



# The Local

Newsletter of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA  
The Local, 77, Number 6, Nov-Dec 2022

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Official publication of the Mid-Eastern region, NMRA – A tax-exempt organization

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## “Look South Carolina Special”

### 2022 Mid-Eastern Region Annual Convention

By Greg Warth

The [Carolina Southern Division](#) can be very proud of sponsoring this Convention, held in the beautiful city of Charlotte, North Carolina at the very accommodating [Hilton Charlotte University Place](#). The spectacular fall colors were in near full bloom and the weather was perfect within the city and in the surrounding area during the October 20-23 gathering. The entire atmosphere of comfort and fellowship was quite enjoyable.

#### Prototype Tours

The [North Carolina Transportation Museum](#) in nearby Spencer was a big hit. Many of us went there first on the way to the Convention to enjoy the prototypes and the history of what we try to model and to take a ride on the Southern passenger tour train ([Photo 1](#)). The round house, turntable and backshop were magnificent reminders of the activity that took place here for almost a hundred years before it became a museum.

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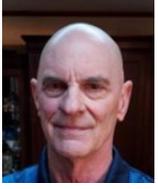


**Photo 1:** Taking a ride on the Southern at the NC Transportation Museum.

The [Newton Depot](#) also provided a great opportunity to learn more about narrow gauge railroading featuring a large collection of vintage railroad equipment extending back into the Reconstruction Era. Several model railroads in O, HO and N scale were displayed there as well.

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Mid-Eastern Region Board of Directors & Administrative Staff

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	<p>Chesapeake Division 14 Tom Casey (410) 426-8947 <a href="mailto:super@chesdiv-nmra.org">super@chesdiv-nmra.org</a> Division web page: <a href="http://www.chesdiv-nmra.org">www.chesdiv-nmra.org</a></p>				

(Convention Report continued from page 1)

Clinics

Except for some minor last-minute scheduling and location issues, the clinics were outstanding. After attending the clinic on making trees, one of the attendees said he'll never have to buy another tree now that he has learned this technique. I learned a lot about how to build craftsman kits from Jack Dziadul (Photo 2) and about using Arduino electronics to automate lights and train movement from Fred Miller, MMR (Photo 3). As usual, there were more clinics than what I had time for, but the ones I saw were very educational.



Photo 2: A simple shanty craftsman kit built by the author during Jack Dziadul's clinic (in progress).



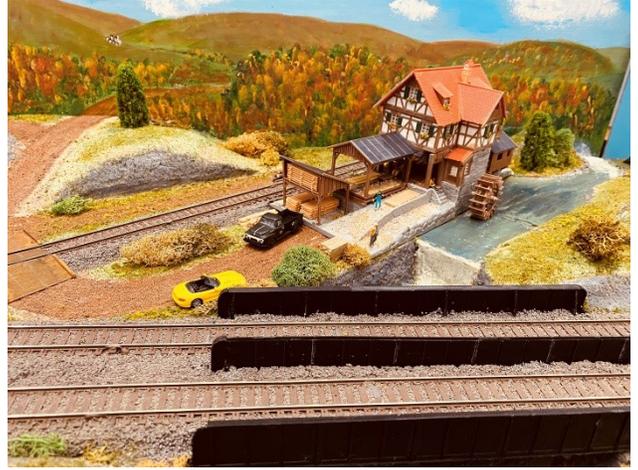
Photo 3: MMR Fred Miller's automated lights, signs, and train operation (best viewed on his website at [Model Railroading with Arduino](http://ModelRailroadingwithArduino.com)).

## Layout Tours Inside

The layout tours are always among my favorite things to do at conventions and the ones available here were no exception. The layouts by local model railroaders displayed in the Layout Room in the hotel were fantastic. A large Z scale layout was shown by John Duino ([Photo 4](#)). We all agreed we needed magnifying lenses to see the details. Nevertheless, it was quite inspiring and well done. The other layouts in various scales in the room were also excellent and well worth the price of admission ([Photos 5, 6](#)).



*Photo 4: Part of John Duino's Z scale display.*



*Photo 5: Layout Room display in HO scale*



*Photo 6: Layout Room display in N Scale*

## Layout Tours Outside the Hotel

I was not able to go on the bus tour on Friday hosted by Gil Brauch, MMR, which I understand demonstrated four fantastic layouts. I was able to do three of the self-driving tours, all of which were truly amazing. There are too many to name them all personally here, but we are extremely grateful to those who opened their homes so that we could view their magnificent railroads. There really aren't enough adjectives to describe the engineering and the artistry that went into building these displays ([Photos 7-9](#)), nor is there enough room here for all the photos required to do them justice. These are just the photos that I took. There were many other layout tours that were attended but not able to be represented here. Hats off to all of them for their work, their expertise, and for allowing us to marvel at what they have accomplished.



Photo 7: Steve Mersch and his B&O layout



Photo 9: Seth Gartner's NYC Piney Fork Branch

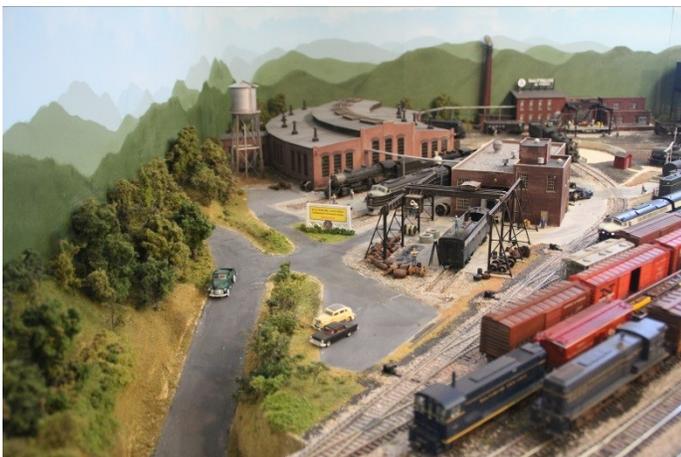


Photo 8: Steve Mersch's B&O Line

### Contest Room

The Contest Room was a little anemic this year. Nevertheless, there were some wonderful models and dioramas presented by very skilled craftsmen. The following article by Alan Mende will demonstrate pictures of the best of those models and the winners of the contests. At the Banquet, people were encouraged to submit more models next year to create more competition. The more models we have to choose from, the better they become, which elevates the standards of the hobby.

### The Banquet

On Saturday evening, at the Banquet, my wife and I joined a table with other couples near the front of the room and enjoyed an excellent meal. We had a great view of all the contest winners coming up to receive their awards, many of which were handed out to the same people. There were several new Master Model Railroaders that were recognized. The main presentation was given by Shane Wilson (Photo 10), President of Scale Trains, who described the many trials and tribulations that he, his family and co-workers went through to get started in the model railroad retail business. It was a fascinating story of faith, volunteerism, self-sacrifice, and perseverance. He should write a book about it.



Photo 10: Shane Wilson, President of Scale Trains

### Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held on Sunday morning. Several people were recognized for their work in the organization. The new Vice President, Gary Brown, took his seat at the front table, along with the new Secretary, Rick Stoneking, and new Director, Bob Charles, MMR. The gavel was then passed from Kurt Thompson, MMR, the outgoing President, to the new President, Scott Unger (Photo 11). And the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) leadership goes on in strength and solidarity to support its members for another year.



Photo 11: The New Board of Directors of the Mid-Eastern Region for 2023. From Left to Right: Director Randy Foulke, Vice President Gary Brown, President Scott Unger, Director Bob Charles, MMR, Secretary Rick Stoneking, and Director Charles Rausch, MMR.

We are grateful to Bob Charles, MMR, pictured above, who has accepted an appointment as Director to fill out the remainder of the term for Bob Morningstar who resigned recently.

**Photo 12** Dave Chance announced his well-deserved retirement after many years of excellent, much appreciated service as the Achievement Program (AP) Chairman. I will miss getting his reports for *The Local* every two months. Dave did a great clinic for the Tidewater Division recently on how to apply for AP certificates. He was a great resource for us as he has been for many others throughout his tenure.



**Photo 12: Dave Chance**

**Photo 13** Kurt Thompson, MMR, who has been unofficially recognized by National as one of the best Regional presidents, will now move into the esteemed position of being Past President of the MER. We are truly grateful for his exemplary leadership as President and will look forward to his wisdom and steadiness over the next few years. Kurt will also now serve as AP Manager filling the position left open by Dave Chance’s retirement.



**Photo 13: Kurt Thompson MMR**

Thanks so much to the Carolina Southern Division for hosting a wonderful 2022 Annual Convention. We know how much work it is, but the value of these conventions to the membership is huge. Our gratitude for all those who volunteered their time and considerable effort in this Convention is overwhelming. We truly enjoyed it.

Also, a big *Thank You* goes out to all those who serve as leaders and volunteers for the MER. As Thanksgiving comes around, think about all the benefits the MER provides for its members. Think about what life would be like without it. And then think about perhaps increasing your own participation over the next year. Volunteer service from the membership is what makes the organization have the ability to provide conventions, education, support and fellowship for its members. What you give is what you get.



**LOOK SOUTH IN 2022**



## President's Column

President Kurt Thompson, MMR

### Passing the Gavel

Was it only four years ago, when I was elected as President of the MER (Mid-Eastern Region)? Yes, that time has passed. As when PJ Mattson, MMR passed the gavel to me, it is now time for me to pass the gavel to Scott Unger so he can begin his term as President of the MER.

During the four years (two terms) in which I have served as President of the MER, things have been somewhat off-kilter at times. However, we as model railroaders continued to manage to enjoy our hobby and work on ways to be socially connected. The use of Zoom has helped many of the Divisions remain vibrant and active, providing a new avenue to get more people to their meetings. Most Divisions are back to in-person meetings as well.

As I step down, I want to thank each of the many people who have provided volunteer service to the MER. Without their help and willingness to serve in various functions, we as members of the MER wouldn't have had three conventions, publication of *The Local/eLocal*, articles for *The Local*, and many other tasks and functions performed for your benefit. Without the assistance of your elected Board of Directors, members, and all the volunteers in all the staff positions, my two terms as President would not have been effective at all.

As Scott assumes the office of President of the MER, please consider getting in touch with him and offering your services to the cause of keeping the MER moving forward into our second 75 years.

Kurt Thompson, MMR  
(now the MER Past President)



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## From the Editor's Desk

Greg Warth, Editor

### Modeling Through Life Changes

Whew! October was a busy month. Our Division went to a layout tour early in the month. Then several of us went to the Great Scale Train Show in Timonium, MD. Some went to the RPM meet in nearby Timonium; others went to the O scale meet in Strasburg, PA. The next weekend, many of us went to Charlotte, North Carolina for the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Convention. Then, the editorial and publishing team proceeded to finalize all the articles and pictures from several of those activities for *The Local*. Add that in to all the other stuff we do every day, and you begin to ask yourself, "Are we having fun yet"?

The answer is a resounding "Yes!" What a blast! It's a much more interesting life than sitting on the couch all day, which, by the way, is not all that healthy for you. As I get closer to retirement from my regular job, people often ask me what I will be doing afterwards. I tell them I suspect I will be busier than ever doing all the fun things that I did not have enough time to do before.

Retirement is a major life change and sometimes brings with it a lot of stress. Your lifestyle will change. You may miss some of your friends at work with whom you have spent most of your time for the past 40 years. Retirees often spend more time in doctors' offices as they get older.

Not just retirement, but there are many other changes that we go through in a lifetime, like graduating (a few times), getting a job, losing a job, changing jobs, getting married, having children, experiencing a pandemic, attending funerals, and more. Some are good, some are not, but they are all stressful at some level.

Like most phases of our lives, there are advantages and disadvantages in every decade of time through which we travel. Would I want to turn the clock back twenty years? No, I would not want to redo it all. It would be like, "Been there, done that, bought the T-shirt." I want to move on and see what's ahead for me.

This model railroading hobby of ours helps us move through these life transitions. It is always in the background. I will always have something to do related to it. Since I am already entrenched in the hobby, I believe the change to retirement will be relatively seamless. I will still be doing some of the same or similar things that I have already been doing for years, except then, I will have more time to enjoy them. So, I am looking forward to it, not as a time to relax so much as a time to enjoy life, enjoy the hobby, enjoy the family, and hopefully stay out of doctors' offices.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Continued on page 8*

Back to the moment, lots of great information lies ahead as you read through the rest of the newsletter. Learn about doing winter scenery, how to model mud on tractor tires, and how to celebrate the Holidays with trains. Discover a simple method of operating three-color signals. See how to recruit new members and help your Division grow. Find out what's new in other model railroading journals. See what all the Divisions are up to in their newsletters. Explore photos of several excellent layouts that will inspire you and give you new ideas for your own modeling. And last, but definitely not least, check out what happened at the MER 2022 Annual Convention in Charlotte, NC.

Thank you for reading *The Local*. [Please consider sending in YOUR articles, tips, and photos.](#) All of us modelers would really like to see and learn things from *you* as well. Plus, you get points for your Model Railroad Author Achievement Program Certificate for both text and photos. Also, let us know how we're doing. Is there anything you would like us to add or change? Is there any particular modeling information you would like to know more about? Keep us posted so we can serve you better.

And Best Wishes from all of us to all of you for a Wonderful Holiday Season,

**Editorial Staff, Publisher, and Proofreaders:**

- Bob Charles MMR, MER Director
- Martin Brechbiel, MMR
- Alex Belida, MMR
- Jack Dziadul
- Rick Stoneking, Publisher



Greg Warth, Editor



# NMRA Achievement Program Update

**Dave Chance**  
MER AP Manager

Since the last report in *The Local*, the following Achievement Program certificates were earned and awarded in the Mid-Eastern Region (MER):

**Division 1 – New Jersey**

- Thomas Neukirchen – Association Volunteer**
- Robert Price – Master Builder-Motive Power**

**Division 2 – Potomac**

- Pete LaGuardia – Master Builder-Cars**
- Robert B. Rodriguez – Master Builder-Cars**
- Richard Steinmann - Master Builder-Cars**

**Division 14 – Chesapeake**

- Patrick Flash – Model Railroad Engineering-Civil**
- Patrick Flash – Model Railroad Engineering-Electrical**
- Patrick Flash – Master Builder-Scenery**

**MER's Newest MMR's:**

**Robert Price, MMR #717**, of the New Jersey Division, and **Pete LaGuardia, MMR #716**, and **Robert Rodriguez, MMR #718**, of the Potomac Division, are MER's newest MMRs. So, be sure to offer your Congratulations the next time you see Robert, Pete, or Robert!

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. I am getting too many of them, only to have to return to the sender and get the proper form. NO R&V FORMS.

Hobby Central Train Station



Model Railroad Supplies

10% Off for MER Members -w/Coupon Code BYMRR10MER

<https://trainstoreonline.net>

# The Carolina Southern Convention Contest Room Results

By Alan Mende  
 MER General Contest Chair

Once again, this year’s contest room was fortunate to be the host of some exceptional, high-quality models. Our host, the Carolina Southern Division, provided us with a large, well-lit space which made for a quality ontest experience in 2022.

A special thank-you goes out to our model contest judges. We were fortunate to have Bob Charles, MMR, Brian Kampschroer, Dave Chance, and Jack Dziadul as our lead judges. Our other judges were Michele Chance, Phil Taylor, Scott Unger, Rich Colman, and Randy Foulke. I also want to thank Robert (Robby) Alvis and Keith Iritsky for their help in assisting me with paperwork, taking in models, and running errands.

We had 29 models entered with 24 being entered for judging. Of the 24 judged models, 11 received Merit Awards in 7 categories. Unfortunately, we had no entries this year in Traction or for the Chuck Hladik Memorial Award.

## THE CONTEST WINNERS

### Model Contests:



Steam – 1<sup>st</sup> place: Neal Anderson, C&NW Class H-1 4-8-4



Diesel – 1<sup>st</sup> place: Joe Walters, MMR, GP-9 No. 613



Freight Car – 1<sup>st</sup> place: Kevin O’Connor, wood tank car\*



Non-Revenue Car – 1<sup>st</sup> place: Joe Walters, MMR, Boom car NE 503\*



Caboose – 1<sup>st</sup> place: John Taylor-Hall, YM 11 bobber caboose\*



Passenger Car – 1<sup>st</sup> place: Jim Murphy, Business executive car "Vermont"



Structure, On-Line –1<sup>st</sup> place – John Taylor-Hall, – Milwaukee Rd. Standard Depot



Display On-Line – 1<sup>st</sup> place: Jerry Lauchle, MMR, – Ore steam excavator\*



John Pursell – small town warehouse



John Pursell – Walt's general store

Structure, Off-Line – 1<sup>st</sup> place tie



Display, Off-Line - 1<sup>st</sup> place: Jim Murphy, – Nighthawks Diner scene\*

**IPSWICH HOBBIES**  
 Craftsman Structure Kits  
 Jack Dziadul  
 IpswichHobbies.com 919-721-8757

**The Special Awards:**

The MER also supports an array of Special Awards that complement the judged model contest.



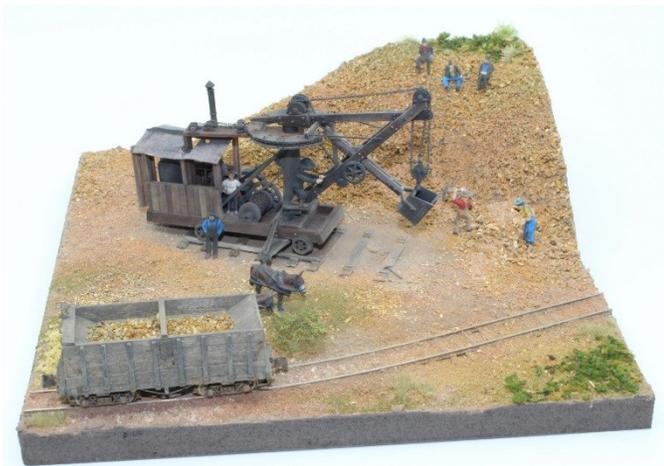
Clyde Gerald Kitbash Award: the best kitbashed model in the model contest.

John Pursell – Walt’s general store



The Philadelphia New Modeler Award: given to the first-time entrant in MER model contest with the highest point score. (A cash prize and large plaque this year!)

Kevin O’Connor – Wood tank car\*



Ray Bilodeau MER Narrow Gauge Award

Jerry Lauchle, MMR – Ore steam excavator\*



Favorite Train - chosen by popular vote

Joe Walters, MMR – Ballast train **Photo 15**



Bob Liberman Award – sponsored by the NJ Division

Jim Murphy – Business executive car “Vermont”\*



Favorite Model - chosen by popular vote

Jim Murphy – Boston & Maine passenger station

The President’s Award: this year’s award was for rolling stock or locomotive of a railroad in the textile industry.

Michele Chance – Lancaster & Chester boxcar



**Best in Show:** given to the entry scoring the highest points in the model contest this year at 114 points! This award includes the cost of registration to next year's convention in Altoona, PA.



Kevin O'Connor – Wood tank car\*

Next year's President's Award is yet to be determined.

If you have any questions about NMRA or MER contest rules, regulations, NMRA judging of models, would like to be a Judge, have contest questions of any kind, complaints, suggestions, or whatever you might want to talk about, you need to contact me, Alan Mende, MER General Contest Chair at: [contests@mer-nmra.com](mailto:contests@mer-nmra.com).

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

# MODEL TRAINS



All the tools, techniques and supplies you need to build your own model railroad empire.

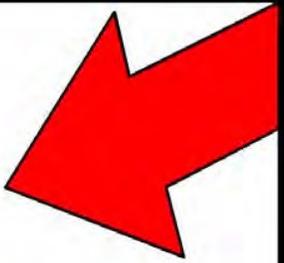
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**301-404-8164**

## Notice:

## HO Scale Freight Car for Sale

The Cincinnati Division 7 is now offering for sale/purchase a new limited edition HO scale freight car. It is an N&W HC-46 ACF 2-bay covered hopper in a unique repaint scheme with patched-out data, available in three different road numbers.



The following link provides details about it as well as pricing, shipping, and ordering information: <https://www.cincy-div7.org/projects.html>.

Please know that 100% of the funds generated from the sale of these cars go towards promoting and growing the hobby. Thank you in advance for your support.

Paul Maciulewicz  
NMRA; MCR; Cincinnati Division 7  
Car Projects Chairman

### MER Board of Directors Meeting Schedule

Board of Directors Budget Meeting – 7 pm Jan ??, 2023 – TBD

Board of Directors Meeting – 7 pm Apr ??, 2023 – TBD

Board of Directors Budget Meeting – 7 pm Oct 19, 2023 – Altoona PA

### UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS

2023 – Susquehanna Division - “Round the Curve to Altoona”  
October 19-22, 2023, Altoona, PA

2024 – Carolina Piedmont Division—“Piedmont Junction”  
Sep 26 - 29, 2024, Durham, NC

2025 – New Jersey Division  
Dates and location TBD

## Regular Clinic Schedule at Hobby Barn

Contact Jerry Stanley to attend: 703-595-8081



*Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn  
11552 Hereford Ct. in Hume, Virginia 22639*

The Potomac Division sponsors a number of clinics to which all MER members are invited when space is available. Most of the in-person clinics are held at Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn in Hume, Virginia unless otherwise stated. If you are interested in attending any of these clinics, either in-person or virtually, please contact Jerry at 703-595-8081.

**Sunday November. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Virtual clinic 3PM**  
Virtual – David Hughes – Bulletproofing Locos and Track for Smooth Running

**Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Make and Take Clinic 10AM**

In Person – Kate Kalis – Painting backdrops  
Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn

**Sunday December. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Virtual clinic 3PM**  
Virtual – George Gaige, MMR – Adding working headlights to HO scale vehicles

**Saturday & Sunday December 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 2022**  
Greenberg Great Train & Toy show, Expo Center  
Chantilly Va.

**Saturday January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Make and Take Clinic 10AM**

In Person – Martin Brechbiel, MMR – Resin Casting  
Knights of Columbus Hall, 3700 Old Lee Highway,  
Fairfax, Va.

**Sunday January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, Virtual Clinic 3 PM**  
Pat Rivard & Paul Hurly -- Making Trees.

# Summary of the Minutes from the MER Board of Directors Meeting on October 20, 2022, Prepared by Rick Stoneking, Secretary

Synopsis by Greg Warth

**Ratifications of the appointments** of Rick Stoneking as Secretary and Bob Charles, MMR as Director-at-Large were completed by unanimous consensus.

## Reports:

**President's Report by Kurt Thompson, MMR:** We are still in recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Vice President's Report by Scott Unger:** General information was provided and discussed regarding the hotel rooms and commitments for the 2022 Convention.

**Treasurer's Report by Brian Kampschroer:** The Director Insurance payment was delayed but has now been completed. The checking account now has a balance of approximately \$82,000 and the Convention account has a balance of around \$10,000. The investments are doing well.

**Director Randy Foulke:** The archive of MER records has been prepared by Kevin O'Connor. A flash drive containing this work is available and a copy will be forwarded to the Business Manager. Jerry Lauchle, MMR has taken on the role of the 2023 Convention Chairman and is requesting help with his MER Photographer responsibilities until the 2023 Convention is over. Several members of the Board expressed their support.

**Director Charlie Rausch, MMR:** No additional comments beyond the written report previously submitted. He wants to work with Jeff Burch, the MER Webmaster, on updating the MER website, although Jeff is currently involved in developing the website for the next 2023 Convention.

**Director Bob Charles:** President Thompson provided comments recognizing the efforts of the Nominating and the Balloting Committee. Director Charles requested members and visitors to look at Divisions for potential nominees to run for MER officers and Directors. He also indicated that he was happy with the current state of *The Local*, the MER newsletter.

**Business Manager Report:** Howard Oakes was not present but previously submitted his written report.

## Discussions/Actions:

**Fund Raising:** Director Foulke provided comments on fund raising previously headed up by Bob Morningstar and indicated that someone should follow up on those efforts. He will discuss this further with VP Unger.

**Checks Going to the Treasurer:** Treasurer Kampschroer mentioned that checks keep coming to him, which he then has to forward to the Business Manager. President Thompson will raise the issue with National via Bill Wurtzell, Assistant Treasurer.

**White Elephant Sales:** The process of updating the Convention Handbook is occurring slowly. Discussion was undertaken about the 15% of White Elephant sales going to the MER. The general consensus was that this fee should be lowered and that 10% of the sales should be equally divided between the Host Division and the Region, each receiving 5%. The issue was tabled until the Handbook is completed.

**Robert's Rules of Order:** Another discussion regarding the use of Robert's Rules of Order and the contents of the meeting minutes. No action was required. This will be discussed during the next regular Bylaws review.

**Group License Plates:** A motion was made to work with each state in the Region to develop special MER license plates. It was noted that each state has its own regulations regarding this which would result in members from each state not being treated equally and fairly. The motion failed.

**NMRA At-Risk-Persons Policy:** Concern was expressed that the MER cannot effectively enforce the policy. It was recommended that the Outreach Coordinator position be eliminated. After further discussion, the decision was to leave it as is for now. Director Foulke will review the job description and recommend any updates later.

**Honorary Life Membership:** Director Charles indicated that our Bylaws are in conflict with National. The MER allows it in the Re-

gion, but this conflicts with the NMRA. This was tabled until the next meeting.

**President Thompson's leadership was commended by all members of the Board.**

**Digital NMRA Magazine:** Many members still are not aware that it is available. There has been no pushback regarding the cost. A new Interchange platform is being piloted by the James River Division and should be available for all members soon.

**Date, Time, and Place of next BOD meetings**

**Board of Directors Budget Meeting – TBD Jan, 2023**

**Board of Directors Meeting – 7 pm, TBD April, 2023**

**Board of Directors Meeting – 7 pm, TBD Oct 2023, Altoona PA**

**MER Annual Meeting - ~8pm TBD Oct 2023, Altoona PA**

[Please note: Complete copies of all the minutes and reports from Board meetings are available to any member upon request to the Secretary. -Ed.]

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## Summary of the Minutes from the MER Annual Meeting in Charlotte, NC on October 23, 2022, Prepared by Rick Stoneking, Secretary

Synopsis by Greg Warth

President Kurt Thompson, MMR explained to the members the changes in the Board of Directors due to two resignations, including the appointments of Rick Stoneking as Secretary and Bob Charles as Director-at-Large.

**Reports:**

**President's Report by Kurt Thompson, MMR:** Discussed the alignment of policies and procedures between National and the Regions resulting in the Regions being more unified. He attended numerous events throughout the Region over the past year.

**Vice President's Report by Scott Unger:** Called on Kirk Bateman, the Convention Registrar, for an update on attendance at the 2022 MER Convention. Kirk reported a total attendance of 169 including family members and a Banquet attendance of 88. VP Unger then reported on future MER Convention Locations:

2023 will be in Altoona, PA. Jerry Lauchle is the LCC Chair for that convention.

2024 will be in Raleigh, NC. Jack Dziadul and Kevin O'Conner are Co-Chairman for that convention

2025 will be hosted by the NJ Division with the location still TBD.

**Treasurer's Report by Assistant Treasurer Bill Wurtzell:**

Checking Account: \$72,000

Convention Account: \$10,000

Investments: \$23,000

Jack Dziadul asked for consideration to reduce the percentage that the MER takes from the White Elephant sales. After discussion, VP Unger indicated that this will be taken under advisement.

**Director Randy Foulke:**

The archive of MER records has been prepared by Kevin O'Connor.

The Board has implemented a policy on document retention and destruction to be compliant with state regulations for non-profit corporations.

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary shirt sales continued after last year's convention, total sales now being over \$2000.

MER Photographer Jerry Lauchle, MMR is LCC Chair for 2023 MER Convention and has requested help in handling his duties as MER Photographer. Director Foulke agreed to assist in this regard until the Convention is over.

The position of Outreach Coordinator has been suspended for now due to ongoing changes in the NMRA At-Risk-Persons Policy. The Board will continue to review the job description and duties in the future.

**Director Charlie Rausch, MMR:**

Charlie will work with Jeff Burch, the MER Webmaster, on updating the MER website.

Contest Chair Alan Mende did a great job, but he needs more judges to sign up ahead of time.

We need to stimulate the members to submit more entries.

There was some limited discussion about eliminating contests. This was quickly dismissed by the President.

**Director Bob Charles, MMR:**

Indicated he was very pleased with the quality of *The Local* newsletter and recognized the Editor.

The Nominating and Balloting Committee members work very diligently but finding people willing to serve continues to be a challenge. He further expounded on his thoughts about serving the MER.

He thanked Bob Minnis, MMR for his efforts as the Ballot Committee Chair.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to destroy the 2022 ballots.

**Business Manager Report:** Howard Oakes was not present but previously submitted his written report. President Thompson offered a summary:

Physical print issues of *The Local* are down to eleven copies being sent to Honorary Life Members.

**Acknowledgements and Announcements:**

President Thompson acknowledged the members of his administrative staff who are critical to the functioning of the Region [listed in the full minutes, -Ed.].

Dave Chance has retired. His work as Achievement Program Manager was greatly appreciated. His replacement will be Kurt Thompson, MMR.

Kurt and the new MER President will ask Bill Roman to continue to be the Registered Agent for the Region. A Registered Agent is required by the state for all 501c3 non-profit organizations.

**Installation of new Board Members**

President Thompson announced the new Board members based on the election results:

- Secretary – Rick Stoneking
- Treasurer – Brian Kampschroer  
This is Brian's fifth of the five terms the position is limited to. A new Treasurer will need to be elected in 2024
- Vice President – Gary Brown
- President – Scott Unger

Scott Unger assumed the role of MER President at 10:43am EDT

President Unger nominated Kurt Thompson MMR as AP Chair to replace Dave Chance. Kurt accepted and agreed to serve.

**Discussions/Actions:**

Gill Brauch expressed a concern that we are missing opportunities to sign up new members. We should have reached out to the many non-member model railroaders who set up their modular layouts as exhibits in the Convention Layout Room, to become members.

Jack Dziadul recognized and thanked NMRA Eastern Division Director John Doering and NMRA Marketing Consultant Christina Zambri for attending the Convention and the Annual Meeting. Director Doering made some brief comments.

Kirk Bateman thanked Jeff Burch for his efforts as Webmaster.

A motion to adjourn was then made, seconded, and carried.

## Advertising in The Local:

**Advertising rates have changed!** For the better! If you have a model railroading business and would like to place an ad in *The Local*, please contact the [Editor](#). The new rates per year are as follows:

<b>Division and Clubs</b>	<b>Free</b>
<b>Full Page – color</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>½ Page – color</b>	<b>60.00</b>
<b>¼ Page – color</b>	<b>35.00</b>
<b>Business Card</b>	<b>10.00</b>
<b>Text Only</b>	<b>7.00</b>

Your ad may appear as text, photo, art, or any combination thereof. Art must be of high quality and camera-ready. Formats must be in txt, doc/docx, pdf, jpeg, bmp or tiff only. The content must be related to model trains or railroads or provide a benefit specifically to model railroaders. If you need help with your ad, please don't hesitate to ask the Editor.

## Send in Your Articles:

We are always looking for new articles, tips, ideas, photos, and comments from our readers. If you have been awarded an AP (Achievement Program) Certificate or an MMR (Master Model Railroader) award, please consider writing an article about it so others can learn how you did it. We always enjoy looking at new layouts, dioramas and models that our members have created.

If you would like to contribute to *The Local*, send an email containing your article and photos to [The Local Editor](#).

*The Local* welcomes and encourages articles, photographs, and model railroad related material as contributions to members' education and 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 retaining back-up copies. Editors, by definition, reserve the right and have the responsibility to make corrections, deletions, and changes to accommodate space. If your item is time-sensitive in any way, please advise the Editor. Otherwise, stories and photos that are accepted for publication are used in approximately the order they are received.

### Publication Schedule Submission Deadline

Jan/Feb .....	Dec 1st of previous year
Mar/Apr.....	Feb 1st
May/Jun .....	Apr 1st
Jul/Aug .....	Jun 1 <sup>st</sup>
Sept/Oct .....	Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>
Nov/Dec .....	Oct 1 <sup>st</sup>

Please observe the following steps to submit your contribution. **1.** Compose and submit your text in one of the following formats: TXT, DOC, or DOCX. **2.** Consider what photos, illustrations, or other graphics can go with the text. These are essential. But, **DO NOT** include/insert them into your text. **Do** put notations in the text such as "Insert Photo #1 here." **Send the illustrations separately and numbered as you would want them in the text.** JPG, GIF, TIFF, or PNG formats are best for photos. **3.** If you have captions for your photos, etc., create a separate text file for the captions, each of which will be numbered to match a numbered photo or figure. A special note on photos or other exhibits; please only send us your creative work or that for which you have written permission to use so we can give that source proper credit. We need to avoid any copyright infringement situations.

Also, if you have previously published your article or photo in any other magazine or newsletter, including a division newsletter or your own website blog, it cannot be reproduced in *The Local* without written permission from the magazine publisher, editor and author / photographer.

# The Local 2022 Photo Contest

By Greg Warth

Drum roll please... And the winner is...



Photo 1

This photo (**Photo 1**) and the others below (**Photos 2-4**) were taken by Don Roback of Apex, North Carolina using an app called Camera Pixels. Don further explains how the photos were processed as follows:



Photo 2

“This app (Camera Pixels) did a focus bracket acquisition for each of the shots. I used 10 photos total for each final shot. I used another app called Helicon Focus to render the 10 shots down to the final shot. For the final shot, I just cropped and played with color settings. I left one pretty much as it looks in real life ([Photo 1](#)) and then did a B&W version ([Photo 4](#)). The other two ([Photos 2, 3](#)) were changed to B&W to better represent the era I'm modeling.

I took the photos and did the post-processing for each shot. These are from my home layout. It is a proto-lanced (mostly 'lanced') N scale version of Chicago Union Station in the early 50s. These shots are all from a coach yard section that I'm working on. [Photo 2](#) shows a small view of the Chicago Union Station model under the bridge and above the coaches”.



Photo 3



Photo 4

Congratulations, Don!

# 2022 Convention Layout Room Winners

Photos By Alan Mende

Favorite Module – Z Scale – John Duino – Buena Park



Favorite Module – N Scale – Tom Spiggle – Middleton



## Favorite Module – HO Scale – Triple Tie

Steve Bienstock – Pandapas Pond



Tom Murray – Radford Yard



Steve Bienstock & Jim Flynn – New River Trail Park





Favorite Module – S Scale – Double Tie – Marvin Thiel – The Swamp



Favorite Module – S Scale – Double Tie – Heidi Thiel – Farm Scene



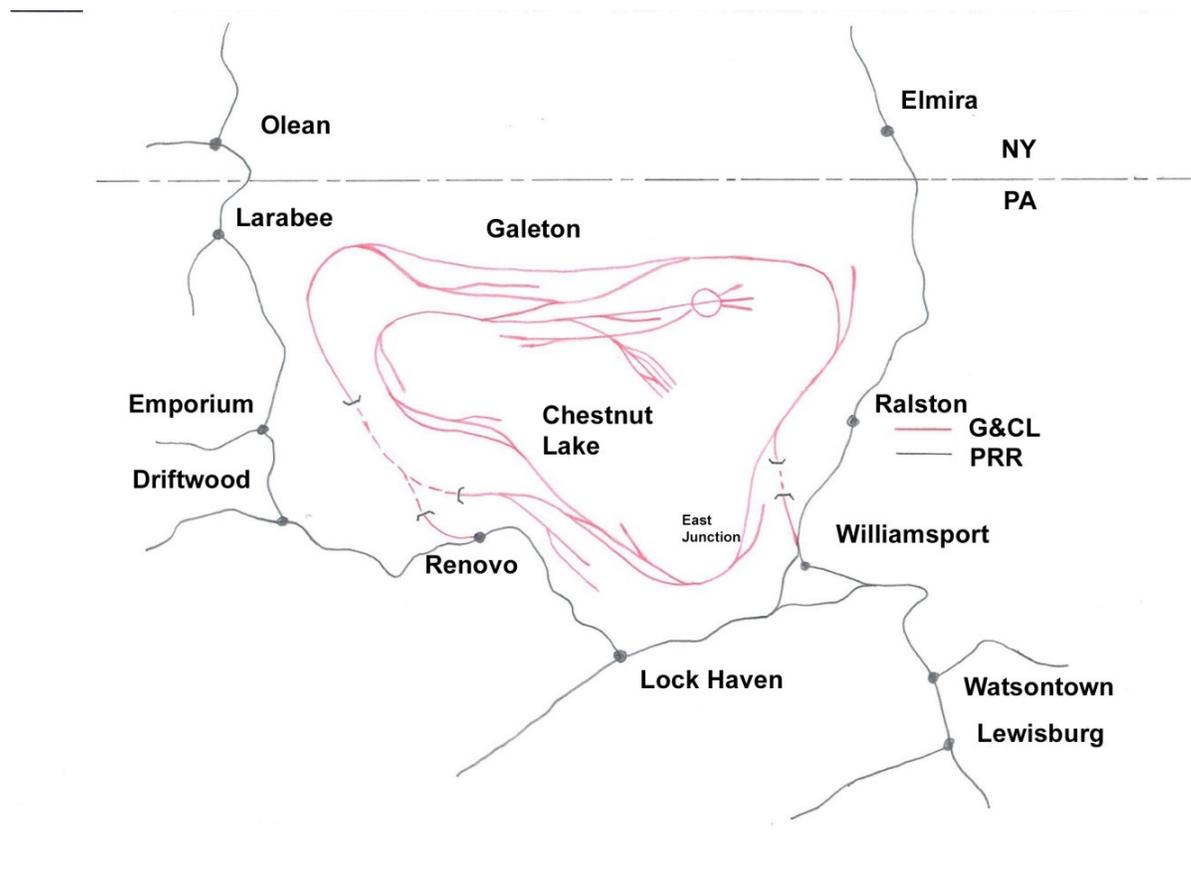
Favorite Module – O Scale – Rich Colton & Dennis Schlassman – Theater & Graveyard

# Featured Layout

## The Galeton & Chestnut Lake Railroad

Jerry Lauchle, MMR

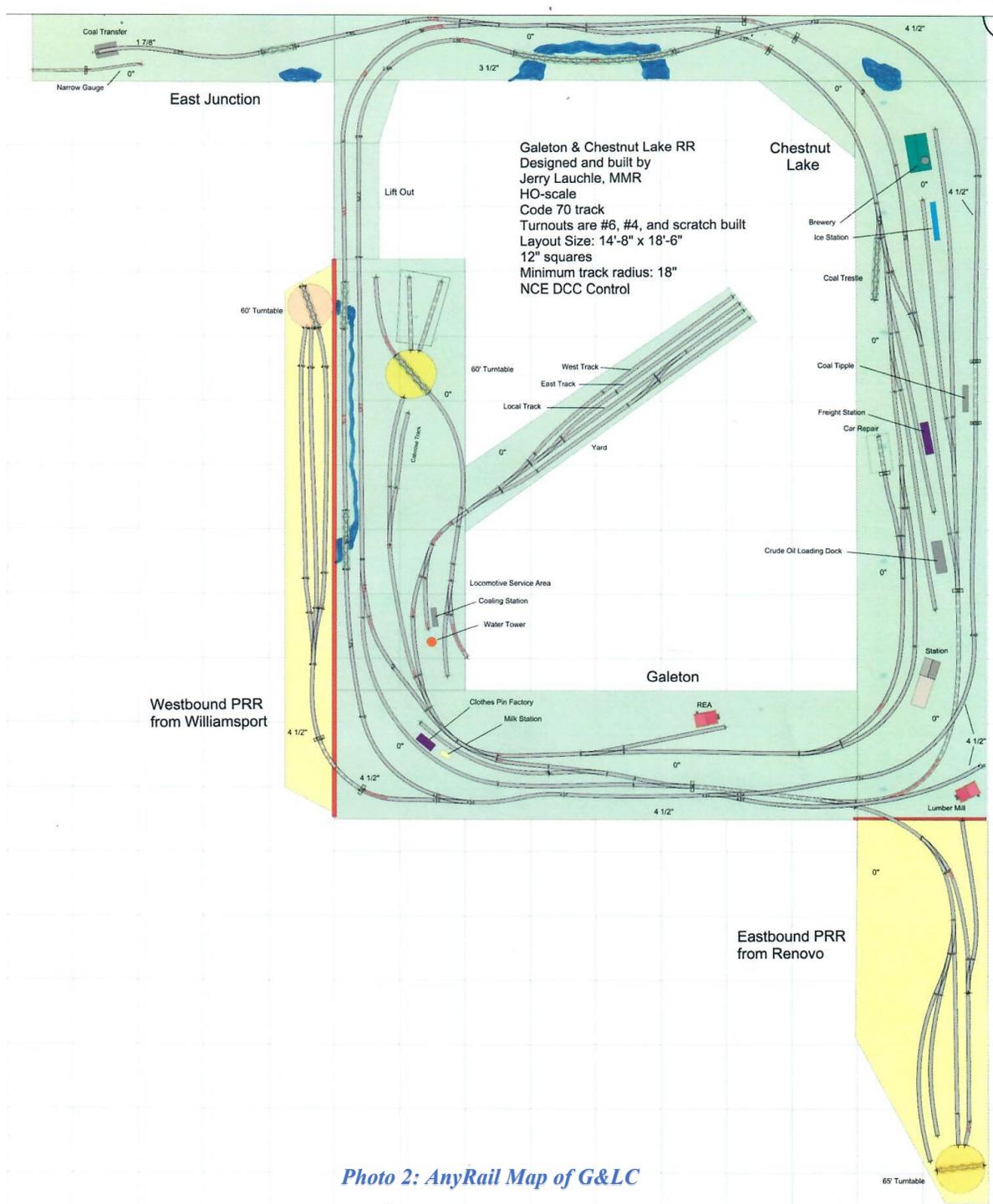
My formal name is Gerald Clyde Lauchle, so for some reason back in 1982, I chose to name the railroad with words reflecting the initials of my name. The Galeton & Chestnut Lake Railroad is a free-lanced HO scale model railroad situated in north-central Pennsylvania. I model an era approximately of 1940-1955 which means that both steam and diesel trains run. The main industries served by the railroad are coal, lumber, a beer brewery, and a clothes pin factory. It is basically a short line that operates between the real town of Galeton, and a fictional one, Chestnut Lake. The G&CL has two interchanges with Pennsylvania Railroad: one at Williamsport and the other at Renovo. There are staging yards at those two locations along with scratchbuilt turntables to turn the locomotives. The map drawing shown here ([Photo 1](#)) is my rendition of how the G&CL interacts with PRR.



*Photo 1: Map Drawing of the G&CL*

I worked on the present track plan for quite some time between when I retired from the College of Engineering at Penn State in 2006 and then when I actually started to build the layout in 2010. A good part of that four-year span was devoted to finishing the basement of our new house, completed in 2004. I must add that I had two previous unfinished G&CLs in the 1980s.

The track plan shown here ([Photo 2](#)) was designed with the available space in mind. There is an equally large space adjacent, but that is for my 9' Brunswick Gold Crown IV pool table. The modeling work bench and model supply cabinets are just to the left of East Junction. I drew this plan using a free on-line software package called AnyRail 6. For a modest fee I registered with the company so that I can receive lifetime upgrades to the software.



*Photo 2: AnyRail Map of G&C*

The next photos (**Photos 3 and 4**) are of the shelf called East Junction. It gets its name from the shop and office in the foreground that I built from craftsman kits by JL Innovative Design that had signage of that name. The coal transfer station is scratchbuilt.

To the right of the East Junction is a lift out which can be ducked under if one desires (note the handrail - *blue arrow*). The photo below (**Photo 5**) is taken at the lift out showing the western edge of Chestnut Lake. The structures are mostly from craftsman kits by Campbell, Bar Mills, Evergreen Hill, Fine Scale Miniatures, and scratchbuilt. The brewery (*orange arrow*) is directly behind the elevated crossing shanty (*gray arrow*).



Photo 3—East Junction

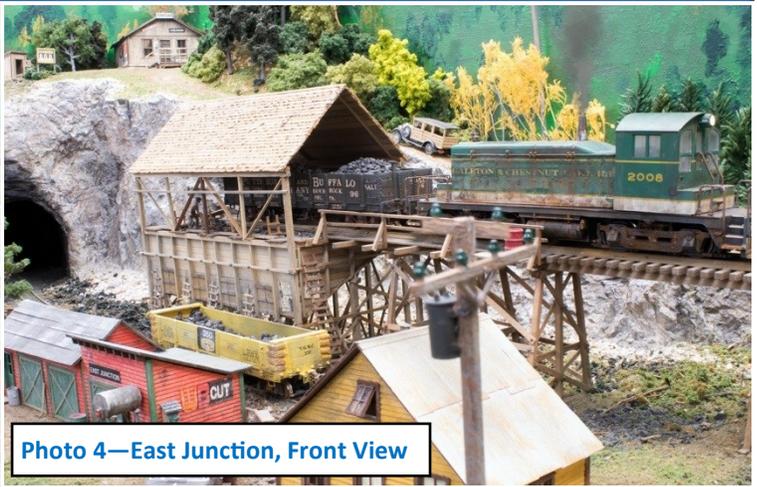


Photo 4—East Junction, Front View



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

Moving to the right (east) inside the layout area we see the eastern section of Chestnut Lake and the western edge of Galeton (Photo 6). Central to the area is the scratch built MacKellar coal tiple (blue arrow). The freight station (gray arrow), car repair shed (yellow arrow), and passenger depot (orange arrow) are from Fine Scale Miniatures kits. Another view of those structures is also given with a passing Sunset brass import 2-8-0 heading up a train of cars made from LaBelle kits (Photo 7).



Photo 8

Moving farther east we see Galeton (**Photo 8**). All of the structures were built from wood craftsman kits, or scratch built. The backdrop was hand painted on 1/8" Masonite.

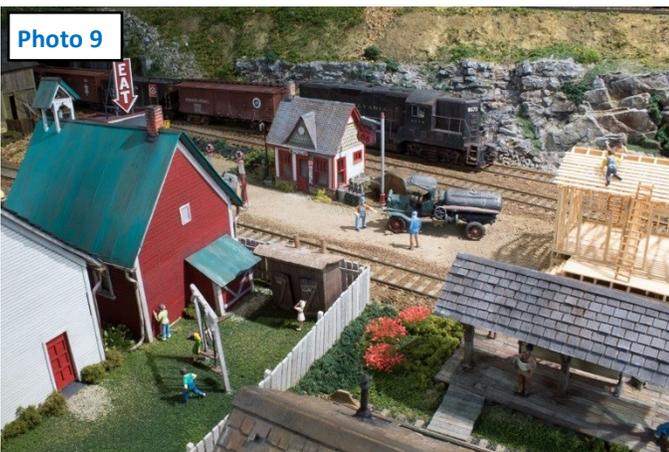


Photo 9



Photo 10

The Phillips 66 station owner is not happy with the tank truck driver who ran over his cat (**Photo 9**).

Moving on to eastern Galeton and the locomotive service area (**Photo 10**), we see the clothes pin factory (*blue arrow*) in the center of the photo as the gray and brown structure. The locomotive service area (*orange arrow*) appeared on the cover of the 2019 NMRA calendar.



Photo 11

Moving to the east a bit farther (**Photo 11**) we see a two-stall engine house built from a Fine Scale Miniatures kit. The four-track Galeton yard is in the foreground. A 60' Diamond Scale turntable (**Photo 12**) is located in front of the engine house.

The tunnel between Galeton and the Williamsport staging is shown here (**Photo 13**).



Photo 12



Photo 13

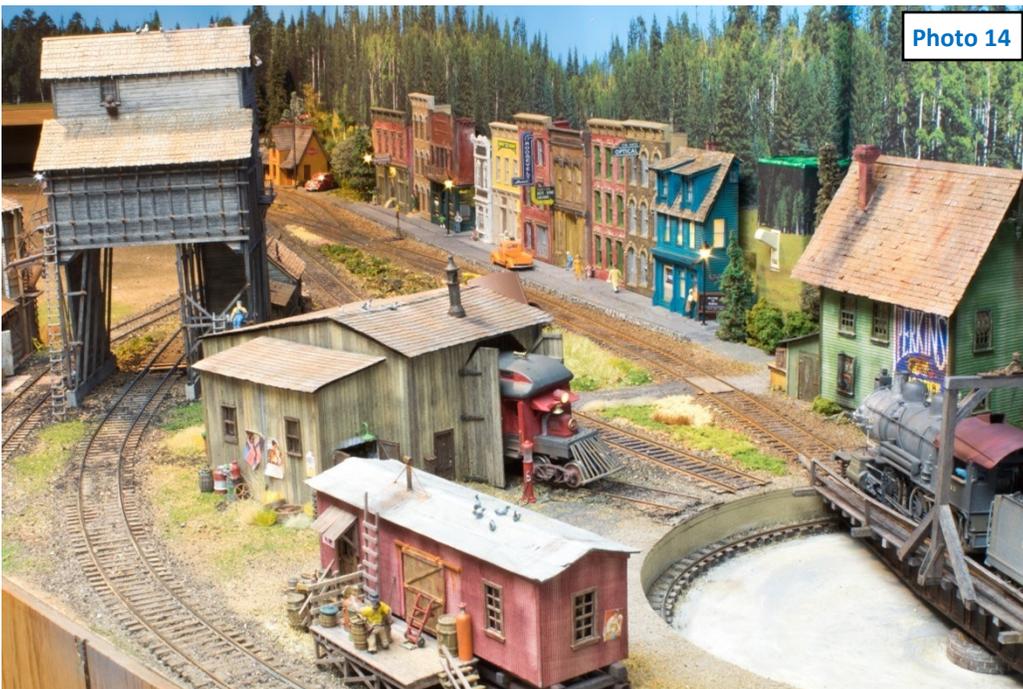


Photo 14

The Renovo staging yard is nearly complete (Photo 14).

Although the railroad is completed and fully operational there have been no formal operating sessions to date. I do solo operation using the "car order" operating system introduced by Hank TenWolde in the March 2012 *NMRA Magazine*. Whereas the traditional car card system (waybills) has a card for each car, the car order system has a card for each customer delivery spot. The card specifies the car type (box, tank, flat, etc.) rather than the car road name and number as used on waybills. I printed my car orders on two-sided business cards, one of which is shown here.

How many cards do you need? I make up a table like the one shown here for Galeton. I count the number of x's, to get 7 car orders for Galeton. There are 9 car orders for Chestnut Lake.

Yard Car Order	Yard Pickup Order
Tank Car to be set out at:	Tank Car to be picked up at:
Oil Well	Oil Well
When car has been set out place this card in box labeled	Return car to East/West yard track with fewest cars, then turn over and place in box labeled
<b>DELIVERED</b>	<b>CAR ORDERS</b>

Galeton Industries	Capacity	Box	Flat	Gondola	Hopper	Reefer	Tank
Milk Station	1					x	
Clothes Pin Factory	1	x					
REA	1	x					
Coaling Station	1			x	x		
Lumber Co.	1	x	x				

The local freights made up at the Galeton yard deliver and pick up cars at the customer spurs and sidings. At the yard I have a card box labeled Orders that contains all of the car order cards with the Yard Car Order side up. A PRR through freight train is made up at the beginning of an operating session and dispatched from either the Renovo (eastbound) or Williamsport (westbound) staging yards. For example, a westbound train from Williamsport is first directed to the yard and I check to see if this through freight has any of the cars specified in the Orders box. I simply leaf through the cards and find those that request the car types that are in the through freight train. Those cars are set out on a "Local" track in the yard. The cards for those cars (taken from the Orders box) are then placed in another box at the yard labeled Filled (they are not flipped to the other side). I have two tracks in the yard labeled "West" and "East." These tracks can hold no more than four cars. Therefore, the maximum number of freight cars in any train, excluding the caboose, is four. Because the through freight in this example is heading west, the cars located on the West yard track are put into this train. The engineer goes on his way and exits the G&CL at the Renovo interchange. There, the locomotive gets turned on the turntable and a new PRR train is ready for the next operating session.

Back at the Galeton yard, a G&CL locomotive and caboose are connected to the cars on the Local yard track. In one operating session I may send this local train out eastward, and in another I would send it out westward. The car orders from the yard Filled box are taken with this local train. Cars in this local are then spotted at the industries specified on the car orders. Once spotted, the car order is placed in a box labeled Delivered. There is another box at each industry labeled Pickup. If there is a car spotted at an industry, there will be a card in that industry's Pickup box that displays the reverse side of the car order card. The local adds that picked up car to his train. When returned to the yard it is spotted on the East or West yard track that has the fewest cars. This procedure prevents those tracks from becoming "overloaded." The card for that car is then turned over and placed randomly in the deck of car order cards in the yard Orders box.

In summary, we see that a local will leave the yard with four cars and a caboose, deliver them to specified customers, pick up cars that were previously spotted at those industries, and return them to the yard where a PRR through freight will take them away to one of the two PRR interchanges. At the end of the session, I go around the layout and move the cards from the Delivered boxes and place them in the Pickup box, ready for the next operating session.

There is no cross over at the lumber mill spur on the G&CL, so it is impossible to set out or pick up a car there from a westbound train. I therefore keep one of my 2-truck logging locomotives parked there to do the switching. My solo operating sessions on the G&CL with four freight cars takes about 2 hours to complete. I have no formal operating scheme for the passenger train and railbus, but I do enjoy just running them around the layout and watching them as a railfan!

If you are ever in State College and would like to see the G&CL, please send me an email to set up an appointment ([photos@mer-nmra.com](mailto:photos@mer-nmra.com)).

More Photos of the G&CL:

Photo 15: Consolidation on the Turntable



Photo 16: Passenger Train at the Station

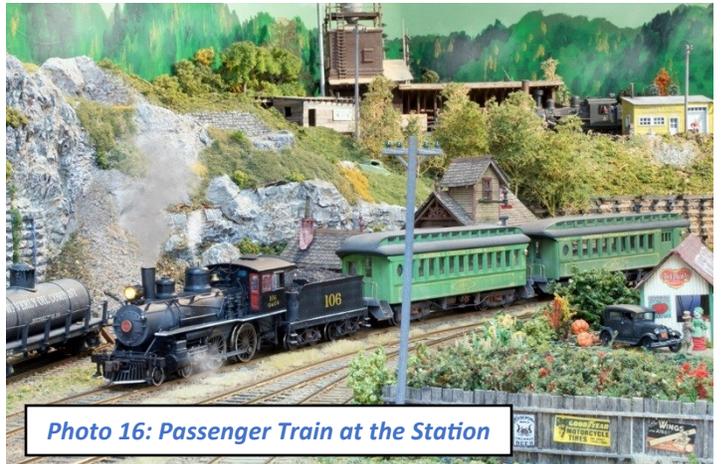


Photo 17: Shay #7 on Bridge



Photo 18: View of the Farm



Photo 19: View of the Girder Bridge



Photo 20: View of the Truss Bridge



# Hobby Barn Clinics

## Turning Plastic into Wood

Clinic Presented by Gary Eames

Text and Photos by Jerry Stanley

In December of 2016, I broke ground on a building my friends labeled “The Hobby Barn.” It took three years of working weekends and afternoons to get the building close enough to start holding clinics there. Since then, The Hobby Barn has held many excellent, informative clinics. Recently, Gary Eames, did a two-part presentation on “Turning Plastic into Wood” and “Turning Rock Mold into Rock.”

For the first part of the clinic, Gary brought Vallejo, Old & New Wood effects, an acrylic paint set, and a second paint kit made by Lifecolor (Photo 1). He also brought plastic sticks of road crossings that were handed out to each person attending the clinic.

The Vallejo paint kit included colors 71.131 Concrete, 71.141 Sand grey, 74.517 Dark Grey, 71.075 Ivory.

Once the road crossings were handed out, Gary instructed us to use the 71.131 Concrete and to coat the road crossing with a wide brush. After using hair dryers to accelerate the drying time, he next showed us how to take a small pencil brush using the 71.141 Sand Grey color and apply it with light strokes at a 45-degree angle across the road crossing over top of the concrete color. Then, after that dried, we dipped a small pencil brush into the 74.517 Dark Grey color, dabbed most of the paint off and then made light random strokes over the road crossing, repeating the process when the brush ran out of paint. Finally, we used 71.075 Ivory and performed the same method of dry brushing with light random strokes, just to provide some highlighting.

I am always amazed at how different people can use the same colors and the same methods and come up with different results! Here are three of the crossings we painted all with the-same colors and methods (Photo 2). See the differences!

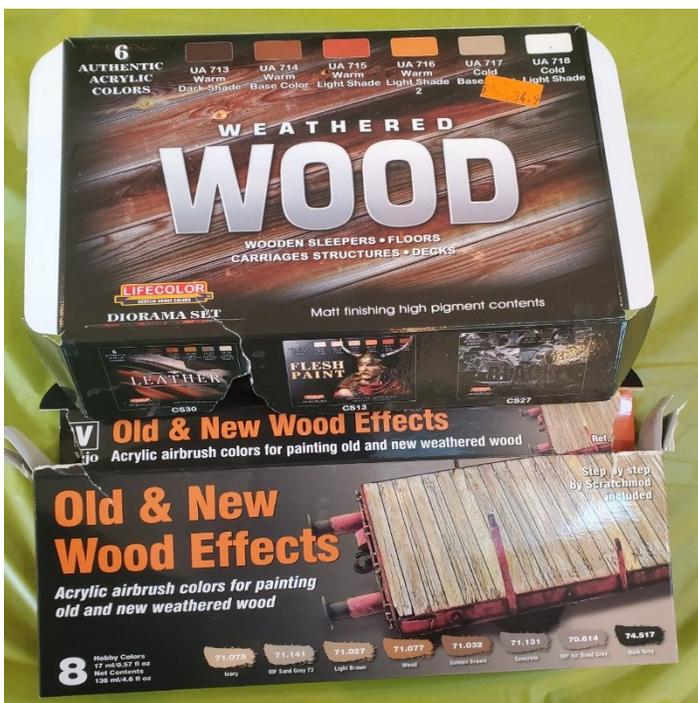


Photo 1



Photo 2

# Turning a Rock Mold into Rock

Clinic Presented by Gary Eames  
Text and Photos by Jerry Stanley

For the rock clinic, Gary used a "Ultimate Scenery Center" rock mold No. 103 Standing Bear 7" x 9" (Photo 3).



Photo 3

The rest of the colors were only used sparingly and to highlight small areas. He first used the Colonial Green, then the Vallejo model wash for rust-colored effects. Next, TruColor TCP 407 matte brown rust color followed by the Timberline Sanora Sand were added (Photo 9).



This method can also be used to create stunning effects on rock wall fences. Prior to coming to the Hobby Barn, Gary colored a rock fence wall (Photo 10)

Photo 9



Photo 10

The paints used were: Woodland Scenic Stone Grey C1218, Woodland Scenic White C1216 (Photo 4), DecoArt, Patina, Green Vert colonial (Photo 5), Timberline scenery Sonora Sand, Vallejo Model wash Dark Rust, and TruColor Paint TCP 407 matte brown rust (Photo 6).



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

Gary mixed Stone Grey c1218 and White C1216 together and painted the entire rock surface with this mixture (Photos 7, 8).



Photo 7



Photo 8

## The Hobby Barn Welcomes All NMRA Visitors

Please feel free to contact the Potomac Division if you would like to attend any of our clinics. Pre-registration is required. You can find the upcoming clinics on our website: <https://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Main/Home.php> and our hands-on (in-person) clinics and virtual clinics (Zoom) calendar are listed here as well: <https://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Calendar/Calendar.php>.

If you wish to attend an in-person clinic, please email me at [Paymaster@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Paymaster@potomac-nmra.org). We only charge for the materials, and for the cost of the meal if food is provided.

To be added to our Zoom virtual clinics email list, please notify Assistant Superintendent Ernie Little, MMR, [Asst-Super@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Asst-Super@potomac-nmra.org).

## Featured Cline Winter Scenery

By Greg Warth

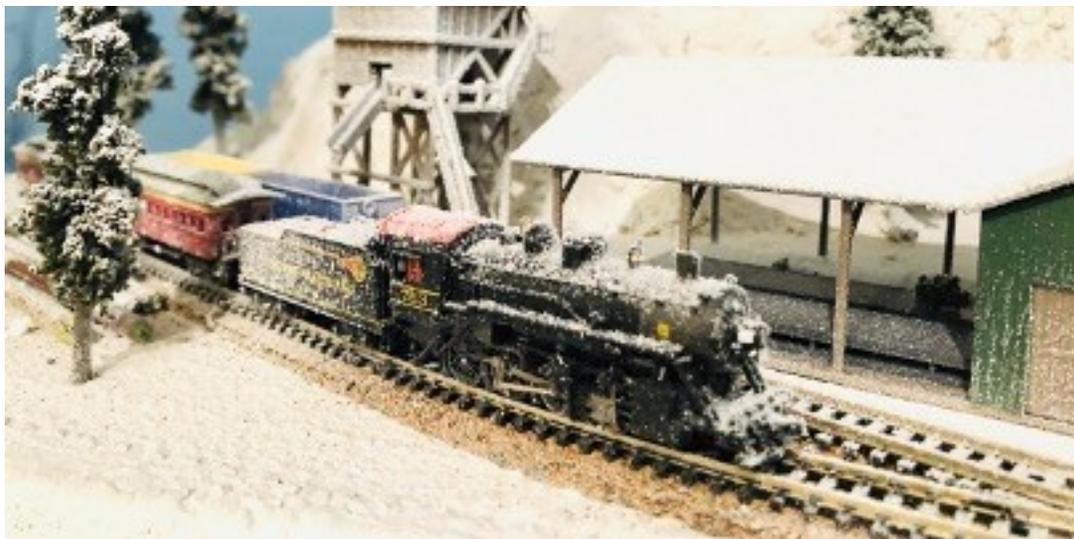


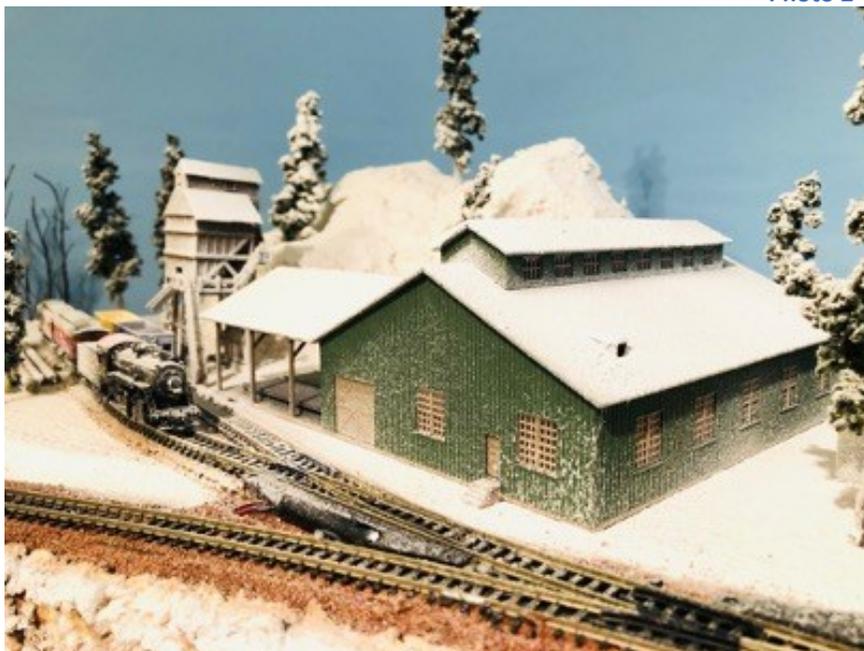
Photo 1

Creating winter scenery is another distinctive type of art form of model railroading. It is perhaps a little unusual since most model railroaders appear to favor summer and fall scenery. If you live in the northern part of North America or Europe, there is certainly no lack of winter reference photos. Perhaps people who live there are so tired of seeing snow for half their lives, they don't want to add it to their model railroads as well.

Nevertheless, there is a certain beauty, peace, and calmness of winter scenery that evokes a different mood or emotion than other seasons do. It paradoxically has a bit of warmth to it, even though you can sense the cold air coming from the scene as you are viewing it and subconsciously remembering your personal experiences associated with that type of scenery.

There are different approaches to creating winter scenery. There's the "heavy snow" approach, as I call it, depicting heavy layers and drifts of white snow that you see after a blizzard or a winter storm, which is the method I attempted on my N scale layout (Photos 1 and 2).

Photo 2



**Heavy Snow:** (Required materials are underlined)

This is created by using a mixture of "snow goop," a concoction developed by [Dave Frary](#) consisting of [acrylic gloss medium](#), [titanium white acrylic paint](#), and [acrylic modeling gel](#) in equal parts. Then add 1-2 drops of [cerulean blue](#). Stir it all up so it is about the same consistency as mayonnaise. Add a little water if it is too thick. Using a [small trowel](#), spread the snow goop over your landscape. Create snowdrifts and snowbanks. Spread it over rooftops like you would put icing on a cake. Spread it on the tops of tree branches, create pathways of plowed snow, pile it up on one side of fences, etc. Use reference photos to help guide you. Use a foam brush to spread small amounts of the goop with a dry brushing technique downward over rock surfaces and cliffs to simulate fallen snow on the upper edges of the rocks. Be careful not to get the goop into the moving parts of any turnouts. Be-

## Featured Clinc

fore the goop dries, sprinkle it lightly with tiny plastic sparkles that you can purchase at the craft store.

**Light Snow:** Next is the “light snow,” or subtle approach, which is what you see on cold winter morning after a brief flurry of snow has filtered down through the night (**Photos 3 and 4**). These scenes were created by Gary Hoover on his 1950s Norfolk & Western layout that I toured at the 2022 NMRA Convention.

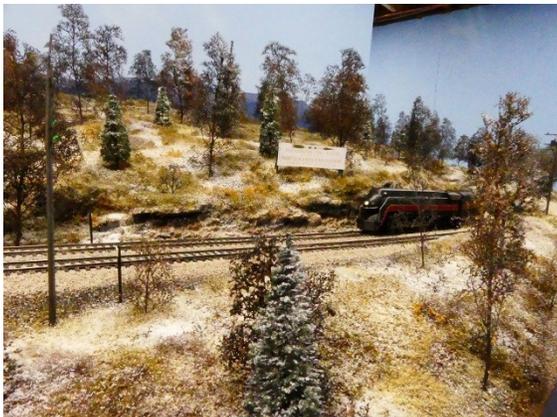


Photo 3 by Mark Nieting with permission

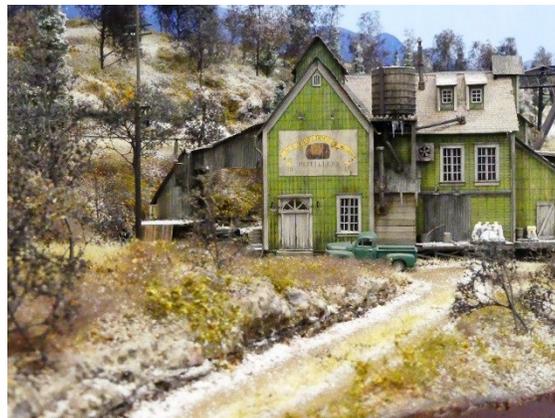


Photo 4 by Mark Nieting with permission

Here, the key is to just add enough sprinkling of Woodland Scenics “Snow” in the right areas that gives the suggestion of snow and cold weather and a slight wind. Adding bare deciduous trees (dried plants), a few evergreens, bushes (foliage clumps) and various shades of static brown grass helps to complete the scene.

**Real Life Snow:** The third is the “real life” approach that you see in the city after snow has been laying on the ground for months and won’t go away because the temperature is too cold. Mark Nieting created and photographed these scenes (**Photos 5 and 6**).



Photo 5

I really enjoyed creating winter scenes on my layout. I also greatly appreciate seeing what others have done to depict this type of scenery. That’s the beauty of model railroading. There are so many ways of doing things. We are limited only by our imaginations. If you now feel inspired to do a winter scene, don’t forget to [send us a picture](#).

(All photos by the author except where otherwise noted.)

### References:

- ◆ “Modeling Winter Scenery”, at <https://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/winter-scene.html>
- ◆ Frary, Dave, *How to Build Realistic Model Railroad Scenery, Third Edition*.
- ◆ “Making a Winter Layout in HOe Scale”, <https://youtu.be/GEnHZ8z6kkU> (I’ve shared this before, but it’s worth looking at again. Incidentally, HOe is the European designation for HOn30.)



Photo 6

## Branch Lines

### From the Divisions...

As *The Local* Editor, I have the distinct pleasure of receiving a copy of all the Division newsletters, which are all very informative and creative to say the least. Here are links to those publications so you can stay up to date on what the other Divisions are doing:

[Wheel Report](#), South Mountain Division

[The Potomac Flyer](#), Potomac Division

[Train Orders](#), New Jersey Division

[Sidetracks](#), Susquehanna Division

[The Dispatcher](#), Philadelphia Division

[The Callboard](#), Tidewater Division

[Crossties](#), James River Division

[The Brass Pounder](#), Carolina Southern Division

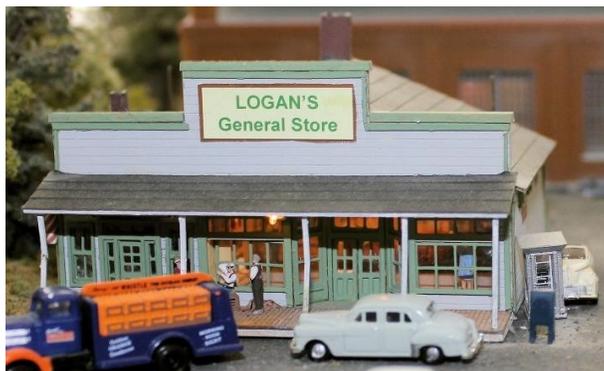
[The Herald](#), Carolina Piedmont Division

[The Relay](#), Chesapeake Division

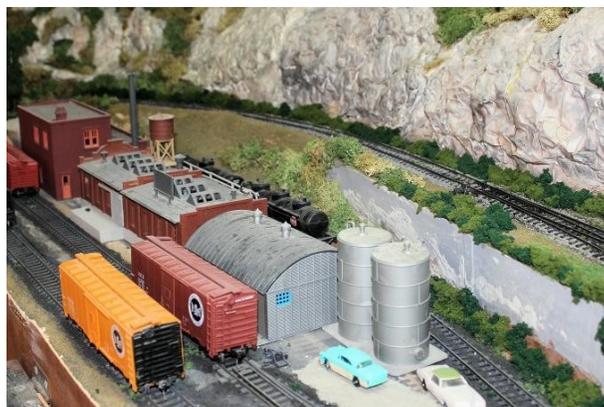
## And don't forget the new digital NMRA Magazine

**Reminder:** Here's how to access the [Digital NMRA Magazine](#):

1. Go to <https://www.nmra.org/user/register>
2. Answer a few questions
3. Click on Create a New Account
4. You will receive an email on how to set your password.



Joe Burden's Southern Yankee (photo by Charles Higdon)



Gordon Miller's Pittsburg Northern RR (photo by Charles Higdon)



N scale model of Southern Yard - Joe Burden, Southern Yankee  
(Photo by Jerry Lauchle MMR)

# Electronics Corner

## Simple Three-Color Railroad Signal

By Fred Miller, MMR

A nice touch in adding some visual animation to a model railroad is to include operating signals. Implementing full signal systems on a layout can quickly become complex and expensive. This article describes a very simple three-color signal operation with limited function (Photo 1). It does NOT rely on signaling block detection and does NOT carry status from one signal to the next. Instead, the described project simply shows RED-YELLOW-GREEN aspects on a single signal, activated by the passage of a train at the signal site (Photo 2).

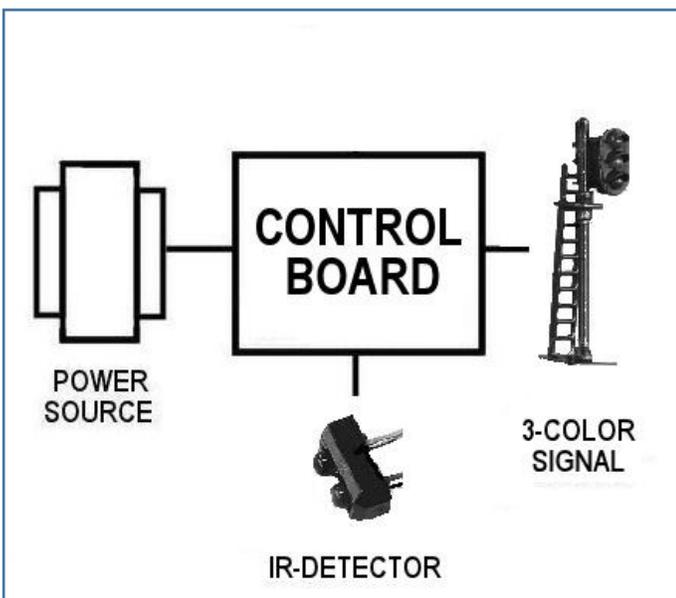


Photo 1

As a train reaches the signal detection spot, the signal shows a RED aspect. After the train leaves the detection spot (in either direction) the signal will change to YELLOW but only after a 10 second timeout.

Similarly, after another 10 seconds the signal will revert to the GREEN aspect. Whenever a train is detected, for example stop-

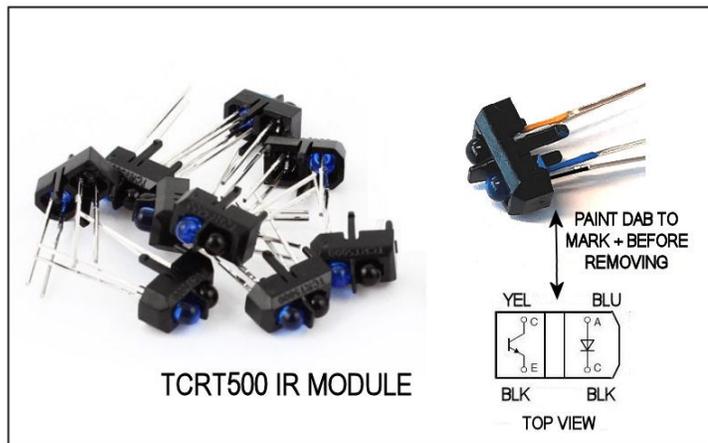


Photo 3



Photo 2

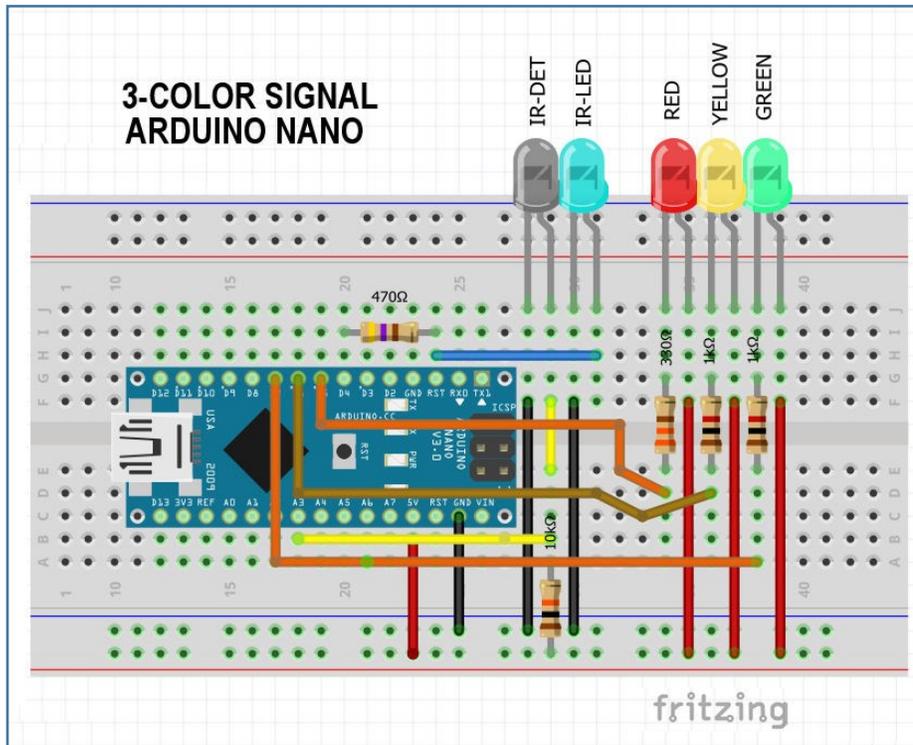
ping at the spot, the signal will remain RED. This operation provides nice visual animation without investing in a complex signaling system.

The project described in this article was developed for an N scale layout and costs less than \$10 for each signal, cheap enough to spread a bunch around a layout. A short video demonstrating the signal in action is shown here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQdz-rUMx3I>

The detection circuit makes use of IR-LED and IR-DETECTOR units extracted from a TCRT5000 IR Module (Photo 3). The logic implemented on the micro-controller removes ambient noise from sensor data by comparing the received IR with and without the IR LED on, making the circuit insensitive to high ambient light, sun, etc., and, of course, it works in the dark.

**CONSTRUCTION**

The TCRT5000 (IR LED and IR DETECTOR is sold as a pair in a plastic holder. I remove the LED and DETECTOR units from the plastic mounting after marking the polarity on the leads with a dab of paint. I like to use yellow for the IR-Detector anode, blue for the IR-LED anode, and black for both cathode leads (**Photo 4**). I follow this color scheme throughout the circuit design and construction.



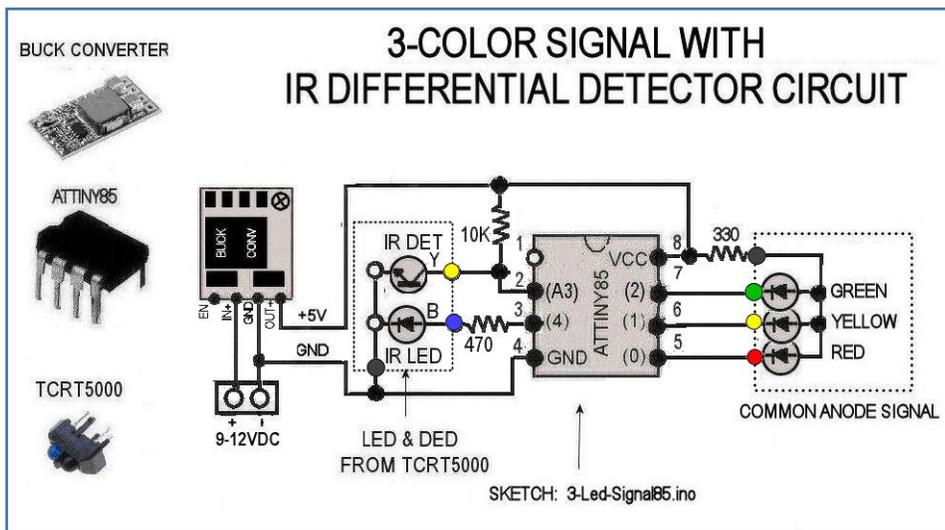
The controlling logic is eventually implemented on an Arduino compatible ATTINY85 chip. However, my Arduino Nano plugged into a breadboard. The Nano is very similar to the popular Arduino UNO. When the circuit and program worked satisfactorily, I moved the code over to the smaller ATTINY85 micro-controller. Note that a few pin designations are changed in the sketch when using the ATTINY85. The arbitrary 10 second delay in color changes can easily be changed in the sketch (**Photo 5**).

I then rechecked the operation with the ATTINY85 (instead of the Arduino Nano) on the breadboard. Note that an Arduino Nano or UNO could be used in the final circuit rather than the ATTINY85, but at a higher price tag per unit. See REFERENCES for more information about ATTINY85s, Arduino UNO, and Nano.

**Photo 4**

When the circuit is operating correctly, I graphically lay out the components on a perf board template and “wire” the components graphically in a top view (**Photo 6**). The drawing is then flipped to represent the bottom or wiring side of the circuit board. I like to use a graphics program called Paint Shop Pro for this work, but other graphics programs could be used as well. Over time I have assembled a number of component outlines which I use in developing the circuit grids.

Note that I use pieces of wire insulation to protect the wires which cross over each other. When completed and tested, I encase the wiring in 5-min Epoxy to secure and protect the circuit.



**Photo 5**

**INSTALLATION**

The LED and detector units are mounted next to the signal (**Photo 7**) in 1/8” holes drilled between the rails with only the top of the dome showing. The control board is mounted under the layout somewhere near the signal and with access to the 6-12V AC or DC power source (**Photo-8**). The signal and detector leads can be soldered directly to the male headers, observing the color coding.

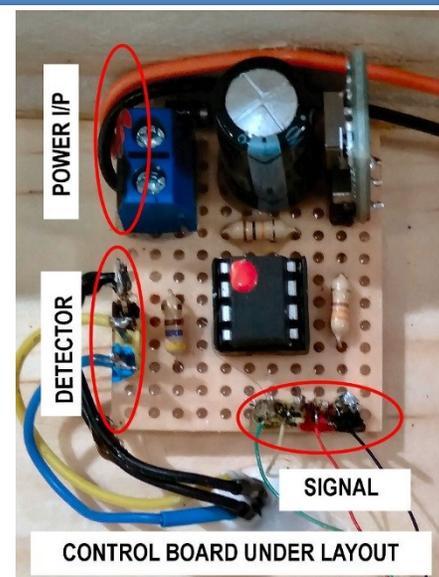
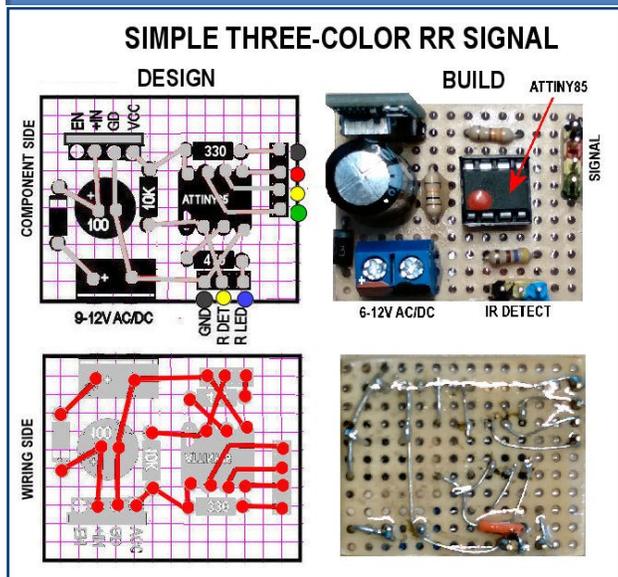


Photo 6

Photo 7

Photo 8

REFERENCES

The accompanying chart (Photo 9) lists the components, suggested sources, and prices for the project. Many of the prices shown are for single items when purchased in larger quantities (to make more signal circuits). The total price is less than \$10 for the project using the ATTINY85. If the Arduino NANO is used instead, the price would go up to around \$15 per project.

As noted above, the project could be implemented on an Arduino Nano (or UNO) without the need for programming the ATTINY, but at a higher cost.

I would be glad to share the Arduino software for the ATTINY85, Nano (UNO), as well as more information on transferring the software to the ATTINY85 micro-controller. For those not interested in Arduino programming, I can supply a pre-programmed ATTINY85 to MER members. I can be contacted at my email address shown below.

SOME LINKS

Arduino website (for Arduino tutorials, etc.):

<https://www.arduino.cc/>

Article with instructions to program an ATTINY85:

<https://www.instructables.com/How-to-Program-an-Attiny85-From-an-Arduino-Uno/>

YouTube videos with similar instructions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1f89Pdidsm4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KbRW1ERetPU>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_MhVSIMZI8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_MhVSIMZI8)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUlzOD9T3nl>

Article about the use of Sparkfun's programmer board to program ATTINY85s:

<https://learn.sparkfun.com/tutorials/tiny-avr-programmer-hookup-guide>

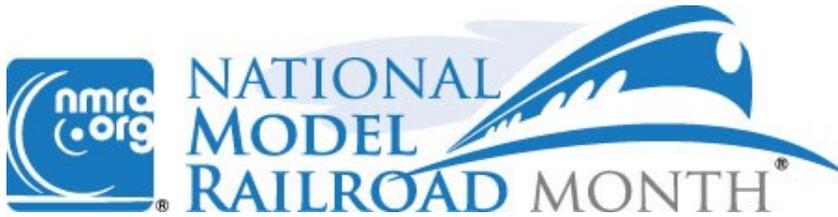
3-COLOR N-SCALE SIGNAL CIRCUIT				
QTY	PART	SOURCE	PART #	TYPICAL PRICE *
1	DCC BUCK CONVERTER	AMAZON	-	\$ 1.10
2	1N4001 DIODE	JAMECO	35975	\$ 0.14
1	100 UFD CAP	JAMECO	93761	\$ 0.17
1	TCRT5000 IR DETECTOR PAIR	AMAZON	-	\$ 0.30
1	3-COLOR N SCALE SIGNAL	EBAY	-	\$ 4.28
5	VARIOUS 1/4 WATT RESISTORS	JAMECO	VARIOUS	\$ 0.50
1	8 PIN IC SOCKET	JAMECO	112206	\$ 0.16
1	ATTINY85 MICROCONTROLLER	DIGIKEY	-	\$ 1.25
2	3 & 4-PIN MALE HEADER (CUT)	JAMECO	686680	\$ 0.59
1	2 PIN SCREW TERMINAL	JAMECO	2120655	\$ 0.49
	PORTION OF PERF BOARD (CUT)	JAMECO	616690	~
	MISC HARDWARE/SOLDER/GLUE			~
			TOTAL	\$ 8.98
- ALTERNATE IMPLEMENTATION USING NANO INSTEAD OF ATTINY85 -				
1	ARDUINO NANO V3	BANGGOOD	-	\$ 6.99
			TOTAL	\$14.72

\* MANY PARTS PURCHASED IN MIN ORDER QTY OF 5, 10 OR 20. ONLY UNIT PRICE SHOWN

Author's email (for further information, files, etc.): [tractionfan@aol.com](mailto:tractionfan@aol.com)

# Marketing Your Division

By Greg Warth



One of the clinics I attended at the 2022 NMRA Convention in St. Louis was presented by NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR, on how to encourage recruitment in your division and how to become more visible in your community. Basically, you need a marketing campaign that demonstrates the benefits of joining the NMRA, and specifically your division. There are a multitude of things you can do to fortify a dwindling membership or make a good membership even better. Here are a few of Gordy's tips:

- Use the promotional materials available at the [NMRA.org](https://www.nmra.org) website.
- **Form a marketing committee.**
- Develop special interest groups (SIGs) within your division.
- Attend conventions outside of your local area to see what others are doing.
- Use surveys to get information from your members.
- Communicate with your members regularly.
- Social Media: Use YouTube, Instagram, and podcasts to increase your visibility. Host virtual events frequently. Take videos of all your members' models, dioramas, and layouts. Show them on your social media sites.
- Do presentations about your division whenever the opportunity presents itself, perhaps at the local libraries, schools, community colleges, retirement communities, at the local VA hospital, or at train shows.
- Advertise events as much as you can.
- Stay in touch with other divisions. Hold mini conventions among two or more divisions as the James River and Potomac Divisions are doing.
- **Welcome new members.** So many new members are lost because they did not really feel welcome. Add a list of new members to your newsletter or website. Help them navigate through the system. Personally invite them to your meetings. Help them get access to the various digital publications offered by the NMRA. Do things to help them. Assign a buddy or a mentor. Monitor those members who are up for renewal. Make a list of them. Send an email to anyone who doesn't renew.
- Set up a special recruiting booth at train shows and intermingle with the crowd. Offer a giveaway with your division name on it. Hand out brochures or business cards to every person you see there. Put your table right next to the best vendor at the show. Have a clipboard that you carry around with a sheet that says, "Sign up to learn more...." Get email addresses from everyone and then follow up with emails later.
- Use various attractions to get people to come to your meetings. Offer coffee and donuts if it's a morning meeting, or pizza for evening meets. Hold raffles to win door prizes. Sell tickets for 50-50 donations. Hold white elephant sales or swaps frequently. Invite guests. Send emails to members to remind them. If anyone is having a model railroad problem, see if there are any volunteers who can help them. Provide education at each meeting. Ask members to provide layout tours.
- Hold social events that families can attend. Did you know that you can ask the NMRA for \$200 to go toward a division social event once a year?
- If you are short on cash, ask for tax-deductible donations at your events. If you tell people what the donations are for specifically, you will be more successful.

- Offer support to your local hobby shops. Advertise them in your division newsletter for free in return for setting up an NMRA sign on the door and/or getting a small discount for purchases. Set up and maintain a small layout inside your favorite hobby shop for a win-win situation.
- Record a video of the non-business portion of your meetings for YouTube or Vimeo. Then send the link to all your members, so they have a record of awards given, contests won and the educational information. This would be particularly helpful for those who were not able to attend in person. You could also use these to help recruit new members.

I am sure there are more things that could be added to this list. Print it out and discuss it with your members at your next meeting. Let us know what you come up with.

# Round the Curve to Altoona 2023

## Mid-Eastern Region Convention



Tim Pavlic II Photo

**October 19-22, 2023**

**Altoona Grand Hotel**

**hosted by the Susquehanna Division 11**



<https://mer2023.org/index.html>

# Modeler's Haven—Tips & Tricks

By Greg Warth (Photos by the author, unless otherwise noted)

*This section of The Local is for all members to share any tips, techniques, tools, books, fixes, new products, or any other information that might be of interest to others. One of the many benefits of being an NMRA member is spreading knowledge about the hobby and learning things from other modelers. Please submit your tips to the [Editor](#) for consideration on publishing them here.*

## Tips from the Journals:

Don't throw away those used **toothpaste tubes**. Paint the outside with flat black or dark gray. Leave the inside silver. Cut it up into small irregular squares and rectangles. Bend and twist each piece and load them into your gondola. Glue them in with diluted white glue. You now have a gondola with a scrap metal load. – “Love Those Loads,” by Bob Frankrone, *NMRA Magazine*, April 2022, p.28.

Order your HO **Class B, Lima-built, 50 ton, 2-truck Shay** now available for fall delivery from [www.krmodels.ca](http://www.krmodels.ca).

## Safety Tips:

1. Cylindrical knives can roll off the workbench and end up in your foot. Use a pencil grip device or a large pencil eraser on the end of the handle to prevent that from happening.
2. Never store a hobby knife in your toolbox with the blade attached.
3. Use safety glasses when working with hobby knives.
4. Use a sharps container (*Ed.- or an old paint can*) to dispose of used knife blades. - “Cutting Tools: Knives,” by Jack Hamilton, *MMR, NMRA Magazine*, April 2022, p.40.

## Scenery above and below the tracks:

There are tricks to making a small layout seem much larger than it is by using topography – mountains, rivers, rocky ridges, canyons, and bridges to separate sections of the layout. Trees and structures can also be used to separate scenes. The Sierra Northern built by Bob McLaughlin is an **N scale layout on a hollow-core door**. His track is elevated 6” above the surface using Woodland Scenics risers without grades or inclines. This allowed him to easily create canyons and cliffs below the track level and mountains to rise above the tracks. He used wads of old newspaper to make the mountains which rose above track level. The wads of newspaper were covered with masking tape and plaster-cloth to create a surface for a variety of rock molds, ground cover and trees. He used reference photos of scenery he wanted to emulate taped to the wall above the layout. He could directly refer to them there to make sure he remained consistent with the colors and the type of landscaping he wanted. “A Compact Layout for Railfanning,” by Bob McLaughlin, *Model Railroader*, August 2022, p.28.

Do you have a water scene that you are not particularly happy with? Perhaps it has bubbles in it, or it just does not look very realistic, consider applying Woodland Scenics **Water Ripples** as Brian Sheron, *MMR* did to rejuvenate an old water scene. You can read about the details in the [Potomac Flyer](#), Spring 2019 issue or in the Members Only area of the [NMRA.org](http://NMRA.org) website under the NMRA@HOME icon.

## Lift-Out Scenery:

Do you have long tunnels on your layout where your trains are expected to go through and reach the other side? Hopefully, you thought about access to that area while you were building it. One solution to this is to build lift-out scenery over the tracks in the tunnel. You could use wads of newspaper covered with plaster cloth, creating a shell of a mountain over the track, Then cut around the edge of the mountain with a sharp knife. Once you have done that, you should be able to lift out the mountain so you can have access to the track underneath. Now you can replace the mountain and add your scenery as you normally

would. Just try not to get too much glue where the bottom of the mountain joins with the layout surface. It is relatively easy to hide that joint with ground cover and bushes. Now try lifting out the mountain and replacing it. It should go back into the same place easily. You can then spend a minute or so replacing any of the scenery at the joint, so it is well hidden. Learn more at this site: <https://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-scenery.html>. Also, see a similar article by George Gaige in the Nov-Dec 2020 issue of *The Local*.



*Photo 1: Lift-out Mountain removed allowing access to tracks underneath.*

#### **New WiFi Throttle, UWT-100, from Train Control Systems (TCS):**

This throttle does everything! I attended a clinic about this device presented at the Gateway 2022 NMRA Convention in St. Louis and was quite impressed. It apparently has been around for a few years, but I didn't know much about it until I saw this clinic. Then I found this video of the same clinic which had been presented in Amherst in 2020...

<https://youtu.be/4x3LP75zlyQ?list=PLYomfXJnNz3mRRF2eMze8AjbBQ9tKLtgg>

#### **Tour Train:**

[Staunton's Virginia Scenic Railway](#) just launched on August 4, 2022 and sold out through Thanksgiving during the first week after it launched. Does America love trains, or what?

Two rides are offered daily Thursday through Sunday. The Blue Ridge Flyer is a dinner train consisting of a three-hour scenic ride in comfortable, modernized 1940s and 1950s passenger cars from Staunton to Ivy and back. The lunch train, the Allegheny Special, travels from Staunton to Allegheny and back. At the end of September, Santa trains will be offered and hopefully will become a new tradition. The railways are provided by the Buckingham Branch Railroad, est. 1988, which operates four divisions and a total of 280 miles of track.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Tips from Nicholas Kalis**

From his Blog, "[Modeling Hints and Reviews for Large Scale Modelers and Others](#)"

(All photos and text in this section by Nicholas Kalis)

#### **Mud on the Tires:**

A layout such as mine, modeling a sugar plantation set in the 1940s, has need of a few tractors. While I model in 1:20.3 (Fn3), this scale (1:43) is fine for what most would call forced perspective - but which I would just call the "reduced scale" technique.

In this project, I weathered an Ertl diecast model of a **1956 Case 600 tractor**. Red wheels set off a nice gray body on this beautiful 1:43 scale diecast model. I purchased this model as part of a set labeled "Limited Edition, 1989" packaged for Mid-States Distributing Company Inc. Once again, we see that perhaps much of what one selects for one's model railroad can be found from companies not primarily oriented to serving our model railroad community.

A second takeaway from my experience is that sometimes the model we seek is not available as a single purchase, e.g., I just wanted a 1956 tractor that was part of a three-piece set.

I went on to weather this model with a wash and some dry brushing to bring out its details, although they might not be when on the layout. I also used some grout leftover from another project to create "mud" on the tires ([Photo 2](#)).

Though the date of this tractor (1956) would normally eliminate it from a model railroad set in 1944, I felt that its era was close enough to use it as a model that would be set inside a structure whose doors are open. My research told me that a plantation such as the one I model on Oahu had many structures used to store tools and machinery such as this from the elements.

My third takeaway is that models with some flaw, such as scale or details or perhaps slightly wrong era, can still be used by hiding them a bit with foliage or a structure or even locating inside a structure whose doors are open.



*Photo 2: Mud on the tires was modeled using tile grout.*

*© 2022 Nicholas Kalis.*

### Photography as a Modeling Tool:

Yes, I realize this story has been told before but let's tell it one more time, this time in large scale (1:20.3).



**Photo 3**



**Photo 4**

After looking at my "before" photograph ([Photo 3](#)) of Oahu Sugar Company Engine Number Five (0-6-0), I realized something was amiss; my [Llagas Creek Railways](#) rails look almost out of the box. I realized my Fn3 (1:20.3) steel rails here required some weathering. Truth be told, this area of my Oahu Sugar Company layout was not originally intended to be scenicked, but scenic it I did and even included a backdrop.

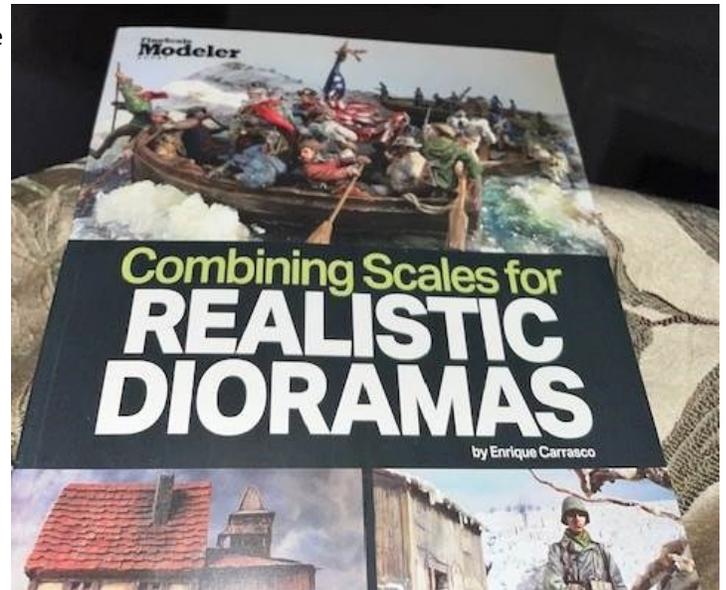
So, in my "after" photo ([Photo 4](#)) readers can see that I painted, using an old brush, my rails with Tamiya gray acrylic paint and added some Bragdon Enterprises Light Rust FF-61 using a Tamiya cotton swab 87106-260. I did these during a short work break (I work out of the home) so it was a bit of a quick and dirty effort, but I can see the improvement.

Yes, I see the shadows my palm trees cast on my backdrop but really that does not disturb me much - it is a model after all. Thanks go to my wife Kate for her wonderful painted backdrop on sheet styrene.

Take away from all this: photographs of our model railroad layouts help improve them. With iPhones being ubiquitous, we no longer have an excuse to shy away from photographing our layouts. Photographs shout out the flaws in our models that we may have overlooked. Whatever the scale, take photos of your models as you progress and share them with friends as I did. It will improve your modeling as those photos will prompt you to correct any shortcomings you see. It did for me. You might even get a compliment or two from your friends who see the progress you have made on your layout - even before your corrections.

**Book Recommendation:**

*Combining Scales for Realistic Dioramas (Photo 5)*, by Enrique Carrasco, published by Kalmbach, available on Amazon.



\*\*\*\*\*

## Tip from John Fallon, Tidewater Division

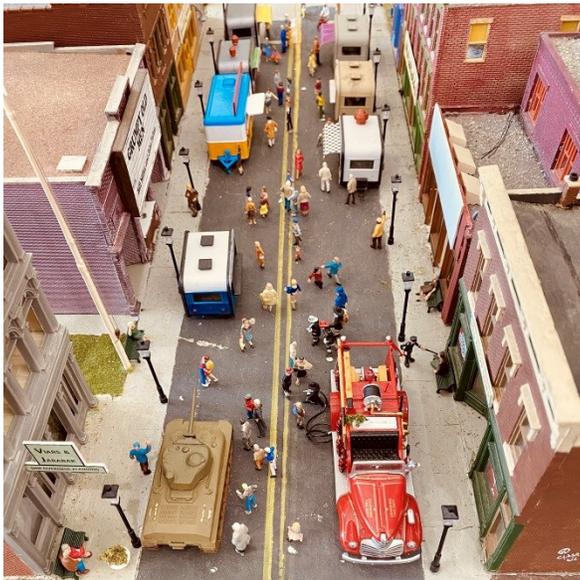


Photo 6—City Streets made with roofing Ssingles



Photo 7 —Roofing shingles for paved area

Black or gray roofing shingles make great roadways, city streets, and parking lots (Photos 6, 7).

Send in YOUR tips to [local-editor@mer-nmra.com](mailto:local-editor@mer-nmra.com)

# Celebrate the Holidays with Trains!

By Greg Warth

If you are a model railroader, or even if you're not, trains are likely to be a part of your Holiday celebration. Railroads and model trains have been intertwined with the Holidays at least since the 1900s when Lionel started producing and marketing electric toy trains. The Holidays have traditionally been associated with traveling to see family and friends and what better way to travel, at least in the early days, than by train. This created a somewhat sentimental relationship with the iron giants. Some say that the connection between trains and Holidays was brought on as much by marketing from companies like [Gilbert](#), [Lionel](#), [Currier & Ives](#), and others as it was by anything else. Movies like *White Christmas* also helped to integrate trains and Christmas. Popularity has increased even more in the last few years by books and newer movies, like the *Harry Potter* series and the *Polar Express*.

Whatever the reason for this connection, the joy of the Holiday Season is accentuated by the presence of train displays nearly everywhere during November and December. It is no surprise that November is National Model Railroad Month.

So, what are some of the best ways to celebrate the Holidays using a train theme? Here are a few suggestions:

Photo 1



- The proverbial train around the tree at home *and at work*.
- Consider making a more permanent [Holiday train layout](#) that you can add to every year.
- Create a [winter diorama](#) (Photo1).
- Decorate your layout – Green pipe-cleaner wreaths on locomotives and structures, Santa figures on rooftops, tiny lights on evergreen trees.
- Create winter scenery on your layout or a section of it (See the article “Winter Scenery” in this issue.)
- Buy train-related gifts for kids and teens.
- Give train toys to charities. The Carolina Piedmont Division (CPD) gives away train sets every year at Christmas. The Division builds a layout, raffles it off and uses the funds to pay for the train sets. Gary Brown of the Tidewater Division and our new Vice President of the Mid-Eastern Region collects train items from members and gives them to needy children in the community. These are just two examples that I know about.
- Encourage others to get into the hobby. Buy your friend(s) a train set.
- Send train-related [greeting cards](#).
- Ask family members and friends to help you build a [Holiday village](#).
- Create a [garden train village](#) in G or O scale.
- Buy *yourself* a train.
- Take the family on a [tour train ride](#).
- Go to a train show.
- Get your group or Division together for Holiday Party and local layout tour. Consider a swap gift exchange and pizza party. Have a contest choosing the best Holiday-related model or diorama built by a member.
- Build a small trolley layout (Photos 2 and 3).

I am sure you can add more to this list. Of course, try to include family and friends as much as possible.

Spreading the Seasonal Joy is always part of the fun!



Photo 2



Photo 3

# Back on Track...

## Wrapping It All Up

By Greg Warth

There was a lot to pack into this issue of *The Local*. We hope you enjoyed it. There were so many pictures of the 2022 Convention we could not fit them all into this issue. You will probably see more of these photos scattered throughout the next few issues. We apologize if your layout was not represented here, but don't be surprised if it shows up later. If you would like us to feature your layout in one of next year's newsletters, please don't hesitate to [send in](#) a couple of paragraphs about it along with some of your best pictures.

The Look South Convention was excellent overall and very enjoyable. We all appreciate the great deal of work and preparation required to put it together. I personally am very grateful to belong to such an organization that does so much for its members. I am thankful for all the volunteers who spend so much time and effort in making it the best that it can be. I am very appreciative of the fellowship and friendships fostered by these gatherings. I am also proud to be surrounded by so much talent, scientific engineering, and artistry emanated by our membership. The construction of these 3D landscapes, the electronics, the imagination, the realism, and the care that goes into them is mind boggling.

So now, we look forward to the Holidays, spending time with families, perhaps building a seasonal winter diorama if we are so inclined, and moving into a New Year, which hopefully holds some promise for better things to come. I look forward to learning more about this hobby, sharing more information about it, making more friends, and volunteering to make it better.

The 2023 Mid-Eastern Region Convention in Altoona is shaping up to be another great one. I will look forward to registering for it as soon as the forms are available. I hope you'll join me there.

Thanks to all who helped to put this newsletter together. We have a *remarkable team* of editors/proofreaders, photographers, authors, and a publisher who make it all possible.

To them and to all the leaders, volunteers and members in the Mid-Eastern Region who contribute to making this a friendly, exciting, and fantastic hobby, have a wonderful Holiday Season and New Year!

