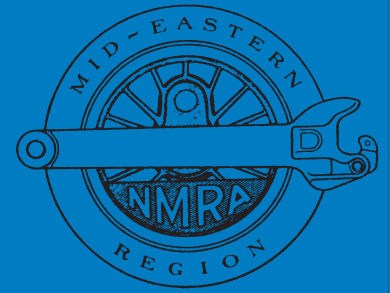


The Local

A Publication of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA



Volume 69

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2014

Number 5

The Car Order Operating System or Who Needs Those Stinking Numbers – Part 2

By Earl T. Hackett
Editor, **The Local**

THE FIRST PART PUBLISHED in the January/February issue of **The Local** showed how car movements could be generated without referring to the car's reporting marks. This has many advantages especially for clubs, large private layouts, and N scale modelers. The method described in the first part works well for closed cars where the load is not seen. A slightly different version is required for open cars – hoppers, flats, and gons – where the load is visible.

For an open load I use a Load Card. It serves the same purpose as the Car Order Card, but works in a slightly different way. Since the loads are visible, you don't want to send a car to a facility only to find there's nothing there to put in it. The Load Card's only function is to make sure that there is a load waiting for the car when it arrives.

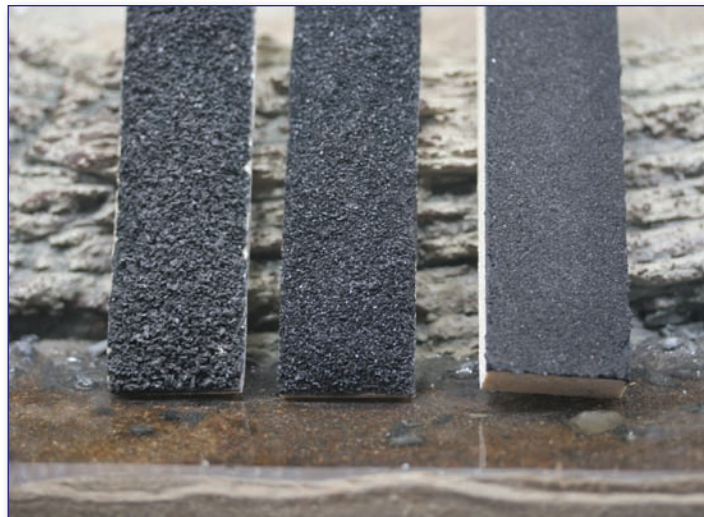
There is one Load Card for each removable load and it is sized to fit under the load in the car. It is a different shape from the Car Order Card so it is easily recognized by the yard crew. The card indicates the facility where the load is awaiting transport and specifies the type of car required. Because our loads are of a fixed size, the card must specify an exact car; not just a coal hopper, but a 50 ton hopper. This is not quite prototypical. In the real world coal can be dumped into any size hopper. I yield on this little detail to avoid the mess involved with loose coal loads. The loads are also labeled on their bottom with the name of the facility from which they originate.

The operation is similar to the use of Car Order Cards with some extras thrown in to handle the model loads. Starting at the mine during the staging operation, the Load Card is placed in the hopper followed by a

load. During staging on my layout the loaded car is moved from the mine's empty storage tracks to the tracks for outbound loads. Appalachian mines were generally gravity operated with the empties uphill from the loads. This allowed the miners to roll cars through the tipple without the need for motive power.

The loads are picked up and taken to the classification yard. Here a number of things can happen. They can be sent to a byproducts coke

plant, the coaling dock at the engine terminal, or east to tidewater. I model the very eastern edge of the West Virginia coal fields so no locally mined coal went west. Movements to the engine terminal or byproducts coke plant are in response to a normal Car Order Card requesting a coal load. Any loads that are not sent to a customer are made up into an east bound train sent to staging – tidewater for export or to power plants. Trains of loaded hoppers operate as 5th class trains so they must stay out of the way of everything except trains of empty hoppers that run as extras.



NOTE: Today all coal is mechanically mined so it's all the same size. When coal was mined by hand and explosives it came out in a range of sizes. Some mines had cleaning and sorting facilities on site so each hopper had a uniform coal size. Other mines shipped 'run of mine' coal to treatment plants for cleaning and sorting. On my layout all cleaning and sorting plants are to the west. If you make your coal loads visually different, the Car Order Card for a load of coal could specify the size required,

continued on page 3

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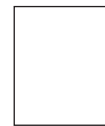
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From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President



THIS IS MY LAST TIME I will be writing to everyone from the Business Car. In October a new group of officers will be sworn in to take the MER into the future. I would like to thank everyone for the wonderful ride in the last four years. I could not have done it without everyone's help. Especially my VP P.J. Mattson, our Treasurer Tom Buckingham and our Secretary Mike White, without these people my job as your President would have been difficult to perform to MER's high standards. It also helped that I inherited Fred Miller as our business manager and later Bob Price stepped in to fill his place. Our officers also had some

excellent help from the Divisions that put in their time and effort to have given us some great conventions in the four years that I have been President. The conventions were also well coordinated by Eric Dervinis, P.J. Mattson and Bob Price from the MER. I can not thank everyone by name or this column would take up the entire **The Local**. Remember that the MER is made up of people who have volunteered their time and effort for the good of the organization and I can not thank them enough for stepping up to the plate to serve the MER.

Hopefully I will see you in October and Happy Model Railroading throughout your days. 🚂

Card Order Operating System, Part 2 continued from page 1

adding a bit more interest to the operation.

When the east bound string of loaded hoppers gets into staging the loads are removed and separated by their origin, one of the two major mines. The loads are returned to their box near the mine and the Load Card is returned to the yard, producing an immediate order for another empty, possibly before the car that was handling the load returns.

There are two 'unit' coal trains on my layout, one loaded, one empty, that serve as off stage traffic. They cycle through the layout as often as possible, the east bound loads change power in the yard to heavier power to get up the grade with loads and in staging back to normal power for their reentry from the New River. West bound empties perform the opposite maneuvers, hopefully keeping the motive power in balance. These trains are identified with a few privately owned Berwin hoppers, a common sight on the C&O, at the front end. This tells the dispatcher, who operates staging, and the yard master that these are through trains not to be unloaded or broken up. Only hopper cars in a train not headed by Berwin hoppers are available for local service.

During the next staging operation, coal loads at the byproducts plant and the engine terminal will be removed,



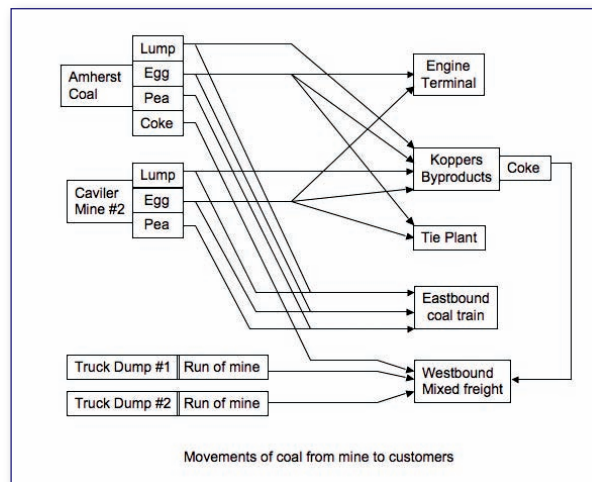
returned to their originating point, and the Load Cards returned to the yard.

Where there were coal mines there was also coke that required shipment. At one mine that produces coke in beehive ovens, Load Cards are needed to call a car. At the byproducts plant, having dumped their inbound coal loads, empty hoppers are readily available so no load card is needed. The coking process reduced the volume of the coal by about 30 percent so if 10 coal loads came in, 7 coke loads would go out.

Petroleum coke is pitch black, but coke made from coal is not black. It has the appearance of a dark graphite. It is visually distinct from coal so

shipping it out is easy. All coke loads go west to steel mills, usually as part of a mixed freight as there is insufficient volume for full trainloads of the material. All coke loads moving through staging are unloaded and handled just like a coal load. The freight, now with empty hoppers in tow, is sent back onto the layout and all empty hoppers are removed when it enters the yard.

As you can see, this operating technique can produce very complicated car movements on a model railroad with no paperwork at all. 🚂



Keeping In Touch...

By Bob Price
MER Business Manager




WHILE ASSEMBLING THIS COLUMN, I am in the middle of moving into a new home. Please make note of and start using my new mailing address (see page 2) when corresponding with the Business Manager. I had been looking at houses for a year, hoping to both downsize and go single story. I was lucky enough to find such a location in my hometown. I was also lucky enough to have my previous home go under contract 3 days after it was listed. The only downside was that the buyer wanted settlement in 6 weeks. Between tearing down the train layout, packing, prepping the new house and doing my own moving, I have not had much free time recently. Despite all that, I look forward to building a new layout soon.

Fortunately the effort to move started after prep work for the election ballots and a trial of electronic voting was completed. Electronic Voting is under consideration as an addition to the current paper ballot system. The theory is that each eligible member would choose how they wish to vote, much like you can choose between a paper copy of **The Local** or **The eLocal**. Instead of receiving a paper ballot, those members that choose Electronic Voting would receive an email. That email would link the member to

a website where they would cast their vote. The website would provide a list of the positions and/or questions that the member can vote on. The site would also display the candidate's photo and platform and allow for write-in candidates. In addition, the site we used would allow us to send out reminders to those who had not yet voted. Our trial election was conducted using the service provider ElectionsOnline (www.electionsonline.com). This provider claims that more people will vote electronically than by mail-in ballot when given a choice. However, the members that participated in our trial felt that more members would vote if the slate of candidates was larger. Who votes when the candidates are running unopposed?

Overall the feedback on Electronic Voting was positive. Everyone found the voting process easy and only one tester reported a glitch. More discussion on the topic will certainly occur at the annual business meeting in Hagerstown. Let us know your thoughts.

As always *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. A current address on file saves the MER some money. 

MER Looking Back

By Chris Conaway
MER Archivist



ONE OF THE DUTIES of the MER Archivist is to prepare for **The Local** an article that looks at past publications and share MER history. For my first official article, I choose to look at the SEP/OCT 1984 MER **The Local**.

Looking back at the September/October 1984 MER **The Local**, I realized how much the hobby of model railroading has changed in the last thirty years, and the impact technology has had on the hobby. So, without further delay, here are highlights of the September/October MER **The Local**.

The Local opened with Notes from MER President Nelson Garber. He announced that the three incumbents Nelson Garber-President, Ralph Oxhandler-Vice President, and Allan Phillips-Secretary had all been elected to serve 2 additional years. He listed the highlights of the board meeting held during the Regional Convention in Greensboro that May.

The highlights of the meeting included the following:

- Results of the special meeting held on May 5, 1984
- Attendance for the Greensboro convention was 289 people
- The 1983 Financial Report announced that the bank changed
- A Polaroid Camera system was purchased to take pictures of what winning models should look like for the fall convention. The fall convention was held in Cherry Hill, New Jersey
- Results of convention commemorative model tank car sales were a success, all sold in 1984
- Recognition of Mary Miller for her work as MER Contest Chairperson
- The appointment of Gwenn Baile as MER Raillette Chairperson

A listing of MER Achievement Certificates passed out at the convention was included in the publication. The following members of the MER received


certificates: Peter Smith, Jerome Kay, J. Patrick Price, Richard Higgins, John Board, Richard Daniels, and Wallace Bailey. Also included, was a list of local, division events that were held over a six-month-time span.

Next, **The Local** had coverage of the contests that had taken place during the Greensboro convention. Photographs of the contest winners were included in the pages of the Local. Some of the Photo Contest winners were:

- Larry Nyce – B&W “switching the mine”
- Larry Nyce – Color “upgrade to Lizardhead”
- Rick Maguire – Color “Coalton Station”
- Richard Wood – B&W “155 South”
- Bill Gruber – night color “Woodbury Station”

Finally, the Model Contest winners were:

- Best in show (arts and crafts) – Ginny Richardson – Porcelain RR Dolls
- Best in show (general contest) – Al Phillips-Florence and Cripple Creek Caboose
- Kit- Rabon Sellers – Campbell's HO Quick Coal Co
- Steam Locomotive – Ronald King – On 30 Sandy River #1
- Diesel – James Teese – Hon3 US Army Trans. Corp #4700n
- Freight cars – Ronald King – On30 “Zero” Std Oil #104
- Caboose – Al Phillips – On3 Florence & Cripple Creek Caboose
- Maintenance of Way – Stan Knotts – HO Tunnel Clearance Car
- Structures – Basil McLean – HO Car Ferry “Ramon”
- Diorama – James Teese – Cranberry Complex

So there you have it, a quick look back at the fall 1984 MER **The Local** from 30 years ago. 

HUB CITY

OCTOBER 16 – 19

By Eric Dervinis

THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION hosts the 2014 MER Convention in Hagerstown, MD at the Ramada Plaza Hotel. The name reminds us of the town's past, when six railroads interchanged here. Today, CSX and Norfolk Southern are still active. The hotel will host all inside activities and offers great rooms with free breakfast each day.

THURSDAY: Attendees arriving Thursday can start registering in the mid-afternoon. Have dinner with friends in the many restaurants nearby and then choose from layout tours or clinics in the hotel. All members are invited to the MER Board Meeting which starts at 7 PM.

FRIDAY: You will have to make some tough choices on what to do. Clinics start after breakfast and continue all day. Learn about TT&TO from Steve King, Ingot cars from John Teichmoeller, Hoisting Equipment from Stan Knotts and many more. In the morning, tours of a tie plant (*if it's the one I'm thinking about, it's a BIG operation and should be quite interesting. Ed.*) and a coal powered electric plant are available (self drive). In the afternoon, choose from layout tours and in the evening sign up for the Operations Callboard. Have some items you no longer need? The White Elephant room will be open all day. The contest room will be accepting entries.

SATURDAY: Start your day in the hotel with your complimentary breakfast. All morning long you will have a variety of clinics to choose from. As an alternative, take a tour of the East Broad Top RR (self drive). No clinics are scheduled for the afternoon, so attendees can focus on layout tours, hobby shopping, railfanning and other activities. Our hard working judges will be reviewing all of the contest entries. Make your plans to return to Hagerstown and have dinner at a restaurant of your choice—no banquet this year. But get back to the hotel for dessert—you have to buy in advance. Yes, we will have a cash bar. The program will continue with contest and special awards. A surprise guest speaker will wrap up the program. Around 9 PM, the SMD will host a live auction of your surplus model railroad items.

SUNDAY: After a good night's sleep and another complimentary breakfast, stay around for a great schedule of clinics and of course the annual MER Membership Meeting. Say good bye to your many friends old and new and head home stopping at some more layouts on the way.

That is a great program. Let's see you in the 'Hub' in Hagerstown October 16 – 19, 2014. 🏠



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Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention

Hub City 2014

October 16th to October 19th 2014



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

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other Attending (living at same address): _____

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

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

NMRA # _____ Region: _____ Division: _____

Favorite Scale _____ Is this your first Convention? _____

Description	Cost	#	Paying
Early Registration (Till at the door fee \$45)	\$40		
Non-NMRA member extra Fee	\$10		
Significant other & Children under 16	\$0		
Banquet Dessert Only – Saturday Night	401	\$8	
Banquet Dessert Only – Gluten Free – Saturday Night	402	\$8	
Banquet Dessert Only – Sugar Free – Saturday Night	403	\$8	
Clinic – Pimp my Kit – Part 1 Friday 8:30AM – 12:30PM Part 2 Saturday 8:30AM – 12:30PM	601	\$20	
Clinic – TTTO – Friday 1:30PM – 2:30PM (Op session included)	602	\$5	
Clinic – Fast Tracks Turnouts – Thursday 7:00PM (Count only 15)	691	\$0	
Clinic – Fast Tracks Turnouts – Thursday 8:15PM (Count only 15)	692	\$0	
Clinic – Installing Decoders – Thursday – 7:00PM (Count only 15)	693	\$0	
Clinic – Installing Decoders – Thursday – 8:15PM (Count only 15)	694	\$0	
Operation Call Board – Wolf – WM – HO – Friday Night (Full)	301	\$5	
Operation Call Board – Moltrip – Steel Mill – Friday Night (Full)	302	\$5	
Operation Call Board – Florwick – HO – Friday Night	303	\$5	
Prototype Tour – Dickerson Plant – Friday 9am – 12pm	201	\$10	
Prototype Tour – Green Spring Plant – Friday 9am-1pm	202	\$10	
East Prototype Tour – Broad Top RR & Trolley Museum – Saturday 8am – 1pm	203	\$20	
Total Advance Registration Paid			

Additional events will be added when their cost is known.

Payment must accompany registration.

Credit Card Number _____ Ext. Date _____ 3 Digit Security Code: _____

An extra charge will be added for Credit Card transactions. **Visa, Master Card and Discover Card only.**

Or Make checks payable to: MER Fall Convention 2014

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

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

Convention Hotel:

Ramada Plaza Hotel

1718 Underpass Way
Hagerstown, MD 21740 301-797-2500

Room rate \$89.00 plus tax per night. Single or Double.

When registering, specify the **Hub City 2014** to get these special rates.

Revised: 9-1-2014

The First State Model Railroad Club presents RAILROAD MERIT BADGE DAY

April 12th & April 19th, 2014

Article by MER member Don Jennings

BEING INVOLVED with the Boy Scouts of America and also with the NMRA's MER, I have traveled several states in the Region's boundaries for any NMRA members willing to assist with a Railroad Merit Badge Class. This year's **Railroad Merit Badge Day** marks its tenth year that **The First State Model Railroad Club** has provided a Railroad Merit Badge class to the Boy Scouts. This event (to my knowledge) far exceeds many other RR clubs with service to the Boy Scouts. The First State MRR Club owns their building which was a small truck terminal and is located in Dover, Delaware as the name should suggest.

The scouts had to show up in Boy Scout Uniform, with a RR merit badge booklet and the worksheets for the badge. Many of the scouts had their worksheets at least partly filled in only needing some information provided from the instructor(s) of the class. Such a class happened over a two day period = on two separate Saturdays. The first one was this past April 12th 2014 and the second one was April 19th 2014. The event has a maximum attendance of 24 scouts for each session. The Scouts started off the morning by doing the Scout Pledge of Allegiance, followed by their Scout law and Scout oath. Then the Scouts were split into four groups of about six boys each. I attended the class on April 12th and provided the club with the MER's HO Scale R F & P RR box car kits. These kits are needed for the badge's requirement 8a2 – which states “Build a model railroad car kit or one locomotive kit.”

All the scouts were eager to learn about the badge and many of them asked questions and responded as the presenters talked about each subject



of the badge's requirements.

In the photo at left some of the First State MRR Club members waiting to take a class on Operation Life-saver's grade crossing safety.

Although book learning and instruction time was needed, the fun part of the day was building the car kits with the assistance of many of the clubs members.

After this, the scouts got to run the switching layout with a locomotive and several cars to be placed on different tracks in a timed exercise. Next came the time to operate trains on the clubs two HO scale layouts that are set up year round. The larger of the two layouts is about 30 feet by 40 feet and is DC controlled with many beautifully scenic areas of local interest.

Center left are some scouts following a train around.

The large but smaller layout is about 20 foot by 20 foot layout is on modules and operated for Digital Command Control. These are both fun to operate with long trains and some switching maneuvers as part of it.

The members of the First State Model Railroad Club have constantly provided a quality program for the scout to learn and earn the Boy Scouts Railroad Badge. This year was no exception. Good Going Guys. 🚂

My Model Railroad Article Reference Database Comes to the Rescue

By William Lyders
Proprietor of the Whitewater & Virginia (W&V) RR

IT WAS OVER 20 YEARS AGO that I was reading a model railroad article describing a specific layout that showed a picture of a very nice rock formation that I would have loved to be able to do. In the text, the article explained how the method used was with pine bark mulch. I have never forgotten that story and have also never been able to find that article again.

gave the article title, author and specific reference information to the issue the article was published in. This was not useful for what I needed.

I needed a reference to published articles by Subject name! And none exists that I am aware of. So since I had 20 years of magazines in organized storage boxes, I decided to catalog articles from them that had Subjects that I found interesting and felt I would want to come back to some day.

Model Railroad Article Reference Database							
Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Magazine	Month	Year	Article Title	Page
Tools		Rt Clamp	MRR	1	2005	Workin' on Railroad - RtAngle clamps	38
Servicing		Platforms	MRR	1	2005	Simple transition-era servicing facility	78
Locos		wood	MRR	2	2005	Easyopen loads	38
Structures		Laser cut	MRR	2	2005	Build a wood structure kit	52
Scenery	Towns	Trees	MRR	2	2005	Steam spectacular-Howard Zane Layout	56
Operations	Dispatcher		MRR	2	2005	Realistic Dispatching - Dispatcher Train Sheet	82

Figure 1: Database Headers and Some Original Entries.

Have you ever tried to remember when you read something and can't find the issue the article was in? I needed some way to rescue me from physically having to search through magazines. So I decided to do some-

And I have done so numerous times over recent years.

One of my habits which would irritate librarians and collectors is that I highlight key points in yellow marker and bend back the page of an article of reference interest in a magazine as I read them. So finding my reference articles didn't require me to reread the magazines. I only had to find the tabbed articles.

The requirements for this project included finding a computer application that I could use to build a scalable database of information that I could then do searches or sorts on to find all articles on a specific model railroading subject. You know the saying "garbage in, garbage out". If I didn't capture useful information and pick useful subject terms, I would never be able to find those articles with the nuggets of information I had read. I had used MS Access before but that program didn't come with MS Office. But MS Excel was in my Office suite of products and I chose that for my computer program.

The requirement for scalability meant that I should be able to keep adding article references and be able to add new Subject terms and Magazine names, etc. over the years. So I will now explain how I built my article reference database.

The first step was to define the columns and the options for each column to capture in the database.

Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 2+	Subject 2++	Month	Year	Magazine
Animation	Autos	Lake	Trees	1	2000	MER-FLYER
Benchwork	Backdrops	Layout design	Trucks	2	2001	MRR
Books	Block Detect	Lighting	Tunnels	3	2002	MRH
DCC	Bridges	Locomotives	Turnouts	4	2003	NMRA
Electrical	Buildings	Mountains	Vehicles	5	2004	PD-LOCAL
Layout	Business	Motors	Water	6	2005	SR
Loads	Car Cards	Paints	Way Bills	7	2006	
Locos	Control Panel	Passenger	Weathering	8	2007	
Lighting	Construction	Performance	Yard	9	2008	
Maint	Decoder	Plants	Yard Master	10	2009	
Modeling	Decals	River		11	2010	
Museum	Details	Roads		12	2011	
Operations	Detection	Rocks			2012	
Painting	Dispatcher	Rolling Stk			2013	
Panels	Dockside	RR Xing			2014	
Photos	Electrical	Scenes				
Rolling Stk	Engineer	Sessions				
Scenery	Falls	Shrubs				
Servicing	Figures	Signs				
Structures	Freight	Signals				
Tools	Grass	Sound				
Track	Harbor	Technology				
Turnouts	History	Terrain				
Water	Industry	Throttle				
Vehicles	Interiors	Towns				
Weathering	Judging	Track				

Figure 2: Scalable Column Cell Pull-down Options

thing about it. The national magazines used to publish once a year a bibliography of articles in their magazine from the previous year. But that only

FIGURE 1 – REFERENCE DATABASE COLUMNS AND HEADERS
I chose to have 8 columns of information, as shown in Figure 1. This captures a number of bibliography facts but is set up with three Subject columns for searching and sorting on. I didn't want to have to keep typing in the same Subject terms over and over again. So, the **Subject 1** and **Subject 2** columns provide single term Subject terms using a pull-down technique for data entry for me the user. The **Subject 3** column is a free form entry column to enhance the subject understanding. The Magazine, Month, and Year columns are also pull-down technique cell data entries. The Article Title and Page are free form data entry columns.

Here is where the scalability in changing pull-down data entry options comes in. In each of the columns, I defined the column cells to bring up a

strike my fancy, I put them in the free-form Subject 3 entry. An insert box in an article, or a scenery technique description in the article text, or

Operations	Dispatcher	AP Dispatcher	SR	9	2008	NMRA/ AP Chief Dispatcher	10
Operations	Dispatcher	Semaphore, controls, operator	MRR	9	2009	The Operators: Train order signals - part 2	102
Operations	Dispatcher	Switching, cabooses, yards	MRR	10	2009	The Operators: Caboose operations	106
Operations	Dispatcher	Timetables, authority, schedules	MRR	11	2009	The Operators: Running extra trains	110
Operations	Dispatcher	Car-card, string graphs, orders	MRR	12	2009	Adding operations to a model railroad	58
Operations	Dispatcher	TT&TO, signals, authority	MRR	12	2009	The Operators: Authority to use the main track	114
Operations	Dispatcher	Track warrants, TTO, block signals	MRR	1	2010	The Operators - Authority to use the main track - part 2	114
Operations	Dispatcher	Pacing opns, schedules, TTO	MRR	2	2010	The Operators - Operating by the clock	110
Electrical	Construction	Signals	MRR	7	2006	Build your own signals	76
Electrical	Construction	Tortoise machine	MRR	4	2007	Easy installation of Tortoise switch machines in 2" foam	30
Electrical	Construction	Cabling	SR	6	2007	Wire Hangers	10
Electrical	Construction	Strobe	MRR	9	2007	Detail a 1980s caboose - Installing a flashing strobe light	84
Electrical	Construction	Wiring	MRR	10	2007	DCC Corner: Good Wiring practices	78
Electrical	Construction	Wire, track bus, testing labels	MRR	9	2009	DCC Corner: Wiring your layout, part 1: track bus	70
Electrical	Construction	LEDs, circuits, sensors, staging	MRR	10	2009	Simple train detection for staging tracks	64
Electrical	Construction	Throttle panels, networks, CVPs	MRR	10	2009	DCC Corner: Wiring your layout, part 2: cab bus	74
Scenery	Backdrops	Curved, benchwork, painting	MRR	12	2009	Step by Step: Building a backdrop	34
Scenery	Backdrops	Sky, clouds, foreground, trees	MRR	12	2009	You, too, can paint a backdrop	38
Scenery	Backdrops	Computer, scan, images, containers	MRR	4	2010	Build an easy container yard backdrop	50
Scenery	Backdrops	Roads, photos, trees, edges, transition	MRR	10	2010	Continue your roads	38
Scenery	Bridges	Viaduct	MRR	1	2008	Cumberland valley System	78
Scenery	Bridges	Paint, weather, hiding ends	MRR	9	2011	Build a highway overpass	58
Scenery	Buildings	Kitbashing	SR	12	2007	From Passenger Car to Yard Office	24

Figure 3: Examples of Searches/Sorts for Key Article Subjects: Operations, Electrical and Scenery.

pull-down menu when the cell is selected by my cursor. As shown in Figure 2, my current lists of pull-down options for each column are actually stored in cells in the MS Excel spreadsheet off to the right of the database columns. For user convenience, the pull-down options are in alphabetic order.

FIGURE 2 – SCALABLE COLUMN CELL PULL-DOWN OPTIONS

Of course, the Subject 2, 2+, and 2++ are really in the same option column but rearranged here for illustration purposes. Whenever I feel the need to add another option (scale the list larger), all I have to do is cut/paste the cells in the list and move it down one cell and then type in the new option term in the now blank cell. MS Excel then includes the new term the next time the pull-down is needed. So when I started reading Model Railroad Hobbyist, I just added MRH. When the NMRA changed names of their magazine from **Scale Rails** to **NMRA.org**, I just added NMRA. For my local NMRA newsletters, I include **PD-Flyer** and **MER The Local**.

I populate my database when it's convenient about every 6 months or so. It takes about 4-5 hours of data entry to capture the select entries from all the magazines for a year. The Subject 1 entry is the top level subject parameter that I select. The Subject 2 entry is a further breakdown of what I want from Subject 1. Then if other topics in an article

a picture of a scene detail would cause me to include a Subject 3 entry (That would not be known from just the article title).

Then, when I need information for an upcoming model railroad project, for example Scenery or Electrical information for my AP certificate projects, I do a search/sort and browse through all the database subject entries for potential articles to go back and read for my project.

In Figure 3, examples are shown of some results for my recent projects in Operations (preparing my W&V Operations Manual), Electrical (techniques to implement for my Electrical AP), and Scenery (methods for scenes for my Scenery AP).

FIGURE 3 – EXAMPLES OF SEARCHES/SORTS FOR KEY ARTICLE SUBJECTS: OPERATIONS, ELECTRICAL, AND SCENERY

Now that I have over 600 entries for the last 10 years in my database, a search will usually net about 30 – 50 articles for each key Subject 1 topic. Having such a deep resource to draw upon is great. I have used it many times and will continue to add new articles to it as my

interests expand. I may decide to divide a Subject 2 entry into multiple Subject 2 entries to simplify their sort results. It will be easy to do. If anybody would like to build their own database and could use some of the information from my database, feel free to contact me. *This resource has rescued me multiple times from long manual searches through my stored magazines.*

PHOTO OF PINE BARK ROCK CUT.




Pine Bark Mulch - Rock Cut.

continued on page 10

Another article reference resource that I have considered is the DVD, **75 Years of Model Railroader Magazine**. The DVD might be a useful resource to replace the cabinets of older magazines too. But Model Railroader stopped providing their bibliographic article list in their magazine and then on their on-line link to an article database years ago for security reasons. I assume there is one in the DVD? Searchable? The NMRA requires a request to the NMRA library to research for an article, book, or photo. No NMRA article listing anyplace.

In the beginning of this article, I mentioned never finding that article using pine bark mulch for making rock formations. I haven't seen any references to it since either. But I did save a bag of mulch and made a very nice cut of rocks around a curve behind my roundhouse as part of my AP Scenery submittal. The judges were impressed and mentioned it in their review afterward. I share that picture with you of an N&W coal train passing by the rocks as part of my closing.

*A search of the DVD mentioned above found it in seconds. The article was in the October, 1976 issue of **Model Railroader**. I bought some mulch (\$6 for a HUGE bag) and tried it – works great. Ed. *

An Introduction to Railroad Freight Rates

Part 3

By Mike White
MER Secretary

IN PART 2, the various classes used by each of the classification committees was defined. Below is a summary chart giving the abbreviation of these ratings as used in a tariff, Figure 5.

Sometimes special conditions arose in different parts of each territory and to meet them the railroads published an Exception to the Classification. These publications were called Exception Sheets.

The Classification and Exception Sheet which governed the rates from one point to another were named in the tariffs containing the rates. It is

ABBREVIATIONS OF CLASSIFICATION RATINGS			
Class	EXPLANATION	Class	EXPLANATION
1	First Class	5	Fifth Class
1 1/4	One and one-fourth times First Class	6	Sixth Class
1 1/2	One and one-half times First Class	A	Class A
D 1	Double First Class	B	Class B
2 1/2	Two and one-half times First Class	C	Class C
3 1/2	Three times First Class	D	Class D
3 1/4	Three and one-half times First Class	E	Class E
4 1/2	Four times First Class	R-25	Rule 25 Class
2	Second Class	R-26	Rule 26 Class
3	Third Class	R-28	Rule 28 Class
4	Fourth Class		

Figure 5

only by referring to the tariff that the Classification or Exception Sheet to be used could be determined. The fact that a shipment was to move between points ordinarily in the Official Classification territory did not necessarily mean that the Official Classification governed the rates.

When both a Classification and Exception Sheet were referred to in the tariff as governing the rates published therein, the ratings, rules, and regulations published in the Exception Sheet took precedence over any ratings, rules or regulations published in the Classification, except as may have been otherwise specifically stated.

The rules and regulations published in a tariff took precedence over any conflicting rules or regulations contained in either the Classification or Exception Sheet by which the tariff is governed, unless otherwise specifically stated.

Joint through rates between points in one classification territory and points in another were always governed by one Classification. It may have been the Classification for the territory of the point of origin or the point

of destination.

There were enough of these extra-territorial applications that a book was published as:

“Appendix to the Official Map of Railroad Freight Classification Territories and Freight Traffic Association Territories”, describing each of the extra-territorial exceptions in existence at the time.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBHSOgPS1ZXdfZZU1BZSm8/edit?usp=sharing>

I have been unable to locate the maps referred to, however a reasonable set of maps, the “Atlas of Railway Traffic Maps,” can be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBHSOgPVXJ6QWwzSFhX-cUE/edit>

In the case of Joint Combination Rates from points in one Classification territory to points in another was a matter determined when the rates were established. There was no absolute fixed rule in the case.”

The primary reference for this article, *The Freight Traffic Redbook* cited earlier, is available on-line from booksellers, but are mostly expensive (and sometimes lower-quality) versions of the same material that is downloadable and can be saved as a PDF.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBHSOgPWGdrb110V3Qwc00/edit?usp=sharing>

The commodity tariff differed from the class tariff in that it quoted the rate on a particular commodity between specified stations without the use of any other publication. To illustrate: a commodity tariff on lumber showed the rates on lumber from shipping point A to receiving stations B, C, and D as being 20, 25, and 28 cents per 100 pounds, respectively. The functions of the classification and the class tariff were combined in the commodity tariff. By far the largest tonnage of coal, lumber, grain, livestock, packing house products, etc., which usually moved in large volumes, was carried on rates provided for in commodity tariffs. Commodity tariffs were also extensively used whenever it was necessary to make exceptionally low rates on particular commodities between given points.

Traffic Territories, Rate Committees, and Rates

By now, you understand the essential point that the Official, Southern, and Western Classification committees, in a general way, determined the classification of all articles, except where state classifications were in effect, offered for transportation to carriers operating in the United States.

There are two kinds of committees which were instrumental in making the basis for freight charges: (1) Classification Committees, and (2) Traffic Associations or Rate Committees. It was the function of the rate committees and general freight departments of the railroads to establish rates on the various classes or groups of goods prepared by classification committees, or make exception on certain commodities known as commodity rates.

For the purpose of rate making, the country was divided into various traffic territories. Within these territories were points known as "Basing Points" which served as a base upon which rates were computed to other points. The committees and associations, composed of representatives of the railroads having jurisdiction over the various traffic territories, determined how rates were made and on what points they were based.

The establishment of Traffic Territories, Rate Zones, and Committees which had jurisdiction over them, was the result of an attempt on the part of the railroad to adjust rates to meet all of the various industrial, traffic, and commercial conditions of the country in a businesslike and economic manner.

The traffic associations, committees, and bureaus grouped by type were:

Major Traffic Associations

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

Maps 1, 1A, 2, and 2A show some of the territory over which the Major Traffic Associations had jurisdiction. They can be accessed at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBH5OgPME1VUnpQN0ISNm8/edit>

Minor Traffic Associations

- Mississippi Valley Freight Association
- The Middle States Freight Association
- Pacific Coast Freight Bureau
- Colorado Freight Bureau
- Colorado-Utah Freight Bureau
- Local Utah Freight Bureau
- Illinois Freight Committee
- Michigan Freight Committee
- Virginia Freight Traffic Association


- Local Freight Traffic Associations
- Buffalo Freight Committee
- Chicago Freight Committee
- Cincinnati Freight Committee
- Cleveland-Lorain Freight Committee
- Dayton Freight Committee
- Detroit Freight Committee
- Indianapolis Freight Committee
- Louisville Freight Committee
- Milwaukee Freight Committee
- Minneapolis Freight Committee
- New Orleans Freight Committee
- Peoria Freight Committee
- Pittsburgh Freight Committee
- Sandusky Freight Committee
- Springfield Freight Committee
- Toledo Freight Committee
- Wheeling Freight Committee
- Danville Freight Committee

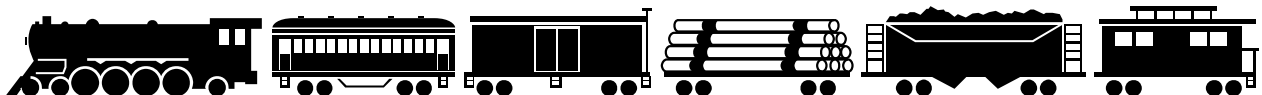
Specific Traffic Committees

- Chicago and Ohio River Committees
- Gulf Foreign Freight Committee
- St. Louis East-bound Freight Committee
- St. Louis-Cincinnati-Louisville Freight Committee
- St. Louis Coal Traffic Bureau
- Indiana-Illinois Coal Traffic Bureau
- Ohio Coal Traffic Association
- Southern Iron Committee
- Standing Switching Committee

Details of the geographical territory covered by the Major Traffic Associations listed above can be found in "Rate Territories Excerpt" at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBH5OgPYUdKcJrWtk5tNIU/edit?usp=sharing>

The Freight Classification and Traffic Territories of the United States, from which much of the above is drawn, can be accessed and downloaded as a PDF from: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBH5OgPakZRNHJIOTFUeE0/edit?usp=sharing>

Associated with each of these and most often with several, were persons who served as Agents of the associations for purposes of filing tariffs. It is their names that are associated with a particular tariff when you see, for example, a reference to "issued by E.H. Histon, Agent". 



New Membership Recruitment Program

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

What’s covered?

Same as Rail Pass—receive six issues of **NMRA** magazine, three issues of **The eLocal**, eligibility to attend conventions and meets, eligibility to participate in contests.

What’s not covered?

Same as Rail Pass—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 or a prior Rail Pass member.

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 Rail Pass form). (2) The “recruiter” should sign the form, and then forward it to: Bob Price, Business Manager, 801 S. Newton Lake Drive, Collingswood, NJ 08108. (3) Bob 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 Soddy Daisy.

What happens after the member’s six month trial period?

The Rail Pass trial member will receive a standard dues notice from national headquarters. We hope a substantial number of Rail Pass trial members will sign up to become regular members.

Are there limits on the program?

The MER initially allocated \$2,000 for this program. When this funding is depleted Division Superintendents and members of the MER Board of Directors will be notified. At that time, the program will be reevaluated by the MER Board of Directors. If successful, we will try to continue it.

For questions?

Contact Bob Price, Business Manager (mailing address is below, (856) 854-8585, Business@MER-NMRA.com), or John Janosko, MER President (see contact information on page 2).

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free “Rail Pass” Trial Membership

Yes, please sign me up for a free six month Rail Pass 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 mailed national magazine, and **The eLocal**, the bi-monthly regional newsletter if an email address is provided. 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 Rail Pass 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 or a prior Rail Pass member.

=====
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Title of Sponsor: _____ (Required)

(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

When this form is completed,
mail it to:

Bob Price
MER Business Manager
801 S. Newton Lake Drive
Collingswood, NJ 08108

Do **not** mail it directly to NMRA
headquarters in Soddy Daisy, TN.

Letter to the Editor

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED the article in **The Local** discussing the problems with judging models made using 3D printers. It was thought provoking.

Many (emphasis on many) years ago I was the Chief Judge for MER. A thankless task. Still, I learned a lot and did my best to be fair. An old college professor taught me how to simplify the process. Triage. Look the models over and separate them into three categories. Obvious winner, obvious non-winner, and everybody else. Spend your time on this last category so that you can help them improve.

I offer my comments in the hope of furthering the discussion and promoting fairness.

Some thoughts on judging, scratchbuilding and new technology. The most recent issue of **The Local** had a very interesting discussion about the problem of judging models that had been produced using the latest high tech tools.

Various comments were offered stating that these models were not scratch built or at least were not scratch built as we have come to believe. But no one offered a definition of “scratchbuilt” or “scratchbuilding.”

Wikipedia defines scratchbuilding as, “Scratch building is the process of building a scale model (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scale_model) “from scratch,” i.e. from raw materials, rather than building it from a commercial kit, kitbashing (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitbashing>), or buying it pre-assembled. I cannot say that this is the all encompassing, perfect definition of scratchbuilding, but let’s accept it, at least for the moment.

By this definition, a model produced by a 3D printer is scratchbuilt, eg. raw materials. A bath of brown, pudding like resin is about as raw a raw material as you could find.

What seemed to be lost, or ignored in the discussion is that the real concern was the TOOLS being used to scratchbuild. A modelers knife is a tool, so is a 3D printer.

Over the years modelers have continued to upgrade their tools and techniques. Files were replaced by milling machines, photo etched rivets replaced hand punched rivets, copiers were used to make templates, signs and drawings, Silicon rubber molds were used to duplicate small parts, etc.

As each of these tools or techniques became more widely used, the overall quality of the models improved, but no judge penalized the builder for using better tools.

Today we have the opportunity and tools to build models that we simply couldn’t produce in the past, by scratchbuilding them using these new technologies.

Now we come to the other aspect of this discussion. Craftsmanship.

The Oxford dictionary defines craftsmanship as, “Skill in a particular craft.” The problem with this definition is that it is a mile wide and an inch deep, but it does apply.

I can build a credible model using the conventional tools and materials, but I cannot build a model with a computer and a 3D printer. I don’t know how. It is a skill set I do not possess. I am not a craftsman when it comes to 3D modeling. Does 3D modeling take craftsmanship? You bet it does. I have seen rather poor 3D models and I have seen some great models, but not done by the same person. The better models were produced by someone with an advanced skill set, a “CRAFTSMAN.”

So what do you do regarding judging models produced using the best

tools available? Do you discriminate against the person using the new tools? No. You must not do that. The better answer is to embrace the new technology and reward those individuals that are leading the way.

John Glaab 


Letter from the Editor



By E. T. Hackett
Editor, **The Local**


THERE HAS BEEN a major change in communicating with the MER. There is a new website www.mer-nmra.com. The old MER page on the NMRA website is gone since our National organization no longer was agreeable to hosting our site, but our new site, on our hosting service is now linked in to the National site.

The pages for the Calendar, Convention, Archives and **The Local**, Contests (updated displays), links to Division pages (updated maps!), Organization, and Election information (new this year!), are all up and running. Still under construction is the Clinics page since we are in the process of stripping out all of the personal contact information to comply with the NMRA privacy policy, and then re-formatting it to be more user friendly. That’s a big job and will take some time. Those looking for clinics information for their events in the interim should contact the current MER Clinics Coordinator. Lastly, this current MER web site is just the place holder while an entirely new site is being built back behind the curtain since 1999 called and wants its web sites back. We also have a new Web Master!

It is very important that when submitting photos that they be sent as individual attachments. The most common format is jpg, a compressed file format, so don’t zip a jpg file – it’s already compressed. Photos embedded in an application are almost useless. Word stores photos in a proprietary format and when extracted the colors do not reproduce correctly. Other document software most likely has similar problems. 

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 Hackett@verizon.net, 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. 

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11/14

CALLBOARD

Coming Events

July 22, August 26, September 23, October 28, November 11, December 9, Carolina Piedmont Division, Meet and clinic 7 PM Cary, NC.

September 6, Strasburg PA, Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

Susquehanna Division Model Railroading Day at the Museum - an event surely to satisfy all model railroader's interests - historic 1:1 scale exhibits, make-and-take laser kit clinic, back-shop tours, many educational clinics, and special model displays. Several clinics presented in historic Reading Railroad #800 electric MU passenger car. Limited to first 100 who pre-register and pay discounted fee by August 15. NMRA members \$9, Friends of the Museum \$5 - all others \$12. After August 15, all pay normal museum admission charges and no access to back-shop tours. Registration or questions: Rich at rjwurst@comcast.net or 609-658-6156.

September 27 - 28, Tidewater Divisions 25th annual train show and sale. Virginia Beach Convention Center, 1000 19th Street Virginia Beach, VA 23451. Operating trains in various gauges and lego trains, test tracks, train doctors on call, scenery supplies, books, videos, track, memorabilia and tools for sale, white elephant tables. how to clinics both days, scouts work towards merit badge in model railroading. door prizes drawn every hour. Admission adults \$8.00 children under 12 with an adult free. scouts in uniform with scout leaders in uniform admitted free. \$1.00 from every paid admission goes to "TOYS FOR TOTS".

October 3 - 4, Joint Susquehanna Division and OP SIG LSOP6 (Lehigh & Susquehanna Operations Weekend 6). Register now for annual Friday evening and all day Saturday free operations event. No prior operations experience required. Twelve, 3-layout positions available in Lehigh/Allentown area and ten, 3-layout positions in greater Harrisburg area. Registration and additional event information available at www.susquehannanmra.org/LSOP6. Contact: Wayne Betty, 717-951-5055, or wbs@susquehannanmra.org.

October 16 - 19, Hub City MER Convention, Hagerstown, MD

World's Greatest Hobby Show:

January 10 - 11, 2015. Hampton Roads Convention Center, 1610 Coliseum Drive, Hampton, VA 23666

January 17 - 18, 2015, Raleigh Convention Center, 500 South Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27601

March 28 - 29, 2015, New Jersey Convention & Exposition Center, 97 Sunfield Ave, Edison, NJ 08837 



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

Bernie Halloran - *Golden Spike*
Bernie Halloran - *Master Builder - Structures*
Bernie Halloran - *Master Builder - Scenery*
William R. Roman - *Master Builder - Cars*

Division 3 - Philadelphia

James E. Dalberg - *Master Builder - Scenery*
James E. Dalberg - *Model Railroad Engineer - Civil*
James E. Dalberg - *Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical*
James E. Dalberg - *Association Volunteer*

Division 13 - Carolina Piedmont

Gene W. Sing - *Master Builder - Cars*

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!

Get the Electronic Version of The Local

To convert from the hard copy of **The Local** to the electronic version send a request to Bob Price, the MER Business Manager at business@mer-nmra.com. The electronic version is in full color and will eventually have added content beyond the 16 page limit of the paper version.

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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 email within two weeks please resend your submission or contact the editor by phone.

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

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

Callboard Ads (30-50 words) (Div. and Clubs Only)	Free
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