

# The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



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Number 3

## The O. Winston Link Museum (or Oh, What I Saw, Look)

**Kurt Thompson, Chesapeake Division**

On Tuesday, January 3rd, my wife, son and I were traveling back to Maryland from a New Year's holiday weekend with my family in East TN. Our usual and fastest route to near Knoxville is running down the I-81 corridor from Front Royal, VA to the end of I-81 where it ends at mile marker 421 on I-40. And just along the way we have to pass within 10 miles of downtown Roanoke.

My wife, Torie, grew up in a family that visited many museums and family trips were centered around how many museums and historical markers my father-in-law could pack in. His summer trips are now the material of extended family lore and humor.

On this trip back home, Torie suggested with stop in Roanoke for lunch and to visit the O. Winston Link Museum. The museum is located in the lower level of the former N&W Roanoke Passenger Station. The Passenger Station has been renovated and is the Roanoke Valley Visitor Center.

Inside the Visitor Center are the usual racks of tourist brochures and a couple of surprises. Two ½" to the foot models: J Class 611 with an auxiliary water tender and the A Class 1218.



On the east end of the Museum is the stairwell that leads down to the O. Winston Link Museum. Halfway down the stair is a built-out (a la All Weather cab window) portico. It looks east at the triple junction. The single track furthest back in the picture are the line from Roanoke down to Winston-Salem as it swings sharply between the 1st and 2nd bridge piers. The next two tracks closer are the mainline to Norfolk. The next bundle of three tracks swing north to the Shenandoah Division and run north (north-east) to Hagerstown, MD. Part of these tracks goes to the Mechanical Department's building where the NS System Test vehicles are kept.

Before I took the picture, my son had been standing in the portico. There is a small audio description that can be played with one button. While Eric was pressing the button, a locomotive rolled into view from the right. It came to a stop. When Eric pressed the button, the locomotive reversed direction and went back. Now, Eric had been to many display layouts as a child and had pushed his share of

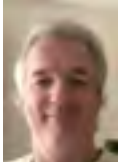
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# The Local

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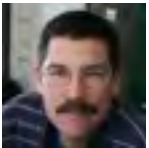
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On page 1, at the top, is a "railcar". It was in the model contest at 2016's convention. Bill Davis, modeler.

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# President's Column

*P J Mattson, MMR*

Winter is all but over. Spring is now starting. It's been an up and down winter with most of it with great weather. I know I had trouble getting any Modeling done as it was too nice outside. I hope you all had a great winter also.

The main activity I did was with our South Jersey Friday Night Operations. This is a group of modelers that get together on every Friday night at one of our members railroads in the group. We enjoy running train and socializing together. There is always a lot of joking and ribbing each other. All the railroads have an operating scheme. We usually do the session in four hours. Along the way we also learn each other's ways of doing things in the hobby. So

besides the fun of operating it is also a good learning experience. If you don't have something like this in your area maybe some of you could get it started. It would be well worth it for everyone. Besides our group there are a few others in the New Jersey Division and the Philadelphia Division.

In the past few months John Rahenkamp, Doc Pattie and I have been featured on some of the news channels. We hope this has inspired some of our local modelers.

This year's convention will be in Harrisburg, PA from Oct 12 to Oct 15. Register early and mark the dates on your calendar. We want to see you there. It promises to be full of activities and a lot of fun! (see pp 10-17 for more info)

Until next time stay on the right track.

Editor and Publisher's note: You see this space? See the other little empty spaces? We hate that. Those are spaces where YOU could have written something and gotten published, picked up an AP point. Not hard to do, not even time-consuming—maybe five minutes. Help us out!

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buttons to activate parts of the display layout. He called me back up to the landing and told me about it. I only wish NS had provided a 1:1 push button display.

Visitors to the O. Winston Link Museum are forbidden to take any photos of the displays. That's why there are no pictures of the inside of the Museum. The displays are quite impressive. Mr. Link was a genius of photography. Considering he was working taking mostly night photographs, his notes and prestaging was monumental. His expenditures on flash bulbs alone was staggering. And when I say flash bulbs, I mean flood light size or bigger bulbs.

The docent on the day of our visit was a knowledgeable old man named John Bradshaw. Sensing my interest from a railfan's point of view, he showed me how to operate one of the displays which digitally unraveled one of Mr. Link's most noted night shots: the street scene. The second photo you can deconstruct is the Drive In Theater with the train in the background.

After I finished in the Museum, I walked around the back of the building. With the parking lot nearly deserted, I had plenty of safe walking area to get

close to the junction, including the southbound stack train led by a BNSF run through locomotive. It was waiting for its turn through the junction/interlocking. The reason for its delay soon arrived from the west: a manifest freight bound for Norfolk and points east of Roanoke.

Though the day was cold and overcast, my visit to Roanoke that day was a warm and pleasant time. If you are planning a trip to Roanoke for railfanning or visiting the Virginia Transportation Museum (down the street in the old NW Freight House), don't forget to take time to visit the O. Winston Link Museum as well.



*continued from page 4*

BNSF 8266 waiting for a turn through the interlocking



## **The MER Grants Policy**

The MER has a matching funds grant mechanism whereby any of the Divisions can file a request for funding for an item, or project. The rules for this are very straightforward and can be found in Section 5, Part X. Grant Policy, page 5-6 (page 52 of the current website version, available from the MER web site, <http://mer-nmra.com/pdfs/ExecutiveHandbook2014mwb610.pdf>, or the MER Secretary). In short, any active Division within the Region can apply for a matching grant of up to \$1000.00 by first submitting a proposal for that funding that describes the use and an estimate as to how it will be spent prior to spending any monies.

All proposals should be a single page. This does not need to be a long, drawn out document. A few clear sentences should suffice in almost every case. What is needed is also a clear cost estimate to be attached and it should all be sent to either the President or to the Secretary of the MER. Thereafter the MER Board will review and either approve or disapprove funding. All requested funds must be used for activities directly related to promoting model railroading and must relate to events, activities, and operations that occur within the MER. There is one limitation beyond that dollar amount - each Division can only present 1 proposal per year. But, each Division can also come back with a new proposal every year.



## YOUR MER AT WORK

### *The Budget*

By Brian Kampschroer, Treasurer

On January 29th, the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Board of Directors approved the MER budget for 2017. The act was the culmination of a process that began with solicitations for income and expense estimates from the Board members and the staff of the MER, followed by a committee meeting that collated the estimates and formulated a preliminary budget which it presented to the Board. The Board then met, analyzed the preliminary document, made a few judicious changes and approved the final budget after a mere four hours of deliberation. It was a convoluted process which we are working to streamline for the future.

The budget for this year shows a deficit and has done for almost the past ten years. While the MER currently has adequate assets to fund the deficit, obviously, unlike a government, we cannot continue with a deficit indefinitely. To understand why we are operating in the red, we must understand where the MER gets its income and what are its major expenses.



US Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton at work on the budget

A number of years ago, the National Model Railroad Association decided it made sense to have members make only one dues payment which would cover the national organization and the relevant region. Unfortunately, as the national budget got tighter and its dues increased, the regions' share of the dues failed to also increase, so today it is still only two dollars, payable as one dollar, twice per year. The dues share from the NMRA, minute as it is, is nevertheless a major source of income. The other major source of income is from the region's annual convention: a small fee built into the registration cost designed to cover some of the MER's convention expenses, and then whatever surplus may result from a successful and well managed convention. Special projects, sales (patches, pins, mugs, etc.), donations and interest sometime also result in income, but none has been significant in recent years.

Conventions also account for a significant proportion of the expense budget. Included here are such things as the MER Registrar's expenses, both personal and for registrations; contest and achievement program awards and associated expenditures, and the Executive Convention Chair's expenses. In addition, the MER assumes responsibility for the convention hotel and for any losses incurred from approved convention activities. If there is a surplus after all the convention bills are paid, the MER remits half the surplus to the sponsoring entity, usually one of the MER Divisions.

The MER's largest single expense is for the printed Local, which is fitting since it is the primary communication with our members. Nearly all the cost of the print version of The Local is paid through a subscription charge collected from members by the NMRA or the MER, or for MER life members, a like deduction from the Life Fund capital account, so this expense is close to being balanced by its

income in the budget. The on-line version of The Local is an additional expense but is reasonably small compared to its print version.

In addition, the MER regularly funds its Divisions and some special programs. It has long been the policy of the Mid-Eastern Region to share half the dues income with the Divisions in proportion to the members residing in each Division, and now NMRA HQ requires it. An additional grass roots program the MER funds is to grant half the cost of an approved capital project sponsored by a Division. (See the related article in The Local.) Supporting the Boy Scouts' railroad merit badge by providing simple car kits and instructors is another major program of the MER. Finally, in a small but significant program the MER sponsors the NMRA's Rail Pass initiative by paying directly to the NMRA the fees of applicants in the area of the MER, essentially making the Rail Pass free to potential MER members.

While there are other insignificant expenses, two other principal ones are for staff and Board costs for postage, software, travel, supplies and so forth; and the cost of nominations and elections, vital to the robust continuation of the organization, actually a significant printing, postage and collating expense.

As mentioned at the beginning of the article, the approved budget shows a deficit. One of your directors, Ken Montero, recently donated the entire cost of last year's survey which will almost balance the budget this year. Historically the directors and officers routinely donated many of their expenses, thus ensuring that by the end of the year the budget will be either close to balanced or possibly even in a surplus. We must keep in mind, however, that not all Board members are always able to make such donations, and the Board and meeting expenses are necessary for the efficient and responsible running of an eleemosynary corporation such as the Mid-Eastern Region.

The 2017 MER budget clearly demonstrates that expenses are under control, even modest in scale given our association's size and mission. The challenge for all of us is to increase our income so we can keep and expand our programs in support of our purpose.

MER Treasurer Brian Kampschroer at work on the budget



## Potomac Division Announcement:

Potomac Division will host **2018 MER Convention**

We are very pleased to announce that the Potomac Division will be hosting the 2018 Mid Eastern Region Convention. We have selected the dates of October 3-7, 2018, which is a Thursday through Sunday on Columbus Day weekend. We have also selected the Rockville Hilton, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD for the location of the 2018 convention.

# Keeping In Touch...

By Bob Price  
MER Business Manager

In this issue of The Local my column continues providing a preview of what members would experience if they elect to use electronic voting during our next MER election using Election Buddy.

We want to make it very clear that paper ballots are NOT going away. Each member eligible to vote electronically will still receive a paper ballot for the 2017 MER election. At some date in the future, we will examine allowing members to select electronic voting only, but paper ballots will remain an option.

In this issue, we look at how Election Buddy handles ballot questions if any are presented to the membership. Ballot questions will appear on the same web page as the positions a member is voting to fill. Each ballot question is presented individually to vote upon. The member votes by clicking on the radio button under the word "Selection" to the right of their choice. Only one decision can be selected per each ballot question. The following image shows an example of a ballot question that was presented on the paper ballot during the 2016 election.



The ballot question voting area only provides a high-level summary of the question. To view more details about what a member is voting upon, there is a hyper-link labelled "more information about this question". If you click on that link, a new web page opens and presents more details about the question.

**Question Info - Article II Membership, Fees, and Publication**  
**Section 3. Subscriptions and Fees**  
**Paragraph F.**

Before: F. In the absence of dues per se, a subscription to The Local may be obtained at a cost to be determined by the Board. Any NMRA member may subscribe to The Local.

After: F. Each MER member shall be entitled to a subscription to The Local, which a member may decline to receive. Any NMRA member may subscribe to The Local. The Board of Directors shall determine the form of, and subscription rates for, The Local.

Rationale: This amendment reflects that we are removed from the time when region membership included a subscription to The Local. It recognizes that some members do not wish to receive The Local in print or electronic format. And, it restates that existing practice that the subscription rates are set by the MER Board of Directors.

Once a voter has made their choices, they are prompted to submit their ballot. Basic tests are applied before the ballot is processed. For example, if a member missed making a choice for one of the ballot questions, they would be prompted to make a choice. A ballot can only be cast one time. Once submitted, a member cannot change their ballot.

Once the election closes, the Election Buddy system tabulates the results and allows them to be extracted. There is no way to extract from the system how any member voted.

Article II Membership, Fees, and Publication  
Section 3. Subscriptions and Fees  
Paragraph F.

I am in FAVOUR of the proposed amendment change: 13 votes - 86.7%  
I am OPPOSED to the proposed amendment change: 2 votes - 13.3%

Article IV Elections, Eligibility, Nominations and Ballots (6/05)  
Section 3. Nominations  
Paragraph C.

I am in FAVOUR of the proposed amendment change: 14 votes - 93.3%  
I am OPPOSED to the proposed amendment change: 1 vote - 6.7%

Electronic Voting has become an accepted standard amongst many organizations. It can be convenient for the voter and tend to see greater voter response. It is also cost-effective for those conducting the election. It also reduces the effort to manually validate and tabulate election data. If you are eligible to vote and eligible to vote electronically, we hope you will try it.

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.



## Position Available: Model Contest Chairperson

**Position Summary:** The Model Contest Chair is responsible for coordinating, administering, and supervising the Model Contest at Mid-Eastern Regional (MER) conventions utilizing guidelines and regulations set by the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) and the MER. He/she must be computer literate, a good organizer and manager, a good modeler in his own right, and thoroughly versed in the model contest judging procedures of the MER.

**Principal Activities Include:** So, this position consists of: (1) recruiting judges, (2) assist in setting up the contest room at each MER sponsored convention, making sure that there is appropriate display space and category identifying signs in the contest room, coordinating with the General Contest Chair,

(3) insuring that each contestant fills out the necessary entry forms, and insuring that the entry form data is recorded in the Model Contest database, assist in contest paperwork, entering information into the computer database, (4) verifying data, tallying scores, printing, and distributing ribbons and certificates to be placed with the winning models, (5) assist the General Contest Chair in distributing awards at the Awards Ceremony, and (6) assist the General Contest Chair in resolving disputes, if any, in connection with the Model Contest.

If interested, contact:

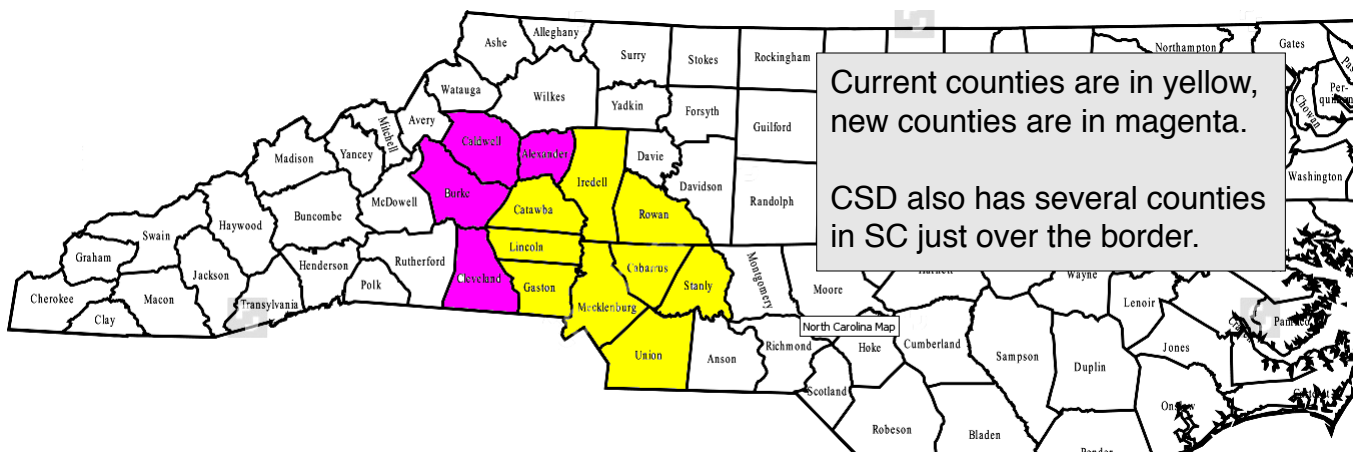
Martin Brechbiel  
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**martinwb@verizon.net**  
General Contest Chair  
Director

---

## Notice of Proposed Expansion of Carolina Southern Division

Under Article X, Section 8 of the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) By-Laws, the Carolina Southern Division (Division 12) has proposed adding North Carolina counties **Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Cleveland** to its geographic boundary. These four counties are to the west of the current Carolina Southern boundary and are not currently aligned with any MER division or other NMRA region. Anyone affected by this change and wishing to comment should submit their comments or concerns to me within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

**Kenneth Nesper Jr.**  
**MER-NMRA Secretary**  
**oscaledc@yahoo.com**





# 2017 MER CONVENTION THE SUSQUEHANNOCK PROTOTYPE TOURS

## American Car and Foundry, and Bowser Manufacturing

Dan Horting

To kick off the convention on Thursday, October 12th there will be a day long bus tour to American Car and Foundry in Milton and Bowser Manufacturing in Mountoursville. As an added bonus our lunch stop will be the Front Street Station Restaurant in Northumberland.

Hotel departure is at 8 a.m. on an executive coach to American Car and Foundry (ACF). Seating is limited to one bus load, so register early to assure a seat. There will be a waiting list in case someone cancels. ACF Industries LLC originally known as The American Car and Foundry Company was formed in 1899. ACF Industries LLC is a leader in the manufacture and fabrication of specialty railcar parts and miscellaneous steel products. While the Company's primary purpose is to compliment the new car and car repair market, it also provides manufacturing support to other manufacturers of steel products.



Following our tour at ACF we will be driven to the historic Front Street Station for a lunch buffet. Construction began on this building in 1908. At the same time PRR's Northumberland classification yard was expanded making it the fifth largest such railroad yard in the United States at the time. The station was completed in 1910, opening the way for a flourishing Pennsylvania Railroad passenger train service that brought 18 trains to town each day. One of these trains was *The Susquehannock*. The station closed in 1958 and remained closed until 1981 at which time it was restored as a restaurant. The Front Street Station Restaurant opened for business on August 1, 1983.



After lunch the bus will go to Mountoursville to visit Bowser Manufacturing. The company was founded in 1948 by Bill Bowser in California; since 1961 it has been owned by the Lewis English family. Bowser produces model railroad locomotives, railroad cars, kits and a wide selection of parts directed at the more serious model railroad enthusiast. Bowser's significance for the model railroad community lies not only in the products that Bowser itself originated, but also in those originally produced by other companies. The latter includes products originally made by Penn Line Manufacturing, Varney, Cary, and Pittman motors. There will be a shopping opportunity at English's Model Railroad Supply.

## Operating Session Callboards

The Susquehannock operating session callboards currently have a total of 64 positions on seven different layouts. The callboard layouts feature a variety of dispatching methods including signals, radios, and timetable and train order. The layouts model a range of time periods and range from prototype-based to freelanced. There will be a variety of operating positions available.

Steven Mallery, whose layout is described above, is one of the operating session hosts. Steve King, who literally wrote the book on timetable and train order operation, will be presenting his clinic on the subject and then hosting an operating session on Bob Charles's South Penn Division. Other layouts include Wayne Betty's Lancaster & Atlantic RR, Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley, Don Florwick's Pittsburgh & South Pennsylvania RR, Charles Kadyk's Pennsylvania and New England, and Brian Wolfe's Western Maryland Railway, Blue Ridge Division.

To see complete descriptions of the callboard layouts and to download the registration form, visit the convention website. We expect to sell out the callboards, so register now to reserve your slot.



# East Broad Top Railroad and Rockhill Trolley Museum Tour

On Friday, October 13 we have a day long bus trip planned to Rockhill Furnace, Pennsylvania, to tour the East Broad Top narrow gauge railroad facilities as well as the adjacent Rockhill Trolley Museum. The bus will be leaving the hotel at 8 AM. During this tour you will visit the historic East Broad Top Railroad shops and roundhouse and the Rockhill Trolley Museum car barns, as well as riding the trolley over historic right of way.



The East Broad Top (EBT) is a National Historic Landmark. The East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company preserves the country's oldest surviving narrow gauge trackage, built and opened for service in 1873. Shut down in 1956, and then operated for another 50 years as a tourist train, the line remains virtually intact – including track, steam locomotives, cars and facilities.

The EBT is a virtual time machine documenting the industrial progress of the U.S. during the golden era of steam power, and has been described by the Smithsonian as “the best preserved example of a 1900- era industrial site anywhere in the country”. You will be guided through the various shops, roundhouse, and facilities by guides well versed in the history of the railroad. One of your guides will be our division’s Lee Rainey, considered by many to be the leading authority on the EBT. His book on the railroad is a “must have” for the EBT enthusiast.

Currently the railroad is not operating any equipment or offering rides, but active restoration and preservation work continues on site under the auspices of the Friends of the East Broad Top, Inc. Your visit will include a behind-the-scenes tour of the restoration shop.

Lunch will be provided during the tour by the members of the trolley museum. Space for this tour is limited to one bus load. Once the bus is full it will be leaving for Orbisonia without you.





At the Rockhill Trolley Museum you will ride on one of the many historical trolleys from the museum's collection. The collection includes several operational trolleys, including an open car, high-speed interurban cars, fascinating maintenance-of-way cars, and two PCC Cars. Plus you'll see more cars being restored in the shops by talented volunteers. Your guides will include experienced trolley operators and restoration crew.







# 2017 MER CONVENTION THE SUSQUEHANNOCK DETAILS ON THIS/THAT

## Layout Tours

The Susquehannock layout tours are still a work in progress but already we have over two dozen layout owners who have graciously volunteered to open their layouts for you to visit. In addition to the tours scheduled during convention hours we'll have a number of layouts open for going-to-the-convention and going-home tours. We have a variety of scales including N, HO, S, O and G, layout sizes both large and small, and layouts both prototype-based and free-lanced. Here is just a small sampling of the layouts that will be open for tours.

### Steven Mallery's PRR Buffalo Line



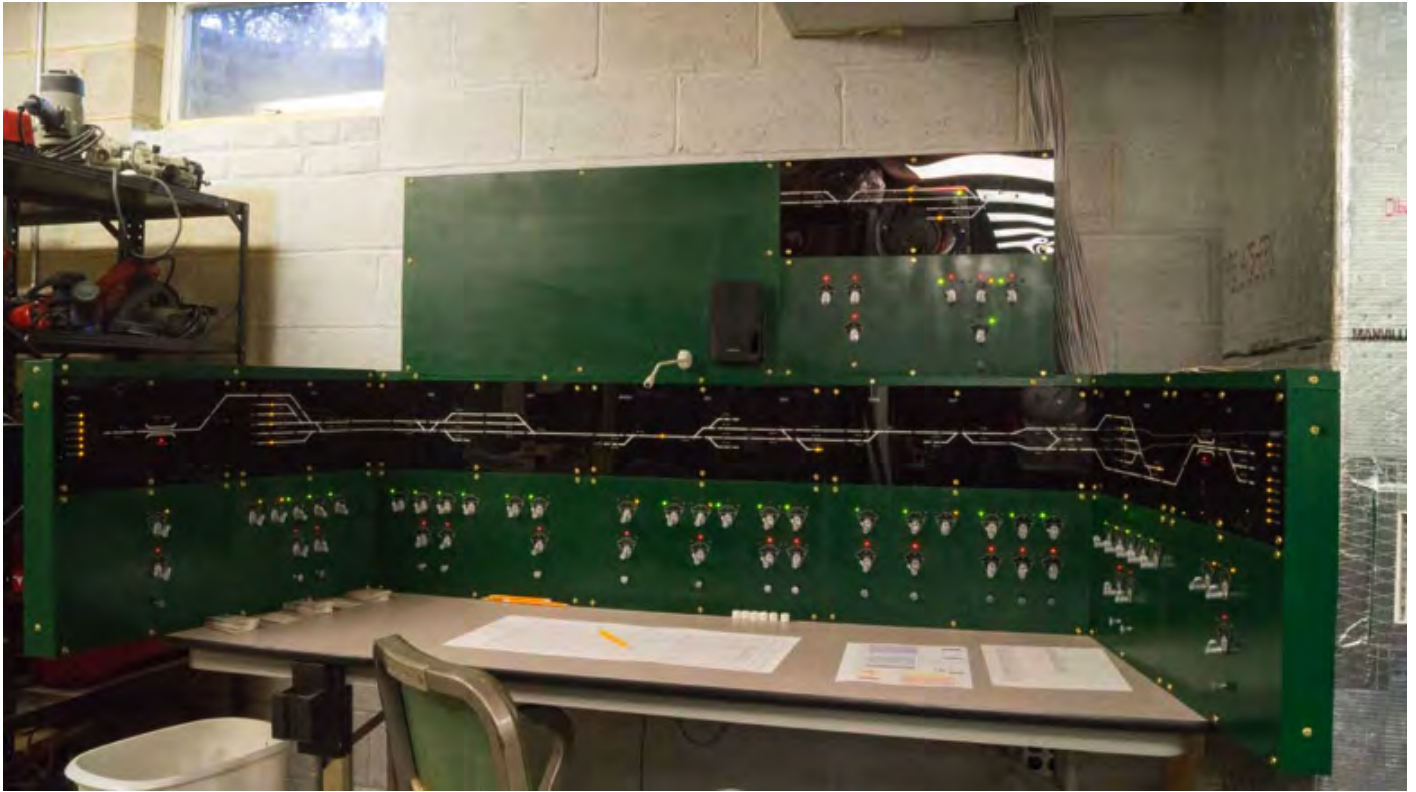
A coal train on the Erie Branch waits for a clear signal as a freight train passes on the main

**Steven Mallery** is a retired dispatcher for Norfolk Southern who worked the same geographical area that he models. His mid 1960's era PRR Buffalo Line is a point to point, HO scale model railroad and runs from South Williamsport, PA, to GJ interlocking outside of Buffalo, NY, with three staging yards representing Enola, PA, Buffalo, NY, and Erie, PA. The principal classification yard at Renovo is supplemented by four small local yards. Half of the 250 feet of single track mainline is on two levels allowing plenty of space on the single level center peninsula for the heavy helper grade that requires helper assistance for both up hill shoves and down hill braking. Depending on traffic, two helper crews are often required. The model railroad is located in a 28' x 34' room.

The layout is fully signaled and features a prototype-style CTC Machine which the Dispatcher uses to control the layout. A computer, which uses Bruce Chubb's C/MRI to interface to the railroad and CTC panel, controls the switches, signals, and CTC panel in a prototypical manner.

<http://www.mer2017.org>





**The CTC panel on the PRR Buffalo Line**

Susquehanna Division 11 Spring Event  
May 20, 2017  
Christiana Freight Station, 10 Railroad  
Ave, Christiana, PA 17509-1416  
The station, approx. 5 miles south of  
Gap PA, features a train watching deck  
on the Amtrak Keystone corridor. The  
morning program will have 2 clinics. We  
are pleased to have a presentation by  
our own Division 11 Jim Hertzog. Also  
scheduled is a discussion of the  
Railroad Museum of PA – Past, Current  
and Future. Afternoon activities include  
home layout visits.  
Contact: Howard Oakes  
717-632-5990  
hoakes@susquehannanmra.org or visit  
<http://www.susquehannanmra.org>

## Ken McCorry's Buffalo Line



Ken McCorry's layout has been featured twice in Model Railroader magazine cover articles. His HO layout occupies 3120 sq. ft. in a barn which was built for the layout. It has a 1425' mainline which is about 23 scale miles. The layout models the PRR Buffalo line in the 1956-57 time period and runs from the east end of the Rockville Bridge near Harrisburg, PA to Buffalo, NY. It's built on two main levels with additional levels for staging. Most industries on the layout are based on actual industries. Operations follow prototype practices of the era requiring a crew of 30 people including 3 dispatchers to operate the railroad.

Ken is building a full-size SD-45 cab simulator in the barn's garage area. The cab contains a prototype-style control stand which controls a model locomotive on the layout. An HD projector projects an image from a camera car pushed by the model onto a large screen in front of the cab. A 500 watt home theatre system amplifies the sound generated by a sound decoder creating quite the authentic rumble. Sitting in the cab simulator it feels like you're running a full-size locomotive on Ken's layout. You won't want to miss seeing this in action.





Ken stands next to the SD-45 cab which he constructed with wood

Ken in his cab simulator with the control stand





## Todd Treaster's New York, Susquehanna & Allegheny, Pittsburgh Division



Above: Enola Yard; Right: Pittsburgh

21,000 cars, 2,000 locomotives and a 35 x 38 foot operating layout with 3,000 cars on it, that's what you'll see when you visit the New York, Susquehanna, and Allegheny, Pittsburgh Division. The railroad is depicted from the late 80s to the late 90s and is mostly Conrail. The N-scale layout features a 40-track Enola yard that will hold 3,200 fifty-foot box cars and main lines that run some 370 feet around four rooms. The city of Pittsburgh is 70% complete and has approximately 400 LEDs that light up the city. There are 4,500 trees in the mountains. The layout was started in 2004 and has been featured three times in N Scale Railroading magazine. Approximately 80 display cases allow you to see the entire history of N scale.

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### And More

For those of you traveling I-95 to or from the convention, Howard Zane's Piermont Division will be open on the Thursday afternoon before the convention and on the Sunday afternoon after.

That's just a few of the layouts that will be available for you to tour. For additional layout tours and to register for the convention, see the Susquehannock website at <http://www.mer2017.org>. And check back for updates as we will be adding more layouts as we sign up additional layout tour hosts.



## Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2017 Convention

**The Susquehannock**  
 October 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
 www.mer2017.org



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

Primary Registrant: \_\_\_\_\_ **MMR? Y / N, Any Title for Badge?** \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Other Attending (living at same address): \_\_\_\_\_

Children Attending (18 & under – list all): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_ Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Scale: \_\_\_\_\_ Is this your first MER Convention?: \_\_\_\_\_

Description	Act. #	Cost	#	Paying
Early Registration (through August 31)	E	\$49		
Basic Registration (September 1 thru October 7 )	B	\$59		
At Door Registration (October 12-14)	D	\$59		
Non-NMRA Member Extra Fee	N	\$10		
Significant Other & Children Under 18	O, T, Y, I	\$5		
Banquet – Saturday Night	401	\$45		
Breakfast Prepay, \$14 Day Includes Tax & Tip	-----	-----	----	-----
Friday Breakfast	402	\$14		
Saturday Breakfast	403	\$14		
Sunday Breakfast	404	\$14		
Convention Polo Shirt, Black – S, M, L, XL. Quan- Size- // Quan- Size-	901-904	\$34		
Heavy Duty w/ Embroidered Logo – 2XL, 3XL. Quan- Size- // Quan- Size-	905-906	\$39		
<b>Call Boards / Ops – Expanded Call Board Info Available on Website</b>	-----	-----	----	-----
Thur. 7p-10p, Pittsburgh & South Pennsylvania RR, Don Florwick <b>Max # 10</b>	801	\$5		
Fri. 12p-4p, Lancaster & Atlantic RR, Wayne Betty <b>Max # 10</b>	802	\$5		
Fri. 1p-5p, Western Maryland RY, Blue Ridge Div., Brian Wolfe <b>Max # 6</b>	803	\$5		
Fri. 6p-10p, PRR Buffalo Line, Stephen Mallery <b>Max # 12</b>	804	\$5		
Sat. 9a-12p, Pennsylvania & New England, Charles Kadyk <b>Max # 10</b>	805	\$5		
Sat. 1p-4p, Quaker Valley, Bob Bucklew <b>Max # 8</b>	806	\$5		
<b>Prototype Tours – More Info on Website</b>	---	----	----	-----
Friday 8a - 5:30p EBT/Shade Gap Trolley/Museum/Shop Tours, Incl. Lunch	201	\$71		
Fri. AM – Harrisburg Station and Harris Tower	202	\$37		
Fri. PM – Harrisburg Station, Harris Tower, & Civil War Museum	203	\$53		
<b>Made in the MER Tours – More Info on Website</b>	---	----	----	-----
Thurs. 8a–5:30p ACF Tank Car Mfg.+ Bowser Tours, Incl. Lunch, & Sightseeing	701	\$67		
<b>General Interest Activities – More Info on Website</b>	---	----	----	-----
Fri. All Day - Harrisburg-Capital & Civil War Museum, Reserved-On Your Own Lunch	501	\$53		
Sat. AM – Hershey Gardens & Guided Museum Tour	502	\$52		
Friday Evening - Wine & Paint Clinic	503	\$45		
Additional events will be added when confirmed and the cost is known.				<b>Total Advance Registration Paid</b>

Payment must accompany registration. **Visa, MC, Discover, & American Express Cards Accepted. Contact Registrar to use PayPal.**

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ 3 Digit Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to: MER Conventions**

Send to: MER Conventions, P.O. Box 467, Crosswicks, NJ 08515-0467

Any Questions and/or additional information, e-mail to **Registrar@mer-nmra.com**, or 609-585-4616 (leave a message)

**Hotel – Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel**, 4650 Lindle Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17111, Hotel Reservations: 717-564-5511 or 800-325-3535 <http://www.sheratonharrisburghershey.com/> **Room Rate** - \$99 night + tax single, \$105 night + tax double, thru Sept. 15, 2017, Use: **<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/ModelRailroadConv2017>**

Or by phone use **Model Railroad Convention 2017**, Room Rate applies 10/9 thru 10/18

Watch the following sites to keep up to date on new information; [www.mer2017.org](http://www.mer2017.org), [mer-nmra.com](http://mer-nmra.com) Updated 4/8/17



# JUST DO SOMETHING!

## (Or Swallow a Live Toad)

**Dr. John Pursell**  
**South Mountain Division**

When we moved into a new home five years ago, I had the pleasure of acquiring a large, if unfinished, basement. My railroad plans called for a reasonably-sized layout, roughly 12 feet by 26 feet, with a simple plan and lots of industrial switching.

But after the bench-work was up, I began to notice that my progress through track laying and electrical work began to get slower and slower, and in some areas had actually come to a standstill. I found myself spending less time on the layout and more time on things like structure kits which, while valuable, were not what I needed at this particular point in time. While I wanted the layout, I had to confront the possibility that there was something wrong with what I was doing. I finally decided to have a personal intervention with myself.

I sat on my stool for an hour or so, staring at the layout, and then realized it was right under my nose, so to speak. My layout had become a giant receptacle for all kinds of junk-- unfinished kits, track pieces, wire, rolling stock, all piled on top of the bench-work like it was a set of shelves. I realized there was no way I could do anything in these conditions. Armed with this knowledge, I set about the next weekend, cleaning off the bench-work and organizing all the stuff on shelves under the layout. This included cleaning up and organizing my workbench, which in truth was as bad as the layout.

But while things were better, I still didn't seem to be making much progress, or at least not as much as I would have liked. Perhaps my personal intervention hadn't gone far enough. It was time to re-examine my personal modeling habits.

I began to realize that I kept waiting for long, uninterrupted periods of time in order to get layout work done. And while my schedule occasionally allowed for this, those times were few and far between. In this, I'm probably little different from most modelers, who balance work, family time, home repairs, etc, with their modeling time. I began to see that I needed to figure out how to get modeling done in short



periods of time. And so I adopted a philosophy that I call “Just Do Something.”

Since short periods of time were what I had to work with on a regular basis, then I couldn't expect to get large amounts of work done in those periods. My plan was to stop thinking about long periods of time and have materials and tools ready for those times when I had just a few minutes. I started by organizing tools and materials by job—all track-laying tools went into a plastic container; wiring tools in another, scenery in a third, etc. While I had to acquire a few duplicates of tools, it was worth it to have the tasks organized. I determined that I would use those short periods to Just Do Something, regardless of how small that something might be. If that meant only getting a single foot of track installed, fine. It was “something.” If it meant just getting a couple of windows painted in a structure, fine, too. It was something. And I began to notice progress—not fast, but steady. And that was just fine, too.

I also began to make task lists; lists of ten or fewer jobs that needed to be done in a specific order, such as finishing a backdrop before ballasting track in front of it. This helped keep me on track through those short periods of work. It's also a big psychological reward to cross an item off the list when it's completed.

Nonetheless, there still were those tasks that I just didn't care to do, even though they were necessary for the completion of the layout. This led me to adopt for my modeling what I call the Live Toad Theory, which states “If you swallow a live toad first thing in the morning, then nothing else that happens to you that day will be nearly as bad.” I use this idea with my private music students. If there is something they really don't like to practice, then they do it first thing in every practice session. Get it over with and move onto more enjoyable things.

Applying the theory to modeling was easy. My personal “live toad” is ballasting. For some reason, I just hate it, which means I tend to procrastinate doing it. So, if I have a few minutes, I have the tools and materials in place to do some ballasting first thing in my work session. I swallow the live toad, so to speak. I might only get a foot or two of ballasting done, but that’s enough, because it’s something.

Then I turn to more pleasant work. This means that the ballasting is getting done. Slowly, but steadily.

So, if progress has slowed on your layout, try these ideas. If necessary, tidy up the layout, organize your tools and materials by task, make a few lists, and Just Do Something.

And swallow a live toad, if you have to!

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## Writing for the LOCAL, from Your Editor

The LOCAL has two purposes here...one of which is to pass on to you the MER member what is going on across the Region, and what the Board is thinking about and doing for you. The other is to provide you the member with an opportunity to do some writing for publication that gets you AP Author credit.

At a large newspaper, there is a staff that writes. They get assignments from editors. They get paid to write. (Although that's less true than it was)

NMRA and MER aren't like that. There's a staff, sort of (me), there are some assignments, sort of (columns by 3 of us), but no one gets paid.

Most small newspapers and magazines pay for stories, on a per-story basis. But you're competing with other writers who would also like that \$100.

The pay here is AP Author points. You need 42 of them for the certificate. That's 21 full pages in The LOCAL, or 11 pages in the LOCAL and 20 in your Division newsletter, 14 pages in a national magazine like NMRA Mag, MR, RMC, etc. Photos are worth the same. Scale drawings of prototype are worth twice as much—but if that's what you are doing, I recommend you start at the top with the national magazines; very few people do those kind of drawings, and you might as well get paid. Here's the link on the points breakdown: <http://nmra.org/author>. You do get partial credit for ¼ and ½ page amounts.

I just had a story about 3d printing. I need one about laser cutting, maybe one about using something like a Vectric ShopBot if anyone can afford such a thing (I'd never even heard of it until recently). A story about using various 3D software tools would be good. Maybe one about live toads.

I need some stories with photos about the model railroads in your Division. There are probably more railroads than there are members needing AP Author. If you go to an open house for someone you haven't visited before, that's a good candidate for an article. Make sure your camera is going with you, take at least a half-dozen pictures. Talk to the owner/builder about it. Arrange for a second visit that is just you, for just this purpose. Take some better photos, that are posed, rather than quickies. Make sure you get agreement from them about photos being published.

Make sure you are keeping track of what/where/when you got published, no one else is going to do it for you.



# THE MER WANTS YOU!

## **NEEDED: Candidates for the position of Director – there are 3 Director positions that are up for election in 2017.**

Any MER member can be nominated via a petition signed by 25 current MER members, submitted to any member of the nominating committee **before June 1st**. A photo and a 200 word (max) statement outlining his/her qualifications or desire for the position is still required. A 500 word statement can also be supplied for on the MER Web site.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Bob Minnis (kahlualab@aol.com)  
Bruce Barrett (greenjeeps2@yahoo.com)  
John Janosko (john2jan@embarqmail.com)

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

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

Please send one e-mail to all three committee members to insure reception of your nomination!

## **Deadlines and Schedules for 2017 Nominations and Balloting**

By-laws changes adopted in 2016 require the publication of deadlines and schedules for nominations and balloting for 2017 to be published in the first issue of The Local for 2017. These dates are determined by Policies, Art. VI, except for the first one that is set by the Nominations Committee. Here they are for the rest of 2017:

June 1, 2017 -- Deadline for receipt of petitions for nominations sent to the Nominations Committee. Also date for Nominations Committee to notify Board of Directors of slate of nominees.

August 1, 2017 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting.

September 5, 2017 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

September 9, 2017 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

September 20, 2017 -- Deadline for Balloting Committee to transmit results to President and Business Manager.

September 30, 2017 -- Deadline for communicating election results to candidates.

October 10, 2017 -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER-NMRA website.

# MER Special Awards -- 2017

By Martin Brechbiel, MER General Contest Chairman

The MER has several Special Awards that are given out during the awards ceremony at the Fall convention every year. Many have been associated with this event for quite a few years and some that were in this list have been discontinued for a variety of reasons. What may not be fully understood is the process of how the MER Special Awards operates, how they are created, approved and terminated.

All Special Awards are sponsored by either a Division, individuals, or the MER itself. There is an approval process. All proposals for any new awards are submitted to the MER Contest Chair and there is a template for entering required information primarily so that our members know and understand the specifics of an award and how to qualify for it if they are interested in making and entering a model into the contest room with that specific intention, e.g. the Narrow Gauge Award or Favorite Train, or in the case of the Pride of Dixie Award, whether it will even be awarded, and it won't in 2017 since the convention is North of the Mason-Dixon Line. Also, not

all awards are made if there are no qualifying models for a specific award.

The template of information defining the new Special Award is reviewed by the MER Board of Directors and the sponsors are notified that their award has been approved. Special Awards are approved for a 2-year cycle and all awards are then reviewed and renewed at the MER Board of Directors in odd numbered years. The MER Contest Chair contacts the sponsors prior to this meeting to confirm renewal or termination. In some cases, awards are renewed only another final year, or are renewed until that final plaque in the sponsor's possession get awarded. And, lastly some awards are terminated at the request of the sponsor.

This year the MER has a new Special Award, The Bob Liberman Memorial Award. The "details" regarding this award are on page 24 and will soon be posted up on the MER web site and in the MER Yahoo group files section.

All of the information and forms pertaining to the Special Awards, criteria, qualifications, Judging, etc. are available on the MER web site, <http://mer-nmra.com/Achievement.html>, and on our Yahoo Group, The MERMailbag at <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MERMailbag/files/The%20Special%20Awards/>. Just click on the name of the Award to be linked to the pdf files for that award's information! Downloading and filling these out well in advance is worth your time & effort since you can type right into the form.

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## A new special award that will be given at the Fall Convention this year

# The Bob Liberman Memorial Award

1) What is the award?

The Bob Liberman Memorial Award will be given for the model freight, passenger, caboose, or MoW car that would, in the opinion of the awarding committee, be the one that Bob Liberman would choose as the best detailed car in the contest. The award includes a plaque and \$100.00 Gift Card/Certificate to Hobby Store of choice.

2) Sponsor: New Jersey Division, MER, NMRA

3) Who can compete for the award? Any NMRA member in good standing who chooses to enter a model in the official NMRA sponsored judged model contest at an MER convention may compete for the award in the freight, passenger, or MoW model categories.

4) Modeling Parameters, i. e. definition and limits of what qualifies a model for the award: The award is made solely based upon the level of details on the model, so it's Details, Details, Details! No upper bounds!

5) How the contest will be Judged and the winner chosen: The NJ Division will appoint a small committee to look over entrants in the model contest room at the convention and declare a winner and inform the Contest Chair.

6) Operations and Award: At the official MER awards ceremony, the plaque and cash award will be handed out by a representative of the New Jersey Division, MER, NMRA when the other official awards are distributed.

7) Sponsors (Organization and Contact persons) and Funding: Bill Grosse or the NJ Division Superintendent. The award is fully funded by the New Jersey Division

8) Time limit for this award: The sponsors of this award understand that in order for it to be placed into the Special awards given at a MER sponsored convention that this award must be approved by the MER Board of Directors. This has been approved, the award will be given at every MER sponsored convention over the next two years. In order to continue to presenting this award after that, the sponsors must seek approval from the MER Board of Directors every two years.



Clint sez: I met Bob Liberman about 15 years ago while MER Vice President; stayed at his house overnight on a visit to NJ Div. He ran for MER VP in 2004. I remember him specifically because he had more brass locos and cars than John Glaab. IIRC his wife had been the mayor of Trenton.

## South Mountain Superintendent Paul Rausch passed away in March...

*remarks compiled by Tom Fedor*

NMRA South Mountain Division (SMD) lost its Superintendent, Paul Rausch, SGM, U.S. Army (retired), 70, of Fairway Oaks, Fayetteville, PA to complications following heart surgery on Thursday, March 9, 2017.

An NMRA member since 2002, Paul was serving his third consecutive term as superintendent. He was also a charter member of the Waynesboro (PA) Model Railroad Club, where he was both a treasurer and president.

Longtime friend and SMD member Mike Toms has known Paul since the beginnings of the Waynesboro Model Railroad Club in 1990. Mike reminisced about a time when the club operated modules at public events.

"Trains kept uncoupling on Paul's module, Rausch Junction, but no one could figure out the cause. Then Paul, rather sheepishly, wondered out loud if it could be caused by the Kadee magnet he had buried under the main just before a turnout. Paul received quite a bit of ribbing over that, but he was always able to give as good as he got when it came to good-natured teasing."

In addition to his involvement with the club and NMRA, Rausch built several basement sized layouts over the years. His last pike was a 30' x 50' point-to-point, walk-in

and around style. Growing up on a farm outside of Jenera, OH, Paul used his attachment to the area for his proto-freelanced Ohio Northern. His concept was based on the old Akron, Canton, and Youngstown Railroad (AC&Y), to be set in 1999, operating as a modern connecting short line. This recent layout was in an early construction phase, being built to operate under track warrant train movement including the use of car cards.

South Mountain Division advisory committee member Don Florwick recalls that Paul was a quiet yet motivating force. Like the career Sergeant Major he was, his council was gentle, focused, and accurate, with a never waning enthusiasm.

"I could always hear his calm voice saying, 'come on fellows, let's get this done', remembers Florwick, adding, 'Paul never called attention to himself, but his encouragement and presence will be missed by all of us.'" Mike Toms echoed Florwick's sentiments, as did Paul's many friends who gathered for fellowship following the funeral.




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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	Nov 20th of previous year	Mar/Apr	Jan 20th
May/June	March 20th	Jul/Aug	May 20th
Sept/Oct	July 20th	Nov/Dec	Sept 20th

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):

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

Business Card size .....	\$60
Quarter Page ad.....	\$125
Half Page ad .....	\$225
Half Page ad per issue (Div only).....	\$25



# Coupler Comments

## Clint Hyde, Editor

Thanks to those who sent stories after last issue's request. They are good items. Keep them coming--almost can't have too many. Don't be worried if I sit on them for a bit.

If you've got another story idea, I'd love to see it. Always need a story or two for publication.

Also: layout open houses need exposure here. If you go to one, take some photos, talk to the owner, take some notes. Doesn't have to be long or fancy, just something in the MER territory. And not something Paul Dolkos did recently ☺

I made a serious error last issue without knowing. The story about the prototype tours for the 2017 convention got cut way short--somehow I didn't see that there were over 3 pages of content on that one, so it got squeezed into a single page. My bad--so this issue of the E-LOCAL will repeat the entire article. What you see for the convention in print this issue is NOT that full story either, you will have to go to the E-LOCAL for the rest; what's here is what fits two pages.

As always, the PDF E-LOCAL will have more than the print version. And you can print the convention registration.

The past two issues were basically done the same way I created issues 15 years ago, but that's about to change.

Where the print issue was primary in the past, the PDF issue will become primary now. It won't be just "a little more" in there, but quite a bit, and that extra content will

NOT be appearing in print later--once used it's used.

This means that you need to get off the print version and onto the PDF version.

Yes, that's right, I'm trying to kill the print version. MER has an obligation to continue the print copy for about 100 of the "MER LIFE" Members" because that's effectively what they paid for back when, but the sooner we zero that out the better.

Derek Wimberly of JRD reminded me a few days ago that we honest-to-god still have members on dial-up internet (I thought that was gone by now) and that he's one of them, which limits his ability to receive electronic documents like the E-LOCAL. So while I realize it does take a few minutes to download, it will be worth it; it also won't be huge, I do create a reduced-size PDF to go on the website. I can make a big one easily enough, if you want the extra photo resolution. Just let me know; the print version is about 50 MB, where the PDF is about 5MB.

When I was publisher for the LOCAL 15 years ago, there was only a print version, I started the PDF back then. We had over 2000 print subscribers at that time; now we have 750, and that reduction slowly changes the cost calculus on whether it is feasible at all, and at some point it won't be.

So get on board with the E-LOCAL: it's bigger, longer, and uncut. And in COLOR! And easier for me to create--squeezing things into 16 pages around all the "required" items is tricky.

Division Superintendents: Please let me know about your annual mini-convention-like local episodes. There's one mentioned this issue already. The LOCAL is happy to let everyone know about them if you get me the info!

The model on the right is called "Boilermakers Beer" and is available from railroadkits.com; I think it was previously from White River.

Alan Bibb bought the kit in January 2017 from another member at the January James River Div meeting, and was intrigued enough to build it over the next two months to show it at the March JRD meeting.

Sticker price on this kit is \$200; Alan paid \$25. Looks like professional skill on an FSM kit to me.



# Achievement Program

## Achievement Program Update

By *Charlie Flichman, MMR*

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

### Division 2 - Potomac

James Hellweg - Master Builder Scenery

### Division 3 - Philadelphia

Don Borden - Master Builder Scenery

Nick Brownsberger - Master Builder Scenery

Joe Parisi - Golden Spike

Joe Walters - Golden Spike

### Division 4 - Tidewater

Dale Ridgeway - Master Builder Structures

Dale Ridgeway - Model Railroad Author

### Division 5 - James River

Douglas Barry - Golden Spike

George Gaige - Golden Spike

Richard Munnikhuysen - Golden Spike

### Division 10 - South Mountain

Andrew Dodge, MMR - Association Volunteer

### Division 11 - Susquehanna

Brian Kampschroer - Golden Spike

Brian Kampschroer - Engineer Electrical

Jerry Lauchle - Golden Spike

Jerry Lauchle - Master Builder Cars

Jerry Lauchle - Master Builder Structures

Jerry Lauchle - Master Builder Scenery

Jerry Lauchle - Model Railroad Engineer Electrical

### Division 13 - Carolina Piedmont

Joseph Gibson - Golden Spike

### At-Large MER

Thomas Harris - Golden Spike

Thomas Harris - Master Builder Scenery

Thomas Harris - Model Railroad Author

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**.

**PROBLEM - PLEASE HELP ME.** National does NOT accept R&V forms. I am getting too many of them, only to have to return to the sender and get the proper form. **NO R&V FORMS!**

### The AP consists of four areas with eleven sub-categories:

#### A. Model Railroad Equipment

1. Master Builder - Motive Power

2. Master Builder - Cars

#### B. Model Railroad Settings

3. Master Builder - Structures

4. Master Builder - Scenery

5. Master Builder - Prototype Models

#### C. Model Railroad Engineering & Operation

6. Model Railroad Engineer - Civil

7. Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical

8. Chief Dispatcher

#### D. Model Railroad Service

9. Association Volunteer

10. Association Official

11. Model Railroad Author

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January - February 2016

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 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Upcoming MER Conventions

2017 — Susquehanna Div, Oct 12-15

2018 — Potomac Division, Oct 3-7

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip (+4) \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA# \_\_\_\_\_ Expire Date \_\_\_\_\_

Scale(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to the "Mid-Eastern Region"

Moving? Changing email addresses? Promptly notify the NMRA at  
<http://nmra.org/members/update>  
 or by mail at:  
 P.O. Box 1328, Soddy Daisy TN 37384-1328

to insure continued timely delivery of The Local to you, and so we can contact you as necessary. (NMRA notifies the MER of such changes, saving you one more step).