

# The Local

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## Rail-OPS! Carolina Southern Style

*Article and photographs by Steven P August  
Carolina Southern Division Superintendent/MER Photographer/Director*

**A**BOUT A YEAR AGO, while at an operating session the idea came up about another group that was having an operating session weekend. The group that was hosting was quite a distance away but it gave the idea to another division member who said we should come up with one ourselves. Although, it was not called Carolina Southern Rail-OPS at the time, this is what it became.

We started out by just a few of us talking about how things would work? What did we need? How did we go about it? Who would operate or have open houses? Let's just say at that time there were more questions than answers. But with that said we started out by coming up with a list of railroads and model railroaders in the area and sent letters, (yes, snail mail) to determine if there was any interest in doing such an event. We sent 19 letters out and received a response from nearly everyone, not all positive, but a response nonetheless.

The first thing we did after the letters was get all the layout owners together to discuss what we were trying to do. Another NMRA member, who was really into railroad operations brought a document out that helped ask even more questions but answered a lot of other questions. During that first meeting we had twelve layouts represented, and by the end of meeting nine of those layout owners decided to take the plunge with us and help sponsor the weekend.

At this point, we were about nine months away from the Ops Weekend. We decided to have another meeting to discuss what was going to be needed to be done to each layout in order to have operations. We laid the ground work of what operations was, how they should work, even all the way down to using car card system or train order system.



**David Ward's D B & W Railway.**

Another part of this weekend had to do with being able to send out information sheets to prospective operators. We were able to come up with a short one page information sheet about each railroad that contained a short bio about the railroad, how many operators would be needed, and a couple pictures of each layout. The layouts we had ranged from very small to very large; all of them at different degrees of readiness for operations.

**David Ward's Denver, Boulder & Western Railway** is a modern HO Scale layout running along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Both BNSF and Union Pacific use this joint line pulling heavy coal, sulfur and ore trains between Denver and Pueblo, Colorado.

The goal of this railroad is to have dispatched operations based on BNSF / UP prototypical operation on a very challenging railroad. The railroad has double mainline operation, which allows 30-car trains to proceed over the line.

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# The Local

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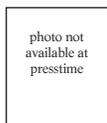
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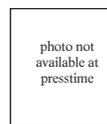
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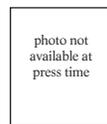
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The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. Editors will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should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

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

# Some Notes from the President

By Roger L. Cason, MMR  
MER President

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Many thanks to the New Jersey Division and the Carolina Piedmont Division for volunteering to host the 2010 and 2011 MER conventions. I hope to see you there:

- 2010 – Princeton NJ, 9/30/10 – 10/3/10
- 2011 – Raleigh NC area, probably 10/27/11 – 10/30/11

Looking beyond 2011, I hope other Divisions will seriously consider hosting an MER convention. The question is not “Will we do it?” The question should be “When will we do it?” It’s a lot of work, but very rewarding. You don’t have to “do it all” – many of the functions are performed by people supplied by the region (for example, contests, auction, and registration). Importantly, if you are the convention host, NMRA members in your area can attend at minimum cost. And, what better way to show off the fine layouts in your area?

## DIVISION AND REGION BOUNDARIES

For administrative and membership, purposes, NMRA is divided into Regions, each with defined geographical boundaries. Similarly, our Region contains Divisions, each with defined geographical boundaries (usually county by county). However, these boundaries are not “cast in stone”, and there are processes for changing boundaries. For example:

- A new Division (the Chesapeake Division) was recently created in the Baltimore area.
- Chester, Lancaster, and York Counties in South Carolina were recently moved from the SER to the MER. These counties are near Charlotte NC, which effectively is the “center of gravity” of our Carolina Southern Division.
- Some years ago, New Castle County Delaware was added to the Philadelphia Division. Formerly, that county had been in no Division. (FYI, almost 10 percent of NMRA members in the MER live in a location that is not within the boundaries of any Division.)

### Two points to remember:

- Any NMRA member may attend any national, regional, or divisional event.

- If you have a boundary question or suggestion, feel free to give me a call to discuss the preferred path forward.

## AN AP REMINDER

People occasionally ask me why they should participate, and/or pursue their MMR. My answers include: acquire new knowledge, learn new skills, and stretch yourself. The requirements are significant, but not insurmountable. In some cases, the main requirement is to keep track of what you’re doing anyway (for example, Volunteer or Chief Dispatcher). In some cases, the AP requirements may influence your detailed path forward (for example, Civil Engineer or Scenery if you’re designing a layout). And a few will push you to do something you wouldn’t have otherwise done. That was certainly the case, for me, with Carbuilder – particularly the scratch building requirement. But I got through it even though I’m not all that good at “building stuff”. The moral of the story: if I can do it, you can do it!

Closely associated with AP: contests (particularly model contests) held at Regional and National conventions. Contest rules can be found on the applicable websites.

## NATIONAL NEWS MISCELLANY

- Registrations have already been received for the 2010 National convention from eleven different countries.
- A recent survey was directed at people who didn’t renew their NMRA membership. A frequently-cited reason: “No one from my local Division or Region ever contacted me.”

## COMPUTERS – ARRGGG!! (AGAIN)

As this note is being written, I am in the middle of yet another series of problems with my e-mail (Juno). Help is supposed to be on the way, but .... In the course of dealing with these problems, I could easily have let something slip through the cracks. So, if I seem to have left undone something I ought to have done, please let me know (to be safe, via phone or USPS letter). I’m particularly concerned that I may have “left someone out of the loop” on some issue of direct interest to them. 

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Rail Ops! Carolina Southern Style continued from page 1

**The Knight Bros. & Dad Railroad** is modeled on the Norfolk Southern’s “S LINE” running from Spencer, NC to Asheville, NC. This HO layout is on three levels in a 24 x 24 ft garage. It is set in the “modern era” and features a variety of mixed freight, wood chip and coal unit trains running between Tennessee and the Linwood Yard (both represented in storage yards) over the “S Line.”

**The K K & L Railroad** is a local mixed freight and passenger railroad that supports operations of the Chicago Great Western and

the Chicago and North Western Railroads. It is set in the Midwestern United States during the late 1950s – 1970s. This is a large layout on two levels, with more than 1,000 feet of track in a large basement. Parts of the layout are still under construction, but it is still a very exciting layout. One major feature of the layout is a four-level, double track helix nicely disguised behind a large mountain. There are a variety of industries and passenger stations on the layout.

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# Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR  
MER Business Manager

BY THE TIME you read this column, the NMRA's 75th Anniversary convention in Milwaukee will be over and many of us will just have great memories. It was nice that the "anniversary celebration" was held in a place much recognized as the birthplace of the NMRA, and in fact much of model railroading activities. This old timer remembers those little, almost pamphlet sized **Model Railroader** magazines published by Al Kalmbach and the early kits from the Walthers family organization. (I still proudly display an O-Scale passenger car I built from a Walthers kit back in those days.) I trust both old timers and newbies have enjoyed the NMRA 75 convention.

Now it is time for you to plan for our Region's fall convention. **Princeton Junction 2010** promises to be another fun event. Bob Clegg and his New Jersey Division crew are busy setting up for

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**Rail Ops! Carolina Southern Style** continued from page 3

**The Green Meadows Railway** is not modeled on anything. It is a fictitious railway that has a little bit of everything. It runs from North Platte, NE to St. Louis, MO. The HO scale layout is built on two levels in a small one car garage. It is set in the "transitional era"



**John Cox and Jack Dziadul operate at the K B & D Railroad.**

and features a variety of mixed freight and unit trains running between Missouri and Nebraska. Both the Bailey and Green Meadows Yards are represented as storage yards on the second level.

**The P & W Railroad** is a large freelance layout, which closely follows the Clinchfield Railroad from terminus towns of Huntington, West Virginia to Charlotte, North Carolina. It is a transition era with a combination of Steam and Diesel Locomotives and period cars. The layout is housed in two interconnected facilities, a building and a trailer. The alignment is a point to point, with staging yards on

our enjoyment in September 30th – October 3rd. Be sure to get your reservations established. Details are contained elsewhere in this issue of **The Local**.

Those of you who followed along in my columns of the last few **Locals** know that my wife and I had planned a move from a town home to a high-rise condo. Well that has now taken place and we are settling in to our new digs. My "closet" workshop is not yet fully established and only plans have been sketched out for my mini-shelf traction layout but most of the household boxes have been unpacked and we are getting accustomed to our new environment. Needless to say my prototype train watching is getting into full gear. The NS mainline through Charlotte is only a couple blocks away and a view from our high vantage point is terrific. The array of 150 car – four-diesel unit trains and single diesel unit local drags runs by all day and night. The NS yard in Charlotte is also within viewing distance but I'll have to get a good telescope to monitor the action there.

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. 📧

each end. These yards are used by through freights and through passenger trains and coal operations. Communications are handled through a telephone system located at each yard and most stations.

**The Piney Fork Branch** is part of the Cleveland Division of the New York Central Railroad. The HO Scale layout occupies approximately 420 square feet of large basement built on three levels. The single track stretches about 260' between Minerva and Dillonvale, OH. Along the way passing by two yards located in Piney Fork and St. Clairsville.

**The Southern Exchange Railroad** is setup for operations in the early eighties. This HO Scale layout operates five freight yards,



**Neal Anderson's K K & L Railroad.**

four supporting the movement of goods, while the fifth is a maintenance/utility yard. There are four fully operational passenger sta-



**Jack Parker's Piedmont & Western Railroad.**

tions on the layout also. Engineers are responsible for switching in and out the cars for their own trains. This layout is primarily Norfolk Southern during the early days of the merger.

There were many months of preparation, meetings, and lots of time spent on many railroads. All the layout owners worked very hard to make their railroads available and to make this event the great success that it was.

We started with nine HO scale layouts. A couple of the layouts dropped for personal reasons which left 7 layouts and 51 slots available for operations. All but one of these layouts belonged to individual owners; the other belonged to a club.



**Bob Johnson dispatches at the NYC Piney Fork Branch.**

We had a total of eight sessions over the entire weekend and we stopped long enough on Saturday evening to have some great Carolina Style Bar-B-Q and hear a great presentation on the operations history of the Lawndale and Shelby Railroad which was a narrow gauge railroad that ran from 1843 to 1943 in North Carolina.

Just about everyone who signed up for the weekend to operate ran most of the three days with only a few operating on Saturday and Sunday and only one person operating just Friday due to a previous commitment. Throughout all the planning sessions and

meetings we were able to sign-up eight new NMRA members. Many of those who operated came primarily from the Mid-Eastern and Southeastern Regions of the NMRA.

In order to get ready for the weekend all these layouts had many operations sessions to do many hours of testing. Problems were found, repaired and tested again. Many of layouts ran with car card systems and some ran with TT & TO. Following each session, a survey form was available for the operators to fill out in order to gauge what the reactions were. Most of the surveys were very positive with many asking when next year's session would be held. Overall, the weekend was a great success and we

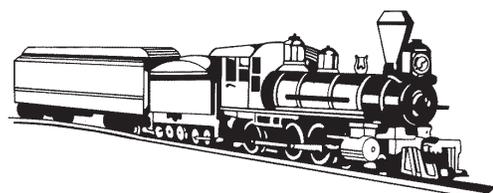


**Jim Allen's Southern Exchange.**

look forward to do this again next year with even more layouts.

Finally I would thank all the layout owners for all the work they did in order to make this weekend the success it was: David Ward and his 'Denver, Boulder & Western Railroad', Jack Parker and his 'Piedmont and Western Railroad', Jim Allen's 'Southern Exchange', Neal Anderson and his 'K K & L Railroad', Rick Knight and his 'Knight Brothers & Dad Railroad', and last but not least Seth Gardner and his 'New York Central PF Branch'.

I would also like to give a special thanks to Joe Howard without whose help at times I would have thrown in the towel, and this event may not have happened; Roy Becker, Jim Rager and Bob Halsey who helped at various layouts as helpers to make the event a complete success for all those who attended. Thank you all for your support! For all who did not attend last year, we plan to have even more railroads available to operate and we hope to see you this year on October 15 – 17, 2010. 🏠



# Final Details for Princeton Junction 2010

*By Bob Clegg  
2010 Convention Chair*

**D**ETAILS! DETAILS! DETAILS! We now have finalized the last piece of the puzzle for the **Princeton Junction 2010** MER convention, the Prototype tours!

The convention offers two prototype tours. First, on Friday morning we will travel to the **Perdue grain elevator facility** in Bordentown. Originally built for GLF in 1950, and run by Agway for many years, it is the last monopour concrete grain elevator in New Jersey. What is “monopour”, you ask? This massive structure was poured as a single unit moving the forms up the structure as the concrete began to cure. The effort was so great for the time that a concrete supplier that is still in business, incidentally, was established in the area for the sole purpose of supplying the concrete to build the elevator silos. Check out the picture in the advertisement elsewhere in this issue of **The Local**.

Now owned by Perdue, the grain elevator is still very active, with rail service daily by Conrail Shared Assets. We will tour the entire facility including a climb up the stairs to the head house to see the operation from the inside. Join the tour and hear the story of this historic structure! Please note that this is a working facility and hard hats and shoes are required. Also note, there are no handicapped accommodations in the facility.

Our Saturday tour will take us across the Delaware to the **New Hope and Ivyland Railroad** where we will travel over the length of the railroad in a first class vintage dining car. The journey requires about 2 1/2 hours round trip. During our trip, we will enjoy the beautiful autumn color scenery of Bucks County, PA as well as a light lunch in that vintage dining car. When you make your reservation, be sure to specify your choice of sandwich. Chips and drinks are also included. Seating is limited so make your reservation early to avoid missing this great rail tour.

The self-directed home layout tours are always a big part of any MER convention and **Princeton Junction 2010** is no exception. What is different is that we are offering some of these home railroads for your viewing on Thursday afternoon so that you may stop in and see them on your way to the convention. The names and addresses of these will not be published in keeping with the privacy policies of the NMRA, the region and the NJ Division, but after you register for the convention, a list and directions will be yours for the asking.

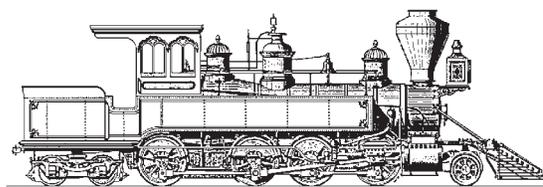
The convention also offers a large number of slots for those of you who enjoy the OPS sessions, operating trains on a host's railroad. With more than seventy of these slots available, if you ever

thought you would like to try your hand in one of these operating sessions, take this opportunity to sign up and join the fun. Slots are available Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and even Sunday beginning after the MER meeting.

We will have clinics, too! Most will be presented twice, so you can get to see those you want and still do that tour or operating session! On Saturday afternoon a type of clinic that we have not before will be presented. We call them “Work in Progress” clinics. There will be eight to ten clinicians presenting clinics at the same time in the same room. You can move from one to another and join the discussions or move on to another as you prefer. Sounds like chaos, but it works really well. The NJ Division has done these at a division meet and they have been well received. General clinic topics will include everything from Animation to Weathering, Australian Railroads to Working with Styrene. There will be something for everyone regardless of level of skill in model railroading.

If you prefer, on Saturday, the Northeastern Fallen Flags RPM group will be holding their annual one-day meeting only about twenty minutes from the convention hotel. For those not familiar with the RPM (Railroad Prototype Modelers), it is a group loosely affiliated with the NMRA, but with no membership requirements. The format of their meets is similar to those of the MER and NJ Division. There will be more clinics and displays of members' models, but no judging. The admission fee is not included in the convention fare.

Saturday night's banquet will feature one of the NJ Division's favorite presenters. Mr. Mitch Dakelman will regale us with a slide show currently planned to feature the railroads of the New Jersey area in the '60s and '70s. This will be followed by a selection from his seemingly limitless video library of vintage railroad subjects. Come and join us for what promises to be a most enjoyable, if not completely exhausting, three days of tours, operating sessions, clinics, fun, and fellowship at **Princeton Junction 2010!** 



**MADE IN  
THE MER**

# Wildhare Models

*By Ken Hamilton, Owner  
New Jersey Division*

**W**ILDHARE MODELS was created to introduce fellow modelers to a line of photo-etched brass detail parts that I had previously been making solely for personal use. As a long time builder, I've spent quite a few years scratchbuilding parts for a variety of models, many of which have ended up on MER contest tables. Some of that scratchbuilding was done simply for the joy of creating a hand-made part. But most of it stemmed from necessity: components were not commercially available, or at least not available with the amount of detail I was looking for.

Not too long ago I began exploring the possibilities of creating photo-etched brass parts at home using an iron-on resist and commercial etching solution. The results were marginal, but the idea of being able to create custom photo-etched parts for a specific project was intriguing; however, at that early stage I had no thoughts of offering the parts commercially.

My first "serious" design project was for HO-scale fire escapes and ladders for an urban storefront diorama project. This time, though, I enlisted the services of a commercial metal etching company that was willing to do small runs. Positive feedback from other modelers surrounding that project inspired me to reproduce some of those designs and offer them for sale which, from a practical standpoint would provide a means to recoup some of the production costs. But more importantly (to me, anyway) they looked so darn cool I wanted to share them! One thing led to another, and additional designs were created and put into production under the newly established "Wildhare Models" banner. As of this writing Wildhare Models offers five different detail kits in

both HO and 1/2"-scales, which happen to be my two favorite building sizes.

One aspect of the kit production that's important to me is the instruction sheet. I really dislike ANY kit that doesn't include a complete, foolproof, easy-to-follow set of instructions. With that in mind, every Wildhare Models kit includes multi-page instruction sheets with full color photos (essential to those of us who prefer "visual aids" to the written word) illustrating every step of construction.

**WILDHARE MODELS**  
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in HO & 1/2" Scales**

Our Current Catalog Includes  
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07/11

We are very excited about the prospect of expanding our line and providing unique, affordable custom photo-etched brass details to fellow modelers and we value your feedback. Visit our web site ([www.WildhareModels.com](http://www.WildhareModels.com)), to check out our product line and leave a message. We would love to hear from you! 



*If you would like to showcase your original drawing, photograph, painting or layout scene (when space is available) please submit them to the editor (contact information is on page 2).*

## Artist, Layout or Interesting Photo of the Month

*By Mike McNamara  
New Jersey Division/HO Scale*

*Maine Central train YR-1 is being assembled in St. Johnsbury, Vermont for its trip east through the White Mountains of New Hampshire and on to Maine. A CP Rail switcher and LVRC Fall Foliage passenger train look on.*

*Mike's layout will be part of the open house tours at Princeton Junction 2010.*

# Dispatching by Telegraph...(Dad Did It)...

## A series article - Part 1

Article and photographs by Mike White  
Potomac Division/HO scale

**I**N PLANNING FOR OPERATIONS on my model railroad, I considered most of the common methods for dispatcher/operator communication. Each presented problems.

The members of our round-robin organization, the Southern Maryland Operating Group, are local-area model railroaders who get together on a monthly basis to operate, railfan, take layout tours, or talk about anything “rails”. As a group, we are developing the operations methods for my under-construction model railroad.

My layout is contained in a single, open, 380 sq. ft. room. Seldom is any operator more than 10 feet from any other operator or more than 20 feet from the dispatcher. This is probably more typical of most layouts than not. The era is the mid-1930s and the locale was completely rural at the time. The only center of any concentrated population was the county seat and that wasn't much. Centrally generated and distributed electricity wouldn't be available in the county until just before WWII. Telephone service was sparse and primitive when compared to more urban areas.

Verbally calling out orders to the room at large, radio communication using inexpensive walkie-talkies, or the more technically complex and expensive telephone system, just didn't seem ideal for these conditions.

After a lengthy consideration of all of the options that I had seen used on other layouts, or had heard or read about, I decided that some different dispatching method was needed – but what?

I originally considered telegraph but I rejected it because of the Morse code learning requirement. It seemed too much to ask of my group. It is appropriate to the era, and a good fit to the level of technological infrastructure and economic conditions of the times, but the learning curve and perceived resistance to the idea by my fellow operators kept it on the back burner.

But then the thought occurred – what if a simple, easily learned, and easy to use method of dispatcher/operator communication using telegraph could be developed that would eliminate, or at least drastically reduce, the learning curve? And, what if a way could be found to implement it that would overcome most of the drawbacks of the other methods? If these questions could be answered, it could be a very good fit.

In planning this system, the items that needed to be addressed were broken down into the following categories:

- Operator/Train Identification
- Message Formats
- Operator Training and Visual Aids
- Dispatcher Training and Qualification
- Physical Locations and Electrical Requirements/wiring
- Equipment Needs
- Options for Future Expansion

Operator	ID	Code
Ron Schmidt	S	...
Dick Higgins	H	....
Bill Roman	O	---
Dale Latham	L	-. .
Mike White	W	.- -
Roark P. Shallow	P	.- .
Tom Buckingham	B	-...
Charlie Kilbourne	K	-.-
Vince Cipriani	C	-.-.
Visitor	V	... -
Dispatcher	D	-..

**Figure 1: Operator/Train Identification – Each Operator ID is based on the first letter of their last name, unless there are duplications.**

### OPERATOR/TRAIN IDENTIFICATION

Train orders are addressed to the conductor and engineer of..., that is, the persons operating the train, not the train itself. Given that, I listed my potential operators and created for each an Operator ID based on the first letter of their last name. Where there were duplications, the second choice was to use the last letter of their first name or, after that, any other letter in their name that did not duplicate one already in use. Each operator has a unique single letter ID that could be used to identify them in messages. The Dispatcher's ID is always the letter “D” regardless of his normal Operator ID. See figure 1.

### MESSAGE FORMATS

If you are at all familiar with prototype train orders, you know that they have very structured, standard formats called “Forms”. For the same purposes, I developed a simple, standard message format, which uses a minimum of characters to

represent the dispatcher/ operator communications for each situation likely to require train orders. In this way, an operator need only learn Morse code for his own ID plus a small number of other letters. See figure 2.

### OPERATOR TRAINING AND VISUAL AIDS

Learning any Morse code, even an abbreviated version such as this, is primarily an aural effort. It is necessary to train your ear to hear and understand the dots and dashes as they are sent. There really isn't any substitute for this. Fortunately, on the Internet at [www.boyslife.org/games/online-games/575/morse-code-machine/](http://www.boyslife.org/games/online-games/575/morse-code-machine/) there is a free, easy-to-use, learning and practice code program. It provides the sound needed to learn the letters by listening.

Another very useful training aid is Free Morse from Nu-Ware at [www.nu-ware.com/](http://www.nu-ware.com/). This is a little more advanced than the Boy Scout aid above and allows you to set variables such as speed, character spacing, and word spacing. The big advantage is that you can type in your own text to be listened to and adjust the speed as you gain proficiency. Once you have a fundamental grasp of the letters required from using the Boy Scout version, you should quickly switch to Free Morse as it has features and flexibility that the Boy Scout version lacks.

For local training and practice, two telegraph keys were mounted opposite each other on a 3-foot length of 1 x 6 pine board with a volume-controlled tone oscillator/speaker/power supply located between and connected to them. See figure 3. Mounted vertically between the trainees above the oscillator was a foam board with Operator ID lists and sample Message Formats thumb-tacked to each side as training aids. This also served to visually separate the Operator from the Dispatcher as in actual operations. In each training session, on one side of the board is the operator (conductor/engineer) and the other side the person acting as the dispatcher. See figure 4.

**THE SECRET WEAPON – THE “STATION AGENT”**

Early in the development process one of our members, Roark Shallow, who is a former Coast Guard Radioman, recognized that there would be a need for a very proficient person who could circulate during operating sessions to provide assistance to any operator (conductor/engineer) who was having difficulty with transmitting or receiving messages using the telegraph system. He dubbed this individual the Station Agent. Until continued use of the telegraph system brought operator proficiency up to a level where help was no longer needed, the Station Agent would be available at any time to provide instruction and assistance. At any time a visitor or guest operator was present, the Station Agent would provide full-time assistance. This would allow the visitor to enjoy operating the railroad without the added concern of learning the communications system.

**DISPATCHER TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION**

Use of the telegraph system described here presupposes a dispatching method that allows and requires the dispatcher to know where each train is located at any point in time. Our group uses a method of dispatching developed over 30 years ago by Charlie Kilbourne, which Bruce Chubb once labeled “manual CTC”. It uses a large schematic of the railroad on the dispatcher’s desk with tokens that are moved across the diagram to keep track of train location. It is a very simple, inexpensive, and effective tool for doing the dispatcher’s job. However, any other system that keeps the dispatcher advised of each train’s location

could be adapted and used with telegraph dispatching.

Roark again drew on his communications and instructor experience to identify skill levels that would be useful in making operations crew assignments:

**Visitor/Guest** – This operator requires the full-time assistance of a Station Agent to communicate reliably with the Dispatcher.

**Novice** – This operator is learning telegraphy, but requires the assistance of a Station Agent to communicate reliably with the Dispatcher.

**Telegrapher** – This operator has the ability to communicate with the Dispatcher by telegraph without assistance over the entire route of the railroad.

**Station Agent** – This operator has the ability to perform any communications duties and has the knowledge and skills to assist and/or instruct members as needed to operate over the entire route of the railroad.

**Dispatcher** – This operator has the ability to perform any communications duties over the entire route of the railroad, issue train orders, and coordinate train movements without assistance.

Dispatcher training is more involved than operator training in that there is some more code to learn as well as learning the dispatching system and acquiring a thorough knowledge of the layout and operating methods. Other than the telegraph communications aspect, however, these requirements are true for any dispatcher qualification.

**PHYSICAL LOCATIONS AND ELECTRICAL REQUIREMENTS/WIRING**

The only real requirement for physical location of the telegraph stations is operator convenience. While it would be nice to have a telegraph station at each train-order station like the prototype did, it is not really necessary. My layout is an around the walls with a middle-peninsula design that creates two aisles with layout on each side. In other words, there are four long layout edges that operators work along. I put two staggered-location telegraph stations on each aisle, plus a station in the dispatcher’s office, for a total of five. Depending on the size and design of your layout, more or less may be appropriate, but one telegraph station per train order station isn’t really necessary. This will be illustrated in more detail in subsequent installments.

The telegraph system itself, in my case, consists of a telegraph key and speaker connected to a code (tone) oscillator in the dispatcher’s office, which is in turn, wired to two two-wire circuits

Text	Action	Code
Acknowledge	A	. -
Ready to GO	G	- - .
Run	R	. - .
Marked Up	U	. . -
Operator Alert	zero 0	- - - - -
End of Transmission	.	. - . - . -
Dispatcher’s ID	D	- . .

**Figure 2: Message Formats – These characters represent the minimum communication for each situation likely to require train orders between dispatcher and operator.**

continued on page 10

around the layout. One circuit connects all of the telegraph keys, the other circuit connects all of the speakers. There is a key and a speaker at each telegraph station.

### EQUIPMENT NEEDS

These are the basic items you will need to build a telegraph system:

- Oscillator (tone generator) – available as electronic kit or ready built
- Telegraph keys – available from several sources.
- Speakers – mini speakers from Radio Shack work fine.
- Mini SPDT switches (optional) – turn individual speakers on and off. (Available at Radio Shack)
- The usual electrical stuff: wire, connectors, soldering iron, wire cutters, etc.



**Figure 3: Operator Training and Visual Aids – Two telegraph keys were mounted opposite each other on a 3-foot length of 1 x 6 pine board with a volume-controlled tone oscillator/speaker/power supply located between and connected to them.**

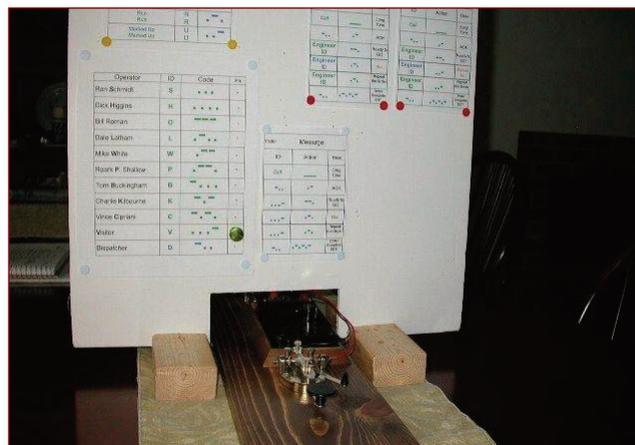
The basic equipment can be obtained fairly inexpensively. Speaker enclosures can be easily homemade. Wiring is simple and straightforward. There is nothing here that should provide any difficulty for the average modeler.

### OPTIONS FOR FUTURE EXPANSION

There are a number of messaging requirements and options that are not addressed here in Part 1. This is an overview. In future installments, each of the topics above will be examined in greater detail and more figures, descriptions, and how-tos will be provided.

### SO, WHAT'S WITH THE TITLE?

In telegraph-speak, code is not spoken as, say “dash, dot, dot” for the letter “D”, for example. Rather, it is said as “dah, di, dit” which more closely resembles the sound that you would hear when listening to a transmission (“Dah” is pronounced as you would the first two letters of “dad”). Say “dah, di, dit” real fast.



**Figure 4: Operator Training and Visual Aids – A foam board with Operator ID lists and sample Message Formats thumb-tacked to each side serve as training aids. This also served to visually separate the Operator from the Dispatcher as in actual operations.**

### FORWARD INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

You may not have thought of telegraph as a solution for your dispatching needs, but it is an alternative for you to consider. If your era is anything up to the mid-1960's, the railroad telegraph was still in widespread use and you would be prototypically accurate in using it on your layout. Think about it. 🚪

## \*Mix-it Puzzles

By Dr. Charles Wood  
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

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 #15:

- a. N R M B E K A A
- b. A O S R M H E P E
- c. N R C E A A T Y
- d. C C R H S T A
- e. E E V S C R I

#### Puzzle #16:

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

#### Answer to puzzle #15:

- a. Brakeman
- b. Semaphore
- c. Catenary
- d. Scratch
- e. Service

#### Answer to puzzle #16:

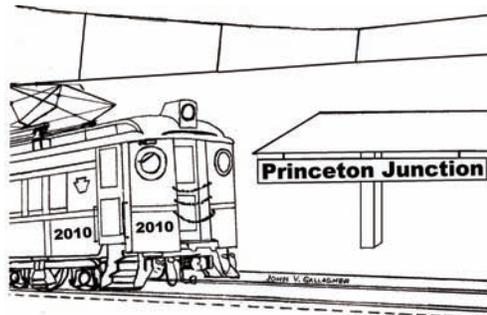
- a. Punch
- b. Turntable
- c. Rolling
- d. Conductor
- e. Junction

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## Princeton Junction

September 30 – October 3, 2010

### REGISTRATION FORM



Please enter (print legibly) all names as you wish them to appear on your registration badges: They will not be changed at the convention.

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

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

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

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

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA # \_\_\_\_\_

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Early Registration (before September 1, 2010) (the rates will go up)	\$40		
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Significant other	\$15		
Children (under 16)	\$10		
Banquet	401 \$30		
<b>Extra Fare Clinics:</b>			
Building in Wood Clinic (HO) (Hyde and Brechbiel)	601 \$15		
Building in Wood Clinic (O) (Fri. Eve.)	602 \$15		
Timetable and Train Order (TT/TO) Clinic & Operations (King) (Thurs. Eve.), combine with "lab" below	611 \$15		
<b>Tours:</b>	<b>TBD</b>		
	<b>TBD</b>		
<b>Call Boards:</b>			
CL&W (Rahenkamp) (Thurs. Eve.)	801 \$ 5		
Harsco (Bickmore) (Fri. Morn.)	811 \$ 5		
NT (Homoki) (Fri. Aft.)	821 \$ 5		
NJW (Prokop) (Fri. Aft.)	822 \$ 5		
A&W (Genthner) (Fri. Aft.)	823 \$ 5		
CL&W (Rahenkamp) (Fri. Eve.)	831 \$ 5		
D&H (Calderone) (Sat. Morn.)	841 \$ 5		
Rocky Hill Club (Sat. Morn.)	851 \$ 5		
A&W (Genthner) (Sat. Aft.)	852 \$ 5		
SCJ&L (Howard) (Sun. Aft.)	805 \$ 5		
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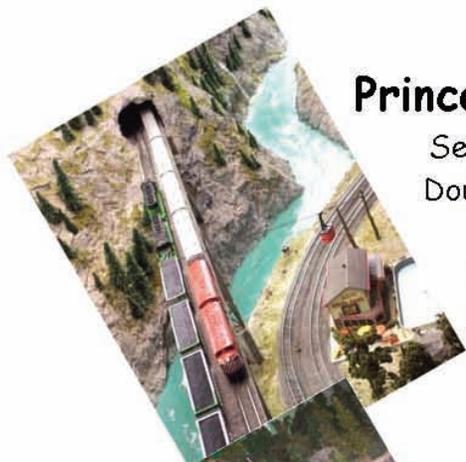
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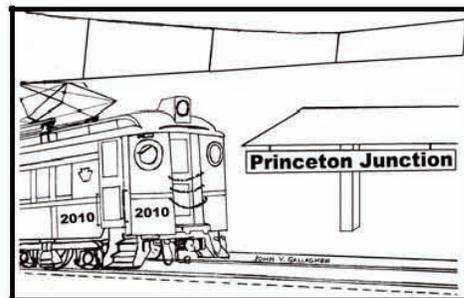
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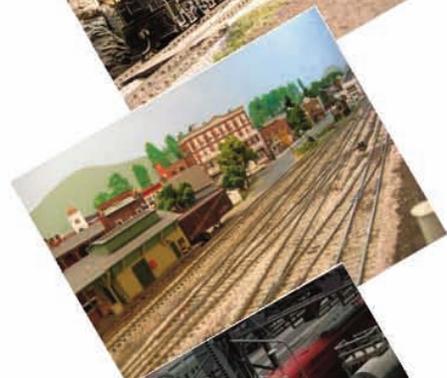
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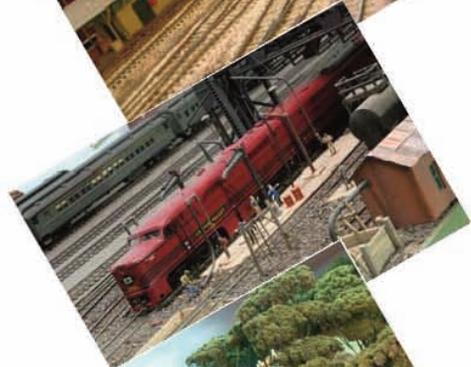
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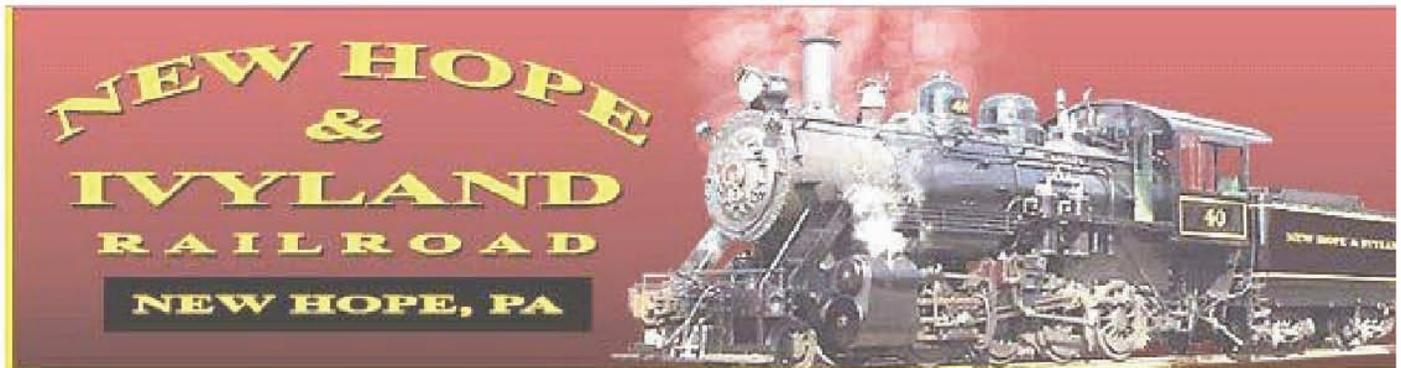
## CLINICS

- Rick Spano: Animation on your railroad
- Bob Jans: Making hidden track dependable
- John Gallagher: Modeling PCC trolleys in O scale
- Dick Perry: Creating better backdrops
- Bob Hubbard: Working with styrene
- Mark Brunton: Building a Helix
- Mike Parisi: Modeling marine operations
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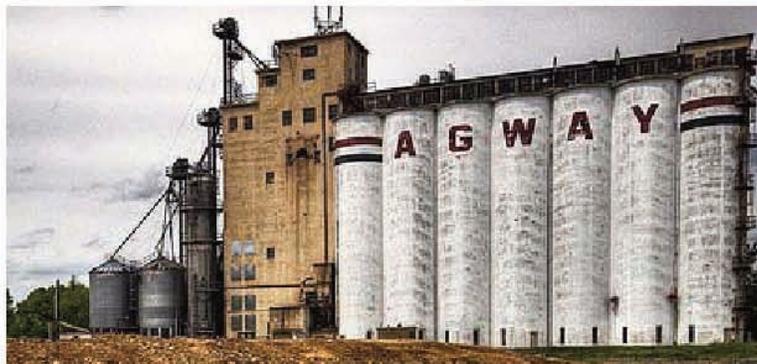
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**JULY 10TH.** Wade's Train Town monthly open house. Operated by Carolina Southern Division members at the Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center St in Hickory, NC. 10 AM till 4 PM.

#### JULY 11TH-18TH

\*\*\*National Model Railroad Association's 75th Anniversary\*\*\* in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Visit <http://nmra75.org/> for complete information and registration.

**AUGUST 14TH.** Wade's Train Town monthly open house. Operated by Carolina Southern Division members at the Brookford Town Center located at 1700 South Center St in Hickory, NC. 10 AM till 4 PM.

**AUGUST 22ND.** Potomac Division layout tour in Burke, VA. 1 PM until 4 PM. For more information visit the "Planned Layout Tours" tab at [http://home.comcast.net/~potomac\\_nmra/](http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/).

Tell members about your upcoming event!! Send your free event listings to the editor (contact information is listed on page 2.) Be sure to include all the specifics for the event: including the date/time, place, cost, a contact person, and a means of getting in touch with him/her (address, phone, e-mail, etc.), and if available a web site for updates or to get more information. Due to publication schedules, please give plenty of notice before the event.

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03/11

# 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 1 – New Jersey

P.J. Mattson – *Model Railroad Engineer, Civil*

#### Division 2 – Potomac

Steven Jackson – *Golden Spike*

Robert B. Rodriguez – *Master Builder, Scenery*

Robert B. Rodriguez – *Model Railroad Engineer, Electrical*

Murray Michael White – *Model Railroad Author*

#### Division 3 – Philadelphia

Brian E. Good – *Association Volunteer*

#### Division 11 – Susquehanna

Robert F. Lyter – *Golden Spike*

George Pandelios – *Model Railroad Engineer, Electrical*

#### Division 14 – Chesapeake

John P. Stralka – *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**.

**NOTE:** When sending me an AP SOQ, please make sure that the pages be copied **ONLY** on one side of the paper. These sheets are scanned and sent to National. During the scanning, information on the backside of the sheet shows through to the front. Your help will be appreciated. Thanks. 

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The ad must include full name and contact information and will be limited to one issue. Word count is also limited to seventy-five (75) words. Please include your NMRA number for verification purposes (number will not be published). 

**NOTICE TO ALL MER MEMBERS:  
 ANNUAL MEETING**

The 2010 annual meeting of MER members will be held on Sunday morning, October 3rd in conjunction with the MER Fall Convention in Princeton, NJ. Exact time and room will be announced later.

*William Roman*  
 MER Secretary