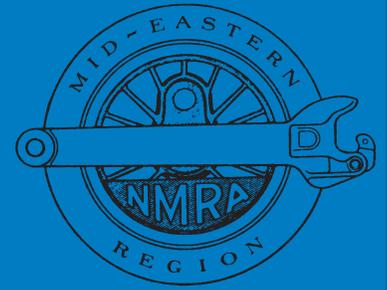


The Local

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JULY — AUGUST 2012

Number 4

Lightning and DCC

*By Brian W. Sheron, MMR
Potomac Division/HO Scale*

ALTHOUGH NOT A COMMON OCCURRENCE, a nearby lightning strike can play havoc with electronic equipment. Last year a lightning strike close to my house took out my DCC system: the purpose of this article is to share my experiences in troubleshooting and restoring my system to operation.

In 2011, on the Saturday before Labor Day, a rare early morning thunderstorm rolled through my neighborhood around 9 AM. My wife and I saw and heard it coming, with the lightning flashes becoming more frequent, and the thunderclaps getting louder and occurring much quicker after the lightning flashes. As the storm's intensity seemed to peak, we heard what sounded like an explosion, with a concurrent flash of lightning. We both jumped, and my wife immediately ran to look around, thinking that maybe lightning had struck the house. After a quick examination, we concluded that the house had not been hit, but that the lightning strike must have been close. That afternoon, we noticed that our internet was out, and upon further examination, concluded our modem was no longer working and must have been damaged by the lightning strike.

On the next day, Sunday, I headed down to the basement to run my trains. When I turned on my power to the system (I use Digitrax DCC), I got the dreaded "5 beeps," which is the Digitrax code for "Short circuit." I had just run the trains a few days ago, and had done nothing to them, electrically or otherwise, in the interim that would account for a sudden short circuit.

The next day was Labor Day, and I was out in my yard by the corner of my house nearest the train room. I noticed our big oak tree (about 15 feet from the house) looked like someone had taken a chisel and gouged a large groove out of it from the base up to the top. I quickly concluded where the lightning had struck two days before.

Lightning can affect electronic equipment primarily in two ways. First, lightning creates large electromagnetic fields around it, and these electromagnetic fields can induce electrical currents

in nearby wires (such as phone lines or even model train wiring). Second, when lightning strikes an object or the ground, current will flow through the object that is struck, and into the ground and away from the strike point for some distance in all directions before it dissipates. Thus, if you have a grounding rod for your house, and the lightning strike is nearby, the current can flow through the ground into the grounding rod and into your house wiring through ground wires attached to the grounding rod.

In what follows are some tips about locating the source of an unknown short in your DCC system. In my case, it appears to have been caused by this nearby lightning strike.

My system is powered by a Digitrax DSC100 command control center, and a Digitrax DB150 booster. I have divided my layout into 3 electrical districts, and the DSC100 powers one district. The DB150 booster output goes to a Digitrax PM42 power manager that provides independently protected power management outputs, and I use two of the outputs to power the remaining two districts.

To troubleshoot the system and figure out where the short is, you need to systematically isolate sections of the system. The first step is to disconnect the track wires and the Loconet cable from the power command centers (in my case the DSC100 and the DB150). The Loconet is the network for connecting throttles to the DSC100 command controller. If the DSC100 and DB150 are working correctly, they should turn on and off correctly in response to throttle commands when a throttle is plugged into the Loconet jack. I connect two wires from the track output terminals to a short, separate section of track (e.g., a 3 foot section of Flex-track) and put an engine on the track. If the command centers were working properly, the engine would respond correctly to your throttle commands. If the command centers worked as they should, then the short is elsewhere.

In my case, the DSC was not working correctly. I even con-

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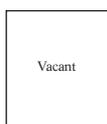
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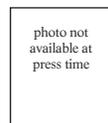
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All subscription information, advertising rates and publication deadlines are now located on page 16.

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

From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President

THIS IS THE TIME of the year that you are probably either planning your vacation or already on vacation. Some people will be heading to the beach and others to the mountains for a change of scenery. There will also be a few going to the NMRA National Convention in Michigan. I hope everyone has a great time but also some time to unwind.

I like to think that I normally am good at planning ahead, but for some reason this year most of my plans have gone to pot. I have had to cancel my NS Society annual meeting, the SER spring convention, the April meeting with the Tidewater Division and I also missed three division meetings. Hopefully, things will turn out better the rest of the year. To get to my point, I was able to make the May Carolina Piedmont Division meeting. Rob Rousseau did a great clinic on the Durham and Southern, but the really important thing was that it is nice getting together with many peo-

ple that share your interest in Model Railroading. If you are in an area that has an active division attend the meetings and if you can do a clinic volunteer, someone else may be interested in what you have to present. It may even be good enough to present at the MER annual convention. If you are not in an active division area, you may want to take a little trip and attend one of the division meetings that are close to where you live. The people that you meet will surprise you and many of them may share your interests. The MER provides a lot of opportunities, but remember it is made up of volunteers and your input will make it a better place for all of us.

Have a great summer and I hope to see many of you at the MER convention in the Tidewater area of Virginia in the fall. From what information I have seen and heard about, it will be a great one to go too. 

Lightning and DCC continued from page 1

ducted the troubleshooting with a Digitrax technical representative on the phone with me. I wound up sending my DSC100 to Digitrax for repair. Digitrax tells you on their web page where to send it, how much it will cost to fix, and that it will take about 4 weeks. In my case, I did not receive my DSC100 back until after 5 weeks. However, the DSC100 was not the only thing affected by the lightning.

Track wiring is usually uncomplicated, being nothing more than a pair of heavy gauge bus wires running under the layout from the command control center, and track feeder wires connected between the bus wires and the tracks every several feet. It is unlikely that lightning would somehow cause these wires to short. Therefore, the next things more likely to be damaged (and thus to check) are any electronic components connected to the track wiring. In my case, I had a Digitrax PM42 Power Manager connected to the DB150 output, and several AR-1 reversing circuits. The Digitrax UP-5 and UR-91 (radio receiver) Loconet panels that the throttles either plug into or transmit to also have track status indicator LEDs connected to the tracks. I disconnected all the wires to the track status indicator terminals of the UP-5 and UR-91 Loconet panels and the AR-1 circuits. I also disconnected the track power wires coming out of the PM42 Power Manager.

To test if the PM42 is functioning okay, you can hook two wires up to the output of each power district and again, connect them to a short separate section of track. Put a train on the section of track and see if it responds correctly. If it responds correctly when the track is connected to each power district output, then you can assume the PM42 is working correctly. Be sure to check the 12 VDC power supply that powers the PM42. In my

case, I found that the power supply was not working. I replaced it, and the new power supply also shorted and failed. Thus I concluded my PM42 had somehow gotten damaged. I replaced it, and the system seemed to work okay. I also determined that one of my AR-1 reversing circuits wasn't working properly and likely had been damaged. However, although it wasn't working properly, it wasn't shorting out the system. Finally, as I began hooking up the track wires to the track status indicator terminals on the back of the UP-5 and UR-91 Loconet panels, the system would short out.

What I found was that the track status light circuits on some of my UP-5 Loconet panels and on all of my UR-91 Loconet panels were shorted and were shorting out my system. Moreover, while the Loconet on the UP-5 and UR-91 panels worked fine when a throttle was plugged into them, the UR-91 panels would no longer function in the radio receiver mode (they would not respond to wireless signals).

Digitrax's repair service repaired all of these components for a reasonable fee, so all was not lost. What I learned when I received the repaired items was that on the UP-5 Loconet panels, the diodes had to be replaced. On the UR-91 Loconet panels, the motherboard had to be replaced, and on the PM-42 Power Manager, the Field Effect Transistors (FETS) had to be replaced.

I have now invested in a fairly decent surge protector into which I plug my Digitrax Command control center power supplies, and another surge protector into which I plug my power supply for the PM-42. Note the larger the Joule rating on a surge protector, the more protection it affords. This may not protect my system against all future lightning strikes, but it is added assurance. Better assurance would be to remember to unplug your power supplies when a lightning storm is approaching. 

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

PERHAPS BY THE TIME you read this column, the NMRA's Annual Convention in Grand Rapids, MI, will be just a memory. I trust all who attended thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Now it is time for you to plan for our Region's fall convention. *Milepost 40* promises to be another fun event. The folks in the Tidewater Division are busy setting up for our enjoyment in October 18th – October 21st in Suffolk, VA. Be sure to get your reservations established. Details are contained elsewhere in this issue of **The Local**.

Those of you who followed along in my columns in **The Local** know that my wife and I moved from a town home to a high-rise condo. That move necessitated a significant down-sizing of everything, including model railroading. I had started a "bookshelf" layout in the condo but recently we were able to gain more space and a larger layout is underway. It's still along the lines of a shelf layout, being only 19" deep, but an 11 1/2 ft. length plus a staging

yard in a closet mean that both railroad and traction operation will be happening soon. And with a nice size workbench it is a pleasure to get back into the game – proving that indeed there is (model railroad) life after downsizing.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who made favorable comment on my Trolley Sounds articles in **Model Railroader** and the **NMRA Magazine**. Those articles documented some of my work of a year or so ago but it was fun to finally see them in print.

On several occasions, I have referenced the problem of copies of **The Local** being returned to me marked by the Post Office as "temporarily away" or because an individual has moved. Our postage permit for **The Local** costs the MER \$1.08 for each returned **Local** and a subsequent resend another \$1.28 plus supplies, so I do not resend returned issues. If any subscriber realizes he is missing a particular issue and would like to receive it, I would suggest they contact me and I will send a new replacement if such is available.

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 1 of 3

By Mike White
MER Secretary
Potomac Divison/HO Scale

THOSE OF US involved in operations on a model railroad are mostly concerned with the delivery and pickup of freight cars at the various customers who populate our miniature worlds. Some operators over the past several years have, through various modifications to car card and waybill systems, introduced some prototypical practices missing from the early systems – routing empties is an example.

The subjects explored here have little to do with the physical aspects of operations, but more with the mental – developing a different mind set when thinking about what it is that we are trying to simulate. There is a financial aspect to prototype roads that is not captured in the model operations realm and probably never will be. But that doesn't mean there are not features of it that can influence or contribute to the way we design and conduct operations.

Most of what follows describes the development and use of railroad procedures as practiced in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Although much of this, in concept at least, has carried over to the present, this article describes how things were, not how they are today. Most of the current versions of the reference material used and listed at the end of this article are no longer available in printed form. Much of what they describe has been automated and is currently provided by subscription and administered by Railinc. Processes and methods in place in 1930 changed little until the 1950s or 60s, so this seemed like a good time frame.

In 1928, about eight years prior to my modeling era, railroads in the aggregate had annual revenues of about 6 billion dollars.

That's roughly 80 billion at today's prices. Most of this was collected, a little here, a little there, by the station agents who served in the towns all along the lines. To the people in the communities where they lived, they were the railroad. To the railroad, they were its public persona, its local business agent, its revenue collector, and its book- and record keeper. It was an extremely responsible job requiring a wide variety of skills.

Many of those skills had to do with understanding and correctly utilizing the large volume of reference material necessary to discharge his duties with respect to the shipping and receipt of freight at his station. He had to be knowledgeable in the completion and/or use of:

Bills of Lading – contracts between the railroad and shipper

Waybill preparation – railroad document for routing cars and recording charges

Freight classifications – identifying the rate class for goods shipped

Freight Tariffs – applying freight and other charges based on classification to goods shipped

Customer billing & collection procedures – handling monies due to and received by the railroad

Railroad accounting procedures – recording and reporting revenues collected or billed

Bills of Lading were of seven (7) types, two of which were related to export shipments and not usually handled by a station agent.

The remaining 5 types:

- Domestic “straight” bill of lading
- Domestic “order” bill of lading
- Government bill of lading
- Livestock bill of lading
- Exchange bill of lading

were to a great extent originated at the point of shipment by a station agent who had to be familiar with the application and use of each with respect to the shipper’s request, the shipper (government or not), and the type of freight for which they were intended. A bill of lading had features of both a contract and an insurance policy between the shipper and carrier (railroad), and was provided to the shipper and used by the consignee as the shipper’s authorization to claim the goods at their destination. The domestic “straight” bill of lading was the most frequently used. The “order” bill of lading was used for collection of the cost of the shipped goods from the consignee prior to authorizing delivery, whereas the “straight” bill of lading was used for customers on “open account”. The Government bill of lading was used for shipments by the federal government. The livestock bill of lading was used for its obvious purpose and had spaces for specifying watering and feeding (if required) and contract provisions for anyone accompanying and caring for the livestock. The exchange bill of lading was used when the shipment was billed only to the point of delivery to another carrier instead of being billed through to its final destination. The originating carrier’s bill of lading was then taken up and an exchange bill of lading issued by the connecting carrier.

Freight classifications and tariffs (see below) were also involved in preparation of the bill of lading in that the freight charges applicable were stated on the bill of lading. Before exploring the subjects of classification and tariffs, let’s take a look at the waybill as it is closely allied to the preparation of the bill of lading.

WAYBILLS

Most of the waybill information provided here had been excerpted directly from **The Station Agent’s Bluebook** written by O. B. Kirkpatrick and published in 1928. Contrary to my comment above, this information, to a large extent, can and does influence the physical aspect of operations. The exception is the use of the waybill to accumulate and record shipping charges to be billed to the consignee at the destination.

A waybill is defined as: a statement describing freight to be transported, specifying the consignor, the consignee, the service which has been and is to be performed, and the charges incident thereto, and it is intended to accompany the freight until such service is completed and eventually to show all services actually performed together will all charges assessed against the shipment.

It is evident that the waybill serves an important function in rail transportation. It is the prime basic document of freight revenue accounting.

The station agent of the time had to be familiar with and know when to use a number of different waybills depending on the situa-

tion to be handled. There were commonly 16 different waybill types:

1. Local waybill
2. Interline waybill
3. Passover waybill
4. Astray waybill
5. Part-lot waybill
6. Weight and charges waybill
7. Live stock waybill
8. Perishable freight waybill
9. Transit waybill
10. Company waybill
11. Switching waybill
12. Passenger train waybill
13. Card waybill
14. Prepaid only waybill
15. Advances only waybill
16. Empty car slip waybill

Local Waybill – a waybill covering a shipment moving between points both of which are located on the rails of the carrier issuing the waybill and in which no other carrier performs any part of the service, nor is interested in the charges.

Interline Waybill – a waybill covering a shipment moving between stations located on different railroads and in which more than one carrier performs a part of the service and participates in the charges.

Passover Waybill – a waybill covering a shipment moving between points on the same railroad, but which passes over the rails of one or more other railroads enroute.

Astray Waybill – may be local, interline, or passover, and is issued to get freight to its proper destination, without charges so far as the issuing station is concerned.

Part-lot Waybill – issued to cover a part of a shipment and may be local, interline, or passover. Certain packages of a shipment may be held over for refrigeration service, for instance, and waybilled separately. The “part-lot” endorsement will protect against the application of the “minimum” charge by giving reference to the waybill carrying the balance of the shipment.

Weight and Charges Waybill – may also be local, interline, or passover, and is issued to accompany a shipment when the regular waybill carrying the charges does not accompany it. Reference must always be shown to the waybill carrying the charges.

Live Stock Waybill – a specially prepared form of waybill provided for shipments of live stock. It is provided for showing all information incident to the transportation of livestock, and is used by most carriers.

Perishable Freight Waybill – a specially prepared form used for waybilling shipments of perishable freight. It is usually printed on

continued on page 6

pink paper and its distinctive color directs attention to the necessity of giving the shipment special care. It may be local, interline, or passover.

Transit Waybill – a specially prepared form used for waybilling shipments, that have undergone a transit operation, from the transit station. [for example, a stop for icing, re-icing, adding heater service, feeding and watering live stock, etc.] It can also be local, interline, or passover.

Company Waybill – used for transporting the carrier’s own material and supplies between stations on its own line. A company waybill is local only.

Switching Waybill – issued to cover switching movements of cars at stations. It may be local or interline according to the switch movement covered.

Passenger Train Waybill – used for waybilling freight carried on passenger trains. Milk and cream is the most commonly transported commodity hauled on passenger trains. Usually a special form of waybill is provided for milk and cream shipments.

Card Waybill – one used for transporting carload shipments that are not accompanied by regular waybilling. Its use is discouraged by most carriers and prohibited by some.

Prepaid Only Waybill – used for the adjustment of errors in the prepaid and advances charges of regular waybills.

Advances Only Waybill – a waybill usually issued to cover charges that accrue to a shipment in transit, that moves under through waybilling.

Empty Car Slip Waybill – an empty car slip is not an actual waybill, but a card bill commonly used for routing foreign empties. When a foreign car is received from a connecting line, an empty car slip is prepared showing the date received, car number and initials, and the home routing. It accompanies the car to the destination of the shipment and is used for directing the loaded or empty movement of the car to its home road. While “home” road cars were not usually waybilled with an empty car slip, some railroads did use them for directing their own empty cars. 📄

Milepost 40 is Approaching!

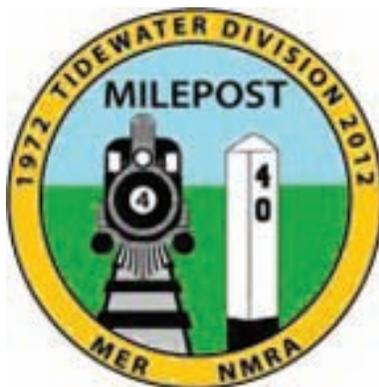
*By Gary Brown
Tidewater Superintendent and Convention Chairman.*

AS WE CONTINUE TO PLAN and organize the October MER convention (October 18th-21st) the excitement is growing! The focus now is in developing the callboard to offer everyone the best opportunity to take in all the events. We have confirmed the tour of Norfolk’s light rail maintenance facility and have added a tour of Don Orr’s live steam layout in Chuckatuck, just minutes from the hotel.

The Convention hotel, the Suffolk Hilton Garden Inn is located at 100 East Constance Road, Suffolk, VA, 23434, and room rates are still \$89 per night. Reservations can be made thru the Division website www.NMRA-MER-Tidewater.org. Click on the convention link, then Hotel Reservation. The information on the hotel will be displayed and at the bottom of that page is a direct link to the hotel booking. Convention registration may be made on the MER website, also linked from the Division website.

Prototype tours include the operations at Vulcan Materials, receiv-

ing and processing rock and gravel by rail. A tour of the Port of Virginia, Norfolk International Terminals and the APMT (Maersk) Terminal, loading and unloading container ships and intermodal rail cars. Norfolk’s light rail maintenance facility will also be available.



Did you know the Army has it’s own railroad? It is located on Fort Eustis in conjunction with the Army’s Transportation Museum and the museum will be open for visitors during our convention.

Our guest speaker, Mr. Jim McClellan is working on an exciting presentation for the dinner. During his decades of time working with the railroads, he has ridden virtually every train in the United States, and has the photos of those rides. He has one book of his photos in print and is working on additional volumes.

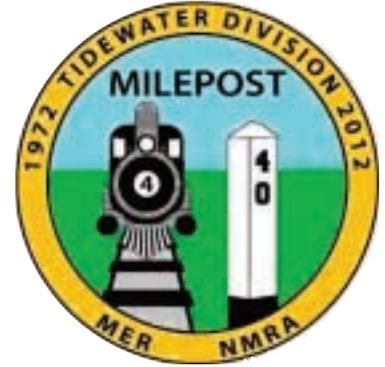
This promises to be a great time, come join us at **Milepost 40!** 📄

Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention

Milepost 40

October 18th to October 21st, 2012

REGISTRATION FORM



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

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other (living at same address): _____

Children (under age 16 – List all): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Email: _____ NMRA # _____

DESCRIPTION		COST	#	PAYING
Early Registration (until September 15, 2012 then \$45 until October 15, 2012)		\$40		
Non-NMRA member extra fee		\$10		
Significant other		\$15		
Children (under 16)		\$10		
Banquet Chicken Marasala Saturday Night	402	\$45		
Banquet Broiled Fresh Salmon Saturday Night	403	\$45		
Banquet Grilled New York Strip Saturday Night	404	\$45		
Intermodal Terminals – Friday Morning	201	\$35		
Norfolk Light Rail Maintenance Facility – Friday Morning	202	\$35		
Fort Eustis Army Transportation Museum – Saturday Morning	203	\$0		
Virginia Aquarium and Military Aviation Museum – Friday Morning	211	\$23		
Vulcan Materials – Friday Afternoon (for count)	212	\$0		
Call Board – Davis HO – Friday Morning	801	\$10		
Call Board – Neiting HO – Friday Evening	802	\$10		
Call Board – TMRC (3 layouts) – Friday Evening	803	\$10		
TOTAL ADVANCE REGISTRATION PAID				
Additional events will be added when their cost is known.				

CONVENTION HOTEL:

Hilton Garden Inn
100 East Constance Road
Suffolk, VA 23434

The convention rate is \$89.00 per room (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at 757-925-1300 or online at www.suffolk.gardeninn.com. These rates are in effect until 18 September 2012. When registering, specify the **Milepost 40 MER Convention** to get these special rates.

Payment must accompany registration.

Make checks payable to: **MER Fall Convention 2012**

Send all registrations to:

MER Fall Convention
P.O. Box 447
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

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

If You Are Looking for Something Interesting For Your Layout for Under \$10

Article and photographs by James Allen
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

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

IF YOU ARE LOOKING for something interesting for your layout for under \$10, Life-like has several vintage kits. Many of these kits are either still being reproduced or at least readily available. I picked up my KFC kit for about \$7.00 on clearance at a little train store about 3 years ago. The kit sat under my workbench until last month. I have been saving this kit for a rainy day so to speak.

I wanted to make sure that this structure really stood out, so the red and white roof was a must to recreate. With the exception of a few parts the kit came basically molded white plastic. The red molded sections were dull and plastic looking. I seldom ever leave anything unpainted and this candy-striped roof was not going to be spared. I knew that it would be tough to get those lines really straight and clean looking. I was prepared to use fineline tape to mark off each stripe when it hit me. Why paint the stripes at all? Simply use auto pin stripe tape. I had already spray painted the entire roof and brick sections white.

I will not kid you when I say it took about 2 hours to pin stripe that roof with red tape. You need a steady hand and really sharp blade. I systematically worked around the roof leaving as few seams as possible.

The pillars we painted with "sac bomber tan" by Model Masters. I really like using spray paints that have a matching color that can be brushed on as well. The side walk was sprayed with "camouflage grey" again by Model Masters. The concrete curbs in the parking lot along with the sign pillar bottoms were painted with "concrete" paint from Floquil. See photos 1 and 2.

The interior floor tile was spray painted with "caboose red" made by Scale Coat.

The tables and chairs were purchased from Preiser, along with the figures. Both the table sets and the figures were painted using an assortment of Model Master colors. See photo 3.

The kit came with a decent set of peel and stick decals. However, the colors were pretty dull and incorrect. A good habit to get into, is to scan your decals before using them. Not only does this help you when you mess one up, but it also allows you to change colors and or edit them. In this case I used Paintshop Pro to make all of the reds a nice bright red versus the orangish dull red of the original decal. You can see the color differences in photo 4. You can also see the original lines, which will help you cut out the decals.



Photo 1: Front and left side view of detailed KFC.

I slightly weathered the concrete, building, parking area with oil-based caulks applied with various paintbrushes.

All in all this was a fun project and fairly cheap project even after the detail additions.

Materials:

- Kit – \$7
- Part of a Preiser table kit – \$4
- 11 unpainted Preiser figures – \$2
- 1 Bright red Ford Comet by Fresh Cherry's – \$3.50
- 1 small section of Avery Label paper – \$.50
- 1 roll of red auto pin stripe tape – \$2
- The paints I already had and can't put a price the little bit that I used.

Grand Total: just under \$20. 🏠



Photo 2: Right side of detailed KFC model.



Photo 3: Interior view of model.

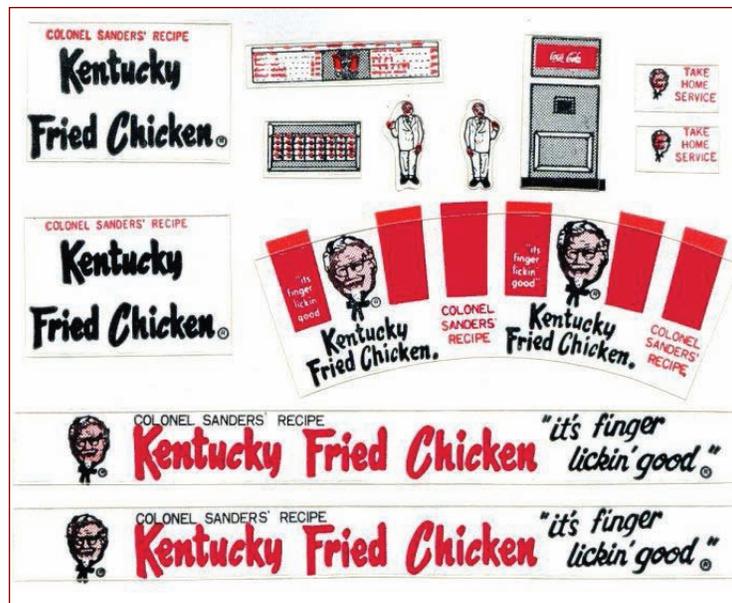


Photo 4: Here you can see the color differences, bright red versus the orangish dull red of the original decal.

Reflections on 50 Years of NMRA Membership

*By David Renard, MMR
Chesapeake Division/HO Scale*

THE ARRIVAL in the mail last year of a certificate, recognizing fifty continuous years of membership in the National Model Railroad Association, is a proud addition to the décor of my model railroad room. Alongside other framed certificates, the collection caused me to reflect on the contribution, which the NMRA has made to my life.

Model railroading probably began for me about the age of three with a wind-up train on a figure eight of track. Hand-me-down Lionel trains eventually led to an introduction to HO scale model railroading. In my early teens, our family doctor, a neighbor, saw my Lionel trains on the floor during one of his house calls to treat my father's stomach ulcer Doc Timm figured Dad needed a hobby and perhaps he could inject interest through me. Each Sunday afternoon I visited Doc Timm's HO layout, which he taught me to operate, while coaching me on building freight car kits and then scratch building structures and cars. Dad never took up the hobby, but I was infected for life.

A family move from Connecticut to Pennsylvania during college years gave me the opportunity to join the Greater Abington Township Society of Model Engineers (GATSME) and my first exposure to the social side of model railroading. Meeting other model rails, visiting other clubs, and joining the NMRA in 1961 greatly expanded my horizons and goals.

We attended numerous Mid-Eastern Region conventions, and the first time I entered several models in a convention contest, they each earned an award including the Hagerstown Trophy for Best of Show. Now I was really hooked and was asked often to serve as a contest judge. Judging gave me the opportunity to closely study some fine models and techniques, and it added to my modeling ideas and skills.

The year 1961 also started a period of service in the U.S. Army, so the trains were packed away. Following basic training, I was assigned to Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. The third day on post, I boarded a bus for my first day as a laboratory research chemist at the Army Chemical Center. The bus passed by an old wooden barracks building bearing a sign, "Model Railroad Club – Meets Tues. & Thurs. 1900 Hrs." Wow, my kind of Army! Unpack the trains!

The military service was mostly a weekday job with evenings free to do model building at the club and weekends off to make rail fan trips with GATSME friends. NMRA activities increased with extensive participation in the MER and attendance at some National Conventions. In 1964 I swapped the military uniform for civilian clothes and continued to work at Edgewood Arsenal and the model railroad club, which was open to both military and

civilian employees and retirees. The brief military service was followed by a long civilian career at Edgewood, and now in retirement, I have 50 years with this model railroad club.

The year 1964 brought the NMRA National Convention to Philadelphia with numerous GATSME members on the host committee. I got to run the model contest. I can remember helping Linn Westcott, **Model Railroader's** Editor, taking photographs of the contest winning models for their convention report.

The 1965 NMRA Annual Convention was in Vancouver, BC. GATSME member, Pete Shavney, and I traveled by train from Philadelphia to Montreal and then across Canada to Vancouver and back on an NMRA sponsored rail trip. The previous year, Pete and I had taken a 25-day, cross country rail fan drive which was reported in five installments in **The Local**.

Around this time, the Edgewood Club hosted a layout tour for MER Conventioneers including a visiting west coast model railroader, John Allen, the "Wizard of Monterey." Our layout was nothing spectacular, so one pass around the room and John fell asleep in the easy chair behind the layout.

My MER participation continued with terms as Editor of **The Local**, Regional Contest Chairman, Regional Secretary, Vice President, President and National Trustee, and Eastern Vice President. I lost to Paul Shimada in the election for NMRA Executive VP.

Most significant during this era was a "blind date" with Annette which led to our 1966 marriage. (Our honeymoon trip included a ride aboard the Cass Scenic Railroad in West Virginia.) Coming up this year is our 46th wedding anniversary.

When our children came along, Michelle in 1969 and Ken in 1972, we now had a family to travel to NMRA Board of Trustee Meetings, Regional, and National Conventions. Our kids were great travelers on cross-country drives from Maryland to Seattle, Washington, one year and San Diego, California, another time. Several summer drives to Colorado allowed us to enjoy all the well-known narrow gauge lines. By 1986, we had traveled as a family to all 50 states, thanks in great part to belonging to the NMRA.

The NMRA participation back in the 1960's and the building of an HO layout in our first home, led easily to several NMRA Achievement Certificates and the status of Master Model Railroader #35 in 1971, one of the first in the MER. Additional certificates were earned after the MMR requirement of seven until I had all ten. When an eleventh certificate was added, I chose not to follow up.

As our children grew up, finished college, married and started families of their own, Annette and I, now in the tuition-free era, continued our travels to include, to this point, three dozen foreign countries and all seven continents. Has anyone else here ridden the Train del Fin del Mundo? This is a 20-inch gauge tourist line, formerly a logging railroad, on Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of South America. It's what we did prior to boarding a ship to Antarctica. The travel "bug" has allowed us to ride ICE trains in Germany, TGV trains in France, and the Bullet Train out of Tokyo to Mount Fuji in Japan, to mention a few.

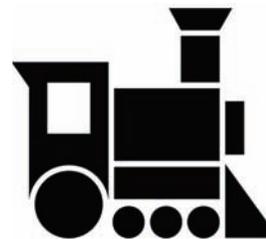
One great model railroad satisfaction has been helping to organize an informal, round-robin group of operators who have been meeting every Tuesday evening for about 40 years. In 1982 we needed a name to identify a bus tour out of the NMRA National Convention in Washington, D.C. to our Harford County, Maryland layouts. We chose "Harford Associates for Railroad Modeling" (HARM). **Railroad Model Craftsman Magazine** has twice printed articles I prepared about our most informal group, entitling them, "In HARM's Way". This is a most compatible group that shares and learns from each other.

Another source of personal satisfaction has been teaching an 8-week, non-credit, evening class about model railroading at our local community college. Russell Cook and I taught this class

annually for about 25 years. When Russ passed away, I continued the effort solo for 5 more years and finally turned it over to a former student, and fellow Edgewood Club member, Dick Schwanke. Dick still brings each class on a field trip to my home layout and has added classes in building modular layouts which now involve elaborate set ups at train shows and annually at the college.

My class discussion always included promotion of NMRA membership; I often wonder just how many new memberships I've influenced.

I am sincerely grateful to the NMRA for its contribution to my life-long pursuit of model railroading and how this interest has led me around the world and into the lives of others with similar interests. The NMRA's tangible benefits have led to immeasurable and intangible, life-long personal benefits. Thank you, my friends. 



Annual Tidewater Show and Sale

September 15 & 16, 2012

10 AM – 4 PM

- MODEL RAILROAD EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES, TOOLS, VIDEOS, BOOKS, PHOTOS, MEMORABILIA, AND TRAIN SETS ON SALE
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or email lenboucher@aol.com

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)

=====

Date of form: 1/31/07

When this form is completed,
mail it to:

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

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

Hand-Held Throttle Attachment

Article and photographs by Don Jennings
 Director in MER
 Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU and show you something I did to my DIGITRAX UT4R hand-held throttle. It is a simple and NO COST modification to it. I have big fingers and to turn the Loco Address Wheel is sometimes difficult for me. I wished I had a tweezer handy to help me turn those little dials wheels.



Here are two pictures of throttle with (above) and without the tweezers (below) attached.

This is what I came up with for this idea. Try it yourself and see. I found a soda straw with a diameter large enough to just hold the ends of the tweezers. Regular tweezers can be purchased at most dollar stores or a local drug store. I placed the tweezer into the straw - maybe an inch down and cut the rest of the straw off. The two-inch piece of straw was scotch taped to the right side of the throttle. This is the opposite side from the reversing switch on the top. Now the tweezers are handy enough to have and use and not be in the way of operating your trains. 🚂

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 2 – Potomac

Ronald King – *Golden Spike*
 Ronald King – *Model Railroad Engineer Electrical*
 William R. Lyders – *Model Railroad Engineer Electrical*

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Anthony L. Perkins – *Master Builder Scenery*

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Danial Fisher – *Model Railroad Author*

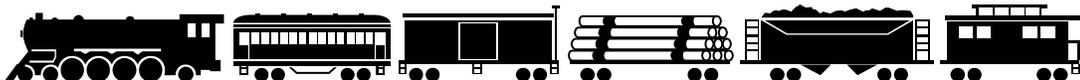
In a perfect world, this information will appear soon in **NMRA Magazine**. This should not deter you from giving recognition locally. Normally you will be able to recognize AP accomplishments long before the names appear in **NMRA Magazine**. 🚂



NOTICE TO ALL MER MEMBERS ANNUAL MEETING

THE 2012 ANNUAL MEETING of MER members will be held on Sunday morning, October 21st in conjunction with the MER Fall Convention in Suffolk, VA. Exact time and room will be announced at the convention.

Mike White
 MER Secretary



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CALLBOARD

Coming Events

July 14th. 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 a message.

July 14th. 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.

July 29th – August 4th. "Grand Rails 2012." NMRA Convention in Grand Rapids, MI. For more information visit www.gr2012.org.

August 11th. 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.

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.

MER Position Open:

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.

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 stevesexpressrr@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). 

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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
Quarter Page ad (6 issues).....	\$125.00
Half Page ad (6 issues).....	\$225.00
Half page ad (per issue) (Div. Only).....	\$25.00