

The Local

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Number 1

Milepost 40 Convention Contest Report

*By Martin Brechbiel, MER General Contest Chairman and
Greg Meeks, MER Model Contest Chair*

Photographs provided by Eric Dervinis and Martin Brechbiel

WE HAD A GOOD LEVEL of participation in the Contest Room at the **Milepost 40** Convention this year. Our host, the Tidewater Division really outdid themselves - thanks to the entire convention staff for a fun convention and for making our contest experience minimally stressful by providing us an excellently appointed spacious and well lit room.

Special thanks also to all of those donated their time on Saturday to judge the Model Contest. We were fortunate this year to be able to also have 5 MMRs, one per judging category participating as well: Bob Charles, Charlie Flichman, Bob Minnis, PJ Mattson, and the MER's newest, Ron Baile! We also were fortunate to have 2 apprentice judges this year.

While we may have not had as large a number in the Contest Room as last year, we were graced with an excellent selection of some very fine models. There were but 27 models entered with 4 being Favorite Train entries. The judged entries populated 9 categories, but there were 10 Merit Awards, and then there were 10 entries in the Photo Contest. There were no entries in the Arts & Crafts categories.

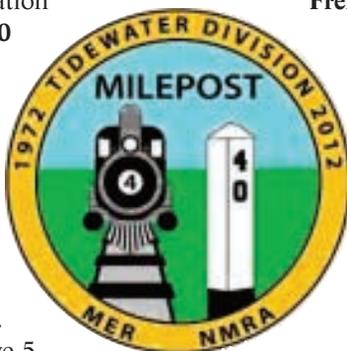
THE CONTEST WINNERS!

MODEL CONTESTS:

Steam – There were no entries!

Diesel –

- 2nd place – James Curth – F unit at the end of its life
- 1st place – Robert Rousseau – Norfolk Southern 701 70-ton switcher*



Freight Cars –

- 3rd place – Stephen Wood – Gondola
- 2nd place – Stephen Wood – Wooden Tank Car
- 1st place – Charles Day – Cattle Car*

Non-Revenue Cars –

- 3rd place – James Curth – ATSF Fuel & Water Tank Car
- 2nd place – James Curth – Work Train Steam Generator Car
- 1st place – William Roman – Western Maryland Icebreaker Car*

Caboose or Cabin Car –

- 3rd place – Charles Day – Caboose*
- 2nd place – Ron Baile – Penn-Central 18561*
- 1st place – Stephen Wood – Eight Wheel Caboose*



**Diesel, 1st place – Norfolk Southern
701 70 ton switcher**

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The Local

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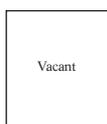
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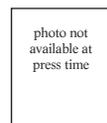
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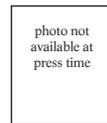
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All subscription information, advertising rates and publication deadlines are now located on page 16.



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

From The Business Car

By John Janosko
MER President

IF YOU HAVE BEEN READING my columns this year, you have probably noticed that I have spent quite a bit of time on trying to get new members for the MER and NMRA. I even asked Bob Clegg to do a guest column in the March/April issue on some of the good ideas he has been using in the New Jersey Division. Hopefully, as members of the MER you have tried some of his helpful hints.

One of the great tools we have in our new member toolbox is the Rail Pass. When you do find someone that is interested in pursuing our hobby of Model Railroading, you should try to get them to sign up for the Rail Pass. The cost is under \$10.00, but the MER pays the cost. All you need to do is to get them to sign up then get one of the officers from either your Division or the MER Board of Directors signature and then the form is sent on to Fred Miller to process the form to the NMRA. The new member will then get six issues of the **NMRA magazine** and will be able to use

all of the NMRA benefits except for voting in the elections. This is a really good way to show a new member what we are about. But your job is still not done. You will need to make sure the new member gets to your Division meetings and to also make them feel welcome. Take time at your meetings to make them feel part of your group. This is where we seem to fall down on the job. Talking to people who drop out, the biggest reason is that they feel that we do not make them feel welcome in the Division and the MER. Not all of us are as outgoing as myself and will not just get involved and start asking questions or do not mix well with strangers. If you do follow through, you will find that you now have someone who will sign up for full membership after the Rail Pass lapses. The more people we get involved in the hobby will make it more enjoyable for everyone. Hopefully you can help grow the MER.

Do not forget our annual convention in the Tidewater Region of Virginia in October. I hope to see you there. 🏠

Milepost 40 Convention Contest Report continued from page 1



Freight cars, 1st place – Cattle Car



Non-revenue, 1st place – Western Maryland Icebreaker Car

Passenger Cars –

1st place – Stephen Wood – Drover Caboose*

Structures On-Line – There were no entries!!!

Structures Off-Line –

2nd place – Mark Nietling – Kline Machine Shop

1st place – Lawton Maner – Watchman Shanty



Caboose or Cabin Car, 1st place – Caboose

Displays On-Line –

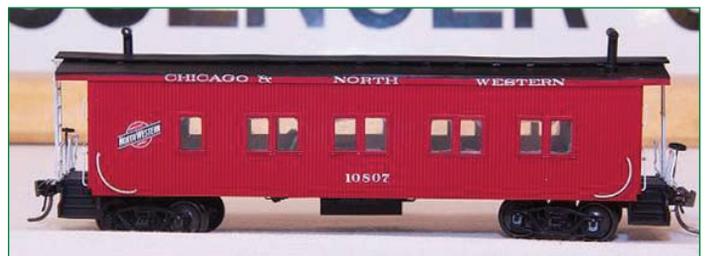
1st place – Martin Brechbiel – The Still back by the old pickle car

Displays Off-Line –

2nd place – Bill Miller – Moonshine Still

1st place – Richard Dietrichson – Blue Ridge Still*

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



Passenger car, 1st place – Dover Caboose

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Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

I TRUST OUR MEMBERS and friends had a good *Model Railroad Month* followed by a wonderful holiday season. It is always a good time to share our hobby with family and fellow model railroaders. I don't know about you, but I tried to get my trains running around the Christmas tree again this year. Well ... it was an HO trolley running past an HO Christmas tree on my new layout.

Each New Year brings to mind statistics of what has happened during the past year. Our active membership has shrunk again this past year to 1,945, over 300 less than it was 3 years ago. The loss was somewhat lessened in part by the good progress with our Rail Pass subsidy program. At this writing, we have subsidized 517 applications. 28 percent of those Rail Pass members have since converted to regular membership.

The number of members enjoying the printed and mailed version of this newsletter has decreased over the past three years from 52 percent of active membership to 42 percent. Even the

19 percent who keep posted with the Region's activities through the electronic version of our newsletter has shrunk from 22 percent from three years ago.

I took another look at the ages of our membership. Of the 1,641 active members who have registered their birth date with NMRA National and the Region, the average age has increased to 65 from 63 of three years ago. No surprise there!

Another little piece of statistical fun: We have the modeling scales registered for 1,317 active and terminated members. The distribution changed a bit from three years ago to 74 percent from 77 percent in HO scale, 11 percent steady in N scale, but 12 percent from 8 percent in O scale. The remaining 3 percent was divided between G, S and Z scales. Looks like O scale is making a modest comeback. (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*. 📧

Milepost 40 Convention Contest Report continued from page 3



**Structures Off-line,
1st place –
Watchman Shanty**



**Displays On-line,
1st place –
The Still back by
the old pickle car**

PHOTO CONTEST

Prototype: Steam –

2nd place – Robert Rousseau – N&W 1134

1st place – Sharon Prescott – Cleaning Up of N&W 1218

Prototype: Non-Steam –

3rd place – Chris Stickney – Norfolk Southern GE
D9-40CW 9668 & 8990Car

2nd place – Sharon Prescott – Snowy Day @ EBT –
Switchstand with snow

1st place – Sharon Prescott – #1 Switch Engine @
Newport Steel in Kentucky

Best-in-Show –

Sharon Prescott – Cleaning Up of N&W 1218

THE SPECIAL AWARDS

The MER has always prided itself on the Special Awards given out in parallel to the judged model contest.

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

James Curth – F unit at the end of its life

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.

Martin Brechbiel – 4-Wheel Trolley Snow Sweeper*



Blue Lantern Award – 4-Wheel Trolley Snow Sweeper

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

Richard Dietrichson – Blue Ridge Still*

The Henry (Bud) Kaiser Award: given the best-detailed and weathered judged model entered.

Ron Parisi – NYC 46' Gondola with AC&F Cement Canisters*



The Henry (Bud) Kaiser Award – NYC 46' Gondola with AC & F Cement Cnaisters

Pride of Dixie Award: Sponsored by the James River Division. This year's objective was a Still!

Richard Dietrichson – Blue Ridge Still*



Pride of Dixie Award – Blue Ridge Still

Ray Bilodeau MER Narrow Gauge Award:

Charles Day – Caboose (HON3)*

Favorite Train: chosen by popular vote!

Bill Miller – SBV MoW Train



Favorite Train Award – SBV MoW Train

Favorite Model: – chosen by popular vote!

Ron Baile – Penn-Central 18561*

The President's Award: this year was for a Water Tank and with a little executive discretion by our President was awarded to:

Richard Dietrichson – Blue Ridge Still*

Best-in-Show: given to the entry with the highest point's score in the model contest. Includes registration next year!

Ron Parisi – NYC 46' Gondola with AC&F Cement Canisters*

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

Now, a few notes about the Contest Room operations and some proposed changes. The rules for the Photo Contest are overly complicated and are in need of revision. In fact, we are contemplating moving it entirely over to a Popular Vote contest. Similarly, the Arts & Crafts contests continue to be minimally populated, at best. We are considering making that entire aspect of the Contest Room to be Display Only. The number of entrants simply do not justify running an actual contest. Overall, this number of entrants this year was somewhat lower than usual and we had limited entries and several categories had no entrants. As a result, we ended up putting 6 of the brass plaque faces in the trash! Had anyone brought a Steam Engine or entered an On-Line Structure, you



Favorite Model Award – Penn Central 18561

could have at least gone home with a 1st place plaque! So next year an entry in that latter category, On-Line Structure, will qualify you for the President's Award as well! So, let's see some structures in next year's Contest Room and may be you too can take a nice plaque home.

Lastly, I have been told and have heard repeatedly from members of the MER and from surrounding regions that the judging in the MER is harsh, tough, lower than any other region, etc. So, I tested that by putting one of my models in the room that had been previously judged in the Mid-Central Region this year along with a copy of the exact same forms and supplemental information. In contrast to this, I had already taken one of my models from the MER 2011 contest room to the Mid-Central Region (MCR) this

year again with exactly the same paperwork to see what would happen. So what were the results? The model I took to the MCR received a 6 point higher score than in Cary, 2011 and a Merit Award.

In contrast, the model that I had judged at the MCR convention that I then had judged in Suffolk received a score that was 10 points higher in the MER, and a Merit Award. I freely admit that 2 models may not make a statistically meaningful test of judging between regions, but some measure or assessment is probably better than none at all since all of that "chatter" had no hard data behind it to back it up. Another interpretation might also be that whatever differences exist, the scores really are not all that far apart in actuality and are probably within the range of human variability. Yet another interpretation that I think far more likely is that there are a lot of myths and "war-stories" regarding judging and scores that have lingered on

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for far too many years. Maybe moving on from the past and focusing on improving the current Contest consistent with the NMRA National Contest and AP programs and leaving behind events and conditions from 2, 3, or even 4 decades would be a good thing to do. Greg Meeks has attended and judged at the NMRA National Convention 3 of the past 4 years. The MER seeks consistent scoring and interpretation of the guidelines. The informal assessment of scoring at Grand Rapids was that it was within the range of

expectations of National. The MER Contest Room is involved across regions and with the National to ensure we are being as consistent and fair as possible.

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

MER Archivist Update

*By Bob Price
Archivist and Director*

In an earlier report, I stated that I wanted to add MER convention handouts to the archives. Most conventions provide attendees with some form of a convention guide and a clinic summary. There are two major benefits to adding these documents to the archives. The first is that future convention committees will be able to review past convention handouts for design and content ideas. The second is that members seeking information for their volunteer or author AP certificates may be able to reconstruct their volunteer time if they were working at a convention or presenting a clinic.

I am happy to report that this objective has been met. Alan Frame has donated his collection of convention guides to the archives. This collection covers most conventions from 1985 to 2007 with the oldest document from the 1978 York White Rose convention. As time allows, these documents will be scanned into pdf documents and made available to those who request them. Thanks Alan for donating these documents to the archive and for donating the cost of shipping them. 

MER Positions Open:

Editor – (For full list of duties see the Nov/Dec 2012 issue.) Solicit, collect and edit items. Collect and edit regular columns and ballot and convention information. Notify members upon receiving items and upon publication. Solicit and monitor advertising. Help with layout if needed.

Contact current Editor or President (see contact page 2) for more information and to apply.

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.

Business Manager – Maintain and distribute membership information and The Local subscription files; process Rail-Pass applications and all monetary payment deposits for MER products, donations, subscriptions and NMRA National membership rebates and providing appropriate spreadsheet analysis of all payments for the Treasurer; post The Local on the MER website and send eLocal alerts.

Contact current Business Manager (see contact page 2) for more information and to apply. 

Election Alert:

*By Bob Minnis, MMR
Election Chairman*

IN THE SUMMER OF 2013, the MER will hold an election to fill the three Director positions on the Board. These Directors oversee the daily activities of the committees that report to them in conducting the Region's business. The term is for two years beginning at the general membership meeting at the annual Region convention. Individuals who desire to be a Director have until April 15 (tax day) to send a candidate statement of 200 words or less plus a passport size photo (if one is not already on file with the Editor) to any member of the Nominations Committee (see below). If you miss the tax day deadline, you can still apply but will need a petition signed by 25 current members. Deadline for the late filing is June 20th. Ballots are mailed to the membership in August/September time frame.

Nominating Committee members are:
Bob Minnis (Chairman) – kahlualab@aol.com
Mike McNamara – mikemcnh@comcast.net
Dave Chance – loconuy@carolina.rr.com 

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 **NMRA Magazine**, 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 two years.

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 2012, 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 below, 704-332-1753, tractionfan@aol.com), or John Janosko, 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 **NMRA Magazine**, 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 two years, 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.

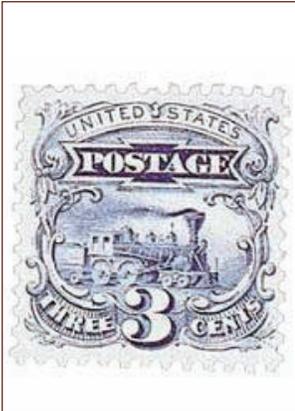
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Date of form: 1/31/07

Hobbies You Can Combine

By Stephen Wood
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

SINCE I WAS A CHILD, there had always been two hobbies in my home well three if you include my dad's ham radio and all the cards from other ham radio operators he collected from all over the world. What I am talking about is my dad's stamp collection and my trains. Over the years, my dad

time my father and I get together to run the trains at my house or the family goes down and visits this collection grows and grows. My father has informed me that among the stamp collectors this



Stamp One: In 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed, uniting the nation with one common link from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Therefore, at the time of issue there was nothing quaint about the locomotive featured on U.S. #114. It represented freedom of movement – the opportunity to visit family and friends, or a chance to move on to a new life. All of the 1869 Pictorial designs were meant to capture the pride of the American people.



Stamp four: The Chicago & Northwestern Railway controlled the FE & MVRR at the time these printed cancels were produced.

amassed well over one hundred thousand stamps, and several collections. A few years ago, my father and mother finally settled down and moved for their last time. During this transition in their lives, my father had to downsize his collections. Boy was my mom

collection is known as “topical collecting”, which simply means that you have acquired items which relate in some way to your chosen field of interest. It is my understanding that stamp dealers claim that trains on stamps is one of the more popular topicals in this business.

Looking into the history of the United States Post office I found out that the first stamp ever issued with a train on it was

Stamp two: The decision to picture the Empire State Express on a commemorative stamp was controversial at the time. Critics charged the choice was political, pointing out that the Empire State Express was still in use as the flagship of the New York Central and Hudson Railroad.



Stamp five: Three examples of slogan meters.

happy! He kept his pride and joy of hundreds of submarine items, and whatever else there is. In addition, my father had collected stamps and first day covers as well as envelopes of trains. This collection, which recognized different trains, and special events landed in my lap. They are now my collection and almost every

printed on March 27, 1869, Scott stamp number 114. See stamp one.

Because this stamp was well received by the American people you would think that the Postal Service would publish another stamp soon to promote the railroad. Think again as thirty-two years past before another stamp was issued with a train. On May 01, 1901 The Pan-American stamps issue is a series of six stamps commemorating a 1901 World's Fair held at Buffalo, New York. The Pan-American Exposition and World's Fair was a celebration of technology and its impact on America. In recognition of the tie



Stamp three: From the “Famous Trains” issue.



Stamp six:
Stamps from
Tanzania.

that truly united America's East and West, the 2¢ issue illustrates the Empire State Express. In 1901, this four-car train was a truly modern machine and could easily travel over 100 miles per hour. The Empire State Express was the world's first high-speed passenger train, and it transported more than half of all the Expo's



Stamp seven: Stamp
from Poland

visitors. See stamp two.

On August 26, 1999, the US Postal Service paid tribute to American industry and design, specifically to the heritage of the American railroad. At this point, prices of stamps increasing up



Stamp eight:
From the USSR.

to thirty-three cents, the Postal service issued a block of stamps entitled "Famous Trains". It covered the Hiawatha, 20th Century Limited, Daylight, Super Chief and Congressional. These five stamps highlighted passenger trains, which ran from the 1930s to the 1940s. The front of the stamp was a reproduction of a watercolor painting with a landscape of its route in the background. See stamp three. What made these stamps unique was that on the



Stamp nine:
From Switzerland



Stamp ten:
North Korea
Orient Express
Train.

back of each stamp is text describing the unique train features.

Along with stamps being issued with trains there were stamps with various railroad cancellations. For an example of this, I found a stamp from the "battleship revenues" with the Fremont,



Stamp eleven:
2006 Cuba
Train Expo.

Elkhorn & Missouri Railroad. See stamp four. Note the date, 1900 near the bottom of the stamp.

Another area of railroadiana collecting—in postal perorations is "slogan" meters. These are called "frankings" or "imprints" that not only indicate postal value but they also provided a bit of



Stamp twelve:
Guyana: 200th
Anniversary
of Steam
Trains.

advertising for the railroad.

With the collection, there is a worldwide collection of hundreds of railroad stamps, which originated in other countries. Some of the nations appear in stamp six though nine.

continued on page 10



Stamp thirteen: Casey Jones went to work for the railroad in 1880. He became an engineer on the Illinois Central Railroad in 1890. On April 30, 1900, he was at the throttle of Number 382 for a friend who was ill. Near Vaughan, MS, he came upon two freight trains blocking the main track. Jones stayed with the train and jammed on the brakes. He died in the crash, but saved the lives of his passengers and crew. This stamp was issued on April 29, 1950.

In the philately, which is the study of stamps there are items known to the collectors as “**Souvenir Sheets**”. They enclose one or more stamps and around them, there is a decorative design. Stamps ten through twelve are three examples.

In conclusion, I am just learning about stamps. One thing I know for sure about collecting stamps is there are hundreds and hundreds of different railroad stamps to be had. See stamp thirteen.

I never knew that this hobby could be this exciting, interesting and rewarding all at the same time. Once important aspect of collecting is how it is teaching me about so many different countries and their railroad system. In addition, I have collected stamps and first day covers from countries I never heard of. If you ever are bored or want to expand your knowledge about either railroads model or real ones, I would highly recommend combining the two as a way to relax and learn. 🚂

2013 NMRA REGIONAL CONVENTIONS: Soak up some modeling and clinics from different areas!!!

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is an overview of upcoming regional conventions through 2013. This listing is as complete as I can get it by deadline time and I am not responsible for incomplete information or moved links.*

<u>DATES:</u>	<u>REGION:</u>	<u>CITY/STATE:</u>	<u>WEBSITE:</u>
April 3rd – 7th	Pacific Coast Region (PCR)	Dublin, CA	http://www.pcrnmra.org/conv2013/
April 26th – 28th	Niagara Frontier Region (NFR)	Mississauga, ON	http://streetsvillejunction.com/
May 2nd – 5th	Midwest Region (MWR)	Indianapolis, IN	http://cid.railfan.net/MP50.html
May 15th – 18th	Mid-Central Region (MCR)	Miamisburg, OH	
May 17th – 19th	Thousand Lakes Region (TLR)	Minneapolis, MN	www.thousandlakesregion.org/pages/conventions.html
May 29th – June 2nd	Lone Star Region (LSR)	Irving, TX	www.lonestarregion.com/convention.shtml
June 6th – 9th	Rocky Mountain Region (RMR)	Albuquerque, NM	http://www.rarg2013.org/
June 13th – June 16th	Mid-Continent Region (MCoR)	Olathe, KS	
June 26th – 30th	Pacific Northwest Region (PNR)	Bosie, ID	http://pnr.nmra.org/3div/2013.html
July 14th – 20th	Southeastern Region (SER)	Atlanta, GA	“ Peachtree Express ” www.nmra2013.org
October 17th – 20th	Northeastern Region (NER)	Laconia, NH	http://www.seacoastnmra.org/Convention/Lakeport2013/Welcome.html
September 25th – 29th	Pacific Southwest Region (PSR)	San Bernardino, CA	http://www.psrconvention.org/sb13/index.html
October 10th – 13th	Mid-Eastern Region (MER)	Rockville, MD	“ C & P 2013 ” – Website and details coming soon!
October 11th – 13th	Fall Sunshine Region (SSR)	Bradenton, FL	
November 1st – 3rd	North Central Region (NCR)	Troy, MI	http://www.ncr2013.ncr-nmra.org/

Milepost 40 Convention Report

By: Eric Dervinis
MER Executive Convention Chair

SUFFOLK VIRGINIA IS AN INTRIGUING railroad town with historical sites in every neighborhood. **The Milepost 40** convention was headquartered in the Hilton Garden Inn, right in the middle of everything. Across the street was the Suffolk Visitors Bureau, and within walking distance museums and the former Seaboard railroad station. The depot has a wonderful model railroad set in 1907 Suffolk and many historical artifacts.

Just south of our hotel the busy mainlines of CSX and NS provided authentic railroad sound and flavor. Many historic railroad buildings are still in use. Large peanut processing plants are important part of the local economy. Suffolk has preserved many of its historical buildings and it was fun to poke around the town.

Conventioneers arriving on Thursday October 18th found a hotel buzzing with model railroaders. The Hilton Inn is situated on the beautiful Nansemond River. Years ago boats loaded with local goods interchanged with a spur of the Virginian Railroad right next to our hotel. The right of way can be traced up the hill to the former main line.

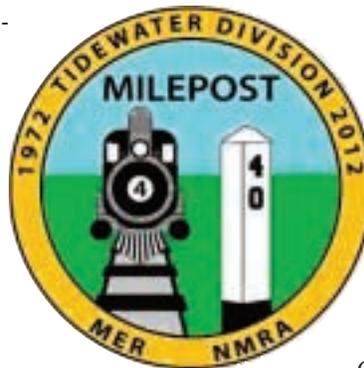
The hotel has a magnificent meeting facility connected to the guest room building. A short walk down the hall brought us to the registration room. After collecting our badges, timetables and tickets, we could visit the modular railroads. Next door to the registration was the contest room. Across the hall were three generous clinic rooms and the white elephant/door prize room. A large clinic schedule was posted in a number of locations along with area maps.

Some registrants' plan every minute in advance and others wait to see what looks good. The choices were many here. The convention committee offered three different railroads with OP sessions, 42 clinics and 28 railroads open for layout tours. Prototype tours went to the Port of Virginia, the new "Tide" light rail maintenance facility and Vulcan Materials crushed stone facility.

After three days of model railroad activities, the conventioneers gathered at the ballroom Saturday night for the social hour. The excellent hotel staff served a delicious meal. Well fed, we sat back and enjoyed a special presentation by a retired Norfolk Southern executive Jim McClellan. He showed photos from his personal collection and commented on each railroad. His insights were unique, an insiders view of how each railroad was managed.

Convention Chairman Gary Brown emceed the banquet, introducing the MER officers and NMRA Vice President of Administration Dave Thornton. MER Achievement Chairman Charlie Flichman presented the achievement awards and announced our latest MMR, Ron Baile. Next up was Contest Chairman Martin Brechbiel presenting the awards and we wrapped up the night with the traditional MER auction called by Jerry Kay.

Sunday morning was your last chance to pick up door prizes and contest entries. At 10 AM the annual business meeting began and wrapped up at 11 AM. After saying our good byes, many conventioneers visited a model railroad on their way home.



The Tidewater Division prepared and presented a superb week end of model railroad fun. The convention was also a celebration of the division's 40th anniversary and thus the name **Milepost 40**. Many thanks to all of the crew members, Tom Trumbauer (Volunteers and Prototype Tours), Sharon Prescott (Local Color), Webmaster Max Robbins, Len Boucher (Publicity), John Hammond (Convention Timetable), Bill Miller and John Robey (Layout Tours), John Fallon (Clinics), Jimmy Curth, Chuck Davis, Henry & Lottie Glista, Shawn Henderson, Jim Keiper, Mark Nieting, Steve Prescott and Conrad Haas (Co Chairman). Thanks also to the standing MER convention committee, PJ Mattson and Bob Price (Registration), Earl Hackett (White Elephant) and Martin Brechbiel and Greg Meeks (Contests).

A special thank you to all of the volunteers, the clinicians, the layout hosts, the layout helpers and all of the family members. Leading the way was Chairman Gary Brown from the early days searching for a hotel until final clean-up on Sunday morning. Thanks Gary for delivering a fantastic convention of model railroading.

Plan now to attend **C&P Junction** in Rockville, MD from October 10-13, 2013. 



Master Accumulator

By John Glaab
Potomac Division/HO Scale

HAVE BEEN A MEMBER of the NMRA since the early 1960's and by and large, I've enjoyed my experiences. Attending conventions, visiting layouts, participating in contests, and assisting the organization when I could, have all provided me with a sense of satisfaction that far outweighs the cost.

Many years ago I began participating in the achievement program. As you may know this is series of steps that when completed, endows the individual with the title of "Master Model Railroader". Each of the individual achievement awards demonstrates a particular proficiency in some aspect of modeling (freight car construction, locomotive construction, etc.) or service to the organization (volunteer, official, etc.) Completing a set number of these specific achievement awards then entitles you to be considered a "Master Model Railroader".

I have several of the individual awards, but I have just never given the effort to get all the awards needed to fulfill the requirement for MMR. I have been contemplating starting up again, and while going through the records, I had a thought, "If I complete all of these requirements, will I really be a Master Model Railroader"? I think not.

I believe that being a "Master Model Railroader" entails more than craftsmanship or service to the hobby. There has to be a sense of appreciation of the evolution of the hobby. A sense of understanding of how operation concepts have evolved, how scenery has improved, how models have improved, etc. To put it simply, an appreciation of the "history" behind the hobby.

History isn't just narrative, its also artifacts, and these provide tangible evidence of the progress made through the years. Now not all history is a story of "battles won". There is also history in knowing about the battles lost, the missteps, the errors, and the bad ideas. I offer the following suggestion for a new award to illustrate this concept. I call the award, "Master Accumulator".

The award for master accumulator should not be confused with the concept of a master collector. No indeed, a master collector has a plan, a rhyme and reason for their collection, a vision. It may only be understood to the collector, but it is there. The "Master Accumulator", on the other hand, has no such grand plan, no underlying methodology, no rhyme, reason or subliminal purpose. Simply put, a bunch of "stuff" that has been accumulated over time, and most importantly, would not be used even if the opportunity presented itself!

Accumulating this stuff may take considerable effort or in most cases, a lack of common sense spread over decades. The purchase, trade or other methods of acquisition often show no logic, nor reasonable purpose. Often times the "stuff" accumulated is the result of an irresistible bargain. A "bargain" is, by definition an irresistible price on something you do not need. I offer this list of items as examples of the sort of "stuff" that one should have to be considered a "Master Accumulator".

Note that these items are not the best examples of the state of

the art at the time. In fact, the contrary is more likely the case. There is no particular hierarchy to this list, and I invite you to offer suggested items for inclusion.

- Kurtz-Kraft switch machine – cantankerous, hard to adjust and unreliable.
- Fiber tie flex track – rarely in gauge, crude looking and would curl up when wet ballasted.
- Perma-Scene – I never figured out what this was supposed to simulate. It did work well to provide drainage in flowerpots.
- Early Bachmann and Tyco train set wheels. Cast in a two-part mold these had a parting line that went across the wheel tread. The axles were also a soft plastic and would warp. These two features allowed the wheels to wobble and bounce in a very interesting way.
- A parts drawer full of X2f Couplers – Need I say more?
- Selenium Rectifier – If you like the smell of rotten eggs.
- Ideal Buildings – Made from thin cardboard, these would warp almost instantly.
- A box of dried out cork roadbed.
- A dried out tube of Ambroid cement
- A dried out bottle of 401M paint
- A shopping bag full of old musty model railroad magazines.
- A Wabash Valley B&O Box car kit – You first had to find the pieces in the flash.
- A parts drawer full of Mantua loop couplers.
- A Marn-O-Stat. Everybody wanted one, but I never saw one!
- A Megow kit. Very early – crude beyond belief.
- Kadee uncoupling ramps for the old "K" series couplers
- A shoebox full of partially used decal sheets.
- A box of dried out Lichen.

continued on page 13

- A cheap train set power pack in a small metal box with a thumbwheel like throttle. Not much of a power pack but a great hand warmer.
- A pack of tin plated steel rail joiners. Very hard to find for they have probably already rusted away.
- A building that is falling apart after 20 years because it was assembled with Goo.
- Any Arbour locomotive kit. No explanation is possible without investive.
- A parts drawer full of Zamac trucks that are getting powdery white and starting to crumble.
- A pile of Athearn “Blue Boxes”, each containing a few little bits. Such as a brake wheel, an air brake reservoir, a coupler pocket cover, etc.

Just remember, the key to this collection is that if you were given the opportunity to use the “stuff”, you wouldn't. 

Celebrating National Model Railroad Month

By Bob Minnis, MMR
James River Division/HO Scale

LAST NOVEMBER, as has been my custom for the past several years, I set up a display of several of several scales of model railroading equipment. This was conducted at the local county library similar to last year's display (see Mar/Apr 2012 issue). This year I was also assisted by Jim Mueller, a local fellow HO modeler.

The items we displayed included samples of scale equipment from “G” to “Z”. We had a circular track that ran a NH theme train. Other examples of railroad equipment included the same kits as an assembled unit and the comparable kit it was built from. Kits and assembled units of buildings and highway vehicles were included. Magazines on display included the subjects of wiring, bench work, track planning and current hobby magazines. The library attendees were enthusiastic and appreciated the display. 

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

Visit the MER's website for all the latest information, contacts and archives
www.mer-nmra.org

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** as space permits in upcoming issues. All of my contact information is listed on page 2.

Thank you,
Steve Kindig, Editor 

Model Railroading Merit Badge Reminder

By Don Jennings
MER Director and Liaison to the Boy Scouts
Carolina Piedmont Division/HO Scale

I WENT TO THE MER CONVENTION in Suffolk, Virginia and spoke to some of the MER members there about the Railroading Merit Badge. I told them how easy it is to become a registered Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Counselor.

This is very important to the MER because we need NEW members. This is one way it can happen. A few hours bonding with a scout to assist him with his badge requirements will be remembered by the scout. And he will hopefully join the NMRA in the near future.

The MER has a lot of HO Scale model train car kits to donate towards the completion of the requirements. All I need is to be notified of a class session and a few bits of information regarding the class and the number of Boy Scouts participating.

After helping with a Railroading Merit Badge for the Boy Scouts, you will qualify for the Association Volunteer Award. So you can help others and earn something while doing it. A good deal all the way around.

Become a HERO to a Scout rather than a ZERO.

It is only one letter difference but a world of difference to a young boy.

The MER members have the knowledge to help, so spread it around to young growing model railroaders.

Other than the First State Model Railroad Club in Dover, Delaware nothing is really being done to help the Boy Scouts.

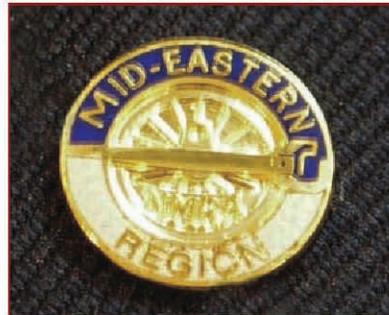
For more information please contact Don Jennings at donj1044@aol.com.

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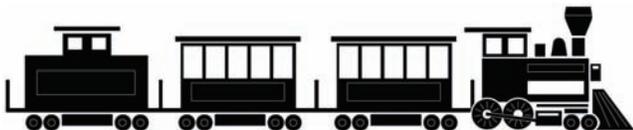
Coming Events

January 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th. February 5th. "Children's Christmas". Frederick County Society of Model Engineers open houses. Located at 423 East Patrick Street in Frederick, MD. Hours: 1 PM till 4 PM. The FCSME was founded in 1966. The Club's Catoctin Central Railroad (CCRR) operating exhibit is a 56-foot HO scale layout housed inside an unusual 70-foot, six-door Chesapeake and Ohio horse car. The CCRR is a mythical medium-sized railroad that crosses Frederick County and the Catoctin Mountains, where it connects with the HO_{n3} scale Catoctin Mountain Lines. Motive power and most of the rolling stock is from member's private collections and is a mix of steam and diesel in various road names. Passenger and freight trains are represented. The HO scale layout is operated with Digitrax DCC, but still can be run with DC. An outdoor G gauge layout, of similar length to the indoor layout, is adjacent to the club car. The G gauge operates with Aristo-Craft Train Engineer System. Club members number approximately 20. Membership is open to any who would like to join. For more information visit www.fcsme.com.

January 5th, 6th, 19th, 20th. February 9th and 10th. FINAL GATSME open houses in the Fort Washington School. Located at Madison and Prospect Av in Fort Washington, PA. Noon until 4 PM. After 38 years, GATSME has lost its lease and is looking for a new home. The 3,000 sq ft HO railroad is 95 percent complete. The era is steam diesel transition with a narrow gauge branch. Admission free. For more information visit www.gatsme.org.

January 19th. Railroad Modeling University hosted by Carolina Southern Division at Northside Baptist Church, 333 Jeremiah Boulevard in Charlotte, NC. Clinics and seminars all day, from basic to advanced subjects. \$10 per family. Lunch available for \$5. 8:30 AM to 4 PM. Visit www.carolinasouthern.org/RMUmian.htm for directions, class schedule, and to register. Contact Larry Paffrath at (704) 778-2745 for more information.

Divisions and Clubs tell MER members about your upcoming event!! Send your FREE (limit of 75 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.



Achievement Program Update

By *Charlie Flichman, MMR*
MER AP Manager

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

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Douglas A. Algire – *Golden Spike*

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Jack Dziadul – *Chief Dispatcher*

Please Congratulate MER newest MMR – Ron Baile of the New Jersey Division. Ron is MMR # 496. Ron was awarded his certificate at the regional convention in Suffolk, VA.

In a perfect world, this information will appear soon in the **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 the **NMRA** magazine. 📧

Congratulations



on your
Achievement!

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 stevesexpressrr@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). 📧

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Publication Schedule:	Articles/Callboard items due to Editor by:
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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