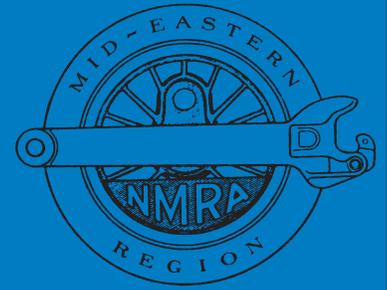


The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



Volume 65

NOVEMBER — DECEMBER 2010

Number 6

Decals: The Basics and a Few Things to Consider

*Article and photograph by James Allen
Carolina Southern/HO Scale*

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article has been published on the author's website (<http://www.southernexchange.net/Decals.pdf>) and is reprinted in **The Local** with his permission. At the end of the online article the author recommends websites to purchase decal paper.

DECALS ARE NOT ALWAYS the answer. For instance, you may have a particular image that you want to use on the side of a building. Most decals when applied directly to a building will give the impression that they were painted right onto the surface.

Decals applied to sheet styrene, wood or a flat panel will better represent signs.

You may get the same result by printing to heavy card stock for many of your signage needs.

Choosing the wrong decal paper will waste your time, money and ink. So with so many to choose from which ones do I pick? This all depends on the project.

DECAL PAPER:

Clear – Clear background paper is good for printing on very light colored objects, such as sheet styrene, railroad cars that are white, or light tan, perhaps silver. A common mistake would be to use clear decal paper to create a nicely colored decal that needs to go on an object that is painted with a dark color. The dark background completely changes the printed color.

White – White background paper is good for printing signs and decals with lots of colors and works great if the background is white.

Ink Jet – Ink Jet paper is specifically for ink jet printers where the ink soaks in the paper to help it dry.

LaserJet – Laser Jet decal paper is different from Ink Jet paper and while I have used Ink Jet paper in a color LaserJet printer I wouldn't recommend the opposite. Remember a LaserJet printer uses heat to dry the toner rapidly.

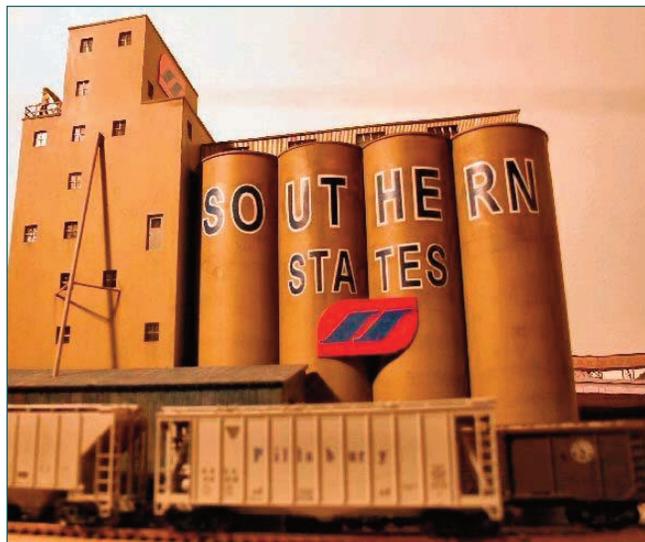
Water Slide – This paper is activated by water and is the norm for most decals.

Chemical Activated – This paper needs a coating of clear lacquer before cutting out the decal and soaking in water. I have one brand of decal paper that changes from a white background to a clear background simply by coating the decal with clear coat after you have applied it.

CUSTOM DECALS FOR YOUR SPECIFIC PROJECT:

Lets say that you have a locomotive or freight car that no one makes decals for. Maybe it is your own railroad or perhaps an old short line that you are recreating. The easy part is printing the decals on the paper, and applying them.

The very first thing that you will need is the artwork. Personally I use Paintshop Pro to do most all of my art/photo needs. If



In this example, the blue letters were painted on white decal paper. Each letter was cut out keeping a small outline of white. The double blue S's were printed on the same white decal paper leaving no white.

continued on page 3

The Local

Official Publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA A Tax-Exempt Organization

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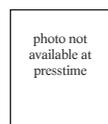
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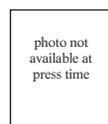
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All subscription information, advertising rates and publication deadlines are now located on page 16.



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

From The Business Car

By: John Janosko
MER President

AS YOUR NEW PRESIDENT of the MER, I would like to thank everyone that voted in the recent election. We had over 400 people vote in this year's election and it was the most that have voted in many years. I would like to thank all of the people that voted for Chuck and me. With your help, I hope that I can do as good a job that Roger has done in the last two years. All of us that are members of the MER owe our thanks to Roger for all the time he has spent updating the operations of the MER. I also want to continue the Division visits from either the VP or President. I know it would be nice to meet everyone at the yearly convention, but this is not possible for everyone of our members. I will be getting together with PJ and between us we will work up a schedule after the upcoming convention in New Jersey. I will have attended the 2010 convention in New Jersey by

the time you read this and hopefully have met with everyone who attended.

Please feel free to give me any suggestions that you think can improve the MER. I will be happy to bring this up at our board meeting to see if your suggestions are good for the region and can be implemented into useful help for the Region.

Being in sales for over 27 years, I am a person that likes to actively meet face to face with people or over the phone more so than email. Sometimes email seems to be a little bit impersonal, at least to me. Please feel free to call me on my cell at (919) 656-6897 or if you would rather you can still email me at johnajan@embarqmail.com.

Hopefully, I will see you sometime in 2010 or 2011. 

MER 2010 ELECTIONS

(*) voted office holder

PRESIDENT

* **John Janosko**-----208

Chuck Hladik-----195

VICE-PRESIDENT

* **P.J. Mattson**-----286

Jack Keene-----108

SECRETARY

* **Mike White**-----301

Garret Nicholson----- 90

TREASURER

* **Thomas Buckingham**-----377

WRITE-INS

VICE-PRESIDENT-----1

TREASURER-----1

TOTAL BALLOTS CASTED-----417

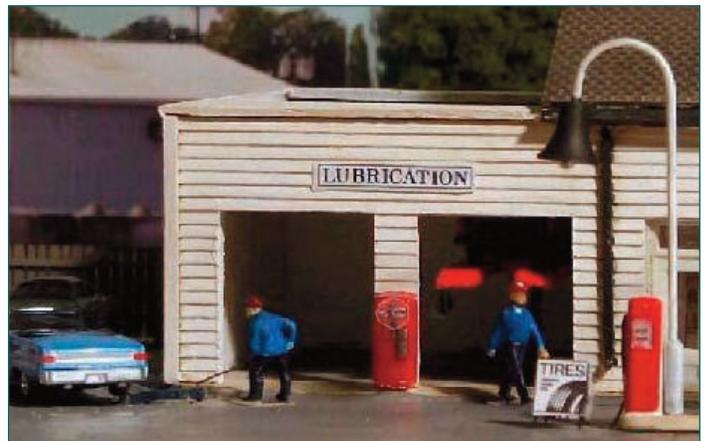
Decals: The Basics... continued from page 1

you have no knowledge or time to create your own artwork then you will have to get some help from someone.

Next, size your artwork to the correct scale of you object and or railroad. I find that the simplest way for me to do this is by transferring the object to Microsoft Word. A simple copy and paste to a new Word document will do fine. Once the object is in Word you can resize it by clicking any edge and dragging the object with the mouse. Normally, I save these word documents after I have things the way I need them for future printing. Finally print and apply them.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE, SOURCES FOR DECAL IMAGES:

Google images – my number one source for finding old signs, images, etc.



This example shows a Lubrication sign where the letters were printed directly to white cardstock with a blue outline. No decal was needed to build this tin sign.

Great Decals!™

Fallout Shelter Signs
CP Mandarin Orange
B&O—3 titles
Interstate—2 titles
Virginian—15 titles

Southern cabooses
PRR X-29 box cars
L&N—6 titles
RF&P—6 titles
FEC—3 titles



...and more! In G-, O-, S-, HO-, and N-scales

William Mosteller, P.O. Box 994, Herndon, VA 20172
SASE for list, or see www.greatdecals.com

03/11

continued on page 4

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

EDITOR'S DEADLINES can be trying at times. Our dedicated **Local** editor is calling for material before the Princeton Convention happens this coming weekend. So I will write this column as if the timeframe was close to when you are reading it.

So didn't we have a great time in Princeton, NJ? (I hope). Our NJ Division had planned a great convention and I am sure that is what we experienced.

Those of you who attended found out quickly that John Janosko won a promotion from VP to MER President, PJ Mattson took John's old chair as VP, and Mike White will assume the Secretary position. Tom Buckingham will continue in his important role as Treasurer. I hope all of you have offered your congratulations for these guys who offer up their time and

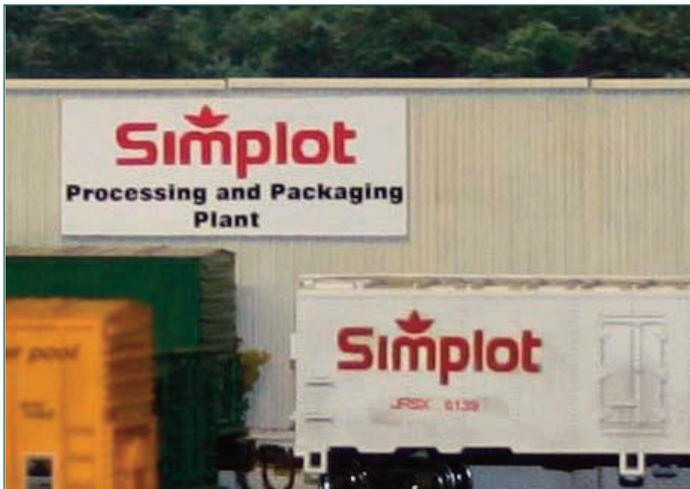
efforts to keep the MER a great organization.

I also hope all of you join me in a great big thank you to the folks leaving their elected posts. I must say that I have thoroughly enjoyed working for Roger Cason during his tenure. Roger is a true gentleman and a meticulous planner and worker, truly dedicated to both the MER and the National organization. Not too many of you see the work of the Secretary, but Bill Roman has done a great job behind the scenes, at pulling together lots of the supporting documents necessary for the smooth operation of the MER. Tom Buckingham is another guy who works tirelessly behind the scenes at the Treasurer's post. I deal with Tom in many of my day-to-day activities, helping Tom as he keeps the finances in shape. Thanks Roger, Bill and Tom.

I hope you will give the new officers your full support and encouragement in their sometimes challenging and unrewarding jobs keeping the MER wheels running.

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. 📧

Decals: The Basics... continued from page 3



The Simplot letters on the building were printed on sticky back paper. The letters on the freight car were printed on white decal paper.

Old magazines – cut out images and/or then scan them.
Clip art found on the web.

Last resort would be to purchase them. I recommend scanning them before using them.

MATCHING COLORS:

This can be hard sometimes, and to be honest even if you have the correct colors they might print slightly different depending on the printer, the paper etc. Several times I have sprayed a section of white styrene, or even primed styrene to replicate the color that I need. Then I scanned the painted object. I used the color dropper within PSP to duplicate the exact color.

If all else fails you can always touch up the decal once it's secured to your object.

For instance, recently I had to make yellow Norfolk & Western Decals for a modern

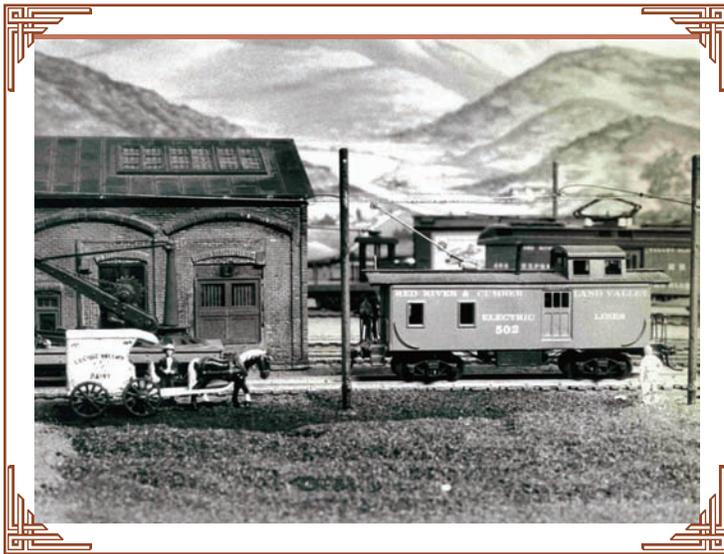


If all else fails you can always touch up the decal once it's secured to your object. For instance, in this example I recently had to make and then touch up yellow Norfolk & Western decals for a modern Generator car.

Generator car. See example. I created the yellow decals within PSP, using yellow letters on a burgundy background. After printing the decals I noticed that the burgundy did not quite match the burgundy on the side of the car. I trimmed off as much of the burgundy from the decal as I could, then secured the decal. Once the decal was completely secured I sprayed a small amount of the paint that I used into a paint cap. Finally, I used the smallest of brushes and I went around and touched any area of burgundy left on the decal. This blended the decal and car side perfectly.

Hint: Strengthen the decal prior to installation. I use several of Microscale's decal solutions to help with decal prep/strengthen the new decal. Microscale also makes products for removing an old decal, or getting the decal to blend and lay down better on uneven objects.

Always use sharp blades with cutting out decals, otherwise you run the risk of tearing the decal, which will lead to losing some of the original color. Here you would have to touch up the edges as described above. Be very careful if you decide to dullcoat the decal, this can cause even a sealed ink to smear. 📧



If you would like to showcase an original model 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 Rick Shoup, MMR

(Red River and Cumberland Lines) This photo taken around 1964 was part of Rick's HO trolley layout in MD. Prototype was from Michigan. Caboose was used for lighting and signalling. The track and over wires were all hand laid. The foreground was used coffee grounds, the poles were brass welding rods. Photo taken with Kodak 620, depth of field was about 4 inches at f-16.

Take a Train to Work Day 2009

By Bob Minnis
James River Division/HO Scale

AS WE HAVE DONE for the past several years, the maintenance staff at work and myself brought our trains to work on Friday, November 20, 2009. The emphasis this year was on the many sub cultures (interest areas) within the model railroad hobby. The display consisted of printed literature, models and modules. Additionally, we had operating train sets in Z scale, American Flyer, Lionel and Marx tinplate. The showcased areas were:

Module operations – setup of four fully detailed modules.

Special Interest Groups – collection of magazines and booklets on layout design, rail industries, circus modeling, trolley and marine rail interface.

Photography – prototype operations caught on camera.

Structure and freight car construction – side by side comparison of a kit and the completed model.

Scenery – samples of rocks made from ceiling tiles and tree armatures as raw product and the finished.

Mark Andersen, coordinator of the Potomac Module Crew also assisted my staff by contributing a module, photographs and scenery props. The attendance over the two and a half hour show was a little disappointing, but those who did come were very enthusiastic and appreciative. 📷

Did you participate in National Model Railroad month? Did you "Take Your Train to Work"?

I am looking for stories about what you did during November to support National Railroad month. I am also looking for photographs of your models or layouts taken to work. These will be featured in **The Local** in upcoming issues. All of my contact information is listed on page 2.

Thank you,
Steve Kindig, Editor

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, 333 W. Trade St, Unit #2504, Charlotte, NC 28202-1961. (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 initially allocated \$2,000 for this program. The Board recently allocated an additional \$1,000 to extend the program to the end of 2010, or when the funds are spent – 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, 704-332-1753, tractionfan@aol.com), or Roger L. Cason, MER President (see contact information on page 2). 

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 Sponsor: _____ (Required)

(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

When this form is completed,
mail it to:

**Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager
333 W. Trade St, Unit #2504
Charlotte, NC 28202-1961**

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

=====
Date of form: 1/31/07

**MADE IN
THE MER**

DCC by Design

By Scott Henry, Owner

SCOTT HENRY WILL TELL YOU he has loved model railroading since he was five, when his grandfather introduced him to model railroads. At seven, Scott got his first layout, “It was a Bubble Yum bubble gum give-away. My mother, knowing I couldn’t save enough wrappers on my own, made a rule in her classroom that you could have chewing gum only if she was given the wrappers.” From that little layout, Scott built bigger and bigger layouts until moving away to college. Several years later, with home ownership came space and the opportunity to have a layout once again. “When I built my first home layout, I used the same DC wiring and control techniques that my grandfather had taught me, but I wasn’t satisfied with the slow speed control.”

That dissatisfaction resulted in a multi-year digital command control (DCC) research and testing project, which laid the groundwork for DCC by Design. When Scott moved to Northern Virginia, he joined the Prince William Model Railroad Club (PWMRC), six months later the club began the design of a new layout for the Quantico Train Depot. Scott led the design effort for the DCC system of the layout design. “As the Trackwork & Electrical Committee reviewed the DCC system design and presented it to the club, a significant amount of education process was needed for club members, even though the club was using DCC for its modular layouts. This is when I realize that there was a market for design and installation services on the layout side of the DCC equation, not just for mobile decoders.”

Today DCC by Design offers a variety of services and products for modelers looking to implement DCC features. Services can be as simple as review of your design and as complex as design and installation of a new DCC system. “Our JMRI configuration services have been very popular. Many folks can see the benefits something like Panel Pro offers, but find the design and programming of such a system overwhelming.” Looking through the recent projects listed on their website, you can see that they offer a wide variety of services supporting many operating styles and modeling eras. “I’m just as excited by the product we deliver on the smallest job as the biggest job.”

In addition to the services offered, DCC by Design offers a growing list of products such as wiring kits and photographic how-to articles. “When we receive frequent requests for similar items, we start breaking down the steps and developing kits so that others can benefit from these ideas. One great example is our forth coming Ro-Ro Remote Kit, which lets you convert your Ro-Ro Train Elevator into a staging solution by providing necessary sensors and controls. This is a good example of the type of niche kit that we plan to bring to market.”

Although software may not seem directly related to DCC, one of DCC by Design’s offering is YardBoss, a model railroad inventory program that ties in JMRI for operations and tracks decoder associated with each locomotive. “When I start configuring my

locomotive fleet with JMRI, I found it was great for saving individual unit settings. However, I had no way to track which locomotives were “complete”, which needed customized programming, and which I needed to by decoders. I found myself buying too many of one type and not enough of another. So I built YardBoss to have the normal inventory software features, plus track decoder information and generate shopping lists. When JMRI came out with their operations features, it was a natural fit to generate the inventory to feed JMRI.

If your layout is at the point where it’s time to implement DCC system and you not sure where to get started, the DCC by Design website (www.dccbydesign.com) offers several free articles to help. Beyond that the website provides information on the services, products, and recent projects that have been completed. To contact Scott you can e-mail him at dccbydesign@gmail.com or call him directly. The phone number is (703) 283-8777. You can address mail to:

DCC by Design
13012 Shadwell Ct.
Lake Ridge, VA 22192

CLASSIFIED

ATTENTION ALL MER MEMBERS:

Do you have a wanted/trade/for sale item(s)? Looking for car-pool options to an event or options for sharing a room? **The Local** publishes a FREE classified section for all MER members. Send your classified ad to the Editor at stevespressrr@yahoo.com, or see all the editor’s contact information on page 2.

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

FOR SALE...

BOOKS: “Pennsy Triumph” Volumes I through IX autographed by the author Charles Roberts, all nine volumes \$359.00; “Louisville & Nashville Steam Locomotives”, by Richard Prince, Hardbound \$14.00; “Iron Rails in the Garden State: Tales of New Jersey Railroading”, by Anthony Bianculli, Hardbound \$14.00; “The Railroad What it Is, What it Does”, 5th edition, Softbound, \$14.00. One each available. Everything is brand new and postpaid. Peter Mosiondz Jr., 26 Cameron Circle, Laurel Springs, NJ 08021-4861. Phone: (856) 627-6865.

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

A series article – Part 3

Article and photographs by Mike White
Potomac Division/HO scale

THE CONSTRUCTION of the actual telegraph system involves four major assemblies: the oscillator, power supply, the key circuit, and the speaker circuit. This part of the series is going to describe the construction of the key circuit and the speaker circuit.

The key circuit involves the wiring of the key bus and the installation of the operator keys on the layout.

The speaker circuit involves the wiring of the speaker bus and installation of the speakers on the layout.

The key bus is the two-wire circuit from the key terminals on the oscillator unit that follows the edges of the layout from the oscillator location to each key in sequence and terminates at the key farthest from the oscillator. See bottom part of figure 1.

My benchwork is an over-engineered L-girder that uses two 1" x 4" boards to make the L-girder instead of the usual 1" x 4" + 1" x 2". I attached my bus wire on the inside perimeter of the layout on the back of the vertical board in the L-girder assembly. See figure 2. I would suggest using paired-color wires for this such as black and red for the key circuit and a different paired-color such as blue and yellow for the speaker circuit. The speakers are going to be co-located with the keys in this installation so the wires for the key and speaker buses can be bundled in the same holders throughout their runs. Paired-colors (with no duplicating color) will prevent confusion as to which wires serve which circuit.

The speaker bus is the two-wire circuit from the speaker terminals on the oscillator unit that follows the edges of the layout from the oscillator location to each speaker in sequence and terminates at the speaker farthest from the oscillator. See top part of figure 1. The speaker wire run is installed in exactly the same way as the key bus above. In the diagram of figure 1, the symbol in this circuit closest to the oscil-

lator is a single earpiece headset that will be used by the dispatcher. This is optional, as the dispatcher's office will have a speaker as well.

The number of keys needed is going to depend on both the size and shape of your layout. My layout is an around-the-walls with a peninsula form that produces a shape roughly equivalent to an elongated letter "E". The dispatcher's desk is located at the far right end of the bottom bar of the "E". This shape produces four long edges (the inside of the top and bottom bars and both sides of the middle bar) along which the operators work. I found that if I staggered the key locations on each side of the aisles, I could put two keys in each aisle and an operator would never be more than a few steps from a key at any time. This meant that I needed 5 keys – four for the operators and one for the dispatcher.

While it would be nice to do so, it is not necessary to have a key and speaker at every train order station on your layout. As long as a key and speaker are within reasonable reach that's sufficient.

While you, of course, are free to purchase your keys, speakers, and oscillator components wherever you wish, I found my keys on the internet at the Milestone Technologies website (www.mtechnologies.com).

The prices are good and the service is excellent. Click on the topic button "AMECO" and you will be at the page where all of the supplies you will need can be accessed. Click on the "Telegraph Keys and Code Practice Oscillators" link. Just below the "Add to Shopping Cart" button on the first oscillator shown is a link for the "MX T-Tone Code Practice Oscillator Kit". This is the one I chose and am very pleased with it. I also purchased the "Project box" from the same page to house all of the oscillator components. The reason that I'm talking about the oscillator and housing here is that if all of your AMECO require-

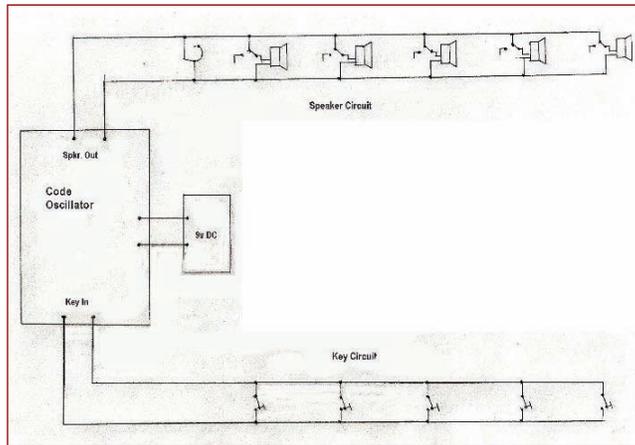


Figure 1: Wiring diagram for speaker circuit (top) and key circuit (bottom).

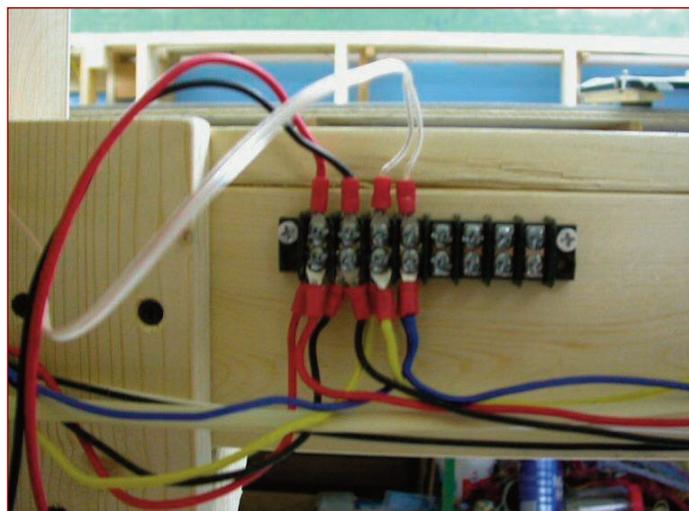


Figure 2: Attachment to layout.



Figure 3: The key is installed on a swing arm that rotates 180 degrees and tucks back beneath the benchwork when not in use.

ments are purchased at the same time, you only pay shipping and handling once. The key I selected is the second one on the key page – Brass Key AM-K4 (\$17.95). Not only is it well made, but its appearance is perfect for a railroad telegraph key. So, you can fill your requirements for all of the key circuit components (except wire) at one website.

The installation/attachment of the key on your layout is going to depend on a lot of factors beyond the scope of this discussion, so the best I can do in that regard is show you how I did it. Because the locations of my keys were mostly in minimum width aisles, I didn't want any arrangement that caused the key to stick out into the aisle. What I came up with was a swing arm that

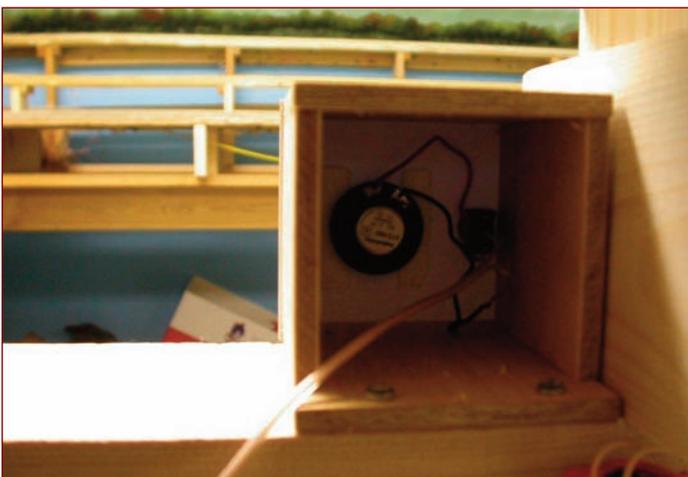


Figure 4: Photo of speaker enclosures attached to layout.

rotates 180 degrees and tucks back beneath the bench work when not in use. See figure 3. I was able to do this because of the over-engineered L-girder construction mentioned earlier.

If you use conventional L-girder construction, the horizontal (2") part of the L-girder is too narrow to support this method. I am sure adequate support can be constructed for almost any benchwork configuration, but I will leave that up to you. A fixed

installation is also feasible where the key is part of a fascia mounted operator station. In this instance the key is mounted parallel to the fascia. If you choose this method, be sure to leave a sufficient flat surface in front of the key to provide a wrist rest for the operator.

Since the speakers are only required to be audible in the immediate vicinity of the operator at each station, I chose Radio Shack #273-0092, 8 ohm, Mini Speakers, 1-1/8" (29mm) diameter. Between the speaker and bus wires, I used regular speaker wire soldered to the speaker terminals with Radio Shack #66-3124 Spade Tongue terminals soldered to the opposite wire ends. The enclosures were homemade from 1/4" birch plywood assembled with yellow carpenter's glue. They are secured to the benchwork with two wood screws. See figure 4. The faceplate is cut from .080" plain sheet styrene drilled for sound and corner mounting holes and for the shank of a Radio Shack #275-613 SPDT Sub-mini Toggle Switch. See figure 5.

My speaker enclosures are approximately 3" x 3", but the size will depend on the size of the speaker used. The speaker is mounted on the back of the faceplate with double-sided foam

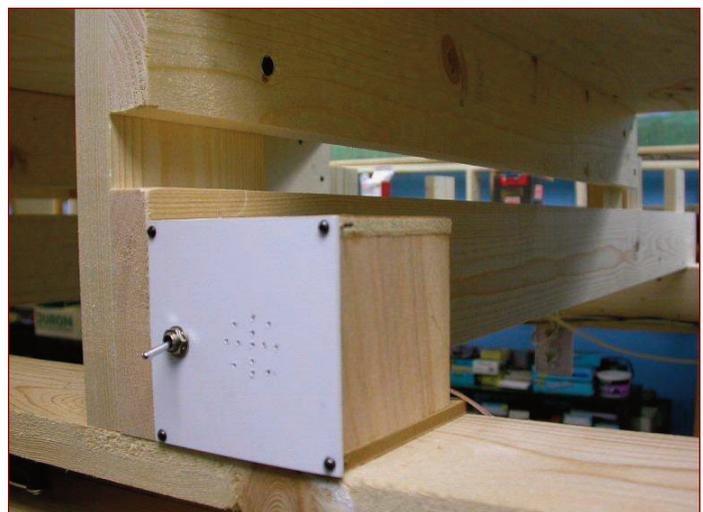


Figure 5: Photo view of the front of speaker enclosure.

tape. The switch is wired with one speaker wire to the center switch contact and then from either the top or bottom switch contact to one speaker terminal. The other speaker contact is wired directly to the other speaker wire. See figure 5. Although this off-on switch is not really necessary, it tends to hold down the noise level in the layout room.

At each operator key + speaker location, the key and speaker wires are terminated in a terminal block mounted on the backside of the vertical L-girder board. The bus wires run from the dispatcher's office where the oscillator is mounted to, and through, these terminal blocks. Terminal blocks facilitate extension, insertion or repairs of the bus and equipment wiring. I strongly recommend them.

That's it. It is really very straightforward basic electrical wiring. If you decide to do this, you will see that the whole process is a lot easier in execution than in explanation.

The oscillator and power supply will be the subject of the next part of the series. 🏠

The 2010 Scout Jamboree's Railroading Merit Badge Class

Article and photographs by Don Jennings
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

HAVE YOU EVER had to do a Railroading Merit Badge Class Session for 40,000 Boy Scouts? The Railroading Merit Badge was one part of the "Merit Badge Midway" where up to 120 merit badges were being instructed to the Scouts.

I was assigned as a Railroading Merit Badge Staff Counselor to the 2010 National Scout Jamboree held at Fort AP Hill in Virginia from July 23rd to August 4th. The National Jamboree



Photo 1: Station 1 – a set up of train cars (a gondola car) from each scale; from the smallest to the largest size.

recruited 64 BSA Counselors/Presenters just for the Railroading Merit Badge. This is not to say every merit badge had 60 counselors. A lot of work had to be accomplished prior to Boy Scouts from all over the United States that would be arriving by planes, buses and in automobiles.

At the Railroading Merit Badge site, there were six "stations" (tents in the sizes of about 20 foot by 20 foot). Each tent was a phase the Scouts had to pass to fulfill the requirement of the badge.

Station One: was an INTRODUCTION TO RAILROADING – how and when railroads started in the USA. There was also a setup of train cars (a gondola car) from each scale –from the smallest to the largest size. See photo 1.

Station Two: OPERATION LIFESAVER – probably the most important part of merit badge. This deals with the education of students and adults in regard to train and road crossing safety. It makes the public aware of passive warning devices such as railroad signs on the roadside and those painted on the streets and highways. There are also the active warning devices such as the flashing lights, the clanging bells and the moving of crossing gates used to alert drivers and pedestrians of approaching trains.

Station Three: RAIL INDUSTRY – identification and the uses of rolling stock and locomotives used on today's railroads.

Station Four: AMTRAK AND PASSENGER RAIL – about the purpose of Amtrak and the various types of rail traffic in use in the USA. Scouts also learned how to read and use a timetable for a train travel trip of 500 miles or more including explanation of services and accommodations while traveling on the train and at destinations.

Station Five: COMMUNICATION AND SIGNALS – included signal identification with the use of visual hand and light and sound signals and their meanings.

Technically when the Scouts finished these first five Stations, they had all the requirements for the merit badge. Although there was one more station: a TIME SAVER SWITCHING CONTEST. This was the fun part of the badge and one that most Scouts enjoyed the best. Setup were 25 one foot by six foot switching layout tables for the Scouts to try their luck and skill at a switching layout puzzle. All of the tables were identically built and designed. See photo 2.

The Scouts had to move two of the four cars from where they were set up to the finish location using a preset speed on the power supply and a double pole double throw toggle plus DC power track turnouts. The Scouts had five minutes to test their skills navigating the switches against other Scouts who had done this and return to the end location. The best score I had for one scout was three minutes and four seconds. Each day's winner received a donated train set. Those winners then competed on the switching layouts at the end of the Jamboree for a two-day Amtrak



Photo 2: The author stands in front of one of the switching layout tables set up for the Scouts to try their luck and skill at a switching layout puzzle.

Rail pass in the USA for a family of four people.

When attending a National Jamboree, every Scout Troop/Council, Region, or State designs an archway or gateway to erect and

compete in a prize-winning category. A lot of these gateways are very ornate and creative in design. The entranceway for Railroad-ing Merit Badge was a Black Northfolk Southern Diesel Locomotive. I have to confess about this as being true and not true. Actually it was a 40 Foot tractor-trailer painted black and decorated for “Operation Lifesaver” to look like the end part of the locomotive. The road tractor was pulled away and then a bench-work of plywood, sheet metal, and angle iron pieces as supports were put into place to erect the NS Diesel Locomotive Cab number 2010. See picture 3. This took a couple of days of many people building this structure. This was used as the Railroad-ing Merit Badge office and also for the Scouts to register



Photo 3: Volunteers stand in front of the “locomotive”.

for the badge before starting on the six stations circuit that would complete their Railroad-ing Merit Badge. When asked where the “Merit Badge Midway” was, a lot of Scouts replied, “Just look for the black ‘diesel’ locomotive and our group is -----.”

As counselors, we worked all ten days and with at least a couple of days off. These day offs were used for patch trading (the BIG thing at National Jamborees) or visiting other regions and activities in and around the vast Fort AP Hill Jamboree area. This was the 100th Anniversary of the Boy Scouts of America and both an honor and privilege to be part of. The next National Jamboree will be in West Virginia in 2013. 📍

Extra Knuckle

By James Reilly
Potomac Division/HO Scale

LAST YEAR, I ATTENDED the Railfan Weekend in Temple, Texas sponsored by the Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum. The BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) Railway provided two locomotives with a crew to explain the normal shut down and start up procedures. The crew was extremely helpful answering all questions.

One was why was a coupler knuckle mounted on the truck. The engineman explained using the following scenario. The train is running along smoothly when suddenly the emergency air is drained, and the train stops. The engineer checks the locomotive while the conductor climbs down to inspect the rest of the train. The trouble is soon located. It is a broken knuckle on a coupler. This information is radioed to the engineer who selects one of

the two knuckles located on the side frame of the locomotive trucks. A “D” and a “F” because of the difference on the rolling stock in the train (pictured here). He drops the new (replacement) knuckle beside the track and marks it with a lighted fusee. Then he moves the train forward “dragging” the conductor on the last car up to the fusee.



The conductor makes the repair by securing the coupler lift bar in the up or open position. It has been known for him to do this by using his belt to hold the bar in (the up) position. The broken knuckle is then replaced and the train is backed until reconnected. Once the repair is completed and the train is hooked to the rear section, air lines are reconnected and the train resumes its trip once the air pressure is pumped up and the conductor has returned to the cab. 📍

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS:

Due to publishing deadlines the contest results, photographs and articles from the convention will not be published until the January/February 2011 issue. If you have an article or something you would like to see published, please contact me as soon as possible so space can be made available. All of my contact information is listed on page 2.

Thank you,
Steve Kindig, Editor

Carolina Piedmont Division Takes Their Trains To Work at the Cary Senior Center

By Don Jennings
Carolina Piedmont/HO Scale

LAST YEAR (November 17, 2009) from 1 PM until 4 PM was a busy time period for the Cary Senior Center. It was there that the CPD 13 held a train show as a THANK YOU to the Cary Senior Center for being our host and providing us with a room for meetings. CPD 13 members appreciated this very much and so we decided to say THANK YOU in our own special way.

CPD 13 members who attended were Gary Holly, Gene Sing, Vic Bitleris, John Janosko, Ray Lambrecht and myself.

There was Gary with an HO Scale model of a water tower he was scratch building, Gene and John and Vic were helping operate the CPD club shelf layout. Ray brought his Railroad Lantern Collection and Railroad Stock Certificates. I brought my popular HO Scale switching layout that I take to train shows and Merit Badge Clinics.

A woman showed up to tell a few CPD 13 members about some model train equipment she wanted to sell. A grandfather allowed his two young grandsons to try my switching layout and judging by their smiles they enjoyed it very much.

People were looking and judging pictures at another part of the senior center and then strolled into our room to see what was going on there. They stayed for a while looking at all the railroad and model railroad things. Many were impressed and some had stories to tell us of their family members who worked for a railroad and their jobs.

All-in-all it was a good day. 

Operating On The Easton & Potomac: Don't fix problems! An Advanced Operations Philosophy

By Keith Stillman
James River Division/HO Scale

DON'T FIX PROBLEMS? That's right fix problems! At least don't fix problems in a way inconsistent with the real (1:1) world.

Before we delve into the "Don't fix problems" philosophy we should determine why you hold operating sessions. Do you hold operating sessions to run trains or run a railroad? If the main purpose of your sessions is to run trains then you can skip the rest of this article. You should fix or remove any and all problems, as they occur to keep the trains running and the fun flowing. But if your goal is to run a railroad the "Don't fix problems" philosophy will force you and your crew to solve problems, to run the railroad.

There is one critical prerequisite you will need before practicing the "Don't fix problems" philosophy and that is a smooth running layout with rolling stock that is up to standards in every way. If you are not surprised and upset when rolling stock derails or engines stop running then your layout is not ready for this operating philosophy. But if you are to this point with the reliability of your layout and rolling stock then the "Don't fix problems" philosophy can enhance your operating sessions by allowing you to run the railroad.

OK so what does the "Don't fix problems" philosophy really mean?

Only do things on the layout that a real railroad can do in the same amount of fast clock time.

For example: don't pickup up cars that have bad couplers and remove them from the layout. Don't pickup up engines that stop running and remove them from the layout. Don't re-rail cars without some time penalty. Don't remove broken rolling stock and if you do only do it to fix it and then don't allow the associated train to leave until the car is back in service no matter what it does to the schedule. Don't go around after a session and place cars where they should have gone in the first place. And unless you have seen train crews pulling on engines or pushing on train cars to provide helper assistance then the 0-5-0 helper is out. In fact most of the time 0-5-0ing should be a no no! If you reach for a piece of rolling stock then you should have determine there is no other way to handle the issue.

How does the "Don't fix problems" philosophy look in the model world? Here are a couple of examples that have occurred on the Easton & Potomac over more than fifty sessions and what was done to address them.

One of the first instances where I used the "Don't fix problems" philosophy was when the turntable at the main engine facility

broke during a session. A quick look at the problem determined it could not be repaired during the session. So instead of 0-5-0ing the motive power stuck on the wrong side of the turntable, we ran the railroad with the motive power that was available and that wasn't much. To address this problem trains had to be either delayed or cancelled, but with the goal of providing as much freight and passenger service as possible. We ran the railroad with what we had even though there was plenty of perfectly good motive power just a few 0-5-0s away.

During another session (actually more than one before I determined I had a bad power isolator) we lost control of one engine. It would happen every time it entered this one power block. No other engine was affected. Since we could regain control after it exited the block we allowed the engine to act as a runaway engine (which it was) until we could regain control. It was then parked on the nearest siding and another engine dispatched to take its place. The dispatcher then wrote orders to get the runaway back to the main engine terminal. Operational problem solved.

No matter how good you are with rolling stock construction and maintenance, problems will occur. Things like coupler alignment or loss of coupler springs will cause the inability to couple to a car. Don't 0-5-0 this car and remove it from the layout! Figure out how to get it somewhere out of the way (using only the layout's motive power) and then bad order it or delay the train until the coupler problem is fixed. I have had this happen several times and the tendency is to pick the car up and remove it from the consist. Again DON'T! Fix the coupler between sessions, if necessary, and continue the car movement during the next session.

During my 52nd session a draft gearbox screw broke on the only passenger coach the railroad owns. It needed to be fixed if any passenger coach service was to be provided that day. This did require removing the car and taking it to the workbench where it was fixed. (This was one of those few acceptable 0-5-0 times.) However, the passenger train did not leave until the car was returned and if the car could not have been fixed during the session it would have been returned broken. The Thorny Point yardmaster would have had to deal with it and no passenger coach service would have been provided during the session. *(If the car could not have been fixed during the session we would have pushed the car onto the turntable, rotated to get the good coupler where the car could be coupled and then moved it to White Hall for repairs. The car would have been repaired between sessions. An extra would have been scheduled at the beginning of the next session to move the car back to Thorny Point to resume service. This one problem would have provided plenty of operating variety.)*

The 0-5-0 helper is another habit that is hard to break. If the engine starts slipping the only acceptable options should be either backing up to get a running start, asking for a helper or doubling the hill. All provide operating variety.

And finally don't go around and move cars that have been miss-spotted to their correct location. Especially don't do this during a session via 0-5-0ing. And resist doing this between sessions unless it is a requirement for staging your layout. Use the next session to get these miss-spotted cars to their correct location.

Of course all of the problems you will experience during an

operating session will not lend themselves to a solution similar to the real (1:1) world. For example: when a model engine stops running it resembles something more like a bolder than a dead engine. It is not easy to have another piece of motive power move a dead piece of motive power in the model world. So here dispatching an engine to the location of the dead engine and then 0-5-0ing the dead engine to an out of the way location is acceptable as long as the assisting engine covers the track necessary to get the 0-5-0ed engine to its new resting place. If the spirit of the problem and its resolution are observed, then the "Don't fix problems" philosophy has not been violated.

It is hard to resist the impulse to pick up the offending piece of rolling stock or motive power and get it out of the way. I still find myself doing this. However, I usually then place the item back on the layout and turn the problem back over to the crew member that brought it to my attention. Even though all problems will not lend themselves to resolution mimicking the real (1:1) world many will and the "Don't fix problems" philosophy calls for doing just that; mimicking real (1:1) world solutions on the layout.

Remember the "Don't fix problems" philosophy is simply:

Only do things on the layout that a real railroad can do in the same amount of fast clock time.

Following the "Don't fix problems" philosophy will provide unplanned situations for you and your crew to resolve and hopefully make operating sessions more realistic. It will force you to run a railroad!

The Easton & Potomac is always looking for new operators and is on the web at www.easton-and-potomac.com and <http://eastonpotomac.blogspot.com/>. 



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Coming Events

November 7th. Potomac Division layout tour in Germantown, MD. 1 PM till 4 PM. For more information contact Brian Sheron at bwsheron@mac.com or (301) 349-5754.

November 13th. New Jersey Division meeting. Held at Buena Vista Municipal Bldg., US 40 in Buena Vista, NJ. Clinics from 9 AM till Noon. Layouts open from 1 till 4 PM. For more information, contact Bob Clegg at (856) 696-0463 or BobcatCS@comcast.net.

November 13th. 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.

December 5th. Potomac Division layout tour in Rockville, MD. 1 PM till 4 PM. For more information, contact Brian Sheron at bwsheron@mac.com or (301) 349-5754.

December 4th & 5th. Severna Park Model Railroad Club Open House. Held in the B & A Train Station on the bike trail, 3 Riggs Road in Severna Park, MD. Noon till 5 PM each day. Admission free but donations welcomed. For more information, contact Sam Shepherd (410) 647-6077 or Frank Winner (410) 647-3335.

December 4th & 5th. GATSME Model Railroad Club Open House. Located at Prospect and Madison Aves in Fort Washington, PA (Just off exit 339 (old#26) PA Turnpike). This is a 40' x 50' museum-quality HO layout, based on Pennsylvania during the steam-to-diesel transition era of the early to mid 1950s. During shows, the mix of trains may include more modern equipment as well. Up to six trains (sometimes more) operate simultaneously on the East-West mainline, plus locals over multiple branch lines. Over 50 years of model railroading on display! Noon - 4 PM both days. Admission is free but donations are appreciated. For more information, visit www.gatsme.org or call (215) 646-2033. (Future open houses occur in January and March.)

December 11th. 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.

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 website for updates or to get more information. Please see the publication deadlines on page 16 to make sure your event is published on time. 

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

Andrew R. Dodge – *Master Builder – Cars*
Andrew R. Dodge – *Master Builder – Scenery*
Andrew R. Dodge – *Model Railroad Civil Engineer*
Andrew R. Dodge – *Model Railroad Electrical Engineer*
Andrew R. Dodge – *Chief Dispatcher*
Andrew R. Dodge – *Model Railroad Author*
Don Engel – *Chief Dispatcher*
Don Engel – *Association Volunteer*
Scott CR Henry – *Chief Dispatcher*
Scott CR Henry – *Association Volunteer*
Scott CR Henry – *Model Railroad Author*
Pete LaGuardia – *Association Volunteer*
Ernest H. Little – *Association Volunteer*
William R. Lyders – *Chief Dispatcher*
Robert G. McKeever, II – *Association Volunteer*
Robert B. Rodriguez – *Association Volunteer*

Division 4 – Tidewater

John Fallon – *Golden Spike*
N. David Hudson – *Association Volunteer*
William C. Miller – *Association Volunteer*
Christopher Stickney – *Association Volunteer*

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

James Allen – *Association Volunteer*

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

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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. The editor 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. Upon receiving any submission the editor will also confirm receipt and at a later date indicate the anticipated edition the submission will appear in **The Local**. If you do not receive a postcard or e-mail within two weeks please resend your submission or contact the editor by phone.

<u>Publication Schedule:</u>	<u>Articles/Callboard items due to Editor by:</u>
Jan/Feb	December 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr	Feb 1st
May/June	Apr 1st
Jul/Aug	Jun 1st
Sept/Oct	Aug 1st
Nov/Dec	Oct 1st

If you are interested in advertising with the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association please contact the Editor, as listed on page 2. The current advertising rates for **The Local** are as follows and must include camera ready art (jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats):

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