

The Local



A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA

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Number 1

Scratch-building your own model railroad building

by

**Jerry Stanley, Professional Home Builder
James River Division**



Have you ever in your life stood in the cross roads of life and not realized you are there? And that life is about to take an unexpected turn and take you places that you did not expect to go? Many years ago, in my youth, my family visited a family friend. While there, my Father's friend handed me an HO gauge F unit. Immediately I was smitten with the beauty of it, the details even that something so small could be that heavy to my little six or seven year old hands. Then my mind started racing with visions

of this wonderful moving piece of art, pacing around a set of tracks. All these years later I still have not lost the wonder of it all. My path at that time took an unexpected turn on a wonderful new journey.

Editor: Jerry presented this as a clinic at a JRD meeting in spring of 2017, and I asked if he could write it up for us. This is not a project most of us could tackle, lacking the space if no other reason, but I thought it'd be an interesting slow-roll of development for us to read about.

Since those early days, I have always had this vision of building a room for a just a train layout. To that end, I collected items for the railroad, built a 4x9 layout on a flat table based on an Atlas design, and even had an area in a basement that was used along with much else for the

continued on page 3

The Local

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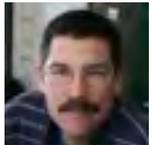
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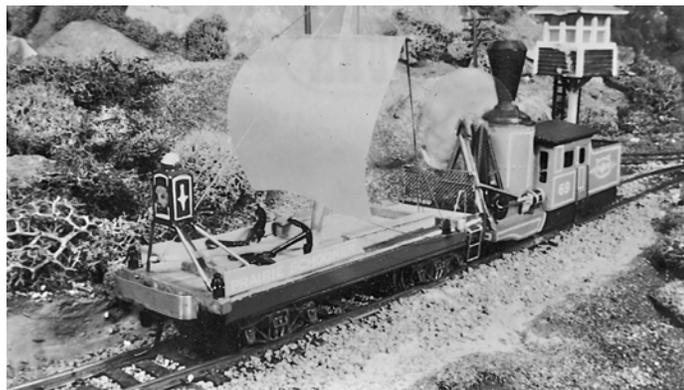


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Remember the Bud Sima article from Sept/Oct? Just bumped into a website (mostly about E L Moore) that mentions Bud, and has some photos of Sima's layout.



The website, for those interested...

<https://30squaresofontario.blogspot.ca/2016/09/prospect-upper-ridge-railroad-purr.html>

Webpage says these photos were taken BY Moore of Sima's layout.

Reprinted here by permission from J D Lowe of "30 Squares"



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On page 1, at the top, is a "Open Platform Passenger Car", from the model contest at 2017's convention. Jerry Lauchle, modeler.

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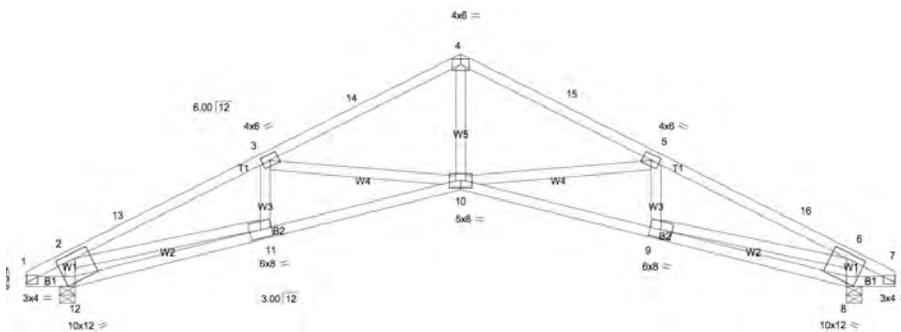
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model RR. Because the room was cramped and shared with other needs such as storage, work bench for home repairs etc., it was hard to get around the layout, and invariably, stuff was stored on the layout which made for more frustration and greatly curtailed any running of the trains.

Now, fast forward many years, I have embarked on a lifelong vision: A building built for the sole purpose of a model railroad! It is designed with windows, ceiling etc. that will fit the bill of a layout. No storage in this area, no work benches for house hold chores...Just trains!

The overall building is fifty feet long by twenty four feet wide. Half of the lower section has a basement that is twenty four feet by twenty four feet. Above this area is the "Hobby Barn" as my friends call it. The train room is twenty four feet by twenty four feet also. Our property size is just over ten acres, so there's room for something like this.

Inside the "Hobby Barn" we installed 4 - 24"x 48" Awning type windows in nine foot walls, the plans show eight feet, but we made a field adjustment to raise the walls higher to give extra foot of height below the windows. The windows are installed near the top of the wall so that it will not interfere with a back drop, but will allow natural light to flow in. I know it is a necessary evil sometimes to run a RR in front of a window. But why do that if you can design it from the start not to? We also installed 4 - 2' x 4' Velux skylights that will have shades attached to help reduce the summer sun. This also will allow for natural light and adjustment of natural light. This room is to be airy, bright and happy.



You can't really put anything up in there, but you do get extra headroom space with this kind of truss.

To add to the airy feeling, we installed “scissor trusses,” which gives the vaulted ceiling another two feet or so of extra ceiling height. In the center of the room we are almost at eleven feet! If I want to build a huge mountain scene we have the room! That would be a very steep grade. There is not much cost difference up/down for these type of trusses versus other comparably standard trusses with a flat bottom chord (ballpark \$85 each).

So where are we at in the process? Last year, we pulled the permit, broke ground, installed footing and foundation, framed and right now we are what we in the industry call “dried in”. Dried in simply means that we have installed all of the exterior sheathing, roofing is installed, and windows and doors are installed. But the interior is nothing but bare studs.

The next step is to design the layout itself, install the necessary electric and lighting, insulate, drywall, trim, paint and then start building bench work! At least that is the vision. There is an old saying “without a vision, the people perish.” In other words, if one does not plan, they ultimately fail. Since I was a young man, my vision has been to have a building just for trains. The vision never failed, sometimes it had to be set aside for other pressing requirements. I have other visions of using the “Hobby Barn” to introduce other people to the hobby including the youth of tomorrow just like my friend introduced me to the hobby so many years ago. What is your vision? Let’s build together.

I hope to contribute more news and fill in some of the process that entails the phases in building from permit to final inspection if folks want to know more.



Jerry is a professional home-builder. His property is about 10 acres; the horse paddock in the background in the page 1 photo is his neighbor's. Jerry mostly built this “barn” himself.

**MORE PIX ON
THE NEXT PAGE**





Once upon a time, there was a green pasture and some friendly trees and clouds.



Then, there was an ugly hole in the ground.

Hmm. This part looks familiar...What color box did this kit come in?



This is all a lot easier in HO scale.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR OLD MAGAZINES?

by Nick Kalis

What single step can give bring joy to your spouse, the fire marshall, model railroad advertisers, and others?

Clear out that multi-decade stash of model railroading magazines you have in your basement or elsewhere!

Admit it, you will never get to build all the possible ideas contained in these issues. Now that MR, RMC, and other magazines are available digitized you have no excuse to keep those back issues. If buying into the digitized route is not your cup of tea, then you can simply save a few back issues that you simply must keep for modeling reference. Another alternative is to clip out a few articles that you absolutely cannot part with. Give model railroading a shot in the arm by getting your back issues of MR/RMC/etc into the hands of the young or the merely curious. If you don't have the energy to do so yourself, ask some of the younger members of your club or round robin group to lend you their muscle. Once you get them out of your basement, then what? You can take them to your club, the freebie table at Timonium, share with members of your house of worship, your fraternal or service organizations, your local library, or your local consignment shop that supports a local charity. By doing so, we all can help introduce another generation to this wonderful hobby of ours.

Remember, with the demise of both the local hobby shop and the traditional newsstand, fewer folks can get their introduction to the hobby by those routes. How many articles have we read about a model railroad in which the owner attributes his introduction to the hobby by his buying a model railroading magazine at a newsstand? We cannot turn back the clock, but we can make an effort to see that our back issues do good.

In my 30-odd years as an active model railroader, I cannot count how many home layouts I have visited in which I could see decades of model railroading magazines whose clutter just gathers dust and creates a fire hazard. Those magazines were doing no one any good.

Postscript – The Potomac Division's Matt Thompson recently received his MMR. In the January 2018 issue of NMRA Magazine relating his biography, Matt credits his interest in trains from his neighbor giving him some modeling magazines. Matt adds that he did not live near any trains nor did any family members work for the railroad. Matt will be hosting an open house during the convention in 2018.

Also from Nick:

Potomac Division members have an informal luncheon monthly at the McLean Family Restaurant in, where else?, McLean, Virginia. It is Dutch treat. We have enjoyed this comradery for years now. MER members interested in joining us can contact Nick Kalis at nkalis@verizon.net

Clint has asked if I can corral a list of model railroading blogs by MER members. Please let me know about any you know of, and we'll see about getting that list published here.

CROSSROADS OF THE MER

by Ed Rosado

It may seem like a long way off, but 10 months goes quickly. From October 4-7, 2018, Columbus Day weekend, the MER will be holding its annual convention. Dubbed "Crossroads of the MER" the convention is indeed a crossroads, where modelers from diverse regions of the country will come together to learn from each other, share experiences, and visit layouts, monuments, and prototype facilities in and around the nation's capital.



This year our host will be the MER's Potomac Division. The convention will be held in Rockville Maryland at the Rockville Hilton Hotel, one of the best venues in the area and located only one block across from the area's subway system. Participants and their families can visit the famous sites and free museums of Washington DC. This is one convention that can't be missed!

Our banquet speaker will be the experienced and renowned modeler, Mr. Lou Sassi. Lou will be sharing some of his many years' experience in the railroad modeling world. An awards presentation will also be featured.

Dozens of clinics, model contests and displays, modular layout set ups, and home layout tours will be available. An operations call board will be organized (don't forget to sign up early), and a white elephant room will open with treasures you may find hard to leave behind.

Don't forget to "hit the road" before, during, and after the convention and take our layout and prototype tours. The region's best modelers will be opening up their homes for you to visit their creations. So far, Bill Demas, our layout tour coordinator, has lined up five layouts to visit on Saturday October 5th alone, and there will be more! Those include Mat Thompson's "Oregon Coast Railroad," featured in Model Railroader magazine's 2014 publication of "Great Model Railroads" and Pete LaGuardia's "New York Central's Western Illinois Division (WID)." See the remaining list on our convention website (below).

Sign up for our operations call board. On three consecutive days, you will have the opportunity to operate four of the finest model railroads in the country! Come operate on Mat Thompson "Oregon Coast Railroad" (Thursday evening, October 4); on Marshall Abrams' "Abrams Railroad Empire" (Friday morning, October 5th); on Doug Kirkpatrick's "Virginia and Western RR" (Friday afternoon, October 5th); and on Brian Sheron's "Long Island RR" (Saturday morning, October 6th). If you have ever wanted to conduct authentic railroad operations, this is the time and place!

You can register at <http://merregistrar.coffeecup.com/forms/2018%20Online%20Registration/>. Be sure to visit our web page, below, frequently to follow along as we add the details of the convention as they are finalized. We will be offering updates in future LOCAL articles.

"Crossroads of the MER" promises to be an opportunity to experience the best of the best in model railroading. We look forward to sharing model railroad adventures, knowledge, and fun during the 2018 MER Convention with you!

<http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018/>



Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2018 Convention

Crossroads of the MER

October 4th to 7th, 2018
<http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018>



Use Online Registration for Secure Payment and Better Up To Date Activity Availability. See Info below

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

Primary Registrant: _____ MMR? Y / N, Any Title for Badge? _____

Significant Other Attending (living at same address): _____

Children Attending (18 & under – list all): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip + 4: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

NMRA #: _____ Region: _____ Division: _____

Favorite Scale: _____ Is this your first MER Convention? _____ Putting Items In Sale/Auction? _____

Description	Act. #	Cost	#	Paying
Early Registration (through August 31)	E	\$55		
Basic Registration (September 1 thru September 30)	B	\$65		
At Door Registration (October 4-6)	D	\$70		
Non-NMRA Member Extra Fee	N	\$10		
Significant Other & Children Under 18	O	\$0		No Fee
Banquet – Saturday Night <i>To Be Decided</i>	401	\$		
Call Boards / Ops – Expanded Call Board Info Available on Website				
Thur. Evening, Oregon Coast RR., HO, Mat Thompson # Open 15	801	\$5		
Fri. Morning Abrams Railroad Empire, HO, Marshall Abrams # Open 6	802	\$5		
Fri. Afternoon Virginia & Western RR., Doug Kirkpatrick # Open 9	803	\$5		
Sat. Morning Long Island Railroad, HO, Brian Sheron # Open 7	804	\$5		
Prototype Tours – More Info on Website				
	201	\$		
Made in the MER Tours – More Info on Website				
	701	\$		
General Interest Activities – More Info on Website				
	501	\$5		
Total Advance Registration Paid				

Online Registration Available at –

<http://merregistrar.coffeecup.com/forms/2018%20Online%20Registration/>

Fill in Form, Press Submit Form for Invoice, then Press PayPal Button and Make Your Payment. A PayPal Account Is Not Required.

Payment [Check Only] must accompany Print Registrations sent by USPS.

Checks payable to: MER Conventions, Send to: MER Conventions, P.O. Box 467, Crosswicks, NJ 08515-0467

Completed PDF Form can be emailed to Registrar with a note requesting an Invoice for Payment to be sent via PayPal.

PayPal Account NOT Required, can use Guest Checkout. Payments by Visa, MC, Discover, AmEx, and PayPal

Any Questions and/or additional information, e-mail to **Registrar@mer-nmra.com**, or 609-585-4616 (leave a message)

Hotel – Hilton Washington DC/Rockville, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 Hotel Reservations: 301-468-1100

<http://www3.hilton.com> Room Rate - \$114.00 night + tax **Reservations Open Starting January 2018**

Use: <https://www.> (Hotel Booking Link To Be Decided)

Or by phone use (- *To Be Decided*-), Room Rate applies 10/1/18 to 10/10/18

Special Awards Update

Martin Brechbiel, MER Contest Chair

The James River Division again will sponsor the Pride of Dixie contest for the 2018 Mid-Eastern Region Convention. There are some very specific qualifications for this year's awards so read carefully!

The model will be for a 2-bay coal hopper car for a railroad (1) operating in a state in the Mid-Eastern Region and (2) that originated (loaded on its own tracks) coal loads south of the Mason-Dixon Line. These states include: Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia (the panhandle is in MER), Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

The usual suspects include: Baltimore & Ohio, Chesapeake and Ohio, Clinchfield, Interstate, Louisville & Nashville, New York Central (in West Virginia), Norfolk & Western, Virginian and Western Maryland. This excludes Pennsylvania (trackage in those states did not originate coal loads). For other railroads, please provide evidence that they originated coal loading on their own tracks in the listed states. All questions regarding eligibility should be directed to JRD's Contest co-chair Shannon Crabtree at stctigers@gmail.com AND CC'd to the JRD Superintendent at superintendent@jrdnmra.org

The winner will be the qualifying entry garnering the most points using the NMRA judging procedures. A special plaque will be awarded to the winner.

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Coupler Comments



Clint Hyde, Editor

In keeping with the other MER officers and staff, I now have an email-address via the MER host server. Yay! This should have happened for a predecessor years ago, but now it has. See page 2, and please use that one. (other one still works)

2018 convention coverage and the nominations process for officer candidates begin in this issue.

The print LOCAL has changed to not use blue ink on page 1. This will reduce about \$600/year in cost. Still looked OK to me in print, but of course will never look as good as the full-color E-LOCAL.

If you are receiving the print LOCAL, be aware that when you renew membership with NMRA, you are no longer able to renew the print LOCAL at the same time, you must contact Bob Price directly about this, and USPO mail him the little form on page 16 here. Cost is \$9 per year.

They are always available for download from the MER website, <http://mer-nmra.com/MERelocalsCurrent.html>

Here in the E-LOCAL are longer stories, additional stories and photos, as usual, and a lot more color, with more to come while I experiment with fancier layout aspects.

I am always happy to receive a story submission from you at any time. I have enough backlog now that it probably won't be in print immediately (depending on length, where shorter increases the likelihood of being able to fill a gap).

Even just a photo that is interesting is good. I have some, for example, from a recent railfanning episode nearby, that was accidentally just fabulous--I went to take a photo of a interlocking tower in Gordonsville, VA. Not 30 seconds after I get out of my truck, a diesel horn blows: "Oh my. Am I really going to get that lucky?" Yes, indeed, there's a diesel approaching pretty slowly, goes over the adjacent road/bridge, slides past me, and stops. OMG. I couldn't have paid money for a better opportunity. There's no fence or anything, so there I am, with my camera, and the loco. I didn't get too close, so as not to worry anyone.

On top of this, it's some local private roadname I've

never seen before. And it's clean. And after a few minutes of I don't know what, it backs up the way it came. Perfection.

The whole little location was nifty. There's a Y past this tower, and a steel water tank in the middle of it, AND...what seems obviously an old railroad hotel (now



a private residence, there were two people outside whom I waved at--clearly unsurprised by a photographer), and some buildings that look like old section houses. All very nicely maintained.



I had no idea, having only seen the tower from Main Street.



Keeping In Touch...



Bob Price
MER Business Manager

A Happy New Year to all our MER members. I want to remind those members receiving a paper copy of the MER Local that the NMRA no longer collects subscription payments when you renew your NMRA membership. If you are currently receiving the paper version of The Local and wish to continue receiving a paper copy, you must send your \$9 subscription renewal payment to the MER Business Manager (address on page 2). As an alternative to renewing your paper subscription, consider switching to the electronic version of The Local. The Nov-Dec 2017 eLocal has 36 pages while the paper version only has 16 – and best of all you can save the \$9. Instructions on how to switch can be found on the last page of The Local or simply send the Business Manager an email.

The NorthEastern Region (NER) of the NMRA is holding their 2018 annual convention in Mahwah, New Jersey. Due to the location's proximity to the border of several MER divisions, they have requested permission to send monthly emails to members in those bordering MER divisions about the convention. To do so, they are requesting access to member names and email addresses. As per the MER privacy policy, the release of such information must be approved by both the MER Board and the Division Superintendents. At this time, it is under review by all parties involved. There are several possible outcomes to this request from the NER. The first is that the release of the information is not approved. The second is that the release is approved in which case some MER members would receive emails regarding the NER convention from the NER. The NER would use Constant Contact (the same service the NMRA uses for their email blasts) and members could "UnSubscribe" if they do not wish to receive future emails. The third possible outcome is that either the MER or the local divisions will distribute the NER's information. The MER has partnered with the NER during past Regional conventions. Also, many MER members living along the Region border regularly attend NER events and vice-versa. Their request seems reasonable and beneficial to MER members. It also is something that those running future MER conventions may also want to explore. Whatever the decision, just know that those making it did so with the member's data privacy and the benefits of such communication in mind.

If you have ANY questions, feel free to contact the Business Manager.

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.

NEW MEMBERS

Eric	Binns	Philadelphia
Brian	Crozier	Philadelphia
Ernest	Fricks	New Jersey
Donald	Greaser	Tidewater
William	Hanmer	South Mountain
Charles	Hull	Potomac
Dave	Lundmark	
David	Moyer	Susquehanna
David	Noll	
Zach	Pabis	Potomac
David	Rafferty	Philadelphia
W Floyd	Reid	Carolina Southern
Allan	Richardson	Tidewater
Lucas	Safrit	Carolina Southern
Gary	Savage	James River
Patrick	Smith	James River
Tyler	Trahan	Carolina Southern
John	Trout	Philadelphia

Welcome all new members!

Apologies if you joined recently and I missed your name here. The way join dates are handled in our database makes for slight imprecision on this.

**Moving? Changing email addresses?
 Promptly notify the NMRA at**

<http://nmra.org/members/update>

or by mail at:

**NMRA
 P.O. Box 1328
 Soddy Daisy, TN
 37384-1328**

to insure continued timely delivery of The Local to you, and so we can contact you as necessary. (NMRA notifies the MER of such changes, saving you one more step).

JAMES RIVER RAILS Operations Weekend



JAMES RIVER RAILS Operations Weekend – October 2018 An Invitation to a Weekend of Model Railroad Operations

One of the big attractions to the hobby of model railroading is the diverse aspects of the hobby, be it conducting historical research, modeling prototype scenery, building realistic structures ... the list goes on and on.

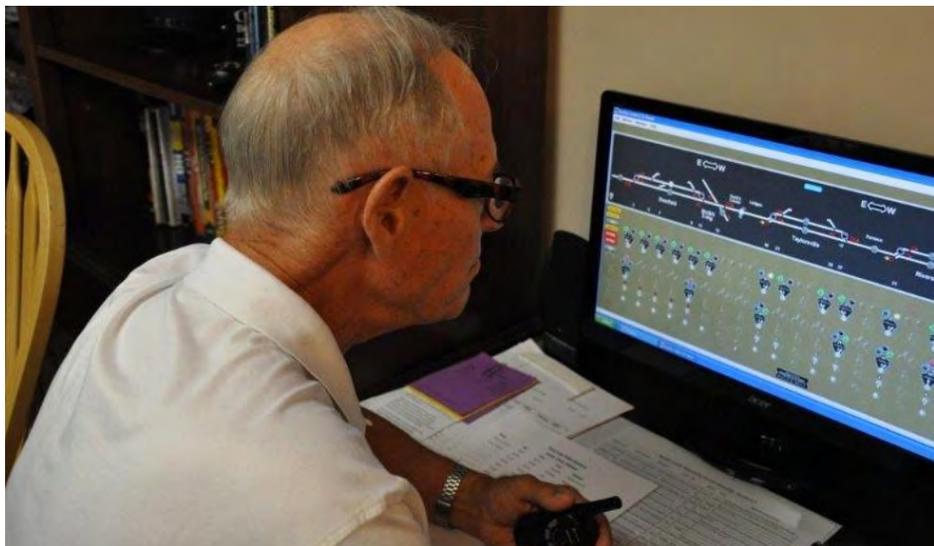
Included in this list is participating in model railroad operating sessions. In fact, operations is at the top of the list for many modelers, whether it be the challenges of recreating a near-prototype environment or simply enjoying freelanced operations. Many of us enjoy running trains on a wide variety of model railroads with their associated operating schemes.



In October 2018 – during the weekend of October 19 – 21, to be more specific – modelers will have the opportunity to participate in multiple operating sessions on a variety of model railroads. A team of modelers in the Richmond and South-Central Virginia area is hosting **JAMES RIVER RAILS, an Operations Weekend**. Layouts located in the Richmond, Williamsburg, Farmville, Appomattox, and Charlottesville, Virginia areas will be hosting operating sessions on Friday evening (October 19), Saturday morning and afternoon (October 20), and Sunday (October 21). The sessions are designed primarily for individuals with previous experience in model railroad operations, but everyone is invited to participate.

If you enjoy model railroad operations, this promises to be a special weekend that you won't want to miss. The hosting layouts feature a wide variety of operating environments:

- HO and On30 scales
- Model scenery including the West Coast, the Great Plains, and the East Coast
- Train movements facilitated via Time Table and Train Order, Centralized Traffic Control, Sequence Schedule, and everything in between
- Small layouts with 3 operators, to large layouts with 20 operators
- Operations ranging from mainline “fast paced and disciplined” to branch-line “relaxed”



<http://www.jamesriverrails.org/>

JAMES RIVER RAILS promises something for everyone on the layouts scheduled for the operations weekend. All layouts feature Digital Command Control (DCC) operations including use of Digitrax, NCE, and MRC systems. DCC throttles will be provided for operators at all layouts participating in JAMES RIVER RAILS. All you need to do is show up, ready to enjoy some outstanding model railroad operations and the camaraderie of fellow modelers.



On Saturday, the JAMES RIVER RAILS team will host a luncheon for all participants at the home of one of the layout owners in the Richmond area.

Various members of the JAMES RIVER RAILS team belong to and actively support the NMRA and/or the Operations Special Interest Group (OPSIG). While the team is coordinating information about this operations weekend with these national organizations, JAMES RIVER RAILS is an independent event. The operations weekend is open to all individuals; NMRA or other membership is not required.



Individuals interested in participating in JAMES RIVER RAILS must sign-up in advance. There are a maximum number of positions available for registration based on the crew sizes of the participating layouts and operating session scheduling, so you are encouraged to register early! A \$20.00 per person nonrefundable registration fee is being charged to cover event costs. The operations weekend is a not-for-profit event and any money remaining after event expenses have been covered will be donated to the James River Division of the NMRA.

The JAMES RIVER RAILS website provides complete information about the operations weekend. The website provides a comprehensive description of each of the participating layouts and an online registration capability for the operations weekend. The website facilitates payment of the registration fee using PayPal; instructions are also provided for payment of the fee via personal check. (Please note that the registration fee must be received by the JAMES RIVER RAILS team before a registrant's scheduling preferences will be honored.) The website also provides information about Richmond area hotels if participants require a room for the weekend, as well as links to various attractions and other venues in the Richmond area.

So if you enjoy model railroad operations and would like to operate on a wide variety of layouts in a single weekend, be sure to check out JAMES RIVER RAILS!



Achievement Program

A couple of questions for you, based on conversations amongst the LOCAL team:

If you are not receiving the E-LOCAL notification email, are you still downloading it and reading it? If you read the E-LOCAL, do you print it yourself and then read the printed copy, or directly on-screen? (Martin prints it, but he has better color printing than I have [which is none], and he then wants to red-ink it too.) Knowing this might help me with typeface choices.

Do you read it only on your PC or do you read it on another device, an iPad or phone?

Long-time MER member Dick Higgins passed away on December 30. Dick had been the “budget director” for MER for years, and Treasurer.

**Custom
Layout
Building**

Layout Design

By Lance Mindheim

**www.shelflayouts.com
301-404-8164**



By Dave Chance

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

Division 3 - Philadelphia

Charles A. Butsch - Association Volunteer
Mark R. Wallace - Association Volunteer

Division 11 - Susquehanna

Robert Bucklew - Golden Spike
Robert Bucklew - Association Volunteer
Pat Mulrooney - Golden Spike

Division 12 - Carolina Southern

Neal R. Anderson - Model Railroad Engineer Electrical
Neal R. Anderson - Model Railroad Engineer Civil
Neal R. Anderson - Master Builder Scenery
Neal R. Anderson - Chief Dispatcher
Neal R. Anderson - Association Volunteer

Division 14 - Chesapeake

John Darlington - Association Volunteer

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.

PROBLEM - PLEASE HELP ME. National does NOT accept R&V forms. Please don't send these any more.



Clint sez: Here's another favorite tool: the sprue nipper. If you ever build with injection-molded styrene, you need one of these. Or maybe two.

Wish I'd had one 50 years ago.

Subscriptions to **The Local**

Send requests to MER Business Manager at



The Mid-Eastern Region, Inc., NMRA
An IRS Tax Exempt Organization
Business Manager
801 S. Newton Lake Drive
Collingswood, NJ 08108

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Scale(s) _____ Telephone _____

Make checks payable to the "Mid-Eastern Region"

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 paper/photo originals without having back-up copies of both. 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 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 email within two weeks, please resend your submission or contact the editor by email.

Publication Schedule Deadline

Jan/Feb	Dec 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr	Feb 1st
May/June	Apr 1st
Jul/Aug	Jun 1st
Sept/Oct	Aug 1st
Nov/Dec	Oct 1st

Attention O Scale Modelers!

The MER is a sponsor of the 2018 O Scale National Convention August 23-25 in Rockville MD

(same hotel as the October 2018 MER convention).

Registration form appears on page 25.

If you are interested in advertising with the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association, please contact the editor. The current advertising rates (one year) for The Local are as follows, and must include camera ready are (text, doc/docx, jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats):

- Callboard ads (30 - 50 words, Div and Clubs Only)..Free
- Business Card size\$60
- Quarter Page ad.....\$125
- Half Page ad\$225
- Half Page ad per issue (Div only).....\$25

A little more AP Contest Room activity in 2017

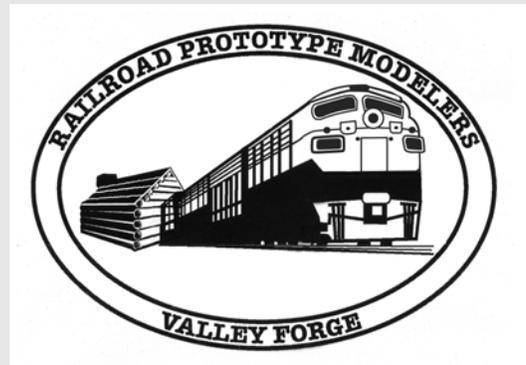
There was this huge wooden bridge in for judging. Sorry about the angle being skewed in the photo, I couldn't get it all in my camera lens and eye at the same time. Imagine this monster on your layout. I left a sheet of paper in the view at the bottom so you can get an idea of the size. Sean Gaston, Old Trestle Bridge, 104 points.



Ron Baile and Ken Montero working hard as AP Judges at the 2017 convention. Note the serious judging tools in use: battery, pencil, cheap plastic scale ruler, a weird alien blaster pistol.

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

Sponsored by a 100% NMRA Club

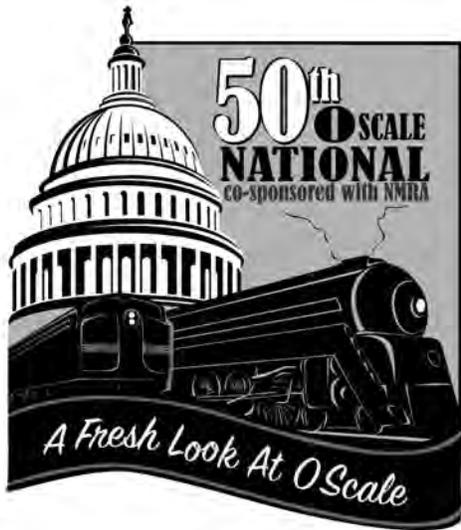


March 23-25, 2018

Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference Center
Malvern, PA

Clinics • Model Displays • Vendor Rooms
Sunday Home Layout Tour

Information and updates: RPMValleyForge.com



2018 O Scale National Convention

“A Fresh Look at O Scale”

Co-sponsored with the
Mid East Region NMRA

August 22-26, 2018

Rockville Hilton Hotel
1750 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD

This is a convention for all 1/4" scale modelers: standard gauge, narrow gauge, P:48, traction and transit. There will be something for everyone: beginners, old hands and those curious about O Scale. This is a “destination” convention* in the Washington, DC area; registration includes:

- Trading Halls
- A full clinic schedule featuring all new presentations & 'extra fare' hands-on clinics
- Modular Layouts On-Site
- Manufacturers & Vendor Displays
- Opportunity to purchase special Convention Cars
- Model Contest/Model Display
- Door Prizes and Goodie Bags for pre-registered attendees
- Banquet with outstanding food
- Layout tours of some of the best O Scale layouts in the country
- Side Trips available (Directions provided and carpools available)
- **Keynote & dinner address by Tony Koester featuring his venture into O Scale, Proto 48**
- Of course, the Washington, DC region with its many train & tourist attractions;
many accessible via the Metro direct from the convention hotel.

Fare: \$40 Full Show Admission

Tables: \$55 per 6' table

Free cargo trailer parking for dealers

Convention Hotel: \$109/night plus fees and taxes

Free underground parking with Hotel stay. \$5 to other convention attendees

* Bring the family and make this a Washington, DC vacation! You will be able to arrive up to 5 days early and/or stay 3 days after the convention at the convention room rate to take in the National Capital Region sights. The DC Metro is 108 steps from the hotel door and can quickly take you anywhere in the region.

See the website for more details: <http://2018oscalenational.com>

2018 O Scale National Convention Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Registration (Spouse & Children under 16 included with registration): _____ x \$40 = _____

Spouse & Children's names: _____

Banquet Tickets (each attendee at the Banquet requires a ticket): _____ x \$60 = _____

Extra Fare Clinics (only registered attendees can participate in Extra Fare clinics)

Your First 3D Print presented by Terry Terrance, 9:30 am Friday 8/24/2018

Attendees will draw an O Scale B&O concrete whistle post, prepare it for printing and then print it on a desk top 3D printer. Participants must bring a laptop computer pre-loaded with Sketch-Up (a free program). Limited to 15 attendees.

_____ x \$20 = _____

Cardstock Structures Workshop presented by Jim Gore, 12:30 pm 8/24/2018

Attendees will assemble an O Scale cardstock structure (provided) under the direction of Prof. Gore. Attendees must bring the following: Hobby knife with #11 blade; Extra #11 blades (plenty; at least 5); Steel straight-edge [ruler]; at least 12" long; Extra straight-edge, if possible – a flat square is nice; Self-healing cutting mat – 12" x 18" [or larger]; Fine- pointed forceps [tweezers]; Several shirt-pins [barring that; a few straight pins]; Roket Card Glue [you can purchase from Amazon] OR Medium Viscosity CA Glue [Gorilla brand is fine]; COPIC Marker – T4 – toner gray; COPIC Marker – E57 – light walnut [markers can be obtained from art store; like Blick's]; Black Sharpie; #1 / #0 round [or liner] artists brush. Structures in other scales can be provided with **prior** arrangement. Limited to 20 attendees.

_____ x \$20 = _____

Dealer Tables (6 foot) (1 free admission with 5 tables; 2 with 10 tables, etc.) _____ x \$55 = _____

Total Enclosed = _____

Models for Display & Judging (Will you be bringing models with you? Circle all that apply.)

Steam Loco	Electric Loco	Freight Car	MoW	Structure	Photo/Painting
Diesel Loco	Trolley	Passenger Car	Caboose	Diorama	

Send this completed form and check made out to **2018 SONC, LLC** to:

2018 SONC, LLC PO Box 42241 Washington, DC 20015

OR: Register with credit card on-line (After Sept. 1, 2017) at: <http://2018oscalenational.com/convention-registration>

Reservations for the Convention Hotel must be made through the Hilton website or via phone:

hiltonrockville.com

(301) 468-1100

Hotel registration opens Aug. 22, 2017, watch the convention website for the event code.

If registering by phone, you must mention **2018 SONC** to get the discounted rate.

A Tale of Two Layouts—A Little Literature and a Mixed Metaphor

by Clint Hyde

It was the best of times. For the last ten years, I have been attending the Mid-Atlantic Narrow Gauge Guild meet in Kimberton, PA with Larry Nyce, MMR. I recommend this event, typically mid-May. A regular crew returns every year, there are multiple modular layouts, stuff to buy, people to talk to. It's not a huge event, attendances varies with the weather. Open to the Public on Saturday; we generally drive up Friday morning, John Short often comes along. Read further at <http://midatlanticng.org/>

The former MER AP chairman, Charlie Flichman, MMR, attends too; he's been going far longer than I have. While chatting with him and a couple other folks on Saturday this year, I heard him say he was tearing down his layout shortly. **It was the worst of times.**

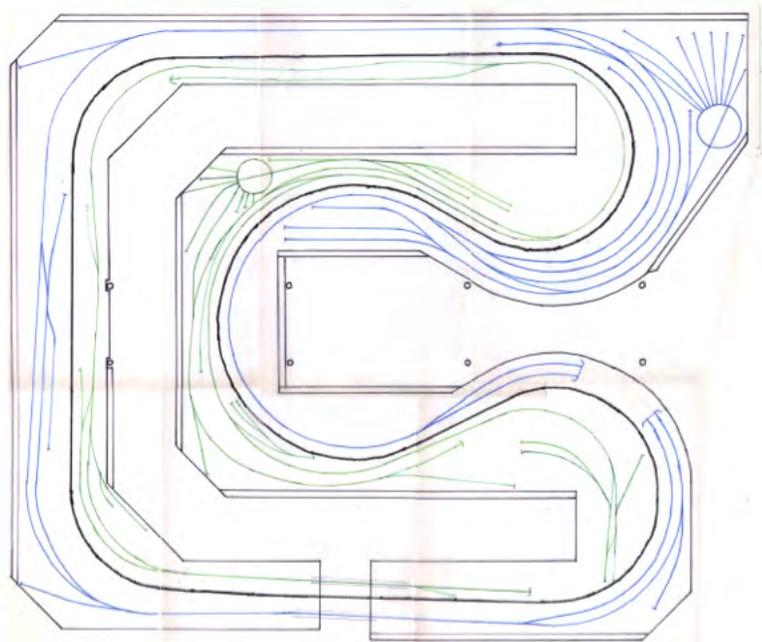
"Whoa, Charlie!" I said. "Hold off just a little bit and let me come down and photograph it for an article for The LOCAL. I can day-trip down there." I live in north-central VA and he lives in NC. Charlie's a retired electrical engineer; me too.

As it turns out, I was tearing mine down, too, because I was in the process of moving to our retirement home. Retirement house? House we live in while retired? New house we live in, theoretically retired but apparently busier than I had intended. OK, I'm officially retired now. And I've sold my old house in Fairfax (ask me about THAT crazy story in person). **It will be the best of times!** Break out the champagne!

I've torn down layouts for others, you've likely heard me tell a story or two in person about doing that, it's been happening on occasion for nearly 20 years. If you haven't heard one,

feel free to ask, I have several. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll think "I'm glad *I'm* not doing that".

One thing I concluded about making my own layout, early on, was that it was a certainty that I would be moving out of that house at some point (feet first was always possible), and it would need to come down. So I designed and built it as a group of modular pieces that could come apart with ease (ok, with power screw-driver and rail-cutters). Pieces that would be easy to take out the basement door, even if it was then going straight to the dump. Which it did, as it was a custom fit into the space available in that inconvenient basement. I had thought I might take pieces with me to reuse, but really, how often does that happen? Not this time either.



Charlie's track plan. Outside is Std Gauge (blue, in color), inner is Narrow Gauge (green). Reprinted here with permission from Bob Brown, Narrow Gauge Gazette, where it first appeared.

Charlie, an O-scaler, has, or had, structures and things he was going to give away, with some interested recipients. I didn't have any pieces to give away, just the "ground" and the track on it. Nothing there to keep really, except the track.

Mine was still too complicated, although years ago I had removed an early section and thrown it out, after I learned the requirement by fire codes that there be a

Because it's narrow gauge, you have to have a logging scene, required in the really squinty print on page 4 of Layout Design Laws.



Required scene element. The Narrow Gauge Police will be looking for you if you don't have one.

three-foot open space in front of the circuit breaker box. My impression has been at various layout open houses over the years that most of us violate that. I did, too, until I learned about it, and then that section went away. In favor of something with less track complexity, but more space getting used.

Charlie's layout was far less complex than mine, and a good bit larger. His didn't have the pointless complexity of too much spaghetti-bowl loops. Mine had less after deleting that one early section, but still...it's so easy to go too far down that direction.

Charlie's layout is actually two layouts. The outer one is O-scale standard gauge, a relatively simple loop. The inner one is



One of Charlie's incomplete areas.

On3, and again a relatively simple loop.

Charlie's goal is not operations, or continuous running. His focus is much more about building things, structures and trains. So the layout doesn't really have any high-density goings on, and there are good-sized spaces between local setting vignettes. The narrow-gauge is totally separated from the standard-gauge. He's a fanatic about detail precision—one bridge has 15 thousand individually placed rivet heads. Yes, he counted them. I'd have needed a padded cell.

I recommend NOT making your layout too complex. That way lies madness, never getting done, and giving up. I regret mine having some complexities it didn't need; even in N scale some curves were tighter than they should have been.

In case you hadn't guessed, which railroad is this? Oh, right, that one.



The infamous Geese. Who dreamed them up, anyway?

Even with a simpler layout concept and design, you still may not finish. Charlie's layout has incomplete areas. Mine was one big incomplete area, which is why you've never seen it.

Charlie is planning on doing something new. Only the standard-gauge layout is coming down. My entire layout came down, because we were leaving; I have a rough plan for what I'll do next, it'll be really different, and not too complex. That's a hard thing to do, making it simpler—it's really easy to overdo it in order to have more track. But railroads mostly don't have track plans anything like what we do as layout designers. Start with a theme, don't overdo it, isolate things that need it. Charlie's layout lacks clutter; mine was

Two Layouts

over-dense. Open empty spaces between scenes—life is like that if you drive around far enough (e.g., drive from west side of Dallas to the east—no real visual difference, big city the whole way, but go east out of Dallas and it hits open space soon after the lakes, really empty open space).

This is a far, far better thing I do in tearing this old layout down and starting over. At some point your old layout stops being interesting the way it used to be; if you stalled out for some reason, that was when. You want to do something new. Don't be afraid of this, don't let inertia hold you back. Knowing when to walk away, when to tear that old one down, is hard. (Andrew Dodge described this recently in his Ops article.)

Charlie was a lot farther along than I was, but in one sense you should never finish. Always more to do...things to do over. You learned along the way, both good and bad. Your skills are better now.

Don't fear the reaper. Tear something out and do it over, or do different.

Take photos while you're doing it. Write me an article. Like this one.

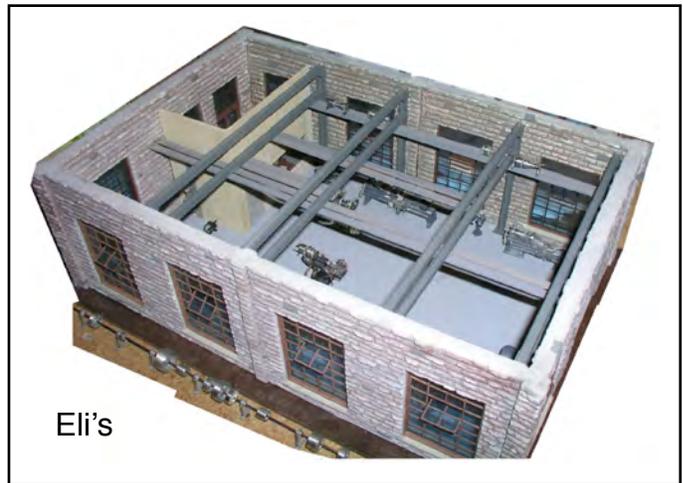
Charlie's layout has been around a while, in its forms. But he is continuously building new things to go on it—a good hobby is one that doesn't have an end-point, even if there are convenient places to stop and



Charlie's older roundhouse

admire the view along the way.

The first thing he showed me was a new building he's working on: Eli's Workshop.



Eli is Charlie's grandson's name. It's hydrocal castings, using rubber molds that were originally made for his roundhouse.

Engineering motto: don't reinvent wheels, reuse wherever possible—and therefore design for reuse.



NG requires steam, too. That's on page 3. Steam engines are very pretty, but really, were they ever this clean—even when they just rolled out of the factory?

Charlie's outer layout is O-scale two-rail. The inner layout is On3 two-rail, and is more complete than the outer one. Neither are tiny, at least double the size/space of what I was doing in N-scale.

I am SO glad I went, and thanks to Charlie for holding off on the sawzall and dynamite.



A mold and the resulting hydrocal casting. Design for re-use.

AP Structures does require you to make a bridge. But why stop with one? I apparently lost the photos of the steel girder bridge that has the 15 thousand rivet heads. The wooden duck-under bridge is very impressive, and includes a head-protector—not so much to protect YOU as to protect the bridge.



A duckunder bridge with a head-shield.



Steam engines, check. Logging scene, check. Roundhouse, check. Coaling tower, check.



Not one of those NG required elements, but stunning. The left piece of roof comes off, too, for more interior. The side wall framing was built using a serious styrene placement jig.



I like seeing folk's private roadnames.

**National Model Railroad Association
Mid-Eastern Region
2018 Convention**

Crossroads of the MER



***Clinics ▪ Silent Auction ▪ Banquet Speaker—Lou Sassi
Contest & Modular Layouts ▪ Operations Call Board
White Elephant ▪ Contest & Display
Banquet & Awards ▪ Prototype & Layout Tours***

**October 4-7, 2018
Rockville Hilton Hotel
1750 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852**

***For the most up-to-date information visit:
<http://www.potomac-nmra.org/MER2018/>***

THE MER WANTS YOU!

NEEDED: Candidates for the positions of President, VP, Secretary, and Treasurer are up for election in 2018.

WHEN: The deadline for self-nomination is May 30th, 2018.

Any MER member can nominate him or herself by contacting and supplying to any member of the nominating com-

mittee the required photo and a 200 word (max) statement outlining his/her qualifications or desire for the position by May 30. Additionally, candidate may supply a 500 word statement for placement on the MER Web site.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Jack Dziadul (jackdziadul@gmail.com)
John Janosko (johnajan@embarqmail.com)
Bruce Barrett (greenjeeps2@yahoo.com)

If you are interested in giving something back to the hobby you thoroughly enjoy, this is your chance.

Successful completion of 3 years in any of these positions counts toward most of the requirement for the AP "Association Official" certificate.

Please respond in one e-mail to all three committee members to insure reception of your nomination!

Deadlines and Schedules for 2018 Nominations and Balloting

By-laws changes adopted in 2016 require the publication of deadlines and schedules for nominations and balloting for every year to be published in the first issue of The Local of that same year. The dates schedule for nominations, ballot and election results may be found in Executive Handbook, Section 5, Policies, Article VI. Here they are:

May 30, 2018 -- Deadline for receipt of self-nominations sent to the Nominations Committee. Date for Nominations Committee to notify Board of Directors of slate of nominees validated by the Business Manager.

July 7 -- You must be a member in good standing (paid up NMRA dues) based on the membership report supplied to the MER Business Manager from NMRA National as of 07/07 (the 7th of July) of every election year to be eligible to vote.

If an individual is not a member or if membership has expired as indicated by that record supplied to the MER, and the MER officials have not been informed by NMRA National of a valid renewal of membership by 07/07 (the 7th of July), such individual will not receive a ballot nor be permitted to vote in that year's election.

August 1, 2018 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting. Could be mailed earlier depending on other deadline requirements.

September 4, 2018 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

September 8, 2018 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

September 15, 2018 -- Deadline for Balloting Committee to transmit results to President the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

September 22, 2018 -- Deadline for The President to communicate the election results to candidates. The Business Manager also notifies the MER Web Master and the NMRA of the election results.

October 10, 2018 -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER-NMRA website.

Kitbashing 101

By Charlie Flichman



Over the past forty-five years, numerous O Scale structures in plaster, plastic or resin have been available. Financial and layout space requirements are a factor in how many of these kits you or I might purchase. Even the ones that have been purchased will turn out to be the same as on someone else's layout except for color and any modifications. There comes a time when you want or need a unique structure. This means either scratch building or kit bashing. I enjoy scratch building, as shown in my two previously published articles in O Scale Trains (# 15, Scratch Building A Roundhouse and # 31, A Backwoods Sawmill). But sometimes, I also like to work on a different kind of project, that is kit bashing a commercial structure kit into a structure different from the original design. This article will cover several plastic structure kits that I kit bashed into other than their original buildings.



Photo #1

Lionel has produced several plastic structure kits over the years. One of these is the Rico Station kit. I built one of these per the instruction sheet, as shown in Photo # 1. Then I wanted another station that would be of similar design, but not exactly the same as the first station. To do this, I bought two more kits. A free-standing station was constructed without the attached freight building. This was done with the extra end wall from the second kit as seen in Photo #2.



Photo #2



Photo #3, separated freight shed with extra door

I also wanted a freight station at this location, but wanted it free standing. Using the parts from these two kits, I kit bashed the freight station shown in Photo # 3.

The trackside wall is the same as in the original kit and the end walls are duplicates of one another. The only modification made to this building was the front wall. I wanted two freight doors in the front wall, so two sections including doors had to be spliced together. One personal comment here, whoever did the die work for this building didn't keep the clapboard straight across the whole width of the wall. In cutting and rejoining the same wall section, the clapboard edges don't align correctly. Photo # 4 shows the two structures on the layout.



Photo #4, buildings separated and modified

Another Lionel kit bash project was their Freight Platform kit. Here I wanted a longer facility than the original kit. A total of three of these kits were purchased, but only used two of them on this project. I cut away the platform section of the second kit and cemented the remaining piece to the end of the shed floor of the first kit. The back side wall of the first kit was cemented to the front wall to make the extended structure as shown in Photo # 5. The back wall on this building is a plain piece of styrene, since you cannot see the back wall on the layout. The roof sections were also extended. This is to be a grocery supplier, but the signage has yet to be applied. The finished structure is shown in Photo # 6.



Photo #5



Photo #6, finished

Another Lionel kit is their Engine House. Over the years, I purchased five of these kits. My first kit bash with this kit is a small factory building, a Western Electric Distributing House, the company I retired from. See Photo # 7.

One interesting note with this structure is that in picking out the windows wall sections, they were not all the same in all of the kits. The windows were not centered in the wall sections in some of the kits. Here again the signage has to be applied.



Photo #7, originally an engine house

Heljan produced an O scale Engine House kit. I purchased three of these. This structure will be the National Bohemian Brewery. Natty Bo is a Baltimore (MD) beer, still available, <http://nationalbohemian.com/>.

The main city on my standard gauge layout is Bawlmer (the slang pronunciation of Baltimore). As seen in Photo # 8, I have a large curved backdrop section next to my engine terminal. The brewery is to fit along this curve. The door sections of the



Photo #8, curved backdrop

engine house have been cut to make two “under roof” loading/unloading annexes. The holes for the swinging doors of the engine house were covered with “steel” styrene angles. The area between the two windows of a window section, were cut away and a large door was made from sheet styrene to provide a door into the building. The rest of the building is just windows sections cemented together to provide the required length to take up most of this section of the curved backdrop. The finished structure is shown in Photo # 9.

As can be seen, using existing (or previously available) kits, one can produce a structure that doesn't show up on everyone else's layout. Try it—you may just come up with a very different-looking structure.



Photo #9, Natty Bo

