

# The Local



A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA

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Number 5

## Custom Signals Using BLMA Signal Heads Rod Vance, MMR



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To enhance operations on my HO-scale layout, the Willow Creek, I decided to install a set of signals that would help operators with the alignment of a difficult-to-see turnout and also give them a signal indicating permission to enter Waverly Yard, a major freight yard on my layout that is accessed by the aforementioned partially hidden turnout. I already had Tomar Industries 2-aspect block signals that indicate block occupancy on my single-track mainline, so I wanted the new signals to look sufficiently different to hopefully avoid operator confusion. I considered ground-level dwarf signals, but didn't like how they looked along the mainline track where I needed to install the new signals; I was also concerned that they might be difficult for operators to see. I found one company that sold "tall dwarf" signals with searchlight-type targets, which I thought would look good for my requirements. Unfortunately, their tall dwarf signals only came with single heads and I had one location where I needed a double-headed signal. Then I happened across an advertisement for BLMA Signal Heads. These signal heads are fully assembled searchlight-type signals with three LEDs per head. With the BLMA product in hand, I decided to scratch-build the signals I needed.

I was impressed with the BLMA Signal Head product so I figure a brief product review is warranted. The BLMA Signal Heads come two to a pack, and are available in N scale (product #1001) and HO scale (product #4001). I found the HO-scale Signal Heads on ModelTrainStuff.com (M. B. Klein) for \$19.95

The MER membership count on June 15 was 1967.

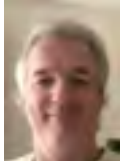
*continued on page 7*

# The Local

*Official publication of the Mid-Eastern region, NMRA – A tax-exempt organization*

Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of MER elected officials. Commercial suppliers, supplies and materials addressed in The Local in no way constitute endorsement by the MER. Copyrighted material that appears in The Local is used for educational and historical benefit only and does not constitute infringement of a copyright.

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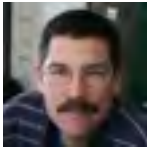


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If you are interested in advertising with the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association, please contact the Editor. The current advertising rates (one year) for The Local are as follows, and must include camera ready art (text, 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

On page 1, at the top, is a WM Waystation, from the 2018 convention's model contest, Jeffrey Dulberg, modeler.

## NEW MEMBERS

Fritz	Dahlin	Chesapeake
Albert	Etzel	New Jersey
Timothy	Gusler	Tidewater
Brent	Hobbs	Tidewater
Matthew	Hosford	New Jersey
Leonard	Hough	Carolina Southern
Kevin	Hunter	Chesapeake
Philip	Lafferty	Carolina Southern
Jeffery	Leknes	Philadelphia
Frank	Neher	Potomac
Dennis	Noah	Chesapeake
Richard	Thompson	Tidewater
Lawrence	Thompson	Susquehanna
Steve	Tkaczyk	South Mountain
John	Wubbel	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.*

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.

If your item is time-sensitive in any way, these dates are the relevant deadlines you need to look out for. Otherwise stories and photos are used in approximately the order they are received.

**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

*Custom  
Layout  
Building*



Layout Design

By Lance Mindheim

www.shelflayouts.com  
301-404-8164



## President's Column



*Kurt Thompson, MMR*

### **Do Unto Others and Then Play Trains**

Confucius had a different version of the Golden Rule than the one we normally think of. His version goes, "Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself." The rule as commonly thought of in Western culture is "Do unto others as you would have done unto you."

Why the philosophy lesson? No reason other than to point out the Mid-Eastern Region at the April 27th BOD meeting adopted a Code of Conduct. It has been sent out to all the Division Superintendents. Two Divisions have already sent it out to their division members. And that prompted a couple of emails to me from members questioning why the MER needed such a document.

One of the reasons is we needed it as part of the Directors and Officers insurance policy we are working to purchase. One of the questions on the application was did we as an organization have an anti-harassment policy or other guiding document. At the time, we didn't have one. Second, over the years I have been in leadership at the Division and Region level the question has been raised about how does the NMRA, at all three levels, handle disruptive members.

I'm now sharing my email response to one member for further amplification. Please consider this an email to each of you.

"Thanks for asking the questions about the Code of Conduct. It has become necessary for the MER to promulgate them due to many years of declining behavior in general society and, sadly, within the MER. It finally came to a head when some of the Superintendents of the region Divisions asked what could be done with mean-spirited and troublemaking members. When I asked NMRA National for guidance on how to handle recalcitrant members, I was told they were "working on it" but they had nothing for us at the Region or Division level.

With that in mind, I had some of the Directors prepare a Code of Conduct that we felt would address the expectations of behavior we wanted as an organization. That was presented at the April 27th BOD meeting and was approved. It was then sent

*If you're going to attend the Liberty Bell convention and have a Go Pro, please contact MER President Kurt Thompson. He's looking for four folks for a special project.*

*Also, if you're the proud owner of a kazoo, or some comparable noise maker, it looks like we'll need a marching band for the half-time show. There might need to be a marching practice out in the hotel parking lot, too. No uniforms necessary.*

out to the Divisions for use and distribution. Both the Potomac and James River Divisions have elected to distribute the Code of Conduct to their members.

Once we approved the Code of Conduct, I had it forwarded to the NMRA Legal Advisor, Mr. Amsler. National is taking a look at this issue of member conduct at the July BOD Meeting in Salt Lake City. We are not holding our breath on how quickly National will implement any policy on member behavior.

I grew up in the era of the Golden Rule. I was also taught by my family to ask of myself if my behavior is in keeping with the way my family wanted me to behave. Or can I look myself in the mirror and know I'm not causing issues for other model railroaders through my interactions.

Even though my parents have both passed 10 and 12 years ago, I still consider is my conduct such that my parents would be proud of me. As of this moment, I can read the Code of Conduct and believe my parents would find it a great working code for the MER and that I should act in accordance with it. So do I."

If you have any questions or thoughts on the MER's Code of Conduct, please reach out to me and let me know. A copy of it follows in this issue.

#### MER Board Meeting Schedule

1. MER Board Meeting, Crowne Plaza Philadelphia - 260 Mall Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA  
October 10, 2019 Scheduled for 7:00 pm EDT
2. MER Budget Meeting 11 am, Jan. 25, 2020, Severna Park Library, 45 W. McKinsey Rd, Severna Park, MD
3. MER Board Meeting 10 am, April 25, 2020, MER Convention Hotel, Crown Plaza Charlotte, NC

# CODE OF CONDUCT

## MID-EASTERN REGION NMRA, INC., (MER) AND ITS DIVISIONS CODE OF CONDUCT

### A. APPLICATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

This policy establishing these standards of conduct and procedures for discipline for violations thereof shall apply to any event or activity of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. (MER), its Divisions, and any event or activity in which the MER or its Divisions are participating with other entities.

### B. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. (MER) is committed to the principles of diversity, integrity, civility, and respect in all of our activities. MER looks to each participant in MER activities, whether a National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) member or not, to be a partner in this commitment by helping us to maintain a collegial and cordial environment. MER expects all participants to behave in ways that reinforce the mission and founding principles of NMRA and MER.

Consistent with the purposes of NMRA, MER acknowledges the dignity and worth of all its participants and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring, and inviting environment to facilitate participant learning, achievement, and collegiality, and in which people are treated with dignity, decency and respect. The environment of MER is characterized by mutual trust, tolerance and acceptance, and the absence of intimidation, oppression, dishonesty and exploitation. We celebrate diversity and differences of opinion, including vigorous debate, while remembering that we are individuals who may disagree without becoming disagreeable.

MER promotes a society where bad conduct in the form of abusive behavior, harassment or rude behavior, as well as violent or disruptive behavior, is not tolerated. These types of bad conduct disrupt a participant's ability to learn and to enjoy model railroading. Demonstration of appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate bad conduct is expected of every participant.



A fabulous pastoral scene from a Civil War setting of Savannah, GA...really good covered bridge, backdrop is great... Life expectancy is poor, but the only air pollution is from our favorite steam engines.

Scene by Thom Radice, NJ Division.

It's unfortunate that we have to alert you about these phone calls, but whatever. John Hoyt has been boosting the eLocal recipient list quite a bit via these phone calls. This specific issue notification will be sent to every email we have in MER. If you want to continue to receive them, reply back and let us know.

## MER IS CALLING YOU – AND IT'S NOT A SCAM

If you get a call or email from Howard Oakes or John Hoyt, don't hang up or ignore their emails.

Business Manager Howard Oakes and Assistant Business Manager John Hoyt, as part of their process to administer the Region's database, are contacting members to verify the accuracy of the individual's data in the MER database. MER needs accurate member contact information to carry out its activities, especially for this upcoming election (Maryland law requires MER to send a ballot to each MER member for the yearly elections. Eligibility to vote is defined as being in good standing in NMRA/MER membership on July 7 of the calendar year.)

### THE MER STILL NEEDS YOU!

Yes, you! If you are a member in good standing and want to support your region with good ideas and real involvement, we need you to volunteer to serve this Region even if you did not choose to run for office.

Do you want to do something else? Contact President Kurt Thompson at [president@mer-nmra.com](mailto:president@mer-nmra.com)  
MER always has opportunities for you.

## Deadlines and Schedules for 2019 Balloting

Our by-laws 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 are in Executive Handbook, Section 5, Policies, Article VI. The dates for 2019 are:

**September 3, 2019** -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

**September 7, 2019** -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

**September 14, 2019** -- Deadline for Ballot Committee to transmit results to President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

**September 21, 2019** -- 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, 2019** -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER-NMRA website

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).

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UPCOMING CONVENTIONS  
2020 Charlotte, NC  
2021 Baltimore



per package of two signals. As shown in Figure 2, each head comes fully assembled with a searchlight target and three LEDs – Red, Yellow, and Green. The model represents a Union Switch and Signal (US&S) company H-2 signal with a large box, and is made of brass and plastic. BLMA touts that most companies use bi-/tri-colored LEDs in their signals, but that BLMA actually uses 3 separate



Figure 2

LEDs in this product to produce vibrant colors including a true Yellow. BLMA also touts the scale realism of their signal heads down to the rivet detail, scale thickness hoods, accurate dimensions, and the scale engraving on the back of the head, as shown in Figure 3.

Four wires (approximately 10-inches long) extend from each signal head. They come labeled as “Red,” “Yellow,” “Green,” and “Com +.” To activate a color in the signal head, the “Com +” wire should be connected to the positive side of a power source, and the selected wire for the colored light desired is connected to the negative side of the source (with appropriate re-

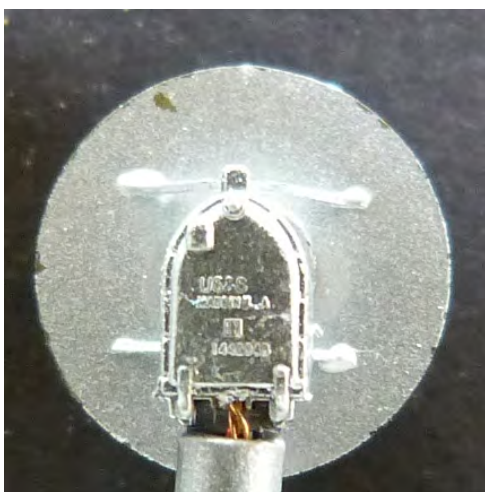


Figure 3. Closeup of detail on the back.

activate a color in the signal head, the “Com +” wire should be connected to the positive side of a power source, and the selected wire for the colored light desired is connected to the negative side of the source (with appropriate re-

sistors, of course). BLMA notes that their signals are wired for a common anode configuration, which is pretty much an industry norm.

BLMA specifically cautions that some of the more recent Atlas signal circuits use a common cathode configuration and, therefore, are not compatible with the BLMA signal heads.

For my project, I needed to construct several tall dwarf signals with single heads, and one tall dwarf signal with two heads. The wires from the head fit easily inside a Plastruct 3/32-inch (outside diameter) styrene tube, which is the size of tube used on many HO-scale signal masts. For my single-headed signals (Figure 4), I cut the styrene tube about 20 mm long. (I actually cut the tube longer than that so that

it extends down into the roadbed, but the key length from the signal base to the signal head is 20 mm.) I

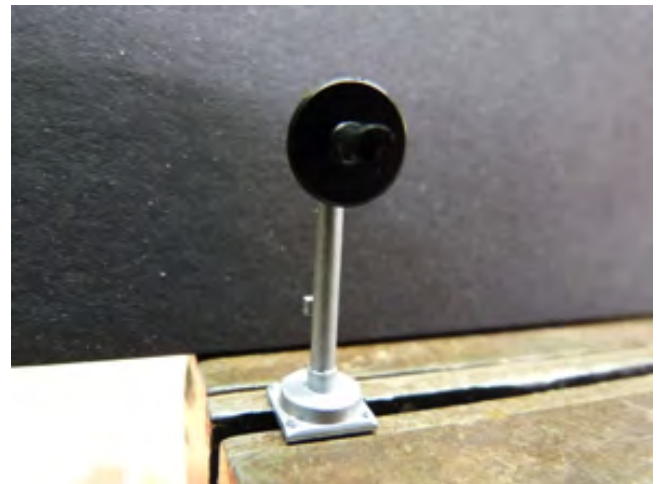


Figure 4. Single-head tall dwarf signal with BLMA Signal Head mounted

cut a styrene base about 1/4-inch square and drilled a 3/32-inch hole in the center of the base. I had some scrap round plastic discs in which I also drilled a 3/32-inch center hole. I glued the round disc on top of the square base, and then inserted the styrene tube into the hole. To finish the model,

Rod adds: The article is from October 2016 and since then Atlas took over BLMA and does not appear to be offering the signal heads any longer.



Figure 5. Relay cabinet and masts for the two-headed dwarf signal.

I cut and glued a small piece of styrene to the back of the signal mast to represent an electrical box, and glued a Tichy Train Group nut/bolt/washer casting (product #8142) to each corner of the square base. The resulting signal is a reasonable representation of a prototype "tall dwarf" signal. I

road tracks, once installed, and a couple of styrene strips to the top of the cabinet to cover the openings. I also glued nut/bolt/washer castings in the four corners of the signal base.

I primed all of the signal assemblies (signal heads not yet mounted) using grey primer, and then brush painted the assemblies with metallic silver paint. Once the paint was dry, I inserted the signal head wires down through the styrene signal masts and glued the heads in place at the top of each mast.

I found several examples of prototype railroad "tall dwarf" signals (sometimes referred to as high dwarfs or stick signals) in my search of Internet images, so even though my models weren't built to exactly match a prototype signal, they're definitely plausible. The installed signals are shown in Figure 6. Their function has definitely enhanced operations on the Willow Creek as I had desired.

So if you have a need for some custom-built signals, or you simply want to try your hand at scratch-building signals, the BLMA Signal Heads should make your job significantly easier. I highly recommend you give them a try.

am pleased with its look and performance ... especially given the cost of about \$10 per signal.

The two-headed signal presented a slight challenge. There is not enough room inside the Plastruct tube to accommodate two sets of wires. I decided that I could hide the wires for the second head in a shorter tube hidden inside a signal cabinet (Figure 5). I again cut a signal mast measuring 20 mm in length for the upper signal head. After measuring the clearance needed for the lower signal head, I cut a second mast 10 mm long. I built a "relay cabinet" slightly more than 1/4-inch square; the height of the cabinet matched the length of the second mast (10 mm) so that the mast would be hidden inside the finished box. For the base of the signal, I cut a rectangular styrene piece about 3/8-inch by 1/2-inch. I glued the two masts together, drilled holes in the rectangular signal base, and inserted the two-mast assembly. I slid the relay cabinet over the two masts and glued it to the signal base. I finished the relay cabinet by adding an access door on the side that would be opposite the rail-



Figure 6. Tall dwarf signals installed in front of Tomar Industries 2-Aspect Block Signals.



## Keeping In Touch...



**Howard Oakes**  
**MER Business Manager**

As I am writing this column the Assistant Business Manager John Hoyt and I are in the final preparation of sending out the ElectionBuddy emails and the printed hardcopy ballots for the upcoming election of 3 MER Directors. We have sent out 1,491 ElectionBuddy emails for electronic voting, and 268 paper ballots (printed by Penny Press). For the elections a year from now we hope to have the number of paper ballots significantly reduced; John has been contacting those members for which we have no email address and hope to have this wrapped in a couple of months. Director election results will be published in the next Local. Also, please make sure your NMRA email address is the primary one you use as we have found out that some addresses although still valid are rarely accessed.

There is still time to register for the Fall MER convention, the Liberty Bell Special in King of Prussia PA October 10-13, 2019. The Philadelphia Division is working hard to present a first class event. There will be clinics, operating sessions, layout tours, vendors and member items for sale. I find that attending these conventions renews my interest in the hobby and there are always new ideas and interests presented. Last year I especially enjoyed the pickle and vinegar industry clinic so much so that I bought the book on which the clinic was based. Don't forget that the famed Norfolk & Western #611 will be in operation 65 miles west of the convention. This is a great opportunity to have a 'double-header' weekend; model railroading and a world famous steam engine to ride and photograph. See the convention website for details.

Just a reminder that if you change your telephone number, home or email address please notify either NMRA National or myself.

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.

## 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 1 – New Jersey

Paul More – Golden Spike Award  
Paul More – Master Builder Structures  
Paul More – Master Builder Scenery  
Michael Prokop – Association Volunteer  
Michael Prokop – Model Railroad Author

#### Division 3 – Philadelphia

Robert W. Hinkle – Association Volunteer  
William Fagan – Association Volunteer

#### Division 4 – Tidewater

Robert Cook – Golden Spike Award  
Robert Cook – Model Railroad Engineer -  
Electrical

#### Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Neal Anderson – Master Builder Motive Power

MER's Newest MMR's - Neal Anderson of the Carolina Southern Division, MMR #641 is MER's newest MMR, so offer your Congratulations the next time you see Neal!

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.*

# MER 75TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO CONTEST

As part of the celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Mid-Eastern Region, a commemorative logo contest is announced. The logo will be used as the MER's logo beginning January 1, 2021, the year of our 75th anniversary.

## Rules:

1. Each contestant must be MER member in good standing at the time of the contest.
2. Professional artists also may participate.
3. Artwork must be camera-ready or a finished digital product that produces a camera-ready image.
4. Current MER officers and directors, MER committee chairs are ineligible.
5. The winning entry becomes the sole property of the MER.

The winning entry will be selected by the Board of Directors from all entries received by July 31st, 2020. The winner will be announced at the 2020 MER Convention in Charlotte.

The winning entry will receive a free convention registration for the 2021 Convention being hosted by the Chesapeake Division.

Submission deadline is July 31st, 2020. The decision of the judges will be final. The artwork will become property of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. The artist will receive public notice of his/her contribution.

## Additional MER Volunteers:

### Registrar:

Kirk Bateman

MER-Registrar@mer-nmra.com



### Ballot Chair:

Bob Minnis, MMR  
11 Marwood Drive  
Palmyra, VA 22963  
(434) 589-3011,  
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### Archivist:

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Chapel Hill, NC 27517  
919-593-2537  
rjconnor2@yahoo.com



### Contest Chair:

Alan Mende  
alanmende@yahoo.com

The **Reading Railroad Prototype Modelers' Meet** will be held September 13-15, 2019 at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, at 503 S. 3rd St, Hamburg, Pa.

**Friday** social hour, & clinics.

**Saturday** clinics, vendors, white elephant table, door prizes.

**Sunday** home layout tours.

For information and a registration form go to:

**readingrrmm.com**

Reminder: The eLocal is always available from the MER website, at  
<http://mer-nmra.com/MEReLocalsCurrent.html>

# The Liberty Bell Special 2019 Mid-Eastern Region Convention

Sponsored by  
The Philadelphia  
Division – NMRA

October 10-13, 2019



**Last one--time to register NOW!**

by Chip Stevens

Most of us probably don't need a back to school calendar or reminder anymore. And for those who do need a nudge, the merchants on TV do an excellent job of reminding us that summer is almost over. But while you're thinking of hanging up those white shorts and trousers you shouldn't wear after Labor Day, give some serious thought to joining your fellow Region members at the Mid-Eastern Region convention at King-of-Prussia, PA, October 10th through October 13th.



The clinic schedule is full up starting Thursday night running through Sunday morning. In addition to the usual fare of presentations, there are several hands on or make and take sessions available for participants. Whether you want to learn T Trak modular, the finer points of resin car assembly, work on your AP Electrical award or build a Hunterline structure, we have something available for you. Many of the hands on sessions require prior sign up available on the convention registration form at [www.libertybell-special2019.org](http://www.libertybell-special2019.org). You will also find a tentative clinic schedule on the site. As we approach the convention, please remember to check the convention website frequently for updates, additions and changes. There is even a place on the home page to sign up for emails whenever changes or additions are made to the site.

[www.LibertyBellSpecial2019.org](http://www.LibertyBellSpecial2019.org)



One thing not listed on the convention website is our vendor roster. Artist Peter Lero will be joined by such familiar names as, in no particular order, Micro Mark, Funaro & Camerlengo, CMR, Downtown Deco, Hunterline, and Nick and Nora Designs.

And speaking of Nick and Nora Designs, our Saturday night railroad menu themed banquet will feature a presentation by Mike Baker of Nick & Nora Designs. Mike is been a professional artist and designer and founded TMB Custom Models in 1992. In addition to creating craftsman kits, Mike builds models and details rolling stock for clients. He will regale us with stories of his achievements and frustrations pursuing this career most of us only dream about.



In one of our previous articles we discussed the modular display from the Reading Modular Society that will be on display at Liberty Bell Special 2019. Your author would be remiss if he did not give equal time to the New Jersey Free-Mo display that will share the Reading Modular room. NJ Free-Mo will offer operating time or spectating time on their two modules. Bill Grosse's Yardville module displays the Pennsylvania Railroad in the name sake town circa 1955. Mike Prokop's Linden Street Freight Station recreates the Reading Railroad's facilities on the Camden waterfront also packs a lot of operating opportunities in a small space. Mike's module was featured in the 2019 issue of Model Railroad Planning.

As you can see, the Liberty Bell Special committee has strived (striven?) to fill all your Region convention expectations over Columbus Day weekend. Register on the convention website, pack the car and family and plan to be on one of the many roads that lead to King of Prussia, PA.



Photos from Ted Fort's PRR Paoli Local layout/setting.

See you all there!



# Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2019 Convention

## Liberty Bell Special



October 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
[www.LibertyBellSpecial.org](http://www.LibertyBellSpecial.org)

**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	\$50		
Basic Registration (September 1 thru October 3 )	B	\$55		
At Door Registration (October 10-12)	D	\$60		
<i>Non-NMRA Member Extra Fee</i>	N	\$20		
Significant Other & Children Under 18	O	\$0		<b>No Fee</b>
Banquet – Saturday Night _____ Railroad-Themed Banquet _____ Vegetarian _____ Gluten-Free Plated Meal	401	\$50		
Friday Breakfast, price includes tax	402	\$15		
Saturday Breakfast, price includes tax	403	\$15		
Sunday Breakfast, price includes tax	404	\$15		
Supers/Editors - Breakfast, Circle 1, Division Super 405 Division Editor 406	405/406	\$0		<b>No Fee</b>
<b>Call Boards / Ops – Expanded Call Board Info Available on Website</b>				
Steve Salotti's New York, Susquehanna & Western (HO), Thu 7pm-10pm	801	\$5		
Steve Salotti's New York, Susquehanna & Western (HO), Sat 1pm-4pm	802	\$5		
St. Alban's Model Railroad Club (STARR) (HO), Fri 9am-12pm	803	\$5		
Bob Zeolla's Conrail Conemaugh Division (HO), Fri 7pm-10pm	804	\$5		
Bill Blackburn's Pennsylvania RR Great Valley Division (HO), Thu 7pm-10pm	805	\$5		
<b>Prototype Tours – More Info on Website When/If Available</b>				
Colebrookdale RR Excursion/Tour, Friday, All Day w/Lunch Included	201	\$75		
<b>Extra Fare Clinics – Registration Required, Info On Website When/If Available</b>				
Hunterline 30' King Post Truss Bridge Make 'n Take _____ Scale: _____ N (\$39) _____ HO (\$42) _____ S (\$46) _____ O (\$53)	601			
T-Track Hands-On Clinic, Fri 8am-10pm	602	\$75		
Electrical AP Certificate, Fri 7pm-10pm	603	\$0		<b>No Fee</b>
Hands-On Resin Kit Build –PRR F25 Well Flat Car, Fri 9:30am-12pm	604	\$25		
Would You Like To Be A Contest Judge At The Convention – Circle YES or NO	Yes	No		
Have You Been A Contest Judge In The Past – Circle - Yes or NO	Yes	No		
Total Being Paid				

Online Registration Available at: <http://merregistrar.coffeecup.com/forms/2019%20Online%20Registration/>

Fill in Form, Press Submit Form for Invoice, then Press PayPal Button and Make Your Payment. A PayPal Account Is Not Required.

Payment [Check Only] must accompany Print Registrations sent by USPS.

Checks payable to: MER Conventions, Send to: MER Conventions, PO Box 426, Sykesville, MD 21784-0426

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

PayPal Account NOT Required, can use Guest Checkout. Payments by Visa, MC, Discover, AmEx, and PayPal

Any Questions and/or additional information, e-mail to [MER-registrar@mer-nmra.com](mailto:MER-registrar@mer-nmra.com), or 410-442-0446 (leave a message)

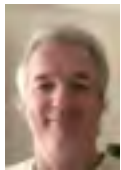
**Hotel** – Crown Plaza Philadelphia-King of Prussia, 260 Mall Blvd., King of Prussia 19406

**Reference** - Mid-Eastern Region-National Model Railroad Assoc., Hotel Reservations: 610-265-7500

**Online Reservations use** - <https://www.tinyurl.com/MER2019>

**Room Rate** - \$109.00 night + tax, Room Rate applies 10/7/19 to 10/16/19

**LOCAL**  
**Sept/Oct**



## Coupler Comments

**Clint Hyde, Editor**

local-editor@mer-nmra.com

## The Future of the Print LOCAL, Part 5

**J**uly/August print LOCAL was good again. We are having some issues about the eLOCAL having to do with notifying members that it is ready. Data from NMRA HQ continues to be weird.

On top of which, when I went to send the notification, I learned that there are some email-quantity limits with our website-hosting-service that I hadn't known. (Didn't hit them for May/June because I did it differently.) Because of those limits it took a little longer to get out (hours instead of minutes). I think I understand that process well now, so if I am doing it again things will move faster.

The Board has made a slight change to the "branding" here, we will be calling the PDF version the "eLocal" from now on.

The print (hard copy) subscription copy count decline continued, as we know: March/April was 155. May/June was 145, July/Aug was 130, this issue is 113, Nov/Dec is 101. The bottom number is now 80 for the remaining MER Life Members.

Nearly all the paid subscribers will drop off by the end of the year; looks like 10 are left, with five paid longer than 2020.

Per copy cost has stabilized at \$1.45 per copy. This should be the cost for the remaining print issues. Cutting out more sheets would only save a couple pennies, so not likely.

Another ten or so people dropped print since last issue. If you are reading this on a dead tree extract, please look at your mailing label--it will say "LIFE" or when your subscription expires, or LAST if this is it. Try the eLocal! It has become a distinctly better document, with color all over, and way more content--stories that cannot and will not appear on paper. Please also consider letting go of the paper version, and let me know directly.

At the convention this year, neither Jerry Lauchle (photog) nor I will be able to visit every open house or clinic or whatever. If you have your phone or camera, please take a picture here or there and send it to me--always happy to have such. There's a possibility I will have a new camera, I'm thinking about it, but I'll probably understand it even less that the one I have now.

In the eLocal are additional/longer stories and photos, as usual, and COLOR!, with more to come while I experiment with fancier layout aspects. MER cannot afford to print color for you, but if you do it yourself, it'll look good.

The eLocal is always available for download from the MER website:

<http://mer-nmra.com/MEReLocalsCurrent.html>

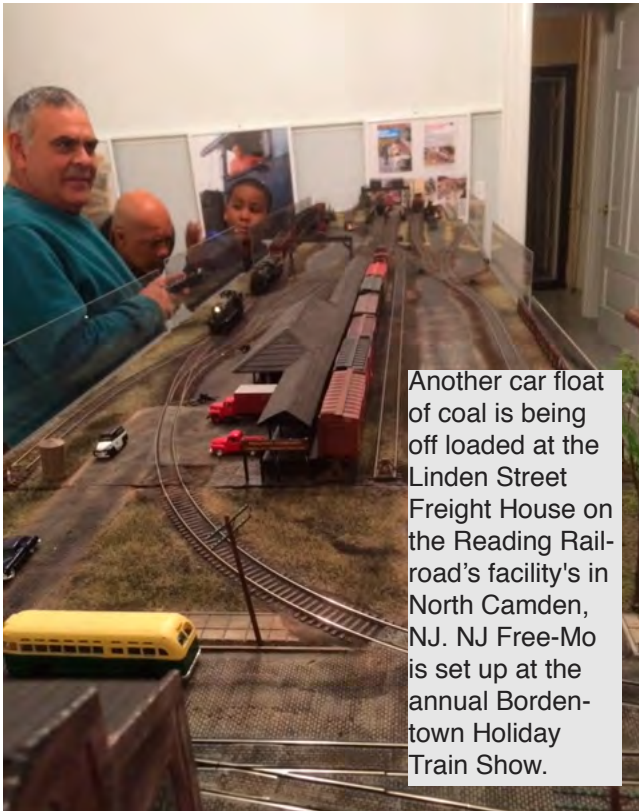
This is an N-scale brass loco. Very nicely done. Regrettably, I have not run this anywhere yet, because I don't have track up after moving here in 2017.





## NEW JERSEY FREE-MO OPERATIONS AT THE LIBERTY BELL CONVENTION

By Mike Prokop



Another car float of coal is being off loaded at the Linden Street Freight House on the Reading Railroad's facility's in North Camden, NJ. NJ Free-Mo is set up at the annual Bordentown Holiday Train Show.



The Reading Railroad has a connection out on Delaware Avenue with the PRSL. You can see the sharp curve of the interchange track heading into the Linden Street Freight House. Another shot from the Bordentown show.

The Liberty Bell Convention will offer operations on the New Jersey Free-Mo HO scale modules throughout most of the convention weekend. While participating in operations or just viewing the modules, you'll be able to admire the fine craftsmanship and modeling of the two module sets presented by the New Jersey Free-Mo group. Also, you'll learn of the historic and prototypical significance of each module set.

Bill Grosse's "Yardville" module features a look at the Pennsylvania Railroad's presence in this small New Jersey town circa 1955. Part of the original Camden & Amboy line that successfully ran one of the first steam engines in the country in the 1830's, Bill has represented the area very well with his modeling of local industries and customers along the line with superb details and interesting features of Yardville. If you like switching and spotting cars, Bill's module offers plenty of operational opportunities that will challenge your skills and provide lots of fun and excitement.

Mike Prokop's "Linden Street Freight Station" module is a late 1950's replica of the Reading Railroad's facility on the Camden, NJ waterfront. Built to almost the exact prototype of the Reading property, this module operates just like the real thing. It features car float operations loading and unloading coal and freight cars. Coal is switched onto two raised trestles for truck transfer with freight spotted at the station and public delivery siding for processing. Transfer runs in and out of the facility offer additional challenges to operations. Mike's Free-Mo module set was featured in the 2019 issue of Model Railroad Planning. If you have a copy, check it out and come operate on it in person.

One last note...when Mike and Bill connect up their modules, they generate plenty of traffic and car loadings between Camden and Yardville that keeps operations moving at a brisk pace. So, whether you're an experienced operator or a beginner interested in learning and jumping into this fascinating part of the hobby, come operate on the New Jersey Free-Mo module setup. More details and information about operating times and format will be available at the Liberty Bell Convention.



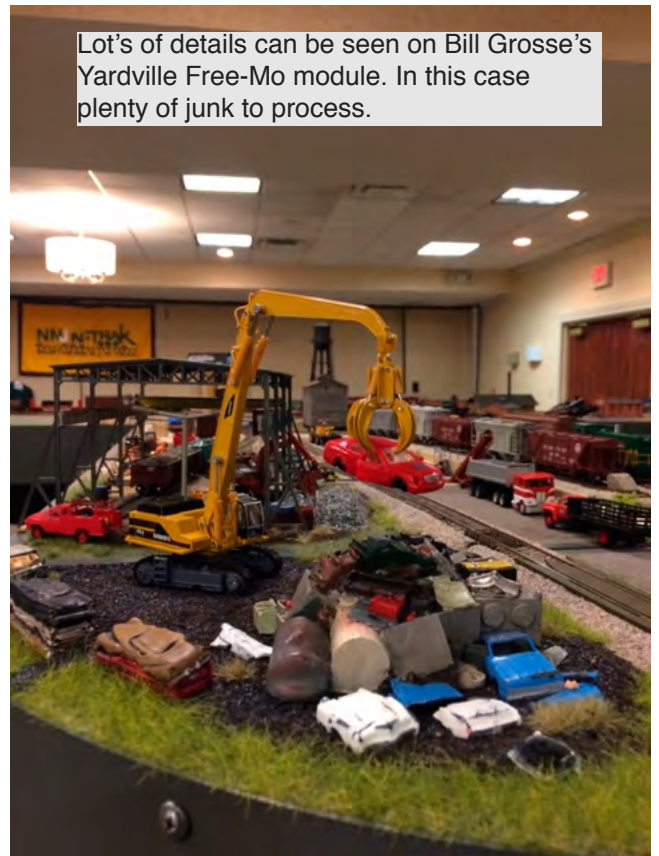
Bill Grosse is getting his Yardville Free-Mo module ready for the crowds attending the Bordentown Holiday Train Show. Last year over 7000 attended over the holiday session.



Plenty of prototypical operations occur on the NJ Free-Mo modules. Ed Delikat and Bill Grosse are switching Yardville, and they look pretty serious!



Large amounts of coal came over from Reading's Port Richmond's yard on car floats to Linden Street. The tug "Ogontz" is in charge of this car float.



Lot's of details can be seen on Bill Grosse's Yardville Free-Mo module. In this case plenty of junk to process.



# Mid-Eastern Region Blogs

Compiled by Nicholas Kalis

## MER Member

## Blog Address

### **New Jersey Division 1**

Mark Pruitt [www.thebandqinwyoming.com](http://www.thebandqinwyoming.com)

### **Potomac Division 2**

Alex Belida <https://esprblog.wordpress.com>

Nicholas Kalis <http://oahusugarcanefn3.blogspot.com/>

Bernard Kempinski <http://usmrr.blogspot.com/>

Stan Knotts <https://mrrminutiae.blogspot.com/>

Marty McGuirk <http://centralvermontrailway.blogspot.com/>

Lance Mindheim <http://lancemindheim.com>

Norman Reid <https://nfandcr.blogspot.com/>

Dean Ripple <https://sites.google.com/site/monongahdiv/>

### **Philadelphia Division 3**

Bill Blackburn [PRR-GVD.COM](http://PRR-GVD.COM)

Bob Dietrich <http://www.dietrichsfam.com/shj/>

Val Pistilli [www.rpmvalleyforge.com](http://www.rpmvalleyforge.com)

Robert Putnick <http://rputnick777.wixsite.com/horseshoecurve>

Robert Putnick <https://sites.google.com/site/ephratavalleyrailroad/home>

Greg Shindledecker <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WMThomasSub/>

Joe Walder <https://prrcambridgesectrk.blogspot.com/>

Paul Welsh [www.rscience.com/Ggauge/](http://www.rscience.com/Ggauge/)

Jeffrey Witt <http://witt-family.com/LayoutConstruction.htm>

Bob Zeolla <https://www.facebook.com/Conemaugh78>

### **James River Division 5**

Shannon Crabtree [virginiamidlandrr.blogspot.com/](http://virginiamidlandrr.blogspot.com/)

Rod Vance <https://www.sites.google.com/site/willowcreekrr/home>

### **South Mountain Division 10**

Jay Beckman <http://jaysoscalelayout.blogspot.com/>

Robert Morningstar [wmrwy.com](http://wmrwy.com)

### **Susquehanna Division 11**

Jerry Britton <https://jbritton.pennsyr.com/>

### **Carolina Southern Division 12**

Scott Perry <http://modelrailroadersnotebook.blogspot.com/>



Icons courtesy  
[flaticon.com](http://flaticon.com), [freepik.com](http://freepik.com)

*Listed in alphabetical order by last name*

*Revised July 5, 2019*

*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](mailto:nkalis@verizon.net) with the member's name and blog address so that we may include that blog on our list. Thank you.*



# The Contest Room and Special Awards - 2019

By Alan Mende, MER General Contest Chairman

I want to invite all MER modelers to bring their models to the 2019 Liberty Bell Special MER Convention held in King of Prussia October 10<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup>. Not only will we have the usual model categories of: Steam, Diesel, Traction, Freight car, Non-revenue, Caboose, Passenger car, On-line structure, Off-line structure, On-line display, Off-line display, and Modules, we will also have several special awards (listed below) that I encourage you to consider.

In addition to the judged contest categories, we also have a popular vote photo contest with multiple categories. Also, we will have a popular vote for Favorite Train and Favorite Model. These special awards and awards for all of the categories in the model and photo contests will be presented at the convention banquet on Saturday evening.

We had 36 judged models at last year's Crossroads of the MER convention in Rockville, MD with 12 merit awards. Hopefully, we'll have more at this year's convention. The MER has some outstanding modelers, so bring your models and enter them in the contest.

We are always looking for experienced judges as well as apprentice judges. If you are interested in judging or being an apprentice judge, please contact me. Being a judge is a great way to improve your modeling (it has helped me immensely) and being a judge is worth points toward your Association Volunteer AP program category.

## Special Awards

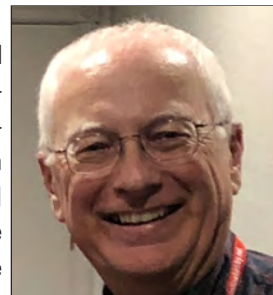
**THE BEST OF SHOW AWARD** is given to the model that scores the highest point total in the judged model contest. A plaque is awarded and the winner has his or her registration paid for the 2020 MER convention.

**THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD** for 2019 will be chosen by MER President Thompson and will be given for his favorite car for automotive use; auto racks, boxcars, gondolas for carrying frames, etc.

**THE CLYDE GERALD AWARD** is sponsored by the MER and named for the late Clyde Gerald, former MER Business Manager and long-time modeler. This is awarded to the kitbashed model which scores highest in the judged model contest. Be sure to check the definition of kitbashed for this award!

### THE PHILADELPHIA DIVISION NEW MODELER AWARD

rewards excellence in model building by first time entrants in an NMRA sponsored judged model contest. The highest score achieved by a new modeler in the contest is worth not only a plaque, but a cash prize of twenty-five dollars!



**THE RAY BILODEAU NARROW GAUGE AWARD** is privately sponsored by a group of narrow gauge modelers, and encourages building models depicting aspects of narrow gauge railroading. The narrow gauge model that scores highest in the model contest is presented a plaque.

**THE GREAT DECALS! AWARD** is an award for an excellent model that includes a Great Decals! product in its construction and/or finishing achieving the highest judged score in lettering & finish and also receives a Merit Award.

**THE FAVORITE TRAIN AWARD** is a popular vote award and will be included on the Popular Vote ballot. Yes, members who can find their way to the contest room and fill out a ballot get to choose the winner!

**THE CHUCK HLADIK MEMORIAL AWARD** For 2019 the award will be given to the freight car with reporting marks from a railroad that ran primarily south of the Mason-Dixon Line entered in the model contest with the highest point total.

Remember, entering models for judging in the contest can earn you merit awards, good toward various Achievement Program categories and help you on your way to Master Model Railroader.

If you have any questions, contact me:

[alanmende@yahoo.com](mailto:alanmende@yahoo.com)

All of the information and forms pertaining to the special awards (criteria, qualifications, judging, etc.) are available on the MER website:

<http://www.mer-nmra.com/awards.html>

Contest forms may be downloaded from the NMRA website:

<https://www.nmra.org/celebration-contests-3>

# Boxing Prized Structures for Moving or Shipping

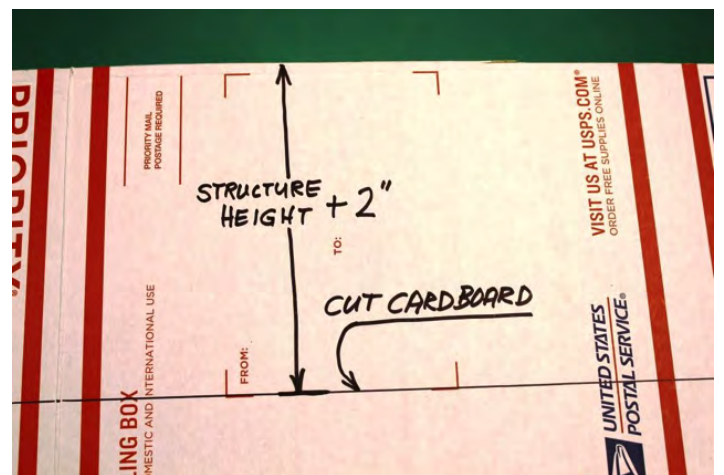
*Jerry Lauchle, MMR  
Susquehanna Division 11*

At Susquehannock I gave a clinic titled "Installing Structures to Permit Undamaged Removal." Part of the material presented in that clinic also appeared in the NMRA Magazine (Sept. 2017, pp. 12-13). The part not published in the magazine is the subject of this brief article. The objective is to box a prized structure with little fear of the structure being damaged during a move or during shipping by a common carrier. I will explain a procedure that has worked well for me having moved several HO-scale structures twice since they were built in the early 1980's.

The structure I am using for an example here is a signal tower that started out as an Atlas kit, but I replaced almost all of the plastic with basswood. I think the only plastic parts retained in its construction were the brick walls, windows, and gutter. As described in the clinic and NMRA Magazine article I mount the structures on a firm base that can be removed from one's layout when the time comes to do so. In my case that base is usually Homasote.



Begin by measuring the overall (maximum) height of the structure including the base thickness. Select a piece of cardboard of length that is at least equal to the perimeter of the base and a width that is the maximum height of the structure plus 2".



After the cardboard is cut to the size described we want to mark the edges of the structure's base one at a time along a line that is 1" up from the bottom edge of the cardboard.



Now, pre-bend the cardboard perpendicular to its bottom at the marks defining the base edge lengths. Then, secure the pre-bent cardboard to its mating edge of the Homasote base 1" up from the bottom using small (3/4") box nails. Proceed to wrap the cardboard around the base securing each edge with the box nails. A couple of nails on each edge are usually sufficient.





The next step is to add a top and bottom. Trace the perimeter of the boxed structure (twice) onto flat card-board. Cut them out for the top and bottom of the box. Use packing tape to secure the top and bottom to the box.



Insert the boxed structure into a larger – sturdy – cardboard box and provide plenty of packing material such as foam peanuts or bubble wrap. Seal it up and it's ready to ship or be moved to your new location. Any jars during moving, such as those due to dropping, will be absorbed by the packing material and the model's base, not the model itself. One exception to this is the case where something really heavy falls upon the outer box. The model could be crushed in that case. If that might happen, I suggest that the inner box be built out of plywood.





ANOTHER PAIR OF CRIPPLE CREEK PHOTOS  
by Stan Knotts. Taken in 1983.

Parade in Cripple Creek



Fortune Club  
Hotel in Victor, CO





A couple of photos of **Dale Latham's** layout, about a year ago. I don't know who took the photos, they were on an iPhone (if it was you, please let me know so you can get credit).







## Walkersville Southern Steam

Photo by Lee Stoermer

(Lee is doing some writing for the eLocal that will appearing next year...)

The Annual Members Meeting of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA will be held on Oct 12th, 2019 at approximately 8 pm at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, King of Prussia, Pa at 260 Mall Boulevard, King of Prussia, PA 19406.



Clint: This is a dreadful photo I took mid-August while eating early dinner at a hamburger joint in Orange, VA. It is right next to the tracks. The opposite side (you can just see the corner) is Orange Station. The window is reflecting some of the interior...no time to get any fancier about things, I only had just enough time to get the camera app fired up and aim the thing.

Four big diesels. Lotta freight cars.

The whole building shakes when it goes by.

*This story was originally Nick's hand-out notes for his open house a couple years ago. We ran this a while back, but I'd left out the track plan.*

# Oahu Sugar Company – 1944

Nicholas Kalis

## Rationale

I have modeled Hawaii's three-foot (36 inch) narrow gauge Oahu Sugar Company as it appeared and operated in 1944 under wartime conditions. Perhaps I chose the WWII era as: most published photographs were taken by servicemen/railfans stationed in Hawaii during this period. I am modeling Waipahu, Oahu and surrounding areas in summer with clear skies. This layout demonstrates how techniques of European exhibition layouts can be applied to an American semi-permanent layout. Valuable assistance was rendered by Paul Dolkos. Inspiration was also garnered from Ty Treutelaar's Aina Nani Railway, Iain Rice, Chris Nevard, and Doug Gurin. Two themes will be evident – sugar cane operations and WWII as it affected the home front.

## Subject and Scale

Benjamin F. Dillingham founded the Oahu Sugar Company (OSC) on 20 acres of land leased from James Campbell in the vicinity of Waipahu. IN 1897, its first locomotive arrived, and in 1899 the first sugar cane was harvested. Additional locomotives then followed. The plantation grew to over 12,000 acres of leased land. By 1939, the railroad reached sixty miles of three-foot gauge track plus an unspecified amount of portable track on which 939 plantation cars (860 four-ton cane cars, fifty flat cars, and 29 other cars) operated. During WWII, over 2,800 acres were commandeered from the OSC for a POW camp for German prisoners.

I decided to model the

OSC railroad as it appeared in 1944, as available photos of ammunition trains show the OSC towing bombs to be dispersed in sugar cane fields. After the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, the US Navy decided it prudent to separate bombs from planes and ships in the event of another attack. Also, the US Army Air Force Kipapa Airport was operational in 1944 is depicted on my backdrop with a gate modeled in three dimensions. By late 1950 the railway system was eliminated from the plantation.

I decided to model Waipahu's water tank with a flat roof given the lack of snow in Oahu and some available photos. The number of figures has minimized since their stationary poses require too much suspension of disbelief (a lesson learned from Paul Dolkos). Based on available photos, many O scale vehicles are parked in Waipahu to demonstrate what a busy mercantile center it was. O scale photos were utilized to make a convincing scene quickly with false fronts.

Modeling in Fn3, I have modified a Bachmann Porter engine to run on batteries as Waikane Number 9, and I have scratch built a tender for it as well. A second locomotive is by Piko with battery installed by G Scale Graphics.





For those curious, the sugar cane crane was a 1:50 scale Northwest Dragline Model 25-D by Spec Cast which I painted to reflect long service in the Hawaiian sunshine. I modified it by removing the bucket and replacing it with O Scale Detail, LOGGING CLAW, Finished Model by Model Tech Studios. Crossing the Waipahu Yard tracks is an International D-2 pickup Truck in 1:25 scale. Future modeling projects include modeling irrigation ditches.



## Content and Scope

My layout consists of various Layout Design Elements (LDE) including the town of Waipahu in O scale (forced perspective) and Waipahu engine terminal. Another LDE is a trestle (appearing in a photograph of 1946) which I have scratch built.

## Modeling Standards

I have scratch built most of the major structures on my layout. Shapeways-produced sugar cane cars are based on drawings by the late Jim Dunlop as they appeared in Bob Brown's Narrow Gauge and Shortline Gazette. Visitors may note W. Britain's 1/30 scale Air Base Sentry Box & Gate with 15 MPH Sign, WWII (No. 51019) stands in for a US Army sentry box for which photographic evidence exists. I use Llagas Creek Railways code 215 track (scales to 65 pounds/yard) with no ballast (as verified by photographs of the prototype).

## Operational Design

My layout is a continuous oval with some possibilities for realistic operation built in.

## Construction

Largely built in my garage and then assembled and completed in my finished basement, my layout consists of fascia, valance, and wings. Valances conceal LED and florescent lighting. Backdrops are Curved styrene, concealed by wings. Minimal scenery with a low horizon was chosen. Most backdrops have two artfully disguised penetrations allowing train to move from one scene to another. I was assisted by Gary Eames, Jim Stapleton, Dick Kilday and many others who know who they are.

## Presentation and Visual Design

Layout skirts are made of white paneling. Valances and fascia match the room walls. My wife Kate painted the backdrops using acrylic paints on styrene (note XT-10 Kipapa military materiel storage tunnel). Kate plans to paint a POW camp on one of our backdrops.

## Bibliography

Honouliuli Gulch and Associated Sites Draft Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment National Park Service US Department of the Interior May 2014

Sugar Trains Pictorial Glenwood Publishers, 1975 Jesse C. Conde

"The Oahu Sugar Cane Plantation", Waipahu Author(s): John Wesley Coulter Economic Geography, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Jan., 1933), pp. 60-71

Hawaiian Railway Album WWII Photographs Volume 3 – Plantation Railways on Oahu The Railroad Press 2007 Gale E Treiber

Affidavit Hans L'Orange et. al March 31 1942



An actual track plan, finally!  
 These things are harder to make than you realize.  
 But we have one!

This one was created by Byron Henderson.

Hawaiian pronunciation guide for those interested:

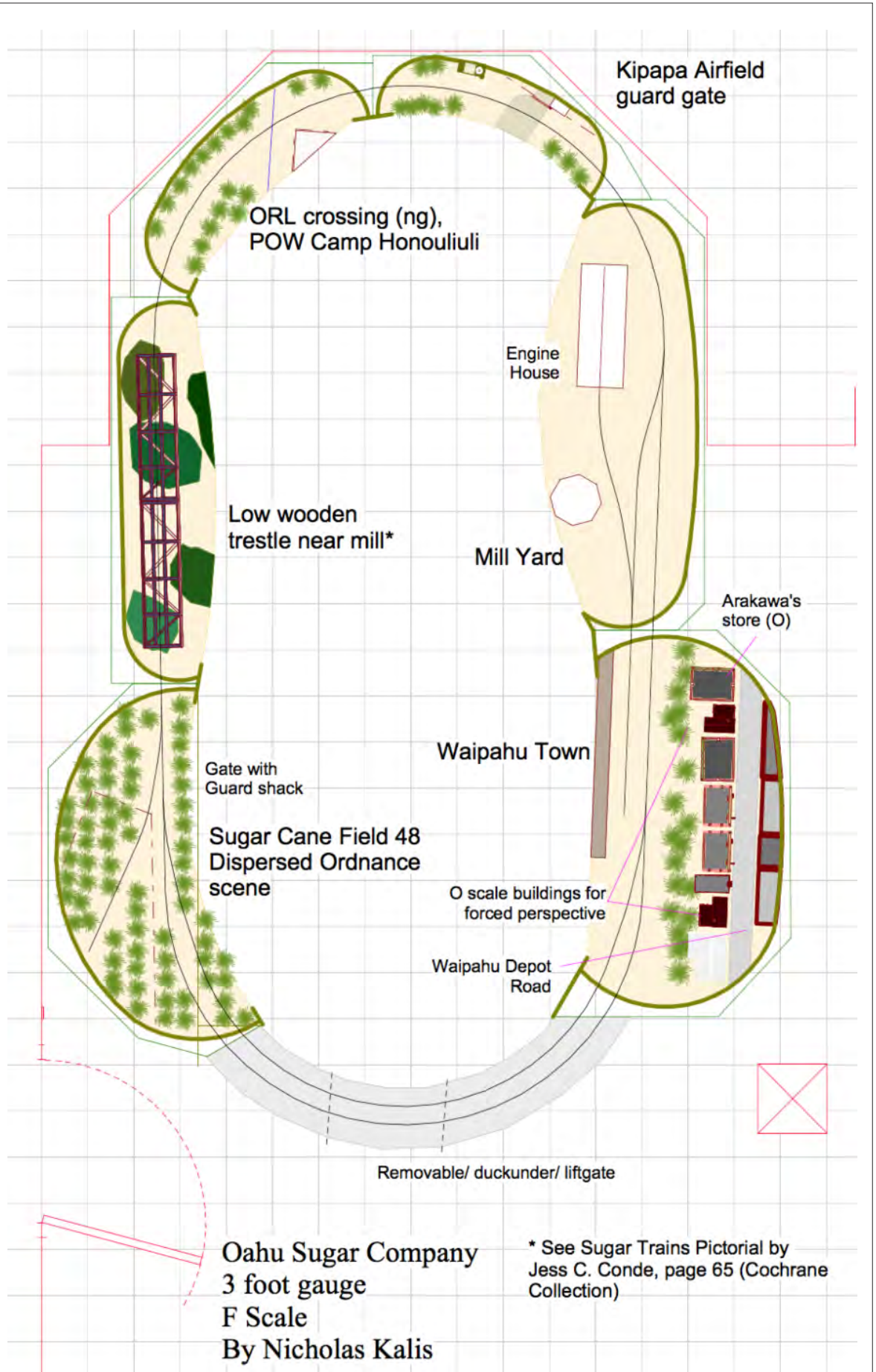
Wye-PAH-hoo

Ah-rah-KAH-wah

Kee-PAH-pah

Hah-no-OO-lee-OO-lee

*(In general, for most words the next-to-last syllable is the one emphasized. Sometimes it's more than one, and those tend to be special.)*



**Oahu Sugar Company**  
 3 foot gauge  
 F Scale  
 By Nicholas Kalis

\* See Sugar Trains Pictorial by Jess C. Conde, page 65 (Cochrane Collection)

# 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 have 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 in 2017. 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 conformance reviews, and other information. Because the subscription rate/postage depends on where you live, check [www.nmra.org](http://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](http://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.

### 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. MWTM classes are usually offered at the National convention, but MWTM 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](http://www.nmra.org).

### Beginners' Guide

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

[www.nmra.org/beginner/](http://www.nmra.org/beginner/)

Recall the story last issue about Flying Trains? Apparently Pop Mech wrote a story on that once...note the caption in the lower right. You can get this image printed on a T-shirt.



Clint asks: If you try to read the eLocal on your favorite gadget and it fails, would you please let me know?

I've have one report of it failing on an Android phone. The PDF is created by Acrobat Pro X, with Version 9 compatibility. I don't have a way to test all possible devices, even if I wanted to. But please let me know.

As the E-LOCAL is expanding, there is room for more writing and photography by YOU!





A couple of photos of **Joe Walter's** layout, about a year ago. Rob Hinkle, photographer.



## The Baltimore Society of Model Engineers: Finding Locomotion, Part 2

By **Chad W. Tyler**  
Director at Large  
BSME Board of Directors

*This three-part series explores the past, present and, most important, the future of the historic Baltimore Society of Model Engineers, the first club of its kind in the Nation dedicated exclusively to model railroads.*

### The Relocation Story

The past two decades at the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers has largely been a smooth-running operation. Rent at the 3000 square foot facility at 225 W. Saratoga Street remained affordable, a healthy roster of members continued to pay their dues and the trains continued to run despite a change of ownership in the early 2000s and a decrease in attendance at the public open houses.

Like clockwork, discussions arose over the past two decades around moving out in order to have more space for bigger layouts and better access for members and the public alike. However, the thought of leaving behind the two 12' x 60' HO and O scale layouts was impenetrable without an explicit need to do so.

When the building was listed for sale again in 2014, the Society began to prepare for the possible need to relocate but the Board of Directors and the membership remained optimistic that they would be able to roll the lease over to the new owners. After a couple years the sale of the building seemed unlikely and the BSME continued operations with continued uneasiness over its future on Saratoga Street.

In the fall of 2018, as club members were wrapping up projects around the layouts and preparing 225 W. Saratoga Street for the busy holiday season, the cars began to go quickly off the rails. A loss of power during the Friday night work hours proved a perplexing situation that was thought to be fixed until the power went out again two days later. After further investigation, it was determined that the BSME had a bigger problem than expected – the electrical failure required a \$5000 fix and the landlord had no interest in helping to fix it. The layouts sat dark for several weeks while bids were gathered and debates were waged on whether to pay out of pocket for the fix or cut our losses and get out.



A scene from the HO Layout at 225 W. Saratoga St.

At a hotly debated December business meeting, the membership raised a vote on whether to spend the money in order to maintain our busy and lucrative holiday open house season or begin the process of moving out. All but one member voted to spend the money so that we bring power back to the layouts and host one more holiday season of open houses before saying goodbye to 225 W. Saratoga St. The BSME saw this as an opportunity to build a more concerted effort to raise funds and awareness about their unique history in Downtown Baltimore. Members left the business meeting energized by the passionate discussion and the unified response.





Members of the HO Division at "The Last Run" on Jan. 20th

railroad equipment, tools, supplies and furniture.

3) The Layout Salvage Committee was responsible for identifying what aspects of the layouts were salvageable – scenery, structures, switches, turnouts, trackwork, and control systems – and the disassembly of the decades old layouts.

Unfortunately, a short time after the vote and just a few days before Christmas, the Board of Directors received an email from the landlord that an offer on the building had been received from a developer who was not interested in having tenants. The letter made it official that the BSME had 90 days to vacate the property leaving it “broom clean” by April 1.

This set off a flurry of activity by the Board of Directors to establish a massive planning effort to pack up and move 67 years’ worth of layouts, supplies, library holdings, and collections. In one of the Board’s first steps, they developed five committees to oversee different aspects of the very complicated relocation:

- 1) The Relocation Committee was responsible for identifying short term facilities, managing the logistics of the move, and gathering supplies and equipment.
- 2) The Assets Committee was responsible for sorting, packing, and labeling the Societies extensive library, artifact collection, loose

4) The Finance Committee was responsible for maintaining the relocation budget and identifying fundraising targets to offset the cost of relocating.

5) The Marketing and Development Committee was responsible for developing a GoFundMe campaign, issuing press releases and developing promotional materials for the Last Run Event.

The three-month relocation was broken down into three general month-long phases: January – Planning, Preparation, and Promotion; February – Sort-



Members of the O Division at "The Last Run" on Jan. 20th





Members of the O Scale Trolley Division at "The Last Run" on Jan. 20th

bers from decades past. Men and women who came 50 years before with their grandparents returned with their own grandchildren. Trains ran around both layouts. Memories were recounted. Ideas were shared. There aren't many words that can succinctly sum up the flurry of emotions in the room that day, but it felt magical and intensely motivating especially as the outpouring of support flooded in from the GoFundMe campaign that was launched just a few days before. Within the first week, the campaign raised over \$2000 towards their modest \$8500 goal.

ing, Packing, Labeling, and Staging; March – Moving, Cleaning, and Looking Ahead.

Luckily, the electrical work had not yet begun and so it was very quickly decided to abandon the repairs in order to save the money and put it towards the relocation. Instead, one of the BSME members supplied a generator that would be carried out on to the fire escape at the beginning of every work session to provide enough electricity through the space to allow for the use of lights and power tools.

This generator proved to be a massive asset for the remaining three months in the space. It even allowed for the layouts to be run which led the BSME to make the bold decision to host one last operating session for the public.

So on January 20th, 2019, the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers hosted "The Last Run" at 225 West Saratoga Street and invited the public to come up to the third floor above Grandma's Candle Shop to say goodbye to the layouts and the space, that many had known for so long.

The event was a smashing success. Several hundred people made their way around the layouts. Club mem-

The following two months were an intense slog of sorting, packing, and moving. Immediately following "The Last Run" the BSME had signed a lease on a new interim location and the teams got to work on Saratoga Street disassembling portions of the layouts. Boxes upon boxes were packed with magazines, books, memorabilia, rolling stock and supplies. The space had electricity but no heat so members dress in thick layers that were often shed as the effort proved quite the workout.



In the aftermath of “The Last Run”, the membership managed to grow with five new members joining on to lend their support and hard work to the relocation. The BSME members would work every Saturday and Sunday with some weekdays in between from eleven in the morning to five or six in the evening.

By April 1st, the hardworking members of the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers managed to clear out the space on West Saratoga Street, leaving behind lots of memories and apocalyptic model landscapes in both HO and O scales. The BSME was able to salvage some of the valuable portions of the old layouts but much of them still sit in their deconstructed “broom clean” state today ready to be ripped apart by the demolition crews of the developers.

After a celebratory pizza party and some much-needed time off from moving, the BSME has been steadily growing into their interim location on the third floor of 3500 Parkdale Ave in the Woodberry Neighborhood of Baltimore. The space is a little more than one third the size of the old location on Saratoga Street but it has high ceilings and allows the Society to store all of their assets while providing enough space for a workshop, meetings, and some small layouts while the club plans their next steps.

*In the next installment of Finding Locomotion, we will explore the possibilities for the future of the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers and reflect on the goals of the organization as it opens this new chapter in its long history.*



Winding down the salvage operation on the O scale layout in mid-March 2019

*If you've enjoyed reading this article, head over to [www.ModelEngineers.com](http://www.ModelEngineers.com) to show your support for our efforts to continue this great history or drop us an email at*

*[BSME.Development@Gmail.com](mailto:BSME.Development@Gmail.com)*

*We'd love to hear your BSME stories and the Society is always seeking new members.*



