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American Freedom Train: 1975-2026

By Greg Warth



American Freedom Train No. 250 (previously No. 1) (Photo by Taylor Everett). [Story on p. 12](#)

This year is the 250th Anniversary of America, and since trains were so much a part of American history, I thought it would be fitting to use this issue of *The Local* to honor some of our most famous and most iconic locomotives from the past, including the American Freedom Train No. 250 as shown above, the N&W No. 611, Union Pacific's Big Boy, and C&O's Challenger. I hope you enjoy the stories and the video links of these remarkable feats of engineering and what they represent.

From the Editor's Desk...



Questions in the Museum

By Greg Warth

"How do you make the trains go?" asked the inquisitive little one as I was adjusting the speed on my J Class N&W #611 engine pulling two coaches and a baggage car through my N scale landscape. "It's all about electricity." I replied. And then I tried to explain how the electrons travel through one side of the track, through the motor in the engine, making it spin, which then makes the wheels go around. About half-way through, I think, she lost track of what I was saying, but the fascination remained. Then she came out with, "What are electrons?" As I tried to explain an entire year of a physics course to a second-grader, including where electrons come from, magnetic fields, and gears, etc. I saw her father standing quietly nearby, smiling, and happy to see someone else struggling to answer her unending questions about things that are not easy to explain.

I love talking to budding engineers, soaking up knowledge while listening to answers to every question. After a few minutes, she and her father moved on to look at other things and I'm sure she did not learn all about electricity from my brief explanation, but a few of the words and the concept might stick; and when she hears about it again in the future, she will add a few more details to her bank of knowledge about the subject.

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BYMRR Train Store

Electricity is just one of the many things that can be learned from model railroading. The fascination is what draws them in which then leads to questions like “Why?” and “How,” and the answers are more likely to stick when they relate to something that is so fascinating, interesting and fun. There are so many other things that people ask about while watching trains weaving their way through three dimensional scenes. “How did you build this?” leads to discussions about carpentry, elevations, inclines, track designs, terrain and landscape development, and architecture among other things. “Why did you build this?” leads to more philosophical questions about life and work balance, construction vs. destruction, and purpose.

This hobby is so much more than just a hobby. I can think of no other pastime that teaches so much. The STEAM acronym is only the beginning.

STEAM is short for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics, all of which are basic disciplines used in model railroading. But more than that, they are educational concepts that foster learning about the world around us. They provide the basis for career development for young people. They provide a foundation which separates truth from fiction, realism from fantasy, right from wrong, actual from theoretical, and critical independent thinking from brainwashing.

Once again, I would like to thank our outstanding editorial staff for all their hard work, not only for this issue but for all they have done over the last several years:

Alex Belida, MMR

Martin Brechbiel, MMR

And special thanks to all our authors, many of whom came to my rescue recently when there was a paucity of articles in the cue for *The Local*. Without them, we would have nothing to show you.

Warm regards and

Happy railroading!

Greg



Registration Open NOW!



From the Business Car

By Jack Dziadul, MMR – MER Business Manager

September-October 2026

Executive Handbook Calendar

It is periodically helpful to review the EHB calendar as outlined in the last issue. Worth emphasizing are several election related dates including:

- August 1 – deadline for mailing or emailing ballots to members – completed
- September 8 – returned mailed ballots must be postmarked by the Tuesday after Labor Day
- September 12 – all ballots must be received by the Saturday after Labor Day
- September 19 – Ballot Committee (John Hoyt) reports results to President Scott Unger, the Director overseeing the Ballot Committee (Greg Warth), and the Business Manager (that's me)
- September 26 – The President notifies candidates of the election results, and the Business Manager notifies NMRA and MER webmaster (Jeff Burch) of the election results
- September 30 – election results submitted to the Editor of The Local for publication
- October 10 – election results posted to MER website

By now, you have all received the ballot and, hopefully, you have taken the time to vote. Other than a potential coup with a massive write-in campaign, the four candidates are running unopposed. But it still is nice to kick off the election season with a show of support and a thank you to the volunteers who have stepped up.

2027 Elections

The Nominating Committee will be recruiting candidates for three Director at Large positions in the 2027 round of Region level elections. Candidate Statements for MER elective offices are due May 30, 2027.

Note the dates listed above. The election software that MER uses shows dates that those with military experience with recognize: day/month/year (DMY), instead of the more common (in the USA) month/day/year (M/D/Y). Don't let the date protocol confuse you.

Tracks to Tidewater

I am looking forward to seeing you at MER's October 15-18 convention in Virginia Beach. If you have not yet registered, please check the schedule of clinics, operating sessions, and other available activities listed on the convention website (www.trackstotidewater.org). And you still have time to finish that model for the contest room.

NMRA member database

If you need to change your address, email, telephone number, etc. you can do so online at NMRA.org. John Hoyt has prepared an exhibit that gives you step-by-step instructions. Let John or me know if you would like a copy emailed to you. Or, just let me know what change you need and we'll make it happen for you.



Another American Favorite: N&W J Class #611 (Photo by Taylor Everett)

From the Contest Room

By Dan Peele

Just in case you are not aware, this is my last attempt this year to motivate modelers and inspire evaluators. That said, I want to remind everyone that the MER (Mid-Eastern Region) has ten Special Awards, including Best in Show:



1. [The Norfolk & Southern Historical Society Award](#)
2. [The Clyde Gerald Award](#)
3. [The Favorite Train Award](#)
4. [The PJ Mattson Memorial Award](#)
5. [The Philadelphia Division New Modeler Award](#)
6. [The President's Award](#)
7. [The Chuck Hladik Award](#)
8. [The Ray Bilodeau Narrow Gauge Modeling Award](#)
9. [Great Decals](#)
10. [Best in Show](#)

Several of these awards are determined by how you complete your entry forms and which entry form you use. You are welcome to submit your entry using any version of the NMRA's [Form 901](#) and [Form 902](#); however, the NMRA's forms do not include the checkboxes required to determine eligibility for these special awards. So, make sure you state why your model should be eligible for these special awards on your form 902. Otherwise, your entry may not be considered for them. The **MER version** of these forms includes checkboxes which are used to determine eligibility for several of the Special Awards. Form 901 MER and Form 902 MER are posted on the [MER Contest webpage](#) (I recommend using the MER forms rather than the NMRA ones.)

For those of you desiring to be evaluators, please include that in your Convention Registration. Experience is not required; first time evaluators will be paired with experienced evaluators. As an additional incentive, evaluators get a much closer look at the contest room entries. You will also discuss the merits of each entry with your team of evaluators. Your team awards a score based upon your team's evaluation. In addition, if you become an evaluator, your modeling skills will go up tremendously.

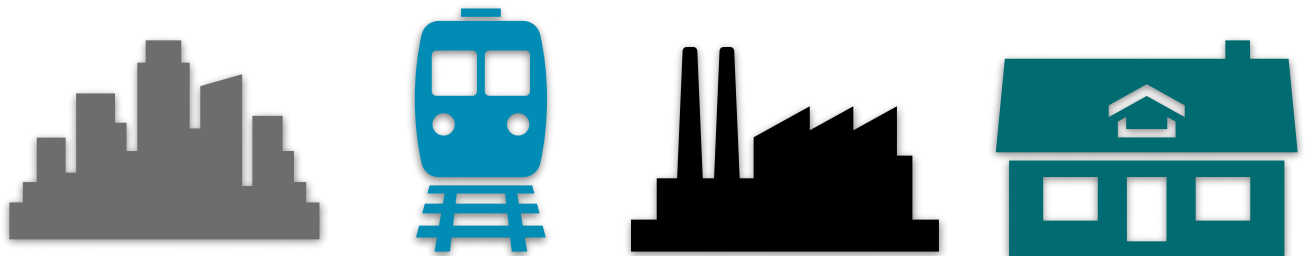
For the safety of the model, only the team lead is permitted to handle the models. Other visitors to the contest room only get to see the model as presented by the contest room staff.

Which brings me to soliciting for one or two volunteers to assist in the contest room. I will need help during model intake and return since it is too much for me to do alone. This includes mostly administrative duties and arrangement of entries. So, the volunteers will need to help me with this. But I can promise you the administrative work is minor, primarily a little typing and providing forms as needed for modelers.

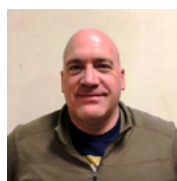
For the modelers, if you prefer, you are welcome to submit your Forms 901 and 902 to me via email prior to the convention. This will save us a little time in the contest room as well. If you desire, I can review your submission for completeness to ensure you are entered for the Special Awards for which your model may be eligible. Documentation completeness is required by the NMRA. For example, as stated on the NMRA's webpage "AP Updates and Frequently Asked Questions", to be considered a prototype model, at least ". . . two sets of documented photographs, videos, or similar evidence. . ." And don't forget, models entering the contest may receive a Merit Award, provided they achieve a score of 87.5 or higher.

At the NMRA's National Convention in late July, **a new AP category** was announced. There is now a Master Builder – **Modular Railroading AP**. This AP is in the same group as Master Builder – Structures, Master Builder – Scenery, and Master Builder – Prototype Models. The requirements and evaluation criteria have been published and are available on the NMRA's website. The [Statement of Qualifications Form](#) and [Evaluation Form](#) are also available for downloading.

The entries are artistic expressions of who we are and what we have learned in this hobby. Furthermore, they are a gauge of how the Mid-Eastern Region is doing. We want to be the best Region in the NMRA. An abundance of participants will show that our interest remains high, and that the members remain active, engaged, competitive, and eager to show their skills to others. I'm really looking forward to seeing an overwhelming number of entries this year. Models and dioramas galore! *You guys are the best. Show off your stuff!*



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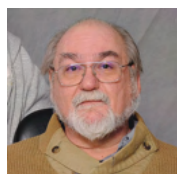
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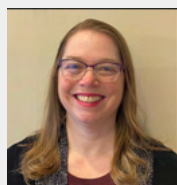
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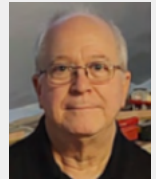
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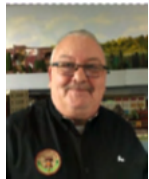
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Kurt Thompson, MMR

NMRA Achievement Program Update

By Kurt Thompson, MMR
MER AP Manager

Update for September-October 2026:

Since the last report, the following persons have earned the following Achievement Program certificates and Golden Spike awards.

Division	Modeler	Certificate Earned
Philly Division (3)	Steve Wysowski	Association Volunteer
	Jeff Witt	Model Railroad Author Association Volunteer
James River Division (5)	John Arthur	Model Railroad Author
Chesapeake Division (10)	Scott Wooddell	Model Railroad Author
	John Zdanis	Golden Spike
	Ken Poznaniak	Golden Spike



Gone Fishin' (Photo by Greg Warth).



Holiday Inn on Greenwich Road in Virginia Beach, VA: Site of the 2026 MER Convention, “Tracks to Tidewater.”

UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS

- 2026 — Tidewater Division — October 15-18, 2026 — “Tracks to Tidewater,” Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23462
- 2027 — South Mountain Division — Location: Hilton Garden Inn, 65 Priority Dr., Martinsburg, WV 25403

MER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SCHEDULE

- October 15 at 7pm. Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23462

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

- Call to Order at 7pm Oct. 17, then recessed until 10am on Oct. 18, 2026
Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23462

American Freedom Train

By Greg Warth

The American Freedom Train (AFT No. 1) had its debut in 1975 as one of three locomotives to pull the American Freedom Train of 1975 and 1976 to commemorate the Bicentennial Celebration and now has been restored again for the 250th American Anniversary. It carried hundreds of priceless artifacts celebrating the nation's history, culture, scientific achievements, and people. For millions of Americans, the train became one of the most memorable attractions of the United States Bicentennial.

The idea came from railroad enthusiast and commodities broker Ross Rowland Jr. Inspired by the original Freedom Train of 1947–1949, Rowland envisioned a traveling museum that would bring the story of America directly to communities throughout the country. After years of planning, the American Freedom Train began its journey in Wilmington, Delaware, on April 1, 1975.

Over the next 21 months, the train traveled more than 25,000 miles, visited all 48 contiguous states, and stopped in 138 cities. More than seven million people toured its exhibits, while millions more gathered beside the tracks to watch it pass.

For railroad enthusiasts, the locomotives were every bit as exciting as the exhibits. Although diesel power had replaced steam on most American railroads years earlier, Rowland believed a great steam locomotive would give the train the dramatic presence it deserved.

Reading Company No. 2101, a powerful 4-8-4 locomotive, was rescued from a Baltimore scrapyard and restored in approximately one month. Repainted as American Freedom Train No. 1, it pulled the train through the eastern and central portions of the country during 1975.

The other two locomotives that joined in the effort were the 4-8-4 Southern Pacific No. 4449, hauling its train through much of the western and southern United States, and the 2-10-4 Texas & Pacific No. 610, pulling its load through much of Texas during 1976.

Together, these locomotives introduced a new generation to the sight, sound, and power of mainline steam. The Freedom Train also helped inspire the preservation and excursion movement that continues to keep historic locomotives operating today.

Over the past year the American Freedom Train No.1 was moved to Baltimore and re-restored to create the American Freedom Train 250 to now celebrate our 250th Anniversary. It resides in the B&O National Museum of Railroad History and Innovation. There were plans made for a national tour for this beloved train, but sadly this had to be cancelled for a variety of reasons. It may make a public appearance later this year.

Nevertheless, like the Big Boy, It remains one of the great icons of American history and it is fitting for it to resurrected on our 250th Anniversary.

These giant iron mammoths are symbols of America's great strength and ingenuity. They help to bring people together from all over the country with excitement, pride and patriotism.

Growing Through Operations: My Journey with the OPSIG Achievement Program

By Alan Feldman



Photo 1: OPSIG-AP Logo

Model railroad operations have a way of pulling us deeper into the hobby. What starts as “running a train around the layout” quickly becomes something richer: teamwork, problem-solving, communication, and the satisfaction of making a miniature railroad function something like the real thing. Over the past year, I decided to lean into that side of the hobby by participating

in the **Operations Special Interest Group Achievement Program (OPSIG-AP)**—and the experience has been both rewarding and eye-opening (**Photo 1**).

Recently, I received an email from the OPSIG-AP Board of Trustees confirming that my latest submission had been approved. The note read:

“I am happy to inform you on behalf of the Board of Trustees that your submissions for the following OPSIG Achievement Awards have been approved. Thank you for providing the documentation we needed to approve this submission with confidence.

ALAN FELDMAN — C&E”

The **C&E (Conductor & Engineer)** award represents dozens of sessions spent learning the rhythm of prototype-inspired operations: blocking cars, handling paperwork, coordinating with dispatch, and working as part of a crew. Unlike some of the other categories, the C&E award **does include a written test**, but all study materials are included, and **free to download**. The test isn’t meant to intimidate—it’s designed to reinforce good operating practices and help operators understand the “why” behind the work we do on the layout.

Beyond C&E, I also completed achievements in several other categories:

- **Dispatcher** — managing traffic, issuing authority, and keeping the railroad fluid
- **YardMaster** — sorting, blocking, and keeping the yard running efficiently
- **Mentor** — teaching new operators and helping others grow their skills
- **Volunteer** — contributing time and energy to the ops community

One award you won’t see on my list *yet* is **Key Helper**. That one is absolutely within reach, but it does require a layout host to give me the gentle nudge needed to complete the application—*nudge, nudge*. It’s on my radar, and I’m looking forward to checking that box soon.

I'm also exploring a few additional categories that look both fun and challenging, including **Office Crew**, **Author**, **Traffic Manager**, and **Clinician**. And who knows—maybe someday I'll even earn the **OPSIG Host** award and eventually be welcomed into the coveted, sought-after, and somewhat tongue-in-cheek **secret society of the Operations Ninja (Photo 2)**. A model railroader can dream.



Insights from Our Division's Zoom Meeting with OPSIG President Paul Weiss

By Alan Feldman

Our Division recently had the opportunity to meet over Zoom on February 6th, 2025, with **OPSIG Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Paul Weiss**, who gave us a guided look into his layout and shared a deeper understanding of what the OPSIG offers. He discussed what makes an operations session work best for all involved. His presentation highlighted how the organization supports operators at every level, from beginners to seasoned dispatchers.

Paul walked us through several features and benefits of OPSIG membership, including:

- **The Membership Directory** — a powerful tool for connecting with operators, layout owners, and regional groups.
- **The Calendar of Events** — a centralized listing of operating sessions, regional meets, and special events.
- **Invite-Only Operating Weekends** — curated multi-day events on some of the best layouts in the country.
- **The Dispatcher's Office** — OPSIG's quarterly newsletter, widely regarded as one of the most polished and informative publications in the hobby.

But the moment that resonated most with the group was when Paul said:

"We don't take ourselves too seriously — this is fun."

That comment alone was the kick in the pants I needed to finish my studying and finally commit to taking the C&E test. Luckily, I passed on the first try. Paul had warned me months earlier to take the study materials seriously—some operators have attempted the test without preparation and didn't pass. It's open-book, but it's also timed and completed from your computer at home, so being familiar with the material makes all the difference.

The recognition that comes afterward is genuinely satisfying. The OPSIG certificates (**Photo 3**) are beautifully produced, printed on high quality paper with a gold border that gives them a professional, almost railroad-office feel. Each certificate also comes with an accompanying pin—about an inch in diameter, solidly made, and surprisingly high quality (**Photo 4**). They make the accomplishments feel tangible and worth proudly showing off. They're the kind of pins you'd proudly wear on a lanyard at an op session or display on a bulletin board next to your timetable and train orders. The pins were a surprising and nice touch included with the certificates (**Photo 5**).



Comparing the NMRA Chief Dispatcher Certificate to the OPSIG-AP Dispatcher Award

The NMRA Chief Dispatcher certificate and the OPSIG-AP Dispatcher award both recognize skill, knowledge, and experience in model railroad dispatching, but they approach the goal from different angles. The NMRA focuses on documented experience, planning, and execution of a full operating session, emphasizing operations, design and documentation. The OPSIG-AP focuses on hands-on dispatching across three different model railroads, showing competency and experience in three of the following disciplines: DTC, CTC, TT&TO, Warrants, or other less formal systems for the movement of trains. In short: NMRA measures your ability to plan and run a session; OPSIG-AP measures your ability to dispatch within a session.

You may be wondering if the OPSIG-AP Dispatcher Award can be used as a substitute for the NMRA Chief Dispatcher AP Certificate. The answer is no, not automatically.

While there may be some overlap in the requirements, there are distinctions to be aware of. One of the primary differences is likely just how the term Dispatcher is defined. I think OPSIG is defining it as one position, while the NMRA encompasses many areas surrounding the dispatcher position, including setup of an operations scheme.

The OPSIG-AP Dispatch award is a much lower barrier of entry, and only entails dispatching in three model railroads with three different operation disciplines (DTC, CTC, TT&TO, Warrants, or other less formal operation styles) to complete the requirements. These dispatch sessions could meet the Dispatcher job requirement for the NMRA Chief Dispatcher award, but does not completely fulfill the requirements of the NMRA Chief Dispatcher.

The NMRA Chief Dispatcher requires (according to the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ):

1. Schematic drawing of a model railroad that meets the requirements presented on the SOQ.
2. Timetable created meeting the requirements in the SOQ.
3. Operation train chart (graph) that interprets the timetable meeting the requirements in the SOQ.
4. Develop or adapt a system of operations for one layout, include all necessary forms and explanations of their use for controlling car movements in a prototypical manner.
5. Operate 50 hours among multiple operation categories (Engineer, Master, Hostler, Towerman, Dispatcher), with a minimum of 10 hours in each of three of the five categories, with one required being the Dispatcher.

What the OPSIG-AP Offers

The OPSIG Achievement Program is designed to encourage participation, learning, and community involvement. It's not a competition, and it's not an exam (except for the C&E test, which is more educational than challenging). Instead, it's a structured way to:

- Build new skills
- Explore different roles
- Support the layouts and clubs you already enjoy
- Celebrate the work you're already doing
- And have fun

Whether you're a seasoned dispatcher or someone who has never tried a yard job, the program gives you a path to grow at your own pace.

And if you know any younger operators, there is a **Ninja In Training** award that can be given out. Perhaps this is something we can have on hand in our Division booth for upcoming shows as an encouragement to younger operators?

Why You Might Want to Join

One of the best parts of the OPSIG-AP is how accessible it is. Membership is only **\$10 per year**, and **NMRA membership is not required**. The program is welcoming, flexible, and designed for operators of all experience levels.

Two helpful links for anyone interested:

- **OPSIG-AP Program Website:** <https://www.opsig-ap.org/>
- **Main OPSIG Website:** <https://www.opsig.org/>

Both sites offer resources, study materials, event listings, and ways to get involved.

A Personal Invitation

As someone who has benefited from the program, I'd love to see more members of our Division and Region get involved. We already have a strong operations community, and the OPSIG-AP is a natural extension of what many of us are doing at sessions every month. It's fun, it's motivating, and it helps strengthen the broader network of operators across the region.

If you've ever thought about leveling up your Ops experience—or simply want a new way to engage with the hobby—this is a great place to start. — Alan

NMRA MER 2026
Tracks to Tidewater Convention



[Click Here to Register Online](#)

[Download Paper](#)
[Mail-In Form](#)

For More Information:

Questions?

Visit
www.trackstotidewater.org

Send email to Registrar at
mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com

Book Review: Railway Express Agency and Its Place in the Express Industry

by V.S. Roseman (White River Productions 2025)

By Ken Montero

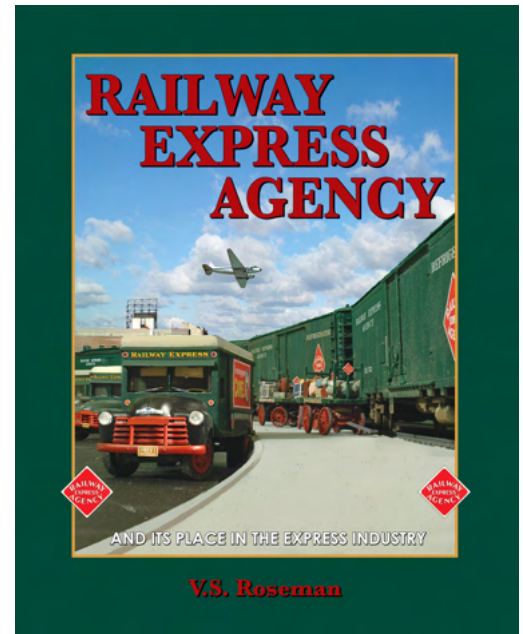
This is Victor Roseman's second book on the Railway Express Agency. It is an extensive expansion of his 1991 book. The new book has more material for each chapter than the 1991 book, including some new chapters, more photos (including railroad and vehicle models), and a new section on Canadian operations and other items. With its expansion, this book does not closely track the 1991 book. It is 164 pages in length. The new book has a hard cover, unlike the 1991 softcover book.

Railway Express Agency operated from 1929 until 1975, but Victor's coverage includes more than this entity's operation on America's railroads. The book includes:

- § A nine-page overview of express companies from 1830's through 1929, of which three pages are about immediate predecessor American Railway Express (with pictures of nine delivery vehicles and several ads).
- § The subsequent formation of Railway Express Agency from American Railway Express, which adds three pages, including the later inclusion of Southeastern Express Co.
- § Railway Express Agency railroad operations and its history.
- § Intermodal operations, international service and Air Express.

Here are some major items of interest to model railroaders that are covered in detail:

- Rail operations – Detailed operations, especially in some major cities, and how shipments and revenues were divided among its railroad owners.
- Rolling stock information – 24 pages of prototype (and a few model) photos and drawings (75 of them). It includes some graphic history of the rebuilding (several times) of Santa Fe express refrigerator cars (pp.45-46). Also included are six drawings of major rolling stock paint and lettering schemes.
- Delivery and transport vehicles – 12 pages of prototype (and a few model) photos and drawings of motor vehicles (39 of them) with explanations.
- Terminals (13 pages) and platform vehicles (4 pages) – Mostly large city terminals, such as in New York and Chicago, but also 12 photos and drawings of the wagons, etc., to move items to and from trains and within the terminals.

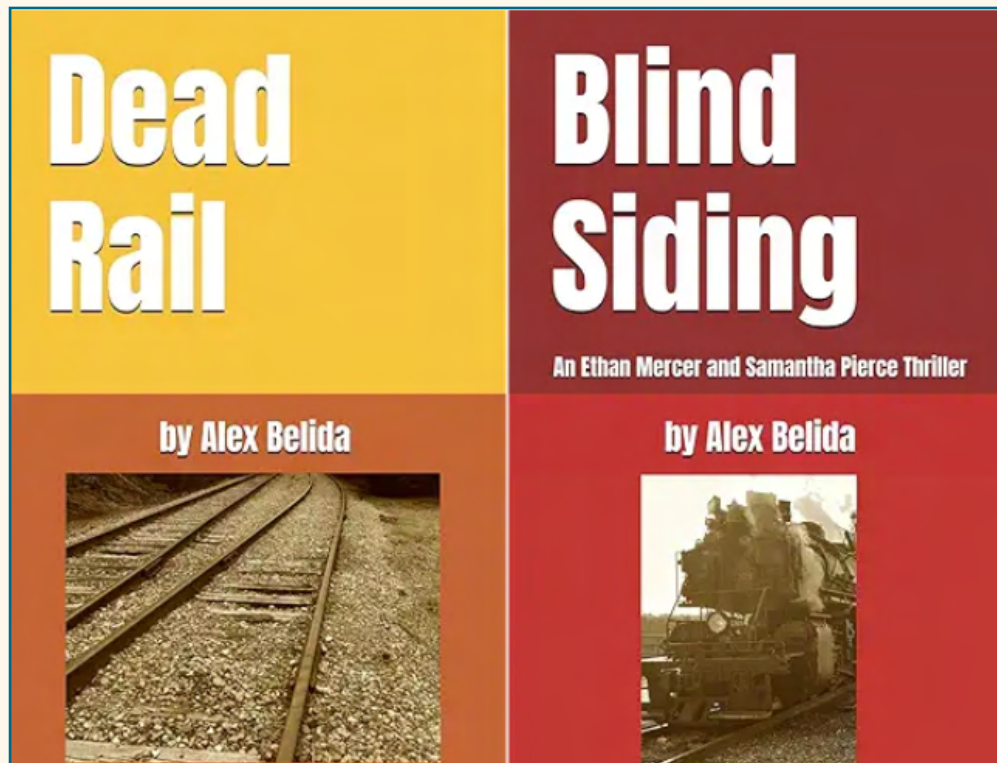


- Canadian companies – These are not part of Railway Express Agency (10 pages).
- Line restrictions – Appendix (C) contains line restrictions for certain cars and equipment on specific lines as of 1964 (not just regarding Allied Full-Cushion trucks and restrictions on cars going into New York City).

Victor Roseman was a prolific model railroad author and model builder, reflecting his background as an arts teacher. He was severely injured in a fire and died two years later before the final editing process was started, so the book was finished by Chris Lane – see p. 164.

I thought that it was well worth the acquisition. As expected, there is some overlap with two other books: Express, Mail & Merchandise Service by Jeff Wilson (Kalmbach Publishing 2016) and Moving Mail and Express by Rail by Edward M. DeRouin (Pixel Publishing 2007), all of which are now out of print. There is more than enough unique material in the Roseman book to make it stand out from these other books. It is available from White River Productions.

For virologist and model railroader Ethan Mercer, threats move faster than ever imagined. For journalist Samantha Pierce, the truth is never where it's supposed to be. When their paths collide, they uncover a hidden reality: railroads have become the perfect conduit for espionage and covert operations. *Dead Rail* and *Blind Siding* by Alex Belida MMR of the Potomac Division are available on Amazon in paperback and for Kindle, and on e-books at Apple and Barnes and Noble.



Big Boy No. 4014: Coast to Coast

By Greg Warth

As part of America's 250th Anniversary celebration, the Union Pacific Steam Club tracked the journey of the legendary Big Boy No. 4014, the largest operating steam locomotive in the world, while it traveled from Central Pacific's Milepost Zero in Sacramento, California all the way to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where it arrived on Independence Day for the big July 4th celebration. It has now moved back to Cheyenne, but what an exciting trip it was!

Few locomotives capture the power and drama of the steam era quite like Union Pacific's Big Boy No. 4014. With its immense boiler, towering profile and thunderous exhaust, this mechanical giant attracts crowds wherever it travels. More than eight decades after it was built, No. 4014 remains a moving monument to American engineering and railroad history.

Built for a Big Job

During World War II, Union Pacific needed a locomotive capable of hauling heavy freight trains across the steep grades of Utah's Wasatch Mountains. The American Locomotive Company answered the challenge by building 25 Big Boy locomotives between 1941 and 1944.

The nickname reportedly originated when a worker wrote "Big Boy" in chalk on the front of the first locomotive under construction. The informal name proved so appropriate that it became the official name of the entire class.

Big Boys used a 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement: four leading wheels, two groups of eight driving wheels and four trailing wheels. This articulated design allowed the front group of driving wheels to pivot independently, helping the unusually long locomotive negotiate curves.

No. 4014 is approximately 133' long with its tender and weighs nearly 1.2 million pounds in working order. Its 68" driving wheels and four massive steam cylinders could generate more than 135,000 pounds of tractive effort. Its tender carries 25,000 gallons of water. Originally a coal burner, No. 4014 was converted to burn No. 5 fuel oil during its restoration.

Despite their tremendous size, the Big Boys were not merely slow, heavy pullers. They were designed to move long freight trains efficiently at sustained speeds, reducing the need for multiple locomotives over difficult mountain territory.

Twenty Years of Service

No. 4014 was delivered to Union Pacific in December 1941. During the next 20 years, it hauled freight across Wyoming and Utah, accumulating 1,031,205 miles.

Diesel-electric locomotives gradually replaced steam power during the 1950s because they required less maintenance and could be operated more efficiently in multiple-unit combinations. No. 4014 was retired in December 1961 and later placed on display at the RailGiants Train Museum in Pomona, California.

Eight of the original 25 Big Boys survive, but for many years it appeared unlikely that one would ever operate again.

Restoring a Legend

That changed in 2013, when Union Pacific reacquired No. 4014 and transported it to the railroad's steam shop in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Moving the enormous locomotive from its museum display back to the main line was an impressive undertaking in itself.

The Union Pacific Steam Team then began a multiyear restoration. The locomotive was extensively disassembled, inspected, repaired and rebuilt. Components that had not been manufactured for decades had to be reproduced, sometimes using Union Pacific's original engineering drawings. The work also included converting the locomotive from coal to oil firing.

After a 58-year retirement, No. 4014 returned to service in May 2019. Its restoration was completed in time to participate in Union Pacific's celebration of the 150th anniversary of the completion of the first transcontinental railroad.

The achievement was remarkable: a locomotive designed in the early 1940s had been restored not merely as a static exhibit, but as a fully functioning mainline steam locomotive.

A Traveling Ambassador

Today, No. 4014 is the world's largest operating steam locomotive and the only operational member of the Big Boy class. It travels over portions of the Union Pacific system as a rolling ambassador for railroad history.

Its public tours draw veteran railroaders, historians, model railroaders, families and children who may be seeing an operating steam locomotive for the first time. Since returning to service in 2019, it has attracted millions of spectators.

In 2026, No. 4014 undertook a historic coast-to-coast tour celebrating America's 250th anniversary. The journey highlighted the vital role railroads played in connecting the nation, supporting industry and helping communities grow.

No photograph or video fully conveys the experience of seeing Big Boy in person. The rhythmic exhaust, sounding whistle, moving side rods and clouds of steam provide a vivid connection to an era when steam locomotives represented the height of transportation technology. There are multiple photos and videos of this immense locomotive on the Internet. If you click on the links provided, you can see this operating giant in all its glory (<https://youtu.be/0DldTahN1AU>).

An Inspiration for Model Railroaders

Big Boy No. 4014 also holds a special place in model railroading. Models have been produced in several scales, ranging from enormous live-steam versions to remarkably detailed Z-scale locomotives.

Before adding a Big Boy to a layout, however, model railroaders should consider its exceptional length. It performs best on broad-radius curves, long turnouts, strong bridges and appropriately sized engine-service facilities. A model may also require a high-capacity power supply, particularly when equipped with sound, smoke and other electronic features.

On a Western-themed layout, the Big Boy looks at home hauling a long string of freight cars through mountain scenery. Even on a display track, its articulated running gear and impressive proportions make it a natural centerpiece.

Keeping the Steam Era Alive

Big Boy No. 4014 is more than an enormous machine. It represents the skill of the workers who built, operated and maintained America's steam locomotives. Its restoration demonstrates what can be accomplished when historical preservation, engineering knowledge and railroad craftsmanship come together. It continues to draw huge crowds and emotional tears when people see it and feel the thunder.

As No. 4014 rolls across the country, it allows new generations to hear, see and feel the power of the steam era and the strength of America herself. The Big Boy was designed to move mountains of freight. Today, it carries something equally valuable—the living history of American railroading.

For tour information, photographs and Union Pacific's live locomotive tracker, visit the official [Big Boy No. 4014 website](#) and [steam schedule](#).



Union Pacific “Big Boy.” Note the chalk marking below the No. 4014 label, written by one of the original workers, giving it its nickname (Photo by Taylor Everett).

Big Boy’s Hidden Hero: The Challenger

The Big Boy deserves all the credit it can get, but there is a story behind the scenes revealing how and why the Big Boy was built. The 4-8-8-4 Big Boy has been touted to be the largest and most powerful *operating* steam engine in the world, but there was one that came before it that was even more powerful and actually made the Big Boy look small. The Union Pacific articulated 4-6-6-4 Challenger was built in 1936-1943 by the American Locomotive Company in Schenectady, New York for the sole purpose of carrying heavy freight trains at high speeds (70mph) over western mountain grades without needing helper engines. They were 122’ long and weighed over one million pounds. One particular grade challenged even the Challengers, so the Big Boy was born from its predecessors and was able to make the grade. Here’s the story (Skip the ads):

<https://youtu.be/q6anL5Z1EgA> | <https://youtu.be/bu4sdFC2l8w>

The Last Mile

By John Arthur

As model railroaders, we often focus our modeling efforts on the final stretch of tracks between the national rail network and the destination industry shipping or receiving goods, or both. Few of us have the space to truly model mainline action and “The Last Mile” approach can be a little friendlier to the selective compression we are forced into using. While this is certainly true of my model railroad, the reason I chose the term for this article is that it represents the construction of the last section of my layout.

To give a general overview of the layout, The Manchester & Deepwater represents areas south of the James River in Richmond, VA during the late 1950s in HO scale. I chose to model this area after being inspired by the history of the location on my many lunch time walks, as my office of the past ten years is built on the site of the former ACL shops yard in Manchester. Shops Yard sat adjacent to the still used Belle Isle Yard on the Norfolk Southern (former Southern RR). A third railroad, the Seaboard Airline operated in the same area at the time and had a yard, aptly named South Yard, a few miles south at an interchange with the Deepwater terminal. This yard, the industries to the north in Manchester, and the Deepwater terminal to the south, are the setting of my layout.

I began construction of the layout in the room over the garage just before the pandemic and had completed all but the Deepwater terminal trackwork and had completed some scenery before being evicted from the space and sent to the garage itself. While a bit of a setback, it did afford a good bit more space. I had also constructed the original layout in sections that came apart easily, so I added some climate control to the garage and set about making a new plan that spread out the original pieces a bit and expanded them significantly before stitching them all back together.

I am currently building the far end of the Deepwater Terminal, which is the final section of the layout. While I did things a little differently, fully completing certain sections before even starting others in the name of variety and to keep my interest piqued, I have been pushing recently to go ahead and complete all the track and wiring and begin doing some operating. In the first of what I hope will be a small series of articles, I will discuss the prototype inspiration and the beginning of construction.

The Deepwater Terminal Railroad was a 4.5 mile terminal railroad located in Richmond, Virginia, that served as a vital link between the Seaboard Air Line Railroad and the Port of Richmond, also known historically as the Deepwater Terminal. It was constructed to provide rail access to the Port of Richmond, a mid-20th-century maritime facility on the James River.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversaw and operated the railroad and coordinated its rail movements with maritime schedules. This ensured that railcars were available when ships arrived and that loaded cars were removed promptly to maintain terminal fluidity. Its mission was straightforward: connect oceangoing cargo operations with inland rail transportation, enabling the movement of bulk materials, scrap metal, and general freight.

The line originated at a junction with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, which provided the Deepwater Terminal Railroad with its primary connection to the national rail network. This interchange track allowed inbound freight cars to be delivered to the terminal railroad for distribution. Outbound cars were staged here for pickup by Seaboard trains. From the interchange, the railroad's main track extended southeast toward the port. This segment was single-track, and paralleled Deepwater Terminal Road as it descended gradually toward the waterfront industrial zone. The most intricate portion of the track arrangement lay within the port district itself. Here, the railroad branched into multiple industrial spurs, serving Peck Recycling (scrap metal), Storage facilities and warehouses, and The Port of Richmond / Deepwater Terminal. These spurs allowed locomotives to spot cars directly at loading docks, scrap yards, and bulk-handling areas. The port area also included short yard tracks used for assembling outbound cuts of cars, storing empties, and staging inbound loads. The layout was designed for maximum switching efficiency, enabling a single locomotive to work multiple industries without requiring long run-around moves. Tight curves, short sidings, and compact clearances were typical of industrial terminal railroads of this era.

On my model railroad, I am representing the Deepwater Terminal Railroad on a peninsula, and have employed a bit of modeler's license with the industries moving the large Southern States Grain silo from Manchester to the Deepwater Terminal for space, and adding rail service to a large quarry that exists, but was not rail served (as best I can tell) for interest. Those are on one side of the peninsula, and the benchwork, trackwork, and wiring are all complete in that section. On the far side of the peninsula will be the actual waterfront port and the metal recycler, and as the final section of the layout to build, represent my "last mile." I am attempting to represent the area shown in [Photo 1](#), as close as I can in the space I have available.

In the era I am modelling, the late 1950s, the scrap yard facility was the location where many C&O steam locomotives met the scrapping torch upon their retirement from service. While this was a sad ending, it does represent a unique modelling opportunity. Imagine SAL Baldwin switchers hauling extras consisting of a couple rust bucket steam locomotives to the scrap yard as part of an operations session! This facility will be located inside the turnback above the helix at the end of the peninsula, and working out its location was part of the process I continue below.

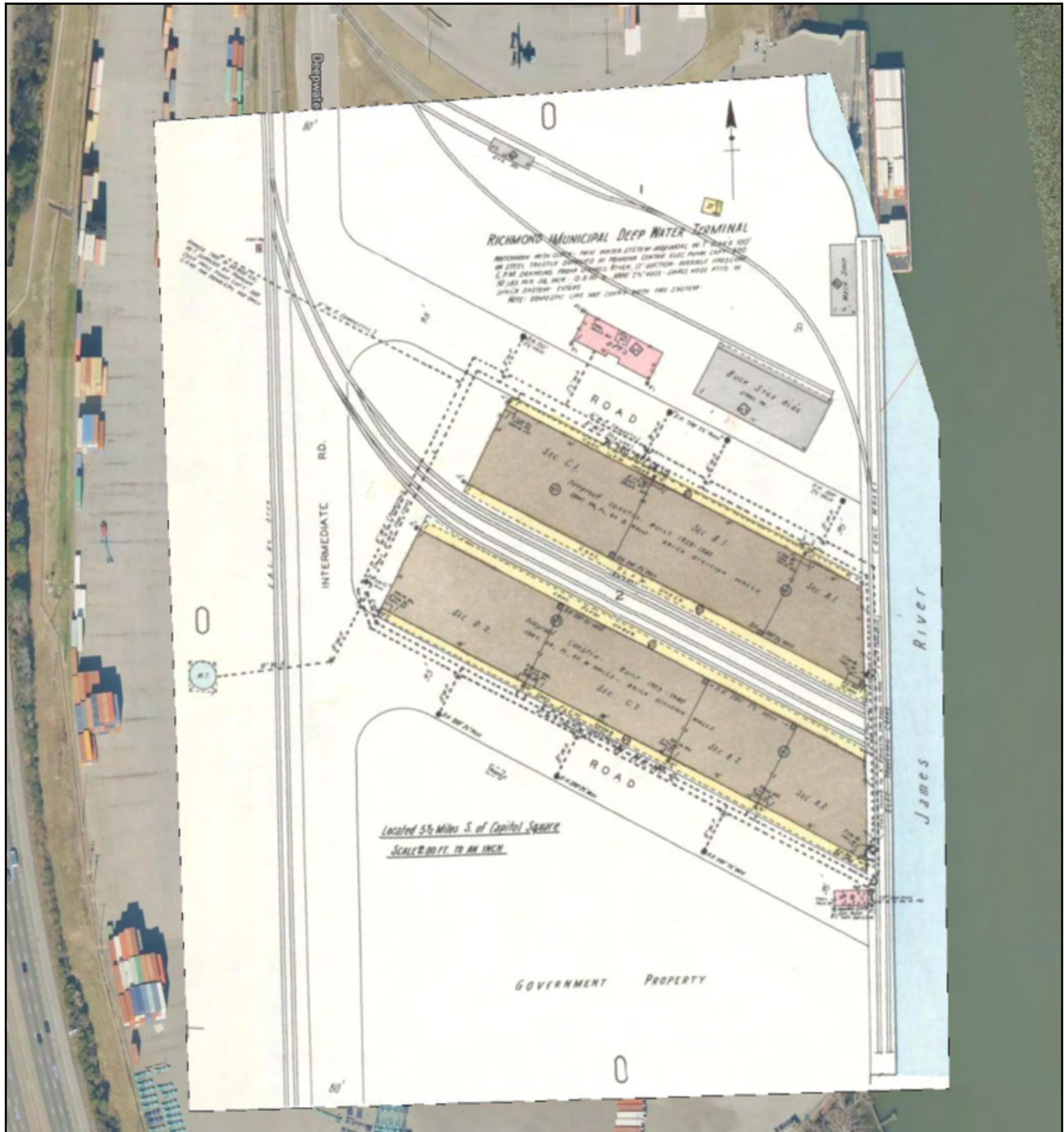


Photo 1 – An image from oldinsurancemaps.net (public domain) which overlays Old Sanborn fire insurance maps on top of google maps satellite images. This area has two large warehouses with sidings and a small yard in between, an engine shed for the port switcher, a machine shop, and tracks paralleling the river for bulk commodities.

I made the original trackwork design using AnyRail, which has the nice feature of printing in 1:1 scale. After taping thirty-four sheets of 8.5" x 11" printed paper together, and building some fairly simple open grid benchwork, attaching it to the structure above the already completed staging yard, (**Photo 2**) and placing some plywood scrap resting on top, I had my plan in real space to mess around with. I placed some old freight cars on the tracks on the plan and tried to envision operating the area in the actual space.



Photo 2 - Basic frame of open box benchwork mounted to shelf brackets on the back of the peninsula, above a staging yard.

Right away, a couple of issues jumped out. To get the general feel of the port, I had placed the bulk loading facilities all the way on the edge of the benchwork toward the aisle, directly in front of the warehouses as they are on the prototype. This made the reach to uncouple cars from the main against the backdrop a little far, and easily susceptible to bellies knocking cars spotted at the bulk facility over and onto the floor during such a reach. The solution was to move the warehouses towards the far end of the peninsula, creating space between the warehouses and the turnback above the helix where I could place the bulk facilities. I lose a little of the feel of the real thing, but schematically it should operate the same. The prototype didn't have bellies knocking cars over to worry about! This also provides room to incorporate the single stall engine house and machine shop here (**Photo 3**).

Next, I purchased the final sheet of plywood and had the hardware store rip it down to the 30" width as per my new plan. I placed that on the benchwork and laid the 1:1 plan out again. I built this section out of 1" x 3" benchwork and extended the joists another 3" high where the port facilities themselves would be, leaving the river level adjacent to the aisle at just a single 1" x 3" height. I laid out the bulk facilities and worked out how they would connect to the tracks along the turnback curve utilizing some hand laid curved turnouts and a hand laid 3-way turnout. The bulk facility itself also calls for a

double slip which will be my final hand laid turnout. With the final tracks locations pinned down, it was time to cut the port supporting plywood down to size and attach it to the benchwork (**Photo 4**).

To mark the track plan onto the plywood base, I used an awl and a tack hammer to mark track centerlines and the ends of turnouts.



Photo 3— A more experienced layout designer may have spotted the issue from a computer screen, but for me printing the plan out in 1:1 really helped visualize the space and spot the issue. After a couple weeks (no, months) of analysis paralysis, a solution presented itself.



Photo 4 – the final shape of the port has been cut out. Note the squared off section to the lower left with benchwork dropped down below it. This will be the river level and gives room in front of the relocated bulk facilities for a prototypically accurate sized ship model ~4 feet in length.

I then removed the paper and used a straight edge and permanent markers to denote the centerline on the plywood. I used the same method with a different color pen to mark the locations of the warehouses (**Photos 5, 6**).



Photo 5 – I used an awl and a tack hammer to punch holes on the track centerline every few inches through the paper plan onto the plywood. I also marked the ends of turnouts for proper alignment later.



Photo 6 – Track and key structure locations indicated with permanent markers.

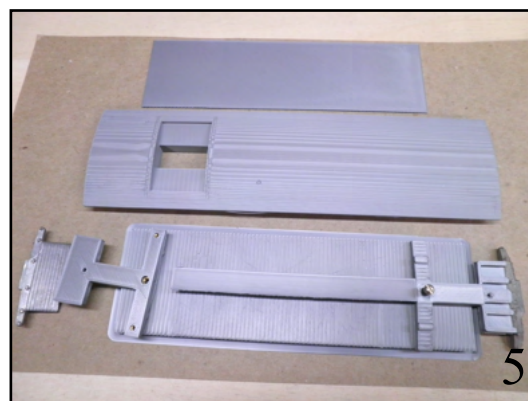
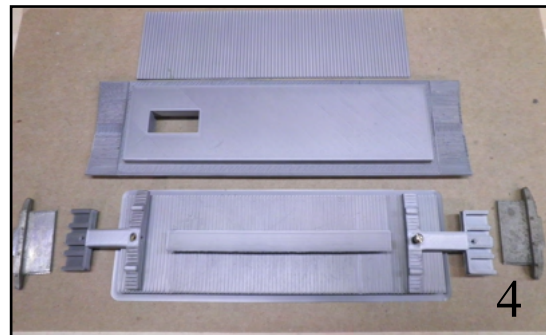
This section is now ready for cork roadbed. As construction continues on “The Last Mile” of my model railroad, I hope to bring you along in future articles.



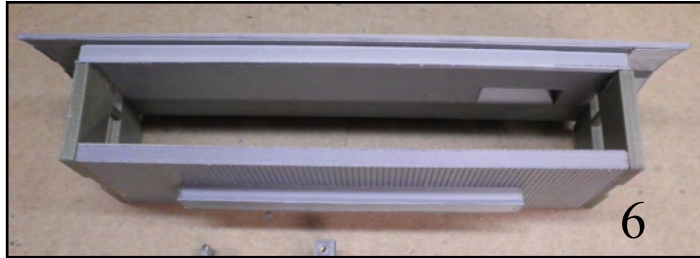
Building a Caboose from 3D Printed All Nation Parts

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR

I was sent a box of caboose parts by John Wubble (All Nation) which included a note that he wanted to see what I would make from them all and what I thought of them as well. There was quite a selection of parts. There was a wood roof and a 3D printed floor, sides, windows, and ends. There were also metal end platforms and cupola parts ([Photos 1-5](#)). This was a challenging amalgamation of parts and mixed materials from which to assemble a caboose. It was also a fun challenge, and given no immediately applicable instructions also a very free and open project to pursue. I was able to download a set of instructions from the [All Nation web site](#) for the standard version of this All Nation caboose kit which I was able to use at least as a visual guide.



I started by assembling the traditional “box” of end blocks, floor, and roof using the 3D printed parts (**Photo 6**). The metal end platforms were mounted to the 3D printed bolster parts. In nearly every joint I used either just medium viscosity CA or Goo plus CA. I set the wood roof section aside for some other project in the future. There’s always a future project and a good roof section is worth saving!

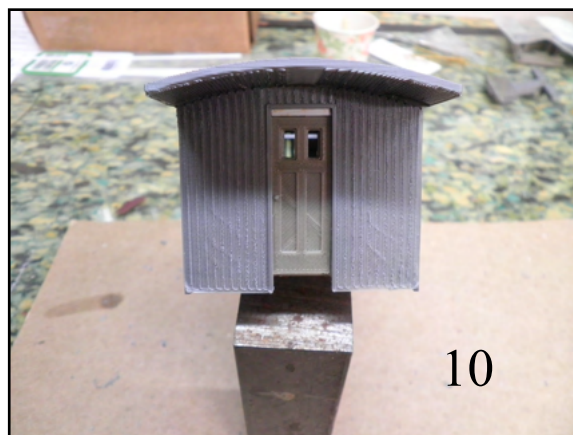


I assembled and installed the printed window parts into the sides (**Photo 7**). The inserted parts took a bit of sanding to fit into the openings, but better a little snug than have parts that fall out of their holes. The surrounding trim was also a bit tight but once sanded a bit everything fit neatly.

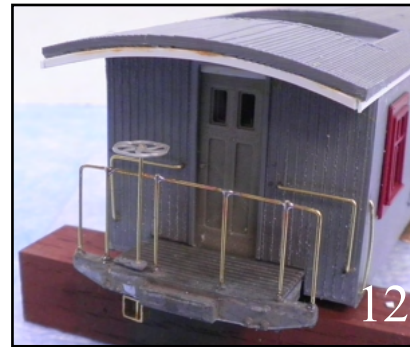
Fitting the sides to the “box” revealed a slight issue that I was unable to resolve. The printed roof extended down into the window opening of the side door (**Photo 8**). I guess that the printed roof could have been milled out to open that space up, but perhaps easier would have been to just not print that section of the roof. That might have made the roof part less stable, but once assembled as a body shell that should not be a problem. Also, the one side seemed to be a bit shorter than the other; this I could resolve with the addition of a bit of styrene inserted to fill the gap (**Photo 9**).



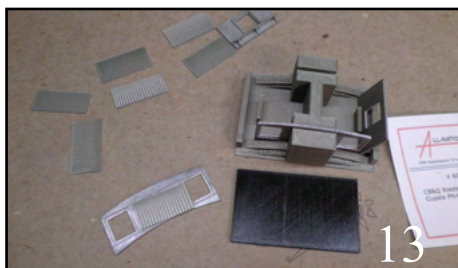
To give the appearance of siding on the ends, a thin 3D printed layer was laminated over the end blocks (**Photo 10**). With the doors inserted into place, there was a gap left above that was filled with some styrene.



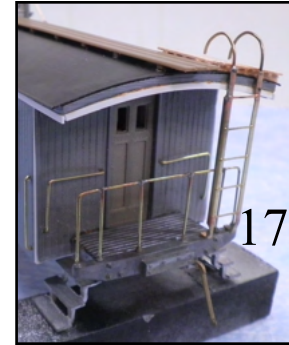
The next step was to add all the grab irons adjacent to the platforms and the side door as well as to the door itself on both sides (**Photo 11**). The platform ends were first decorated with grab iron fashion from phosphorbronze wire (Tichy). Thereafter, the metal end sills were drilled out to accept more phosphorbronze wire which was soldered together to form the railing. A brake wheel and ratchet & pawl casting on more wire were assembled and mounted through the end sill and through a short section of brass box stock to make a brake stirrup (**Photo 12**). Some styrene strip was added around and under the top of the roof as a finishing touch.



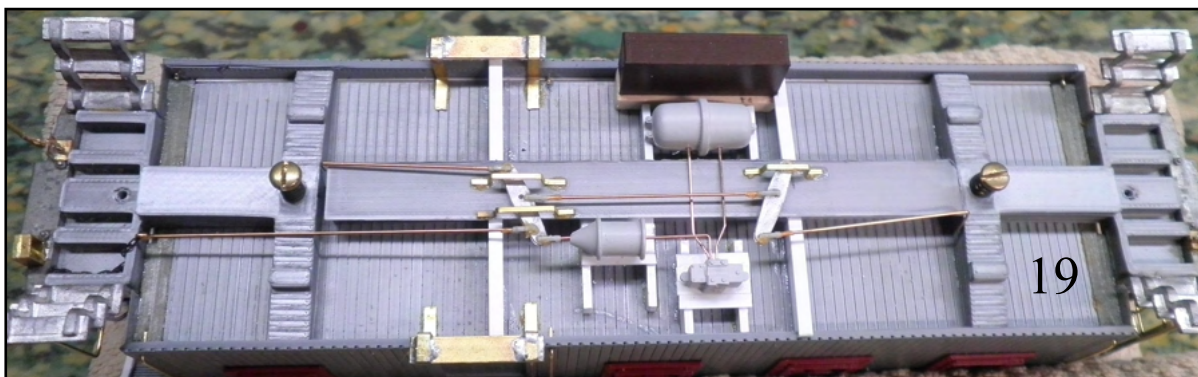
Assembling the cupola was facilitated by the use of a provided jig that held the parts in alignment (**Photo 13**). Once assembled, the cupola was mounted into place. The roof sheathing was added using Goo working around the cupola. More phosphorbronze wire was used to make all of the cupola grabs and supports. A Precision Scale smokestack was added with a support wire. Roof walks and end roof platforms were mounted to the roof. End ladders were fabricated starting with some brass ladders by adding feet and the top loops to mount these at both the base and into the end roof platforms. White metal step castings (Rail Craft) were added to the end platforms using Goo and CA filing as needed to fit these into the space tightly (**Photos 14, 15**).



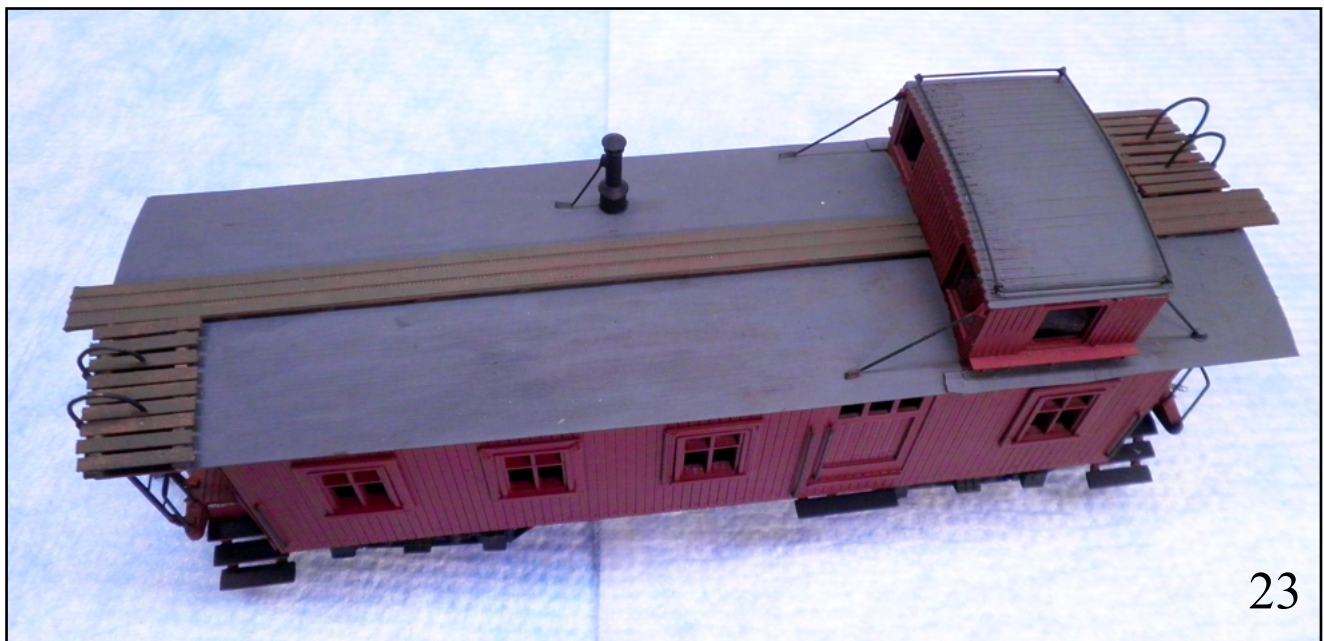
A step under the side door was fabricated from some brass angle and flat stock, and then attached using Goo and CA. A tool box was built up from a Rail Craft casting mounted to a block of wood which was then skinned in 0.010" styrene (**Photo 16**). Air hoses (Precision Scale) were added to the ends (**Photo 17**).



Up to this point the underbody was largely untouched (**Photo 18**). That void had to be corrected to avoid an outbreak of naked underbody syndrome. Underbody framing made up from styrene was added. Thereafter, and AB brake system was installed (**Photo 19**).



To finish up this project, the caboose body was painted Rustoleum Red primer and roof was painted Lark Dark Gray (Floquil). Engine Black (Polly Scale) was applied to the details and trucks. Trucks (Walthers Sierra) and couplers were mounted to the underbody to complete this caboose (**Photos 20-23**). This project was a bit of a challenge.



Greece's National Railway Museum

By Nickolas Kalis

[A version of this article previously appeared in The Potomac Flyer. It is reprinted here with permission from the author and the Editor-Ed.]

True, most tourists visiting Greece do not think of railroad museums, but the environs of Athens boast two. On Tuesday May 26, 2026, Alexander Sikalias gave my cousin Nikolaos Kallivrisousis and I a tour of the under-construction National Railway Museum (Hellenic Railways) in Piraeus. But before that I was able to see crossing gates lower and a flag man appear to allow modern passenger cars pass by the museum grounds. When completed the museum will house not only meter gauge but also rolling stock and equipment from all companies and gauges that ran in Greece. To be clear, no visitor center exists as of yet. At present the museum consists of a guard and a skeletal staff of restorers. This museum celebrates a meter gauge railroad with many locomotives, freight cars, and other rolling stock on display both inside and outside the stone roundhouse. We were treated to a tour of the roundhouse and its electrically powered turntable before taking a walking tour of the balance of the site. The roundhouse, built in 1912, became the central depot of the Peloponnesian network until 2005; it looks now essentially as it appeared when first built – except for considerable wear and tear.



Photo 1 - Entry Sign

Sultan Abdul Azziz

Perhaps the highlight of the tour was an Ottoman era passenger car designed for smoking, i.e. open sides with opulent decorations and a roof with two openings allowing for the rise of tobacco smoke. (**Photo 2**). In the 1860s, this smoking car of Sultan Abdul Azziz was part of a 14-car imperial sultan train gifted to him by Eugene de Montijo Napoleon's niece and last empress of France. Remember Greece had been part of the Ottoman empire for centuries.

A Greek Village

Arriving early at this industrial/warehouse area, I chanced upon what amounted to a little Greek village behind this railroad shop area where I am told even roosters and other animals can be heard from time to time.

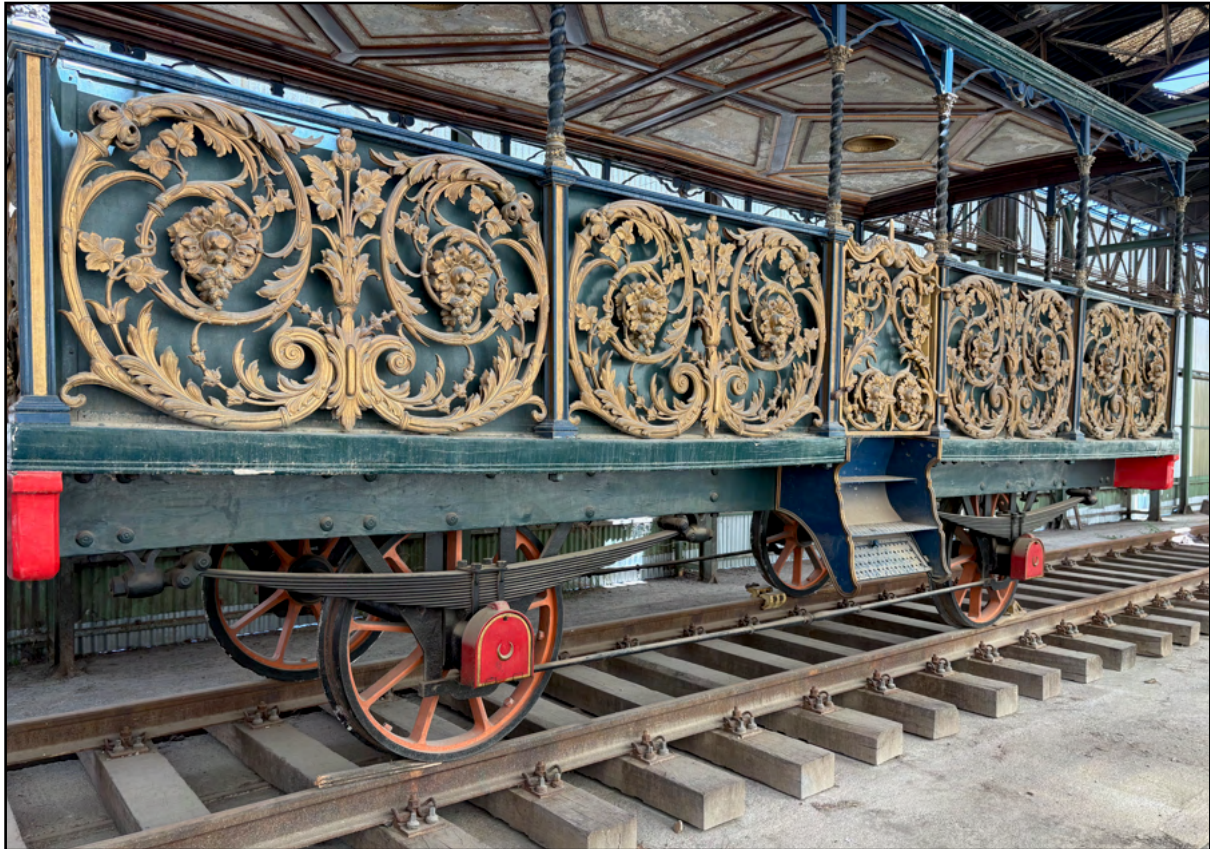


Photo 2: An Ottoman era passenger car designed for smoking.

This museum is not yet open to the public for regular visits, but private visits might be able upon request and upon availability.

Future Plans

Hellenic State Railways, the infrastructure manager of this network, plans to proceed with creating the first complete Railway Workshop in operating condition with a vision to conduct restoration activities and multicultural events in this area. The first of its kind in Greece and Eastern Europe, it will be a place where people travel through time, presenting not just another train story, but how a railway operates in all aspects, with living history. The under-construction National Railway Museum will include not only the roundhouse, but also the first fully equipped Railway Workshop, built in 1884 (meter gauge) and the first depot of Hellenic State Railways built in 1904 for the Larisaikos Railway (standard gauge line to the north borders). However, this project still lacks funding; such funding is sought from national and European economic support sources. For now, only a small volunteer group tries to maintain this roundhouse in a condition conducive to visitors. Volunteers also conduct some small restoration projects on diesel engines (an narrow gauge Alco

Immetou (Υμηττού) 43

Piraeus Greece

railwaymuseum@osenet.gr



Without Reservations one can visit the Electric Railroad Museum in the port of Athens which was inaugurated in 2005. I also visited this museum during my stay in Athens and found the staff welcoming. This museum is on two floors and contained within the terminal of an active electric railway. Lots of restaurants were nearby for those planning a visit. Caution, the staff might close for lunch as we experienced.

(All photographs by Nicholas Kalis.)

Photo 3 – Turntable, Railroad Museum

In Greece street addresses are written with building number following the street name. Incidentally, while colorful signs were posted for this museum, we did not see a house number posted.

We would like to extend our appreciation to museum staff and in particular to Alexander Sikalias for their warm hospitality during our visit.

For further information Contact:



OSE
Alexander Sikalias
Outreach Section
Public Relations and Museum
Telephone 210 529-7240
Mobile 698 748-4029
a.sikalias@osenet.gr



Phone 214.4141.552 and 210.4129.503

info@museum-synt-isap.gr

www.museum-synt-isap.gr

Hours and Admission

Monday – Sunday: 08:00 AM- 2:00 PM

Entrance: Free

1 Loudovikou Square

Terminal Train Station

Piraeus 18531

Obituary: Fred Humphrey

September 9, 1945 – August 17, 2026



Fredrick Humphrey, a man defined by devotion, service, and quiet strength, passed away surrounded by the love of his family. He leaves behind a legacy built on integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to those he cared for.

Fred is lovingly remembered by his wife, Nancy; his sons, Mike and Mark; three grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. To his family, he was a pillar of strength—someone who taught loyalty, excellence, and integrity not through words, but through the way he lived. He was not only a father, but a trusted friend who always made time to listen, guide, and support.

Fred and Nancy were married on July 6, 1963, beginning a partnership that spanned 63 years of steadfast devotion. Together, they created a home filled with warmth, generosity, and love. Fred's kindness extended far beyond his family; he was the type of man who would stop on the side of the road to help a stranger without hesitation. Helping others was simply part of who he was.

Fred lived a life marked by remarkable accomplishment and honorable service. He retired twice from government service—first as a Master Chief in the United States Navy, where he served faithfully for 21 years, and later as a GS-13 with the Naval Safety Center. His dedication to duty, safety, and excellence left a lasting impact on all who worked alongside him.

In retirement, Fred embraced his passion for model railroading. He helped establish a railroad museum and served as president of the railroad association, sharing his enthusiasm and craftsmanship with his community. Yet, through all his achievements, Fred's greatest concern was always the well-being of his family. His love for them was constant, steady, and unconditional.

Fred Humphrey's legacy is one of service, compassion, and unwavering love. His presence will be deeply missed, but the values he instilled and the memories he created will continue to guide those who knew him.

Rest in peace, Dad. We love you!

[We will sincerely miss Fred - his irreplaceable leadership, inspiration, warmth, humor, courage and friendship. I'm so glad to have known him.- Ed.]

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Convention Ads	Free
Full Page - Color	\$100.00
1/2 Page - Color	\$60.00
1/4 Page - Color	\$35.00
Business Card	\$10.00
Text Only	\$7.00



IPSWICH HOBBIES

Craftsman Structure Kits

Jack Dziadul



IpswichHobbies.com
919-721-8757



HO Covered Hopper from the Cincinnati Division

Hello once again to NMRA, MER, Division Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Directors, News-Letter Editors, Web Masters, Facebook Managers and members in-general. We previously reached out to you in the Fall of 2022 and in subsequent ads since then.

We are getting in touch with you once again with a request to publicize and promote Cincinnati Division 7's limited-edition, HO scale, N&W HC-46 ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper cars that we have for sale. This car is unique in that it is a repaint scheme with patched-out data.

The following link provides details about it as well as pricing, shipping and ordering information.
<https://division7mid-centralregionnmra.godaddysites.com/car-projects>

It would be greatly appreciated if you would make your membership aware of this limited-edition freight car by publicizing it in your Region's and/or Division's web page, newsletter or email blast.

We thank you in advance for your support!

Paul Maciulewicz
NMRA; MCR; Cincinnati Division 7
Car Projects Chairman

From the Divisions...

Branch Lines

As *The Local* Editor, I have the distinct pleasure of receiving a copy of all the Division newsletters, which are all very informative and creative to say the least. Here are links to those publications and to their Division Websites for easy access:

Divisions	Newsletters
1 - New Jersey Division	<i>Train Orders</i>
2 - Potomac Division	<i>Potomac Flyer</i>
3 - Philadelphia Division	<i>The Dispatcher</i>
4 - Tidewater Division	<i>The Callboard</i>
5 - James River Division	<i>Crossties - Index</i>
10-South Mountain Division	<i>Wheel Report</i>
11 - Susquehanna Division	<i>Sidetracks</i>
12 - Carolina Southern Division	<i>The Brass Pounder</i>
13 - Carolina Piedmont Division	<i>The Herald</i>
14 - Chesapeake Division	<i>The Relay</i>

Other NMRA Links:[Bulletin](#)[NMRA Partners \(Discounts\)](#)[Events](#)[Archives](#)[Education](#)[Turntable](#)[Submit Articles](#)[Videos](#)[Clinics](#)

Send in Your Articles

We are always looking for new articles, tips, ideas, photos, and comments from our readers. If you have been awarded an AP (Achievement Program) Certificate or an MMR (Master Model Railroader) award, please consider writing an article about it so others can learn how you did it. We always enjoy looking at new layouts, dioramas, and models that our members have created. If you would like to contribute to *The Local*, please send an email containing your article and photos to [The Local Editor](#).

The Local welcomes and encourages articles, photographs, and model railroad related material as contributions to our 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 are published in approximately the order in which they were received.

We love our authors and we love our jobs in creating *The Local* for you to enjoy. We receive many articles with great content and we are always anxious to publish them. However, so many articles that we receive are not in a good format and require many hours of work to get them ready for publication. When you are preparing your article to send to the Editor, please follow the instructions presented here. It won't require any more work for you in writing the article, but it will save us many hours of proofreading and publishing time. Depending on the size of the article, it may take as many as 10-12 hours to actually get it in the newsletter. We can save at least half that time if it comes to us prepared according to the instructions.

How to Submit an Article for The Local (Please Follow These Steps Carefully!)

1. **Please read** the article written by Martin Brechbiel, MMR on "[Preparing Your Manuscript for Publication in The Local](#)."
2. Compose and submit your text in Word format (.doc or docx).
3. Use Times New Roman font in 12 pt size.
4. The title should be **centered** and in **bold**.
5. Directly under the title should be "By (your name)" - centered, not bold. If you are an MMR, put it there.
6. If the photos are yours, enter in parentheses (Photos by the author) right after your name.
7. Enter your text with no paragraph indents. Justify the text so it is even on both sides.
8. In your text, refer to your photos this way: (**Photo 1**) - in parentheses, bold and blue.
9. Between paragraphs in your text, write "**Insert Photo 1 here**" where you want the photo to appear. DO NOT put your photos there. Otherwise, we just have to take them out.
10. Include the number of the Photo in the file name of the Photo so we know which one goes with which number.
11. Photos must be clear and sharp or they cannot be accepted. JPG, GIF, TIFF and PNG formats are acceptable.
12. Photo captions should be listed at the end of your article, or in a separate Word file, and numbered with the same number as the photo.
13. Send your text and your photos separately by email to [The Local Editor](#). They can all be sent in the same email as long as the total file size is less than 25 MB. If the size is larger than that, you will have to split them into two or three emails.

What Happens to Your Article after You Send It In?

First, the substance and context of the article has to be reviewed. Is it original? Has it been used before, or published elsewhere? Was it borrowed from someone else's work? Is it an appropriate topic for our newsletter? We've had to reject a few articles because they were more about rail fanning than they were about model railroading.

Then the text is carefully reviewed line by line by four different sets of eyes to check for typos, grammatical errors, wording or phrasing problems that have to be rewritten to be more understandable. Punctuation has to be corrected. If there are photos in the text, they have to be removed. Photos frequently require editing to make them look brighter and more appealing. File names of the photos have to be changed to include the number of the photo.

After the proofreading is finished, the text has to be entered into the publishing program, paragraph by paragraph, sometimes line by line. The text often has to be resized to make it fit properly without looking inconsistent. When we come to a point where a photo has to be inserted, it has to be resized so that it fits in with the text and in the right order with the proper caption. If a photo is missed, the whole article may have to be redone in order to get the photo in the right place.

It's just like putting a model together in many ways. You start with the raw materials or the parts that come in a kit. The materials and instructions for the kit are what the author provides. In this case, the various parts include the words that have to be put together properly. Then the paragraphs and the photos may have to be rearranged. Then you have to fit the pieces into the right places, so that they make sense and look appealing. There are many details that have to be added or corrected. Eventually, we glue them all together by converting them from Word into a pdf file.

What Kinds of Articles Do We Like to See?

1. Anything about modeling, whether it be about just putting a kit together, kit bashing, scratchbuilding, or just adding details or weathering to a model.
2. Any type of "How to..." article, as long as it is about model railroading.
3. New tips or techniques, or even old ones used in a new way.
4. A tour of your layout or that of a friend, including its name, location, theme, era, scale, size, best features and biggest challenges.
5. Summary of a model railroad conference you visited.
6. Tell us about your workbench, or any special tools you use.
7. Tell us how you fixed a problem you encountered with your model or layout.
8. If you received an AP or MMR Certification, explain how you did it, what were the challenges. What would you recommend to others working on the same project.
9. New electrical techniques that you performed, new automations, how you set up signals, how you installed sound or flashing signs, billboards, or other details.
10. Scenery techniques, mountains, water, river rapids, trees, forests, ground cover.
11. Building a bridge or trestle.
12. Photographing your layout or model.
13. How to recruit more people into the hobby.
14. Your summary of a clinic you attended.
15. How we can help each other.

Special Notes for Authors (**MUST READ** before submitting an article):

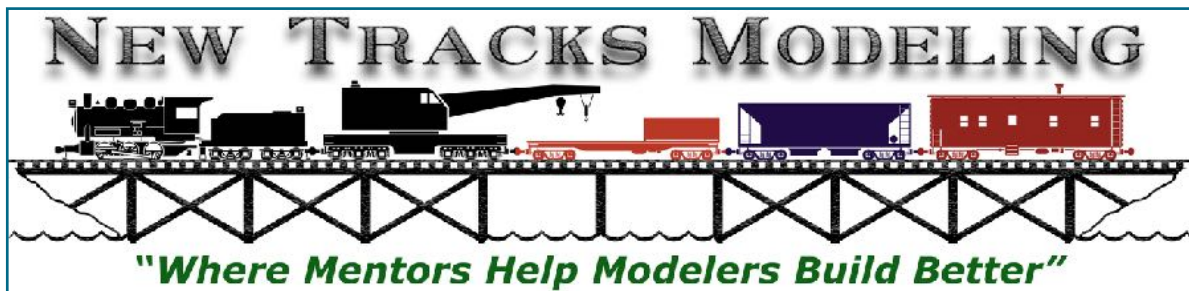


Please only send us your own creative work or that for which you have written permission to use so we can give that source proper credit. We need to avoid any copyright infringement situations. If you have previously published your article or photo in any other magazine or newsletter, including a Division or Regional newsletter or your own website blog, it cannot be reproduced in The Local without written permission from the magazine publisher, editor, and author or photographer. Also, Please read the article written by Martin Brechbiel, MMR on “Preparing Your Manuscript for Publication in The Local.” If this is your first submission to The Local, please fill out and return this Media Agreement Form to the Editor, which gives us permission to use your material and verifies that the work is yours, or that you have obtained written permission to use it. Once your article is approved for publication, and you have qualified for 42 or more points in the Author Category of the Achievement Program (AP), you may submit a Statement of Qualifications Form along with a Record and Validation Form to your Division AP Manager to receive your Author AP Certificate.

NMRA Membership Programs and Savings

The NMRA has several money saving programs and discounts exclusively for NMRA Members.

Check out the ones listed on this page!



Back on Track...

Tracks to Tidewater



By Greg Warth, Editor

The excitement abounds. The Mid-Eastern Region (MER) National Model Railroad Convention is upon us. Our annual regional climax, our *sine qua non*, our train show of shows will be here on October 15-18, ready or not. The Tidewater Division has been working nonstop to assure that this will be one of the best MER conventions ever. All the arrangements have been made with the Holiday Inn on Greenwich Road. The clinic rooms, the clinicians, the Company Store, the layout tours, the keynote speaker and the banquet plans are ready and waiting. The only thing we don't know yet is who will win the contest awards. But we can guarantee the contestants are anxiously getting their models ready, adding the last-minute details, hoping theirs will be the best. The impressive prototype tour with the Plasser American MOW (Maintenance of Way) equipment will be a highlight of the show.

Not only will the show itself be fabulous, entertaining, fun and enlightening, but the attractions in the surrounding area are magnanimous. Even the hotel has extended our convention room rate to include the Wednesday before and the Sunday after the Convention so you will have the opportunity to visit the many attractions in the Virginia Beach area including the Ocean Front, Boardwalk, Colonial Williamsburg, Busch Gardens, Historic Yorktown, the Casemate Museum, Fort Monroe, the Virginia Zoo, the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, MacArthur Memorial, Norfolk Naval Station, the Lee Hall Depot, Military Aviation Museum (including WWI and WWII aircraft), Nauticus and the Battleship Wisconsin, nearby golf courses, e.g., Top Golf, and much more. So, you will want to be sure to bring your family and your best camera. If you wish to expand your trip to see the rest of Virginia, consider a visit to the Eastern Shore, Jamestown, Natural Bridge, the Luray Caverns, Appomattox, Wintergreen, the Greenbrier, the Skyline Drive, Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, or Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, and, of course, the Virginia Museum of Transportation in Roanoke.

If you have not yet registered for the MER Convention, please do so NOW. You won't want to miss it. Think of all the clinics that you can learn from, all the great layouts you can tour, all the friends you can talk trains with, and all the great deals you can get in the Company Store. You may register at the door, but the rates may be higher. You do not have to be an NMRA member to attend. Children 18 and under are free. Just so you know.

Thanks for reading The Local, and thanks to those who helped put it together.