

The Local



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Number 2

Master Muddled Railroader (MMuR) Program

by James Dos Carriles

The Fraternal Association of Railroad Collectors and Enthusiasts (FARCE) is happy to announce the creation of the new recognition program for model railroaders. The program is structured so we as an organization can identify those members who through their continued or sporadic efforts have shown themselves to be model railroaders of extraordinary talent or infamy. After having qualified and quantified the achievements of the member, FARCE will bestow upon the member the designation of Master Muddled Railroader (MMuR).

The program is broken down into several categories of achievement:

- Muddling yourself
- Confusing others
- Muddling kits
- Disarranging scenery
- Conflicted operations
- Layouts

To earn the award in the category of **Muddling Yourself**, the modeler must show extraordinary talents that include, but are not limited to:

- personal injury
- procrastination
- clutter
- other items

Under *personal injury*, this category is divided into three stratum of minor, moderate, and major. This category is awarded based upon the "Hey Bubba" scale. If the modeler has more than a few minor injuries in a year, that will qualify him or her. Cuts, bruises, splinters and such fall in the minor stratum. The moderate stratum requires stitches and/or splints, and a quick trip to the ER or MinuteMedic center accompanied by measureable bloodletting. To earn this award in one swift move requires a major effort. This is defined no less than as an overnight stay in the hospital. If the modeler has a near death experience, or in the case of actually experiencing death, this category will be awarded posthumously.

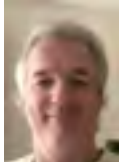
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The Local

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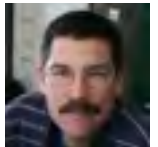
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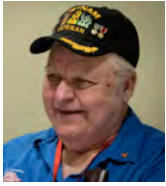
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President's Column

P J Mattson, MMR

time to think about the Achievement Program. Write down what you are doing as you do your modeling, and TAKE PHOTOS! That way you will have all you need to be judged and receive your Merit Awards.

Well the Holidays are in the past. I hope everyone had a wonderful time with family and friends. Did you get lots of model railroad stuff for your layout? I hope so.

It's now winter and the temperatures are down making it unbearable to stay outside. So it gives us the best excuse to work on our layouts and those modeling projects we have been putting off otherwise. It's a good

Our Achievement Coordinator, Charles Flichman, has retired from the position. Dave Chance has taken his place. Dave is looking forward to getting your Achievement write ups and judging papers to process them for the NMRA. He wants to give out as many certificates as possible. So let's help him out by doing a good job on our models and achieving the 87.5 points needed for the award. It's not as hard as you think.

Till next time stay on the right track.

Speeding Up Your Scratch-building Project

By Nicholas Kalis

I have used hot glue guns before to speed up the construction of my Fn3 (1:20.3) wooden trestle on the Oahu Sugar Company. Problem is that on

smaller jobs, they shoot out too much glue. This product solves the problem. I picked up the gun for about \$3 at Michael's. Readers might give it a try to speed up their next scratch building project to connect wood pieces.

Incidentally, I have tried a hot glue pot but thought that the hot glue created was too difficult to handle.

Mini Glue Gun by Craftsart ----->



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Under *procrastination*, this will be awarded for long-term issues such as analysis paralysis or over-analysis. FARCE has not yet completed all the requirements under this portion.

Under *clutter*, special recognition is given in three subsets: the layout, the workbench, and “other spaces”. When the layout represents a huge storage area and the track and trains can’t be seen for the tools, opened and/or unbuilt kits, and other “stuff”, the modeler is well on his way to completing this category. On the workbench, the quickest way to complete this portion of “muddling yourself” begins with the simple question, “Dude, where’s your workbench?” Special points are awarded also for having multiple copies of the same tools since the modeler can’t find the one he bought just last month. Other spaces include any other part of the modeler’s home. If the collection of monthly magazines is a sliding pile beside the bed or in the bathroom, clutter in other spaces will be an easy accomplishment. Easy completion can be accomplished when the spouse threatens to clean up the mess outside the train room, especially if a street sweeper or a flame thrower is included in the threat. Extra points may be awarded if said threat is carried out.

The second major category is Confusing Others. This can take several forms including:

- nitpicking
- disinformation
- pomposity
- disorganization

Nitpicking falls into two subcategories. The first one is informed nitpickery. This one requires special knowledge in the area under consideration. More points can be garnered here when the nitpickee has a complete lack of understanding or care about the subject in question. The second subgroup is uninformed nitpickery. This sometimes hold more amusement for others not directly involved in the nitpicking. Bonus points here are gains when the victim of the nitpicking actually is persuaded to concede the issue to the nitpicker.

The second subcategory is *disinformation*. This can be closely aligned with uninformed nitpickery. Points may only be earned in one subcategory or the other, unless the nitpicker can involve and persuade other modelers who are not the subject of the original nitpicking to agree to his position as well.

Third here is *pomposity*. This subcategory can be coupled with *chutzpa*, the legal definition of which is after committing patricide throwing yourself on the mercy of the court since you’re now an orphan. Points earned here for that level are instantaneously granted.

The last subcategory is *disorganization*. Though this portion is usually reserved only for elected officials within the FARCE organizational structure, it can be earned by volunteers at all levels of our esteemed organization when they demonstrate through their active involvement (or not: See Procrastination) the unique ability to disrupt, delay, or cause disorder within the FARCE.

The next segment of the MMuR program is Muddling Kits. This is broken down into *Motive Power*; *Freight and Passenger Cars*; and *Structures*. To earn recognition in this category, the modeler’s building efforts in each segment must show unusual talents and skills. Special notice will be given for improbability, failure of the original prototype, and general inappropriateness to the modeler’s overall theme. Extra points can be earned here by being able to counter the nitpicking efforts of the modeling judges. Shout downs do not count as properly countering the judges; just improperly encountering them.

Deranged Scenery is the next category under the MMuR program. This category holds similar specifications as the Muddling Kits category listed above. Additional merit is awarded for the garishness of a structure's finish. Lack of weathering does not meet the standard for garishness as that only shows a lack of effort on the modeler's part. Part of the garishness factor can best be exemplified by placing the Haunted House with Vincent Price in the doorway next to the pickle factory. Every good Muddler knows the pickle factory has to be located next to the slaughterhouse so the pickles can be shipped with the beef.

When it comes to **Operations**, the MMuR program recognizes the distinguished and infamous efforts of the modeler. Work as the *Dispatcher*, a *Yardmaster*, and a *Train Crew* all have the opportunity to receive an award in this area of the program.

The *Dispatcher* can show his talents and earn points in 3 areas. The first area is snarling (both verbally and actual traffic). The first person to earn this was "Blue Streak" Murphy who was well known for his blue hued speeches over the train room radio. Cornelius Cornfield is the namesake for impromptu head-on meetings for which a Dispatcher may be credited. Confusing and/or conflicting train orders is another area in which the Dispatcher may shine and earn points. Falling in conjunction with Pomposity above, a Dispatcher may become noteworthy for burying a Yardmaster.

The *Yardmaster* has his own places to shine and earn points towards the MMuR Operations segment. First there is positive and negative dwell time; disorganization, operation hazards. Positive dwell time is earned for not releasing complete trains within the yard or preventing crews from getting into the yard before they outlaw. Negative dwell time increase comes with slow switching. Disorganization includes such tasks as placing the wrong cut of cars into the wrong train and releasing it to the Dispatcher, and running through closed switches tripping the short circuit protection for the yard and/or the entire railroad.

Members of a *train crew* get to have their crack at earning points for this segment as well. Their point score goes up when they interact (negatively) with the Dispatcher or the Yardmaster. The train crews get points simply for causing chaos on the mainline or branch, failing to follow proper signals, train orders, rules, and for causing derailments. Their interaction with the Yardmaster shows up in wrong cars in the train without proper paperwork (waybills) or derailments in the yard or engine tracks. This list here is only partial. The imagination is boggled by the ways a train crew can muddle operations.

So that is the general overview of the new Master Muddled Railroader program from the Headquarters of the Fraternal Association of Railroad Collectors and Enthusiasts. We look forward to each and every member to join the FARCE and earn your Master Muddled Railroader.



James dos Carriles (James of the Two Rails) is the nom de plume of Kurt Thompson, Mid Eastern Region Vice President. As his friends in the hobby can attest, he has earned Master Muddled Railroader points, especially in the category of Muddling Yourself. He has points in both the minor and moderate categories, most recently for the six surgical staples required to close a cut on the top of his head, and perma-mount the hardhat.

Remember what Obi-Wan said: May The Farce Be With You!

NMRA HQ rebate to Divisions

By [Peter Youngblood](#), MMR, North America Director-At-Large

Your NMRA Leadership Team announces a new program available to all active North American NMRA Divisions. Called the **NMRA Division Retention Event Matching Fund Program**, the NMRA is offering a matching fund in the amount of \$50 USD once annually to any active Division that holds a Division event qualifying as promoting member retention (i.e. hands-on clinic material purchase or similar event).

The NMRA will reimburse up to \$50 USD to the Division when the required steps have been approved and completed. Logging in to the NMRA website, you'll find the downloadable "[Application For NMRA Division Retention Event Matching Funds](#)" form formatted as a Word DOC by first logging into the website as a member, then clicking on "Regions." Click on "Regions and Divisions." There you'll find a "Division Matching Fund" tab. Click on it for an explanation and a hot link to the DOC form. Once the event is completed, the Division will forward copies of the approved form and the required receipts to NMRA HQ (nmrahq@nmra.org or by mail).

NMRA HQ will then send a check to the Division's Treasurer for half the event cost or \$50 USD, whichever is less. Reimbursement will be made by NMRA HQ once all requirements are met. It's that easy!

Divisions are encouraged to take advantage of this new Matching Fund program as a way to increase member participation, education and retention.

Available as of January 1, this is a one year pilot program. Continuation thereafter is contingent on its usage.

NOTE: Unlike the 50-50 split of the NMRA annual rebate discussed in the Business Manager's column on page 14, this "rebate" is a reimbursement for expenses incurred by a Division in the activities that NMRA decides are membership promotional activities. MER is not involved in this reimbursement program - it is directly between NMRA and each participating Division.

Mid Eastern Region Blogs

Compiled by Nicholas Kalis

Potomac Division

<u>MER Member</u>	<u>Blog Address</u>
Bernard Kempinski	http://usmrr.blogspot.com/
Stan Knotts	https://mrrminutiae.blogspot.com/
Marty McGuirk	http://centralvermontrailway.blogspot.com/
Lance Mindheim	http://lancemindheim.com

Susquehanna

Jerry Britton	http://pennsyrr.com
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If you know of a Mid Eastern Region (NMRA) member who maintains a personal model railroading-related blog, please contact Nick Kalis at nkalis@verizon.net with the member's name and blog address so that we may include that blog on our list. Thank you.

MER JOB OPENING

Bob Bridges, our photographer, is moving out to Arizona in a few weeks, near the grandkids, etc.

So MER needs YOU! to volunteer to be the photographer. Mostly this means attending the convention and taking photos of the contest models and various open houses. Other photos from elsewhere/when are also good.

Contact Clint Hyde or Ken Montero or PJ Mattson via their info on page 2 to volunteer. There's an official job description we can send you.

This amusing rascal is an Industrial Fan load on a depressed center flat car.

This was at the JRD meeting on March 10.

Sorry the back-drop isn't plain white, this was the best I could do given the under-60-seconds time limit I had to photograph everything.



-- clint hyde, Editor

Richard A Higgins, 1928 - 2017

Richard A Higgins, of Alexandria, VA, died on Saturday, December 30, 2017, in Heartland Healthcare Nursing Home in Henry, IL.

Richard was born March 29, 1928 in Elizabeth City County, Virginia. He was the only child of George Judson and Florence Iola Higgins formerly of Pebble Beach, CA who have preceded him in death.

Richard attended the Citadel Military School in Charleston, SC during WWII. He left school to serve in the Army in 1945 as a Weather Forecaster. After the war, he enlisted in the Army Reserves and was called back to active service during the Korean War. After the war, he attended New Mexico State University and Penn State University where he graduated with a degree in Theater. He designed production sets for theaters for a few years then went back to weather forecasting for the National Weather Service in Alexandria, VA. He retired from the Weather Service in 1988 after serving 31 years. He remained in Alexandria during his retirement and moved to Illinois in July, 2017 to be closer to relatives and resided the Heartland Care Center in Henry.



Richard had a passion for Trains and Model Railroading. He was a member of the National Model Railroading Association most of his adult life, was very active with his local chapter, and served as treasurer for several years. He was a lifetime member of the American Legion and supported several veteran related charities. He supported several other charities as well, especially those aimed at underprivileged American Indians.

Cremation rites have been accorded and a memorial service will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be sent to Saint Joseph's Indian School, PO Box 300, Chamberlain, SD 57325-9919. The obituary can be viewed and online condolences can be made through Lenz Memorial Home at www.lenzmemorialhome.com.

by Tom Buckingham

I have known Dick for at least thirty-seven years. I first met him when I became a member of the Chesapeake Trainmasters Club, a round-robin model railroad operating group which meets every Tuesday. Dick was a very active member of the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association, had been the Treasurer, was on the Audit Committee, and was for a long time the Budget Chair of that group. When I began my ten year service as Treasurer of the Mid-Eastern Region, Dick graciously agreed to be a second set of eyes by reviewing inputs and reports. His interest, advice, and attention to detail made my job easier and more accurate. He also traveled with a group of us who attended many NMRA regional conventions. He was a wonderful, kind, and considerate friend.

CROSSROADS OF THE MER

by Ed Rosado

We are getting ready for you! Are you getting ready for us? Besides our trains, time is rolling along and before you know it the October MER Convention will be upon us. Our Crossroads of the MER conference is shaping up. This year, hosted by the Potomac Division, we are headed to Rockville MD, October 4-7, only 15 miles from the center of our nation's capital. It presents an excellent opportunity to visit DC during the perfect time of the year. Not too hot, not too cold with colors beginning to change.



So while family and friends are enjoying the Washington Monument, US Capitol, The White House, The Smithsonian museums and galleries or the spy museum and other sights, we modelers will be joining colleagues in clinic sessions, or touring layouts or maybe looking for bargains in the white elephant room among other activities.

Here is an update from our previous posting. We must make a correction from our last report. Marshall Abrams, "Abrams' Empire" will be open as a layout tour in addition to its originally scheduled operations call board offer. An additional operating session is scheduled for Friday morning 9-1pm at the Northern Virginia Model Railroad Club's "Western North Carolina RR".

We have added more layout tours from Thursday through Saturday. In addition to Matt Thompson's "Oregon Coast RR" and Pete LaGuardia's "New York Central's Western Illinois Division", you can visit Bill Demas's "Westmoreland RR" or Nick Kalis's "Oahu Sugar Company" as well as Dean Ripple's "B&O Monongah Division" and Ed Rosado's "Puerto Rican American RR". Bryan Kidd's "C&O Allegheny sub-division" and John Swanson's "PRR Cresson Branch" have also been added to the tour schedule. We are scheduling more tours so keep up with us at our convention website (below).

If you like operations, plan to sign up for the operating session on Brian Sheron's Long Island Rail Road. There is ample switching to be done, either at the large car float yard on the East River in Long Island City, or in either Holban or Sunnyside yards in the Borough of Queens. There is also freight to be moved, and you can be the engineer for freight trains delivering and picking up goods at various industries on the layout.

In the next edition of The Local we will hope to provide you with a clinic update, so don't miss it.

Register now for what promises to be one of the best railroad conventions you will ever experience.

Go to <http://merregistrar.coffeecup.com/forms/2018%20Online%20Registration/>

And be sure to continue visiting our webpage below. Future updates to come.

<http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018/>

Editor: Open house photo collage, including when I took pictures a while ago...no guarantee they still look like this.

Marshall Abrams,
old photo



Brian Sheron,
old photo



Mat Thompson,
kinda old photo



Nick Kalis,
new. Hawaii
venue. This is
Nick's photo
this time.





Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2018 Convention

Crossroads of the MER

October 4th to 7th, 2018

<http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018>



Use Online Registration for Secure Payment and Better Up To Date Activity Availability. See Info below.

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? _____ Putting Items In Sale/Auction? _____

Description	Act. #	Cost	#	Paying
Early Registration (through August 31)	E	\$55		
Basic Registration (September 1 thru September 30)	B	\$65		
At Door Registration (October 4-6)	D	\$70		
Non-NMRA Member Extra Fee	N	\$10		
Significant Other & Children Under 18	O	\$0		No Fee
Banquet – Saturday Night <i>To Be Decided</i>	401	\$		
Call Boards / Ops – Expanded Call Board Info Available on Website	-----	-----	----	-----
Thu. Evening, Oregon Coast RR., HO, Mat Thompson # Open 12	801	\$5		
Fri. Morning Abrams Railroad Empire, HO, Marshall Abrams # Open 6	802	\$5		
Fri. Afternoon Virginia & Western RR, , Doug Kirkpatrick # Open 4	803	\$5		
Sat. Morning Long Island Railroad, HO, Brian Sheron # Open 3	804	\$5		
Thu. Evening, Allegheny & Shenandoah RR, HO, Bob Reid # Open 12	805	\$5		
Thu. Afternoon, Maryland Junction, HO, Frank Benenati # Open 8	806	\$5		
Fri. Morning, Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, HO # Open 16	807	\$5		
Prototype Tours – More Info on Website	---	----	---	-----
	201	\$		
Made in the MER Tours – More Info on Website	---	----	---	-----
	701	\$		
General Interest Activities – More Info on Website	---	----	---	-----
	501	\$5		
Total Advance Registration Paid				

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Completed PDF Form can be emailed to Registrar with a note requesting an Invoice for Payment to be sent via PayPal.

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

Hotel – Hilton Washington DC/Rockville , 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852

Use Link at <http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018>, Hotel Reservations: 301-468-1100

Room Rate - \$114.00 night + tax, includes parking, Room Rate applies 10/1/18 to 10/10/18

Editor: I'm sorry if this looks like garbage on-screen; 'tis the nature of importing a PDF...Print it and it will be fine.

ELOCAL. Mar/Apr.

Special Awards Update

Martin Brechbiel, MER Contest Chair

The James River Division again will sponsor the Pride of Dixie contest for the 2018 Mid-Eastern Region Convention. There are some very specific qualifications for this year's awards so read carefully!

The model will be for a 2-bay coal hopper car for a railroad (1) operating in a state in the Mid-Eastern Region and (2) that originated (loaded on its own tracks) coal loads south of the Mason-Dixon Line. These states include: Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia (the panhandle is in MER), Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The usual suspects include: Baltimore & Ohio, Chesapeake and Ohio, Clinchfield, Interstate, Louisville & Nashville, New York Central (in West Virginia), Norfolk & Western, Virginian and Western Maryland. This excludes Pennsylvania (trackage in those states did not originate coal loads). For other railroads, please provide evidence that they originated coal loading on their own tracks in the listed states. All questions regarding eligibility should be directed to JRD's Contest co-chair Shannon Crabtree at stctigers@gmail.com AND CC'd to the JRD Superintendent at superintendent@jrdnmra.org

The winner will be the qualifying entry garnering the most points using the NMRA judging procedures. A special plaque will be awarded to the winner.

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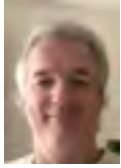
MER Cloth Patch

MER Cloth Patch	\$3 each includes S&H	\$ _____
MER Pin	\$6 each includes S&H	\$ _____
The LOCAL, on CD, all issues 1947-2012	\$5 each includes S&H	\$ _____
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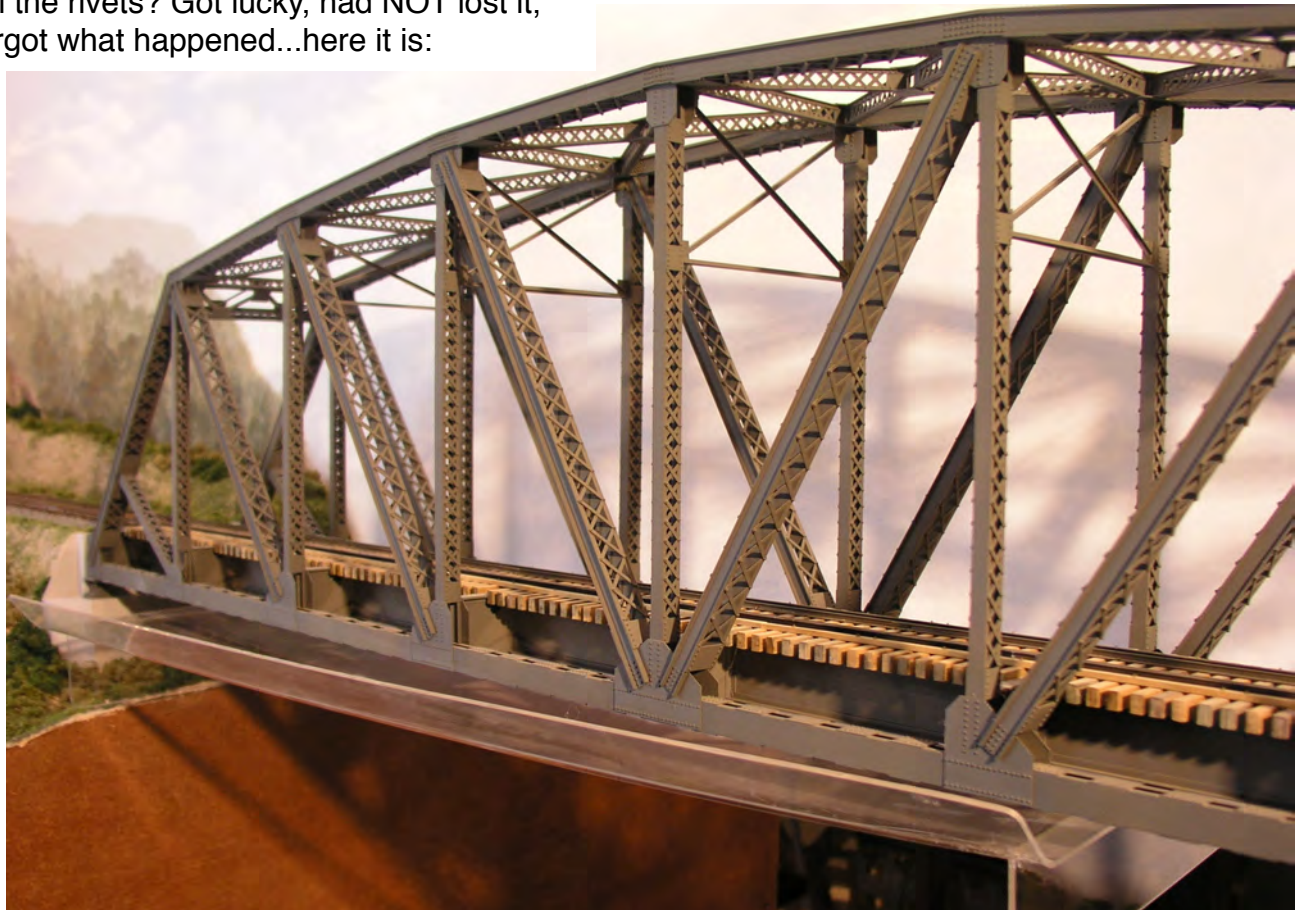
Clint Hyde, Editor

Last issue's print version arrived a few weeks ago, and the quality of the printed photos was outstanding. Printing from electronic originals has come a really long way since I was first working The LOCAL 15 years ago. Black and white isn't full color, but the dot resolution and resulting clarity and blackness was fabulous.

If you are receiving the print LOCAL, be aware that when you renew membership with NMRA, you are no longer able to renew the print LOCAL at the same time. You must contact Bob Price directly about this, and USPO mail him the little form on page 16 here. Cost is \$9 per year. Because this is now separated from HQ, the actual publication releases will ratchet forward in time a bit, for a total of about 10-14 days.

This time around, the print issue went in early, got printed

Remember last month I couldn't find the close-up of Charlie Flichmann's steel-girder bridge with all the rivets? Got lucky, had NOT lost it, just forgot what happened...here it is:



immediately, mailed immediately, and was getting delivered all in less than a week. Amazing.

The E-LOCAL continues to be about twice the page-count as the print LOCAL, and you continue to need to sign up for it by letting Bob Price know you want to. He sends an email out early each issue month to let you know the new issue is available. Be aware here, too, that altering your preferences for what email you receive information from MER might drop you off that notification when new issues are out.

They are always available for download from the MER website (<http://mer-nmra.com/MEReLocalsCurrent.html>).

In the E-LOCAL are additional stories and photos, as usual, and a lot more color, with more to come while I experiment with fancier layout aspects.

MMR (and not MMuR) Bill Miller passed away just a week ago as I write this column. We have an obituary here. Dick Higgins passed away just before the end of 2017, obituary in this issue too.

Hope you enjoy Kurt's story. Can't say I recall our having one like that before.

Keeping In Touch...



Bob Price
MER Business Manager

As Business Manager, I was recently requested by the MER Board of Directors at its Annual Budget Meeting to inform all division superintendent's that the MER program for subsidizing the Rail Pass fee was immediately suspended. As of January 1st, the Rail Pass fee was doubled by National. The MER budgeted for 50 Rail Pass applications for 2018 and we have already exceeded that number by more than double. Additionally, the MER has suspended the Division Matching Grant program. The MER BOD realizes the importance of these programs and hopes that funds can be restored in the future.

A question was recently raised about the bi-annual NMRA rebate program. This is the program where National distributes \$1 per member twice a year to each region. In the MER, the amount is split with half of the rebate amount per member going to the MER and the other half going to the division the member resides in. National does not provide rebate funds for family or Rail Pass members.

One of the monthly jobs that the Business Manger performs is distribution of member data to each division.

With many divisions holding elections at this time of year, please remember to inform the Business Manager of any changes in who is receiving the monthly division data extracts. While I often check division web sites for officer updates, the updates may occur several months after the division election process.

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.

On page 1, at the top, is a "French Fishing Dock", part of a diorama, from the model contest at 2017's convention. Glyn Thomas, modeler.

NEW MEMBERS

Eric	Binns	Philadelphia
Brian	Crozier	Philadelphia
Ernest	Fricks	New Jersey
Donald	Greaser	Tidewater
William	Hanmer	South Mountain
Charles	Hull	Potomac
Dave	Lundmark	
David	Moyer	Susquehanna
David	Noll	
Zach	Pabis	Potomac
David	Rafferty	Philadelphia
W Floyd	Reid	Carolina Southern
Allan	Richardson	Tidewater
Lucas	Safrit	Carolina Southern
Gary	Savage	James River
Patrick	Smith	James River
Tyler	Trahan	Carolina Southern
John	Trout	Philadelphia

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).

JAMES RIVER RAILS Operations Weekend



JAMES RIVER RAILS Operations Weekend – October 2018 An Invitation to a Weekend of Model Railroad Operations

One of the big attractions to the hobby of model railroading is the diverse aspects of the hobby, be it conducting historical research, modeling prototype scenery, building realistic structures ... the list goes on and on.

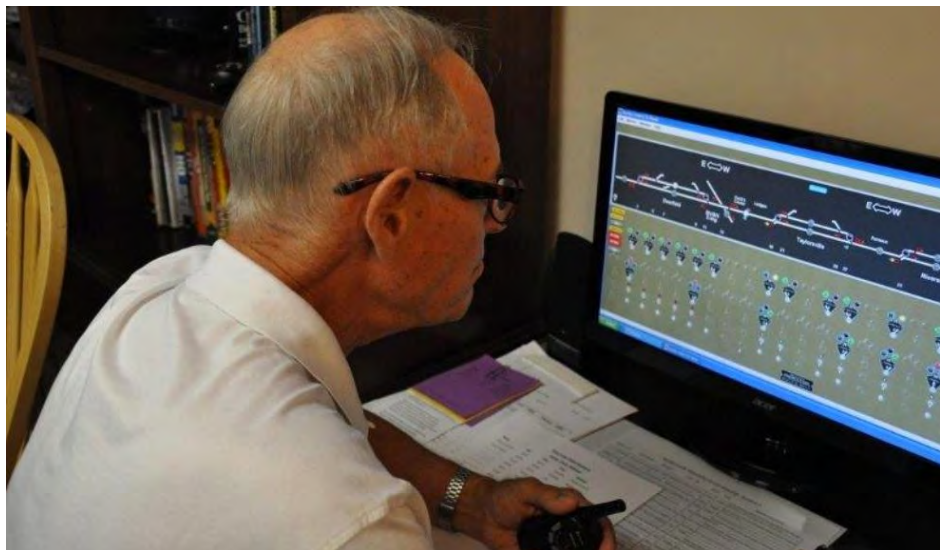
Included in this list is participating in model railroad operating sessions. In fact, operations is at the top of the list for many modelers, whether it be the challenges of recreating a near-prototype environment or simply enjoying freelanced operations. Many of us enjoy running trains on a wide variety of model railroads with their associated operating schemes.



In October 2018 – during the weekend of October 19 – 21, to be more specific – modelers will have the opportunity to participate in multiple operating sessions on a variety of model railroads. A team of modelers in the Richmond and South-Central Virginia area is hosting **JAMES RIVER RAILS, an Operations Weekend**. Layouts located in the Richmond, Williamsburg, Farmville, Appomattox, and Charlottesville, Virginia areas will be hosting operating sessions on Friday evening (October 19), Saturday morning and afternoon (October 20), and Sunday (October 21). The sessions are designed primarily for individuals with previous experience in model railroad operations, but everyone is invited to participate.

If you enjoy model railroad operations, this promises to be a special weekend that you won't want to miss. The hosting layouts feature a wide variety of operating environments:

- HO and On30 scales
- Model scenery including the West Coast, the Great Plains, and the East Coast
- Train movements facilitated via Time Table and Train Order, Centralized Traffic Control, Sequence Schedule, and everything in between
- Small layouts with 3 operators, to large layouts with 20 operators
- Operations ranging from mainline “fast paced and disciplined” to branch-line “relaxed”



<http://www.jamesriverrails.org/>

JAMES RIVER RAILS promises something for everyone on the layouts scheduled for the operations weekend. All layouts feature Digital Command Control (DCC) operations including use of Digitrax, NCE, and MRC systems. DCC throttles will be provided for operators at all layouts participating in JAMES RIVER RAILS. All you need to do is show up, ready to enjoy some outstanding model railroad operations and the camaraderie of fellow modelers.



On Saturday, the JAMES RIVER RAILS team will host a luncheon for all participants at the home of one of the layout owners in the Richmond area.

Various members of the JAMES RIVER RAILS team belong to and actively support the NMRA and/or the Operations Special Interest Group (OPSIG). While the team is coordinating information about this operations weekend with these national organizations, JAMES RIVER RAILS is an independent event. The operations weekend is open to all individuals; NMRA or other membership is not required.



Individuals interested in participating in JAMES RIVER RAILS must sign-up in advance. There are a maximum number of positions available for registration based on the crew sizes of the participating layouts and operating session scheduling, so you are encouraged to register early! A \$20.00 per person nonrefundable registration fee is being charged to cover event costs. The operations weekend is a not-for-profit event and any money remaining after event expenses have been covered will be donated to the James River Division of the NMRA.

The JAMES RIVER RAILS website provides complete information about the operations weekend. The website provides a comprehensive description of each of the participating layouts and an online registration capability for the operations weekend. The website facilitates payment of the registration fee using PayPal; instructions are also provided for payment of the fee via personal check. (Please note that the registration fee must be received by the JAMES RIVER RAILS team before a registrant's scheduling preferences will be honored.) The website also provides information about Richmond area hotels if participants require a room for the weekend, as well as links to various attractions and other venues in the Richmond area.

So if you enjoy model railroad operations and would like to operate on a wide variety of layouts in a single weekend, be sure to check out JAMES RIVER RAILS!





Somebody parked in the wrong neighborhood.

Operating Sessions are funny!

-- Clint Hyde

Have done a few Op Sessions at Chris Artale's layout since the first of the year. He lives about 5 miles from me. Hadn't been there before; generally I prefer to observe once, and he does have some interesting features to help newbies.

Of course "the new guy" always has the worst accident, so inevitably that was me. I put 3 diesels on the deck about halfway through; not sure how I did it; we did have radio issues.

Didn't get fired. I don't think that's prototype.

Achievement Program

Achievement Program Update
By Dave Chance



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

- Division 3 – Philadelphia
Adam Eyring – Association Volunteer
- Division 11 – Susquehanna
Barry Schmitt - Association Volunteer
Jerry Lauchle – Motive Power
- Division 12 – Carolina Southern
Gilbert Brauch -- Structures
- Division 13 - Carolina Piedmont
Robert Rousseau – Civil Engineer

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. Please don't send these any more.

*Custom
Layout
Building*



Layout Design

By Lance Mindheim

www.shelflayouts.com
301-404-8164

This is the longest issue of The LOCAL ever.

Subscriptions to **The Local**

Send requests to MER Business Manager at



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

Free electronic **color** version
 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

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 21.

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

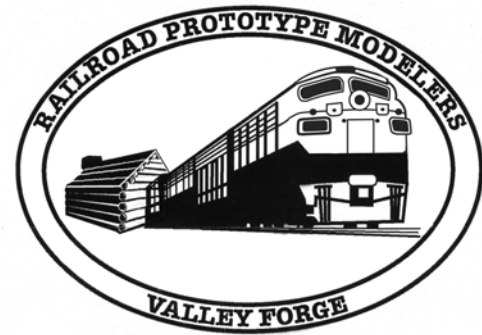


Don't ever think that you over-weathered a structure. This abandoned sawmill just outside of Cass would make a great scratchbuilding project.

Photo by Ed Gumphrey.

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

Sponsored by a 100% NMRA Club

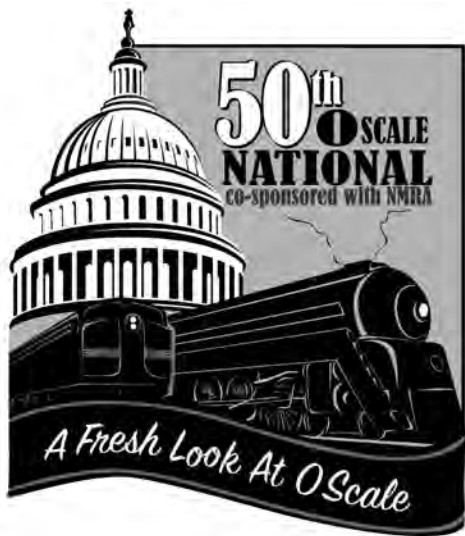


March 23-25, 2018

Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference Center
Malvern, PA

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

Information and updates: RPMValleyForge.com



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]; Rokat 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.

MER's 2017 End-of-year Asset Statement

by Brian Kampschroer

Once per year, MER publishes an asset statement so you know the financial condition of the region. That statement is included in this issue.

It is particularly of note that for the year 2017 MER's net worth has decreased by over \$2,000. How can that happen? For over twelve years, we have approved budgets that were not balanced, but rather showed a deficit. The only reason we are not in worse shape financially is that the actual expenses do not match the budgeted expenses, but are much less.

For over twelve years, we have been living off the generosity of the MER officers and staff, who routinely donated their legitimate expenses. We cannot count on that always, though. We want the best staff, the best officers, and they should not be obliged to donate their expenses. In order to get the best people, we need to continue to budget their expenses, and they

should be free and comfortable claiming them.

The cost of running the MER is not great. We have three board and staff meetings per year, one of which is at the annual convention, down from four. We are efficient in the use of our volunteer staff and they do everything to keep expenses low. The reason for the deficits is that our income is extremely limited. The NMRA has never increased our share of dues since the single dues structure was implemented many years ago. Our other main source of income is the convention, and that income has not changed significantly over the same period. We also have very small income from donations.

Over the next year, we will be working hard to increase our income. Expect and look for more on programs under consideration in coming year.

MID-EASTERN REGION, NMRA, INC.	ASSET STATEMENT		12/31/17
Account	Balance		
ASSETS			
Morgan Stanley Checking	\$27,478.40		
Morgan Stanley Money Market ~ 1.2%	\$10,037.25		
Morgan Stanley Convention Base Checking	\$5,000.33		
CD 1-Sallie Mae Bank ~ 1.3%	\$30,104.78		
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	\$72,620.76		
TOTAL ASSETS		\$72,620.76	
LIABILITIES			
Life Member Fund	\$31,934.88		
Subscriptions 2018	\$2,314.00		
Subscriptions 2019	\$386.50		
Subscriptions 2020	\$48.00		
Subscriptions 2021	\$3.00		
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$34,686.38	
NET WORTH			\$37,934.38

TIDEWATER DIVISION MODELING CONTEST

DIORAMA MODELING

CONCLUDING AT THE TIDEWATER 2018 TRAIN SHOW

SIMPLE CONTEST RULES!!

All Division members are encouraged to compete by constructing a diorama centered around the Cornerstone 933-4023 kit, available thru the Division Paymaster for \$20 per kit.

Completed dioramas will be displayed and judged at the Tidewater Division Annual Train Show. Awards will consist of First Place a \$75 prize, Second Place a \$50 prize, and Third Place a \$25 prize and a "People's Choice" prize of \$50.

Judging will be by Theme, Detailing, Visual Interest, Modeling Skills and Efforts.

Entry and Contest Rules

1. Walthers Cornerstone kit 933-4023 must be used.
2. Diorama cannot exceed maximum 18"x18".
3. The kit is to be modeled with any theme (i.e.. car dealer, auto shop, welding shop, paint store, dairy, feed store, tractor dealer, grocery store, farmers market, etc....).....you create it!
4. Building can be kit bashed.....as long as you use the original 4 walls!
5. Can have a railroad theme or as a stand-alone business in town.
6. Dioramas will be displayed at a special table at our NMRA Tidewater booth for the show attendees to vote for "People's Choice".
7. Division judging will be by a 3 NMRA member panel.
8. Era is your choice.....steam or diesel era.....
9. Super detailing is encouraged.

Yes, you can enter more than one diorama!

Contest entries will be completed and available for display set up on Friday before the Division Train Show.

Contest awards will occur at 2pm on the Sunday of the show.

Editor: This contest is for Tidewater Division members. I've included it here so that the idea gets out farther. Even if you can't participate, undoubtedly worth visiting their show to have a look.

Pictures from Walthers website.



William H. (Bill) Miller, MMR

July 22, 1939 – January 29, 2018

On January 29th the model railroad hobby lost one of its most enthusiastic proponents, Bill (Tiger Bob) Miller. Bill was a fount of knowledge about our hobby and could talk for hours about almost any facet of it. Most often he spoke of his favorite things; railroad history, scenery, scratch building, and his much-loved Colorado and Southern. This interest stemmed from the time he spent in Colorado, both professionally and as a hobbyist, researching the narrow gauge railroads and the C&S in particular.



In partnership with his MMR wife Mary, he developed the idea to build a railroad that the prototype planned but never built, the C&S Ohio Creek Extension. The resulting On3 railroad models an area from Gunnison to Floresta via Baldwin and Kebler Pass with a branch to Ruby. As a team their skills combined well. Bill's well-developed skills in scenery, scratchbuilding and rolling stock highly complimented Mary's abilities with trackwork and locomotive construction. The result is a superb model railroad that has been widely featured in the hobby press. It is one of the few railroads that operates as well as it looks, and as you may have seen, it is gorgeous. Operating under the timetable/train order system, it frequently operates for months at a time without so much as a derailment.

As a modeler, Bill won many awards both nationally and regionally and was recognized by the NMRA as a Master Model Railroader. He loved to share his modeling knowledge and photographic skills and has been widely published in the model press. His byline has appeared often over the last 40 years in Model Railroader, The Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette, Railroad Model Craftsman and the NMRA Magazine.

He is survived by his loving wife, Mary Synowiec Miller and one son, Michael Marc Miller. His modeling friends and family will long remember and sorely miss his outstanding sense of humor and warm, willing friendship.

UH-OH!

**Grandt Lines will be going out of business (voluntarily)
- see: <https://www.grandtline.com/>**

**Grandt Line is handling orders through May 1, then
will be limited to stock on hand.**

**Please check out the link in this email, and spread the
word to fellow modelers. Grandt Line makes many
good things, and there is no announcement of any
successor manufacturer at this time.**

EARLY DAYS of DIVISION 1, New Jersey

Bill Birchall

It all started with a question: “What’s a Railette?” The question was asked of Gene Colborn, Eastern VP of the NMRA who lived in a neighboring town. His answer: “If you’re married, you have one!”

I had been given NMRA membership as a Christmas present in 1965 and that question led to a friendship with Gene that lasted until his death in 1992. During 1966, we attended the national convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Having seen NER’s Garden State and Sunrise Trail Divisions in operation, the next question was: why did our Mid-Eastern Region not have divisions?

At that time, there was a small group of NMRA members in Burlington County, NJ that met in each other’s homes, including Gene Colborn, John Johnson and Bill Birchall. The concept of having divisions in the Mid-Eastern Region was presented to the region board by this group and, at the November 1966 MER Board of Directors meeting, the ground rules were established for the formation of divisions. They included the tentative boundary as the MER portion of New Jersey. A major discussion related to the issue of requiring NMRA/MER membership for division members. Bill and Gene argued, successfully, that a division should be the recruiting point to introduce potential members to the NMRA. The Board did require that division officers be NMRA/MER members since they would serve on the region advisory board. Of course, changes in NMRA insurance and security have affected the membership process.

On September 30, at the 1967 MER fall convention in Wilmington, Delaware, Bill announced the intent to form a division in New Jersey. Shortly after that, we contacted MER Office Manager, Clyde Gerald, to get a list of all NMRA members living in the MER portion of New Jersey. There were over 170 NMRA members. The first written notice appeared in the September-October 1967 issue of The Local, listing Bill as the contact person.



Gene and Louise Colborn, John and Brenda Johnson, and Bill and Esther Birchall prepared the announcement which was mailed to these members, inviting them to attend an organizational meeting on December 2, 1967 at the Cherry Hill Community Center. Twenty-three members attended this meeting and signed a petition to be presented to the region board to create the New Jersey Division. The constitution of the Garden State Division, NER was reviewed and rewritten to read MER and New Jersey Division. Gene, Bill, John and Harold

Conway were the first Board of Directors.

While waiting for MER approval, the group held a joint meet with NER's Garden State division on January 20, 1968, in Camden.

At the February 25, 1968 meeting of the MER Board, the New Jersey Division was formally chartered as MER's first division.

On April 27, 1968, the final organizational meeting was held with Bill Birchall being elected as the first Division Superintendent.

The following month, the MER board presented the charter to Gene Colborn, representing the Division on May 18, 1968 at the MER spring convention in Hampton, VA.

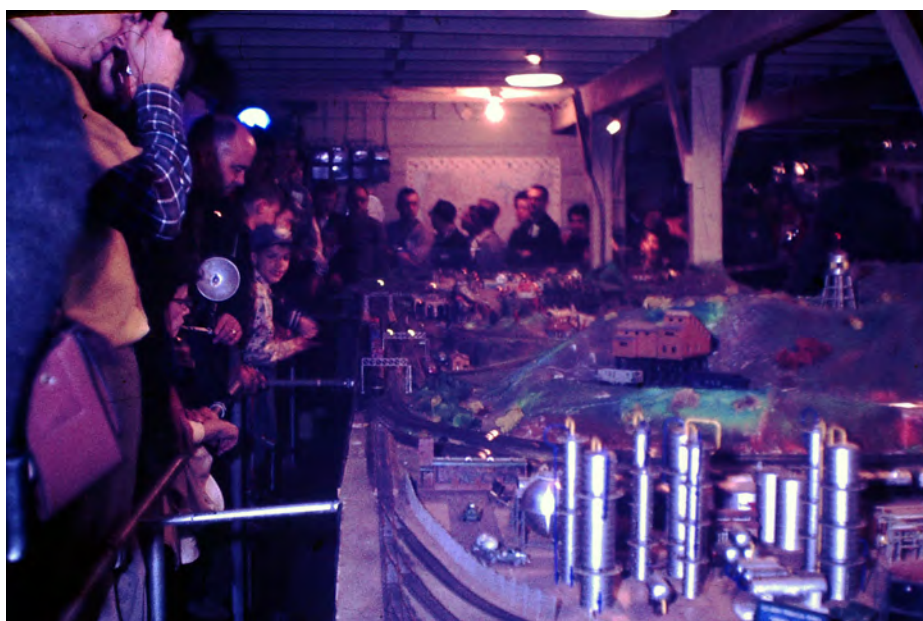
In the early years of the division our anniversary celebrations were based on the feeling that December, 1967 was when the division was formed. Later on, it was decided to recognize the charter date as our anniversary date.



The TV show picture was about Model Railroad Week on February 29, 1968. Bill worked for Channel 48 at the time.

The other shots are from an early meet. The New Jersey Division hosted MER Conventions in 1996 and 2002 and had a major role in running NMRA's Valley Forge Express National Convention in 1993.

Bill Birchall has been a member of the NMRA since 1965 and MER since 1966. In addition to being a founder of the Division, he served on the Pike Registry, Rerailer and Membership Promotion Committees of the NMRA and was MER Secretary in the early 1970s.



**National Model Railroad Association
Mid-Eastern Region
2018 Convention**

Crossroads of the MER



***Clinics ▪ Silent Auction ▪ Banquet Speaker—Lou Sassi
Contest & Modular Layouts ▪ Operations Call Board
White Elephant ▪ Contest & Display
Banquet & Awards ▪ Prototype & Layout Tours***

**October 4-7, 2018
Rockville Hilton Hotel
1750 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852**

***For the most up-to-date information visit:
<http://www.potomac-nmra.org/MER2018/>***

THE MER WANTS YOU!

NEEDED: Candidates for the positions of President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer are up for election in 2018.

WHEN: The deadline for self-nomination is May 30th, 2018.

Any MER member can nominate him or herself by contacting and supplying to any member of the nominating com-

mittee the required photo and a 200 word (max) statement outlining his/her qualifications or desire for the position by May 30. Additionally, candidate may supply a 500 word statement for placement on the MER Web site.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Jack Dziadul (jackdziadul@gmail.com)

John Janosko (johnajan@embarqmail.com)

Bruce Barrett (greenjeeps2@yahoo.com)

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

Successful completion of 3 years in any of these positions counts toward most of the requirement for the AP "Association Official" certificate.

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

Deadlines and Schedules for 2018 Nominations and Balloting

By-laws changes adopted in 2016 require the publication of deadlines and schedules for nominations and balloting for every year to be published in the first issue of The Local of that same year. The dates schedule for nominations, ballot and election results may be found in Executive Handbook, Section 5, Policies, Article VI. Here they are:

May 30, 2018 -- Deadline for receipt of self-nominations sent to the Nominations Committee. Date for Nominations Committee to notify Board of Directors of slate of nominees validated by the Business Manager.

July 7 -- You must be a member in good standing (paid up NMRA dues) based on the membership report supplied to the MER Business Manager from NMRA National as of 07/07 (the 7th of July) of every election year to be eligible to vote.

If an individual is not a member or if membership has expired as indicated by that record supplied to the MER, and the MER officials have not been informed by NMRA National of a valid renewal of membership by 07/07 (the 7th of July), such individual will not receive a ballot nor be permitted to vote in that year's election.

August 1, 2018 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting. Could be mailed earlier depending on other deadline requirements.

September 4, 2018 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

September 8, 2018 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

September 15, 2018 -- Deadline for Balloting Committee to transmit results to President the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

September 22, 2018 -- Deadline for The President to communicate the election results to candidates. The Business Manager also notifies the MER Web Master and the NMRA of the election results.

October 10, 2018 -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER-NMRA website.

by **Barry Schmitt**

Bricktown Model Railroaders NMRA Open House Susquehanna Division

We've added a new event to this year's Susquehanna Division calendar. Mark your calendars on Saturday, May 5th for the Bricktown Model Railroaders NMRA Open House.

The event takes place in Mount Union, PA. Mount Union is on the main line of Norfolk Southern, about 80 highway miles west of Harrisburg. In the last century, it was the largest shipping point on the Pennsy's Middle Division, because it was the site of three huge brick plants, also served by the East Broad Top narrow gauge. Hence the town's nickname: Bricktown.

Mount Union – still Bricktown to its citizens – is today the home of a vibrant model railroad community. Last fall the Bricktown Model Railroaders Association finalized the purchase of a 50-foot by 100-foot former warehouse – complete with railroad siding – as their new club headquarters. They've invited our division to come and learn more about their plans and to sample model and prototype railroading in Mount Union.

For several years, the Bricktown club rented space in a former Mount Union school building. Then, about four years ago, like many model railroad clubs housed in rented buildings, they were given short notice to vacate. Thus began the long and difficult process of finding another home. During that search, they completed the legal task of organizing themselves as a non-profit organization and established the challenging goal of purchasing their own facility. Like most clubs, they were well short of funds for an outright purchase, so they conducted a lengthy but successful contribution campaign which resulted in the purchase of the new home. They are now focused on refurbishing the building while also developing their layout plan.

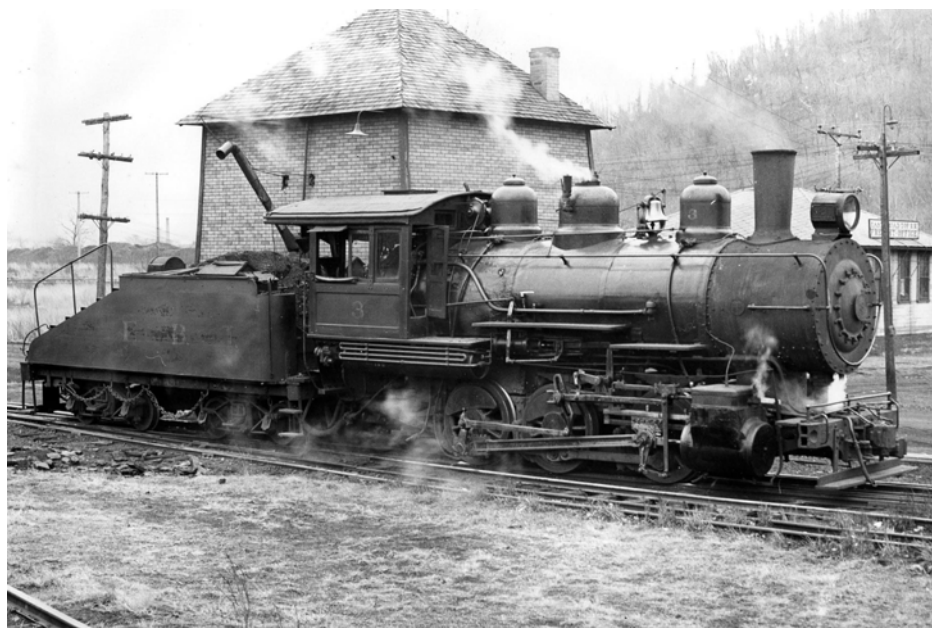
We will visit their under-renovation facility, receive a presentation about their extensive modeling plans, learn about the substantial railroad operations centered in Mount Union many years ago, and explore a former large industrial site served by the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and East Broad Top (EBT) Railroad.

The meet will be headquartered at the Bricktown Model Railroad Club and Museum, 300 West Small Street, Mt. Union. Doors will open at 9:00 am and the program starts at 10 am. Here's what you'll enjoy at the club headquarters (in addition to donuts and coffee):

10:00-10:30 Welcome and walking tour of club building and layout plans.

10:30-11:15 Profusely illustrated slide presentation by noted author and historian Bryan

East Broad Top standard-gauge 0-6-0 #3 will be on display



Donaldson on Mount Union and its railroad past. Then we break and let you tailor your own afternoon from the following menu of activities around the Mount Union community.

9:00-4:00 On30 modular layout of George Sarra, in club building.

11:15-12:30 Walking tour of remains of Harbison Walker brick plant (once the largest of its kind in the world), adjacent to the club building

11:30-4:00 Outdoor large-scale layout of Doug Renninger (weather permitting).

11:30-4:00 Outdoor large-scale layout of Bud Parks (weather permitting).

11:30-4:00 Outdoor large-scale layout of Jon Clark (weather permitting).

1:00-4:00 Wade Woodcock's HO/HOn3 layout.

1:00-4:00 Jon Clark's On30 layout.

1:00-4:00 Mount Union Area Historical Society Industrial Museum

1:00-4:00 And rarest of all, a chance to tour the East Broad Top engine house in Mount Union, home to EBT 0-6-0 #3, a 1923 Baldwin steam locomotive.

Lunch will be served in the former PRR Freight Station, now Mount Union's Senior Center. It will be available from 11:00 to 3:00 pm. The format will be cafeteria-style, featuring hot dogs with kraut, sloppy Joes, baked beans, potato salad, macaroni salad, ice tea, soda, coffee, and baked goods.

And of course, expect lots of action on the Norfolk Southern main through the heart of town. Several other great prototype and historic railroad attractions are also close by. Your May 5 visit could be a great starting point for a weekend or three-day getaway to several excellent and fun railroading opportunities.

For example, Horseshoe Curve, the Altoona Railroaders Museum, and Allegheny Portage Railroad National Park are just a little over a two-hour drive to the northwest. Cumberland MD, with the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and extensive CSX traffic through town, is slightly over two hours to the southwest, and Harrisburg's Rockville Bridge and several large NS yards are just under two hours to the east.

We hope to see you in Bricktown!

The former Pennsylvania Railroad freight station, now the Bricktown Senior Center. Time for lunch!



DIVISION ANNUAL REPORTS

Division 1: New Jersey

Meeting Times and Places:

All NJ Div. meets open 8:30 am.

Clinics, Contest, NJ Div. Bookstore, Business, and Swap Tables 9a-12pm.

1pm to 5pm we have at least 4 Open Layout Tours.

January 7, 2017 was Haddon Twp., NJ, we hosted joint meet with Philadelphia Div.

March 11, 2017 was in Hamilton, NJ

May 12, 2017 was a joint meet with the Garden State Division of the NER, hosted by GSD in Bridgewater, NJ

September was held in Millville, NJ

November 18, 2017 held in Forked River, NJ

Editor: This is a compilation of reports submitted by the Divisions each year. I have not verified any of it for accuracy.

Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator):

Bill Grosse has become Superintendent, Sept. 2017

John Gallagher is Asst. Super, and Clinics Coordinator

Mike Prokop has taken the Treasurer position.

Tom Lavin is Secretary

Jack Menaker and Geert Marien have joined Chuck Higdon as Directors

MER President PJ Mattson and MMR Ron Baile are handling AP

Contact information:

Bill Grosse, Superintendent, w.grosse.jr@optimum.net, C-609-532-3431

Achievement Program highlights:

The NJ Division Board has made a commitment to try to reinvigorate the AP Program.

We are trying to plan a Modeling with the Masters Day for June 2018. This will be a reserve a spot with an MMR and spend the day on a project. We hope to have at least 5 MMR's to choose from.

We are offering assistance to members in understanding the AP requirements and paperwork, also encouraging them to work for the certificates.

Activities from the past year:

December 16, 2017 we presented a 4 hour Free-Mo Module Clinic Day in Bordentown, NJ. Members Bill Grosse and Mike Prokop had their modules set up in Bordentown from Nov. 24, 2017 through January 7, 2018, open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. This provided them, along with past NJ Super Mike McNamara, a chance to give a comprehensive clinic with all of their modules set up. Included were Standards, Planning, Construction, Wiring, and Transportation.

Special Projects or working with other organizations:

We plan at least 2 joint meets a year, 1 with Philadelphia Division, and 1 with Garden State Division of the NER.

We are offering Clinicians and equipment to help Garden State Div. in Sept 2018, when they host the NER Convention

New Jersey Division will be having its 50th Anniversary in May 2018. We are planning to have an Anniversary Dinner for our members, and a Special Car Project that will be for sale. The car project will reference 1968 and 2018 in the car numbers for the 1st and 50th year.

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions.

We had the Free-Mo clinic in Dec. 2017. We plan at least 4 contact hours for these clinics.

We have had good feedback on these special clinic days which are not on normal meet days. Members liked the extra hours for a more thorough clinic. It is also easier on the presenters to agree if they have extensive setup, like modular railroads, since they are not just setting up for an hour.

Division 2 - Potomac Division

2017 Meeting Times and Dates

January 14 (Board mtg., teleconference) February 18 (Board mtg.) March 4 (Membership mtg., Minicon) March 16-17 (Board mtg., e-mail) April 15 (Board mtg.)

June 10 (Board mtg., Local Convention Committee (LCC) mtg.) September 10 (Board mtg.) November 11 (Board mtg., LCC mtg.)

List of Officers plus AP coordinator Contact information

Superintendent –

Brian W. Sheron, MMR 17120 Campbell Farm Road Poolesville, Maryland 20837
BWSheron@mac.com 301-349-5754 (H) 301-938-9634 (C)

Senior Asst. Superintendent –

Marshall Abrams 2906 Covington Rd. Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
abrams_railroad@comcast.net 301-588-1005 (H) 301-980-6108 (C)

Assistant Superintendent – Ed Rosado, 17600 Charity Lane Germantown, MD 20874

erosado1312@gmail.com (202) 255-4541

Paymaster - Tom Brodrick, 24078 Preakness Drive, Damascus, Maryland 20872

t.brodrick@verizon.net 301-253-0558 (H) 301-641-7167 (C)

Clerk - William White, 3709 Bayview Avenue Chesapeake Beach, Maryland 20732

chesbaywatch@comcast.net 410-535-4293 (H)

Achievement Program Coordinator -

Brian W. Sheron, MMR (same contact information as above)

Achievement program highlights:

Mat Thompson was awarded his MMR at the recent MER convention in Harrisburg, PA. Ken Nesper got his Volunteer Certificate.

Planned Activities from the past year 2017

1. On March 4 we held our 2017 Mini-convention at St. Matthew's Church in Annandale, VA. We had 7 clinics, two

modular layouts, a white elephant sale, and a model/contest room.

2. Layout Tours/Open Houses

January 7 (Dale Latham, Glenn Paulson, cancelled because of weather) (February 11 (Jim Hellwege) March 18 (John Swanson, Dave Mitchell) April 29 (Marty McGuirk, Prince William Model Railroad Club) May 6 (Bryan Kidd) September 16 (Rick Wright, John Sethian)

Special projects or working with other organizations.

The Division is holding the 2018 MER Convention in October. A Local Convention Committee (LCC) was formed to coordinate Convention activities. As noted in Meeting Times above it met twice in 2017.

Division 3: Philadelphia Division

Meet Times and Places:

January (Joint meet with NJ Division): Hadden Township. H.S. Hadden, NJ, Phila. Div. canceled due to a snow storm

April: Upper Southampton Twp. Community Cntr. Southampton, PA , 38 division members, 5 NMRA guests, 2 visiting guests, 45 total

June: Plymouth Fire Co. Conshohocken,PA 33 division members, 5 NMRA members, 8 visiting guest. 46 total

September: West Whiteland Two. Bldg. Exton, PA, 38 division members, 6 NMRA guests, 8 guests, 52 total (a number of Susquehanna folks showed up for the equipment we lent them for their convention)

November: Brandywine Town Center Com. Cntr. Wilmington , DE, 30 division members,6 NMRA guests, 5 visiting guests, 41 total

The average Division meet attendance was from 30 to 40 members plus 10 to 12 guests and visitors from other divisions. There was a visible increase of attendance from the previous year.

List of Officers plus AP coordinator

Contact information

Board of Directors:

Auxiliary Officials / Committees:

Supt.: Charles A. Butsch cabutsch@gmail.com A/P Coord.: Dave Messer dmesserpr@comcast.net

Asst. Supt. : Rob Hinkle rohink@comcast.net A/P Com. Chair.: Earl Paine earlpaine@verizon.net

Clerk: Mark Wallace mwallace665@verizon.net Newsletter (Dispatcher) Editor: Earl Paine

Treasurer: Howard Kaplan hakaplan@rcn.com Webmaster: Howard Kaplan

Directors at Large:

John Siebert Events/Clinics johnsiebert@comcast.net

Social Media: Rob Hinkle

Bill Fagan Events/Layout bfagan@comcast.net

Membership: Mark Wallace

Rob Hinkle Op Coordinator robhink@comcast.net

Membership Outreach: Charles Butsch

Scouting: Joe Bergmaier

Layout Video: Bill Fagan

Cert./Awards: Howard Kaplan

Division Sales and Apparel: Howard Kaplan

Achievement Program Awards:

Civil: Joe Walters
Dispatcher: Joe Walter
Volunteer: Howard Kaplan, Charles A. Butsch
Scenery: Mike Brownberger, Joe Walters
Prototype Models: Mike Brownberger
Structures: Joe Walters
Golden Spike: Tom Crop, Don Henkinsifken, Joe Parisa, Joe Walters

Activities During the Year:

Division Newsletter: The Dispatcher was issued six times during the year. It is the main contact to all members via emailings and still via snail mail to some. It averages over 25 pages with articles on the Divisions activities, model railroading and more.

2019 MER Convention Committee: Was formed with Rob Hinkle as its Chairman. Several meeting have taken place and a location has been obtained.

Division Meets: Typical Program:

Sign in with Coffee, donuts and sign in
Introduction of guests and new members
Announcement of future events
A/P Awards
First Clinic
Coffee and donut social break
Door Prize Award
50/50 Prize Award
Second Clinic

Show and Tell All (a new event were modelers can show and/or tell what they have been doing)

The meet normally run from 9 to noon at which we break for a independent lunch.

A map with directions to several layout open houses in the meets area are available for visits from 1 to 4 that afternoon.

Division Successes:

Attendance at our meets have increased as well as participation the the A/P Program. With one new member earning five during the year (so much for his retiring from Amtrak) Now with the planning for the 2019 Convention more and new members are participating the Division activities.

The video recording of layouts continues not only within the our Division but also neighboring divisions layout and across the country. Bill Fagan has provided a link to our members other layouts and their skill. These videos have also has been shown at our meets as well.

Our Newsletter The Dispatcher continues to be a extremely successful link to our members, other divisions and those wishing to know more about our Division. The diligence of both Howard Kaplan and Earl Paine has created what had been a simple four page mailer to what is now a 25 plus page color emailed publication that all members can be proud to share with their fellow railroader.

Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to Your Division?

Continued financial support for special projects and tools ensures the success of The Philadelphia Division's operation. We always welcome MER Board members to our meets. We appreciate Kurt Thompson attendance at several meets.

Division 4: Tidewater Division

Meeting Times and Places: We meet on the third Saturday of the months.

We try to vary the meeting location to promote the local attendance in our division.

2018 Division Meeting Schedule (tentative)

Date	Location	Contest
Jan 21	St. Matthew's Church, Va. Beach	Favorite Train
Feb 18	St. Matthew's Church, Va. Beach	Passenger Car
Mar 18	Eastern Shore RR Museum, Parksley, VA	On-Line Structure
May 13	Denbigh Community Center, Newport News	Freight Car
June 17	St. Matthew's Church, Va. Beach	Photos
Aug 19	St. Matthew's Church, Va. Beach	Locomotive
Sep 16	St. Matthew's Church, Va. Beach	Off-Line Structure
Nov 18	Va. Beach Central Library	Dioramas

In an effort to expand our meeting locations and presence, we met at Parksley, VA and were able to tour the cars at the Eastern Shore Railroad Museum. We also went to a nearby hobby shop and toured two layouts tours. We participated in Railroad Days at the Denbigh Community Center.

St. Matthew's Church had a renovation project this summer, so we were not able to secure the facility for June or August. We cancelled the June meeting and had the August meeting at a new location at Miles Memorial United Methodist Church

Change in Officers from last year:

Superintendent:	Conrad Haas
Asst. Superintendent:	John Cryderman
Paymaster:	John Robey
Timekeeper:	Mark Nieting
Director:	John Fallon
Director:	Pat Mahoney
Director:	Bob Cook

Other key members of the Division:

Hospitality:	Tina Vogel
Callboard Editor:	John Fallon
Membership:	John Fallon
AP Coordinator:	John Johnson
AP & Contest:	Norm Garner
Webmaster:	Roger Bir
Annual Show:	Bill Miller
N Scale Coord:	Pat Mahoney

Contact information: Conrad Haas

(757) 256-5989 or conradh4@verizon.net

Achievement Program highlights:

John M. Johnson completed Structure and Scenery to add to his other awards.

Dale Ridgeway completed the following AP Awards -Structure, Author and sent in for Civil to add to his other AP awards.

Activities from the past year: After expanding the Tidewater Division up the Eastern shore and the North East North Carolina, we have a few more attendees at our meetings. The division has been promoting the hobby through the use of a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/483227801838868). We have 96 members so far content is added regularly.

The 100% NMRA members club Tidewater Modular Railroad Club (TMRC) continues to promote the hobby at their clubhouse in the Fairfield Shopping Center three days a week, local nursing homes, libraries, Pungo Aviation Museum and the annual train show. The TMRC also uses a Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/pg/TMRCFairfieldJunction) to promote model railroading. The TMRC will hand out candy for Halloween and has invited Santa to hear from the children (and some club members) what they wanted for Christmas.

Again we had a NMRA recruiting table at the annual train show (with a new banner) that was staffed to hand out invitations to local meetings rather than Railpasses. We even talked to a modeler from Hatteras Island (2.5 hours away) that talked about attending our next meeting in November. One of our members expanded his switching puzzle layout to engage the public to play with. He took a picture of one of the youngsters playing with the puzzle that you can see on the Facebook page. We donated a dollar of each show ticket in the form of toys to the "Toys For Tots" Marines set up at the entrance of our show. We donated time to the Suffolk Seaboard Train Station Museum for their layout and annual "Touch-A-Truck, Trains and More" event.

Special Projects or working with other organizations:

We invited several non-profits to set up tables at our annual show.

Norfolk Southern Operation Safe Crossing and Friends of Lee Hall Station, to name a few.

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions:

I think the NMRA display table was successful. We encouraged visitors to attend our local meetings to get their Railpass. We felt if they are really interested, they will join us at our meetings. We had a table at the Greenberg show coming up.

Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to your division?

I would be encouraged to hear from other divisions on what works for them. I do think the Railpass is a good idea.

Division 5: James River Division

Meeting Times and Places: Second Saturday of Odd Number Months, Places Varies

Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator): Rod Vance is now AP Coordinator

Contact information: Superintendent@jrdnmra.org

Achievement Program highlights: John Siegle expected to achieve his MMR in 2018. Individual Members Earning Certificates

Activities from the past year: Meetings every odd numbered month.

Special Projects or working with other organizations - Ops Weekend to be held in 2018 sponsored in part by JRD.

Division 10: South Mountain Division

No report for 2017 provided.

Division: #11 Susquehanna Division

Meeting Times and Places:

February 3	St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Lebanon, John Wissinger
April 7	Mini-Con, Blue Ridge Summit W/ South Mountain Division
May 5	Bricktown, Mount Union, Lee Rainey
June 9	Lewistown Station – PRR Archives & Observation Tower, Jerry Britton
September 16	Main Line Hobby Open House Tour
Oct 3-7	MER Regional Convention, Rockville, MD
Oct 26 - 27	OPSIG – Wayne Betty
Nov	Division wide layout tour

Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator): Director: Pat Mulrooney

Contact information:

Superintendent: Tim Himmelberger	timh@susquehannanmra.org
Asst. Superintendent: Wayne Betty	wsb@susquehannanmra.org
Clerk: Paul Tice	ptice@susquehannanmra.org
Director: David Collison	director@susquehannanmra.org
Director: Pat Mulrooney	director@susquehannanmra.org
Director/Membership Chair: Howard Oakes	director@susquehannanmra.org
Director: Lee Rainey	director@susquehannanmra.org
Achievement Program Chair: Robert Charles, MMR	director@susquehannanmra.org
Training & Clinic Chair: Alan Mende	director@susquehannanmra.org
Sidetracks Editor: Tedd Pounds	director@susquehannanmra.org
Model Showcase Program Chair: John Wissinger	director@susquehannanmra.org
Past Superintendent: Barry Schmidt	director@susquehannanmra.org

Achievement Program highlights:

Jerry Lauchle:	Scenery, Structures, Electrical, Cars, Golden Spike
Jerry Britton:	Volunteer, Golden Spike, Electrical, Dispatcher
Brian Kampschroer:	Golden Spike, Electrical
Alan Mende:	Cars
Robert Bucklew	Golden Spike, Association Volunteer
Pat Mulrooney	Golden Spike

Activities from the past year:

Special Projects or working with other organizations

We are partnering with the South Mountain Division to sponsor the April Mini-con. We will be visiting the Pennsylvania RR Technical & Historical Society's archives at the Lewistown Station in June.

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions.

Aside from being a successful convention the level of cooperation and team spirit that working together on the convention generated was amazing. It far exceeded anyone's expectations.

Division: Carolina Southern Division 12, MER

Meeting Times and Places:

Regular member meeting third Saturday each month

February 18th Annual Business Meeting;

February Board Organizational and Planning Meeting

July BOD Meeting

Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator): No Change

Contact information:

Superintendent:

Curtis Alan Hardee 908 S. 9th St., Bessemer City, NC 28016 704-868-6976
superintendent@carolinasouthern.org

Asst Superintendent:

Larry Paffrath 17815 Prescott Border Drive, Cornelius, NC 28031 704-778-2745
assistsuper@carolinasouthern.org

Paymaster:

John Stevens 114 W Vista View Place, Mooresville, NC 28117 704-663-5565
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Clerk:

Fred Miller 333 W Trade St #2504, Charlotte, NC 28202-1753 704-332-1753
Clerk@carolinasouthern.org

Director 2019:

Roy Becker 5112 Granite Creek Lane, Charlotte, NC 28269 704-644-5555
director2@carolinasouthern.org

Director 2020:

Blayne Olsen 4429 Wolf Pond Rd, Monroe, NC 28112-7900 704-764-3377
director1@carolinasouthern.org

Director 2018

Gil Brauch 4142 Wandering Lane NE, Hickory, NC 28601 828-256-5708
director3@carolinasouthern.org

AP Chairman

Dave Chance 5884 Circlewood Dr, Kannapolis, NC 28081 704-933-4200
apchair@carolinasouthern.org

Achievement Program highlights: See Attached

Activities from the past year:

“Brass Pounder” Division Newsletter; (6 editions)
Division promotion display with operating Timesavers at Train Shows
Hickory, NC, April
Spencer, NC, May
11th annual Railroad Modeling University (RMU), January
Division Picnic, September
Members Swap Meet, November
Wades Train Town Open House (2nd Saturday monthly)
5 members and spouses attended MER Convention.

Monthly activities

January,	RMU, Railroad Modeling University.
February,	Annual Meeting. BOD Meeting
March,	Clinic, building a RR fusee by Fred Miller, MMR.
April,	Clinic, Adventure in Scratchbuilding by Scott Perry
May,	Display at North Carolina Transportation Museum train Show, Clinics, How to give a clinic. Layout and Yard design
June,	4 roundtable mini clinics/
July,	BOD Meeting, OP session at Neal Anderson
August,	Visit to Southeastern Narrow gauge Museum, Newton NC
September,	Annual Picnic and layout visit to Jack Parker’s Piedmont & Western Railroad.
October,	Clinic, Using Arduinos for sounds and lighting for layouts and buildings by Fred Miller, MMR
November,	Monthly meeting. Annual swap meet and show. Hickory, NC

Special Projects or working with other organizations

Sponsor Boy Scout Model Railroad Merit Badge with multiple Councils
Maintain & repair model train display at Levine Museum of the New South.

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions.

The Division has held a Railroad Modeling University for 11 years. This event has been a half or full day collection of classes, clinics, demonstrations, and hands on work sessions on many aspects of the hobby. It is scheduled for January and always includes some classes targeting beginners. Some of the beginner classes have been run every year and consistently get 8 to 12 attendees. We often have several people who had their first exposure to model trains at Christmas and are curious about what more they can do with them. We typically have 4 to 6 concurrent one-hour classes at all levels of expertise, so anyone can learn something from the day. Attendance has been in the range of 60 to 80.

CPD-13 Carolina Piedmont

Meeting Times and Places: Previously through October 2017 was St. Michael Parrish Center on High House Road Cary, Starting November Waltonwood Retirement Home on Cary Parkway and US-1/64

Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator): Re-elected January 2018, John Sokash – Superintendent, Charlie Rausch – Assistant Superintendent, Bob Bridges – Clerk (However will be resigning effective March to retire to Arizona—CPD-13 will need to find replacement), Gene Sing – Paymaster. Continuing Directors are Willard Seehorn and Bill Hanley, New Director is Daniel Fisher replacing retiring Steve Miley. No other staff changes. Vic Bitleris continues as AP Coordinator.

Contact information: John Sokash, Superintendent

Achievement Program highlights: Mostly quiet.

Activities from the past year: Several members travelled to MER convention and National conventions. CPD-13 was present at annual Neuse River Valley train show in November, raffled off train sets as fundraiser to support Holiday Trains for Kids program. One member, Jim Murphy did have an article about his train layout published in Model Railroader.

Special Projects or working with other organizations: Holiday Trains for Kids

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions. In 2016, the club members put together a model train layout based upon the small town of Edenton in eastern North Carolina. We sold raffle tickets at the 2016 MER convention that we sponsored as well as the 2016 Neuse River Valley train show. The fund-raising efforts were the best ever! The winner of the train layout declined to take ownership of the train layout and requested it be donated instead to the Edenton Historical Society where it was very happily received. However, in 2017, the club decided to take a breather and raffle off train sets instead, the end results were mediocre raffle ticket sales at best. The decision for 2018 has been made to go back to building and raffling off a completed train layout, which may be to improve upon a donated existing modular layout.

Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to your division? Continue present activities.

Division 14: Chesapeake Division, MER

Meeting Times and Places:

Annual Meeting: Towson, MD Library
November 19, 2017

Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator):

Superintendent: Bill Ataras
Asst-Superintendent: Rick Uskert
Paymaster: David Arday
Director at Large: Mike Zitzman
Division Clerk: Tim Beaty
Relay Editor: Kirk Bateman

Contact information:

Superintendent: super@chesdiv-nmra.org

Achievement Program highlights:

The division had one new AP certificate earned in 2017:

Activities from the past year:

In February, 2017, we had four members open their layout to the Division. Three of the layouts were HO scale, and the 4th was O-scale, 2-rail. All layouts are still under construction, each to varying degrees.

In March, we had an Arduino clinic hosted by a member. This was second part of his clinic series on this topic. It was well attended, and even the “computer challenged” had a good time and came away with an appreciation for some of the things that can be done with very simple, low cost microcontrollers to augment our layouts.

In April, we had a photography clinic hosted by 3 members and well attended by the membership. Attendees were encouraged to bring their own equipment so they could get some hands-on hints to make their photos more striking and effective.

May was our month for a Canton Railroad Operations Tour. It was very well attended, even though some members could not attend on a weekday. Railroad staff were very informative and helpful, and everything I heard from those who attended was strongly positive. Durable shoes or boots were required; hard-hats were recommended. And, safety glasses were provided for those who didn't have them.

Our annual Division meeting took place on November 4th. We took care of the necessary business in about 45 minutes, and then switched to “fun” mode. There were a series of 4 mini-clinics, with a host for each providing slides and descriptions of his topic. And everyone chimed in with their applicable personal experiences on the topic at hand. This seemed to draw the members into the discussions better than most of our other meetings.

Special Projects or working with other organizations:

During the year, we took several surveys via the Internet using the Google Survey functions to structure the survey and automatically tabulate the results. Some of the surveys were used to get “registrations” for an upcoming event; one survey collected information about the members modeling and activity interests. This helped the Board plan events based on the modelers' interests, and estimate the eventual attendance.

The only downside to this was that not all members are “Internet compatible.” Thus, a relatively small percentage, perhaps 20%, are not able to participate. And, as might be expected, not all Internet savvy members participated in the polls; our total response rate was about 16%. This is approximately the same percentage of the Division members that actually participate in the various events.

One not so surprising outcome was the answers to the question about the time period being modeled. The conclusion is that the vast majority of us model the time period of our youth! That's right. Essentially it's this: we strongly tend to model life as we knew it when we were in elementary school.

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions:

I would suggest that the Divisions can benefit from the Google Internet surveys. It helped us to focus on the preferences of the members, and estimate attendance. This last item could be significant if a particular activity draws an unexpected number of attendees and exceeds the space available.

Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to your division?

It could be helpful if Division reports, such as this, are distributed to each Division superintendent. Any successful activity, such as our Canton Railroad visit for example, might give other divisions information about a potential activity that their membership might be interested in.

The Proto Boys make models too. They look a little different, not actually super-detailed. I've lost track of who took these pictures. Sorry.



South Mountain Division's annual "mini-convention" is on April 7, 2018, 9 to 4 PM, Blue Ridge Summit, PA. More clinics, new layouts, well known presenters and a raffle for a Mainline Hobby Supply gift certificate. <http://www.smdnmra.org/>

MCR/Cincinnati is holding a Regional Convention: Cincinnati Division 7 is conducting a huge 4 day Cincinnati Express Regional NMRA Convention this May 17-20. This is their first NMRA convention since the popular 2005 national and includes rare access to dozens of published layouts. All the details are found on their webpage at <http://www.cincy-div7.org/convention.html>

