

The Local



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Number 5

Convention Central

by
Clint Hyde

The Washington DC area is Convention Central, no doubt about it. There isn't a week or weekend that goes by that doesn't have umpty-zillion conventions or seminars or group something-or-others going on all over.

This year it includes TWO model railroad conventions. At the same hotel. Sponsored by MER.

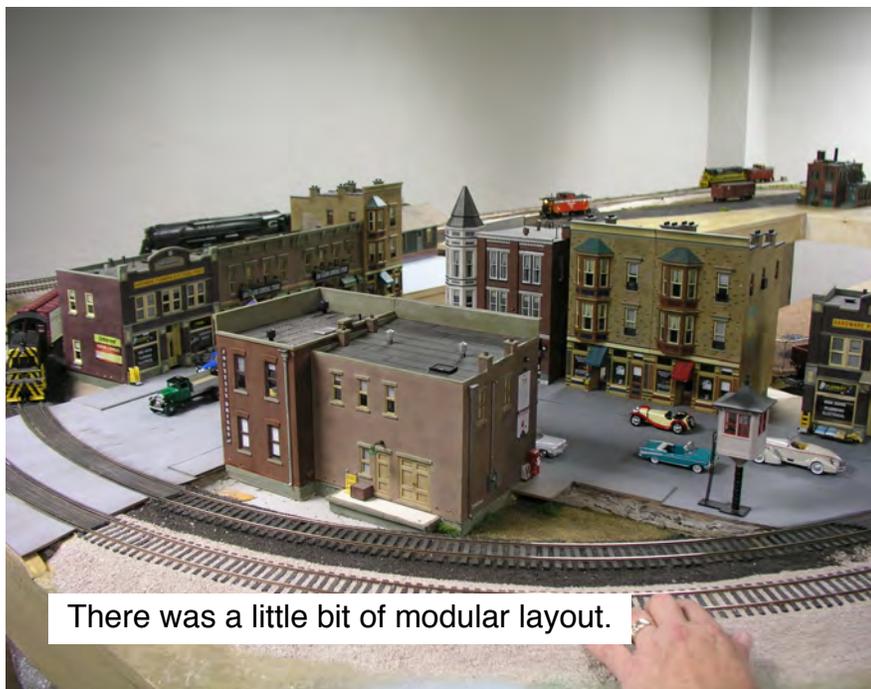
OK, that sounds goofy--but it's true. The first one was the O Scale National for 2018, just this past month; the second one is the MER annual convention, coming up next month. MER was co-sponsor for the O Scale convention, it was about 50-50 run by MER folks and others (i.e., I recognized half the people running things).

For Your Immediate Information:

MER FALL CONVENTION:

Deadline to reserve Hilton rooms at the \$114 convention rate is September 17

Deadline for registrations on-line is September 28



There was a little bit of modular layout.

I attended the O Scale convention in August, thus this story. Next issue should have the MER convention story.

Relatively speaking, not a whole lot of difference between the two, except that the O Scale convention had dealers rooms (yes, plural). They occupied 5 or 6 rooms of varying sizes. Virtually everything in them was O Scale stuff, other than the usual suspects from around our area that are clothing, artwork, etc. I might have seen one HO thing.

There were clinics, four were hands-on (one of which will be repeated for MER Fall convention). I was able to partici-

continued on page 4

The Local

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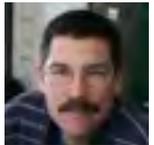
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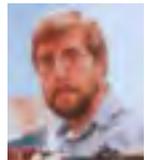
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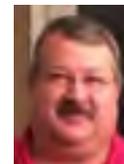
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President's Column

P J Mattson, MMR

The convention is the first week of October. At that time there will be a new President, Vice President, and Secretary. I wish them well.

Kurt Thompson will become an MMR. Congratulations. He also will become your President.

I have been part of the Board for eleven years. I enjoyed it but am looking forward to retiring. My plans are to keep up my modeling and I also plan on coming to all the future conventions. Of course I will probably miss it for at least 5 minutes. LOL.

Hope to see everyone at this year's convention.

Good Bye and stay on the right track.

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:

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.

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O Scale Convention, continued from page 1

pate in one, get a "kit" from another, and observe the other two. Terry Terrance did the 3D thing again, twice, once about buying a 3D printer, and the other about create the 3D artwork and print it. It was interesting enough to Phil Taylor of JRD that he later bought the same printer that weekend, over at MicroCenter, which is more or less right across the street. THAT is a sign of a good clinic.

There was NMRA model judging, and it was the same speed as at a MER convention, which is not surprising considering that it was the MER judging folks who did it. My model photos are inside this issue. Better photos will be in O Scale Trains Magazine, taken by their photographer. I managed to get a photo of everything except the best-in-show building.

There were open houses. If you've been to the MR events around DC, you pretty much know who these folks are, and likely have seen their layouts at some time or another. I went to a few of them--as at the MER convention, no way to see them all even if you did nothing else, on top of the DC traffic. Still, darn good stuff well worth your time to visit. Not much overlap with MER Fall, looks like.

There was a banquet. I didn't go to the banquet; I thought it was already sold out. Turned out that wasn't true, and there were a few no-shows. I don't live in the DC area any more, I don't have much in the way of interesting places to eat near home now, so I was exploring that while in the area. I promise you there are quite a few interesting choices in walking distance of the hotel. I had SmashBurger, Persian, Chopt, Fish, BBQ. Plenty of other choices--I ran out of meals to go out for. In October, I hope to do Indian, Greek, Peruvian, Chinese, and the Kielbasa Factory. And the banquet. Holler if you want come along.

The hotel bar is not open as late as we like. Last call is 10.45? Probably need to request special to be open another hour.



The mold-making clinic. We used Legos to make the dam to hold the blue goop inside.



I had a good time, but I did feel a little bit like Gulliver in Brobdingnag.

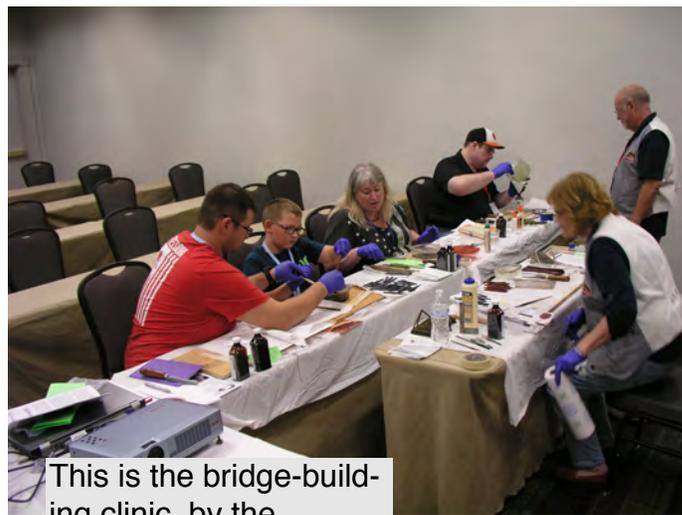
This cooling tower is over two feet tall.



Pretty much a standard dealer room area. This was a small one.



Yeah, this guy was there.



This is the bridge-building clinic, by the Hunters of Hunterline.



This is a nearly complete build of the cardstock clinic kit. Model by Kim Ryker.



Whoops! An HO item. How did that get in there?



Andrew Dodge's new layout is just as gorgeous as his previous one.



This is from Wes Morgenstern's layout. He passed away not too long ago, and his widow was the host.

Some very fine contest models at the O-Scale convention.



I thought I was doing this from a better angle. My favorite in the show.



All the models looked better in person. I realized later that I was not using "macro-focus" on my camera, so these are improperly fuzzy. Back to the drawing-board on that one.



Mid Eastern Region Blogs

Compiled by Nicholas Kalis

MER Member

Blog Address

James River Division

Shannon Crabtree viriniamidlandrr.blogspot.com/
Rod Vance <https://www.sites.google.com/site/willowcreekrr/home>

Philadelphia Division

Bill Blackburn PRR-GVD.COM
Bob Dietrich <http://www.dietrichsfam.com/shj/>
Val Pistilli www.rpmvalleyforge.com
Robert Putnick <http://rputnick777.wixsite.com/horseshoecurve>
Robert Putnick road/home <https://sites.google.com/site/ephratavalleyrail-road/home>
Greg Shindledecker <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WMThomasSub/>
Joe Walder <https://prrcambridgesectrk.blogspot.com/>
Paul Welsh http://www.rrscience.com/G_gauge/wmrr.shtml
Jeffrey Witt <http://witt-family.com/LayoutConstruction.htm>
Bob Zeolla <https://www.facebook.com/Conemaugh78>

Potomac Division

Alex Belida <https://esprblog.wordpress.com>
Bernard Kempinski <http://usmrr.blogspot.com/>
Stan Knotts <https://mrrminutiae.blogspot.com/>
Marty McGuirk <http://centralvermontrailway.blogspot.com/>
Lance Mindheim <http://lancemindheim.com>
Norman Reid <https://nfandcr.blogspot.com/>
Dean Ripple <https://sites.google.com/site/monongahdiv/>

Susquehanna

Jerry Britton <http://pennsyr.com>

Listed in alphabetical order by last name

Revised Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Please contact Nick Kalis at nkalis@verizon.net with the name of any Mid-Eastern Region (NMRA) member you know of who maintains a model railroad-related blog, so we may include their blog on our list. Thank you.

Listed in alphabetical order by last name

Revised Tuesday, June 26, 2018

If you know of a Mid Eastern Region (NMRA) member who maintains a personal model railroading-related blog, please contact Nick Kalis at nkalis@verizon.net with the member's name and blog address so that we may include that blog on our list. Thank you.

MER NEEDS A NEW OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Official Photographer

Appointed by: President
Approved by: Board of Directors
Reports to: Assigned Director

Position Summary:

Attends the MER Convention and records all aspects of the proceedings at Clinics, Contest Room, Banquet, and other events as deemed either necessary or of interest to the members of the MER at large for further distribution via The Local or via MER web pages.

Specific responsibilities:

1. Photographs any and all events, participants of clinics, and other ongoing events transpiring at the MER conventions;
2. Photographs any and all models entered in the Contest Room; obtains results thereof to capture those models that win 1st place and/or Special Awards;
3. Provides publication quality photography to the Editor of The Local, as needed for coverage of the MER convention;
4. Retains an archive of photographs of the MER Conventions;
5. Prepares an annual budget request to cover anticipate expenses for the year to come

Editor: Mostly you do #2, and #3. With a better camera than I have. And a bright white backdrop.

NMRA HQ rebate to Divisions

By [Peter Youngblood](#), MMR, North America Director-At-Large

Your NMRA Leadership Team announces a new program available to all active North American NMRA Divisions. Called the **NMRA Division Retention Event Matching Fund Program**, the NMRA is offering a matching fund in the amount of \$50 USD once annually to any active Division that holds a Division event qualifying as promoting member retention (i.e. hands-on clinic material purchase or similar event).

The NMRA will reimburse up to \$50 USD to the Division when the required steps have been approved and completed. Logging in to the NMRA website, you'll find the downloadable "[Application For NMRA Division Retention Event Matching Funds](#)" form formatted as a Word DOC by first logging into the website as a member, then clicking on "Regions." Click on "Regions and Divisions." There you'll find a "Division Matching Fund" tab. Click on it for an explanation and a hot link to the DOC form. Once the event is completed, the Division will forward copies of the approved form and the required receipts to NMRA HQ (nmrahq@nmra.org or by mail).

NMRA HQ will then send a check to the Division's Treasurer for half the event cost or \$50 USD, whichever is less. Reimbursement will be made by NMRA HQ once all requirements are met. It's that easy!

Divisions are encouraged to take advantage of this new Matching Fund program as a way to increase member participation, education and retention. Available as of January 1, this is a one year pilot program. Continuation thereafter is contingent on its usage.

NOTE: Unlike the 50-50 split of the NMRA annual rebate discussed in the Business Manager's column in the May/June LOCAL, this "rebate" is a reimbursement for expenses incurred by a Division in the activities that NMRA decides are membership promotional activities. MER is not involved in this reimbursement program - it is directly between NMRA and each participating Division.

On page 1, at the top, is a pair of O scale cabeese, from the O Scale convention model contest.

Editor: We are slightly shorter this issue so I can be sure this is released before the hurricane wipes out my electricity.



**Custom
Layout
Building**

Layout Design

By Lance Mindheim

www.shelflayouts.com
301-404-8164

CROSSROADS OF THE MER

by Ernie Little

MER 2018 Convention We are preparing for boarding now.

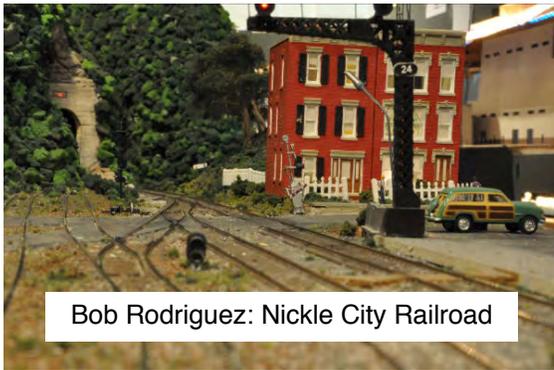
Time passes quickly and, in a few weeks, the 2018 MER Convention, Crossroads of the MER, will commence and the members of the MER-Potomac Division will be welcoming you to Rockville, Maryland for a long weekend of model railroading fun. The Convention will open on Thursday night, October 4th and end on Sunday, October 7th. There is still room for more model railroaders to come on down and talk about trains, attend clinics on some excellent topics, participate in some great operations sessions, see some terrific model railroad layouts, and socialize with other model railroaders who have a passion for trains. You can register for the convention at <http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018>.



The Potomac Division Convention Committee has been busy working on the final arrangements for the convention. Marty McGuirk, the Convention clinic coordinator, has been scanning the horizon looking for more clinics to add to the ones already scheduled to provide Convention attendees interesting and informational learning opportunities. There will be three parallel clinic tracks running to provide those attending the Convention several opportunities to learn, and in some cases participate in hands on activities.

The layout tour coordinator has several great model railroad layouts lined up for attendees to visit, see some great modeling, and perhaps get some ideas to use on their layouts. There are also several opportunities to participate in Operations Sessions on model railroad layouts throughout the area.

The Convention will have a White Elephant Sale room where you can sell your excess model railroading items or find great bargains on items for your layout. If you want to participate in the White Elephant Sale, it is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that you complete your forms prior to arriving at the Convention site to speed up the process of getting your items accepted to be in the sale. If you don't have your form completed and the price tags attached to your items, then you will have to complete the form on site. Obviously, this will take lots of your time and there will be limited space for folks to fill out forms. Forms are available on the web-site.



Bob Rodriguez: Nickle City Railroad

There will also be raffle with lots of items to be raffled off. Tickets will be \$1 a ticket, or 8 tickets for \$5.

When you receive your registration package, you will receive a convention booklet that lists some local model railroad hobby shops that have agreed to give convention participants who show their convention registration badge a 10% discount on all purchases made during the convention.

On Saturday, October 6th, there will be a prototype railroad excursion on the Walkersville Southern Scenic Railroad (WSRR) in Walkersville, Maryland as part of the Convention. You can sign up for the excursion which consists of a group guided tour of the WSRR yard, where one can see vintage freight cars, cabooses, diesel switchers and passenger cars which have been restored or in the restoration process. The tour will be followed by an approximately 70-minute train ride in vintage P-54 passenger cars, and if the weather is permitting, open air flat cars with bench seating.

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

If you'd like to see vintage trains up close, get to ride in vintage, restored passenger cars, and now have the potential opportunity to ride in the cab of a diesel switcher pulling the excursion train, go to <http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018> and register now and be sure to sign up for the WSRR excursion!

And finally, on Sunday morning, the MER Board of Directors will hold its annual membership meeting. This is a great opportunity to meet the Board members and observe a Board meeting, and ask questions of the Board.



Mat Thompson: Oregon Coast RR

The convention is being held at the Rockville Hilton Hotel located at 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD. Special rates for those attending the Convention are available through the link on the registration page of the Convention website.

BREAKING NEWS..... Convention Excursion Bonus!

A bonus feature has been added to this excursion. The WSRR has invited two convention attendees. who go on the excursion, the opportunity to ride in the engine cab with the engineer! All excursion attendees will be asked to place their name in a hat prior to the train ride, and the WSRR we will draw two names from the hat who will get to ride in the engine cab with the Engineer!

There is also an opportunity to socialize at the banquet on Saturday night where our speaker, Model Railroader magazine Associate Editor Lou Sassi, will be speak on his experiences with modern railroad photography.

As this will be the last article to be published prior to the Convention dates, the Convention Committee strongly recommends that you look at the Convention Website, <http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018>, where you that will provide you a wealth of information regarding the activities and events that will take place during the four days. The website has been constructed to include the ability of attendees to use a smartphone or tablet to stay informed on the activities at the Convention.

Using the Web Page on your Smart Phone

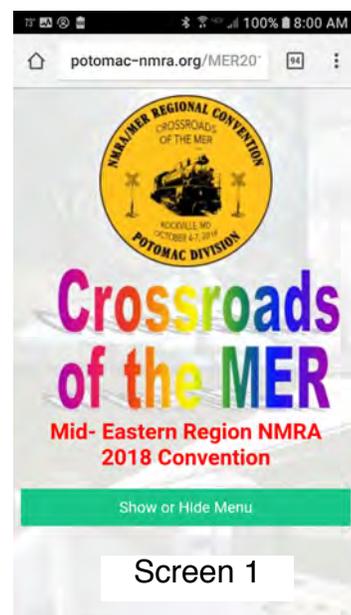
The web page for Crossroads MER 2018 has been designed to adapt to the small screen of a smart phone or tablet. You can view it on your smartphone

or tablet now so that you are familiar with its operation, which is slightly different from the on a desktop.

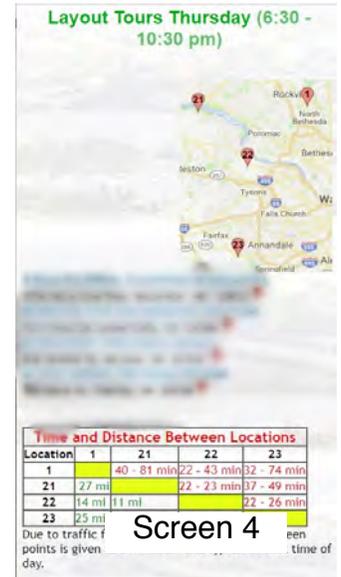
The home page appears as shown [Screen1]. The menu appears as the green bar. When you tap on the green bar the menu toggles on and off. The menu appears as a stack of blue bars [Screen2]. When tapped, the bottom bar, Information, drops additional light blue bars down [Screen3].

One of the most useful screens during the convention will be the Layout Tours page. It opens to a map showing all the tours. Scrolling down we find that each time slot has its own map and information. The first time slot is Thursday evening [Screen4].

A special version of the Layout Tour page will be available during the convention that will include the Layout locations. It will include a link to Google Maps which will provide directions from your present location to the location of the layout. This is such an improvement over what existed for previous conventions! You can decide in real time which layouts you want to visit and the directions are provided for you. You open Google Maps by tapping on the map pin that follows the address. The screen also shows the distance between locations in both miles and minutes. As noted on the screen, the time varies depending on traffic conditions. Google Maps will show the current times for alternate routes.



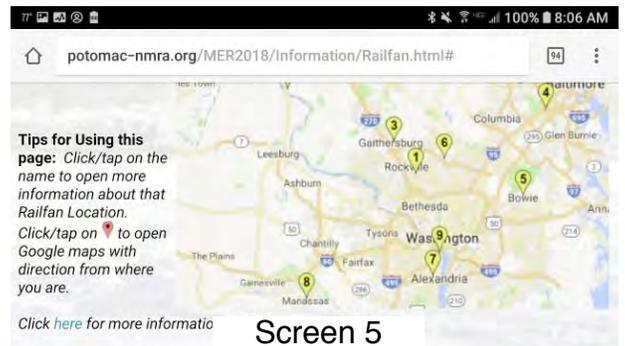
Screen 1



Most smartphones allow you to rotate the phone to landscape orientation. As shown [Screen5], the presentation adjusts to the screen orientation. Try it on your phone. This screen shown the Railfan Locations, which were under the Information tab in the menu. Scroll down to the list of sites. You can open a page of information about the site by tapping on its name; the map pins will open Google Maps. This is a good place for you to get familiar with this feature.

You can also check out the restaurants near the convention hotel; they have their own page under Information.

The Members of the Potomac Division look forward to seeing you at the Crossroads MER 2018 Convention look forward to a long weekend of model railroading.



LAST-MINUTE CONVENTION UPDATE!

The 2018 MER Convention has just had an additional, extra fare hands on clinic added. Clinic # 602, Introduction to 3D Printing, with Terry Terence. Attendees to this clinic Must Bring Their Own Laptop Computer, and they Must Have SketchUp! (a Free Program) loaded on the laptop prior to the clinic.

Attendees will Design a B&O Whistle Post in SketchUp!, Prepare the Design For Printing, and then 3D Print the project on Terry’s desktop 3D printer.

There is a \$5 fee for this clinic.

The Maximum Number of Attendees is 15.

BREAKING NEWS..... Convention Excursion Bonus!

A bonus feature has been added to this excursion. The WSRR has invited two convention attendees. who go on the excursion, the opportunity to ride in the engine cab with the engineer! All excursion attendees will be asked to place their name in a hat prior to the train ride, and the WSRR we will draw two names from the hat who will get to ride in the engine cab with the Engineer!

There is also an opportunity to socialize at the banquet on Saturday night where our speaker, Model Railroader magazine Associate Editor Lou Sassi, will be speak on his experiences with modern railroad photography.



Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2018 Convention



Crossroads of the MER

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 September 15) Extended 2 Weeks thru 9/15!!	E	\$55		
Basic Registration (September 16 thru September 28)	B	\$65		
Online & Mail In Registration Closes 9/28 thru 10/4				
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 American BBQ Buffet	401	\$60		
Banquet – Saturday Night Vegetarian – Meatless Lasagna Buffet	402	\$60		
Call Boards / Ops – Expanded Call Board Info Available on Website				
Thu. 7p-10p, Oregon Coast RR., HO, Mat Thompson Sold Out - Check Online	801	\$5	----	-----
Fri. 9a-12p Abrams Railroad Empire, HO, M. Abrams Sold Out - Check Online	802	\$5	----	-----
Fri. 7p-10p Virginia & Western RR., , D. Kirkpatrick Sold Out - Check Online	803	\$5	----	-----
Sat. 9a-12p Long Island Railroad, HO, Brian Sheron Sold Out - Check Online	804	\$5	----	-----
Thu. 7p-10p, Allegheny & Shenandoah RR, HO, Bob Reid # Open 5	805	\$5		
Fri. 9a-12p, Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, HO # Open 9	807	\$5		
Prototype Tours – More Info on Website				
Walkersville Southern RR, Excursion & Yard Tour, Sat. 9a-1:30p, Total # Open	---	----	---	-----
(Travel Is By Your Own Arrangements) ADULTS – Ages 13-64	201	\$12		
NO Bus Provided) SENIORS – Ages 65 & Up	202	\$11		
(Under 3 Free ONLY If On Parents Lap) CHILDREN – Ages 3 - 12	203	\$10		
Extra Fare Clinics – Registration Required, More Info on Website				
Fri. 1p-3:30p Molding & Casting w/ Hydrocal and Resin # Open 5	601	\$20		
(By Jay Beckham, 2+ Hours Hands On, \$20 for Materials)				
Sat. 8a-10:30p Intro To 3D Printing w/Terry Terrance, \$5 for Materials # Open 4	602	\$5		

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
 Use Link at <http://potomac-nmra.org/MER2018>, Hotel Reservations: 301-468-1100
 Room Rate - \$114.00 night + tax, includes parking, Room Rate applies 10/1/18 to 10/10/18

**ELOCAL. Sept/Oct
 Rev 9/11**

**SPECIAL
 ROOM RATE
 EXPIRES
 MONDAY 9/17**

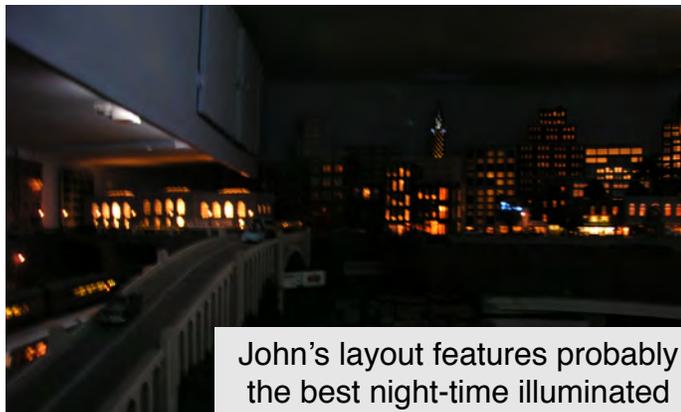
An Open House Tease for MER 2018

John Sethian. The setting is called New Lyon, a New Jersey-like location.

John is also a fan of Jaguar Cars, owning three right now, and others in the past. New Lyon is named after the founder of Jaguar, Sir William Lyons. The sign on the bridge is an homage to that name, and there are two scenes in the layout feature O scale models of various different Jaguar car models (being a Jaguar owner myself, I recognized them all). One is a road rally of older race cars made by Jaguar, and the other features models of all the cars John has ever owned. Nearby, if you look from just the right angle, is a special silver car. Recognizing that one is left as an exercise for the attendee.

John was open during the O Scale convention in 2018, and since he's open for MER as well, we have a tease of photos.

I can't explain it all for you here, you need to go see it and let John tell you in person.



John's layout features probably the best night-time illuminated buildings you've ever seen.



This is the Jaguar Road Rally.



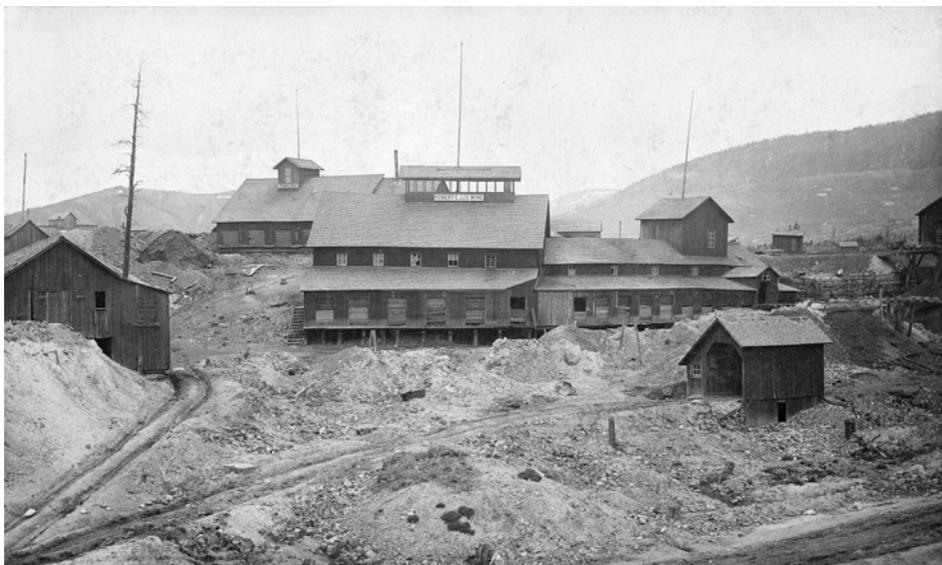
John's layout has some unique features that you really want to see...one of them is the large amount of lighting in buildings, and signs. There's a really interesting feature of his "lift-out" section: you can see the stack of pink 2-inch foam up in the air--it's on a motorized elevation arm underneath, that raises and lowers the section to allow access off to the left. Really neat!

Clint sez: I forget where I dug this up, online someplace.

This is the "Robert E Lee Mine" in Leadville, CO. It's a huge picture that I have squished down here. I do not remember the date on it, but it's got a lot of detail--quite a bit going on in that photo.

If you squint really hard, in the left background, yes, that's the "Matchless".

The only rail anything I can imagine in the photo seems to be center-right at the edge, and even that is uncertain.



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Coupler Comments

Clint Hyde, Editor

I went to the O Scale National this year. It was at the same hotel as this year's MER Convention, the Hilton something in Rockville, MD. Right next to the Metro station.

Pretty good time overall. Tony Koester was Guest of Honor, gave a couple of good presentations. Four hands-on clinics. Good open houses. Dealer room was a little weird, it was spread over a half-dozen rooms. Full story starts on page one.

Most of what I did was talk to folks, and take pictures. In particular I was talking to folks about writing for The LOCAL, as is usual these days. I now have a couple of stories to write myself, and a couple of new Made In The MER stories (one is a complete surprise), acquired a couple new writers, reminded a couple folks they promised to write something, etc.

This issue of The LOCAL is being created with Adobe InDesign, recreating the template from scratch. This is mostly a test drive; I personally prefer Quark XPress, although that's probably mostly due to 30 years of familiarity; that said, it does have aspects I don't like. I'll be giving a clinic on InDesign, with live demo I hope, at the MER convention. I'm not 100% impressed with InDesign, and have found one really annoying thing it does that it shouldn't. Other than that, mostly the same capabilities as Quark. Photos seem better to me, in test prints.

I had to recreate the entire document template in Adobe, I am pretty sure I missed something, but it was a one-time thing, I hope. At least it is now ready if I have to use it again. The do-over aspect meant it was about two hours per page to create the issue, about double the usual effort.

PDF importing in both Quark and Adobe is problematic. You would think Adobe, as the inventor of PDF, would do a better job, but it was pretty much the same. The convention registration form Bill Grosse creates causes real trouble on import, in both software apps, altho not the same way. Something his PDF-creator does fails to import, or has trouble downstream. What I have found is that since I also receive the original Word document from him; if I use it to create the PDF myself, that imports ok. Ultimately, I'm doing something slightly different anyway. The prose and the top and bottom (outside the pricing table) only changes once per convention, so those are boilerplate text that goes into separate boxes, and I only import the table, which I slice down into its own document, generate the PDF, and import that. Reason partly because "importing" a table is also awkward. An alternative would be to NOT do that import at all, and to insert the registration PDF into my document PDF; that would work, Acrobat Pro and other tools can do such a thing, but then it's just an insert, it doesn't have header/footer from the document, page numbering doesn't match up unless I began with a blank page to force numbering that I then deleted...not really better. The form prints ok by itself, it's the import that goes awry.

I didn't do that great a job with the photos at the convention. Closeups I forgot about setting macro focus. Photos on my phone got lost because I was out of space online and apparently it won't hold local ones either at that point. Sheesh!

NEW BERN 24th Annual TRAIN SHOW

Address: New Bern Convention Center
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READING RAILROAD MODELERS MEET VI September 21-22-23, 2018 HAMBURG, PA

WELCOME to the READING RAILROAD MODELERS MEET VI. Our event goal is very simple – get everyone interested in modeling the Reading Railroad together and enjoy displays of our modeling efforts, learn more about the Reading Railroad and how to model it, see Reading Railroad inspired layouts, enjoy meeting fellow Reading modelers and creating long lasting friendships! As you can see by the event title, this is our 6th event. We did well in the past and we hope you will make this 6th event even better! Our event includes many extras- Clinics, displays, optional lunch and layout tours! For further information or questions, call Barry Hensel at 734-649-3056 or send email to barry76Lt@wowway.com OR see our website at <http://www.ReadingRRMM.com/>

Keeping In Touch...



Bob Price
MER Business Manager

As this is being written, the MER election process is in progress. Paper ballots were mailed to those eligible members for whom we do not have a validated email address. For those members that we could validate the email address, an email was sent with a link for electronic voting. If you received a paper ballot and have an email account, please reach out to the Business Manager so that we can update our records. In addition to electronic voting, you are missing out on convention updates and notification when the latest issue of The eLocal is available.

So, what do the election numbers look like? No, it is too early to see the results. Let's look at the eligible voter counts. 1,798 members are eligible to vote in this year's election. Last year that number was 1,831 so we had a small decrease. Of the eligible population, we could confirm the email addresses for 1,369 members.

Paper ballots were mailed to the remaining 429 members. Of the 429 members that received paper ballots, we have email addresses on file for 226 of them. Our test email bounced for 190 of them and 36 are duplicated (usually family members).

Two issues back, our Editor published some charts in the e-Local that I produced showing paper and e-Local email subscription counts. The January-February printed version of The Local was mailed to 591 members. The July-August issue was mailed to 293 members. That is a significant drop, ~50%. The email notification for the e-Local during the same period only climbed from 640 to 676. It is probable that some members that were receiving both the email notification and printed copy are now only receiving the email notice. But - just a reminder - if you want to receive the paper version or electronic version email notification, please contact the Business Manager. Instructions can be found on the last page of any recent edition of The Local.

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.

NOT MADE IN THE MER

A factory in China that was handling contract production of model railroad items abruptly closed recently. Intermountain reported this first, saying it will affect their production for a while. Con-Cor has since also reported this, adding that it will affect something like 15 different manufacturers, but did not name names. I asked the Atlas O rep at the O Scale convention if they were affected, too, and he said a few items will be.

So don't be surprised about availability being limited for a bit. Build those Made in the USA laser-cut structures instead.

NEW MEMBERS

Elizabeth	Boisvert	Potomac
Tim	Burrington	Potomac
John	Cilley	Carolina Southern
Valerie	Cuddy	Carolina Southern
Laurent	Daudelin	Potomac
Patrick	Dowd	Tidewater
William	Eshelman	Potomac
Cindy	Fields	Philadelphia
Jeffrey	Fleisher	
Vernon	Gullo	Philadelphia
Roger	Hammond	Chesapeake
Robert	Hunter	James River
Chris	Jones	Potomac
Paul	Kauffmann	James River
Lawrence	Koenig	Chesapeake
John	Porter	Potomac
William	Quiram	Tidewater
Norman	Reid	Potomac
Family	Rhode	Carolina Piedmont
Jeffrey	Rowe	Potomac
Sean	Summer	Carolina Southern
Richard	Tobia	Chesapeake
Bryant	Welch	Potomac
Julie	Ziegler	Susquehanna

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.

Bob Macionis final open house

by Clint Hyde

James River Division went to Bob's in Charlottesville twice last year. His layout will be in the process of coming down by the time you are reading this, which is both good and bad. All things grow, change, and die. Tis the way of things.

As with Charlie Flichman's layout, it's good to get an open house done and written about before the "die" part, since you can't afterwards.

Bob's layout is/was pretty substantial. A lot going on. I didn't ask how long it would take to traverse every inch of track if you were driving a train at scale 35 mph, but I'd guess at least an hour.

As with many of us, he grew into the operations end of things, and then concluded that his layout didn't do that as well as he eventually wanted. Thus, the teardown and replacement, with wider aisles, better design, eliminated awkward spots.

Don Wells, physicist and astronomer, designed his signaling system with 4000-series CMOS (which are 12-volt electronic devices I used back in the mid-70s, my earliest EE years). He has LEDs all over at ground level indicating occupied vs available track blocks, permission grabbing, turnout directions. A custom arrangement. I love LEDs, myself, have for years (they're all over my house), so this encompasses things I want to do myself if I live long enough.

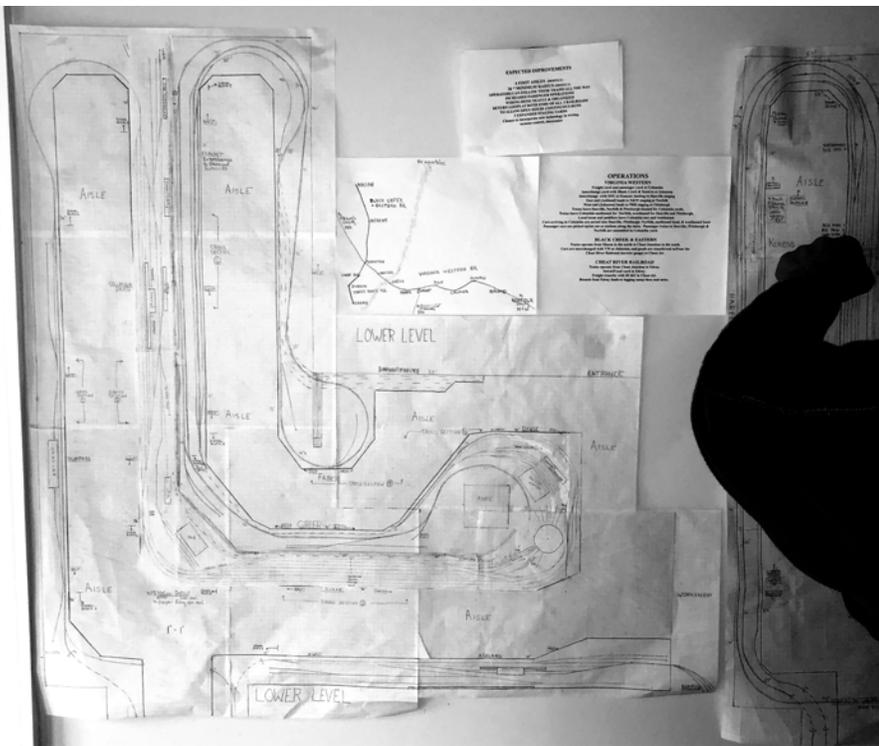
The first time I was over there I took some pictures, but I didn't get them labeled and later I couldn't remember which ones they were. This time I took a video; the images here are frame-captures from that video. I think the video is incomplete, like maybe I recorded a second half and managed to delete it without realizing.

There's no story to go with the pictures, just a meander through the scenes. There was a lot of up and down.





The tall scenery went from almost the floor to almost the ceiling, in several locations.

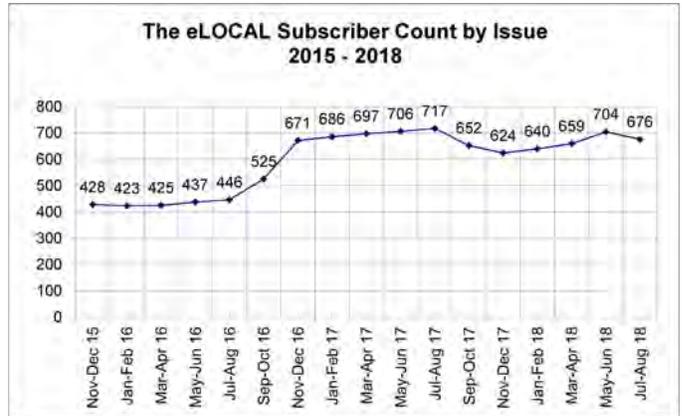


The track plan on the wall there goes about another four feet to the right.

More interesting subscription graphs from Bob Price, MER Business Manager



Headed downward, pretty fast. This is probably because you don't renew The LOCAL (paper) when you renew NMRA membership.



This is fairly steady, after the large climb 2 years ago.

Clint sez: I finally saw David Vaughn's layout, the one that includes parts of John Armstrong's layout, during the O Scale Convention weekend. Here are a few photos.

The Lugubrium plant is there, but not mounted yet, so no photo of that. We did all agree that we need a photo of that out somewhere with Martin's Lugubrium articulated cars in front of it.



David did manage to acquire some of John's rolling stock and locomotives.

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The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. The Editor will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send 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

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 Changing email addresses?
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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).

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

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 Half Page ad\$225
 Half Page ad per issue (Div only).....\$25

Another tidbit from Nick Kalis. You can see this in person at his open house at the convention, the Oahu Sugar Company in Fn3 (1:20.3)

Sugar cane is painted broom
DioDump DD016 Bamboo stems
Length approx. 15 cm
Thickness varies 1-3mm 4.95 Euros;

1:50 scale Northwest Dragline Model 25-D by Spec Cast, painted to reflect long service in the Hawaiian sunshine; modified by removing the bucket and replacing it with O Scale Detail, LOGGING CLAW, Finished Model by Model Tech Studios

W. Britain's 1/30 scale Air Base Sentry Box & Gate with 15 MPH Sign, WWII (No. 51019) stands in for a US Army sentry box for which photographic evidence exists;

backdrop by Katherine S. Kalis.



The AP consists of four areas with eleven sub-categories:

- A. Model Railroad Equipment**
 - 1. Master Builder - Motive Power
 - 2. Master Builder - Cars
- B. Model Railroad Settings**
 - 3. Master Builder - Structures
 - 4. Master Builder - Scenery
 - 5. Master Builder - Prototype Models
- C. Model Railroad Engineering & Operation**
 - 6. Model Railroad Engineer - Civil
 - 7. Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical
 - 8. Chief Dispatcher
- D. Model Railroad Service**
 - 9. Association Volunteer
 - 10. Association Official
 - 11. Model Railroad Author

Membership has its benefits...

Your NMRA membership entitles you to all these benefits, plus the fellowship and assistance of more than 18,000 members across the globe.

Partnership Program

The NMRA has partnered with model railroad manufacturers of all sizes who have agreed to give discounts to NMRA members. Discounts range from free shipping to 20% off all purchases. From Micro-Mark to Rusty Stumps, more manufacturers are being added every month. To see the current listing, see our website's Partnership page in the Members Only section.

Model Railroad Directory

Whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more.

NMRA Online Archives

More than 10,000 photographs, slides, plans, drawings, erection elevations, paint schemes and more, with additional scans being added all the time. High-resolution files are available for download at a discount to members.

Achievement Program

The AP helps modelers get more out of the hobby by providing an incentive to learn and master the skills necessary. Those who've completed the AP receive Master Model Railroader (MMR) certification.

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\$1 million liability insurance is available to model railroad clubs in which every member is an NMRA member. \$50 administration fee and completed application required.

Special Access to Places and People

As an NMRA member, you'll have access to all kinds of railroad locations you'd never otherwise see. Often National and Regional conventions will tour prototype facilities such as yards and maintenance shops, and will charter special excursion railroads that are usually never open to the public. You'll have the chance to see top-of-the-line model railroads that usually don't accept visitors. And you'll be able to spend time talking with some of the most famous personalities in model railroading today.

Bi-monthly NMRA eBulletin and NMRA Turntable

Every other month we publish the electronic NMRA

eBulletin, containing late-breaking news and reports of happenings in the organization. The NMRA Turntable is a monthly electronic publication that rounds up some of the most interesting model railroad websites, videos, blogs, and articles on the web. We do the searching so you don't have to! Every member with a valid email address receives a copy of both publications.

NMRA Magazine

NMRA Magazine is the monthly publication of the NMRA, and features news about the organization and its Regions and Divisions, along with modeling articles, product performance reviews, and other information. Because the subscription rate/postage depends on where you live, check www.nmra.org for your rate.

"Members Only" Company Store

The NMRA's Company store offers many items, from apparel to mugs to gauges, available only to NMRA members.

Online Video Library

The Members Only section of www.nmra.org features dozens of helpful "how-to" videos produced by professional video companies, as well as over 50 videos of clinics presented at national NMRA conventions.

Annual NMRA Calendar

Features spectacular model photographs, as well as dates for Regional conventions and more. Free to every U.S. member. Additional copies can be ordered for \$5 each from HQ. Outside the U.S., contact HQ.

Liability Insurance for Meets and Shows

This insurance covers liability claims for all Region, Division, and NMRA SIG-sponsored events up to a specific limit of liability provided for in the policy. (For clarity and assurance of coverage, we prefer that SIG events be co-sponsored by National, a Region, or a Division.) Please see the website for important details.

Conventions

The annual National convention runs one week and usually features about 100 clinics, more than 50 layout tours, and dozens of prototype tours. The National Train Show runs for the final three days of the convention.

Regional conventions vary in duration from two to five days. Many feature prototype and layout tours, plus clinics and other activities.

Clint sez: This was in NMRA Magazine just recently. I asked for permission to reprint it here.

Theirs was prettier, but this is important information to tell folks in recruiting them. More info on the NMRA website.

The insurance aspect was important for the O Scale Convention.

Achievement Program

Modeling With The Masters (MWTM)

This is an intense, multi-day regimen of direct instruction by Master Model Railroaders. Modelers get hands-on experience in beginning and intermediate modeling techniques. MTWM classes are usually offered at the National convention, but MTWM courses have also been offered in various cities and at Regional conventions across the country.

Discounts and Advance Registration on New KML Books

Kalmbach Memorial Library periodically offers special books and book reprints to the general public. NMRA members receive a substantial discount on the retail price and can reserve copies in advance.

Local Divisions

There are more than 150 local Divisions in the NMRA, located in large and small communities across the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain. Most hold regular meetings and meets featuring clinics, presentations, layout visits, and more.

Standards and Conformance

The NMRA constantly researches and sets Standards and Recommended Practices for all scales and gauges of train models, as well as adjunct items such as DCC and modules. The NMRA continually checks new products for conformance to Standards and RPs.

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This service offers NMRA members group property insurance for collections, layouts, live steam, tools, slides and photographs, books, magazines, railroad memorabilia, and more. This insurance also covers an individual's property if it resides on a club layout. Members receive NMRA Group Rates.

• Free quote or brochure, contact J.A. Bash & Co: 1-800-654-2256 or 300 Mt. Lebanon Rd., Suite 225, Pittsburgh, PA, 15234.

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NMRA members can purchase Standards Gauges at significant price reductions over retail prices. Data Sheets CD and Turnout Templates are available only from the Company Store. Many data sheets are being updated and will appear in NMRA Magazine, as well as available for free download from the Members Only section of www.nmra.org.

Beginners' Guide

The Beginner's Guide pages on www.nmra.org offer those new to the hobby help in learning the basics of track, wiring, scenery, and more.

• www.nmra.org/beginner/



Achievement Program Update

By Dave Chance

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

Division 1 – New Jersey

Joseph Zebrowski -- Golden Spike Award
Robert D. Hubbard – Structures

Division 2 – Potomac

John Paganomi -- Golden Spike Award
John Paganomi – Electrical Engineering
John Paganomi – Civil Engineering

Division 3 – Philadelphia

Jeffery Witt – Golden Spike Award
Jeffery Witt – Electrical Engineering
Jeffery Witt – Civil Engineering
Jeffery Witt – Scenery
Glyn Thomas -- Golden Spike Award
Glyn Thomas -- Electrical Engineering
Glyn Thomas – Scenery
Glyn Thomas – Structures
Glyn Thomas – Proto Model
Charles Stevens Jr. – Association Volunteer

Division 11 – Susquehanna

Jerry Lauchle -- Author

Division 12 – Carolina Southern

Joe Skorch – Golden Spike Award

Division 13 – Carolina Piedmont

Robert Rousseau -- Scenery

Division 14 – Chesapeake

John P. Stralka – Association Volunteer
Kurt Thompson -- Structures

MER's Newest MMRs - John Paganomi, of the Potomac Division; Jerry Lauchle, of the Susquehanna Division; Kurt Thompson, of the Chesapeake Division. Offer your congratulations the next time you see these new MMRs!

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.

Product Review: FusionFiber

An Alternative to Plaster for Making Your Scenery Base
Rod Vance

When I construct the base for scenery on my HO-scale layout, I tend to be fairly traditional in my approach. I typically construct a cardboard web and then cover it with plaster cloth. When the plaster cloth is set, I add a layer of plaster (e.g., plaster of Paris). When that dries, I have a traditional hard-shell scenery base upon which I add my ground foam, static grass, rocks, trees, and whatever else I desire.

Figure 1. Narrow embankment next to fascia.

In some places on my layout, this traditional approach either isn't appropriate or tends to create more of a mess than I desire. For example, Figure 1 shows a narrow strip of land alongside the main yard on my layout, between a service road and the layout's fascia. The area, shown finished in Figure 1, is only about 1 ½ inches wide. I could have created the embankment in Figure 1 by using plaster but it would have been messy. The road was already in place and I didn't want to drip plaster on it and, although I was putting the scenery base on top of cork underlay, there was a gap between the cork and the fascia into which the plaster would have oozed and dripped. Using plaster for the scenery base can be quite messy and I didn't want that problem here.

Figure 2 – Textured ground next to the roundhouse.

Figure 2 shows another small area of the yard where I wanted some textured ground. This particular area had either a plywood base or cork underlay, I don't recall exactly which. In either case, the foundation was flat. Because I wanted the resulting ground to also be relatively flat (i.e., typical ground but not flat like asphalt or concrete), I didn't want to use crumpled newspaper and plaster cloth to create any contours; that would have resulted in more definition than I desired for the



ground. Simply covering the area with plaster would have gone to the other extreme – the resulting ground would have been too flat and smooth. The likelihood was also very high that the thin plaster, when dry, would have cracked and chipped.

I found a great solution for my scenery needs in these situations – a product called FusionFiberSM marketed (and now licensed) by Scenery Solutions (www.SceneryMadeEasy.com). FusionFiber is a cotton-based product combined with a powdered adhesive (Figure 3). You simply mix the product in a bowl (I used a plastic 2-cup measuring cup) with water – about a 50/50 mixture of product and water. The specific amount of water and product does not need to be exact; it's very easy to adjust if you have too much water or too much FusionFiber. If you want to tint the FusionFiber, which I did, you simply add cheap craft-store acrylic paint (e.g., raw umber for a nice earth tone) to the water to get the color you desire, and then add the FusionFiber.



Figure 3 – 1-pound package of FusionFiber and a sample of the dry product waiting to be mixed.

If you've used plaster to create your scenery base, you know that you typically have about 10 – 15 minutes of working time before the plaster starts to setup. I have a formula to extend that working time to 30 – 45 minutes, but that's pushing it for plaster. FusionFiber has a working time of 8 – 10 hours! Obviously, when you're working with FusionFiber there's no hurry. Because of the amount of moisture in the FusionFiber mixture, it takes the product 2 – 3 days to completely setup, depending on the humidity in your work area.

With plaster, once the mixture starts to setup, whatever is still in your mixing bowl is wasted product. You get to chip the drying plaster out of the bowl and then clean the bowl and your mixing tools – usually a messy process. And we won't even start to talk about the problems you have if you wash the plaster down the drain of your sink! With FusionFiber, there's no waste. If you have product left over in your mixing bowl, you can simply cover it (e.g., using a small plastic food tub with a lid) and save it for another day. The company says that they've stored the left-over FusionFiber for as long as six months. If the mixture is dried out when you get ready to use it, simply add water to rehydrate it. Unmixed FusionFiber stores easily in its re-sealable bag. I've had my dry product for several years and have stored it without any problems; it's ready to use when I need it.

One of the really nice features of FusionFiber is that it has an adhesive mixed in with the cotton product. When you add FusionFiber to the water, the adhesive is activated. This means that once you've spread the product out on your scenery area, you can simply sprinkle on layers of ground foam, dirt

and gravel, or other scenery products while the mixture is still wet and they will adhere to the FusionFiber. If you come back to your scenery later after the FusionFiber has completely setup, you can reactivate the adhesive by spraying the FusionFiber with wet-water and then add the ground foam or other scenery materials you desire.

Another nice feature of Fusion Fiber is that it won't crack or chip. This was especially important to me in the area where the scenery base was right against the fascia of my layout. Plaster would have surely cracked in this situation. Additionally, if you tinted the FusionFiber with an earth color when you mixed it up (I use inexpensive craft acrylic paints such as Apple Barrel or Americana – the type of paints easily found at Walmart, for example), any product showing through the ground-cover foam or other scenery materials looks like natural earth, as shown in Figure 4. I really like that look!



Figure 4 – Close-up view of embankment with tinted FusionFiber showing through just like real dirt.

About the only drawback I've found with the FusionFiber product is that it's not inexpensive, in my opinion. A 1-pound bag of FusionFiber is currently listed on the Scenery Solutions website for \$21, plus shipping. The good news is that the 1-pound bag covers 15 to 20-square feet of area. At that price, I probably wouldn't use FusionFiber for the scenery base on my entire layout, but it sure comes in handy for those special areas. If you're going to tackle a larger scenery area, Scenery Solutions now offers a 2.5-pound bag for a better price of \$48, plus shipping. Their website says that this will cover up to 50-square feet of area, depending upon what you're creating. I have sometimes found FusionFiber sold by one or two other vendors at a very slight discount, so it might be worth querying the product in your Internet browser if you're interested in making a purchase.

The Scenery Solutions website has a very nice YouTube video that demonstrates preparation and use of FusionFiber (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSRImRqbZ7A&feature=youtu.be>). The video clearly describes the various features of the product.

So if you're looking for an alternative to using plaster for your scenery base, you might want to consider FusionFiber.

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

Crossroads of the MER



***Clinics ▪ Silent Auction ▪ Banquet Speaker—Lou Sassi
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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/>***

