

The Local



A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA

Volume 70

July - August 2016

Number 4

A Dream Come True - Finally

Jack D. Monette



Way back in 1972 I had a dream. One day I was looking through my brand new copy of the "Second Diesel Spotters Guide" and I came across a strange looking beast. It was made by General Motors' Electro Motive Division (EMD), and it looked somewhat like a freak of nature, if there is such a thing in the locomotive world. It was so ugly that I just had to have one; I tend to stand up for the underdog. This was the RS1325, of which only two were ever built, more about that later. Now here's my dilemma; nobody made a model of this locomotive back then, and as far as I can tell, they still don't today. What was I to do? Well, never one to think things out too far in advance, I decided to build my own. Finally after several attempts and 43 years I am happy to report that an RS1325 graces my layout. I will explain how this was accomplished, but first let's look at this unique locomotive.

The RS1325 looks like a SW1200 and a GP20 backed into one another. The concept that EMD had was that of a switcher with a steam generator for use in passenger terminals. This idea never caught on, but EMD

did build two without the steam generators. These went to the Chicago & Illinois Midland. The locomotives boasted a 1325 hp 12 cylinder 567C prime mover. They rode on two axle Flexicoil trucks which gave them reasonable road stability and speed.

Back in 1972 I had neither the time, finances, knowledge, nor skills to undertake such a daunting task of mating two dissimilar body shells, cutting and altering metal frames, creating new drive lines and all the many aspects of cutting and forming unavailable parts from scratch. However, having been in the hobby since 1956 (Lionel) and having some modeling experience I did try to make a reasonable model of this ugly duckling.

The result was, to say the least, a crude barely runnable model that had no redeeming values. It had only one powered truck, I couldn't find the parts to make a new drive shaft. The truck side frames were the AAR type. It ran poorly, mainly because power was only picked up by one truck. The long hood headlight was totally incorrect, and these are only a few of its faults.

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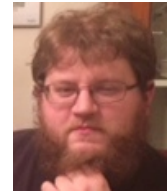
Official Publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA - A Tax-Exempt Organization

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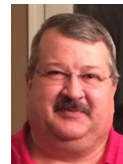
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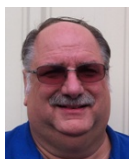
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From The Business Car

By P. J. Mattson, MMR, MER President

The MER Board had its meeting on Saturday June 11th 2016. Highlights of the meeting were: we decided to move the adoption of the Budget back to January from October and we decided to have the midyear meeting in April after the 15th, and to be held at the Hotel where the current year's convention will be held. The members of the hosting convention committee will be invited to bring the Board up to date on the workings of the upcoming convention. The LOCAL was discussed and the problem of content was reviewed. We need input of articles from you the membership to make The LOCAL a better publication for our Region. Also, we will be putting the Ballot for this year's Election in a special issue of The LOCAL that will go to every member rather than just a

separate mailing of the ballot. There will be an envelope with the return address included. It has been around 10 years since the By-Laws were reviewed and brought up to the NMRA current standards. I appointed a Committee to go over the By-Laws and present to the Board any changes that may be necessary. I ask each Division to diligently review their own By-Laws.

This year's Convention will be in Durham, NC. It's named "Tracks to the Triangle". We hope to see you there. Bring your best models for the contest. This year's Presidents Award will be for a Diesel Engine. I hope to see many of them in the contest. Until next time, stay on the right track.

Keeping in Touch...

By Bob Price, MER Business Manager

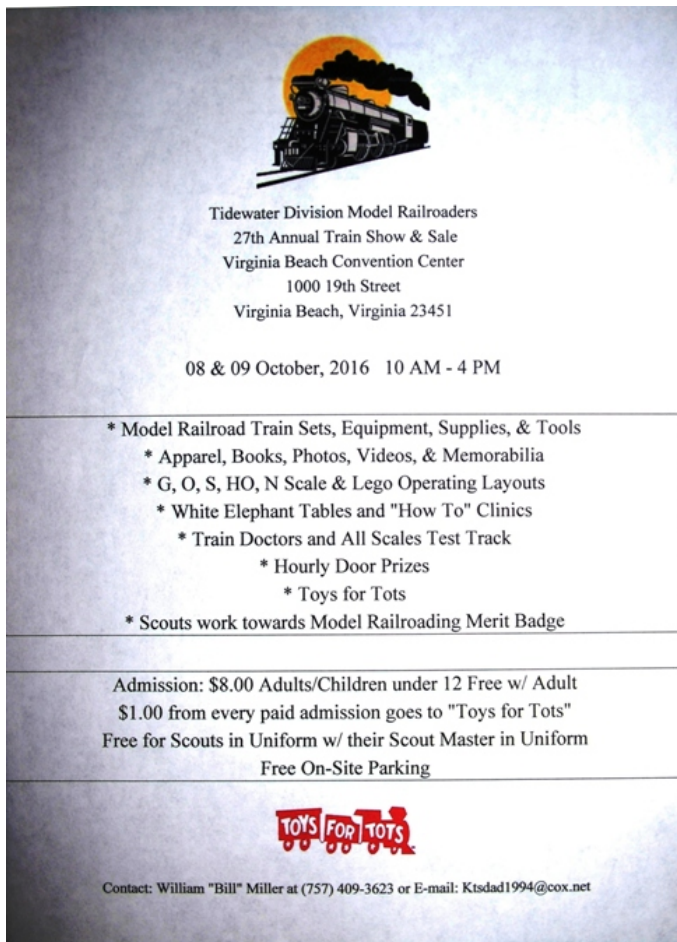
I hope everyone is enjoying our early summer. Once again we seem to have moved from winter directly to summer. Add rain and that now means I need to cut the lawn and perform yard work instead of working on the new layout. While the weather is changing, it's not too late to start thinking about attending this fall's MER convention.

The convention committee has interjected some new events. It will be interesting to see the member response to the RPM and the book signing. I know I plan to bring along a book and have it signed.

Another event about to occur as I write this is a mid-year MER Board meeting. The Business Manager's report will show that compared to January 1st, our membership has decreased by 1.84% to 1,864 members. That number is made up by 109 Life Members, 13 Associate Life Members and 1,742 Regular members. We also currently have 67 Rail Pass members. Paper (mailed) subscriptions to The Local continue to decline with the May-June issue being mailed to 814 members – down 2.86% while distribution of the eLocal email has increased to 382 members – up 3.52%.

Election Time will be upon the membership very soon. As has been the past practice we will be mailing out paper ballots to members who are eligible to vote. To ensure you receive your ballot, please make sure that you have notified either National or the MER Business Manager of any recent change of address. I will tell you from past experience that having a Change of Address on record with the USPS will not guarantee that all of your mail is forwarded.

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 poster features a steam locomotive pulling a train through a landscape with a large sun in the background. Below the image, the text reads: "Tidewater Division Model Railroaders 27th Annual Train Show & Sale Virginia Beach Convention Center 1000 19th Street Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451 08 & 09 October, 2016 10 AM - 4 PM". A list of activities includes: "* Model Railroad Train Sets, Equipment, Supplies, & Tools", "* Apparel, Books, Photos, Videos, & Memorabilia", "* G, O, S, HO, N Scale & Lego Operating Layouts", "* White Elephant Tables and 'How To' Clinics", "* Train Doctors and All Scales Test Track", "* Hourly Door Prizes", "* Toys for Tots", and "* Scouts work towards Model Railroading Merit Badge". Admission information states: "Admission: \$8.00 Adults/Children under 12 Free w/ Adult \$1.00 from every paid admission goes to 'Toys for Tots' Free for Scouts in Uniform w/ their Scout Master in Uniform Free On-Site Parking". At the bottom, there is a "TOYS FOR TOTS" logo and contact information: "Contact: William 'Bill' Miller at (757) 409-3623 or E-mail: Ktsdad1994@cox.net".



I learned a lesson from my Lionel days; NEVER throw anything model railroad related away! And so I wisely boxed the whole mess up for later consideration.

Fast forward now to about 1987. We finally were able to buy a house and had stopped moving every few years. I now had a layout and my modeling skills had progressed to where I felt that tackling this project might just bear fruit. I began collecting detail parts and started to work on my dream once more. Did you ever have some small thing intimidate you so much that you just gave up and shelved your project? Well, that happened to me! That small thing was the odd ball headlight on the long hood. Nobody makes one, I had never done any scratch building, and I just couldn't feature making one myself. So, perhaps it was time put the dream aside for awhile longer, and so, back to the storage box.

Over the following several years I began to expand my horizons. I discovered the joy of super detailing rolling stock and locomotives. Many happy and challenging hours were spent carving off molded-on details and replacing them with better quality and better looking appliances. I never thought I could use an air brush and since I had a good friend who would paint for me, I let Paul do it for me. Decals were also intimidating; you guessed it, let Paul do it. Then the unthinkable happened, Paul moved to Buffalo New York. About this same time I became involved in a model railroad club which had several NMRA members. The NMRA had

never been a big influence on me but after seeing the results of a couple of skilled members I was challenged to at least try to paint with an air brush and to decal my own work. Another big help in developing skills was the building of craftsman kits. Over a period of a few years, I built several as these required cutting and fitting. They not only honed skills, they instilled in me more confidence.

About five years back I wanted a U18B. The only ones on the market were brass models. Brass is completely out of the question, budget wise, so I decided to kit bash one. This project involved cutting down the frame and body shell of an Athearn U30B and doing some super detailing as well as painting and decaling. The result was a good running model that earned a merit award.

The year is 2015. That box of parts for the RS1325 project is opened for the final time and when it is closed this time my dream has finally come true.

This is not a construction article because I never thought to document what was done, but I would like to relate some of the more challenging construction details.

An Athearn SW1200 was used for the running gear and the long hood of the locomotive, while a Tyco GP20 provided the cab and short hood.

To start, I cut the cabs from both body shells and joined the cab of the Tyco and the long hood of the Athearn. To keep everything square I used a piece of plate glass for a work surface. Sheet styrene was used for splice plates and the voids were filled with Squadron Putty. A combination of Tenax-7R and Model Master liquid plastic cement was used to join the two parts.

Next came the frame and drive mechanism. Although I could have machined a new frame out of brass (that may still happen), I took the easy way out. The frame was cut just ahead of the motor mount and the two halves were mounted to the body. On the Tyco end the frame was mounted to the modified cab. This was done by cementing styrene bar stock on each side and drilling #50 holes to accept two number 2-56 self tapping screws. The Athearn end was easy; I simply used the mounting tabs and slots provided by Athearn.

For power, a newer Athearn switcher motor with flywheels replaced the old motor. Since my layout is controlled with DCC a Digitrax DH-126 decoder was installed along with LED Headlights. I used the original drive shaft on the long hood end and an A Line universal and drive shaft on the cab end. While this works, alignment is a problem and the locomotive can be quite noisy at times so the brass frame which would solve the alignment problem might still happen.

Remember that intimidating headlight that stopped me for a while? Well, it turned out that was probably the easiest part of the whole project. Two square styrene

shapes were bonded with Tenax-7R. With a small file they were shaped, then two headlight openings were drilled, a Detail Associates Pyle headlight casting was cemented over the openings and the oddball headlight was born.

Painting came next. Being a bit lazy when it comes to certain things, I will take the shortest route if the results are satisfactory and so I did what comes natural; I used a can of black spray paint from the hardware store. Why go to all the trouble to hook up the compressor, mix paint and go through the process of cleaning an air brush when all I wanted was a nice black locomotive? I find that in many instances I can achieve a really good finish with a spray can. Don't misunderstand me; I will use the air brush if I have to.

Decaling was the next step. Ever since Model Railroader sent out free decals for the Turtle Creek Central, I have used that road name to justify having locomotives that the Baltimore & Ohio and the Delaware & Seneca (my home road, which is all Alco) never had. Decaling was one of the other intimidating aspects of the hobby that held me back for several years. Once my friend Paul left, I realized that if I wanted to do any serious modeling, I would have to bite the bullet and learn to apply decals properly. I rather quickly found out that decaling isn't difficult, it just takes common sense. The Locomotive is decaled using Microscale Turtle Creek Central sets along with dashed sill stripes and barricade stripes front and rear.

Final detailing finished up the project. Tichy grab

irons were used. I had to make the handrails but was able to find enough Athearn stanchions to complete that part of the job. Brake cylinder air lines were fashioned from .013 phosphor bronze wire. Athearn Flexicoil truck side frames replaced the previous AAR types. Air lines, front and rear, were fashioned from AWG 20 gauge wire with the ends flattened to form the glad hands. I use blister wrap from various articles that come so wrapped to make window glazing. To secure the glazing I generally use Micro Crystal Clear.

I should add at this point, that this project was built purely for my own satisfaction, to run on my layout, and was never intended to be judged. Although this model was never intended to be judged, I learned another valuable lesson from it. Our division AP Chairman was giving a clinic on judging and asked to borrow some of my work to practice with. I gave him two locomotives and two cars and all four won Merit Awards. The lesson is this. Never give up! I have three Achievement Awards and had quit trying, thinking I could never do any more. Now I am encouraged to press on toward MMR. Scenery is close to being ready for judging; I am also working on Cars and Motive Power and finally as you may have guessed, Author. I would like to thank Neal Anderson for kindly letting me use his layout for the photo shoot; my pike is not suitable for good photography.

Ed. For only two locos, there is a bunch of photos of them on the web.

A Sticky Subject

Martin Brechbiel



We use an array of adhesives and glues in our modeling and one that has seen huge amounts disappearing into basement shops and model railroads over the past several decades is cyanoacrylate ester glue, now commonly abbreviated as "CA". The original compound has a long history, but quickly crossed over from its initial uses to be pervasive in our daily lives. This simple adhesive rapidly evolved into a host of varying formulations ranging from very thin viscosity up through to a gel and everything in between as well as variations with fillers, and various accelerators for when "instant" is not fast enough. Removers and dissolvers are also available for those times when instant

might have been just a bit too fast. It's rare to be able to get through the checkout line at the store without seeing some form of this stuff for sale. And, if you are blessed with a reasonably decent stocked hobby shop, you'll find racks of the varying types from multiple sources all neatly sealed ready for you to buy anywhere from ½ oz. amounts upwards to 2 oz., or more. The cost varies a bit from type to type and from source to source, but regardless of price, one thing for sure is that you don't want to waste any by letting it go bad in the bottle. And the clock starts ticking on that precious stuff going bad right about a second after you've snipped open the bottle and broken the seal.

So, how do you avoid the

common tale of tossing away ½ a bottle of solidified CA and wasting time (got to run out to the store right at 3 am since it always fails at a critical moment) and money (you are throwing away ½ a bottle and going to the store to buy more) at the same time? There are 2 options. The first option is to use it up before it goes bad! Sure. If that happened with any frequency, then no one would be throwing ½ full bottles of solidified CA into the trash either. The second option is to store it properly so that it does not go bad. Now there's a concept! There are a lot of ideas, stories, and myths about on how to properly store CA, but almost all of them are incorrect. One suggestion that you hear proffered regularly is to store it in the freezer. Well, this is both a good and bad suggestion, and can actually accelerate how fast the clock is running on tossing it into the trash. It's good idea since the lower temperature slows the natural self-polymerization reaction that turns your CA into a solid that's later in the trash can. And, it's really good as long as the bottle is totally sealed. But, if it's not sealed, then you're not doing yourself any favors. The biggest enemy of CA is actually moisture. Moisture (aka water...) catalyzes and accelerates that same self-polymerization that you really want to avoid. So, every time you put that opened bottle into the freezer, and let's face it, your seal is probably not as good as the factory seal, moisture gets condensed into the CA bottle. And, then every time you take it out of the freezer, moisture gets condensed into the CA bottle. So, after two paragraphs now you begin to wonder, does this guy actually have any kind of solution to the problem, or what?

I got that 2 oz. bottle of medium viscosity ZAP CA over 2 years ago and stored it open at room temperature in my shop for that same amount of time (I had 2 of these and the first ran dry, dry as in empty in August). These 2 bottles were left over from a clinic I did at an O Scale National.

The solution to the storage problem is a plastic jar that makes an air tight seal and contains anhydrous calcium sulphate, which is also known as Drierite. You



can see that it is a nice blue color. That's because it's indicating Drierite that has been impregnated with cobalt chloride. It's blue when it is dry and then it changes to pink upon absorption of moisture. The color change is quite visible and makes this a very useful agent when it is important to know when a storage container's environment is dry, and also when the drying agent needs to be replaced.



In theory, it can even be regenerated for reuse, but I've never heard of anyone actually doing that so it's probably not as easy to do as it is to write. (*Calcium sulfate/gypsum/Plaster of Paris decomposes from the dihydrate to the hemihydrate between 100 and 150°C (215 - 300°F). Just bake it for a few hours in a thin layer at 275°F in a ventilated oven to remove escaping moisture. It's done when it turns blue. At higher temperatures it undergoes further decomposition and loses its ability to adsorb moisture. The difficulty will be getting your wife to let you do it. Ed.*) You can buy this material through Amazon. Google it and you'll find it's not hard to find. It's even on eBay!

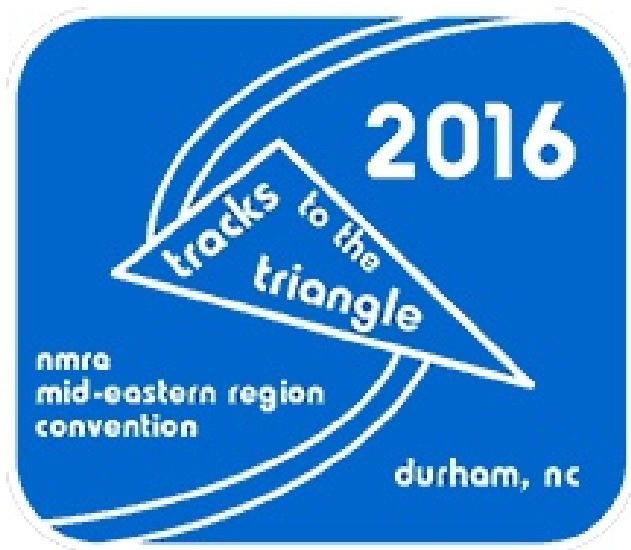
So an inch or so of Drierite in the good sealing jar keeps your CA safe both short- and long-term and saves you from that emergency run to the store at the darkest hour of night when you really should have been asleep anyway. I mean who really is up at 3 am building models anyway? Don't ask....

Of course, some wag is going to state that you could use those silica packets you find stuffed into the silliest of products at times. Well, if you think a little you'll realize that they've all been exposed to air (and moisture...) for an unknown period of time while not being in anything close to an air tight package, so they've lost all value as a desiccating agent, and lost it long ago. So, unless you have a vacuum oven that heats up over 250°C, those packets are just more trash.

So, as a result of this simple hint, I've never had a bottle of CA go bad in over a decade – dry & empty, many times, yes. And, a good quality mayo jar will seal air tight in case you're wondering what to use – you don't need specialized containers or glassware – there used to be one of these jars on Funk & Wagnall's back porch, but it's long gone. And, now so am I!

Tracks to the Triangle - Update

Stephen Milley, Co-Chair, Tracks To The Triangle



The 2016 MER Convention, Tracks to The Triangle, being held October 20-23 in Durham, NC will include several new and exciting features you won't want to miss.

This year's convention will feature a Railroad Prototype Modelers' (RPM) room which will have tables for model display and be an opportunity for attendees to share prototype information, modeling techniques and fellowship. It will be open throughout the convention. RPM coordinator Bill Hanley says the event will develop greater knowledge and understanding of both prototype and

modeling information among convention participants.

Also, a unique addition this year will be an Author's Book Signing Table. Several renowned modeling and prototype authors will be featured as clinicians at Tracks to The Triangle and will offer signed copies of their books for sale during the convention, or if you already have a book, they will be happy to sign your copy! Authors include Bernard Kempinski, Lou Sassi, and Dr. Cary Poole.

Convention hosts Carolina Piedmont Division will display their annual Holiday Trains for Kids Raffle Layout at the convention hotel. This year's layout features a special one-of-a-kind theme based on Layout Design Elements of Edenton, North Carolina. The layout includes a cotton mill, peanut mill facility, passenger depot and a company town mill workers' village. The structures of the mill village are being scratch-built by CPD13 members. Tracks to The Triangle attendees will have the opportunity to participate in the annual fund raiser to purchase train sets for needy children by buying raffle tickets to win the layout.

Thanks to a strong registration response, additional rooms are now available at the special convention hotel room rate of \$99.99/night at The Marriott at Research Triangle Park using this website:

<http://tinyurl.com/nzcjwvz>

For the latest convention updates, and to register for Tracks to The Triangle please go to the convention website:

www.MER2016.org

For the latest updates on clinic topics and schedules please go to the convention website above and click the clinics tab in the far left column. The convention registration form is also available on the registration tab.

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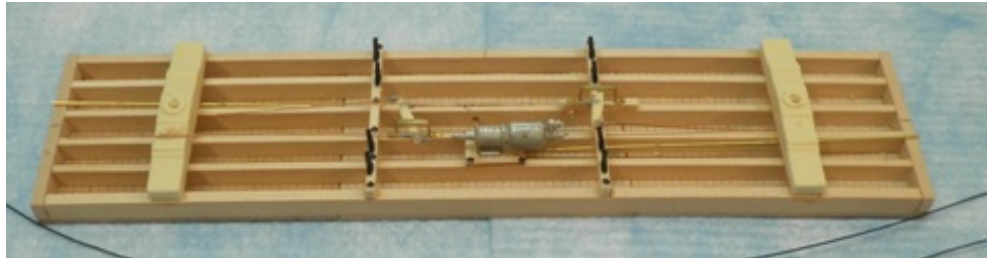
Easy Truss Rods

Martin Brechbiel

My modeling interests tend to reside in the late 1880's up through to ~1920, as so I focus on truss rod underbody style cars more than any other style. As a result I suspect that I have scratchbuilt at least 100 truss rod era cars by now and that practice went through a bit of an evolution from the starting point with what was supplied with or suggested for use in kits. I was never a real fan of monofilament and getting it to go and stay where I wanted it to versus where it wanted to go was always something of a battle.

Invariably, these kits also made use of a short cut of running the truss rod material up through the floor of the car body under the car bolsters which just always seemed wrong. For me, the truss rods really have to be located prototypically, generally through the end sills of a car. To do that using monofilament while trying to get it under some tension over the queen post never seemed to look right. For some time I used brass wire shaped and cut to length such that it would insert into the inside of an end sill, aligned with the Nut-Bolt-Washer (NBW) casting on the outside of the end sill that represented the end anchor of the truss rod. This actually worked pretty well albeit labor intensive getting all of the bits of wire shaped properly, cut to length, and tied together with turnbuckle castings. I still make use of this method for under traction freight trailers and other trolley related cars, but I wanted a simpler, yet still visually satisfying method. After playing around testing a few ideas, I

finally found both a method and material that meets my needs, namely a single length of surgical silk that makes all of the truss rods in a single operation. A decent substitution for surgical silk might be the heavier thread used for upholstery or carpets.



Installation of truss rods using this method is actually pretty simple. First, you need a car that's ready for this step in its construction. Not a problem as I almost always have 2-3 cars in progress in the shop that have the brake system, castings, levers, and plumbing installed. One just needs to add the needle beams and the queen posts, since their placement defines the pathway where the truss rods will be located as well as anchored in the end sills.

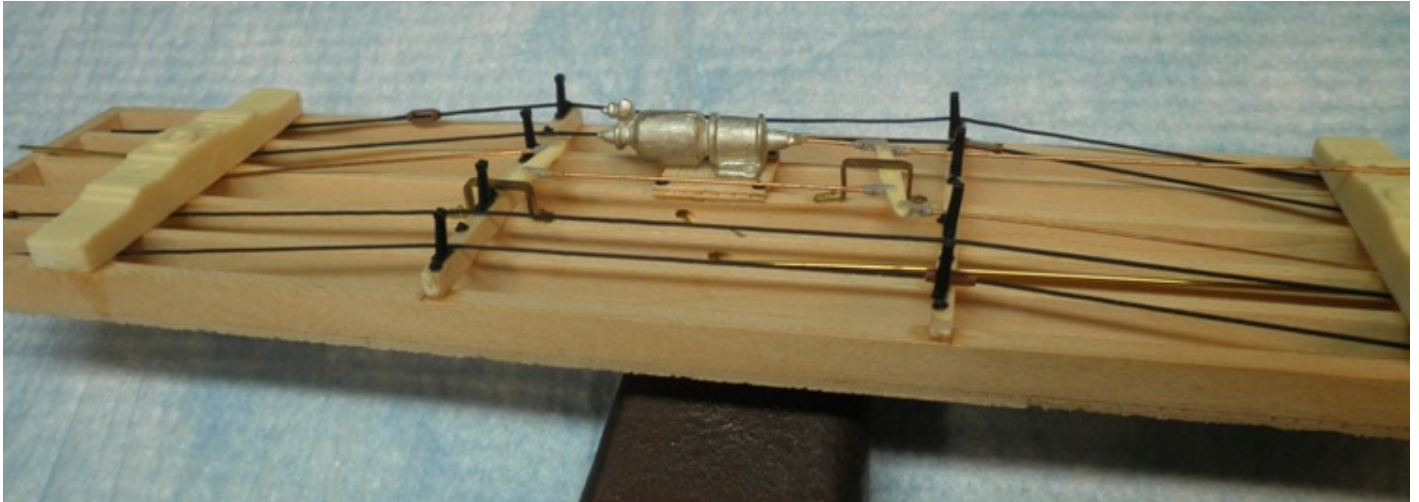
Now you need about 5 car lengths of that surgical silk. This stuff is actually braided silk around a core making it extremely strong. You also need a good pair of scissors or a really sharp blade to make a good clean cut end as well. Next, you need whatever NBW castings you have in mind to use for the ends of the truss rods. In this specific case, I used Grandt Line #81 NBW's. Now, you need to drill holes in the end sills to insert those NBW's in place using the casting sprue "bolt". Make sure you use an angled cut to take them off the main sprue. The holes have two requirements: they have to align with the placement of the queen posts centered in the end sill and they have to be ~0.005-0.010" larger than that "bolt". After all the holes are drilled is when the fun begins.

Take the end of the surgical silk and thread it through one of the far end holes of one end sill into the interior of the underbody leaving an inch or so exposed. On one of your NBW castings, apply a drop of Cyano Acrylate ester glue (CA), and using the angled cut on the "bolt" insert it, along with the silk, into the hole, trapping the thread under the washer portion. Now you have your first anchor point established. Now take the other end of the silk and thread it under the car bolster and then up and over the needlebeams, not on the queen posts, and add a turnbuckle casting (no glue) onto the thread.



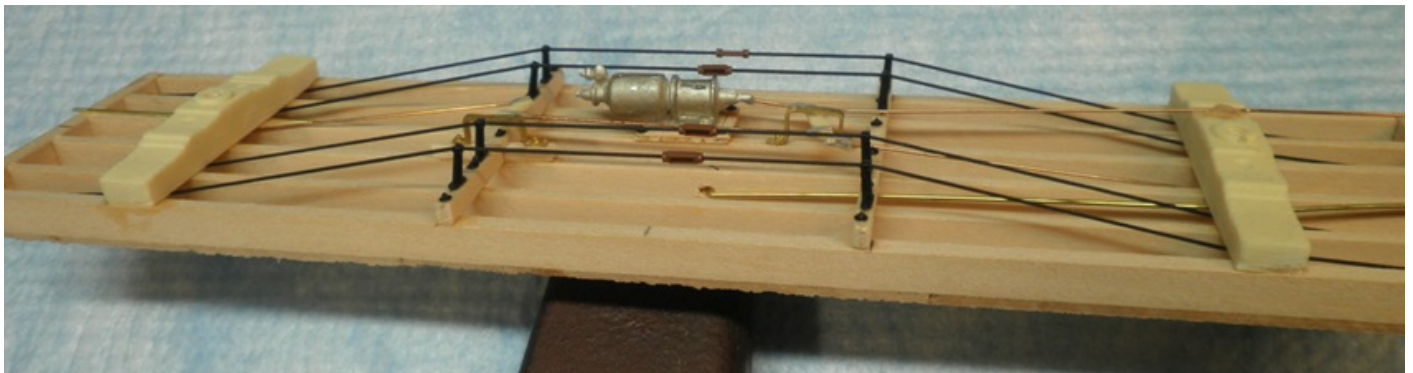
Do this with every passage through the car body! Now take the end and pass it under the other car bolster and out through the corresponding hole in the end sill for that truss rod. Pull the silk taut, and while holding that just so, take another one of your NBW castings, get a good drop of CA on it, and insert it into the hole from the outside again trapping the thread under the washer portion. Some may find that having a third hand useful,

but I've found with a little practice two hands are adequate to the task, and you only lose one in five of the NBW castings from the tweezers off into space. Now you only have to do this 3 more times. Pass through and anchor with an NBW, pass under the bolster, add the turnbuckle, over the needlebeams, under the bolster and out the other end, pull tight and anchor.



Now for the final steps – carefully lift the silk thread up onto the queen posts. There will be real tension on these and as you do this make sure that you position the turnbuckle castings in between the queenposts. A

microdot of CA on each contact point and bit to hold the turnbuckles in position and you're 99% done. Last step, take a sharp blade and trim away all of the protruding exposed thread at each end. Now you are done!



Ok, couple of final details and this is complete. No, I've never had an anchor point fail – that hole has to be tight enough to really challenge your inserting the NBW while the thread is already present. If it's easy, it's too big, and if you think that the bolt is about to break off, you're probably at just about the right size. Only other caution is that you do not put too much tension or pull the thread too tight as you pass it through the body. How much is too much? If you can't lift it onto the queenposts, that's too much. I've never had that happen,

but I have had enough tension to warp the entire car body – once. And, yes there is a flaw here since the thread runs through the entire length of the turnbuckle. If I blink a few times I don't notice it; you could also stick a small board into the turnbuckle (prototypical!) there to obscure the view, too. So, this is an option that you might find useful to use – again, I use this routinely for many of the cars that I scratchbuild or on cars that I'm restoring and upgrading to cure them of "naked underbody syndrome".

Shapeways' High Definition Acrylic Process

Earl T. Hackett, Editor

Most readers of The Local have realized that your editor is a scratch builder and tool junky. Never satisfied with commercially available generic models, I always want a model of a specific station, building, or factory, not to mention rolling stock. At 70 however, time becomes very valuable. When I was in my 20's, and not having a layout, spending a year building a brass locomotive seemed reasonable. Today that just won't happen.

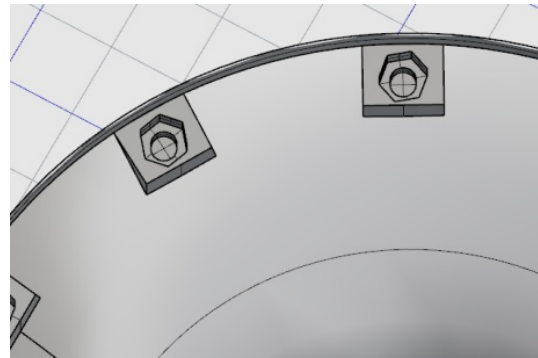
A few years ago I was introduced to 3D printing, specifically Shapeways Frosted Ultra Detail (FUD) plastic. Another C&O modeler brought some examples of yard offices and tool sheds he had made from photos taken at Hinton, WV. They looked pretty good and I decided to see what I could do with the process.

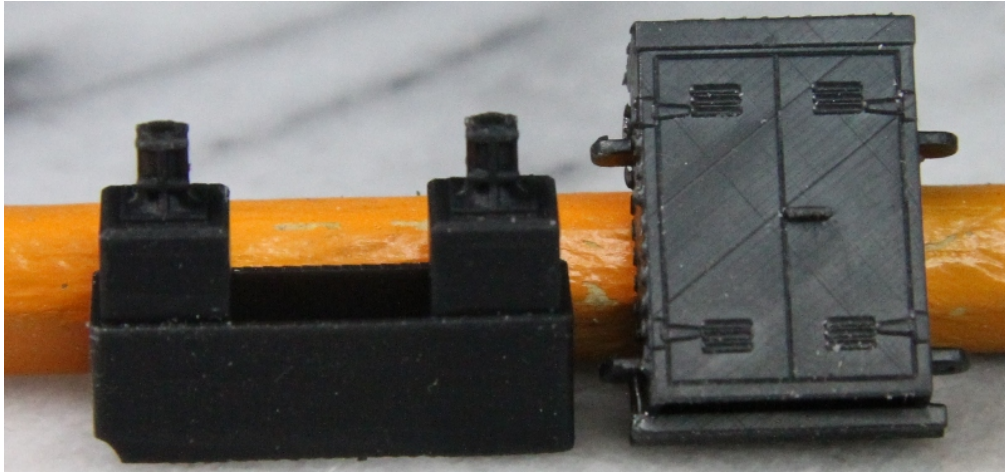
I've given a number of clinics on it and have been pretty honest about its good and not so good characteristics. Parts are made in thin layers by first putting down a layer of wax to act as a dam to contain the liquid polymer. This is not unlike the molten plastic printers, but the wax is much less viscous than a molten polymer so it can be applied in much thinner layers for better resolution. The polymer is placed in the open areas and hardened with UV light. On most surfaces this process produces acceptable surface finish and detail, but has serious problems with warping and variable shrinkage. In short, the FUD process is acceptable for

small, stand-alone parts, but completely unsuitable for large parts that have to fit together, such as walls for a large station.

A few weeks ago Shapeways sent me an email describing their new High Definition Acrylic (HDA) process. I had just made an FUD print of a Pogue water column with a spout somewhat unique to the C&O. I had messed up the spout, but it was close enough for my purposes. To see what this new process would do, I corrected the error and ordered two HDA copies. The results were astounding. Note the clear .01" hole in the rod support bracket.

Three images below show the base attachment bolts for the water column; the original 3D model, the FUD process (white - white is a bear to photograph), and the HDA process (black).





Problems with surface roughness in the FUD process are clearly evident in the close up and the hex bolt is just a blob. Not bad, but if you're trying to do a lot of rivet detail the variation between rivets will be noticeable. In the HDA process the surface quality is far better. You can roughly detect the outline of the hexagonal bolt. The quality of the HDA surface detail is better illustrated in the reflected light from the relay box and base above, modeled from C&O plans dated 1938. For scale reference, the yellow thing behind it is a common wood pencil. The box will be mounted on the base with some .040" music wire and will be used as a master for a silicone rubber mold. A 0.030" wire in the epoxy casting will provide sufficient strength for handling.

So how is this process different from the FUD process? Rather than using a support wax, the model is made by directly curing the photosensitive resin with patterned light. A 'build plate' is lowered (vertical movement is referred to as the Z axis) into a vat of photo sensitive liquid resin and positioned about .001" from a window through which a light pattern will be projected, curing the resin in specific areas. The build plate is then raised, the resin refreshed, and the build plate is lowered into the resin so the previous surface is positioned about .001" above the window. This process repeats layer by layer until the model is completed.

Being a tool junky I just had to have one of these machines and began an internet search. I found there are two basic methods used to project the light pattern through the window; a scanned laser beam, and Digital Light Projection (DLP). The scanned laser is just what the name implies. Two mirrors scan a laser beam around the window. I have not found a laser scanner that produces the required resolution for our modeling needs.

Digital light projection uses a digital projector to project an image from your PC monitor onto a small (~2" x 3") area to polymerize the resin. Low cost systems use consumer grade digital projectors, which emit a small amount of light in the 405 nm region where the acrylic resin systems are sensitive. A technology developed by

Texas Instruments (DLP®) takes this one step further and uses an array of micro mirrors to reflect light from an array of UV LEDs through an optical system for better resolution and faster exposure. This system can produce intense UV light in the 405 nm or 365 nm region for very fast and precise polymerization.

From the equipment specifications, I found the unit Shapeways most likely is using is an EnvisionTec Perfactory 3. It uses the TI projection system for exceptionally good results, but at \$20,000, even for a tool junky like me it's a bit out of my price range. I did find some more reasonably priced DLP® units that have the potential for producing quality parts. However, with Shapeways making first class parts for a few bucks, from which you can make your own RTV silicone molds for multiple copies, why bother with owning one of these things.

While this sounds like the ultimate in modeling, there are still a couple of bugs. The most obvious is the need for supports to hold overhangs in position as they are formed. These are pillars of hardened resin that attach to the model with small contact points. Shapeways is pretty good about keeping these contact points on surfaces that aren't visible or where they can be easily removed. These contact points can be seen on the left side and top of the relay box where they are easily removed by scraping with a sharp knife. The lines on the front of the relay box are very shallow and should disappear when painted.

The cured polymer is brittle. Holes can be drilled using very high speed and slow feeds. Interestingly, in thin layers it is very flexible. You could easily use it as a wrapper over a support structure.

The last problem is that you can't print what you can't draw. AutoDesk (creators of AutoCAD) has a pretty good answer to that problem with their recently released open source Fusion 360 CAD program. Its capabilities are comparable to the best commercial CAD systems and it's free. It doesn't have everything I want, but it's close and additional capabilities are being added.

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 is instituting a program whereby it will pay the \$9.95 Railpass fee for interested applicants in the MER. In other words, we are making available FREE six month Railpass trial memberships to encourage recruitment of regular members.

What's covered?

Same as Railpass—receive six issues of NMRA Magazine, three issues of The Local, eligibility to attend conventions and meets, eligibility to participate in contests.

What's not covered?

Same as Railpass—applicants cannot vote or hold office, and will not receive the New Member Pak from national (it's rather expensive).

Who can be recruited?

Anyone living within the MER who has not been a member of NMRA during the past two years or a prior Rail Pass member.

How will the recruitment process work?

(1) The prospective member fills out the MER trial membership application form which was sent to all division superintendents (not the standard NMRA Railpass form) (2) The "recruiter" should sign

the form, and then forward it to: Bob Price, Business Manager, 801 S. Newton Lake Dr., Collingswood, NJ 08108. (3) Bob will record the information he needs in his data base, and will forward the application to the MER Treasurer. (4) The Treasurer will add the necessary check and forward the application and check to the national headquarters in Soddy Daisy.

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

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

Are there limits on the program?

The MER initially allocated \$2,000 for this program. When this funding is depleted Division Superintendents and members of the MER Board of Directors will be notified. At this time the program will be reevaluated by the MER Board of Directors. It has proven to be an excellent means to recruit new members. 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 P. J. Mattson, MER President (see contact information on page 2).

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

YES, please sign me up for a free six month Railpass trial membership in the NMRA—which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region, and in my local Division. During this six month period, I understand that I may attend conventions and meets, and participate in contests. I will receive NMRA Magazine, the monthly national magazine, and The eLocal, the bi-monthly regional newsletter if an email address is provided. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office, or receive a New Member Pak.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six month Railpass trial membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Regardless of who pays, six month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person.)

At the end of the six months, I may join NMRA, paying the regular active member dues.

During the past two years, I have not been a member of NMRA, nor have I been a RailPass member.

Name: _____

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Scale(s): _____

Signature of Sponsor: _____ (Required)

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(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

When this form is completed
mail it to:

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

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

June 2015

Prototype Tours at Tracks to the Triangle

Bob Bridges



A variety of prototype tours will be available to attendees of Tracks to The Triangle, the 2016 Mid-Eastern Region convention being hosted by the Carolina Piedmont Division this October in Durham. A visit to a 1911 Pullman sleeper undergoing restoration in Raleigh, rides aboard trains at The New Hope Valley Railroad in Bonsal, and a factory tour of Tichy Train Group, manufacturer of detail parts and rolling stock in Burlington are the choices available to convention attendees.

The Villa Real is one of the few remaining Pullman Cars that was just a sleeping car. The goal of its owner, Al Sauer is to restore the car to how it looked in 1931 and then donate the car to a Museum that can properly show and protect it. He also would like a Museum that actively runs trains on their own tracks so that, occasionally, visitors can ride on the Villa Real as George M. Pullman intended. Mr. Sauer will host three one-hour tours on Saturday, October 22 for one starting at 9am.



The Villa Real began life on March 21, 1911 when the Pullman-Standard Car Manufacturing Company completed the 12 section-1 Drawing Room-1 Compartment sleeping car Lenover, Plan 2411, Lot 3880, for general service in the Pullman fleet. The construction of steel cars was encouraged by the management of the Pennsylvania Railroad which expressed concern over operation of wooden cars in the newly completed tunnels between New Jersey and Penn Station. Lenover was one in a series of eight cars all of which sacrificed lavatory space for the sake of the compartment that was squeezed into a standard 12 section-1 drawing room floor plan. Attired in Tuscan Red, the car was assigned to the Pennsylvania Railroad where it remained until being converted to a 10 section-3 double bedroom car in January 1931.

The New Hope Valley Railroad in historic Bonsal NC is the Triangle's Train. Located 30 minutes southwest of downtown Raleigh, NHRV operates restored prototype locomotives and rolling stock over 6.5 miles of track. Equipment includes two General Electric, two Whitcomb diesel-electric locomotives, a tank (0-4-0) steam locomotive, and passenger and freight cars. In addition to offering rides aboard the restored equipment, NHVR is also an open air museum with a number of current and future restoration projects available for up-close inspection and photography. Additionally, there is an outdoor G-Scale garden railroad for visitors to enjoy for our scheduled tour on Friday October 21st from 9am until noon.

The Tichy Train Group factory in nearby Burlington offers MER convention attendees a chance to get a behind the scenes look at a one of today's finest manufacturers of craftsman styrene rolling stock kits and detail parts for cars and structures. Owner Don Tichy will share his processes and demonstrate the advanced technology and old world craftsmanship that he and his personnel, who are active modelers, use to create great prototypical modeling kits. Tours of Tichy Train Group are available both Friday and Saturday morning from 9:30am -11am. This tour is filling up fast! Register now to guarantee your spot.



Don's facility is not a garage shop. That's a 2 ton crane to handle the molds.

All prototype tours are available for a nominal extra fare when you register for Tracks to The Triangle on the convention website, www.mer2016.org. The prototype section of the website includes additional information and more photos of each tour as well as links to other self-guided railfan attractions in The Triangle area.

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CALLBOARD

Coming Events

Susquehanna Div Live Steam Live Steam Day

June 26, 11:00 AM
Pennsylvania Live Steamers
Rahn, PA

Mark your calendar now - Sunday, June 26, the Susquehanna Division will present a Live Steam Day event at the PA Live Steamers (PLS) located in Rahns, PA. The program begins at 1100 with an introduction covering the history, construction, and operation of the railroad that operates a variety of steam and diesel equipment in 1.5", 1", and 3/4" scale as well as 1 gauge. Train rides will be provided. For directions, detailed agenda, and registration information
Contact: Dan Horting
717-285-7320
k4sbuilder@comcast.net.

The Callboard is pretty quite this issue so your editor dug around and found the meets in the MER

Great Scale Model Train Show

Fmonium, Maryland (July 9-10)

Lionel Operating Train Society Annual Convention

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania (July 10-16)

Lycoming Summer Train Meet

Pennsdale, Pennsylvania (July 16)

Williams Grove Historical Steam Engine Association Model Train Flea Market

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania (July 16-17)

Greenberg's Train & Toy Show

Monroeville, Pennsylvania (July 16-17)
Timonium, Maryland (August 6-7)
Edison, New Jersey (August 13-14)
Chantilly, Virginia (August 27-28)

Coal River Model Train Show

Madison Civic Center; 261 Washington Ave; Madison,
West Virginia 25130 (September 10-11)

The Great Train Show

Raleigh, North Carolina (September 17-18)

Tidewater Division Model Railroaders 27th Annual Train Show and Sale

Virginia Beach Convention Center
Virginia Beach, VA (October 8 & 9)

Achievement Program

Charles Flichman, MMR

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

Division 1 - New Jersey

Bob Duffield - Golden Spike

Division 2 - Potomac

Ronald King - Master Builder Cars

Division 5 - James River

Keith Pritchard - Chief Dispatcher

Division 12 - Carolina Southern

Jack D. Monette - Master Builder Motive Power
Jack D. Monette - Master Builder Cars

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

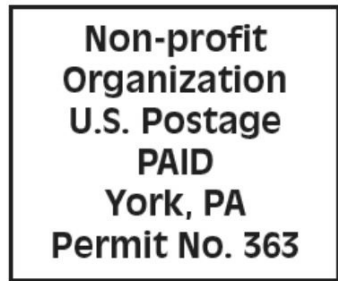
Editor's Note

A very nice article about the return of N&W 611 to service was submitted for publication in The Local. It is far too big for the print version and to publish the great photographs of this beautiful locomotive in black and white just wouldn't do them justice.

So it has been added in its entirety to the end of the electronic version of The Local. It is a very well written and illustrated article and I encourage all readers to download a copy.

You'll see it listed in "In This Issue" on page 16. In the future, any articles that are published exclusively in the electronic version will be listed in this manner.

The Mid-Eastern Region, Inc., NMRA
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Business Manager
801 S. Newton Lake Drive
Collingswood, NJ 08108



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American Technology Sublime
The Return of 611 eLocal

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

Publication Schedule	Deadline
Jan/Feb	Dec 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr	Feb 1st
May/Jun	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. The current advertising rates (6 issues) for The Local are as follows, and must include camera ready are (jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats):

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Half Page ad per issue (Div only).....	\$25.00

American Technological Sublime: The Return of 611

Gerard J. Fitzgerald

James River Division Crossties Assistant Editor

All photos by the author

The year 2015 will be remembered by many people around the world as the year Norfolk & Western Railway J-Class (4-8-4) steam locomotive #611 returned to mainline running for excursions. 611 not only took to the rails in various railroad hot spots across Virginia and North Carolina but the locomotive even spent some quality time in various locales right here within the bounds of the James River Division. The locomotive's journey last summer rekindled old memories for many of earlier fan trips in the 1980s and 1990s, and for a select few, 611's nine years of service on the former N&W between 1950 and 1959. 611's various travels in 2015 also created a brand new set of memories for those who had never before seen the 4-8-4 moving under its own power. For the record, the author of this article falls into the latter category, and truth-be-told, the sensory experience of 611 will probably never be forgotten. This brief photo essay recounts my thoughts about my experiences during two summers of 611.

Roanoke, Virginia: May 24, 2014

My first connection to 611 began on a hot and sunny day in May of 2014 when I drove down to the Virginia Museum of Transportation (<http://www.vmt.org/>) in Roanoke to see the locomotive off. That day the locomotive left the museum and was ferried down to the North Carolina Transportation Museum (<http://www.nctrans.org/>) in Spencer, North Carolina, for an overhaul and refitting to make the engine mainline and fan trip ready. While much has been written about the history of the N&W J series in general, and locomotive 611 in particular, the crowds of visitors who assembled that day in Roanoke were aware they were witnessing the beginning of the rebirth of a native son.(1)

Sixty-four years earlier N&W Class Js 611-613 were constructed in the N&W Roanoke Shops making them the very last batch of steam passenger locomotives

constructed in the United States. The locomotives were completed between May and July 1950 and began service just as the outbreak of the Korean War grabbed national headlines. 611 rolled out of the Roanoke Shops that May with a price tag of \$251,544 dollars, 80,000 pounds of tractive force, 70 inch drivers, roller bearings, a streamlined design created by N&W's Mark W. Faville and Frank C. Noel, and a top speed in excess of 100 mph on level terrain, making the machine arguably the absolute pinnacle of 20th century steam passenger locomotive engineering.

That last group of passenger locomotives only saw service for nine years and 611, through the kind intervention of among others –the late great R. Graham Claytor- was the only locomotive to escape the scrappers torch. It was ironic that the locomotive had to leave its birthplace for an overhaul but in the early twenty first century most people in Roanoke were just happy to see the 611 moving at all. The fact the locomotive would return in a year under its own power made a seemingly embarrassing tow by Norfolk Southern diesels acceptable in the short term.

As a historian of technology by training, and a model railroader by choice since childhood, I traveled to Roanoke that day not just to see the locomotive but also to people watch and observe. I was intrigued by the cultural response to 611 that had a public life and resonance far outside of southwestern Virginia. In graduate school I read David Nye's *American Technological Sublime*, a book that examines the American preoccupation with large and complex technological projects such as dams and railroads. I was rereading Nye in my head that very hot day in Roanoke and thinking what 611 might possibly mean for the various people who made the effort to be there. In discussing the reaction of people present at the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge Nye wrote the following:

(1) The most useful standard text on Norfolk & Western steam locomotives remains Lewis I. Jeffries' 1980 *N&W: Giant of Steam* that was republished in a revised edition in 2005. This book has a wonderful chapter long analysis of the J series including detailed discussion of locomotive research and design practices, construction information, and of course passenger operations. For introductory information on 611 a *Trains Magazine* Special Edition entitled *611 in Steam* was published in 2015 that contain past articles on 611 design, the history of earlier fan trips, and insightful coverage of the current restoration program that got 611 moving again. Finally the Norfolk & Western Historical Society has just published a book coauthored by Tim Hensley and Ken Miller that examines the 611 fan trips in the 1980s, 1990s, and in 2015 called *611: Three Times a Lady*.

The sublime underlies this enthusiasm for technology. One of the most powerful human emotions, when experienced by large groups the sublime can weld society together. In moments of sublimity, human beings temporarily disregard divisions among elements of community. The sublime taps into fundamental hopes and fears. It is not a social residue, created by economic and political forces, though both can inflect its meaning. Rather it is an essentially religious feeling, aroused by confrontation with impressive objects, such as Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, the New York Skyline, or the earth shattering launch of a space shuttle. (2)

As I watched 611 move out of the museum complex and onto the Norfolk Southern (former N&W) mainline that day, surrounded by hundreds with smartphones and cameras, I wondered if in 50 or 80 years the citizens of Mountain View, California will line the streets and highways bringing their children and grandchildren to witness the return of first Google pilotless automobile. I say this not to be facetious as the engineers, scientists, and technicians who have worked for years on this new technology (a number of whom are no doubt graduates of my Alma mater) have much to be

proud of. My guess is... probably no... for various reasons. The most important one being that there really is a power and majesty to a large steam locomotive running at speed, or sometimes even just standing at rest, which a hybrid drone/automobile just cannot match, no matter how path breaking technologies it contains. I will get back to you about this with a more definitive analysis of this question in 2065.

Charlottesville, Virginia: June 3, 2015

To be honest my initial encounter with 611 in Roanoke left me intrigued but rather underwhelmed. This changed in a dramatic fashion when 611 made it way north to Charlottesville from Roanoke via Lynchburg on the old Southern, now NS mainline between Washington and Atlanta, on a dreary and very rainy June day. While I occasionally find myself trackside photographing trains I am not really a “railfan” and do not own a scanner nor do I frequent many of the online chat groups where enthusiasts shadow trains and specific locomotives like military intelligence operatives. As such my approach to 611 was to essentially “wing it” which has always worked out well enough in the past.



(2) David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994) xiii.

Once 611 arrived back in Roanoke on May 30th to begin excursions I followed things online as best I could and hoped to catch it going northbound and southbound when it passed through Charlottesville on its journey to Manassas for the first weekend of railfan trips. A friend told me that 611 would be leaving Roanoke around 7:00 AM on June 3rd for Manassas via Lynchburg and my initial calculations had 611 passing through at the C&O/Southern (CSX-Buckingham Branch RR/NS) crossing around 10:00 AM. I arrived at 9:00 AM in a terrible downpour to secure a good spot for photography. There was only one other person there, a local high school student who had arrived sometime closer to 6:30 AM because he was so excited about 611 he couldn't sleep. We had a long but ultimately satisfying day.

The bad news, which was also initially confusing as 611 just did not appear with each passing hour, was the train would not arrive until about 3:00 PM. The heavy rain did not let up until 2:45 and was in fact so bad Internet and phone service was spotty at best making it difficult to track the train although that improved later in the afternoon. The good news was we were eventually informed that 611 would be STOPPING!!! in Charlottesville to pick up a VIP. That meant the possibility of getting a series of photographs depending upon the weather, the crowd I anticipated might show up, and most importantly how long 611 might be staying.

As it turns out the locomotive stayed about 20 minutes, which may have been the best and most exciting slice of railroad time Charlottesville has seen in decades. Being out of the loop I was not even sure 611 would be under its own power when it arrived and yet the first time I saw the locomotive it was under a full head of steam pulling a long line of varnish headed to my favorite local "railfan" spot. Life does not get much better. Seeing and hearing 611 come into view really was breathtaking and I was glad I had the forethought to stay in the moment and enjoy the scene and also keep taking photographs.

It was my hope that day to photograph 611 at it crossed the CSX/NS crossing which was the one photo I most wanted regardless of weather. However that was dependent upon how many Norfolk Southern folks were around when 611 finally arrived because to shoot at the right perspective would involve the dreaded T-word. As I discovered July 4th weekend, NS personnel bent over backwards to accommodate railfans and anyone else with a camera standing trackside –which sadly some people abused anyway- but I did not know that while standing in the rain on June 3rd.

In the final twenty minutes before 611 arrived, the station parking lot and work area near the track at the

diamond filled up with NS vehicles and with people arriving with cameras. Just as many arrived with their families for what might be a once in a lifetime opportunity. Lots of rail fans poured in too in the last few minutes and what had been just two wet guys with cameras expanded slowly to about 20 people and then suddenly grew to a hundred or so. With about 15 minutes to go I was thinking I had never seen so many NS employees before anywhere, much less in Charlottesville. As the crowd of railroad personal and civilians like myself grew and I realized taking a diamond shot was probably impossible, which was fine, since I was still well positioned to get some kind of useful photograph.

What happened in the final 10 minutes before 611 arrived made me a lifelong fan of Norfolk Southern. Having staked out a spot at the end of the platform I was the first photographer in line for a shot. Until I wasn't and another person with a camera went around me and set up his tripod right in front of where I had been standing. When I asked him to move I just received a dirty look. I was going to start arguing with this person when a NS employee pointed at me and told me to come over to the parking lot. At that moment I was not only frustrated and angry but I thought I was probably going to be the only person who was reprimanded that day and took no photographs at all. This was particularly devastating, as I had waited for six straight hours in the rain. Regardless I walked over into a large group of NS people hoping I was not in too much trouble but was extremely doubtful as to my predicament.

The gentleman from NS introduced himself, his son, and asked if I was the fellow who had been standing on the platform all day in the rain. I replied that it was in fact me. (3) He invited me out of the rain and mentioned that he had seen me down at the tracks on a number of occasions before and noticed I was always safe and mindful of railroad property. He gave me a chance to shake the rain off my hat and camera case and introduced me to some of the NS people that were there. At this point I was confused and worried I wasn't going to get a good photo since I would now be positioned behind everyone on the platform. On the other hand I was relieved I probably wasn't going to railroad jail. Finally this man looked at his watch and said 611 would be there in 4 minutes. He also said that since the platform was now extremely crowded with people it might be better if I accompanied him out to the crossing where all the NS people were gathering as he thought a shot at the diamond might make for a good photo.

(3) My high school friend had decided to photograph at the end of other end of the platform well past the Main Street Bridge and so might have remained unnoticed.

The series of photos I took of 611 crossing the diamond a few minutes later are not the best railroad photographs I have ever taken but they are among my most cherished.

Aside from the kindness and forethought of a stranger I have to say I was also overwhelmed in the next few moments by 611 itself. The locomotive was of course streamlined but also more powerful and brutish than I expected and completely different than the machine I had seen pulled out of the museum in Roanoke a year earlier. Under her own power, belching smoke, and with a deep bellowing whistle that must be heard in person to be fully appreciated, I now understood that 611 was, for lack of a better description, a linebacker of a locomotive. (4) Here was a machine that could pull passenger trains through the mountains at speed, keep to the timetable, and not look back.

As I shot photographs of 611 from both the Amtrak platform and the Main Street Bridge, I was reminded not only of David Nye's perspective but also the writings of the late David P. Morgan. (5) In addition

I remembered why I had started "playing" with trains as a very young boy. A number of the children present that day seemed awestruck by 611 and a few carefully poked at it with a finger and then quickly withdrew. If I were six I think I would have done the exact same thing.

Roanoke, Virginia: July 2-4, 2015

Having witnessed 611 up close in Charlottesville I looked forward to the big excursion weekend in Roanoke over July 4th weekend. It is truism that one cannot see the locomotive if you are riding many cars behind as a seated passenger. I was fine with that as I planned one day of riding behind 611 and one to two days of being trackside with my camera. Although to be fair the sinusoidal nature of the N&W mainline in many of the mountains south and west of Roanoke gives a photographer more chances to capture the locomotive than one might think, something I discovered a few years back on an excursion to Bluefield.



(4) Afterwards I was told by others that whistle on 611 is a refit and not correct. This may be true. I am not a N&W steam acoustics expert and to make matters worse have never heard those O. Winston Link LPs. Regardless 611 sounded pretty impressive to me each time I encountered it in 2015. I understand that the whistle for the 2016 fantrips will sound much closer to the original item.

(5) For a Youtube view of 611 leaving Charlottesville that rainy June day please see the following online: <https://youtu.be/A2AS5RTVatY>

I arrived at the former N&W hotel complex on the afternoon of July 2nd so I would have relatively quick access to 611 over the rest of the weekend. As it turned out I chose the correct day to be a passenger as July 3rd was overcast and rainy. My day began at 6:00 AM when I awoke to try to catch 611 coming down from the engine terminal as it brought the train in facing EB to go to Lynchburg. I took some good photos and was amazed how many people were already out and ready to track 611. That morning I took The Powhatan Arrow excursion 98 miles from Roanoke to Lynchburg and back that ran from 8:00 AM to noon.

My accommodations were deluxe as I earlier wound up purchasing a ticket for a Great Northern full dome car. My seat next to the window afforded a wonderful view of all the trackside sights. Not being a native Virginian I am always interested in observing rail lines and countryside that are not easily accessible and found the trip quite interesting and very enjoyable from an observational standpoint.

That morning trip was also memorable for two other reasons. First, I was able to witness the large number of people almost continuously trackside along the 611 route, many in places that indicated NS was

being especially open minded about photography all weekend. The most impressive vantage point was a farmer who had a cheery picker on his property and who looked down on us from a considerable height as we passed his property. The second thing I recall is I believe I was the only person in that car who had not attended Virginia Tech, or so it seemed. After turning on the wye in Lynchburg we returned to Roanoke although not before surprisingly slipping quite badly a few miles out from the station.

Upon our return I was forced to detrain but was told by a car attendant to stay at the front of the line so I could access a good seat. His advice was quite useful and in half an hour I boarded the train a second time, now in a more standard coach, for the afternoon excursion. The Pelican, or at least a much shorter version, ran the most picturesque and exciting part of the entire excursion summer, from Roanoke, Virginia, to near Radford, an 84 mile round trip that included the famed Christiansburg grade. The 4-8-4 Js were designed in part to conquer that particular grade with a long string of heavy mail and Pullman cars in tow and over July 4th weekend 611 did not disappoint. The excursion ran from 1:30 to 5:30 PM and the power of the locomotive was readily apparent







capture 611 under a full summer sun. I was lucky enough to be trackside too. My first attempt to capture 611 on the way to Lynchburg was perfect...until my line of sight was blocked by a hotshot double stack train on an inside track that closed the gap and destroyed my chance for a photograph with only seconds to spare. Luckily things improved as the day progressed. Between the

to watchful passengers who tracked speed and distance the old fashioned way by counting mile markers – which I did – or using up to date GPS software on a laptop – the approach used by my seatmate. Although the weather was miserable all day the number of people trackside was amazing and it seemed every person in the county was out in Christiansburg. The trip was also useful as I was able to choose possible places to railfan on July 4th.

July 4th dawned as foggy and miserable as July 3rd. Although by late morning the sun finally came out and by the time 611 returned from Lynchburg with the morning excursion run photographers were able to

the morning and afternoon runs I was able to get some wonderful photographs and video of 611 in downtown Roanoke. That afternoon I managed a truly wonderful photograph of 611 descending a mountain grade at speed near Glenvar, Virginia, on the return leg to Roanoke. That image was the photograph I had hoped to get when I purchased my ticket for the weekend many months earlier even though I had no idea when I arrived where or when I might be best placed to try shooting it. While that photograph is one I am very happy with the most lasting memories I took from 611 this summer were not captured on film.



Conclusion: The Technological Sublime

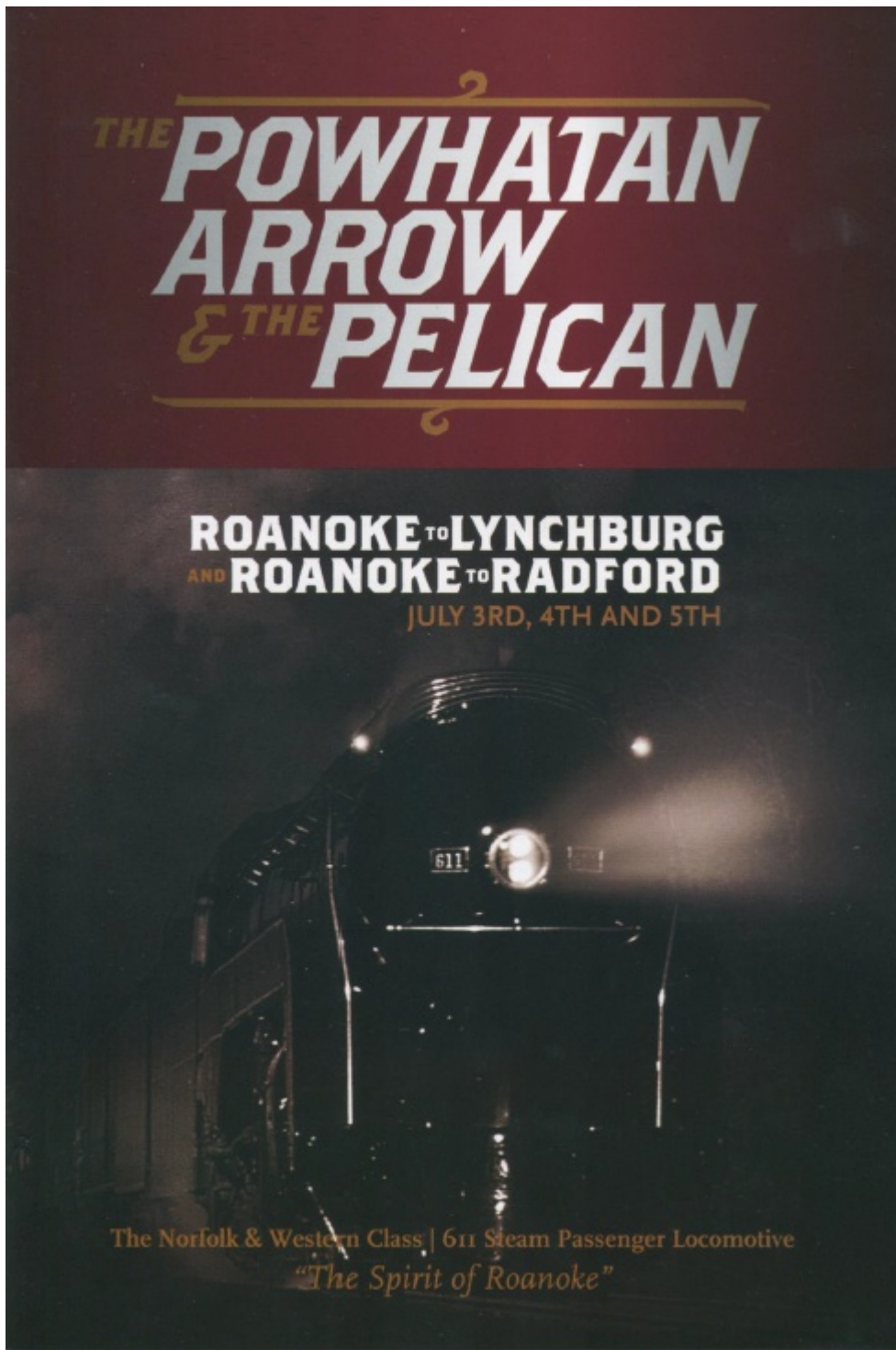
Let me conclude this essay by sharing with you my two most substantial and unforgettable memories of 611 from this past summer aside from that act of kindness in Charlottesville. Interestingly enough neither experience involves direct contact with the locomotive itself, although the memories of both encounters are fresh and are more real for me in many ways than any photograph that I took of 611.

The first event took place on Saturday of the July

4th Roanoke fan trip weekend. After riding behind 611 on two different back-to-back excursions the day before, I went trackside with camera in hand to try to capture the majesty of 611 out on the former N&W mainline. I drove north along the outskirts of Roanoke to the small town of Vinton, Virginia, hoping to catch the return trip that morning from Lynchburg. I stopped and parked my car on a quiet side street in front of a home near a grade crossing. As I pulled in that morning I wondered if I might be trespassing in some way, or maybe just give the perception of trespassing, as the road seemed both public and yet also private. In the back of my mind a question of perhaps parking elsewhere persisted.

As I walked over to the grade crossing to get a line of sight for a photo I noticed an elderly man coming over to me quickly from the house near where I had parked. His expression was difficult to gauge although I was already reaching for my keys to move my vehicle and starting to apologize before he could say anything. He asked if I was there to photograph 611. I said yes. At that point he began to speak and I began to listen. He told me 611 had gone by earlier on the way to Lynchburg and had never looked finer. He motioned towards the house and mentioned he had his grandson visiting in addition to many other family members and he had wanted them all to see 611. He explained he had worked for the Norfolk & Western as did his father, his grandfathers and many of his uncles, and that one of the latter had probably helped build 611, if not some of the other Js. Some had retired from N&W while others had retired from NS. He noted he had never expected to see 611 run again and was thankful that the opportunity was presenting itself that July 4th weekend.

After a while I asked the gentleman if it was OK to park there and he said that was fine and I could stay all day. He





Lynchburg. I had a writing deadline that week and could not take time out to try to photograph the locomotive again. In addition the exact day and time of the return trip were unknown to me.

My home in Charlottesville is very close to the grounds of the University of Virginia and is not only one block from the CSX/C&O Mountain Subdivision – which I can see out the living room window in winter – but is also less than a mile and a half from the former Southern/NS mainlines. There is a large hill behind my place and I rarely hear NS except very late at night although there is a lot of heavy mainline traffic. That day, lost in thought analyzing World War I, I was reading and typing with the window open and making progress. For a moment the world became still and quiet and I suddenly heard a far off rumbling. I thought it was CSX but realized this was a different sound that was recognizable yet unfamiliar. It was 611! The locomotive was making good time and I could make out the sound of the running gear. Suddenly the whistle blew and I could hear the locomotive quite clearly even though it was not very close. For a few minutes the locomotive grew ever louder as did the whistle and then the echoes faded completely away. And there I was still sitting at my desk next

wished me luck and hoped I got some good photographs. I asked him if he would like me to send him a set of the photographs later, assuming some of what I was hoping to shoot that weekend came out. He smiled, spread his hands wide gesturing towards the space between his home and the tracks and said he was thankful for the offer but he didn't need any photographs. With the unobstructed view of the NS mainline from his front porch I had to agree.

My “final” and most lasting memory of 611 actually took place before the July 4th excursion weekend at the desk in my home office where I am sitting at the moment. This was the week following the Manassas excursions as 611 passed through Charlottesville southbound to return to Roanoke via

to the window.

Before I wrote this essay I had “remembered” and replayed that sonic encounter over and over again in my mind and had assumed it had occurred after I traveled to Roanoke for the excursion weekend. It turns out that hearing that locomotive, which to me really was technologically sublime, occurred before I took hundreds of photographs in Roanoke and spent time behind 611 as a passenger. Seeing 611 down at the Charlottesville station in June was special for me because it was surreal to see the locomotive in my hometown. As it turns out having the locomotive “present” in my home, if only for a minute or so, is even more special. Hopefully 611's return provided similar experiences for others.