The Local

Official publication of the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA

SEARCH

Operating on Jones Island in Milwaukee

Photo by Mark Nieting

It's a late winter afternoon on Jones Island as a lone SW-7 drags its cut back to Stowell Yard.

Contents

Twists and Turns
By Greg Warth

There are more twists and turns in real life than there are on my N scale layout and I have a lot of them. And for every switch off the mainline, there are frequent derailments. For every derailment, I have to stop everything, pick up the pieces, get all the equipment back on track, redo the environment, try to find and fix the cause and proceed to the next destination, the last of which is the most important part of the process. After all, what good is building something if you are not going to maintain it and keep it viable and moving forward.

This is not a complaint. It is a challenge to be dealt with and resolved in the best way possible. As many people have said, success occurs as a result of many failures from which we learn. Troubleshooting a model railroad requires thought, patience, and acceptance of the fact that there WILL be problems that you will have to fix. There is no such thing as not having problems. We have to accept them as part of life, accept the challenge to try to improve them if we can and keep on keeping on. Later we can celebrate overcoming those challenges, learning new lessons and having the knowledge and ability to do better next time.

Train Wreck - AI generated (purchased from Adobe Stock)

NOTICE:
MER BOARD OF DIRECTORS BUSINESS MEETING

7 PM October 16, 2025
Crowne Plaza Hotel
King of Prussia, PA

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Greg Warth will continue to be your editor for the near future. We will let you know if and when that changes. Thank you for your patience and support.- Ed.

Mid-Eastern Region Elections 2025
For Directors

Deadlines and Schedules for 2025

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, 2025 -- This was the deadline for receipt of self-nominations sent to the Nominations Committee. This was also the date for Nominations Committee to notify Board of Directors of slate of nominees validated by the Business Manager.
• August 1, 2025 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting.
• September 3, 2025 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.
• September 7, 2025 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.
• September 14, 2025 -- Deadline for Ballot Committee to transmit results to President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.
• September 21, 2025 -- 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, 2025 -- Deadline for publishing election results on MER's website.

Here's Your Chance to Give Back to the MER!
Two Positions Are NOW OPEN:
BUSINESS MANAGER and
TREASURER.

If you are interested, please send email to President@MER-NMRA.com

Board of Directors & Administrative Staff

MER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SCHEDULE

Board of Directors Business Meeting - 7pm October 16, 2025
Crowne Plaza Hotel, 260 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia, PA 19406

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - 10am October 19, 2025
Crowne Plaza Hotel, 260 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia, PA 19406

	Executive Convention Chair (Acting): Gary Brown 757-641-7671 ecc@mer-nmra.com		**MER Photographer:** Jerry Lauchle, MMR 814-404-6955 **photos@mer-nmra.com**		**Assistant Registrar:** Jim Fisher 443-504-3919 jfisher@mer-nmra.com
	Past President: Kurt Thompson, MMR 410-507-3671 **pastpresident@mer-nmra.com**						

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	Tidewater Division 4 John Robey (571)217-0599 jrobey2019@gmail.com *Division web page:* nmra-mer-tidewater.org				

UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS

- 2025 — Philadelphia Division — "Philly Express," October 16-19, 2025, Crowne Plaza Hotel, 260 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia, PA 19406

- 2026 — Tidewater Division — "Tidewater Triangle," Virginia Beach, VA - TBD

NMRA Achievement Program Update

By Kurt Thompson, MMR

Kurt Thompson, MMR

Update for June/July 2025:

Since the last report, the following MER members have earned the following certificates. They should have been listed in the national magazine by now. Remember to congratulate them and encourage them to continue. Also, it's a great way to motivate ourselves to continue the journey towards MMR!

Division	Modeler	Achievement
1 - New Jersey	Thom Racide	Model Railroad Builder-Cars
10 - South Mountain	John Pursell	Prototype Model
11 - Susquehanna	Ken Roth	Associate Volunteer
14 - Chesapeake	Jim Fisher	Model Railroad Engineering-Electrical

40' N scale layout at the Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads (Photo by Greg Warth).

Peter Becker Community (PBC) RR Club
By Joe Morris

The Peter Becker Community Model Railroad Club

History of the RR Club

The PBC RR Club was established in 2012 by James Costello. The initial site was a single-story residence on the Peter Becker Campus that was transformed into a clubhouse for various activities, including our model railroad project. Two of the bedrooms were combined into a 12' by 26' room for the layout. Jim Rich, our founding and current president, has been involved from the very beginning in designing the layout and track plans.

Our first endeavor after reassembling the layout was building another expanded engine terminal. In addition to steam and diesel facilities for our transition era operation, we also included a main passenger terminal and food processing district for slaughterhouse, canning and dairy operations.

Layout description

The layout is a folded dog bone with an up and over double tracked mainline. A mainline turning wye leads to the engine terminal, main passenger station and food processing district. A lower-level loop to loop line (DC only) traverses parallel to the main line. A narrow-gauge double loop track plan with a passing siding, industry spur, and small town is at the center of the larger mainline dog bone peninsula. The urban trolley line connects a local rail station with the town.

In 2017 the club moved to its current location in the Maplewood Estates apartment building. The layout was divided into sections, moved to the ground floor of Maplewood Estates, and reassembled. This process lasted for about six months from the fall of 2017 to the spring 2018. The size and configuration of the current layout location resulted in the dismantling of the original engine terminal. Although wider at 19' than the 12' at the original location, the new location is shorter in length at 22'. In addition, we have an adjacent 7' by 12' work and storage room.

A Pennsy local serves a small rural depot, very common in the area served by the prototype and modeled as shown in these two views. We pay attention to including small details in every scene.

The layout represents the transition period from the late 1940s to the 1960s, illustrating the shift from steam to first- and second-generation diesel operations on the Reading, Pennsylvania, Lehigh Valley, and other eastern railroads of that time. Motive power, rolling stock, and infrastructure embody this theme. Central to our operations is the turning wye from the main line leading to the engine terminal, main passenger station and food processing facilities. Steam facilities include a turntable, six stall round house with coal, sand, ash and water tower and spouts. And a separate diesel shop completes the motive power facilities. The main passenger terminal accommodates four full length passenger trains and an engine storage track. Also included are eight freight yard storage tracks and a freight house siding. The food processing district for dairy, slaughterhouse, and canning operations, is adjacent to the engine terminal receiving and departure tracks. Industries serviced along the main line include the Lowry Coal Company and the industrial park, home to Armstrong Electric Motors, Union Crane and Shovel Co and warehouse buildings.
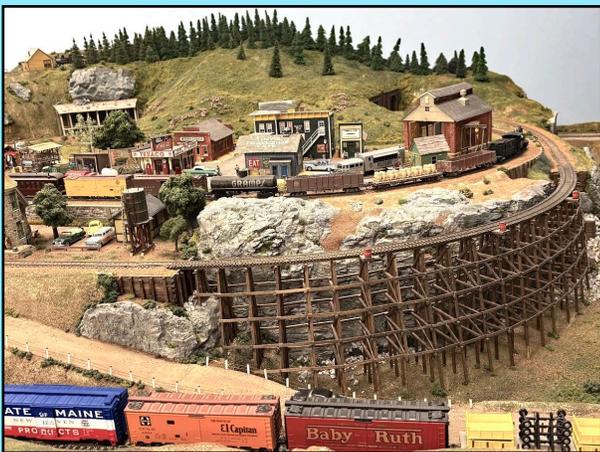
Curved trestle is one of the scenic highlights of the layout
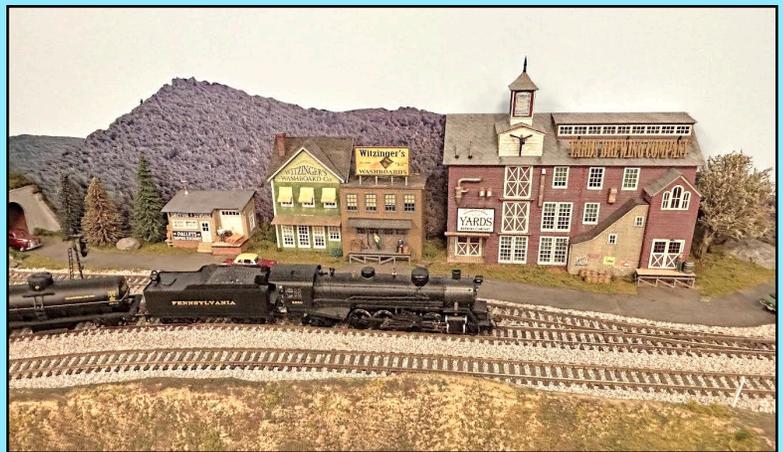
Steam and diesel are both run on the layout; this one serving a large New England style mill.

Operations

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Future

Scenery is about ninety percent complete. The most significant item on our list is the river gorge project and its main line bridges. We plan to finish the passenger and freight yard control panel. The wye and interchange switches need their own control panel. We will add fascia boards and curtains around the layout with plexiglass protection at the edges where tracks, buildings, and bridges are located. The original double tracked main line had one track wired for DC and the second track could toggle from DCC to DC. All mainline tracks are being converted to DCC. We welcome you to visit our community and club. Peter Becker Community (PBC) is a senior living community located in Harleysville, PA. The PBC model railroad club is one amenity that many residents enjoy.

Obituary for Eric Dervinis

Eric Dervinis, 69, of Downingtown, PA, passed away on Sunday, April 27, 2025. Eric was a member of the Erie Lackawanna Historical Society, the Delaware Lackawanna & Western Historical Society, the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society, and the Philadelphia chapter of NRHS (National Rail Historical Society). In the NMRA, he was involved at the divisional, regional, and national level. A Life Member of the organization, he's been on the National Board of Directors of the NMRA as a Trustee, served as Clerk of the local division, and as the Executive Convention Chair of the Mideastern Region of the NMRA. He ran the NMRA Valley Forge Express Convention in 1993. A member of the Friends of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, he would direct unofficial tours for his family.

Operating on Jones Island in Milwaukee
By Mark Nieting

Two events really motivated me to model in HO. I lived a mile or so from Linn Westcott, then the editor of *Model Railroader*. I'm sure that I pestered him enough that he invited me to pedal over and view his fabulous Sunset Railway and Navigation System, which hooked me on mountain scenery. From his rather impressive "stash" he gifted me with an Ambroid caboose kit, which I patiently built. That car eventually found its way onto the layout of MMR Kent Roberts, where it lived out its useful life. Then there was a school field trip tour of the Kalmbach facility in downtown Milwaukee. Here I saw employees actively involved in operating their employee layout. Unfortunately, my Number one takeaway was getting scolded for leaving a fingerprint in the live load of an ore car! At that time, my favorite railroad was the Chicago and Northwestern (CNW) since its colorful locos were nowhere near my home in Elm Grove. To us the Milwaukee Road was a common sight as its Hiawathas roared east and west through "the Grove." Fast forward some sixty years (**Photos 1 and 2**) and I'm a (mostly) retired Lutheran (LC-MS) pastor living in Chesapeake, Virginia, busily modeling the port of Milwaukee, Jones Island.

My model railroad journey over 60 years. Left is from 1962, right from 2025.

NEW TRACKS MODELING

Moving from a house with a large basement (Asheville, NC) to coastal Virginia put me into the "land of no basements." Convincing our realtor that I needed room for a model railroad that was larger than a sheet of plywood was another challenge. We settled on a home with a "frog," a finished room over the garage measuring 19' by 14' with a small closet. Adding a split-zone AC unit and I had my space! My first layout (**Graphic 1**) managed to cram two around the room levels connected by a helix. Three small yards, 19' of steel mill and lots of industrial areas made busy operating sessions for a crew of eight or more for the next ten years. The theme was South Chicago with lots of Indiana Harbor Belt, Elgin, Joliet and Eastern (EJ&E), Penn Central, Milwaukee Road, and Illinois Northern which we enjoyed for ten years. About the time I retired I was ready to downsize. Out came the helix, the upper level and tracks through the closet. It was time for a switching layout, one that had been rattling around in my brain for years. I was ready to model Jones Island, the port of my hometown of Milwaukee.

Jones Island, Milwaukee, 1970s
HO scale, 14'X19'
22"/24" min. radius "main", 20" elsewhere
#6 turnouts "main", #5 elsewhere
52" track elevation
No grade

1 sq. ft.

3/8" = 1 ft.

Mark's layout captures many signature scenes of the prototype in a relatively modest space by reducing the scope of some elements, particularly the number of yard tracks. The space saved is used to model key industries, such as the massive Continental Grain Elevator. The nature of the prototype, with its separate railroads and distinct operating areas, also allows a couple of crews to work comfortably at the same time.

Graphic 1:   Produced by NMRA Layout Design SIG Layout Design Journal #4 2024 (printed here with permission).

The port of Milwaukee is commonly known as Jones Island. Now a peninsula, it was at one time a true island, lying low and swampy south of downtown and north of the St. Francis area of Milwaukee. Early on it was occupied by a community of eastern European fisher-folk known collectively as the Kaszubes. As the city grew, the growing need for more port facilities and industrial space necessitated change. A steel mill was built on the south end, served by the Chicago and North Western that trestled through the marsh. Ultimately the homes were removed, the island filled to become a peninsula, and port facilities were added. The City of Milwaukee's smallest park is located on Jones Island honoring the Kaszubes (**Photo 3**).

Photo 3: Kaszubes' Park fits between LaFarge Cement and
the Pier. It has three trees, two picnic tables and one anchor.

Both the Milwaukee Road and the Chicago and North Western originally served the area, although the trackage on the island was (and still is) owned by the city. For many years two railroad ferry operations called JI home, providing bypasses to the congestion of Chicago. The Chesapeake and Ohio operated its pier at the far end of Jones Island; while the Grand Trunk occupied slips off the Kinnickinnic River. Years ago many ore boats wintered in the Jones Island basin. (Note: Great Lakes freighters are always known as "boats," while those visiting from the oceans are called "salties.")

In the early 1970s the city built an expressway directly above the eastern edge of Jones Island with a high bridge over the harbor entrance connecting the south side of Milwaukee with downtown. This became the distinct feature of Jones Island, with the need for any modelers to choose "before" or "after" the expressway. I chose before, as it was a time I remember from trips there as a young person. Another factor was a post-1975 date would have necessitated the building of 19' of elevated expressway! Hence I model 1968-1971, pre-expressway and pre-Amtrak, also allowing me to incorporate a CNW commuter train during operating sessions. Finally, it's always winter on my layout. Not the "frozen stiff" of February, but early December, where some of the lakers and barges are still making a few trips. I've always wanted to model winter on a layout, so this was my opportunity.

The Railroads of Jones Island:

The Milwaukee Road served the area with a spur off the C&M main line that ran a few blocks west. Transfers from the main yards downtown BACKED into Stowell Yard off the main line, having run south from downtown onto a long stub-ended lead just south of the KK River. Stowell was 3 double ended sidings plus a few stub tracks that ended just east of its crossing of the CNW at BA Tower. Milwaukee cuts would cross the CNW, run down a long stub and back up onto Jones Island trackage. Milwaukee usually kept a few switchers at Stowell, 0-6-0s in steam days and FM's afterwards, served by a shop-built fuel tank built on a short steam tender frame. Note: today CPKC serves Jones Island with a job out of Muskego Yard, as all the facilities at Stowell are gone.

The Chicago and Northwestern ran its "Marsh Job" from Mitchell Yard east on the freight bypass to the wye at St. Francis tower, turning north onto the old passenger main to reach the south end of the "island," where it split. From there, at BA Tower, one line entered the port area while the main line crossed the Milwaukee Road and entered Updike Yard, which served both its connection to the Grand Trunk ferry and the large facility of Continental Grain. Beyond Updike, the double-track main the Kinnickinnic River on a swing bridge and heading north toward downtown. Today's UP "Marsh Job" runs out of Butler Yard, the UP's main facility in the northwestern suburbs.

The Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) kept an SW7 at its small yard serving the two-track ferry slip. Transfers ran to and from both "home roads" according to the ferry schedules. The Grand Trunk did much the same from its yard and slips. The C&O service lasted until 1979. On my model, I chose not to incorporate the Grand Trunk operation. I also truncated the C&O trackage short of the actual ferry slip, as I didn't have space to model it. Finally, just for fun, every several operating sessions, the Milwaukee, Racine and Troy (the MRT, Kalmbach's former employee pike) brings a transfer to the C&O ferry.

Operations on Jones Island: First and foremost, all switching operations on Jones Island are accomplished by basic, hand-written switch lists provided by the Stowell Yard/BA tower operator, yours truly (**Photo 4**). While the Milwaukee keeps at least one unit at Stowell, the CNW Marsh Job switches with its transfer power, usually whatever old, beat- up switcher or Geep is at hand.
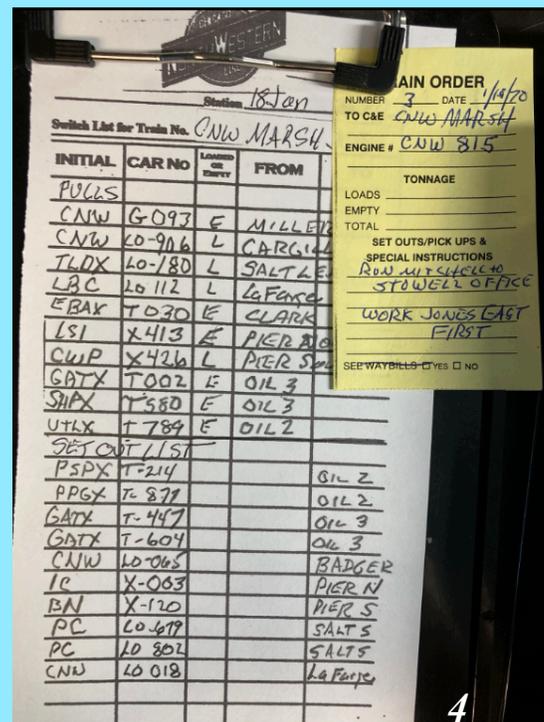

Photo 4: Switch List

Photo 5: John Cryderman working the Marsh Job.

CNW Marsh Job: This train enters Jones Island from the west on either the "freight main" or crossing over from the passenger main. Once on Jones trackage, it drops any Continental Grain cars at Updike Yard. Once receiving BA permission, the Marsh Job usually works Miller Scrap, then the west side of Jones Island. Cuts for the C&O ferry may be left on the Jones Pocket track or, by C&O permission, shoved onto one of their tracks. Then it works Cargill Salt, LaFarge Cement, Clark Oil, and the heavy-lift pier. When the west side work is complete AND the Milwaukee job is finished on the east side, the Marsh Job can cross over to the east side, working the port (Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD), and the oil yard. Permission must be received from BA to return to Updike Yard where it assembles its outbound cars and prepares to head off into Staging Track 1 (**Photo 5**).

Milwaukee Stowell Yard Transfer (ST): The Milwaukee's Jones Island Transfer BACKS into Stowell Yard (from either staging 3 or 4), where the Stowell switch crew will cut the cab and pull inbounds cars off. If the downtown yardmaster hasn't been a nice guy the inbounds have to be sorted into cuts for Jones EAST, Jones WEST, and "shorts" for Wrought Washer and Louis Allis. Meanwhile the transfer power, usually a dogs-breakfast of F-units, FM H-16-44s or Geep 9s, ties up at the west end of the yard and the crew goes to lunch at a nearby tavern (This is Milwaukee, after all!), awaiting the return of the outbound cars. Upon clearance from BA, the switcher (usually) takes the east lead across the CNW at BA, working the OIL YARD first, then the Piers and finally the MMSD. This plant takes all of Milwaukee's "finest" and turns it into Milorganite, a popular brand of fertilizer that is sometimes shipped out in covered hoppers (**Photo 6**).

When finished with the east side, the switcher returns to Stowell with outbound cars, swapping them for cars to be spotted   on the west side of the island once it receives clearance from the CNW. Work is usually done from north end southward, ending at the Cargill salt tracks, and finally Miller Scrap and Continental. Then the train is SHOVED across BA back into Stowell and added to the other outbound cars. Lastly the switcher tacks the cab onto Transfer. The road power ties to the south end of its train and heads home toward Muskego Yard (staging 3 or 4).

Photo 6: Stowell. Yard office with two "ribbies."
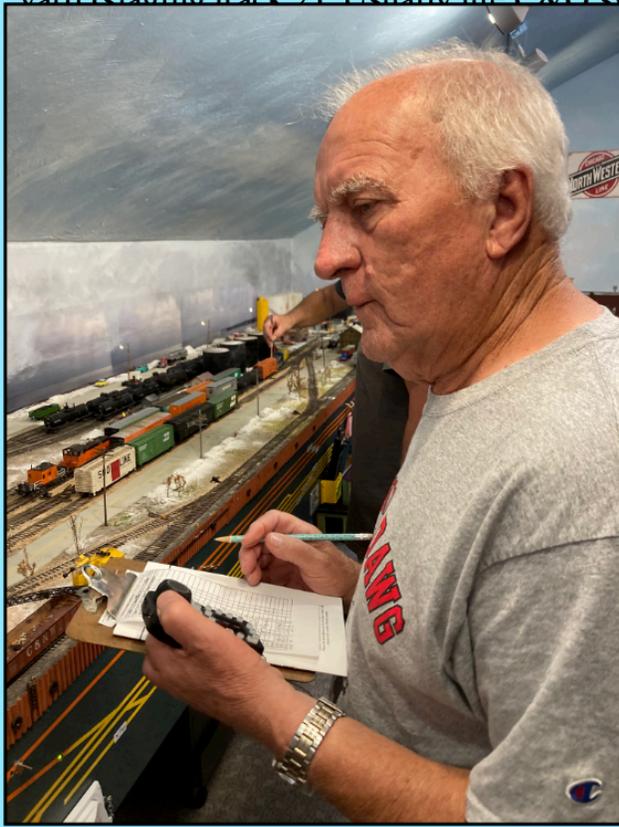
Photo 7: MMR Chuck Davis working Jones West.

C&O Switcher: This job begins with the arrival of a ferry that "stages" the C&O tracks with inbound cars. Switch list in hand, the crew arranges three outbound cuts: MR&T cars are dropped onto Jones Pocket, then MILW cars are pulled across BA and into Stowell yard, and finally a transfer is made to CNW's Mitchell Yard (Staging Track 2). Usually, the C&O switcher and caboose do not return until the next op session begins.

MAKING IT ALL WORK

Our normal crew is comprised of six operators. Two serve as the Milwaukee crew, two the Northwestern, one runs the C&O, and the last is the tower operator who also runs the CNW commuter train. As the session begins, the Milwaukee crew *backs* the Jones Transfer from staging to Stowell Yard. After sorting the inbounds, the switch crew crosses the CNW at BA and heads to work the east side first. The Northwestern crew runs to Updike, leaves cars for the east side and heads out to work the west side. Complicating work on the west side is the C&O switcher working from the north end. Once the C&O lugs over to Stowell with the Milwaukee cut, things get easier for the CNW crew, at least until the C&O returns.

To make things even more interesting, the CNW commuter, two yellow bi-levels with a well-worn F-unit on the north end, runs in from "Chicago" (staging under the Bay Street viaduct) as it gets the signal through BA heading for the depot in Milwaukee, North Staging #2. This ties up any Milwaukee movement through BA until the signals clear again. The same commuter job returns about a half hour later, heading south.

When the major players finish their respective "sides" of the island, they check with the yard office to see if the coast is clear to swap sides of the island. Most often the west side finishes first, as there are fewer spots and more run-around tracks. On the east side, the oil yard usually involves a lot of re-spotting and work from both ends as some cars are still hooked to their unloading pipes. The same goes for the cargo pier, which has three different spots holding up to three cars each.

If things can even get more complicated, it's when a train of grain cars, either ancient 40' boxcars with grain doors or newer covered hoppers, rings the bell at BA looking to drop its loads at Continental Grain. Somehow, with a bit of patience and an occasional help with an extra pull or shove, it all gets done and the crews mark off another day's work completed.

CONCLUSIONS

Although I really enjoyed the 10 years of the Chicago Belt, the size of the railroad and the tightness of the aisles began to give way to a desire to follow Lance Mindheim's "less is more" philosophy. With all the changes, the room is much more open, there is less maintenance both on and under the layout, and we can run trains at a more relaxed pace. My workbench has expanded, there is room in the closet for my "stash", and I've even installed a paint booth, something I couldn't fit in previously. The entire room is carpeted, making it easy on the feet. As a switching layout, there are days I go upstairs and just run a short job purely for fun! Change…..it's for the better!

Photo 8: Only one photo exists of BA Tower. This is my scratchbuilt model.

Photo 9: Bill Miller and MMR Bob Cook work as the CNW crew.

PRESS RELEASE

Kit 21 Commissary / Freight House

Ipswich Hobbies has released this laser cut basswood craftsman kit inspired by the Commissary that was once in Yard 4, East Cambridge, MA. The 12" x 4" structure kit would be suitable as a foreground structure on any HO scale model railroad. The laser-cut brick is an outstanding feature of this model. Although the prototype was a commissary that serviced dining cars on long-distance trains on the Boston & Maine Railroad, this structure would be suitable as a general freight house for just about any railroad. Tichy windows and doors, and the pre-cut dock pieces make this an easy build.

*Kit 21 Commissary / Freight NT House*

Custom Decals with Ghost White Toner

By Garth G. Groth

During the past year I have experimented making my own waterslide decals for HO scale freight cars using a product called Ghost White Toner.

Ghost White is an opaque white laser toner from a German firm that makes various specialty toners for the arts-and-crafts and graphics markets (https://www.ghost-white-toner.com/landingpage-us/). They fill cartridges to fit nearly 400 machines. Over 300 are Hewlett-Packard (HP) printers, mostly legacy machines, which is a nice way of saying they are obsolete and out of production. If you own an older HP color laser printer, or one of several other brands, you are likely to find it on Ghost's list. Older factory-reconditioned color laser printers are also sometimes available direct from HP at a hefty discount, and Ghost cartridges may be available to fit them. Several current-production HP printers are also on Ghost's list: Color LaserJet Pro 4201, Color LaserJet Pro MFP 4301, and Color LaserJet Pro MFP 4301. Ghost White is not available for ink jet printers.

I work on a Macintosh computer, using Pages word processing software, so I cannot comment on techniques for other software or offer specific advice to PC users. My printer is an HP Color Laser Jet Pro M254, a machine typical of HP's recent small home/office printers. I chose Apple Pages word processing software for ease of use over Microsoft Word for the Mac and Apache Open Office (both of which I also have on my computer). Pages also has some special features not found in the other two programs, which generally offer fixed combinations of features via style sheets instead of Apple's more flexible individual tools.
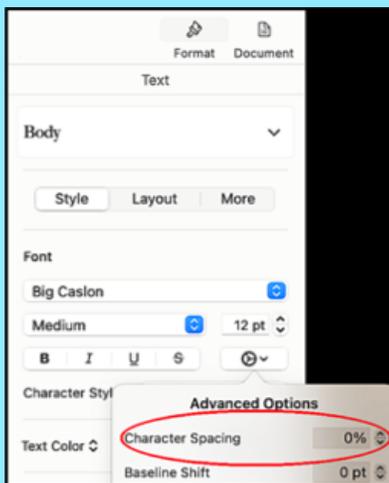
Photo 1: Character Spacing

Mac Pages includes a Character Spacing tool hidden in the Format menu behind a tiny gear wheel icon (Photo 1). This gem allows adjustments to horizontal spacing between highlighted characters. Each click on the up or down arrows increases or decreases the spacing by 1%, though the characters themselves remain unchanged. This is useful for establishing the right-hand margins for stacked lines in capacity and dimensional data blocks, for centering stacked road names, and correcting respecting drift as multi-line type block elements are pasted across a page. It is also handy for moving periods closer to initials, adding space around hyphens in reweigh data, and making tiny repack lettering easier to read with aging eyes like mine.

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The other really useful tool is found on the Format menu under Re-Spacing. After highlighting all the lines in a block, the vertical spaces between the lines can be tightened by specifying exactly and setting the points to the same size as the type. Further adjustments can be made by increasing or decreasing the point size.

TrueType railroad fonts for either Macs or PCs are available from several sources. A great source for fonts is RAIL SIM STUFF (http://www.railsimstuff.com). They offer ~ 40 free fonts, and most are rich with heralds and other goodies. Some of their fonts are steam-era, others are more modern, and some can do double-duty. As a sample, their Norveganâ font combining Norfolk & Western and Virginian, is shown below in 13 point size for clarity:

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ !@#$%^&*() < >]
[\abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz 1234567890-= ; :

Re-spacing Tool

Perhaps the best known railroad font source is RailFonts.com, which offers some 46 fonts at reasonable prices. Their most useful fonts for steam/early diesel-era freight cars are in their Railroad Roman series, with lettering for Chesapeake & Ohio, Chicago & Northwestern, Clinchfield (regular and condensed), Northern Pacific, Pere Marquette and Southern Pacific.

My current favorite font is B&O Railroad Roman, available as a free download from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Historical Society (https://borhs.org/Logos/bo_font_logo.html). This font includes the 1946 13 Great States and the 1960 Capital Dome heralds. I discovered that this font is a near duplicate for steam/early diesel-era lettering used by the Southern, the original Norfolk Southern, and Rutland. It is also now my go to font for most freelanced cars.

Some other useful fonts that can found on general free download websites include Railroad Roman 1916 for general use, Futura Demibold adopted by the C&O and B&O about 1960, and Helvetica Bold (pre-loaded on many computers) for sans serif capacity and dimensional data preferred by some railroads over Railroad Roman.
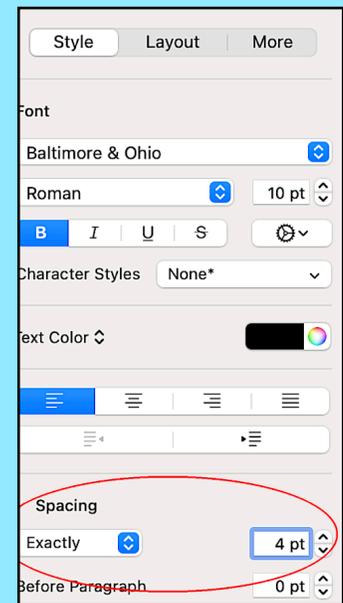
Heralds included in font sets are also TrueType characters, and so can be enlarged almost to gargantuan size without losing definition. My Southern Serves the South heralds were correctly sized for HO scale when enlarged to 52 point. Various other heralds matched prototype sizes at 28 to 42 point.

In the 1930s the American Railway Association (ARA), and its 1934 successor the Association of American Railroads (AAR), created standards for the size and position of freight car lettering. The Wabash and the Southern both flaunted the standards in various ways. Later other railroads such as the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe eliminated periods in the initials, and removed the lines above and below the initials and car numbers.

According to the ARA/AAR standards, the initials on the car sides were supposed to be 9" high. The car number was set at 8". The capacity block lettering was supposed to be 3" in height, and the reweigh station code and date at the same size. The dimensional data and build date were to be 2" high. Car-end initials and numbers were 4" high. My source for the size information was a very old NMRA Data Sheet D5e, Freight Car Lettering, dated April 1956.

I found that compromises were needed on most models, and some can be seen in my sample Virginia Midland boxcar decal (**Fig. 3**). The railroad initials are in 9 point type, with the numbers at 8 point. For the capacity block 3 point type would have been correct, but I chose 4 point. The dimensional lettering should have been at 2 point, but lettering this small tends to be unreadable, so it was enlarged to 3 point. Because the capacity block lettering was usually larger than the dimensional blocks, I bumped the capacity lettering up from 3 to 4 point. Repack data and special car loading/routing information (the latter not shown here) was set at 2.5 point, again a bit larger than normal to give the letters visual weight. The end lettering initials and car number should be 4 point, but this is often too large to fit in the upper right corner on steel-end house cars, so I substituted 3.5 point lettering here.
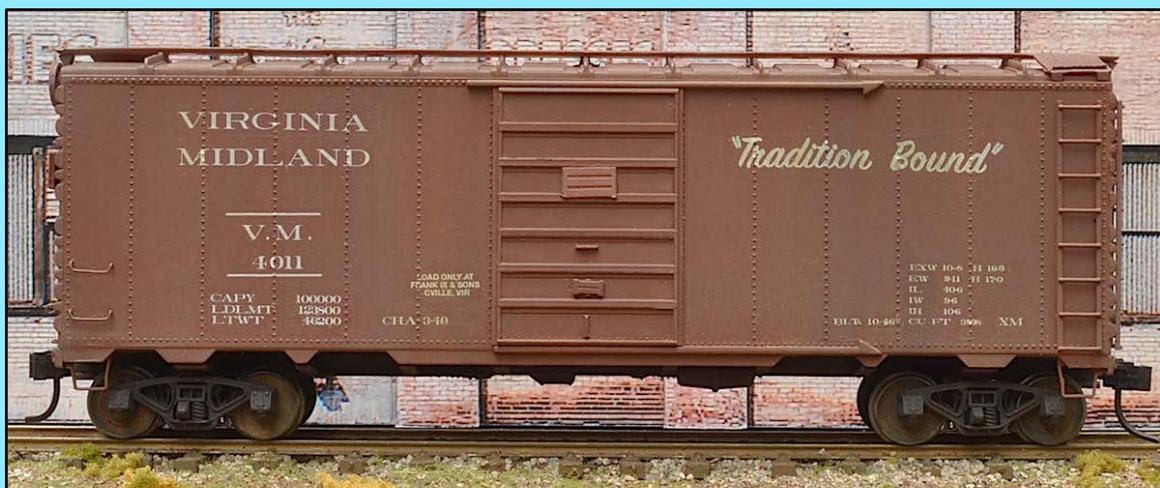
Fig. 3: Virginia Midland Boxcar

Printing itself is very simple. With the printer off, I remove the black cartridge, and drop in the Ghost White cartridge. After decal paper is loaded into the paper tray print-side up, I turn the printer back on. The machine will make some interesting whizzing and zizzing sounds until a text block on the computer screen tells me I can issue the print command. For best results, through the printer preferences in the print command menu, I specify HP Presentation Paper Glossy 120g, which is close to the qualities of the decal paper.

I noted during early experiments that some smaller characters and thin lines were not printing completely. I solved this drop-out problem by activating the Archival Print command on the printer itself (not on the computer screen). On my printer this is found through the set-up and Service commands in the printer's tiny menu window.

I prefer Microscope setting products rather than Walthers Solvaset, which actually melted some lettering.

Early on, I learned NOT to spray fixative on the finished decals while they are still on the uncut sheet (once again the hard way!). If sprayed, the decal will lose the slight differences in reflectivity and contrast between the white lettering and the backing, making accurate cutting almost impossible. Not sealing leaves the decals vulnerable to damage, especially during the application process, another reason for making extra pieces in advance. I save the spray for the whole car when the decal process is finished. NEVER use inkjet decal paper in a laser printer. NEVER! Inkjet paper lacks the hard glaze layer applied to laser printer paper. Without this protection the ink jet paper's adhesive layer can melt during the fusion stage and clog the laser printer's tiny toner nozzles. This will void the warranty, and turn the printer into an expensive piece of e-waste.

This project has been an interesting experiment, and provided me with decals for my fictional Virginia Midland Railroad. I have also been able to correctly letter some favorite prototype cars when decals were not available, including the original Norfolk Southern, the Rutland, and an 11-mile Wabash subsidiary, the grandly named New Jersey, Indiana & Illinois Railroad (**Figures 4 and 5**).

Figure 4

Figure 5

Road name and slogan sizes were not regulated by the ARA/AAR, so railroad officials could make this lettering any size they wanted. My Virginia Midland road name is in 10 point type. The tongue-in-cheek Tradition Bound slogan, which substitutes for a herald, is 19 point.

When filling a whole 8.5 X 11" sheet, I first create a single initial/number block, one capacity block and one dimensional block (all on separate lines). It is a lot easier to make corrections to just one block than to a whole row of them across the sheet. When I like how the lettering looks, I print a paper copy with black toner, then compare the size, spacing style to trusted factory-lettered freight cars. Kadee, Tangent, Branchline and Proto 2000 are noted for their lettering accuracy, and are my cars of choice for comparison. This step is especially important for gondolas, ribbed hoppers and single-sheathed boxcars, where point size and spacing may require some fussy adjustments for a proper fit. With gondolas in particular, I learned the hard way to cut the paper letters apart and drop them onto the car side to check for a correct fit. Where railroad names need to be broken up to fit around ribs, on the decal sheet I allow several extra spaces between letter groups to make cutting easier.

When I am satisfied the sizes are correct, I copy & paste each line's elements across the page, moving left to right usually with 8 or 10-character blank spaces between. Often I find that about 1/3 of the way across the page my so-carefully aligned characters on the second and subsequent lines begin to drift as tiny spacing errors too small to have been seen add up. The Character Spacing tool can be used in the blank areas between or inside the type blocks to correct any misalignment. Depending on how many similar cars I plan to letter, I make several extras of each car initial/number block, capacity block and dimensional block in case I ruin a decal during cutting or application. I usually make lots of extra reweigh and repack decals with different dates and station symbols, as such tiny pieces are easy to damage. Any extras may be useful later for other cars. I recommend only one brand of decal paper: Tango Papa from CMR Hobbies (https://www.cmrproducts.com/Tango-Papa-Decal-Paper-c124226851). Tango Papa paper's blue backing is slightly darker than MicroMark or Microscale papers, which makes cutting A LOT easier. Tango Papa papers also come in three thicknesses, which govern how fast the decals release in water.

Tango Papa decal paper is also usually available with a white film. This is useful for printing building signs and heralds that have color or black elements using the printer's regular toners. Except for black, HP toners are NOT opaque. When a colored decal printed on clear film is applied to a car side, any background will suck the life from the decal's translucent colors. Printing on white film solves this opacity problem.

After photographing one of the last New Jersey, Indiana & Illinois boxcars in a train some 40 years ago, I had to have one. No Wabash decals I have ever seen included a full alphabet. I used Rail Sim Stuff's Wabash font to make decals based on a builder's photo. The car uses a Front Range body with correct Branchline ends spliced on to depict an AC&F welded car from 1950. Southern WWII-era composite hoppers were being rebuilt with steel sides by my chosen era, but a few were still in original condition. This car is based on a Proto 2000 model. The capacity information took special care to fit into the small space below the diagonal rib. Although I don't actually model the Norfolk Southern, it is a railroad of great interest to me. My NS boxcar (Fig. 6) is based on a photo from my collection, with original lettering as it was before the original herald appeared in the late 1950s. The car body is from C&BT Shops upgraded with details parts from a Front Range kit.

Fig. 6: Norfolk Southern (original) steel boxcar

The fictional Virginia Midland boxcar (**Fig. 3, p. 22**) represents a car assigned to the Frank Ix & Sons textile factory, once the largest employer in Charlottesville, Virginia. The real factory did not have direct rail service, though in my world it does. The car is an upgraded C&BT Shops 12-panel body with 7' doors, a combination not known to exist in real life, but the VM fleet has three examples.

The Rutland flat car (**Fig. 7**) is based on a model by the late Richard Hendrickson, described in the August 1993 Rail Model Journal, and from my photos of a preserved car at Steamtown. It is a modified Athearn 40' flat car.

Fig. 7: Rutland Flatcar

My planned Virginia Midland (**Fig. 8**) will also serve the Monticello Dairy, again a real firm in Charlottesville that did not have a railroad connection. This milk car (see left) is a class XI insulated boxcar, kitbashed from a Train Miniature refrigerator car with the ice platforms removed. It rides on Athearn express reefer trucks. The VM herald was printed with black toner on clear decal paper, then dropped onto a disk of white decal film stamped out using a large round leather punch.

Fig. 8: Monticello Dairy Milk Car. Note the Fred J. Swaine building in the background.

For the curious, the Fred J. Swaine building in the background of these photos was a real structure that stood until recently in St. Louis. I found the image in an article by Richard Schumacher at https://www.gatewaynmra.org/2011/industrial-warehouse-background-buildings/. The cars were photographed on a portable stage with interchangeable backgrounds.
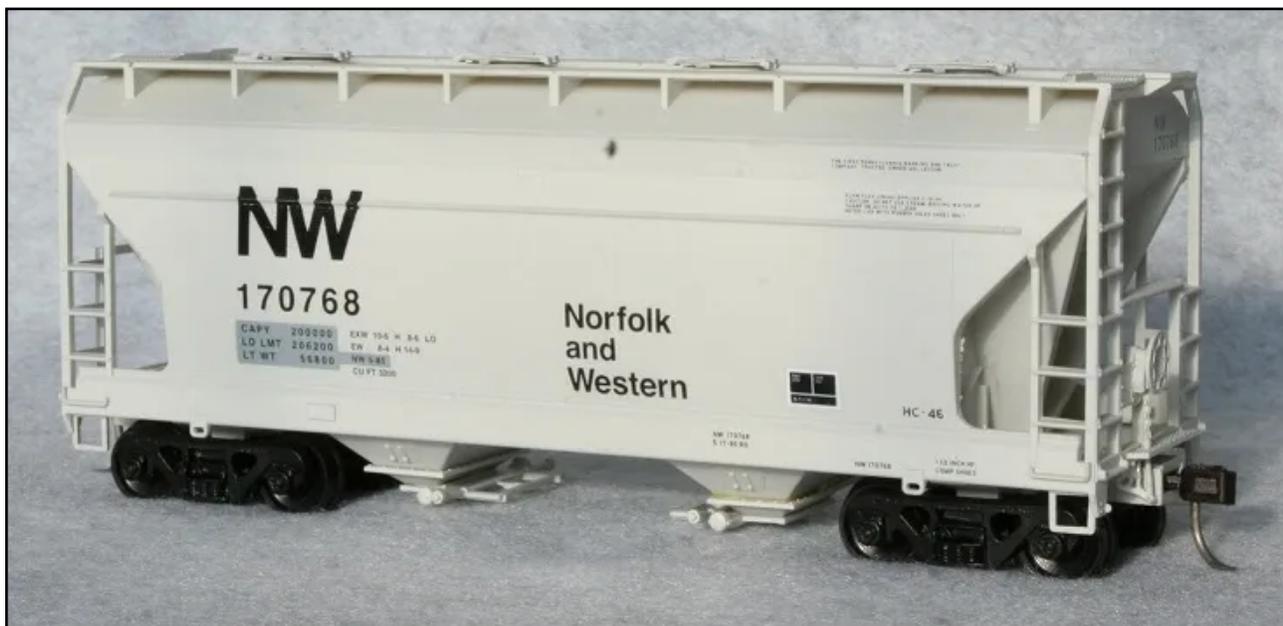
For Sale

Cincinnati Division 7's limited-edition, HO scale, N&W HC-46 ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper cars that we have for sale. This car is unique in that it is a repaint scheme with patched-out data.

The following link provides details about it as well as pricing, shipping and ordering information.
https://division7mid-centralregionnmra.godaddysites.com/car-projects

Down on the Farm (Photo by Greg Warth at the Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads).

A Story about Downsizing My Model Railroad World

By Fred Miller, MMR

Many of the aging population of model railroaders are faced with the need to downsize their modeling activities while still keeping the hobby fresh and challenging. Such was the case for me as I am rapidly approaching my 90th year with over seven decades of model railroading under my belt. This article documents my lifetime of modeling and the eventual need for 'downsizing.'

Photo 1: My Teenage Layout

My modeling interest probably started when I was a kid watching my Dad fill a basement with modified O-Gauge Lionel trains. When his interests waned my modeling juices started to flow with several small HO layouts (**Photos 1 and 2**). That passion continued through my high school years but took the usual backseat to 'other interests' during college, and then beginning marriage and family nurturing years.

My passion for model railroading resumed while raising my first child in an apartment in New York City. I built, and wrote articles about, a small TT scale layout. That layout was located daughter's nursery, the only space available in a young couple's apartment.

Apartment TT Scale Layout

Photo 3: N Scale Basement Empire

When the eventual house ownership came about in New Jersey a few years later, I switched to N scale and filled a basement with several good-sized layouts. Later, I also built a portable HO trolley layout. My article describing that project appeared in *Model Railroader (***Photo 3***)*. This little layout was also exhibited around NJ, including a location in the. DL&W Hoboken Terminal.

Photo 3: My "Headline" in **Model Railroader***!*

Retirement from my IT career in the corporate world many years later led me to follow my wife's career as an ordained Presbyterian minister while she took on church assignments up and down the east coast. Although that experience might have put a major cramp on my modeling interests, it in fact started me on another modeling journey.

Photo 4

Following that, I built a series of connected HO trolley modules, adding additional 2' by 4' modules in each of the cities in which we took residence (**Photo 4**). Upon my wife's retirement, we settled in a Charlotte (NC) townhome where I was able to assemble all the modules into an operating layout (**Photo 5**). Two of the modules traveled to several NMRA/MER sponsored conventions.

Photo 5: The assembled modules on display, first in the Charlotte Trolley Museum and currently in the NC Transportation Museum in Spencer, NC.

Photo 6

So, at that point in time, my modeling experience needed a new influx of energy. Over the course of another 10 years, I built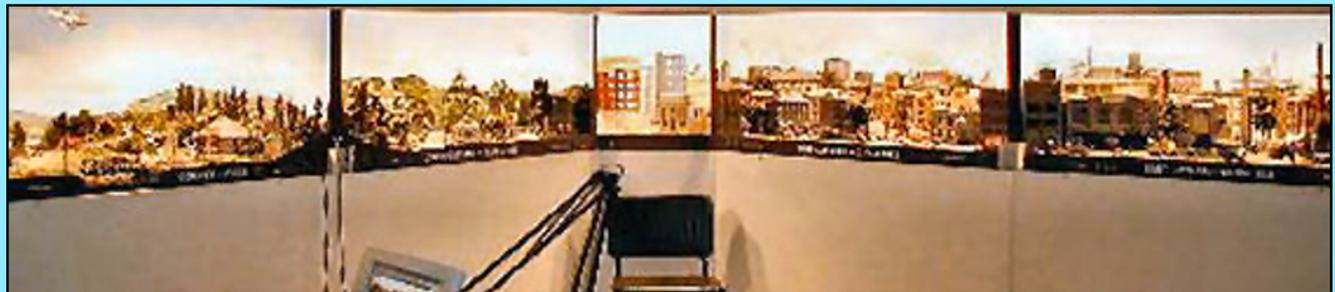 smaller and then smaller HO and N scale 'shelf' layouts (**Photo 6**), all appropriate for apartment living. I was proud to have Lou Sassi and his wife spend a day photographing one of my layouts, and then writing an article for the Kalmbach publication *Great Model Railroads*, 2019. I should point out that my lifelong interest in electronics has led to much light and sound animation on my smaller shelf layouts. Each of my layouts includes a host of micro controllers providing interesting effects, albeit in limited layout space.

As my wife and I approach our mid to latter 80s, the wonderful high-rise uptown condo living had to end. As a result, we moved to a senior living community in South Park Charlotte. Needless to say, this caused a major downsizing of our living experience, including my model railroading.

Photo 7: HO 5' by 18" Trolley Modeling in Senior Apartment Living

Photo 8: N scale Switching Layout

But that model railroading bug just could not be stifled. With the much limited space and working environment I have been able to build yet another HO trolley layout. Using the kitchen counter and a closet for a workspace I was able to construct a 5' x 18" layout. My N scale mini-shelf layouts have been dusted off and their electronics refurbished for nice automated or manual operations. These layouts are small enough to reside on a bookshelf, so no problem fitting into a much reduced hobby space (**Photo 9**).

Even though I have downsized my modeling to minimal senior living space, my model railroad journey continues. Perhaps my downsizing experiments over the years will provide inspiration to other modelers faced with limited space restrictions.

Photo 9: Shelf Layout and Displays

Building Dworkin's Stop

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR

I was possessed of the thought of building a small rural gas station not unlike many that once graced the sides of distant roads, some of which survive today in other business incarnations or as small, roadside domiciles. There are a number of kits available, but why build someone else's ideas when you can build your own? Off to the shop and a cleared space on the bench!

I decided to use board & batten for the walls. Due to the alignment of this siding and the width of the commercial product, you have to glue it up edgewise to get a width that makes a decent size wall in O scale. After gluing up two sections of 3/16" spacing board & batten (Kappler), I started by laying out the front door and windows (Tichy 5-panel No. 2021, Grandt Line No. 3765) to determine just how wide I was going to make this wall (**Photo 1**). With the front width, and then height set, I was able to set and cut out the back wall and the two side walls (**Photo 2**). The openings for the front door and two windows were made and then the one side wall was opened up to accept a Grandt Line No. 3702 window. After opening up these walls, I had to go back to chip away some of the battens to make sure that all the castings would lay down flat in the openings (**Photo 3**).
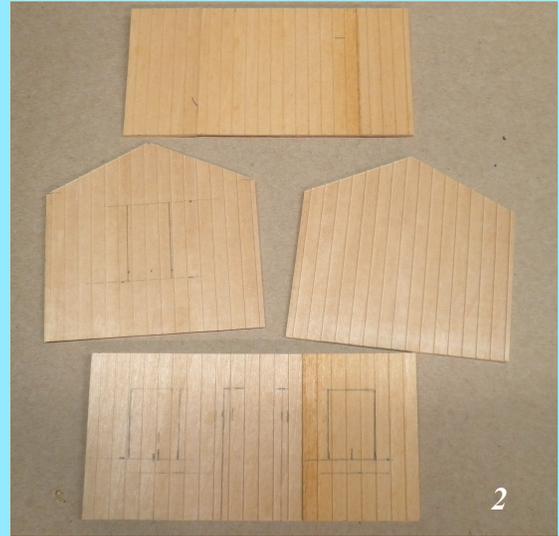
The four walls were glued together and the interior corners were reinforced with scrap wood. More scrap stripwood was applied at the top for gluing the roof on while other wood (O scale 10" x 16") was applied around the base to act as cleats to glue the structure down to a mounting plate (**Photo 4, previous page**). The roof was made up from glued together scrap 1/32" sheet basswood which was then cut to size and glued on to the top of the structure's wall (**Photos 5, 6**).

I tacked a stone foundation (dental stone castings) under the building attached to the wood cleats using Titebond glue. I test fit this structure onto a section of plywood and with that location and then size of base settled, I built up a service island from some more of that wood 10" x 16" stripwood and other larger basswood (**Photos 7, 8**). You can see where the battens were relieved to accept the window castings.

The building was painted Azure Blue (Polly Scale) and the foundation was painted using 5-7 different gray colors along with some green and brown colors (**Photo 9**). The roof was added using Builders-in-Scale No. 702 (Now part No. 734) Ribbed seam metal roofing. This was applied over the sheet basswood using Goo and a little CA. Some of the ribbed seam section was saved to use as a cap and it was painted Pacemaker Gray (**Photo 10**). The windows were painted CP Gray, glazed and installed in place.

The service island was painted to match the building. A smoke jack was fabricated from brass tubing and some thin sheet brass soldered together, painted black, and mounted through the one side wall. Thereafter both the structure and island were glued to the plywood base (**Photo 11**).

The roof extension bridging the structure and the island was built up from O scale 3" x 8" rafters with HO 3" x 18" cross-strapping for support of the top layer of roofing (**Photo 12**). A fuel oil tank (Berkshire Valley No. 513) was assembled and test fitted around the back corner of the building (**Photo 13**).
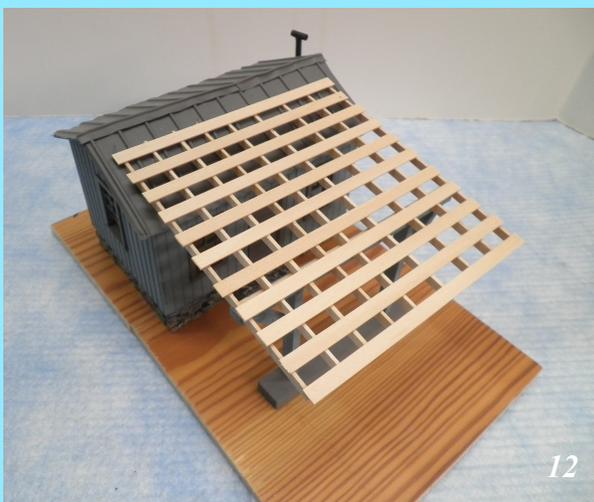
Corrugated roofing, a combination of Builders-in-Scale Nos. 710 and 712 (now parts 735 and 737, respectively), was cut into strips and added over the strapping (**Photo 14**). This roofing was painted Flat Aluminum (**Photo 15**); the exposed wood portions of this roof were painted to match the rest of the structure. Now it was time for a little scenery work and that small pile of details that wanted in this little scene.
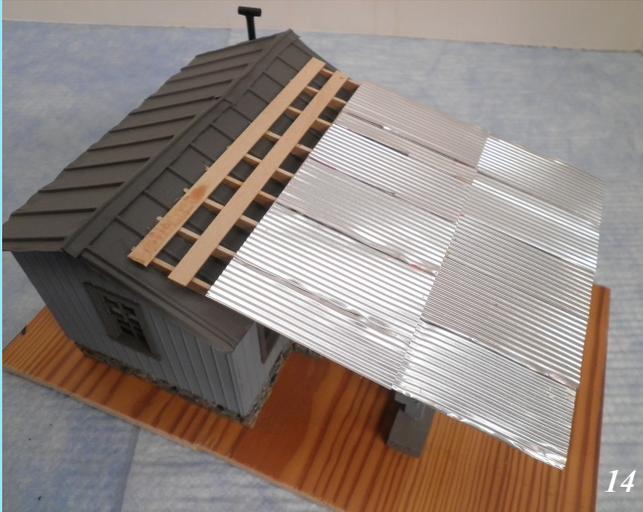
I painted up more Berkshire Valley parts: Nos. 508 tires, 525 5 gallon gas cans, 505 oil bunker with syphon, and 568 oil rack with can. I had a pair of old time gas pumps in kits that were of dubious form and origins that I manage to assemble and paint. I had a compressor kit available in a bag, so that and a water pump with a bucket were added to the cast of available scenery details after painting. A barrel casting with a lid also found its way into the mix. A scenery base of mixed turf (Woodland Scenics) was applied over Titebond painted onto the base. Gravel (ballast) was added along with some small foliage. These were anchored in place with Woodland Scenics Scenic Cement applied with a plastic pipette after wetting everything with some diluted alcohol. After the scenery was tight in place and dry, I added all of the scenery details along with an Arttista figure to complete this project (**Photos 16-18**).

Except, I was not finished to my liking just yet; the station needed a sign. I created the sign using PowerPoint and after printing it out, mounted the paper to some scrap 1/32" basswood and placed it to the end of the roof rafters facing the road (**Photo 19**). I wasn't quite finished just yet. I added an old radiator around the one side (**Photo 20**). And then since the paint on the building was a little too clean, I added another Arttista figure (No. 1201) of a man painting. I placed him around back (**Photo 21**). I added a cluster of waste drums and some gas cans near and under the oil tank (**Photo 22**). I added a trash can and I had two soda crate castings and bottles (Berkshire Valley). After painting these were added to the one side and at the entrance step (**Photo 23, 24**).

19

20

21

22

23

24

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
1 - New Jersey Division	*Train Orders*
2 - Potomac Division	*Potomac Flyer*
3 - Philadelphia Division	*The Dispatcher*
4 - Tidewater Division	*The Callboard*
5 - James River Division	*Crossties*
10 - South Mountain Division	*Wheel Report*
11 - Susquehanna Division	*Sidetracks*
12 - Carolina Southern Division	*The Brass Pounder*
13 - Carolina Piedmont Division	*The Herald*
14 - Chesapeake Division	*The Relay*

Other NMRA Links:

Bulletin	NMRA Partners (Discounts)	Events
Archives	Education	Turntable
Submit Articles	Videos	Clinics

Did You know...

2025

is the 90th Anniversary of the NMRA!

Happy Anniversary!

That's 90 years of helping model railroaders.
Thank you!

90
nmra
1935 — 2025
NATIONAL MODEL
RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

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 our 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.

We love our authors and we love our jobs in creating *The Local* for you to enjoy. We receive many articles with great content and we are always anxious to publish them. However, so many articles that we receive are not in a good format and require many hours of work to get them ready for publication. When you are preparing your article to send to the Editor, please follow the instructions presented here. It won't require any more work for you in writing the article, but it will save us many hours of proofreading and publishing time. Depending on the size of the article, it may take as many as 10-12 hours to actually get it in the newsletter. We can save at least half that time if it comes to us prepared according to the instructions.

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 Word format (.doc or docx).

3. Use Times New Roman font in 12 pt size.

4. The title should be **centered** and in **bold.**

5. Directly under the title should be "By (your name)" - centered, not bold. If you are an MMR, put it there.

6. If the photos are yours, enter in parentheses (Photos by the author) right after your name.

7. Enter your text with no paragraph indents. Justify the text so it is even on both sides.

8. In your text, refer to your photos this way: (**Photo 1**) - in parentheses, bold and blue.

9. Between paragraphs in your text, write "**Insert Photo 1 here**" where you want the photo to appear. DO NOT put your photos there. Otherwise, we just have to take them out.

10. Include the number of the Photo in the file name of the Photo so we know which one goes with which number.

11. Photos must be clear and sharp or they cannot be accepted. JPG, GIF, TIFF and PNG formats are acceptable.

12. Photo captions should be listed at the end of your article, or in a separate Word file, and numbered with the same number as the photo.

13. Send your text and your photos separately by email to The Local Editor. They can all be sent in the same email as long as the total file size is less than 25 MB. If the size is larger than that, you will have to split them into two or three emails.

Special Notes for Authors (MUST READ before submitting an article):

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 or Regional 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. Also, *Please read* the article written by Martin Brechbiel, MMR on "Preparing Your Manuscript for Publication in The Local." 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 along with a Record and Validation Form to your Division AP Manager to receive your Author AP Certificate.

It's probably hot where you are so here's something to chill by. A Milwaukee local leaves Stowell Yard on Mark Nieting's Jones Island layout. The time is early December 1970. (Photo by Mark Nieting).

What Happens to Your Article after You Send It In?

First, the substance and context of the article has to be reviewed. Is it original? Has it been used before, or published elsewhere? Was it borrowed from someone else's work? Is it an appropriate topic for our newsletter? We've had to reject a few articles because they were more about rail fanning than they were about model railroading.

Then the text is carefully reviewed line by line by four different sets of eyes to check for typos, grammatical errors, wording or phrasing problems that have to rewritten to be more understandable. Punctuation has to be corrected. If there are photos in the text, they have to be removed. Photos frequently require editing to make them look brighter and more appealing. File names of the photos have to be changed to include the number of the photo.

After the proofreading is finished, the text has to be entered into the publishing program, paragraph by paragraph, sometimes line by line. The text often has to be resized to make it fit properly without looking inconsistent. When we come to a point where a photo has to be inserted, it has to be resized so that it fits in with the text and in the right order with the proper caption. If a photo is missed, the whole article may be have to be redone in order to get the photo in the right place.

It's just like putting a model together in many ways. You start with the raw materials or the parts that come in a kit. The materials and instructions for the kit are what the author provides. In this case, the various parts include the words that have to be put together properly. Then the paragraphs and the photos may have to be rearranged. Then you have to fit the pieces into the right places, so that they make sense and look appealing. There are many details that have to be added or corrected. Eventually, we glue them all together by converting them from Word into a pdf file.

What Kinds of Articles Do We Like to See?

1. Anything about modeling, whether it be about just putting a kit together, kit bashing, scratchbuilding, or just adding details or weathering to a model.
2. Any type of "How to…" article, as long as it is about model railroading.
3. New tips or techniques, or even old ones used in a new way.
4. A tour of your layout or that of a friend, including its name, location, theme, era, scale, size, best features and biggest challenges.
5. Summary of a model railroad conference you visited.
6. Tell us about your workbench, or any special tools you use.
7. Tell us how you fixed a problem you encountered with your model or layout.
8. If you received an AP or MMR Certification, explain how you did it, what were the challenges. What would you recommend to others working on the same project.
9. New electrical techniques that you performed, new automations, how you set up signals, how you installed sound or flashing signs, billboards, or other details.
10. Scenery techniques, mountains, water, river rapids, trees, forests, ground cover.
11. Building a bridge or trestle.
12. Photographing your layout or model.
13. How to recruit more people into the hobby.
14. Your summary of a clinic you attended.
15. How we can help each other.

Use these hot summer days to sit in your basement and write articles for *The Local!*

Back on Track…

The Little Engine that Could

By Greg Warth

I hope you are planning a nice vacation with the family this summer. If you are, make sure you stop at a train show or at least a train store somewhere, or perhaps include a side trip to a train museum if you can. I know a great one in Eastern Virginia.

The Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads is a grass roots organization starting out with a bunch of guys sipping coffee and soft drinks after lunch at a local restaurant. They have been meeting there every week for several years, ever since their popular public train display had to be dismantled. Among the many topics discussed at those gatherings including Navy planes, ships, helicopters (several of the guys are retired Navy pilots and engineers), muscle cars, football, astronomy and the weather, the one subject that was sure to come up was how do we get our trains running again.

They had spent much of the previous three years looking for a place that would be affordable (i.e., free). Those possibilities had all but dried up but they still had hope and a certain ambition to keep at it. They met with the mayors of Norfolk and Virginia Beach, the local chamber of commerce, the public utilities departments, local realtors, and others to find a location where they could resume their public train display, all to no avail.

One day the decision was made to become a legal nonprofit entity, so that perhaps they would be taken more seriously. In the process of doing that, they had to develop a detailed business plan and bylaws, which they did. They did some limited marketing in local newsletters and developed a website (MRMHR.org). They received a few donations and a small grant from CSX, although it wasn't enough.

They were a very accommodating group and easily accepted new members who were interested in trains. One of those new members later turned out to be a benefactor for the group and was willing to support the organization financially. They suddenly became viable! It wasn't long after that that they were able to lease a suitable space at a local mall. The lease was very affordable since the mall had been failing recently, mostly due to a growing number of people who were buying products and supplies on line rather than in physical stores. The museum opened last November for the Holidays and have been very successful since then with 60 to 100 visitors per day!

The current challenge is that the mall will be closing by January 31, 2026 and the team will have to find another place for the museum. This is disappointing but not insurmountable. The dedication and perseverance of these guys are amazing. I'll let you know where we end up.

So wherever you are and whatever you want to do in life, keep the faith, and don't give up. Be prepared. You never know when the magic might happen.

Thanks to all those who make <u>*The Local*</u> *possible. We hope you enjoy it.*
Happy Fourth of July! - Greg