



The Local

Newsletter of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
The Local, 77, Number 1, Jan-Feb, 2022

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

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The Basic Cabin or Company House No. 3 or How to Get Rid of Leftovers – Part 7

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR

Seems that those leftovers tubs are terribly deep! Another 5-panel door and frame from yet another partial pack (Tichy; No. 2040), and two 4/4 window (Grandt Line probably) from that zip lock baggie, apparently self-replenishing, jumped out onto my bench. And I found yet another stove pipe (likely

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Turner Model Works) so once more we go charging forward into another exercise in basic O scale structure building.

You can see in **Photo 1** these parts and the associated building clapboard walls. The clapboard siding came out of a scrap baggie (Kappler or Midwest). One has to be a little



careful about using scrap clapboard from multiple sources as the spacing varies, complicating mixing and matching parts for gluing up sides. This build will bump up the complexity a small notch by not being a simple rectangle. This will have a small front porch under the main roof sheltering the entrance. There's a wall for the door and another with a window that will define the porch area. One

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side has a window planned for it while the opposite side gets that stove pipe. Two more wall sections tie everything together. Corners (3/32" x 3/32" basswood) were added to the sides and that one porch wall with the window using Goo and CA since there is end grain wood involved in the joinery. This step makes the corner board trim and also provides gluing surfaces for assembly of the walls.

The openings for the door and windows were cut out. This is pretty straightforward. Just measure the needed opening from the back of the casting and make a hole where you want the casting to fit. I usually use a No. 23 scalpel to make openings cutting through onto a piece of oak flooring and then use a No. 11 to tidy up the openings. The six wall parts were assembled using Goo and CA. Braced and glued surface boards (HO 12" x 22") were added for mounting the floor and the roof (carpenter's glue). You can see better now how the six parts fit together with the one side projecting forward to define the rest of the porch area that will be under the roof (**Photo 2**). In the same photo, you can see the floor that was assembled from... what else – leftovers! The scribed siding married to the 1/16" thick flat stock provides the floor for the porch.



After the floor was glued into place, the front of the porch was tied together connecting the far wall to the inside porch wall with a beam (3/32" x 3/32") supported by what would be a load bearing post (1/8" x 1/8"). The exposed inside surface of the clapboard was covered over with some of the same

scrap scribed siding that was used for the porch flooring. A pair of ridge poles were installed ($3/32'' \times 3/32''$) to tie the side walls together, and to provide a support and glue surface for the roofing (**Photos 3,4**).



The roof was just plain stock $1/32''$ sheet basswood glued down around the perimeter and at the top to the ridge poles. A series of floor joists (HO $12'' \times 22''$) set on a two-foot center were added to lift this structure up off the ground a bit.

Now it's time for some painting and finishing to take this building to completion. The door and windows were painted Maintenance of Way Grey (Polly Scale), and then the windows

were glazed with scrap acetate. The envelope of scrap acetate seems bottomless. The front, back, sides, and post were painted Dark Green (Polly Scale) applied over all surfaces include the underside of the roof overhang. The porch was painted Dirt (Polly Scale). The floor joists and

base perimeter were painted L&N Gray (Polly Scale). A washer from the $6/32$ box was added to the stove pipe prior to painting (Steam Black; Polly Scale) and a hole was drilled in the side where it was mounted. The pipe was secured with some Goo and CA.



Once all the paint was dry, the roofing material was added. This cabin received plain ark gray tarpaper (Builders In Scale). This comes in small sheets that were cut into four-foot (conveniently $1''$ in O scale) strips and glued

into place using carpenter's glue. These strips were also applied overlapping and overhanging the roof edges. Some weighting was needed to keep it flat while the glue set. A one-foot-wide strip was cut from the leftover scraps and used to cap the top of the applied tarpaper. The edges of the tarpaper and a bit of Steam Black paint was added to the doorknob (**Photos 5-7**).

5.



This ends the series of cabins in this ongoing collection of builds, but it is not the end of the “Leftover” series. This is also another demonstration of the ease in which a simple structure can be built. Lots of details could be added to the porch and then again more with the surrounding scenery. That’s all to be supplied by your imagination.

6.



7.





President's Column

Happy New Year!

Lame Duck President Kurt
Thompson, MMR

May 2022 bring you more joy, happiness, and model railroad fun.

November came and went. Hopefully you got to enjoy some of the fun of National Model Railroad Month. As we move forward from the shutdown of the pandemic, I'm grateful for the Convention just passed.

I look forward into the year of 2022 with greater hope and expectation. The Carolina Southern Division is busy working on the Look South Convention which was "overcome by events" back in 2020. The extra two years of time should make it an even better convention than it was going to be two years ago.

I spoke with Neal Anderson at the Mt. Clare Jct. convention. He was proudly wearing his "one of a kind" Look South in 2020 convention shirt. It's now a stand-alone item.

As the year begins, it's time for my reminder about volunteering to serve at the regional level. This year, the elections will be for President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. I reminded the Division Superintendents at the breakfast at Mt. Clare Jct. that more volunteers at this level are needed. I'm willing to talk to anyone who has a willingness or even a simple interest to serve on the MER (Mid-Eastern Region) Board.

Also in the crystal ball, the President's Award for the convention this year will be models dealing with pulpwood in the Southeast. So, start your models now.

I'm continuing to serve as the MER President, but the days are getting shorter. So as your lame duck President, it's time for fresh talent.



From the Editor's Desk...

Greg Warth, Editor

Another year has come and gone. It wasn't an easy one for a lot of folks. We lost a few members for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, we have renewed our hope and anticipation for a better future as we enter a New Year.

We are back to having in-person conventions again which is wonderful, but we have also learned more about how to do virtual meetings and clinics, which is also good because it allows for much greater attendance, education and participation in various model railroading events that were previously inaccessible to many of us.

Enjoying the hobby of model railroading as we do allows us the opportunity to add an extra dimension to our lives that we would not otherwise have. It brings people together and fosters the "Good Will" that we always talk about during the Holidays. And the more of that that we can spread around this year certainly can't hurt anything!

My usual New Year's resolutions in prior years were all about getting more things done, saving more, spending less, losing weight, etc. This year, my resolutions are to be more grateful, don't take good things for granted, enjoy life and enjoy friends and family, and to cherish the time we have together. Those are the things that can be taken away at any time without notice, making all the other little stuff pale by comparison.

The first thing I'm grateful for is that we have lots of new knowledge, tips and techniques in this issue that I'm sure you will enjoy. I never cease to be amazed at the artistic and engineering abilities of our members who are so willing to teach those talents to others, noncompetitively and without reservation or reward.

I know there are hundreds of new model railroading tips out there that we don't know about yet. Please share your ideas with the rest of us so we can learn your techniques. There must be a hundred different ways to make a tree, but I'll bet someone out there has a method that we never heard of before. Please let us know. We are avid learners.

We are looking for good layouts (scenery or no scenery), new track-plans, scratchbuilt models, and/or new electronic ideas to fill our special sections (Featured Layouts, Featured Models, Modelers' Haven and Electronics Corner). It's really not difficult at all to present these to us. Just answer a few questions written in the box on page 11 and send it in. Well do the rest.

For those who wish to contribute an article for publication in *The Local*, be sure to read the article on the website written by Martin Brechbiel, MMR on [how to submit a manuscript](#) properly, which can save you and us a lot of time, and then send it to the [Editor](#), with a copy to the [Director](#). We truly appreciate all of those who provide articles, photos of their projects, even short tips that you think might be helpful to others in the hobby.

So, as we leave 2021 behind, let us look forward to a new and better world, in which we all play a small part in making it better. Happy New Year and Good Will to All!

Letter(s) to the Editor...

We don't often get letters, so you can imagine how excited we were to get this one, referring to the Nov-Dec issue and before!

“To The Editor: The only word to describe this and the last editions of The Local is: WOW! I have been a member of the NMRA since 1952 (3785) and I've seen a thing or two, but your publication has become something else wonderful! Thank you. Ray Colombo”

Thanks, Ray! We really appreciate your kind words. You have inspired all of us who work on *The Local* to continue the tradition of providing a quality publication for the members of the Mid-Eastern Region.

And for all our members, please keep us posted. Tell us what you like or don't like. This is *your* journal. We always are interested in hearing your comments and concerns. That's how we get better. - Ed.

Send all articles, photos, tips, comments, requests, and feedback to [the LOCAL Editor](#).
Learn how to prepare an article for *the Local* [here](#).

Above all, thank you for your membership in the MER and NMRA. We truly appreciate your support and your faith in our organization as an informational resource and as a method of collaborating with other modelers. Happy railroading!

Advertising:

If you have a business and find yourself wishing to place an ad on this page, please contact the Editor at 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

Your ad may appear as text, photo, art or any combination thereof. Art must be of high quality and camera-ready. Formats must be in txt, doc/docx, pdf, jpeg, bmp or tiff only. The content must be related to model trains or railroads or provide a benefit specifically to model railroaders. If you need help with your ad, please don't hesitate to ask the Editor.

The Local welcomes articles, photographs, and model railroad related material as contributions to members' education and enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. The Editor will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send paper/photo originals without retaining back-up copies. Editors, by definition, reserve the right and have the responsibility to make corrections, deletions, and changes to accommodate space. If your item is time-sensitive in any way, please advise the Editor. Otherwise, stories and photos that are accepted for publication are used in approximately the order they are received.

Publication Schedule Submission Deadline

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

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.

Proofreaders:

Alex Belida, Martin Brechbiel, Bob Morningstar, Jack Dziadul



Achievement Program Update

By Dave Chance, MER AP Manager

December 5, 2021

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

Division 3 – Philadelphia

Michael Dettinger – Association Volunteer

Division 4 – Tidewater

Robert Cook – Association Volunteer

Division 11 – Susquehanna

Scott Unger – Association Volunteer

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Bob Halsey – Golden Spike Award

Note: Nine members of the MER were awarded 16 Merit Awards at the 2021 Mount Clare Junction, MER Convention Contest.

In a perfect world, this information will appear soon in the **NMRA** magazine. This should not deter you from giving recognition locally. Normally you will be able to recognize AP accomplishments long before the names appear in the **NMRA** magazine.

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

Please, NO R&V FORMS with other submissions.

Elections 2022

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 generally meets 3 times per year; once at the MER convention. The deadline for nomination is May 30, 2022. The term of office is two years, with a limit of two 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, 2022** – to all of the following nominations process officials:

Robert Charles, MMR Nominations Committee Chair rcharles@aol.com
 Jack Dziadul jackdziadul@gmail.com
 Kenneth Montero va661midlo@comcast.net
 or to

Kurt Thompson, MMR, President, MER
president@mer-nmra.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 President Thompson to insure receipt of your nomination! That is all there is to it!

Deadlines and Schedules for 2022 Nominations and Balloting

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

The dates for 2022 are:

May 30, 2022 -- 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 4, 2022 -- 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, 2022 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting; could be mailed earlier depending on other deadline requirements.

September 6, 2022 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

September 10, 2022 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

September 17, 2022 -- Deadline for Ballot Committee to transmit results to President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

September 24, 2022 -- 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 8, 2022 -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER's website.

HELP WANTED: Publisher

Newsletter Publisher: *The Local* and *eLocal*

Appointed by: President
 Approved by: Board of Directors
 Reports to: Editor of *The Local* and
eLocal

Position Summary

Responsible for assembling the official publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, *The Local*, working directly with the Editor. The newsletter Publisher is responsible for providing “typesetting”, article layout and arrangement, and pasting-up services for each issue, to produce a web-and-email-ready version of the full issue of *eLocal*, as well as a ready-to-print version of *The Local*. The Publisher shall also produce camera-ready-copy and ship the camera-ready-copy and related artwork to the printer in a timely fashion. Those efforts all rely upon the materials delivered from the Editor to the Publisher with direction as to which issue and where in that issue (sequence location) that content might be placed. The Publisher is to communicate objectives met on creation and insertion of content, sending frequent draft versions of the *eLocal* to keep the Editor fully informed of the status of issues as they are being assembled.

The content of the first twelve pages of the print version of *The Local* shall be equivalent to the first twelve pages of the *eLocal*. The in-house official articles and business-related information must be contained within those first twelve pages. This

ensures that all members will have access to this information regardless of which version they receive.

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

Specific Responsibilities of the Publisher:

1. Keeps the Editor informed at all times.
2. Provides quality production.
3. Assembles the articles, photos and content obtained from the Editor into a pleasing and interesting presentation.
4. Collaborates with the Editor, when necessary, on layout design, presentation of content and space considerations.
5. Produces uniform quality and tone of the publication.
6. Acknowledges in writing (by e-mail) to the Editor confirming receipt of article(s) for insertion into draft versions of *eLocal* and communicates with the Editor routinely by providing draft versions of *eLocal*.
7. Prepares the ballot for all elections held within the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA.
8. Provides electronic copies of *The Local* and the *eLocal* of each issue to the Editor for final review and distribution

MER Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

1. Board of Directors Budget Meeting – 10 am, January 29, 2022 (Zoom)
2. Board of Directors Meeting – 10 am, April 23, 2022 (Zoom)

UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS

2022 Convention – Carolina Southern Division -- “Carolina Special Look South”, Oct. 20 - 23, 2022
Charlotte, NC

2023 Convention –Susquehanna Division – Dates and location tbd

2024 Convention –Division, Dates and location tbd

2025 Convention –New Jersey Division, Dates and location tbd

How to Get your Layout or Model in The Local

In *The Local*, we are enthusiastic about showing your modeling work to other members, not for judging or criticism, but for the art of sharing, inspiration, and education. If you are interested in featuring your layout or models in The Local, please send an [email to the editor](#) with answers to the following questions:

1. Name of your layout or model?
2. What scale is it?
3. Does your layout or model depict any specific era and/or location?
4. What are the dimensions of your layout?
5. How do you control your layout?
6. When did you start making your layout?
7. What type of track and switches did you use?
8. What are your model's or layout's best features?
9. Do you host open houses, layout tours or operating sessions?
10. Please include a short bio and picture of yourself.
11. Include your best high-resolution photos (1-5) of your model or layout.



Carolina Special Look South 2022 MER Convention

By Bob Halsey

The next MER (Mid-Eastern Region) convention will be the Carolina Special Look South 2022 on October 20-23, 2022. Put those dates in your calendar! The [Carolina Southern Division](#) is well into planning for 2022, and is ensuring that your trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, will be way more than worthwhile! It will be downright memorable!

We have already planned several tours. The first one, on October 20, will be to the [North Carolina Transportation Museum \(NCTM\)](#) in Spencer, the former main maintenance facility of the Southern Railway. This tour includes the huge backshop, large roundhouse and turntable, many historic locomotives, railcars, automobiles, firetrucks, and airplanes. You can ride on one of NCTM's own passenger trains (pulled by one of their ex-Southern diesels), and if we are lucky, we may get to see an impressive visitor, the N&W 611 4-8-4 locomotive, which comes to Spencer from Roanoke for regular maintenance. Second, we will also offer a tour of the [National Narrow Gauge Museum and Restoration Facility in Newton](#), showing several old and not-so-old railcars and locomotives (steam and diesel). The museum not only has the original fully restored passenger/freight station, but a separate building with several large O, HO, and N scale layouts. Third, we are also arranging a tour of the [Lionel](#) Corporation's development center in Concord to see their latest projects (O and HO).

Of course, we are going to have the usual elements for a successful convention: many clinics (including some you have not seen before!), the company store (with MER products) combined with the white elephant room (member products) and the contest room. As a judge ("evaluator") at the last two conventions, I can say that many of the dioramas and rolling stock were not just super-detailed, they were true works of art!

We will have many layout tours available to visit (too many to list all here) including Jack Parker's Piedmont & Western (HO mountain railroad) and Seth Gartner's NYC Piney Fork Branch (with its large, detailed steel mill). Both of these layouts were subjects of 2018 cover articles in Model Railroader magazine. Also, Ed Smith's Erie Railroad (with its amazing 10-arch viaduct bridge), Neal Anderson's basement-filling KK&L Railroad, and a number of excellent N gauge layouts will be available.


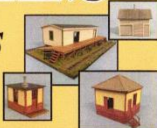
This spectacular convention will be held at the [University Hilton](#) in North Charlotte (just off I-485), with a reduced room rate for convention attendees. Although we are not ready to accept registrations (coming soon), our website (www.carolinasouthern.org) will contain convention details. We have a very interesting Saturday evening banquet speaker lined up. Again, more details will be coming soon!

For non-modeler attendees (spouses and future adults) there are a number of local attractions, including the Mint Art Museum, US National Whitewater Center (with whitewater rafting, zip lines and hiking trails), Discovery Place Museum, Duke Energy Explorium, Charlotte Aviation Museum (at the airport), Billy Graham Library and Museum (very interesting!), Charlotte Motor Speedway (where you can get really fast rides in NASCAR race cars driven by professional drivers), the NASCAR Museum in downtown Charlotte, Concord Mills Mall (It's a big one!), evening dinner cruises on Lake Norman, plus many good restaurants in the area. I have done all of these things!

It's easy to get to Charlotte by train from D.C./Baltimore/Philadelphia, by air to Charlotte/Douglas airport, or by driving south on I-95/85 or I-81/77, or west on I-40/85. We will be covering more details in future issues of *The Local*. You don't want to miss this one!


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 July 4-11, 2021
www.nmra2021.com

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- Great local attractions and tours like Santa Cruz mountain wineries, Filoli estate, Levi’s Stadium and more



Your advertisement could be on this page!

Train Station in Sawdust City Lehigh Valley Railroad in Lopez, Pennsylvania

By John G. Hoyt III

CAD Computer-Aided Design) drawings are quite useful for those wishing to scratchbuild and/or create a 3D print of model structures. The purpose of this article is to provide a new feature for the *eLocal*, that would include high quality CAD drawings of items of interest to model railroaders. I am hopeful that this will create enough interest that CAD Drawing will be considered part of our diverse hobby, maybe even worthy of an Achievement Program Certificate. In my case I have lost the ability to create with my hands, but I can still model in the digital space.

Some of my oldest memories were passing under an old railroad trestle, at the age of four. This dark structure seemed huge and scared the wits out of me every time my father drove under it. I have imperfect memories of train stations, railroad bridges, factory buildings and logging dams. It was not until I reached ten that these relics took on importance to me. Unfortunately, in the meantime, many of these artifacts had been destroyed.

My father and I built our first model railroad at the same time of my realization of the importance of the history I was watching melt away. Thus began my obsession with learning about and trying to preserve some small part of my family's history.

My mother was born in Lopez, Pennsylvania, which is nearly a ghost town now. Lopez is in Sullivan County, at the head waters of the Loyalsock River and north of Red Rock Mountain. Lopez began as a settlement called Tar Bridge due to the bridge over the Loyalsock. Lumbering began in the 1880s and the settlement became a town. There are several stories about the origin of the name Lopez. One I favor is that the area was surveyed by the United States Geological Survey by an engineer named Lopez. My great-grandfather settled in Lopez in the 1890s, a Russian immigrant who rode the Lehigh Valley Railroad from Elis Island to work in Lopez.

The Lehigh Valley built the Bowmans Creek branch line from Wilkes-Barre to Bernice running through Ricketts (where my grandfather grew up), Lopez and ending at Bernice to service both the lumbering



Figure 1 – Dushore Station 1905



Figure 2 – Dushore Station 2005

industry and the anthracite mine. Eventually, the Lehigh Valley would take over the State Line and Sullivan Railroad from Towanda to Dushore and connect to the Bowmans Creek Branch. The Dushore Station is still intact. An interesting fact is that the LVRR built on to the original State Line and Sullivan Station in Dushore. **Figure 1** shows the Station in Dushore in its glory days and how it is now (**Figure 2**).



Figure 3 – Dushore Trestle 1905

The trestle I mentioned was also in Dushore, two photos from around 1905 and 1940 show it in **Figures 3 and 4**. Yes, it was as big as I remember, but back to Lopez. The Lehigh Valley built a station in Lopez around 1880. There appears to be no standardization on station design. Clearly the four stations found in Ricketts, Lopez, Bernice and Dushore are similar, but also very much different in detail as can be seen in **Figures 5-8**. Now, I have purchased all of the LVRR drawings for the Dushore Trestle (the source for another article) and have drawn it in detail in my 3D CAD program VectorWorks. The drawing as you can imagine is immense and a cartoon is shown in **Figure 9**.

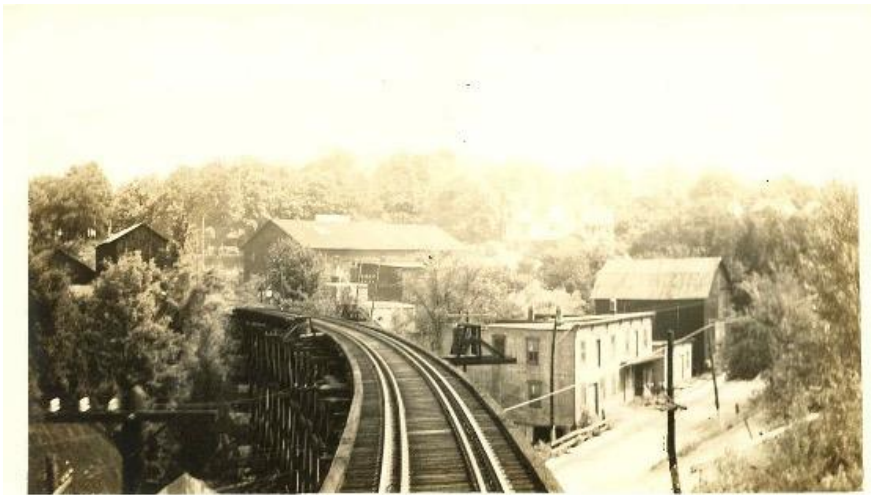


Figure 4 – Dushore Trestle 1940

Lehigh Valley Station Design



Figure 5 - Ricketts



Figure 6 - Lopez



Figure 7- Bernice



Figure 8 –Dushore

So enough of the background; what I have here are some digital drawings I made using a drawing program called [VectorWorks](#). I have used VectorWorks for over 20 years as a Naval Architect. It was originally called Mini Cad and was for the Macintosh Computer, which I use. It is very capable and unfortunately has a steep learning curve. And yes, some people prefer Fords and some Chevys, some Macs and some PCs, but they all get the job done, so it is just what you are used to that works for you.

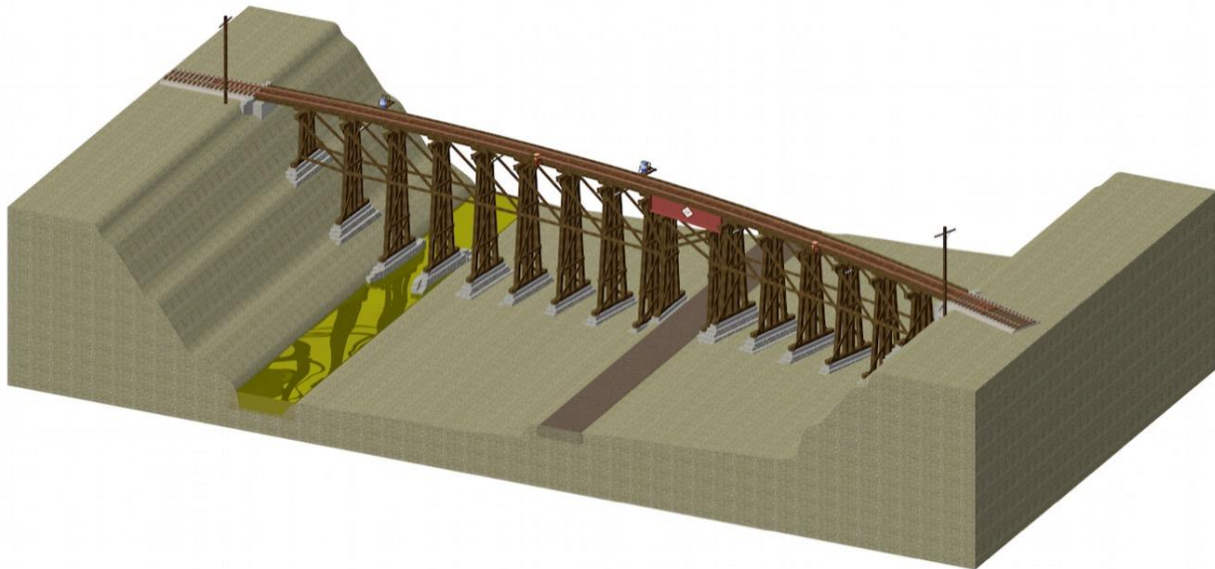


Figure 9 – This is a CAD drawing of the Dushore Trestle. See the other eleven [CAD Drawings of the Lopez Station](#)

These drawings are of the Lopez Station derived from photographs, written accounts, and personal conversations with my relatives. VectorWorks has a nice feature called CameraMatch. It allows you to use a 2D photo and extract 3D dimensions using assumptions on camera focal length and perspective. Using photos to extract dimensional data can be difficult. I have done so in my job for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. I know what I have done is not perfect just based upon comparing my original trestle drawings to the real LVRR ones. So, I apologize and would be grateful for anyone who has better information they can make available.

Finally, the last word, I have included 11 drawings in compressed PDF format ([CAD Drawings](#)). These are tabloid size, 11" x 19". I have a sizing scale on the lower left side of each drawing. You can use it to enlarge or reduce the base drawing, which is in HO scale, to any other scale when imported into a drawing program (as in References). Please give me feedback as whether these are of any use.

My next project is to produce digital drawings of the Camden and Amboy's "John Bull."

References:

Other CAD Software Programs:

[SketchUp](#)

[OnShape](#)

[Adobe 3D Modeling](#)

[FreeCAD](#)

What Else is New?

- **NMRA Going Digital?** The *NMRA Magazine* is currently experimenting with a new digital format in which to publish the magazine online, similar to what *Model Railroader* and others have done. We have no details yet on when that might be available to the membership, or whether the print format will remain available after that, but I know many are looking forward to it.
- **MiniCons:** The James River Division and the Potomac Division have started to have joint meetings, or MiniCons, as some have called them, two of them so far in 2020, which have included several clinics, layout tours and door prizes. Perhaps this may be an inspiration for other divisions to join together in their respective areas for their own MiniCons. For more information, look in the [Potomac Flyer](#), Dec. 2021-Jan. 2022 issue, p.12.
- **How to Do a Clinic:** Learn how to prepare a clinic from Master Model Railroaders, in the [Potomac Flyer](#), Dec.'21-Jan.'22, p. 19.
- **Clinics:** Watch your division newsletters for information on local and virtual clinics available in your area.
- **Lee Hall Diorama:** The Tidewater Division is recreating a prototypical historical diorama of the area surrounding the [Lee Hall Depot](#) in Newport News, Virginia as it was in the 1920s. The diorama will eventually be displayed there when it's finished.
- **Members:** The total Mid-Eastern Region membership currently stands at 1806. Since the last issue of The Local, we have gained 25 members, and lost 22. Getting better!
- **Get your Photos in a Magazine:** Learn how to photograph your layout from Jack Burgess, MMR in [this video](#).

More Photos from the 2021 Mount Clare Junction Convention

We have lots of photos taken at the MER (Mid-Eastern Region) Annual Convention in October that haven't been shown yet. We thought you might be interested in seeing a few of these.



N-Trak Club (Photo by the Editor)

Chesapeake Division HO Modular Layout (Photo by the Editor).



**Don Yingling's
Traction Layout
(Photo by the
Editor).**



**N-Trak Club
(Photo by the
Editor).**



N-Trak Club (Photo by the Editor).



White Elephant Room (Photo by Randy Foulke).



Arduino Clinic, presented by Kurt Thompson, MMR and MER President (Photo by Randy Foulke).



Resin Clinic, presented by Martin Brechbiel, MMR (Photo by Randy Foulke).



Annual Meeting of the Board with members in attendance, October 24, 2021 (Member Photo).



Board of Directors, Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA: (from left) Secretary Martin Brechbiel, MMR; President Kurt Thompson, MMR; Vice President Scott Unger; Treasurer Brian Kampschroer; Director-at-Large Randy Foulke; Director-at-Large and MER Photographer Jerry Lauchle, MMR; (Photo by Bob Charles).

Railfanning the White Pass & Yukon Route: Presenting a Unique Modeling Opportunity

By David Arday

It's the 9th of June. It's windy and raining, lightly all the time, moderately some of the time. And there is snow mixed in, because the temperature is barely 40°F. I am boarding the White Pass & Yukon Route (WP&Y), in Fraser, British Columbia, having just arrived by motor coach from Skagway, Alaska (Figure 1). Fraser sits about 2700' above sea level, which is just below the Alpine tree line. It's at



milepost (MP) 27.7 on the WP&YR, the limit of most current tourist runs.

Fig 1. Boarding in Fraser.

Another thousand feet above me, I can see a bit of fresh snow sticking to the tundra before the peaks disappear into the clouds. I think to myself that snow might actually be better than the wind-driven rain I'm standing in (Figures 2,3).



Fig 2. In the subalpine zone, nearing White Pass, elev. 2915 ft.



Fig 3. At the border, in White Pass.

The WP&Y is a narrow-gauge marvel from the turn of the last century. When the Klondike Gold Rush began in 1897, tens of thousands of “stampedeers” rushed to the tiny port of Skagway, Alaska, and climbed either the shorter, steeper Chilkoot Trail a few miles to the north, or the slightly longer, less steep White Pass Trail, directly out of Skagway. Both trails led to neighboring northern British Columbia, then through to the more interior Yukon Territory and down the Yukon River back into Alaska, where gold had been discovered over 550 miles further inland. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police would not allow any stampedeers to cross the border without a minimum of 2,000 pounds of supplies and equipment, enough to last a year in the wilderness. This meant each stampeder had to make multiple trips up and down the trail, as each man could only carry about 50 lbs. at a time, and each pack animal about 200 lbs. more, due to the rough terrain.

Men immediately began to think of easier ways to get supplies in and gold out. In early 1898, at the peak of the gold rush, construction began on the 3-foot-gauge WP&YR. The railroad was completed in a mere 26 months, financed by \$10 million (~\$890 million today) from a British consortium, and engineered by an American. Approximately 35,000 men worked on the railroad’s construction crews, though most of them did not work from start through finish. Peak employment is estimated to have reached about 10,000 men.

From sea level at Skagway, the main line rises 2,885 feet to White Pass summit in 20.4 miles, with grades running as steep as 3.9%. It then continues on for another 90 miles to Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. Beyond that, the WP&Y owned a fleet of riverboats that carried passengers and freight to and from Dawson City, Yukon Territory. By the time construction was finished, in the summer of 1901, the gold rush was largely ending. But other mines in the interior needed to ship their copper, silver, lead and zinc ore to waiting ships at Skagway, so the railroad survived. For a long time, there was no easier way to reach Whitehorse, and no other way out of Skagway except by sea.



Fig 4. Emerging from the 1969 tunnel, elev. 2715 ft.



Fig 5. Abandoned bridge at Dead Horse Gulch, elev. 2613 ft

The original route had only one tunnel (**Figure 7**), but a second tunnel (**Figure 4**) was drilled in 1969, to allow a new routing around an original steel cantilever bridge and trestle over Dead Horse Gulch (**Figure 5**). The original bridge couldn't handle heavier, more modern equipment. At the time, the WP&Y earned most of its revenue from freight, and its right-of-way needed upgrading to handle ore volumes from the newly opened Faro lead-zinc mine, located in the Yukon about 80 miles northeast of Whitehorse (**Figure 6**). Ore traffic lasted until 1982, when the last of the then existing mines closed, and the WP&Y was forced to join them. However, as tourism to Alaska increased, and more cruise ships docked at Skagway, the WP&Y was reincarnated as a heritage railway, in 1988.



Fig 6. Hugging the cliff.



Fig 7. Exiting the original tunnel at MP 16, elev. 2275 ft.

My train is led by two 1950s era GE 1450 HP “shovel-nose” units, numbered 91 and 97 in green and yellow livery. I’m riding coach #340, “Lake Finlayson,” a replica clerestory coach that was built in 2004. But its historic look and feel are helped by the oil-burning cast iron stove, providing the only source of heat at the rear end of the car. While departing Fraser, all passengers are required to be seated, and all we can do is peer through heavily fogged windows. But in a few minutes and a couple miles on our way up to White Pass, I am allowed to take a position on the outside platform at the rear end of my coach. There I stand in the cold and rain for most of the remaining 90-minute ride, knowing that this is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me to document my trip. And thanks to the rain, most of the other passengers never venture outside, and I share the platform with only one other hearty soul for most of the ride. Unfortunately, the swirling rain coated my camera’s lens filter with droplets every 30 seconds or so, rendering some shots blurry and causing many others to be missed while I repeatedly wiped the

lens filter dry (Figures 8, 9, 10).



Fig 8. Just below the clouds and looking over the edge.

Fig 9. Picking up hikers at Glacier, elev. 1871 ft.





Fig 10. Brake wheel on following coach.

Nearing our final destination just outside of Skagway (**Figure 11**), where buses meet all of the passengers, everyone must again be seated for U.S. customs inspection, as we have all reentered the States from Canada when we crossed the pass early along our route. Thanks to the war against terrorism and fears of illegal immigrants, anyone who rides the WP&Y in modern times is required to show a passport each way—upon arriving at Fraser or at Skagway. The days of an open border between the U.S. and Canada, the border that thousands of stampeders were able to cross without a passport, has also vanished into history.



Fig 11. Denver, MP 5.8, crossing the East Fork of the Skagway River, elev. 410 ft.



Fig 12. Steam powered rotary plow on display in Skagway.

Unlike the narrow-gauge railroads of Colorado, the WP&Y is not a frequently chosen prototype for model railroaders. A quick Internet search will not return a lot of available engines or rollingstock in WP&Y livery, though there are some. For example, in HO, Mantua currently produces an “1860s Reefer,” and Roundhouse previously produced a pair of “Old Timer” passenger coach and baggage car models lettered for WP&Y that show up on eBay. But none of these three are prototypical.

The 2022 issue of Kalmbach’s annual “Great Model Railroads” happens to feature a nice WP&Y themed layout. The 8x25 foot sectional shelf layout, by Mike May, is set in the 1960s, and includes a pair of prototypically accurate GE shovel nose diesels, just like on my tourist train. According to the article, Mike obtained these rare 30-year-old Precision Scale brass imports second-hand and upgraded them for sound and smooth operation.

The featured layout contains none of the scenes along the route from Skagway to Fraser that I photographed in 2018. Instead, the layout jumps from some now abandoned trackage on the Skagway docks—tracks that functioned as the primary off-loading point for raw ore, harvested timber, and a few other commodities—to Log Cabin Siding, which is about 5 miles beyond Fraser, at MP 33.

Modeling the cliffs, steep grades, trestles, curves, White Pass and other features between Skagway and Fraser might be an interesting challenge and a unique opportunity to tackle for someone reading this article.

References:

"Applying Lessons from the Prototype" - Paperback, November 23, 2020, by Tony Koester and Jeff Wilson

"Prototype Railroad Modeling, Vol.1" - Paperback, January 1, 2005, by Ted Cullota

"Ticket to Tehachapi", by David Arday, *The Local*, July-August, 2018, pp.24-31.

Mike May's HOn3 White Pass & Yukon Layout Tour NNG 11 Jan 2021: <https://youtu.be/S-mrhP3Eqf0>

Modelers' Haven...

By Greg Warth

Scenery View-Blocks:

A view-block refers to the creation of a natural-appearing separation of different scenes on your layout. It provides a way in which you can visually prevent different scenes from running together. A simple example would be to have a mountain, or a river that separates two small towns. View-blocks provide the viewer with a sense of organization as they walk from one scene to another. If various scenes are right next to each other, without a visual block, it creates confusion as to what each scene is intended to depict. View blocks can be anything that logically and naturally separate the scenes, like a collection of structures, a grove of trees, a hill, river, bridge or tunnel. It could be quite obvious like a backdrop running down the middle of a layout table, or it could be very subtle like an open space or rural area, such that the viewer isn't even aware that his/her eye is being directed to separate scenes.

To create an individual scene, you need to have a view-block on three sides of the scene, one of which



might be the backdrop and then perhaps a group of trees on each of the two sides with the fourth side being open, directing the viewer to visualize what you want them to see ([Photos 1, 2](#)).

Photo 1: Here is a scene of small town sandwiched between two mountains with a third block being the group of trees lining the back of the scene.

Ideally, each scene should be large enough that your longest train can fit into it comfortably. Otherwise, your lead locomotive might be in Chicago while your caboose is still in Cleveland.

You can also use a view-block to create a sense that there is something beyond a particular scene that the viewer “knows” must be there, e.g., a road or track going around an outcropping of rocks and trees, even though the viewer can't really see the area into which it's heading.



As you design your layout, try to draw in where your view-blocks should be placed for your layout to make sense and be more realistic. Even if your layout is mostly finished, you could probably rearrange some buildings or trees to help separate some of your scenes a little better..

Photo 2: This scene is outlined by mountainous view-block in the back, the structure on the right and the vegetation on the left. The curved track around the front also helps to delineate it as a separate scene but doesn't block the view.

Tips on Layout Design and Track Planning from Lance Mindheim and others:

One of my favorite authors on model railroading is Lance Mindheim. Here are some tips that I gleaned from his book, “How to Design a Small Switching Layout”, plus a few tips that I got from others and from making my own mistakes along the way.

It’s good to remember that all of what is written here depends on your “Givens and Druthers” that you start off with when designing your layout. It all begins with your imagination and what you want to model - prototype or freelance, or a combination of both, the scale, the era, the theme, the limitations (space, money and time), etc. The only real rule here is that, unless you are building a railroad for someone else, it’s *your* railroad. You can do whatever you want with it. Having said that, there are tips that have been handed down by the masters, providing some guidelines that may enhance your enjoyment of the railroad, by making it run better and look more realistic.

When first designing your layout, Lance suggests that it’s a good idea to dedicate at least a third of your layout to scenery. Most of us put down too many tracks, and then find out we don’t have enough space for the other stuff. But if that’s what you want – just a switching layout with no scenery – that’s okay. Go for it. A friend of mine did just that and enjoyed the heck out of it!

More suggestions:

Try not to put tracks any closer than 2-3” from the backdrop so you have room to blend the scenery into the backdrop, or to put in a relief of a building. Likewise, don’t put any track within 2” of the front edge of the layout to avoid the problem of losing your expensive locomotives or railcars to gravity. (I can personally attest to that risk!)

Your mainline should have the same code (referring to the vertical height of the rails) of track throughout your layout including the turnouts. You can use a slightly lesser code for the branch lines, which is prototypical. For example, if you use code 100 for the mainline, you may want to use code 83 for the branches. When you join the code 83 with the code 100, be sure the tops of the rails are flush. You may have to add an extra thickness of roadbed under the code 83 track, so the tops of the rails coincide where they meet. I wouldn’t rely on rail-joiners to do that for you.



Photo 3: Curved N scale tracks on the other side of Photo 2. I used flex track for this and was careful to make them far enough apart that my longest cars would not sideswipe each other.

Curves:

Curved HO parallel tracks should be at least 2 and 3/8" apart to avoid cars side-swiping each other. It would be different for other scales ([See the NMRA recommended practices RP-7 and RP-11](#)). The best thing to do is test that distance with your longest locomotives and railcars before fastening the track to your layout surface. Notice the curved N scale parallel tracks in [Photo 3](#). These were tested using the longest cars I had to be sure they were far enough apart.

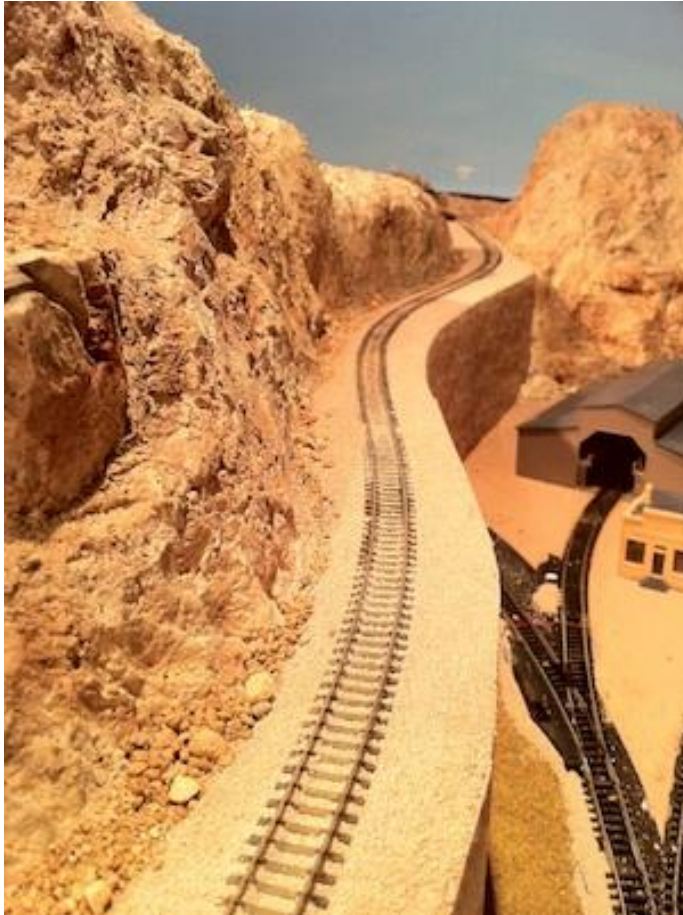


Photo 4: Two S curves with sections of straight(er) flex track in the middle of the “S”. It works better if the S curves are stretched out like this rather than using tight curves. Again, be sure to test it before fastening down the track.

S curves are fun to have on a layout since you can watch long trains weave in and around mountains and other natural obstructions. However, they are a source of derailments if not planned properly. The most important thing to remember about S curves is to be sure there is a length of straight track in the middle of the “S” that is longer than your longest locomotive or railcar that will be traversing that section of track ([Photo 4](#)). Also, when running trains around curves, try not to put your heaviest railcars in the middle of the train. It’s best to place them closer to the locomotive power to avoid “stringlining”

(lighter railcars in the middle being tilted or pulled off the track by the centrifugal pull of the heavier cars on both ends).

For small layouts, it is tempting to use curved tracks with a smaller radius like 16” to make sharper turns, which take up less space. In general, this depends on your overall layout plan. If you are going to have a mountainous area where you can run short logging locomotives (like Shay or Heisler), or a small yard using short switchers, the smaller radius would be appropriate. Otherwise, if you have a larger space, you may want to stick to using larger radii especially on mainlines. (Flex-track, or hand-laid track, rather than sectional track, is great for making larger curves.) If you will be using longer locomotives, passenger cars or even long freight cars, then the larger the radius, the better. You may want to test your equipment on your curves to be sure it looks and runs properly before fastening the track down permanently.

Turnouts:

Due to space considerations for small layouts, and if you are planning to use commercially available turnouts, #6 turnouts might be your best option. It is tempting to use #4 turnouts, but they are less realistic in appearance usually and seem to be more likely to cause derailments in my experience. But that may be your only option in certain circumstances. If you have the space, #8 turnouts might be the best of the ready-made commercial devices to use for the smoothest operation. Most serious model

railroaders would say the *best* turnouts to use are the ones that you lay by hand and that optimize your track layout design. A great reference on turnouts was developed by [Rich Kolm](#) for a clinic presented at the 2008 PCR Convention, “Sierra Memories” in Fresno, California.

There are many more tips available in the [several books](#) written by Lance Mindheim, John Armstrong, Jeff Wilson, Tony Koester and others on layout design and track planning. You may want to pick up one or more of these as you design your model railroad.

In the end, the best layout design is the one that gives you the *most fun* for the space, budget and time that you have available. And remember, it’s your layout. These are just suggestions, some of which are based on engineering principles which you can find in the [NMRA guidelines](#) for best operation, and some of which are just based on experience and tips from those who have done it before.

References:

“Use View Blocks to Extend Your Layout”, by Gary Hoover, *Model Railroader*, December 2011, p38-42.

Track Planning for Realistic Operation (3rd Edition), by John Armstrong, January 29, 2018.

How To Design a Small Switching Layout, by Lance Mindheim, Sep 2, 2009.

How to Design a Model Railroad, by Lance Mindheim, June 7, 2021.

More Tips from Nicholas Kalis’ Blog submitted by him and reprinted here with his permission:

Mixing Scales for More Realism

When choosing details for one's layout, it can soon be apparent that an item we have bought or are considering buying is overscale. It is too big and just does not look right. A solution to this problem is to try to find that detail in a smaller scale. I did this years ago with my HO scale Montauk Branch layout. I saw some HO scale retaining walls by a popular manufacturer and just hated the way they looked. My solution was to buy those same retaining walls in N scale. Voila - the N scale retaining walls looks superb.

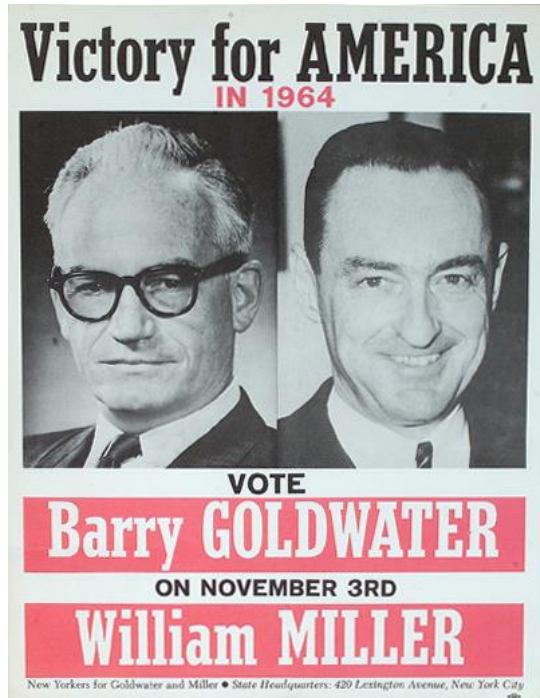
Above is an example of a pair of crows ([Photo A](#)) made by Scenic Express (O Scale Black Crow Raven/2PCS, Item number CG403). One set consists of two pewter crows painted black. My friend Gary Eames purchased them for his O scale layout and just never used them because they did not look right. They seemed overscale. So, he gifted two packages of these (four crows in all) and I will use them on my Fn3 (1:20.3 scale) Oahu Sugar Company.

So, next time you are scratching your head that a detail does not look right, try what I have done. This can work for many scales. If an N scale item appears to be overscale, try Z scale. If an O scale item does not look right, try that detail in HO scale.

(Submitted by Nicholas Kalis from his Blog, “[Modeling Hints and Reviews for Large Scale Modelers and Others](#)”, November 9, 2021.)



Often Seen, Seldom Modeled



I placed this poster (**Photo B**) on an HO scale building wall located on my HO scale Lower Montauk Branch layout. This layout was long ago sold to another modeler. What I thought made it distinctive was that the sign featured losing candidates in that 1964 election. And yes, who has ever heard of "William Miller"?

Savvy modelers will often include a campaign poster for a presidential election to set the time frame for visitors to their layout. What I had never seen was a campaign poster for the losing candidate. An argument could be made that as modelers we should make matters easy for our visitors - our viewers. Perhaps that is a bit trite?

Perhaps we should model reality for visitors when they must work or struggle just a bit when they encounter such a cue. And by struggle, I do not mean sloppy modeling or an incoherent story line to the layout, nor anachronisms of all sorts.

By making him or her struggle a little, perhaps we engage our visitor a bit and bring him into the time and place we are modeling. Perhaps readers can come up with their own "struggle" to include in their layout without bringing the viewer to the point of exasperation.

I learned this principle of "Often Seen, Seldom Modeled" from my mentor Doug Gurin. Doug stresses that modelers can enhance their layout's character and story-telling ability by including scenes we see all the time on railroads. The problem is too few modelers include these often-seen features, hence the second part of the phrase "seldom modeled".

So next time you are tempted to put up a campaign poster or billboard to set the era of your layout, consider a poster for the losing candidate(s). And more importantly, consider including cues to the era you are modeling that make your visitor work a bit.

Thank you, Doug.

(Submitted by Nicholas Kalis from his Blog, "[Modeling Hints and Reviews for Large Scale Modelers and Others](#)", January 20, 2020.)

What modeling tips do you have that you would like to share with others in this section? Just a short paragraph or two with or without a photo is all you need. Please forward them to local-editor@mer-nmra. We would love to hear from you!

Featured Layout

Howard Zane's Piermont Division

Photos by Jerry Lauchle, MMR

One of our “favorite sons” of the Mid-Eastern Region, [Howard Zane](#) is well-known as one of the most accomplished model railroaders in the world. During our 2021 MER Convention at Mount Clare Junction in Baltimore, many of our members were treated to a tour of his famous HO scale Piermont Division of the Western Maryland Railroad, an artistic masterpiece, which has appeared many times on the pages of *Model Railroader* and other magazines. A host of DVDs on [Model Railroad Academy](#) and videos available on YouTube provide excellent details of his impeccable “multi-dimensional” scenery, realistic scratchbuilt structures, smooth running trains and Western Maryland Railroad operations.

Jerry Lauchle, MMR, our MER photographer, was everywhere during the 2021 75th Anniversary Convention and he didn't miss this exhibit!

Here are some of the photos, in no particular order, that Jerry took of Howard's layout, in the unlikely event that you may not have seen some of these scenes in the past.

For more information about Howard Zane's Piermont Division, please check out the YouTube videos listed at the end of this article. You won't be disappointed!









**References:**

- Howard Zane's Piermont Division Layout in 4K: <https://youtu.be/U6GBoVIC9Sg>
- Vol 1: Howard Zane's Piermont Division – from Nace's Videography LLC: <https://youtu.be/l84AoVUQuXE>

Annual Reports from the Annual Members Meeting

President's Report:

After participating in the drafting of the 2025 Long Range Planning document last summer and early Fall, I (along with two other members of the Board) have been participating in the review and development of the new Region President's Handbook. This is part of National's effort to bring consistency to the operations of the Regions.

The RAC/Region Presidents conference covered 4 Saturdays in March and April. The topics included the new Region President's Handbook; a session about National's concerns and the Regions' concerns about National; expectations both ways; how the organization is communicating and how effective is it being done; long range planning; the recruitment and retention of members; education as led by National; the recovery of NMRA as an organization from the effects of COVID 19; and review/update on the At Risk Persons, Three Strikes, and Disruptive Members policies.

Each of these sessions/topics were an hour or more discussion/presentation. I will be addressing these in the next couple of columns in the Local, starting with Recruitment and Retention in the July/August column.

Under Education, the MER will need to open and fill a new volunteer position: Education Committee Chair (and attendant committee). One committee member will be a Clinics Manager. With Education we will be expected to submit two clinics a year to National, along with developing some Modeling with the Masters (MWTM) instructors.

Under membership, we need a Membership Committee and Chair as well.

Along with that, I have handled the submission of the MER's selection for the "Service to the Division" award for the upcoming summer. This award from the National President is to honor and recognize the quiet and often unrecognized division members whose service to their Division is vital.

We have continued to work within the restrictions of COVID-19 to meet and carry on with the business of the MER. I want to thank all the members of the Region BOD and all the Division Superintendents and their staffs who kept the MER active and moving forward.

Vice President's Report:

Executive Convention Chair Report:

2021 Convention – Chesapeake Division – October 21-24, 2021

MER contracted with the Delta Hotels Baltimore Hunt Valley on October 20, 2019. At the request of the President, I talked with the hotel regarding their policy for postponements due to COVID-19. While the cancellation fee is very high, the hotel indicated that they would work with us should some delay be necessary.

The budget submitted by the LCC is currently showing a deficit which was discussed during the monthly conference call (March). It was agreed to look for ways to reduce the spending, including

requesting that the hotel roll back the food and beverage revenue commitment of \$15,000 or give MER credit for meals purchased by attendees in their restaurant. The hotel ultimately did reduce the F&B commitment to \$7,500.

The MER Board of Directors was provided an update on the convention's status at a special meeting on September 14, 2021. The current registration was 150 at the time of the special meeting, with a goal of 200. The number of room nights booked as of the special meeting was 167 with a target of 216 to avoid attrition charges on a contracted 260 room nights contracted. Options presented were moving forward and trying to secure additional attendees with a potential loss of an estimated \$6,000; cancellation without rescheduling which would cost around \$30,000 (less than originally forecasted due to reduction in F&B); cancellation and rescheduling which would potentially cost some penalty at the Delta Hunt Valley because of the late date and \$4,000 in Charlotte. The Board voted to move forward with the COVID 19 protocols in place consistent with current CDC, local and hotel guidelines. The Superintendents' and Editors' breakfasts have been arranged, as per ECC assignment.

Rick Uskert, Local Convention Chair, worked closely with the Hotel and kept abreast of current CDC and County guidelines related to COVID-19 and adjusted the convention protocols accordingly. Rick has done an excellent job pulling things together during a difficult period. On a personal note, I am looking forward to attending my first convention and meeting everyone in person.

2022 Convention – Carolina Special – October 20-23, 2022

Charlotte, originally scheduled for 2020, has moved to 2022, replacing the James River Division. A new hotel, the Hilton Charlotte University, has been selected and a contract has been negotiated. The contract does include Force Majeur provisions for another COVID outbreak. Local Convention Chair Neal Anderson has restarted the planning and will promote the convention at this year's event.

2023 Convention – Susquehanna Division

Superintendent Tim Himmelberger had confirmed the division will host the 2023 convention. He is aware that it is time to assemble the LCC. Follow up required as it is time to get rolling.

2024 Convention – Open

James River Division Superintendent Philip Taylor has asked that another division take this year. Looking for guidance as to next logical destination,

2025 Convention – New Jersey Division

The Division had voted to host 2025. Then Superintendent Bill Grosse had confirmed.

Respectfully submitted,
Sam Rogers
MER Executive Convention Chair (ECC)

Convention Registrar's Report:

March 28, 2021

I have been communicating with Rick Uskert, the Local Convention Chair, to keep apprised of the information required for the convention registration form. With that information, I have created an initial

draft of the online registration form, including the operating sessions and extra-fare clinics (the most complex parts of the registration form).

In addition to developing the registration form itself, I spent many months to develop some automation of the registration process. This automation is expected to be transparent to the registrant, but, if successful, will considerably reduce the amount of manual intervention required of the registrar to process and confirm each registration. I was pleased to have successfully implemented some of that automation in a test environment during the Spring (with the generous assistance of our MER Webmaster, Jeff Burch).

The online registration form went live May 1, as planned. During the first couple of days a few initial issues were readily resolved. As expected, the registration form has continued to require updates and maintenance throughout the registration period. Some of those updates were quite significant and added to an already hectic effort, but I don't know that they could have been avoided. The content of the registration form did finally stabilize in early August, requiring minimal updates after that.

This year was particularly difficult, not only because of COVID-19, but also having to do with the amount of information the registrar was required to track this year. For example, the meal selection, in my limited experience having developed the registration form for only two other conventions, 2019 and 2021, was much larger than in past years, with each meal having three selections. This added a complexity to the registration form and the backend database that required considerable effort to develop and support.

The automation of the registration workflow will serve as a stepping-stone to more automation that will get us to a more streamlined and efficient workflow. Note that most of the registration process is transparent to the registrant, so their experience was not degraded, and should have appeared essentially just like past years. There were improvements to the user experience, with one benefit of the automation being the ability for the registrant to see how many slots were available in a given extra-fare clinic or operating session at any time, simply by calling up the registration page.

I will carry forward at least a couple of lessons learned that should facilitate an improved and more efficient workflow for the development of maintenance of the registration form in the future.

Kirk Bateman
MER Convention Registrar

Assistant Treasurer – Conventions Report

Over the summer, signature cards were completed with the bank to add William Wurtzell as a signer on the convention. He was also provided the convention credit card and the check book for the convention account. While these items completed the steps necessary to transition staffing duties, I will continue to be available to answer questions and provide assistance as may be required.

R. Scott Unger
Former Assistant Treasurer

Vice President Division Activities:

- No attendance at in person Division meets due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Requested and began Reviewing by-laws provided by Divisions
- Requested Division Reports and followed up with those who had not responded
- Attended the Potomac Division virtual meeting on April 18, 2021
- Attended Superintendents meeting held virtually on July 22, 2021
- Responded to various inquiries and communications from Division Superintendents
- Worked with and assisted convention team on 2021 convention

Treasurer's Report:

The Treasurer contracted covid-19 in late January and February of 2021. While he is recovering nicely though not without some relapses, he was unable to convene the budget committee meeting and unable to attend the January BOD meeting. At the January meeting the board adopted the 2020 budget for 2021. So far, this approach, while not ideal, is working.

The bi-annual audit was completed successfully in the first quarter of 2021. The financial status and the accounts of the MER are in good shape, with no irregularities found. The Treasurer thanks the auditors and looks forward to working with them again at the end of his term next year.

By action of the board and the MER membership, the Assistant Treasurer, who deals primarily with convention finances but is also the back-up for the Treasurer, is now added to signatories on the checking account. By the same action the Secretary was removed as a signatory. There are still three signatories on the accounts, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, and the President.

Once again, and always, the Treasurer wishes to thank Bill Roman, the Resident Agent, the entire convention staff, especially Executive Convention Chair Sam Rogers and Registrar Kirk Bateman, and the Assistant Treasurer, Bill Wurtzell. While not all of them report to me specifically, they all at one time or another have dealings with me. Without their help, the Treasurer's office and the MER would be in sorry shape. So, thank you all, indeed.

Despite the cancelling of last year's convention with the attendant penalties and lack of income, and despite dwindling membership, the finances of the MER are in good shape (See Asset Statement). Mostly this is so because of excellent management by the MER Board over the past many years. Our investments are helping the bottom line, as are some donations, particularly a very generous donation given to cover the hotel cancellation penalties we incurred last year. We definitely need to build our donation base. Please consider helping. The MER board and staff are working on some donation programs, and please consider the Amazon donation program (See the Amazon article). Please give generously and often.

8/30/2021		3/31/2021		Account	Value	Value	Notes
MID-EASTERN REGION, NMKA, INC.							
ASSET STATEMENT OF CHANGES							
9/24/2021							
ASSETS				ASSETS			
BDPS	\$2,997.44			BDPS	\$5,843.59		Bank Deposit Program (Cash)
MPUXX Money Market Checking	\$26,736.23			MPUXX Money Market Checking	#####		Morgan Stanley Money Market
MPUXX Convention Money Market Checking	\$5,148.02			MPUXX Convention Base Checking	\$8,708.19		Morgan Stanley Money Market
BDPS Convention Available Cash	\$20,092.98						Combined convention accounts split for clarity
SOUCC	\$4,973.30			SOUCC	\$4,925.48		American Beacon Income
CVMCC	\$2,454.62			CVMCC	\$2,609.75		Calvert Emerging Markets
KAUCX	\$2,862.93			KAUCX	\$2,548.11		Federated Kaufmann
GCLX	\$5,643.56			GCLX	\$5,238.54		Goldman Sachs International Equity
PONCX	\$5,394.00			PONCX	\$5,448.48		Pimco Income
PBLCX	\$18,657.04			PBLCX	#####		Principal Blue Chip
PKSCX	\$4,261.18			PKSCX	\$4,076.86		Virtus Kar Small Cap
PQNCX	\$2,891.37			PQNCX	\$2,731.32		Allianzgi NFI Mid Cap/Virtus NFI Mid Cap Val C
TOTAL Cash and Equity Accounts	\$102,212.87			TOTAL Cash and Equity Accounts	\$84,242.49		
Convention 2021 LCC Advance	\$1,070.00			Convention 2021 LCC Advance	\$1,070.00		Includes one registration refund
Prepaid Hotel Deposits 2021 Convention	\$2,300.00			Prepaid Hotel Deposits 2021 Convention	\$2,300.00		New
Supplies	\$1,140.00			Supplies	\$1,140.00		Consumable supplies as of 2018-12-31
Material Assets	\$3,403.00			Material Assets	\$3,403.00		Assets in the hands of volunteers, mostly depreciated
Inventories-Car Kits	\$1,756.00			Inventories - Car Kits	\$1,756.00		~2756/54.00
Total Other Assets	\$9,869.00			Total Other Assets	\$9,869.00		
TOTAL ASSETS		\$112,081.87		TOTAL ASSETS		\$94,111.49	
LIABILITIES							
Restricted Life Member Fund	\$15,113.16			Restricted Life Member Fund	#####		Updated 2019-12-31
Clyde Gerald Legacy Operations Fund	\$17,319.96			Clyde Gerald Legacy Operations Fund	#####		
Estimated Convention Liabilities	\$11,000.00			Estimated Convention Liabilities	\$1,500.00		New Hotel Negotiation
Subscriptions 2021	\$3.00			Subscriptions 2021	\$3.00		No Change
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$43,436.12		TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$33,936.12	
NET WORTH		\$68,645.75		NET WORTH		\$60,175.37	
NOTES							
1. Assets include convention operating funds							
2. Convention funds were previously combined, are now broken out into the investment fund and the cash fund							

Director-at-Large Foulke's Annual Report:

Archives

MER Archivist, Kevin O'Connor, has completed the compilation, digitizing, and filing of 2020 and 2021 to date MER reports, newsletters, and other miscellaneous items. The Archivist has also compiled, digitized, and filed 2020 and 2021 Division newsletters and other information. Ken Montero and I have developed a proposed Document Retention and Destruction Policy compliant with Federal and State of Maryland requirements and guidance. The proposed policy will be presented at the Board of Directors October 21, 2021 meeting for consideration and acceptance.

MER Merchandising

A project was developed for a special edition golf shirt commemorating the 75th anniversary of the MER. As I write this report a total of 51 shirt orders have been received between March and September 20, 2021. The deadline for shirt orders was September 24, 2021. Three articles in *The Local*, along with the registration page of the convention advertised the commemorative shirt. Michele Chance, Bob Morningstar, and Ken Montero assisted in the development of the project. Special thanks to Business Manager Howard Oakes for ramrodding the orders.

Photography

MER Photographer, Jerry Lauchle, will visually document the Mount Clare Junction convention, focusing on contest entries at the convention and layout tours. Other activities and events at the convention will also be photographed as time and space permit. Jerry's efforts are greatly appreciated, especially with his willingness to purchase equipment at his cost to enhance to quality of the photo documentation. Contest photos are presented at the Saturday night banquet with other photos presented in other venues.

NMRA At-Risk Persons Policy and Outreach to Other Non-Profits

NMRA Past President Pete Magoun stated in the "President's Car" column of the June 2021 issue of the *NMRA Magazine* that National is actively working on clearing up any misunderstandings of the At-Risks Persons Policy, and direction will be forthcoming on what we can do and what we cannot do. The NMRA has new leadership which may result in a lengthy period to provide the direction on the At-Risks Persons Policy. As has been stated previously, MER members should make themselves aware of the policy, and should monitor communication on this subject from National. This policy does not prohibit an NMRA member from donating their time, money or resources to a non-profit organization for railroading education. Persons donating time, money, or resources can never state they are representing the NMRA, MER, or one of its Divisions when providing these donations. Considerable effort was expended to attempt to replace a previous MER position with a new position of Outreach Coordinator, including communication with the legal counsel for the NMRA, Robert Amsler. This included a definition of the job responsibilities. However, with the ongoing review of the At-Risk Persons Policy, I am recommending that efforts to establish the Outreach Coordinator position and the job description be put on hold until such time the MER receives directions from National on this subject.

Director-at-Large Lauchle's Report

General Contest Chair

General Contest Chairman, Alan Mende reports that all the convention plaques have been ordered and Ken Montero will be picking them up.

MER on the Web

Webmaster, Jeff Burch has:

- posted the bi-monthly MER eLocals to the website
- added the database and user creation for the MER Convention clinic registration and the white elephant registration (Both built by Rick Bateman)
- converted the website to use SSL and provide for encrypted transmittal of data to and from users
- performed email account maintenance including disk space allocation for users who reached their assigned disk usage limits.

Director-at-Large Morningstar Report

Nominations/Balloting

Ballots went out on time August 1. Director Jerry Lauchle asked not to serve another term and was removed from the ballot. An effective and vibrant MER requires active participation by the membership and the efforts of those willing to step up and lead the region via the various roles available. Please consider offering your time and talents to support model railroading and the MER.

Local/eLocal

Greg Warth, Alex Belida, and Martin Brechbiel are doing an exemplary job of getting the newsletter out.

Twelve articles were reviewed during this reporting period. Most articles were of high quality, one was recommended to be declined due to inappropriateness for the Local. Some authors continue to struggle with following the submission guidelines. Again, perhaps an author's checklist can be improved to address common editorial issues identified by the reviewers?

The effort to determine the validity of the "Life Member List" continues. I have been using various public databases to determine who is deceased using legacy.com, tributes.com, and obituare.com for 133 Life members. The paper version of the Local is an extra obligation on the volunteer editorial and publishing staff. We are attempting to remove the need to produce and mail a paper copy by getting the Life Members to convert to the digital publication.

Current circulation numbers (as of Sept 4 2021), thanks to John Hoyt for providing these:

eLocal Numbers:

Total Contacts 1,792

Total Currently Subscribed 1,627

Total Currently Unsubscribed 165
Total Filed Complaint 1
Total Opened for the Sep-Oct 2021 eLocal 953
Total Downloaded from MER site 301
Total Bounces 86
Unsubscribed 0

Paper Local Numbers

Total Number of Paper Local Subscribers 32
Legacy Subscribers 0
Life Members 32
Deceased This Period 0
Lost Contact and Perhaps Deceased 1

Advertising

We are reviewing and considering revision of our ad pricing structure. The goal of this effort is produce a revised pricing rate card that brings the rate structure more in line with the other magazine when the cost per thousand readers is the driving metric.

Fundraising

Long term giving (planned giving) article submitted in July for the Local. Part II was submitted in late August for a future issue. This will be a 3 part article emphasizing awareness, education, and communication to the membership.

Need specific guidance on how members can give via Paypal and other online giving mechanisms. We have a Paypal account; why cannot it not be used for planned and ad-hoc giving?



Gateway 2022
NMRA National Convention
August 7-13, 2022

Marriott Grand, St Louis, MO
Information/Registration at gateway2022.org

Making Loads for Transit

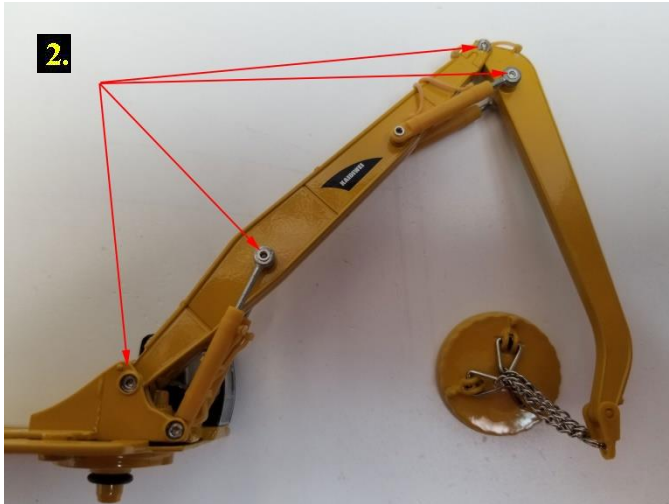
By Roger Bir

For some members of the Tidewater Division, the traffic scene is all too familiar when traveling west or east on Interstate 64 as you approach the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel. I have lived in the area for twenty-one years, and the situation has not changed during my time here in Virginia. The HRBT is how we readily identify the tunnel. However, to most people stuck in traffic, it is known by many other names, some with a very descriptive adjective either before or after you say “HRBT.”

In juxtaposition with Washington DC, the state government has finally approved funding to expand the tunnels from four tubes to eight. This in itself is a feat worthy of a documentary on either the History or Smithsonian channels, but the local news is keeping us posted for now. To accomplish a project of this magnitude, some of the most significant pieces of construction equipment available have made their way to Hampton Roads. As you drive through this area, you will encounter a multitude of names on the sides of the equipment. One of the most prominent pieces has the name “Liebherr”, which is a family-owned German company with U.S. manufacturing facilities.

Our "Making Loads for Transit" project for this article is a Liebherr Construction Handling Crane, an HO model of which is made by a company called Kaidiwei. Check on eBay and you will find several priced for under \$25 (**Photo 1**). The number of cars you will need for this project is four 50' flat cars. Should you plan any weathering, you will need to accomplish this before starting this portion of the project. This particular Kaidiwei Handling Crane model comes with two interchangeable attachments. One, is a circular magnetic disc (for scrap metal), and the other is a claw-like device called a multi-tine grab (used for lumber or large scrap metal). Please remove whichever attachment is present on your model from the crane's boom and set it aside. Now, turn the piece of equipment upside down and, on the bottom, you will see one center screw holding the crawler treads. Remove the screw and the caterpillar crawler treads from the main cab. On the bottom, you will notice five screws. Remove all five screws and lift off the main body/engine cover and the operator's control cab. Place a small flat tip screwdriver under the operator's seat (from the rear) and gently lift and the cab should pop free.





Next, the main and secondary pins, holding the two booms together, from the crane body are removed. There are four points where you will remove (drill out) cotter pins (**Photo 2**).

Using a 1 1/16" drill bit, place the point in the center of the pin and slowly drill it out, gaining speed as the drill begins to cut away the metal. The metal used in these pins is not the most resilient. However, it is recommended to use slower speeds to start, thus avoiding any excess damage to the boom should the bit slip.

The next phase is probably the most challenging

aspect of this project. Overall, with its crawler tracks attached, the handling crane would be too wide for a standard rail car load. We will be removing the crawler tracks (and cutting them down) and the crane's side catwalks for this task (**Photo 3**).

Turning the crane frame upside down, you will notice manufactured lines which represent the crane's "catwalk" (**Photo 4**).

Use a Dremel (with a cutting disc) and cut off the catwalk on both sides using those lines as guides. Then, take a file and smooth all edges and remove any metal spurs. Once that is accomplished, paint the exposed edges on both sides with flat black paint (you will understand

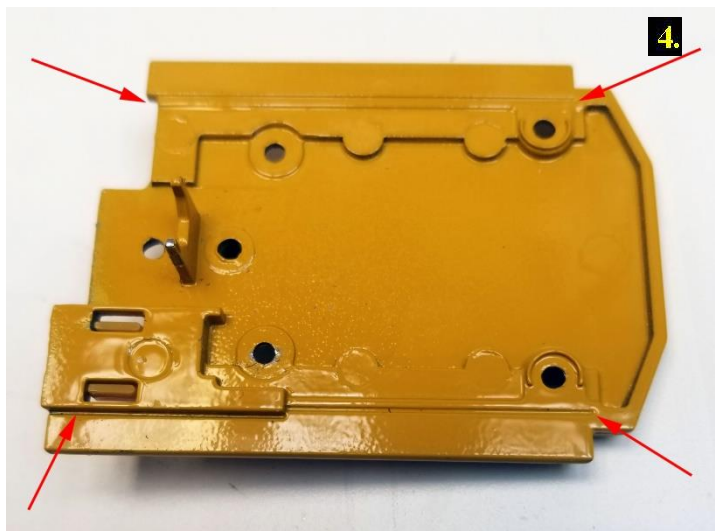


3.

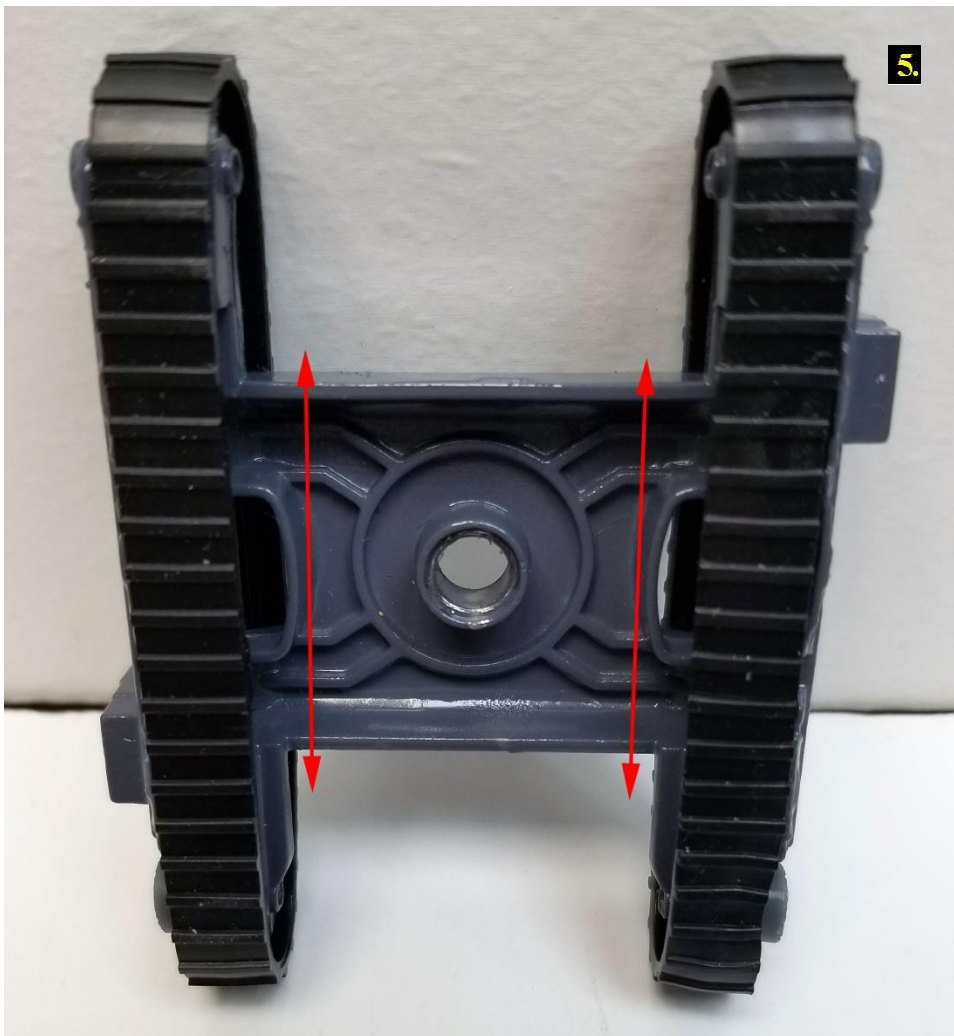
this concept later). Now take the continuous, or crawler tracks, and place them upside down.

Looking at **Photo 5**, take your Dremel tool with the cutting disc and cut along the red-arrowed lines. The result will be three pieces. Smooth all edges and remove any metal spurs.

Now you are ready to mount the main crane boom to your 50' flat car. Center the boom, and once the final spot is determined, add CA glue to the main boom and mount it on the flat car allowing the glue to completely dry before moving to the next step. When looking at the boom from above, there are three natural holes



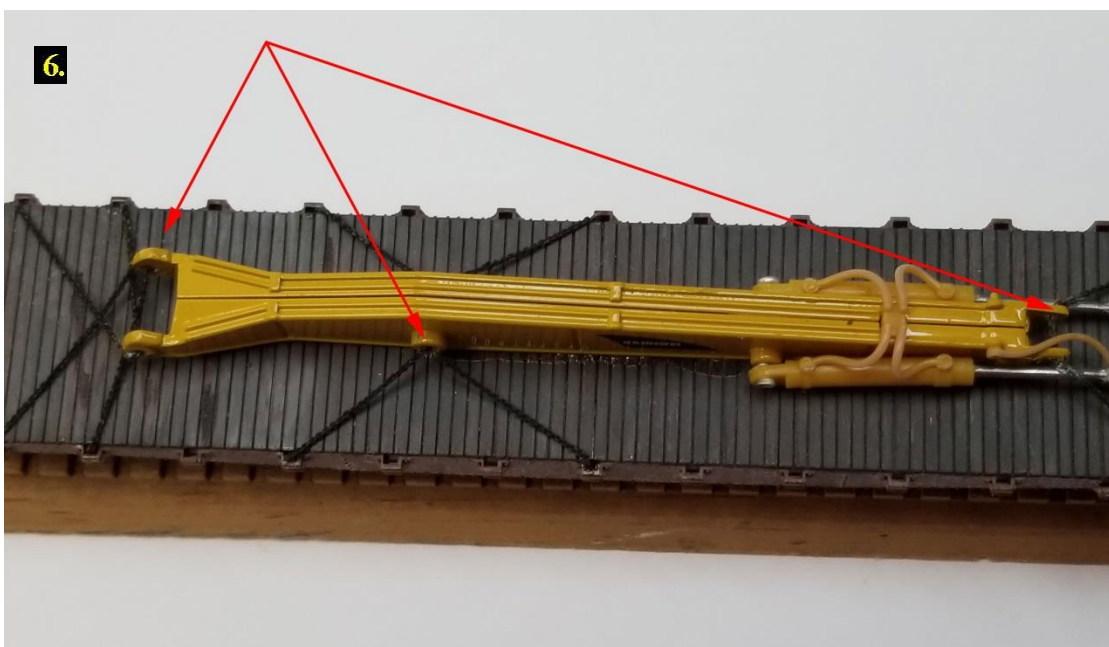
4.

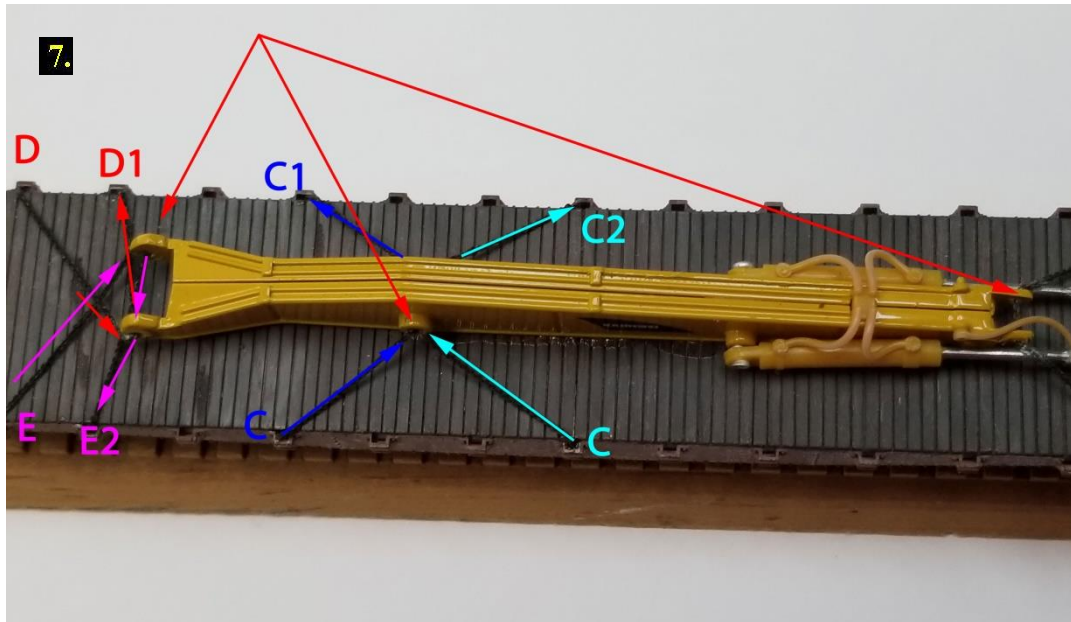


that can be used for applying tie-down chains (**Photo 6**).

Now we will install the tie-down chains. We will use a standard railroad configuration. To save on chain, I recommend determining the lengths needed using thread. Once you have the length, add about 1/2"-1" to the overall end of the chain and cut. For ease of installation, insert the chain in a slot (C), add a dab of glue, allow it to completely dry, and then pass it through the mooring hole to the opposite side (C1) (**Photo 7**).

Once the end was inserted into C1, and the 1" excess was hanging down through the mooring point on the flat car, I put a small clamp on the end and gently pulled the chain tight. Doing this removes any slack. Once the chain is taut and while holding onto the clamp, put a small dab of CA glue into the opening. Hold the chain for about twenty seconds or until the glue completely dries. Once the glue dries, cut off the excess chain. I will be using this same tie-down

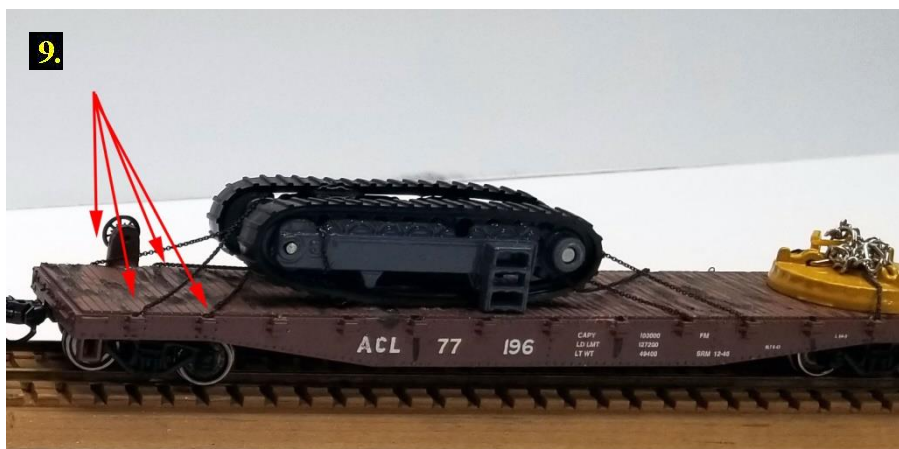




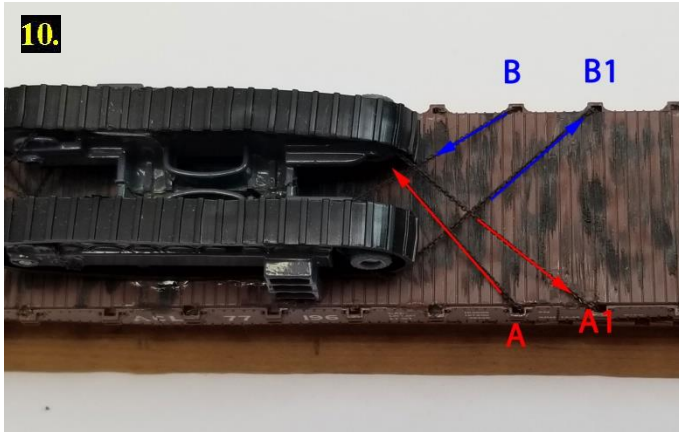
technique for the rest of the project.

The next phase is to secure and then tie down the crawler treads. When you accomplish the original cut (paragraph 4, sentence 8), both pieces are then glued and placed together (upside down). They should look as shown in **Photo 8**.

For the car placement of the crawler tracks, the center-of-gravity product placement is essential. We will center the tracks between flat car's trucks. Placing the crawler tracks directly over the center of the trucks will eliminate one end of the mooring sites, thus you will have no place for tie-down chains (**Photo 9**).



Once the glue has dried, you are now ready to add the tie-down chains. You will tie down both ends of the crawler tracks. You will use the same process for the tracks as with the boom (**Photo 10**). Next, we will tie down the crane's magnet using the same procedure as the boom and the crawler tracks (**Photo 11**).

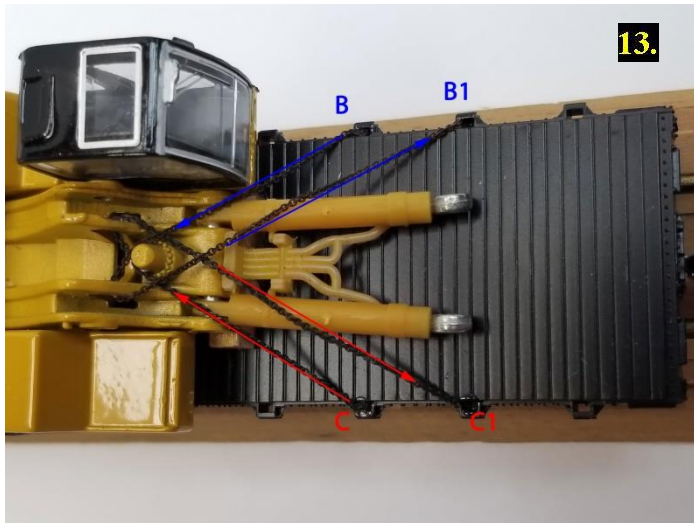


At this point, we have the boom, magnet, and crawler tracks mounted on two flat cars. Next, we will mount the main cab component to a flat car. Unlike the tracks and magnet installation, the main element, because of its size and weight, will be mounted in the center of the flat car. Considering the size of the crane minus its tracks, I decided to use a piece of poplar to simulate an 8” x 8” piece of wood to serve as floor mounts to the flat car (Photo 12).

Once the glue on the wood mounts was dry, the main cab was glued to the mounts, and allowed to completely dry. Then, install the chains as shown in the picture (Photo 13). Securing the opposite end is relatively simple. Just follow the example in the picture (Photo 14).

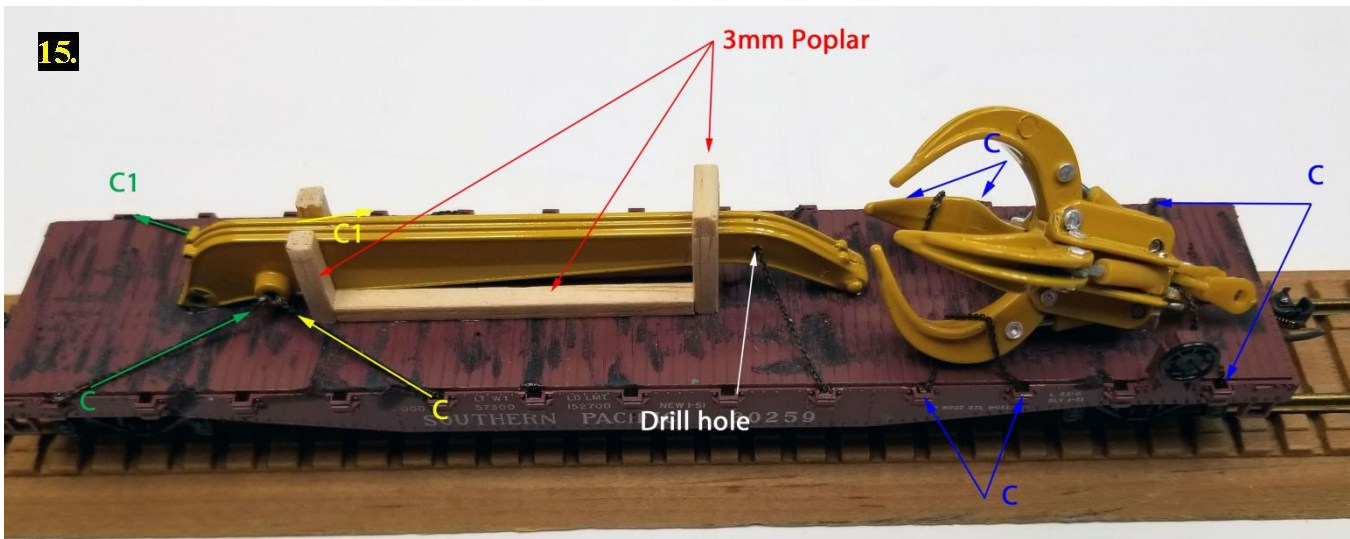


This completes the third car. Now we will secure the secondary boom and the crane’s claw. You have two options with regards to how you will tie down the crane’s secondary boom. The easiest way is to lay it flat, glue it down, let the glue dry, and secure it by crossing chains. I have opted for a builder’s challenge, building a wood support system, to which the boom will be secured. Preparation: the first thing was look at the piece and ascertain where your tie-down chains will run through. At one end, there is a natural hole where the hydraulic lift cylinders were once mounted. However, there is nothing at the



opposite end. Using a 1/16” drill bit, I centered a spot at the end and drilled a single hole. Now, using a 3-millimeter-wide piece of poplar (in actual scale, it would be 10”), I fashioned and glued the supports as shown in **Photo 15**. Let the glued parts dry entirely, and then install the chains (as shown in the image).

At this point, you now have loaded four 50’ flatbed cars with a fantastic load. (**Photo 16**). Could I have used larger flat cars? Yes, you can, as it is your railroad. I have done similar loads (for 100’ gantry cranes), and instead of using a 50’ flat car, I have used 60’ and 89’ rail flat cars. Remember, using a larger flat car will give you more space to consolidate your loads. The exact configuration can be



accomplished using three 60’ flat cars, or for that matter, you could try two 89’ cars for your load. Again, keep in mind it is your railroad, and you maintain the final decision on how many cars you want to use for any given project. If you have any questions or comments regarding this article, please feel free to [contact me here](#). Happy modeling!



Model Railroad References and Resources

How to find great train shows...

- There are many model train shows, exhibitions and conventions going on around the country, now that COVID restrictions have eased somewhat.
- [Rail Serve](#) provides an updated listing of all these train-related events. If you are traveling or just looking for a good train show to visit in your local area, you are almost certain to find one here.
- [Great American Train Shows](#) is another great place to look for train shows both locally and around the USA.
- One of the best ways to find a train show near where you are is to just enter “**train shows near me**” in your Internet browser (Google Chrome, for example).

Railroad history...

- [American-Rails.com](#) – A fantastic resource about prototypical railroads in America, including fallen flags as well as the current class 1 railroads, railroad infrastructure, steam and diesel locomotive history, rolling stock, railroad museums, train stations and depots, tourist train rides, and more. This site also provides a listing of [American model railroad museums](#).

How to find prototype track plans...

- Use Google Earth to find any prototype railroad yard, exchange, or junction in the world. As an example, follow this link to the [Norfolk Southern coal yard in Norfolk, VA](#).
- [Open Railway Map](#) can help you find prototype railroad maps all over the world and provides a lot of information regarding infrastructure, maximum speeds, electrification, signaling, etc.

The Last Stop...

Short Lines:

- **Researching?** Whatever model railroad or train topic that interests you, you're likely to find it in the Rail Magazine Index (RMI) at <https://www.rmagazineindex.org/>. You'll be amazed at what you can discover here! The only hook is that you may have to buy a trains.com subscription to get what you need to know.
- **Let there be light:** Looking for easy wireless lighting for your streetlights or buildings? Consider using fiberoptic filaments 1-1.5mm from a light source under your layout. Check out [Dwarvin Fiberoptics](https://dwarvin.com) (dwarvin.com). You could even make your own light source using this concept.
- **Easy control panels:** Want to update your control panels? New technology to the rescue! Learn about [Touch Toggles at the Barrett Hill Shop](#), recently demonstrated at the 2021 Mount Clare Junction Convention. [Joey Ricard's video](#) shows how to install them.

[Note: Neither *The Local*, the MER (Mid-Atlantic Region), nor the author have any financial interest in any of these products or companies. -Ed.]



Another great photo of Howard Zane's Piermont Division of the Western Maryland in HO Scale. See pp. 34-38 in this issue (Photo by Jerry Lauchle).