

The Local



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Number 6

A Twelve Step Program on How Not to Build a Model Railroad, Or: If I Only Knew Then What I Know Now

Bob "Doc" Rosenberg

When I first started writing articles for the Potomac Flyer I had no idea that I would still be doing them three years later but the good news, according to the powers that be in the division, is that I have now contributed enough written articles (written pages, actually) to have reached the half way point toward my goal of a Model Railroad Author AP certificate. The bad news is that in doing so I have also maxed out on the number of points I can receive from sending articles to the Potomac Flyer. Any further progress will have to occur at a higher level, and my personal opinion of my writing skill is that I'm not quite ready for prime time (the National level). But a talk with Clint Hyde at the 2017 Potomac Division Mini-con convinced me to try my luck with the MER first. I started looking through my old files for something that I thought might be appropriate and I remembered this piece. I had written it several years ago after a weekend of, to use a well-known Biblical quote, "much weeping and gnashing of teeth" in frustration over my railroad, but it was never put out for public consumption at the time because I wasn't writing for any model publications back then and didn't know what to do with it. And the frustrations must have been fairly substantial, because I eventually sketched it out as some

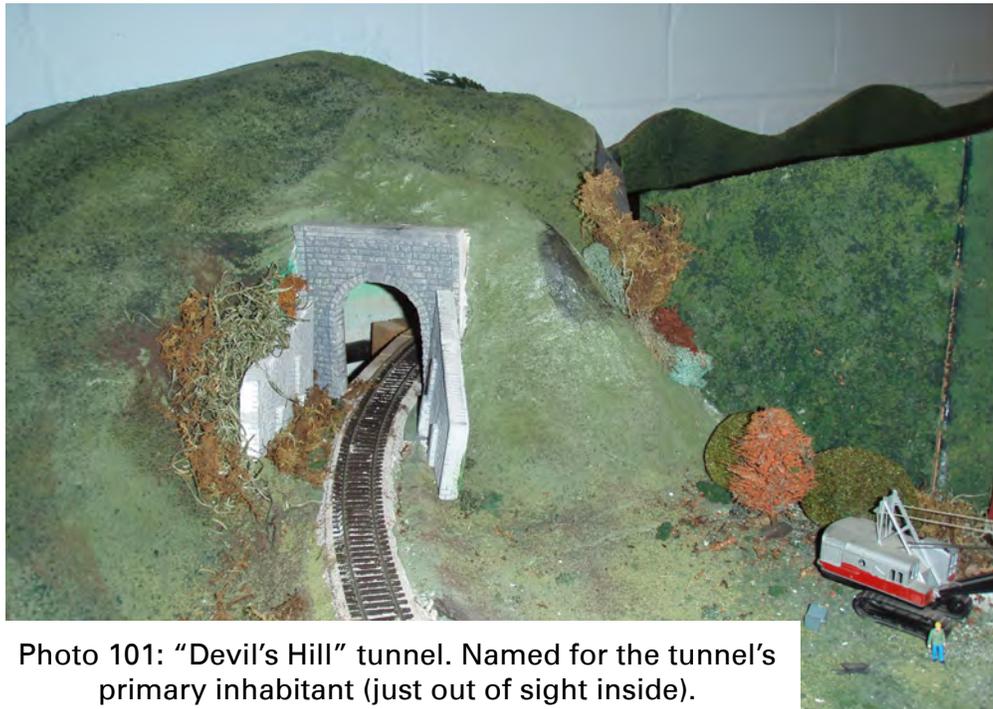


Photo 101: "Devil's Hill" tunnel. Named for the tunnel's primary inhabitant (just out of sight inside).
Future plans: to turn it into a deep cut.

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President's Column

P.J. Mattson, MMR

At the banquet at this year's convention, MR Editor Hal Miller said that Model Railroader magazine is reviving its cover motto "Model Railroading is Fun." It should be. It can be. We want it to be. Yet that feeling is diminished when one or more folks engage in rude speech and bad behavior that detracts from the fun element of this wonderful hobby. Some say that such is a reflection of the times, and it's not only the news media that is overflowing with intemperate expression. We are better than that, and each and every one of us can (and should) be better than that in our dealings with our fellow model railroaders.

Model railroading is a collegial hobby. We learn from each other, we teach each other, we share with each other. That does not mean that we always agree with each other, but how we disagree separates those of good character from those who get down in the gutter. Model railroaders should be gentlemen or ladies in their conduct, using common-sense etiquette and good behavior. To paraphrase an ancient quote, a gentleman or lady is a person who can disagree without being disagreeable.

How does this work? Treat others as you would like to be treated, how you would like your best friend or family member to be treated - with respect. Deal only with the facts and

issues as you know them, and respect the other person's opinion even if it conflicts with yours. Vigorous discussion can be civil if there is no shouting, namecalling, denigrating the other person's opinion, bullying or threatening or the like. Often, there is more than one way to do things. There is no harm in conceding if you think that the other person is right, and be gracious to others if you prevail in your discussion.

The same considerations apply when dealing with someone whose speech or conduct falls short of your expectations. Even legitimate criticism becomes offensive when common courtesy and good conduct are forgotten in addressing the modeler's expectations. No one deserves to be abused.

A lot of us have observed model railroaders drop out of the NMRA, MER and its divisions (and sometimes the hobby) because of rude speech or bad conduct directed at them by a fellow member, or even being surrounded by a lot of it. It also tempts others to contemplate dropping out. Too often, the victims of rude speech or bad behavior are the very volunteers who make model railroad organizations function. This hurts model railroading and all model railroaders. It's long past time to discuss this subject, and deal firmly with rude speech and bad behavior when it occurs. Hopefully, it can be addressed privately and gently, but sometimes it must be done publicly, starting with saying things like "That's rude. Please stop it."

The Mid-Eastern Region is known as the Most Enthusiastic Region. Let's not confuse enthusiasm with rude speech and bad behavior.

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On page 1, at the top, is a "G&CL logging caboose", from the model contest at 2017's convention. Jerry Lauchle, modeler.

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sort of multi-step program on what not to do in the hope that others might benefit from my ineptitude. It started out simply enough with one or two fairly obvious missteps, but the more I thought about it the more they kept piling up. Anyway, with a few updated comments added, these are my original thoughts as I recall them on what must have been for me a very dark and depressing day.

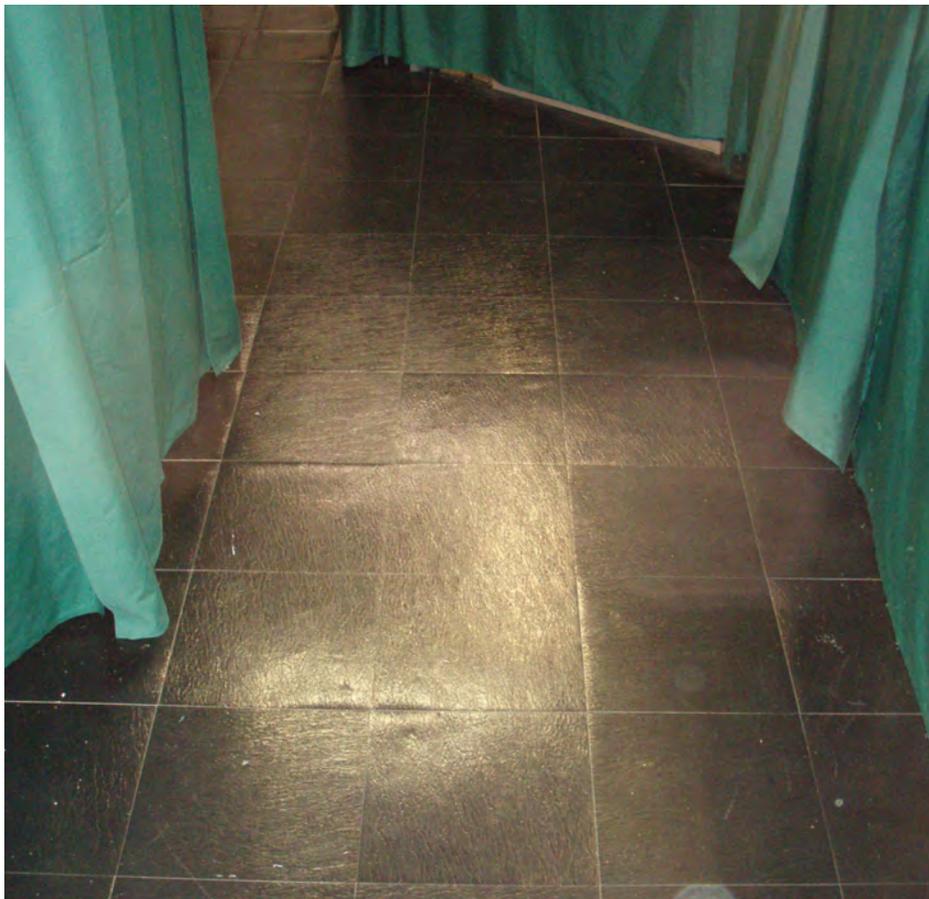
1. **Work alone.** Even though you personally know some experienced modelers who would be willing to help you, don't seek them out because they might know more than you and that could adversely affect your know-it-all self-image.
2. **Draw up your own plans.** There are many books available with plans that have already proven to be successful but again, those planners might know more than... (See #1).
3. **Work in a pig pen.** This idea is absurd on its own. Even pigs don't like pig pens; that's why when they're in one they're always hiding down in the mud; they're ashamed to be seen there. But keeping your workplace clean and tidy takes time away from doing model railroad things like laying track or wiring turnouts (assuming you can find the tools for doing any of those model railroad things) so just keep pushing ahead, and if you don't get any fatal infections you'll get it done eventually, mess and all.
4. **Use an unfinished room;** finishing it is boring anyway, so do it later. This was one of my bigger slip-ups; by not finishing it in advance of building the railroad, I had to finish it when the railroad was pretty much in the way. And don't bother chuckling "dumb@\$\$" behind my back; I'm already aware of that too.



#4: Cinder blocks make great backdrops. Works great in all those government buildings. Don't even need to be painted sky blue.

5. **Ignore grades.** Those model locomotives weigh a ton, don't they? I've mentioned this before in writing up the home layouts of people who didn't make this error. By making both grades to my upper level the same (as well as making them too steep) I precluded any chance of being able to run the lighter locomotives that came on line after I finished the grades. The state of the art for 1976 was Hobbytown: Heavy metal die cast shells and frames with monster open frame motors and flywheels, locomotives that if dropped on the floor caused more damage to the floor. Those seem like hand cranked Model T's compared to the light weight locomotives with their electronic wizardry we run now, and as was true back then, using multiple units will solve most problems. Additionally, those heavy Lifelike / Walthers Alco DL 109's (New Haven's and others) will do fine as single units. There's probably some truth to the stories about them pulling nails out of the bench work. But I have some steam locomotives, mostly later brass, that are helpless pulling trains without helpers; they can hardly pull themselves up the hills.

6. **Use dark tiles or dark carpeting** (the kind that Home Depot sells in large pieces). That way you'll hardly ever have to clean them, and if you drop any small parts on them you won't have to spend a lot of time looking for them because you'll never find them. Buy twice as many to begin with and ignore the unusual clicking noises when you run the vacuum.



#6: Dark tiles...lovely stuff, looked great at the store...just make sure you bought extra parts.

7. **Leave your railroad dormant for an extended period of time.** They say you should operate it frequently – daily if possible – but what do “they” know? Due to my medical problems I found it extremely painful to go up and down stairs, but after my surgery that became less of a reason than my more than justified paranoia about falling on the stairs (I had already fallen once); as a result, almost a year went by before I felt that I could get down there and back up safely to run anything. Surprisingly, most of it ran pretty well until I tried to run a couple of my programmed DCC sound equipped locomotives. They didn’t respond at all, and when I looked for my manuals to re-program them I couldn’t find them anywhere, nor could I remember how to program without them. I eventually found what I needed and re-programmed everything, but for a while the locomotives just stared back at me, probably wanting to scream some obscenities regarding my intellectual deficiencies but they couldn’t because their sound systems weren’t working either.
8. **Access: No big deal.** I’ve also called attention to this in writing up home layouts. I offer a cash bounty to anyone with a layout who has only had problems out front. I have almost never had a problem in a place that I could conveniently reach to fix it. It’s been my sad experience that hidden



#8: Hidden staging, complete with turnouts. Guarantees hours of fun!

areas don't just hide your trains; they hide potential disasters involving your trains, worse still if you've hidden turnouts back there too. If you insist on doing that, at least put visible directional lights on them (another stroke of genius that I failed to carry out) so you know which way they're set. For example, you'll inevitably throw a turnout to the siding, park a train on it that can't be seen, and with no light to remind you forget to return it to the main; now sit back and watch the excitement. Or better yet, read Jim Kelly's column in the March 2017 MR; even the pros don't always get it right.

9. **Don't worry about lighting.** In case you haven't realized this already, there's no such thing as too much light focused on a model railroad unless you're running night scenes. John Sethian has installed what I would call the Mercedes of lighting systems on his PRR Nassau Division with those four foot dimmable LED's, but the new conventional three tube fluorescent fixtures with T-8 bulbs put out plenty of light, and at a much lower price per fixture as well. I added some of them prior to the 2013 MER convention when I felt that my old 40 watt four footers weren't cutting it anymore (it may actually have been my declining vision, but since I haven't filled the wrong tooth yet, I don't think so) and it brightened things significantly.
10. **Forget staging tracks.** You don't really need any staging tracks; just use your passing sidings. This is probably my biggest mistake of all. Some (obvious) words of wisdom here: You can use the same tracks to run trains or to store trains, but not at the same time. By not putting staging tracks in the original plan, I was never able to find a suitable place for them later on, and I'm sure that Frank Ellison will return to haunt me over this lapse if he ever finds out about it. The inability to practically accommodate staging tracks all these years has turned out to be one of my greatest regrets.

MER CONVENTION 2018

THE POTOMAC DIVISION IS HOSTING THE 2018 MER CONVENTION, "THE CROSSROADS OF THE MER." IT WILL BE HELD OVER COLUMBUS DAY WEEKEND, OCTOBER 4-7, 2018 AT THE ROCKVILLE HILTON IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND. THE POTOMAC DIVISION IS STAFFING A LOCAL CONVENTION COMMITTEE (LCC) TO PLAN AND OPERATE THE CONVENTION. THEY'LL BE OFFERING GPS-INTERACTIVE MAPPING FOR OPEN HOUSES/ETC THIS YEAR.

[HTTP://POTOMAC-NMRA.ORG/MER2018/](http://POTOMAC-NMRA.ORG/MER2018/)



11. **Hand lay track and hand build turnouts;** it really impresses people. This is true; it really does impress people and it got me a Golden Spike for a curved turnout. It also takes forever, but again code 100 Shinohara track and turnouts were the state of the art for 1976. In 1982, on a division home tour, I saw what could be done with three foot sections of code 83 track (probably Micro Engineering). It was absolutely beautiful; equal to if not better than what I had so painstakingly done six years earlier. It also took about a tenth of the time to complete. I don't actually recall this next part, but I would speculate that a little mini-circuit repeating "why did I even bother" kept running through my brain for the next several weeks.



#11: Hand-laid curved turnouts. Mmm-mmm-good!

12. **Procrastination is your friend.** When all else fails, procrastinate; why do today what you can put off to tomorrow, or to next month, or to the next millennium? A word of advice; you may think that you have an infinite amount of time to do this thing but you don't. Other activities – work, family, careers – tend to creep in on you and before you know it, to a quote a verse from a Broadway Show tune, "the days dwindle down to a precious few." And serious illnesses don't operate on clocks, fast or otherwise. Ask the man who has recently been there and is not really done with that yet (hence the difficulty in climbing stairs). Never forget that the "perfect" layout will only exist in your mind, but the "adequate" layout will give you many years of pleasure.

There may be more steps, but the first twelve have depressed me enough that I've reached my elastic limit on the number of times I can kick myself for my model railroading sins of 40 years ago. The purpose of this, to paraphrase a quote from George Santayana, was to point out the mistakes of my past so that others might not be doomed to repeat them in the future, and if I've accomplished that then I've completed my mission. But while I'm visiting the past, I'd like to point out how things always look so much clearer when viewed through a retro-scope. There were other ideas that I could have or should have pursued; not so much mistakes as things that I never thought of doing at the time that would have made my life so much easier down the road. The first would have been to build a two deck railroad. I could have doubled my running distance, improved my access, found a suitable place for those staging tracks, and solved my hill problems by operating them as two separate railroads connected by a helix, only running trains between them that could literally "make the grade" in the helix. But that helix connection might have proven to be a problem in and of itself; they were real novelties back then, and I'm not sure anyone knew much about them. It could just as easily have been next on that list of disasters (#13: of COURSE you need a helix!) Like I said, things always looks better through the retro-scope. I think you can get them from Amazon.

Coupler Comments



Clint Hyde, Editor

Well, perhaps the most important thing to mention that came out of the convention weekend and concerns The LOCAL is that we are NOT going to drop from six to four issues. Yay! We ARE going to drop the blue ink on page 1 of print version, as you'll may have noticed. That will save \$600/year, and it wasn't that good a thing as it was. We also discussed the need to keep a print version, and that will continue for as long as necessary, although we do encourage you to let go and get the E-LOCAL instead. The E-LOCAL continues to grow in size, and you continue to need to sign up for it.

We held the first ever "Editor's Breakfast" at the convention, for all the newsletter editors in the Region (turns out several are electrical engineers, like me). We should have started this years ago. I think the most valuable thing coming out of that is that Ken Montero and I will help all the interested Divisions to get a working copy of a real document production tool, so they aren't still using MS Word. (It's like satellite internet--it *works* but it sure isn't the best tool for the job.) We'll be helping those interested to acquire Adobe InDesign for this.

I personally use Quark XPress, have since 1990. For quite a while it was really the only game in town, and 15-20 years ago was the software used by our print-service, so it was easy for me to send them document

files (now of course you send a PDF). About 15 years ago Adobe introduced their equivalent software, and very quickly made inroads in that market that Quark didn't keep up with. I have InDesign, but I have not used it. Even so, I recommend Adobe here rather than Quark, so that's what we will be working on for the Divisions.

Elsewhere this issue is a story about process here at The LOCAL. Next issue we'll describe graphics tools. There was a clinic at Harrisburg that talked about GIMP some, so I asked the presenter to do up a story about it for me. Not what I use, but it is powerful and free.

Charlie Flichman suffered a health mishap recently, and has resigned as AP Chairman. His replacement is Dave Chance, of Carolina Southern Division.

I (as MER Prez way back when) appointed Charlie as AP Chair seems like 100 years ago but it was probably only 12 or 13, and he did an outstanding job for a really long time, taking over from Roger Cason.

Thanks a huge bunch to Charlie for all his years of service, and to Dave for taking this on. I will have a couple of stories re Charlie's layout in the next issue.

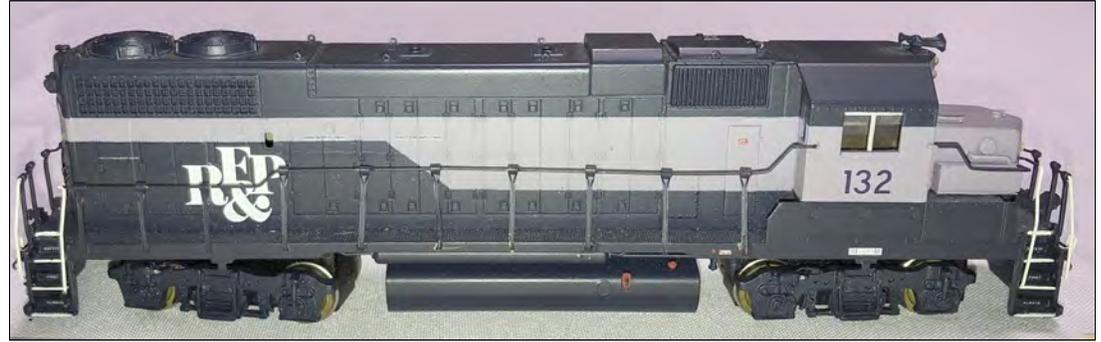
Dave has been AP Chair for CSD for a while now. I first met him in ~2003 or 04 when he asked for some MER help re AP efforts. Norm Garner, Roger Cason (then AP Chair) and I drove there for a weekend visit to go through an exercise for them.

So starting next issue Dave will be the writer of the AP awards list, and I'm going to ask him to do something else for us.

Slightly over-flashed (sorry about that, Chief)



JRD's November meeting featured diesels, these are my two favorites



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MER 2017 Convention Report

Clint Hyde



I haven't been just a casual attendee at an MER convention since 1999 at Hagerstown. This year I was closer to that than any time this century, but I've still got a job to do, and that was about seeing things in the hotel, seeing open houses, talking to people about stuff and twisting their arms to write about what they're doing for us to read about. Our photographer, Bob Bridges, and I split some chores about what things we were seeing. The mix of photographs in these issues will be mostly his and a few of mine because he's better at photography and his cameras are better.

I arrived Wednesday because I was riding with Ken Montero and he was going to the ACF/Bowser tour on Thursday. I went out with some other folks from Carolina Piedmont to the two open houses, and we drove by Tommy Gilbert's first.

I had to do the Board meeting Thursday evening, because we were talking about The LOCAL and some related details at some point (reported elsewhere this issue). Five hours later, the meeting was adjourned, and I had ended up on the Budget committee because of the magazine--didn't step backwards fast enough.

Friday I went to three open houses with my friend Chris Jessee. The first one was magnificent: Ken McCrory lives over towards Philly, he has a house and three outbuildings. The biggest outbuilding looks like a three-car garage entrance, but that's not what it is. Upstairs in there is a 3000 ft train room, with 7000 feet of HO rail. This thing is amazing—at one point in the layout there are five (5!) levels of

track that are visible. That's more than can fit in a photo in my camera, so there's a montage shown here. Multiple levels all the way around, lots of steel mill structures all over, the setting is largely east Penn steel mills. It was impressive, the kind where you think "I can't possibly do that" and you'd be right. Not a "craftsman" layout, too big, too much going on. Just a few photos here don't do it justice. You had to be there.

Saturday we held the first-ever "Editors Breakfast", where nearly all the Division newsletter editors and I got together and talked shop about creating documents and related things, with the goal of enabling everyone to learn from each other and improve their results.

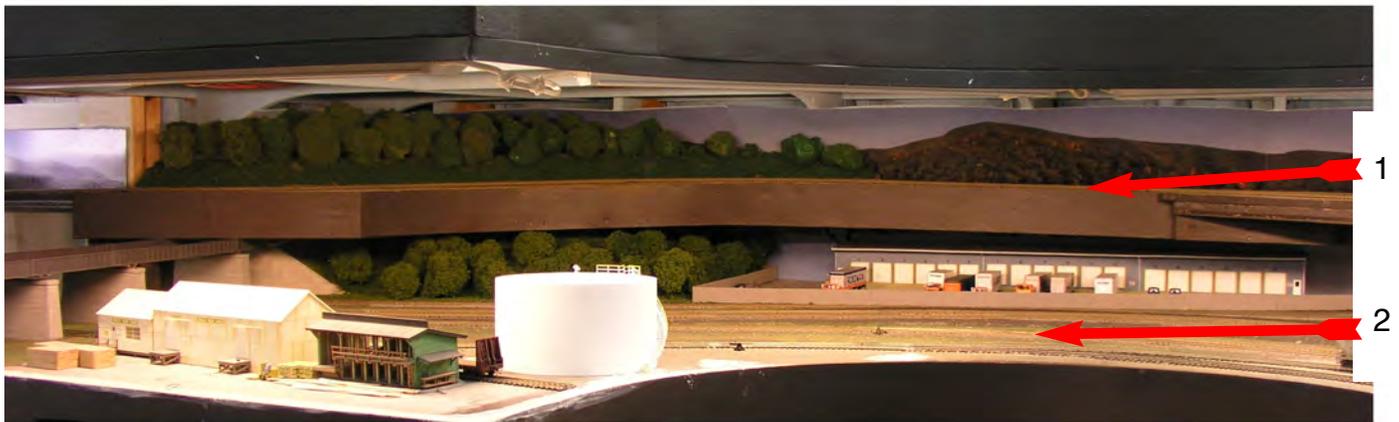
Later Saturday Chris and I saw Todd Treastor's amazing collection of N-scale cars. Amazing. Over 20 thousand. A number that isn't really conceivable, like "a billion dollars".

Clinics were good, I missed a few because I had decided that this year I was doing open houses. I still saw good ones, fewer than I wanted, and pressed the presenters for some writing to go in here. *You know who you are...*

Guest speaker at the banquet was Hal Miller, new editor from Model Railroader.

The auction was typical Bob Charles, and the goofiest thing that night happened to me. Ask me in person about it.

Ken McCorry's magnificent layout.



That's a crummy montage, but it's the one place where there are 5 (!!) levels of track.

Some, but not all, of Todd Treastor's N scale cars



A small set of the multitude of display cases, 1 of 10 groups of six. All full.



The Longest Yard. 28 tracks. 16 feet.

Chris later told me there was an area with very nice scenery. I'm afraid I froze with my mouth open at the yard...and didn't see it

PUBLICCKER-WARD was a distiller/bottler business in Philadelphia, years ago; they used to make whiskey, scotch, industrial alcohols. Some of our members lived nearby, and described it as “you could tell which way the wind was blowing by the smell from Publicker, as well as what they were making that day”. Publicker was, over time, a huge business, and had some private tank cars. A victim of its own successes, bad management, and of course poor cleanup practices, and explosions/fires more than once (it’s alcohol, what did they expect?), it was eventually an EPA Superfund site.

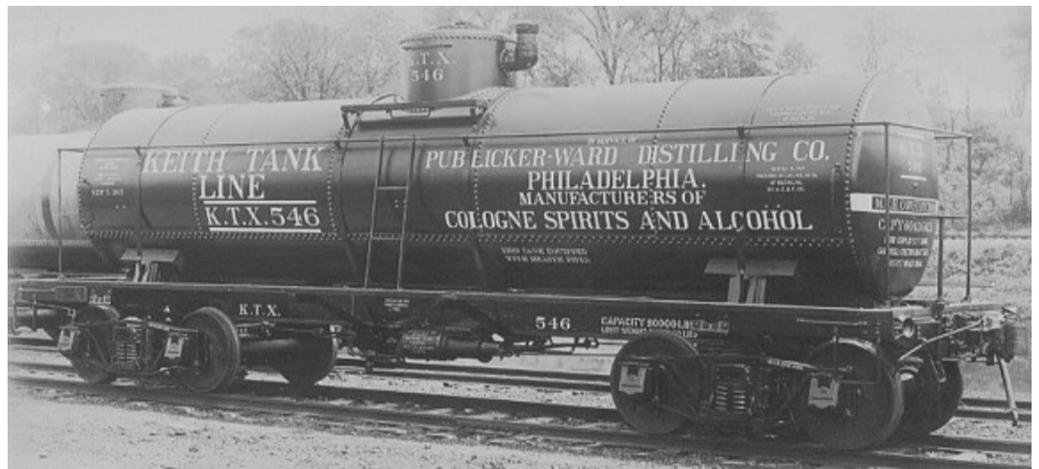
Susquehanna Division has found a couple of photos of a private road-markings tank car for Publicker, and turned it into a kit made by Tichy. It was initially available at the 2017 convention, but you can buy it from Susquehanna now, too. It represents a car updated to the transition era and includes decals for up to 6 different car numbers. The car sells for \$18.95 plus \$6.95 shipping. Order by check or money order from Susquehanna Division, MER/NMRA @ 206 Stoever Drive, New Holland, PA 17557



This built model was photographed on Bob Charles’ home layout.

A PROTOTYPE AND A MODEL MADE IN THE MER

This picture is of the prototype as originally built in 1913. The model represents the car as rebuilt several times and will have Bettendorf trucks for interchange. It ran through the 1940s and into the '50s, and that is the car we want to represent with the model. Unfortunately, we could find no pictures from that era.



Not many factory photos, it seems, but these websites look informative:

http://www.ellenjaye.com/pub_publicker.htm

<https://www.straightbourbon.com/community/topic/6180-my-memories-of-kinsey-distilling/?page=28>

<http://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/node/16729>

Keeping In Touch...



Bob Price
MER Business Manager

An important reminder to all paper Local subscribers! The NMRA is in the process of updating their membership applications to remove collecting subscription payments on behalf of the MER for The Local. The online payment methods have already been updated. The NMRA will continue to accept subscription payments for mailed renewal forms that allow for such payments. If your renewal form does not allow for the subscription payment, you must send the subscription renewal payment to the MER Business Manager. But why not save yourself the \$9 and consider switching to the electronic version of The Local? It has more content than the paper copy--color photos--and if you have a printer you can print your own copy.

To determine when a paper Local subscription ends look at the mailing address label information on your latest issue. The first line will have your MER member id followed by your paper subscription termination date. Note that the listed date is the 1st issue that you will NOT receive. If your label shows "exp:11/2017", your last issue is the

Sep-Oct 2017 issue. You would not receive the Nov-Dec 2017 issue. If the current issue is your last issue, it will state so on the label "LAST ISSUE (exp:07/2017)".

For members for whom the MER has an email address on file, the MER BOD does approve the occasional sharing of information via an email blast from a service provider named MailChimp. These emails can include convention updates, election results, notice of availability of the Local and any matter deemed member appropriate by the MER BOD.

The MailChimp email allows recipients to "unsubscribe from this list" or "update your preferences". It should be noted that if a mail recipient unsubscribes, they would no longer receive any email notifications including those for The Local. If a member wishes to opt-out of a specific type of email blast such as convention emails, choose "update your preferences" and unclick that email type.

If you have ANY questions, feel free to contact the Business Manager.

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.

Moving? Changing email addresses? Promptly notify the NMRA at

<http://nmra.org/members/update>

or by mail at:

NMRA
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).

Please sign up to receive the notification email about when a new PDF LOCAL is available, instead of just downloading it at some random time. That helps us keep track of how many folks are getting it, which we need to do.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Charles	Anderson	James River
Family	Blaustein	Carolina Piedmont
Paul	Bonner	James River
David	Bowerman	Potomac
Tom	Burke	Susquehanna
Cameron	Crabtree	James River
Brian	Dougherty	New Jersey
James	Garrison	Philadelphia
Randolph	Ghertler	Potomac
Frank	Grill	Susquehanna
David	Higgins	Potomac
John	Hooper	Potomac
Joseph	Johnston	Carolina Piedmont
James	Kerner	Susquehanna
Vernon	Leeds	James River
Craig	Miller	James River
Nick	Pautler	Philadelphia
Michael	Petriga	Philadelphia
Meg	Rafferty	Philadelphia
Joe	Ruppert	Potomac
Thomas	Seaman	Susquehanna
Jim	Shepard	New Jersey
Frederick	Sternberg	Carolina Piedmont
Matthew	Swayhoover	Potomac
Michael	Tuomey	Potomac
Cameron	Wright	Carolina Southern

2017 MER Elections, for Director

Incumbents re-elected:

Michelle Chance
Ken Montero

Newly elected:

Bob Charles

ByLaws revision passed

Welcome all new members!

Apologies if you joined recently and I missed your name here. The way join dates are handled in our database makes for slight imprecision on this.

Another very nice model from the 2017 Contest Room.

This diesel pair was built by Jerry Lauchle.



The Susquehannock Convention Contest Room Results

Martin Brechbiel, MER General Contest Chair

This year's Contest Room was once again fortunate to be the host of truly exceptional, high-quality models. Our host Division, the Susquehanna Division provided us with an excellent space well beyond any previous in square footage which made for a quality contest experience in 2016 that we shared easily with the RPM!

A very special "Thanks" as always to those who donated their time on Saturday to judge the Model Contest. We were fortunate this year to have a good representation of MMRs in our pantheon of judging teams including Charlie Flichman, Rod Vance, and Ron Baile along with several of the usual cadre of Judges. Of special note, the assistance of John Siegel, the MER's newest MMR made the ultimate difference in the operations of the contest room this year.

There were 34 models entered with 32 being entered for judging. Of those models, 15 received Merit Awards giving us another excellent year in this department! The judged entries populated 11 categories with 3 modules being judged this year! We also had a significant increase in numbers for our Photo Contest.

One detail of note was the distribution or represented scales of models. Of the judged, models, there were the usual dominance of HO, but there were also several O scale (On30), HOn3 and 1 that required the efforts of several individuals just to move in and out of the room! But again, no S scale; maybe next year?

Model Photos by
Bob Bridges

Steam
1st place - J. M. Johnson
0-6-0 Switcher



Diesel
1st place - Bruce Barrett
1 1/2" scale SW9 PRR 8539*

Editor: Not obvious in the photo, but that thing is five feet long. Hold your arms all the way out—yep, that big.

Traction
1st place - Martin Brechbiel
CG&W #18 RPO Freight Motor*

*Denotes AP Merit Award—scoring a minimum of 87.5 points.



Model Contest continued

Structure On-Line

1st place - James P. Murphy – Holyoke's
"Richardson" Passenger Station*

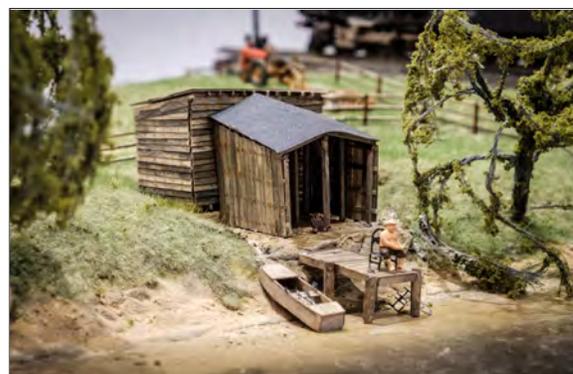


Display On-Line

1st place - Bob Frankrone
Hardware Store*

Structure Off-Line

1st place - Glyn Thomas
French Fishing Hut



Freight Car

1st place - J. M. Johnson –
RDG Covered Hopper*



Non-Revenue Car

1st place - Martin Brechbiel
CVRR #43 Rail, Tie, and Tool Car*



Caboose

1st place - Bernard Kempinski
USMRR Conductor from 1863*



Shown here with the top off.

Continued... 

Passenger Car

1st place - Chuck Davis

Lehigh Valley Business Car #352*

Display Off-Line

No entries!!!



Module

1st place - William Grosse

HO Scale Module (Free-Mo)



Photo Contest:

Prototype: Steam – 1st place - John M. Johnson – N&W 611

Prototype: Other – 1st place - Glyn Thomas – B&O Switcher at Wilmington, DE

Model – 1st place - Chuck Davis – Here comes the Morning

Best-in-Show – John M. Johnson – N&W 611

Models not shown here will appear in 2018 issues of The LOCAL.

The Special Awards:

The MER also supports an array of Special Awards that complement the judged model contest.

The Philadelphia New Modeler Award: given to the first-time entrant in MER model contest with the highest point score. (Included a \$25 cash prize with a plaque!)

Jim Homoki – Caboose CNJ 91165*

Ray Bilodeau MER Narrow Gauge Award

Doug Sandmeyer – Jacks Cabin Tank (O Scale)*

Blue Lantern Award

Jerry Lauchle – Railbus #27*

The President's Award: this year's award was for a Passenger Car.

Jerry Lauchle – Open Platform Passenger Car

Bob Liberman Award

Jim Homoki – Caboose CNJ 91165*

Best-in-Show: given to the entry with the highest point's score in the model contest this year–118 points! This award includes to the recipient the cost of registration to next year's convention in Rockville!

David Albertson – Tower from New York & Long Branch Red Bank, NJ*



Clyde Gerald Kit-Bash Award: the best kit-bashed model in the model contest.

Doug Sandmeyer – Kit Bashed Bar Mills Gas Station

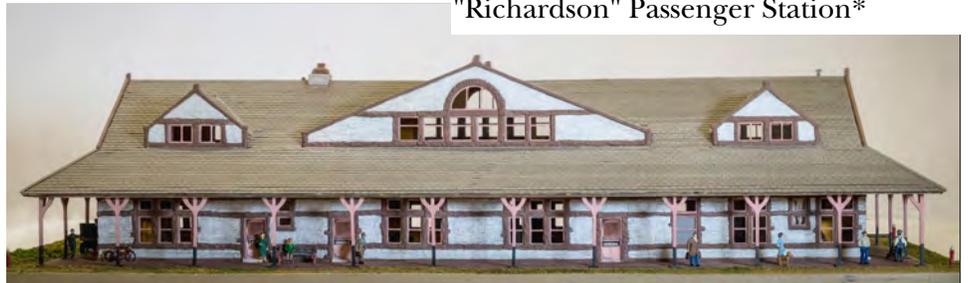
Favorite Train - chosen by popular vote!

William Nesbitt – Logging Train



Favorite Model, chosen by popular vote!

James P. Murphy – Holyoke's "Richardson" Passenger Station*



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

A couple of questions for you, based on conversations amongst the LOCAL team:

If you are not receiving the E-LOCAL notification email, are you still downloading it and reading it? If you read the E-LOCAL, do you print it yourself and then read the printed copy, or directly on-screen? (Martin prints it, but he has better color printing than I have [which is none], and he then wants to red-ink it too.) Knowing this might help me with typeface choices.

Do you read it only on your PC or do you read it on another device, an iPad or phone?



Achievement Program Update By Charlie Flichman, MMR

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

Division 1 - New Jersey

William A. Grosse, Jr. - Model Railroad Engineer Electrical

Division 3 - Philadelphia

Don Borden - Model Railroad Engineer Electrical

Division 4 - Tidewater

Dale Ridgeway - Model Railroad Engineer Civil

Division 5 - James River

John Siegle - Master Builder Cars

Division 11 - Susquehanna

Jerry Britton - Golden Spike

Jerry Britton - Model Railroad Engineer Electrical

Jerry Britton - Chief Dispatcher

MER's Newest MMR - John Siegle of the James River Division is MER's newest MMR. John is MMR # 601, so offer your congratulations the next time you see him!

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!

Charlie has stepped down as AP Chairman, and Dave Chance has replaced him. Charlie still gets credit on page 2, but Dave Chance will be there next issue.

In the meantime, here's Dave's contact info:

Dave Chance
5884 Circlewood Dr
Kannapolis, NC 28081-8736
704-933-4200
loconut@carolina.rr.com

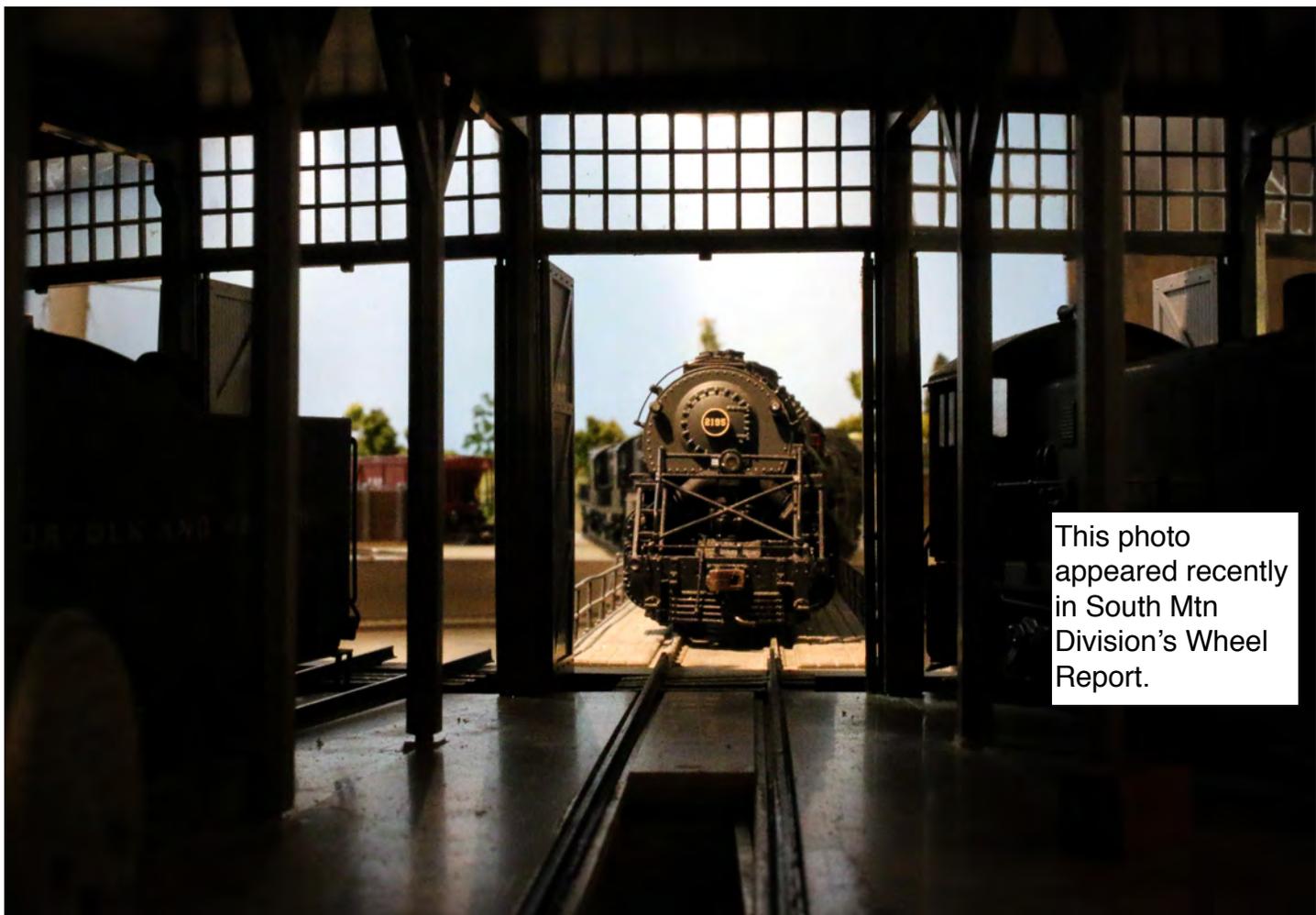
**Custom
Layout
Building**

Layout Design

By Lance Mindheim

www.shelflayouts.com
301-404-8164

SMD member Mason Cooper of Stephens City, VA. shared a view of his Y-6b (2-8-8-2) photographed through the roundhouse on his Norfolk & Western, Valley Line layout.



This photo appeared recently in South Mtn Division's Wheel Report.

Even the big boys make models of things. This picture is from the ACF proto tour at the 2017 Convention, taken by Kurt Thompson, our VP. Pallets in the rear should give an idea of size.



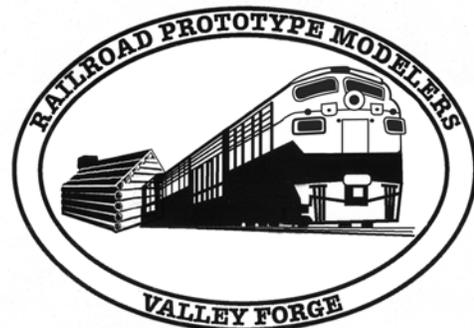
The MER Grants Policy

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/ExecutiveHandbook_2014mwb610.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.

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

Sponsored by a 100% NMRA Club



March 23-25, 2018

**Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference Center
Malvern, PA**

**Clinics • Model Displays • Vendor Rooms
Sunday Home Layout Tour**

Information and updates: RPMValleyForge.com

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email _____

Printed black & white version, \$9/year \$ _____
Donation \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip (+4) _____

NMRA# _____ Expire Date _____

Scale(s) _____ Telephone _____

Make checks payable to the "Mid-Eastern Region"

The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. The Editor will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send paper/photo originals without having back-up copies of both. 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 email.

Publication Schedule Deadline

Jan/Feb	Dec 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr	Feb 1st
May/June	Apr 1st
Jul/Aug	Jun 1st
Sept/Oct	Aug 1st
Nov/Dec	Oct 1st

The Mid-Eastern Region, Inc., NMRA
An IRS Tax Exempt Organization
Business Manager
801 S. Newton Lake Drive
Collingswood, NJ 08108

Attention O Scale Modelers!

The MER is a sponsor of the 2018 O Scale National Convention August 23-25 in Rockville MD

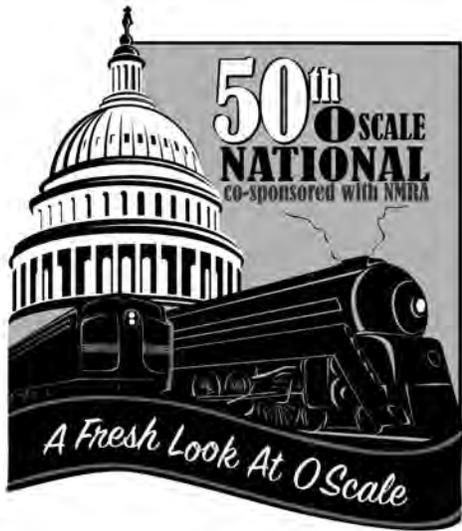
(same hotel as the October 2018 MER convention).

Registration form appears on page 25.

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 (one year) for The Local are as follows, and must include camera ready are (text, doc/docx, 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



2018 O Scale National Convention

“A Fresh Look at O Scale”

Co-sponsored with the
Mid East Region NMRA

August 22-26, 2018

Rockville Hilton Hotel
1750 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD

This is a convention for all 1/4" scale modelers: standard gauge, narrow gauge, P:48, traction and transit. There will be something for everyone: beginners, old hands and those curious about O Scale. This is a “destination” convention* in the Washington, DC area; registration includes:

- Trading Halls
- A full clinic schedule featuring all new presentations & 'extra fare' hands-on clinics
- Modular Layouts On-Site
- Manufacturers & Vendor Displays
- Opportunity to purchase special Convention Cars
- Model Contest/Model Display
- Door Prizes and Goodie Bags for pre-registered attendees
- Banquet with outstanding food
- Layout tours of some of the best O Scale layouts in the country
- Side Trips available (Directions provided and carpools available)
- **Keynote & dinner address by Tony Koester featuring his venture into O Scale, Proto 48**
- Of course, the Washington, DC region with its many train & tourist attractions;
many accessible via the Metro direct from the convention hotel.

Fare: \$40 Full Show Admission

Tables: \$55 per 6' table

Free cargo trailer parking for dealers

Convention Hotel: \$109/night plus fees and taxes

Free underground parking with Hotel stay. \$5 to other convention attendees

* Bring the family and make this a Washington, DC vacation! You will be able to arrive up to 5 days early and/or stay 3 days after the convention at the convention room rate to take in the National Capital Region sights. The DC Metro is 108 steps from the hotel door and can quickly take you anywhere in the region.

See the website for more details: <http://2018oscalenational.com>

2018 O Scale National Convention Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Registration (Spouse & Children under 16 included with registration): _____ x \$40 = _____

Spouse & Children's names: _____

Banquet Tickets (each attendee at the Banquet requires a ticket): _____ x \$60 = _____

Extra Fare Clinics (only registered attendees can participate in Extra Fare clinics)

Your First 3D Print presented by Terry Terrance, 9:30 am Friday 8/24/2018

Attendees will draw an O Scale B&O concrete whistle post, prepare it for printing and then print it on a desk top 3D printer. Participants must bring a laptop computer pre-loaded with Sketch-Up (a free program). Limited to 15 attendees.

_____ x \$20 = _____

Cardstock Structures Workshop presented by Jim Gore, 12:30 pm 8/24/2018

Attendees will assemble an O Scale cardstock structure (provided) under the direction of Prof. Gore. Attendees must bring the following: Hobby knife with #11 blade; Extra #11 blades (plenty; at least 5); Steel straight-edge [ruler]; at least 12" long; Extra straight-edge, if possible – a flat square is nice; Self-healing cutting mat – 12" x 18" [or larger]; Fine- pointed forceps [tweezers]; Several shirt-pins [barring that; a few straight pins]; Roket Card Glue [you can purchase from Amazon] OR Medium Viscosity CA Glue [Gorilla brand is fine]; COPIC Marker – T4 – toner gray; COPIC Marker – E57 – light walnut [markers can be obtained from art store; like Blick's]; Black Sharpie; #1 / #0 round [or liner] artists brush. Structures in other scales can be provided with **prior** arrangement. Limited to 20 attendees.

_____ x \$20 = _____

Dealer Tables (6 foot) (1 free admission with 5 tables; 2 with 10 tables, etc.) _____ x \$55 = _____

Total Enclosed = _____

Models for Display & Judging (Will you be bringing models with you? Circle all that apply.)

Steam Loco	Electric Loco	Freight Car	MoW	Structure	Photo/Painting
Diesel Loco	Trolley	Passenger Car	Caboose	Diorama	

Send this completed form and check made out to **2018 SONC, LLC** to:

2018 SONC, LLC PO Box 42241 Washington, DC 20015

OR: Register with credit card on-line (After Sept. 1, 2017) at: <http://2018oscalenational.com/convention-registration>

Reservations for the Convention Hotel must be made through the Hilton website or via phone:

hiltonrockville.com

(301) 468-1100

Hotel registration opens Aug. 22, 2017, watch the convention website for the event code.

If registering by phone, you must mention **2018 SONC** to get the discounted rate.

Making Custom Photo Backdrops

by

Brian W. Sheron, MMR



Many model railroaders simulate depth to their model railroading scenes by using backdrops. These are put against walls when our layout benchwork runs against a wall, or against a view block that is erected in the center of an island layout.

There are a number of companies that offer ready-made backdrops in all scales for model railroaders. These are usually panoramic photos of various scenes that are enlarged and printed on a heavy paper. The scenes will vary from urban city scenes to industrial scenes, to rolling hills to mountains or desert. Many come in long lengths upwards of 10 to 12 feet in length. Depending on what you are modeling, it is possible you may find what you are looking for in a ready-made backdrop.

However, if you are modeling a specific location or area, you might like to have a backdrop that depicts the specific location or area you are modeling. This was the problem I ran into when I expanded my Long Island Railroad to model Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn and the car float bridges and yard in Long Island City.

For my car float yard, it posed a unique challenge. The car float yard and the car floats were located in a corner. The problem I had was that if a viewer was standing in the aisle and looking at the car floats, they would be looking north up the East River, and they would see the 59th St. Bridge in the distance. However, if they were looking at the car floats as if they were standing in the car float yard, they would be looking due west and would see the Manhattan skyline about 1/4 mile away. I had put a curved panel in the corner, so there was no sharp corner to deal with. Nevertheless, I needed a backdrop that would sweep around the corner, showing the Manhattan skyline and the 59th Street Bridge.

It turns out that the internet is a virtual treasure trove of photos. I Googled “59th Street Bridge images” and a number of photos of the bridge appeared. I also Googled “Manhattan Skyline”, and a wealth of photos appeared. I scanned through the photos and found one of the 59th St. Bridge (figure 1) and one of the Manhattan skyline (figure 2) that appeared to be compatible. I dragged both photos to my editing program (“Pages” on an Apple computer) and began adjusting their sizes and butting them against each other. I soon had what appeared to be a backdrop that would wrap around the wall so that for an observer standing in the aisle, they would see the 59th St Bridge, but as they moved around to simulate standing in the car float yard looking west, the scene would change to the Manhattan Skyline (see figure 3). Although the sky in both photos were different colors, this is solved by carefully cutting the sky away from the skyline structures, painting my backdrop wall a sky blue color, and gluing the backdrop (with the sky cut away) to the wall.

Editor's note: Changes by me to this story last time goofed things up, so we are re-running this unmodified.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Many of the companies that offer model railroading backdrops will make custom backdrops from a customer's photos. I sent the combined photos to Dave Burgess at Backdrop Junction and asked if he could print a custom backdrop from them that was 93 inches long. Dave informed me that the resolution of the photos was acceptable, and that he could produce the desired backdrop. I noted to him that the photos needed to be purchased, and Dave took care of the purchase and just added it to the price.

When the backdrop arrived, the only problem was that the water in the 59th St. Bridge photo was very different in color from the water in the Manhattan skyline photo. To remedy this, I asked Dave to print a mirror image of the 59th St. Bridge backdrop. When I received it, I simply cut the water portion off of it and glued it on top of where the water was on the Manhattan skyline photo. The photos of the water would now match perfectly where they butted together. Figure 4 shows the completed backdrop mounted in place (note that simulated water has not yet been added to the scene).

Figure 4



Sheron: Backdrops For my scene of Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, I needed several backdrops of Brooklyn and New York City. Again, I went to the internet, and this time looked on a site called Pixabay, which has photos that can be used for free. I found several that I liked, and again asked Dave Burgess if they were suitable for backdrops. It turned out a couple were not suitable because the resolution was not high enough, and when they were enlarged to backdrop size, they became too grainy. Resolution is an important factor, and my rule of thumb is that photos should be at least about 500 x 500 pixels or higher. Web sites with photos usually specify the photo resolution.

Another important parameter to consider is the aspect ratio. This is the ratio of the height of typical structures in the backdrop photo to the overall length of the backdrop. As an example, let's say you need a backdrop that is 100" long, and suppose you have some buildings that will be against the wall where the backdrop will be mounted and they are, say, 8" high. Now let's assume that you find a panoramic photo for the backdrop. If you measure it on your computer screen with a ruler, it is 10" long, and the buildings in the photo measure 3" tall. You would like the buildings on the backdrop to be taller than the layout buildings by perhaps a couple of inches, say 10 - 12". However, if this panoramic photo is enlarged from 10" to 100" in length, the buildings on the backdrop will now be 30" high! In order for the buildings in the backdrop photo to be the correct height, they would need to be only 1" - 1.2" on the computer screen photo. One way to correct for this is to cut off the lower portion of the panoramic photo that may not be needed so the building heights are correct.

Figure 5 shows a photo of a Brooklyn panorama, and figure 6 shows it mounted on my layout with the lower portion (the river) cut off. Figure 7 shows three photos of Brooklyn that I combined to make one sweeping backdrop, and figure 8 shows a New York City skyline photo that I found and had made into a backdrop.



Figure5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Custom backdrops are not cheap, but they are not much more than stock backdrops. A 10' x 3' backdrop can run a couple of hundred dollars. Backdrop companies, such as backdrop Junction, have a price calculator on their web site, so you enter the size you need and get an estimate of the cost. Remember that purchasing rights to use a photo will add to the cost.

If you want to create custom backdrops from photos on the internet, here are some helpful tips:

- 1.) When you are searching for a scene, add the words “skyline” or “panorama” to the subject you are searching. This is more likely to find scenes that have the right aspect ratio.
- 2.) Check to see if you need to pay a royalty in order to use the photo. Most Companies that make custom backdrops do not want to violate copyright laws. Conversely, look for photos on websites that offer photos for free, like Pixabay.
- 3.) Make sure the photos you are considering have a high enough resolution so they won't become grainy when they are enlarged. At least 500 x 500 pixels is needed, and usually the company that would make it into a backdrop can tell you that in advance. If they don't, ask them.
- 4.) When trying to combine two or more photos into a continuous backdrop, try and match them up on the computer first. Make sure the tint and shadows are compatible. You don't want one photo with shadows falling on the left side of a building and the other photo with shadows falling on the right side.
- 5.) Make sure the length of your backdrop is such that the objects in the backdrop photo have the right aspect ratio for your layout. You may have to put several photos together to get the right aspect ratio. Note that if you put several photos together, it is likely that the color of the sky in each photo will not match. This can be remedied by painting the wall the backdrop will be mounted on a sky blue color, carefully cutting the sky portion of the backdrop photos away from the objects on the backdrop, and gluing the remaining backdrop to the wall.

The NMRA Magazine Index, by Clint

Remember that years ago there was an online magazine index? And that about 10-12 years ago Model Railroader magazine bought it? And then in early 2010 MR killed the index, taking it completely offline? Resulting in much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth.

The reasons they gave were feeble, and indicative of their not really knowing what they were doing with it, of not being serious computer guys. Unlike me.

So in early summer 2010 I and a couple of unindicted co-conspirators decided we could recreate it in a much better way. Turned out that NMRA had a huge index that was NOT online, and that we could recover a lot of data and find new stuff.

Late in 2010 that new index went online. You can find it here:

<http://www.rrmagindex.com/>

It's actually running on a server owned by one of the co-conspirators.

The goal is that it be a user-driven-content, aka "crowd-sourced" index. Not long after ours went online, MR released their own—new—index that they hadn't told anyone about. It doesn't have a lot of magazines listed, but probably has better detail about what IS listed. If MR had said they were going to make a new one when they killed the old one we'd have ignored the whole situation; we'd have been disappointed in the outcome, since MR dropped a bunch of magazines, but still...

RRMAGINDEX.COM needs your help.

For security reasons of avoiding getting a load of garbage in there, it needs a small registration that does not involve creating yet another password you can't remember, and then you can add and edit data about issues on quite a lot of magazines—including MR and RMC, but any other one you want, including if it's something completely new.

I can't do all the data entry, have other things going on in my life, one of which is named Annette. The index needs someone to add data about NMRA bulletin, for about 10 recent years. It needs other things completed for recent years. It needs edits for a lot of issues over a bunch of years, a basic QC of things. There are approx 165 thousand individual stories entered.

In theory the entire index may roll over to being hosted by NMRA. That was the idea from the very beginning but not too much has happened along that line. One can hope...but in the meantime, I don't want to wait on that, so new data needs to get in there now. I've found it to take about 15-20 minutes for a brand-new issue, and under 15 for correction edits to an existing one.

Email me if you can participate, I'd like one person for each magazine, so no one's burden is too great. You can see how to register on the website. Email me at clinthye58@gmail.com to register.

When we started this, it was with HQ's blessing, and the expectation that NMRA website would take it over at some point. So far, that takeover hasn't happened, although we are working with HQ on this. In the meantime, however, it still needs your help in case that ball gets dropped.

2017 National Narrow Gauge Convention, Denver

by Nick Kalis

My wife Kate and I attended the 37th National Narrow Gauge Convention held Aug. 30th - Sept. 2nd, 2017 in Denver, Colorado at the Marriott Denver Tech Center Hotel. We had a great time along with nearly 2,000 attendees. This is not an NMRA event but it is nevertheless well organized. We were able to car pool to many of the home layouts. There were no prototype tours. Here is a complete list:

Appalachian & Ohio RR, O, Dave Stewart	High Plains Route, O, Jeff MacDonald
ATSF – Colorado Division, HO, Dennis Krausman	The Leadville to Climax Highline Sn3, Keith Hayes
BNSF Fall River Division, HO, John Parker	Joe Crea's Trolley Layout
Calumet & Hecla Railroad, On3, Ken Schei	Los Pinos & Lake City Railroad, HO/HOn3, Harry Lindsay
Cascade & Silverton RR, Fn3 Indoor, Ron Keiser	Oahu Railway & Land Company, On3, Jim Chiddix
Cedar River and Iowa Central Railway Co., Pat Lana	San Juan Silverton, Hon3, Rick Huntrods
C&NW, HO, Steve Mann	Rocky Mountain Line, HO, Don Meeker
Colorado Live Steamers	San Juan Southern, Fn3 Indoor, Bill White
Colorado & Western, On3, Jim Trowbridge	Scenic Line Modelers
D&RGW Third Division RR, HO/HOn3, Art Lort	Tuscarora Railroad, Fn3 Outdoor, Kevin Strong
D&RGW Third Division, HOn3, Fred Oster	Termite & Tarantula Railway, On30, Gerald Styles
Elk Pass Railroad, HO, Bob Rothgery	Wolf Creek Southern Railroad, Sn3, Dennis Hagen
Granite Mountain Railway, HO/HOn3, Doug Geiger	

Modular layouts displayed and operating at the convention hotel included:

Colorado O-scale Modeler's Modular Layout
Gold Creek, Pine Cliff and Elk Springs On30 Modular Layout
The Mudhens Modular Layout
Near Sighted Narrow Gauger
New Mexico Narrow Gauge Modular Group
Slim Rail

There were fifty clinicians, the most famous of which was Tony Koester, who delivered a clinic entitled Creative Structure Kitbashing.

There was also a great contest room.

The two vendor rooms were large and impressive. I brought home quite a few bargains.

Jim Chiddix's Oahu Railway and Land Company is On3 in a 22 foot by 33 foot windowless basement room. Minimum radius is 42 inch on the mainline. Jim Chiddix runs K-28 type 2-8-2 Mikados. He models Honolulu to Waipahu with a branch to Wahiawa. His modeled era is 1928 to 1932.



OMG--now THAT's a bridge!



Photos from Denver Open Houses. Nick regrets not keeping track of which photo is which open house...but they're still good photos.



Great weathering!



A beach scene that's a module

Sometimes you take a prototype photo too



Some words about process, how The LOCAL is made. Clint Hyde, Editor/Publisher

The typical editing process begins with you as author submitting a story. Maybe we've already talked about it, or I've asked you for it. If I like it as is, I use it as is. But the editor's job is to edit, not to rubber-stamp, where necessary. This means that I will fix grammar, typos, minimal reword if necessary, fiddle with your pictures. Remember those things your English teacher hammered on you about way back when—run-on sentences, or non-sentences, punctuation troubles, etc? Yeah, me too. Ouch. I am going to fix those up. If I can't figure out what you mean, I'll get back to you and ask what something-or-other was about. None of us are Papa Hemingway, and even the best authors need editing occasionally. If I feel larger changes are necessary, or I didn't understand something, we'll work together on it. My reviewers edit me, and have for years; I'm regularly guilty of sloppy writing that sounds more like a conversation (I'm sure an old teacher just rolled in her grave).

The other time I have to edit your prose is if I discover that I can't make it fit the physical space properly. This is a primary concern in the paper LOCAL, where there's a fixed size I can't violate. The E-LOCAL can just have more pages, but The LOCAL is 16 pages for print. No more, no less. If your story runs a little over onto another page, I'll start by changing typeface or size, shrinking the pictures a little, but after that, if there's a problem still I'll look at how to shorten things that can be reworded to reduce word-count. A little of that here and there and suddenly the end of the story doesn't overrun, all is good. Most of the time I spend on the print LOCAL is concerned with making things fit the spaces; on average this can be one hour or two per page. I change typefaces, font sizes, alignments, margins/borders, whitespace, picture boundaries, etc., in pursuit of not dropping words out, but if that still has to happen I will cut or reword things. The story will probably be copied from the print LOCAL to the E-LOCAL exactly, but if your story is E-LOCAL-only, I don't worry about length, I'll resize things other ways, because there's no page limit. I do enjoy this document creation effort.

If it feels like something is missing, I'll get back to you about it. Bob Rosenberg's story originally had 10 or 11 bullets in it, and I thought "this needs to be more like a 12-step thing," allowing for a more entertaining read, so I asked him to add one. We went back and forth a couple times to get the pictures all lined up correctly. I asked Nick Kalis to provide some extra details in his story, hitting the classic "5 Ws: who what when where why" that we were all taught back in fifth grade for writing a newspaper-reporter-like story. Those details always help jog my memory about things that I am now old enough to misremember all too often.

MER bought The LOCAL a large-format printer earlier this year (11x17 paper, the printer is the size of a washing machine) so that I (and my eventual successor) can do proof print copies before releasing an issue to our printer. This is where I do the red-ink markup routine, but that's more about the overall

visual, which looks different in print than on-screen, where I have a bunch of helper guides that are for alignment but reduce readability. Said printer is not used for the E-LOCAL, partly because I am using more color here.

Once the document is assembled, reviewers look it over. This usually results in some changes, like typos that weren't caught in spelling-check, some visual glitch, or mis-labeled photo, and then I make a final PDF for the print service. Should have been doing this all along, but now I am asking writers to help proof their own stories, make sure I didn't goof up something during edit. It's happened...

I then take the content from the print LOCAL and drop it into similar spaces in the E-LOCAL, and I round out the E-LOCAL with additional things, whatever I've had longest. E-LOCAL has no page limit, so I'm aiming at 30-35 pages at that point. A lot less work making things fit—then I'm looking at awkward ends dangling. Still takes some time, but less per page, maybe 30 minutes. We tend to have more white-space here, too; I need to get more comfortable with using that differently. Continuous process improvement is the watchword here.

Occasionally errors are large: Brian Sheron pointed out that I had added a photograph to his story in the last E-LOCAL issue that was one he had not selected. We've reprinted the whole story as submitted this time, to eliminate any possible ongoing confusion.

Model Railroading is fun! So are words. Don't be surprised if there's a joke somewhere. My style is more MST3K than NYT.

Also, let me know if I've made an error. If it's correctable I'll do so. I ain't Hemingway either, but The LOCAL is not For Whom The Bell Tolls.

Ken McCorry has a 1:1 mockup of a diesel cab in his layout building, on the bottom floor. Here's the control panel.



Here's me, sitting in the control seat. Pix by Chris Jessee.



A few more photos from the convention, all by Bob Bridges.

Green Ridge Retirement Community Club Layout. It is huge. And there's a lower level you almost don't notice.



Hal Miller of Model Railroader



Charlie presents John Siegle's last AP award



Only the white gloves touch the models.



Clinics get high-tech these days.

