

# The Local

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Number 1

## Cardboard Is Your Friend

*Photographs and article by Keith Stillman  
James River Division/HO Scale*

**T**HE CURRENT EASTON AND POTOMAC is a double deck layout in a 16 x 18 foot room. While it has been operational for over six years and has held over 75 operating sessions something was missing and that was structures. Anyone that is building or has built a large layout knows it takes a lot of structures. And anyone who has built structures knows it takes a long time to build a lot of them.

I had more pressing issues on the layout than building structures so I used blocks of wood with names written on them as stand-ins for the structures to indicate where the various businesses and stations would be. Since I had the conceptual image of the layout these were fine for me. But for my operators without my conceptual image they were just blocks of wood.

One day I was working on a Central Valley through truss bridge kit that was going to be highly modified to include offset sides. I made full size drawings of the desired bridge and was about to begin the construction process when my wife suggested I build a cardboard mockup. See photo 1.

Great idea! I don't know why I listened to her this time but I did and I'm glad I did.-It took about two days using my full size drawings to make the cardboard mockup and set it in place. (This was much quicker than the actual kit.)

After a few modifications were made to the cardboard mockup construction of the final bridge was started. The mockup was referenced during the construction and greatly helped with the finished product. See photo 2.

The cardboard mockup stood in for the finished bridge for two

months. In fact some of my operators said if I just painted the mockup it would be fine and the Central Valley kit would not be needed. (This is the one drawback to mockups; you may never replace them with the actual kit!)

The next time it occurred to me to build a cardboard mockup was when I started on a background building kit. Since I had already laid the track and had no intention of relaying it I would need to modify the depth of the building to fit. It was back to my wife's suggestion of building a mockup. Once the mockup was built and fitted between the backdrop and track it was a simple process to take the measurements off the mockup and modify the kit.

And that brings us to the purpose of this article. Cardboard mockups are almost as good as the finished product. They are just as good as the finished product for providing a sense of size and location

and they take substantially less time to construct. Cardboard is your friend!

All you need to build cardboard mockups is a sharp knife, some cardboard and a hot glue gun. I use packing box cardboard for most of my mockups. It is rigid and has a fairly large end-gluing surface. I use hot glue to assemble the mockup because it is fast. And I use the kit pieces to set the shape and size of the mockup so the mockup will be full size (height, width and length) to the kit.

After I completed the cardboard mockup for the first back-



**Photo 1: A cardboard mockup of the Central Valley bridge kit sitting in place.**

continued on page 4

# The Local

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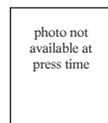


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All subscription information, advertising rates and publication deadlines are now located on page 16.

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

# From The Business Car

By John Janosko  
MER President

**B**Y THE TIME you read this column it will be 2012. I hope you had a very good 2011 and a very prosperous new year in 2012.

For everyone who attended the MER convention in Cary, I hope you had a good time and had a chance to see old friends and to meet some new people that were attending an MER convention for the first time. Being co-chairman for the convention, I was not able to attend many clinics but from the feedback we did get, it seems that 95 percent of the attendees liked the variety and the large numbers to choose from.

The prototype and layout tours were well attended and about the only complaint I did hear about was that there was not enough time to do everything. The committee worked hard to make this one of the best Regional conventions and I believe we met our goals. We also had some great facilities at the Embassy Suites and they cooperated with the convention committee even when we had some last minute changes. If you were unable to attend, you need to come next year when it is in the Tidewater area of Virginia. From what information I have seen, it will be as good as Cary.

Remember to thank the Division people that put on a convention. It takes a lot of time and effort plus planning at least a year in advance to make sure that everything goes smoothly for the convention attendee. You can also thank PJ Mattson and Bob Price for all the time they put in as the registrar and assistant to make sure that when you arrive at the convention your package has all you tickets and booklets. Remember, volunteers do all these jobs and a thank you goes a long way in making them feel that their time was well spent.

At the board meeting we voted to donate \$7,500.00 to the

NMRA for digitizing photos, which will be available to all NMRA members. See Mike Brestel's letter in this issue for more information. It may seem like a lot of money but it is going for a very good cause.

We are also looking for an official photographer for the MER. Steve August has been our photograph for the past several years and has recently been transferred out of the MER territory by his company. If you are interested, please contact myself or any one of the Directors that are on page two of **The Local**.

One of the things that was on the agenda at our board meeting in October was on how do we add people to the rolls of the MER. Bob Clegg, the superintendent of Division 1 (New Jersey) had some very interesting points on membership. I asked Bob if he would be interested in being the guest writer for the March/April issue of **The Local**. He agreed to write a column and hopefully it will give everyone some ideas on how we can add to our membership rolls. If we are to survive into the future, we need to add some new blood to the MER and NMRA. Hopefully YOU can bring someone along to the Division and then to one of the conventions.

In November, I was invited to attend the James River Divisions meeting in Richmond, VA and to put on a clinic. I would like to thank Robert Alvis for the invite and for everyone that attended; it was a very enjoyable Saturday for myself and I hope it was a shared feeling by everyone.

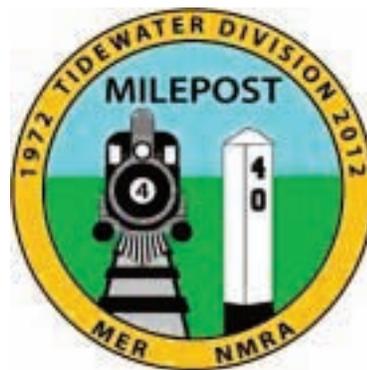
Remember now that the weather is cold you can spend some time building those kits you had been putting off during the summer and you can also spend some time sprucing up your layout.

Happy Railroading. 🚂

## Election Time

By Bob Minnis

Next year is a national election. The MER will also have an election for the four top offices: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Nominations are due to the Nominating committee before April 15. Any interested MER member interested in serving in one of these positions needs to submit a 200 word Candidates Statement and a photo. These items should be sent to the Nominations Committee (see page 2) prior to the deadline. Serving in these offices count towards the requirement for an AP certificate as an Association Official.



Mark your calendars for Milepost 40, the 2012 MER convention to be held October 18th -21st. in Suffolk, VA. Look for more information in upcoming issues!!

# Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR  
MER Business Manager

I TRUST OUR MER MEMBERS and friends had a good *Model Railroad Month* followed by a wonderful holiday season. This is always a good time to share our hobby with family, friends and fellow model railroaders. Unfortunately I didn't get my trains running around the Christmas tree this year. OK... so it would have been a big trolley.

Each New Year brings to mind statistics of what has happened during the past year. Our active membership shrank this past year to a total of just over 2,000, a loss of a couple hundred. At this writing, we have subsidized 454 Rail Pass applications. 29 percent of those Rail Pass members have since converted to regular membership, with another 9 percent still within their 6-month trial membership.

The number of members enjoying the printed and mailed ver-

sion of this newsletter has decreased over the year to 46 percent of active membership. Another 20 percent keep posted with the Region's activities through the free electronic version of our newsletter.

I took another look at the ages of our membership. Of the 1,700 active members who have registered their birth date with NMRA National and the Region, the average age increased to 64 1/2. No surprise there!

Another little piece of statistical fun: We have the modeling scales registered for 733 active members. The distribution changed very little from last year with 78 percent in HO scale, 10 percent in N scale, 8 percent in O scale, and the remaining 4 percent divided up between G, S and Z scales. (The scales have been simplified to base scales and only primary modeling scales have been tabulated.)

As we enter this New Year, get out all those stalled modeling projects and start enjoying your hobby of model railroading. As always *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. A current address on file saves the MER some money.

Best wishes for the New Year of *model railroading*. 📧

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## Cardboard Is Your Friend continued from page 1

ground building I decided to build mockups for all of the unfinished kits I had in inventory. Some of the mockups needed to be modified from the original kit dimensions. This was especially true of the other backdrop buildings that also needed to be modi-



**Photo 2: Final Central Valley bridge kit modified and sitting in place.**

fied to fit between the backdrop and the already laid track. But now these mockups can also be used to modify the final kit.

Once the cardboard mockups were completed I placed them on the layout where I had envisioned they would go. Some worked. Others didn't. I moved the mockups around until I found locations that worked. See photo 3.

One side benefit of making these cardboard mockups and placing them on the layout is it gives the operators a better feel for the final look. They are able to relate better to the towns, businesses and stations they are working.

Cardboard mockups will also show up issues with access to the rolling stock during operating sessions that will need to be fixed before the final kit is installed.

Building cardboard mockups takes very little time but the benefits are enormous! Give it a try.

The Easton And Potomac is always looking for new operators and is on the web at [www.easton-and-potomac.com](http://www.easton-and-potomac.com) and <http://eastonpotomac.blogspot.com/>. 📧



**Photo 3: Four mockups can be seen in this photo of Thorny Point. In the front is a cardboard mockup of the Oregon Rail Supply kit of the Menomonee Falls Depot. Behind that is a cardboard mockup of Walthers Plant No. 4 background building. An on the right behind the white mockup of the steamer Easton is a cardboard mockup of a to be scratch built backdrop structure.**

# 2012 NMRA REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

Soak up some modeling and clinics from different areas!!!

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This is an overview of upcoming regional conventions through 2012. This listing is as complete as I can get it by deadline time and I am not responsible for incomplete information or moved links. ~S.K.*

<u>DATES:</u>	<u>REGION:</u>	<u>CITY/STATE:</u>	<u>WEB SITE:</u>
May 2-5	(Joint) Pacific Coast Region (PCR) & Pacific Northwest Region (PNR)	Medford, OR	<a href="http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2012/">www.pcrnmra.org/conv2012/</a>
May 26-29	Mid-Central Region (MCR)	Pittsburgh, PA	<a href="http://www.highlinetopittsburgh.org">www.highlinetopittsburgh.org</a>
May 14-16	Sunshine Region (SSR)	Winter Haven, FL	
May 18-20	Thousand Lakes Region (TLR)	Sioux Falls, SD	<a href="http://www.thousandlakesregion.org">www.thousandlakesregion.org</a>
May 30-June 3	Mid-Continent Region (MCoR)	St. Louis, MO	<a href="http://www.gatewaynmra.org/2012/">www.gatewaynmra.org/2012/</a>
June 1-3	Southeastern Region (SER)	Gatlinburg, TN	<a href="http://www.ser-nmra.org/convention/2012-gatlinburg-convention">www.ser-nmra.org/convention/2012-gatlinburg-convention</a>
June 6-10	Lone Star Region (LSR)	Houston, TX	
June 8-10	Rocky Mountain Region (RMR)	Chama, NM	<a href="http://www.bighornmixed.com">www.bighornmixed.com</a>
<b>July 29-Aug 4</b>	<b>NMRA CONVENTION</b>	<b>Grand Rapids, MI</b>	<b>“Grand Rails 2012” – <a href="http://www.gr2012.org">www.gr2012.org</a></b>
September 6-9	Northeastern Region (NER)	Syracuse, NY	<a href="http://empirejunction.org/">http://empirejunction.org/</a>
October 18-21	Mid-Eastern Region (MER)	Suffolk, VA	“Milepost 40” – Web site and more details in next issue!
October 19-21	British Region (BR)	Kegworth, nr. Derby	

## MER Archivist Update

*By Bob Price  
Archivist and Director*

I want to thank everyone for their input and positive feedback on the effort to create a digital backup of the paper documents in the MER archives. It is good to know that the value of the project is understood by the membership. At this time I am happy to report that all of the documents in the archive have been scanned into PDF documents and secured in a location separate from the actual archives. The project has already assisted in answering several research requests, allowing me to perform a search on a computer instead of reading stacks of paper.

With the completion of the scanning project, I have embarked on a project suggested by our Business Manager. We are expanding the archive to include division newsletters. The plan is to store only electronic copies of these documents. The first step was to download and organize all of the available newsletters from each division's website and the MER Yahoo group. With that completed, I reached out to several members of the neighboring Philadelphia Division to find out what newsletters may exist that are not available on their website. Eric Dervinis responded by delivering to me a stack of newsletters that he has saved over the years. If anyone can assist with this effort in their own division, please contact me (see page 2) and let's see what we can coordinate. Thanks.

# Master Model Railroader #470

By Charlie Flichman



Charlie Flichman

**O**N MY FIRST CHRISTMAS, one of my gifts was a new Lionel O gauge Blue Comet Passenger set. This set plus my father's Lionel #150 engine and three Ives passenger cars and a Carlisle & Finch streetcar made up the family Christmas garden for many years to come. About age six, I received a Marx wind-up freight train set. Around age ten, I purchased a Lionel 2-6-2 freight train set, which was added to with other Lionel equipment up until the time I graduated from high school. Also around age ten, I started getting **Model Railroader** magazine. Trains were put away due to college and the military service, serving part of my time in Germany. There I did purchase and built a HO Marklin diesel and several freight cars kits. A few Marklin passenger cars were also obtained. These were and are the only HO equipment that I have ever had and still have.

After the military and getting married, I decided that I enjoyed the size of the Lionel equipment, but wanted to do scale modeling. I purchased an All Nation boxcar kit and have never looked back. Our first "abode" was the second floor apartment of a private home. The owner allowed me to build a small switching layout in his basement. After a few years of being in our first home, I started a 24' X 36' standard gauge O scale layout based on the C&O. Around 1972, Kemtron introduced a On3 Shay kit. I thought that would be nice running on a little narrow gauge branch line from up in hills connecting to the C&O. More on this later.

I first joined the NMRA and the MER in 1965, attending many of the regional and several National conventions. When the Mt. Clare Division of the MER was formed, I was one of the founding members. I also served on the main committee for the 1978 MER regional convention in Baltimore, Maryland. Mine and several other Harford County, Maryland layouts were open as an extra cost tour as a part of the NMRA National held in Washington, DC in 1982. I have always enjoyed the conventions for all of the knowledge learned from clinics and gathering of friends, some of whom you only see at conventions.

The breakup of the Bell System caused me to have to move from Maryland to North Carolina in 1984. By this time the Maryland O scale C&O standard gauge layout had been taken over by narrow gauge. 95 percent of the standard gauge track was dual

gauge, remember it was only going to be a little branch line. After getting settled in our new home in NC, I had a BIG decision to make, standard gauge or narrow gauge. After much thought, I wound up with two layouts, one inside of the other. I have a 27' X 29' U-shaped table with O standard gauge on the outside (59" radius) and On3 on inside (42" radius). There is a 58" nod under to pass from one layout to the other. My layouts were open for the 1991 National O Scale Convention held in High Point, NC. I had just gotten the narrow gauge mainline running. My "two" model railroads appeared in the March 2011 issue of the **Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette**. These layouts were open for the 2011 National Narrow Gauge Convention in Hickory, NC with much more scenery and scratch built structures.

Around 1988 when my NMRA renewal came up, I decided that as an O scaler, I was getting more from other model railroad organizations and did not rejoin. North Carolina for an O scaler was an oasis. In 1992, I joined the local Winston-Salem HO model railroad club just because they knew the meaning of the word "train". One of the members of this club was Al Phillips, MMR, an active NMRA member and former MER President. I knew Al from my earlier NMRA days. He got me to rejoin both the NMRA and the MER in 1994. Several decisions were made at this time – I decided to become Life member of both organizations and Al being a MMR got me started in the Achievement Program. My first AP's were Civil and Electrical Engineering and Model Railroad Author in 1995. I earned Association Volunteer in 1997 and Cars in 2002. In 2005, I was asked to take over as the MER AP Manager, and trying to give back to the NMRA some of what I have gotten out of the NMRA, I accepted. I have enjoyed doing this job and have made many new friendships. Finally in 2011, I achieved my last two certificates in Structures and Scenery and earned MMR # 470. Two of my structures have appeared in articles in **O Scale Trains** magazine, *Scratchbuilding A Roundhouse* in July/Aug 2004 and *A Backwoods Sawmill* in Mar/Apr 2007.

Oh, that Lionel Blue Comet, I have it on display and also have all of it's boxes, track and the original receipt from 1936. 📄

## Some Observations on Judging Models Made from Kits

By Brian W. Sheron,  
AP Chairman – Potomac Division/HO Scale

**NOTE:** The article was reviewed by Martin Brechbiel, the MER Contest Chairman, and Charlie Flichman, the MER AP Chairman.

**I**F YOU HAVE EVER CONTEMPLATED trying to earn your Master Model Railroader (MMR) Certificate, and if you have looked over the requirements, you will see that while you must earn achievement certificates in 7 of the 11 categories, it cannot be in any 7 categories. The 11 achievement categories are grouped into 4 areas: 1.) Railroad Equipment, 2.) Railroad Setting, 3.) Railroad

Construction and Operation, and 4.) Service to the Hobby and NMRA Member. To qualify for the MMR, you must receive at least one achievement award in each of the 4 areas. Thus, in order to get your MMR, you must get an achievement certificate in the Railroad equipment area, which means you must get an achievement certificate in either the "Cars" or the "Motive Power" category.

Constructing motive power, such as a steam or diesel engine, is usually (but not always) considered a bit more difficult than constructing a car. The parts are often trickier to model, might require metal-working tools such as a lathe and milling machine to make them, and often have difficult detail to model, such as rows of rivet heads. As is evidenced by the relative dearth of motive power models submitted for merit judging at conventions and elsewhere, the majority of modelers prefer to submit models in the “Cars” category for merit judging.

The requirements for the “Cars” category are that you must construct 8 models: 4 of the models must be scratch built, merit judged, and receive a merit award (earn at least 87.5 points out of 125 maximum). The other 4 models can be built from kits, but must be super-detailed. In addition, 1 of the 8 cars must be a passenger car. Note that the cars can be of any scale, and do not all have to be the same scale.

The requirements for the scratch-built cars are quite clear. The cars must be scratchbuilt. They cannot be built from a kit. They cannot be kitbashed or modified kits. This means making almost every piece from stock scratch building material (e.g., strip styrene, strip basswood, brass). Usually the only commercially made parts are the trucks, couplers, and some of the brake gear (e.g., brake wheel assembly, piston, control valve, and air tank). Some modelers will also use additional commercial parts, such as cast door hinges and coupler lift bars.

I have heard a number of modelers complain that if they build a craftsman kit, it is not considered scratch built, but if they go to the hobby shop, buy the same materials that are in the craftsman kit, duplicate each piece in the craftsman kit, then build the model from the duplicate pieces, it is considered scratch built. This is true, and if you go to the NMRA web page for the “Cars” category, the instructions discuss this and clearly explain that it acceptable.

However, if you submit a car for merit judging in a contest, say at a division, regional, or national convention, then it can be built from a kit, or it can be kitbashed. However, kit built or kitbashed cars usually earn lower points than scratchbuilt cars in a contest. Whether the judging is for a merit award or for a contest, the criteria the judges use are the same. So why is this?

First off, you need to consider how points are awarded. There are 5 judging categories, and in each category you can earn a maximum number of points. For the “Cars” category, you can earn a maximum of 40 points in the “Construction” category, a maximum of 20 points in the “Detail” category, a maximum of 25 points in the “Conformity” category, a maximum of 25 points in the “Finish and Lettering” category, and a maximum of 15 points in the “Scratch built” category. When you total all these points, the maximum a modeler could earn is 125 points. The minimum number of points you need to earn a merit award is 87.5, which is the equivalent of 70 points on a 100-point scale.

When the judges sit down to judge a car, they will have the

NMRA’s “Judging Guidelines” in front of them. These can be found at [www.nmra.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-judging-guide-lines.pdf](http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-judging-guide-lines.pdf).

In addition to describing what the judges should consider, the guidelines also provide a points matrix for each judging category.

Let’s look at how a kit built or kit-bashed model would fair against the matrix in the “Construction” category. If the model was built from a kit, or was a modified kit, then it would likely be considered in the “somewhat complex” to “moderately complex” range. If the kit was perhaps totally laser cut and readily assembled with tab and slot construction, then it will be hard for the modeler to get credit for quality and workmanship, since the manufacturer did most of the work. Thus, it is likely the model would get points somewhere in the mid to low 20’s. Of course, there is a

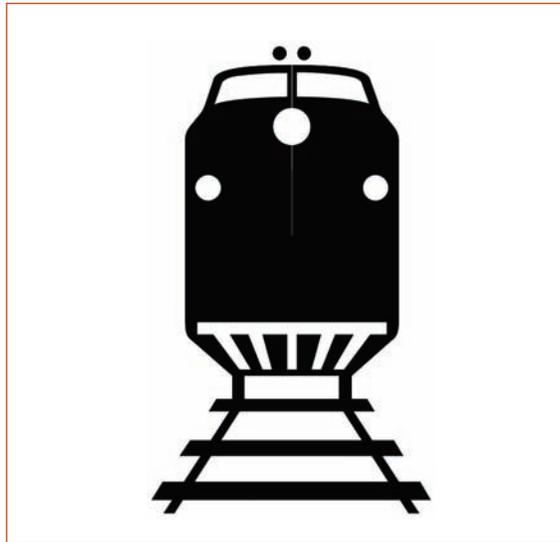
range of complexity in kits; from “shake the box” to the classic “box of sticks.” If you do choose to construct from a kit, make sure you explain to the judges in your write-up the relative complexity of the kit you used.

Now if we look at the next category, “Detail”, the matrix focuses on the amount of details you add, and how complex the details are that you have added to the model. For standard freight cars, it is quite possible that there just is not a lot of detail one can add, since a standard flat or boxcar usually just doesn’t have a lot of detail. If you are building a kit and much of the detail is molded on, then there is obviously not a lot to add. Thus, you would likely receive maybe 9-11 points in the

detail category. To gain points in this category, you would need to select a car that had a lot of detail, and it was detail that you could add. As an example, for a freight car, having operating doors would help gain points. Another way to gain points is remove molded-on detail and replace it with better and/or more correctly scaled details.

The next category is “Conformity”, and that can be tricky. Conformity focuses on how well the model replicates the prototype. What the judges first look for is the prototype. Photos and/or drawings of the prototype car are important. Even if you are freelancing a car, you should provide photos and/or drawings of similar cars so the judges can tell if your model is following typical prototype practices of the era. If you are submitting a kit -bashed car, or a car that was duplicated from a craftsman kit, submitting the plans found in the kit and/or photos of the finished model as found on the kit plans, while helpful because the judges can see what the finished model is supposed to look like, is usually not sufficient. I have found that many times, a craftsman kit does not actually duplicate or accurately represent a prototype. They may change the location of or omit lettering, omit a detail, or have a detail in the wrong location. If you are submitting a kit model, a kit-bashed model, or a replicate of a craftsman kit, make sure you have prototype photos and your model conforms to the photos.

continued on page 12



# Piedmont Crossing Contest Report

By Martin Brechbiel and Greg Meeks  
 MER General Contest Chairman and MER Model Contest Chairman  
 Photographs by Martin Brechbiel



**W**ELL, WE HAD A MUCH larger turnout of model entries than last year and a great room to display them in for all to see and enjoy. Our host, Carolina Piedmont really did a great job in setting everything up – thanks to Grif Bond, Jack Dziadul, John Janosko, Stephan Wood, and the entire convention staff for a fun convention and for making our contest experience almost painless and less stressful by providing us a spacious and more than adequately lighted room.

A special Thanks! also to those who judged the Model Contest: Bob Charles, Charlie Flichman, Chuck Hladik, Bob Minnis, and P.J. Mattson. We had enough Judges to form 3-4 person teams for each category along with a good healthy number of Apprentice Judges.

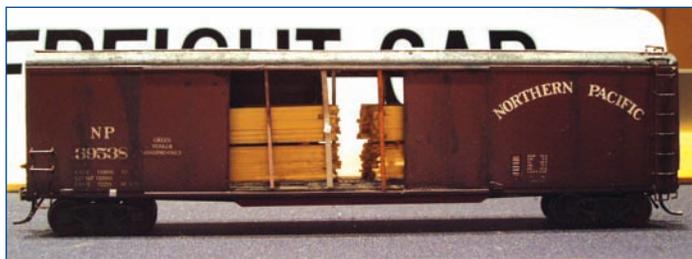
As stated before, we had a solid turnout for the Model Contest. There were 28 models in the judged contest and from that number of models, 16 received Merit Awards. And, for the first time in many years, there was at least one model entered in every category!! Great job and thanks to all the modelers for bringing their entries!

## SPECIAL AWARDS

The MER has always had a selection of Special Awards to make every year, and this year was consistent with that practice and this year marked the inaugural awarding of the

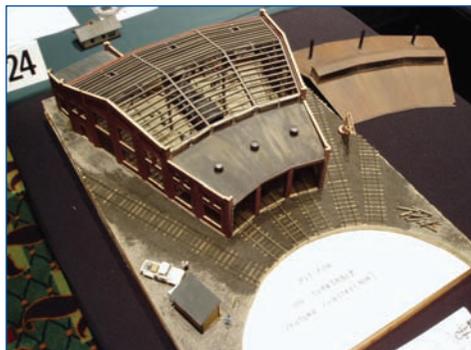
The Henry (Bud) Kaiser Award: The best weathered piece of rolling stock.

*Mathew Tompson – Northern Pacific Boxcar 39538*



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

*Daniel Fisher – Wytherville, VA Roundhouse*



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

*Mathew Tompson – Oregon Coast Railroad Boxcar*



The Philadelphia New Modeler Award: Given to the first-time entrant in the model contest with the highest point score. (A plaque and a \$25 cash prize from the Philadelphia Division!)

*Bruce De Young – Provisions Car HOn3*



Favorite Train: Chosen by popular vote.

*Pete Slugg – Consist of finished steel mill products including wire, coil, and wheels*

Pride of Dixie Award: For a piece of rolling stock from South of the Mason-Dixon Line.

*William Roman – Western Maryland Business Car #203*



MER Narrow Gauge Award  
*Philip DeChene – Pulpwood & Landing - Horse Loading*



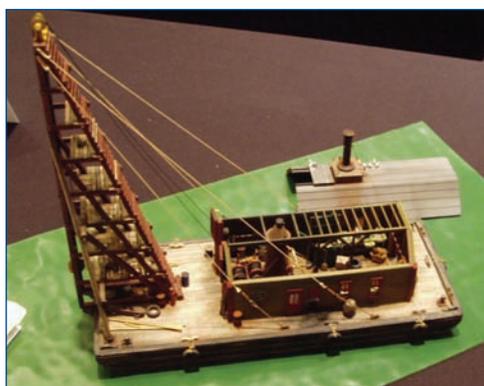
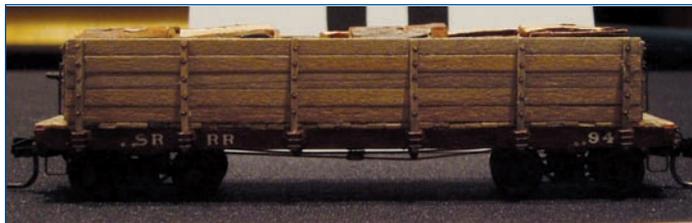
Traction: *Dick Buchan – CNS&M Coach*



The President's Award: given for engine facilities this year.  
*Daniel Fisher – Wytherville, VA Roundhouse*

Favorite Model – Popular Vote  
*Philip DeChene – Pulpwood & Landing – Horse Loading*

Freight Cars: *Bruce De Young - wood-sided gondola HOn3\**



Best in Show:  
 Given to the entry with the highest point's score in the model contest.  
*Ronald Parisi – NYC RR Floating Pile Driver*

Non-Revenue Cars: *Bruce De Young – Provisions Car HOn3\**

Caboose or Cabin Car: *Bruce De Young – HOn3 Caboose\**



## MODEL CONTEST

I really want to expressly thank and congratulate all of those modelers who entered the judged model contest.

Steam: *Charles Hladik – Shenandoah Western HOn3 2-8-0\**

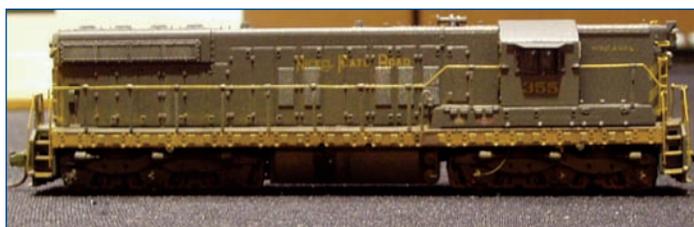


Passenger Cars: *William Roman – Western Maryland Business Car #203\**

Structures On-Line: *Daniel Fisher – Boilerhouse Coal trestle\**



Diesel: *Steve Holzheimer – NKP SD9 #355 N scale*



Structures Off-Line:  
*Gene Sing – Wood Fire Station\**



continued on page 10

Display On-Line: Philip DeChene – Pulpwood & Landing – Horse Loading\*



Display Off-Line:  
John Taylor-Hall  
– “Gramma Wolfe’s House”

Modules: Donald Jennings



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

### PHOTO CONTEST

After many years of what had appeared to be a serious decline in interest and numbers in the Photo contest, this year we had 28 quality entries!



PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC DENYNS

Best-in-Show: John Roberts – Push’n for Home

Model: J.M. Johnson – M1 near Driftwood

Prototype Steam: Robert Rousseau – Flag Coal #75

Prototype Other: Robert Rousseau – Hawks Nest WV

### ARTS & CRAFTS CONTEST

We were again surprised and delighted to see 2 entries in Arts & Crafts contest this year!

Rail: Donald Jennings – ARRW Sign

Non-Rail: Nancy DeGhetto-Murphy – Zion Majesty

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

# MER AP Milestone? and AP Tidbits

By Charlie Flichman, MMR

**A**T THE CARY REGIONAL CONVENTION, MER #1000 AP Certificate was awarded to Grif Bond. When I took the regional AP Manager job over from Roger Cason, he gave me all the AP information that he had processed. He had nothing of any activity before his term. I wrote and asked National if they had a listing of all MER AP activity from the beginning of the program on 1/1/1962. They sent me a spreadsheet of all MER AP earners since day one.

In the first days of the AP, regional numbers were not issued with the certificates. Throughout the ensuing years, regional numbers were added. As the program was handed from one Manager to the next, the same numbering system was not always continued. I took the list I got from National and by date listed everyone who had earned an AP certificate. Where there was a regional certificate number, I put it down. I added another column with the earliest certificate being number 1 and up to 1000. I continued the number system that Roger used until I would have issued certificate #700. At that point I switched over to the 1 to 1000 column and issued certificate #828.

The reason for the question mark in the title – a CD with copies of **The Local** from 1949 to 2010 has become available. After reading the May-June 1962 **Local**, I see that the first MER AP certificate was issued to Leslie T. White from Montrose, VA for Structures. Leslie White’s name doesn’t even show on the list I got from National. The second AP certificate was earned by Gene Colborn. The date on the National list is 9/15/1972, off by ten years. A good friend of mine who is an early MMR, gave me a listing of the dates on his certificates. The dates don’t agree with the National list. Reviewing other issues of **The Local**, I can come up with the list sent me by National but with many date discrepancies.

Also from the same archives CD, a correction to Rick Shoup’s article in the last issue of **The Local**. Wilson C. Wertz was the first MER AP Manager, from 1/1962 until 1/1963. Claude Owen took over in January of 1963.

Also in one of the early 1962 **Local** issues, it is mentioned that Paul Mallory was the first MER MMR. The original MER charter included New York City, Long Island and all of New Jersey. I am not sure when this was changed to MER’s present geographical boundaries. Paul is now listed in the NER. My MMR friend says that Paul even mentioned to him that he was MER’s first MMR.

So with the inclusion of Leslie T. White’s AP certificate, Grif Bond’s AP certificate should have been #1001. No matter, I think the records are as good as they are going to get.

It took MER essentially 50 years to reach AP certificate #1000. Keep the AP SOQ’s coming and let see how long it is going to take the MER to reach AP certificate #2000. 

# Piedmont Crossing Makes The Grade

*Article and Photographs by Eric Dervinis  
MER Executive Convention Chair*

**T**HE CAROLINA PIEDMONT DIVISION hosted the Mid-Eastern Region convention in 2005. That successful convention prompted them to do it again. The 2011 sequel Piedmont Crossing was an even greater success. They combined a jam-packed program of inside activities, outside activities, their own train show and one terrific hotel, the Embassy Suites Raliegh-Durham/Research Triangle.

The Embassy Suites was conveniently located on I-40, next to a shopping center filled with inexpensive restaurants. On arrival registrants were awed by a 9-story atrium and the huge koi in the lobby pond. Check-in was fast and friendly. All hotel guests receive a complimentary hot breakfast and drinks in the evening. Free food and drink makes model railroaders smile.

The MER Registration staff had its own room this year. Pre-registered attendees received their badges in seconds. The final count was 224, and that included one registrant all the way from Germany.



**Annual Business meeting audience.**

The hotel was well designed with all of the activities together. Across from registration was the division's own train show in the ballroom. Down the hall, the clinic rooms, contest room, white elephant/door prize room and live auction room. The train show had two large modular railroads and many local vendors.

It was hard to choose from 60 clinics with four in each time slot. This included a variety of make and take clinics. The Contest



**Contest Room view.**

room was very busy with entries in every category. Competing for your time and dollars, 142 items in the white elephant room – 92 sold and 50 door prizes to win. Outside of the hotel, registrants had a long list of model railroads to visit plus four outside tours. On top of all these choices, registrants had six operating sessions available on the Callboard.

The large breakfast area was a wonderful place to catch up with friends, and in the evening many members could be found in the lounge area. After three very full days of model railroading, we wrapped up the convention with a BBQ banquet in less than three hours. At 9 PM, the annual live auction began and eventually 28 lots sold.

Sunday morning started early or late as all of the clocks in the hotel fell back a week early. That left one more free breakfast, the



**Banquet view.**

annual business meeting and our final goodbyes. Many of the registrants worked in a few more model railroads before heading home.

A great convention requires a large contingent of volunteers all pulling together. Most important are those unsung volunteers that gave five minutes or an hour. Thank you one and all.

Thanks go to all of the clinicians, the owners that opened their model railroads, the staff at the outside tours, the members that held 'op sessions', the companies that provided door prizes, the train show vendors, the modular railroad volunteers and the great Embassy Suites staff.

And last but not least is the convention staff that put in untold hours planning the convention and working 18 hours days so we could have fun. That list includes Stephen Milley (Volunteers/Program), Robert Rousseau (Website), Jim Babcock (Company Store), Stephen Wood (Train Show), Bob Clegg (Program Editor), Tom Cook (Prototype Tours), Vic Biteris (Layout Tours), Jack Dziadul (Clinics), Grif Bond (Publicity/CoChair) and John Janosko (Hotel/CoChair). Coming back every year is the MER Staff, Bob Charles (Auction), Martin Brechbiel (Contest), Earl Hackett (White Elephant/Auction) and PJ Mattson (Registration). Thanks to one and all.

The MER Convention Department is striving to put on better conventions every year. Comments and suggestions are welcome at [eric@dervinis.com](mailto:eric@dervinis.com). 

Otherwise, you could be down in the 11-13 point range.

The next category, "Lettering and Finish", is probably the only category that is independent of the type of model (scratch built versus kit model, a kit-bashed model, or a craftsman kit replicate model). Cars that are a single color are usually not considered complex. The quality of the finish is also important, regardless of the type of model. Make sure there is no decal film showing, no unpainted surfaces (unless it is prototypical), no unnatural "shine", and no glue spots. If you do a good job, you should expect to get somewhere in the high teens (18-19) in points. There are several ways to gain points in this category. One is to select a car that has a more complex paint scheme (i.e., multi-color) and/or decal scheme. Another is to prototypically weather the model. Making your own decals will help gain points, and air-brushing usually results in a better finish than hand-brushing and will add points.

The last category, "Scratch built" is the one that hurts the modeler who either kit-bashed a model or just built a model from a kit. Unless almost everything was scratch built, you probably will not get more than 10 points maximum. Thus you start out in the "partly scratch built" column. If you just built the model from a kit, and made no modification and simply added details, then you would receive 0 points in this category. If you added detail, made some modifications to improve prototypically, etc., then you would be in the "partly scratchbuilt" category.

So lets see what happens when we total up the likely points a kit model or kit-bashed model would get when judged.

Construction:	20-25 points
Detail:	9-11 points
Conformity:	11-13 points
Detail:	18-19 points
Scratch built:	0-8 points
TOTAL:	58-76 points

As you can see, by not scratch building a car, it is going to be more difficult to get high points. What the modeler who builds from a kit or kitbashes needs to recognize is the categories that will normally not receive a lot of points, and focus on them to boost the points that could be awarded, or focus on those categories that are not too affected by the type of model being judged, and try to maximize the points earned in those categories, or better yet, focus on both strategies.

The bottom line is that a kit or kitbashed car can compete against a scratchbuilt car in a model contest, but it will likely be more difficult. 



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To the members of the Mid Eastern Region:

On behalf of the entire membership of the National Model Railroad Association, we'd like to thank you for your generous gift of \$7,500.00 to the NMRA's Diamond Club.

As you're well aware, one of the main goals of any Region is to add value to NMRA memberships of people in your area. With your donation to the Diamond Club, you've not only benefited your own Region's members, you've benefited the entire NMRA organization and the model railroading community as a whole. Your donation will aid us in our scanning work, and will help us continue to uncover some of the railroading treasures our Kalmbach Memorial Library holds – many of which have not been seen for decades.

In short, your donation, and the individual contributions of your members, will continue to pay dividends for generations to come.

Again, our sincere thanks for your donation and for the continuing work you do to keep the NMRA a growing, vital organization.

Mike Brestel  
NMRA President

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# 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

Robert Clegg – *Model Railroad Author*  
William H. Howard – *Chief Dispatcher*  
Frank Neufeld – *Master Builder Scenery*

### Division 2 – Potomac

John Paganoni – *Master Builder Cars*  
Mathew A. Thompson – *Master Builder Structures*

### Division 3 – Philadelphia

Earl Paine - *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**. 📄

*Congratulations*



on your  
**Achievement!**

## Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

**March 23-25, 2012**

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Malvern, PA



**Clinics ■ Model Displays ■ Vendors' Room**  
**Operating Sessions ■ Sunday Home Layout Tour**

For information, updates, or to register, go to:

[www.phillynmra.org](http://www.phillynmra.org)



# CALLBOARD

## Coming Events

**January 7th & 8th.** GATSME Model Railroad Club Annual Open House. 1,800 square feet of HO model railroad in both standard and narrow gauges. Located in the old Fort Washington (Montessori) Elementary School, Prospect and Madison Avenues, Fort Washington, PA. Noon until 4 PM each day. Everyone is welcome – bring your friends and family. Donations appreciated. In case of inclement weather check website or call us during show hours. Club phone number 215-646-2033. For more information visit [www.gatsme.org](http://www.gatsme.org).

**January 6th.** New Jersey Division home layout tour on Friday evening from 7 PM until 10 PM. Maps and directions can be obtained by emailing [BobcatCS@comcast.net](mailto:BobcatCS@comcast.net). Be sure to include your NMRA membership number and phone number for verification. Put “Friday Night Tour” in the subject of your email. For more information email [BobcatCS@comcast.net](mailto:BobcatCS@comcast.net) or call (856) 696-0463.

**January 7th.** New Jersey Divisional meet at the Haddon Township High School cafeteria located at 401 Memorial Ave. in Westmont, NJ. Registration opens at 8:30 am and the meet will begin at 9:00. This meet will have the usual coffee, contest (Detailed & Weathered Gondola Cars), door prizes, and camaraderie. The clinics will be presented as “Work in Progress.” Eight clinics will be presented simultaneously and attendees are welcome to join and leave any of them as their interests dictate or as the clinicians work on projects or lead discussions. The afternoon will feature a home layout tour from 1 PM until 5 PM, for which maps and directions will be available at the meet. For more information email [BobcatCS@comcast.net](mailto:BobcatCS@comcast.net) or call (856) 696-0463.

**January 7th.** 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.

**January 14th.** HO scale Model Railroad Open House and Display at the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Club. Located in the historic Vienna Depot of the former Washington & Old Dominion Railroad, 231 Dominion Road NE (at Ayr Hill Avenue), Vienna, VA. Hours: 1 PM until 5 PM. Admission is free (donations accepted). The layout depicts the Western North Carolina Railroad (now a portion of the Norfolk Southern) during the period of transition from steam to diesel. For more information visit [www.nvmr.org](http://www.nvmr.org) or call (703) 938-5157 (leave message).

**January 22nd & 23rd.** GATSME Model Railroad Club Annual Open House Noon until 4 PM each day. See contact info for GATSME Club.

**February 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.

**February 18th.** NVMR Model Railroad Open House. 1 PM until 5 PM. See address and contact info for NVMR Club.

**Divisions and Clubs tell MER members about your upcoming event!!** Send your FREE (limit of 25 words) 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. Please see the publication deadlines on page 16 to make sure your event is published on time. 

## CLASSIFIED

### ATTENTION ALL MER MEMBERS:

Do you have a wanted/trade/for sale item(s)? Looking for carpool 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 [stevesxpressrr@yahoo.com](mailto:stevesxpressrr@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). 

### MER position open:

**Official Photographer – Duties include shooting all model contest photos, award ceremony/winners, layouts and scenes from around convention.**

**Contact any Director or President (see contact page 2) for information and to apply.**

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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):

Callboard Ads (30-50 words) (Div. and Clubs Only)...Free	
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