



# The Local

Newsletter of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA  
The Local, 75, Number 3, May-June, 2020

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

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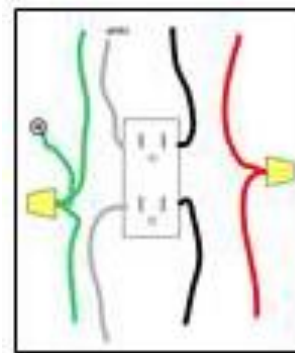
## AP Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical

By Rod Vance, MMR

Welcome to our continuing focus on the NMRA Achievement Program (AP). In this article, we are going to talk about requirements for the AP Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical certificate – or AP Electrical, for short (no pun intended!).

The requirements for AP Electrical look lengthy, but they really are not. As with all AP categories, always refer to the AP requirements on the NMRA.org website for the “official” list and discussion of requirements. The website also includes several additional articles about the AP Electrical category that will help you understand the requirements.

If you have built or are building a model railroad layout, AP Electrical is a great place to start your AP journey. However, you do not have to have your own layout to satisfy the requirements. You could do the work on a club layout, for example, or maybe a friend’s layout. The choice is yours.



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### Electric Clip Art

AP Electrical requirements are broken down into five groups.

1. The first requirement deals with constructing and demonstrating an electrical control system on a model railroad. The requirement includes some criteria for the layout, including that it must be able to operate two mainline trains simultaneously and independently. The layout must also have:

- a. DC, DCC, or some other form of power.
- b. Have a mainline passing siding.
- c. Have a wye, reverse loop, turntable, and/or transfer table.
- d. Have a 3-track (minimum) yard with a switching lead separate from the mainline.
- e. Have a facility for storing 2 or more unused locomotives.
- f. Have a power supply with a protective device(s), such as a circuit breaker.

(con’t on page 3)

## Mid-Eastern Region Board of Directors & Administrative Staff

	<b>President:</b> Kurt Thompson, MMR 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> <a href="mailto:loconut@carolina.rr.com">loconut@carolina.rr.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:jlauchle@mer-nmra.com">jlauchle@mer-nmra.com</a> <a href="mailto:photographer@mer-nmra.com">photographer@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Nominating Committee Chair:</b> Bob Charles, MMR 717-763-1848 <a href="mailto:rcharles@aol.com">rcharles@aol.com</a>
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	<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@verizon.net">MER-Registrar@verizon.net</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 443-574-6859 <a href="mailto:webmaster@mer-nmra.com">webmaster@mer-nmra.com</a>
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	<b>Assist Registrar:</b> Jim Fisher 443-504-3919 <a href="mailto:jfisher@mer-nmra.com">jfisher@mer-nmra.com</a>		<b>Executive Convention Chair:</b> Sam Rogers 443-610-8452 <a href="mailto:ecc@mer-nmra.com">ecc@mer-nmra.com</a>		

### MER Board Meeting Schedule

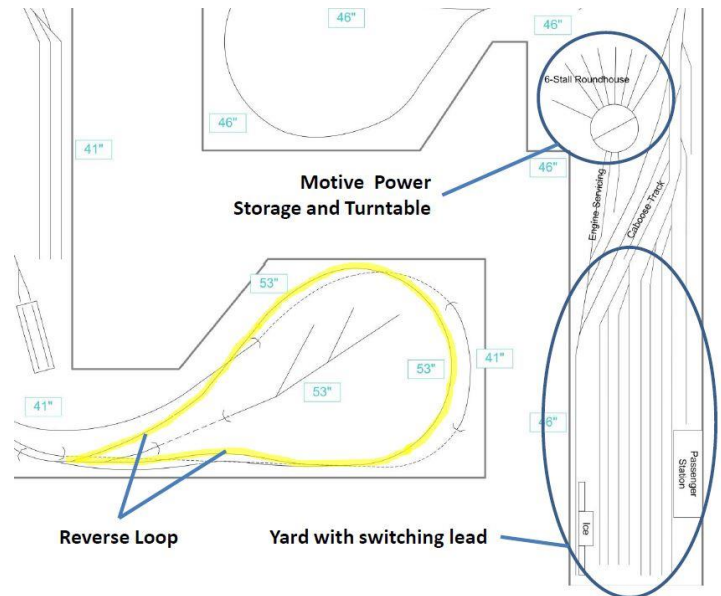
1. MER Board Meeting 10 am, April 25, 2020, Teleconference
2. MER Board Meeting 7 pm, Oct. 15, 2020, MER Convention Hotel, Crown Plaza Charlotte, NC
3. MER Annual Meeting 8 pm, Oct. 17, 2020, MER Convention Hotel, Crown Plaza Charlotte, NC

### Mid-Eastern Region 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, MMR  <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>                  Mike Zitmann                  N/A  <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) As you will hear throughout your AP journey, do not read more into a requirement than what is stated. For example, the requirement to have a facility to store two or more unused locomotives can simply be satisfied by having a track where you can park a couple of DCC-powered locomotives. Since a locomotive with a DCC decoder only moves when you select that decoder's address, then the locomotive is obviously "stored" as long as its address isn't selected. Simple!

When I tackled this requirement, I included a schematic of my layout and then highlighted and labeled where each part of the requirement was demonstrated on the layout, as shown in the sample diagram here. This made it really easy for my Division's AP Chairperson to see that I actually satisfied the requirement. The AP Chairperson really liked this approach!



**Labeled Schematic**

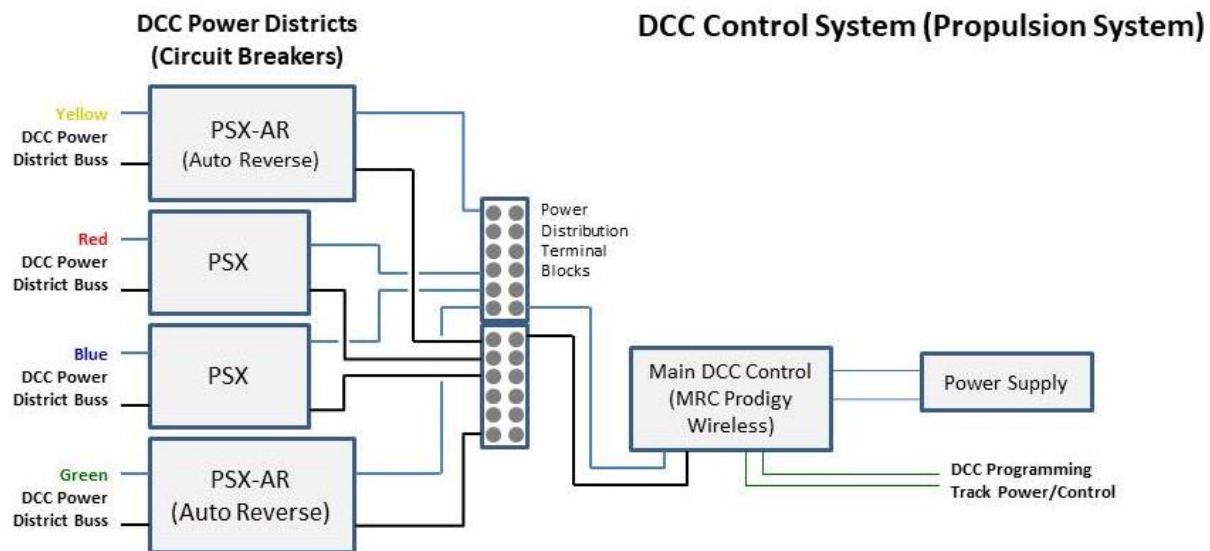
- Wire and demonstrate the electrical operation of three types of trackwork. The requirement includes a list of eleven types of candidate trackwork, such as a turnout, crossing, etc. You choose which ones you want to work on.

Again, do not read more into this requirement than what is stated. For example, you could take a commercial turnout or crossing and simply wire it so that you can run a train through it. That satisfies this requirement for those two types of trackwork. Simple! And the requirement doesn't say you have to scratch-build any of these items (though you could if you wanted to, such as in conjunctions with the AP Civil category). Working with commercial components for this requirement is totally acceptable.

- Wire and demonstrate the electrical operation of three different features. Again, the requirements include a list of more than 22 candidate features to choose from, such as electrical turnout position indicator (e.g., LEDs that indicate how a turnout is thrown), track occupancy, two-way block signaling, etc.

Here is where you definitely need to read the documentation for AP Electrical on the NMRA.org website. Commercial components may be used for *most* of these features ... but not all. The website identifies several features where the use of "commercially assembled complete units" is not acceptable. Not a big deal ... just read the requirements on the website.

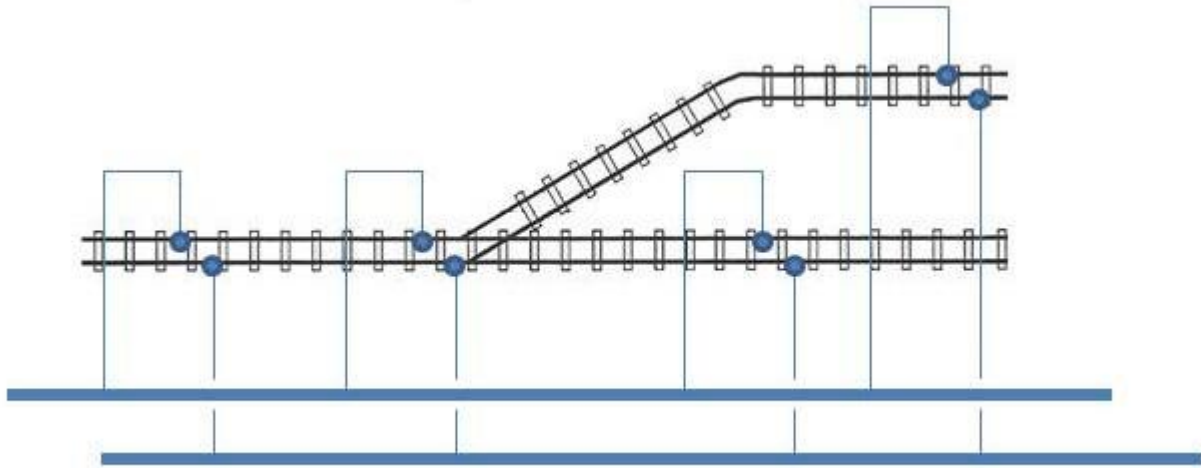
- Prepare a schematic drawing of the propulsion circuitry of the model railroad used in requirement #1 above. Show the gaps, blocks, feeders, speed and direction control, electrical switches and power supplies. Basically, you need to create a diagram that shows how the DC or DCC system is installed – something that you really ought to have in the documentation for your layout already. Below, I have provided a simple diagram of a DCC system installation. Now you would simply need to include a schematic showing the layout's gaps, blocks, feeders, etc.



**Electrical Propulsion System Diagram**

- Prepare schematic drawings showing the wiring and components of the three selected trackwork items in requirement #2, and the three selected features in requirement #3.

The schematics specified in these requirements are typically the type of documentation that you would create for a layout to help you with troubleshooting when the need arises. So you might have created this documentation already as you built the layout. Also, nothing says that the schematics have to be created using a computer-based graphics program. A neatly hand-drawn schematic is fine. And if one drawing satisfies several requirements for schematics, just make multiple copies of that single drawing and using a computer-based graphics program. A neatly hand-drawn schematic is fine. And if one drawing using a computer-based graphics program.



### Turnout Schematic

A neatly hand-drawn schematic is fine. And if one drawing satisfies several requirements for schematics, just make multiple copies of that single drawing and highlight or annotate the specific items/features associated with each requirement. Keep it simple!

As you read the requirements and the candidate trackwork or features you might tackle, do not be put off by what you might consider to be a complex item. The items in the lists are not meant to be of equal difficulty or complexity. For example, the list of features in requirement #3 includes such diverse items as a grade crossing and a computerized block detection system. This list is designed so that you can pick the items that interest you. For example, if you are into computerized interfaces to your layout, then the block detection system might be just what you want to demonstrate. However, if computers drive you crazy, there is nothing that says you have to tackle this particular feature; just choose something else.

Once you've completed all of the AP Electrical requirements, print a copy of the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) form from the NMRA.org website and fill it out. Give the SOQ and all required documentation (e.g., the schematics discussed above) to your Division's AP Chairperson when he or she meets with you to verify satisfactory completion of the requirements.

A couple of final notes...

If you have questions about the required documentation, talk to your Division AP Chairperson and see if he or she has examples that you can see.

For the AP Electrical certificate, there is no requirement for Merit Judging. Your Division's AP Chairperson and/or designated assistants will sign the SOQ verifying that you have satisfied the requirements, but your work on the requirements does not have to meet a minimum evaluation score of any type. Yeah!

So there you have it! The requirements for AP Electrical are not particularly difficult, especially if you have built a layout or are in the process of building a layout. In fact, in my Division, many members have found the AP Electrical certificate to be one of the easiest to achieve. Read the requirements on the NMRA.org website and see how your work measures up. Who knows ... you might have already completed all of the requirements! And if you have questions, just contact your friendly Division AP Chairperson.

Enjoy your AP journey!



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### The "I love me" Wall

President Kurt Thompson,  
MMR

Long before there was the man cave or Cheryl's She-Shed\* in popular culture, there was the "I love me" wall. I found out about it while I was in the Navy. It is a tradition in the submarine/nuclear community. I am sure it is not just limited to the sub community as my uncle-in-law had one, and he was a retired Army Colonel.

Since I had a short military service period, I only would have had two items on the wall: my Good Conduct Medal and my Honorable Discharge. If I added awards from my insurance experience, I would tack on three designations: AIC, ARM, and CPCU. If you want to know more, drop me an email.

But by far the most important things going on my "I love me" wall are the Achievement Program certificates I have earned in the NMRA. These culminated in my Master Model Railroader. Along with the MMR plaque and framed certificate, my children gave me another plaque for my wall. For Father's Day last year, Katie and Eric took the NMRA magazine issue with my MMR piece and had the pages framed.

Dave Chance, our MER AP Manager, just sent me the list of all the AP certificates earned by MER members back through Charlie Flichman's tenure as AP Manager through October 2017. On the spreadsheet are 674 entries, one for each certificate submitted by the AP Manager to National for approval.

The spreadsheet has entries for every one of the eleven certificates: Motive Power, Cars, Structures, Scenery, Prototype Models, Engineering-Civil, Engineering-Electrical, Chief Dispatcher, Association Official, Author, and Association Volunteer. Doing a little digging, I found proof of

what I suspected would be the most earned AP certificate.

Guesses? Ideas?

Yes, Association Volunteer. One hundred forty members of the MER have earned their Association Volunteer certificate since November 2017. (The 140 doesn't include my own since I earned that while living in the MCR.) It is easy to see why this would be the most earned AP certificate. We are an all-volunteer organization. Without volunteers, the organization sputters and stops.

Now to tie the two ideas together. I want to first thank the 140 members of the MER who have earned their Association Volunteer certificate. I appreciate what each of you have done to support the NMRA, the MER, and your local Division. Without you volunteering, there's little hope of sustaining the organization.

For those of you who have not earned your Association Volunteer certificate, I ask you, "Why not?" I can tell you from experience, you probably already are earning time units (points) towards your certificate. If you are interested in earning your Association Volunteer certificate, please check with your Division Superintendent or reach out to me. I always have need for volunteers (not a silent pitch for an Editor).

So what is going on your "I love me" wall? I hope for you eventually to have your MMR plaque and certificates. But, a fine place to start would be with your own Volunteer certificate.

For those who were wondering, rounding out the other AP certificate total counts in descending order: Master Builder Scenery, 92; Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical, 88; Chief Dispatcher, 81; Model Railroad Author, 80; Model Railroad Engineer - Civil, 55; Master Builder Structures, 48; Master Builder Cars, 38; Association Official 27; Master Builder Motive Power, 17; and Master Builder Prototype Models, 5.

\*Cheryl's She-Shed is from an insurance commercial for those who missed it.



EDITOR'S COLUMN

Jack Dziadul

With this May – June issue, we continue with our Achievement Program series. Rod Vance, MMR leads off with a well-illustrated review of Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical. Brian Sheron, MMR follows with Association Volunteer, which is the third and final certificate from the Service to the Hobby category. President Kurt Thompson, MMR nudges us along on our Master Model Railroader journey with his message.

Our rolling twelve-month master calendar and the Modeler's Notes have been updated. Let us know if you find these exhibits helpful.

In the model building arena, Brian Sheron, MMR has a follow-up to his MTH article (see Letter to the Editor on page 16) and John Teichmoeller has a follow-on to Bob Morningstar's turnout article (page 20), both of which appeared in the January-February edition of The Local.

Nominating Committee Chairman Bob Charles, MMR reminds us that the window for tossing your hat in the ring for the 2020 MER elections closes on May 30. This issue of The Local also features the Annual Reports from the Divisions. Be sure to read these to see what has gone on elsewhere within our Region over the past year.

To our authors, please remember to send in your text with indicators as to where photos and other exhibits should be inserted. The photographs and other exhibits should be sent in a separate email along with appropriate captions.

On the volunteer contacts page, you will note two new names. First, we welcome Sam Rogers to the position of Executive Convention Chair. Sam follows in the footsteps of Eric Dervinis, who served very admirably in that position for many years. I had the privilege of working closely with Eric during the 2016 Tracks to the Triangle convention. Thank you Eric. Sam, I look forward to meeting you in October in Charlotte.

We also welcome new Editor Greg Warth of the Tidewater Division. Greg has been an NMRA member for ten years and produces the very popular website [www.building-your-model-railroad.com](http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com). It has been a pleasure to serve the MER membership as Interim

Editor over these past several issues of The Local. Thanks to our many contributors, we have a very nice pipeline of articles that Greg will be bringing to you in the coming months.

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/Jun	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.

## Videographer Efforts Appreciated

By President Kurt Thompson, MMR

During the Liberty Bell Special, your MER President along with MER Treasurer, Brian Kampschroer, put on a clinic/seminar about completing the Section A requirements for the Electrical Engineering AP certificate. The clinic was filmed by three volunteers. The raw footage was then given to Les Owen of Bowie, MD for compilation and editing.

The final resulting video is available for viewing. The entire 1 hour and 23 minutes clinic can be viewed on a new YouTube channel set up for the MER Webmaster. The URL for the clinic is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOG3TCiHmI4>.

A shortened version of the clinic with time-lapsed effects is available on the NMRA website in the Members Only (<https://www.nmra.org/clinic-videos>). You will need to log in to the Members Only area of the website.

Les Owen was presented with his Certificate of Appreciation on Saturday, February 29, 2020. His efforts were mighty considering three different cameras were used. This caused the video files to be of varying quality and compression rate. Try as your President did, he has been unable to persuade Mr. Owen into becoming a model railroader or at least joining the NMRA.



The final product includes a 3-minute stop action video of the track

components assembling themselves into the necessary track configuration. Please enjoy the videos and remember the efforts of Mr. Owen.

## THE MER NEEDS YOU!

By Bob Charles, MMR

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 server 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 for every year 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 April 01, 2020

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

### Division 1 – New Jersey

Paul More' – Electrical Engineering

### Division 2 – Potomac

William Lyders – Civil Engineering

### Division 3 – Philadelphia

Walt Miles – Golden Spike

John H. Seibert – Association Volunteer

### Division 4 – Tidewater

Mark Nieting – Chief Dispatcher

### Division 5 - James River

George Gaige - Scenery

### Division 10 - South Mountain

Robert Morningstar – Electrical Engineering

This time of “social distancing” is ideal for working on those AP certificates that you have been putting off. You can discuss any questions with your Division AP Chair, or you can contact me. **704-933-4200 or loconut@carolina.rr.com**

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.

The R&V form is for your personal use. Only use it with the Author Submission

Please, NO R&V FORMS with other submissions.

### Proofreaders:

Alex Belida , Martin Brechbiel, Ken Montero



**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 OPEN AT THIS [LINK](#)**

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
- Shane Wilson, President of [Scale Trains](#) to be keynote speaker at banquet

**MORE INFORMATION IS ON OUR WEBSITE**

<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 Latest Up-To-Date Activity Availability

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 One, 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, Fri 8am – 10:30am	601			
Crossing Shanty ___ N (\$15) ___ HO (\$20)				
Section House ___ N (\$15) ___ HO (\$25)				
Bull Chute Make-n-Take, Fri 1pm – 11pm	602	\$5		
Staining and Weathering Castings, Sat 8am - noon	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.coffee.cup.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 01/13/20

## Achievement Program Article Series

By Jack Dziadul

We hope that you are enjoying the AP series of articles by some of MER's most accomplished modelers. The March-April issue featured **Association Official** and **Model Railroad Author**, by Kurt Thompson, MMR and Martin Brechbiel, MMR, respectively. In this issue of *The Local*, Brian Sheron, MMR, completes the **Service to the Hobby** category with his **Association Volunteer** article on page 19. In addition, Rod Vance, MMR, starts us off in the **Engineering and Operations** category with a well-illustrated **Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical** article on page 1.

The complete lineup is in the table below:

	Category	Author
Model Railroad Equipment	Master Builder - Motive Power	Joe Walters, MMR
	Master Builder - Cars	Ron Baile, MMR
	Master Builder - Cars	Ernie Little, MMR
	Category	Author
Settings	Master Builder - Structures	Glyn Thomas, MMR
	Master Builder - Scenery	Mary Miller, MMR
	Master Builder - Prototype Models	Andrew Dodge, MMR
	Category	Author
Engineering and Operation	Model Railroad Engineer - Civil	Ernie Little, MMR
	Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical	Rod Vance, MMR
	Chief Dispatcher	Kurt Kramke, MMR
	Category	Author
Service to the Hobby	Association Official	Kurt Thompson, MMR
	Association Volunteer	Brian Sheron, MMR
	Model Railroad Author	Martin Brechbiel, MMR

### 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



## **MER Convention – Look South in 2020**

Hi, my name is Ed Smith. I am a member of the Carolina Southern Division of the Mid-Eastern Region. I would like to invite all of our members to the MER Regional Convention, **Look South in 2020**, October 15 - 18, 2020, sponsored by the Carolina Southern Division in Charlotte, NC.

Our Division is the southern-most Division in the MER. Fall is a wonderful time of year in the Charlotte area. But, weather aside, the city and surrounding areas have many things of interest. There is the NASCAR Hall of Fame, Carolina Speedway, the National Whitewater Training Center, Billy Graham Library, Carowinds Amusement Park, and, being in the fall, the Carolina Panthers of the NFL, to name a few. There is a diverse selection of restaurants, with barbeque always available. You can go to the website <https://www.charlottesgotalot.com/things-to-do> to open the door to a plethora of activities in the area. If you have extra time and feel adventurous, Columbia, SC is only about an hour south and Asheville, NC is a couple of hours to the west. The Asheville area is especially beautiful in the fall.

That is the southern hospitality of the Charlotte area, but this October weekend is all about model railroading. Our Division members have been working overtime to create an entertaining four days for you. You will be able to enjoy a wide range of clinics, with a schedule that spans three days. Sign up for Operation Sessions if you want. Layout tours will include some of the best in our Division, including two that have been featured on the cover of Model Railroader magazine.

A trip to the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC is available. Tour #201 on Thursday visits what is now a museum, but was once the engine facilities and maintenance shops for the Southern Railways. Located on 60 acres, it was once the largest facility of this type on the East coast. The Back Shop houses exhibits pertaining to aviation, automobiles and trucks, firetrucks, and a continuing restoration of a 1942 Piedmont Airlines DC-3. The 37-stall roundhouse features steam, diesel, railcars, and more. Our tour is more than a mere visit. We will enjoy a docent-led guided tour of areas that are not normally open to visitors. And, too early to tell yet, we may be able to get an “up close and personal” look at Norfolk & Western 611, which may be in the roundhouse for the winter season.

A Unifour Tour #202 is available on Friday. This trip will take you to the western regions of our Division. This day trip will include lunch. There will be three home layout visits:

1. Gil Brauch, MMR – DD & DM Railroad, N-scale, freelanced, post 1980's railroad, constructed using N-Track modules. 16' x 7' with a 12' x 12' extension, Digitrax.
2. Scott Teague – Norfolk Southern – Pocahontas Division, N-scale. Depicting the Bluefield-to-Williamson, WVA area. 18' x 42' with 24', 2-level staging. 99% complete, Digitrax. Featured in 2004 and 2019 Great Model Railroads.
3. Ed Smith – Erie Railroad, Delaware Division, circa 1947. HO scale, double deck with helix, double track 600'+ mainline. Under construction, 20% complete, Digitrax.

In addition, we will visit Wade's Train Town. This legacy layout was a 10-year project of the late Wade Warren. The Carolina Southern Division has restored this 12' x 18', 1980's era layout, housed in an old schoolhouse.

Last, but not least, is The Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Short Line Museum in Newton, NC. The museum has the largest collection of vintage narrow gauge equipment in the south. Located on four acres, the campus consists of the 1924 Southern Railways Newton Depot, a car barn, and a Model Railroad Center, featuring operating layouts in O, HO, and N scales

This is a full day of railroading. The tour is limited to 25, so sign up is required by Aug. 31.

There are also the usual activities. There will be a Contest Room, where models will be given awards in many categories, from standard awards to special awards and popular awards. You can also bring your modeling endeavors and just display them. The Model Emporium will be where the White Elephant Sale and Door Prize ticket sales will take place. So bring those extra things you want to sell and funds to purchase those things you just have to have. We will have a room displaying multi-gauge modular layouts. And, of course, we will have the Saturday Evening Banquet. The guest speaker will be Shane Wilson. He is the owner/President of ScaleTrains. Shane started ScaleTrains in 2015, after around 20 years in hobby manufacturing with Horizon, before they purchased Athearn. So, with good food, fellowship, and our guest speaker, it should be a great evening to wind up the convention. For those who need more, there will be scheduled events on Sunday morning.

The convention hotel is the Crown Plaza Charlotte. It is located in South Charlotte, just off Interstate 77, allowing easy access for all modes of transportation. Rooms are available for a convention rate of \$114 per night. You can go to the MER website <http://mer-nmra.com/> click on the 2020 MER Convention button or the Carolina Southern website <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/> and select the Convention website. There you will find all the information and links for the hotel, registration, and Convention main page. This page will offer all the events scheduled, with additions and updates periodically, from which you can create your itinerary.

So, from me, convention chair Neal Anderson, MMR, all our coordinating officials, and Carolina Southern volunteers, welcome. Hope to see you in October.

Just remember, as winter slowly fades away and you start to make plans for spring and summer adventures, save a few days for a fall visit to Charlotte, NC in October. I think you will be glad you did.

NOTE: Due to the many Covid-19 related cancellations, please check the event's web site for the latest update before finalizing your travel plans.

### Upcoming Events

2020	Dates	Event	City	State	Contact
MAY	2	Columbia Railroad Day	Columbia	PA	wclesjak2@comcast.net
MAY	16	New Jersey Div meeting	Middletown	NJ	vze5crrw1@outlook.com
MAY	16	Tidewater meet	Newport News	VA	www.nmra-mer-tidewater.org
MAY	16-17	Spencer Train Show	Spencer	NC	www.nctrans.org
MAY	26	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
MAY	29-30	New England RPM	Farmington	CT	www.nerpm.org
MAY	30	MER nominations due			rcharles@aol.com
JUN	12-13	Narrow O Summer Meet	Harrisburg	PA	millcreekrr@yahoo.com
JUN	14	Potomac Division Outreach	Vienna	VA	
JUN	20	Susquehanna meet	New Oxford	PA	ppeters@susquehannanmra.org
JUN	23	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
JUN	24-28	N Scale Convention	Nashville	TN	www.nationalscaleconvention.com/
JUL	12-18	NMRA Convention	St Louis	MO	www.gateway2020.org
JUL	28	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
AUG	8	2 Rail O Scale Train Show	Strasburg	PA	John Dunn 609-432-2871
AUG	22	Susquehanna meet	Denver	PA	dblank@susquehannanmra.org
AUG	25	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
SEP	10-13	Mid-Atlantic RPM	Linthicum Heights	MD	www.marpm.org
SEP	12	TCA train show	Mebane	NC	www.traincollectors.org
SEP	22	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
SEP	26-27	Old 97 Rail Days	Danville	VA	www.dcs.smv.org
SEP	27	TCA train show	Philadelphia	PA	http://adtca.com
OCT	2-3	Selma Rail Days	Selma	NC	www.selma-nc.com
OCT	2-3	Susquehanna Ops weekend		PA	www.susquehannanmra.org
OCT	3-4	Great Scale Model Train Show	Timonium	MD	www.gsmts.com
OCT	9-12	NER Convention	Westford	MA	www.milcity2020.org
OCT	15-18	Look South in 2020	Charlotte	NC	kklrailroad@yahoo.com
OCT	15	MER Board meeting	Charlotte	NC	www.mer-nmra.com
OCT	17	MER Business Meeting	Charlotte	NC	www.mer-nmra.com
OCT	17	2 Rail O Scale Train Show	Strasburg	PA	John Dunn 609-432-2871
OCT	23-24	TCA train show	York	PA	www.easterntca.com
OCT	24-25	Great Scale Model Train Show	Timonium	MD	www.gsmts.com
OCT	27	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
NOV	1	TCA train show	Philadelphia	PA	http://adtca.com
NOV	7-8	Neuse River Valley Train Show	Raleigh	NC	www.nrvclub.net
NOV	7-8	Susquehanna open houses		PA	www.susquehannanmra.org
NOV	10	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org
NOV	14-15	Susquehanna open houses		PA	www.susquehannanmra.org
NOV	21-22	Susquehanna open houses		PA	www.susquehannanmra.org
DEC	5-6	TCA train show	Raleigh	NC	www.traincollectors.org
DEC	8	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	www.cpd13.org

2021	Dates	Event	City	State	Contact
JAN	28	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
JAN	30-31	Railroad Hobby Show	West Springfield	MA	<a href="http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com">www.railroadhobbyshow.com</a>
FEB	25	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
MAR	23	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>
APR	23-24	TCA train show	York	PA	<a href="http://www.easterntca.com">www.easterntca.com</a>
APR	27	Carolina Piedmont meeting	Apex	NC	<a href="http://www.cpd13.org">www.cpd13.org</a>

## Letter to the Editor

**Editor:** Brian offered this follow-up to his *MTH HO Subway Series Trains* article. See *The Local* Volume 75 #2 March – April 2020.

**Brian Sheron, MMR:** In my March article on the MTH Subway Series cars, I wrote that they were offered in four-car sets. After I wrote my article, I found that the cars are also offered in two-car sets.

Most subway routes are two-track with trains running in both directions simultaneously. For each paint scheme, MTH offers a northbound and a southbound train set. The northbound and southbound designations refer to their route between the stations at each end of the route. Thus, only the station names at the ends of the routes are the same, and the station stops in-between are different between the northbound and southbound routes.

Another issue I need to mention is the “conductor.” As I pointed out previously, the first set that I bought (80-2348-1) had a sound track of a conductor with a very distinct (and obviously prototypical) New York/Brooklyn accent. The literature states that they are recorded voices of actual NYC subway conductors. Unfortunately, for a given set of northbound and southbound trains, the conductor’s voice is identical. If you plan to run a single two-track elevated subway with trains running in both directions, you should buy two identical sets of subway trains, since the station stops for both of your trains should be identical. However, this means that it will sound like the same conductor (or his twin brother) is running both trains!

I did discover that different train sets do have different conductors. For example, the set in the dark green livery has a different conductor’s voice from the conductor’s voice recorded in the set with the dark red livery. However, the station names will be entirely different between the two train sets.

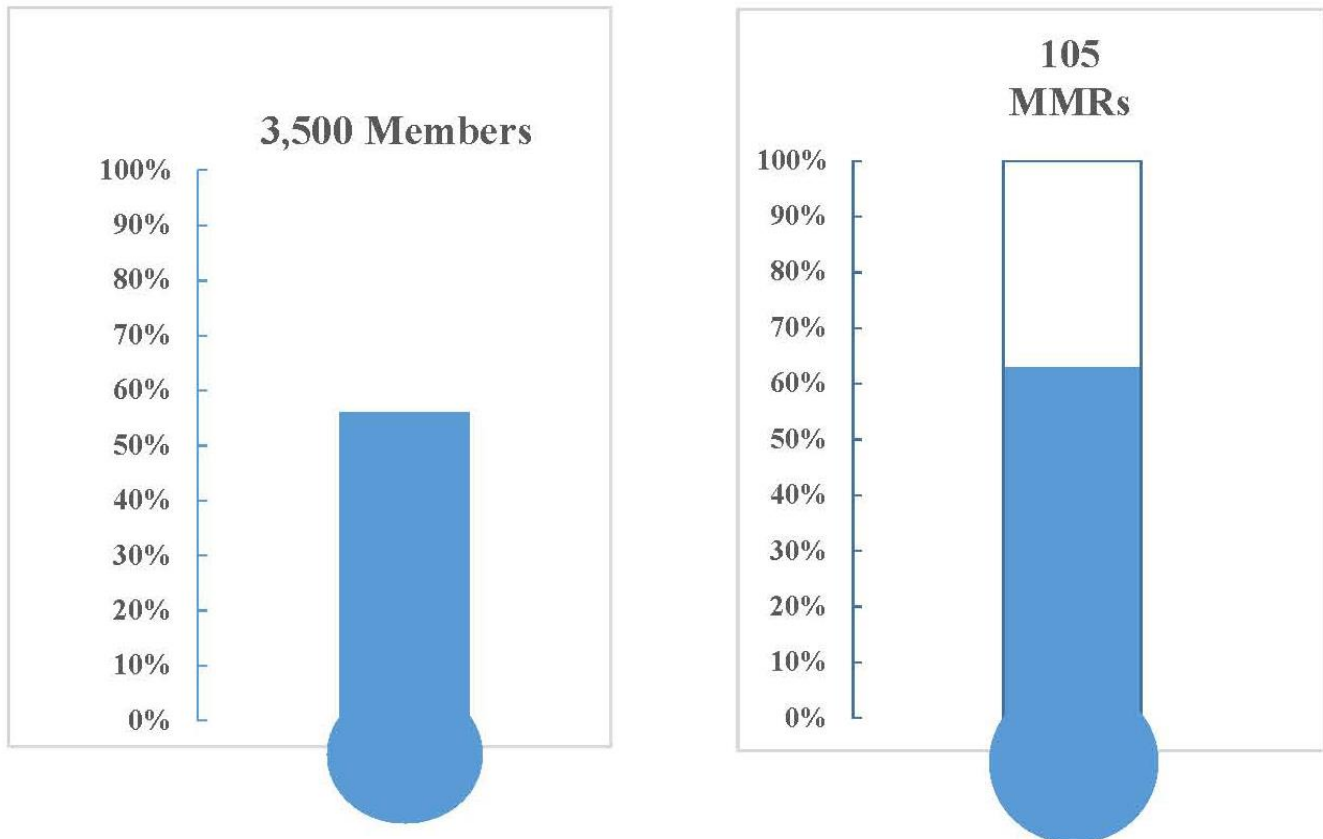
As a result of my enjoyment with the MTH subway trains, and especially the programming features for automatic operation, I have been building another elevated subway line above Flatbush Avenue on the Atlantic Branch section of my Long Island Railroad. Articles on the construction of this line are scheduled to appear in future issues of “The Local.”



## MER 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Goals

By Kurt Thompson, MMR

The Mid-Eastern Region will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. You will recall that we have established goals for membership to reach 3,500 and 105 Master Model Railroaders by the October 2021 convention. The thermometers below will reflect our progress toward achieving these targets.



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## 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logo Contest

By Kurt Thompson, MMR

Reminder to submit your Logo Contest entry to me by the extended deadline of November 30, 2020. We have several very nice entries so far. **The winner will receive paid registration to the 2021 MER convention.** Full details are in the September-October 2019 issue of The Local.

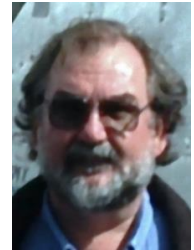
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## Business Manager's Column



**Howard Oakes**

Folks, my name is John Hoyt and I am the Assistant Business Manager for the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). I assist Business Manager Howard Oakes with maintaining the business side of MER. This includes keeping tabs on the membership roster, distributing notifications such as the calls for conferences, and distribution of the eLocal.



**John Hoyt**

Both of our positions are voluntary. We are selected by the President, and approved by the Board of Directors. Howard replaced Bob Price last year; the same time that I was asked to help by President Kurt Thompson, MMR. Since Howard has had some minor surgery, I am filling in for this column.

This column will deal with a timely subject, the organization of the MER Leadership and Volunteer positions. Last year, the Business Manager function was filled by a team consisting of both a Manager and an Assistant Manager. There have been many advantages to this arrangement. Yes, the position perhaps does not require two people; however, having a fireman never hurts.



It is always good to have a second person to go to when something comes up. Both Howard and I have had medical issues recently requiring one of us to step forward and take responsibility for all of the duties. The MER leadership is predominantly made up of older individuals, and having another person to step in to perform the duties of one of the officers or volunteers is a great advantage.

I am advocating having an assistant as standard practice for each of the volunteer positions. Yes, this is easier said than done because just getting one person to take the responsibilities can be challenging

let alone finding two. I would also like to take this a step further by using it as an opportunity to involve younger members, increasing involvement with MER as well as growing new leaders for the future.

I know for myself that working with Howard greatly reduces the fear of not being able to perform the duties requested of me and made the decision to accept the position easier. All of the volunteer positions are for the betterment of the organization and the hobby. If there is any way that we can lessen the burden on these individuals, and at the same time create future leaders, then perhaps it is an idea worth considering.

Thank you for your time in reading this article. Take care and happy model railroading!

# The Association Volunteer Certificate

By Brian W. Sheron, MMR

There are eleven achievement certificates that can be earned in the NMRA's Achievement Program, and each one falls into one of four major categories. The Association Volunteer certificate, which I will talk about in this article, falls into the category of "Service to the Hobby," along with "Model Railroad Author" and "Association Official."

First, let us talk about what a "volunteer" is – a volunteer is someone who donates his or her time and talents. As a member of the NMRA, you are also a member of a Region, and, for most of us, a member of a Division within that Region. The NMRA, including the Regions and the Divisions, is a non-profit organization made up of volunteers who all have one thing in common: their love for the model railroading hobby. In fact, the organization could not exist without volunteers. A member who donates his or her time and/or talents to help further the NMRA meeting its objectives can earn the Association Volunteer AP certificate.

## The Time Unit Requirements

If you look on the NMRA web page that discusses the requirements for earning the Association Volunteer certificate, you will immediately notice that it requires that you earn 60 time units, or TUs. Your first reaction might be to think that a time unit is an hour, a day, a month, etc. While that might be a conventional definition, it is not what a TU is in NMRA lingo. A TU in NMRA lingo is a point value awarded for either a certain, specific service that you provide to the NMRA organization (National, Regional, or Divisional) on a monthly or a one-time basis. In general, the higher in the organizational structure that you serve as a volunteer, the more TUs you can receive.

For example, serving on a Division committee will earn you 1/2 of a TU for every month that you actively serve on that committee, whereas if you serve on a Region level committee, you will earn one TU for every month that you actively participate on that committee. If you serve on a National level committee, you will earn two TUs for every month that you actively participate on that committee.

As mentioned previously, you can also earn TUs for volunteering for one-time events. such as hosting an open house layout tour, participating in a modular club setup at NMRA-sponsored events, or judging at an NMRA sponsored contest, to name a few.

Note that one of the most important aspects of earning the "Volunteer" AP certificate is documenting your volunteer time. Make sure that you accurately record your TUs on the NMRA "Statement of Qualifications" form, and that a qualified person signs off on the form attesting that you earned those TUs. One of the biggest issues I ran into as the Division AP coordinator was members claiming TUs for volunteer work they did many years ago, but being unable to now find anyone who was qualified to verify the volunteer work claimed.

There have been many articles published over the years that discuss the NMRA's achievement program and about each of the eleven achievement certificates. When I was asked to write an article on the Volunteer certificate, I wondered what I could write about that had not been said before. It came to me

that I should just write about my experience getting my Association Volunteer certificate and all the additional benefits that experience produced for me.

About 12 years ago, I was invited to join an operations group. As it turns out, a couple of the members of this group were also Potomac Division Board members. It also happened that the Potomac Division was scheduled to host the MER convention that year. The Board's Senior Assistant Superintendent, Marshall Abrams, asked if I would like to help with the convention layout tours by taking photos of the layouts for an article in the "Potomac Flyer," the Division's newsletter, about the convention that would be published after the convention was over. I said "Sure." As a result of visiting the layouts and taking photos, and while working on the convention committee, I got to meet many Division members who had volunteered to help at the convention.

Following the convention, I discovered that the Division needed a layout tour coordinator. Marshall Abrams asked if I would like to take on the job, and I agreed. Now mind you, I hardly knew anyone in the Division at that time, much less knowing which members had layouts that might be candidates for open houses.

Nevertheless, I started by asking the few Division members that I knew or had recently met if they could give me leads on members with layouts who I could ask about hosting an open house. I received a few names, and called these members, introduced myself and asked if they would like to host an open house. As I was lining up open houses, I found that I also needed to provide a volunteer to greet members who came to visit the open house. I enjoy seeing other people's layouts, so I decided to also be the greeter at many of the open houses. Because the Board wanted to run articles in "The Potomac Flyer" about our open houses, I took on the additional task of taking photos of many of the layouts and writing short articles about them. This meant that I had to interact much closer with the layout tour host in gathering information about the layout for the article. These interactions led to many new friendships.

So why am I telling you this? Well, after arranging a number of layout tours and interviewing hosts, I eventually got to know many of the members in the Division that I not previously known. Many of these members became good friends. In addition to making many new model railroading friends, I also got to see many very nice layouts and got great ideas that I could apply to my own layout.

As the layout tour coordinator, I also participated in a number of Potomac Division Board meetings and got to see how the organization worked.

The Division also had a vacancy for Achievement Program (AP) Coordinator, and Marshall asked if I would also be interested in being the AP Coordinator. My response at the time was "Sure, but what's an Achievement Program?" I was completely unfamiliar with the NMRA's Achievement Program, so I figured that if I was going to be the Division coordinator, I had better learn about it ASAP! I began by reading about the AP program on the NMRA's web page. As I read the requirements for each certificate, questions were popping up in my head. After a while, it dawned on me that the best way to learn about the NMRA's Achievement Program and answer my questions was to simply participate in it! What better way to learn about it than to actually try to earn AP certificates?

As I started working through the requirements of the various certificates, the answers to many of my questions became obvious, but many were not. As a Division AP Coordinator, I worked closely with the

Regional Achievement Program Manager, who at that time was Charlie Flichman. Charlie was extremely helpful in answering my questions, and we became friends in the process.

As I progressed in earning various AP certificates, in particular my Master Builder-Cars certificate, I became interested in learning to judge, so I could also judge models for Division members trying to earn modeling AP certificates. Martin Brechbiel, MMR, who was the Regional Contest Chair, was extremely helpful in teaching how me to evaluate models, and soon I was judging at our Minicons and Regional Conventions.

It took me about three years to complete earning seven certificates, and I was awarded my Master Model Railroader (MMR) Certificate in 2011.

In the subsequent years, I was on the Board of the Potomac Division, and in 2014 became the Superintendent. The Potomac Division volunteered to host the 2018 MER convention, and Marshall Abrams and I were Co-Chairs. One of the first tasks in organizing a convention is to assemble the Local Convention Committee. Based on meeting and getting to know so many Potomac Division members over the past years, I knew a wealth of people I felt I could call on and ask to volunteer to help with the convention. As a result, we quickly staffed the committee with very capable volunteers, and by all accounts the convention was considered a success.

So what does all this mean? First, because of volunteering to help out in the Division, I got to meet and become friends with many of the model railroaders in the Division who I ordinarily would never have had the opportunity to meet. Second, volunteering to be the AP Coordinator for the Division ultimately led me to get my MMR! Finally, volunteering showed me first-hand the value that volunteers provide to the Division, the Region, and ultimately to the NMRA. Since I got my MMR, I have continued to volunteer. I served on the Board of the Potomac Division for about ten years in various capacities. I continued to volunteer with the AP program, open houses, etc. I have also continued to write articles for both the Division and MER newsletters as well as present clinics at the Division and Region conventions.

In summary, volunteering is really a lifelong and integral part of the hobby and makes the hobby not only more rewarding for yourself, but for all other model railroaders as well! So, if ever there was a really fun AP certificate to get, in my opinion, this is it!



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# Another Approach to Locking Atlas Turnout Points

By John Teichmoeller

## Introduction and Background

I really liked Bob Morningstar's article in the January/February issue of *The Local* on using teeny and affordable super magnets to solve a common problem, namely how to hold turnout points in place when you cannot or do not want to install powered switch machines. Or, when you find the size of the affordable, reliable, and easy-to-install Caboose Industries ground throws just too oversized. Bob's approach also has merit in that it can be installed on turnouts already in place, even if they are ballasted and otherwise anchored down. Some years ago, a friend introduced me to a somewhat different technique for addressing this issue. This alternative technique does require access to the underside of the turnout. Therefore, if your turnouts are already anchored down with ballast, with caulking gun goop, or whatever, the technique I will describe below will not work so you can skip over this article.

When it comes to track planning, I find that while it is important to plan well on paper, there are often many revelations that arise when it comes time to actually laying the track. In addition, you identify even more insights for improvement when trial operations begin. I am in the process of experimenting with the track arrangement in several industrial areas of my layout. Accordingly, the track is provisional; that is, temporarily laid using track nails which are removable, and which allow for easy changes. Track is laid directly on blue or pink foam. Most of it will eventually be partially or totally embedded in pavement or cinders.

As with Bob's example, I used Atlas code 83 turnouts because that is what Lance Mindheim, my layout installer, used. ([www.shelflayouts.com](http://www.shelflayouts.com)) Well, I did cheat and used two curved PECO's that just happened to fit a particular spot precisely in the open hearth area, and there are a couple Walthers curved turnouts that happened to fit perfectly on the main line. For the main line, and some yard and industrial trackage, especially those not easily reached, I used Tortoises with edge connectors and wired frogs. However, for the point locking problem in other industrial areas, I plan to use a technique that was shared with me some years ago by my late friend, George Baustert. He called it the "Omega spring" approach because it is basically a knock-off of PECO's design using a "U" shaped wire spring. After it is installed, the "U" becomes more of an "Omega" shape. I have nothing against using PECO turnouts. Until recently, however, their geometry was different from that of Atlas. Also, they could be hard to find and are more expensive than the Atlas.

A brief word about my friend George Baustert, and I smile as I write this: George was a retired automotive engineer who alternated living between Michigan and Florida. He was an early "fine scale" HO modeler with a few photos of his work in *Model Railroader*. His sub-hobby was track plan design. Back in the 1990s when the enthusiast magazines ran a lot of track plans, George would regularly critique them, pointing out flaws such as troublesome inadvertent hiding "S" curves. He would redraw the track plan and send copies to the offending editor and to other people. His corrections were on the mark. Well, you never saw these, did you? Of course to publish these "errors" would not reflect well on the layout design gurus. Plus, he would mark portions of his redrafts with colored pencil. Oh yes, he would always add a carfloat apron somehow. And finally, he would mail his submissions in a 9x12 yellow envelope with the return address in a bizarre typeface that read "The Ecclesiastical Order of ISM and AM." Maybe he could perform marriages, too. Guess what some versions of Spellcheck want to do to his name? I could go on about George, but, seriously, it is too bad his work was not published. His masterpiece, in my opinion, was a re-do in easy to find and cheap (train shows) Atlas Snap Track of

John Pryke's *MR* Union Freight Line project layout. Who cares what the track itself looks like on this layout because the track is all embedded in pavement (Walthers street sections)?

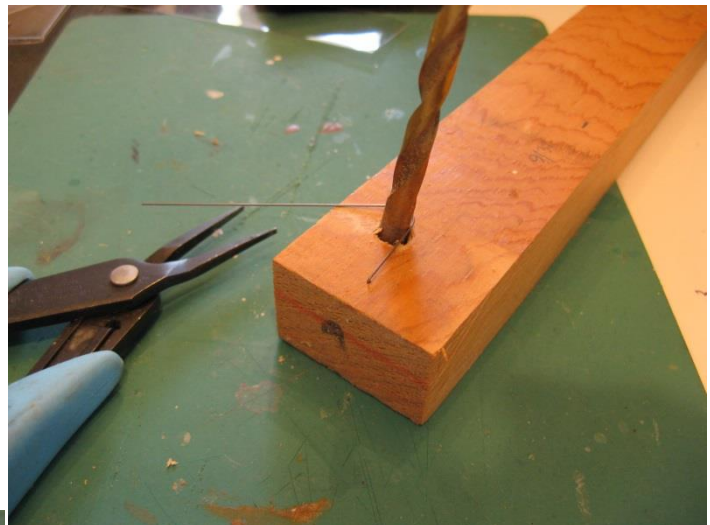
### Make a Spring

We will start by making a "U" shaped spring from .015" piano wire. A 3' length will probably cost you less than a dollar. I have two loops of it in my wire drawer with price tags of \$.48 that I probably bought ten years or more ago. Snip off a 3" or so piece. Do not use your track cutters unless you want nicks in them. Try your blue handle Xuron hard wire cutter.

Use a 3/16" twist drill as a mandrel to bend your spring. You can do it freehand but your spring will probably be crooked. If it is crooked, use pliers to twist it back into a single plane. I chose to make a little bending fixture (**Figure 1**). Find about a 6" long piece of 1x2. Drill a 3/16" hole through, or just about through, the 1x2 about 1" from the end, and a #71 hole about 1/4" deep in line with the bigger hole and about 1/4" from the end. Clamp the end of the 1x2 to your work table with one

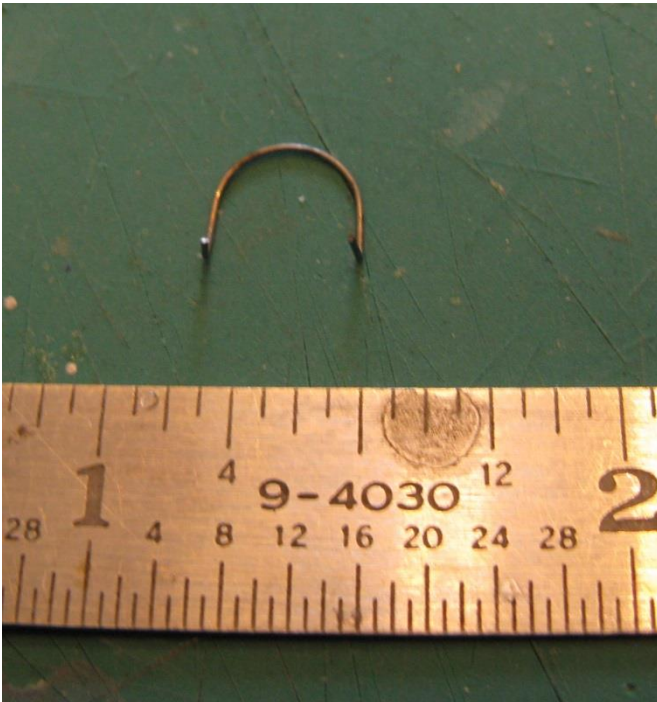
**Figure 1. Wire bending tool showing wire bent around 3/16" drill bit.**

of those Quick-Grip squeeze clamps. Bend the end of the wire 90 degrees about 1/4" from the end and insert it into the #71 hole. Insert the 3/16" bit into its hole (No, you are right, it was not drilled square—the bit was dull). Wrap the long end of the wire around the drill bit and pull



hard on the free end of the wire with your pliers. You will now have a decent looking "U." If it is slightly twisted, twist it back so it is all in one plane. Make a mark on the end of your 1x2 9/32" from the end. Put the top of the "U" against this mark and bend down the two straight pieces with one thumb while holding down the "U" with the other thumb...

**Figure 2. The spring is 9/32" high and 5/16" wide with 3/32" "feet".**



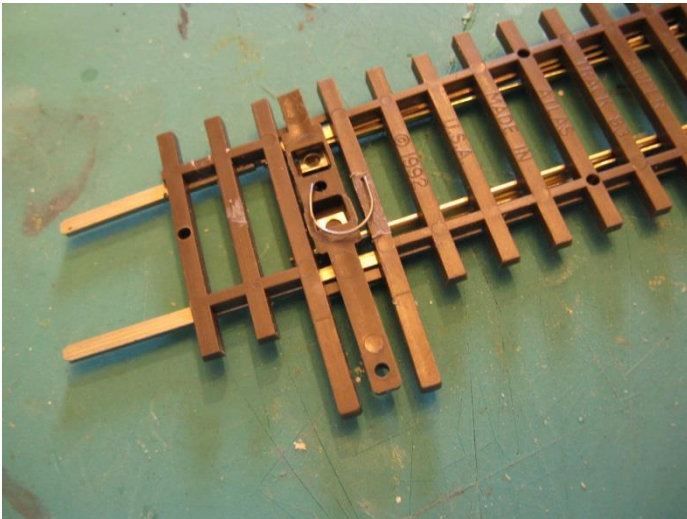
Take your Xuron tweezer nose pliers and make a sharp bend down. With your hard wire cutter, snip off enough wire so these right angle "feet" are 3/32" long. Too much shorter and they will not be long enough to stay where they are going. Too much longer and they will stick up through the tie and snag your finger. You cannot cut them off with the hard wire cutter once they are installed (unless you have another hardened blade cutter that cuts flush). Your "U" (soon to be an Omega) is about 5/16" across (**Figure 2**).

### Drill a hole

Flip your turnout on its back and use your scribe to make a drill starter prick in the exact center of the first tie on the frog side of the throwbar. I used a No. 71 drill, which is .028" in diameter, because I had a pin vise on the bench armed and loaded with a No. 71. You could probably go smaller, but you do not want to go so small that you squeeze the .015 wire. Shave about 1/64" off the tie you drilled from the hole to the outer rail. This is to give a little clearance to the spring. You do not need to shave the throwbar because it is thinner than the ties. Insert the feet of the "U" which we will now call a spring, into the new hole and into the hole in the center of the throwbar (**Figure 3**). You may want to place a small strip of tape over the spring to keep it from flying, or just wait until the next step.

### Make a cover plate

Find some clear, smooth plastic .010" thick. I used the acetate cover to an empty Christmas card box. Make a rectangle 3/4" x 1 1/16" from this material. While you are at it, and if you like where this is going, you might as well make a bunch of these. Make strips equal to one dimension and mark off and cut rectangles from the strip.



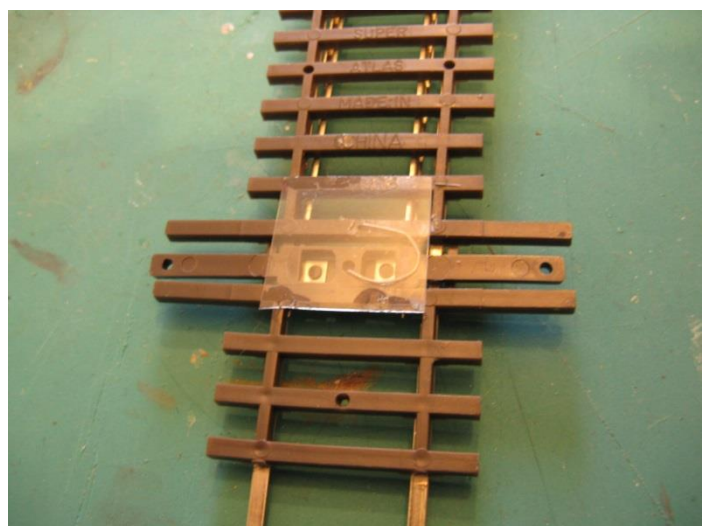
**Figure 3. Spring inserted in hole drilled in tie and in the throwbar hole. You can barely see how the drilled tie has been shaved ca. 1/64" thinner between the hole and the stock rail.**

If you have not already done this, insert one foot of the spring into the hole you drilled in the tie and the other foot into the hole in the drawbar. Keep your finger on the spring to keep it from flying, and carefully see if the "snap action" on the points works. If not, maybe your shaved tie needs smoothing or you made your spring too big.

Use your open eye needle cyanoacrylate applicator to put a teeny drop of CA on the tie next to the tie you drilled and carefully place the cover plate in position (**Figure 4**). Squish it down so it spreads, but make sure it does not get on the throwbar or the spring. When the CA has set, carefully wick another speck under the other edge of the cover plate on the other side of the throwbar.

**Figure 4. Cover plate glued to ties with Omega spring visible.**

You are finished. A gentle flick of the finger should move the points and allow them to gently snap into place. The cover plate will cause a slight hump under the points when you go to install the turnout. If your turnouts are "floating" this may not be noticeable. Otherwise, shave out a rectangular section of the roadbed in the cover plate area using your X-ACTO chisel blade to give enough clearance.

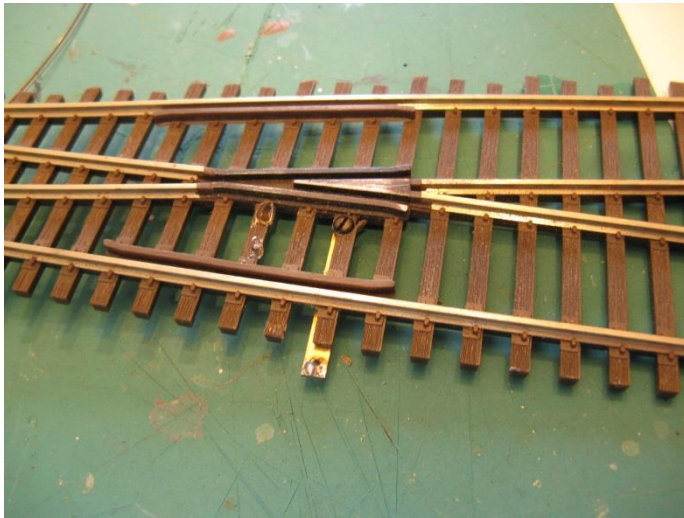




George built his layouts on foam board and he just lightly whacked the blue foam with a hammer to form a clearance depression.

### **But there's more—what about power to that frog?**

Unless and until all our locomotives are equipped with “Keep Alive” circuits, it is helpful to have those frogs powered, especially if our turnouts are in yards and we use short wheelbase locomotives. Bob mentions his plan to use “Frog Juicer” circuits ([www.tamvalleydepot.com](http://www.tamvalleydepot.com)). I have heard of these, but have not gotten far enough on my industrial areas to try them, although I plan to. But, before hooking up the Frog Juicer, we need to consider how to get power from the juicer circuit board to those frogs. Now you will notice the frogs on Atlas turnouts (except the “Snap” line which have plastic frogs) are metal and there is a little hole cast into the straight side of the frog (**Figure 5**).



So all you have to do is solder a feeder wire into that hole, right? Unfortunately, the frog is made of Zamac, and your solder joint probably will not be very good. You might even melt the plastic underlying the frog. (Kemtron once sold a flux for soldering zamac, Salmat.

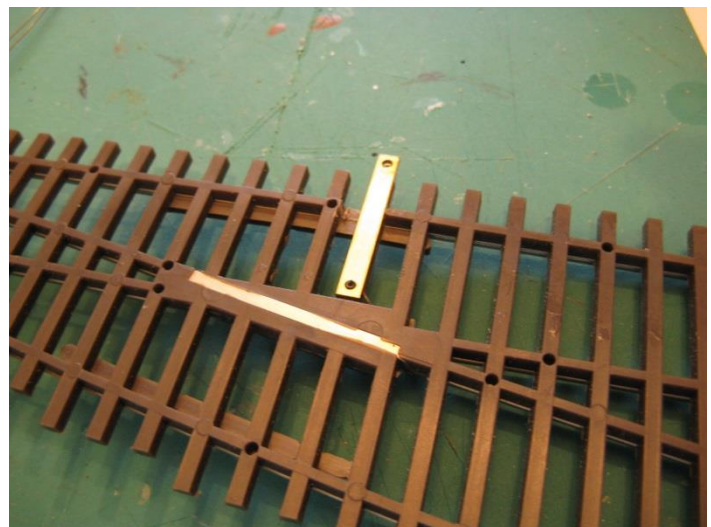
**Figure 5. Atlas brass bus bar installed with visible small screw next to frog. Note tie damage due to unsuccessful attempt to solder jumper to Zamac frog.**

I bought a jar 55 years ago. It did not work that well—at least for me--and dried up 40 years ago. I rehydrated it. I finally discarded the jar a year ago when I was weeding out dried up Floquil jars

and could not open the Salmat jar.) Fortunately, Atlas offers a solution. That little hole is tapped, I think 1-72 or a close metric size, and Atlas sells a brass bus bar that lies under the tie next to the frog and sells the little screws that secure the bus bar. The part numbers are 200001 for the screws and 200002 for the bus bars. The screws are called “machine screw rd hd snap relay” and come in a pack of 12; the bus bars are called “bus bar for snap relay” and come in a pack of six. I guess they figure you will lose half the screws during installation. One more thing: There is a little “membrane” you need to remove on the outer edge of the tie so the bus bar will slip under it. I have found that not all “batches”

**Figure 6. Underside of turnout showing installed bus bar, outer membrane removed.**

of Atlas turnouts have this membrane; maybe they are omitting it on the latest runs. You will notice the tie is thinner to allow for the thickness of the bus bar. Remove the membrane BEFORE installing the turnout as it is possible, but bothersome to do it afterward, especially if the



membrane is on the side of the turnout toward the

To order these parts from the Atlas e-store is slightly frustrating. So just put the part number in the Search window; you will get a whole page or two of results and these turnout parts will be at the very end of the results. The price has not changed since I ordered a lifetime supply (for all my planned industrial trackage) in 2003. Even better, try to get your hobby shop to stock and promote these to all users of Atlas turnouts. To paraphrase the TV commercial, probably “everybody knows about these,” but I didn’t and owe thanks to Fred Scheer who says he got it from John Stralka.

As a footnote to the above, at a recent Timonium show I noticed the Atlas No. 8s had the bus bar already molded in it. I also noticed on one of the modular layouts they had just run a brass screw into the little hole from the bottom of the frog and soldered the jumper wire to that, completely dispensing with the bus bar and avoiding the minor unsightliness of the visible, albeit blackened, screw.

### **And just one more thing...ballasting under those points**

Well, don’t ...and let me suggest an alternative. Getting ballast entangled in the points and around the omega spring mechanism will be troublesome. Again, I stole the following idea from a piece by Terry Thompson in *Model Railroader*. I would be happy to cite the issue, but unfortunately I just have a photocopy of the article, and due to *MR*’s page layout “style” the issue number does not show on the bottom of my copy of even-numbered page 50.

The magical idea is: just do not use any real ballast at all inside the rails around the point area. Instead, before installing the turnout, spray paint the area on the roadbed below the turnout point area with Rust-Oleum Stone Creations fleck paint. It comes in numerous flavors and there is probably one that comes close to your ballast color. (It also looks good on twisted wire winter tree trunks.) I made an approximate 9”x9” mask out of paper bag paper with an open square about 4”x4” to limit the paint to the actual under-point area. Hold it in place with a couple strips of tape. I would tell you the exact size and include a photo of the mask, but after some use I threw it away. Use newspaper for the floor or other adjacent areas you do not want painted, but you probably know that. Terry doesn’t mention one other thing I did learn. This paint has a nice petrochemical odor that suggests it would dry quickly, but the paint is very slow drying. Allow to dry overnight or even longer before installing the turnout and ballasting the rest of turnout outside of the point area.

### **Final comments**

I have not done any experimenting with alternate spring wire size type of wire. For example, Tichy’s phosphor bronze wire might or might not work and may even be better. Maybe .010 wire would work. I just followed George’s cheap and easy instructions, so improvements are possible. Obviously, production efficiencies could be developed if you are doing a bunch of these installations at one time. Although this technique does require application before the turnout is installed, once you have installed it you can always add Bob’s approach if the spring approach is not working to your satisfaction. Of course, the later application of a Tortoise or Blue Point machine is not affected by the omega spring application. Finally, the spring pressure on the points is firm, but still weak enough that a loco can usually throw the points without derailing if the turnout is set against it.

## Modeler's Notes

By Jack Dziadul

We have highlighted below some of the modeling “how-to” articles, clinics, and videos that have appeared in recent publications or websites. Rather than re-print the articles, we will be providing links or references. We will also highlight some articles that discuss the Achievement Program. Building models, building and operating a layout, and the AP program are what this section of The Local is all about.

### CAROLINA PIEDMONT DIVISION

To access each of the referenced CPD articles – [www.cpd13.org/newsletter-the-herald](http://www.cpd13.org/newsletter-the-herald)

- **Proto2000 Sound DCC Install** by Charlie Rausch, January 2020
- **Lehigh New England 2-10-0 Conversion** by Charlie Rausch February 2020
- **Flicker-Free Lighting Circuits Updated** by Jim Murphy February 2020
- **Install Sound DCC Bachmann 0-6-0t Saddle Tank** by Charles Rausch March 2020
- **Rolling Stock Marathon Check Up Session** by Kevin O'Connor

### NEW JERSEY DIVISION

- **The Golden Spike** by Joe Zebrowski *Train Orders* March 2020  
[https://mcusercontent.com/d0a9c05792f94bbe3a24503b3/files/72babd56-9a1a-4ec7-8a52-96402c0bead9/2020\\_03TO\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_File.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/d0a9c05792f94bbe3a24503b3/files/72babd56-9a1a-4ec7-8a52-96402c0bead9/2020_03TO_FINAL_PUBLICATION_File.pdf)

### POTOMAC DIVISION

To access each of the referenced PD articles below:

<http://potomac-nmra.org> Library tab: February-March

- **Car Float Operations** by Brian Sheron, MMR
- **Building a Simpson O Scale 36 Foot Gondola Kit** by Martin Brechbiel, MMR
- **Using GoJo Pumice Hand Cleaner to Remove Lettering** by Mat Thompson, MMR
- **Mark Me Up: Switching Vienna** by Mat Thompson, MMR

To access each of the referenced PD articles below:

<http://potomac-nmra.org> Library tab: April-May

- **Prototype Modeling an Old Trackside Structure** by Alex Belida
- **A Load for the O Scale 36' Gondola** by Martin Brechbiel, MMR

### SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION

- **AP Association Volunteer and AP Scenery** article by Jane Clarke *SMD Wheel Report*  
[https://smdnmra.org/newsletters/WRpt\\_VOL1920No2.pdf](https://smdnmra.org/newsletters/WRpt_VOL1920No2.pdf)
- **AP Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical** by Jane Clarke *SMD Wheel Report Spring 2020*  
[https://smdnmra.org/newsletters/WRpt\\_VOL1920No3.pdf](https://smdnmra.org/newsletters/WRpt_VOL1920No3.pdf)

### NMRA MAGAZINE

- January 2020 pages 20-31 “**Building a Prototype Model in HO Scale**” by Jerry Lauchle, MMR

### NMRA WEBSITE

- **AP Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical** clinic video by Kurt Thompson, MMR and Brian Kampschroer.

<https://www.nmra.org/clinics/getting-ap-electrical-certificate-railroad-club-presentation>

# Scouts BSA Rail Camp

By Rob Rousseau

Twice a year the North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, North Carolina hosts Rail Camp for 452 Scouts. The Scouts camp out for two nights on the historic 60-acres of museum property and work on their Railroading Merit Badge. During the day on Saturday, they attend workshops, explore the exhibits, and enjoy a train ride around the site.



**Photo 1: Scouts from Troop 356 enjoying the NC Ports Authority 45-ton GE switcher**

Luckily for me, as a BSA Railroading Merit Badge Counselor, I took my Troop there this past February. Temperatures dipped into the 20s overnight and made for a cold morning, but we warmed up with some hot coffee (adults) and hot cocoa (Scouts) and made it to the nearby flag ceremony. From there, we were divided into two groups, for the morning and the afternoon. We received a detailed schedule a few days before the weekend after making sure the weather would be okay.



**Photo 2: Chilly mornings while camping on the grounds of the NCTM**

**Photo 3: Troops gather before morning flag ceremony**



Our Troop and others were scheduled for a 10:30 am train ride. We had free time before and after the train ride until lunch, so we went off and explored the cavernous back shop and roundhouse.



**Photo 4: Norfolk & Western GP9 620 pulls the Scout Train**

Measuring 600' long by 150' wide, the 90,000 square foot Back Shop was completed in 1905 and was recently restored back into museum use. Today it houses aviation and automotive exhibits, such as the ongoing restoration of a Piedmont Airlines DC-3 and many fire trucks.

Built in 1924, the Bob Julian Roundhouse is the largest remaining roundhouse in North America with 37 stalls and contains many steam & diesel locomotives, and other rail cars. It is also an active restoration shop where volunteers maintain rail cars and locomotives that are used on site for train rides. Currently, it is also housing a guest, a classic streamlined steam locomotive, the N&W Class J 611. On loan from the Virginia Museum of Transportation, it is wintering here and into the springtime.

After our train ride and more exploring of classic trains, planes, and automobiles, we returned to our campsite and had lunch.

**Photo 5: On loan, the mighty Class J N&W 611 steam engine towers over the others**



After lunch, we attended our series of workshops to work on our merit badge. The museum laid out signs and made it easy to progress from one class to the next. Our first class was on railroad signals.



**Photo 6: Scouts listen intently to the instructor about freight trains & locomotives**

The next classes were on railroad departments, freight trains and locomotives, planning an Amtrak trip and, finally, Operation Lifesaver. Prior to this trip, I had talked with Carolina Southern Division 12 Superintendent Alan Hardee and arranged for him to supply model railroad car kits for this event. Alan volunteered at the museum over the weekend as a trained Railroading Merit Badge Counselor. He was at the last class and, after the presentation, the boys enjoyed getting to pick out their cars.

**Photo 7: Several Scouts, on their way back to camp, caught a free ride on motorcars provided by the North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA).**



That evening we had a virtual campfire in the Back Shop with jokes and skits, and then retired to our own campfires (in museum provided burn barrels) for additional cleanup after dinner.

The next morning after packing up all our equipment back into our trailer, we had our Roses & Thorns. This is where each Scout gets to share something he enjoyed and something he did not (weather notwithstanding). They greatly enjoyed exploring the site and riding on the motorcars and train. This was a great trip for the kids and they learned a great deal about the railroad history of this North Carolina treasure.

For more information, please visit the North Carolina Transportation Museum's website:

<https://www.nctrans.org/>

# Annual Reports from MER's Divisions for 2019

By Kenneth Montero, Vice President, MER

Each year, each Division is required to provide MER with a report of its activities for the prior year. A copy of each report received by MER is printed below. A copy is also provided to the MER Board of Directors in their packets for the Mid-Year BOD meeting.

While a suggested format is provided, the Divisions are not required to follow it, and there will be some differences (such as formatting) as a result. Because these are official reports from each Division, they are printed here without editing.

In addition to informing MER members of the activities of each Division, these reports also contain ideas for future activity in Divisions other than the reporting Division."

## Yearly Division Report

### Division: New Jersey Division

**Reporting Period: January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019**

#### Meeting Times and Places:

We schedule 5 meets per year, with all meets starting at 9:00 am and ending at 12:00pm. We try to move the meets around the division for member's convenience.

For our 2019 meets, NJ Division members sign in count ranged from 55 to 75, the average being 64. This count is NJ Division Members only and does not include guests of members, first time visitors, or members from other divisions.

We gladly welcome visitors from other divisions, seeing regular visitors from Philadelphia and Susquehanna Divisions in MER, and Garden State Division of the NER.

- January 2019 was held at Grace Church in Merchantville, NJ. Also home to Cherry Valley Model Railroad Club. We host a joint meet at this location with the Philadelphia Division as guests. Clinics were History of the Crystal River Railroad in Colorado, and Modeling a Depressed Center Flatcar.
- March 2019 was held in Hamilton Twp., NJ. Clinics followed the Works In Progress format, with 10 clinics available to choose from, each clinic was 30 minutes long and presented 4 times.
- May 2019 we were hosted by the Garden State Division of the NER in Hillsborough, NJ. Clinics were History of the Raritan River RR, and Modeling the Diamond Glass Co.
- September 2019 was held at Brick Elks Lodge in Brick, NJ. Clinics were How to Design and Produce Open Loads, and How to Make Removable Scenery.
- November 2019 was held at Cumberland County Community Church in Millville, NJ. Clinics were Operating Freight Trains Using Dead Rail/Power On Board, and Prototype RR Operation VS Model RR Operation.

Our meets usually consist of Division Business, 2 Clinics, NJD Bookstore, Model Contest, Sales Tables, and Door Prizes. Following the meets we have 6 - 7 very generous members, near the meet locations, open their layouts for tours from 1pm to 5pm.

#### Change in Officer from last year (including AP Coordinator):

We elected a new Clerk, Joe Zebrowski to fill the 1 year unexpired term of Tom Lavin, and we elected 1 new Director for a 2 year term. All other positions were incumbents or in the middle of their terms.

**Achievement Program highlights:** The following submitted paperwork and received certificates;

Model Railroad Author (3) - **PJ Mattson, MMR, Bob Price, and Mike Prokop**  
 Association Volunteer (3) - **Chuck Higdon, Mike Prokop, and Fred Willis**  
 Master Builder Structures - **Paul More**  
 Master Builder Scenery - **Paul More**  
 Chief Dispatcher - **Mike Prokop**  
 Golden Spike - **Paul More**

#### **Activities from the past year:**

- We worked with Tangent Scale Models, beginning in 2018, to design and order a New Jersey Division Gondola Car in 2 numbers, NJDX 1968 for our start year, and NJDX 2018 for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Our cars arrived January 10, 2019, and are available for purchase. The model is a Bethlehem Steel Company, 52'6" 70-ton Drop-end Gondola. These gondolas are available for **anyone** in any region or division, to purchase, \$35 for first one, and \$30 for the second, choose number(s) you want. Contact a NJ Div. Board Member if interested. See njdivnmra.org for more info.

#### **Special Projects or working with other organizations:**

We plan at least 2 joint meets per year to expand the availability of activities, clinics, and layout tours for our and our neighboring members. Each division provides 1 Clinician for the joint meets.

We will host or be hosted by the Philadelphia Division, MER, and the Garden State Division, NER.

For the third year in a row, we have sponsored a Free-mo Modular Railroading Clinic during December. This is a non-meet day, extended clinic that runs from 9am to 2pm, plus time afterward for those wanting more information.

We try to have a summer clinic day each year, during one of our non-meet months. For summer 2020 we are planning to have a craftsman building kit day.

The New Jersey Division has decided to host the 2025 MER Convention. There are no further details to present at this time of this report.

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

We are continuing the Member ID Card and Lanyard program we started in 2018. This includes credit card sized custom ID's (similar to the MER Conventions ID Cards) and a custom printed New Jersey Division Lanyard. These items have been a big hit with our members, and generate many comments and questions from other divisions, while costing the division about \$2 per member.

In December 2019 we decided to design and offer our members a NJ Division Caboose Logo, embroidered shirt. These will be paid for by each member, but with a bulk order price. For the first order we made it to 40 shirts ordered. This is not a fund raiser, each member will pay the exact cost of their order as quoted to the division. This is another option for the members to show their membership in the NJ Division.

#### **In your opinion, where could the MER provide support to your division?**

Find a way to begin funding the RailPass Program again. Our Division has been paying the cost of the trial memberships through 2018 and 2019, directly to the NMRA, or by reimbursing the Garden State Division of the NER for a number of them they initially paid, for members within our Division

#### **Superintendent's Name and Signature** (Electronic or typewritten signature OK):

William Grosse Jr.

### **Yearly Division Report Reporting Period: 01-01-2019 --- 12-31-2019**

**Division: Potomac Division**



**Meeting Times and Places:**

Annual Meeting was held at St. Matt's Church, Annandale, VA on March 16, 2019

Board Meeting was held at the Clerk's residence (Kalis) on March 30, 2019

Board meeting was held on June 22, 2019 at George Mason Regional Library

An online Board Meeting was held on August 26, 2019 to approve the purchase of a laptop for the Division. Motion carried (purchase of laptop approved).

Online Board Meetings were also held to approve Policy document updates and the accept the revision of the Bylaws as suitable to be placed on the 2020 ballot before the membership for acceptance.

**Change in Officers from last year (including AP Coordinator).  
Contact information:**

Name	Address	Contact Info	Position	NMRA Number
Martin Brechbiel, MMR	3404 Monarch Lane Annandale VA 22003-1155	703-309-3082 Superintendent @potomac-nmra. org	Superintendent	114353
Andrew Dodge, MMR	16260 Batchellors Forest Rd Olney MD 20832-0000	301-774-7753 sr-asst-super @potomac-nmra. org	Senior Asst. Superintendent	107528
Ernest Little, MMR	10162 Woodbury Dr Manassas VA 20109-3724	571-383-7316 asst-super @potomac-nmra. org	Asst. Superintendent	129108
Nick Kalis	1420 Spring Hill Rd Ste 600 McLean VA 22102-3030	703-585-0100 Clerk @potomac-nmra. org	Clerk	092783
Thomas J. Brodrick	24028 Preakness Dr Damascus MD 20872-2167	301-253-0558 Paymaster @potomac-nmra. org	Paymaster	127623
Mathew A. Thompson, MM	13000 Triple Crown Loop Gainesville, VA 20155-3207	703-743-1895 achievement-program @potomac-nmra. org	AP Coordinator	081125

**Division web site address:** <http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Main/Home.php>

**Membership:** Number of members including the change from the previous year. Membership recruitment activities conducted during the year.

According to the roster extract provided to the Division from the MER:

December 2018 --- 305

November 2019 --- 288

However, it is also clear that the membership data that filters down to the Division through the MER is not entirely accurate and varies significantly from month to month. Members that were listed one month, disappear, and return later. New member appear for a period and then disappear. Members that known to correct are missing and Life members are missing. This information is provided back to the MER Business Manager without knowledge of any further action by anyone.

We make every attempt to recruit new members at every open house and other events; membership forms, NMRA benefits, and a Divisional brochure are available at every event.

**Financial:** Dollar amount in bank at end of the last accounting period was ~\$5600.

We do not charge for any event or service other than for attendance at the yearly miniCon that takes place usually in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of every year – the attendance fee is nominal and set to cover the cost of the venue as opposed to profit. However, to cover costs of venues in the future we will be accepting donations as opposed to a set fee.

### **Achievement Program highlights:**

Master Model Railroader – Martin Brechbiel, No. 629 and Ernie Little No. 647.

Achievement Program Certificates:

Scenery –	Nick Kalis Bernard Kempinski Pete LaGuardia
Structures -	Alex Belida
Volunteer -	Bernard Kempinski Bill Mosteller
Electrical -	Bernard Kempinski
Civil -	Bernard Kempinski
Cars -	Ernie Little
Author -	Alex Belida Ernie Little Bernard Kempinski Pete LaGuardia

Golden Spike – Frank Benenati, Paul Hutchins, Pete LaGuardia, and Cameron Green

### **Activities from the past year:**

#### **Division Events:**

<b>Open Houses</b>	Host	Name of Layout	Scale	Location
February 16, (Saturday)	Frank Benenati	Maryland Junction Railroad	HO	Damascus Maryland
March 30 (Saturday)	James Zarnick	Butler & Western New York	HO	Ashburn, Virginia Silver Spring
April 27 (Saturday)	Richard Kafka	Colorado Midland Basalt to Aspen	HO	Maryland
May 18 (Saturday)	Gil Fuchs	Haifa and Jerusalem Railroad Nickel City Line Railroad	HO	Rockville Maryland
June 22 (Saturday)	Bob Rodriguez	Company Ohio Central RR - East Central	HO	Dumfries Virginia
July 20 (Saturday)	Douglas Hess	Ohio	HO	Burke , Virginia
August 17 (Saturday)	Paul Hutchins	Modern Day CSX	HO	Waldorf Maryland
September 21 (Saturday)	Mark Gionet	Boston & Maine Western Route	HO	Alexandria Virginia

		Milwaukee Road - Superior Division		
November 9 (Saturday)	Glenn Downing	Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee	HO	Reston Virginia
November 16 (Saturday)	Terry Terrance	M&K Junction Model Railroad	O	Culpeper, Virginia
November 16 (Saturday)	Cam Green	Main Central Lower Road	HO	Broad Run, Virginia

November 16 open houses were held in conjunction with the joint Convention with James River

Attendance of open house events averages 15 +/- 5.

Sept. 15 meet at the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders club in Vienna, VA; 3 clinics; attendance count was 31.

Nov. 16 Joint meet with James River Div. in Warrenton at Battlefield Baptist Church; 2 tracks of 2 clinics, popular vote model contest, raffle, and 2 open house layouts in the afternoon; attendance count at one point was >61.

The Ops Day organized by the Division's AP Coordinator in 2019 is planned to become a yearly event starting off in 2020 (May 16, 2020).

The Board has reviewed the current set of Potomac Division Bylaws to ascertain their conformity to current NMRA and MER standards and to assess the celerity of the various written rules. Upon completion of that task, the Bylaws were edited, reorganized, with extensive sections being rewritten. The new version of the Bylaws have been reviewed by the Superintendent, Senior Assist. Superintendent, Assist. Superintendent, and the MER vice-president for acceptability and the Division Board has also voted upon their acceptability. The revised Bylaws will be presented to the Division membership at our Annual Meeting in April 2020.

In conjunction with the Board's work on the Bylaws, we also revised and streamlined the list of Division's Policies and Procedures into a single public document to provide the Board the flexibility to oversee and help operate the division in a more efficient manner. The Board is currently also assembling a single document of Position Descriptions such that all will know of the basic duties of every position within the Division, and to make these clear for recruiting purposes. All three documents will then form the core of an Executive Handbook for the Potomac Division.

In order to present Power Point clinic programs for the Division, the Senior Assistant Superintendent requested and received approval to purchase a laptop computer and other hardware along with the necessary software programs to facilitate presenting programs to the attendees. This was done in response to the simple fact that the Division had no laptop computer and was left relying upon the waning generosity of members. After programing the laptop, the computer fulfilled the Board's expectations at our November meet and should serve the Division for a number of years in the future.

The Division web site has been given a facelift, made mobile-friendly, and new information is added to it regularly.

The Division Yahoo Group will transition to an io.groups over the next several months not with a wholesale migration but with a controlled invitation of Division members and those known to be NMRA members as the current Yahoo group membership cannot be verified as being actual NMRA members.

**Charitable and Educational Activities:** Include information about the Division's charitable contributions and educational activities.

This year's charitable contribution was during the Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> joint meet with the James River Division in Warrenton at the Battlefield Baptist Church wherein \$400 of donations were collectively made by the attendees.

**NMRA and MER Convention Activity:** Information about the Division's plans to host a Regional or National convention.

No interest whatsoever in either due to ridiculous costs associated with venues, hotels, other associated financial unknowns that apparently cannot be defined by the MER.

### Ongoing & Future Directions:

Working to fulfill the requests and desires of the Division's membership, which was expressed in a December 2017 special addition of *The Potomac Flyer*, the Board began an outreach program of clinics, coordinated open house events, and socialization time. In September, the Division held a two-hour program of three clinics at the Northern Virginia Model Railroad Club. This was followed in November by a joint division meet with the James River Division in the Warrenton, Virginia, area. It was an all-day schedule with four clinics and a popular-vote modeling contest in the morning followed by two open houses in the afternoon. The Board has also scheduled all-day events in the Southern Maryland area on March 7<sup>th</sup> with multiple clinics and two open houses, and the yearly miniCon in Annandale, Virginia, set for April 4, 2020, with a new format of clinics. Tentative scheduling is in place for another similar meeting in June and then in the Fall in either Sept. or Nov.

Open houses, Outreach Program, and the annual miniCon are scheduled through 2020 with ~9-11 on the calendar outside of those meets with clinics.

	Name	Name of Layout	Scale	Location
January 18	Cameron Green	Maine Central Lower Road	HO	Broad Run, Virginia
February 22	Dean Ripple	B&O Monongah Division		Gaithersburg, Maryland
March 7		2 open houses with clinics		<a href="#">Surrat House, Clinton, MD</a>
April 4 - Mini Con		<b>MINI CON</b> Cowan, TN an NC&SL helper district		<a href="#">St Matthews, Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA</a>
April 11	Brad Stanford		N	Arlington, Virginia
May 30	Brad Trenkamp	State Line Feed Co.	HO	Vienna, Virginia
June 20	Alex Belida	Eureka and South Pass Railroad	HO	Rockville, Maryland
	Bernie	USMRR Aquia-Fredericksburg		
July 25	Kempinski	Line	O	Alexandria, Virginia
August 15	John Swanson	Cresson Branch PRR	HO	Gainesville, Virginia
September 5	Brian Sheron	LIRR Port Jefferson Branch	HO	Poolesville Maryland
September 5	Brian Benoit	Seneca Junction	HO	Poolesville Maryland
November 14	George Meyrick	The Tri-State Line	HO	Manassas, Virginia
		Lehigh & New England		
December 12	Todd Hermann	Catasauqua Branch	HO	Falls Church, Virginia

Three hosts for open houses have volunteered for 2021; however, we plan on integrating those into the Outreach Program to make those full day events with clinics in the morning, lunch on your own, and layouts to visit in the afternoon.

### Special Projects or working with other organizations

We seek to make the Fall joint meet with the James River Division with year in Nov. a regular yearly event. We would like to have a parallel meet jointly with the Chesapeake or South Mountain Divisions were suitable venues to be found available within budget constraints.

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

The newly initiated outreach program of clinics, coordinated open house events, and socialization time has already demonstrated significant attendance success and will be continued.

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

The \$1 per member rebate is completely inadequate support given the constant assessment of the Divisions to be the most important level of the NMRA. The MER should take this issue very loudly to Nat'l NMRA and demand

this so-called rebate be significantly increased. The matching grant program really is needed to support the acquisition of A/V equipment for the Division in the near future given that the Division has no real fund raising abilities and is confronted with serious costs associated with meeting place venues.

**Superintendent's Name and Signature.**

Martin Brechbiel, MMR

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## 2019 Philadelphia Division Annual Report to the MER Region

### Meet Dates and Places:

January 12th: (Joint Meet with NJ Division)

Grace Episcopal Church, Merchantville, NJ

20 Phila. Division Members, NJ Division Members or their guests were not recorded 1 Non-NMRA guest Members.

Total: 21

April 6th: Phila. First Church off the Brethren, Wynmore, PA

37 Phila. Division Members, 6 Other Division Guests, 6 Non- NMRA Guests,

Total: 49

June 8th: Newtown Township Building Newtown Square, PA

36 Phila. Division Members, 6 Other Division Guests, 2 Non- NMRA Guests,

Total: 44

September 7th: Phila. Crown Plaza Hotel, King of Prussia, PA

32 Phila. Division Members, 4 Other Division Guests, 4 Non- NMRA  
Guests.

Total: 40

November 9th: Brandywine Town Center Com. Cntr., Wilmington, DE

33 Phila. Division Members, 3 Other Division Members 3 Non-NMRA Guest.

Total: 39

The average division meet attendance was 38 Phila. Division Members. There continues to be a strong attendance to our meets.

### The Board: (Elected)

Superintendent: Charles A. Butsch, [cabutsch@gmail.com](mailto:cabutsch@gmail.com)

Asst. Supt.: Rob Hinkle, [robhink@comcast.net](mailto:robhink@comcast.net)

Clerk: Mark Wallace, [mwallace665@verizon.net](mailto:mwallace665@verizon.net)

Treasure: Howard Kaplan, [howard@phillynmra.org](mailto:howard@phillynmra.org)

Director Clinics: Mike Dettinger [dettinger@comcast.com](mailto:dettinger@comcast.com)

Director Layouts/ Video: Bill Fagan, [wfagan@comcast.net](mailto:wfagan@comcast.net)

Director Publicity: Charles J. Stevens, [ReadingChip@yahoo.com](mailto:ReadingChip@yahoo.com)

### Auxiliary Officials: (Appointed)

AP Coordinator: David Messer MMR, dmesserpr@comcast.net  
 AP Committee: Earl Paine: earlpaine@verizon.net  
 2019 Convention Chairman: Rob Hinkle  
*The Dispatcher* Editor, Webmaster: Howard Kaplan  
 Membership Outreach: Charles Butsch, Bill Fagan  
 Membership Records: Mark Wallace  
 Scouting: Joe Bergmaier, [jobber922@gmail.com](mailto:jobber922@gmail.com)  
 OPS: Rob Hinkle  
 Social Media: Rob Hinkle  
 Special Projects: John Seibert johnseibert@comcast.net

### Achievement Program Awards Earned in 2018:

Cars: Glyn Thomas, Joe Walters  
 Scenery: Al Zollers  
 Structures: Al Zollers  
 Volunteer: Joe Walters, Bill Fagan, Rob Hinkle  
 Author: Glyn Thomas  
 Motive Power: Joe Walters, Glyn Thomas  
 MMR: Glyn Thomas, Joe Walters

### Activities During The Year:

The division's newsletter *The Dispatcher* was issued five times during the year. It is the main contact to members via e mail and snail mail to a few as required. Special events and notices are also sent out this way as required.

The average issue is 43 pages includes articles by division members, up coming events, directions to our next meet, advertising of division apparel and member's own

**For Sale** items.

The MER 2019 Convention Committee led by Assistant Super, Rob Hinkle was introduced at the 2018 Convention by Chip Stevens at the Convention Dinner. The *Liberty Bell Special Convention* will be held at The Crown Plaza Phila. in King of Prussia just out side of Philladelphia. Activities include, but not limited to, clinics, layout tours, modular layouts, model judging & displays, Op sessions, white elephant tables, door prizes and Full Banquet Dinner with a keynote speaker, Mike Baker. The convention was a challenge, but through the convention committee, volunteers within the division and adjacent division and the MER Region a convention was delivered the we are all proud of to have presented.

### Division Meets: Typical Program

- Sign in with coffee, donuts and Philly pretzels
- Introduction by the Superintendent: Welcome of guests & new members and announcement of future events
- A/P Awards: by the A/P Committee Chair
- First Clinic: introduced by the Clinic Director
- Brake for Refreshments and Fellowship
- Door Prize Awards: by a board member
- 50/50 Prize Award: by a board member
- Second Clinic: introduced by the Clinic Director

- Show and Tell ( where members can share their hobby by showing or tell what they have been doing)

The meets normally run from 9 am to 12 noon Saturday mornings. Maps and directions are distributed, before an independent lunch, for home layout tours of several local member's layouts that will be open from 1pm to 4pm that afternoon.

### Division Successes:

The attendance at our meets continue to remain strong not only with our own members and their guests but also from our adjacent divisions members.

The A/P program remains a very strong program in our division with Glyn Thomas and Joe Walters completing their MMR goal and receiving their award at the MER Convention Banquet in October.

The video recording of layouts continues to not only within our division but also neighboring divisions divisions layouts and across the country. Bill Fagan has provided a link with these videos to our members to other layouts and their skills. These layouts have also been part of our meets as well.

Our news letter *The Dispatcher* continues to be extremely successful in maintaining a link to our members as well as to prospective members. Our web site has also been a link with in the NMRA not only to members but also to non-members who have found informational links to the hobby that was not easily found else where. Howard Kaplan, who is the editor of *The Dispatcher* as well as the web master continues to maintain two vital communication elements of our division.

### Where in our opinion could the MER provide support to our Division?

Continued financial support for special projects and tools insures the success of the division.

We always welcome MER Board members to our meets throughout the year. We appreciated Kurt Thompson, MMR and Martin Brechbiel, MMR attending some of our meets this pass year. It is extremely important to have a link between division and the regional representatives.

Charles A. Butsch

Philadelphia Division Superintendent

January 29, 2019

## Tidewater Division 2019 Annual Report

### Division 4 – Tidewater Division

**Subject:** Yearly Division Report

**Reporting Period:** January 2019 – December 2019

**Division:** Tidewater (#4)

### **Officers and Directors:**

Superintendent: Fred Humphrey



He's in his second term as the "Superintendent" for the Tidewater Division. He retired in 2010 as a Master Chief Petty Officer after 50 years of reserve and active service plus civil service responsibilities for the Navy. Fred has been interested in trains since childhood because his father worked for Southern Pacific. He began collecting railroad items and got into model railroading after getting his first O-scale train. He grew up around Decatur Illinois where he loved watching trains near the interlock. All train traffic passing through the interlock included B&O, Illinois Central, Illinois Terminal, Pennsylvania and Wabash railroads. Fred

still visits the interlock every time he's in town. Now, he watches trains from NS, CSX (up for sale), CN, UP unit coal, BNSF unit grain plus observing several short lines like the Decatur Central, Decatur Junction, R. C. Corman and the large ADM locomotive fleet. He joined the NMRA and TMRC to learn more about the hobby and how to use it in building his layout.

929 Priscilla Lane

Chesapeake, VA 23322

Phone: 757.482.9498 (H)

757.406.2078 (M)

Email: [frederickhumphrey@outlook.com](mailto:frederickhumphrey@outlook.com)

Assistant Superintendent: John Fallon



He is in his third term as Assistant Superintendent. He is native to Hampton Roads, having returned here after military service. He spent ten years (active and reserve) in the Navy as a submarine electronics technician-nuclear and spent all of his career in submarines. John is a journeyman electrician and enjoys modeling the Norfolk & Western Railroad. John's fondest childhood memory was an Amtrak trip with his family from Richmond to Orlando's Disneyland.

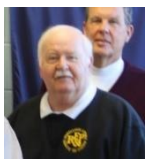
200 Mt. Vernon Ave. #4

Portsmouth, VA 23707

Phone: 757.636.3023

Email: [zzoxdoc@yahoo.com](mailto:zzoxdoc@yahoo.com)

Pay Master: John Robey



He is in his third term as the Division "Paymaster." John is a retired member of the US Secret Service, having served president's Carter, Reagan, Bush (G.H.W.) and retired when Bill Clinton's term ended in 2001. John is a lifelong fan of (and models) the Richmond, Potomac & Fredericksburg Railroad and is a member of their historical society. John's favorite railroad memory is riding in a convertible across the highways of central Missouri

with his father. His Dad drove with one hand on the steering wheel and in the other...held an 8mm movie camera shooting pictures of local trains traveling down the tracks.

1313 Smith Cove Circle

Virginia Beach, VA23455

Phone: 571.217.0599

Email: [Jrobey2019@gmail.com](mailto:Jrobey2019@gmail.com)

Time Keeper: Jim Keiper



My love for model railroading started as a young child with 027 scale trains around the Christmas tree and later layouts in the cellar. I got serious in modelling later in life and joined the Tidewater Division in 1999. I served in various capacities to include BOD member, assistant Superintendent and later Superintendent for two terms. I am also a founding Member of the Tidewater Model Railroad Club (TMRC). I have participated in the transportable modular layouts as they evolved and attended their shows at various venues to include our Division and major Shows, Assisted Living Centers, and Nursing Homes. I have represented the Division on local radio and television shows to promote our hobby and related events. I have also participated in the organizing and conducting of a MER Convention (MP 40) in Suffolk, VA. I have also attended numerous MER and NMRA National Conventions. I model the DL&W and the Erie Lackawanna System in HO and N Scale. I grew up in Tobyhanna, PA where the DL&W and later, the EL traversed. My Father worked for those Railroads for 20 years. I learned some behind scene operations of the Railroad as a result of his employment. My home layout was disassembled and is



presently being designed and built in my FROG. My desire for participating in our NMRA MER Division is many faceted. I am thrilled participating with my Family Members, I enjoy the fellowship, public operations, appreciating others' modelling talent, sharing of the hobby with younger folks, and learning from some of the best modelers in our hobby; right here in our Division!

1024 Chesterfield Ter  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
Phone: 757.739.9082  
Email: [eljek8952@gmail.com](mailto:eljek8952@gmail.com)

Director At Large: John Cryderman



He's in his third term as a "Member at Large" for the Tidewater Division. John was born in Rochester Michigan and models both the Piere Marquette and Chesapeake & Ohio railroads. He is a Navy veteran having retired from active duty with 20 years of service as a nuclear machinist mate. Since retiring from the Navy, he is currently employed with Huntington-Ingalls Newport News shipyard as a production planner. John's fondest childhood railroad memory was walking in the Michigan Central Station (Detroit) with his Dad.

4706 Barger Street  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
Phone: 757.494.0976  
Email: [jcryderman@cox.net](mailto:jcryderman@cox.net)

Director At Large: Roger Bir



He is in his second term as a "Director at Large" for the Tidewater Division. Roger produces the division newsletter, "The Callboard" and is the webmaster for the Division. He retired in 2011 after 38 years of active and reserve service in the Navy and Air Force. Roger moved into model railroading in 2007 after retiring as an NCAA football and wrestling referee. His early interests centers around passenger consists starting from Union Pacific and continuing with the C&O's "George Washington." Roger's fondest railroad memory came in 1956. He and his father ventured to a country railroad crossing just east of Columbia City, Indiana. Off in the distance approached a Nickel Plate Berkshire. As the train grew near, his Dad said, "wave at the engineer and make a pulling motion with your hand." He did as his father asked and was surprised as the engineer waved and sounded the locomotive's whistle.

1728 Springs Edge Court  
Virginia Beach, VA23456  
Phone: 757.876.5568  
Email: [sorcerer54@cox.net](mailto:sorcerer54@cox.net)

Director At Large: Norm Garner



He recently received his Master Modeler Award, #625, on 21 November 2018.

3408 Wilshire Road  
Portsmouth, VA 23703  
Phone: 757.484.0772  
Email: [nwgrail2@aol.com](mailto:nwgrail2@aol.com)

**Division Web Site Address:** <https://nmra-mer-tidewater.org/>.

**Membership:** 147, down from 2019 (157)

**Membership Recruitment:** Recruiting display at The Greenberg's Train Show. Distribute back issues of Scale Rails, Model Railroader, Railroad Model Craftsman, newsletters to waiting rooms, hobby stores, etc., with Division contact information sticker applied. Also, use weekly local newspaper supplement to list Tidewater Division in hobbies section.

**Division Events:** Looking for ways to improve the Tidewater Division inter-action with other train modelers. First, continue the follow-on from the previous superintendent's goal to change the Tidewater Division imagine from just an HO organization to one which supports all modelers (regardless of scale). Our top priority will be to move some meetings near a train club or layout for inclusion into our meeting schedule, so the membership can visit that club's or individual's layout. The object is to share information, exchange ideas and reach agreements on ways to spread the word regarding railroad club events. Those events support our second priority by having them placed in "The Callboard" the division newsletter, providing links to other local web sites to promote these events. Finally, the Tidewater Division meeting and contest for 2019:

19 January 2019 – Annual Business Meeting at St Matthews Church in Virginia Beach, VA

Contest: Favorite Train

16 March 2019 – Hobbytown Store, Virginia Beach, VA

Contest: Cars with Loads

11 May 2019 – National Train Day, Denbigh Community Center Newport News, VA

Contest: Structure (Off-Line)

20 July 2019 – Albemarle Railroad Club and Museum, Elizabeth City, NC

Contest: Favorite Photo

21 September 2019 – Suffolk Seaboard Station Railroad Museum, Suffolk, VA

Contest: Engines (Steam vs Diesel)

16 November 2019 – National Model Railroad Mouth, Virginia Beach Public Library, Virginia Beach, VA

Contest: Your Favorite Car

18 January 2020: - Lee Hall Station Foundation, Lee Hall, VA

Contest: Favorite Train

#### **Charitable and Educational Activities:**

- (1) Annually, made substantial donation to "Toys for Tots." This is a donation started 29 years ago.
- (2) Made a cash donation to The Children's Museum in Portsmouth, VA to help support their model railroad exhibit.
- (3) Made donations to facilities providing space for meetings, helping cover costs for utilities, trach collection, etc.

#### **Achievement Program Activity:**

NMRAAP Certificates – 2

Golden Spike – 1

Merit Awards – 4

#### **Awards Distributed at the 2019 Annual Business Meeting:**

Modeler of the Year: George Downer

Volunteer of the Year: John Fallon

Superintendent Award: Bill Miller

**NMRA and MER Convention Activity:** We explored and were involved in discussions for possible joint hosting with the James River Division for the 2022 MER annual convention. As planning moves

forward, we are awaiting word from the James River Division coordinator on the level of responsibilities needed by us to support the MER 2022 Convention.

**Future Directions:** Several local model railroad clubs are in danger of losing their public display facilities. The Division has taken the lead to locate a facility to house multi-scale layouts. This effort will try to bring local modelers into one organization on how best to have public displays, hobby education, hands on clinics, public tour of local layouts and build a railroad library for public access. We believe an organization titled “Hampton Roads Council of Model Railroaders” will provide the best solution in having a governing body for all local model railroad scales. These local clubs have shown interest by attending several meetings to determine whether or not they will participate:

ATLANTIC COAST S GAUGERS – S Gauge  
 CHILDREN’S MUSEUM – O Gauge  
 CHUCKATUCK LIVE STEAM - 7½ inch Gauge Live Steam  
 KIDS RUN TRAINS – O Gauge  
 LEGO GROUPS – O Gauge  
 SOUTH HAMPTON ROADS N-TRAK – N Gauge  
 SUFFOLK SEABOARD STATION & MUSEUM – HO Gauge  
 TIDEWATER O-GAUGE ASSOCIATION – O Gauge  
 TIDEWATER MODULAR RAILROAD CLUB – HO Gauge

These organizations haven’t attended any meetings, but are on the distribution list for meeting reports:

PENINSUAL MODEL RAILROADERS – N Gauge  
 TIDEWATER BIG TRAIN OPERATORS – G Gauge

These clubs have provided documentation to help us in developing our strategy in forming the Hampton Roads Council of Model Railroaders:

Citrus Model Railroad Club (Florida) – Non-Profit 617  
 Florida Citrus Model Train Society (Florida) – Non-Profit 501(c)(3)  
 Model Railroad Club Inc. (New Jersey) – Non-Profit 501(c)(3)  
 North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (Texas) – Non-Profit 501(c)(3)  
 San Diego Model Railroad Museum (California) – Non-Profit 501(c)(3)

We’ll continue our partnership with Dayton Hobbies, Inc. (HOBBYTOWN STORES) to have some Divisional meetings in the Virginia Beach Store, open to the public, with Q & A sessions about the hobby, demonstrations, (clinics), etc. A large floor to ceiling glass show case has been made available to the Division to exhibit structure, motive power, rolling stock, kit bashing, and other hobby related topics. Also, generous discount on model railroad related supplies is given to Division members.

**Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to your Division?** Assist in developing more media exposure to promote the art and science of model railroad hobby. For example: PBS “Track Ahead” series shown on television. It was popular in Charlotte, NC and Richmond, VA area. Our local PBS told me there is not enough interest in model railroading, but it received a half page in the Wall Street Journal in 2016 and according to last survey by Hobby Industry Associations, it was the number one hobby in the USA. Also, connect with “Teen for Trains” which has replaced the defunct “Teen Association of Model Railroaders.”

Reporting Period: Meeting Times and Places: Meetings are held every other odd month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday

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

Achievement Program highlights: Rod Vance continues to expand AP Participation along with regular articles about the program in Crossties (JRD Newsletter)

Activities from the past year: Regular meetings including a first joint meeting with Potomac Division. JRD continued its series on weathering as a "Hands on Clinic."

Special Projects or working with other organizations: Joint meeting with Potomac Division. Planned a common build for 2020 where all members are given the opportunity to build the same car to the level they are comfortable. If they don't build it members are asked to either return the kit or reimburse the division for the cost. The model will be shown at the Weathering Clinic at the September meeting. (The start of this project is delayed due to the Covid-19 outbreak)

Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions: Weathering Clinics held where an expert shows one facet of weathering. This is done annually for one of the meetings with the division paying all costs of supplies. We hold this in the workroom of a hobby shop in our division with members able to buy the supplies at a discount along with other items after the meeting.

Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to your division? – Nothing at the Moment

Superintendent's Name and Signature.

Philip R Taylor

## **Yearly Division Report**

**Reporting Period: September 2019 - May 2020**

**Division:** 10, South Mountain

### **Meeting Times and Places:**

In 2019...

September 15th, SMD member Jeff Grove's home, Hagerstown, MD

October 13th, SMD member John Madden's home, Mt. Airy, MD

November 10th, SMD member Dave Thalman's home, Winchester, VA

December 8th, SMD member Bob Morningstar's home, Greencastle, PA

In 2020...

January 12th, Hobbytown USA store location, Frederick, MD

- Open house by Fredericks County Society of Model Engineers

February 9th, Cumberland Valley Model Railroad Club, Chambersburg, PA

March 8th, SMD member Jay Beckham's home, Berkeley Springs, WV

April 18th, Mini-Convention, Blue Ridge Summit, PA

- Sponsored by Mainline Hobby Supply

May 17th, SMD member Steve King's home, Fayetteville, PA

**Change in officers from last year:** none

**Contact information:** N/A

**Achievement Program highlights:** Several members did earn awards this season, and the program was actively promoted via our newsletter.

**Activities from the past year:** None / see below

**Special projects or working with other organizations:** Division meeting at the Hobbytown USA location in Frederick, MD for a second year. The store is owned by SMD member Richard Benjamin. Meeting also partnered with the Frederick County Society of Model Engineers to provide an open house, of whom several club members also belong to SMD. For the first time ever, SMD also held a meeting in collaboration with the Cumberland Valley Model Railroad Club, which was received very positively by both parties.

**Any successful or new ideas that your division has tried which might be helpful to other divisions:** We believe very strongly in the monthly business meeting format, which keeps members involved and engaged in the division's administration. In this way, individuals can put forward ideas and attain support from fellow members. This benefits the health of the Division and eases the officer's workload.

**Where in your opinion could the MER provide support to your division?** Some type of auto-generated welcome document, either by email or snail mail, letting new members know which division they're in and who to contact in that division for more info. I'm aware we get the monthly updated database, but I've encountered some confusion with members who don't know how to "join SMD" after getting their NMRA membership, or don't realize they're even in a division until they start getting our notifications.

**Superintendent's name and signature**

Alex Polimeni

## Yearly Division Report

Division: #11 Susquehanna Division

Reporting Period: 2019

Meeting Times and Places:

➤ 2019 Calendar

- February 29 – Allentown – Scott Unger
- April 4 – New Holland – Pat Mulrooney & Jeff Thompson
- April 6, Blue Ridge Summit, Mini-Con w/ SMD
- May 2 – Columbia Railroads Day – Barry Schmitt, Tony Sergo, Bill Lesjak
- June 20 – New Oxford – Phil Peters & Howard Oakes
- August 22 – Denver – Dennis Blank
- Oct 2 – 3 – LSOP – Wayne Betty
- October 15 – 18 – Charlotte, NC, MER Convention, Carolina Southern Division
- Nov 7 – 8, 14 – 15, 21 – 22 Section wide Open House Tour

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

Directors

- Dennis Blank
- Phil Peters
- Jeff Thompson

Achievement Program highlights:

Activity in the Achievement Program has continued to remain strong.

## Golden Spike

- Scott Ungar

## Association Volunteer

- Tim Himmelberger

## Civil Engineer

- Scott Ungar

## Electrical

- Scott Ungar

## Structures

- Alan Mende

## Scenery

- Scott Ungar
- Brian Kampschoer
- Pat Mulrooney

## Activities from the past year:

- February 23 – Allentown – Scott Unger
- April 6, Blue Ridge Summit, Mini-Con w/ SMD
- May 4 – 5, Railroads in Columbia – Barry Schmitt, Tony Sergo
- September 14 – 15, Mainline Hobby Open House Weekend
- October 10 – 13, King of Prussia, PA, MER Convention, Philadelphia Division
- Nov 4 – 5, 11 – 12, 18 – 19 Section wide Open House Tour

## Special Projects or working with other organizations:

Yearly we participate with the South Mountain division Mini-Con in April. Building on that success of last year's event, this year in May we have again partnered with the Columbia Historic Preservation Society to co-sponsor Columbia Railroad Day. This has quickly grown to also include as sponsors the Columbia & Reading Railroad, the Lancaster Chapter of the National Railway Historic Society, and as word gets out other groups are wanting to join in.

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

Working with other groups has brought in different ideas and people with different contacts. It also broadens the base of people you are reaching out to

In your opinion, where could the MER provide support to your division?

Superintendent's Name and Signature (Electronic or typewritten signature OK):

Timothy Himmelberger

Susquehanna Division

Yearly Division Report  
Reporting Period: 2019

Division: Carolina Southern Division 12, MER

Meeting Times and Places:

Regular member meeting third Saturday each month  
February 16th Annual Business Meeting;  
February Board Organizational and Planning Meeting

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

Contact information:

Superintendent:

Curtis Alan Hardee	908 S. 9 <sup>th</sup> St. Bessemer City, NC 28016	704-868-6976 superintendent @carolinasouthern.org
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Asst Superintendent:

Jack Monette, MMR 613	174 Glenwood Drive Concord, NC 28025	704-788-2856 assistsuper @carolinasouthern.org
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Paymaster:

John Stevens	114 W Vista View Place Mooresville, NC 28117	704-663-5565 paymaster @carolinasouthern.org
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Clerk:

Edward Gumphrey	911 Pleasant Drive Shelby, NC 28152	757-353-8355 Clerk @carolinasouthern.org
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Director 2020:

Roy Becker	5112 Granite Creek Lane Charlotte, NC 28269	704-644-5555 director2 @carolinasouthern.org
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Director 2022:

Ed Smith	142 Williams Cove Ln. Taylorsville, NC 28681	828-495-7441 director1 @carolinasouthern.org
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Director 2021

Larry Paffrath	17815 Prescott Border Drive Cornelius, NC 28031	704-778-2745 director3 @carolinasouthern.org
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AP Chairman

Neal Anderson	172 Woodfield Dr Statesville, NC 28677	704-775-2830 apchair @carolinasouthern.org
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Achievement Program highlights: See Attached

Activities from the past year:

“Brass Pounder” Division Newsletter; (10 editions)

Division promotion display with operating Timesavers at Train Shows  
Hickory, NC in April, Spencer, NC in May, Gastonia, NC July

13<sup>th</sup> annual Railroad Modeling University (RMU), January 19<sup>th</sup>.

Division Picnic, September- Jack Parker’s Piedmont and Western RR.

Members Swap Meet, November

Wades Train Town Open House (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday monthly)

11 members and spouses attended MER Convention.

Monthly activities

January, RMU, Railroad Modeling University. 1/19/19

February, CSD Annual Business Meeting. Board Of Directors Meeting.

March, Monthly meeting "Show and Tell"

April, Tour of Tichy Train Group. Combined with Carolina Piedmont Division 13.

May, Display at North Carolina Transportation Museum train Show,  
Clinics for train show attendees.

June, Cool Summer "How To Clinics" Part 1- Washing and painting NMRA boxcar shells with Airbrush.

July, Cool Summer "How To Clinics" Part 2- Apply decals on the NMRA boxcar shells using Micro-Sol and Micro-Set.

August, Cool Summer "How To Clinics" Part 3- Weathering NMRA boxcar shells. Layout visit and tour of Neal Andersons KK&L Railroad. Continued class for those working toward Chief Dispatcher.

September, Annual Picnic and layout visit to Jack Parker's Piedmont & Western Railroad.

October, Liberty Bell Special MER Convention.

Monthly Meeting and Layout visit to Southern Piedmont Live Steamers 7 ½" gauge in Oakboro, NC

November, Monthly meeting. Annual swap meet and show. Hickory, NC

Special Projects or working with other organizations

Sponsor Boy Scout Model Railroad Merit Badge with multiple Councils

Maintain & repair model train display at Levine Museum of the New South.

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

The Division has held a Railroad Modeling University for 13 years. This event has been a half or full day collection of classes, clinics, demonstrations, and hands on work sessions on many aspects of the hobby. It is scheduled for January and always includes some classes targeting beginners. Some of the beginner classes have been run every year and consistently get 8 to 12 attendees. We often have several people who had their first exposure to model trains at Christmas and are curious about what more they can do with them. We typically have 4 to 6 concurrent one-hour classes at all levels of expertise, so anyone can learn something from the day. Attendance has been in the range of 60 to 80.

Superintendent's Name and Signature.

Curtis Alan Hardee, 1/14/2020



## Yearly Division Report

**Division:** CPD-13 Carolina Piedmont

**Reporting Period:** January 2019 to January 2020

**Meeting Times and Places:** 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of Every Month January to October, then 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday only for November and December Location is Cambridge Village Retirement Community, Apex NC

**Change in Officer from last year** (including AP Coordinator):

Re-elected in January 2020---John Sokash as Superintendent (3<sup>rd</sup> and last 2-year term), Charlie Rausch as Assistant Superintendent (3<sup>rd</sup> and last 2-year term), Gene Sing as Paymaster, Bill Hanley as Clerk. Tom Shafer replaces Will Seehorn as BoD member till 2023. Kevin O'Conner continues as BoD membership till January 2022 and Danial Fisher continues as BoD membership till January 2021. Vic Bitleris continued as AP Coordinator.

**Achievement Program and other Club Highlights:** December 2018—Jim Murphy Open House; January 2019—Rob Rousseau Member of Year, Charlie Rausch AP for Cars and Volunteer; April 2019—Kevin O'Conner AP Golden Spike, Jim Babcock AP Scenery, Charlie Rausch AP Master Builder; May 2019—Lou Sassi Open House; August 2019—Show & Tell for Cambridge Village Residents; September 2019—Vic Bitleris AP Civil Engineer, Jim Murphy MER 1<sup>st</sup> Place Caboose; November 2019—Jack Dziadul AP Official; December 2019 Grif Bond AP Official.

**Activities from the past year:** Model contest every month. Tichy Train Manufacturing tour in April, Train Shows at NC State Fairgrounds in April and November—Raffle Layout. Annual Yankee Swap at December meeting.

**Special Projects or working with other organizations:** Holiday Trainsets for Kids which is funded via the Raffle Layout.

**Any successful or new ideas your division has tried that might be helpful to other divisions:** Regarding Monthly modeling contests—have expanded numbers of winners from just one to multiple depending upon total numbers of entries. This has encouraged many more participants to the contest.

**In your opinion, where could the MER provide support to your division?** Continue as previous.

**Superintendent's Name and Signature** (Electronic or typewritten signature OK):

John A. Sokash, CPD-13 Superintendent

## Chesapeake Division Yearly Report 2019

**Meeting Times and Places:** We try to meet monthly except for August and October (MER Convention). Places vary depending on the event and availability.

### Officers:

- Superintendent – Tom Casey, [super@chesdiv-nmra.org](mailto:super@chesdiv-nmra.org) (I took over in May from Mike Zitzman who had to resign)
- Assistant Superintendent – Vacant
- Clerk – Tim Beaty, [tsbeaty@verizon.net](mailto:tsbeaty@verizon.net)
- Paymaster – Dave Arday, [davidarday@aol.com](mailto:davidarday@aol.com)
- Board Members – Travers Stavac, [sailsman@att.net](mailto:sailsman@att.net); Mike Zitzman, [mdzitzman@comcast.net](mailto:mdzitzman@comcast.net); Rick Uskert, [mandalore1@yahoo.com](mailto:mandalore1@yahoo.com)
- AP Coordinator – Kurt Thompson, [kurtrain@verizon.net](mailto:kurtrain@verizon.net)

### Achievement Program Highlights:

- Dick Schwanke earned 2 certificates: Dispatcher and Electrical.
- Dave Arday earned Dispatcher

**Activities in 2019:**

1. January – We had a visit with the BSME scheduled but it was cancelled when their power failed and they were forced to move.
2. February – Modelers Day In
3. March – Shared mini-con with Potomac Division
4. May – visit to Andrew Dodge's Colorado Midland
5. June – We had a visit to the Baltimore Streetcar Museum that was cancelled due to track damage from a CSX derailment that damaged the track and overhead.
6. July – Four open houses including Fritz Dahlin, David Vaughn, Don Marvel, and Jeff Mutter.
7. August – Visit to Chesapeake and Allegheny live steamers
8. November – Annual General Meeting
9. December – Visit to Severna Park club.

**Special Projects:**

1. The division is working on the 2021 Convention under the leadership of Rick Uskert. He has submitted a separate report for that.
2. We worked with the Potomac Division on a one day mini-con in March.

**Successful or New Ideas:** None this year.

**Where could the MER provide support:**

1. We have had ongoing issues with the accuracy of the membership list including an incorrect mailing address for the Superintendent, and a number of non-functioning email addresses. We do all of our communications electronically so accurate email addresses are critical. When we have attempted to contact people with non-functioning emails we have had limited success. I'm not sure if there is anything the Region can do to help but I wanted to mention this.
2. We have the issue that all small organizations seem to have: getting people to participate, either at events or, more importantly, volunteering as board members, officers, etc. Last year we tried polling a random sample of the members that do not seem to participate and had no responses from them. The board is never sure if the activities we schedule are what people are looking for or not.

**Signed:**

Tom Casey, Superintendent



**Aberdeen & Rockfish inspection car 105 2018 (Photographer Jack Dziadul)**