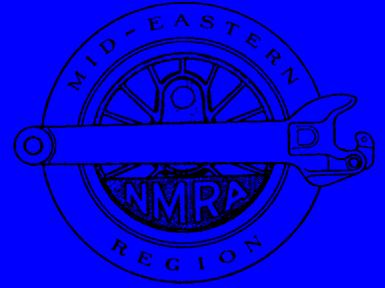


The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 59

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Number 1

The Chief Dispatcher Achievement Certificate: Go For It!

*By Roger L. Cason, MMR
MER AP Manager*

THIS ARTICLE focuses on the Chief Dispatcher certificate, and continues the series on NMRA's Achievement Program normally written by Charlie Flichman. As with other certificates, the full requirements can be found on the NMRA website <http://www.nmra.org/achievement>. We will look at a summary of the requirements, and at some of the realities that aren't fully covered or are only implied on the website.

DOCUMENTATION

There are two basic groups of requirements—operating experience, and what the website calls “documentation”. Let's look first at documentation. You must:

- Prepare a schematic drawing of a model railroad layout (meeting the operating conditions described later in this article), indicating pertinent simulated distances. (Normally, this would be a diagram of one of the layouts you operate on—but it doesn't have to be. In other words, this might be a hypothetical layout.)
- Develop a timetable appropriate to this model railroad, simulating prototype time, covering a period of eight hours or more, during which time at least three mainline trains move in each direction. (In this context, “mainline” means outside of yards and sidings. Since the model railroad can be hypothetical, the timetable can also be hypothetical.)
- Develop an operating train chart (a graph, also known as a string diagram), which interprets the above schedule for timetable operation of the model railroad.

Indicate at least one train meet on the schematic drawing. Show the positions of the trains involved and describe the action, giving pertinent time and movement data to affect the meet.

- Develop or adapt a system of operation for the above layout, including all necessary forms and explanations for their use for controlling car movements, train makeup, and operation in a prototypical manner. (More on this below.)

OPERATING EXPERIENCE

You must have participated in the operation of model railroads for not less than fifty hours. A minimum of ten hours must be served in three of the five categories listed below, one of which must be Dispatcher:

Engineer
Yardmaster
Hostler
Towerman
Dispatcher

Particularly on smaller layouts, you may perform more than one of these functions in a typical operating session. If so, allocate your total hours between categories. The categories all carry their normal meaning, but a complete detailed description of each is on the website.

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MER LOCAL

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Editor

Alan Mende
526 Pine Hill Road
Hummelstown, PA 17036-8020
(717) 566-9956
afmende@amp.com

Associate Editor

Roger L. Cason, MMR
1125 Grinnell Road
Wilmington, DE 19803-5125
(302) 478-2550
rogercason@juno.com

Official Photographer

Ron Baile
24 Hampton Road
Westmont, NJ 08108-2202
(609) 858-6644
ronald.h.baile@verizon.com

Assistant Photographer

Raymond Fisher
1228 Kings Circle
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-7673
(717) 732-4748

LOCAL Advertising Manager

Ed Gumphrey
1604 Elkstone Court
Virginia Beach, VA 23456
(757) 471-3559
Ed_Gumphrey@cox.net

LOCAL Publisher

Julianne H. Smith
(703) 938-3764
dragonjuls@cox.net

The **MER 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 backup 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.

Keeping In Touch...

*By Rita Lynam
MER Business Manager*

AS I AM WRITING this column, snow is falling here in Delaware and I just heard the whistle of the steam engine on the Wilmington and Western Railroad. It's great living close enough to hear train whistles!

In September 2003, a tropical storm hit the Wilmington area with severe flooding and the Wilmington and Western lost two bridges and a lot of track was torn up. They have limited trackage for running the tourist line, but they are able to run short distances. This happened a few years back during Hurricane Floyd, and they rebuilt other parts of the line that had been destroyed. The railroad runs along a river that is very picturesque but not good when hurricanes and tropical storms find their way up that route. They have been fundraising, and we hope they will rebuild and be up and running the full length of track soon. Their website is www.wvrr.com. They can be contacted by e-mail at schedule@wvrr.com.

About a month ago, I had a call from a member explaining why he could not renew with the NMRA or the MER. The member was just recognized for 50 years of membership in the NMRA. He joined in 1947. It would have been 56 years membership, but the NMRA would not reconsider the reason his membership had lapsed—in 1952 he was out of the country in the Korean War and paying membership dues was not a priority; staying alive was. That is only an aside. Back to the point of the phone call; with his limited funds now that he is retired, he is unable to continue his membership dues. This is probably the feeling of a lot of members—current or lapsed.

Several other members have notified me of their change of address. Thanks and I have sent an e-mail to national for them to update their records.

Now that winter is upon us, there will be more time to work on our layouts and get items ready for contests in the division, region or national.

Please be sure to contact me if you have a question or lose your membership card.

MID EASTERN REGION

Administrative Staff

President: Norman W. Garner
3408 Wilshire Road
Portsmouth, VA 23703-3940
(757) 484-0772
Nwgrail@aol.com

Vice President: Clint Hyde
13443 Brookfield Drive
Chantilly, VA 20151
(703) 803-3068
chyde@cox.net

Secretary: Bill Roman
12569 Council Oak Drive
Waldorf, MD 20601-4509
(301) 645-2035
wroman@starpower.net

Treasurer: Ron Schmidt
7110 Riverdale Road
Lanham, MD 20706-1130
(301) 577-7899
rgschmidt@juno.com

Trustee: Eric Dervinis
632 Bobwhite Road
Wayne, PA 19087-2305
(610) 688-6113
ericdlw@aol.com

Director: Bob Minnis
3016 Dower House Drive
Oak Hill, VA 20171-2236
(703) 391-0675
kahlualab@aol.com

Director: Roger Cason, MMR
1125 Grinnell Road
Wilmington, DE 19803-5125
(302) 478-2550
rogercason@juno.com

Director: Noll Horan
8316 Tobin Road, Apt. 12
Annandale, VA 22003-6835
(703) 642-6568
nhoran@mymailstation.com

Business Manager: Rita Lynam
9 Roosevelt Avenue
Wilmington, DE 19804-3044
(302) 636-0888
mgrmerbus@aol.com

Send change of address to Business Manager at mgrmerbus@aol.com or at the address in the right column of this page.

MER web-page URL is <http://members.cox.net/chyde/MER/MER.html>

President's Column

By Norman W. Garner

I HOPE EVERYONE had a wonderful and safe holiday season. I want to thank the MER division superintendents and their boards of directors for working so hard this past year to keep our membership losses to a minimum. The MER will continue to be challenged to keep our membership from declining and to recruit new members.

The membership thermometer in the December 2003 issue of the **Scale Rails** showed the NMRA membership in September 2003 was 19,775, the first time it has fallen under 20,000. The NMRA has lost 1,247 members since September 2002. The NMRA administratively needs to keep the membership thermometer up to date with data that isn't three months old. A MER member e-mailed me just before Christmas and summed up the NMRA membership problem with, "Houston, we have a problem."

The MER is financially sound going into the New Year. The MER/BOD is working hard to keep our cost down and maintain the programs we have. We will continue to do all we can to maintain our programs and retain our members.

I would like to see our divisions send more articles to **The Local**. I know from reading the various newsletters, all of you are involved in a number of outstanding charitable and community projects. You need to share this with all of us in the region.

Congratulations to Dick Genthner upon becoming the MER's newest Master Model Railroader.

Remember model railroading is fun.

Norm

*(Editor's Note: If ALL the division newsletter editors would put me on their mailing list, I would be happy to pick articles of interest to reprint in **The Local**. E-mail is best if you have that capability.)*

Achievement Program Attaboys (And Congratulations to Richard Genthner, MMR 330!!!)

By Roger Cason, MMR

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

Division 2 – Potomac

Doug Kirkpatrick – Golden Spike

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Fred Miller – Volunteer

Fred Miller – Scenery

Fred Miller – Structures

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Jerry Mersch – Golden Spike

Richard Genthner – Master Builder – Cars

Richard Genthner – MMR

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

WHAT QUALIFIES?

I have encountered people who seem to think that you need ten brass locomotives, hundreds of cars, a fully scened layout, and DCC to qualify. Others think that the paperwork must exactly match what some railroad did in a particular year. None of this is true. Let's look at the actual specifics.

What type of layout qualifies? Quoting the website, the layout must have at least two mainline trains plus yard switching in simultaneous operation. Clearly, it doesn't have to be huge to meet the foregoing requirement. It can be your layout, a friend's layout, or a club layout. You do not have to own a layout of your own to qualify for this certificate.

What type of train movement control system is needed? Again quoting the website, it can be by sequence, timetable and fast clock, or other operating system.

How about control of individual car movements (pickup, drop off, etc.)? Car cards will work. So will switch/movement lists.

My verbalization of the "bottom line": the operation should reflect a good business purpose, rather than just having people drink coffee (or other beverages) and watch trains run in circles. The usual circle of track under the Christmas tree doesn't qualify. An assembly of modules could qualify, but only if operators do more than run trains in circles for the folks in the mall or at the train show. There were operating sessions on the modular setup at the Reston convention in 2003. Hopefully, there will be a repeat at the Hagerstown convention in 2004. If you have questions in this area, contact any Division AP Coordinator or myself.

WHO CAN SIGN FOR YOUR OPERATING EXPERIENCE?

The necessary forms for this certificate are on the NMRA website. You will note that someone must verify (sign for) each operating session. In a perfect world, this might be the layout owner who has already earned the Chief Dispatcher certificate. But the world isn't perfect, and this may not be practical. Also, there's nothing on the NMRA website indicating that this is a requirement. The fallback is to get the signature of another NMRA member who was present at the session. If none of this works, contact me. We can almost certainly work something out.

We don't want anyone's location to block him or her from earning this certificate. For example, in my own case, most people in my round robin group are NMRA members. But no one had earned the Chief Dispatcher

certificate. Also, many of my hours were accumulated on my own layout (which at that time was unknown to most people). After I turned in the paperwork, the Division AP Coordinator (Dave Messer) visited one of our operating sessions to verify that the operation was consistent with the specifics and the spirit of the certificate requirements. This was a very logical quality control measure.

GETTING CONNECTED

Suppose you are interested in pursuing the Chief Dispatcher certificate, but aren't part of an appropriate group or club. What can you do?

Your first choice is to use your "know who"—i.e., contact someone you know who is involved in a group or club. Most groups and clubs are happy to take on a new member, particularly if he or she is serious about operations, will show up regularly, and will make an effort to learn the idiosyncrasies of the layout.

Another possibility is to contact the Superintendent or AP Coordinator of the nearest Division. Most MER members live within the geographic reach of one of our nine active Divisions.

If none of this works, contact me. I may be able to put you in touch with the appropriate people.

A NOTE TO LAYOUT OWNERS

Most of this article is directed at people who want to operate. But might you be a layout owner who could use more operators? Consider putting a note in your Division newsletter and/or in **The Local** to that effect. Your note could include the following information of interest to prospects: operating dates and times, usual length of session, experience needed (if any), expectation (if any) on bringing a radio and/or DCC throttle, and expectation (if any) on contributing munchies and drinks.

GO FOR IT!

As you can see, the requirements aren't all that difficult. And operating a model railroad in a prototypical manner is a lot of fun. If you've never done it, you will find that it adds another wonderful dimension to the hobby. So, put down that TV remote, pick up a throttle, and start accumulating your operating hours!

USEFUL REFERENCES:

- Realistic Model Railroad Operation*
by Tony Koester
- Operation Handbook for Model Railroads*
by Paul Mallery
- How to Operate Your Model Railroad*
by Bruce Chubb (out of print, but frequently found as a used book).

CALLBOARD

Coming Events

January 3–4, 10–11, 2004, 10 AM to 4 PM. Patcong Valley Model RR Club Open House. Admission free; donations welcome. Location is 3324 Bargaintown Rd, Egg Harbor Twp., NJ (about 10 miles west of Atlantic City). Contact: Tom Todd (609) 465-9380 or email: patcongrr@aol.com.

January 3–4, 2004 (Jan. 10, 11 snow dates), Noon to 4 PM. Cheltenham Model Railroad Club open house. Located at 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge) adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA 19027. There is no admission charge, but donations will be gratefully accepted. For more information, call (215)-635-9747.

January 17, 2004, 9 AM to Noon. New Jersey Division Meet. 406 Memorial Drive, Haddon Twp., NJ. Clinics, contests and layouts. Free for first time attendees. Website: <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/njdivnmra/>. Contact: Mike McNamara, Phone: (856)-824-0879

March 20, 2004, 9 AM to Noon. New Jersey Division Meet. Walnut Street School, 411 Walnut Street, Delanco, NJ. Clinics, contest and layouts. Free for first time attendees. Website: <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/njdivnmra/>. Contact: Mike McNamara, Phone: (856)-824-0879

Saturday, March 20, 10 AM to 5 PM and Sunday, March 21, 2004, 1 PM to 5 PM. 6th Annual Model Train Show & Railroad-ing & Merit Badge Workshop, sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 964, Dale City, VA. Admission: Adults \$4.00, students \$2.00, under 6 free. Location: Saunders Middle School, 13557 Spriggs Rd, Manassas, VA 20112. Featuring trains G to Z. Railroad-ing Merit Badge Workshop—so far we've awarded over 500 Railroad-ing Merit Badges in the 5 years we've hosted the show. Largest DCC-controlled HO Modular Layout assembled in Prince William County. Featuring: The Prince William County Model Railroad Club, Piedmont Model Railroaders, Potomac Module Crew and Boy Scout Troop 964. Additional train layouts from G to Z provided by the National Capitol Trackers, Atlantic S Gaugers and Northern VA Ntrak, Lego Trains, Potomac Steam Industries, Boy Scout Railroad-ing Merit Badge Workshop, Operation Life Saver & much more. Refreshments & door prizes. Railroad-ing Merit Badge information and registration or general information: (703)-730-1296, or email . Website: <http://www.troop964.org/>. Merit Badge registration accepted beginning February 1, 2004.

March 26–28, 2004. Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge. At the Desmond Great Valley Hotel and Convention Center, 1 Liberty Blvd., Malvern, PA. Prototype clinics, model displays, vendor's room, Sunday home layout tours. For additional information, phillynmra.org or SSAE to: Paul Backenstose, 103 West Uwchlan Ave. Downingtown, PA 19335. Sponsored by the Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA.

Pittsburgh & West Virginia USRA 50ton Two Bay Hopper Kit

This kit duplicates the original paint scheme on 1,000 steel 50ton 2 bay hopper cars owned by the Pittsburgh & West Virginia (P&WV) Railway. Numbered in the 3000-3999 range, the original P&WV order was placed in the early 1920s with the Cambria Steel Car Company. Other cars were built by the Pressed Steel Car Company. Many of these hoppers were rebuilt beginning in 1951. Some of these had channel ribs applied. These cars saw service through 1964 on the P&WV.



Produced for NMRA MCR Division 2 by Accurail, Inc. Accurail lettered these kits from a builder's photo. There are four numbers available at this time. These cars will only be rerun if sales and orders warrant. Individual kits are \$12.00 + \$2.00 S&H. A four pack is \$45.00 + \$4 S&H. Please make checks payable to Division 2, NMRA-MCR. Mail orders to: Division 2, NMRA-MCR, P.O.Box 152, Greensburg, PA 15601.

Achievement Program Part 7

By Charlie Flichman

THIS TIME we turn our attention to the Model Railroad Engineering and Operations section of the Achievement Program and discuss the Model Railroad Engineer—Civil category. As always, the complete set of requirements may be found at www.nmra.org/achievement/apc5.html. The disclaimer on the website states that the requirements for this certificate may look long and complicated, but they really are not. The reason for the length is to offer more options for meeting the requirements. If you are going to prepare to meet the requirements for this certificate, look also at the requirements for the Electrical Certificate as the two can go hand in hand. (We will cover the Electrical Certificate in the next article.) The requirements for the Civil certificate are as follows:

1. Prepare an original scale drawing of a model railroad track plan, identifying the overall size, scale, track elevations, curve radii, and the turnout sizes. The plan must include the following items:

- Adequate terminal facilities for handling freight and/or passenger cars.
- Adequate terminal facilities for storage and service of motive power.
- A minimum of one mainline passing siding.
- Four switching locations, not counting yards, interchanges, wyes and reverse loops.
- Provision for turning motive power.
- Provision for simultaneous operation of at least two mainline trains in either direction.

2. Construct and demonstrate the satisfactory operation of a completed section of model railroad and track work as described in Section One. The track work has to be at least 25 linear feet in Z, N or TT scales, 50 linear feet in HO or S, 75 feet in O and 100 feet in G or #1 scale. The track work must contain six of the following examples:

Passing Siding	Super Elevation
Spur	Simple Overhead Wire
Crossover	Compound Overhead Wire
Reversing Loop	Scale Track
Wye	Cog Railway Track
Simple Ladder	Coal Dump Track
Compound Ladder	Ash Pit
Turntable	Service Track
Transfer Table	Grade Elevation

3. Construct for merit judging, (they must win a Merit Award), scratchbuilt models of any three of the following and demonstrate satisfactory operation.

Turnout	Gauntlet Turnout
Crossover	Dual Gauge Turnout
Double Crossover	Gauge Separation Turnout
Single Slip Switch	Double Junction Turnout
Double Slip Switch	3-Way Turnout
Crossing	Spring Switch
Gauntlet Track	Operating Switch in Overhead Wire

Commercial frogs are not permitted in any of these items. These models may or may not be a part of a layout. In my own case for this certificate, I had an On3 crossing on a 12" by 12" piece of Homasote that I had saved from a former layout that I used for one of the pieces of my scratchbuilt track work. With wires connected to each of the tracks, an O-4-0 was able to run through the crossover in each direction. It is NOT sufficient to push or pull a car through the track work by hand.

As always an SOQ must be submitted with a copy of the track plan, descriptions of the track work, and verification of the Merit Awards.

It was interesting to note that in a list of certificate "popularity" from AP Chairman Roger Cason, this certificate was third from the bottom. I don't know if Part 3, the scratchbuilding of track work, is the hang-up or not with so much good RTR track available. This and the Electrical certificates were my first ones and to me the easiest. It is all a matter of preference. But don't be afraid, step forward and try a new set of circumstances.

Free Screen Saver

Again this year, with permission, Doug Scott of Railfan Express (<http://www.scotware.net/>) has made a screen saver from the NMRA calendar. Last year's screen saver is still available as well. This is free to all and may be accessed from a link at the top of the NMRA home page at: <http://www.nmra.org/>

Roger Hensley
Central Indiana Division, NMRA

The Veep's Corner

*By Clint Hyde,
MER VP*

I THINK THAT SOMETIME this spring the new NMRA bylaws (<http://www.nmra.org/news/regulations.pdf>), which are based on the goals in the Long Range Plan (<http://www.nmra.org/news/LRP.pdf>), are going to be submitted to the members for a vote. Some parts of this are important right away, i.e., compliance with Ohio state law (where NMRA is incorporated), and the unified national/region/division membership. Some things have less clear importance, like changing the quantity of and territorial election base of the "Trustees" (called "Directors" in the new Regulations). Others are painfully vague (the money end of things in the unified membership). Regrettably, they don't separate well – I'd prefer to have addressed some of these things individually. Norm Garner is especially worried about the money end.

Because of that, I am going to be making some income-related proposals at the next MER Board of Directors meeting on January 10. I hope to be reporting on them in the next issue of **The Local**. I think you'll like them, and I'll be asking for volunteer help (you knew that part was coming, right?).

Anyone interested in seeing the compiled results of the 2003 Reston, VA Convention survey can email me for a copy.

More folks are getting **The Local** electronically, and this is good. The MER is not prepared to make a permanent paper vs. email choice; you'll continue to get the paper copy until it's official. One of my upcoming proposals will be to make **The Local** an optional item (which reduces your actual Region membership cost), with it being free via email. I encourage you to try receiving it via email now if you can because: 1) you'll get it a LOT sooner; 2) you'll see the pictures in color; 3) it won't cost anything (unless you are paying for dialup time by the minute); and 4) you'll still get a paper copy until your next renewal at the least. You need to find out in advance whether your current email arrangement will handle it (some folks will have trouble for sure, mostly AOL users – something about attachments and AOL working badly). Email me at chyde@cox.net to give it a test-drive.

My current Division visit plans are: January 17 – James River; March – Tidewater. I still need to visit South Mountain, Susquehanna, and Philly divisions.

Welcome aboard to the Monmouth County, NJ folks!

Nominations For MER Officers

*By Bill Roman,
MER Secretary*

THIS YEAR, the President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary positions are up for election. President Garner and Secretary Roman are ineligible for re-election due to term limits. While there is at least one candidate for each office so far, any other MER members who wish to run for office should send a candidate qualifications statement (no longer than 200 words) and photograph to Nominations Chair John Johnson not later than April 15. His address is 22398 Scojo Drive, Franklin, VA 23851-2819.

Combined Annual Reports



NEW JERSEY, DIVISION 1

Officers and Directors:

Superintendent: Mike McNamara
Assistant Superintendent: Ken O'Brien
Secretary: Bob Clegg
Treasurer: Bob Liberman
Director – Layouts: Carl Corsi
Director – Clinics: John Swift
Director – Contests: Chris Widmaier

Membership:

Number of members at start (Sept. 2002): 110
Number of members at end (July 2003): 107

In an effort to recruit new members, we mail our newsletters and an invitation letter to new NMRA members using the list supplied monthly by the MER. This has brought in a few members. We also post our meetings in RMC and MR. This has brought in some walk-ins. We also allow anyone wishing to do so to subscribe to our newsletter. This helps people figure what we are about, what we offer and help bring them on board.

Financial:

Treasury Start (Sept. 2002): \$1,053.69 checking,
\$ 874.36 savings
Treasury End (July 2003): \$636.96 checking,
\$874.36 savings

Division Dues:

\$13 per year includes newsletter and fee for all 5 Meets.
\$10 per year for electronic version of newsletter and fee for all 5 Meets.
\$5 per year covers the newsletter only; At-Meet fee of \$5 charged per Meet attended.

Division Events:

- 1) Hosted MER Fall Convention Cherry Hill Depot in October 2002.
- 2) November – Division Meet in Tuckahoe, at new location in Tuckahoe Railroad Museum with multiple scale layouts, clinics on Creative Night Photography and Using the Camera to enhance Model Railroading, layout tours, side trip to P-RSL junction and tower, Steam Motive Power contest and swap tables.
- 3) January – Division Meet in Haddon Township (joint Meet with Phila. Division), clinics on Model RR Chemistry

and Model RR Engineering, Friday Night and Saturday layout tours, NTrak modular layout, Lineside Structures contest and swap tables.

4) March – Division Meet in Hamilton Twp., clinics on the Reading RR, Rebuilding a Model RR and a video from the 2001 NER Fall Convention in Albany, layout tours, Diesel Motive Power contest and swap tables.

5) May – Division Meet in Toms River, clinics on Modeling Water and Outdoor G Scale Railroading, layout tours, Unusual Cars and Loads contest and swap tables, Annual Business Meeting of the Division. Attendance at each meet averaged 75 members.

6) June – Outdoor Garden Layout Tour, featuring large scale railroads and their gardens throughout South Jersey. Open to members and their friends and families. Unable to estimate attendance, but usually over 100 people.

Charitable and Educational Activities:

Continued regular video-taping of our clinic presentations as a source of educational materials available to all members.

Achievement Program activity:

During the past year, no Division members received an award at a Division event or were we notified of any certificates from the MER.

Newsletter:

8 page **Clinkers** published 5 times, September, November, January, March and May, mailed, e-mailed and posted on website.

Also sent to other MER and NMRA representatives, area hobby shops and clubs as a courtesy.

Division Website Address:

<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/njdivnmra/>

Future Directions:

- Division meets throughout our geographical area in September (Deptford), November (Hamilton Twp.), January (Haddon Twp.), March (Delanco), May (Toms River/Ocean County).
- Garden Layout Tour in June.
- Investigate Division trip to Winchester & Western RR in Bridgeton, NJ.
- Investigate conducting a Kids In Trains clinic (make & take simple boxcars) at January Meet.



POTOMAC, DIVISION 2

Officers and Directors:

Superintendent: John Drye
Senior Assistant Superintendent: Jim Stapleton
Assistant Superintendent: John Griffith
Clerk: Clint Hyde
Paymaster: Mark Andersen

Division Website Address:

<http://members.cox.net/chyde/PotomacDivision/Potomac.html>

Membership:

December 31, 2002: 278
December 31, 2003: 203 (looks bad, but we handle renewals once a year)

Financial:

Membership Dues: \$4
Amount in bank: Dec 31, 2002 – \$2,852.82
Amount in bank: Nov 30, 2003 – \$2,852.82

Division Events:

The Division holds monthly layout tour open house. In March, the annual miniconvention was held at the Brunswick MD railroad museum, and was less MRR-flavored. In Fall 2003, Potomac Div. played host to the MER Fall convention—it was essentially a larger version of our usual miniconvention.

Newsletter:

The Potomac Flyer is published quarterly, and primarily features the Open House announcements, with the occasional other MRR story. Approx. 75 members get it electronically.

Achievement Program:

Noll Horan became MMR #326.

Future:

We are contemplating a road-trip for the 2004 miniconvention. August 2004 will see the very large N-Scale/NTRAK convention in western Fairfax County.



PHILADELPHIA, DIVISION 3

Division Board of Directors:

Superintendent: Jim Dalberg
Assistant Superintendent: Tim Palmer
Clerk: Steve Salotti
Paymaster/Treasurer: Dick Landt
Directors: Dick Foley, Dave Messer, Ray Bilodeau

Membership:

We currently have 132 members on the rolls.

Finances:

The Division has a positive account balance of \$1,317.43 as of 31 August 2003. This will change slightly in September, due to a few dues renewals and the Operations Call Board at the 27 September meet. The Division has decided to raise the Annual Dues from \$5 to \$7, primarily to cover the cost of the Division Newsletter and various costs associated with the meets. The dues year will coincide with the calendar year, beginning on 1 January 2004. This is primarily an accounting issue.

Division Activities:

We have held two meets this year, with another scheduled for 15 November. The most recent meet, 27 September, included three railroads open Friday evening, a morning meet with two clinics, and an Operations Call Board Saturday afternoon. This had five participants plus the crew, and was planned as a means to get more people interested/involved in operations as well as a fund-raiser—and to have fun.

The Division is sponsoring a Railroad Prototype Modeler (RPM) Meet. This will be held the weekend of 26 – 28 March 2004 in the Valley Forge area.



TIDEWATER, DIVISION 4

Officers and Directors:

Superintendent: Donald S. Taber
Assistant Superintendent: James Keiper
Timekeeper: Richard Uglum
Paymaster: Leonard Boucher
Directors: Celeste F. Robbins, James Curth, William Fay

Division Website Address: Tidewater Division Online

<http://groups.hamptonroads.com/tdwdmer>

Newsletter:

The Callboard

Membership:

30 September 02: 72 regular members, 4 family members, 1 honorary member.
30 September 03: 60 regular members, 4 family members, 1 honorary.

Membership recruitment is conducted at the various public operating sessions of the Division Module Group and through the Division website. The membership committee chairman also contacts new NMRA members as we receive notification from the Region.

Financial:

Dues: \$5.00

Start Balance: \$11,274

End Balance: \$17,560

Division Events:

Meets: Division meets were held on the following months: November, January, March, May and August. Average attendance was 20 members. The Annual Business Meeting was held during the January meeting. During this meeting Dan Taber remained as Superintendent. Jim Keiper remained as the Assistant Superintendent and Len Boucher was selected paymaster. Rich Uglum was selected as Timekeeper while Celeste Robbins remains as a Director. James Curth and William Fay were elected as new members of the Board. There were no changes to the Bylaws. Following the Business Meeting the annual members-only auction was held.

The remaining meetings were composed of various clinics such as resin casting and working with resin and styrene kits.

Annual Show:

The Annual Show was held in September. The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve was represented at the show in support of "Toys for Tots." They held a successful collection drive netting both cash donations as well as new model railroading toys. Additionally, the Division donated a portion of the net proceeds in the amount of \$1,500. This was a donation in kind of HO Electric Train sets and wooden trains for the younger set.

Module Operations:

Major module operations began with the combined operations of the Tidewater Division and the Potomac Division at the Annual Train Show in September. This was followed by the annual 3 day Christmas Show at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Nursing Home. Originally conceived as a show for the residents and staff of the home it has been open to the public and proves to be very successful. In March, the group participated in a Train Days show at the Great Bridge Library, City of Chesapeake, VA. The group has also put on numerous shows at Pembroke Mall in Virginia Beach and Greenbrier Mall in Chesapeake.

Charitable and Educational Activities:

The division purchased \$1,500 worth of train sets and donated them to the USMCR "Toys for Tots" campaign. Various members of the division continue to help the Boy Scouts meet the requirements for Model Railroad Merit Badge. The City of Suffolk, VA Historical Society recognized the work of specific members of the Division and the financial contributions of the Division to the Suffolk Train Station Museum over the past few years. A plaque bearing the names of members who either built the layout or built structures for the layout was presented. The plaque is displayed in the museum near the layout.

Achievement Program:

The Division did not have any AP Certificates awarded this year.

Future Directions:

The Division continues to develop the relationship with the Boy Scouts of America and the USMCR "Toys for Tots" campaign.



JAMES RIVER, DIVISION 5

Officers:

Superintendent: Bill McMillan

Assistant Superintendent: Frank Schwenk

Clerk: Mark Chase

Paymaster: Jay Manning

Division Website Addresses:

Division web page – www.JamesRiverDiv.homestead.com

Crossties Annex – www.crossties.homestead.com

Membership:

Membership was 69 on 30 June 2002 and 70 on 30 June 2003.

The increase of only one does not reflect actual membership activity. A number of new members were recruited to compensate for the loss, by moving out of the area and for other reasons, of old members. Active efforts (emails and letters) to emphasize recruitment of new members and the rerailing of former members have proven very successful. JRD promotional material has been placed in fourteen hobby shops and other appropriate locations in the central Virginia area.

Financial:

Annual dues are \$3.00. The Division began the year 2003 with a bank balance of \$1,098.97. The bank balance was \$1,239.97 at years end.

Division Events:

During the course of the year the James River Division held two of its customary three one-day meets (Ashland – 02/15/03, Lynchburg – 04/19/03) and will meet in Danville – 09/27/03. The average attendance at the first two meets was 25 members and guests. We anticipate a larger attendance in Danville as our meet is in conjunction with that city's commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the wreck of Old 97. All of these meets included clinics, contests and member white elephant sales plus any necessary business in the morning and two or more layout or other tours after lunch. The annual business meeting was conducted during the April meet at which time a revised set of Bylaws was passed by the membership along with a "division meet fee" policy. This policy, which follows, is intended to encourage division area modelers to join the JRD rather than simply attend meets.

To register and attend any JRD meet, an attendee must be a paid-up member through the current calendar year, pay their current year dues at the time of registration, or pay an admission fee of \$ 5.00 per meet. This rule pertains to current members, for-



SOUTH MOUNTAIN, DIVISION 10

mer members and second time (Division area) guests. Occasional guests from outside the Division area and first time attendees will be accorded free attendance, as will non-member clinicians, owners of visited layouts or others specifically invited to attend a meet.

In addition to the above meets, one Operations Day was held in April on two layouts in the Richmond area and, on another date in that month, one was held on a very large layout in Amherst. Members were invited to sign-up in advance to run trains in accordance with the operating scheme of each of the layouts. Eight members spent one half-day on each of the Richmond layouts, and more than ten operated the Amherst layout for a full day. The object of these sessions is to introduce members to operating a railroad instead of just running trains. This activity has received enthusiastic support for the membership.

Achievement Program:

During the year covered, The AP awards for Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical and for Association Volunteer were awarded to Bill McMillan.

Newsletter:

The division newsletter **Crossties** (Copy provided to MER separately) was published three times during the year and will be published again in December 2003.

Future Directions:

In the course of the next year the officers and directors of the James River Division plan to:

- Hold four, instead of three, one-day meets to include some geographical areas of the division that have not been served in the recent past.
- Hold an Operations Day or days again next year with layouts in two geographical areas of the division in a continued effort to include more members in this popular event.
- Pursue the possibility of holding joint meets with adjacent divisions (Tidewater and Potomac).
- Study the modification of the content of some meets to include, if possible, some form of prototype railroading.
- Continue to be more proactive in our publicity and recruitment efforts.
- Appointment of a Publicity/Recruiting Chairman and publication of a brochure are first steps in this direction.

Conclusion:

With the revision of the Bylaws, the Division has improved and strengthened its organizational structure. The treasury has shown an increase over the year and is expected to continue to show fiscal strength. Further, the division has proven that it can increase its membership while continuing its routine goal of making model railroading more enjoyable and interesting to all members. This is no small feat considering the large area covered by the Division. Efforts to be more responsive to the desires of the membership have proven to be fruitful. In the future, the officers plan efforts to extend these benefits to more model railroaders in the James River Division area.

Officers:

Superintendent: Don Florwick
Assistant Superintendent: Raymond F. Price Jr.
Clerk/Paymaster: Larry Snook
Advisory Board: Bob Johnson, Bob Heyser III,
Harvey H. Van Zant

Division Website:

<http://www.fred.net/richardb/smd.html>

Active Members: 50

2002 Membership: 50

Membership Activities:

We had a total of 50 members last year and there has been no increase this year. **The Wheel Report**, our division newsletter was mailed out to all NMRA members residing within the division. This was our fall mailing. We included along with the newsletter, a letter from the division, inviting these NMRA Members to join us in Division activities. Hopefully, we will gain some new members as a result of this campaign.

Dues:

Dues were raised this year to \$4/year to better reflect costs of servicing the membership.

Division Events:

Activities consisted of a monthly meeting hosted at private homes during the months September through May. SMD members hosted most meetings and all meetings featured a layout. Clinics were given at a few of the meetings. In October, the division and guests were again treated to a very comprehensive tour of the CSX Cumberland Shops, Running Repair Car Shop and to the Hump Yard Tower. This was the return visit that CSX had offered since our original tour last May had to be cut short because of visiting dignitaries from corporate headquarters.

Achievement Program:

No certificates have been awarded this past year. The AP Representative, Art Thomas passed away this past year and progress in this area has stalled.

Convention Activity:

The division is planning to host and run the 2004 MER Fall Convention, The South Mountain Express. The original Convention Chairman resigned in July of this year and two gentlemen from the committee stepped forward to assume the chairman position. As reported last year, the division has formed a committee and has a hotel commitment. We are on their reservation list without deposit. This is the same hotel that housed the 1999 Hagerstown Convention. A number of layouts have committed and others have promised to be available for layout tours. Other planned activities will be reported as we get closer to the event.



SUSQUEHANNA, DIVISION 11

Officers and Directors:

Superintendent: Brian Brandt
Assistant Superintendent: Jim Atkinson
Clerk/Paymaster: Paul Tice
Directors: Bruce Allison
Directors: Alan Frame
Directors: Scott Turner

Membership:

Our membership is holding steady at 64 members. After the date for this report we have lost approximately 5 due to the NMRA rules.

Finances:

Division reports having \$1,648 at the end of June.

Activities:

We had 5 meets during the year, all at member's homes, many with clinics.

We publish a quarterly newsletter named the **Susquehanna Sidetracks** with Scott Turner as the editor.

Website:

Our website is: <http://moosevalley.org/nmra/index.htm>



CAROLINA SOUTHERN, DIVISION 12

Carolina Southern Division Twelve began the year 2003 with our annual meeting on January 25, 2003 held at the Waxhaw Fire House. The main order of business was the election of new officers and the establishment of meeting dates and hosts for the balance of the year. Our current elected officers are:

Superintendent: Larry Lau, (term expires January 2005)
Assistant Superintendent: Jack Parker, (term expires January 2005)
Clerk: Martin Oakes, (term expires January 2005)
Paymaster: Dick Bronson, (term expires January 2005)
 Ed Locking (term expires January 2004)
Director: Dave Chance, (term expires January 2005)
Director: Michelle Chance, (term expires January 2006)

Superintendent Lau has appointed the following **Chairmen of Standing Committees:**

Re-rail and Membership: Jack Parker
Train Show: Martin Oakes
A/P Chairman: Fred Miller

Activities:

An Achievement Program meeting with Regional Officers. A

presentation of the A/P program, judging critiques, and A/P judging took place.

The Brass Pounder, our division newsletter, has been published on a quarterly basis.

Current membership is 15. Starting membership was 12.

We have held bi-monthly meetings at members' houses. Clinics were presented and operations on the host's layout took place. Our annual picnic is planned in September.

Works in process:

Train show for spring beginner layout's to be built, sold and delivered A/P certificates awarded to:

David J. Chance – Chief Dispatcher
 Michele J. Chance – Chief Dispatcher
 Martin Oakes – Chief Dispatcher
 Jack Parker – Chief Dispatcher
 Jack Parker – Electrical
 Jack Parker – Scenery
 Jack Parker – Structures
 Jack Parker – Civil

Newsletter:

The Brass Pounder published quarterly

Website:

<http://www.bytedesign.com-CSDiv>



CAROLINA PIEDMONT, DIVISION 13

Officers and Directors:

Superintendent: David H. Lynam
Assistant Superintendent: Richard Buchan
Clerk: Andrew Stitt
Paymaster: John Rudisill
Director: Thomas Cook
Director: Edmund Dougherty
Director: David Derway

Division Website Address:

<http://www.trainweb.org/cpd13>

Membership:

As of September 1, 2002: 41
As of September 1, 2003: 43

Financial:

Annual Dues: \$12 per calendar year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)
Amount in bank: August 29, 2002, \$2852.82
Amount in bank: August 29, 2003, \$3,312.95
Change from previous year: \$460.13

Division Events:

The Division holds our scheduled monthly meeting in the

Apex, NC train station on the fourth Tuesday of each month starting at 7 p.m. Each meeting includes an educational clinic and a popular vote contest. Over the past year the subjects of the clinics and contests were as follows:

- September 2002 – Layout Planning – First Generation Diesels
- October – Bulletin Car Sides – Modern Freight Cars
- November – Scenery Tips and Tricks – Old Time Freight and Passenger Cars
- December – Annual Christmas Party – Santa Cars
- January 2003 – Weathering Techniques – 4 x 4 Dioramas
- February – DCC – NC Railroads
- March – Resistance Soldering – Passenger Trains
- April – Traction – For Sale Night
- May – Making Trees – Anything but a Caboose
- June – Jigs – “What If” Merger Paint Schemes
- July – Prototype RR You Can Model – Trains for Kids Buildings
- August – Couplers – Tips & Tricks – Home Track Plans

In addition to the monthly meetings, the Division has participated in the following activities over the past year:

In November 2002, we participated in the Neuse River Valley Train Show. This was an opportunity to promote the hobby, the Division and the NMRA. We displayed our portable switching layout and sold old magazines and donated equipment. A highlight of this show was the Holiday Trains for Kids Layout Raffle. The Division members built a small N-Scale layout on a closet door, fully scened and running. Raffle tickets were sold during the show. At the end of the show the winning ticket purchaser received the layout. We raised \$843.00 to purchase train sets as Christmas gifts for needy children in the Raleigh/Durham area.

In March of 2003, the Division participated in a mall show at a local shopping mall. We displayed our portable switching layout and sold donated magazines and equipment for the Division's charity.

In April of 2003, the Division participated in the Great American Train Show. We displayed our portable switching layout and sold donated magazines and equipment for the Divisions' charity.

The Division also has provided opportunities for community reengagement for clients of the Triangle Aphasia Project. This group provides assistance to people who have suffered stroke and have lost their ability to speak and participate in their former activities. On several occasions the Division meetings were privileged to assist clients in enjoying their model railroading hobby and be around other model railroaders.

Charitable and Educational Activities:

Over the past year the Division conducted educational clinics as listed above.

In addition, the Division's charity, The Holiday Trains for Kids program, distributed 6 train sets worth approximately \$450. The

remaining monies raised during the year went to purchase train sets for December 2003 at 2002 prices. The Division has committed to distribute 12 train sets for December 2003.

Achievement Program Activity:

During the past year David Derway was awarded the Golden Spike Award.

Ed Dougherty, Dill Huey, and John White earned Chief Dispatcher AP awards.

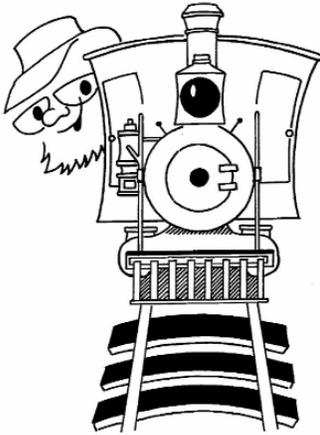
Convention Activity:

At present the Division has no plans to host a Regional Convention due to its small membership.

Future Directions:

The following Officers are up for election in January 2004: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Clerk, Paymaster and one Director.

Upcoming MER Convention
South Mountain Express
November 12-14, 2004
Hagerstown, MD
Watch The Local for more details



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Make plans now to attend this year's
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in Pittsburgh, PA. We have a lot planned for you!

The convention program will include prototype tours, clinics, operating sessions, model and photo contests, non-rail activities, silent auction, layout tours and awards banquet.

Early Bird registrations until January 31, 2004 are \$50.00.
Registration after February 1, 2004 is \$55.00

The convention hotel is the Sheraton Four Points in Cranberry Township, PA. It's located at the intersection of the PA Turnpike, I-79 and PA Rt. 19 for easy access from every direction!

Room reservations should be made directly with the hotel at 724-776-6900.
Rate is \$99.00 per 1-2 people. Reserve under:

National Model Railroad Association, MCR Convention.

Hotel address is: 910 Sheraton Drive, Mars, PA 16046.

<http://home.comcast.net/~cjerry3/html/convention.html>

Name _____ NMRA # _____ Region _____ Div _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Early Bird Registration before January 31, 2004 — \$50.00 x _____ = _____

(Banquet and extra fare tours must be selected and paid for separately at a later date.)

Make checks payable to: Division Two, MCR, NMRA

Mail to: Convention Registrar, Susan Werner, 292 Salem Church Rd, Belle Vernon, PA 15012.

Phone: 724-379-8584. E-mail: mehrt@sgi.net.

Letters

Dear Editor,

At the recent convention held in Reston, Virginia, we at Granddad's Hobby Shop made a special offer to conventioners of an additional 10% discount when they stopped at our store. We are aware of two instances we did not give the additional discount. It is totally our error. We are concerned that there may be others who were due, but did not receive, the discount. We apologize for any inconvenience our error may have caused.

Any conventioner who shopped at Granddad's Hobby Shop on the 10th thru 13th of October and did NOT receive the discount is asked to send us a note with a copy of their receipt and we will immediately refund our error.

Because I suspect that many simply discarded their receipt and thus will never know if they received their due discount, we are attaching our check payable to the Mid-Eastern Region of an amount we feel represents the discount due from all sales made to conventioners during our sale. The Region is welcome to use these funds in any manner they wish commensurate with the charter. So altho' some individuals may not individually benefit, the Region will. We hope that this represents a solution satisfactory to all.

Sincerely,

Robert B. "Doc" Thatcher, Boss

To the NMRA Board of Trustees:

There are a few issues about the proposed regulations/by-laws changes of the Long Range Plan (LRP) that have me concerned. I feel that these changes would be detrimental to many of the divisions and regions, and therefore to the NMRA as a whole.

One issue is that the LRP does not define the roles of the regions and divisions within the NMRA. Since the NMRA was established at first without these subdivisions, there has only been a loose definition of the regions' responsibilities. The divisions have almost no role within the current structure. This is reflected in the amount of support and attention that the regions and divisions receive from the NMRA. This needs to change!

There are three major goals of the NMRA. First is the setting and regulation of standards for the model railroad industry. Second is the recognition of the skills and achievements of the membership through the Achievement Program. Third is the support and promotion of the hobby of model railroading.

These missions can be divided between the levels. The NMRA would define the standards for products and issue conformance warrants. It would also set the standards for the Achievement Program and manage the library and museum. The regions would administer the Achievement Program and provide assistance to the divisions, which would be promot-

ing and supporting model railroading in their localities. This division of missions is already the way the organization is operating, it just needs to be defined and recognized in the regulations.

The main issue of concern is in the changes to the dues structure. As the membership chair of my division, I am well aware of the confusion generated by the current system. I agree that there needs to be a change to a one-dues system for membership, but the way in which the proposed regulations changes address this is unacceptable.

The LRP proposes that all membership dues would be collected by the NMRA and membership at all three levels would be automatic. The regions and divisions would be prohibited from charging additional membership dues. The NMRA "may" give a portion of dues collected to the regions, but this is not guaranteed. The LRP suggests that regions and divisions can recover lost dues income by charging members for newsletter subscriptions and for attending meetings. This will not work.

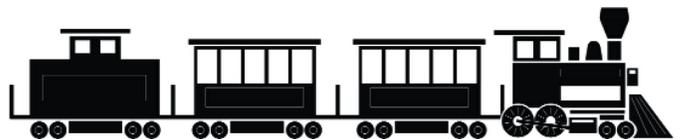
In the Rights of Members section, the LRP includes the right of communication. The means of communication used by divisions and regions are first, newsletters and other publications, and second, open meetings. Charging additional fees for these forms of communication violates those rights. The main reason for the dues charged by the regions and divisions is to offset the cost of communication with the membership.

Any changes in the dues structure to the NMRA that includes automatic membership at all levels must include payment of a portion of the dues to the region and division involved. The method proposed in the LRP would leave them unable to perform their functions in the NMRA.

My final concern is the lack of discussion about the LRP in the **Bulletin**. There has been no offer to hear differences of opinion about the LRP. The impact that the by-laws changes would have on the NMRA is too great to allow them to be simply pushed through. Before the by-laws changes are voted on, the NMRA should at the very least solicit and publish the opinions of each of the regions' presidents. The members have the right to hear all sides of the issue before it is brought to a ballot.

Thank you for reading this letter. I hope that it opens some minds.

John D. Fallon
Tidewater Division/MER
PO Box 10233
Virginia Beach, VA 23450



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MER N-Scale Special Car Order Form

Car	QUANTITY	MEMBER PRICE *	NON-MEMBER PRICE	TOTAL
#29290	_____	\$19.95	\$23.95	\$ _____
#29299	_____	\$19.95	\$23.95	\$ _____
TOTAL				\$ _____
SHIPPING: _____ CARS @ \$2.50 FOR FIRST CAR, \$1.50 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL				\$ _____
* My MER # IS _____		TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED		\$ _____



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*Life membership cost is based on your age.
 Send your Birth Date to the NMRA for a quotation.*

Region Dues: New Renewal _____
 1 year: \$8.00 2 years: \$16.00 \$ _____
Life membership cost is based on your age. Send your Birth Date to the MER for a quotation. Only NMRA Life Members qualify for MER Life Membership

MER Lapel Pin/Tie Tack @ \$6 each _____ \$ _____
 MER Cloth Patch @ \$3 each _____ \$ _____
 Donation _____ \$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

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 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip (+4) _____
 email _____
 NMRA # _____ Expire Date _____
 MER # _____ Expire Date _____
 Scale _____ Birth date _____
 Tel # _____

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