

The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 69

MAY—JUNE 2014

Number 3

Bob Reid Earns MMR 534

MY FIRST TRAIN was an old alternating current steamer that ran around the Christmas tree and had one of those 1930's reversing units in the tender. You pressed a button to do the ForwardNeutralReverse thing like the Lionel E units did. My dad loved it, me not so well. Dad gave it to me when I was old enough. I liked it even less then so I asked for a big train set the next Christmas. I received an AC Gilbert steamer and immediately went to work creating an empire in the basement. The 4x8 wasn't large enough so dad had a carpenter friend expand it with leaves on each side to 5x9. A modest empire to be sure but it ran very well until I decided to create a reversing section like my Lionel buddies had. Hmm... Not so good.

My folks played duplicate bridge once a month with friends from the neighborhood. It was a round robin affair and one night when the group was at our house one of the guys wandered downstairs to see my "empire." He pretended to be suitably impressed and proceeded to describe his railroad to me. The "Huntingdon Valley Central" was an around the room HO scale passenger layout that filled his basement and even snuck through a hole in the wall to run into the garage. He had three ABBA F-unit sets and dozens of passenger cars all neatly lettered for the HVC. When I saw it I was hooked. I had switched to HO by then and my new benchwork started to fill one wall of the basement, passenger cars were repainted and not so neatly lettered and I developed a time table to run them by. Oh Boy! I built one of those old Athearn rubber band drive F-units to power the pike and quickly discovered it made a big difference which way you strung the darn rubber bands around the drive rod. Thus began a career, albeit haphazard, in model railroading that has lasted to this day.

But college then family then work intervened. It seemed like there was always something. After much moving then building then tearing down then moving, I finally wound up with a basement that I had built to my specifications to facilitate my "empire." Of course there was a house on top of the basement but it was clearly not the star of the show. I opened one of my first conversations with the builder with the specs for the base-

ment and then had to explain to her that the purpose of the house was "to keep the rain off my trains." The house was finished in 2003 and within 6 months I had the double decked benchwork installed around the walls of the basement. But my job with the Treasury Department required long hours and many airline miles to speak at financial conferences both here and abroad so progress beyond that point was slow. I retired in 2008 and at long last I was able to devote myself to creating that



"empire" I dreamed about as a kid.

My railroad empire is now nearing completion. Benchwork not only goes around the wall but also occupies a spiral peninsula that fills the room. The environment is fully carpeted and over 35 light fixtures have been installed in the drop ceiling. The fully scenicked mainline is 720' feet long, over 600 cars populate the layout that is set in 1925, and has over 300 structures. A group of experienced and dedicated operators run intricate op sessions 20 times per year. My childhood dream is now a tangible product you can see and touch and most importantly have FUN with!

My modeling career took a very fortunate turn in 2007 when I was invited to join the Chesapeake Trainmasters Club, a round robin operations group. I finally was enjoying some real fast clock

continued on page 3

The Local

Official publication of the Mid-Eastern region, NMRA – A tax-exempt organization

The Local is published six times a year. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of MER elected officials. Commercial suppliers, supplies and materials addressed in The Local in no way constitute an endorsement by the MER. Copyright material that appears in The Local is used for educational and historical benefit only and does not constitute infringement of the copyright holder.

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@verizon.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



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



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



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,
cwflich@aol.com



Archivist: Chris Conaway
407 Kings Highway
Moorestown, NJ 08057-2726
chrisconaway@aol.com
856-439-1742



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: Brian Sheron, MMR
(301) 349-5754
BSheron@mac.com
Division web page: http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/



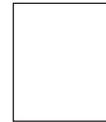
Philadelphia Division 3
Superintendent: Joe Bergmaier
(610) 269-8558
jober922@gmail.com
Division web page:
<http://www.phillynmra.org/>



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,
rclind202@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) 536-7066,
grifbond@embarqmail.com
Division web page:
<http://www.trainweb.org/cpd13>



Chesapeake Division 14
Superintendent: Tom Casey
(410) 426-8947;
super.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com
Division web page:
www.chesapeake-nmra.org



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

The MER website is www.mer-nmra.com/

From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President



IN THIS MONTHS COLUMN I wanted to update the membership on some things that are going on in the MER.

The directors (Martin Brehbiel, Jack Dziadul and Gary Tyler) along with our Business Mgr. Bob Price are in the process of updating our procedures manual. Some of this manual has not been updated in years. They plan on having this accomplished to hand over to the new officers at the October meeting. This should help in better operations and also simplifying the manual.

Earl Hackett our **The Local** editor has been adding more pages to **The Local** online. I hope this will provide for members to get more information without adding to our operating costs. If you have something you think might add to the member's interest, please contact Earl he definitely can use extra input for **The Local**.

Martin Brechbiel and I have discussed how we can improve our web site. Over the years many band aids have been used to improve the site but now it looks as if we are creating more problems than we fix. Martin is now working on a new site that we hope will be online in the next few months and then over a period of time will replace the old site. Martin will keep you abreast of the new site with information on line and in **The Local**. In the long term this will be a more user friendly site.

Thanks for everyone putting in extra time to better serve the

MER and if you get a chance at the MER convention you might want to show your thanks to the above people for all the work they have done for the MER.

A few months ago a person contacted Gene Sing about donating some model railroad equipment to his Railroad Museum. It seems he was moving and would not have room in his new residence. Gene and some of his friends went over to disassemble a rather large layout. Track work and shelving were very well installed plus some scenery. Quite a bit of stuff was saved and the rest went on to the dump. It is sad to see a layout being torn down but the biggest disappointment to me is that here we had someone who had a nice layout and no one had ever seen it. Until the gentleman called we did not know he was a model railroader. It is a shame that we have so many loners in this hobby that have a lot to share. They just did not want someone finding out that they played with trains. I know from my own experience, if it was not for other members in our division, I would never have tried painting backdrops, scratch building and kit bashing buildings. It is also a great help when you bounce off some of your ideas to other model railroaders when you get together at your operating or work sessions. It helps to make you a more rounded modeler.

Hope you have a great summer and see you in October. 

Bob Reid Earns MMR 534 continued from page 1

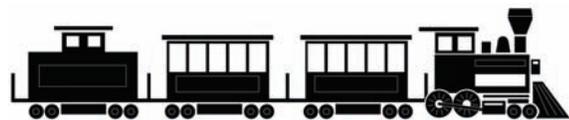
operations sessions and was being introduced to folks that had decades of experience. It was at this time I started to think perhaps I should look into the achievement program more seriously. I had built and dismantled at least two dozen layouts, a couple even had scenery on them, so I thought perhaps I could somehow manage to meet the requirements that still seemed very daunting. I am fond of saying the most difficult thing about any kit is opening the box. By that I mean that the first step is often the hardest. So with that in mind I began to work on one achievement area at a time and over time was able to stumble my way to this point.

I certainly would not have arrived here without my wonderful association with the Chesapeake Trainmasters. They have provided me with many friends, fabulous advice, and operational experience I couldn't have received anywhere else. I would be remiss if I didn't thank them all and tell them how important to my modeling efforts they have become. I would not have achieved

this much treasured status as a Master Model Railroader where it not for all the assistance they have provided me.

Finally my most important thank you needs to be said to my longtime companion and fiancée Patti McNeese. We are always together. She travels with me in our RV, sometimes for months at a time and often to model railroad conventions and layout tours. I am a very lucky person.

Although the layout has reached the stage where all the plywood is covered by scenic material and the track is all ballasted I am still coming up with new projects to work on. It seems a career model railroader's work is never done. 



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 **MER-BusMgr@comcast.net**. The electronic version is in full color and will eventually have added content beyond the 16 page limit of the paper version.

Keeping In Touch...

By Bob Price
MER Business Manager



ONE YEAR AND COUNTING. As I was assembling my thoughts for this issue's article, I realized that I have been handling the Business Manager's responsibilities for over a year now. The nights of emailing my predecessor for support are long behind me. I believe that I have all of the various cycle work processes under control. Understanding the processes is one thing, but learning the nut and bolts behind them is another. I compare this to having DCC on my layout. I know how to use it, but I do not know all of the technical details about what happens in the command control box.

Learning the nuts and bolts of the MER database system was necessary because we needed to rewrite the software that supports it. I had 3 computers with me when we did the transition from my predecessor's computer. We were only able to get the software to work on one of those machines, an older XP computer. Technology keeps evolving and sadly it does not always support older software. The combination of VB coding, a proprietary email software package and older mail-merge routines was not sustainable. A lot of good things came out of this effort. I have a far better understanding of what our business processes really do, data

queries are much easier to handle and our MER database system is portable (anyone with MS Office Access can run it).

So what does all of this computer talk do for you the member? Computer technology is a part of everyone's life. Like it or not, for better and for worse it is a reality. Many of the current MER communication initiatives involve computer technology. The MER website will be moving and undergoing many positive changes. An expanded electronic version of **The Local** is being discussed as a means to attract more **eLocal** subscribers. We are investigating various options to have both mail and electronic elections with the hope of generating more interest in voting. Rounding out the list, our Editor has started a new bi-monthly photo essay MER eNewsletter. So far two editions have gone out to members for whom we have an email address. Kudos to Earl on this initiative! If you are not receiving the eNewsletter and have an email address, send it to the Business Manager for our MER database.

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. 📧

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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

From the Editor

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



I'M STARTING a new 'feature' this month; Letters to the Editor. Send comments to hackettet@verizon.net. This is not an open forum, it is a dictatorship and this dictator will decide what will be published. However, send your stuff and if there's space it will (maybe) get published.

We often get material that can not be published in the paper copy of **The Local** due to content or size. In those cases, the material will be published in an addition to the electronic version or as links to the document. In this issue there are two such electronic copy only items.

The photos supplied by the GAMR club are quite good. The full size photos are suitable for desktop wallpaper. The links will take you to the images for you to download.

The article on freight rates is far too big and specialized for the paper copy. Only the first of four articles is in the paper version of **The Local**. The other 3 are included in the electronic version as much of the content is on-line and accessed by links imbedded in the articles. 📧

An Introduction to Railroad Freight Rates

Part 1

By Mike White



EDITOR'S NOTE: When I got this four part article from Mike I thought, "What a boring subject, nobody will like this," but since he made the effort to do the research I decided I should at least read it. Well, it's fascinating. I'm publishing the first part in the print copy of **The Local**. The other three parts are published as an addition to the electronic version as much of the information is in documentation available only through electronic downloads from Google books, Wikipedia, and other on-line sources.

It also explains a bit of my family history that I never understood. My grandfather, as was the case with many men born in the late 19th century, never finished high school and started working the American Car and Foundry shops in Wilmington, Delaware in the accounting office. When that business closed he went to work at the Chamber of Commerce. When he retired he made a nice income through the 1950's writing tariffs, which meant nothing to me, for various trucking companies. When he finally passed away there were more limousines at his very Irish wake than could fit on W 16th street. Even the governor showed up to pay his respects. Now I know why.

PS: Do not incorporate this in your operating sessions...

FOR ALMOST 100 YEARS, rail freight rates in the United States were regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission. By 1910, the essential legislation was in place to make that regulation effective and binding on rail carriers. Rates were managed by means of tariffs which were required to be filed by the railroads with the ICC and published for review by the public.

The Interstate Commerce Commission came into existence in 1887 with the passage of The Act to Regulate Commerce http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstate_Commerce_Act and was somewhat ineffective at regulating the railroads though its powers were subsequently enhanced by further legislation in the early part of the 20th century. Additions and changes to the ICC rule making and enforcement capabilities by the Elkins Act (1903), the Hepburn Act (1906), and the Mann-Elkins Act (1910) put teeth into the regulation missing from the original legislation.

The Elkins Act of 1903 (32 Stat. 847) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mann%E2%80%93Elkins_Act allowed the ICC to punish shippers who practiced unfair competitive methods. The Hepburn Act of 1906 (34 Stat. 584) gave the agency wider pow-

ers to regulate railroad rates, making its rulings binding without a court order.

The Mann-Elkins Act of 1910 gave the ICC authority to investigate proposed railroad rate increases and suspend them if warranted. The "long-and-short haul" clause of the original was strengthened to prohibit railroads from charging passengers more for a short distance trip, compared to a longer distance ride, over the same route, unless specifically approved by the ICC.

In the 1970s and 1980s Congress passed legislation such as the Staggers Rail Act of 1980 which signaled the end of intense government regulation of rail rates and services. The end of the ICC came in 1995 with passage of the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act.

Railroad freight rates, in the period addressed here (1900 -

1970), but with heavy reference to publications between 1910 and 1920 (when most of the structure for making rates was finalized), were fully under the jurisdiction of the ICC (and the various state commissions for intrastate traffic) for classification and classification rules, exceptions to classifications, freight rate tariffs and rules, and almost anything else that pertained to freight traffic on America's railroads. This was a huge undertaking. Attempting to describe it and make it understandable is only a little less so. Source material is becoming scarcer everyday and the people who actually did the jobs scarcer still. One of the most devastating

actions was the loss of the ICC tariff files. All of the tariffs that were on file with the ICC (pre-1996) were moved to storage and were to be retained for 10 years. The retention period was changed to 5 years and they have now all been destroyed. What are available now are all privately-owned items that have been put up for sale. Even institutional and public libraries have very little available. Anyone who is interested in this subject and wishes to obtain an actual classification and/or tariff from the period needs to do it now. Rare and out-of-print bookstores and websites are probably the best bet as a starting point.

Applying railroad freight rates to a shipment was initially the responsibility of the station agent or, at larger stations, the freight agent or traffic department. This task could range from fairly simple, as where a local rate was required for a customer who regularly shipped to the same point, to extremely complex, where

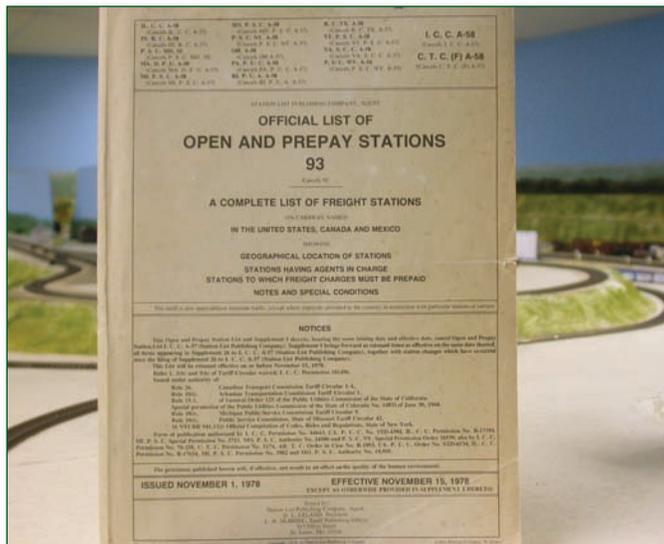


Figure 1

continued on page 6

rating was interline over different classification territories and tariff jurisdictions.

The example below, shown as a letter in reply to an inquiry concerning the rail freight rate between two points in the U.S., illustrates the complexity that could face a station or freight agent in arriving at the correct rate to charge for a given shipment.

“Answering your esteemed favor of recent date asking how to determine a rate from Allendale, N.J. to Albany, Ga., be advised that this requires a knowledge of classification territory, differentials, rate basis, applications, and a number of things perhaps most people never heard of. Otherwise you would not know which of the 150,000 tariffs to use in securing this rate.

“The railroads which run through either of these cities do not publish a tariff which gives the rate. The expert traffic man, by virtue of his technical knowledge, knows which one of the thousands of tariffs to select. He knows where to find the legal rates, how to interpret them, and how to apply them. In other words, he knows that the Joint Freight Tariff governed by Southern Classification with exceptions, published by J.A. Ryan, representing several railroads as agent of a railroad association, contains the information desired.”

“I am sending you this tariff under separate cover. If you will look at pages B 30 to B 39 inclusive, you will find methods of obtaining rates from interior Eastern points. Page B 30, however, does not show Allendale, there being no joint rate published from that point, but if you will look on B 33, you will find that Allendale is located on the Erie Railroad and takes a “rate basis No 1” to points in territorial locations X, Y, and Z. The explanation of the territorials X, Y and Z will be found on pages B157 to B 167, giving you the “rate basis.” Referring now to pages B 30 to 89, you will find that Albany, Ga., is a territorial location of X, and that rate basis No. 1 will apply from Allendale, N. J. to Albany.

“Looking now over on page B 157 you will find to determine a rate from points in rate basis No. 1 to all points in territorial location X, a certain amount must be added to the rates from New York, which in this case is \$0.08. This is known as a “differential” and this amount must be added to the “first class rate” in order to define the rate to Albany, Ga. The first class rate to Albany is show in the tariff as applying to “groups of origin” in item A 1013. By referring to this item, it is found that “A” represents New York, therefore the rate published opposite “A” also Albany, Ga., are the “class rates” from New York to Albany, the “first class rate” being \$1.05.”

“Opposite Albany there is also shown under “route” the number 13 and by reference to item A 1011 opposite route 13 will be found, Atlantic Coast Line, Piedmont Air Line, Seaboard Line, etc. Traffic may be forwarder to Albany, Ga., via either of these routes specified. Since the first class rate from New York to Albany is \$1.05, and the differential is \$0.08, this makes by addition \$1.13, the lowest legal class rate from Allendale, N.J. to Albany, Ga.”

The above instance, showing the computation of a rate, plainly points out that a knowledge of the rate structures, the committees which control them, the points to and from which rates are based, was absolutely necessary in the interpretation of tariffs and the application of rates.

This is a link to a Google photocopied book “Freight classification and freight territories of the United...” <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B7SG5wBH5OgPakZRNHjIOTFueE0/edit?usp=sharing>.

From the early 1900s onward, the situation above improved due to the acquisition and consolidation of many short lines into the major carriers and coverage by their rates, but rating was still a daunting activity.

The first task of the originating agent was to determine the type of station to which the shipment was directed. There were basically two types of station: “Open” and “Prepay”. An open station was one where an agent was on duty who could complete the rating, if required, of the waybill, notify the consignee of the arrival of the shipment, prepare the freight bill to be paid by the consignee, collect the charges due, and to protect the shipment until release to the consignee. The second type was a station where there was no agent on duty who could complete the billing work required. Shipments destined for this type of station had to be paid for at the originating station prior to shipment – hence the term “prepay”.

Information about stations was contained in a document entitled the “Official List of Open and Prepay Stations” (Figure 1). It was filed with the ICC as a tariff document and, to the extent necessary had to comply with the rules for filing (preparing, formatting, and submitting) tariffs. It contained several alphabetical listings; geographical location (country, state, province), and railroad name, identifying all stations known at date of publication with references to an extensive section of Notes, which identified capabilities, restrictions, and additional services available, among many other things.

The next concern was whether the item(s) to be shipped took commodity or class rates. Classification will be covered in Part 2. 



Great Decals!TM

- FEC - 5 titles
- Interstate Railroad - 5 titles
- Virginian Railway - 26 titles
- L&N - 11 titles
- After Hours Graphics line
- Coupler gages, and more

In O-, S-, HO-, and N-scales



William Mostellar
PO Box 994, Herndon, VA 20172
SASE for list, or see www.greatdecals.com

GAMR Turns 75

IN MARCH 2014, the Glenolden Association of Model Railroaders, also known as the GAMR, will celebrate its 75th Anniversary.

The organization was founded in 1939 by six men who frequented the Pop Cornish Glenolden Bicycle Shop at 45 North Chester Pike in Glenolden, Delaware County, a suburb of Philadelphia Pennsylvania.

What got their attention was a Gilbert's two rail HO scale train, introduced in 1938, displayed in the shops window.

Conversation about the display motivated our founding members, Messrs. Harry Brutsche, Henry Dickinson Sr., Henry Dickinson Jr., J. Ralph Cornish, Robert Peyre-Ferry and Harry P. Albrecht, to form a model railroad club. Mr. Albrecht also holds the distinction of being Model Railroader Magazine's first subscriber.

In those early years the club considered **Model Railroader** magazine as their "workbook and manual" as stated in early meeting documents, and continues to be an important resource to the club members today.

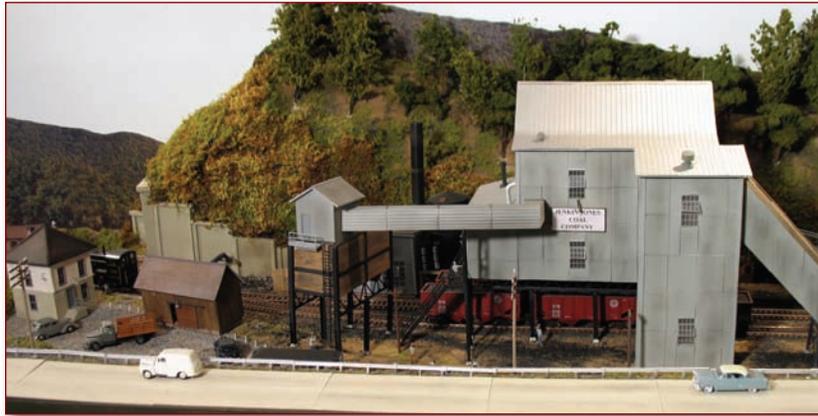
It's been many years since a member has resided in Glenolden but the name remains as well as the goals and objectives documented in the first By-Laws and Constitution.

The GAMR does not have a club layout. Rather it's an organization of members who have their own layouts, and members who have no layout, but have a genuine interest in model railroading or proto-type railroads.

Meetings are rotated on a monthly basis at our member's homes where a short meeting is conducted, a light dinner served and a visit to the train room where progress (or lack of) is shared. It's a great time to share knowledge with and/or learn from our fellow members. Members without layouts may present a video or photo presentation on a railroad related subject or introduce a guest speaker. At our meetings we are never critical or negative in our comments. We all believe that our friendship is more important than our memberships. Currently we limit our membership to 25 so that hosting a meeting doesn't become unwieldy.

We also have an annual Banquet each September at a local restaurant. This year, while preparing for a move, one of our members realized his railroad library had grown way beyond his expectations (and shelf space) so he donated books to the club to be used as door prizes at the banquet.

The club has always been interested in the world around it and often conducts field trips. Examples include visits in the 1940's to a number of Pennsylvania Railroad facilities and specifically in 1946, a tour of the Pennsylvania RR "ZOO" Tower in Philadelphia.



Most recently, in October 2013 we visited the Lehigh and Keystone Valley Model RR Museum in Bethlehem, Pa. which was the cover story of **Model Railroader** in September 2013.

Most of our modelers participate in the Model Railroad Open House program which is held annually each November, that showcases train layouts in

Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland and New Jersey. We believe that it's a great way to promote the hobby.



We've also created a GAMR on-line site that each of our members have access too.

The site is a central source of information for our members and also includes our constitution, club and prototype photographs, our membership list and coming events.

The members of the GAMR intend to continue the goals established 75 years ago by our founding members, promoting the great hobby of model railroading, sharing our fellowship with others and of course, having fun doing so.

Respectfully submitted by
Bob Gross President
Dave Morrow Vice President and Club Historian
Peter Scherer Secretary
Sam Parker Treasurer 

Product Review: Roberts Brick Mortar Formula

By John Darlington



A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, I was rummaging in N.B. Klein's with no particular purpose in mind when I came across this white jar next to the cash register called Roberts Brick Mortar Formula. I read the application instructions which appeared to be rather simple so I decided to give it a try. Now those of us who have tried it before know just how difficult it is to reproduce a mortar effect on brick walls in N Scale which have such small and narrow mortar lines. I have tried any number of techniques over the years with decidedly mixed results. Additionally, if you have a building that has already been constructed and painted and you want to improve the mortar effect (I call it "retro-painting"), some of those techniques I have used in the past do a poor job. This is why I was so happy to try a product that would solve some of those problems.

The whole process can be accomplished in three or four easy steps. I usually paint the brick surfaces of a building I am con-

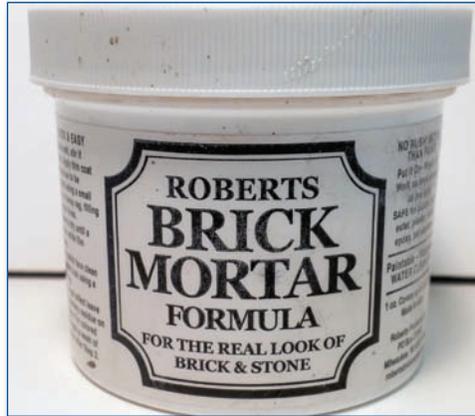


Figure 1: Freshly painted wall.

structing prior to final assembly (Figure 1). This is the best time to use this mortar mix.

Next I apply the mix as instructed being sure to cover all of the mortar lines. I tried a wide brush, but I found that it did not apply the mix into all if the mortar joints on either N or HO scale brick. After experimenting a bit, I found that a soft medium horse hair

brush was the best tool to use without having to "flood" the surface which leaves an excess of mortar mix on the brick surfaces. The next step is to wait for the mix to dry into a powdery film and



Roberts Brick Mortar

then to remove the mix from the brick surface leaving the mortar joints filled. The instructions say that you can use a soft damp (not wet!) cloth for a clean brick surface or a dry cloth if you want to leave an "aged" look. (That is what I chose in my photo – Figure 2) I have found that you may have to repeat this process a couple of times to get the desired effect even in the larger scales (HO, O) The third photo (Figure 3) is of an HO scale brick wall on which I applied two coats of the mortar mix. The fourth photo shows (Figure 4) the mortar mix that has been rubbed off in spots to get a realistic "aged" look.

Finally, the photo (figure 5) below shows a "retro-painting" job on a building that had been already constructed and painted. I bought it some years ago at a train show and repainted it. I wanted to see how the product worked so I decided to "sacrifice



Figure 2: Excess mortar removed.

it" as an experiment. I was so pleased with how it turned out that it is now the switch tower in my yard. With retro-painting you need to use a dry cloth to remove the white film.

It's a fun product to use and the results are pretty good! 

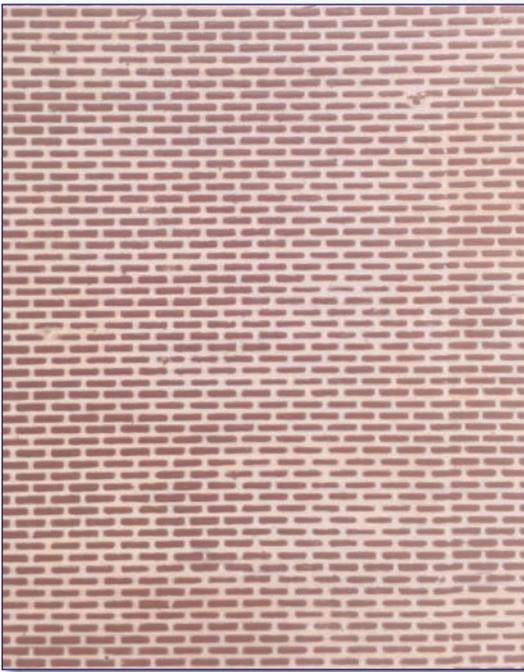


Figure 3: Two coats on HO brick

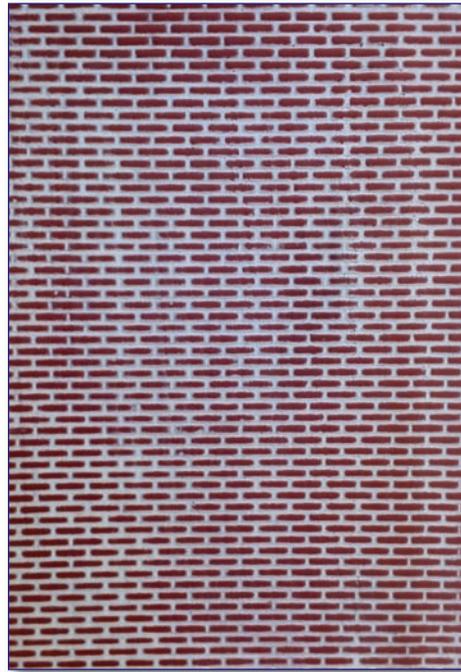


Figure 4: Mortar removed from spots.



Figure 5: A rehabilitated building.

Pimp My Kit!

Martin Brechbiel, David Emery and Clint Hyde

SINCE WE STARTED doing build-it clinics 10 years ago, the goal has always been to reach the point where we can do a longer clinic where you build something from beginning to end and get it judged for a Merit Award. We plan to offer a clinic to accomplish this objective at the 2014 MER Convention, over the space of a 3 hour morning or afternoon Friday session and a 3 hour morning Saturday session.

We will cover advanced assembly techniques, finishing, and detailing, beginning with a laser-cut commercial kit that we will “pimp up” to be able to reach that 87.5 points in judging on Saturday at the convention.

This is NOT a scratchbuilding clinic—that’s a different topic. The kit we will build is #692 from Bar Mills, combination passenger/baggage shelter. While currently out of production, Art Fahie is cutting a special bunch for us for just this select purpose.

Here’s a picture of our preliminary build of this one.

We have added trim, both inside the shelter and outside, door hardware, a different roof, a power head and meter on the back, and signs, as well as filling in some holes and rough spots in the original kit.

We will have several example builds on display that you can look at during the clinic.

This is not a beginner class. You need to have built some other wood kits already. It won’t be a short clinic; there will be a 3-4 hour session Friday morning, primarily about assembly, and another 3-4 hour session Saturday morning, primarily about finishing and detailing, followed by official judging Saturday afternoon. We intend that there be Merit Awards handed out that same day, and possibly something else special Saturday night.

Attendance will be limited to 15 max. Sign up early.

Bar Mills #692 is a wood kit, so we will be going through advanced wood assembly and gluing techniques. We will cover finishing and detailing aspects; this may include using an airbrush, but we don’t need you to bring that.

Martin will be talking about judging aspects: where we think this kit falls on the judging charts, and what we and you will do to move it towards higher points, and getting your paperwork filled out. Because this is a relatively simple kit, we will be making changes and doing quite a bit of additional detailing to reach 87.5. Clint will talk about construction techniques, and David will talk about finishing techniques.

We will provide a complete list of extra parts you will need to acquire in advance. The judging requirements for Structures say what we can and can’t do for you, and it helps you to acquire other parts separately (outside the contents of the kit). We will have a selection of possible “scratchbuilding” parts/supplies available, separate from the kits, in order to maximize judging points.



In mid-summer, we will provide a complete list of tools you will need (with part numbers), so that you have time to obtain them. We may have a few extra with us, but don’t count on that--because this is NOT a beginner class, you need to be prepared. The list right now is: X-Acto with #11 blades, box of plain tooth-

picks, very pointy tweezers, cutting mat (12x18 is good, don’t bring a huge one), steel multi-scale ruler, sprue nippers, 90-degree angle weights in all sizes, three paint brushes (#8 flat, #0 white sable, #3/0 suggested), small metal square, clamps, brush wash basin.). Watch the convention website for any changes to this list.

This kit is based on the South Pacific Coast Railroad “Zayante Shelter” drawings in the **Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette** Nov/Dec 2006 issue, page 72. The first person registered for the clinic who can find good prototype photos in advance will get the kit cost refunded at the beginning of the clinic. Knowing the prototype helps improve the judging score in the Conformity category, and having those photographs in hand to add to your judging paperwork is particularly useful for documenting conformance to the prototype. Otherwise, we will be talking about conformance to normal practice.

We will assist with the paperwork for judging, using Fred Miller’s computer templates. If you have a laptop you can bring for your own use that will be helpful! 🖨️

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)

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 NMRA
headquarters in Soddy Daisy, TN.

=====
Date of form: 2/2014

Letter to the Editor

Subject: thoughts on contest judging re: new technology

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 you 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 “from scratch”, i.e. from raw materials, rather than building it from a commercial kit, kitbashing or buying it pre-assembled.

I cannot say that this is the all encompassing, perfect definition of scratchbuilding, but lets accept it, at least for the moment.

By this definition, a model produced by a 3D printer is scratch-built., 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.

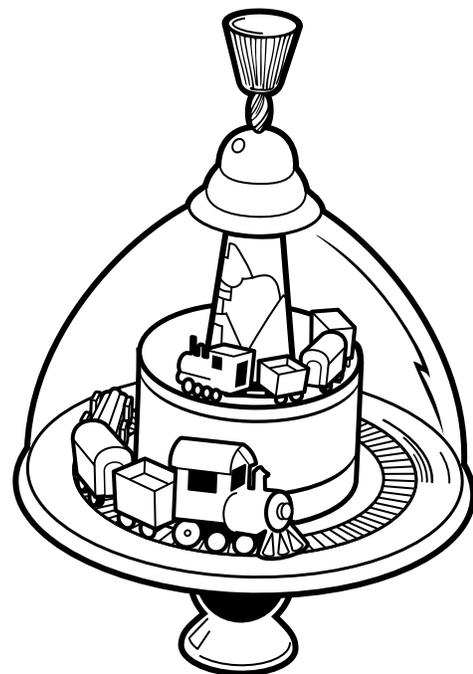
Now we come to the other aspect of this discussion. Craftsmanship.

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



SUPPORT YOUR NMRA REGION AND PURCHASE THESE GREAT PRODUCTS FROM MER



MER Lapel Pin / Tie Tack



MER Cloth Patch

MER CLOTH PATCH**	QUANTITY _____	\$3.00 including S&H	\$ _____
MER LAPEL PIN/TIE TACK**	QUANTITY _____	\$6.00 including S&H	\$ _____

THE LOCALS**
NEW! (all issues 1947–2013) on CD QUANTITY _____ \$5.00 postpaid \$ _____

** Only available to MER members. MER or NMRA Membership # _____

DONATION	\$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$ _____

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MID-EASTERN REGION

Ship to:

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Mail to:

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

CALLBOARD

Coming Events

May 10. Susquehanna Division Meeting, Elizabethtown PA, Masonic Village Welcome Center, Brossman Ballroom – map in March **Sidetracks** newsletter. Three Morning Clinics, 9-1PM: “The East Broad Top Story”, “Model Showcase”, and “Dead Rail – Future Model Railroad Operations” with operating modular layout. Afternoon, 1:30-4:30PM, three area layout open houses. Free to all. Contact: Barry Schmitt, 717-877-1810, or bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org.

May 27, June 24, Carolina Piedmont Division
Meet and clinic 7 PM Cary, NC.

May 31, the Potomac Division of the Mid-Eastern Region will hold its annual Mini-convention on Saturday, May 31st at St. Matthew’s Methodist Church, 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA. 22003. Admission is \$10, spouses and children under 16 are free. Hours are 8am-4pm. Featured will be two operating modular layouts, two tracks of clinics (eight clinics total), contest and model display room, and a white elephant sale. For more information, call Brian W. Sheron at 301-349-5754 after 6:30 pm.

June 28, Susquehanna Division Day at East Broad Top Railroad and Rockhill Trolley Museum, 421 Meadow St, Rockhill Furnace PA. 10:30am-4:30pm. Smithsonian described EBT as the best preserved example of a 1900 industrial site anywhere in America. Scenic trolley rides, back-shop tours, museum, gift shop, and large Bricktown Model Railroad Club operating HO/HOn3 layout visit. Admission and trolley ride \$18. Free parking. Reservations required. Contact Lee Rainey leerainey@aol.com or 818-867-7878 for information/registration.

July 10, Susquehanna Division road trip to Bowser Manufacturing, English’s Model Railroad Supply, and Weaver Scale Models. Weekday event because manufacturing facilities closed on weekends. Free tour includes Bowser and English in Montoursville, PA and Weaver (maker of Scalecoat paints) in Northumberland, PA. See injection molding machines, pad printing of road names, assembly, testing, and packaging. Registration required. Contact Howard Oakes for questions, event registration, directions, and maps at hoakes@susquehannanmra.org or 717-632-5990.

May 27, June 24, July 22, August 26, Oct 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 wsb@susquehannanmra.org.

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.

FOR SALE: Topside Creeper safety ladder to reach over your layout. Barely used item is like new. \$125.00 firm. No shipping available. For your pick up in Maryland, contact Ray Colombo, 410 569 4811, rayc-one@verizon.net, Ray Colombo NMRA 3785 MER 8783, 320 Millwright Circle, Abingdon, Maryland 21009

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

Robert N. Reid – *Association Volunteer*

Division 3 – Philadelphia

Paul Cappelloni – *Golden Spike*

Don Borden – *Golden Spike*

Earl Paine – *Model Railroad Engineer – Civil*

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

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
 Collingswood, NJ 08108

**Non-profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 York, PA
 Permit No. 363**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Bob Reid Earns MMR 534 1
 Staff & Division Contacts.....2
 From the Business Car3
 Keep In Touch4
 From the Editor4
 Intro to RR Freight Rates - Part 15
 GAMR Turns 757
 Model Weathering Washes8
 Pimp My Kit!..... 10
 Hub City Convention registration form .11
 Letters to the Editor.....13
 MER Products For Sale.....14
 Callboard / Achievement Program15

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Mid-Eastern Region Inc., NMRA
An IRS Tax Exempt Organization
 Business Manager
 666 Princeton Avenue
 Collingswood, NJ 08108

Subscriptions to The Local

I want to receive the printed copies
 of **The Local** at \$9.00 per year (6 issues) \$ _____

I want to receive the free electronic
 version of **The Local**
 Email: _____

Donation \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip (+4) _____

Email _____

NMRA # _____ Expire Date _____

Scale _____ Telephone # _____

Make checks payable to the Mid-Eastern Region

The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. The editor will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send originals without having back-up copies of both articles and photographs. Editors, by definition, reserve the right—and have the responsibility—to make corrections, deletions and changes to accommodate space. Upon receiving any submission the editor will also confirm receipt and at a later date indicate the anticipated edition the submission will appear in **The Local**. If you do not receive a postcard or e-mail within two weeks please resend your submission or contact the editor by phone.

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

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

Callboard Ads (30-50 words) (Div. and Clubs Only)...	Free
Business Card size (6 issues)	\$60.00
Quarter Page ad (6 issues).....	\$125.00
Half Page ad (6 issues).....	\$225.00
Half page ad (per issue) (Div. Only).....	\$25.00