

The Local



A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA

Volume 73

November — December 2018

Number 6

Convention Central, Part 2

by
Clint Hyde

(Part 1, in the previous LOCAL, was about the O Scale National.) This time it was the MER Fall 2018 Convention. Not so much of that OOOOversized stuff this time. We were back at the same hotel, the Rockville Hilton. The Hilton had plenty of space, MER didn't use nearly as much as the O Scale National did (which had a large dealer presence). As I already knew the hotel, it was easy getting around.

There were about twice as many models present for display or judging—some really lovely work. Photos are a few pages further inside. There were plenty of open houses, of which I went to exactly zero. A year ago our now-long-gone photographer and I split duties about going to open houses and other things. Not that lucky this year...darn it. If you have photos of open houses from this year, please send me some, for use in 2019.

We had one very unusual episode this year. I'm pretty sure MER hasn't done this before: we had FOUR people receive Master Model Railroader (MMR) awards at the banquet.



Four MMRs all at once in 2018. A World Record!
L to R: John Paganoni, Jack Monette, Jerry Lauchle,
Kurt Thompson, with AP Chair Dave Chance

I had hoped to see a couple of open houses, like Mat Thompson's, but it was too far away. So I hung around at the hotel, only venturing out to find the funky food establishments I hadn't been to back in August.

Alan Mende is taking over the job of Contest Chair at the conventions. Martin Brechbiel, who is MER's new Secretary, did this job for years, so in the future Martin will be able to go to some open houses, finally.

I did get to some of the clinics, although as usual there were more I wanted to sit in on than I actually went to. This is good, better too much than too little...Lance Mindheim, whom I've known almost 20 years ago, talked about models as art. Lou Sassi talked about his cameras over the years (and it has become clear I should replace my digital camera). Bernie Kempinski was there and I had to miss his presentation (again! darn it).

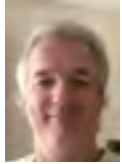
continued on page 5

The Local

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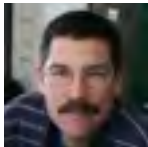
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A Model Railroading Essential

By Nick Kalis

I have read many an article about essentials to building a layout but one item often left out is a 100-pack of #11 X-ACTO blades. Good modeling may be less attributable to a steady hand than to a brand-new #11 blade. Trust me, an #11 blade can get dull even after only a few cuts! Once the blade loses even a little bit of its sharpness, your blade will stray from its intended path. This is one case where you truly can say “it’s not my fault”, it is the blade, so always keep a 100-pack on your workbench. I recently went into a crafts store to their X-ACTO display to get a 100-pack and could not find one; neither were they stocked at a local hobby shop. So I bought mine online, but not after paying a fortune for a 5-pack. And believe me, a 5-pack of these blades goes almost instantly.

Don’t be cheap about your blades. They’re only 10 cents like this. Better to put new 10-cent blades in more often than make a bad cut or three in a \$200 craftsman kit.



Make sure you have handles, too...those blades are too sharp for your fingers!

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President's Column



Kurt Thompson, MMR

A service is a service no matter how small

In Horton Hears a Who, by Dr. Seuss, Horton the Elephant declared that a Who is a who, no matter how small. He did this as he was battling to save the Whos from destruction against some people who could not, nor would not, hear the voices of the tiniest of the Whos.

What's that got to do with model railroaders? Nothing much, though our significant others might say that model railroaders all live in a world worthy of Dr. Seuss.

Where I see the relevance to model railroading, and particularly to the MER, is service. Service to our fellow modelers.

The need for service comes in many shapes, sizes, time commitments, etc. But no matter how much time or how little time you have to share and serve the hobby, any amount is service that can and will make our hobby and organization grow.

Each division works through the efforts of the divisional officers and other volunteers who give clinics, open their layouts for home tours, write articles for the division newsletter or the regional newsletter. Someone takes on the job of being the editor of the newsletter. Even members who attend divisional meetings are giving some service.

Each year, one or more divisions put on the MER convention. At the MER conventions, the hosting division rustles up a number of volunteers so "the show" can go on. Again, not all the service is large, such as being the Convention Chair or Asst. Chair. Some work half of a day making sure the clinics run on time and the clini-

cians have help. Some also present the clinics and share forty-five minutes of information.

One of the first AP certificates I earned was Volunteer. Amazingly, I earned it while I was a first time Dad in the early 90s. I worked on a couple of NMRA National committees but I didn't have to travel. All my volunteer time was handled remotely, thanks to overnight package delivery and phone calls. That was before we had reliable email service and file transfer.

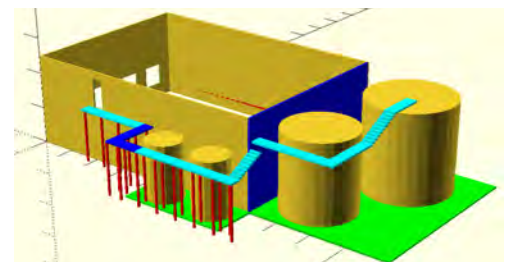
In the last several years (since Dec. 2008) I've done more volunteer work for the NMRA. I served 7 years helping the Chesapeake Division become and remain active. But even that required the help of many division members to make it work. Each was a cog in the machine.

After a break, I was persuaded (arm twisted or other method of persuasion) to again volunteer to serve at the Regional level. The past two years as Vice President have been entertaining, educational, but not overly burdensome in time or energy.

Just as the divisions need volunteers to help them run and operate, so does the MER. Not all positions are elected Board positions. Many other jobs require someone to willing take the lead and get a certain project or issue done. Some things that you might not think about as volunteer work for the MER includes: being a model contest judge; serving on the nominating committee (sometimes a clear way to keep your name off the ballot); helping with the webpage; or help with the convention registration, to name just a few. If you don't want to be in the limelight, you don't have to be out front to be of service.

So with a nod to Horton the Elephant and all the tiny Whos, please remember that a service is a service, no matter how small. Next time you see a member of the MER Board or myself, stop one of us and ask what small service you might do. We won't burden you but ask you to give some time back to the Region.

Clint sez: If you've used OpenSCAD, you need to check out www.openscad.org; it's similar, but different. OpenSCAD is a desktop application. OpenJSCAD is a web-browser-based work-alike. Not quite identical, but very similar. Can go straight to STL file, which is the thing for 3D printing. To the right is a little bit of OpenSCAD I'm working on.



Quite a few awards handed out. John Johnson picked up more photography awards than he could carry, Charlie Flichmann got a special length-of-service-to-MER award, and there were the several MMR plaques.

John Glaab retold me the two stories he told me at the O Scale Convention. Still funny. Nothing to do with model railroading.

I did mostly get out to the restaurants I wanted to go to, except for Peruvian Chicken. The weirdest of them all was "The Kielbasa Factory". Turns out it's not really a place to eat...you can, and I did, but it's really mostly a Polish grocery. Featuring, yes, lots of Kielbasa. And lots of stuff with only Polish writing on it. No idea what it all was. Went to Pendery's Spices on the way home (just north of the hotel). The whole place is just containers of spices. Need to figure out how to incorporate that onto the layout. Yeah. I can see it now...need to make an E L Moore-style building that is a spice-grinding factory. Gotta have some tanks, too. Moore loved tanks. And a warehouse...OK, brain is now churning.

See? That's why you go to a convention. Ideas. New ideas. Where's my drafting pencil?



Kurt congratulates PJ on not having to come to any more meetings.



Model judging time is the busiest this room gets each year.



Yes, indeed, there was a modular layout. Although "modular" has come to mean a lot more than just 2x4 rectangles arranged in a boxy loop. Actually there were two layouts. The second one has the purple skirt, in the background.



Charlie Flichmann wasn't at the convention this year, so Jack Dziadul took the award to him in person at home.



A styrene kitbuild by Charlie. Jack took this picture while visiting. (Charles Brommer kit)

Model Contest Award Winners



Steam Winner: Camelback.
Charles Rausch, Lehigh New England E13 2-8-0

Diesel Winner:
John Johnson, PRR Alco S-2



Traction: Martin Brechbiel
Freight Motor CG&W #19



Passenger:
Charles Rausch, On3 DRG&W Baggage Car



Clyde Gerald award: Doug Sandmeyer, Horse Tram (wait, I thought that meant the horse *pulled* it, not rode it?)

Best in show: Alan Mende, CRR of NJ, Class C-3 2-6-0 #375. AP judged at 117 pts.



President's Award: Gondola, Ernie Little

Mid-Eastern Region Blogs

Compiled by Nicholas Kalis

MER Member

Blog Address

James River Division

Shannon Crabtree virginiamidlandrr.blogspot.com/
Rod Vance <https://www.sites.google.com/site/willowcreekrr/home>

Philadelphia Division

Bill Blackburn PRR-GVD.COM
Bob Dietrich <http://www.dietrichsfam.com/shj/>
Val Pistilli www.rpmvalleyforge.com
Robert Putnick <http://rputnick777.wixsite.com/horseshoecurve/line>
<https://sites.google.com/site/ephratavalleyrail-road/home>
Greg Shindledecker <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WMThomasSub/>
Paul Welsh http://www.rrscience.com/G_gauge/wmrr.shtml
Jeffrey Witt <http://witt-family.com/LayoutConstruction.htm>
Bob Zeolla <https://www.facebook.com/Conemaugh78>

Potomac Division

Alex Belida <https://esprblog.wordpress.com>
Bernard Kempinski <http://usmrr.blogspot.com/>
Stan Knotts <https://mrrminutiae.blogspot.com/>
Marty McGuirk <http://centralvermontrailway.blogspot.com/>
Lance Mindheim <http://lancemindheim.com>
Dean Ripple <https://sites.google.com/site/monongahdiv/>

Susquehanna

Jerry Britton <http://pennsyrr.com>

Listed in alphabetical order by last name

Revised Wednesday, August 15, 2018

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 HAS A NEW OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

It is Jerry Lauchle, one of the guys receiving MMR award on page one.

LOOK RIGHT HERE!

SEE THIS BLANK SPACE?

**YOUR LITTLE STORY OR PHOTO
COULD HAVE GONE HERE.
INSTEAD, WE MIGHT HAVE ONE
OF MINE AGAIN. I HAD AN UNEX-
PECTED GAP, AND YOU COULD
FILL IT. THESE THINGS OCCUR
REGULARLY, AND THAT'S WHY
MY LITTLE ITEMS GET INSERTED.**



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 in the May/June LOCAL, 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.

On page 1, at the top, is a Trolley, from the model contest at 2018's convention. Martin Brechbiel, modeler.

Deadlines and Schedules for 2019 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.

The full set of dates will be in the next issue.

The "Pride of Dixie" award, from James River Division, is being renamed the "Chuck Hladik Memorial Award" starting in 2019.

**Custom
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Building**

Layout Design

By Lance Mindheim

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Freight Car: (also: Ray Bilodeau NG winner) Charles Rausch, On3 DRG&W 30' stock car



Non-revenue: Jordan Spreader (also: Philadelphia New Modeler award) Joe Walters, Jordan Spreader Type J



Caboose: John Johnson, PRR N5c Cabin Car



Structure On-line: Jerome Skein, Woodsboro Station



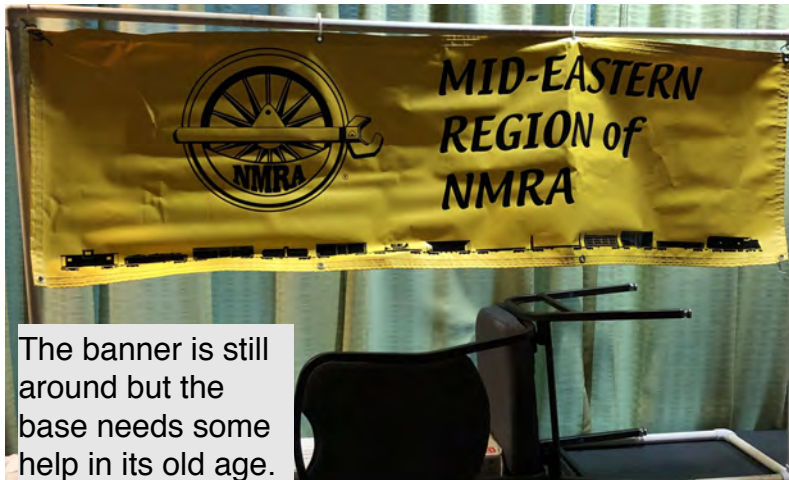
Structure off-line: Fred Willis, Frost Bros Ship Stores



Display offline: Martin Brechbiel

Merit Award winners are in gray boxes, like the two above.

Some other photos from around the convention...



The banner is still around but the base needs some help in its old age.



The White Elephants were there too. Behind the lamp.



Paul Dolkos still packs 'em in for a presentation.

We had an interesting number of dioramas this year.



These two had lights and animation. Jim Murphy, modeler.



My Dad loved White Castle when he was in college. I'm not sure what's going on inside there. Vintage dancing? (Closeup detail in this photo)





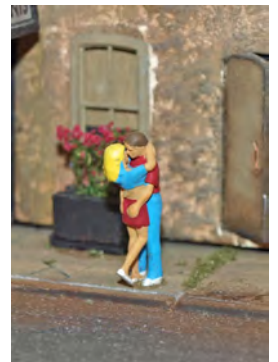
Every diorama should have a good-looking getaway car.



I'm sure Jimmy D would have wanted a car wash like this one.



Needs more red lights. And some animation.



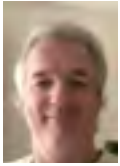
Apparently I haven't been keeping up with the Preiser figure sets. When was this released?

The MER Board, working hard. Or vice versa.



Outgoing Prez PJ Mattson got a special award from incoming Prez Kurt Thompson.

Coupler Comments



Clint Hyde, Editor

When I first worked on The LOCAL starting in 2000, it cost 50 cents to print 16 pages, and 50 cents to mail on our permit. There were 2000 copies being mailed; using a permit only needs 200. Subscription cost was \$6—exactly break-even.

Eighteen years later, those prices are gone (like the hair). It now costs \$1.50 to make a stapled magazine of 16 pages (which is a VERY good price), and \$1 to mail it, for a total of \$2.50 per copy per issue. The subscription price is \$1.50 per copy per issue (total of \$9 per year); a total of a \$1 loss per copy. We are discussing how to manage this, but there's no really great answer. We can cut pages, but that doesn't produce break-even. The mailing cost drops if we cut pages far enough, but then The LOCAL barely contains the minimum required info. I did a 12-page test-case a few months ago; it worked, but it wasn't exciting. Imagine this issue minus four pages of model photos.

If you recall from the graphs printed last issue, the print quantity count has been dropping pretty fast.

If it goes below 200 (which it will in 2019), we cannot use the mailing permit (we can fake it for a while and print/mail some extra copies back to the Business Manager). That leaves first class, which will cost more.

If it goes below 100 (which it probably will in 2020),

we can't afford our multi-decade professional printer any longer, leaving it to ME to print on MER's 11x17 laser printer (which I have in my basement, and use for proof copies during production each issue), and mail it first class (since the permit requires 200 minimum).

We can raise the price, to \$15, which is break-even for 16 pages. We can cut 4 pages, or 8. (The LOCAL was only 8 pages back in the 90s.) The remains of the Life Member fund pays for the copies for the MER Life Members (of which there are 81 remaining).

We could cut issues from 6 per year to 4. Should the electronic version also take that cut? It's a lot easier on me to do them both at the same time—changing that schedule means that they will be out of sync and not sharing all the content.

At some point, the print LOCAL will cease. For now, please let your MER Board members know what you want to do here. Let the Business Manager know if you want to drop the paper version—or tell him you want to pay more.

As I've been saying for the last two years, the electronic (PDF) LOCAL is a better publication, with all the content from print and quite a lot more. Plus color.

I am certainly willing and able to continue a print publication, but at some point we need to spike it—and that point may not very far away.

The E-LOCAL is always available for download from the MER website:
(<http://mer-nmra.com/MEReLocalsCurrent.html>).

MER ELECTION RESULTS for 2018

President: Kurt Thompson
Vice President: Ken Montero
Treasurer: Brian Kampschroer
Secretary: Martin Brechbiel

Shortly after the new officers were installed Sunday morning at the convention, the Board appointed Jack Dziadul to fill out the remaining year of Ken Montero's term as Director, picking up Ken's assignments, including The LOCAL. Jack has had the LOCAL task before, in his previous time on the MER Board.

Bob Price is moving on from being the Business Manager, so he can do some actual model building finally. NEED A REPLACEMENT VOLUNTEER!

Alan Mende, alanmende@yahoo.com, is taking over the Contest Chair from Martin Brechbiel.

Clint sez: I was over at something in Orange, VA, in early November, a nice sunny Sunday afternoon. Building was right next to some rails. There were some beat-up graffiti'd gondolas there. They had loads. Look at those loads. What are they? Brand-new, un-cresoted ties. What do they look like? Scale basswood sticks. On the ground in a pile, and in every one of the gondolas. Brand new sticks. I'm going to do exactly this.



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| Donation | \$ _____ |
| | Total enclosed: \$ _____ |

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

Stan Knotts sent this in a few months ago. You've probably never seen it, I certainly had never seen it. The date on the charter is May 26, 1946. This is a re-issued copy dated Nov 4, 1965. I wonder if we even still have the original.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

TO EVERYONE:

I NEED STORIES FROM YOU. LENGTH CAN BE ANYTHING, BUT I ESPECIALLY NEED THINGS THAT ARE 1-2 PAGES. REGULARLY THERE ARE GAPS TO FILL, AND THEY TEND TO BE THAT SIZE. LONGER IS FINE, OF COURSE, BUT IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT IS ABOUT A PAGE OF TEXT AND 4 PICTURES, THAT IS VERY GOOD.

AND YOU GET AUTHOR POINTS.

NEW BERN 24th Annual TRAIN SHOW

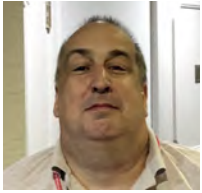
Address: New Bern High School
 4200 Academic Drive
 New Bern, NC 28560
 Date: March 2 & 3, 2019
 Hours: Saturday 10am – 5 pm, Sunday 10 am – 4 pm
 Sponsor: Carolina Coastal Railroaders

Admission: Ages 12 and up \$7.00, under 12 free with adult. Ticket is good for both days and enters you in hourly door prize drawing.

Attraction: Many operating layouts, including Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends in HO & G Scale, 90 vendor tables to sell and buy your old equipment and food concession.

Person to contact:
 Joseph T. Hofmann
 601 Tyndall Lane
 New Bern, NC 28562
 (252) 474-4153
 e-mail: southernrrtrains@yahoo.com

ALERT!! Hurricane Florence damaged the Convention Center in New Bern-- THIS IS NOW AT A NEW LOCATION, THE HIGH SCHOOL.



Keeping In Touch...

Bob Price
MER Business Manager

address so you can electronically vote in the future.

The 2018 MER convention is also now history. Thanks to the Potomac Division for hosting and for putting on a first-class program. Between the Thursday evening Board meeting and Sunday morning Member meeting, the Business Manager did a lot of navigating with then MER President Mattson and others to many of the home layouts. We were impressed by all that we saw and extend our thanks to our hosts for opening their homes to us. Despite all the hype, we never got stuck in any DC traffic (the traffic was far worse leaving NJ). Next year's program is shaping up to be a must attend event in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Mark your calendars now for it - October 10th thru the 13th.

As always *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. A current address on file saves the MER some money.

The 2018 MER Election cycle is behind us. Thanks to those who put it on the line to run for office and those who took their time to vote. This year was our second using electronic voting for those members with valid email addresses on file. 370 of the 1,369 that could use electronic voting did so. That is 27% of that population, and a slight increase over last year's 26%. The Ballot Chair, Bob Minnis, received 75 paper ballots for a combined total of 445. If you received a paper ballot this year and have an email account, please consider providing the MER you email

Ivy Branches 1:35 Scale from Fredericus Rex

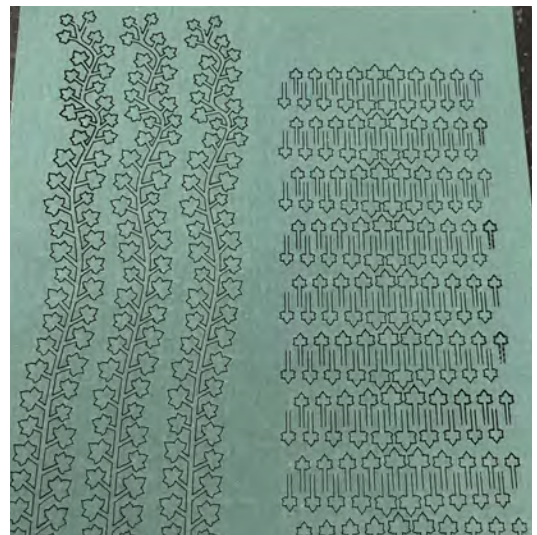
Product Review, by Nicholas Kalis

This product is part of the Fredericus-Rex Green Line of paper plants. Founded in 2004, Fredericus-Rex has an extensive line of diorama accessories and details. Most of their items are in either 1:72 or 1:35 scales. If you are in G scale, 1:35 can serve to create forced perspective when used correctly. An S scale modeler can easily use 1:72 scale models "as is". For the O scale modeler, 1:72 will assist in creating a forced perspective scene.

I intend to use this product to make some tree stumps on my layout appear a bit more realistic. I will glue the branches to model tree trunks on Oahu Sugar Company. I purchased my ivy from Lots of Models who sold it through Amazon at \$17.51 shipping included - not cheap. While described as Reality in Scale, that is simply another marketer of this product.

Ivy Branches comes with three (3) ivy branches and 180 leaves. This paper product requires some assembly as described in an included multi-lingual illustrated instruction sheet. While the instruction sheet does not mention this, the leaves and branches should be painted. Nature is never just one color. I would recommend that one do as I have - dab various leaves with two or more shades of lighter, brighter green and even a darker green. One can use inexpensive craft paint to vary the colors of the ivy for a more realistic appearance. The individual leaves with short stems should be cut out with a hobby knife and then glued to the branches to give them a fuller, more 3D look. Their web site is www.fredericus-rex.eu where one can find many items to enhance one's layout, again at the larger scales.

This product is made in Germany.



RMU AT DIVISION 12 AND THE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

By: Stephen C. Wood, MMR

On Saturday, January 27, 2018, I attended the Division 12's signature program Railroad Model University. It was their 12th consecutive year of putting on outstanding clinics, and it was my 9th or 10th time attending.

For me, this year was a lot different. I had been asked to put on a clinic, as I have done in the past. Knowing that Dave Chance had recently been appointed the Regional AP chairman, as well as the Division AP Chairman, I contacted him to see if it was okay for me to do a program on the AP. Dave informed me that he was planning on doing an all-day program with the AP, and he asked if I would be willing to spend the day with him helping to judge models. I signed up immediately.



Gil Brauch, on the left, gets a bunch of Merit Awards

When I arrived, I was told that there were only a few people signed up for the 7 hours of classes. I thought that I would then have time to attend some of the classes. Was I ever wrong! Gil Brauch asked if he could have a few of his models judged. In he came with 9 models, including engines, a caboose, a junkyard prototypical beam bridge and an outstanding Depot, properly named D'Ree Depot, named for his wife.

We started judging about 9 am and finished after 4 pm. The judges were Dave Chance, Neal Anderson, and myself. Neal Anderson had just completed 5 AP Certificates and was recently appointed as Co-Chairman of the AP for the Division. After a couple of hours, Neal had to present a clinic, and we were joined by Michele Chance, who jumped right in to help with these models. When all was said and done, Gil Branch received 8 Merit Awards, with one model scoring over 100 points. This accomplishment completed Gil's 6th AP Certificate--Structures. My understanding is that Gil is scratch building an engine to receive his 7th award and to reach MMR status.



Is there a Merit Award for quantity of documents all filled out on the same day? At least for the hand-cramp?



D'Ree Depot, by Gil Brauch.

We interrupted our judging for lunch, at which time Dave Chance presented Neal Anderson with 5 AP Certificate awards. What an accomplishment! I know that he is working on 3 different Certificates right now. If I understand correctly, he is doing cars and engines at the same time, plus Author. Just 2 more, Neal, and you will join the ranks of MMR--congratulations on your hard work.

As we were wrapping up around 3 or so, Joseph Barden, a new member of Division 12, walked in and talked to Dave Chance. Low and behold, he wanted to know if we could judge a model he had brought. Even though we were tired and exhausted from an all-day event, we told him to bring it in and we would love to see it. Joseph had scratched built a warehouse named Cranberry Warehouse. (The next time I see him, I intend to ask him from where he got the name.) As Dave helped him and showed him the paper work that needed to be filled out, I sat down with my handy flashlight and magnifying glass to view this model. To my surprise, it was not only an excellent model, but the detailing was highly impressive. As I looked at the model, not only was there a warehouse, but there was also a side building to be used as an office. Inside the warehouse there are two doors at each end of the building to enter the office. In the warehouse there are pallets full of different items, and these run from the front to the back, plus there are people and pallet jacks as well.



Joseph Barden gets his first-ever Merit Award, for the Cranberry Warehouse on the left.

As I was looking in the upstairs window of the warehouse, I could see more items. After close inspection, I asked Joseph if my suspicion was correct, and that he



Neal Anderson runs out of hands to hold all the AP Certificates.

had pallets upstairs just like a real warehouse. A special treat for us was when Joseph hooked up wires coming out of the warehouse to a battery, and he had



lights inside. Around 4:15 or so we finished judging his model, and Joseph Barden received his first Merit Award. See how well he did. I know he mentioned that it might be time for a visit to his layout. I hope I am invited, as I look forward to seeing it.

As exhausted as I was, it was a pleasure to work with Dave, Neal and Michelle. I, also, want to thank the men and women of Division 12 for putting on such an outstanding event, and I thank you for inviting me to join all you do.

That is a lot of Merit Awards for one guy on one day.



Eating The Elephant

Motivational guru Brian Tracy once asked the question, “How do you eat an elephant?” His most sensible answer was “One bite at a time.” I don’t know if Brian ever sought to become a Master Model Railroader or not, but his advice applies to those of us pursuing this achievement.

Let’s apply Tracy’s suggestion to the master modeler program. To receive your award, you need seven certificates from four categories. In addition, you must have one certificate from each of the categories. Let’s look at the elephant menu using Engineering as an example. Engineering includes Dispatcher, Model Railroad Engineer, Civil and Model Railroad Engineer Electrical. Get a knife and fork and explore Electrical.

For sake of discussion, let’s say you have an operating layout. The Validation Form says that to qualify for this certificate you must wire and demonstrate the electrical operation of a turnout, crossover, or crossing. In addition, you can demonstrate a working three-way turnout, single slip switch or any of six other options. How many of these requirements have you met with your layout? Have you had a mouthful yet?

The next section requires that you can demonstrate the satisfactory operation of three of twenty-two “features”. Included are such options as cab control, two turnout junctions, electronic throttle, track occupancy and, my favorite, “other.” To get a more thorough command of the requirements, go to the NMRA.org website and under Education, scroll down to Forms and pull up the Record and Validation – Engineer-Electrical. How many of these have you met? How many of these do you have signed off on a Validation form?

An important thing to remember through the entire Master Model Railroader journey is you can claim credit for requirements you have already completed even if you weren’t planning to enjoy the journey. We recently awarded a Division member five certificates based on what judges saw on his layout when they visited his layout to look at one certificate. He has two certificates left to become a Master Model Railroader. Consider this as one mouthful.

If you examine the requirements or menu for your meal, you will notice that many certificates overlap. Taking the suggestion above, you could share your experience in a division or regional newsletter, meeting one of the requirements of the Author certificate and Volunteer. That easily, you have now made progress on three different certificates. In addition, your layout work may help qualify for Golden Spike. Three more mouthfuls enjoyed.

So study the menu, order your elephant, knife and fork, and let’s get started.

Chip Stevens

It is a complete accident that the December RMC has an article with almost exactly the same name and almost exactly the same theme.

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The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. The Editor will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send 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

Moving?
 Changing email addresses?
 Promptly notify the NMRA at

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

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NMRA
 P.O. Box 1328
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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).

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
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 Half Page ad per issue (Div only).....\$25



Bob Price, our Business Manager the past few years, is the photographer for the open house photos in the next 6 issues. If you have other ones, let me know, we can always use more.

That is A LOT of cookie-cutter low-budget houses on that hill.

2018 Convention Open Houses. Part 1, Albert Pugliese

Massive lumber yard.
My estimate is 50-60
stacks of boards.



I don't even know what goes on at this place, but it sure looks like a lot happens. And the year is fairly obvious.

Membership has its benefits...

Your NMRA membership entitles you to all these benefits, plus the fellowship and assistance of more than 18,000 members across the globe.

Partnership Program

The NMRA has partnered with model railroad manufacturers of all sizes who have agreed to give discounts to NMRA members. Discounts range from free shipping to 20% off all purchases. From Micro-Mark to Rusty Stumps, more manufacturers are being added every month. To see the current listing, see our website's Partnership page in the Members Only section.

Model Railroad Directory

Whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more.

NMRA Online Archives

More than 10,000 photographs, slides, plans, drawings, erection elevations, paint schemes and more, with additional scans being added all the time. High-resolution files are available for download at a discount to members.

Achievement Program

The AP helps modelers get more out of the hobby by providing an incentive to learn and master the skills necessary. Those who've completed the AP receive Master Model Railroader (MMR) certification.

Liability Insurance for Clubs

\$1 million liability insurance is available to model railroad clubs in which every member is an NMRA member. \$50 administration fee and completed application required.

Special Access to Places and People

As an NMRA member, you'll have access to all kinds of railroad locations you'd never otherwise see. Often National and Regional conventions will tour prototype facilities such as yards and maintenance shops, and will charter special excursion railroads that are usually never open to the public. You'll have the chance to see top-of-the-line model railroads that usually don't accept visitors. And you'll be able to spend time talking with some of the most famous personalities in model railroading today.

Bi-monthly NMRA eBulletin and NMRA Turntable

Every other month we publish the electronic NMRA

eBulletin, containing late-breaking news and reports of happenings in the organization. The NMRA Turntable is a monthly electronic publication that rounds up some of the most interesting model railroad websites, videos, blogs, and articles on the web. We do the searching so you don't have to! Every member with a valid email address receives a copy of both publications.

Clint sez: This was in NMRA Magazine just recently. I asked for permission to reprint it here.

Theirs was prettier, but this is important information to tell folks in recruiting them. More info on the NMRA website.

NMRA Magazine

NMRA Magazine is the monthly publication of the NMRA, and features news about the organization and its Regions and Divisions, along with modeling articles, product performance reviews, and other information. Because the subscription rate/postage depends on where you live, check www.nmra.org for your rate.

"Members Only" Company Store

The NMRA's Company store offers many items, from apparel to mugs to gauges, available only to NMRA members.

Online Video Library

The Members Only section of www.nmra.org features dozens of helpful "how-to" videos produced by professional video companies, as well as over 50 videos of clinics presented at national NMRA conventions.

Annual NMRA Calendar

Features spectacular model photographs, as well as dates for Regional conventions and more. Free to every U.S. member. Additional copies can be ordered for \$5 each from HQ. Outside the U.S., contact HQ.

Liability Insurance for Meets and Shows

This insurance covers liability claims for all Region, Division, and NMRA SIG-sponsored events up to a specific limit of liability provided for in the policy. (For clarity and assurance of coverage, we prefer that SIG events be co-sponsored by National, a Region, or a Division.) Please see the website for important details.

Conventions

The annual National convention runs one week and usually features about 100 clinics, more than 50 layout tours, and dozens of prototype tours. The National Train Show runs for the final three days of the convention.

Regional conventions vary in duration from two to five days. Many feature prototype and layout tours, plus clinics and other activities.

Achievement Program

Modeling With The Masters (MWTM)

This is an intense, multi-day regimen of direct instruction by Master Model Railroaders. Modelers get hands-on experience in beginning and intermediate modeling techniques. MTWM classes are usually offered at the National convention, but MTWM courses have also been offered in various cities and at Regional conventions across the country.

Discounts and Advance Registration on New KML Books

Kalmbach Memorial Library periodically offers special books and book reprints to the general public. NMRA members receive a substantial discount on the retail price and can reserve copies in advance.

Local Divisions

There are more than 150 local Divisions in the NMRA, located in large and small communities across the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain. Most hold regular meetings and meets featuring clinics, presentations, layout visits, and more.

Standards and Conformance

The NMRA constantly researches and sets Standards and Recommended Practices for all scales and gauges of train models, as well as adjunct items such as DCC and modules. The NMRA continually checks new products for conformance to Standards and RPs.

Private Insurance

This service offers NMRA members group property insurance for collections, layouts, live steam, tools, slides and photographs, books, magazines, railroad memorabilia, and more. This insurance also covers an individual's property if it resides on a club layout. Members receive NMRA Group Rates.

• Free quote or brochure, contact J.A. Bash & Co: 1-800-654- 2256 or 300 Mt. Lebanon Rd., Suite 225, Pittsburgh, PA, 15234.

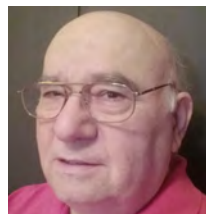
NMRA Standards Gauges, Data Sheets CD ROM, and Turnout Templates

NMRA members can purchase Standards Gauges at significant price reductions over retail prices. Data Sheets CD and Turnout Templates are available only from the Company Store. Many data sheets are being updated and will appear in NMRA Magazine, as well as available for free download from the Members Only section of www.nmra.org.

Beginners' Guide

The Beginner's Guide pages on www.nmra.org offer those new to the hobby help in learning the basics of track, wiring, scenery, and more.

• www.nmra.org/beginner/



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

Glyn Thomas – Model Railroad Author
Joe Walters – Master Builder Cars

Division 10 - South Mountain

Robert Morningstar – Golden Spike Award

Division 11 – Susquehanna

Phillip W. Peters Jr. – Golden Spike Award

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Michele Chance – Association Official

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 except for AUTHOR. Please don't send these any more.

2019 Elections are for
DIRECTOR.
Please consider running for that
office--it's always worthwhile to
have new participants.

One of the elements of a good-looking layout is a good application of track ballasting.

Some layouts utilize a spoon and a piece of plastic that was dragged across the track leaving a mound of ballast. Actual Railroad Ballasting would never look like that! I will show you a more realistic way of laying ballast.

I have helped and have taught many people how to ballast track in a short period of time. Many people attempt ballasting and find it time consuming and frustrating. By utilizing my simple and fast ballasting system, you will learn that ballasting can be fun and easy.

This just shows me that the hobbyist has to practice more than one or two times a year, and will have this article to use as a reference in the future.

When you want to start ballasting, all you need to have is a condiment bottle with a ¼ inch hole for medium ballast in HO scale, and a 1/8 inch hole for N scale.

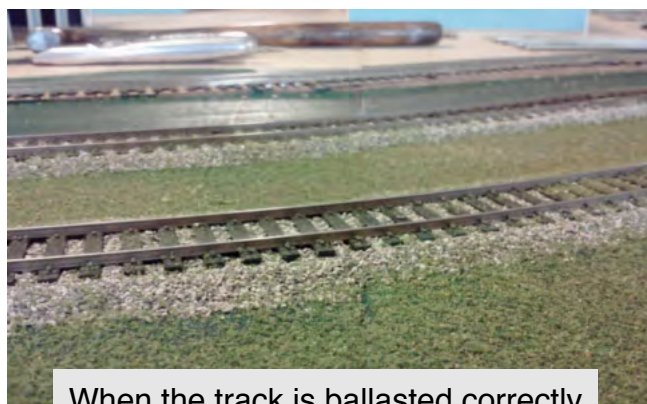
The track that you will be ballasting will have some kind of roadbed under the track, and that will determine how many passes are needed on the sides of the rail to cover the road bed with ballast.

In HO gauge, you start down the center of the track and bounce the bottle across the ties. To do the sides, you make one pass on each side across the ties, and then make a second pass over the same ballast on the outside of the rails.

Using your first three fingers, run them on the farthest rail away from you, using the tips hanging over the rail head and slightly bouncing down the ties. Use your pointer finger to smooth down the center of the track. Do not worry about the ballast getting into all the corners. The center only gets one pass of ballast. Run your thumb down the closest rail, with the lower part of your thumb bouncing down the ties. If you need to make a

BALLASTING TRACK MADE EASY BY NEAL ANDERSON

third pass with the ballast, do it now on the outside of the rails.



When the track is ballasted correctly

This should cover the sub-road bed totally. Using a stencil brush, tap the ballast into the ties down the center of the rails. This will redirect the ballast to fill in the empty spots between the ties. Run your fingers and thumb down the ballast one more time.



When the ballasting is not properly done

Then take the stencil brush and turn it around so you are holding on to the bristles and let the weight of the brush handle bounce on the rail



Spreading ballast from a condiment bottle

head, moving up and down the track, but not forcing the ballast to bounce off. The movement of the brush should be no higher than an 1/2 inch in height when bouncing the brush. This will bounce the remaining stones off the ties. That should fill in nicely, but if there is a bare spot, you can take the bottle, turn it sideways, tap on the bottle to let a couple of stones fall out to fill in an empty spot.



Tamping the ballast into place



Preparing the glue mix

The next step is to prepare the glue mix. Use 50% Elmer's white glue and 50% water. Mix in 5 drops of Dawn dish detergent to break the tension of the water and the glue. Mix it up so it becomes runny on the stick used for mixing. Pour the glue mix into a separate container smaller than what it was made in. This will keep the unmixed glue in the first container. After a little time, the rest of the glue will break down in the glue/water mix and be ready to pour on to the track.

Use straight 70% isopropyl alcohol (put into a spray bottle) to wet the ballast down so the glue will flow around the rocks. Soak the ballast down thoroughly because it will try to dry up quickly.



Wetting the ballast

I use a large medical syringe outer tube to apply the glue mix to the ballast. Make a pass down the center, then jump over the rail to the outside ballast, spread the glue up along the rail and ties. Make your second pass on the ballast and ties on the outside. Make a third pass just off the ties on the outside of the rails to cover the rest of the ballast with glue. Don't try to move the ballast once it has been sprayed or glued. Wait until it dries, then chip it up or add some more ballast and wet it down, Then pour the glue mix over the top to lock it into place. Use some sand paper or a "bright boy" to clean the glue off the rails. Even a little Alcohol will do the trick.

When doing your ballasting, don't try to do too much at once. Do two to three tracks no more than six feet long at a time. Move down six feet and do another section. Come back later and then do in between the two finished sections.

When ballasting around switches, only shake out a few stones so you don't over-fill the points or frog.

I learned the hard way that you don't spray and glue the whole yard at once, because you will warp the sub bench-work and make the track warp.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the people who have supported me in this effort to show you how to ballast track in a short time frame. Go give it a try!



Tools used

There is now a video on the web page showing how to ballast.

(I NEED A URL HERE)



Showing the height of the tamp



Stipple brush

NEW MEMBERS

Stephen	Bird	James River
Tim	Burrington	Potomac
Laurent	Daudelin	Potomac
Patrick	Dowd	Tidewater
Jeffrey	Fleisher	
Vernon	Gullo	Philadelphia
Roger	Hammond	Chesapeake
James	Hood	Carolina Southern
Paul	Kauffmann	James River
Kevin	Kuchler	Potomac
Jim	Mullison	Potomac
William	Mullison	Potomac
John	Porter	Potomac
William	Quiram	Tidewater
Family	Rhode	Carolina Piedmont
Jeffrey	Rowe	Potomac
Sean	Summer	Carolina Southern
Bill	Sweeney	New Jersey
Julie	Ziegler	Susquehanna

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.

A Visit to the Richmond, VA, Railroad Museum.

Actually, it was the James River Division November meeting, held at the RR Museum. We'll have a story next year by today's presenter, but in the meantime here are some photos I took of things inside that I thought were interesting. There were LOTS of other things, but we don't have space, so this is just stuff I thought needed a photo here.



This is a single-seat four-wheel "car" that is self-propelled, via a small, lawn-mower sized gasoline 2-stroke motor. I didn't look close but it's probably chain-driven. There's a tray for carrying stuff, tiny wheels and a small throttle right behind the headlight.

Would make a really unique model that might well qualify for AP Locos.



Here's a more traditional-looking handcar/speeder. I think there's a motor inside/underneath, didn't see it in the picture.

You either sit straddle behind the levers in the middle, or side-saddle. You can see a couple of pieces of wood stick out the front; I think those are there for lifting this thing on/off the rails.

I did what I could to "fix" the photos. The museum interior has an old wood floor, which is interesting by itself, but not conducive to high-contrast pictures. And these three gizmos were parked really close together.



This is another funky item. No motor this time, you move it via a rowboat-like pull-towards-yourself action on that "handlebar". You'd need to be really strong to do it very long.

I don't know if this would qualify for AP Locos. I've got a different photo of a similar device, actually on rails, someplace.



This was in a display case. The lettering below the windows says "Church Hill and New Reservoir Park", and "East & West End Line".

OK, in this one the horse DOES pull it.



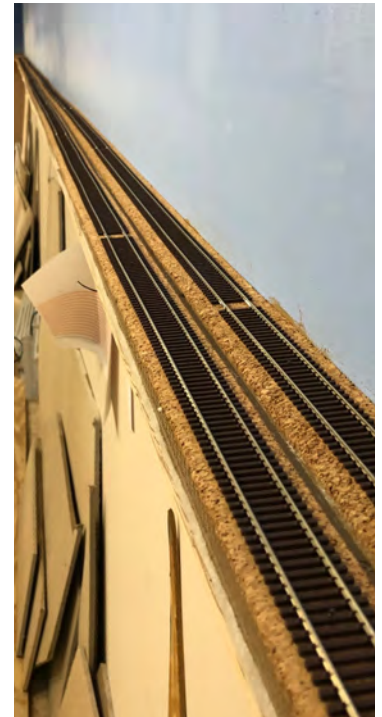
Models this time were signal towers. Lighting was a little weird for photos, and I was under-prepared.



This excellent ghost sign was across the street.

Had two open houses, almost across the street from each other. No crazy driving all over town.

When you don't even LIKE scenery, then a 5-inch wide shelf works just fine.



This guy likes scenery. While the layout is in progress, there is a reasonable amount.



