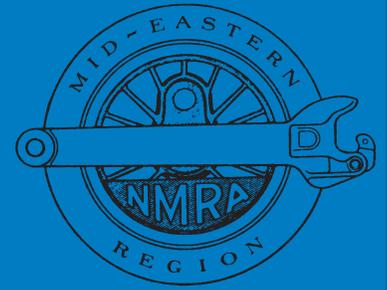


The Local

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Number 1

The Car Order Operating System or Who Needs Those Stinking Numbers – Part 1

Earl T. Hackett

AS WAYBILLS for model railroad operation become more like the prototype, they create problems similar to those the prototype has experienced: lost cars, lost freight, and mountains of paperwork. In Wilmington, the Pennsylvania Building, a large 4-story structure that stands behind the Wilmington Amtrak station, was the office for several hundred clerks whose sole function was to keep track of rail cars roaming around the local tracks. This function was repeated many times around the prototype railroads until computers took over. That solved some of the paperwork, but cars still got lost. Over a hundred cars found their way onto a small short line and never came out. The short line was repainting them in their own colors and sending them out for general freight service – and collecting the income. This went on for years. When they were finally caught, they had repainted more cars than could fit on their total trackage.

Operators on our layouts invariably make some mistakes. Cars are sometimes placed in the wrong location and or the wrong car is picked up. This creates all sorts of problems, particularly on a large layout. A friend down in Tennessee has a large layout and at any one time has about 150 car cards that have lost their car and a similar number of cars in a box that have lost their card.

Some years ago at a regional meet in Grand Rapids, Michigan I was introduced to an operating system developed by Dan Hinel and Hank Tenwolde. Frustrated with the problems of using a car identification system on large layouts, they based their operating system on demand from the on line industries. Rather than having a card for each car, their system has a card for each customer delivery spot. For those who love paper-

work and like trying to decipher the reporting marks hidden on a car in the middle of a yard, you can stop reading right here, because reporting marks and car numbers have no function in this system. There is no documentation concerning pieces of rolling stock, no waybills, no switch lists, yet the system generates prototypical car movements.

This has significant benefits in many situations.

- Operators on N scale layouts don't have to carry magnifiers
- There's no problem on club layouts when members bring in or remove rolling stock
- It creates prototypical random movement of cars without any paperwork
- On a private layout you can just go run trains without messing up the operating system and if you get a new piece of rolling stock, just put it on the layout and run it
- The whole system is self healing – you can't mess it up

The Car Order card is the only documentation in this system. In the basic system there is one and only one Car Order card per delivery spot. The information on it includes

- The industry name and, optionally, the specific car spot
- The type of car. This can be as detailed as you like. For example it could specify a tank car or a Koppers Coal Tar tank car.
- Shipping instructions east or west upon return to the yard
- Local classification yard if there is more than one yard on the layout – the Car Order cards are unique to each classification yard. On a small lay-

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**YARD A
CAR ORDER**
40' BOX
TO BE SETOUT AT

**TOWN B
FEED MILL**

WHEN CAR HAS BEEN SETOUT
PLACE THIS CARD IN BOX
LABELED

DELIVERED

**YARD A
PICKUP ORDER**
40' BOX
TO BE PICKEDUP AT

**TOWN B
FEED MILL**

For shipment WEST

WHEN CAR HAS BEEN RETURNED
TURN THIS CARD AND PLACE IN

CAR ORDERS

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EDITORIAL STAFF



Editor / Photographer: Earl Hackett
3 Forrest Lane
Hockessin, DE 19707
(302) 239-5509
Hackett@verizon.net



Webmaster: Martin Oakes
8057 Lucky Creek Lane
Denver, NC 28037-8004
(704) 483-7972
martinoakes@charter.net



Publisher: Julianne H. Smith
7221 Ridgeway Drive
Manassas, VA 20112,
(703) 794-7309
dragonjuls@comcast.net

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



President: John Janosko
264 White Cedar Lane
Youngsville, NC 27596-9196
(919) 562-0260
johnajan@embarqmail.com



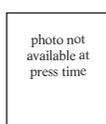
Vice President: P. J. Mattson, MMR
129 East Avenue
Swedesboro, NJ 08085-1209
(856) 467-0421
pjmattson@comcast.net



Secretary: Mike White
3800 Chaneyville Road
Owings, MD 20736
(410) 286-2873
mm.white@comcast.net



Treasurer: Thomas R. Buckingham
7216 S. Osborne Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-4206
(301) 952-0427
tombuckingham@juno.com



MER Archivist: Chris Conaway
407 Kings Highway
Moorestown, NJ 08057-2726
chris_conaway@verizon.net
856-439-1742



MER Contest Chair/Manager:
Martin Brechbiel
3404 Monarch Lane
Annandale, VA 22003
(703) 309-3082
martinwb@verizon.net



Director: Martin Brechbiel
3404 Monarch Lane
Annandale, VA 22003
(703) 309-3082
martinwb@verizon.net



Director:
Jack Dziadul
1488 Abercorn Ln
Sanford, NC 27330-9152
JackDziadul@gmail.com
919-721-8757



Director:
J. Gary Tyler
315 Sourwood Dr
Hardy, VA 24101-2863
tylerenergy@aol.com
405-921-8058



Achievement Program Manager
Charles Flichman, MMR
6909 Crandall Court
Clemmons, NC 27012-9056
(336) 766-8353,
cwfflich@aol.com



Business Manager:
Bob Price
666 Princeton Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108
(856) 854-8585, MER-
BusMgr@comcast.net



Nominations Chairman:
Bob Minnis, MMR
11 Marwood Drive
Palmyra, VA 22963;
(434) 589-3011,
kahlualab@aol.com

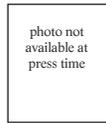
MER DIVISION CONTACTS



New Jersey Division 1
Superintendent: Robert Clegg
(856) 696-0463
bobcats@comcast.net
Division web page:
www.njdivnmra.org



Potomac Division 2
Superintendent: Marshall Abrams
(301) 588-1005
Abrams_railroad@comcast.net
Division web page: http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/



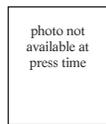
Philadelphia Division 3
Superintendent: Joe Bergmaier
(610) 269-8558
jober922@gmail.com
Division web page:
<http://www.phillynmra.org/>



Tidewater Division 4
Superintendent: Gary Brown; (757) 481-2348; alleghenyrr@yahoo.com
Division web page:
www.nmra-mer-tidewater.org



James River Division 5
Superintendent: Bob Minnis, MMR
(434) 589-3011,
kahlualab@aol.com
Division web page:
<http://www.trainweb.org/jrd/>



South Mountain Division 10
Superintendent: Richard C. Lind
202 W College Ter.
Frederick, MD 21701-4844
301-694-9496,
rlind202@verizon.net

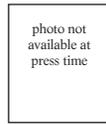
Division web page: www.smdnmra.org



Susquehanna Division 11
Superintendent: Barry Schmitt
(717) 877-1810, bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org
Division web page:
www.susquehannanmra.org



Carolina Southern Division 12
Superintendent: Bob Halsey;
(704) 660-9712; xnavman@roadrunner.com
Division web page:
www.carolinasouthern.org



Carolina Piedmont Division 13
Superintendent: Grif Bond;
(919) 556-7066,
grifbond@embarqmail.com
Division web page:
<http://www.trainweb.org/cpd13>



Chesapeake Division 14
Superintendent: Kurt A. Thompson
(410) 544-7247;
super.chesdivmerrnmra@gmail.com
Division web page:
www.chesapeake-nmra.org

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From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President

IF YOU MISSED the MER convention you really missed having a good time. The Potomac and Chesapeake Divisions did a great job. We had over 350 people attending the convention. That is the most people we have had at a convention since I attended the joint MER SER convention in the spring of 1997. The only damper was that it rained the whole time. This made it a little difficult to get around to seeing all of the layouts that were on tour. Charlie Getz, the President of the NMRA, was also there and we shared a table at the banquet. Charlie has some great ideas as to improving the NMRA and this will make it better for both the regions and divisions. It is nice to see we have a forward

thinker at the throttle of the NMRA. The hotel facilities were great and we were in a good location to get around the DC area. South Mountain Division has a high bar to meet next year. The good thing is that the convention group for this year has agreed to provide some help to the division. At this time the hotel has not been picked out, but as soon as everything is signed it will be on the website.

I hope everyone has a wonderful 2014 and that Santa was good to you in 2013.

Happy Model Railroading throughout the New Year and hope to see you at next year's convention, October 16-19, 2014. 

The Car Order Operating System continued from page 1

out this 'classification yard' could be a simple interchange track.

Figures 1 and 2 show the two sides of a Car Order card. On the Car Order side is the information needed at the classification yard and for delivery to the customer. On the other side is the Pickup Order information that is needed at the customer's location when the car is picked up. The information on each side is almost identical, but the background or border colors are different, making it easier for the local freight crew to keep track of what they are picking up and dropping off. Avery makes a variety of pre-scribed forms with downloadable templates that can be printed with any digital printer. After printing you simply flex the sheet to separate the cards. Their business card size is ideal for this purpose.

So let's see how this Car Order process works. In the Car Order system, through freights are treated very differently than in other operating systems. The cars on a through freight have no documentation. They are simply the store of cars needed to service the local industries and the means of moving cars to off-lay-out destinations. This can be a difficult concept to grasp, especially for those who have been tracking cars by their numbers for many years, but read on, all will become clear shortly. The through freights can run on a schedule (the most prototypical method), as extras, or on demand from the yard; whatever method you prefer.

When a through freight arrives in the yard a portion of the consist is cut from the train and any cars in the yard intended for shipment in that freight's direction of travel are added. How much of the consist is removed can be decided by whatever means you like; rolling dice, picking numbers from a hat, a fixed percentage of the consist, or the whole train. I prefer using dice to determine how many cars will be delivered by the through freight. This occasionally creates problems for the through freight operation as sometimes only a few cars will be dropped at the yard while a bunch of cars will have to be picked up. Will this large freight have enough power to get up the ruling grade? Will it fit on the available passing sidings? Should the dispatcher be contacted to run a second section? There's no sense making the yard master

and road crews get off easy all the time. Table I shows the number of cars dropped off and the frequency of occurrence for 2 through 6 dice. With the addition of each die the average number of cars drawn increases by 3.5 so the number of cars arriving can be carefully tuned to the capacity of individual layouts.

The yard crew will have a stack of Car Order cards. Starting at the top of the stack the Car Order card is matched to a car type among the new arrivals. If there is no match for the card, you go to the next card until all the

cars are matched with a Car Order card. Any cars that don't have a matching Car Order card (you may have pulled off 4 box cars, but only have Car Order cards for 3) are given a Car Order card

Cars	2 Die	3 Die	4 Die	5 Die	6 Die
2	2.8%				
3	5.6%	0.5%			
4	8.3%	1.4%	0.1%		
5	11.1%	2.8%	0.3%	0.0%	
6	13.9%	4.6%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%
7	16.7%	6.9%	1.7%	0.2%	0.0%
8	13.9%	9.7%	2.9%	0.5%	0.1%
9	11.1%	11.6%	4.6%	0.9%	0.1%
10	8.3%	12.5%	6.6%	1.6%	0.3%
11	5.6%	12.5%	8.6%	2.6%	0.5%
12	2.8%	11.6%	10.4%	3.9%	1.0%
13		9.7%	11.6%	5.4%	1.6%
14		6.9%	12.1%	6.9%	2.5%
15		4.6%	11.6%	8.4%	3.6%
16		2.8%	10.4%	9.5%	4.8%
17		1.4%	8.6%	10.0%	6.1%
18		0.5%	6.6%	10.0%	7.4%
19			4.6%	9.5%	8.4%
20			2.9%	8.4%	9.1%
21			1.7%	6.9%	9.3%
22			0.8%	5.4%	9.1%
23			0.3%	3.9%	8.4%
24			0.1%	2.6%	7.4%
25				1.6%	6.1%
26				0.9%	4.8%
27				0.5%	3.6%
28				0.2%	2.5%
29				0.1%	1.6%
30				0.0%	1.0%
31					0.5%
32					0.3%
33					0.1%
34					0.1%
35					0.0%
36					0.0%

Table 1: The probability of a number of cars delivered per die roll.

continued on page 4

Keeping In Touch...

By Bob Price
MER Business Manager

I WANT TO EXTEND NEW YEAR WISHES to all of our members and friends. I hope everyone had an enjoyable Model Railroad Month. I know that there were over 100 home layouts open to the public during December in my area of the MER. Open Houses are a great way to promote the hobby and to make new friends. Some of the layout owners actually hand a throttle over to the youngsters and allow them run a train. It is a great way to get them and their parents interested in the hobby. If you have never shared your layout, consider doing so for the next local meet in your area. If you open your layout for visitors, next time consider letting your guests have a hands on experience while they visit.

Having previously held the position of Archivist, I know that it has been tradition in this issue to report statistically what has happened during the past year. Our active membership has shrunk again this past year to 1862, down 4.5 percent from last year. The loss was somewhat offset in part by the Rail Pass subsidy program. At this writing, we have subsidized 597 applications. Twenty nine percent of those Rail Pass members have since converted to regular membership.

The number of members enjoying the printed and mailed ver-

sion of this newsletter has increased over the past year from 42 percent of active membership to 49 percent. Surprisingly, the number of members enjoying the electronic version of **The Local** has shrunk from 19 percent last year to 17 percent.

Next, I looked at the ages of our membership. Of the 1566 active members who have registered their birth date with NMRA National and the Region, the average age has increased to 66 from last year's 65. If the data is accurate, we have one Life Member that reached the 100 mark this past year.

Rounding out the annual numbers: We have the modeling scales registered for 686 active members. Those who only listed HO scale represented 71 percent of that population. N scale represented about 12 percent. The many other scales account for about 7 percent of those registered. The remaining 10 percent of those reporting listed multiple scales.

It is a new year. Get yourself motivated and enjoy your hobby of model railroading. 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. 📄

The Car Order Operating System continued from page 5

sending them to a team track. By keeping the number of cars to about 80 percent of the car order cards for that type of car, you shouldn't have too many of these undocumented cars. Team track order cards are kept in a separate stack and are of a different color for identification purposes. The yard crew sorts these cars into the proper way freight, hopefully in the proper switching sequence. To help the yard crew, a sequential number can be added to the Car Order card, indicating the sequence in which the delivery spots are encountered. If the Car Order cards are in numerical sequence, the cars will be properly blocked for delivery. The Car Order cards are stacked in the same order as the cars in the train and given to the way freight crew.

In the basic system, when the way freight arrives in the town, they will find two boxes labeled Delivered and Pickup. Any Car Order cards they find in the Delivered box are on hold and are to remain at the industry. The Car Order cards in the Pickup box are to be taken back to the yard and the cars in their train destined for that town are set out at the proper locations. To keep things straight, pickups are added at one end of the train (I prefer the rear) as deliveries are taken from the other end (front). The Car Order cards for cars they delivered are dropped in the Delivered box and cards for their pickups are taken with them stacked in the same order as the cars in their train.

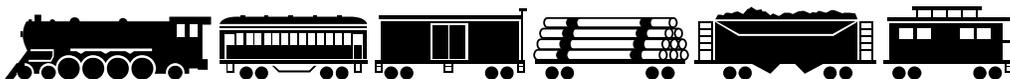
Now here's part of the genius of this system. If the crew finds a

car sitting in the spot where they are to deliver a car, it is an error from a previous op session – or maybe the kids were down there running trains. In that case they just pick up the car and take it back to the yard. Likewise, if there is a pickup order, but no car at that spot, it is also an error so they just put the card at the bottom of the stack and take it with them. Cars can't get lost and cars and cards can't get separated.

When the way freight gets back to the yard, the yard crew gets the Pick Up cards and sorts the cars in the train for shipment east or west. The Pick Up cards are then turned over, placed at the bottom of the Car Order stack, and the process repeats. To stage the layout for the next session someone simply goes to each town, takes the Car Order cards in the Delivered box and puts some or, if they really want to see crews sweat, all of them in the Pickup box.

That's the basic system, but you can add complexity by having more than one type of car delivered to the same spot. However, if the spot is occupied and the Car Order card is not in the Pickup box, you will need to add an Off Spot box and a location for the car to be stored so the next crew will know this car has not been delivered and they have to finish the job.

This system concept is very flexible and can be modified to handle just about any situation, such as coal loads, which I'll cover in the next issue. 📄



I Learned How to Operate

By Peter Mosiondz, Jr.

IS IT GOING ANYWHERE?

Many of us can trace our beginnings in this greatest of all hobbies to that well-remembered Lionel or American Flyer train set going around the Christmas tree. Going around and around and around. You get the idea. It wasn't really going anywhere.

We grew up. Some stayed with O, O-27 or S. Others ventured into HO and later to N scale. Of course girls and cars got in the way for awhile but we eventually came back. But, for the most part, the trains kept going around and around.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s HO grew in popularity by leaps and bounds. So did the hobby. This was due in large measure to a new and wide variety of equipment and accessories made available to us at affordable prices.

Kits were simpler and quicker to build. More detail could be found in those better performing locomotives and rolling stock. Forget for a moment those dreadful horn hook couplers. I believe the NMRA called them X-2F and they did conform to their standards at the time. And I still have an Athearn F7 with rubber-band drive. I fondly call this period of growth the "Golden Era" of model railroading.

Thanks to all of these improvements we had some extra time on our hands with which to think about being more creative in our track planning and design efforts. Gone was the oval of yesteryear. We began to add sidings and passing tracks to our newly built "L" or "S"-shaped layouts. The trains were now running differently but they still weren't going anywhere.

To "go somewhere" we need to think about the function and purpose of our transportation system. In other words we must decide on a line of travel in a realistic direction. This could be east to west, north to south or perhaps something a little different such as an eastern starting point then traveling westward for a while and eventually branching out to the north or south. Your own imagination, if you are freelancing, will provide the right answer. Now we have the beginnings of a definite purpose in mind. Where did this train come from? Where is it going? How many towns will be located on our empire? What industries will be located in those towns?

Now we're traveling in some meaningful direction – without looping back. We are going to serve industries and maybe even transport people. We now have a sense of purpose.

But to make our railroads more prototypical, we have to do some interchanging with other railroads. On many occasions, products manufactured by a shipper on your pike will need to be shipped to other distant cities. These carloads will have to be shipped off-line to one or more other railroads. This is easily handled through end-to-end connections between railroads, mostly in medium to large cities, or at interchange points where one railroad crosses or otherwise connects with another. You will not just be handing off to other railroads. They will be interchanging with your road as well.

These interchange locations are typically funneled by stub

tracks. These do not need to be seen but rather they can be hidden behind a bridge, a building or some scenery to create the illusion that they are really there.

Our next task is to select the era and locale we plan to model. Then we arrive at track planning which will now be quite a bit easier since the foundations are in already in place. Next we build the layout and start running trains. Most importantly we now have a true transportation system with trains that are performing actual service and are really "going somewhere".

NOW WE'RE GOING SOMEWHERE

Operation is the culmination of all that hard work performed in planning, designing, building and scenicing our model railroad together with the selection and detailing of our motive power and rolling stock. The efforts expended to this point created the purpose of our transportation system.

Our locomotives will be transporting cars of products to places where they are needed and people to destinations they wish to reach. These predetermined ends of the trip can be on-line or off-line. As we discussed previously, a good number of your trains will be performing an interchange with another pike. All of these movements are carried out as expeditiously as practical. Such trains are often moving in opposite directions, even over a single-track railroad. Accordingly we need some sort of system to prevent collisions or undue delays. As a result, railroads have published rule books and timetables which outline the priorities and schedules of every train negotiating their rails.

It all boils down to moving freight and passengers over the system to their intended destinations, or to a connecting railroad, as quickly and as safely as possible in accordance with a well-defined set of rules and following a comprehensive schedule.

When a model railroad attempts to emulate such practices, we describe this as operation. And operation thus goes hand-in-hand with purpose on a model railroad.

My personal desire to operate came from articles on the subject by many hobby luminaries, such as Bill McClelland and Tony Koester. I must admit that I was scared to death when I was first asked to operate on a friend's model railroad. But with the urging of my friends, I agreed to give it a try and was handed a throttle. These great friends graciously tutored me. My trepidations were unfounded. It was really easy and the experience was a great deal of fun. I was warmly welcomed into the "South Jersey Operators" group.

We have already pondered the question of whether or not our railroad was really going anywhere. In other words, does it have a purpose? Is it logical? If that railroad is logically designed with a definite purpose in mind, you'll have the greatest amount of fun operating it. We're on the way!

There are many other areas to talk about concerning operating a model railroad. These include the actual operating session, car

continued on page 6

cards, way bills, switch lists and other items. One tip I'd like to offer is that too tight a schedule or too many trains running at one time results in tension for the operators and the dispatcher and defeats the purpose of this wonderful hobby that we turn to in an effort to reduce our already high stress levels.

OPERATIONS

In my opinion there is no more fun in model railroading than operations. I wish I had discovered the fun years ago. Before we talk a bit on that subject, let's take a look at a few things that are most likely second hat to you but they were new for me.

"Blocking" is simply the logical arrangement of a freight car, or cuts of freight cars, in a given train so that they will be placed in convenient order when switching or drop-offs are required. This is accomplished by the yard master in a classification or hump yard with each track serving as a place to build a specific train. And, don't forget that we need a caboose track, if you are modeling an earlier era, and a yard lead so as to avoid fouling the main. The yard jobs are very demanding on a model railroad but they are also a great deal of fun.

A "turn" is a job that goes to and from one terminal with the same crew and power within the 16-hour on-duty time limitation law. It is 12 hours today but I model the mid-1950s when it was still 16 hours. Most operating sessions feature at least one "turn".

Any "foreign" freight cars should be gotten off-line, via interchange, as quickly as possible so as to avoid paying per-diem charges. This is a fee that all railroads must pay to the owning road for keeping their car on their property. Everyone needs to be on their toes here.

THE OPERATING SESSION

The call board lists train departure times for all scheduled trains. On many larger model railroads each operator carries an employee's timetable.

The crew usually reports to the yard master about a half-hour before the train's departure time. This is assuming the use of a 6:1 fast-time clock. It would be five minutes in real time. We are talking here about the larger pikes. The operator is given an envelope or packet containing the car cards for his train. Inserted into clear pockets on the cards are the waybills. Beforehand the pike's owner or his yard master made the decision as to which industries, car destinations or interchange locations were to ship or receive cars. There are instances where a computer, fed with all the required data and then some, accomplishes this task.

The car card contains specific information including the type of car, its reporting marks, car (or road) number, AAR car classification and type of lading. One home-made car card that I have seen is a 3" x 5" index card with about 40 percent of its space at the left side devoted to this information. The remaining space housed a transparent waybill pocket that was taped to the card. The pocket accommodated the 3" x 2.5" waybill that the yard master placed there.

Micro-Mark sells a buff-colored car card sized 2 1/8" wide x 4" high (folded) that easily accommodates their 2" wide x 3" high waybill. The card folds up from the bottom and tape is placed along the left and right sides to make a convenient pocket for the

waybill. This is the version that I prefer. They also sell three-compartment bill boxes to house the car cards. Their "Car Routing Starter System" is worthy of a look as well.

The waybill contains information that tells the operator where to route the car. This could be a specific on-line industry or perhaps an interchange track to name two examples. The waybill can be color-coded across the top to make life a little easier. A green stripe or dot could represent an interchange track. Red might signify that the car is to be taken to a sub-division. Other colors may represent specific industries according to the color chosen. In addition to the routing instructions, the waybill includes car content information and the AAR classification.

Switch lists of incoming cars to the yard, with shorthand destination information, saves time. You can be certain that the list will show the exact order in which the cars stand on the track and will be an aid in using shortcuts to making new blocks. Best of all is the added realism that you're using a prototypical form. Switch lists are really the equivalent of a yard foreman operating with written train orders.

The yard master has written the engine number(s), train number, number of cars and throttle assignment on the outer envelope. The crew, or operator, then contacts the dispatcher and relays this information so that the train's "run" can be properly planned. The dispatcher then instructs the crew to depart on schedule or informs them of any delay in doing so. If it is a CTC railroad he reminds them to watch the CTC signals for operational instructions. On a CTC system, the signals perform the same function that train orders (Form 19s) did previously. The signals must be strictly obeyed.

Timetables are critical to the operation of any railroad that does not employ a CTC system, as they convey rights to various trains. On a CTC system, the timetable establishes priorities of the trains as the trains are directed by the CTC signals. Train orders are similarly employed.

It requires considerable thought to select logical loads for the cars and their destinations. And, it really is a lot of fun. Once completed for the operating session, the "data" can be stored for another op session. A year later no one will remember that this was the "game plan" used once before.

DISPATCHING

A small railroad can usually function without a dispatcher but it's a vitally needed position on the larger model railroad. The dispatcher adjusts schedules when the situation warrants, adds "extras" when needed and, in general, is the model railroad's traffic cop. He uses his expanded timetable and sees at a glance what is supposed to be running and where to. He has radio or telephone connections with crews who report in when departing a station. The information that the crew provides is logged "on train sheets", or "OS". He then relays other information to the crew if required. He ensures proper routing of "his" trains by aligning the desired turnouts, moving signal levers on his CTC panel to the proper direction and pushes the appropriate buttons. The dispatcher is a jack of all trades and the railroad's catalyst.

I recently joined the Operations Special Interest Group (OPSIG). It's something I should have done a long time ago but,

as they say, it's better late than never. The group publishes a quarterly journal, the Dispatcher's Office. The annual membership fee of \$20 includes four issues of this high quality journal printed on glossy stock. By itself it is easily well worth the membership dues. But, many other benefits await the modeler. Or you can choose the electronic magazine via PDF file download for the bargain rate of \$7 per year. Their website is www.opsig.org.

I'm having a great deal of fun operating and hope you are as well. 

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Visit the MER's website for all the latest information, contacts and archives
www.mer-nmra.org.

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03/11

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 Hacketet@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.

PRR Books for sale. All in new condition (except for ex libris bookmark) with dust covers. I was given these from my brother-in-law's estate. I priced them at the used price on Amazon.

Pennsy Power, Stauffer, \$35

Pennsy Steam Years, Sweetland, \$40

PRR Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment, Sweetland and Yanosey, \$30

Pennsy Diesel Years, Yanosey, \$50

Contact: Earl T. Hackett, 3 Forest Lane, Hockessin, DE 19707, hacketet@verizon.net

FOR SALE: **Pennsy Triumph** Volumes 1 through 8. Brand new and never even opened @ \$375 postpaid. **Pennsylvania Railroad in the Schuylkill River Valley** by Benjamin L. Bernhart, Hardcover. Also brand new and never even opened @ \$30 postpaid. Take both lots @ \$395 postpaid. A discount will be given if you pick them up.

Contact: Peter Mosiondz, Jr., 26 Cameron Circle, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021-4861, Phone (9 am to 8 pm) 856-627-

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge March 28-30, 2014

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www.phillynmra.org



Railroad Slang

Submitted by Steve Kindig

This came from Wayland Moore who got it from a retired railroad engineer who wishes to remain anonymous. I'll start with a little story he related to Wayland and then provide the RR Slang – English dictionary so you can translate it.

“OTHER THAN HANDLING a little more pork than usual and the old man riding on 130, looks like a pretty quiet day on the railroad, but I did want to offer a few words of encouragement to ensure a safe and productive day. And I thought that in pursuit of authenticity, it might be appropriate to use a little of the colorful vernacular of our profession so:

“A few reminders to all you hoggies, skippers, baby lifters, bakeheads, and dollyflopers. Pay attention to when you shine, put on your thousand miler, grab your company jewelry, your banjo, and your bird cage and head for the buzzard’s roost to get your dope from the paperweights, your greetings from the DS, and grab your willies from the number dummy. Head down to the pig pen, jump on your calliope and ride the merry-go-round.

“The dinger and the jam buster will keep an alley for you, so buckle the rubbers, crown him and make sure the wind’s pumpin’

back to the shack, mind the paddle and the runty, and head for the high iron. If you’re running varnish instead of a rattler, put a little run-fast on your high wheeler, grab your cushions, and try not to make too many laplanders. You eagle eyes may need to rap the stack and lay down some grit to get over the knoll, but otherwise no jack’n the throttle – just keep it in the company notch. You captains use your rag wavers when you need ‘em, and no drawbar flagging or we’ll shower you with brownies and have you dancing on the carpet. And don’t let the Federalies or the brass hats from the Crystal Palace catch you poundin’ your ears in the top dresser drawer. You see any boxcar tourists, call the cinder dicks, and if you’ve got a cripple, get a car toad or a nut buster to take a look. If you’re puttin’ on the nosebag, don’t be blowin’ smoke to the beanery queen at the red onion – she’s heard it all. The old heads of the brethren with plenty of whiskers need to help out the fresh fish. Always check with the ringmaster before you enter the garden, and you may make it to the Indian Valley Railroad. And if that made perfect sense to any of you Pocatello yardmasters, you truly are an old head. Now let’s play ball.” 

alley	clear track in a switching yard
baby lifter, groundhog, pin puller, stinger	brakeman
bakehead, diamond hustler, tallowpot	fireman
banjo	fireman’s shovel
beanery queen	waitress
bend the iron	throw a switch
bendin’ weenies, bucklin’ the rubbers	connecting air hoses
bighole it, plug it, dump it, soak it	make emergency brake application
boomer	employee who moves around a lot
boxcar tourist	hobo
brains, captain, skipper	conductor
brass hat, silk hat, tin hat	railway officers or officials
brass pounder, lightning slinger	telegrapher
brethren	fellow operating dept workers
brownies	demerits for breaking rules, etc.
bunch of thieves	wrecking crew
buzzard’s roost, bee hive, stock pen	yard office
calliope	steam locomotive
car toad, car knocker	car inspector
cinder dick, bull, pussyfoot(er) (plainclothes)	RR special agent
circus	railroad
collar and elbow joint	boarding house
company jewelry	trainman’s hat, badge, & switch keys
company notch	throttle (johnson bar) most efficient setting
couldn’t pull a setting hen off her nest	derogatory description of locomotive
cow cage, pig palace	livestock cars
cripple	bad ordered car
croaker	company doctor
crowning him	coupling a caboosie on a made up freight train



crow's nest	caboose cupola	
Crystal Palace	company headquarters	
cushions	passenger cars	
dancing on the carpet	called to the supt's office for discipline	
delayer, detainer, moving spirit	dispatcher	
dinger, general, ringmaster	yardmaster	
dog catcher	crew sent to relieve an outlawed crew	
dope	switch list, orders, official instructions	
drawbar flagging	flagman leaning on caboose drawbar instead of going back a distance	
drop a little run-fast, grease the pig	oil the engine	
Eastman, etc.	train traveling in specified direction	
elephant style	all motive power units facing same direction	
eyeballs	loco headlights	
Federalies	FRA personnel	
flimsy	train order	
fly light	go on duty after missing a meal	
foamer, GERF (Glassy Eyed Rail Fan)	railfan	
fresh fish, piglet, FNG	new hand or hire or trainee	
garden, field	rail yard	
gas can, oil can	tank car carrying petroleum	
gate	switch	
glory hunter	reckless, fast running engineer	
goat	switch engine	
good set	train with no problems and good air	
green eye	clear signal	
greetings from the DS	train orders	
griever	union rep at investigation	
hash house	railroad restaurant	
head shed, brain shack, monkey house, clown wagon	caboose	
high daddy	flying switch	
high iron	mainline	
high wheeler	passenger engine	
hogger, hoghead, eagle eye	engineer	
in the hole	on the siding (off the main)	
Indian Valley RR	mythical RR – always good jobs awaiting – happy haven of RR legend	
jack'n the throttle	move throttle excessively, causing slack action	
jam buster	assistant yardmaster	
jerkwater town	small town with few facilities	
join the birdies	jump from a locomotive before a collision	
knock her in the head	slow down	
laplander	passenger jostled into someone's lap in crowded car	
lay down some grit	apply sand to rail	
merry-go-round	turntable	
mule, hoptoad	movable derail	
muzzle loader, hand bomber	hand fired steam locomotive	
number dummy, mudhop	yard clerk	
nut buster	mechanic	
old man	superintendent	
op	operator	
over the knoll	getting up the hill	
paddle	semaphore signal	
paperweight	RR clerk, office worker	
pig pen	locomotive roundhouse	
play ball	get to work, get busy	

continued on page 10

Pocatello yardmaster	derisive term for boomers
pounding their ears	sleeping
pull the calf's tail	yank the whistle cord
pull the pin	knock off work or go home for the day
put on the nosebag	eat a meal
Queen Mary	light engine move
rag waver	flagman
railbender, iron bender, dollyflopper	switchman
rap the stack	throttle wide open
rattler	freight train
red onion	railroad eating house
rubberneck car	observation car
runt(y)	dwarf signal
shake and bake	spotting the dock
shiner	trainman's lantern
shotgunned train	train with cars unblocked
shuffle the deck	switch house tracks at a station
smoke orders	moving train without orders by looking for smoke of approaching train
snakehead	rail coming loose & piercing car floor
snipe, gandy dancer	track laborer
spotter	company spy
strawberry patch	rear end of caboose at night
thousand miler	typical starched blue shirt worn by trainmen universally
tie 'em down	set hand brakes
top dresser drawer	upper bunk in caboose
tripper	yard shifter
varnish, plush run	passenger train
when do you shine	what time were you called for
whiskers	seniority
willie	waybill
wind pumping back to the shack	air brake lines pressurized all the way to the caboose
windy	car going down a track with no air or hand brake applied
wing her	set brakes on a moving train



Save the Date for Spencer

By Jack Dziadul

We are reaching out to MER members to see if there is sufficient interest in having a NMRA Day at the NC Transportation Museum. Saturday, May 31, 2014 is one of the days where the museum has a special first generation diesel roster event. So far, ten operating E and F units will be on display that weekend. Check the website www.nctrans.org for details. If there are sufficient numbers we will likely be able to arrange for discounted tickets. If you are interested please contact me directly at JackDziadul@gmail.com. 

From the Mail Car

Jack Dziadul, MER Director

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT in the recent election. I look forward to serving you and working with the Officers and the other new Directors, Martin Brechbiel and Gary Tyler. We appreciate John Siegle tossing his hat into the ring last summer and we hope to tap his talents as well in the coming year. I have started my two-year commitment with getting acquainted with my new colleagues and with the “administrivia” that is a part of running any organization. (By-Laws, Executive Handbook, policies and procedures, traditions, etc.) This has mostly been accomplished through emails with a few phone calls mixed in. Most of my communication to date has been with Tom Buckingham, Mike White and Business Manager Bob Price. You quickly learn to appreciate the talent that has been driving the train these past few years.

The three new Directors have each been assigned areas of responsibility by President John Janosko. Mine include Publisher (Julianne Smith), Boy Scouts (Don Jennings) and Editor / Photographer (Earl Hackett). Martin Brechbiel is responsible for the nominations and ballot, website and all convention contest related activities. Gary Tyler oversees the budget process, archives, and the sales of merchandise including kit projects.

I have yet to meet Julianne, but I look forward to working with her. I have known Don Jennings for many years and I am pleased that he has agreed to continue in a role for which he has great passion. Earl Hackett is new to the Editor position, but he has excellent organizational and photography skills that will serve us all well. I am especially delighted that Earl has taken the initiative to develop a new web-based communication medium that, with Board approval and budget support, will supplement **The Local**.

The November-December 2013 **Local** included annual reports from eight of our Divisions. I find these very helpful and informative. I trust that you did as well. There were some interesting questions and suggestions raised in a few of the reports. I would like to respond to some of those that were specific to how the MER can better support Divisions, but please keep in mind that these are just my comments and not necessarily those of the Board of Directors. One over-riding observation is that, in my opinion, a number of the questions and suggestions assume functions and responsibilities that are beyond the capabilities of MER’s administration. MER is comprised of seven elected officials plus several appointed leaders, each with specific tasks. We have no full time or paid staff and we cover quite a bit of geography. I do not know the head count of each Division, but MER has 1,967 members and ten active Divisions. Without factoring in members not within Division boundaries, Divisions clearly have greater human resources and smaller territorial footprints with which to deliver services and programs when and where their members prefer, and with what frequency works for them. With the above in mind please see some of the Superintendent questions and remarks followed by my thoughts.

1) “Provide more communication within the model railroad community as to the MER and division existence, activities and

overall benefits of NMRA membership” and “Publicize Division activities...”

a. See the above comments on the web-based communication that Earl is working on.

b. Rob Rousseau has set up a Facebook account for the Carolina Piedmont Division. <https://www.facebook.com/cpd13>. Perhaps the MER could incorporate that example. Any volunteers?

c. Division activities can be posted to the “Callboard – Coming Events” in each issue of **The Local**. Contact Earl Hackett. There is also free ad space available in the **NMRA Magazine**.

d. Division meets and activities can be posted to the MER web calendar page. Contact Martin Oakes.

e. Divisions can announce their events on the MER Mailbag Yahoo Group website. Contact Martin Brechbiel for membership information.

2) “Nurture and support an active pool of clinicians who volunteer to rotate throughout the MER in promoting quality clinics.”

a. Marshall Abrams maintains a web page <http://mer.nmra.org/Clinics/Clinics.html> with a list of clinicians from recent conventions. That is a resource well worth tapping into for clinicians. Expecting a volunteer to travel throughout the Region might be expecting too much.

b. Most Divisions have Master Model Railroaders and aspiring MMRs who are well qualified to present clinics. Sometimes the experts are among us. We do not always need the expert from out of town.

c. Although my opinion is not universally shared, I have no hesitation about inviting a skilled presenter who is not a NMRA member. It can even be viewed as a recruitment tool.

3) “There is now a proven ability to give clinics remotely...”

a. Yes, with technological and administrative challenges at both ends of the camera if it is a live event. Here is where some cross-pollination among Divisions would be very beneficial. I have read and heard about one or two of the attempts, but I have no first-hand knowledge or experience with this. Contact Marshall Abrams regarding his experience with this. Marshall has also co-authored an article on this subject.

b. NMRA National is presently working on EduTRAIN. As I understand it, the idea is to provide a curriculum and exhibits that can be used by local presenters. I have been following this and watching for the development of this program.

4) “Provide feedback from other Divisions” and “Facilitate communication between Divisions”

a. Superintendents, please write articles and submit events to **The Local**. The good, the bad and the ugly; no names necessary so as to not embarrass the guilty. But, what does not work is often just as helpful as sharing what works.

b. I have asked Superintendents to add me to their email distribution. Others might want to do the same, at the risk of more emails in the in-box of course.

c. Are you a member of the MER Mailbag Yahoo Group? If

continued on page 13

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 Local**, 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.

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 also sign the form, and then forward it to: Bob Price, Business Manager, 666 Princeton Avenue 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 Chattanooga.

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, **MER-BusMgr@comcast.net**), 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 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 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.

=====

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: 1/1/2014

When this form is completed,
mail it to:

Bob Price
MER Business Manager
666 Princeton Avenue
Collingswood, NJ 08108

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

not, contact Martin Brechbiel. I highly recommend it. It does not bury you with emails, but does act as a depository for Division newsletters, convention contest results, AP evaluation information, as well as some conversational blog posts.

d. MER does sponsor a Superintendent's breakfast at each convention. I have had the opportunity to attend two as a substitute and they are excellent venues for meeting and sharing.

5) "Fix the links on the MER website..."

a. I believe that Martin Brechbiel is in the process of reviewing each web page.

b. If you see a glitch, please email Martin Brechbiel or Martin Oakes directly with a specific repair need.

6) "Have National provide Division contact information to new members."

a. Superintendents receive a roster from Business Manager Bob Price at the beginning of each month. Bob provides a column in red ink that highlights any member status change, such as "NEW." It is up to the Divisions to contact new members. This can be done via telephone, letter, email or any combination of the above. In my home Division this is delegated to the Clerk. This communication provides new members with contact information and serves as an invitation to attend events, join a Yahoo Group, check the Division website, arrange for carpooling, etc. There are numerous reasons why Division initiatives are the most effective.

b. Bob Price can probably better respond, but I believe that welcome letters do go out from National as well as the Region. These might not include the Division contact information. In defense of National, Division folks are not always prompt with providing election results, new email addresses etc. National HQ has limited staff and also has enough on its plate with limited resources.

7) "Attend Division meetings more frequently."

a. Excellent point. Please extend invitations. You might request President John Janosko to arrange for Board representation at your event.

b. Perhaps Officers and Directors should in a more organized or programmatic way travel to Division activities more frequently, other than our home Division that is.

c. I will confess that I will probably will not live up to expectations in this regard. I am still a working stiff with significant business travel. Traveling to most other Divisions from Sanford, NC is a 10-hour day-trip.

8) "Notify division superintendents of your meetings..."

a. The Board has two meetings annually. The first is scheduled for Saturday, January 18, 2014. Please contact Tom Buckingham for details. The October Board meeting will be at the Ramada, Hagerstown, MD on October 16th..

b. We should post these to our "Call Board" and on the web page calendar.

9) "Offer more clinics (especially hands-on)..."

a. See Marshall Abrams' clinic web page referred to above.

b. Let's see what the convention folks are coming up with in Hagerstown. We have already started to plan the 2016 convention and you can be assured that we will make best efforts to again include hands-on clinics.

c. Hands-on clinics do not need to be complicated. Small /

bite-size clinics can be presented on topics such as weathering, flat car loads, making trees, etc.

d. The folks at Carolina Southern sponsor an excellent model railroad university each year. Check out its web site.

10) "Have MER try to arrange group tours."

a. The October MER conventions do this.

b. My opinion is that Divisions are best set up for this function as they know the local venues and have the local contacts.

c. Carolina Piedmont is an example where a Division set up the Tichy factory tour and invited other Divisions.

d. On my to-do list is to arrange for a group event at the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC.

11) "Have MER arrange for discounts to rail-related locations, activities, and museums."

a. Ask your local hobby shop if they will offer discounts to NMRA members. In my area we have at least three hobby shops that offer NMRA and / or train club discounts. I would expect that this applies locally throughout the MER.

b. Excellent points. Our Tichy tour included discounts to the attendees.

Let me know your thoughts. And, oh yes, be sure to thank a volunteer today. 

THE MER WANTS YOU

NEEDED: Candidates for the offices of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer of the MER.

WHY: The incumbents in these four offices (except for the Treasurer) are term – limited in their present positions. They may run again for any other office if they choose to.

WHEN: Any MER member can nominate his/her name to any member of the nominating committee before April 15th. A photo and a 200 word (max) statement outlining his/her qualifications or desire for the position is all that is required. If you miss the tax deadline, then an additional requirement of a petition signed by 25 current MER members is due by June 20th.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Bob Minnis (kahlualab@aol.com)

Mike McNamara (mikemcnh@comcast.net)

Dave Chance (loconet@carolinr.rr.net)

If you are interested in giving something back to the hobby you thoroughly enjoy, this is your chance.

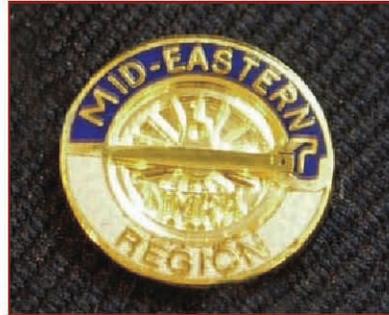
Successful completion of a 2 year tour counts toward part of the requirement for the AP "Association Official" certificate.

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CALLBOARD

Coming Events

March 15 (tentative). Switlik Park, 5 Fisher Place, Hamilton Twp. NJ 08620, Contest: Detailed display, scene, or diorama, Times are 8:30 registration, program begins a 9:00, home railroad tours from 1:00 to 5:00. Clinics have not yet been confirmed and will be announced in our newsletter, **Clinkers**

March 28-30, Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge will hold the 6th biannual meet at the Desmond Great Valley Hotel, Malvern Pa. Registration \$35. Prototype clinics, vendors' and model display rooms, Friday operating sessions, Sunday layout tour. Visit www.phillynmra.org for registration form and details, or contact Paul Backenstose at prrpaul@aol.com, or 103 West Uwchlan Ave, Downingtown, PA 19335, 610-269-2763

Carolina Piedmont Division meet/clinic 7 PM Cary, NC, January 28; February 18; March 25; April 22

May 17. Christ Episcopal Church (joint meet with Garden State Div, NER), 90 Kings Highway, Middletown, NJ 07748, Contest: Detailed diesel locomotives, Times are 8:30 registration, program begins a 9:00, home railroad tours from 1:00 to 5:00. Clinics have not yet been confirmed and will be announced in our newsletter, **Clinkers**

May 31. NMRA Day at the NC Transportation Museum.

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

Divisions and Clubs tell MER members about your upcoming event!! Send your FREE (limit of 75 words) event listings to the editor (contact information is listed on page 2.) Be sure to include all the specifics for the event: including the date/time, place, cost, a contact person, and a means of getting in touch with him/her (address, phone, e-mail, etc.), and if available a web site for updates or to get more information. Please see the publication deadlines on page 16 to make sure your event is published on time. 

Achievement Program Update

By *Charlie Flichman, MMR*
MER AP Manager

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

Division 1 – New Jersey

Jack Menaker – *Golden Spike*

Richard A. Perry – *Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical*

Robert W. Price – *Association Official*

Division 2 – Potomac

Murray Michael White – *Association Official*

Division 3 – Philadelphia

William Fagan – *Golden Spike*

Valentine E. Pistilli – *Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical*

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

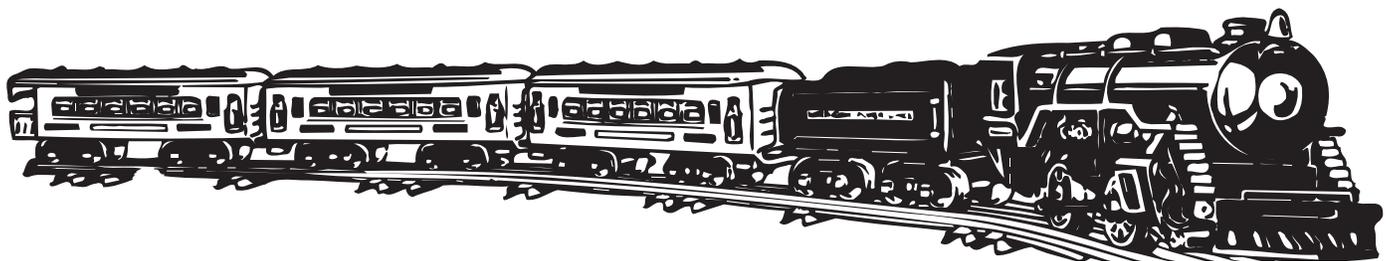
Gene W. Sing – *Master Builder – Structures*

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!



The Mid-Eastern Region Inc., NMRA
 An IRS Tax Exempt Organization
 Business Manager
 666 Princeton Avenue
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<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
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