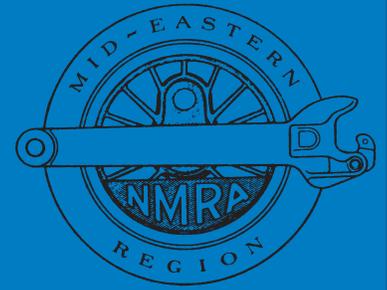


# The Local

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## SOME THOUGHTS ON LAYOUT PLANNING

*By Brian W. Sheron*

I AM CURRENTLY WORKING on according to my count, my third and possibly last layout. I have been actively into modeling since about 1980, or going on 26 years. You would think that after all these years, my current layout would be perfect after years of experience and lessons learned from previous layouts. Well, almost! Every time I walk down into my layout room, I see not only handiwork I am proud of, but also things I regret doing, despite the fact that they seemed like a good idea when I was planning my layout. Fortunately, they are not fatal errors, but nuisances I have either had to live with, work around or correct.

Now my first two layouts contained potentially fatal errors. Fortunately, as my family grew, we saw fit to move twice when both layouts were still in the relatively early stages of development. Thus, I actually welcomed the moves, since they gave me an excuse to start over. The following are some lessons learned about layout planning that I have learned (some the hard way) over the years. Hopefully, they will help others avoid some of the common mistakes people make when they start into model railroading.

### 1. STARTING OFF

When you get bitten by the model railroading bug, you are raring to go, and can't wait to run some trains. If you are restrained, and have the will power I suggest you start off with a small layout (e.g., something on a 4 x 8 board). I think that is the smartest and best way to start. It gives you the opportunity to learn the basics of model railroading. Such as track laying, the fundamentals of electrical wiring, structure building and scenery construction. It also gives you the opportunity to develop a layout theme and track plan, and to see them through to fruition. Moreover, it gives you time to become acquainted with the hobby. Most importantly, it gives you the opportunity to make mistakes without potentially jeopardizing a major investment (more on this later).

Joining the NMRA and subscribing to model railroading maga-

zines is a great first step. For example, in the Potomac Division of the NMRA, in addition to publishing an informative periodic newsletter and sponsoring mini conventions, the division hosts open houses for it's members once a month. Each month a member will show off his or her layout at an open house. Getting out and seeing what other people's layouts look like will give you a plethora of ideas and an opportunity to meet and talk with other modelers. Reading model railroading magazines and going to train collector and swap meets will also acquaint you with what's available in the market today.

### 2. AVOID JUMPING IN THE DEEP END TOO SOON!

The two biggest mistakes I think a modeler can make are: A.) Overestimating his or her capabilities to finance, build, and maintain a large layout and B.) building an ill-conceived and inadequately planned layout.

#### A.) The overestimated layout

You might have recently finished a small tabletop layout, or just decided it was time to move out of the ranks of armchair modeler. But whatever the reason, you have decided it was time to build that model railroad empire using that large room in the basement, or maybe even the whole basement. Well, unless you plan to pay someone to construct your dream layout, building a large layout is not something that you will accomplish in a few weeks, or even a few months. Much of your ability to construct a layout that will have some semblance of completion in your lifetime depends on the amount of time you have to work on it. If you are retired, and can or plan to devote a substantial number of hours each day or week to its construction, then tackling a large layout construction project shouldn't be a problem. However, if you have other commitments (like a day job and other extracurricular activities, etc.) then you will not have the time to devote to constructing a large layout. What can happen is that due to the

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# Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR  
MER Business Manager

TIMES ARE TOUGH! But you don't need me to remind you of that. I think in many ways our world of model railroading is much like the greater United States economy. Let's face it. We have been riding high on the rails ... buying all sorts of higher priced, beautiful, probably ready-built models.

If you are like me, you have shelves and shelves filled with previously acquired but currently un-built kits. Maybe now is the time to work on that reserve of stored up good hobby building resources. Hey, and maybe even try a hand at scratch-building. Sure, you might think your building skills will yield models of lesser quality than those expensive items you bought. But one thing for sure ... you will get a heck of a lot more satisfaction. And the gleaming look in your eyes will blend away some of the lack of perfection in the resulting models.

Well that's my approach. Until those stock dividends come back to something like real money for this retired, old modeler, I think I'll work off some of that excess kit and scratch building fun.

I certainly hope that any belt tightening that goes on in your mind does NOT include dropping your NMRA membership. After all that's your life-line to this wonderful hobby of ours. And don't abandon your hobby shop, even if you just stop by to pick up some scratch-building supplies.

I want to thank all those folks who, after reading my column in the last issue, emailed or wrote letters to me to make sure any recent changes in their postal and/or e-mail address were correctly reflected in our files.

As always *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. A current address on file saves the MER some money. 

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**The Local** welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. Editors will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send originals without having back-up copies of both articles and photographs. Editors, by definition, reserve the right—and have the responsibility—to make corrections, deletions and changes to accommodate space.

The MER website is <http://mer.nmra.org/>

# Some Notes from the President

By Roger L. Cason, MMR  
President

## STRATEGIC PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

In the fall of 2008, a strategic planning questionnaire was sent to everyone on the published Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Roster (about 40 people), and was made available to all members of the MER via a notice in **The Local**. Twenty replies were received – fewer than hoped for, but enough to provide some useful data, and many useful ideas. In effect, this worked out to be a “brainstorming” exercise. A summary of the responses has been sent to members of the MER Board of Directors, and to a variety of other people in leadership positions in the MER and its Divisions. Recipients were asked to study the summary, and come up with at least one improvement idea in their area of responsibility/interest. From this starting point, a number of improvement projects are now underway, and I look for many more . . . . If you would like to receive a summary of the responses (preferably by e-mail), let me know. My contact information is listed on page 2 for every issue of **The Local**.

## NEW DIVISION - BALTIMORE AREA

As this note is being written, “administrative preparations” to start a new Division in the Baltimore area are nearly complete. The new Division will be called the Chesapeake Division. Boundaries will be similar to – but not identical to – the boundaries of the old Mt. Clare Division (now inactive).

Speaking of which . . . other things being equal, I feel that it highly desirable for NMRA members to belong to a local Division. In effect everyone should have “a place they can call home”. The major deficiency in this respect has been the Baltimore area, and that deficiency is being corrected (see note above). A quick search of our MER membership data base indicates that about 5 percent of our member do not live within the territory of any Division . . . . If there is a cluster of NMRA members who are interested in starting their own local Division, members of the MER Board (including myself) are available to help you with this process. It isn’t all that difficult, and it has the potential to greatly improve the benefit you get from your NMRA membership.

## CONTEST STREAMLINING

The March-April issue of **The Local** contained a note from General Contest Chairman Martin Brechbiel. This note included a proposal to eliminate the Crafts Contest because of lack of participation. (In three of the five years since 2004, there was only one entry). To date, Martin has received no contrary opinions. If you have a contrary opinion, please contact Martin promptly ([martinwb@verizon.net](mailto:martinwb@verizon.net)). As the old say goes – going . . . going . . . going . . . (soon to be gone).

In this connection . . . another contest streamlining idea has surfaced. Some years ago (five?), the photo contest rules were changed to create four categories of prints. One was “Artistic” which was defined (in part) as “Pictures that have been substantially changed in terms of content or composition through computer modification or similar processes.”

In this context, “substantial change” did not include minor modifications such as brightness or cropping (you can do these in

the darkroom without a computer). Pictures using the latter processes are eligible for entry in one of the other categories. My point in bringing this up . . . to the best of my knowledge, we have never received a photo contest entry classified by the contestant as “Artistic” – as defined in the rules. So, we plan to eliminate this category unless we receive significant contrary feedback.

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE LOCAL

As you probably know, NMRA members living within the MER are eligible to receive **The Local** (the MER bi-monthly newsletter). If you receive it via e-mail, there is no charge. If you want a paper copy via USPS, the cost is a modest \$6.00 per year.

But, there’s a problem . . . . There are now 2,140 NMRA members living within the boundaries of the MER. Over half of them do not receive **The Local** either way . . . . Using a multi-stage process, MER Business Manager Fred Miller is now contacting these folks to see if, and how, they would like to receive **The Local**. This is a place where you and/or your Division may be able to help. Many of the non-recipients are within the territory of a Division. If you encounter a non-recipient, let them know that **The Local** is available for their enjoyment and benefit. To start receiving **The Local**, contact Fred Miller ([tractionfan@aol.com](mailto:tractionfan@aol.com)).

## BARGAIN PRICES

Elsewhere in this issue, you will find a page devoted to the HO-scale and N-scale cars and car kits for sale from the MER. Note the prices. Each one is reduced versus the original MER member offering price, and each one represents a real bargain compared to comparable items from the usual commercial sources.

## CALLING ALL PROGRAM CHAIRMEN!

As Program Chairman, you are probably responsible for coming up with who-knows-how-many interesting clinics each year for your Division meets. This can be a tough job. But, there’s help. Marshall Abrams, the newly appointed MER Clinic Chairman, is compiling an extensive list of possible clinics and clinicians for use by the MER (at the convention) and by all MER Divisions (for use at the meets). If you’re running short of ideas, feel free to contact Marshall ([abrams\\_railroad@comcast.net](mailto:abrams_railroad@comcast.net)).

## DOING GOOD

A big “Attaboy” to the Potomac Division! At the end of 2008, This Division made a financial contribution to each of three railroad-oriented organizations: The Rockhill Trolley Museum, the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad, and the East Broad Top Railroad. As individuals and as Division members, this is something we can all consider doing or instigating. (Disclosure: I was the NMRA Fund Raising Manager, and I’m married to a professional fundraiser.)

## CLOSING THOUGHT

In a sense, you don’t belong to the MER. The MER belongs to you. 

limited time you can spend on the layout each day or each week, progress on the layout may become disappointing and you eventually lose interest.

As a calibration point, my current layout is housed in a 13' x 19' room in my basement and is basically a double track folded-dog bone design. I started it in 1988. I was working at my regular job all day (as I still am), had two children at home, and my weekends were taken up with sporting events, etc. Nevertheless, I did manage to spend perhaps 8 to 10 hours a week on the layout. By about 1996, or 8 years later, I had a substantial part of the layout completed.

The other thing to consider is cost. A number of years ago, I recall I saw a figure published that said the cost (or investment) in the average layout is about \$80 per square foot. I believe this includes the cost of engines, cars, in addition to the bench work, electrical, structures, and scenery. Using this estimate for my layout indicates that when I planned my layout, I should have expected to invest about \$13,000. (Note: I subtracted off the aisle area.) I have not kept any records of my actual costs, but I would imagine I was spending perhaps \$2,000 a year between 1988 and 1996. This number has risen over the past several years. Obviously, this number will also vary according to the specifics of a layout. If the setting is in the west, where the scenery is mostly open spaces with few structures, the cost will be less than the urban scene with densely located large structures and lots of details. If you use a single track mainline, then track, roadbed, and ballast costs will be less than the multiple track mainline. The message here is to figure out what your budget is for model railroading (i.e., how much do you believe you can afford to spend each year on the hobby), and decide how big of a layout you can afford to build.

### **B.) The ill-conceived layout**

Think of a large layout as an investment. If you were planning to invest a sizable amount of money into a car, you would probably do a bit of research first. Find out what the safety performance was, what the repair records show about repair frequency and cost, what options are available and which ones you want. You would do the same if you were planning to invest in the stock market. You wouldn't just blindly start buying any stocks. You would likely first figure out what your financial goals were, then decide what kinds of stocks would best meet those goals, and then figure out which were the best stocks to buy. The same is true for model railroading. If you jump blindly into building a layout that has not been properly researched and planned, you will likely end up with something that you eventually discover doesn't meet your needs. Once you decide you don't like what you have, and it is beyond being easily corrected, you will lose interest because you don't want to continue working on something you really don't want to finish, and the thought of tearing down what you have and starting over again makes you sick.

The following are some thoughts on planning. The better planned the large layout is, the easier it will be to construct, the more the layout will continue to meet your expectations, and there is less likelihood you will lose interest in it.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR GIVENS AND DRUTHERS?**

I believe I once saw an article in which the master layout planner

John Armstrong used this term. You should ask yourself: What kind of railroading do you want to do? Do you like watching long coal drags being pulled through the hills of Pennsylvania? Do you like the hustle and bustle of urban railroading, where passenger trains carry travelers through urban areas of industrial parks, tenement housing, etc.? Do you want to run just diesels? Do you want to run both diesels and steam? Or just Steam? Is there a particular prototype railroad you want to model?

Perhaps you want to freelance and make up your own fictitious road name. If you want to model a particular road, I suggest you invest in some books about that railroad. Many hobby shops carry books about particular roads, and the model railroad magazines often run ads by vendors that specialize in railroad books.

These days, the Internet is a great place to search for specialized books. Learn about the railroad. Study photos so you get an idea of what the area was like through which the railroad ran. Find out what kind of motive power they used. Most railroads had unique rosters of motive power specifically suited for that railroad's major purpose (e.g., passenger service versus freight). Once you decide on a road, and figure out what kind of motive power they ran for the era you intend to model, it is a good idea to check on the commercial availability of models of that motive power in the scale in which you wish to model.

During this phase of your layout planning, keep in mind the space you have available. For example, you shouldn't be thinking of running articulated challenger locomotives pulling 50 carloads if you don't have the space for broad 32-inch radius curves. You also need to decide what kind of model railroading interests you. Do you like complicated switching operations or do you just want to watch the trains run around the layout with minimal involvement? If it is the latter, consider the folded dog bone type of layout. If you like both, think about incorporating a switching yard off of the mainline and several industrial sidings where freight cars can be delivered and picked up.

Another thing to consider is complexity. Remember, every turnout you design into your layout presumably should be capable of being thrown during operation. If you are thinking about hand-thrown turnouts, make sure they are in easy reach from the front of the bench work. Also remember that powering turnouts electrically from under the table requires spending a fair amount of time under the bench work mounting switch machines, adjusting the linkage, and wiring them. If you don't like getting up and down a lot, opt for the hand-thrown turnout.

On layouts that are either point to point or a continuous loop, the trains will run in one direction only. There are three ways to turn a train around: 1) a turntable, 2) a wye, and 3) a reverse loop. With the exception of the turntable, the wye and reverse loop require more complicated wiring. Keep this in mind. If you are not particularly electrically savvy, I would recommend staying away from reverse loops. There is nothing worse in my mind about model railroading than having your trains not run because of an electrical problem. Finding hidden shorts or incorrectly wired connections is my worst nightmare.

### **LAYOUT ROOM LIGHTING**

Simply put, building a layout is work. Enjoyable work, but nevertheless, work. Just like any work you do, your surroundings influence whether the work will be enjoyable or not. Building a layout

in a finished, well-lit room is much more enjoyable than building one in an unfinished, poorly lit basement. I cannot emphasize enough the need to take the time and money and prepare your layout room! If it is an unfinished room and it will be devoted to model trains, think about putting curved walls in the corners so you will have the illusion of a continuous backdrop.

Put in a ceiling. Drop ceilings are not too expensive, relatively quick and simple to install and really give the room a finished look.

Put in sufficient lighting. There are numerous articles written on different methods of lighting. I think the type of lighting you use (e.g., fluorescent versus combination of incandescent and fluorescent, Lighting behind fascia boards) is secondary to simply making sure the room is well lit. Let's face it; dark rooms are depressing and certainly not conducive to observing scale model trains. And don't think you will be able to put the lighting in later. Trying to run wires, mount lights, etc. over a finished layout is just asking for trouble - expensive trouble!

### OTHER LAYOUT CONSIDERATIONS

Layout height is an important dimension you need to decide up front. Unless you are building a double deck layout, make sure the bench work is high enough so that most viewers won't think they are observing your layout from the window of an airplane. Think about your audience and what they will see. For example, if your layout runs around the walls of the room, the bench work should not be very wide (e.g., one foot wide), and if your primary audience is adults, then relatively high bench work will work. It will put the action at close to eye level, but because the bench work is not deep, details towards the back of the bench work won't be hidden.

On the other hand, if you have relatively wide bench work (e.g., three feet), you will want to drop the height a bit so that the viewer can easily see the scenery and details at the inside edge, which will likely be up to 4 feet or so from the viewer's eye. If children will be a large part of your audience, don't make it too high for them. I chose 50 inches as the height for my layout. I have neighborhood kids that love to come over and watch the trains run, so I keep a few metal milk crates handy under the bench work for them to stand on to see the trains. Bench work width is yet another consideration. My rule of thumb is that everything on my layout should be within arm's reach. Thus, I don't have anything that is more than about three feet away. Trying to reach that derailed car or cleaning the track in the far corner of the layout can be a very unpleasant experience, especially if you destroy that beautiful scene you just finished on the front of the layout in the process! I don't think there are any hard and fast rules on bench work depth. My advice is to make sure that everything you may need to access is, in fact, accessible.

Electricity is another thing not to overlook, especially when you are building a layout in an unfinished room. In most residential houses, several outlets are ganged together on circuits. Circuits run from a fuse, or circuit breaker, at the main electrical panel in your house, so that if there is a short circuit, or if the electrical load becomes too heavy, the breaker will trip. Circuits in residential houses usually have 15 ampere breakers installed. This means that when the electrical current in the circuit reaches 15 amperes, the circuit breaker will trip. What this means is that you need to make sure that the circuit (or circuits) supplying your train room

have sufficient capacity. For example, make sure the electrical circuit supplying your train room is also not the same one that is supplying the finished part of your basement, including the wall air conditioner and/or the dehumidifier. Depending upon the scale you choose, running model railroads, especially if you have accessories, can draw several amperes. Also, if you plan to construct the bench work in the train room and use power tools such as saber saws, electric drills, etc., these too draw considerable current and could result in overloading the circuit. My advice is that if you have the capability, add a circuit, or even two, dedicated to the train room. A circuit for lights and a circuit for outlets should do the trick. Have a licensed electrician install it so that it is legal and meets local electrical codes. Locate outlets where you think you will need to have a source of power. Again, doing this before you start to finish the train room will save you untold headaches down the road.

Think about access when you build your layout. Make sure that the water meter can still be accessed and read easily. Make sure that if the water heater springs a leak, or the furnace dies, that they can be removed and replaced without having to irreparably tear up your layout. Aisles are important! Most of us don't have infinite space, and in fact, most of us don't have all the space we would like to have for that dream layout. I know I don't! In order to cram the most railroad into a given space, it is easy to sacrifice aisle width in order to get that 32 inch radius curve, or to add that yard. However, when visitors are perusing your layout and can't walk past each other without intimate physical contact, then your aisles are too narrow. Or if you envision operating sessions with several railroaders helping you operate your layout, you will want wide aisles. If people are constantly bumping into each other or can't get past each other in the aisles, operating won't be fun anymore.

The floor is also important! A concrete floor will generate dust that will coat your layout, and cleaning a layout is something you should minimize because you will inevitably break some fragile part while you are dusting or using a minivac. Before you start construction, either put down a carpet, or paint the floor, or both. I suggest initially painting the floor because construction will be hard on a nicely carpeted floor. I recommend using an epoxy paint especially made for concrete floors. This paint will dry to a hard, durable finish that will stand up to a lot of traffic and abuse. Once the major construction is over, then you can decide if you want to install carpeting.

In summary, a large layout represents a major investment of both your time and money. Proper planning and room preparation should be the first activities you embark on when starting that dream layout. Spending the time and extra money for these activities up front may not seem like real model railroading to you, but they are probably the most important part of the process. Failure to properly plan your layout and/or prepare your layout room could mean the difference between a lifetime of model railroading enjoyment and a premature exit from the hobby.

**BRIAN SHERON** *lives in the Potomac Division where he models HO scale.* 

# The Marv Kershner Creativity Award

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Located throughout this issue are two award descriptions that are specific to the MER convention. In the coming months we will highlight each of the awards. Next issue there is also scheduled to be two helpful articles with plenty of tips on entering prototypical photos vs. model photos.

## 1) WHAT IS THE AWARD?

The Marv Kershner Creativity Award, sponsored and chosen by the South Mountain Division, rewards creativity in model building. The award is named after Marv Kershner, a gifted modeler who urged others to be creative and venture “out of the box” when approaching a modeling subject.

## 2) SPONSORS:

The Marv Kershner Creativity Award is sponsored and chosen by the South Mountain Division. The contact person for this award is the South Mountain Division 10 Superintendent.

## 3) WHO CAN COMPETE FOR THE AWARD?

Any NMRA/MER member in good standing who chooses to enter a model in the official NMRA/MER sponsored judged model contest at a MER convention may compete for this award. A member can also compete for this award by bringing a model to be judged for the Achievement Program only.

## 4) MODELING PARAMETERS – definition and limits of the what qualifies a model for the award.

An eligible model is defined as any model contest entry (all categories) which demonstrates exceptional creativity in the use of overall design, materials (especially non-traditional materials), and finishing.

## 5) HOW THE CONTEST WILL BE JUDGED AND THE WINNER CHOSEN:

The model will be judged as part of the regular judging of the model contest at an MER convention. The Judging guidelines will be those established by the NMRA for the model contest and the AP Program. Any model can also qualify for this award if it is being judged only for the Achievement Program at this convention, and is not an entry in the model contest. The winner of this award is chosen by the South Mountain Division.

## 6) THE MARV KERSHNER CREATIVITY AWARD (OPERATIONS AND AWARD):

Once the winning entry has been decided, the sponsors of the award will contact the winner. At the official MER awards ceremony, the Marv Kershner Creativity Award will be presented to the winner. The award will be handed out when the other special awards are distributed. This award can be presented by one of the sponsors. If this is not possible, the MER General Contest Chairman, or someone he or she designates, can announce and hand out the award.

## 7) SPONSORS (ORGANIZATION AND CONTACT PERSONS) AND FUNDING:

The sponsors of the award will fund the Marv Kershner Creativity Award.

## 8) TIME LIMIT FOR THIS AWARD:

The sponsors of this award understand that in order for it to be placed into the special awards given at a MER sponsored convention this award must be approved by the MER Board of Directors. If approved, the award can be given at every MER sponsored convention over a two-year period. In order to continue presenting this award, the sponsors must seek renewal approval from the MER BOD every two years. 🚂

## Mix-it Puzzles

By Dr. Charles Wood

These are puzzles of scrambled words. The letters on each line can be rearranged to form a word that relates to models or to prototype railroads. Answers below.

### Puzzle #9:

- a. N T E D R E
- b. S K R A B E
- c. N L T E N U L
- d. O N C I R G S S
- e. T E W R O

### Puzzle #10:

- a. N N L E A T R
- b. S R B S A
- c. E I L H S W T
- d. T B R H E
- e. S B T A L A L

**DR. CHARLES WOOD** lives in the Carolina Piedmont Division where he models HO scale. 🚂

### Answer to puzzle #9:

- e. Tower
- d. Crossing
- c. Tunnel
- b. Brakes
- a. Tender

### Answer to puzzle #10:

- e. Ballast
- d. Berth
- c. Whistle
- b. Brass
- a. Lantern

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Southern cabooses  
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William Mosteller, P.O. Box 994, Herndon, VA 20172  
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# New Membership Recruitment Program

As an aid to membership recruitment, NMRA recently instituted a six month "Railpass" trial membership program which costs the applicant \$9.95. Building on this idea, the MER is instituting a program whereby it will pay the \$9.95 Railpass fee for interested applicants in the MER. In other words, we are making available FREE six month Railpass trial memberships to encourage recruitment of regular members.

## What's covered?

Same as Railpass—receive six issues of **Scale Rails**, three issues of **The Local**, eligibility to attend conventions and meets, eligibility to participate in contests.

## What's not covered?

Same as Railpass—applicants cannot vote or hold office, and will not receive the New Member Pak from national (it's rather expensive).

## Who can be recruited?

Anyone living within the MER who has not been a member of NMRA during the past thirty months.

## How will the recruitment process work?

(1) The prospective member fills out the MER trial membership application form which was sent to all division superintendents (not the standard NMRA Railpass form) (2) The "recruiter" should

also sign the form, and then forward it to: Fred Miller, MER Business Manager, 8960 Challis Hill Lane, Charlotte, NC 28226-2686. (3) Fred will record the information he needs in his data base, and will forward the application to the MER Treasurer. (4) The Treasurer will add the necessary check and forward the application and check to the national headquarters in Chattanooga.

## What happens after the member's six month trial period?

The Railpass trial member will receive a standard dues notice from national headquarters. We hope a substantial number of Railpass trial members will sign up to become regular members.

## Are there limits on the program?

The MER has allocated \$2,000 for this program. The program has been extended to the end of 2009, or when we have spent \$2,000 – whichever comes first. When and if we approach either limit, Division Superintendents and members of the MER Board of Directors will be notified. At that time, the program will be evaluated by the MER Board of Directors. If successful, we will try to continue it.

## For questions?

Contact Fred Miller, MER Business Manager (mailing address is above, 704-752-5138, [tractionfan@aol.com](mailto:tractionfan@aol.com)), or Roger L. Cason, MER President (1125 Grinnell Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803-5125, 302-478-2550, [rogercason@juno.com](mailto:rogercason@juno.com)). 

---

## National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

**YES**, please sign me up for a free six month Railpass trial membership in the NMRA—which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region, and in my local Division. During this six month period, I understand that I may attend conventions and meets, and participate in contests. I will receive **Scale Rails**, the monthly national magazine, and **The Local**, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office, or receive a New Member Pak.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six month Railpass trial membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Regardless of who pays, six month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person.)

At the end of the six months, I may join NMRA, paying the regular active member dues.

During the past thirty months, I have **not** been a member of NMRA.

=====

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Scale(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of "Recruiter": \_\_\_\_\_  
(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

=====

When this form is completed,  
mail it to:

**Fred Miller, MMR**  
**MER Business Manager**  
**8960 Challis Hill Lane**  
**Charlotte, NC 28226-2686**

Do **not** mail it directly to MMRA  
headquarters in Chattanooga, TN.

Date of form: 1/31/07

# Operations on the Easton and Potomac

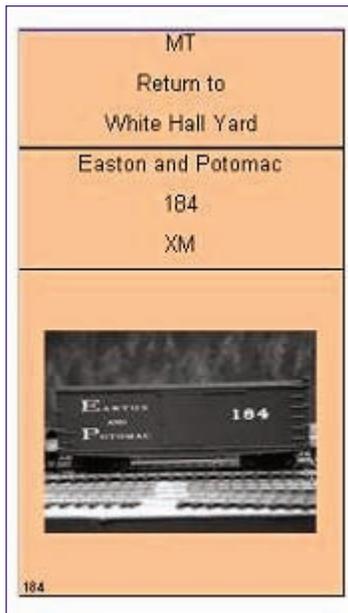
## Part 3 – Positions, Paperwork and Staging

By Keith Stillman

**I**N THIS FINAL INSTALLMENT of the series we will take a more in depth look at the details behind a session including the positions manned, the paperwork used and what is entailed in staging the layout for a session.

The number of attendees determines the positions manned for an Easton and Potomac session are:

- (with one to four attendees I staff) – Engineer and White Hall Yardmaster.
- (with five or six I add) – White Hall Assistant yardmaster and Thorny Point yardmaster.
- (with seven to eight I add) – Operator
- (with nine, the maximum I add) – Dispatcher.



**Figure 1:** This is a car card used on the Easton and Potomac. It has a picture of the car, lists the type of car, the name and number of the car and the destination.

**White Hall yardmaster:** is responsible for all engine and car movements within the White Hall yard limits and notifies the dispatcher when trains are ready for crews.

**Assistant White Hall yardmaster:** is responsible for the proper operation of the White Hall switcher.

**Thorny Point yardmaster:** is responsible for all engine and car movements within the Thorny Point yard limits and responsible for working Brooke.

**Operator:** is located in the layout room and talks to the dis-

patcher (located in the dispatcher's office if staffed) via radio. The operator is responsible for the proper operation of all mainline switches between White Hall and Swift Run, and all semaphores between White Hall and Hood. He/she reports all On Sheets (OS) to the dispatcher, relays all orders from the dispatcher to the engineers and relays all communication between the White Hall yardmaster and dispatcher. An On Sheet is where the operator informs the dispatcher of the time of arrival of a train at his/her position and the time entered onto train sheet. The operator also has the discretion as to routing the trains through Flat Top and Hood. With less than full staffing the operator also assumes most of the duties of the dispatcher and a hands-free radio is placed in the crew lounge to call crews.

While I have operated with as few as three, with staffing below five it becomes a sequential operation since there are not enough crews to send out the trains on schedule. When staffing falls below seven I set all of the semaphores in Hood and Flat Top to green and the train crews are governed only by the timetable. With a staffing of eight the operator also assumes some of the duties of the dispatcher controlling train movements between Swift Run and White Hall.

### LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT EACH POSITION.

**Engineer:** is responsible for hosting his engine and the proper operation of his assigned train. Engineers wait in the crew lounge until their call time or assignment from the dispatcher.

**Dispatcher:** is located in the dispatcher's office adjacent to the crew lounge. He/she is responsible for coordinating all activities on the railroad. The dispatcher communicates with the operator (located in the layout room) via radio. He/she keeps the train log and dispatcher's board up to date and assigns all crews to their trains and makes all engine assignments.

To support these positions several types of paperwork are used:

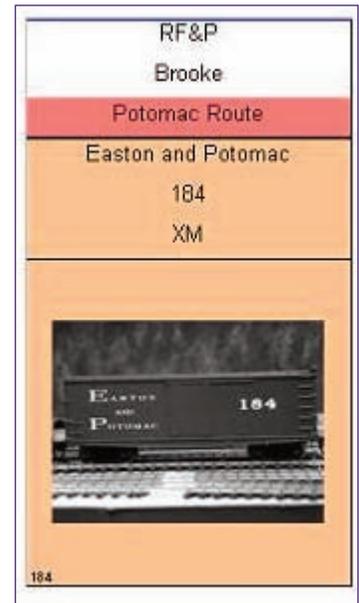
- Car cards, BOLs & MTs (Bill of Ladings & Empties)
- Engine cards
- Train cards
- Timetable
- Layout diagram
- Hostler schedule
- White Hall arrivals
- White Hall departures
- Signup sheet

### LET'S TAKE A QUICK LOOK AT EACH.

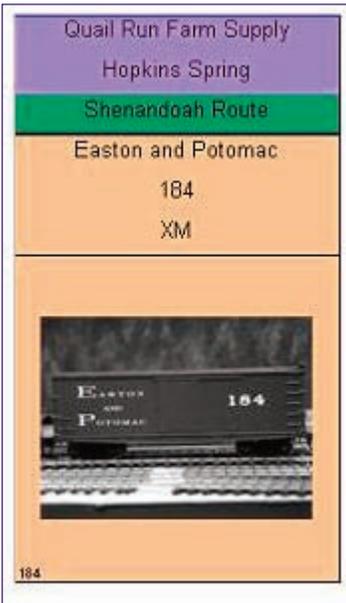
#### 1. Car cards, BOLs & MTs (Bill of Ladings & Empties)

Figures 1, 2 and 3 are examples of car cards, BOLs and MTs. Figure 1 is a car card used on the Easton And Potomac. It has a picture of the car, lists the type of car (XM – box car), the name and number of the car (Easton and Potomac 184) and the destination (White Hall Yard). This car happens to be empty and is headed back to White Hall yard.

If a car is loaded then it will have a BOL or waybill in its



**Figure 2:** This car is loaded and headed to the RF&P interchange in Brooke, this car card requires a BOL or waybill in its pocket.



**Figure 3: This car is MT (empty) and headed for Quail Run Farm Supply in Hopkins Spring to be loaded.**

pocket, such as figure 2. The only other state a car can be in is MT (empty) and headed for a business. See figure 3.

### 2. Engine cards

Figure 4 shows an engine card, these cards tell the engineer everything he needs to know about an engine.

### 3. Train cards

Train cards are used in place of clearance forms to give authorization to an engineer to take control of a train. They contain summary instructions (orders) to the engineer for proper operation of the train. They also can contain detailed instructions in their card pocket. See figure 5.

### 4. Timetable

Along with the train card the engineer also uses the timetable to control his train. The timetable shows all of the stations times for all of the scheduled trains. It shows the time where meets occur in bold. A lot of other information is provided in the

timetable to assist the engineers in the proper operation of their trains.

The time table also provides a sting diagram which most operators find more useful in identify meets. Due to space limitations both the timetable and string diagram examples are posted online in PDF and Excel files at [www.easton-and-potomac.com/epops/epops\\_timetable.html](http://www.easton-and-potomac.com/epops/epops_timetable.html).

To help the White Hall yardmaster the following paper work is provided.

### 5. Layout diagram

Figure 6 is a layout diagram. The diagram shows the three routes, their color-coding and the towns served by them.

### 6. Arrivals

Figure 7 shows the White Hall yardmaster the

scheduled time for every arrival into White Hall during a session.

### 7. Departures

Figure 8 shows the White Hall yardmaster the scheduled time for every departure from White Hall, the route the train will take, the towns it will service and the type of cars to be assigned.

### 8. Hostler schedule

The engineers and dispatchers use the hostler schedule to assign motive power to each train. See figure 9. For example #300 the Logger would be assigned a 2-6-0 if one were available. If a 2-6-0 was not available then the hostler looks for a 2-8-0 and failing that a 2-10-0.

### 9. Finally, to help coordinate the crews a signup sheet is used.

Attendees place their name beside a position or train they want to staff. Listed on this sheet is the call time (time the crew is expected to report to the dispatcher), the destinations, the train out number and if different train in number, the departure time and the arrival time. See figure 10.

Now that you have seen the main paperwork associated with an operating session before any of this can be used the layout must be used the layout must be used. Staging the Easton and Potomac is fairly straightforward. A computer program is used to select cars that are not currently on the layout to be placed on the interchanges and to generate demand for each business located on the layout. (No staging yards are used.) A detailed explanation of the staging process can be found on the website at [www.easton-and-potomac.com/epops/epops\\_staging.html](http://www.easton-and-potomac.com/epops/epops_staging.html).

Freight operations on the Easton and Potomac are based on two events:

first, the arrival of new cars on any of the four interchanges (N&W at Stanley, Southern at Broadway, RF&P at Brooke and C&O at White Hall) and second, the generation of traffic from businesses located along the Easton and Potomac tracks. These two events set into motion all of the freight car moves that will take place on the layout. Because the layout only depends on these two events mistakes in car moves during a session are not an issue and are corrected during subsequent sessions. The only time the computer needs to know about the location of a car is when it arrives at one of the four interchanges from the Easton and Potomac.



**Figure 4: This is the train card for the return of the Southern interchange. You can see that the engineer has to sort the train before leaving Broadway. No detailed instructions are provided for this train card.**



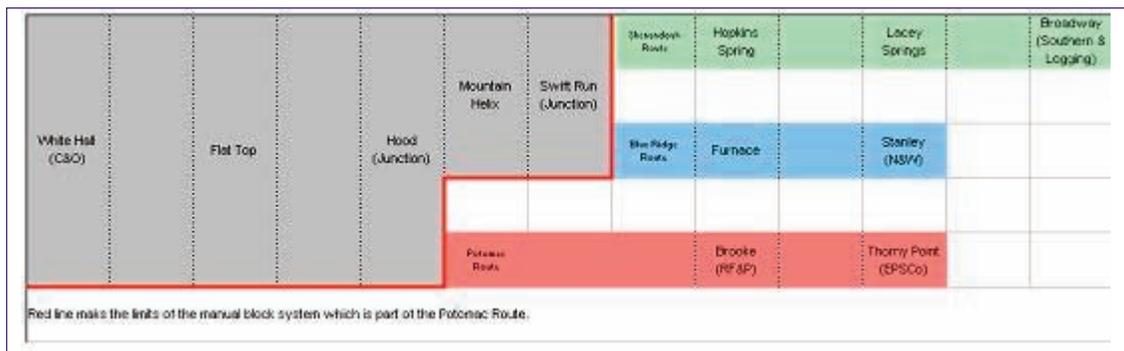
**Figure 4: This is engine card for Engine #40. Its DCC address is 40 and it only operates on the lower level of the layout. The functions available are listed as well as some whistle signals.**

When a car is removed from the layout it will not be used in the next session. It must stay off the layout for at least one session before returning. This prevents cars that were placed on an inter-

an empty (MT) car is available for loading at which time the waybill is removed from the Business Card and placed in the Car Card.

The last step is requesting MT cars. For each business waybill generated by the computer that does not have an MT car avail-

Figure 6: A layout diagram.



change track to be picked up from showing up during the next session either on that same interchange or another interchange. In my opinion, I don't think it looks right having a car that just arrived at an interchange return the next session with a different load. After all, it will take a while for it to reach its destination and get loaded/unloaded and return.

able an MT request is placed in a rack at White Hall yard to instruct the yardmaster to locate and direct an MT car to that business.

Waybills are not turned. When a car reaches its destination, either at an interchange or business, the waybill is removed indicating that the car has been unloaded. The car is then either loaded and another waybill is placed in its Car Card or it is

The process used to stage the Easton and Potomac generates

Figure 7: Arrival Diagram.

Arrival Time	Train	Description	Arrival Time	Train	Description
6:41 AM	121 Southern	Return of last night's Southern interchange run	12:18 PM	5 Mail Express	Mail service to all locations between White Hall, Broadway and Stanley
7:18 AM	131 NS&W	Return of last night's NS&W interchange run	2:42 PM	Broadway Turn	Assign RPO and/or log cars Local service to Flat Top, Hood, Hopkins Spring, Lacey Springs and Broadway
8:01 AM	11 Potomac	Return of last night's passenger service to Thorny Point	3:05 PM	21 Shenandoah	Blue local and some red into local cars. No interchange cars
8:42 AM	301 Logger	Customer service to ELC sawmill in Lacey Springs and ELC logging interchange in Broadway	4:50 PM	101 Parker	Passenger service Broadway to White Hall
10:18 AM	111 Stearns	Through freight service to Thorny Point	4:08 PM	31 Blue Ridge	Customer service to Hood Brothers packing

File Name: Easton & Potomac; Table 12

random car arrivals and repetitive and random car movements. This prevents the same cars in the same trains session after session. It also means the "local" (Broadway Turn) will have regular switching moves as well as random switching moves.

directed to another business with an MT request or routed to its default MT location. Cars arriving at the interchanges are simply unloaded (waybill removed if one exists) and removed from the layout, only to return when the computer selects them again.

Car Cards and waybills are used to direct the required car moves. However, switch lists could also be used. Waybills come

I also wrote a computer traffic generator to control the number of cars selected for each interchange, the load status of the

Figure 8: Departure Diagram.

8:08 AM	203 Logger	Customer service to ELC sawmill in Lacey Springs and ELC logging interchange in Broadway	12:23 PM	100 Parker	Customer service to Hood Brothers packing
7:45 AM	Broadway Turn	LEIM service to Flat Top, Hood, Hopkins Spring, Lacey Springs and Broadway	1:28 PM	11 Blue Ridge	Assign Hood Brothers cars and through train service to Stanley and back
8:18 AM	113 Stearns	Blue local and some red into local cars. No interchange cars	4:18 PM	130 NS&W	Assign light cars going to the lower tracks in Furnace or Stanley (check with dispatcher for equipment car assignments)
8:21 AM	5 Mail Express	Through freight service to Thorny Point	4:18 PM	120 Southern	Assign only cars going to the NS&W at Stanley
10:26 AM	20 Shenandoah	Assign only cars going to the Southern in Broadway	4:48 PM	13 Potomac	Southern inter interchange run to Stanley
		Assign RPO and/or log cars			Assign only cars going to the Southern at Broadway
		Passenger service to Broadway			Passenger service to Thorny Point
		Check with dispatcher for passenger car assignments			Assign RPO and check with dispatcher for additional car assignments

File Name: Easton & Potomac; Table 12

from two sources: first, interchange cars and second, business located along the Easton and Potomac tracks. The waybill identifies the receiver and car type required. For the interchanges these are preloaded into the "loaded" cars' Car Card. For the businesses the new waybills are placed in Business Cards until

cars and the destination of the cars. All of this is controlled by probability number ranges and random numbers. If you are interested in the details, a discussion of this is available on the website at [www.easton-and-potomac.com/epops/epops\\_staging.html](http://www.easton-and-potomac.com/epops/epops_staging.html).

I hope these articles have been of some value to you and if you

HOSTLER SCHEDULE					
Engine Ready	Train	Engine Assignments	Engine Ready	Train	Engine Assignments
5:45 AM	300 Logger	2-6-0, 2-8-0, 2-10-0	12:08 PM	100 Packer	2-6-0, 2-8-0
7:30 AM	Broadway Turn	2-8-0, 2-8-0	1:10 PM	30 Blue Ridge	2-8-0, 2-6-0, 4-6-0, 4-4-0
8:04 AM	110 Steamer	2-9-0, 2-10-0, 2-6-0	2:53 PM	130 N&W	2-10-0, 2-8-0, 2-6-0
9:06 AM	5 Mail Express	4-4-0, 2-6-0, 2-8-0	4:03 PM	120 Southern	2-10-0, 2-8-0, 2-6-0
10:23 AM	20 Shenandoah	2-8-0, 2-6-0, 4-6-0, 4-4-0	4:33 PM	10 Potomac	2-8-2, 2-6-0, 4-6-0, 4-4-0

For Use With Easton & Potomac Timetable 12  
Superintendent: Keith F. Stillman

Figure 9: A hostler schedule lists each train, the engine ready time (time when the engine should be coaled and watered and ready for service) and the preferred order of assignment.

are not already an operator you will think about giving it a try. It is a really fun aspect of the hobby!

I am always looking for people interested in model railroad operations. No experience is required. If you would like to sign up

FOR USE WITH						Name
Easton & Potomac Timetable 12 Superintendent: Keith F. Stillman						
		Dispatcher	5:30am - 12:00noon			
		Operator	5:30am - 12:00noon			
		White Hall Yardmaster	5:30am - 12:00noon			
		White Hall Assistant Yardmaster	5:30am - 12:00noon			
		Thorny Point Yardmaster	5:30am - 12:00noon			
Call Time	Destinations	Train out	Train in	Depart	Arrive	
5:30 AM	Broadway White Hall	121 Southern	n/a	5:50 AM	6:41 AM	
5:30 AM	White Hall Broadway	300 Logger	301 Logger	6:00 AM	9:43 AM	
5:30 AM	Stanley White Hall	131 N&W	n/a	6:35 AM	7:19 AM	
7:15 AM	White Hall Broadway	Broadway Turn		7:45 AM	2:42 PM	
7:15 AM	Thorny Point White Hall	11 Potomac	n/a	8:19 AM	9:01 AM	
7:49 AM	White Hall Thorny Point	110 Steamer	111 Steamer	8:19 AM	10:18 AM	
8:51 AM	White Hall Broadway	5 Mail Express		9:21 AM	12:09 PM	
10:08 AM	White Hall Broadway	20 Shenandoah	21 Shenandoah	10:38 AM	1:05 PM	
11:53 AM	White Hall Hood	100 Packer	101 Packer	12:23 PM	1:50 PM	
12:55 PM	White Hall Stanley	30 Blue Ridge	31 Blue Ridge	1:25 PM	4:08 PM	
3:38 PM	White Hall Stanley	130 N&W	n/a	4:08 PM	4:57 PM	
3:49 PM	White Hall Broadway	120 Southern	n/a	4:18 PM	5:09 PM	
4:18 PM	White Hall Thorny Point	10 Potomac	n/a	4:48 PM	5:25 PM	

Figure 10: A sign-up sheet.

for an operating session or simply to learn more about operations on the Easton and Potomac visit [www.easton-and-potomac.com](http://www.easton-and-potomac.com).

The Easton and Potomac is also blogging on the web at <http://eastonpotomac.blogspot.com/>.

**KEITH STILLMAN** lives in the James River Division where he models HO Scale 

## The Western Maryland Transfer! October 15th-18th, 2009

By Jane Clarke

**B**Y NOW, YOU ARE AWARE that the MER convention is back in Hagerstown, Maryland at the Plaza Hotel. We think this is a great location in the midst of railroad country. The hotel is on the west side of Hagerstown, just off I-81 and easy to get to from all directions. You can call and make reservations now, ask for the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA. For more information, please check the website <http://mer.nmra.org/MERConv/MERConv.html> early and often. If you have any problems call or e-mail Clint Hyde ([chyde@cox.net](mailto:chyde@cox.net)) or Jane Clarke (301-610-2219 or [Jane.clarke@BioReliance.com](mailto:Jane.clarke@BioReliance.com)).

The convention will include lots of layout tours, prototype tours, the make-it-and-take-it clinics, operation call boards, lively discussions with folks you know, and some you don't! Of course there will be a raffle, white elephant table, auction, and model contest.

We have planned an extra-special offsite trip to the East Broad Top led by EBT historian, Lee Rainey. This includes train and trolley tickets, shop tour, and box lunch. Please send in your registration early to get in on this one. We will probably car pool from the hotel. A new narrow gauge modular layout, James River Division

The East  
Broad Top  
engine pulls  
out of  
Orbisonia  
Station in  
Pennsylvania.



On30 Modular Group, will be shown to MER for the first time ever. The Saturday evening banquet will culminate in a keynote presentation by Linn Moedinger of the Strasburg RR.

The list of clinics is constantly growing. Here is a sampling: Steve King on Time Table/Train Order operations (please register for both the clinic and the lab at one of three layouts), Lee Rainey on the EBT, Bob Johnson on rocks, Clint Hyde and Martin Brechbiel's build-it clinic, and many other topics from modeling techniques to fallen flag railroads.

Operations call boards will be held at the following local layouts: Jeff Grove's Pine Valley Timber Co. (with extensive generic/freelanced locale Western Maryland Ry. trackage), Dick McEvoy's Barneytown and Scupperville (northern N.J. area), Paul Rausch's Ohio Northern, Mike Shockey's Great Northern Empire (Pacific Northwest), and Brian Wolfe's Western Maryland Railway – Blue Ridge Division (Baltimore to Hagerstown through Pennsylvania).

Be sure to volunteer to help out while you're there, there's always room for additional help in one place or another. 

# Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA Fall Convention

October 15 – 18, 2009

Hagerstown, Maryland

## ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM



Please enter (print legibly) all names as you wish them to appear on your registration badges:

Primary Registrant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Other (living at same address): \_\_\_\_\_

Children (under age 16 – List all): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA # \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION		COST	#	PAYING
Early Registration (before September 1, 2009)		\$35		
One-day Registration		\$20		
Non-NMRA member (applied to Rail Pass Membership)		\$10		
Significant other		\$15		
Children		\$10		
Banquet (Saturday Evening)	401	\$30		
Building in Wood Clinic (HO) (Hyde and Brechbiel) (Friday PM)	601	\$15		
Building in Wood Clinic (O) (Fri PM)	602	\$15		
Timetable and Train Order Clinic & Operations (King) (Thursday Eve., ops Friday AM)	611	\$15		
<b>Tours:</b>				
Union Bridge Tours — Friday (all day)	301	TBD		
East Broad Top Excursion and Shops Tour Saturday (all day) – dependent on the EBT's schedule.	201	TBD		
<b>Call Boards:</b>				
Call Board Shockey – Great Northern (day TBD)	801	\$ 5		
Call Board Grove – (day TBD)	802	\$ 5		
Call Board Rausch – (day TBD)	803	\$ 5		
Call Board Wolfe – (day TBD)	804	\$ 5		
<b>TOTAL ADVANCE REGISTRATION PAID</b>				

Payment must accompany registration.

Make checks payable to:  
**MER Fall Convention**

Send all registrations to:  
**MER Fall Convention**  
**P.O. Box 447**  
**Swedesboro, NJ 08085**

For questions and / or additional information e-mail  
**MER-Registrar@comcast.net**

Additional events will be added when their cost is known.

### CONVENTION HOTEL:

Plaza Hotel  
1718 Underpass Way, Halfway Blvd. (exit 5A off I-81)  
Hagerstown, MD 21740  
301-797-2500  
[www.plazahotelhagerstown.com](http://www.plazahotelhagerstown.com)

The convention rate is \$85 per room single, \$95 double, \$105 triple, and \$115 quad (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at 301-797-2500. These rates are in effect until 24 September 2009. When registering, specify the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA to get these special rates.

# The Blue Lantern Award

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Located throughout this issue are two award descriptions that are specific to the MER convention. In the coming months we will highlight each of the awards. Next issue there is also scheduled to be two helpful articles with plenty of tips on entering prototypical photos vs. model photos.

## 1) WHAT IS THE AWARD?

The Blue Lantern Award is for a judged contest model containing no more than 40 percent commercial parts, that best represents an example of either branch line, short line, or private line operating equipment and/or facilities.

## 2) SPONSORS:

The Blue Lantern Award is privately sponsored and chosen by long time MER modeler Terry Nesbit and his Narrow Gauge Car Shop.

## 3) WHO CAN COMPETE FOR THE AWARD?

Any NMRA/MER member in good standing who enters a judged contest model containing no more than 40 percent commercial parts, that best represents an example of either branch line, short line, or private line operating equipment and/or facilities in the official NMRA/MER sponsored judged model contest at an MER convention may be considered for the award.

## 4) MODELING PARAMETERS – The Blue Lantern Award model is defined:

The Blue Lantern Award model is defined as any model entry that containing no more than 40 percent commercial parts, that best represents an example of either branch line, short line, or private line operating equipment and/or facilities.

## 5) HOW THE CONTEST WILL BE JUDGED AND THE WINNER CHOSEN:

The Blue Lantern Award is chosen by long time MER modeler Terry Nesbit

## 6) THE BLUE LANTERN AWARD:

Once the winning entry has been decided, the sponsor of the award will contact the winner. At the official MER awards ceremony, the Blue Lantern Award will be presented to the winner. The award will be handed out when the other official awards are distributed. The award will be presented by Terry Nesbit.

## 7) SPONSORS (ORGANIZATION AND CONTACT PERSONS) AND FUNDING:

The Blue Lantern Award is funded by Terry Nesbit.

## 8) TIME LIMIT FOR THIS AWARD:

The sponsors of this award understand that in order for it to be placed into the Special awards given at a MER sponsored convention that this award must be approved by the MER Board of Directors. If approved, the award can be given at every MER sponsored convention over a two-year period. In order to continue to presenting this award, the sponsors must seek approval from the MER Board of Directors every two years. 

## CLASSIFIED

Do you have a wanted/trade/for sale item(s)? Looking for carpool options or options for sharing a room? **The Local** is starting classified section for all MER members. Send your classified ad to the Editor at [stevespressrr@yahoo.com](mailto:stevespressrr@yahoo.com), or see all the Editor's contact information on page 2.

The ad must include full name and contact information and will be limited to one issue. Word count is also limited to fifty (50) words. Please include your NMRA number for verification purposes (number will not be published).

## BOOKS

For Sale: **The Passenger Car Library**, Volume 4, Mid-Atlantic Railroads. Brand new in shrink-wrap. \$50.00 plus s/h. Contact Chuck Hladik at (434) 821-4941 or [rutlandrs@aol.com](mailto:rutlandrs@aol.com).

**HEY MEMBERS**, are you too busy modeling, operating, scratch building and even kit bashing railroads to print and then whittle away precious minutes filling out the Achievement Program forms??? Simplify your life by downloading the AP forms from the NMRA website (<http://www.nmra.org/achievement/apforms.html>). The forms are available in several different formats including MS Word documents. You can add your own information by editing the forms on your PC. 

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03/09

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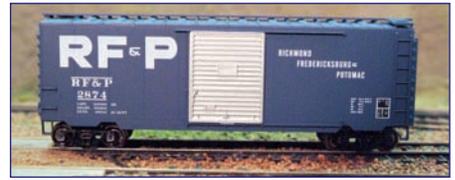
COURTESY OF THE FREIGHT YARD



These 40' Western Maryland N-Scale box cars are Micro-Train bodies custom painted by The Freight Yard. They are box car red with prominent white "speed lettering".



These 40' RF&P PS-1 HO-Scale box cars are Accurail bodies, custom painted by Accurail. They are blue with aluminum-colored doors, and feature prominent white lettering.



F.L. MATSON (2)

Milk station.  
Simplified  
structure.



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Small Freight Station,  
Tidy windows and  
detail parts, laser-cut  
walls, roof, tar paper,  
and stripwood for the  
platform.



CLINT HYDE

WESTERN MD. N-SCALE CARS	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE*	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#29290	_____	<b>NEW!</b> \$10.00	<b>NEW!</b> \$14.00	\$_____
#29299	_____	<b>NEW!</b> \$10.00	<b>NEW!</b> \$14.00	\$_____
Shipping: \$2.50 for first car, + \$1.50 for each additional car				\$_____

RF&P HO-SCALE CARS	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE*	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#2836	_____	<b>NEW!</b> \$6.00	<b>NEW!</b> \$9.00	\$_____
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\* Please list your MER or NMRA Membership # \_\_\_\_\_

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\*\* Only available to MER members.

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# CALLBOARD

## Coming Events

**May 2nd and 3rd.** Severna Park Model Railroad Club Open House in the B & A Train Station on the Bike Trail. Noon until 5 PM each day. Located at 3 Riggs Road in Severna Park, MD. Admission is free but donations are welcomed. For more information contact Sam Shepherd at (410) 647-6077 or Frank Winner at (410) 647-3335.

**May 9th.** Wade's Train Town Open House, operated by Carolina Southern Division members, at the Brookford Town Center in Brookford, NC. 10 AM until 4 PM.

**May 16th.** New Jersey Divisional Meet held at the Fire Hall Building located at Oak and Main in Richland, NJ. Clinics from 9 AM until Noon. Layout tours from 1 PM until 4 PM. Contact Mike McNamara at (856) 824-0871 or e-mail [mikemcnh@comcast.net](mailto:mikemcnh@comcast.net).

**May 17th.** First Division Meeting of the Chesapeake Division! Formerly known as the Mt. Clare Division. Meet the new Chesapeake Division officers; see the presentation of charter/letter from the MER Board. Bring and Brag models. Held at the Towson Public Library in the public meeting room located at 320 York Rd in Towson, MD. 2 PM. For more information contact Kurt Thompson at (410) 544-7247 or [kurtrain@verizon.net](mailto:kurtrain@verizon.net).

**May 24th.** Potomac Division layout tour in Silver Spring, MD. 1 PM till 4 PM. Contact layout coordinator: Tom Brodrick at (301) 253-0558 or e-mail [t.brodbrod@comcast.net](mailto:t.brodbrod@comcast.net).

**May 30th.** Visit Steamtown National Historical Site in Scranton, PA. Short train ride (most likely behind steam power), and get a private shop tour NOT available to the public. Non-NMRA members are invited. Event starts at 9 AM. Signup by May 27th. To signup or for more information contact Bob Martin at (717) 848-3640 or e-mail [cprroboss@comcast.net](mailto:cprroboss@comcast.net).

**June 6th.** Visit Art Dum's live steam railroad with the Susquehanna Division in Shermansdale, PA. Advance signup is required. Call Wayne Godshall by June 5th at (717) 582-4405 [home] or (717) 215-7776 [cell]. Actual address will be posted on the Divisions website [www.susquehannanmra.org](http://www.susquehannanmra.org). This event will also be scheduled in July, August and November.

**June 13th.** Philadelphia Division Meet. Held at GATSME Model RR Club located at Prospect and Madison Avenues in Fort Washington, PA. Clinics begin at 9 AM. Layout tours to be announced. For more information contact Greg Shindledecker at (610) 383-7767 or [gshindledecker@gmail.com](mailto:gshindledecker@gmail.com).

**June 13th.** Wade's Train Town Open House, operated by Carolina Southern Division members, at the Brookford Town Center in Brookford, NC. 10 AM until 4 PM.

**June 13th and 14th.** North Carolina Raildays held at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Located at the Southern Railway Spencer Shops, 411 S. Salisbury Street in Spencer, NC. Raildays is two full days (9 AM until 5 PM) of events that include model train layouts, model train and railroad memorabilia dealers, children's activities, musical entertainment, special displays and special train schedules. For complete information and costs visit <http://nctrans.org>. 

## Achievement Program Update

*By Charlie Flichman, MER AP Manager*

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

### **Division 2 – Potomac**

Brian Sheron – *Scenery*

Pete LaGuardia – *Chief Dispatcher*

Ernie Little – *Chief Dispatcher*

Robert G. McKeever – *Chief Dispatcher*

Robert B. Rodriguez – *Chief Dispatcher*

### **Division 3 – Philadelphia**

Stephen F. Salottio – *Chief Dispatcher*

### **Division 5 – James River**

Robert W. Alviso – *Association Volunteer*

### **Division 11 – Susquehanna**

Jeffrey Warner – *Association Volunteer*

### **Division 12 – Carolina Southern**

James Allen – *Chief Dispatcher*

Gilbert Brauch, Jr. – *Association Volunteer*

Gilbert Brauch, Jr. – *Engineer, Electrical*

Seth Gartner – *Gold Spike*

Jerry Shepardson – *Gold Spike*

David Ward – *Gold Spike*

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

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW:

The South Mountain  
Division will be hosting  
the 2009 MER Fall  
Convention  
on October 15-18, in  
Hagerstown, Maryland.  
More information in  
upcoming issues!

## ATTENTION ALL MER MEMBERS:

Members have until June 15 to submit a  
petition signed by 25 members to get their  
name on the ballot for the open director  
positions, as per the bylaws.

To submit your name, photo, petition and  
200-word position statement for election,  
contact:

John M. Johnson  
22398 Scojo Drive  
Franklin, VA 23851-2819  
757-562-5917