



# The Local

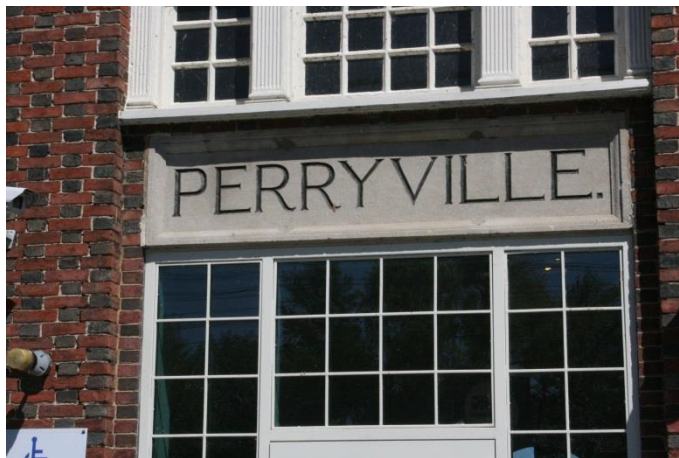
Newsletter of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA  
Volume 75, Number 1, Jan-Feb, 2020

## Place Names Make for Better Operations

By Ron Baile, MMR

I never liked model railroad names that were too contrived. The Maryville & Kennytown RR, for example, just turns me off. Although it's your railroad, and you should enjoy it as you like. If it's named after family members or friends then more power to you. However, you don't have to make up funny sounding or catchy names for your railroad empire. They already exist in real life so why not use them? I have named two towns for deceased railroaders who I knew very well. One is a first name, Douglas and one is a surname, Black Town. Your friends need not be dead to be honored by a location on your railroad.

For example, here in New Jersey we have an actual place named Clayville Switch. The late, great Minnie Pearl reputedly came from Grinder's Switch. Let's look at some real railroad "Stations". On most railroads, a station is a place designated in the employee timetable by name, not necessarily a structure. There is



usually a name on a signboard mounted on a post and that is it. Model railroads should utilize many more names than they do. It makes more sense to say I am in the clear at Quinton rather than say I'm in the clear over by that big gray rock.

My friend and modeling buddy, Dr. Patti, named all his on-line communities after golf courses around the country. I knew one guy who named all his on-line towns alphabetically. I don't remember why, but it had something to do with his operating scheme.

From the CSX Employee Timetable No.3, April 1, 2002 we get to see some real doozies. There is Murray's Sink, Savage, Cherry Lane, Sunnyside, and Zepp. Continuing on we see Miller's Bend, Peachers Mill, Skeeterville, Couchmans Curve, Old House Curve, and Rattling Bridge. I would (con't page 3)

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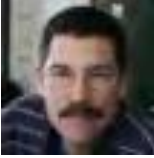















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# The Local

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



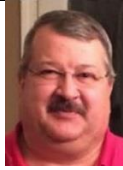




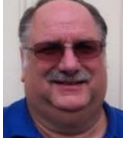


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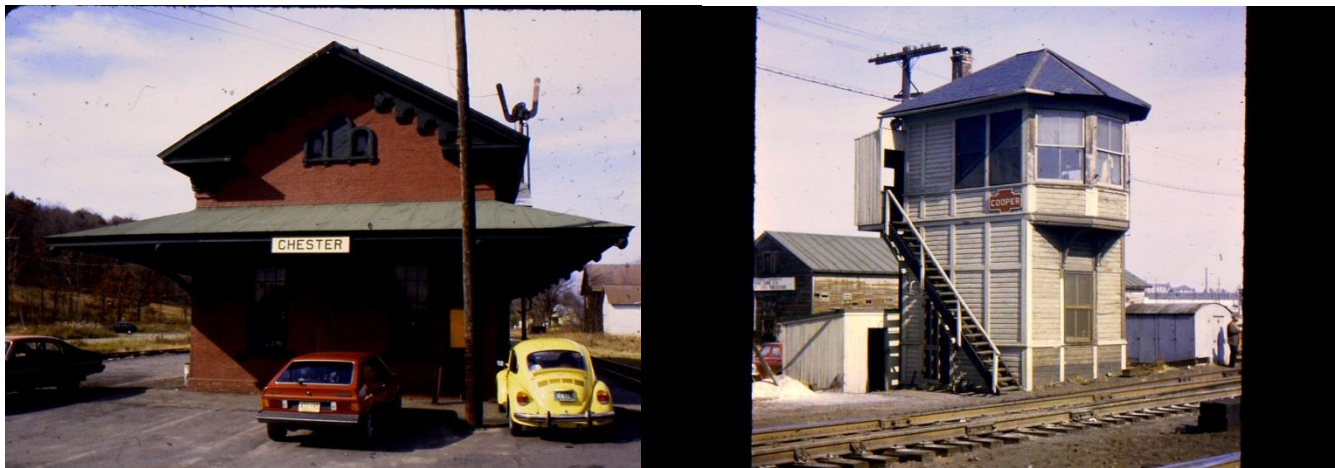
	<b>President:</b> Kurt Thompson 350 Ternwing Drive Arnold, MD 21012 410-507-3671 <a href="mailto:president@mer-nmra.com">president@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Director-at-Large</b> Randy Foulke 919-649-8253 <a href="mailto:randy.railfan@gmail.com">randy.railfan@gmail.com</a>		<b>Achievement Program Manager:</b> Dave Chance (704) 933-4200 <a href="mailto:ap@mer-nmra.com">ap@mer-nmra.com</a>
	<b>Vice President:</b> Ken Montero (804) 794-5704 <a href="mailto:Vp@mer-nmra.com">Vp@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Director-at-Large and MER Photographer:</b> Jerry Lauchle, MMR 814-404-6955 <a href="mailto:gcl1@psu.edu">gcl1@psu.edu</a>		<b>Nominating Committee Chair:</b> Bob Charles, MMR 717-763-1848 <a href="mailto:rcharles@aol.com">rcharles@aol.com</a>
	<b>Secretary:</b> Martin Brechbiel (703) 309-3082 <a href="mailto:secretary@mer-nmra.com">secretary@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Director-at-Large:</b> Bob Morningstar 301-471-0132 <a href="mailto:bobmorningstar@protonmail.com">bobmorningstar@protonmail.com</a>		<b>Editor:</b> Jack Dziadul 919-721-8757 <a href="mailto:Local-editor@mer-nmra.com">Local-editor@mer-nmra.com</a>
	<b>Treasurer:</b> Brian Kampschroer 717-991-7560 <a href="mailto:treasurer16@mer-nmra.com">treasurer16@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Business Manager:</b> Howard Oakes 717-632-5990 301 Moulstown Rd Abbottstown PA 17301 <a href="mailto:business@mer-nmra.com">business@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Registrar:</b> Kirk Bateman 410-442-0446 <a href="mailto:mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com">mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com</a>
	<b>Ballot Committee Chair:</b> Bob Minnis, MMR 410-340-1776 <a href="mailto:kahlualab@aol.com">kahlualab@aol.com</a>		<b>Contest Chair:</b> Alan Mende 717-469-1047 <a href="mailto:alanmende@yahoo.com">alanmende@yahoo.com</a>		<b>Web Master:</b> Jeff Burch 443-538-2028 <a href="mailto:webmaster@mer-nmra.com">webmaster@mer-nmra.com</a>
	<b>Assistant Business Manager:</b> John Hoyt 410-340-1776 <a href="mailto:jhoyt@mer-nmra.com">jhoyt@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Assistant Treasurer:</b> Scott Unger 610-462-0756 <a href="mailto:rsu74bno@gmail.com">rsu74bno@gmail.com</a>		<b>Archivist:</b> Kevin O'Connor 919-593-2537 <a href="mailto:kjoconnor2@yahoo.com">kjoconnor2@yahoo.com</a>

### MER Board Meeting Schedule

1. MER Budget Meeting 11 am, Jan. 25, 2020, Linthicum Branch Library, 400 Shipley Rd, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090
2. MER Board Meeting 10 am, April 25, 2020, MER Convention Hotel, Crown Plaza Charlotte, NC
3. MER Board Meeting 7 pm, Oct. 15, 2020, MER Convention Hotel, Crown Plaza Charlotte, NC
4. MER Annual Meeting 8 pm, Oct. 17, 2020, MER Convention Hotel, Crown Plaza Charlotte, NC

MER Division Superintendents					
	<p><b>New Jersey Division 1</b>                      Bill Grosse                      (609) 585-4616  <a href="mailto:wgrossejr@gmail.com">wgrossejr@gmail.com</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://njdivnmra.org">njdivnmra.org</a></p>		<p><b>James River Division 5</b>                      Phillip R. Taylor                      (434) 589-6006  <a href="mailto:drphilster@gmail.com">drphilster@gmail.com</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://jrdnmra.blogspot.com/">jrdnmra.blogspot.com/</a></p>		<p><b>Carolina Southern Division 12</b>                      Alan Hardee                      (704) 868-6976  <a href="mailto:superintendent@carolinasouthern.org">superintendent@carolinasouthern.org</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://www.carolinasouthern.org">www.carolinasouthern.org</a></p>
	<p><b>Potomac Division 2</b>                      Martin Brechbiel  <a href="mailto:superintendent@potomac-nmra.org">superintendent@potomac-nmra.org</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://potomac-nmra.org/">potomac-nmra.org/</a></p>		<p><b>South Mountain Division 10</b>                      Alex Polimeni                      (540) 532-6244  <a href="mailto:arpolimeni@gmail.com">arpolimeni@gmail.com</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://www.smdnmra.org/">http://www.smdnmra.org/</a></p>		<p><b>Carolina Piedmont Division 13</b>                      John Sokash                      N/A  <a href="mailto:jasokash@bellsouth.net">jasokash@bellsouth.net</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://www.cpd13.org/">www.cpd13.org/</a></p>
	<p><b>Philadelphia Division 3</b>                      Charles Butsch  <a href="mailto:cabutsch@gmail.com">cabutsch@gmail.com</a>                      (610) 446-2375                      Division web page:  <a href="http://www.phillynmra.org">www.phillynmra.org</a></p>		<p><b>Susquehanna Division 11</b>                      Tim Himmelberger                      (717) 695-7958  <a href="mailto:timh@susquehannanmra.org">timh@susquehannanmra.org</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://www.susquehannanmra.org">www.susquehannanmra.org</a></p>		<p><b>Chesapeake Division 14</b>                      Tom Casey                      (410) 426-8947  <a href="mailto:super@chesdiv-nmra.org">super@chesdiv-nmra.org</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://www.chesdiv-nmra.org">www.chesdiv-nmra.org</a></p>
	<p><b>Tidewater Division 4</b>                      Fred Humphrey                      757-482-9498  <a href="mailto:tidewater.mer.nmra@gmail.com">tidewater.mer.nmra@gmail.com</a>                      Division web page:  <a href="http://nmra-mer-tidewater.org">nmra-mer-tidewater.org</a></p>				

(con't from page 1) imagine a speed restriction is in effect there. Also listed are Back Creek, Sleepy Creek, and Red Rock. Sir Johns Run and Drywall are right down the line from each other as is Turkey Foot. Then there is Doe Gully and Pawpaw as well as Dans Run, Patterson Creek, and Mexico.



A factory in Glade City might make air fresheners. Then there is Sand Spring, Middle Creek, and Shoofly. You don't fancy East Coast names? Let's look at an old AT&SF employee timetable. How about these names on the old Santa Fe? In Illinois, there is Romeo and Joliet (a terrible pun, but blame the railroad), Eaton, Congo, Sugar Creek, Elmer, and Tecumseh. Women's names are popular but model them only if they are names in the family or you could get in trouble. Men's names also are popular, both first and last. There is Gene Autry, Perry, Guthrie, Edmond, Wayne, and Pauls Valley all on the same line.



Animal names were very popular on the Santa Fe. There is White Deer, Black Bear, Elk Falls, Asp, Deerfield, and Las Animas. Saints make nice place names such as St. Francis on the C&NW and St. Johns on the ATSF as well as San Luis Obispo and San Diego. Many of these “Stations” are merely a sign on a post. Some are what is known as Block Limit Stations. Some block limit stations are named for nearby major online industries. Some are named after railroaders both dead and alive. Two examples are Griff after one of the Atlantic City Line’s architects who died of a heart attack while on the job or Melvin on CONRAIL’s Delmarva Division, which was named after engineer Melvin who suggested they add an additional block limit station to facilitate operations on that line. Further down that line is block limit CORK, which is adjacent to a plant belonging to Crown Cork & Seal. The point is that for almost every switch or crossover you should have a place name. Print some signs on your computer. Pick a typeface and size that you like and always use that font on all your signs. Most railroads had standards for their signs as well as stations, towers, bridges etc. Put those signs on telephone



poles, relay cases or just 4” x 4” posts. I’m lazy so I just go for black on white. If you are good with a program like Paint or some other graphics program you can create some nifty signs in various colors. If you have a dry basement, print them on index stock. If humidity is a problem like it is for me, print them on plain bond paper and use spray glue to attach them to 0.005” styrene. You could also use dry transfers or decals. Let your crews and visitors know where they are. It will add an interesting dimension to your operating sessions as well as a certain consistent look to your railroad.



## MER Liberty Bell Special 2019 Contest Room Winners

Following up on the Special Award Winners from the MER Liberty Bell 2019 Contest Room, here are the 1<sup>st</sup> place model winners!



1<sup>st</sup> place in the category of Cabooses was awarded to Jim Murphy for his B&M wooden cabooses.

1<sup>st</sup> place in the category of Freight Car was awarded to Bernie Kempinski for this DODX 41000 flat car.



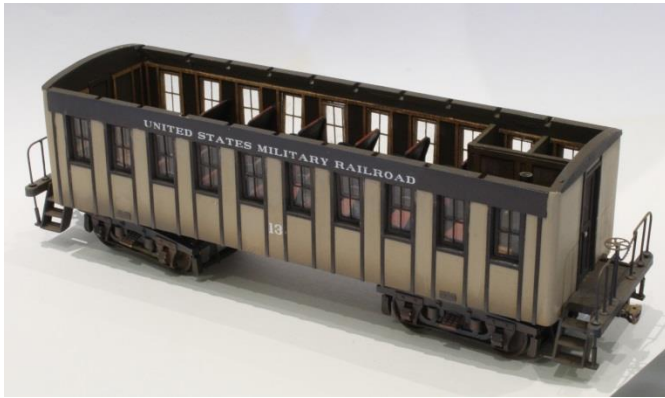
Joe Walters, MMR took home the 1<sup>st</sup> place plaque for his Sperry Rail car in the Diesel category.

Joe Walters, MMR also took home the 1<sup>st</sup> place plaque for Non-Revenue with his UP snow plow No. 076.



In the category of On-Line Structures, Fred Willis's Boesler covered bridge took 1<sup>st</sup> place.





In the category of Passenger Car, this early passenger car by Bernie Kempinski was awarded the 1<sup>st</sup> place plaque.

Alan Mende took home the 1<sup>st</sup> place award in Traction for his Hummelstown & Campbellstown Brill combine.



Glyn Thomas, MMR was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place for this Off-Line Structure, Ghost on Master



1<sup>st</sup> place in the category of On-Line Display (above) went to Jerry Lauchle, MMR, for his Abandoned Railroad while 1<sup>st</sup> place for Off-Line Display (below) went to George Downer for his Northside Tire & Battery.





## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### New Year in the MER January 2020

“Deadlines and commitments  
What to leave in, what to leave  
out”\*

#### President Kurt Thompson, MMR

Who knew a rock and roll song would be applicable to model railroading layout design and planning? Makes me wonder if Bob Seger is a model railroader.

As the New Year has just begun, we are all up against deadlines. Each of us as model railroaders are up against commitments as well. Some in the form of new resolutions; some as reviewing past resolutions. Some of these are self-imposed; some imposed by circumstances or others.

With the societal habit of making New Year's Resolutions, I also take time to look back over the year. It is a time to see what has improved in my life and where in my life there is still room for improvement. Since my life includes the Mid-Eastern Region, I also look to see how things are operating in the MER.

I am still looking for several someones to step up and volunteer to serve the MER as Board of Director members, in particular candidates to run for the office of Vice-President. The other officer positions (President, Treasurer, and Secretary) are also on the ballot this year. Anyone on the Board will talk with you about it, especially our Nominating Committee Chair Bob Charles, MMR.

One of last year's accomplishments included the purchase of Directors and Officers (D&O) insurance, sadly a necessary expense of doing business, even a volunteer business, in our current society.

We inducted six new Master Model Railroaders at the Liberty Bell Convention. Dave Chance says there are more on the way. That is ten new MMRs since January 2018. My congratulations to each one of the new MMRs. It is an accomplishment each can be proud of.

As you arrive in the new year of 2020, try to live within your personal deadlines and commitments, but most importantly, have fun with your trains.

\*“Against the Wind,” written by Robert Clark Seger



## EDITOR'S COLUMN

### Jack Dziadul

With this issue of The Local / eLocal, we are introducing two new features.

1) We have highlighted in this issue some of the modeling “how-to” articles, clinics, and videos that have appeared in recent Division newsletters or on Division websites. Rather than re-print the articles, we will be providing links to the newsletters or website articles (See page 36). This hopefully will cross-pollinate modeling tips and ideas across the region, as well as promote the readership of the various Division newsletters. We will also highlight some articles that discuss the Achievement Program. President Kurt Thompson, MMR has challenged more of us to achieve Master Model Railroader status as we approach the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mid-Eastern Region. So building models, building a layout, and the AP program are what this section of The Local is all about.

Initially, we have reviewed two to three years of each Division's newsletters. Going forward, we will just update this template bi-monthly as new Division newsletters are published, or as you bring how-to articles from Division newsletters to our attention. This is intended to be a regular feature of The Local. Let us know what you think about this effort at [editor@mer-nmra.com](mailto:editor@mer-nmra.com).

2) You will also see in this issue a master calendar of events. The purposes of this master calendar are to a) assist Divisions and members in promoting their events, and b) to assist members and hosts with planning. This master calendar should help schedulers avoid conflicts, or at least to be aware of conflicts. We invite event hosts and participants to advise the Editor of meetings, conventions, train shows, etc. that might be of interest to the MER membership.

In other matters regarding the publication of your newsletter, we are continuing the advertising to fill the volunteer position of Editor / Publisher.



## Upcoming Events

2020	Dates	Event	City	State	Contact
JAN	11	NJ- Phil joint meet	Merchantville	NJ	<a href="http://www.njdivnmra.org">www.njdivnmra.org</a>
JAN	25	RMU	Charlotte	NC	<a href="mailto:rmuchair@carolinasouthern.org">rmuchair@carolinasouthern.org</a>
JAN	25	MER Budget Meeting	Severna Park	MD	<a href="http://www.mer-nmra.com">www.mer-nmra.com</a>
JAN	25-26	Railroad Hobby Show	W Springfield	MA	<a href="http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com">www.railroadhobbyshow.com</a>
JAN	28	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
FEB	1-2	Timonium train show	Timonium	MD	<a href="mailto:jsgeare@gsmts.com">jsgeare@gsmts.com</a>
FEB	7-8	Model Train Expo	Easley	SC	<a href="mailto:trainshow@crmha.org">trainshow@crmha.org</a>
FEB	25	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
FEB	29	Susquehanna meet	Allentown	PA	<a href="http://www.susquehannanmra.org">www.susquehannanmra.org</a>
MAR	7-8	New Bern Train Show	New Bern	NC	<a href="mailto:billtucker@centurylink.net">billtucker@centurylink.net</a>
MAR	14	Mebane Train Show	Mebane	NC	<a href="http://www.themebanetraindisplay.com">www.themebanetraindisplay.com</a>
MAR	21	Greatest Little Train Show	Greensboro	NC	<a href="http://www.carolinamodelrr.org">www.carolinamodelrr.org</a>
MAR	24	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
MAR	26-29	Valley Forge RPM	Malvern	PA	<a href="http://rpmvalleyforge.com/">http://rpmvalleyforge.com/</a>
APR	4	Minicon	Annandale	VA	<a href="http://potomac-nmra.org">http://potomac-nmra.org</a>
APR	4	Susquehanna meet			
APR	11	Tichy Open House	Burlington	NC	<a href="mailto:jackdziadul@gmail.com">jackdziadul@gmail.com</a>
APR	25	MER Board meeting	Charlotte	NC	<a href="http://www.mer-nmra.com">www.mer-nmra.com</a>
APR	28	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
MAY	2	Susquehanna meet			
MAY	2-3	NRV Train Show	Raleigh	NC	<a href="http://www.nrvclub.net">www.nrvclub.net</a>
MAY	13-16	PRRT&HS Annual Meeting	State College	PA	<a href="http://www.prrths.com">www.prrths.com</a>
MAY	16-17	Spencer Train Show	Spencer	NC	<a href="http://www.nctrans.org">www.nctrans.org</a>
MAY	26	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
MAY	29-30	New England RPM	Farmington	CT	<a href="http://www.nerpm.org">www.nerpm.org</a>
MAY	30	MER nominations due			<a href="http://www.mer-nmra.com">www.mer-nmra.com</a>
JUN	23	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
JUN	24-28	N Scale Convention	Nashville	TN	<a href="http://www.nationalscaleconvention.com/">www.nationalscaleconvention.com/</a>
JUL	12-18	NMRA Convention	St Louis	MO	<a href="http://www.gateway2020.org">www.gateway2020.org</a>
JUL	28	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
AUG	25	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
SEP	12	TCA train show	Mebane	NC	<a href="http://www.traincollectors.org">www.traincollectors.org</a>
SEP	22	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
SEP	26-27	Old 97 Rail Days	Danville	VA	<a href="http://www.dcs.smv.org">www.dcs.smv.org</a>
OCT	2-3	Selma Rail Days	Selma	NC	<a href="http://www.selma-nc.com">www.selma-nc.com</a>
OCT	15-18	Look South in 2020	Charlotte	NC	<a href="mailto:kklrailroad@yahoo.com">kklrailroad@yahoo.com</a>
OCT	15	MER Board meeting	Charlotte	NC	<a href="http://www.mer-nmra.com">www.mer-nmra.com</a>
OCT	17	MER Business Meeting	Charlotte	NC	<a href="http://www.mer-nmra.com">www.mer-nmra.com</a>
OCT	27	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
NOV	7-8	NRV Train Show	Raleigh	NC	<a href="http://www.nrvclub.net">www.nrvclub.net</a>
NOV	10	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
DEC	5-6	TCA train show	Raleigh	NC	<a href="http://www.traincollectors.org">www.traincollectors.org</a>
DEC	8	CPD meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>



Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Vice President Ken Montero, and Alex Belida have each been of great assistance in putting together The Local. Their reviews and guidance are very much appreciated. If you are interested in discussing this position please reach out to the Director overseeing The Local, Bob Morningstar; President Kurt Thompson, MMR; or me. In the meantime, I will continue to sit at my desk tapping my fingers waiting for the phone to ring.

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**HELP WANTED:  
Editor and Publisher**

The Mid-Eastern Region is now inviting applications for the volunteer positions of Editor and Publisher.

Appointed by: President  
Approved by: Board of Directors  
Reports to: Director-at-Large assigned to oversee the publication.

Position Summary (the essential elements are from the Executive Handbook. Refer to the EHB for the complete position description):

Responsible for preparing, editing, and producing the official publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, **The Local**, in accordance with the Bylaws. The newsletter editor is required to publish a quality newsletter six times per year. Solicit articles and photographs of educational interest to model railroaders; acknowledge receipt of all information received, edit articles with the assistance of the editorial proofreading team, and format the newsletters for both print and web viewing.

The Local serves as the in-house publication and will contain all official articles of the organization and information of general interest to the membership. The Local must be presented as an image-building device for gaining membership and maintaining membership interest. The Editor must exercise sound judgment and editorial expertise for producing a uniform and pleasing tone to the publication.

Specific responsibilities:

1. Keeps the Director –at-Large overseeing **The Local** informed at all times.
2. Strives to come in at, or under budget.
3. Provides quality production.
4. Produces uniform quality and tone of the publication.
5. Acknowledges in writing to the authors confirmation of receipt of article(s) and indicate the anticipated edition date the article may appear in **The Local**.
6. Prepares an annual budget request to cover any anticipated expenses for the coming year.
7. Prepares ballot for Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, Inc. elections.
8. Provides electronic copy of The Local for posting on the website and for distribution by the Business Manager.
9. Serves on the Budget Committee

For advertising in The Local, please contact the Editor ([Local-editor@mer-nmra.com](mailto:Local-editor@mer-nmra.com)). The current advertising rates (one year) as follows:

- Callboard ads (Division and Clubs Only)....Free
- Business Card size .....\$60
- Quarter Page ad.....\$125
- Half Page ad .....\$225
- Half Page ad per issue (Div. only) .....\$25

and must include camera-ready art (text, doc/docx, jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats).

The Local welcomes articles, photographs, and model railroad related material as contributions to members' education and 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 retaining back-up copies. Editors, by definition, reserve the right and have the responsibility to make corrections, deletions, and changes to accommodate space. If your item is time-sensitive in any way, please advise the Editor. Otherwise, stories and photos that are accepted for publication are used in approximately the order they are received.

### Publication Schedule Submission Deadline

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

Please observe the following steps to submit your contribution. **1.** Compose and submit your text in one of the following formats: TXT, DOC, or DOCX. **2.** Consider what photos, illustrations, or other graphics can go with the text. These are essential. But, **DO NOT** include/insert them into your text. **Do** put notations in the text such as “Insert Photo #1 here.” Send the illustrations separately and numbered as you would want them in the text. JPG, GIF, TIFF, or PNG formats are best for photos. **3.** If you have captions for your photos, etc., create a separate text file for the captions, each of which will be numbered to match a numbered photo or figure. A special note on photos or other exhibits; please only send us your creative work or that for which you have written permission to use so we can give that source proper credit. We need to avoid any copyright infringement situations.

## THE MER 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 as one of the four Officers for the Region. The MER Board of Directors meets 3 times per year; once at the MER convention. The deadline for nomination is May 30, 2019. The term of office is two years, with a limit of two terms for President and Vice President. The Treasurer and Secretary may serve five consecutive terms.

Any MER member in good standing can be nominated, either by him or herself or by another member with the candidate's permission. The process is very simple:

Prepare:

A 200-word (max) statement outlining the nominee's interest and qualifications for the position, **and** a photo of the candidate.

Send the nominations package – by **May 30, 2020** – to all of the following nominations process officials:

Robert Charles, MMR Nominations Committee Chair [rcharles@aol.com](mailto:rcharles@aol.com)  
 Jack Dziadul [jackdziadul@gmail.com](mailto:jackdziadul@gmail.com)  
 Kenneth Montero [vp@mer-nmra.com](mailto:vp@mer-nmra.com)  
 Robert Morningstar, Director, MER [bobmorningstar@protonmail.com](mailto:bobmorningstar@protonmail.com)

Option – also by May 30, candidates may supply a 500-word statement suitable for placement on the MER Web site.

You can make a difference by giving something back to the hobby you thoroughly enjoy. This is your chance. Successful completion of three years in office fulfills most of the requirement for the Achievement Program “Association Official” certificate. Please respond in one email to all three committee members plus Director Morningstar to insure receipt of your nomination! That is all there is to it!

### Deadlines and Schedules for 2020 Nominations and Balloting

Our Bylaws require the publication of deadlines and schedules for nominations and balloting in the first issue of The Local of each year. The dates and schedule for nominations, ballot and election results are in Executive Handbook, Section 5, Policies, Article VI.

The dates for 2020 are:

**May 30, 2020** -- Deadline for receipt of self-nominations sent to the Nominations Committee. Date for Nominations Committee to notify Board of Directors of slate of nominees validated by the Business Manager.

**July 5, 2020** -- You must be a member in good standing (paid up NMRA dues) based on the membership report supplied to the MER Business Manager from NMRA National as of 07/05 (the 5th of July) of every election year to be eligible to vote. If an individual is not a member or if membership has expired as indicated by the record supplied to the MER, and MER officials have not been informed by NMRA National of a valid renewal of membership by 07/05 (the 5th of July), that individual will not



receive a ballot, nor be permitted to vote in that year's election.

**August 1, 2020** -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting; could be mailed earlier depending on other deadline requirements.

**September 8, 2020** -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

**September 12, 2020** -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

**September 19, 2020** -- Deadline for Ballot Committee to transmit results to President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

**September 26, 2020** -- 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, 2020** -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER's website.

## Achievement Program Update

By Dave Chance, MER AP Manager, Dec 1

As of Dec. 1, 2019, these Achievement Program certificates were earned and awarded.

### Division 1 – New Jersey

Michael Prokop – Chief Dispatcher  
Fred Willis – Association Volunteer

### Division 2 – Potomac

Pete LaGuardia – Master Builder Scenery  
Ernest H. Little – Master Builder Cars  
Pete LaGuardia – Model Railroad Author  
William Mosteller – Association Volunteer

### Division 5 - James River

George Gaige – Civil Engineering  
George Gaige – Chief Dispatcher

### Division 10 - South Mountain

Dave Thalman – Golden Spike Award

### Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Ed Smith – Civil Engineering  
Andrew T. Sadler – Chief Dispatcher

### Division 13 - Carolina Piedmont

Jack Dziadul – Association Official

### Division 14 – Chesapeake

Dick Schwanke – Electrical Engineering

### At-Large MER

Thomas K Harris – Chief Dispatcher

**MER's Newest MMR - Ernest H. Little** of the Potomac Division, **MMR No. 647** is MER's newest MMR, so offer your Congratulations the next time you see Ernest!

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** - The R&V form is for your personal use. Only use it with the Author Submission. Please, **NO R&V FORMS** with other submissions.

## UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS

**2020 Convention** – “Carolina Special Look South in 2020” – Oct. 15 - 18, 2020 - Crowne Plaza Charlotte Executive Park, 5700 Westpark Drive, Charlotte, NC, 28217

**2021 Convention** – Chesapeake Division – Oct. 21 - 24, 2021 - Delta by Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD

**2022 Convention** – James River Division – dates tbd - location tbd

**2023 Convention** – Susquehanna Division – dates tbd - location tbd

**2024 Convention** – TBD – dates tbd - location tbd

**2025 Convention** – New Jersey Division – dates tbd - location tbd



## Why Go to the 2020 MER Convention?

By Bob Halsey

### LOOK SOUTH IN 2020

There are three very good reasons why any model railroader would want to attend a Mid-East Region annual convention, especially the upcoming 2020 version in Charlotte, North Carolina!

First, and most obvious, is the opportunity to learn a lot more about this fascinating hobby by taking the various classes and clinics conducted by some very talented presenters! They often cover subjects that you have never heard before, or show you aspects and techniques that are completely new to you. At a convention a couple of years ago, I learned how to make realistic scenery items from common backyard plants and trees, how to make good-looking awnings for store-front buildings, and how to create water scenes that can be either rapidly flowing rivers or hardly moving, greenish, polluted canals often found near cities (but not in North Carolina!). Clinics in 2020 will cover everything from basic scenery, track laying and wiring, to more complex electronic controls for signals and switching, painting, decaling, weathering, and various methods of operating on a larger layout. No matter what subjects the clinic schedule has in it, you will be sure to learn new skills, especially during the hands-on sessions!

Second, you will get to meet fellow model railroaders, many of whom will be new to you, but all of them will have the same desire to learn and exchange ideas and problem-solving experiences, and see what others are doing. Forming new friendships and contacts is always a major benefit of a convention, whether regional or national, especially since our region extends from the Carolinas up to Pennsylvania and New Jersey! In addition, not all of our Carolina Southern Division members are at the convention center in the hotel, because some will be hosting tours or operating sessions at their home layouts. Three of our members have had cover stories and photos of their layouts published in Model Railroader magazine within the last two years! Aside from the clinics and layout tours, you will get to meet new folks (and some of their significant others!) at the Saturday evening banquet – going to be one of the best ever, with excellent menu choices! The hotel also offers full breakfasts and lunches.

Third, you will have the opportunity to contribute to educating others about this hobby by offering to conduct a clinic yourself about some subject of unusual interest, or involving different procedures that you have developed or found to be more efficient or useful! As with any creative field, we should feel some obligation to, or obtain some satisfaction in, helping others to learn more and improve their skills, just as we learned when we were younger and inexperienced!

Additional plus factors for the 2020 MER convention will be a “white elephant” room, where you can buy items donated (or are privately owned – no vendors!) that may include something that you just got to have, plus really good door prizes. Of course, there will be a model contest / evaluation room, where you can submit models or dioramas for evaluation and possible awards. There will also be an operating layout in the hotel for you to observe.

And finally, one of the best features of this convention, we will be offering a guided tour of the North Carolina Transportation Museum with its many exhibits, including railroad engines, rolling stock, classic autos and trucks, even an old DC-3 airliner undergoing restoration! The NCTM was formerly the Southern Railway maintenance shops in Spencer, NC, and has a large turntable, and a roundhouse with about two dozen stalls filled with many engines and cars (some still under restoration). The huge engine backshop was for many years the largest industrial building in the state. NCTM not only has a large, well-stocked gift shop, but also is just across the street from the largest (and best) model railroad store in North Carolina. The Museum runs a passenger train from their own station north a short way, then a mile south, and then back to the station (about a half hour ride). NCTM is where the Norfolk & Western Railway Class J steam engine #611 has all of its maintenance done when it is not on display in Roanoke, VA. So if we are lucky, we may get to see this magnificent piece of machinery in action during the convention!

Charlotte Airport is a major destination and connection point for all major eastern US cities, including Philadelphia, Harrisburg, Baltimore, Washington, Columbia, Nashville, Knoxville, etc., and it is only a short ride from the airport to the hotel, which is offering discounted room rates for our conventioners.

This is a convention you do not want to miss! More details will be appearing here in The Local over the coming months!





LOOK SOUTH IN 2020

**MID-EASTERN REGION 2020  
CONVENTION  
CAROLINA SPECIAL  
OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> – 18<sup>TH</sup> 2020  
Crowne Plaza Charlotte, Executive Park  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

Carolina Southern Division is proud to be  
hosting the MER 2020 Convention

**REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN**

Convention activities will include:

- A wide selection of model railroading clinics, including by some nationally recognized names in the hobby
- Tour of the North Carolina Transportation Museum Back Shop and other non-public areas
- Tour of the Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum
- Tour of Wade's Train World in Brookford, a layout maintained by the CSD
- HO, S and N scale operating layouts in the Convention Hotel
- Home layout tours in the area, to include The Piedmont & Western and NYC Piney Fork Branch, which were both cover stories in *Model Railroader*
- Operating Sessions

**START THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AT THIS LINK:**

<http://carolinasouthern.org>



LOOK SOUTH IN 2020

Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2020 Convention

Carolina Special



October 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

[www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2020.html](http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2020.html)

Use Online Registration for Secure Payment and Best 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 + age): \_\_\_\_\_

Registrar's Use Only!	Address: _____
	City: _____ State: _____ Zip : _____
	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 8 )	B	\$55		
At Door Registration (October 15-17)	D	\$60		
Non-NMRA Member Extra Fee	N	\$20		
Significant Other & Children Under 18	O	\$0		No Fee
Banquet – Saturday Night ___ Steak ___ Chicken ___ Vegetarian	401	\$48		
Friday Breakfast, price includes tax and gratuity	402	\$18		
Saturday Breakfast, price includes tax and gratuity	403	\$18		
Sunday Breakfast, price includes tax and gratuity	404	\$18		
Supers/Editors - Breakfast, Circle 1, Division Super 405 Division Editor 406	405/406	\$0		No Fee
<b>Call Boards / Ops – Expanded Call Board Info Available on Website</b>				
	801	\$5		
	802	\$5		
	803	\$5		
	804	\$5		
	805	\$5		
<b>Prototype Tours – More Info on Website When/If Available</b>				
North Carolina Transportation Museum (first 30 to sign up attend free)	201	\$10		
Unifour Special Tour – Layouts / Narrow Gauge Museum / Brookford / Box Lunch	202	\$60		
<b>Extra Fare Clinics – Registration Required, Info On Website When/If Available</b>				
Structure Make-n-Take, Thu 8:30pm - TBS	601			
Crossing Shanty ___ N (\$15) ___ HO (\$20)				
Section House ___ N (\$20) ___ HO (\$25)				
Bull Chute Make-n-Take, Fri 1pm - TBS	602	\$5		
Staining and Weathering Castings, Sat 8am - TBS	603	\$13		
	604			
	605			
<b>Made in the MER Tours – More Info on Website When/If Available</b>				
	701			
<b>General Interest Activities – More Info on Website When/If Available</b>				
	501			
<b>Would You Like To Be A Contest Judge At The Convention – Circle YES or NO</b>				
<b>Have You Been A Contest Judge In The Past – Circle - Yes or NO</b>				<b>Total Being Paid</b> ➔

Online Registration – <http://merregistrar.coffeecup.com/forms/2020%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

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

Hotel – Crowne Plaza Charlotte Executive Park, 5700 Westpark Dr, Charlotte, NC 28217

Reference-Mid-Eastern Region-National Model Railroad Assoc., Reservations: 704-527-9650

Online Reservations use - <https://www.tinyurl.com/MER2020-Hotel>

Room Rate - \$114.00 night + tax, Room Rate applies 10/12/20 to 10/21/20

Watch web sites for information: [www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2020.html](http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2020.html), [mer-nmra.com](http://mer-nmra.com) Updated 12/01/19



# A RIDE BACK IN TIME ON THE WALKERSVILLE SOUTHERN

Article and photos by Lee Stoermer

It is said that more memories are triggered by smell than any of the other senses. Be it the smell of apple pie in the fall or fresh cut grass in the spring. You know what I am speaking of, right? I am not sure what it is about the mix of coal smoke and steam that captures the attention of so many of us railfans. My earliest recollections of any railroad-related smells were of creosote and coal smoke. The creosote smell was from hiking with a schoolmate along the Northern Central Railway line in southern York County, PA., which was in the process of abandonment by Penn Central after having been heavily damaged by Hurricane Agnes in 1972. The coal smoke scent occurred when visiting the East Broad Top and Strasburg Railroads. That mix of coal smoke and steam vapors become a powerfully intoxicating mixture that drives many railfans to great lengths to experience these in person. This is especially more attractive when these are on trackage that has not felt the pounding of a steam locomotive on it in decades.

So, it should not come as much of a surprise that steam aficionados will jump at the chance when there is an opportunity to ride behind a steam locomotive. Recently I learned of a nearby tourist rail line less than an hour away from my home that was offering trips along their route with a steam locomotive. The Walkersville Southern Railroad located near Frederick, Maryland had the Jeddo Coal Company 0-4-0T steam locomotive No. 85, which garnered my attention.

I have ridden the narrow gauge Cumbres & Toltec in Colorado and New Mexico. In addition, I have been in the Union Pacific business train with the impressive UP 4-8-4 844, as it traveled in Arizona and California. When I thought of going to the Walkersville Southern, I was going mostly because I had wanted to ride the line, although it is typically operated with a variety of small diesel switch engines. Having the steam locomotive was an added incentive I could not resist. My wife and I headed out and enjoyed the hour or so scenic drive. When we arrived, I was actually surprised at how big the Jeddo No. 85 actually was. While this locomotive is small as compared to other mainline steam locomotives, this 0-4-0T reminded me how large even these small switch locomotives were up close. Still, no matter how diminutive it was as compared to those others I have experienced, it had all the makings of a steam locomotive with all the sounds and smells of its larger mainline brethren.

But let me back up a bit as I am getting ahead of the story. When my wife and I arrived early that afternoon, the train was already at the station, having made a prior round-trip excursion. We found a caboose was coupled at the end of the train to a pair of 1920s era steel passenger cars towards the front. At the station, we quickly purchased tickets. We had just a few moments to view the items for sale nearby, and then with a call by the crew we headed to the platform as it was nearly time to depart. When we exited the station and while walking towards the platform, I caught that first wisp of coal smoke and steam. That familiar aroma verified that the steam locomotive was nearby, but not in view, since the loco was beyond the two passenger cars. There were two open-air covered cars in front of them, which were still further towards the front of the train. I did notice a vintage semaphore signal standing tall at the end of the platform, and just beyond, there was definitely a light plume of steam rising just over the roofs of the cars. As we walked up the platform ramp in anticipation, we were pleasantly greeted by the

train crew and a friendly bunch of Union Civil War soldiers. Hmm, interesting. I guess they were along for the ride back in time as well.



**A member of the crew greets us as we prepare to board. Once the Union detail escorts “clear” a Confederate soldier for passage, we board.**

I had just enough time to take a quick photo of the station as the ‘All Aboard!’ was being called. It turned out that not only did I catch a side of the building that isn’t typically recorded, as it isn’t the platform track side, that side view of the building provided a very good detail reference for future modeling. It was painted one of the classic vintage railroad station schemes of yellow ochre and medium brown trim. We took our seats in the passenger coach and just as we got comfortable, we heard two quick blasts of the distinctive steam whistle. With a couple clanks of the drawbars as the slack was pulled out, the distinctive view of puffing smoke and steam at the front of the train, we began to pull out of the station.

**This end view of the Walkersville, MD depot is very useful for noting the coloring, details, and construction from a modeler’s viewpoint.**





It was a comfortably warm day and we were able to have the windows open on the coach cars, which, of course, allowed the occasional welcomed waft of coal smoke to drift in. As we started to pick up speed, we passed a siding with numerous pieces of maintenance-of-way equipment and an older Pennsylvania Railroad caboose. Oh, excuse me, that should be properly referred to as a “cabin car.” I definitely need to stop back by as there were many items of modeling interest to be had there, if that siding could be found and located from street side easily enough. The train was well attended, although not overly crowded. An announcement by the conductor offered that there were plenty of seats available in the open-air cars, if anyone was interested. We thought we would try out the comfortable coach seats for at least the first portion of the trip.



**Open-air excursion car view on the Walkersville Southern RR; just close enough to enjoy without the side effects!**

Our trip progressed through wooded lots and farm fields, passing a few older established commercial buildings and a subdivision of newly built homes, then over a railroad right-of-way that was more than 140 years old. We approached an open area when the train unexpectedly began to slow down, and then come to a stop. Suddenly, there were some loud bangs, growing rapidly in tempo and sounding louder,



coming from across a field in the wooded fence line off the side of the train. A Confederate ambush was occurring on our train! Then a series of volleys were fired in defense from the Union Soldiers aboard our train. This continued back and forth until the attempted takeover by the Confederate Rebels was halted, which allowed our train to continue safely. Huzzah! A cheer from the Union troops (For those not familiar, Huzzah! is a cheer of triumph from that period).

**One of the Union reenactors aboard the train fires in defense of our train, much to the amazement of a young passenger (see musket barrel).**



Afterwards, we recalled that there could be some open-air car seats, so we took advantage of trying out the ride in the open air. It is quite a different experience, especially when the open-air cars are right behind the locomotive! Having experienced riding behind steam locomotives before, I opted not to be in the car directly behind the locomotive. Many other passengers, however, were going for the up-close experience. That turned out to be a fortunate decision for us later in the trip.

**Current  
Walkersville  
Railroad open-air  
cars.**



Continuing on our route, we crossed a few streams. One was on a bridge that had been damaged by the same 1972 hurricane that did in the Northern Central line. Interestingly, the Walkersville Southern crews rebuilt the bridge in 1995, which allowed for a six-mile increase in the travel route. There was a slight curve to the rails along the route that “allowed” us to catch those occasional whiffs of mixed steam and coal smoke. Of course, along with that mixture, come a few cinders now and then. Those of us experienced with coal-fired steam locomotives had expected them and were not that bothered. Although, based on comments heard and the noticeable gestures, those in that front open-air car right behind the locomotive, were starting to question their decision to be right up front! It seems that cinders and coal smoke were attractive to only those die-hard rail fans, but not your average tourists! With a swing in the wind and track directions, we were in the clear again. Upon reaching the end of the line, a short distance from actually entering Frederick, the train paused for a short while during which the crew adjusted for the return trip. Three quick whistle blasts and we began reversing our route. With the change of wind direction and our route of travel, we were not peppered with any more cinders or smoke.

We were able to enjoy the ride as we listened to the chuff of the locomotive and the clicks of the wheels on the track while crossing the streams and the woods. A short stretch of the line paralleled the main road. I had noticed the tracks on the drive and wondered about them. I immediately recognized that location. The railroad accommodates rail fans by having a designated photographer’s lineup area as well as a covered waiting shed at the location. Very cool! A few more photographs, including some with the reenactors, saved those memories for future viewings.

Along the way, several of those Rebels appeared again. Although this time, they were less intimidating, friendly waves to us as celebratory shots were made into the air. Back at the station, after disembarking, I walked up to the front of the train and was able to experience the full spectrum of senses. We could feel the heat from the boiler, hear the steam flowing out the exhaust, and smell the coal and grease. I took this opportunity to capture a few portrait photographs of this iron pony.



Once everyone was clear of the train, it slowly reversed across the street that ran next to the station blowing the whistle for the road crossing. The train stopped a short distance away, near a front-end loader with a bucket full of coal. A group of workers sprang into action with a hose and buckets. While the hose was placed into the water tanks that straddled the boiler of the locomotive to fill it, a series of five-gallon buckets were loaded from that scoop of coal. Each of these buckets was carried by hand, and then hoisted up into the cab of the locomotive to load coal into the fuel bunker.

**Since there is not a traditional tender located behind the locomotive for fuel and water, refueling is done by hand, loading coal bucket by bucket into a bin in the cab of the locomotive.**



Once all the fuel was on board, and an extra bucket of sand added to the sand dome, the train pulled back up to the station, fully prepared for its next run of the day. There seemed to be an even larger crowd for this next trip. This is a really good sign for this tourist line. My coal smoke desire was satisfied, at least for now. As with any serious enthusiast though, this thrill will hold me only for a while and then the hunt for my next train adventure begins anew! ... Hmmm, I wonder where that next one will be.



**Refueling in progress between runs being completed by a bevy of volunteers**



**Jeddo Coal No. 85 poses as power for today's train (photo by Lee Stoermer).**



**Lee Stoermer**

## HO Scale Coca-Cola Collectibles: Vehicles, Billboards and Soda Machines

Article and photos by Richard Schumacher (reprinted from GatewayNMRA Division of the Mid-continent Region)

Visitors to your model railroad look for both the familiar and the unexpected: landmarks, structures, scenes, and brands they recognize. Scenes and landmarks set the place for your railroad – where it is located, what town and cities it serves. Structures add that next level of detail to the towns, telling the story of what is important about that location as well as highlighting the industries served by the railroad. And the details on those structures, and on and along the streets, help establish the era of your railroad. And there's nothing quite like vehicles to firmly and visibly set what era you have modeled for (non-rail) visitors.



Your layout is always more interesting if there are details to be discovered. Brands on vehicles and structures provide easy opportunities for visitor discoveries. Many modelers add cultural references to their industry signs. Tim the tool-man would always approve of a “Binford Tools” structure. Prototype



signs are appreciated as well – one of my St. Louis area structures has a lighted and flying Anheuser-Busch eagle. A Reddy Kilowatt sign firmly identifies a power generating plant, as well as it being from an older era. But there is one brand that is always immediately recognized, and Mini Metals has released a new series of 50s-era Coca-Cola models. Obviously, they are perfect additions for my 50s-era St. Louis Southern Railroad.

**Mini Metals Set 40004 features a 1954 Coca-Cola delivery truck and a 50s-era billboard.**



Bottle delivery truck models have been hard to find in the past. The new 1954 Ford trucks by Mini Metals are just what I needed for my railroad, but other manufacturers have announced they will be offering earlier (1947) and modern trucks if you are looking at other eras. The Mini Metal truck has great bottle details at scale size.



**Mini Metals 1954 Coca-Cola bottle delivery truck.**

Mini Metals hasn't forgotten other aspects of the soda infrastructure. The sales agent's delivery wagon and the Aero van trailer would be perfect parked outside the local bottling plant (served by rail, of course!).

**Mini Metals 30502  
1953 Ford Coca-Cola delivery sedan  
and their 50s-era  
31182 Aero van trailer.**



The delivery truck will obviously stop at your local grocery stores, but soda vending machines were everywhere starting in the 50s. Mini Metals is offering Coca-Cola vending machines to go along with their vehicles, but I also like the soda machines made by JL Innovative Design. The JL Innovative Design machines are available as painted or unpainted models. Their 347 (unpainted castings) vending machine detail set has two 50s-era ice machines as well.





HO Scale soda machines by JL Innovative Design (971 “Soda Jerk” set shown here) and Mini Metals (20228 50s Coca-Cola set of 4 machines).

Comparing to an HO figure, the Mini Metals upright soda machines seem a little small, and the JL Innovative Design machines and soda cases seem a little big (enough so that you might get away with using them in S scale too). All of them look great.

**JL Innovative Design and Mini Metal Soda Machines with an HO scale figure.**



The Mini Metals Coca-Cola billboards have nicer printing than the Athearn ones made a few years ago (which always looked a little fuzzy to me). I did like the more traditional and lighter wooden framework design of the Athearn billboards.



**Mini Metals and Athearn Coca-Cola HO scale billboards.**

Mini Metals also offers the 1954 bottle truck with Dad's Root Beer branding. This goes perfectly with a JL Innovative Design Dad's billboard I purchased a few years ago. The JL Innovative billboard is made of laser-cut wood.

**Mini Metals 30538 1954 Ford bottle truck with a JL Innovative Design 983 billboard.**



Another new 50s-era Mini Metals set I liked was for Hostess cupcakes. Another brand from my childhood. There's a box of them on my kitchen counter right now.

**Mini Metals 40005 Hostess Cupcake International Metro delivery van and billboard set.**





The lattice at the bottom of the Mini Metals billboards, as well as the entire back, is a printed graphic.



**Front and back of the Mini Metals billboards.**

All of these items are available from any dealer or hobby shop reselling products distributed by Walthers. I purchased mine at retail directly from Walthers and an online hobby shop.

**Mini Metals 1953  
Ford Coca-Cola  
delivery sedan with a  
vending machine.**



Richard Schumacher is the GatewayNMRA.org webmaster and models the transition-era Saint Louis Southern in HO scale. He is the technology manager for the [Workforce Solutions Group](#) of St. Louis Community College. Learn more about Richard by following him: [LinkedIn](#) - [Twitter](#) - [WSG Articles](#) - [Email](#)

# Layout Photos from the Liberty Bell '19 Convention

From Bill Kachel's PRR Cosmopolitan Div. (Photos by Jerry Lauchle).





From Ken McCorry PRR Buffalo Line (Photos by Jerry Lauchle).





Ron Hoess's PRR Chestnut Hill Branch (Photos by Jerry Lauchle).





## New Director Assignments

By Jack Dziadul

Martin Brechbiel, MMR submitted a suggestion that the new MER Directors provide a description of their assignments. Members might not be aware that the MER President assigns each Director a “portfolio” to supervise. Kurt Thompson, MMR makes every effort to balance the interests, experience, and skills against the needs of the Region to create the best fit to provide the most effective supervision and guidance of our volunteer positions.

The new Director assignments are:

Randy Foulke

- Archivist
- BSA Coordinator (formerly Boy Scouts)
- Merchandizing
- Photographer

Jerry Lauchle, MMR

- Convention Contests
- Website

Bob Morningstar

- Ballot / Elections
- Fundraising
- Nominations
- The Local

Contact information for the Directors and the volunteers under their direct charge is listed on pages 2-3 of The Local. Below is a summary of duties as submitted by each of the new Directors.

### RANDY FOULKE

Randy’s areas of responsibilities are BSA Coordinator, Archivist, Photography, and Merchandising. Description of the areas is as follows:

- BSA Coordinator – Provides support to individual Divisions to be involved in the Scouting BSA program, specifically the Railroading Merit Badge. This includes providing model-building kits to MER members working with the local scouting troops, encouraging MER members to work with local scouting troops to educate Scouts about railroading and model building, and if necessary, provide training about procedures and policies for volunteering with Scouting BSA. The MER BSA Coordinator is Don Jennings.
- Archivist – Organize and maintain permanent records of the history, administration, and meetings of the MER. This includes conversion of hard copies to digital files. The MER Archivist is Kevin O’Connor.
- Photographer – Take photographs of MER events, including conventions, contests, and meetings. Provide photographs to MER publications, and maintain a record of the photographs for the MER. The photographer for the MER is Jerry Lauchle, MMR.

- Merchandising – Investigate opportunities for the development and sales of merchandise for the MER to sell to both MER members and others. The goal of merchandising is to sell items of interest to MER members and provide additional income to the MER.

#### JERRY LAUCHLE, MMR

Jerry has been named Board point-of-contact with the MER Webmaster, and the MER General Contest Chairman.

- As decisions and actions are made by the Board of Directors regarding the website, it is Jerry's responsibility to communicate these with the Webmaster.
- Similarly, as decisions and actions are made by the Board of Directors regarding the contests, it is Jerry's responsibility to communicate these with General Contest Chairman Alan Mende.
- Although in his Official Photographer position Jerry reports Director at Large Randy Foulke, Jerry describes this function here. The photographer takes photographs of the various MER Convention activities. Tops on this agenda are getting quality photos of the contest winning models. He uses a featureless backdrop when photographing all of the models in the contest room, and post processes the photos, as required, using focus stacking and Photoshop

#### BOB MORNINGSTAR

As a newly elected Director for the NMRA, Bob was assigned the following responsibilities: 1) Overseeing the MER newsletter, the Local / eLocal, 2) Oversight of the Nominations and 3) Balloting activities of the MER, and 4) Coordinating MER fundraising activities.

- Bob's goal for the Local / eLocal is first and foremost: do no harm. We have a very nice newsletter for the MER member's benefit and there is a concerted effort among many of us to grow the electronic version, eventually discontinuing the printed version. Bob will also encourage the Divisions to be more proactive in submitting content from their Division newsletters, especially their calendar of events. MER is actively soliciting for a Local Editor and Publisher. If you have the desire and skills to take on either, please contact Bob or Jack Dziadul, who is currently the acting Editor. This position has lots of support. You will have others to assist you with the learning curve and getting the issues out the door.
- As to Nominating Committee activities, Bob will be working with Committee Chairman Bob Charles, MMR to actively promote the MER's open positions, recruit capable candidates to run for the positions, and assist in any way possible. Serving in an office gives back to the hobby in so many ways. Bob Morningstar set an example by submitting his nomination to be a Director in the MER because of how much enjoyment he has gotten out of the hobby over the past four decades. As he approaches retirement, with the kids finishing college and moving on with their own lives, Bob and his wife have both agreed to "give back" to those organizations that they get so much out of. Giving back is what makes us a compassionate and enduring society; the time requirements are modest. Please consider throwing your hat in the ring. Self-nominations for Officer positions on the Board of Directors are being announced in this issue of The Local (See page 10).
- Bob also has direct oversight of the Ballot Committee, working with Chairman by Bob Minnis, MMR. This responsibility involves coordinating the efforts of the Ballot Committee with the Business Management team, Nominating Committee, Editor / Publisher and others.



- Fundraising is the last area that will require Bob's attention. The MER finances are in excellent shape, but fundraising provides the capital to sustain current operations, grow our reserve fund for extraordinary expenses, and ensure the financial well-being of the organization for many years to come. Bob used to work for a very large non-profit organization that had a very active fundraising group. There are potential areas to explore and engage in, but we need to balance those activities against the wants and needs of our membership. If you have ideas on this topic please send them Bob's way.



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Moving?

Changing email addresses?

Promptly notify the NMRA at  
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NMRA

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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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### Keeping in Touch

By Howard Oakes, Business Manager



With the holidays behind us, it is time to plan for the New Year and to think of railroad items or activities we may have wanted to engage in but have not. I have mentioned before that railroad historical societies are a great source of information.

Most societies have regular publications, which include articles about places, structures, motive power, rolling stock, and operations. Other articles may cover modeling the prototype or the personal experiences of someone who worked on the railroad. Several societies publish books, and sell models and other railroad related items. There may be a yearly convention and even meetings throughout the year. I put 'List of Railroad Historical Societies' into my browser and found several sources that have extensive lists, literally hundreds of societies. Therefore, there is no excuse that you cannot find something that interests you. Go find that society of the railroad you model, or even just a railroad that has piqued your curiosity.

Just a reminder that if you change your telephone number, home or email address please notify either NMRA National or myself to keep our records up to date. A current address on file saves the MER some money.

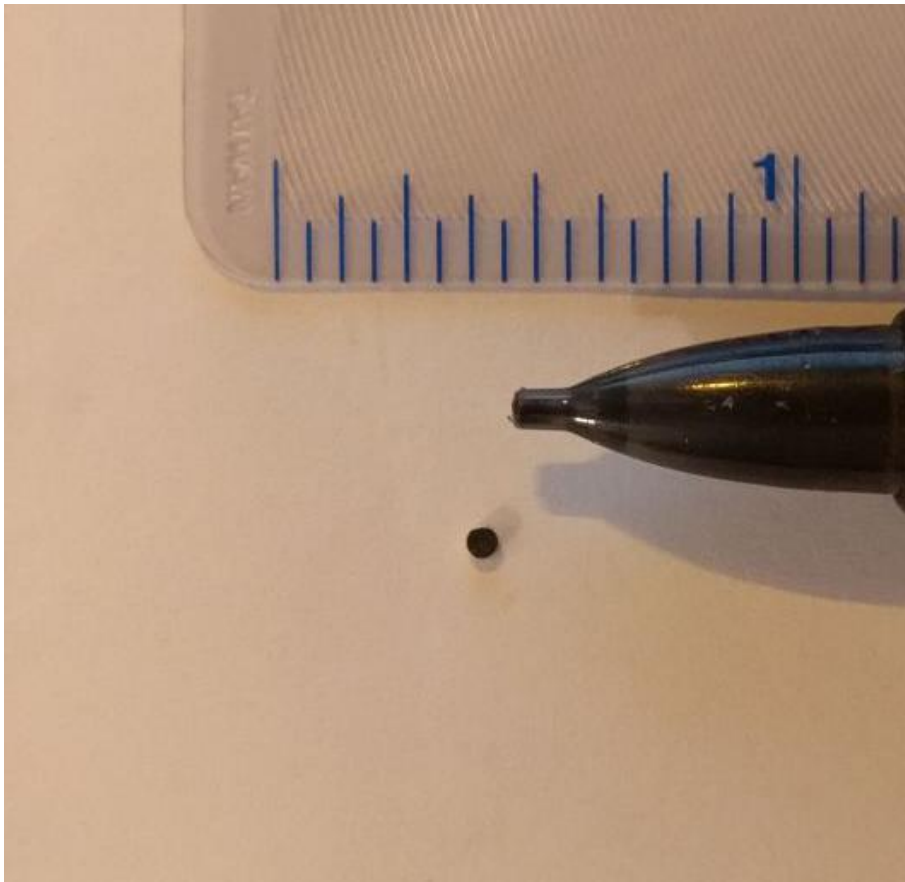
## Enhancing HO Scale Turnouts with Magnetic Point Locking

By Bob Morningstar

I have been thinking about how to positively lock turnout points to the stock rail without resorting to powered turnout throws (i.e., Tortoise and others) or commercially available manual throws (i.e., Caboose Hobbies). I especially wanted to “lock” the points in place in my yard and industrial tracks that are within 24” of the layout fascia. I prefer to use a skewer or finger to move the points.

Peco sprung turnouts are available, but I liked the look of Atlas code 83 and the pricing is better. I was watching my son one day put together some gaming figures and saw him using very small neodymium magnets to attach the arms and legs (so they can easily be repositioned).

In my testing, I found these magnets to be most satisfactory for the intended purpose. They keep the point rails tight against the stock rails, but not so tight that if you run through a misaligned turnout that you will end up on the ground. I do NOT rely on the points for electrical connectivity as I provide feeders to the point rails and use Frog Juicers to keep the entire turnout reliably powered up to the Digitrax DCC booster. Here is a photo of the relative size of the magnet, which measures 1/16” x 1/32”.



**Relative size of magnets**

I attach two or three magnets to each end of the tie that moves with the points. I use two-part epoxy and place just a dab where the magnets will be located. I then place a small magnetic nail, pin, or brad into both sides of the roadbed at a point where the magnetic forces will drive the points over to contact the steel nail, but not close enough to prevent the point from closing snugly with the stock rail. Here is a



photo where the points are not contacting the pin (in this photo I have attached magnets to only one side of the turnout for illustration purposes).



**Points held in normal position with magnets.**



### **Magnets holding the points in the diverging position**

The nail brad is visible within the red circle. The magnets are attached to the throw rod and are highlighted within the green rectangle.

It is crucial the points move freely without binding or interference from ballast, or other friction generating sources. You can adjust the amount of “pull” by adding or subtracting magnets as needed. I find that three magnets per side generates enough force to pull over the points from the midway point of the throws entire travel. Two magnets will be enough to hold the points if you position the points by hand or skewer, but not enough to pull the points across.

Here is a photo of the magnets contacting the pin and holding the points in the diverging position. The force of the magnets is strong enough so that if you move the points away slightly from the stock rail, the points will snap back into position.

To see the magnets in action, go to YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/sp3AnhsIm54>. I obtained the magnets on eBay; the particular item I purchased was listed as:

“100pcs VERY Small Tiny Neodymium Disc Magnets 1/16" x 1/32" Warhammer 40K New.” The price was very reasonable at \$6.99 for 100 pieces.

On page 34 is the final photo with the magnets painted to blend into the trackwork and the pin hidden with a piece of foam foliage. The beauty of this method is the low cost, simplicity, and relative miniaturization of the solution. I am working now with my 3D printer to make inoperable scale ground throws to place on top of the pin. That will be a future article here in The Local.



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## South Mountain Division's MiniCon Announcement

Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, April 18, 2020, NMRA, MER South Mountain Division and Mainline Hobby Supply host its 8<sup>th</sup> annual Mini Con at the Blue Ridge Fire Hall, 13063 Monterey Ln., Blue Ridge Summit, PA. Come enjoy from 9 AM to 4 PM, this one-day free event one block north of Main Line Hobby Supply, consisting of prototype and modeling presentations, formal and informal clinics, modular displays, and interaction with your fellow hobbyists and beginners. This no admission charge, wheelchair accessible, educational event is open to the public for the promotion of the hobby of Model Railroading.

Submitted by Don Florwick, [DJFlorwick@comcast.net](mailto:DJFlorwick@comcast.net) for the South Mountain Division, Mid-Eastern Region, <http://www.smdnmra.org/>.

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**Proofreaders:** Alex Belida, Martin Brechbiel, Ken Montero



## Modeler's Notes

### POTOMAC DIVISION

- Earning Merit Awards for Cars and Structures Part 3: Lessons Learned – Cars by Mat Thompson, MMR <http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Flyer/2018WinterFlyer.pdf>
- Earning Merit Awards for Cars and Structures Part 2: Lessons Learned – Structures by Mat Thompson, MMR <http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Flyer/2017%20Fall.pdf>
- Earning Merit Awards for Cars and Structures Part 1: Judging by Mat Thompson, MMR <http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Flyer/2017%20Summer%20Potomac%20Flyer.pdf>

### PHILADELPHIA DIVISION

- DCC Wiring for Model Railroads Using Digitrax Components by Nick Brownsberger <http://www.phillynmra.org/wp-content/uploads/Wiring-for-Model-Railroads-NMRA-Clinic.pdf>
- Sylvan Trucks by Steve Salotti <http://www.phillynmra.org/wp-content/uploads/Dispatchers/Disp2013-10.pdf#page=5>

### TIDEWATER DIVISION

- Airbrushing Techniques by John Johnson, MMR <https://nmra-mer-tidewater.org/photos-2018-annual-business-meeting-auction/division-clinics/>
- Car Modelling – Adding Details – Parts 1 and 2 by John Johnson, MMR <https://nmra-mer-tidewater.org/photos-2018-annual-business-meeting-auction/division-clinics/>
- Building a Resin Kit – Parts 1 and 2 by John Johnson, MMR <https://nmra-mer-tidewater.org/photos-2018-annual-business-meeting-auction/division-clinics/>

### JAMES RIVER DIVISION

- Focus: AP Scenery by Rod Vance, MMR <https://app.box.com/s/p35lkgrdxoraeafs4q1x0ximc3sc2c9x>
- Focus: AP Civil by Rod Vance, MMR <https://app.box.com/s/itslqb84euixy0avjigii02tsz8tl8d>
- Decoder Replacement by Mike Garber <https://app.box.com/s/itslqb84euixy0avjigii02tsz8tl8d>

### CAROLINA SOUTHERN DIVISION

- Building Flats by Ed Smith <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/BrassPounder/BrassPounderV19N10.pdf>
- Weathering Clinic by Jack Parker, MMR <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/BrassPounder/BrassPounderV19N9.pdf>
- Decal Clinic by Roy Becker <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/BrassPounder/BrassPounderV19N8.pdf>

### CAROLINA PIEDMONT DIVISION

- O Scale Freight Depot by Charles Rausch [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIMFU-T6S6Ze\\_5vmLlLkfbCR2\\_xRN6Z5](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIMFU-T6S6Ze_5vmLlLkfbCR2_xRN6Z5)
- The Art of Weathering by William Hanley [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIMFU-T6S6Ze\\_5vmLlLkfbCR2\\_xRN6Z5](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rIMFU-T6S6Ze_5vmLlLkfbCR2_xRN6Z5)
- Building a Rail and Tie HO Scale Flat Car by Kevin O'Connor Part 1 <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B6VdKTW2bzMvNnZIMzNKd3I5SU0>