR 35	1993 – Jim Kellow	MMR 202
1972 – Graham Harvey	MMR 40	1994 – W. Monroe Stewart	MMR 220
1972 – William E. Lorence	MMR 45	1995 – Rick Shoup	MMR 234
1973 – Charles E. Eckstein*	MMR 47	1996 – Charlie L. Evans*	MMR 249
1973 – George R. Johnson*	MMR 49	1997 – David Skinner	MMR 266
1973 – G. William Hammer	MMR 50	2002 – Roger Cason	MMR 307
1973 – Norman B. Blackwood, Jr.*	MMR 51	2003 – Noll L. Horan	MMR 326
1975 – C. L. Siebert, Jr.	MMR 62	2003 – Richard A. Gentner	MMR 330
1976 – Deane E. Mellander	MMR 68	2004 – Fred Miller	MMR 336
1977 – Edward Costello*	MMR 70	2004 – John M. Johnson	MMR 339
1982 – Larry Nyce	MMR 95	2005 – David H. Lynam	MMR 354
1986 – Allan C. Phillips	MMR 114	2005 – Robert W. Charles	MMR 355
1986 – David W. Messer (NER)	MMR 115	2006 – Richard F. Newmiller	MMR 374
1986 – John D. Spanagel	MMR 117	2006 – Douglas Kirkpatrick	MMR 384
1988 – Robert C. Love*	MMR 135	2007 – William A. McMillian	MMR 401
1988 – C. William Gruber*	MMR 141	2009 – Chuck Davis	MMR 425
1989 – Basil A. McLean*	MMR 147	2010 – Joseph T. Lofland	MMR 444
1989 – Allen E. Means*	MMR 154	2010 – Andrew Dodge	MMR 453
1990 – William H. Miller	MMR 165	2011 – Robert G. Minnis	MMR 462
1991 – Charles R. Potter, III	MMR 171	2011 – P.J. Mattson	MMR 467
1991 – Mary S. Miller	MMR 175	2011 – Brian Sheron	MMR 469
1991 – Capt. Pliny G. Holt USN (Ret)*	MMR 178	2011 – Charlie Flichman	MMR 470
1992 – Lt. Col. USA James L. Teese*	MMR 190		
1993 – Paul Locher	MMR 162		

* (Deceased) 

Ingenious Layout Wiring: A Simple Remedy

*By Don Jennings.
MER Director and Liaison to the Boy Scouts
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale*

AFTER HELPING a fellow model railroader, Pete Wehr, with the planning and layout construction of his first DCC model railroad, it came time to go under the table to start the wiring process. The first thing that had to be done was the running of a bus wire for the DCC System. How to attach this bus wire to the table was the question. There are many methods of doing this and they have probably all been explained in the model magazines. But here is one that we came up with and you may not have thought of.

This is so ingenious and a simple remedy to the problem. He decided on using the type of plastic clothes pins that squeeze open and closed.

He went to a local hardware store to purchase the packages of clothes pins. Two different colors of pins were decided upon to indicate the positive and negative sides of the train track rails.

Each pin had a spring coil in the center of it. That hole of the coil is large enough to place a screw through and attach the pin to the bottom of the table joists.

So simple and easy, just a one-inch sheet rock screw and a drill with a Phillips head bit is all that was needed to attach each pin. One thing to be careful of is the spacing of the pins on the joists. In particular, far enough apart so the wires do NOT touch each other. This is especially important when the wires have to follow the curves of the tables.

Hopefully you will try this on your current layout to improve it or for sure on the next and better layout in the near future. 

Master Model Railroader #462

By Robert G. Minnis

MY INTEREST IN TRAINS began prior to kindergarten when my mother and I traveled to Nova Scotia by train to visit Canadian relatives. I recall waking up in the morning and watching the country scenery roll by the train window. The summer before elementary school, my family moved to the South Shore in Weymouth, Massachusetts. As luck would have it, the new house was located about 300 yards from the New Haven's Old Colony Branch. I was able to watch freight and passenger trains all day long. Since my dad used to commute into Boston via the train, I quickly learned the schedule so I was always home when Dad arrived from work. Also, the train was used for the periodic visits to Dad's office and to view the large train displays in the department stores during the holidays.

The usual Lionel train set arrived one Christmas a year or two later. My younger brother and I (with Dad's help) built a large (5 plywood sheets) table to set-up and operate our railroad. A mountain occupied one corner of the table while roads were painted directly on the plywood. Placticville structures filled the spaces between the tracks. A large remodeling project in the house was the demise of the table. The train set was packed away into its box where it remains today. My modeling interests then shifted to plastic ships and planes. One day I was in the hobby shop looking for my next 'plastic' venture when I spotted a metal (Globe or Athearn) box car kit. I have been in HO scale ever since.

Since my dad rode the train every day, he became friends with the crossing guards (remember them) and station attendant. The station had a team track for local business. During school breaks and summer vacations, thanks to these railroad employees, I was able to meet the contractors who unloaded the freight cars. For my assistance in running errands (coffee, juice, donuts) for these contractors, I was allowed to 'clean' out the empty boxcars of salvage and/or usable materials. We built a lot of projects around the house and yard with these commandeered materials.

During high school, I continued to build car kits and box them for future use. The college years saw much less activity. Upon graduation, the Army occupied most of my time for the next 10 years. Marriage and the purchase of a house allowed me to open up those boxes and resume modeling activities. Within six months, I was reassigned to Fort Devens, Massachusetts (now closed). While there, a group of active military formed the Fort Devens Model Railroad Club. The Recreation Services Office assigned the Club an old two-story barracks building for our use. We built a layout that filled the entire first floor. Unfortunately, the layout was dismantled when the installation closed.

The next stop was Fort Richardson, Alaska, where I joined the Northern Lights Model RR Club. The club was a modular opera-

tion at the time and we set up at various public events in Anchorage. I continued to build and box both cars and small structures. A small group of military officers wanted to form its own modular group so we built 10 module frames. Shortly after completing construction of these frames, we all received orders for our next assignments. I ended up with the blank module frames since I was the last to leave.

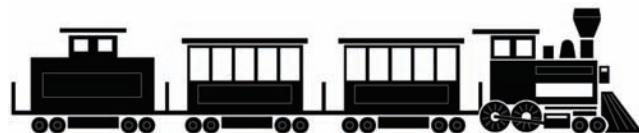
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, was my next duty station. I continued to build small structures and freight cars for a 'future' layout. Upon retirement, I moved to Springfield, Virginia, bought a house and adjusted to civilian life. I joined the local Potomac Division (MER) and started to attend meetings. The Superintendent heard about my modules and asked if I was interested in doing a show for the Children's Museum in Washington DC. I supplied the module frames to the six people who signed up for the group. We decided on the name of Potomac Module Crew as that was as formal as we wanted to go – no dues, no officials. We did decide to have a Coordinator (I was volunteered) to take care of the administrative details. I have displayed my modules over 125 times during the 20+ years I have been part of the "Crew." Today, the PMC has 25+ members and approximately 70 modules.

I heard of the Achievement Program early in my association with the NMRA, but it wasn't until I joined the Potomac Division that I took an active interest. The monthly layout tours and mini-conventions exposed me to the modeling efforts of several dozen craftsmen, including several MMRs. After observing these other modelers' work, I decided I could do just as well. Slowly, I began to accumulate Merit Certificates. The various jobs that I found myself in (Division Paymaster, Division Superintendent and Region Director) added other AP Certificates. I have thoroughly enjoyed my association with the Achievement Program and encourage you to give it a try.

I am currently in the process of designing and building a layout in the basement of my new home near Charlottesville, VA. I am looking forward to many more years of model railroading. The Achievement Program is not that difficult. Just read and follow the requirements for each certificate. 



Robert Minnis



SEND THAT NMRA INSURANCE IN!

Photographs by Anthony Jones
MER at Large/N Scale

I guess you can use my train barn in an advertisement for NMRA insurance!

When Irene hit at the end of August it left a huge oak tree laying right in the middle of my rail yard and my whole layout is destroyed. Ironic enough, I had filled out the insurance paperwork and did the inventory, but hadn't sent it in yet. I was waiting for the first of the month.

Not counting the building, I lost \$9,000 in trains, buildings, electronics (DCC) and layout. SEND THAT NMRA INSURANCE IN! 



Before



After

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

Roger Thomas – *Model Railroad Engineer, Electrical*

Division 2 – Potomac

Robert N. Reid – *Chief Dispatcher*

Robert N. Reid – *Model Railroad Author*

Brian W. Sheron – *Master Builder, Cars*

Division 4 – Tidewater

Thomas Holmsted – *Golden Spike*

Max R. Robbins, Jr – *Golden Spike*

Division 5 – James River

Mike Garber – *Golden Spike*

C. Earl Guthrow – *Golden Spike*

Gareth D. Quale – *Master Builder, Scenery*

Jean Rass – *Golden Spike*

Jerry Ritter – *Golden Spike*

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

David Draxler – *Master Builder, Scenery*

David Draxler – *Chief Dispatcher*

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Victor J. Bitleris – *Association Volunteer*

Edward G. Bond, Jr. – *Association Volunte*

MER at Large

Richard Dietrichson – *Model Railroad Author*

Charles Flichman – *Master Builder, Scenery*

Charles Flichman – *Master Builder, Structures*

Please offer your special congratulations to the MER NEWEST MMRs: (The formal presentation was made at *Piedmont Crossing*.)

Congratulations

Brian Sheron #469

Charlie Flichman #470



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**. 

Model Railroad Operations

*Article, photographs and examples by Pete Clarke.
South Mountain Division/HO Scale*

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appeared in the Fall 2010 issue of The Wheel Report and is reprinted with the author's permission.

UNITL SOMETHING ON IT MOVES, a model railroad is a diorama. Once something moves, it becomes a transportation system in miniature. Most of us got into model railroading because we like to see trains run. "Operation" does not just refer to having other people run your railroad. In its basic form, operation is just how you decide what train to run and what cars it should take. So if you have ever run a train on your model railroad, you have had an operating session.

don't take this train across this turnout. You can run what trains you want, when you want, and do whatever switching you want. There is nothing wrong with that. However, real railroads do things for a reason and have patterns. It could be the one-train-a-day pattern of a short line in bankruptcy, or the mass of trains rolling on the 4-track Pennsylvania mainline. Modeling the traffic pattern is as much a part of modeling as constructing the buildings. Most of us built model railroads that are big enough to run more than one train. And after we have run trains by ourselves for a while, we begin to wish we could see our railroad live up to its full potential. We begin to wish we could see the traffic pattern in action. To do that, we need to have other people visit and help us run those other trains. This article will look at what having other people run your railroad may cause you to do. One side benefit is that doing these things for those "other people," may well cause you to think of your model railroad as a railroad rather than as a model.

The moment you have even one other person over to run trains several things change:

- The guest doesn't know all the quirks and cannot avoid them.
 - The guest doesn't know which train to run next.
 - The guest doesn't know when to run the next train.

Example 1: The basic timetable.

- The guest doesn't know what cars the train should take, drop off, or pick up as it goes.

- With two trains running, you now have to be deal with train meets.

1. – Quirks of the railroad. Quite simply, you have to resolve these. Don't expect a system of operations to resolve this for you. If a section of track or a turnout exists, it must work correctly. That's annoyance number one for both the host (who has to fix

time re-doing things that are already “done.” Further, to do this is to admit that you did a crappy job of doing it the first time. You might damage some scenery or have to redesign some track work. It’s easy to see why this step can stop many who might otherwise have become hosts of operating sessions. But a railroad must function, before it can operate.

2. – What train to run next/when to run it. There's lots of ways to resolve this. The simplest is to just tell your guest what train to run. You could also make up a list of trains you'd like to have run. You might even list a scheduled time for each to run.

3. – What cars a train should take. Again, there are lots of ways to resolve this. You can just tell your guests what cars to pick up and drop off. You could make up a list for each train in which you tell what cars to drop off or pick up in each town. You could make up car cards and waybills that would allow the guest to figure out which cars they should take.

4. – How to control train meets. DCC is great, now we can have collisions, “corn field meets,” and destroy our trains just like (sometimes) happens on real railroads. But, neither you nor your guest is likely to feel very happy if you have one of these events.

So how do you avoid it? Well, you can watch and just tell your guests to, "Wait here for a meet with train x." Or you could include the meets on your train's car switching list. Or you could build a prototypical signaling system. Or you could use the system known as "Time table and train order" to allow the operators to resolve meets on their own.

Once we eliminate "quirks of the railroad," we are left with 4 issues that any "ops system" needs to take into account. (1)

What train to run, (2) when to run it, (3) what cars to take, and (4) how to control meets. Let's discuss the list of systems I have seen and used to deal with these issues:

- 1 – Verbal
- 2 – Sequential trains and switch list
- 3 – Timetable and switch list
- 4 – Timetable and car cards

I have used each. Each works. Each has its strengths and each has its weaknesses.

SYSTEM 1 – VERBAL

The first thing you might have noticed is that all of those issues can be resolved by you just watching over things and telling your guests what to do. Tell them what train to run. Tell them when it should go. Tell them what cars it should pick up and drop off. Tell them where and when to meet other trains. There is nothing wrong with doing this. It works. But it has some drawbacks.

- You'll get tired of always having to tell everyone everything.
- Your guests will get tired of always being told what to do.
- It will get noisy, and people will not be sure if you were speaking to them.
- People prefer to do things on their own, and that gives them a sense of accomplishment.

In general you will soon find that the verbal system does not produce a relaxing or enjoyable experience for you or your guests. It's loud. You feel like a Nazi commander. Your guests think of you as a Nazi commander. It's simple, and requires no preparation or up front work. It is an easy way to get started. But has some serious drawbacks.

Departure times										
Northward					Station	Southward				
Read down						Read up				
					1 Train					
					8:00 Town 1					
					8:05 Town 2					
					8:15 Town 3					
					8:20 Town 4					
					8:25 Town 5					
					8:30 Town 6					
					A 8:35 Town 7					

Example 2: Timetable with time of day entered that ops session is likely to start

That's good. However, it does require that you do some work up front.

You must decide what trains to run and where they are going. Also, you have to decide what cars they are to pick up or drop off at each town. And, you

need to define where and when train meets are to happen. Ok, that doesn't sound so bad. But let's think about it for a minute. What does this mean in terms of the four ops system items?

Issue (1) What trains to run – Not so bad. Just think of what trains you want to have run in a session. Ah, but before the ops session starts, you have to be sure that the equipment for each train is in its starting point town. That's called "staging." You might want to write up a page of staging notes for yourself so you get it right!

Issue (2) When the trains leave – In the sequential train system, the departure of any train is dependant upon the arrival of another train. Nice, simple. Train X doesn't leave until train Y arrives. But, if you are a person waiting for your train to leave so you will be at your destination on time, this may not be the best system for you. You really don't know when your train will depart nor when it will arrive at any town. But it works and there's nothing wrong with it.

Issue (3) What cars to take, which to pick up and drop off –

Switch lists may be the best solution to this issue. You just take a practice run and write down each car that this train should start with. Then, for each town, write which cars it should drop off (and where) and which

Departure times										
Northward					Station	Southward				
Read down						Read up				
					1 Train		2			
					8:00 Town 1		A 8:50			
					8:05 Town 2		8:45			
					8:15 Town 3		8:35			
					8:20 Town 4		8:30			
					8:25 Town 5		8:25			
					8:30 Town 6		8:05			
					A 8:35 Town 7		8:00			

Example 3: Timetable with second train running times added.

cars it should pick up (and from where.) Ah, but in order to be able to do this, you have to know the exact location of every car that's going to be moved in the entire operating session. This means that you will have to have staging notes that define the location of every car. A pain in the ass, but not so bad? Oops, you may find that you have to spend hours before each ops session picking up cars and placing them in the correct spots for the start

continued on page 10

of the session. And what if train 2 is supposed to pick up a car that was to be dropped by train 1 – but train 1 forgot to drop it? So you can see that the switch list system, while perfectly functional, has some issues as far as car pickups and drop offs.

Issue (4) How

to control meets –
On the sequential train list/switch list system this is pretty straight forward. You must first run each train and write down your arrival and departure times. Your guests will need to know what time they might want to add to their arrival time. You can now figure out what time you will have to write the meet into the train list. If you are up front on your planning, you will be able to get away with less time between the two trains. Operator "A" is very efficient and operator "B" is hopefully not too late getting the train ready. Don't be too happy with the results.

SYSTEM 3 – TIMETABLE AND SWITCH LIST

Issue (1) What train to run, that's a given in all systems.

Issue (2)
When the trains leave – In this system trains leave at their departure times on the timetable.
“Great,” you say,
“How do I make a timetable?”

You'll need to have run each train yourself and have written down the arrival and departure times at each town. If you are moving to a timetable from a sequential train and switch list system, you

Does your railroad run North/South or East/West? You need to know this. There must be many ways to build a timetable. One

easy way is to take a piece of graph paper (or Excel for you PC users) and write each town name in order, on the center column of the page. Label all the columns to the right as being for North bound trains (or south, or east, or west). Label all the columns to the other side as being the other direction. See example 1.

In the column next to the towns, write in the departure times for the first train that runs. I suggest you enter the start time as either the time of day that your ops session is likely to start (say 8:00 PM) or the

your ops session proposes to represent (say 6:00 AM.) See example 2. Add in the second train that runs. See example 3. Then just add in the rest of your trains.

Issue (3) What cars to take, which to pick up and drop off –

This system still uses a switch list, so this does not change from what we did in the sequential train and switch list system.

Issue (4) How to control meets – Take a look at example 3.

Note that these two trains have a meet in town 5. Train 2 arrived sometime after 8:05 and train 1 arrives sometime after 8:20, but both are to leave at 8:25. So you have a meet. Each train crew should have a copy of the timetable, so each crew also knows that they have a meet. Great. But what if train 1 is running late and does not get to town 5 until after 8:25? Now you have a choice. In

the sequential train system, we have trains wait so that all meets happen in the town they were scheduled to happen in. If one train has to wait, so be it. We can do the same again here. Nothing wrong with that. Or you can take train control to the next level. To do this, you must give the crews the information they'd need to know in order to make wise and reasonable decisions. What do they

have to decide? They have to make the “Go/No Go” decision. Real railroads had this same issue. They solved it by assigning priority levels to trains and establishing operating rules. This can get

Departure times									
Northward (Superior)					Station	Southward (Inferior)			
Read down						Read up			
					1	Train	2		
					8:00	Town 1	A 8:30		
					8:05	Town 2	8:45		
					8:15	Town 3	8:55		
					8:20	Town 4	9:00		
					8:25	Town 5	9:15		
					8:30	Town 6	9:30		
					A 8:35	Town 7	9:45		

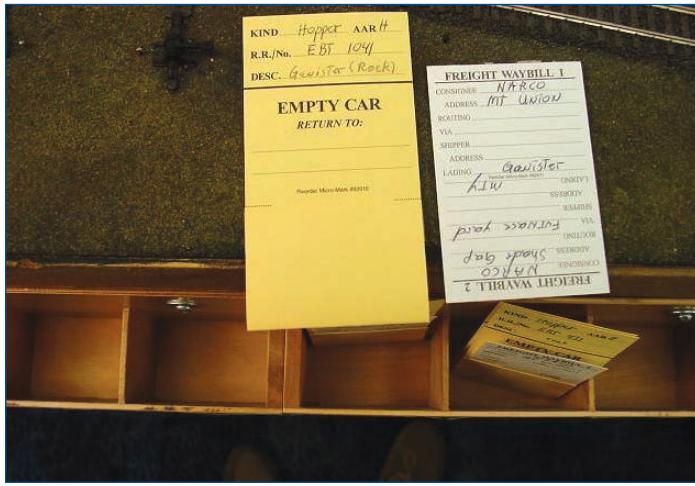
Example 4: Timetable with superior/inferior information added.

In Effect Friday November 5th, 1926
Departure times

Example 5: Our timetable is made to look like the actual timetables of the East Board Top Railroad.

quite involved, and there are entire books on this topic. I don't claim to know all the details. But to get you started, a simple version is just this ...

- You need to decide which direction is going to be "superior." The other will be the "inferior."
- You will want to add this superior/inferior info to the



Example 6: A picture of car card and waybill.

timetable so your crews know it. See example 4.

- Each operator needs to learn to look at the schedule before they depart any town.

Let's say you decide that Northbound trains are superior. At 8:25, if both trains are in town 5, then both have completed the meet and may go.

But if 8:25 comes and only one train is in town 5, the following should happen...

If train 1 is in town and train 2 is not, then

- Train 1 is superior, it may move on towards town 6.
- Train 2 will have had to look at the timetable before they depart from town 6 and realize that they don't have time to get to town 5 before the superior train will have departed. As a result, they must wait in town 6 and have the meet there. Inferior trains must always stay clear of superior trains.

Ok, but what if it was 8:25 and only train 2 was in town 5?

- Easy, as the inferior train, train 2 must wait until train 1 arrives in town.
- What happens back in town 4? Train 1 can leave even if it is late, because it is a superior train.

Sweet, and very "railroadly."

What if there's some reason that you (as the owner) want train 2 (the inferior train) to advance? You can then issue a "meet order." In this, you simply inform both train 1 and 2 that they will now meet in town (X). You can do this verbally, or you can use a written order form. Wow, even more railroad!

If you model a prototype railroad, you can have some fun making your timetable look as close to the real thing as possible. See example 5.

Timetable and switch list, a really good combination and a good system of operations. But, look at all the work you have to

do up front. In addition to making the timetable, you still have to make up a switch list and deal with the staging issues.

SYSTEM 3 – TIMETABLE AND CAR CARDS

Using car cards to control car movement will not change what we have already seen with – **Issue (1) What trains to run; Issue (2) When the trains leave;** and **Issue (4) How to control meets.**

Issue (3) What cars to take, which to pick up and drop off – One of the concepts of car cards is to resolve that.

The basic idea of car cards is that each physical car on the layout has a paper card that follows it. The paper card tells where the car should go. Most car card systems will have a separate "waybill" for each card. See example 6. The waybill will allow for multiple destinations so a car can cycle its way around the layout. Also, most systems use a "card box," to control the "should it go now?" aspect. The card box will have separate sections for those that are "ready to go" versus those that need not be moved. See example 7. So the card and box system tells the train crews if this car is ready to be moved, and if so, then where this car is to go. Now your train crews simply look at the car cards in each town to determine if they should or should not pick up or drop off any cars. This means that you don't have to know where every car is at the beginning of each operating session! You can just let each train pick up the cars that are available. Sweet!

Ah, but you say that the first train will pick up every car on the



Example 7: A picture of a card box with cards in them.

layout. First, they will know that they only pick up cars that are going in the direction they are traveling. Second, you can identify for each train what its maximum number of cars is. Now the crew knows they can only take a limited number of cars. Oh, you might want to add in some car priority system – you don't want those reefer cars to sit and let the contents spoil!

Disadvantages? Oh, it has them – You have to build or buy the boxes, cards and waybills. You have to complete (write) the card and waybill for every car on the layout. The crews have to sort through cards and need a place to put them down. The cards can become separated from the car and you'll have to re-connect them.

continued on page 12

Master Model Railroader #467

By P.J. Mattson

GOT MY FIRST TRAIN for Christmas when I was 5 years old. It was an American Flyer "S" gauge train. I had a small platform in the basement to run it on. I don't know what happened to that train.

When I was 16 my father was killed in an unfortunate motorcycle accident. I had a neighbor named Paul Gaunt that took me under his arm and introduced me to HO trains. He had me join club that was in the third floor of another person's house. I was given a section to model all my own. Things happened and we had to dismantle the layout and the club disbanded. I still have the hump yard in my garage tacked to the rafters in the roof.

During this time I got a Tyco work train. It was my first HO gauge train. It was yellow and had a 0-4-0 engine, a flat car with a crane, a gondola and a work crew car. I still have this train.

The group attempted to get clubs started a few more times. We did have a nice layout going in the 3rd floor of Pitman's municipal building. We also sponsored a Cub Scout group. This lasted about 5 years and again we had to dismantle the layout, I was drafted and went to Vietnam. I had a marriage that didn't last. I started a layout in my mom's 3rd floor. I then met my now wife and when we decided to marry I looked for a home with a basement for the trains. The now Raccoon Valley Railroad was born.

One day Pappy (Paul Gaunt) called me about going with him on a Friday night. This got me involved with a group known as the South Jersey Friday Night Operators. The then New Jersey Division Superintendent was part of the group and got me to join the NMRA.

I became involved as the Registrar for the NMRA's national convention in 1993 known as the *Valley Forge Express*. To get ready for this I did the *Markers 89* MER convention. After the national I was the Register/Treasure for the *Jersey Limited* in 1996. After that I was named the Registrar/Treasure for all MER conventions.

All the Volunteer work I did for these events lead to my AP for Volunteer. Off and on over the next 20 years I did other AP cer-

Model Railroad Operation continued from page 11

I have used all four of these operations systems: Verbal instructions, Sequential trains and switch list, Timetable and switch list, and Timetable and car cards. Each has advantages. Each has disadvantages. But they all get your railroad rolling!

By the way, did you notice that at some point I stopped referring to "guests" and started referring to "train crews?" The more you ask your guests to think like railroad crews, the more they'll think of themselves that way. Wasn't that part of the reason you built a railroad? 

tificate work. I was also appointed the AP Director for the New Jersey Division.

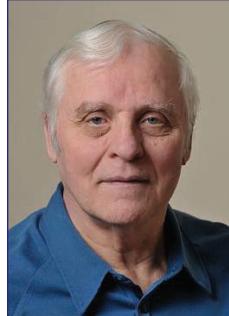
The layout in my basement expanded as the kids moved out and I got more space. It became one of the layouts operated by the South Jersey Friday Night Operators.

I became a Director on the board of the MER. I now serve as Vice President of the MER.

I worked as a Chemical Emergency Responder for the DuPont Corporation until I retired. I am also a Volunteer Fireman for Woolwich Fire Company where I was Chief for 14 years. I am now a life member.

I plan to continue working on other AP awards. I have one thing to say to all modelers. If I can do this so can you.

My AP Awards are "Dispatcher" 1991, "Volunteer" 1991, "Electrical Engineer" 1991, "Scenery" 1996, "Civil Engineer" 2010, "Official" 2010 and "Motive Power" 2011. I also received the "Golden Spike" in 1996. 



P.J. Mattson

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New Membership Recruitment Program

As an aid to membership recruitment, NMRA recently instituted a six month "Railpass" trial membership program which costs the applicant \$9.95. Building on this idea, the MER is instituting a program whereby it will pay the \$9.95 Railpass fee for interested applicants in the MER. In other words, we are making available FREE six month Railpass trial memberships to encourage recruitment of regular members.

What's covered?

Same as Railpass—receive six issues of **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: _____

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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

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CALLBOARD

Coming Events

November 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.

November 12th. HO scale Model Railroad Open House and Display at the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Club. Located in the historic Vienna Depot of the former Washington & Old Dominion Railroad, 231 Dominion Road NE (at Ayr Hill Avenue), Vienna, VA. Hours: 1 PM until 5 PM. Admission is free (donations accepted). The layout depicts the Western North Carolina Railroad (now a portion of the Norfolk Southern) during the period of transition from steam to diesel. For more information visit www.nvmr.org or call (703) 938-5157 (leave message).

November 12th. South Mountian Minicon. Held at Hobbytown USA, 919 C North East Street in Frederick, MD. 10 AM until 4 PM. Open to public! For more information contact Michael Shockey at (240) 675-9352 or SHOgone@aol.com.

November 12th. Joint New Jersey divisional meet with Philadelphia division. Held at Wilmington Towne Centre (Concord Pike, US 202 at Naamans Road) in Wilmington, DE. Layouts open from 1 PM until 5 PM. Door prizes, refreshments, and camaraderie come standard! White elephant tables are also available. No contest, but bring a model or two for show 'n tell. For more information contact Bob Clegg at (856) 696-0463 or bobcates@comcast.net.

November 18th. TAKE YOUR MODEL TRAIN TO WORK.

November 28th (MONDAY). Vienna Holiday Stroll. 6 PM until 9 PM. See address and contact info for NVMR Club.

December 3rd. Potomac Division layout tours in Lusby and Lower Marlboro, MD. 1 PM till 4 PM. For more information contact Brian Sheron at (301) 349-5754 or bwsher@mac.com.

December 3th & 4th. GATSME Model Railroad Club Annual Open House. 1,800 square feet of HO model railroad in both standard and narrow gauges. Located in the old Fort Washington (Montessori) Elementary School, Prospect and Madison Avenues, Fort Washington, PA. Noon until 4 PM each day. Everyone is welcome - bring your friends and family. Donations appreciated. In case of inclement weather check website or call us during show hours. Club phone number 215-646-2033. Website www.gatsme.org.

December 10th. 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.

December 17th. NVMR Model Railroad Open House. 1 PM until 5 PM. See address and contact info for NVMR Club.

Divisions and Clubs tell MER members about your upcoming event!! Send your FREE (limit of 25 words) 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. 

CLASSIFIED

ATTENTION ALL MER MEMBERS:

Do you have a wanted/trade/for sale item(s)? Looking for carpool options to an event or options for sharing a room? **The Local** publishes a FREE classified section for all MER members. Send your classified ad to the Editor at stevesx-pressrr@yahoo.com, or see all the editor's contact information on page 2. 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). 

Contest Results will be published in the Jan/Feb 2012 issue. If you have any stories or photos from the convention that you would like to share please contact the editor [see page 2 for contact details] before next deadline (December 1st, 2011.)

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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.

Publication Schedule:

	Articles/Callboard items due to Editor by:
Jan/Feb	December 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr	Feb 1st
May/Jun	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	\$60.00
Business Card size (6 issues)	\$60.00
Quarter Page ad (6 issues).....	\$125.00
Half Page ad (6 issues).....	\$225.00
Half page ad (per issue) (Div. Only)	\$25.00