



# The Local

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

SEARCH

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## Fur Field

*By John Arthur (Photos by the Author)*

Even though I model a mostly industrial line on my HO scale layout, I intentionally left a few areas of open space. These are places where trains can simply pass through the scene, rather than having spurs and tracks everywhere. They provide good opportunities for rail fanning, add realism, and give the illusion of distance between switching areas. In one such scene, the track winds along the 18” shelf nearer the backdrop than the front edge. I didn’t want to hide the tracks behind a bunch of trees, so I opted to put an open field in the space with a wooded hill marking one edge and serving as a scene break, and a stream passing under the tracks on the other side. I did install trees behind the track, to frame and finish off the scene. The space in question between the track and the front edge of the layout is about a foot wide by 3’ long. With the general idea of the scene in place, I set about creating the field ([Photo 1](#)).



*Photo 1: Zoomed out view of completed scene. The base for the field running from the creek on the left to the trees on the hill to the right is teddy bear fur.*

*[Continued on Page 8]*

**President's Column...**



**Proximity**

**By R. Scott Unger**

In the fall of 2021, my wife and I traveled to western Pennsylvania to pick up a dog that we had purchased from a breeder. Since I model a portion of the Buffalo, Rochester, and Pittsburgh Railroad (BR&P), located in that part of the state, I took the opportunity to visit and photograph some of the key locations along the way. I have a series of books published about the BR&P that I rely on heavily to understand the history of the railroad, particularly focusing on 1974, the year I model. At that time, the line was a Baltimore & Ohio Division within the Chessie System. The books are excellent and have numerous photos that I will reference when I finally get to adding scenery to my railroad. However, after remotely researching the line through books and online since 2015, being there in person gave me a much better appreciation for topography and other features that the railroad struggled to overcome.

Our dog's name is Riker, which coincidentally, is the name of the main classification yard on the BR&P located in Punxsutawney, PA. Just after dawn last fall, I was walking Riker through our neighborhood, as I do every morning and we encountered a fox. In its mouth was a squirrel and I could not help but notice that the fox trotted past us in the exact same way Riker proudly trots around when he gets a new toy. Being only about ten feet away, I could readily observe a sense of pride and accomplishment just in the way the fox moved.

Vocabulary.com defines virtual as "something that exists in essence but not actuality." Technology provides numerous ways for us to experience things that might not otherwise have been possible. It can also expand on or improve our already existing experiences.

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For instance, the *E-Local* in which this article appears, offers extensively greater amounts of content and full color imagery than the print version, *The Local*. Over the last several years I also recall reading about groups conducting virtual operating sessions

where several of the participants, the dispatcher for instance, were located in a different state, or even country. What an amazing way to share the hobby that was not possible just a decade ago! Additionally, some Divisions in the Mid-Eastern Region (MER) have established regular, high-quality virtual meetings that in some cases have gotten higher participation rates than previously observed with in-person meetings. These virtual meetings help reduce the long geographic separation between NMRA members as many of our Divisions are very large. The **NMRA Interchange** and **NMRAX** are additional virtual resources that provide improved connectivity and interaction for members.

There is a place for both virtual and in-person activities in the hobby of model railroading and there are pros and cons to each. One of the key drawbacks to virtual interactions is the potential to miss subtle details or the “body language” that can be part of an in-person interaction. Just like that proud fox that Riker and I met on our walk, we experience our direct interactions on a different level. I can’t explain exactly why we possess the ability to interpret other mammals’ behavior, but it seems connected to the fact that we are clearly equipped to operate as social animals.

Use of technology also requires a deliberate choice. A communication or interaction needs to be initiated, planned, or carried out by at least one party for it to take place. So, if no one takes that initiative there are missed opportunities, or simply no interaction. In-person interactions also add elements of chance, or unscripted dialogue, that can provide new connections or ideas. There can be significant benefits of proximity in rail fanning full scale trains in person. Witnessing a steam locomotive in an online video simply isn’t the same as being there in person to feel its weight and smell the soot as it rolls by you. As I have previously written, proximity was also a determining factor in my reengagement in the hobby of model railroading. My exposure to Digital Command Control and the capacity to follow your train across the railroad was pivotal in my return to model railroading.

The MER hosts a regional convention each year that has all the benefits of in-person interactions. Last year’s convention in Altoona, PA was well attended and a great experience! Don’t miss the opportunity to engage directly with other model railroaders, meet new people and learn new skills at the Piedmont Junction in Durham, North Carolina this fall. Registration is open now at <https://piedmontjunction.cpd13.org>. We hope to see there... in person!





## Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA 2024 Convention Piedmont Junction · October 17 - 20, 2024



<https://piedmontjunction.cpd13.org/>

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

Primary Registrant: \_\_\_\_\_ MMR? Y / N, Title for Badge \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Other Attending (living at same address): \_\_\_\_\_

Children Attending (18 & under - list all + age): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Registrar Use Only!	Phone #: _____	E-mail: _____	
	NMRA Member #: _____	Region: _____	Division: _____
	Favorite Scale: _____	Is this your first MER Convention? _____	

Description	ID	Cost	Qty	Amount
<b>Registration</b>				
NMRA Member: ___ \$60 thru Aug 31, ___ \$70 Sep 1 – Oct 4, ___ \$80 On-Site Oct 17 – 20				
Non-Member: ___ \$80 thru Aug 31, ___ \$90 Sep 1 – Oct 5, ___ \$100 On-Site Oct 17 – 20				
One-Day (circle day)   NMRA Member: \$45 Fri Sat   Non-Member: \$65 Fri Sat				
Spouse/Significant Other		\$10		
Children 18 and Under (Name & Age)		\$0		
Banquet – Saturday Night North Carolina Barbeque Buffet Vegetarian Gluten-Free	401	\$65		
Hot Breakfast Buffet Fri Sat Sun <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-Free	402-4	\$21		
Lunch Buffet Fri Sat <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-Free	405-6	\$26		
Editors' Breakfast Fri (Division Editors)	420	\$0		
Superintendents' Breakfast Sat (Division Superintendents)	421	\$0		
<b>Call Boards / Ops – See Convention Web Site for Latest Information</b>				
Golden East Model Railroaders Club -Section 1 (Thu)	801	\$5		
Golden East Model Railroaders Club -Section 2 (Sun)	802	\$5		
Charles Rausch's Rio Grande Southern NC -Section 1 (Thu)	803	\$5		
Charles Rausch's Rio Grande Southern NC -Section 2 (Sat)	804	\$5		
Dave Koss' Atlantic Coast Line -Section 1 (Thu)	805	\$5		
Dave Koss' Atlantic Coast Line -Section 2 (Fri)	806	\$5		
Erik Dyke's ATSF, SP, GN (Thu)	807	\$5		
Jim Kalinowski's Lehigh Valley CNJ -Section 1 (Thu)	808	\$5		
Jim Kalinowski's Lehigh Valley CNJ -Section 2 (Fri)	809	\$5		
Ken Reising's Southern Pacific (Fri)	810	\$5		
Dan Koenigshofer's Western Pacific (Sat)	811	\$5		
Jamie Jordan's Lehigh Valley (Sat)	812	\$5		
Mike Rossi's Baltimore & Ohio (Thu)	813	\$5		
<b>Extra Fare Clinics – Registration Required, Further Information on Web Site</b>				
Speed Ballasting	601	\$5		
Build a Prototype Structure N (\$15) HO (\$15) O (\$25) Detail Parts (\$5)	602			
Making Trees from Wire	603	\$5		
Programming with JMRI	604	\$5		
Creating Zero-Depth Water Features	605	\$35		
Resin Castings for Unique Parts	606	\$15		
<b>Prototype Tours – Further Information on Web Site</b>				
Tichy Train Group Facility Tour (Fri 2 - 4pm)	201	\$5		
Tichy Train Group Facility Tour (Sat 10am - 12pm)	202	\$5		
Operate an NHVR Locomotive (30 minutes)	203	\$160		
Operate an NHVR Locomotive (60 minutes)	204	\$320		
NHVR Nuclear Fuel Train Caboose	205	\$25		
Aberdeen & Rockfish Facilities Tour, Museum, and Layout Lunch Sandwich Selection: Ham & Cheese Turkey & Cheese Club w/ Cheese	206	\$75		
<b>Convention Shirt</b>				
Regular: Small Medium Large XL	901-904	\$31		
2XL 3XL	905-906	\$35		
Tall: Small Medium Large XL	907-910	\$33		
2XL 3XL	911-912	\$39		
<b>Convention Car</b> N Scale Norfolk Southern 70-Ton 3-Bay Offset Hopper from Bluford Shops	921	\$25		
<b>TOTAL</b>			➔	
<b>Would you like to be a contest judge at the convention – Circle YES or NO</b>				
<b>Have you been a contest judge in the past – Circle YES or NO</b>				

Print registrations must be accompanied by check payable to **MER Conventions**. Send to: MER Conventions, PO Box 426, Sykesville, MD 21784-0426  
 Any questions and/or additional information, contact the Convention Registrar: e-mail [mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com](mailto:mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com) or call (410) 442-0446.  
**Hotel – Marriott at Research Triangle Park, 4700 Guardian Drive, Durham, NC 27703, (919) 941-6200. Room Rate - \$79.00 per night + tax.** To receive the convention room rate, contact the hotel directly and reference the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association.

## From the Editor's Desk...



### Musings of a Model Railroader

By Greg Warth

Whatever your thoughts about climate change, I like the fact that spring seems to come earlier in our area than it did previously. The doldrums of the winter months are breaking away into a somewhat brighter, more colorful world. My seasonal affective lethargy is lessening as the days get longer. It's time to get up and do something. In hobby terms, that translates into starting a new project, learning something new, trying something you haven't done before. It could also mean taking some old stuff and making something good out of it. For me, I've decided to create a new N scale switching layout. It would be small enough to put on a coffee table on front of you and complicated enough to create challenging puzzles related to spotting cars in different industries. I would use the newest technology for switching turnouts and signals and turning on lights and sounds automatically. The scenery would be complete, artistic, and appropriate for the theme and the era, which I haven't decided yet. I'm thinking a western theme around 1880 would be interesting and different than anything I have done before.

So, that's how you do it. Start with a dream, a vision in your head, and then start scribbling on a piece of paper. I've done layout designs on napkins when I had nothing else to write on. That's what I enjoy doing most in the hobby; creating, designing, and building layouts. As I have gotten older, my layouts have become smaller, so I don't have to crawl under them any more to do the wiring, and I can have the whole layout to work on right in front of me. Model builders have that luxury as well.

As I am daydreaming about this new layout, which is half the fun of building it, I am thinking of having perhaps two levels; the level in back being about an inch higher than the one in front. Both levels would be connected with a curve at one end with a row of scenery separating the levels into two towns. This will be a point-to-point railroad capable of having operating sessions with three operators, one being the chief dispatcher/referee and the other two being engineers/yardmasters for their respective towns. Whichever of the two yardmasters places their cars appropriately the

soonest would win the match.

Without spending any money, gathering any materials, or connecting any wires, I have just created an entire switching layout and a new model railroading game in my head. I can see it, but, of course, no one else can, yet.

I am currently sitting at my desk, typing while I am thinking about this. If I were at a restaurant with friends waiting for dinner, staring off into space, dreaming, I would look pretty weird, not to say that I have never done that. Just make sure the waiter brings plenty of napkins. So, you can't do this kind of model railroading anywhere, but you can in most places, like when you are in a conference listening to a boring speaker, or sitting in a symphony that your spouse made you attend. This method of model railroading allows you to enjoy the hobby almost anywhere. I guarantee that you will leave that conference room or symphony a much happier person than you would have been otherwise. When your spouse asks whether you enjoyed it, you can say you truly did, without one iota of fibbing reflected on your face.

This issue of *The Local* is full of musings turned into reality. What do teddy bears have to do with model railroading? You'll find out in this issue. Martin Brechbiel, MMR applies the brakes to his O scale freight cars. Patrick Flash does some kit-bashing with Woods Furniture. Wayland Moore gets a helping hand from Ken Montero, which exemplifies another NMRA benefit we haven't thought about lately. We have more convention updates from Don Roback, and Ken Montero continues his series on railcar construction (Part 3). Lots of other stuff is in here, but I don't want to tell you everything. Grab your favorite beverage and enjoy the ride.

Once again, I would like to thank our outstanding editorial staff for all their hard work, not only for this issue but for all they have done over the last year:










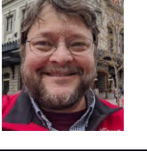
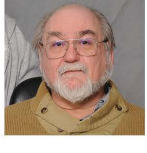
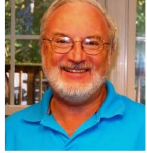

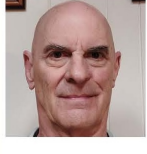

Jack Dziadul











Alex Belida, MMR

Martin Brechbiel, MMR



And special thanks to all our authors. Without them, we would have nothing to show you.

Happy railroading,

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**UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS**

2024 – Carolina Piedmont Division—“Piedmont Junction” October 17-20, 2024, Durham, NC  
 2025 – Dates and Location TBD (NJD had to cancel.)

**MER Board of Directors Meeting Schedule**

Board of Directors Meeting - 7 pm Oct. 17, 2024 - Marriot Hotel - Research Triangle Park, Durham NC  
 Annual Business Meeting - 10 am Oct. 20, 2024 - Marriot Hotel - Research Triangle Park, Durham NC

*[Fur Field - Continued from Page 1]*

I tend to watch a lot of videos on YouTube, and I often stray from strictly train-related content. As we all use the same media, we can learn a lot from modelers of other subjects, such as the armor and military modelers, ship builders, model airplane guys and gals, and in this case, war gamers, who create scenes for their pitched battles. I have seen this employed on at least one other layout, but it does not seem to be as common among model railroaders. The technique I chose to try out was to create a field mostly from teddy bear fur.

You can buy teddy bear fur by the square yard from online retailers, so you don't have to rip apart a cuddly teddy bear (unless you feel the urge to do so). If I remember correctly, I paid about \$30-35 for two square yards delivered to the house, which was enough for this project and another much larger area I would create later. I chose a "honey" colored fur, as this would still take paint well, but at least started from a more natural place than say, a bright white. After taking some rough measurements of the desired location, I cut the piece to roughly fit the area. I then laid it on the layout with some weights to hold it in place (do not glue it down yet!) and trimmed the excess from the aisle side. I should warn the reader, this is very messy work (**Photo 2**).



*Photo 2 – Unaltered fur trimmed to fit on the layout. At this point I was really wondering whether this was going to work.*

After getting the right fit, I moved the fur to the workbench and began trimming the length of fur back to an approximately HO scale waist to chest high, as I intended for this to appear like a wild and unkempt meadow. I first used beard trimmers, but these were no match for the thickness of the fur,



so I switched over to scissors. I changed the direction of the cuts frequently so as not to leave a noticeable pattern. I frequently viewed my work from the side as well, and spent a good amount of time removing much of the length of the fur. Once satisfied, I used a fine tooth comb to remove the trimmings and also to cause the fur to stand more upright to make painting easier.

While still on the workbench, I painted the fur using inexpensive Apple Barrel matte acrylics, in various shades of green such as English Ivy, Marsh Green, Palm Leaf, and Kelly Green. With a 1" wide brush, I grabbed a bit of paint, applied it to the fur, and then applied a good bit of water with the same brush, to both dilute and spread the paint over a much larger area. I would then dab into a different shade, work somewhere nearby with the new color, and again return to the water to blend the edges of the shades. I



***Photo 3 – On the workbench, the fur is trimmed and painted with various watered-down shades of green.***

repeated this process until all the fur was colored, with some variation by virtue of different shades of green mixing both on my pallet and on the field itself. I combed through the fur with a fine tooth comb which further mixed the colors together and removed any matting. After this application of paint dried, I combed the fur once more, and then I dry brushed some Apple Barrel Khaki, occasionally tinted with yellow ochre, over the tips of the taller bits of fur to mimic how longer grasses tend to go yellow and tan versus remaining bright green in late summer, which is the time of year that I model. After the paint dried, I glued the fur into place on the layout using Aileen's Tacky Glue (**Photos 3, 4**). Next, I spent a good bit of time adding textures and layers. The idea is to pull and tease apart scenic mats (from [Scenic Express](#)) until they are very thin and irregular, and place them over top of the fur. Not so much to cover the fur, but to add variations to it. To the grass itself, I added many different scenery materials, including various shades of [Heki](#) Wildgrass. I also used (sparingly) [Pollak](#) white and yellow flower material. Both of these products come in mats from Scenic Express that can be teased apart to thin them and then placed directly over the existing fur to add the look of clover, or goldenrod, and glued in place with Aileen's clear tacky glue. For interest, I added a gravel road across one corner. This involved cutting the fur all the way down to the base, and then adding a fine gravel ballast, with dirt along the edges, both sealed in place with isopropyl alcohol and diluted Mod Podge. Once dry, I added

repeated this process until all the fur was colored, with some variation by virtue of different shades of green mixing both on my pallet and on the field itself. I combed through the fur with a fine tooth comb which further mixed the colors together and removed any matting. After this application of paint dried, I combed the fur once more, and then I dry brushed some Apple Barrel Khaki, occasionally tinted with yellow ochre, over the tips of the taller bits of fur to mimic how longer grasses tend to go yellow and tan versus remaining bright green in late summer, which is the time of year



***Photo 4 – After dry brushing some tan onto the taller tips, the fur was glued down to the layout. No turning back now!***

the gravel dust effect, where tires grind down gravel, using and light gray pigments (**Photo 5**). I also added several different varieties of **Martin Welberg** thicket materials in both colors and heights applied using the same glue. To blend in around the edges, I added real dirt, sealed in place with isopropyl alcohol and diluted Mod Podge and then added various tufts from **Silflor/Mininatur**. I found that the teddy bear fur field base makes a great foundation for static grass, which I also added in certain places along the edge to blend it together. I added some individual vertical weeds using the **Horse Tail (SF99022)** material from Mininatur, cutting the matted material into thirds long ways, and then separating out individual strands, and gluing those vertically with the clear gel. Lastly, I finished the field off with some fine leaf particles from a container with a perforated lid, shaken unevenly over top of the whole area. I used several colors of the leaf material from **Heki** for this since it is among the finest/smallest I could find.



*Photo 5 – A zoomed out view of the scene with numerous additional layers of stretched and thinned out scenery materials from Heki and Polak placed, prior to the addition of any vertical elements.*

One of the the keys to scenery is that nature is not uniform, and I found that adding many textures and materials over top of this base worked well and was far cheaper than trying to accomplish the scene using expensive diorama scenery mats on their own. Using the fur, which on its own did not have enough variation, allowed me to really spread out the expensive scenery bits, using enough to add variation and interest, but not having to come close to fully covering the entire area with those products, and break the bank. In this way I feel that it allowed the project to approach diorama quality, but at the size and scope of a full model railroad. I hope you'll give it a try on your layout (**Photo 6**)!

*Photo 6 – Vertical elements from Mininatur and Martin Welberg have been added, as the C&O transfer run passes by on its way back to staging.*





## NMRA Achievement Program Update

Kurt Thompson, MMR  
MER AP Manager

Kurt Thompson, MMR

Since the last issue of The Local, the following members have earned the listed awards - both AP certificates and Golden Spike Awards. When you see them next, please congratulate them and if you're curious, ask them how they achieved these awards.

### **Potomac Division (2)**

Mike Byles	Electrical
Greg Cassidy	Structures

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### **Philly Division (3)**

Charles Liggett	Volunteer
Andreas Nesemann	Golden Spike

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### **James River Division (5)**

Glenn Lapkin	Structures
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### **Carolina Southern (12)**

Roy Becker	Structures
Andrew Stitt	Chief Dispatcher
Andrew Stitt	Golden Spike
Dave Chance	Golden Spike

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### **Carolina Piedmont (13)**

Danial Fisher	Civil
Danial Fisher	Electrical

---

### **Chesapeake Division (14)**

Patrick Flash	Volunteer
Patrick Flash	Author



*B&O Railroad Museum (Photo by the Editor)*

# Elections 2024

THE MER NEEDS YOU!

## Now Accepting Nominations for Officers

If you are a member in good standing (dues paid) and want to support your region with good ideas and real involvement, we need you to volunteer to serve as one of the four Officers for the Mid-Eastern Region (MER). The MER Board of Directors generally meets three (3) times per year; once at the MER convention. **The deadline for nomination entry is May 30, 2024.** The term of office is two years, with a limit of two terms for the President or Vice-President, five terms for Treasurer or Secretary. Any qualified MER member in good standing can be nominated, either by him or herself or by another member with the candidate's permission. The process is very simple:

### **Prepare:**

A 200-word (max) statement outlining the nominee's interest and qualifications for the position, AND a photo of the candidate. Send the nominations package – by May 30, 2024 – to ALL of the following nominations process officials:

#### **Nominations Committee:**

Chair: Robert Charles, MMR rcharles@aol.com

Jack Dziadul, jackdziadul@gmail.com

Kenneth Montero, va661midlo@comcast.net

Optional – also by May 30, candidates may supply a 500-word statement suitable for placement on the MER website.

### **Deadlines and Schedules for 2024 Nominations and Balloting:**

Our Bylaws require the publication of deadlines and schedules for nominations and balloting in the first issue of *The Local* of each year. The dates and schedule for nominations, ballot and election results are in the Executive Handbook, Section 5, Policies, Article VI.

May 30, 2024 -- Deadline for receipt of self-nominations sent to the Nominations Committee. Date for Nominations Committee to notify Board of Directors of slate of nominees validated by the Business Manager.

August 1, 2024 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting.

September 3, 2024 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

September 7, 2024 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

September 14, 2024 -- Deadline for Ballot Committee to transmit results to President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

September 21, 2024 -- 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, 2024 -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER's website.

*You can make a difference by giving something back to the hobby you enjoy. This is your chance. Successful completion of three years in office fulfills the requirements for the Achievement Program "Association Official" certificate. Please respond in one email to all three committee members to ensure receipt of your nomination! That is all there is to it!*

## Advertising in The Local

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:

Divisions & Clubs	Free
Clinics & Education	Free
Convention Ads	Free
Full Page - Color	\$100.00
1/2 Page - Color	\$60.00
1/4 Page - Color	\$35.00
Business Card	\$10.00
Text Only	\$7.00

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*, please 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 are published in approximately the order in which they were received.

## How to Submit an Article for *The Local* (Please Follow These Steps Carefully!)

1. Please read the article written by Martin Brechbiel, MMR on "[Preparing Your Manuscript for Publication in The Local](#)."
2. Compose and submit your text in one of the following formats: TXT, DOC, or DOCX.
3. 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."
4. Your photos should be high resolution and very clear. We can-not accept photos that are fuzzy or out of focus. JPG, GIF, TIFF, and PNG formats are acceptable.
5. Please rename your photo files in the order you want them to appear, e.g., Photo-1.jpg, Photo-2.jpg, etc.
6. If you have captions for your photos, etc., create a separate text file for the captions, each of which should be numbered to match a numbered photo or figure.
7. Send your article or photos by email to [The Local Editor](#). There may be a limit on the number of megabytes you can send depending on your email program. If necessary, either send the photos three at a time, or compress the photos with a "Zip" program to send more at one time.

**Special Notes:** Please only send us *your own 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.

**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 or photographer. If this is your first submission to *The Local*, please fill out and return this [Media Agreement](#) form to the Editor, which gives us permission to use your material and verifies that the work is yours, or that you have obtained written permission to use it. Once your article is approved for publication, and you have qualified for 42 or more points in the [Author Category](#) of the Achievement Program (AP), you may submit a Statement of Qualifications Form to your Division AP Manager to receive your Author AP Certificate.

## **“Because We Are All in It Together”**

**By Wayland Moore**

This story began several decades ago when I first moved to Lynchburg, Virginia and joined the NMRA, MER, James River Division. The idea to write a story began 5 or 10 years ago when the then MER president, Kurt Thompson, suggested I write an article about Ken Montero. It was not until last year that I really got to know him and definitely had some good material to provide.

What I saw with Ken over decades was someone who worked in the background. I didn't know what he was doing other than encouraging people to join and participate in NMRA/MER activities. Last year I got to know Ken better when he helped me out, when I was really needing help, and didn't even realize how much help I needed. For all the work and time Ken has spent supporting the MER activities, he has not yet achieved MMR status, nor does he have a layout yet. It made me wonder what sort of things he was doing. He then showed me another substantive reason for being a part of the NMRA without which I doubt I would have ever met him and received such meaningful help.

Recently, I found out from a dancer that she had observed my decline in health as early as 2020. About the same time frame, a modeler, Doug Berry, was helping me build my model layout. He interrupted our work one day and drug me upstairs to tell Cynthia, my wife, he recommended that I have my cognitive ability evaluated. After a long wait for the appointment, the UVA results showed indeed some reduced cognitive ability in certain areas. Beginning in 2021 both Cynthia and I observed declining health as evidenced by my excessive sleeping, easily up to 11 hours a day, fear of falling, and not keeping up with bill payments. My weight dropped down to at least 131 and there was significant fatigue. The fatigue was to the point that when Cynthia was not available to walk with me, I was afraid of falling and not being able to get back up, but I did know I needed to walk and the exercise. For over two years my condition was undiagnosed at both UVA and Sentara. By the beginning of 2023 I realized that I had way too much model railroad "stuff" that Cynthia would be stuck with should I pass. It was at this time that Ken Montero learned of my desire to get rid of a lot of my excess "stuff." Some of you who probably have "stuff" know what I mean.

Ken offered to help and help he did. I had rented controlled-conditions storage space for a storage of a lot of the stuff - stuff as defined by G scale, O scale, a bit of S scale, lots of HO, N and Z scales. Yes, I'm a real "train-aholic" and don't have enough room here to tell you of my prototype rail adventures. In 2006, I had moved from Lynchburg to Palmyra which is just east of Charlottesville. Ken drove up from Richmond and helped me sort through what I wanted to keep and what I wanted to dispose of. He made many trips to sort through and put on his Excel spreadsheet a complete inventory, sometimes taking some of it back to his home just to go through all that those small pieces like vehicles, detail parts, scenery, etc.

All the boxes were numbered, and contents inventoried. He then generated separate spreadsheets for locomotives, freight cars, passenger cars, structures and details including figures, vehicles, scenery, and parts. The spreadsheets for locomotives, structures, vehicles and parts had columns which identified Box #, RR, Description, Engine No., Mnfr, Mnfrg #, KD or X2f, RTR of Kit, New or Used, Other, No. Units. Similar columns for freight cars had Car No., and Blt. For passenger cars, he included Car No., Name, HW or S/L, C or S, Vehicles noted material [resin, etc.].

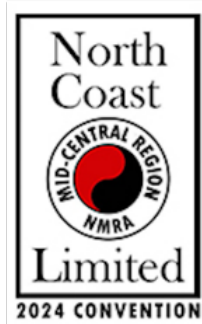
Additionally, he identified potential sales outlets, and many times, took cases of stuff to NMRA-sponsored and other train meets. He also mailed packages and delivered messages when it was "along the way". He provided sale receipts and collected money. I offered to pay, and he refused acceptance of any monies. He was willing to take certain selected items in consideration for his considerable work effort. I asked him more than one time why he was willing to do all of this, spend all that time and effort to support me, and his responses were "we all are in this together". In March 2023 my health issues were finally diagnosed first as Hodgkin's lymphoma and then non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Seeing my improved health this past fall, he gave me back the key to the storage shed. A combination of additional lifestyle changes, and very effective chemo resulted in complete elimination of the cancer as evidenced by a PET scan on November 1. The only thing left has been occasional flashbacks of things I had been through. Ken Montero had helped me through more than I had realized at the time.

Being a member of the MER Division of NMRA has certainly benefited me beyond the formal activities of meets, publications, Achievement Program, etc. I got the "we are all in this together" treatment from Ken Montero. There are other wonderful volunteers helping us in our modeling experience and enjoyment of life. Thank you, Ken. I told you I was going to write you up!



## **National Train Show 2024**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the National Model Railroad Association announces that the National Train Show, originally scheduled to take place at the Long Beach Convention Center, August 9-11, 2024, has been relocated to the Westin Hotel. The Westin Hotel is the site of the [SurfLiner 2024 NMRA National Convention](#), and we believe this convenient and intimate venue will result in a more accommodating and enjoyable experience for all participants.



## Call for N-Scale T-TRAK Modules!

It's here! The call for N-Scale T-TRAK modules! It is for those N-Scale T-TRAK modelers who will be attending the North Coast Limited convention, hosted by The North Coast Division of the NMRA Mid Central Region. The convention will be at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Middleburg Heights, Ohio from May 16-19, 2024.

**Let Us Know You're Coming!**  
<https://forms.gle/RkKrdTWxcZetGDUr6>

## Useful Links

*NMRA Mid Central Region, North Coast Division*  
<https://www.div4.org/>

*North Coast Limited Convention*  
<https://northcoastlimited2024.org/>

*T-TRAK Information*  
<https://ntrak.org/T-TRAK-Home>

*T-TRAK Wiki*  
<http://ttrak.wikidot.com/>

## Questions

If you have any questions, please send an email to both Ramhog Shearer [ramhog5@aol.com](mailto:ramhog5@aol.com) and Frank Trocchia [ftrocchi@yahoo.com](mailto:ftrocchi@yahoo.com).



# Piedmont Junction 2024: Convention Operating Sessions

By Don Roback

The Piedmont Junction 2024 convention being held in the Triangle region of North Carolina from October 17-20, 2024 will feature numerous layouts open for operating sessions. Charlie Rausch and his team have recruited an impressive list of nine local layouts and another on the way in or out of town that will support over 70 operating slots! Many of these layouts have been featured in the model railroading press and include several sizes and scales. These operating sessions will be available for a small fee on the [convention registration page](#). The host hotel is the Marriott Raleigh Durham Research Triangle Park at 4700 Guardian Dr in Durham, NC. The hotel website is [Hotels in Durham, NC- Marriott Raleigh Durham RTP](#). The room rate is only \$79 per night so don't delay making a reservation. Note also that the host hotel will feature a large T-TRAK layout that will be available for operations. Operators will be able to accumulate hours on this layout for their Chief Dispatcher AP certificates.

Here are short descriptions of the layouts available for operations to convention visitors. A guidebook will be available at the convention with more specifics.

## Rio Grande Southern and Eastern Divisions by Charlie Rausch, MMR:

The Rio Grande Southern and Eastern Divisions layout is based on the Denver and Rio Grande Western and Rio Grande Southern between 1949 and 1952. The 36' x 14' point-to-point On3 layout fits the Colorado setting and features two terminals with yards and four intermediate switching locations. Eastern and western interchanges are created with two staging tracks for off-layout traffic. It simulates that after abandonment in 1950, the D&RGW took over operation in the mineral-rich San Juan Mountains and upgraded the road for use with heavier power and increased traffic. The layout uses Digitrax operating system and supports five operators.



*Photo 1: Roundhouse on MMR Charlie Rausch's layout (Photo by John Sokash).*

**Western Pacific by Dan Koenigshofer:**

This layout models a 100-mile section from Portola (20 miles NW of Reno, Nevada) down the Feather River to the Sacramento Valley in Oroville (90 miles N of Sacramento, CA). This 30' x 15' point-to-point HO scale layout is designed for moving freight from the western states to Oakland for export. Staging yards below the main layout represent Salt Lake City and Roseville. Roseville features a huge yard 10 miles east of Sacramento where numerous lines intersect. From Roseville, trains continue to Southern California and the Ports of Stockton and Oakland. On the layout all lines converge in Quincy, so trains run through there frequently. The DCC system is NCE and the layout is signaled to aid turnout routing. Operations can support two road crews, four yard crews and a dispatcher (**Photo 2**).



*Photo 2: Dramatic bridge scene on Dan Koenigshofer's layout (Photo by Dan Koenigshofer).*

### Lehigh Valley by Jim Kalenowski

This layout depicts freight operations in the Allentown, PA area with off layout locations stretching from Jersey City, NJ to Wilkes Barre, PA from 1955 to 1966. It also features interchanges with Central Railroad of New Jersey & Lehigh and New England Railroads plus some interaction with the short line Ironton railroad. This 20' x 14' N scale layout is point to point with a coal-based branch line. The DCC system is Digitrax and the layout can support four road crews (**Photo 3**).



*Photo 3: Coal Operations on Jim Kalenowski's layout (Photo by John Sokash).*

### Aberdeen and Rockfish by Rick Hollings

The Aberdeen and Rockfish layout is based on the prototype in the Fayetteville, NC area that was featured in a November 1965 Model Railroader article. Diesels pull the trains on this modern era layout featuring many switching opportunities. Operations are highlighted by interchanges with both the Seaboard Coast Line and Southern Railroads. This 37'x17' HO scale layout is configured as point to point with a Seaboard Coast Line loop. The layout is controlled by MRC DCC can support four road crews and a yard master. The host serves as the informal dispatcher (**Photo 4**).



*Photo 4: Switching area on Rick Hollings' layout (Photo by John Sokash).*

### **Lehigh Valley Allentown Division by Jamie Jordan**

The Lehigh Valley Allentown Division model railroad depicts the 1950 mainline between Easton, PA and the Lehigh River Gorge. This line moved anthracite coal from the mines of eastern PA to points East, as well as bridge traffic between Buffalo and Oak Island, NJ. The layout includes a branch line connecting the Gorge to the coal fields near Hazelton, PA. This 40' x 20' HO scale double-decked point to point layout is controlled by Digitrax DCC and can support twelve operators including tower operators, yardmasters and several road crews (**Photo 5**).



*Photo 5: Switching area on Jamie Jordan's layout (Photo by John Sokash).*

## Golden East Railroad Modelers

The Golden East Railroad Modelers' operating layout is based on North Carolina railroading. It is set in the transition era and features railroading from a harbor to the mountains and to many points in between. Industries include a steel mill, a concrete plant, lumber yards, many small industrial sidings and replicas of the Atlantic Coast Lines and Amtrak Rocky Mountain Stations. The 100' x 40' HO scale point to point layout is controlled by Digitrax DCC with working signals. Operations can support twelve operators teamed up as two-man road crews.

Note that this layout is in the Golden East Crossing Mall located in Rocky Mount very near the US 64 and I-95 intersection, approximately 75 miles east of the convention hotel via interstate. Operating sessions are scheduled for October 17 and 20, 2024 to be convenient for operators traveling south from the I-95 corridor to the convention on Thursday or on the reverse trip back home on Sunday (**Photo 6**).



*Photo 6: Busy shops area on the Golden East Railroad Modeler's layout (Photo by John Sokash).*

## Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads by Eric Dyke

This freelanced transition-era railroad features the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads running through rural California with run-throughs from other western lines such as Santa Fe and Northern Pacific. There are two levels on this 35' x 25' HO scale layout which are connected by a helix. Both levels feature long mainline runs with plenty of switching opportunities along the way. The layout is configured as point to point with large staging yards at each end and supports mainline, local and yard operations. The layout is controlled by Digitrax DCC and can support six operators as road crews (**Photo 7**).



*Photo 7: A passenger train rolling past a switching area on Eric Dyke's layout (Photo by Charlie Rausch, MMR).*

### **The Southern Pacific Coast Division by Ken Reising:**

The Southern Pacific Coast Division depicts mixed freight and mainline switching operations between San Francisco and Milepost 100 at Watsonville Junction in the late transition era. The layout is based on the Southern Pacific prototype of Peninsular and Gilroy Subdivisions of the California coastline. This 30' x 14' double-decked point-to-point HO scale layout is controlled by Digitrax DCC with a few DC sections remaining operational. This layout is controlled by a dispatcher operating a CTC machine salvaged from scrapped Seaboard Air Line Railroad CTC consoles. The layout can handle six operators including a yardmaster and road crews (**Photo 8**).



*Photo 8: Salvaged CTC machine on Ken Reising's layout (Photo by John Sokash).*

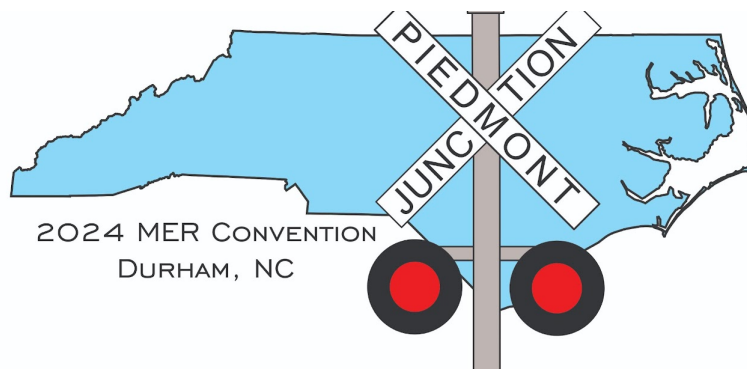
### The Atlantic Coast Line by Dave Koss

This layout depicts the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in 1967 just prior to the merger with the Seaboard and specifically the lines from the Atlantic ports to the Carolina foothills of the Piedmont. It is a multi-level railroad with coal mines in the hills, a large classification yard in Spartanburg, and a port-side yard. The 24' x 20' N scale layout is configured as point-to-point with mainline road switching. It is controlled by Digitrax DCC and operations can support two road crews, one local crew and two yard crews (**Photo 9**).



*Photo 9: Switching area on Dave Koss' layout (Photo by Charlie Rausch, MMR).*

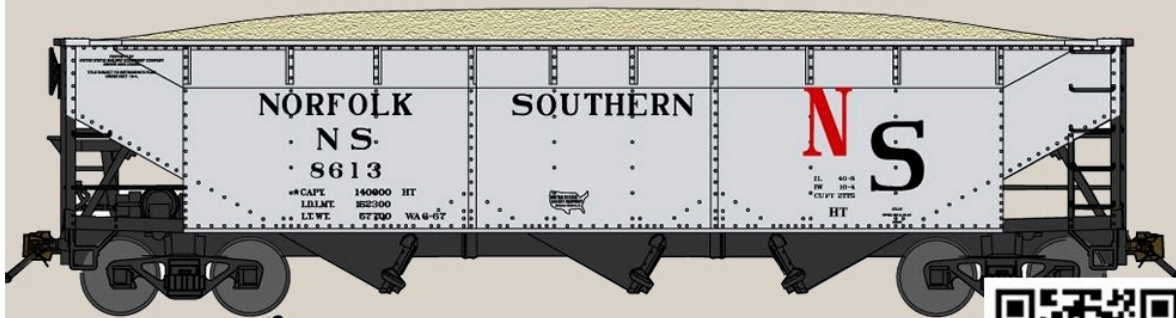
For the most up-to-date information including registration and hotel information, see the convention website at [PiedmontJunction.org](http://PiedmontJunction.org). You can also find a link on the [NMRA.org](http://NMRA.org) conventions page.





*MER VP Gary Brown with Director and Editor Greg Warth getting a preview of Tom Cook’s layout. Tom’s layout will be open at the Piedmont Junction convention in October (Photo by Jack Dziadul).*

## Carolina Piedmont Division, Mid-Eastern Region



**N Scale version coming in Jan 2024!**

**Exclusive Limited Edition Custom Decorated by Bluford Shops  
Norfolk Southern Rwy N Scale 70-Ton Offset Triple Hoppers  
2 Road Numbers Available**

Exclusive run of 86xx series N scale Norfolk Southern 70-ton Offset Hopper. These ex-B&LE cars were leased by Norfolk Southern from U.S. Ry Equipment in 1967. They were photographed in service and all have lightweight dates that was always stenciled to the right of the car's light weight on the left side under reporting marks. WA was for Washington, Indiana on the B&O, the old B&O car shops on their route to St. Louis. The shops were closed and US Ry Equip acquired them.

Carolina Piedmont Division is offering these in two unique road numbers, 8613 & 8724 for sale as limited edition kits using Bluford Shops 70-Ton Offset Hopper car. Pricing is \$25 per car plus USPS shipping.

To order, visit <http://cpd13.org> or email [railroad@nc.rr.com](mailto:railroad@nc.rr.com) today!



## Red Springs & Northern Railroad

By Jack Dziadul (Photos by the Author)

The Red Springs & Northern Foundation is a North Carolina non-profit that owns the Red Springs & Northern Railroad. RSN operates railcars owned by its members as well as its own fleet on 13.4 miles of track between Red Springs, NC and Parkton, NC. The lineage of this line began in 1879 as part of the Cape Fear & Yadkin Valley Railroad. Then, successors in ownership of this branch through mergers and reorganizations were the Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Airline, Seaboard Coast Line, and finally CSX. After abandonment by CSX in 1984, the Laurinburg & Southern provided limited freight service for its new owner, a local development agency, until 1990. Railcar Operators of the Carolinas received permission to use the rails for motorcars in exchange for maintenance. Eventually, in 2001, the RSN Foundation was created to raise funds, which led to the purchase of the old Branchline in 2004.

RSN and Carolina Southern Division member Seth Gartner coordinated a railcar excursion with CSD Superintendent Andrew Stitt and CSD Director Joe Skorch. CSD set March 30, 2024 as the date for an excursion riding the railcars. Members of the Carolina Piedmont Division were invited to participate. Tickets costing \$20 included a tour, a round-trip ride on the motorcars, and a box lunch.

Seth, Andrew, and Joe guaranteed perfect weather and that is exactly what we got that day. Twenty-five members, 11 CSD and 14 CPD, had a unique railroad experience, learned a bit about local railroad history, and got to meet some new friends. It was a wonderful experience, and the photos below really tell the story.



*Photo 1: The Carolina Southern Division participants.*



*Photo 2: Alan Hardee (L) and Joe Skorch standing. Red railcars are owned by RSN. The yellow speeders are owned by members.*



*Photo 3: Barbara Aulicino on 8401.*



*Photo 4: Barbara and Bill Aulicino.*



*Photo 5: MER Archivist Mike Maurer taking a picture of me taking a picture. Hollis Siding is an RSN storage and maintenance facility.*



*Photo 6: Dan Peele by 8401.*



*Photo 7: Alan and Joe again, on RSN 8411.*



*Photo 8: Carolina Piedmont's youngest member, N-scaler Luke Snowden, with Grandpa Mark Snowden with RSN 3100.*



*Photo 9: MER Director and CPD Clerk Kevin O'Connor in foreground at Parkton with Mike Humble close behind. Joe Skorch closely examines mile marker 223. Jim Smith is in the gray sweatshirt.*



*Photo 10: Mike Humble checking out the farm scenery for some layout ideas. Neil Blumenkopf in the background tipping his cap to the photographer. Or, perhaps just blocking out the sun.*



*Photo 11: From left to right, Kevin, Bill, and Dan at Hollis Siding.*



*Photo 12: Neil with MC 2 at Hollis Siding.*



*Photo 13: There are 14 mile markers along the 13.4 mile route. Hmm?*



*Photo 14: Hollis siding is a railcar storage facility. Members can trailer their speeders or garage them in a storage container.*



*Photo 15: The day started with a safety briefing and safety was the order of the day. There were two RSN volunteers at each road crossing. These two railcars followed the red RSN excursion train.*



*Photo 16: Doubtful that these railcars were this clean in their working days.*



*Photo 17: Also doubtful that the crew gangs had tricked out speeders with cushioned bucket seats.*



*Photo 18: Flagmen at a crossing. Whistle posts alerted the traffic to their approach. Long, long, short, long.*



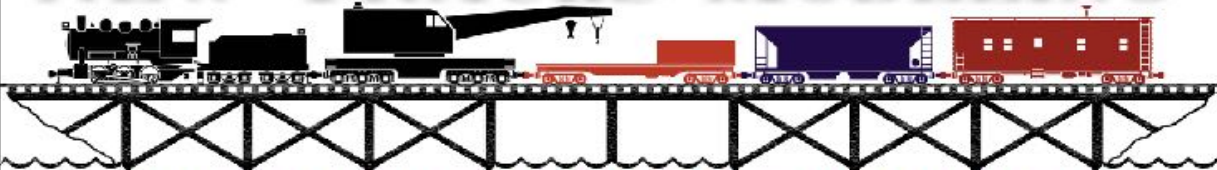
*Photo 19: Bill and Dan discussing the wiring on Bill's new layout.*

*Photo 20: Seth basking in the sun on the way back to Red Springs, no doubt quite pleased with how the day went. He would soon lose his hat and glasses to a gust of wind.*



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**NEW TRACKS MODELING**



**"Where Mentors Help Modelers Build Better"**

The complex block features the text "NEW TRACKS MODELING" in a large, bold, serif font at the top. Below the text is a photograph of a model train consisting of a black steam locomotive, a black freight car, a white crane car, a red flatcar, a blue flatcar, and a red passenger car, all on a black metal truss bridge. At the bottom of the block, the slogan "Where Mentors Help Modelers Build Better" is written in a green, italicized font.

## Hit the Brakes – Installing Brake Details on Models – Part Two

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR (Photos by the Author)

I'm going to pick up from where I left off in the prior installment of this subject<sup>1</sup> and move on to putting an AB brake system under your model cars. This is probably far more relevant to the majority of models as the "K" brake system was abandoned prior to the era that most model today.

Regardless of that shift, there are a number of points that remain constant. That near infinite number of variations of this system as defined by actual prototype underbody locations, actual parts and their dimensions, and how the plumbing and rigging is all connected remains in play. In fact, if anything, that variability has increased solely on the basis that you now have three components in the brake system that have to be arranged and connected together under the car, i.e., the brake cylinder, the air reservoir, and the triple valve. Again, if you have prototype information and photos, that's great for that specific car, and you can follow that example.

If you don't have that information, then there's a bit of leg work required. You will have to look at various diagrams and other models to decide what to install under your model(s). There are plenty of published examples in model railroading magazines, quite a few with some of the better kits, and there's a good generic diagram in the Precision Scale Catalog. If it's a kit, then that should give you a good, detailed diagram, parts, and instructions. Note that word "should" that might be filed alongside of wishful thinking.

Being still an O scale modeler, O scale parts and sources will be described within, but parts should never be an issue for those smaller scales. Seeing what you are doing and manipulating the parts, well, medical breakthroughs are happening every day.

Let's start with the prime components. There are many sources for the basic AB brake system parts and they have been produced in various materials. In [Photo 1](#) there are a select few that I have in my shop. Grandt Line actually makes a set in styrene. I've not had an occasion to make use of it yet. There have been a few others that have produced sets in styrene, but I believe that they are all out of production now.



Photo 1



There have been a host of sets produced in white metal by various kit makers. Some are cruder than others, but many are serviceable. I've salvaged a good number over the years from very bad condition kit cars that just had the sprues of the three components glued up into a wood floor. Nation made a set in a black plastic material that some prefer. Those may or not be currently available. Precision Scale makes sets in both brass (for the wealthy) and styrene (for the economy minded). Both are very nice. Wiseman Model Products sells sets in either white metal or brass (Back Shop parts), each priced accordingly. Both are quite nice and come with instructions and installation diagrams, as well as air hose castings, and some other bits. Lastly, there are 3D printed parts that can be very nice to use. Some are available through Shapeways. We'll get to other parts as we go along.

We need a donor car to pursue this exercise so I've pulled out of my queue a Rail Craft gondola. This car is tin-plated steel which poses some inherent challenges, and also being fully assembled, installing a train line is not a realistic pursuit (**Photo 2**). **Photo 3** shows our endpoint to this exercise. Now it's just a matter of filling in the middle.



Photo 2



Photo 3

I've chosen to use the Wiseman Model Products white metal set. I'm not going to solder this all together. Drilling the brass castings to accept the rigging and plumbing is tedious enough using the white metal parts. I'll not be using all of the parts in the kit as well. They'll get saved for another project down the line (**Photo 4**). Also in **Photo 4** are some familiar parts from the prior article that will get carried through into this installation. The Tichy wire, Grandt Line turnbuckles, Scale City Designs brake levers, and then a bit of 0.015" x 0.060" brass (Detail Associates) completes the required parts that are needed. Studying that supplied schematic for connecting up the plumbing is also a necessity for success.

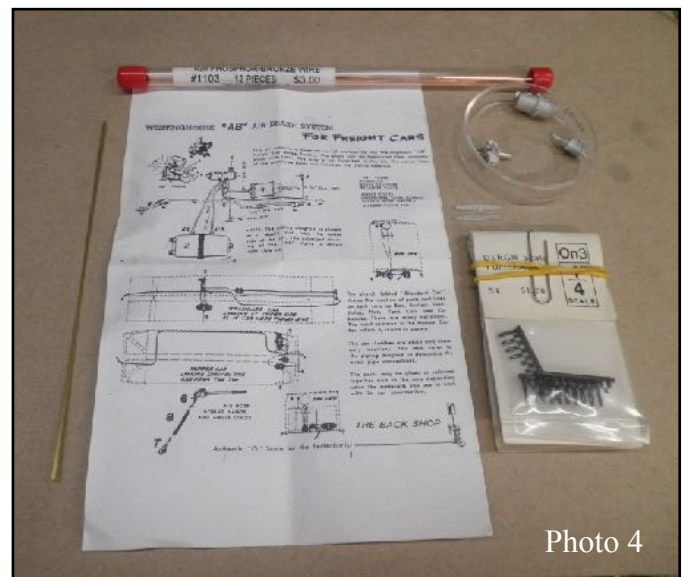


Photo 4

The brake casting needs a platform to be installed first. That should be just high enough to place the casting and the connecting rigging above the center sill. Some cars however run the brake levers through the center sill which becomes real fun to replicate under a freight car. In this example, I used some Evergreen styrene channel to span the distance between the center sill and side of the car. There's a bit of mortising out at the one end to get these pieces into place and flat. The spacing between them is defined by the brake cylinder casting, so measuring that dimension, and placing these two parts is important. Once these are in place, the brake cylinder casting can be mounted onto the styrene supports. You'll note that this casting has a rod and clevis already in place that will accept the Scale City brake levers. Also important here is the placement of the cylinder to ensure that the brake lever will adequately span the center sill. A bit of test fitting is prudent to make sure of the placement of the casting (**Photos 5, 6**).



Photo 5

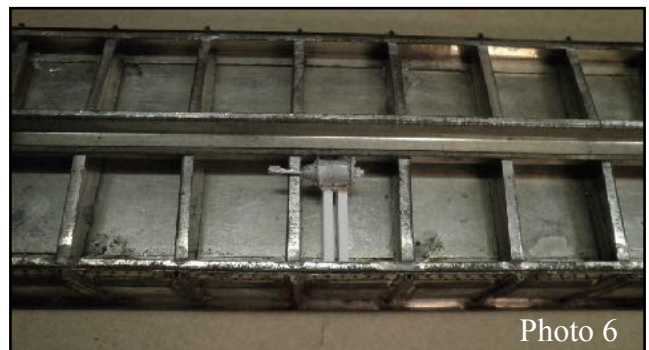


Photo 6

The two castings for the air reservoir and the triple valve need to be drilled out to accept the plumbing connections. There are dimples for drilling these holes. I generally suggest drilling at least two drill bit sizes larger than the wire that is going to be used to represent the plumbing. Reason being is that it gets to be tight quarters manipulating a bit of wire into two holes while working around all the other connections. After a micro-drop of CA, any excess space about the wire will be filled, too. And, before I forget, the back of the brake cylinder needs a hole drilled in it as well to connect to the triple valve. Do that before gluing it into place! Once drilled, these other two castings can be put into place (**Photo 7**).

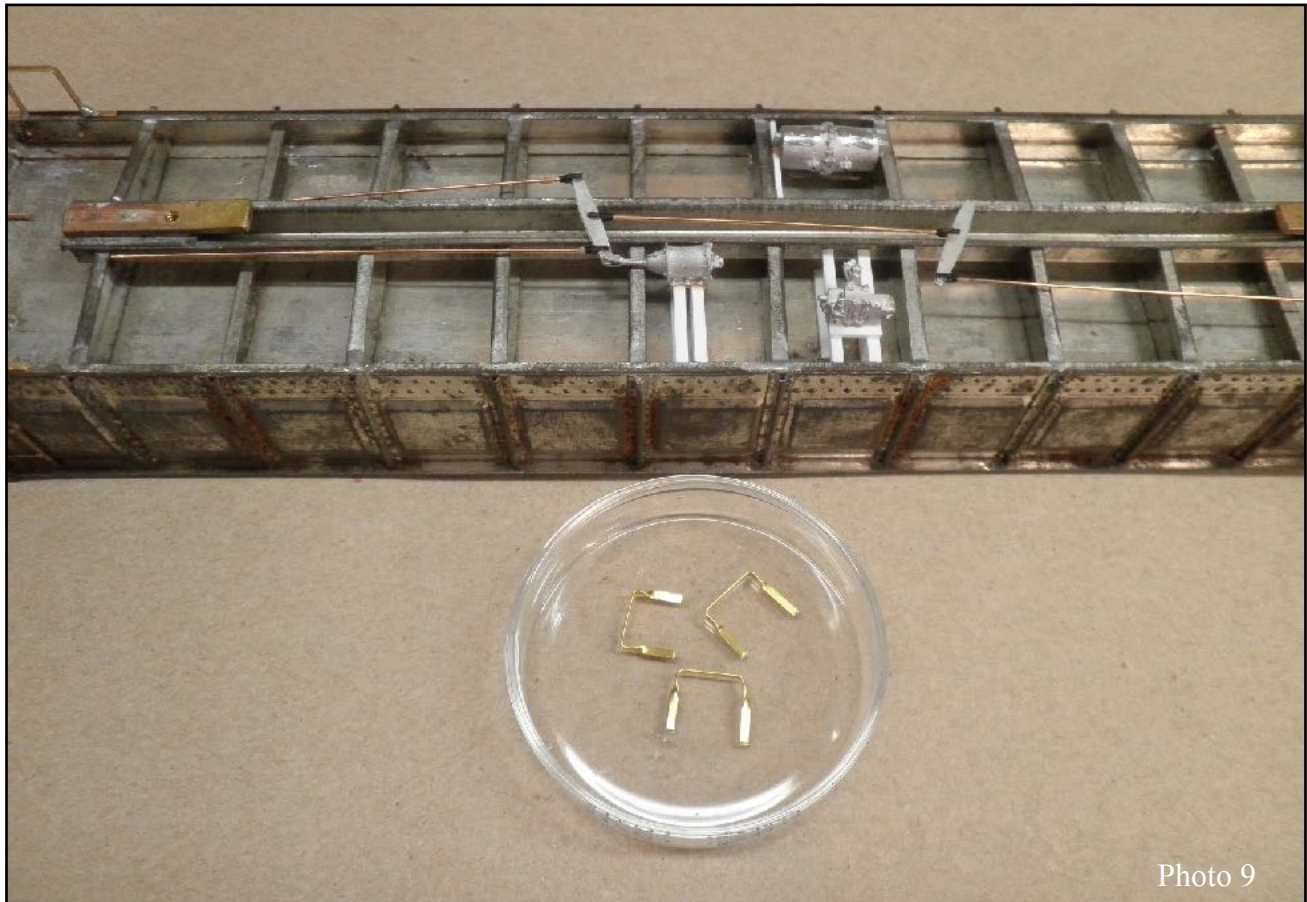


Photo 7

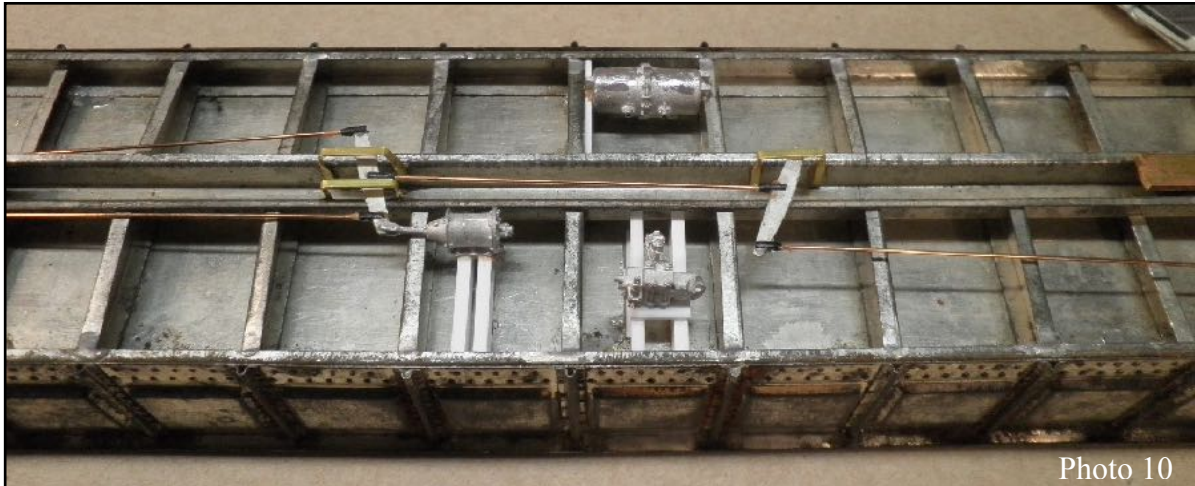
To install the triple valve, I've built up a platform again from Evergreen styrene channel with a small pad from scrap styrene. I nipped that casting sprue off leaving just enough to be captured in a hole drilled in that same styrene pad. A little Goo and CA and this part is locked in place. To install the air reservoir, I added a bit of styrene to the inside of one of the cross members and filed off a bit of the one mounting tab so that the casting was rest square between the styrene and the other cross member. Again, a little Goo and CA to lock it in place, and now it's time to add plumbing and rigging (**Photo 8**).



Here's where things get familiar and easy. The brake rigging and brake lever assembly is the same as when installing a K brake underbody assembly. So all that structure and materials are a constant and translates directly from what was discussed in the prior article.<sup>1</sup> **Photo 9** shows this all installed under the gondola.



What does need to be added are the brake hangers to complete this brake rigging. In **Photo 9** you can see these in the dish made up from that 0.015" x 0.060" brass. There's a ½ twist in these that is done with two pairs of square jaw pliers. The trick to putting the twist in without tearing or breaking the brass is to leave a gap between the two sets of pliers when making the 90° twist. Since we're past the point of soldering these in (at least I am with my torch...), these were secured in place with a bit of Goo and some CA (**Photo 10**).



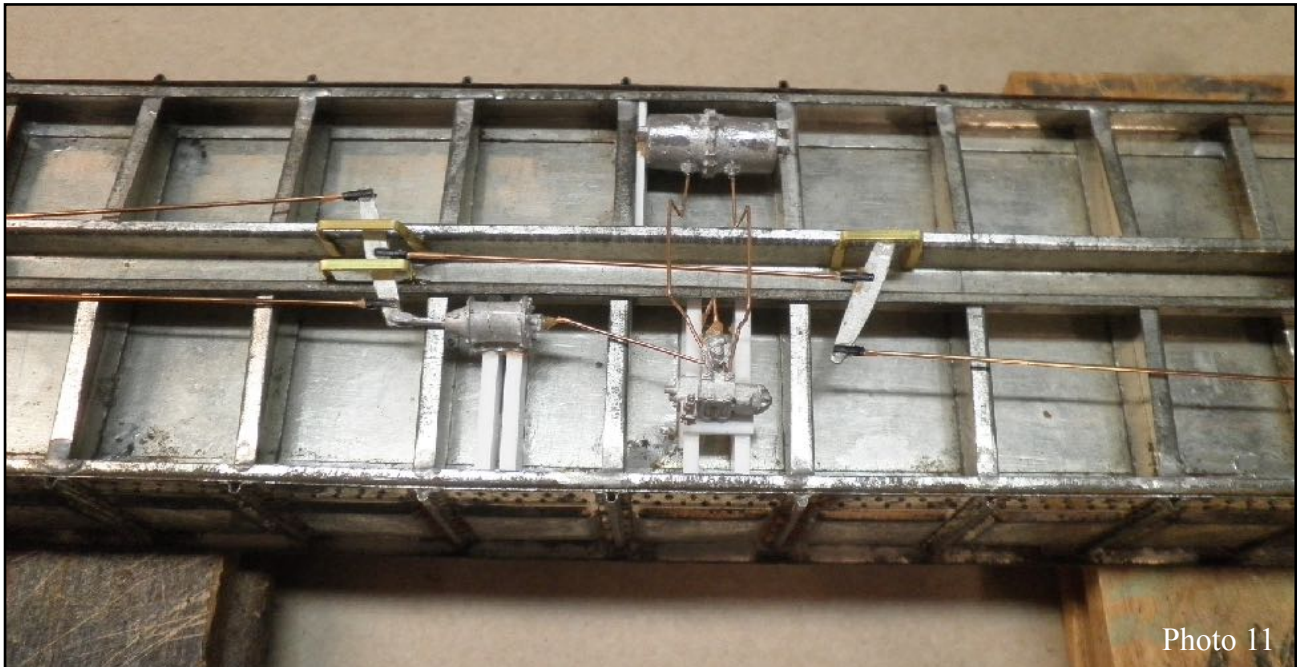
Now it's time for the final step installing the plumbing connections. This may be a good time to work on some relaxation techniques prior to proceeding for some modelers. There are four connections through the triple valve. Review that supplied diagram to see which of the four connect to the train line, to the brake cylinder, and then the other two that go to the air reservoir tank. I'll be using some 0.025" wire for all these bits of pipe. The order that I relate installing these does not have to be followed by any measure. I doubt I have ever done these in the same way or order.

Pipe number one runs out and down to the train line that isn't there, so I've just placed a line off the triple valve from the proper outlet out and down to where that train line would be to simulate that connection. This takes a bit of bending, test fitting, and repeating until it feels right and fits into the correct hole that was drilled into the triple valve. Once fabricated, it got secured with CA. A fine tip hemostat seems to be a good tool for holding the fabricated wire while working through the bending and test fitting process. At least, I've found that beats being on the floor on hands and knees looking for the dropped wire that is only located after you've made a replacement.

Pipe number two runs out and down under the one to the train line close to the triple valve and ends in the back of the brake cylinder. This is another bend, test fit, and repeat until it fits right exercise, followed by securing with CA before you lose the part.

Pipes number three and four connect the air reservoir to the triple valve. In this particular arrangement of brake parts, these two components are located opposite from one another separated by the center sill. That may or not be the case for many prototypes which had the brake parts located in different places and orientations. This is particularly so for hopper cars where all three components are at the one end of the car stashed under the slope sheet where you should have installed them before making that space inaccessible. Running these two plumbing bits up and over the center sill, and back down and in to their respective left and right holes in the triple valve is what completes the installation of this brake gear. Again, I recommend that hemostat as there are numerous bending and test fitting steps involved in the fabrication of these two pieces.

Once done and in place, secured with a little CA, this makes a good representation of an AB brake system under your model (Photo 11).



After a little paint, we're back to Photo 3. Again, this is not a terribly painful pursuit for the average model railroaders to add more visible detail. And yes, I'll fully confess that I left out bits and bobs like the retainer valve. Connecting to the brake wheel is generally straightforward, e.g., a bit of wire and some chain and a few linkages are all that's required. We'll have to see what comes up next on this subject in another article.



<sup>1</sup> Volume 79, Issue 1, Page 45

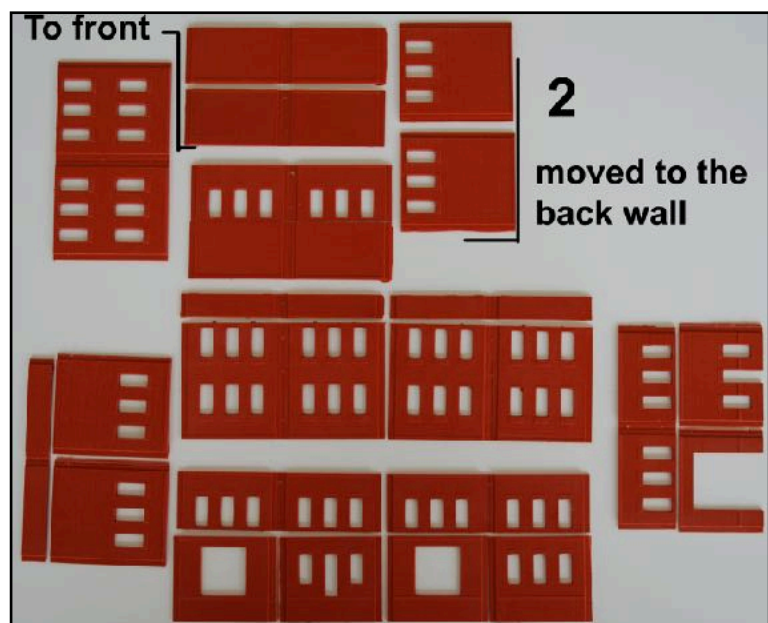
## Reconfiguring DPM Woods Furniture

By Patrick Flash (Photos by the Author)

First, the back story. When I joined Scale Rails of Southwest Florida in North Fort Myers about 2010, I was welcomed with open arms, especially because I expressed an interest in the small N scale group which had a nice NTRAK layout. They were in the process of adding a six-foot module to the layout and needed bodies to work on it. Dwight Sedgwick, our unofficial leader, decided that I would build DPM's Woods Furniture kit for the module. This would be in addition to the track laying and scenery work that I would be expected to do.

I had purchased the same kit a few years ago in anticipation of building my N scale layout on a door in Florida when I retired. After I opened the kit, I looked at the number of parts and decided it was too complicated for me to build. I explained my problem to Dwight, but he wouldn't take no for an answer. I would build the kit under his careful watch and encouragement. Thank you, Dwight. Having completed the kit for Scale Rails, I was now ready to build my own kit.

My N scale layout in Florida had progressed to the point where much of the track was laid, trains could run, and some scenery had been started. I had places for planned buildings laid out on the table and had actually built some of them. Of course, one building I'd planned to add was DPM's Wood's Furniture. Surprise! When I checked the layout of the building for the long ago purchased kit, there was no "lot" big enough on the layout to hold the building. Being frugal by nature, I pondered the problem and, rather than trying to sell the kit, I decided to kitbash the pieces into two smaller buildings. (Two for the price of one! Did I mention that I'm frugal?) The parts layouts that I came up with are shown in [Photos 1 and 2](#). The pieces in Photo 1 eventually became Callahan's Miracle Mattress and the pieces in Photo 2 became Delano's Brewery.



The building assembled from the parts in Photo 1 was short one cornice piece so I replaced it with plain styrene on the back wall where it would not be seen. The assembled building is shown in [Photo 3](#).



I later revised the plan for the larger four-story building by putting the blank walls of the upper section, so they faced the roof of the lower level. I also moved the two sections with the odd window arrangement to the back of the structure where they would not be seen. The assembled building is shown in [Photo 4](#). Never really having kitbashed anything before, I was pleased with the results so far.



It turned out that I had four bays and a lot of pilasters left over at this point. I couldn't bear to discard the leftover pieces. The leftover pilasters were intended for the mid-joints of sections and were not intended for corner pilasters which come with 45-degree angled edges so that two can be joined together to form the corner. So, I patiently scraped and filed eight edges to a 45-degree angle and made four corner pilaster pieces to join the four walls. Now I had a small office building of some kind.

Unfortunately, during the building process, I lost the door casting and two window castings. Scale Rails to the rescue. While looking through our “junk” drawers I found the appropriate missing pieces. They were probably leftovers from my “forced” Wood's furniture build. How appropriate. I added a loading dock, roof, stoop, and steps to the office and had another small place to spot cars. A picture of the “leftovers” building on the layout is shown in **Photo 5**. It's the Adang building in the front of the picture at the end of the loading dock. The large crate waiting for shipment contains gator hides being shipped from Florida State University to the University of Florida. Inside joke. I have a dear step-sibling and spouse who are rabid Gators alums.





# Garden Railroading Challenges and Successes

By Tom Neukirchen (Photos by the Author)

The idea of a garden railroad for my back yard was initiated by a friend who had a layout in *his* back yard for whom I had helped wire and repair equipment. During the time I was thinking about this, he visited one day and brought one of his engines for me to use if I decided to go ahead with the project. I was hooked after that. The discussion of where to put my new railroad led to the area under a tree which prohibited many plants from growing due to lack of water. With reluctant approval from my wife, the project was conceptualized and started on paper. I used many of the planning concepts as if I was doing an HO layout indoors.

I chose a flat or minimum grade track plan that also had remote turnouts for ease of accessibility as well as right of way for maintenance of the grass and flower bed. The tree and the previously closed-down koi pond area were the prime locations for the railroad. The level of the koi pond track set the standard for the rest of the layout (**Photo 1**).



## Challenges:

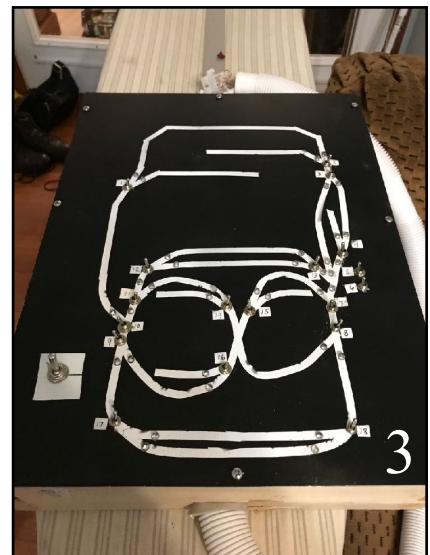
The track had to be leveled. I used cement blocks and 3/8" graveled roadbed above the patio blocks to keep the grade close to level and manageable. Any additional height adjustment was done by adding more stone. This created some electrical challenges to the turnouts and track power drops.

The electrical wiring had to be accessible and also water proof to be able to operate over multiple years. Water, when it penetrates the plastic insulation, will cause oxidation of the copper wire resulting in loss of power to the track and turnouts. I learned this the hard way and rewired the turnouts and power pickups using better insulated wires. The electrical panels were also raised to allow for better access (**Photo 2**).



Mother Nature throws curveballs at the garden railroad modeler because trees and plants grow, requiring the track to be flexible. The track plan had to be modified to allow for exceptional tree trunk growth and surface root enlargement. This was mitigated by raising the track bed.

New thinking and wiring was required for the control box. The use of a dispatcher's remote control box has connection issues, which are solvable with the better transformers and connectors (**Photo 3**).



**Engine selection:** The diameter of the curves dictates the size of the motive power. With 5' diameter curves, the use of larger engines and rolling stock was not permitted. Rolling stock and engines had to meet this limitation. Be sure to research the actual turning radius, not what was stated by the manufacturer only. The number of curves will also set the speed usable for each engine (similar to HO track layouts). Metal wheel sets are best for outdoors just as they are for the indoor HO rolling stock (**Photo 4**).



**Rolling stock couplers:** The use of knuckle couplers is not standard for all G scale rolling stock. It is best to use a uniform style on all equipment.

**Track selection and replacement:** Minimizing the number of different track manufacturers used in the layout will result in fewest headaches when it comes to track joiners, track height discrepancies, etc. I have found that the newest split jaw track connectors are the strongest for exterior use when the tracks are sometimes stepped on and moved. Piko track connectors are also good for inside track connections.

Plants make up a final phase of the layout. But, unlike the static models in the indoor dioramas, the plants on the outside are real. This is where the wife or significant other could be a great help in selecting the miniature plants that are good for your buildings and the track components of the layout. Maintenance and periodic pruning, etc. are all part of the ultimate diorama (**Photo 5**).

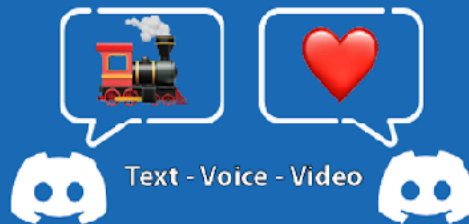


Just as in setting up a basement layout, thorough planning of an outdoor layout leads to earlier success and operational fun. So, go ahead with your outdoor railroad dreams and have fun with a glass of your favorite beverage while watching and controlling your garden railroad.



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**From the Divisions...**

## Branch Lines

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 and to their Division Websites for easy access:

Divisions	Newsletters
<a href="#">South Mountain Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>Wheel Report</i></a>
<a href="#">Potomac Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>The Potomac Flyer</i></a>
<a href="#">New Jersey Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>Train Orders</i></a>
<a href="#">Susquehanna Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>Sidetracks</i></a>
<a href="#">Philadelphia Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>The Dispatcher</i></a>
<a href="#">Tidewater Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>The Callboard</i></a>
<a href="#">James River Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>Crossties - Index</i></a>
<a href="#">Carolina Southern Division</a>	<a href="#"><i>The Brass Pounder</i></a>
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3. Click on Create a New Account.
4. You will receive an email on how to set your password.
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# Tips for Improving Car Construction: Part 3 of 4

By Ken Montero

*[Continued from Part 2 located in the March/April 2024 issue of The Local. -Ed.]*

## 11. Removing Unwanted Parts - General

### Flat surface details

When removing material (grab irons, ladders, tack boards, etc. from a flat surface such as a car side, a chisel generally is needed. In some situations, some small parts can be cut off with a scalpel or a hobby knife

### Modeler's chisels

- #17 X-Acto chisel blade modified by rounding its corners with a file to prevent gouging. That chisel blade fits in a hobby knife blade holder.
- Narrow flat chisels (such as UMM-USA's UMM30 ULTRA MICRO CHISEL - 0.7mm DOUBLE BEVELED – my current choice. I am using an out-of-production Mission Models chisel.
- Micro-mark grab iron chisel for removing plastic details (I don't use it. I find it awkward to use.)

The key to successfully using the chisel blade is to keep the small flat surface parallel to the flat surface on which the parts to be removed are located. The blade or chisel then is pushed along the flat surface in a scraping action until it cuts into the detail to be removed.

To avoid unnecessary scarring of the car body (which may or may not be curable later by the use of body putty), take the following approach:

- Use as narrow a chisel blade as available. Note: The #17 X-Acto blade can be narrowed by filing the sides to get a narrower blade. Use a file, not a Dremel moto-tool or similar device to do this - the metal in the blade may not be able to handle high- speed cutting on it.
- Use several strokes to remove a small detail or many strokes to remove a larger detail. It is better to use several short strokes than one long stroke because you have better control of the cutting with a short stroke than with a long stroke.

- Unless the unwanted detail is very small (shallow), it is better to remove most of the unwanted detail by cutting just above the flat surface on which the unwanted part is found, then coming back and re-cutting at the surface level of the flat surface on which the unwanted part resided. The advantage to this procedure is that it leaves very little material to be removed by sanding, etc., and avoids gouging the sides. It should then be followed by sanding several times, with increasing fine grits of sandpaper being used each time, followed by final buffing with steel wool.
- Very small, thin detail such as rivets can be substantially removed on the first pass of the blade (a second pass may be needed in some cases), followed by sanding several times, with increasing fine grits of sandpaper being used each time, followed by final buffing with 0000 steel wool (preferred) or very fine sandpaper (100 grit or finer)
- If the unwanted material to be removed is very thick, such as some cast-on ladders or grab irons, scraping off such a large item by beginning at the point where the item is attached to the flat surface may be difficult because control of the chisel blade may be impeded by the material through the chisel blade has cut through but which remains attached to the model as waste. Two different approaches can be used in removing thick items:
  - Using the blade as a plane, take off the thick part in layers. Because the blade does not start on the flat surface to which the unwanted part is attached, use short strokes and take care not to let the blade wander into the flat surface and gouge it. After most of the thickness of the part has been removed and a thin layer is left, finish the removal using the technique described above in the.
  - Using the blade as a chisel, cut into the thick part and remove wedges of the part. Be careful and do not cut through the part and into the flat surface to which it is attached, since body putty will be needed to hide the nicks, and they may be difficult to completely cover. Once a generally thin layer is left, then finish the removal using the planning technique described above.
- If the detail to be removed is near other detail which is to be preserved, care must be taken in the removal process. Place masking tape over the details to be preserved (such as rivets) to preserve it and prevent inadvertent removal.

## 12. Removing Unwanted Cast-on Grab Irons

- Decide whether you are replacing the cast-on grab iron with a replacement grab iron of the same size in the same location.
- If not, follow the above directions in 11., Removing Unwanted Parts - General for removing unwanted details.
- If replacing the cast-on grab iron with a same-size replacement grab iron in the same location,
  - Measure on both ends of the cast-on grab iron where the holes for the grab irons should be drilled and mark them with a fine-point pencil.
  - Decide whether to keep or remove the existing cast-on rivets holding the grab iron.
- If you decide to keep the rivets, follow 11., Removing Unwanted Parts – General, above.
- If not, then remove most of the grab iron and, if applicable, the grab iron's rivets, leaving a thin layer of the former cast-on grab iron and rivets.
- If replacing the cast-on grab iron with a different-size grab iron at the same location,
  - Use either the left or right side of the remainder of the cast-on grab iron for measuring where a hole one side of the replacement grab iron should be located and mark it with a fine-point pencil.
  - Then measure where the hole for the other side of the grab iron should be located and mark it with a fine-point pencil.
  - Then remove most of the grab iron and, if applicable, the grab iron's rivets, leaving a thin layer of the former cast-on grab iron and rivets.
- If nut-bolt-washer castings as rivets are to be added adjacent to the replacement grab iron, measure where the holes for these castings should be located and mark them with a fine-point pencil.
- Use an awl, T-pin or needle as a centerpunch on these pencil marks to create a starting point for drilling these holes.
- Drilling
  - Select the correct drill bit size for the grab irons.
  - Put it in the drill bit holder.
  - Lubricate the drill bit.
  - Drill the holes for the grab irons through the car body.



- Repeat the process for any nut-bolt-washer castings (the drill bit size needed for grab irons may be different from the size needed for nut-bolt-washer castings)
- Finish removing the grab iron (and nut-bolt-washer casting not being retained) through the sanding stage as described in 11., [Removing Unwanted Parts](#), above.
- From the inside of the car shell, use a fine wire to poke through the surface where the sanding filled the holes.
- Re-sand the area lightly to remove the material ejected from the holes. If the holes are filled again by the re-sanding, repeat this process.
- Finish buffing with steel wool.

### 13. [Removing Details \(Ladders, Brake Rods, Etc.\), Except Tack Boards, from Corrugated Car Ends \(Dreadnought, Pullman, Etc.\)](#)

- Use a chisel to remove grab irons on the outer edge of any corrugation. See above about replacement grab irons, if applicable.
  - o For grab irons near the bottom of a corrugated end, a hobby knife may be useful to remove the bulk of such grab irons, but may not be as effective as a chisel in removing the final layer of a cast-on grab iron.
- Use a chisel to remove the bulk of the material between the corrugations.
  - o Keep the small flat part of the blade [parallel to the surface of the corrugations](#).
- Use "swiss" pattern files to remove the remaining material down to the surface of the corrugations and the valleys between the corrugations. The diamond-shaped file is very useful for this purpose.
- Alternate filing among two corrugations and the connecting valley to avoid leaving a new corrugation in the valley.
- Use the sandpaper-steel wool process described in 11., [Removing Unwanted Parts](#), above. The "swiss" pattern files can be used as sanding blocks for the sandpaper.

14. Removing Large Tack Boards and Power Brake Wheel Mechanisms from Corrugated Ends

- Using a chisel blade, remove most of the tack board and power brake wheel mechanism above the corrugations.
- With a pencil, draw on the remainder of the tack board and power brake wheel mechanism an estimated centerline where each valley between two corrugations would be located but for this cast-on tack board.
  - Some tack boards cover more than one valley and, consequently, have more than one centerline.
  - The centerlines need not be precisely in the center, as the later procedures will make appropriate adjustments.
- Create a notch on these estimated centerline using a ruler and a blade or a sharp-edged file.
- Use a diamond-shaped "swiss" pattern file to widen the notch. The idea is to reshape the sides of the notch to conform to the sides of the adjacent corrugations and the valley between the corrugations so that, when finished, the notch area conforms to the angle and curvature of the corrugations.
- Use the sandpaper-steel wool process described in Removing Unwanted, above. The "swiss" pattern files can be used as sanding blocks for the sandpaper.



15. Removing Running Board/Roofwalk

- From inside the car, push pins in car ceiling which hold the running board/ roofwalk to the car.
- Fill the pin holes in the roof by one of these three methods:
  - o Cut the pins off the running board/roofwalk and re-insert upside down into the holes and flush with the running board/roofwalk support (or roof ribs if no running board/roofwalk supports are cast onto the car roof), then cut, file, sand and steel-wool to conform to the adjacent roof detail as described in 11., Removing Unwanted Parts.
  - o Same as above except using sprues from plastic kits or plastic rods (some filling with body putty and sanding also may be needed).
  - o Fill hole with body putty (may need more than one application since body putty can shrink), then file, sand and steel-wool to conform to the adjacent roof detail as described in 11., Removing Unwanted Parts.

16. Creating window and door openings (passenger cars, cabooses, etc.

- Measure and mark window openings with a sharp pencil. Lightly score those lines with a sharp tool and a straight edge (for straight parts of lines).
- On the inside of each corner, drill a hole.
  - o To make a larger curved corner, use a bigger number drill.
  - o To make a square corner, lightly score the pencil marks for the corner, then cut along those lines with a jeweler's saw or a knife (scalpel or modeler's knife).
- Lightly score the lines between the drilled holes for the outline of the windows
- Cut along those lines with a jeweler's saw or a knife (scalpel or modeler's knife).
- Finishing:
  - Straight cuts - gently use a sanding block with 400 grit or finer sandpaper
  - Curved cuts - gently use to smooth out the curves:
    - o A round "swiss" file
    - o An appropriately size dowel with 400 grit or finer sandpaper wrapped around the dowel.

17. Modifying Underframe Parts for Air Lines

- Depending on where the main (train) airline fits under the car:
  - o Where the train does not lie on the car floor, drill holes in frame ribs for train line to pass through - plan ahead
  - o For plastic frames, where the train lies on the car floor, use a “swiss: diamond- shaped file to create a notch in the frame parts in which the train line would be sandwiched between the frame and the car floor.
- If the air lines between the air reservoir and the control valves goes through the frame, plan for it and drill the appropriate holes.

18. Patching holes

- Large openings
  - o Styrene sheet or strips
  - o Wood sheet or strips.
- Round holes where parts with legs will be placed:
  - o Styrene rods
  - o Wood dowels

*[This concludes Part 3 of this series. The next section, Part 4, which will appear in the July-August issue of The Local, will include assembly and painting. Print these parts out so you have the complete set after the next issue. -Ed.]*



*Boxcar - AI Generated from Adobe Firefly*



[Building-Your-Model-Railroad.com](http://Building-Your-Model-Railroad.com)

*A Complete Guide to*

*Creating Your Own Empire*

# **National Model Railroad Association, Inc.**

## **Member Code of Conduct**

### **Introduction**

This Code of Conduct (“Code”) has been developed to set expectations for the behaviors, conduct, communication, and interactions between you and other members, officers and directors of the National Model Railroad Association, Inc. (“NMRA”). This Code applies to all such persons when engaging with other NMRA members, participating in any event, social media platform or other sponsored extension of the NMRA (for example, the NMRA Interchange or an NMRA-sponsored online meeting) and attending NMRA meetings, events, or activities (whether National, Regional, Division or other subset). This Code also includes general guidelines on the appropriate use of social media for NMRA matters at any level.

### **Why do we need a code of conduct?**

We join the NMRA and participate in its activities for one common reason – we enjoy the model railroading hobby and the fun, challenges, personal growth and camaraderie that it provides. It is imperative that we keep our common bond of model railroading “front and center” and rise above the inevitable differences that exist among us in personalities, opinions, experience, gender, age, race, nationality, or any of the other factors that make each of us unique individuals. Our collective goal is to enjoy and promote the hobby of model railroading, so we must strive to avoid “distractions” that interfere with or obstruct our common purpose. Collaboration and co-operation are vital for the success of our hobby and our enjoyment of model railroading and everything it has to offer.

### **What does the NMRA expect of members?**

The NMRA expects all members to conduct themselves in a respectful, responsible, and mature manner, and demonstrate courtesy and kindness toward other individuals. Constructive and healthy discussions and interactions are encouraged and in fact are vital to the success of our hobby. However, certain other verbal and nonverbal behaviors and actions are not consistent with the NMRA’s values and hurt our hobby and relationships, such as the use of disparaging language, shouting, profanity, confrontational, intimidating or threatening behavior or language, and immature and disrespectful behavior or language. It is imperative that we interact in a polite and professional manner.

The NMRA does not condone abusive, threatening, or aggressive behavior toward anyone at an NMRA event or in an NMRA forum (such as social media and other forms of electronic and digital interaction). This includes other participants, event organizers or sponsors, judges, or other officials.

You should be welcoming to newcomers and remember they may not have the benefit of experience and information that you have enjoyed. Be constructive in helping to make their entry into the hobby an enjoyable one.

## Harassment

NMRA events and functions are meant to be fun, educational, and inclusive. No one should be subject to intimidation, made to feel unwelcome, or put in fear of reprisal. Harassment may include behavior or language that causes alarm, distress, anxiety, fear of physical violence, offensive statements, verbal abuse, and threats. Members should be sensitive to others.

## Non-Retaliation

The NMRA relies on you to identify potential issues and raise concerns that the NMRA may need to address. The NMRA prohibits acts of retaliation against any person who reports an issue honestly and in good faith, and retaliation can constitute misconduct that could subject a member to discipline. This commitment to non-retaliation assures you that raising concerns, reporting misconduct, or cooperating in any investigation will not result in adverse consequences. The NMRA prohibits retaliation in any form, at any level of the organization, recognizing that retaliatory behavior contributes to an environment of mistrust and diminishes the willingness of individuals to be collaborative and transparent. During the investigation of any matter, the NMRA makes every reasonable effort to maintain the confidentiality of those involved.

## Use of social media

The rapid growth of social media combined with ease of use and pervasiveness make it an attractive channel for communication. Use of social media for communication also creates the possibility of a host of unintended consequences. To help you identify and avoid potential issues, we are providing some examples of best practices that are meant to help you understand, from a wide range of perspectives, the implications of participation in social media. Any postings that you make as a representative of or participant in NMRA sanctioned activities will reflect on you and the NMRA.

*Understand Your Personal Responsibility:* You are personally responsible for the content you publish on user-generated content forums, such as blogs or social media sites. Remember that what you publish will be public for a long time. Protect your privacy.

*Be Accurate:* Be sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify your sources first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. If you do make a mistake, admit it and correct it. Post a retraction, edit your post, make any necessary apologies. If you are editing an earlier post, make it clear that you have made a correction.

*Respect Others:* You can catch a whole lot more flies with honey than vinegar. If you are constructive and respectful while seeking advice, asking for help, or discussing a disagreement or bad experience, you are far more likely to reach an understanding. In some instances, you may not be able to reach an understanding or agreement, but it is your responsibility to be constructive and address the problem rather than attacking the person.

*Respect Your Audience:* Don't use personal insults or disparaging conduct or language toward others. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for sensitive topics. Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with one another but be respectful of others' opinions. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with an idea or a person. Harassment is not acceptable.

*Think Before You Post:* There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after publication. Comments can be forwarded or copied, and screenshots are easily available. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's prudent to wait until you are calm and clear-headed before posting.

*Does it Pass the Publicity Test?* If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it is not acceptable for a social networking site. Do not use the anonymity afforded by a social media screen name or handle to post something that you wouldn't say if you could be identified.

*Take the High Ground:* You are more likely to build a high quality following if you discuss ideas and situations civilly. Don't pick fights online. Remember that as a participant in NMRA programming, you are representing the NMRA, and the organization supports the principles of fun, respect, and inclusion.

*Do not post information that you know (or reasonably should know) is private, confidential, or proprietary.* Some information that becomes available to you may be considered private, confidential or proprietary by the owner or source of such information – think before you post and if you are unsure, check with the owner or source before posting. Do not post anything in a private forum that you would not present in any public forum because there is no true privacy on the Internet. Ask yourself if you would want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or ten years from now? Additionally, ask yourself if you would want to see screenshots posted to the person or persons about whom you are speaking or writing.

*Be Aware of Liability:* You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Be sure that what you post today is not something that you will regret in the future and that you are not violating any legal guidelines. Postings on social media sites can be, and have been, the subject of lawsuits alleging defamation, slander, or libel. In such a lawsuit, a court can compel the social media platform to disclose your account information; you won't be anonymous. How does the NMRA enforce this code?

The NMRA can enforce this code of conduct independently, or in response to a complaint, after notice to affected members and due process including an opportunity to be heard. Proceedings include gathering facts, interviewing witnesses, conducting a hearing, and imposing discipline or dismissing the matter. The NMRA is a private membership organization; membership, member benefits, and the use of NMRA trademarks and intellectual property are not free or public. Therefore, the NMRA's leadership can determine that a violation of this code of conduct justifies a disciplinary action. Examples of actions include censure (a warning the similar conduct could cause termination), removal from an elected office, disqualification from elected offices or leadership, and termination of membership. The NMRA's Corporate Policies & Procedures Manual (CPPM), and Ohio state law applicable to nonprofit membership corporations such as the NMRA, governs the enforcement of this code and member discipline.

## Pre-Convention HO Layout Tours

By Greg Warth (Photos by the author)

As one of the new Directors-at-Large, I had the opportunity to attend a weekend Board meeting in April to see the hotel where the Piedmont Convention 2024 will be held in October. Jack Dziadul was kind enough to arrange a series of layout tours for us to enjoy while we were there. Gary Brown, Vice President, and I enthusiastically agreed (I'm never one to turn down a layout tour!). We arrived on Friday around 2PM, met Jack at the hotel, and were ready for our first tour starting with Tom Cook's layout (**Photos 1, 2**). This is a wonderful work-in-progress with a great design and impeccable trackwork.



*Photo 1: Tom Cook's helix and excellent trackwork.*



*Photo 2: I was intrigued by how he made these rock walls using kits that he purchased.*

We then headed for Ken Smith's home where his layout demonstrated great realistic weathering on all his structures and railcars (**Photo 3**). He also does railcar painting and decals for others on the side.



*Photo 3: All of Ken's Structures and railcars are superbly weathered.*



Finally, we arrived at Mike Humble's Twin Cities double-decker railroad, which was a delight as well (Photos 5, 6, 7).



*Photo 5: Trestle Bridge*



*Photo 6: An entire town nestled deep into the lower deck!*

This is just a smidgeon of what you will see at the Convention. There are 27 layout tours in all in addition to all the clinics, contests, prototype tours, operating layouts, and other features. If you're a model railroader or even thinking about being one, you need to see this Convention. Registration is open. Just print and fill out the form on [Page 4](#), or [access it here](#).

Every modeler and every layout is unique. There is something new, exciting and different about each one. That's why this hobby is so fascinating. You almost never see the same thing twice. Model railroaders have an immense amount of creativity and very interesting ways of expressing themselves through the hobby. This is a three-dimensional art form like no other.

Gary and I truly appreciated the extra time and effort that it took Jack to set up these tours for us. We also are very grateful to the owners of these layouts to have accepted us into their homes to demonstrate what they have accomplished. We enjoyed the experience greatly. It was a nice preview to the Convention.



*Photo 7: Engine Facility*

**Back on Track...**

## View from the Watchtower

By Greg Warth, Editor

As I look over this completed issue of *The Local*, I feel somewhat like a switchman in a railroad watchtower looking over the landscape and the interchange below, throwing switches, making sure everything goes where it's supposed to go. There is the mainline of original articles connecting the departing station on the first page and ending with the "caboose" page called "Back on Track." Off the mainline there are multiple side branches and spurs that temporarily take the reader to different places but then return them to the mainline. It is my job to be sure the reader enjoys a smooth ride, travels in the right direction, remains safe in the journey, and arrives at the proper destination. The arrival point is where your knowledge and information about model railroading has been expanded and your enthusiasm for the hobby has increased. The goal is not just to arrive at that point, but to also enjoy the journey, without derailments or major delays. It is my hope that you have enjoyed the ride, learned something new, and that you are smarter now than you were when you were reading Page 1.



Harris Switch Tower in Harrisburg, PA - In Service 1930-1980s. Photo by Niagara.  
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**Thank you** for reading this issue of *The Local*. If you have any suggestions or constructive ideas about what to add or change in the newsletter, [please let us know](#). We're always open to exploring new ideas.