

The Local

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Number 6

A Two-In-One Project

*Article and photographs by Don Jennings
Director and BSA Liaison Coordinator for Railroad Merit Badge and a RR MB Counselor
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale*

HERE IS AN EASY and inexpensive way to construct car card-holders for your layout. Yes, I know, everyone may already have something like this and they are placed around the layout at the towns. But there may be a new person starting out or someone starting a new layout that might want to give this a try. The materials are easy.

A coupon holder from a craft store. See photo 1. I found mine at the local AC MOORE in North Carolina. NOTE: I spent all of a dollar for each of the boxes I used. Total \$2.00 for the three section car card box.

A saw (I used a jigsaw because I can't cut a straight line with a handsaw.)

Some *Tight Bond 111™* glue. (not that sissy stuff)

A pencil and a ruler or straight edge.

Now, you will have to purchase two of the coupon holders to make each of the three position car cards holders you need.

With the curved top of the holder away from you, cut the RIGHT side of one of them and the LEFT side of another. See photo 2. NOTE: these are just glued so it may pull apart (or not). Try to be careful and save the sidepieces for the inserts or dividers of the new car card boxes.

Next, separate the front panel from the box. Cut the front panel from the bottom so you have



Photo 1: Wooden coupon holder from local craft store.

about 1-1/2 – 1-3/4 inches to be used for the new front pieces. The rest may be discarded.

If you were able to save the sidepieces, make a diagonal cut of the side panels to match up to the new smaller size front panel. (If not, use the old front panel pieces to cut new sides). This will make it easier to get a hold of the car cards when they are in the box. The two boxes will be glued with the open sides together making one longer box. See photo 3.

This now will measure about 7-1/2 inches long. I suggest using an addition support piece such as a small length of furring strip wood glued to the bottoms to hold the boxes together. See photo 4.

Glue both of the sidepieces to the in side of the car card box. Measure about 2-1/2 inches for each of the three equal spaces and let set up overnight. Next you can paint the boxes to your favorite

railroad's color scheme and finally add the words "IN", "HOLD", "OUT" on the small front panel. See photo 5.

The boxes come in two different sizes. This is in case the car cards you might be using are bigger or larger than what I described here. The bigger box is a little longer and also wider. See photo 6.

Here comes the second part of this two-in-one project article. NOTE: This was thought up after I



Photo 2: Boxes minus the sides.

continued on page 5

The Local

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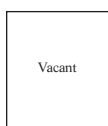
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All subscription information, advertising rates and publication deadlines are now located on page 16.

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

From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President

IN AUGUST, THE MER sent out ballots for the election of officers for the next two years. Once the ballots were mailed we ran into a problem. It seems we had the wrong address on the return ballot. Once we found out our mistake, I contacted some of the board by phone calls and email. Tom Buckingham was able to get Penny Press to print new ballots and to get us into a slot that would not cause but a little delay in resending the new ballot. Internally, I would like to thank PJ for getting an email to all of the Divisions so that no one would return the old ballots and wait for the new colored ballot with the proper addresses. Bob Price (Director), Steve Kindig (Editor of **The Local**) and Julianne Smith (Publisher) were able to quickly respond to our problem and to get it solved. I know we all do not like to see problems arise, but it is times like this that I can say I am very proud of the people at the MER for there quick actions and team

work. I again apologize for any inconvenience that this may caused you in voting for our ballot of officers. I believe that we should not run into this problem again.

Remember November is National Model Railroad month and now would be a perfect time to work on your layout, so that you can show the neighbors what real model railroading is like. This is another way of getting people interested in the hobby.

I would like to thank everyone that took the time to vote and especially everyone that voted for me. I really appreciate your vote.

I also want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a better year in 2013. 📧

A Two-In-One Project continued from page 1

completed the car cards boxes. This is just an idea of what you might be able to do with the left over pieces. I did not physically



Photo 3: This is the two boxes glued together with the lowered front and sides cut diagonally.

do this. The handles of the coupon box may be cut off even with the top of the boxes. Those curved pieces from the tops can be used to make a Quonset style hut for your "N" Scale layout.

Not many modelers have



Photo 4: Bottom view of the box.

You would have to figure the scale length you desire for the hut size. Use the two top pieces as the front and rear ends of the hut. Some extra wood or styrene

pieces would have to be used as a base and roof supports to hold the hut together. Once this is done, you could use dull side of aluminum foil wrap as a roof. And use the *Tight Bond 111™* glue to secure the shiny side of foil to the hut's framework. Let this completely dry overnight.

I hope this project may help you think of other projects that can qualify you for an Achievement Award.

I also hope you enjoy doing this or at least trying this idea for your layout. It will add interest as something you made and that it is not a store bought item. 📧

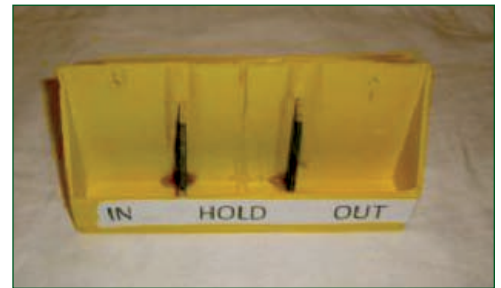


Photo 5: Finished product.



Photo 6: These are the different sizes the boxes come in.

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

BY THE TIME you are reading this newsletter, I hope you experienced the fun at MilePost 40, MER's annual convention in Suffolk, VA. **The Local** editor's timetable each year at this time calls for articles to be written before the convention but read by members after the convention. So while I am writing this column, I am just anticipating that the convention will again be an outstanding event, complete with clinics, layout and prototype tours and auctions.

I trust most of you received your MER Ballot in September, actually two, the original white one with an addressing goof and a corrected yellow one. (Anyone want to join the proofreading team?) We sent out 1,963 ballots to eligible MER members. Eligible, of course, means those fully paid up NMRA members living within the MER territory at the time of the mailing. As usual, about a dozen and a half ballots were returned to me by the Post Office for such reasons as bad addresses, temporarily away, etc.

But a total of 461 valid ballots were forwarded to Bob Minnis, the Ballot Chairman. That's a tad below 25 percent participation. The results of the election are reported in this issue of **The Local** and were also posted on the MER website and the MER Yahoo discussion group. Congratulations to John, PJ, Mike and Tom for their election results, and thanks for their efforts as officers in the previous term.

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 to add to your layout.

We are still looking for volunteers to assume the MER Business Manager position. If one or more members don't step up to cover some or all of the responsibilities by this time next year, the membership may not be receiving any communications, products or check processing and subsequent financial analysis.

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. 📧

A Series Article: The Revenue Dimension Part 3 of 3

By Mike White
MER Secretary
Potomac Divison/HO Scale

From the *Freight Traffic Redbook*, page 28:

"The transportation and commercial conditions in different sections of the United States vary to such an extent that the rates, rules and practices observed by the transportation lines of one section may not be fair and practicable to the transportation lines and the public of another section. This condition, together with a desire on the part of the transportation lines and the public for uniform rates, rules and practices extending over as large a region as possible, has resulted in the United States being divided into several rate territories, of which the principal ones are described below."

- The New England Freight Association Territory
- The Trunk Line Association Territory
- The Central Freight Association Territory
- The Western Trunk Line Committee Territory
- The Trans-Continental Freight Bureau Territory
- The Southwestern Freight Bureau Territory
- The Southeastern Territory
- The Associated Railways of Virginia and the Carolina Territory
- The Southeastern Mississippi Valley Territory
- Canadian Freight Association Territory

It was from the above that Exceptions to the freight classifica-

tion or rates usually originated. An agent of each association was appointed by the participating carriers to publish their rates if the carriers didn't publish the rates individually.

In order for a tariff to be useful at a working level, the I.C.C.

Between New York and	CLASSES.					
	(Rates in Cents per 100 Pounds.)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Harlem River, N. Y.	8	7	6	5	5	5
New Rochelle, N. Y.	12	10	8	6	5	5
Greenwich, Conn.	13	11	9	8	7	7
South Norwalk, Conn.	15	13	10	8	7	7
Milford, Conn.	16	14	12	10	8	8
New Haven, Conn.	17	14	12	10	9	8
Wallingford, Conn.	18	14	12	10	9	8
Hartford, Conn.	20	17	14	12	10	9
Springfield, Mass.	20	17	14	12	10	9

Figure 1: Rate chart.

rules specified that a tariff index be published by each carrier listing each tariff to which it was a party either as an initial or delivering carrier. The first section of the tariff index lists all tariffs for which the carrier is an initial carrier. The second section lists the

tariffs for which the carrier is the delivering carrier. The carrier may also show in this section, if it desires, tariffs for which it is the intermediate carrier. The I.C.C. prescribed the following order for the listing of tariffs in section one; commodity tariffs, general commodity tariffs, class and commodity tariffs, class tariffs and miscellaneous schedules.

First Class rates were stated in cents per 100 lbs. and designated as Class 1. Second, third, fourth, etc. were computed as a percentage of 1st class and became Class 2, 3, 4, etc., respectively. See figure 1.

The Official Classification had eight standard classes of traffic

O		Subject to Uniform Bill of Lading Conditions. L. C. L. C. L.	
OUTFITS—Continued.			
15	Traveling Crane Erection, consisting of Wrenches, Ropes, Tackle Blocks, Chains, Sledges, Crow Bars, Gin Poles, Hand Hoisting Crabs, Motor Driven Hoisting Machines, Rollers, Timber Buggies, Tools N. O. S., etc.	3	5
16	Wax Show, P. P. (C. L., min. wt. 24,000 lbs.) (subject to Rule 27)	D 1	4
17	Well Drilling, consisting of second-hand engines, boilers, derricks, tools, etc.	3	5
18	Ovens, Stove, tin, crated or boxed	1
19	Ox Bows or Yokes: In bundles.....	2
	In boxes or crates.....	2
20	Oysters:		
	Fresh:		
	Shucked (Oyster Meats):		
	In cans, P. P. (C. L., min. wt. 15,000 lbs.).....	1½	1
	In wood, or in oyster carriers or refrigerators, P. P. (C. L., min. wt. 15,000 lbs.).....	1½	1
	In shell:		
	† In bags, barrels or boxes, P. P.	3
	In bulk, P. P.....	3
	Pickled or Preserved:		
	Spice or Cove, in cans, boxed (C. L., min. wt. 36,000 lbs.).....	R.26	5
	N. O. S., in glass, boxed.....	1½	3

Figure 2: An excerpt from Official Classification #40 indicating both L.C.L. and C.L. rate classes for oysters.

numbered 1 to 6, inclusive with two classes called Rule 25 and Rule 26 which follow second and third class, respectively. The Southern Classification had ten standard classes numbered 1 to 6 and A to D. The Western Classification also had ten standard classes numbered 1 to 5 and A to E.

In addition to this, the classification had ratings higher than first class called “multiple ratings”. The multiple ratings range from 1+1/4 times first-class to 4 times first-class.

Figure 2 shows an excerpt from Official Classification #40 indicating both L.C.L. and C.L. rate classes for “oysters” in different packaging.

Figure 3 is an example of early commodity tariff filing in Texas in the 1890s.

I have been unable to find online either a full or partial text of actual tariffs filed with the I.C.C. between 1900 and when the Commission was abolished in 1995. Similar to, but not entirely analogous to I.C.C. filings are the current tariffs where they still exist. I have provided a link to the Alaska Railroad Freight Tariff

as an example you can refer to (see: References and further reading).

Although the initial preparation of the Bill of Lading and waybill required the agent at the originating station to consult the classification and tariffs to determine and record the freight charges on the shipment, the responsibility for accurate pricing fell to the agent at the destination. It was only after arrival that all of the charges incident to the shipment would be recorded on the waybill and it fell to the receiving agent to verify that all of it was correct.

The total of freight charges was recorded on a multi-part Freight Bill prepared by the destination station agent from the waybill and presented to the consignee for payment. Unless prepaid, freight charges were always the obligation of the consignee. Absent any disputes, the freight charges were collected and the freight delivered.

On a daily and monthly basis, the agent was also responsible for the bookkeeping related to revenues and disbursements at the station. Fully half of the book first mentioned (The Station Agent’s Bluebook) is concerned with the correct and accurate preparation of the various reports that were the part of the station agent’s job. Most of this was related to the billing and accounting for freight and passenger receipts.

While this subject of study is unlikely to start a stampede to the library, or eBooks, or any other reference, it is worth noting that operations ideas can come from unlikely sources.

References and further reading:

The Station Agent’s Bluebook by O. B. Kirkpatrick

Kirkpatrick Publishing Company

Chicago, IL

<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015011139303;p age=root;view=image;size=100;seq=1>

*Read online only; Also available from AbeBooks.com and Amazon.com at \$44.00 and up

Classification of Freight Commodities

Railway Accounting Officers Association

Twenty-sixth Report

New Orleans Meeting 1911

<http://books.google.com/books?id=L7spAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Classification+of+Freight+Commodities&hl=en&sa=X&ei=4w1NT7SsKKR50gG7ppD4Ag&ved=0CEsQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Classification%20of%20Freight%20Commodities&f=false>

*Can be downloaded as a free eBook

This is the simplest presentation of classification and its relationship to tariff rates.

Official Classification No. 44

Effective July 1, 1913

The Official Classification Committee

R.N. Collyer, Chairman

New York, NY

http://books.google.com/books/about/Official_freight_classification.html?id=bDEwAAAAYAAJ

*Can be downloaded as a free eBook

Publication and Filing of Tariffs by Frank Ruhle Garrison
LaSalle Extension University
Chicago, IL 1916

<http://books.google.com/books?id=ydQpAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Publication+and+Filing+of+Tariffs&hl=en&sa=X&ei=zwtNT9i0HqLf0QGaiO2tBg&ved=0CDkQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Publication%20and%20Filing%20of%20Tariffs&f=false>

*Can be downloaded as a free eBook

Freight Classification by John Frederick Stromneck
Hart Schaffner and Marx Prize Essays XII
Houghton, Mifflin 1912
New York, NY

http://books.google.com/books?op=add&sig=ACfU3U0bTO9GHjTv1Hu8c7iG6W9BzvC_Mw&uid=102533620957763646095&as_coll=7&id=qzVMAAAAIAAJ

*Can be downloaded as a free eBook

Uniform Freight Classification OPSL 6000 series by Sandra Hladick

Tariff Publishing Officer

RAILINC

7001 Weston Parkway, Suite 200

Cary, NC 27513

www.narps.net/UFC%206000/6000-M.pdf

*Downloadable pdf document

The Freight Traffic Redbook

The Traffic Publishing Company

New York, NY 1920

In addition to wide coverage of rate-making principles and application, it contains the full text of those Federal laws governing the transportation of freight and passengers in the United States.

http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Freight_traffic_red_book.html?id=qRopAAAAYAAJ

*Downloadable pdf document

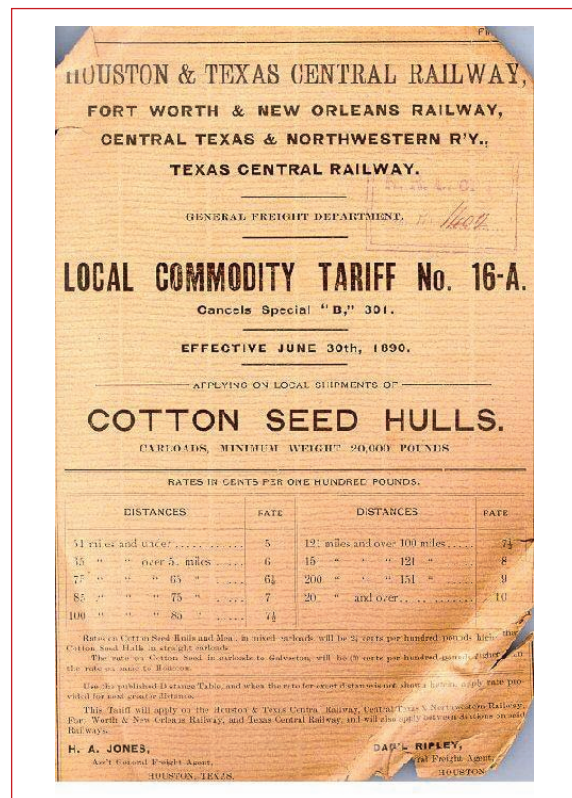


Figure 2: An example of early commodity tariff filing in Texas in the 1890s.

American Railroad Rates by Walter Chadwick Noyes
Little, Bown & Co., Boston, 1905

Overview of Railroad freight rate-making and application.

http://books.google.com/books/about/American_railroad_rate_s.html?id=Wwgf1A-Arhc

*Can be downloaded as a free eBook

*Downloadable pdf document

Alaska Railroad Freight Tariff

<http://alaskarailroad.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=TIpvYFcFLYY%3d&tabid=390&mid=885>

MER Positions Open:

Editor – See description of duties in this issue.

Official Photographer – Duties include shooting all model contest photos, award ceremony/winners, layouts and scenes from around convention.

Contact any Director or President (see contact page 2) for information and to apply.

Business Manager – Maintain and distribute membership information and The Local subscription files; process RailPass applications and all monetary payment deposits for MER products, donations, subscriptions and NMRA National membership rebates and providing appropriate spreadsheet analysis of all payments for the Treasurer; post The Local on the MER website and send eLocal alerts.

Contact current Business Manager (see contact page 2) for more information and to apply.

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 2012, 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 below, 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)

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

Memories of National and Regional Conventions: That You Won't Believe – Or Maybe You Will. Part 2

*By E. Winfield Gross
Philadelphia Division/HO Scale*

I WROTE THE FIRST PART of this story last winter and had it published in the May/June 2012 issue, I have thought of some more experiences I would like to share with you.

Years ago, at one of the region conventions during the usual layout tours I went down in the basement to see a layout. The owner was there and was telling people about his layout but no trains were running. Finally, someone asked him why he wasn't running any trains. His answer was: my son wired the layout when it was built and there is a short circuit somewhere. I can't find it or fix it because my son went away for the weekend.

At another layout I visited the owner was running one passenger train around the layout in a large circle. Every time the train went over one section of track one car kept derailing and the owner would stop the train and put the car back on the track. Someone suggested he take the car out of the train or turn the car around. He did that and it ran fine. He said he never thought of doing that. Another layout I visited had a similar problem. The layout had two reverse loops. The trains went through the one loop in both directions with no problems. But when the train went through the other reverse loop it had to go only one way or the train would derail if it ran the other direction. The owner said he didn't know how to fix the problem so the trains could only run the one direction through the loop. Oh well, the fun of model railroading!

Speaking of visiting home layouts, I went to a layout a few years ago at a region convention. Upon looking at the layout I saw a least three dead mice on the tracks at three different tunnel portals. When the owner came downstairs I mentioned the mice to him. He said that several nights ago he placed mouse poison in those places and forgot to check for dead mice. Before he could run trains he had to get a long stick and get the three mice off the tracks. More fun!! Another thing I remember being disgusted with on layout tours was visiting layouts that were very dirty and full of dust. Some of them a train couldn't even run on. I often wonder why the layout owners didn't get busy and clean up their layout. I would be ashamed to have my layout open under those conditions.

At another national convention all the good layout owners refused to be open because they didn't like the convention chairman. That was really nice of them.

At one of the national conventions I attended years ago, I took the usual layout bus tours. After visiting several layouts during the evening, the bus came to a driveway that went up a very steep hill. The bus stopped and the driver told us to get off the bus and to walk up the hill, as the bus couldn't make the hill with a full load of people. We did that and upon reaching the top I saw the layout. Much to my disappointment, it was very small and only had one circle of track with a trolley car going around and around. No scenery at all. Then when it was time to leave the bus driver told us that we had to walk down the hill because he was afraid that with a full bus the brakes wouldn't hold us back. That was a new experience!

Speaking of buses, over the years I have been on several buses

during layout tours when the bus broke down on the way back to the hotel. Fortunately, a replacement bus arrived in a short time so we could continue our trip home to the hotel. Also, during the hot summer months on national conventions sometimes the buses air conditioning was not working well and I was glad to get off those buses.

Speaking of air conditioning, one time I was on a bus tour at a national convention in the hot south and after I visited some home layouts the bus stopped at a hobby shop. When the bus pulled up to the shop I could see the front door was wide open. I went in the shop and it was like a bakery oven in there. The shop owner told us the AC had stopped working a few days ago and he hadn't got it fixed yet. That was sort of dumb on his part knowing he was to have buses stopping at his shop during the convention. I went in the shop, made one big circle and returned to the bus where the AC was working great! Oh yeah, the hobby shop did offer free water and soft drinks - wasn't that nice of him.

I remember on one layout tour at a national convention when we pulled up to the first house the owner was outside cutting his lawn. Our tour guide got off the bus and talked to him. He told the tour guide he knew nothing about his layout being open but we were welcome to see it anyway. The layout was in his garage and was fairly nice. Why would the convention committee have his layout in the tour guide and not tell him about it was beyond me.

At another national convention when our bus tried to go up a residential street the local cop stopped the bus because buses weren't allowed up there. We all had to get off the bus and walk about 5 long blocks to the layout. But it was a nice layout. I suppose the convention committee never told this town that they would have buses coming all week. Over the years I drew a lot of layout tour maps to be used by the people going on the home layout tours. I always thought I did a great job making the maps but some people still complained!! More fun.

One time, while attending a regional convention, we left the hotel early Saturday morning in 3 buses to visit several layouts, to ride a tourist line and visit a live steam club. On the way we stopped for a lunch break at a fairly large restaurant. It took a while to serve about ninety people on our buses plus the other people eating there. About halfway through the lunch the tour guide stood up and yelled: OK, hurry up and eat as the buses are leaving shortly. Then one of the buses drives stood up and yelled: Take your time as we haven't been fed yet and nobody is going anywhere until the drivers received their lunch. We ended up riding the tourist railroad in the pouring rain. REAL FUN!! After that we drove to see a live steam club layout. The three buses pulled up this muddy lane for about two blocks and stopped. The tour guide got off and looked for someone from the club. Finally, a man appeared from one of the buildings and asked what we were doing there. Our tour guide told him why we were there. He told our guide that the club knew nothing about our visit and we

might as well leave. Just as well as it started to rain again. That was fun trying to get those three buses out the lane and back to the main road.

I remember at both national and region conventions I took bus tours to a railroad yard or a shop facility. Whenever we arrived at these places, the management told us that the buses could drive through but we couldn't get off the buses nor take any pictures. Of course, that made every one on the buses quite angry. I wonder why when the convention committee made the arrangements for the tours they weren't told about this rule before the buses arrived at the yard or shop.

Another time on a national convention I rode for an hour or so to see this big live steam railroad where we were supposed to take rides on it. When we arrived at the place the owners told us we could look around but we couldn't ride because of their insurance wouldn't allow it. Why didn't the convention committee find this out before we drove out there? We did look around and I was on the FIRST bus back to the hotel!

Speaking about trips from the hotels or motels, one of the biggest problems I have encountered was trying to get breakfast served for a large group of people early in the morning. Most of the hotels couldn't understand that we had to eat and leave at an early hour. It always seemed to be a problem. Another problem with some of the hotels, both at national and region conventions was that there was not enough help behind the front desk to check us in. I always had to wait in long lines to get my room.

I have also been to a lot of conventions where the hotel was always under construction, which was a real pain for the convention people. Another problem was that after the hotels started using those darn key cards, a lot of times they didn't work right and it was a hassle to get in rooms. I remember at one of the national conventions most of the people attended the train show on Friday and when we came back to our rooms we couldn't get in because the dumb hotel had cancelled all the key cards. So everyone had to go down to the front desk and get the cards remade. Of course, we were all tired from walking around the train show and wanted to get in our rooms and relax. Oh well more fun at conventions.

At one of the national conventions in a big city our rooms were never made up until after 5 P.M. which was another nuisance to us. One time, there were three of us staying in a room but we never seemed to have enough towels and drinking glasses because the maids never left enough. So we kept all the extra things that we did get until we checked out at the end of the week. That was not one of my favorite hotels!!

Speaking of hotels, one of the hotels at a regional convention had rooms on the ground floor, I mean really at ground level with the parking lot outside. The first night we were there was a terrific rainstorm that came up and the wind pushed the water from the parking lot under the doors of all these rooms including mine. The hotel had to move all the people occupying those first floor rooms to different rooms. Another experience I never had before! At another regional convention the hotel was so old that the door locks on the room doors wouldn't work. The hotel had to hire guards to patrol the hallways the whole time we were there. More fun!

Speaking of locks, at another region convention I checked into my room but I couldn't lock the door. I called the front desk and told them about it and asked for another room. Their reply was

the hotel was filled and there were no other rooms but they did send a maintenance man back to my room to change the lock. I asked him why the maids don't tell the hotel about this. He told me the maids just clean the rooms and usually saying nothing about anything being wrong in the rooms. When the guests check in to the rooms, hopefully, is when things get fixed. Another good motel!!

At a hotel at a national convention when we checked into our room, above the one bed was a large splat of something. It looked someone threw a half of a grapefruit at the wall and the juice ran down the wall. Not a pretty sight. In fact it was disgusting. After two nights with this mess my roommate wrote three notes for the maid to clean up the mess and placed them on the bed and taped one to the wall over the mess. That night when we returned to the room the mess was cleaned up.

As I said in the first part of this story checking in the auction was always fun or not so fun. I remember years before I was the auction chairman for the MER, I helped the auction chairman register items for the auction on Saturday morning in a motel's cold, cold hallway because there were no rooms available until later to take in the auction items. At another convention, when the auction person started to register the items some people complained there were too many items being put in and he tried to limit the number of items. Of course that started an argument with the person in charge and we told him that to limit the number of items per person had to be published ahead of time in **The Local**. He wouldn't budge on his rules so most of the people putting items in the auction just split up the items among friends and still placed all the items in the auction. I remember one convention silent auction, where we didn't limit the number of items but after four days we did run out of space and had to stop receiving auction items. That made some of the people angry but we couldn't do anything about it. More fun doing the auctions!

I also remember attending a national convention some years ago and ending up helping the committee putting the convention timetable together the evening before the registration started the next day. This happened because the printer was late in getting the timetable printed and it would have been even later if the printer had to put the timetable together. Another new experience me!!!

Another item I would like to mention about the conventions, both national and region ones is that I hate buffet banquets, I know they are cheaper to have than a sit down waitress served banquet but they can be rather annoying. The committee calls different tables up to get their food. By the time the last tables are called up to get their food the first tables are already getting up to get second helpings. A lot of times when this happens the food runs out and the last tables get hardly anything to eat, especially the deserts. Another reason I dislike buffet banquets is that you have to carry the salad, the main dish, the deserts and your drinks back to your table, which is another nuisance in my opinion

In closing I hope you enjoy reading my past experiences with conventions and I hope I didn't bore you when reading it. I do enjoy attending the conventions and the activities and meeting and talking to all the persons attending the conventions. I have attended a lot of conventions and a majority were excellent and run very well with no foul ups. 🏠

**MADE IN
THE MER**

Great Decals!

By Bill Mosteller
Potomac Division – Falls Church, VA

HOW DID YOU get into making decals? Mike Bartel of Imperial Hobby Productions (<http://ihphobby.tripod.com/>) produced models of PATCO (Philadelphia to South Jersey) subway cars. (I've always been a fan of the line.) They needed decals, so with the help of Bill Vigress, who had worked for PATCO, and Ron Roberts of Rail Graphics, my decal printer, I produced my first decal set. While it was not a commercial success, I found it very rewarding. I loved the process! This was back in the late 1990s. Bob Thatcher, owner of Granddad's Hobby Shop in Springfield, VA, provided considerable guidance on commercializing my decal business, and gave me my first copy of QuickBooks, crucial for managing my small business, especially sales tax. He was also my very best customer, taking on some of practically everything I produced.

Where do ideas for projects come from? At the time I was starting the decal business I was also becoming interested in the Virginian Railway, and Marty Swartz' *Virginian Resource Guide* proved a valuable reference both for collecting Virginian equipment in HO-scale and identifying gaps in Virginian decal offerings. My Virginian "battleship" gondola and caboose decals have been in print for over a decade, with several reprints. Bob Bowers, who runs the Norfolk and Western Historical Society's Commissary, is an excellent customer.

Do you produce custom decals? If by custom you mean for fantasy railroads (like the Joe Blow and Western) I'd recommend you talk to Ron Roberts of Rail Graphics. There's a link to his web site on mine under Decal Suppliers, and he's really in that business. If, however, you've got a prototype project in mind, let's talk. Everything on my list started out as somebody's idea.

How do you promote your decals? Initially, my line was too small for print advertising to make sense. Luckily, at work I had been charged with testing a web server product, and had to learn enough about building a web site to be able to manage one on my own. At the time, model railroading on the web was in its infancy, so that many big companies had cheesy website addresses (URLs) of the form "www.unknown_internet_service_provider.com/~userid_you_cannot_spell" but I was determined to have something classier and more memorable. Bob Thatcher suggested the name, and www.greatdecals.com was born.

Early on, I discovered eBay. Some folks like to diminish eBay as being, "Just for collectibles," but I think it's a very serious phenomenon. An issue with something like model train decals is how to get in touch with potential customers. New product mentions in hobby magazines and internet search engines help, but eBay accounts for a large part of my business. Just as I'm writing this I'm corresponding with someone who's using eBay in the United Arab Emirates and interested in one of my projects.

I sponsor regular advertisements in **Railroad Model Crafts-**

man, Model Railroad News, Model Railroad Hobbyist and the NMRA division and region publications for this area.

I'm also using guerilla marketing. I have discovered that there's at least one Yahoo group for every American railroad, so I've joined groups for all the railroads I have offerings for. I recently started selling Doug Miller's S-scale Erie locomotive decals, and I joined two new groups to promote the sets.

A while back I noticed a recurring article in the modeling magazines. The modeler is detailing and painting a car for their favorite railroad. They finish it with a Herald King decal set. At the time, Herald King was out of business, although they're back again. I wondered when the magazines would feature Great Decals! products. Probably when I'm out of business, I thought bitterly. So I invented The Contest. If you publish an article that shows and mentions use of a Great Decal!, I'll pay you \$50. Started as an exercise in resentment on my part, it's turned into a gratitude lesson. Since established in 2005, I've given the award 6 times, about once a year. My thanks, all you authors!

You've done non-decal projects as well? Yes, while I've always felt that one of my strengths was living two miles from the Merrifield Post Office; things mailed there get to their destinations very quickly. Decals are flat and light, easy to mail. But I've taken on some three dimensional projects. The first was windows for the American GK/Walthers E60CF electric freight locomotive. I'm fascinated by electrics, and particularly interested in ones younger than me. I noticed some of these at train shows missing their detail packets. I wrote American Model Builders suggesting they produce replacement windows. They weren't impressed with the project's commercial prospects, but quoted me a price to make a few for my use. My first thought was, "Expensive," but my second thought was "Artwork for a decal project." I called back and got the price for a production run, and did the project. They didn't fly off the shelves, but I now know something else I can produce. However, this is the only one of my offerings Bob Thatcher didn't take on, and I don't blame him!

The year 2010 was my worst year ever, I actually lost money. So I spent much of 2011 scurrying around for new projects. I remembered that Bob Thatcher had wonderful HO-scale coupler gauges at the shop, but it had closed. So I got in touch with him and took on some of his inventory, which I've been selling.

It occurred to me that modelers in other scales might be able to use such a gauge. I sat down with the HO-scale gauge, a digital micrometer, Kadee S- and O-scale specifications, and a spreadsheet, and designed gauges for those scales. A friend, Roger Amidon, is a blacksmith and in retirement has acquired a lathe he's learning to use, turned prototypes for me. Martin Brechbiel agreed to cast the gauges for me. The S-scale gauge was my most popular offering at the National Association of S-

Gaugers recent convention in Chattanooga.

Your web site has ads for other peoples' decals. Why is that? Early on I noticed that promoting a small decal line is very difficult. In model railroading, the road names are the brand names. People will buy decals from a small producer if they model that road and know about them. But a business like mine wakes up invisible and spends the rest of the day addressing that. It occurred to me that a small manufacturer didn't have a practical way of getting on the web. So I began offering to host pages for other manufacturers. I get a couple benefits from this. In addition to the modest fees I charge, by having their lists on-line, the Decal Suppliers page on my web site is more complete. These other manufacturers aren't my competition. Our competition is cable TV and game boxes.

Do you produce dry transfers? I don't produce anything I can't use, and I have no ability to apply dry transfers. I have a couple of hopper cars I've renumbered with transfers, and they look like ransom notes. I have an H. D. Productions craftsman boxcar kit that still has the white flecks from the dimensional and capacity data dry transfer I tried to apply. I finished the car, 20 years after building it, with a Herald King decal! But I'm inclusive, Greg

Komar, king of dry transfers, advertises on my web site.

If you live in Falls Church, why is your Post Office box in Herndon? The whole business is something out of the New Yorker's department of *Through The Glass Darkly*. I was in the middle of a divorce and had offered my wife the house. Roger Amidon pointed out that I needed to re-target the decal business to another address. I asked myself, "What will be stable in my life?" The answer that came was the job, as I'd been 15 years at each of my two previous jobs. So I got a box near work. But that was four jobs ago! I don't change it because I'm often in Herndon, changing your address is a pain, and I think makes you look disorganized. I recently signed up for the Post Office's marvelous Real Mail Notification Service, and this has eliminated visits to an empty box.

Isn't the hobby trending toward ready to run? Bob Thatcher accuses me of being a salmon, always swimming against the current. And he may be right. I have put some thought into what a ready-to-run decal might look like. I decided that instead of a number barf, it would have a dozen valid road numbers and those numbers would be chosen so that any valid road number could be produced by splicing. Many of my products have this feature. Unrelated to my new project efforts, 2011 was my best year ever, and 2012 is looking excellent as well, so life is good. 📧

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

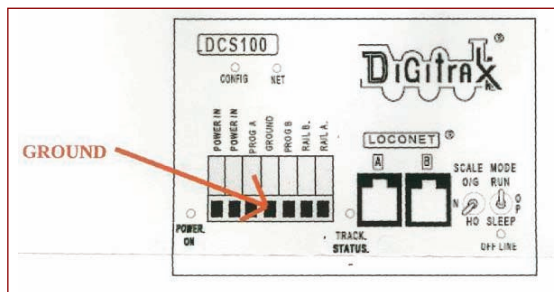
It was with interest that I read The "Lightning and DCC" article in the July-August 2012 edition of **The Local** by Mr. Sheron. Mr. Sheron has mentioned several valid points in his article regarding lightning and power surges. I certainly agree with his recommendation of using a surge protector, as well as his advice regarding unplugging the layout when not in use. I have been using that method for years, but as you probably know, we don't always remember to unplug our layouts. Lightning can travel dozens of miles, so why it may not be storming outside, lightning can strike power grids from miles away where it is storming, and still fry our delicate electronics when we are using them.

I was very surprised that Mr. Sheron being a Master model Railroader did not mention one of the most important aspects of modeling with DCC: Grounding the System. One can never have too much surge protection. Grounding the system is not only sound advice, but is specifically recommended by Digitrax. One familiar with any Digitrax Command Station will note there are seven places to attach wires on the front, two are for power in/out, two for rail A/B. Two for programming A/B, and then there's the odd-man in the center with apparently no counterpart. This is the GROUND terminal. See figure.

On my layout, I have attached a wire from this ground terminal to the screw on the front of my electrical outlet. All household

electrical wiring has to be grounded by code, and this screw is connected to the outlet itself, which should be grounded to your home's electrical wiring. By grounding your Digitrax booster you will provide a ground for power surges, static electricity, and RF interference to ground itself.

Digitrax advises in their user manuals, "This should be the ONLY point of any DCS100 installation that is connected to the AC safety ground pin provided on most 3 pin 110VAC power sockets." as well as the following advice, "Grounding the system is a sensible safety precaution that should not be ignored."



I thought I would write to you, as Mr. Sheron has ignored this precaution in his advice. Many people, like me, were confused with all the wires and how-to-hookup questions when getting into DCC from DC. It was not

until later that I knew enough about DCC to learn more and realized that I was not protecting my layout as much as I could.

Grounding from the center ground terminal to any electrical outlet is fast, cheap, and doesn't require any knowledge of home wiring. This free and effective advice from Digitrax should be added to Mr. Sheron's advice on Lightning and DCC.

Sincerely,
Anthony Jones
Carolina Piedmont Division 📧

From the Editor

By Steve Kindig
Susquehanna Division/HO Scale

Dear members,

I believe the time has come to step back from the Editor's position. I feel like I have advanced **The Local** as far as my time allows and now I need to focus on family and my own modeling. So I am looking for the next Editor!

But what do I do in my position as Editor? I'm going to share the by-laws and then provide you some information on how I do what I do.

BYLAWS:

Newsletter Editor (and Publisher): **The Local**

APPOINTED BY: PRESIDENT

Reports to: Director assigned to oversee the publication.

POSITION SUMMARY:

Responsible for preparing, editing and producing the Mid-Eastern Region official publication, **The Local**, in accordance with the By-Laws.

NATURE AND SCOPE:

The newsletter editor is required to publish a quality magazine at least six times per year within the budgetary guidelines, solicit articles and photographs of general interest; acknowledge receipt of all information received; edit articles; provide typesetting layout, and paste up services; produce camera-ready-copy; and ship the camera-ready-copy and related artwork to the printer in a timely fashion.

If the publisher position is also filled, extra help will be provided with typesetting layout, and paste up services; producing camera-ready-copy; and shipping the camera-ready-copy and related artwork to the printer in a timely fashion.

The Local serves as in-house publication and will contain all official articles of the organization and information of general interest to the membership. The Local must be presented as an image-building device for gaining membership and maintaining membership interest. The editor must exercise sound judgment and editorial expertise for producing a uniform and pleasing tone to the publication.

All issues concerning **The Local** production shall be so designed as to conform to budgetary restrictions.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES:

- Keeps the director informed at all times.
- Strives to come in at, or under budgeted amount each time.
- Provides quality production.
- Produces uniform quality and tone of the publication.

Acknowledges in writing (by postcard or formal electronic mail) to the authors to confirm receipt of article(s) and indicate the anticipated edition date the article may appear in **The Local**.

Prepares an annual budget request to cover any anticipated expenses for the coming year.

Ok, so now that we are officially on record you will see that a lot of my duties also include a good working relationship with Julianne (our publisher).

Most of my duties for every issue consist of finding the articles, photographs, timely information, sending out notices and reminder dates and finally editing the received items for grammar and style. I also handle all of the advertising, and advertising reminders.

Primarily, I use the phone to contact members and e-mail and the Internet is my best friend to browse the division websites and newsletters when searching out items. But I also try and take time at conventions to make some connections and encourage people to write.

So if you apply you should be comfortable with a computer, people-orientated and have good grammar and proof reading skills (but don't worry you don't have to be an English teacher!). There are a few directors and elected officials that help out for final proofing.

In regards to computer software, most of my documents are written in Word but occasionally I receive WordPerfect. I have also found a scanner is helpful if someone is not as computer savvy or their computer malfunctions and must send a hard copy of a photograph or article. Sometimes I must use my camera's photo editing software but that is mostly to scale, and lighten or darken images.

I will be glad to assist you in the new role for a few months and Julianne (our publisher) is also helpful when you have a problem, as she has been doing it longer than me. We will hopefully make your leadership as Editor as easy as my 7 seven years.

If you are interested in applying or have any questions feel free to contact me! 



ELECTION RESULTS:

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE that ran for office this year. 463 valid ballots were received. The results (excluding write-ins) are:

President:

John Janosko – 270
Chuck Hladik – 193

Vice President:

PJ Mattson – 446

Secretary:

Mike White – 448

Treasurer:

Tom Buckingham – 449

C & P 2013 will be held Oct 10th – 13th in Rockville, MD. Look for more information in upcoming issues of **The Local**!

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Achievement Program Update

By *Charlie Flichman, MMR*
MER AP Manager

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

Division 1 – New Jersey

Ron Baile – *Master Builder Cars*

Division 5 – James River

Gerard Fitzgerald – *Model Railroad Author*

Division 10 – South Mountain

Robert C. Johnson – *Chief Dispatcher*
Robert C. Johnson – *Master Builder Scenery*

In a perfect world, this information will appear soon in the **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 the **NMRA** magazine. 🚂

Congratulations



on your
Achievement!

TO ALL MEMBERS

Due to publishing deadlines the contest results from **Milepost 40** will be in the January/February 2013 issue. If you would like to have any stories or photos published from the convention, please see page 16 for deadline information and contact me as soon as possible (see page 2) so space can be reserved.

Steve Kindig
Editor of The Local

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 Roger Ossman
 MER Merchandise Sales Agent
 3307 Englewood Road
 Wilmington, DE 19819-3323

CALLBOARD

Coming Events

Nov 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.

Nov 17th. 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 and leave message.


Nov 26th. "Vienna Holiday Stroll" at the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Club. Hours: 6 PM until 9 PM. See other listing for complete information.

Nov. 24th and 25th, Dec 1st and 2nd. The Delmarva Model Railroad Club will host its annual Open House at 103 State Street in Delmar, DE. Hours are Sat. 11 AM until 5 PM and Sun. Noon until 5 PM. Admission and parking is free. 5,000 sq.ft. of permanent operating layouts in most scales including HO, N, O, O tin plate, American Flyer and Thomas the Train. Refreshment are available. White Elephant Table. More info and map at www.delmarvamodelrailroadclub.org/index.html or email DodgeDE@cs.com or call (302) 856-9250.

Dec 8th and 9th. "Children's Christmas". Frederick County Society of Model Engineers open house. 423 East Patrick Street in Frederick, MD. Hours: 1 PM till 4 PM both days. The FCSME was founded in 1966. The Club's Catoctin Central Railroad (CCRR) operating exhibit is a 56-foot HO scale layout housed inside an unusual 70-foot, six-door Chesapeake and Ohio horse car. The CCRR is a mythical medium-sized railroad that crosses Frederick County and the Catoctin Mountains, where it connects with the HOn3 scale Catoctin Mountain Lines. Motive power and most of the rolling stock is from member's private collections and is a mix of steam and diesel in various road names. Passenger and freight trains are represented. The HO scale layout is operated with Digitrax DCC, but still can be run with DC. An outdoor G gauge layout, of similar length to the indoor layout, is adjacent to the club car. The G gauge operates with Aristo-Craft Train Engineer System. Club members number approximately 20. Membership is open to any who would like to join. For more information visit www.fcsme.com.

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

Dec 15th. HO scale Model Railroad Open House and Display at the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Club. See other listing for complete information.


Divisions and Clubs tell MER members about your upcoming event!! Send your FREE (limit of 75 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 stevespressrr@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).

FOR SALE: HO Scale Intermodal Crane kit by Walthers (933-3122). Brand new, still in plastic. \$15, can ship to you if you pay for shipping. Contact Steve Kindig at (717) 825-5558 or stevespressrr@yahoo.com.

FOR SALE: Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette; the magazine for fine model building. Years 2008 through 2012 complete (36 issues) like-new condition. Each issue averages 100 pages and is lavishly illustrated with many marvelous building plans in every issue. I will sell the entire lot for \$35.00 plus actual Media Mail postage. That's less than a buck per issue and well worth it. Call Pete Mosiondz, Jr. at (856) 627-6865 or e-mail choochoopete@comcast.net. 

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A Two-in-One Project.....1
 Staff & Division Contacts2
 From the Business Car3
 Keep In Touch4
 The Revenue Dimension, Part 3.....4
 New Membership Program.....7
 Memories of Conventions, Part 28
 Made in the MER.....10
 Letter to the Editor.....11
 From the Editor12
 Election Results13
 Achievement Program Update13
 MER Products For Sale14
 Callboard / Classifieds15

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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/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
Business Card size (6 issues)	\$60.00
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Half page ad (per issue) (Div. Only).....	\$25.00