

The Local

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Number 1

Operations on the Easton And Potomac Part 2 – The Layout

Article and photographs by Keith Stillman

IN THIS PART of the series article I am going to take you through what factors influenced my design choice and the design process for the bench work and track plan.

After operating on Tom Sullivan's, Howard Heltman's and Mike Dodd's layouts, I knew the layout designs I had produced in the past were not going to cut the mustard. I went about designing a new one, which I broke down into three phases.

The first phase was to determine what I wanted in an operating session. I thought back on the operating sessions I had attended. Most of the layouts I had operated on to that point had been single-track main lines. I liked this and it had the advantage of reducing trackage. It also provided the requirement to meet other trains at designated points.

After operating on Mike Dodd's layout and using a timetable, I knew I wanted a layout that would support TT/TO (timetable/train order) operations. I also wanted to provide for operator and dispatcher positions.

I wanted a section of the layout to be "dark territory" where the train crew would be on their own with only the timetable and train orders to guide them. But I also like semaphores and wanted a section of the layout to be a high traffic area requiring the coordination of a dispatcher and an operator to

address the real time challenges and ensure smooth movement through this section. (Not to mention to see if the train crews would actually pay attention to the semaphores.)

I listed what I liked and what I disliked about the various layouts. I don't care how good the layout is, there will most likely be something you don't like or feel can be improved. I have several on mine already.

So I created the following list:

- Single track mainline
- TT/TO operation
- Traffic density to force meets
- An operator position
- A dispatcher position
- Variety in train makeup (not the same cars in the same trains every session)
- Interchanges in place of staging yards
- At least one yard with plenty of switching
- Passenger traffic

I already had the time period narrowed from 1890 to 1900. This would move as I started acquiring rolling stock and found the 1920's to be an acceptable compromise. I noted that there is not much turn-of-the-century stuff around these days. Trains would be short, less than 10 cars requiring passing sidings that take up less valuable real estate. Geographical location could wait until later, but it would be Virginia.

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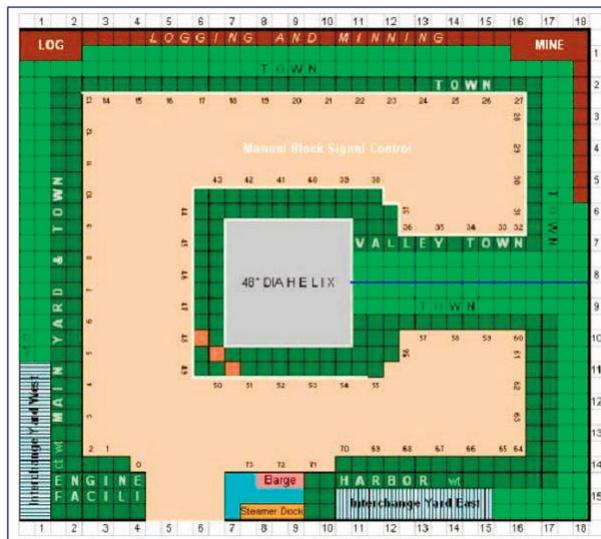


Figure 1: This is the last version of the rough benchwork design developed using Excel. The room is 18.5 x 16 feet. The run lengths are 92 feet to the interchange yard west, 70 feet to the interchange yard east and 73 feet to the steamer dock. The aisle width in the busiest area is 3.5 feet. This was later expanded to 4 feet. The mining line was not included in the track work design because there just was not enough space. Measurement for the benchwork in 3D Railroad were taken straight off this spreadsheet.

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

I trust our members and friends had a good Model Railroad Month last November followed by a wonderful holiday. It was a good time to share the season with family and fellow model railroaders. As I have said a number of times before, this old timer always associates that time of year with memories of trains around the Christmas trees and big train displays in department stores a half century ago.

The New Year again brings to mind statistics of what has happened during the past year. Our active membership declined about 2 percent since this time last year. We now stand at 2,120. The decline would have been larger except for the excellent progress with our Rail Pass subsidy program. At this writing, we have subsidized over 150 applications. 28 percent of those Rail Pass members have converted to regular membership, with another 28 percent still within their 6-month membership.

The number of members enjoying the printed and mailed version of this newsletter has increased a bit over the year to 47 percent with another 15 percent keeping posted on the Region's activities through the electronic version of our newsletter.

And speaking of statistics, I took another look at the ages of our membership. Of the 1,748 members who have registered their birth date with NMRA National and the Region, the average age is 63, up again by one year since last year's report. No surprise there!

Another little piece of statistical fun: We have the modeling scales registered for 717 members. The distribution looks pretty much like last year with 80 percent in HO scale, 10 percent in N scale, 7 percent in O scale, and the remaining 3 percent divided up between G, S and Z scales. (The scales have been simplified to base scales and only primary modeling scales have been tabulated.)

*I have to repeat my plea of several times: please check your **The Local** subscription termination dates before you send in subscription money to me or with your NMRA membership renewal.*

As we enter this New Year, get out all those stalled modeling projects and start enjoying your hobby of model railroading. 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.

Best wishes for the New Year of model railroading. 

The Local

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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/>

A Note from the President: Boundaries, Territory, and Location

By Roger L. Cason, MMR
President

MANY OF THE QUESTIONS we get on the MER Board of Directors concern boundaries, territory, and location as they relate to your membership. I want to review a few general principles. Then – via Q. & A. – let’s see how they might impact on your personal situation in NMRA, the MER, and your Division.

With the NMRA, you join the national organization, but you get a “package deal” of privileges, many of which apply principally at the regional and divisional level. Here are some general principles that apply below the national level, taken from national and regional Bylaws:

Each NMRA member shall be a member of the region, if one exists, and the division, if one exists, in which territory the member has an address of record.

As an NMRA member, you have the right to participate in all NMRA activities, including those administered through a region or division, but subject to user fees imposed on members (of the host organization).

Regional boundaries are established by the national organization, and are listed in the national Regulations (a.k.a. Bylaws).

When chartered, divisions in the MER are assigned boundaries by the MER Board of Directors.

This “package deal” approach is relatively new for NMRA, but is quite common in other hobby organizations – for example, United States Power Squadrons and the American Contract Bridge League - organizations to which I also belong.

Now, let’s look at some specifics via Q&A:

Q. I live in the territory in the XX Division, but it would be more convenient for me to participate in the meets of the neighboring YY Division. Can I do this?

A. Yes, as an NMRA member you have the right to participate in all NMRA activities.

Q. Will there be any fee?

A. The fee, if any, will be the same as the members of YY Division would pay.

Q. Would this be true even if the YY Division were in another region?

A. Yes

Q. Again in the case above, could I receive the newsletter from the YY Division?

A. Probably yes. Work this out with the appropriate people in the YY Division. There may be a nominal charge, particularly if you elect to receive a paper rather than an electronic newsletter.

Q. Can I be a member of more than one Division?

A. No. But you can attend meets in any Division.

Q. How else might I find out about events in another division?

A. We have asked divisions to send their calendar information to the MER Webmaster for posting on the MER website. In addition, you might contact the division superintendent directly (contact information is always on page 2 in **The Local**).

Q. I live in Pennsylvania, but spend two months a year in Florida. Can I be a member of a division in both locations?

A. No, your principal residence (in your case, Pennsylvania) is the one that counts. But, when you’re in Florida you can attend local division meets, and otherwise participate in the local division’s activities.

Q. Is everyone in the MER in a division?

A. No. The MER division boundaries are described in detail on the MER website. As you will see, there are a lot of locations (counties) that are not included within any division’s boundaries.

Q. For the individual member, are there any advantages to being in an area that is not within any division’s boundaries?

A. None that I can think of.

Q. Are division boundaries ever actually changed in the MER?

A. Yes. In practice, the process is pretty straightforward (see below). For example, the boundaries of the Philadelphia Division were recently changed to include New Castle County, DE (where I live). Before the change, New Castle County was not within the boundaries of any division.

Q. A group of us in the XX Division would like to change the divisional boundary, and become a part of the YY Division. Can this be done?

A. Yes. Per the MER Bylaws (Article X-8), you can start the process to change a boundary by writing a letter to the MER Secretary. (It would also be a good idea to send copies to the MER President and any Division Superintendents who might be involved or interested.) Your proposal will also be published here in **The Local**. Depending on the comments received and the nature of the request, the MER Board of Directors may poll the individuals in the area involved before voting on the proposal. (Current examples of proposed changes appear elsewhere in this issue of **The Local**.)

Q. What’s the smallest geographical unit that’s practical when specifying division boundaries?

A. Based on past experience, the smallest practical geographical unit is the county.

continued on page 4

A Note from the President continued from page 3

Q. Suppose a group of us want to start a new local division. Where do we begin?

A. Start by contacting the MER Secretary. He/she will send you copies of several guidance documents from the MER Executive Handbook. The process involves (among other things) a minimum number of people, someone to be in charge, and creation of a set of bylaws. Depending on the situation, a notice may need to be published here in **The Local**.

Operations on the E & P continued from page 1

The second phase, given the requirements defined in phase one, was to design the best bench work layout for the room. The key here was to keep the aisles wide and (since it was going to be two levels) towns staggered between upper and lower levels. I used Excel to create a six-inch grid (setting row and column heights to create squares) the size of the available room. See figure 1.

I played with various scenarios until I came up with one that would allow for the maximum run length, an acceptable number of staggered towns, and maximum aisle widths. This took about



Photo 1: I ran a sawsall around the wall and with the help of several friends shoved the wall back four feet and nailed it into place.

three month's elapsed time and resulted in the moving of one of the room's walls. See photo 1. Don't rush anything from this point on! A good plan here will make construction go smoothly and should result in obtaining your list of requirements. You may have to go back to the requirements list if the physical location cannot support them. But whatever you do, don't make compromises in aisles! You will need them.

Then I purchased some red painter's paper and cut it out to the size and location of the bench work and laid this on the floor of the room. See photo 2. This gave me a

good visual of the bench work and the aisles. If something doesn't look right here, change it. It is easier to change it on paper (and Excel) than in wood! I was satisfied with what I saw. So it was on to phase three.

The third phase was the purchase of CAD software to start the track design. This is critical. I used Abracadata's 3D Railroad but others are available. The software keeps you from cheating and makes sure what you design will fit. This type of program is easy to learn and use and it provides the ability to do what-if. What if I change the track arrangement in this town? Will it be better? I did this several times even after I had started laying track.

The third phase when on for about nine months. I started at the

Q. Will it matter if part of the territory we have in mind is covered by an existing division?

A. No, the process will be about the same. However, a favorable vote from the MER Board of Directors is more likely if the board of the existing division involved agrees with the action.

Q. So far, we've talked mainly about division boundaries. How about regional boundaries? Can they be changed?

A. Yes. That process is covered in the national Regulations (a.k.a. Bylaws) and is beyond the scope of this note. 📄

main yard in White Hall. This was the critical area, everything that moved on the layout during a session would move through this yard. It needed to be bullet proof. It needed to have enough storage and sorting tracks to handle the traffic. It needed enough arrival and departure tracks to keep the traffic moving. It needed an area for passenger equipment and this needed to be separate from the freight yard so arriving passenger trains would not impact freight work. It was going to have an engine terminal with turntable and roundhouse and this needed to be arranged so the engines could get to and from their trains no matter what was going on in the yard. This area would have the most complex track work and would thus require the most effort for design.

When I had a plan (on paper and in my mind) that I thought would work for White Hall, I walked through various trains arriving and leaving. I sorted freight and handled the arrival of passen-



Photo 2: Even with the benchwork started, the paper layout is still on the floor for a good visual aid.

gers. Once I was happy, I took the design to one of Tom Sullivan's operating sessions and asked for feedback. Some good comments were received and a few changes made. I think I had White Hall designed! In fact no changes would be made to White Hall from the design to the construction and it has been able to handle all situations presented to it during the thirty-nine plus operating sessions. Take your time and think it through. Don't move on until you are completely satisfied with your design of something this critical. It will payoff!

After getting what looked like an acceptable solution for White Hall, I started on the mainline. Using a minimum 24" radius curve, I laid out the mainline between the towns. As I got to a

town location I included the passing siding but no more at this time. When finished, I now had the main yard and the mainline with all of the various towns' passing sidings designed. But there was still no track in the towns.

Next, I went back to each town and designed the track for that town. My goal here was to keep each town from having the same track plan as any other town. I roughly laid out the trackage for each. Most were easy. I roughed in track for each and moved on to the next. I would come back and polish the design of each later. Moving on also allows you to stop thinking about the design in a particular town. When you come back to it, it looks fresh and you will probably see something you did the first time around you want to change. Keep this up (design, leave, come back and design some more) until you have all the town designs you are happy with.

The end-of-line towns required some additional thought. They would all have turntables and would need to allow for interchange switching and run around moves. Thorny Point would have the second largest yard and would require a considerable amount of time to design. Broadway would be fairly straightforward. However, it would also be directly over White Hall and thus needed to accommodate this unpleasant fact. Stanley would have the most limited space, not even enough for a switching lead for a run around track. I solved this problem by using the turntable as the

switch. I got that idea after riding the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and saw the same configuration at the end of the line in Frostburg, Maryland. I also wanted a small switch puzzle here. Something not too complicated, but enough to provide some fun.

Once I had all of the towns designed, I started walking trains through the track plan. I would pick the train up in White Hall and switch it in all of the other towns. If something didn't fell right, I changed it. When I completed a walk through and did not change anything, the track work was ready!

You can see the complete track plan on my website at www.easton-and-potomac.com/ep/eplayoutroom.html.

The next part in the series will discuss getting ready for the first session and the lessons I learned from it. I am always looking for people interested in model railroad operations. No experience is required. If you would like to sign up for an operating session or just learn more about operations on the Easton And Potomac, go to www.easton-and-potomac.com.

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

KEITH STILLMAN lives in the James River Division where he model HO Scale. 

2009 NMRA REGIONAL CONVENTIONS: Soak up some modeling and clinics from different areas!!!

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an overview of upcoming regional conventions through 2009. This list is as complete as I can get it by deadline time and I take no responsibility for incomplete information or moved links. ~S.K.

<u>DATES:</u>	<u>REGION:</u>	<u>CITY/STATE:</u>	<u>WEBSITE:</u>
April 15th-19th	Pacific Coast Region (PCR)	Fremont, CA	www.pcrnmra.org/conv2009/
April 17th-19th	Midwest Region (MWR)	Rockford, IL	www.rrvd-nmra.org/conventionflyer.html
April 17th-19th	Niagara Frontier (NFR)	Ontario, CN	www.nfr-nmra.org/Convention.htm
April 30th-May 3rd	Mid-Central Region (MCR)	Columbus, OH	http://mcr09convention.dwilke.org
May 21st-24th	Rocky Mountain Region (RMR)	Greeley, CO	www.2009-rmr-nmra.org
May 29th-31st	Thousand Lakes Region (TLR)	Hutchinson, MN	www.thousandlakesregion.org/pages/conventions.html
June 3rd-7th	Lone Star Region (LSR)	Irving, TX	www.trinityriverinterchange.com
June 11th-14th	Mid-Continent Region (MCoR)	Wichita, KS	www.mcor-nmra.org/MCoR_2009_Convention.html
June 12th-14th	Southeastern Region (SER)	Pensacola, FL	www.trainweb.org/pmrc/Convention/home.htm
July 5th-11th	North Central Region (NCR)	Hartford, CT	"The Hartford National" - http://hn2009.org/
September 2nd-6th	Pacific Southwest Region (PSR)	Las Vegas, NV	www.psrconvention.org/2009/index.html
September 17th-19th	Pacific Northwest Region (PNR)	Edmonton, AB	www.northernlights2009.ca
October 2nd-5th	Australian Region (AR)	Castle Hill, AU	www.nmra.org.au/convention09/convention09.html
October 15th-18th	Mid-Eastern Region (MER)	Hagerstown, MD	"The Western Maryland Transfer"--Website coming soon!
October 15th-18th	North Central Region (NCR)	Fort Wayne, IN	www.hoosierdiv3nmra.org/09/index.html
Oct. 31st-Nov. 2nd	British Region (BR)	Kegworth, UK	www.nmra-br.org.uk/convention.asp 

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), or Roger L. Cason, MER President (1125 Grinnell Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803-5125, 302-478-2550, 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

NMRA Presidential Candidate Statements

EDITOR'S NOTE: As is the case with other candidate statements in the MER, each NMRA Presidential candidate was limited to 200 words. A longer statement will be included with the ballot in the February **Scale Rails** issue.

By Eric Dervinis and Ray deBlieck

Hello Most Enthusiastic Region!

One of our very own, Eric Dervinis of Wayne, PA is running for NMRA President. Eric was MER Secretary 1996-2000 and MER Trustee (Director) 2000 – 2004. On the same ballot running for Vice President is Ray deBlieck, PCR Trustee/Western District Director (2001-2007) — the team that is running to speed implementation of the Long Range Plan.

Eric and Ray say: We were both members of the committee that created the Long Range Plan. We congratulate the board and officers for the progress so far. Now is the time to kick change into high gear. Let's hasten the use of technology throughout the NMRA. That translates into online membership renewals, real time convention registration including online tour selection and hotel registration, just to name a few. We are committed to frugal spending/balanced budgets.

We want to build stronger relationships with the regions, divisions and SIGs. Those groups deliver the most benefits for the least cost — the NMRA can borrow their best practices.

The ballot will be in the February 2008 **Scale Rails**. Vote for the team, Eric Dervinis and Ray deBlieck. For more information about our platform go to www.ericandray.org. 

Continuing On A Positive Path

By Mike Brestel

Not that long ago, the NMRA was in an extremely perilous financial position. Through the efforts of an outstanding team of volunteers and employees, including Allen Pollock, John Roberts, and me as the executive leadership team, we have gradually worked our way out of a huge financial hole.

Just as we were finally on an even keel, events affecting the national and international economy have negated some of our progress. As a response, we have already made some tough decisions about what must be done to cut back while continuing to fulfill our mission.

I am hoping to stay in office to see these changes through, and to help position the NMRA for leaner years ahead. At my side is one of the most experienced leaders we can call upon, a man of proven executive ability who, like me, has a solid grounding in the business world.

When times are good, leadership is easy. When times have been, are, and certainly will continue to be rather challenging, leadership becomes more difficult. I hope you feel that the management team of the NMRA has earned your trust and support for the next three years, and I solicit your vote. 

Proposed Boundary Changes

By Roger L. Cason, MMR
MER President

The MER Board has received two proposals for changes in Division boundaries. If you have any comments (pro or con), please communicate them to Bill Roman, MER Secretary, whose contact information is on page 2.

1) Move Clinton County, PA to the Mid-Central Region.

Comment: Clinton County is on the boundary between the MER and the MCR. Two NMRA members live in Clinton County. One is strongly in favor of the move and the other has no objection. Clinton County is now in the MER's Susquehanna Division. The Superintendent of that division has given his approval to the proposed move.

2) Expand the Susquehanna Division to include Baltimore City, and Harford, Carroll, and Baltimore Counties.

Comment: The area involved was part of the now-defunct Mt. Clare Division, which was centered in the Baltimore area. In 2007, Howard County, to the south of Baltimore, was added to the Potomac Division. This county was also part of the Mt. Clare Division. If NMRA members in the Baltimore area want to re-start a division of their own in the future, they are free to do so. Information on creating a division anywhere in the MER can be obtained from Bill Roman, the MER Secretary. 

Potomac Junction Convention Contest Report

By Martin Brechbiel, MER General Contest Chairman
Photographs by Steve Kindig and Martin Brechbiel



A GREAT CONTEST ROOM at the Potomac Junction 2008 Convention! Our host, the Potomac Division really did an outstanding job — thanks to Bob Minnis, Bill Day and the entire convention staff for a fun convention and for making our contest experience almost painless and less stressful by providing us plenty of tables, a spacious room, a more than adequately lit “room with a view”, and our Volunteers.

Thanks also to Dick Landt and Roger Ossman, our Model Contest and Photo Chairmen for helping to administrate the photo, arts and crafts and favorite train contests.

A special Thanks also to those who judged the Model Contest: Bob Charles, Howard Garner, Chuck Hladik, John Janosko, Charlie Flichman, John Johnson, Noll Horan, Jack Dziadul, Dave Chance, Horace Oliver, Dennis Vaccaro, and Fred Willis. We also want to take note and thank our Apprentice Judges for their dedication and investment of their time — Stephen Wood and John Bell. We need more apprentices in Hagerstown in 2009!! We also want to thank John Johnson for his continual support of the contests — ordering the plaques & ribbons, and affixing them to the bases.

We had an excellent turnout for the Model Contest. There were 45 models in the judged contest! From that number, 16 received Merit Awards. There was at least one model in every category except surprisingly Steam and Diesel! Let's get on those 2 categories for Hagerstown in 2009!!

SPECIAL AWARDS

The MER has always prided itself on the Special Awards associated with the judged model contest. Most, but not all of these awards were in fact given out at the awards ceremony.

Clyde Gerald Kit-Bash Award: The best kit bashed model in the model contest.

Ken Hamilton for his 1/2" scale mack-powered hopper



A 1/2" scale Mack-Powered Hopper by Ken Hamilton, New Jersey Division – Winner of Clyde Gerald Kit-Bash and Blue Lantern awards

The Blue Lantern Award: Sponsored by the Narrow Gauge Car Shop and given to the model that best represents branch line or private line equipment or facility with no more than 40 percent commercial parts.

Ken Hamilton for his 1/2" scale mack-powered hopper

The Philadelphia New Modeler Award: Given to the first-time entrant in the model contest with the highest point score. (A cash prize as well as a plaque from the Philadelphia Division!)

Dave Emery for his Russell Snowplow



A Russell snowplow by Dave Emery, Potomac Division – Winner of the Philadelphia New Modeler award

The Marv Kershner Award: Sponsored by the South Mountain Division and given for outstanding creativity in modeling.

Ken Hamilton for his Rainbow Motel



The Rainbow Motel by Ken Hamilton, New Jersey Division – Winner of the Marv Kershner awards

Pride of Dixie Award: Sponsored by the James River Division and given this year for a winning (judged) model in the category of “Roadside Vendor”

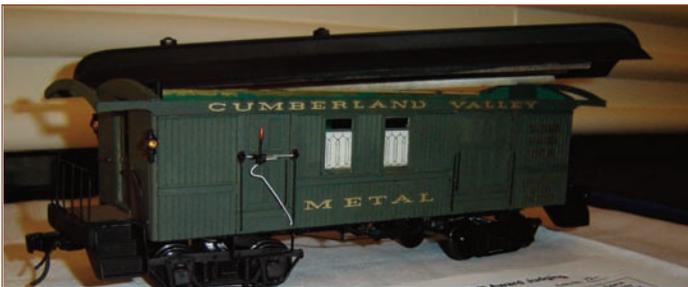
Martin Brechbiel for his Peachy's Produce



Peachy's Produce
by Martin Brechbiel,
Potomac Division
–Winner of the
Pride of Dixie
award

Favorite Train: chosen by popular vote.
Roger Cason for his "I Love Open Loads" Train

The Chairman's Award: given to his favorite truss-rod passenger car
Martin Brechbiel for his CVRR RPO "Metal"



A CVRR RPO "Metal" car by Martin Brechbiel, Potomac Division – Winner of The Chairman's award

The President's Award: given for a ventilated car
Martin Brechbiel for his B&O Fruit Car



A B&O Fruit car by Martin Brechbiel, Potomac Division – Winner of The President's award



Best-in-Show:
Ken Hamilton for his
Engine Shop & Garage

Engine Shop and Garage
by Ken Hamilton, New Jersey Division – Winner of The Best-in-Show award

MODEL CONTEST WINNERS

Model Contest Chair, Martin Brechbiel, wishes to thank and congratulate all those modelers who entered the judged model contest.

Freight Cars:

- *1st – John Johnson – PRRH21d Covered Hopper
- 2nd – Martin Brechbiel – CG&W Stock Trailer
- 3rd – Martin Brechbiel – On5 TVRR Boxcar #33



PRRH21d Covered Hopper by John Johnson, Tidewater Division – Winner 1st place Freight Cars.

Non-Revenue Cars:

- *1st – Ken Hamilton – 1/2" Scale Mack-Powered Hopper
- *2nd – Ken Hamilton – 1/2" Scale Tractor Locomotive
- *2nd – Martin Brechbiel – CVRR Saw Car
- 3rd – Martin Brechbiel – CVRR Scrap Metal Car



CVR Saw car by Martin Brechbiel, Potomac Division – Winner 2nd place Non-Revenue Cars.

Caboose:

- 1st – James Murphy – New Haven Caboose C-510



New Haven Caboose C-510 by James Murphy, Carolina Piedmont Division – Winner 1st place Caboose.

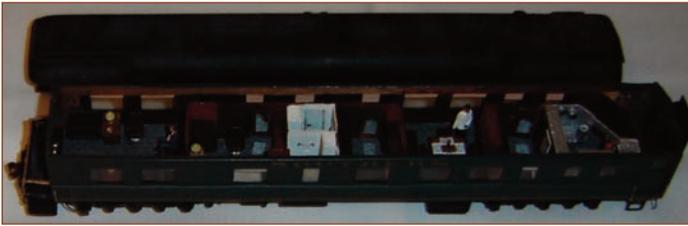
Passenger Cars:

- *1st – J.L. (Larry) Lee – Southern Railway (CSG) Office Car Blue Ridge
- *2nd – Martin Brechbiel – CVRR RPO "Metal"
- 3rd – James Murphy – Truss Rod BSLRR Passenger Car

Traction:

- 1st – Martin Brechbiel – CG&W#9 Work Platform Car
- 2nd – Horace Oliver – Freight Motor – Shenandoah Traction #27

continued on page 10



Southern Railway (CSG) Office Car Blue Ridge by Larry Lee, Potomac Division – Winner 1st place “Passenger Cars”.



CG&W#9 Work Platform Car by Martin Brechbiel, Potomac Division – Winner 1st place “Traction”.



Freight Motor-Shenandoah Traction #27 by Horace Oliver, Potomac Division – Winner 2nd place “Traction”.

Structures On-Line:

- *1st – Bill Day – Ogle Coaling Tower
- *2nd – Bill Day – Fairbanks-Morse Coaling Tower
- *3rd – Chuck Davis– CNJ Station, Wilks Barre, PA
- *3rd – Robert Beecher – Combination False Frame Bent & Deck Truss Trestle



Ogle Coaling Tower by Bill Day, Potomac Division – Winner 1st place “Structures On-Line”.



CNJ Station - Wilks Barre, PA by Chuck Davis, Tidewater Division – Winner 3rd place “Structures On-Line”.



A Combination False Frame Bent & Deck Truss Trestle by Robert Beecher, South Mountain Division – Winner 3rd place “Structures On-Line”.



Structures Off-Line:

- *1st – Bob Minnis – Hay Barn
- 2nd – Joseph Lofland – Band Shell
- 3rd – Stephen Wood – Small Garage

A Hay Barn by Bob Minnis, Potomac Division – Winner 1st place “Structures Off-Line”.



A Band Shell by Joseph Lofland, Philadelphia Division – Winner 2nd place “Structures Off-Line”.

Displays On-Line:

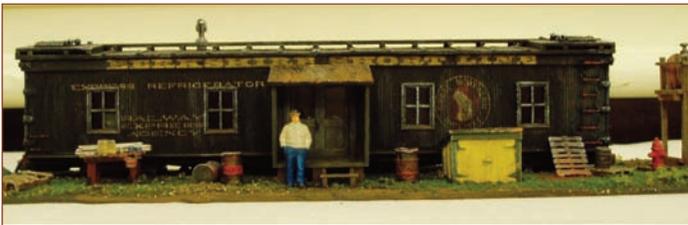
- *1st – Ken Hamilton – HO Engine Shop & Garage
- *2nd – James Murphy – Shad Cannery Structure (Dock 007 & Bait Shop)
- 3rd – James Murphy – Berkshire Shortline Yard Office



**A Small Garage by Stephen Wood, Carolina Piedmont Division
– Winner 3rd place “Structures Off-Line”.**



**The Shad Cannery Structure (Dock 007 & Bait Shop
by James Murphy, Carolina Piedmont Division
– Winner 2nd place “Display On-Line”.**



**The Berkshire Shortline Yard Office
by James Murphy, Carolina Piedmont Division
– Winner 3rd place “Display On-Line”.**

Displays Off-Line:

1st – Martin Brechbiel – Peachy’s Produce

*Denotes AP Merit Award—scoring a minimum of 87.5 points.

The following models entered in the model contest also won AP merit awards:

- James Murphy – Brendan Ice Co. Platform*
- Chuck Davis – LV Gate Tower*
- Ken Hamilton – 1/2” Scale Rainbow Motel*

PHOTO CONTEST: Roger Ossman, our Photo Contest Chairman and I were pleased to see a number of quality entries.

Model:

- 1st John Johnson – M1 Near Driftwood*
- 2nd John Johnson – FA at Driftwood*
- 3rd John Johnson – M1 Westbound*

Prototype: Steam:

- 1st Roger Cason – Wilmington & Western No. 98*
- 2nd Roger Cason – Wilmington & Western No.3*
- 3rd Roger Cason – Wilmington & Western*

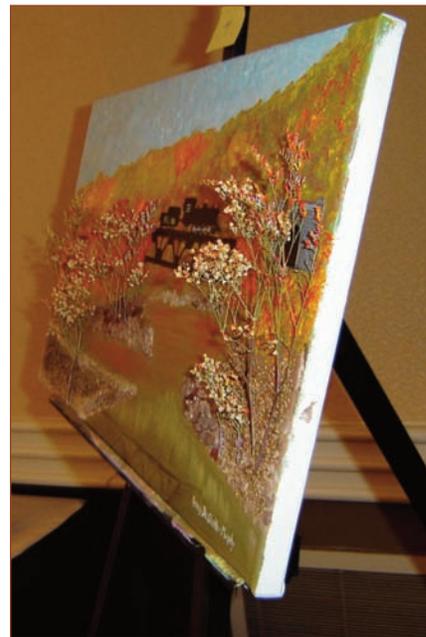
Prototype: Non-Steam:

- 1st Roger Cason – Three Curved Tracks near Galitzen*
- 2nd Roger Cason – Lighting the Way*
- 3rd Roger Cason – Coal and More Coal*

Best in Show:

Roger Cason – Wilmington & Western No.3

ARTS & CRAFTS CONTEST: We were all delighted to see the one well-crafted entry for the Arts & Crafts contest – a very interesting 3 dimensional painting with applied details.



Rail:

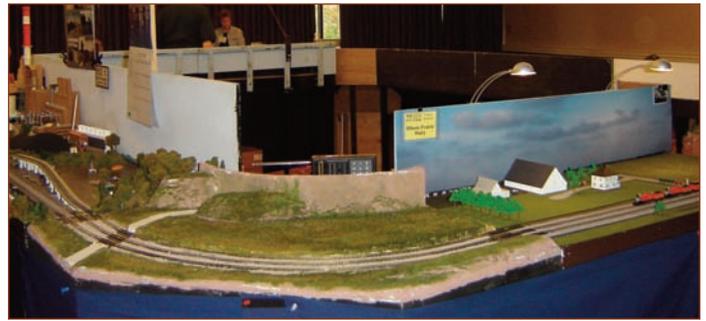
- 1st Nancy DeGhetto-Murphy – To the Hoosic Tunnel and Beyond*

**“To the Hoosic Tunnel and Beyond” by Nancy DeGhetto-Murphy
– Winner 1st place “Rail”.**

If you have any question about NMRA or MER contest rules and regulations, NMRA judging of models, contest questions of any kind, complaints, suggestions, or whatever you might want to talk about, please contact me at martinwb@verizon.net.

One final note, although I do enter models into the Contests in the Contest Room it should be known that I do not participate in judging of any of the entries. Everyone that entered the outstanding group of models this year has a good reason to be proud of their efforts. I hope to see both this number and quality in the Contest Room in Hagerstown, MD in 2009! See you there! 🏠

continued on page 12



Special Thanks to NVNTRAK for displaying their modules during the convention. For more information on NVNTRAK and their upcoming schedule visit nvntrak.org.

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 #5:

- a. N T T I A O S
- b. K C R A T
- c. T N I S O P
- d. R E T T T O L E
- e. S K M E O

Puzzle #6:

- a. L I A R S
- b. A G G E U
- c. E G F A L N
- d. R A T L I E N M
- e. H N B C R A

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

Answer to puzzle #5:

- e. Smoke
- d. Throttle
- c. Piston
- b. Track
- a. Station

Answer to puzzle #6:

- a. Rails
- b. Gauge
- c. Flange
- d. Terminal
- e. Branch

Custom Layout Building

By Lance Mindheim

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Attention all MER members

The MER has a NEW and UPDATED website! The new website is <http://mer.nmra.org/>. The current website will redirect you.

Along with the Callboard items seen here in **The Local**, the Webmaster is looking for events to post on the new calendar. Submit events for **The Local** Callboard to Editor - Steve Kindig at stevespressrr@yahoo.com AND to the Webmaster Martin Oakes at martinoakes@charter.net. For more contact information see page 2.

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

By Jane Clarke



THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION will be hosting the 2009 MER convention! The location will be the Plaza Hotel in Hagerstown, MD (www.plazahotelhagerstown.com). We plan to have an exciting slate of layout open houses, clinics, prototype tours, contests, non-rail activities as well as the traditional auction, company store, and banquet. Save the date and check here for additional information and registration forms as they become available.

Although the convention will be centered in western Maryland with many tours into south central Pennsylvania and West Virginia, please consider opening your railroad for at least a few hours. Layouts on the outskirts of the convention area will be needed for “going home” tours. Don’t worry if your layout is not

complete; very few layouts are. People are interested in seeing works in progress and they might want to see how you built your bench work. Committing to an open house is also a great incentive for working on your railroad.

If you are interested in holding a clinic, we welcome you to do so. They can be hands-on workshops, PowerPoint or slide presentations, or multi-media presentations. They can be on anything from: modeling, prototype railroads, your own model railroad, a recent railfan trip – you name it!

Please contact me at (301) 253-4913 or jane.clarke@bioreliance.com or if you have any questions. See you next October if not sooner! 

Western Maryland Transfer 2009: Special Contest Awards

By Martin Brechbiel
MER General Contest Chairman

THE WESTERN MARYLAND TRANSFER 2009, the MER 2009 convention, October 15th through 18th, in addition to the range of the standard Contest Room awards and Categories will feature the following Special Awards:

THE BEST OF SHOW AWARD is given to the model that scores the highest point total in the judged model contest.

THE PRESIDENT’S AWARD for 2009 will be chosen by MER President Cason and given for “the most interesting scratch built open load, in an open hopper car, gondola, or on a flat car” with all of the appropriate and realistic blocking and tie downs that load would require.

THE PRIDE OF DIXIE AWARD is sponsored by the James River Division, awarded in 2009 will be presented to the winning (Judged) model in the category of “Ventilated boxcar”. [This is defined as a ventilated boxcar like the ACL fruit and produce cars generally described as “Watermelon Cars”].

THE CLYDE GERALD AWARD is sponsored by the MER and named for the late Clyde Gerald, former MER Business Manager and long time modeler. It is awarded to the kitbashed model which scores highest in the judged model contest.

THE BLUE LANTERN AWARD is privately sponsored and chosen by long time MER modeler Terry Nesbit and his Narrow Gauge Car Shop. The Blue Lantern is given to a model best representing branch or private line equipment or facilities, which contain no more than forty percent commercial parts. The prize—a genuine railroad lantern—is presented to the winner by Mr. Nesbit.

THE PHILADELPHIA DIVISION MODELER AWARD rewards excellence in model building by first time entrants in an NMRA sponsored judged model contest. The highest score achieved by a new modeler in the contest is worth not only a plaque, but a cash prize of twenty five dollars!

THE MER NARROW GAUGE AWARD is also privately sponsored by a group of narrow gauge modelers, and encourages building models depicting aspects of narrow gauge railroading. The narrow gauge model that scores highest in the model contest is presented a handcrafted plaque.

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.

THE MA AND PA MODELING AWARD is sponsored by the Ma & Pa Society. The winner is a Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad model, which scores highest in the judged model contest.

THE FAVORITE TRAIN AWARD, sponsored by the Tidewater Division, is a popular vote award and will be included on the Popular Vote ballot. Yes, members who can find their way to the contest room get to choose this one!

These special awards, and the 1st through 3rd place awards for all of the categories in the Model, Photo and Arts and Crafts contest, will be presented by the contest staff at the convention banquet on Saturday evening.

Additionally, in my continuing role as MER General Contest Chairman I’d like to encourage everyone to consider bringing a model to enter into the various NMRA contest categories. My modeling skills continue to improve from participating in the AP program and Contest room, I’ve found it to be very educational, and of considerable general value. I feel this to be a valuable part of the MER and the NMRA, and I also know that the MER has a great number of truly outstanding modelers out there. So, bring your models to the contest room this fall in Hagerstown, Maryland! If you have any questions, contact me martinwb@verizon.net. 

SUPPORT YOUR NMRA REGION AND PURCHASE THESE GREAT PRODUCTS FROM MER

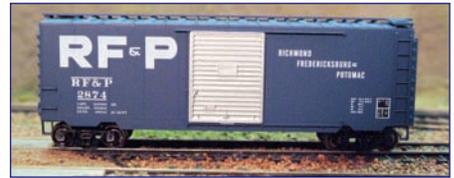
COURTESY OF THE FREIGHT YARD



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.



CLINT HYDE

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



CLINT HYDE

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#29299	_____	NEW! \$10.00	NEW! \$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	_____	NEW! \$6.00	NEW! \$9.00	\$_____
#2874	_____	NEW! \$6.00	NEW! \$9.00	\$_____
Shipping: \$2.00 for each car (not for each order)				\$_____

* Please list your MER or NMRA Membership # _____

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Small Freight Station	_____	\$25.00 postpaid	\$_____

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CALLBOARD

Coming Events

January 1st, 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th and February 8th. Baltimore Society of Model Engineers Open House. O & HO Scale steam, diesel, and trolley action over two 12 x 65 foot layouts. The 2,500 sq. foot display includes 34 authentic railroad heralds, historical publicity photos, and a K-4 whistle, bell, and headlamp. Open 1 PM till 5 PM each day. Admission is a suggested \$5 per person or \$10 per family donation. For more information visit www.modelengineers.com or call (410) 837-2763 and leave a message.

January 3rd and 4th. World's Greatest Hobby Show at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center located at 100 Station Avenue in Oaks, PA. 10 AM till 6 PM on Saturday; 10 AM till 5 PM on Sunday. Adults: \$10; kids 16 and under are free (admission is good for both days). For more information and directions visit www.wghshow.com/showinfo/phl/phl.htm.

January 3rd and 4th. Greenburg's Train and Toy Show at the Garden State Expo Center located at 50 Atrium Drive in Somerset, NJ. 10 AM till 4 PM both days. Cost: \$7 for Adults; kids 12 and under are free (admission is good for both days). For more information and directions visit www.greenbergshows.com.

January 3rd and 4th. 10th and 11th. Cheltenham Model Railroad Club Open House. 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge), adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA 19027. Noon till 4 PM. Admission free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information: call: (215) 635-9747 or visit www.cheltenhammrr.org. SNOW DATES are January 17th and 18th.

January 10th and 11th. Greenburg's Train and Toy Show at the York Expo Center located at 334 Carlisle Avenue in York, PA. 10 AM till 4 PM both days. Cost: \$7 for Adults; kids 12 and under are free (admission is good for both days). For more information and directions visit www.greenbergshows.com.

January 17th. New Jersey Divisional Meet held at Haddon Twp. High School located at 406 Memorial Ave in Westmont, NJ. Clinics from 9 AM till Noon. Layout tours from 1 PM till 4 PM. Contact Greg Shindledecker at (610) 873-3595 or greg@shindledecker.com.

January 25th. Potomac Division layout tour in Damascus, MD. Noon till 6 PM. Contact layout coordinator: Tom Brodrick at (301) 253-0558 or e-mail t.brodbrod@comcast.net.

January 31st. James River Division Meet held at Church of the Redeemer located at 2541 Winterfield Road in Midlothian, VA. Registration begins at 9:30 AM; Clinics and meeting at 10 AM. Contact Robert Alvis at (804) 329-4060 or e-mail rwalvis@aol.com.

January 31st and February 1st. Great Scale Model Train Show at the Maryland State Fairgrounds located at 2200 York Rd in Timonium, MD. 9 AM till 4 PM on Saturday; 10 AM till 4 PM on Sunday. Cost: \$9 for adults; kids 15 and under are free (admission is good for both days). For more information and directions visit www.gsmts.com.

February 28th and March 1st. Greenburg's Train and Toy Show at the Virginia Beach Convention Center located at 1000 19th St in Virginia Beach, VA. 10 AM till 4 PM both days. Cost: \$7 for Adults; kids 12 and under are free (admission is good for both days). For more information and directions visit: www.greenbergshows.com. 

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

Martin Brechbiel – *Association Volunteer*

Division 3 – Philadelphia

Eric Dervinis – *Model Railroad Author*

Earl T. Hackett, Jr. – *Engineer - Civil*

Earl T. Hackett, Jr. – *Engineer - Electrical*

Division 4 – Tidewater

Chuck Davis – *Engineer - Civil*

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

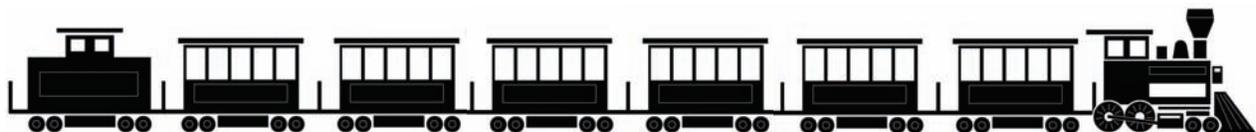
James Allen – *Engineer - Electrical*

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Robert Rousseau – *Model Railroad Author*

Gene W. Sing – *Chief Dispatcher*

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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**Attention all
 MER Members**

There are three open Director positions scheduled for election this year. If you are interested in running submit your name, a photograph and 200-word candidate statement by April 15th to:

John Johnson
 22398 Scojo Drive
 Franklin, VA 23851-2891
 Phone: (757) 562-5917 

**NEEDED:
 Assistant Model Contest
 Manager for the MER**

Convention attendance, computer wizardry, keen eye and modeling skills a must.

Humor, scale blindness, patience, fairness and impartiality will take you to the top!

Please contact Roger Cason,
rogercason@juno.com

or
 Martin Brechbiel,
martinwb@verizon.net 