

Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of MER elected officials. Commercial suppliers, supplies and materials addressed in *The Local* in no way constitute endorsement by the MER. Copyrighted material that appears in *The Local* is used for educational and historical benefit only and does not constitute infringement of a copyright holder.

Building an O Scale Missouri Pacific Bay Window Caboose

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR (Photos by the author)

I have a well-established affinity for cars that are unique or shop bashed. Add a bay window to the side of a car and I'm hooked. Missouri Pacific had a bay window caboose shop bashed from a box car. While I have no good reason for such a car for on my layout roster, I still wanted one. While there are a host of models available for this car, there are apparently none in O scale. Yes, there are a plague of O gauge cars in an assortment of paint schemes. I, however, wanted something that addressed the scratchbuilding itch as well as provided a decently acceptable 2 rail O scale model. Now it's time to get building! (*Continued on p.16*)



O Scale Window Caboose Scratchbuilt by Martin Brechbiel, MMR

From the Editor's Desk...



America: Made in Virginia

By Greg Warth, Editor

It is fortunate that our Mid-Eastern Regional Convention will be held in [eastern Virginia](#) this year even though it will be a few months after the big celebration on July 4. Nevertheless, there will be events going on throughout the year in commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of our Independence.

Multiple special events will be occurring at iconic locations around the country. The Smithsonian Institution just a few hours north from us will be hosting celebrations to reflect on American history. The [Army, Navy, and Marines](#) will be hosting multiple celebrations throughout June and July of 2026. There will also be [Citizen Participation Programs](#). By signing up here at this link, [Store.America250.org](#), you can get 15% off on hats, shirts, ornaments and other memorabilia.

During the [weekend of October 15-18](#), there will be several exciting events and activities, like the Middleburg Film Festival, [Busch Gardens Howl-O-Scream](#), [Colonial Williamsburg](#), Jamestown Settlement, Movies in the Plaza, [Virginia Beach Boardwalk](#), [Rassawek Autumn Festival](#), and [Monticello](#), home of Thomas Jefferson. Also, October is the best time of year to take a scenic drive down the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#). There are several apple orchards, wineries, breweries and pumpkin farms to visit. October is Wine Month in Virginia.

Leesburg might be worth a drive through as perhaps the most beautiful town in Virginia. Williamsburg, [Jamestown](#), where it all began, and

Contents

The Local		
Building an O Scale Bay Window Caboose	Martin Brechbiel, MMR	1
Editor's Desk	Greg Warth	2
From the Business Car	Jack Dziadul, MMR	5
Who's Who in the MER	Staff	7
AP Update	Kurt Thompson, MMR	9
Meetings	Staff	10
Upcoming Events	Staff	11
Elections 2026 - Officers	Staff	12
Candidates Statements	Candidates	13
Elections 2026 - Officers	Staff	14
Advertising Rates	Staff	15
Caboose - cont'd from p.1	Martin Brechbiel, MMR	16
From the Contest Room	Dan Peele	25
McDowell Salvage	Jim Allen	27
Building an HOn30 Motor Rail Car	Alex Belida, MMR	30
WS Deep Pour Water-Murky	Alan Balma, MMR	34
NS Layout Prep for Ops	Ernie Little, MMR	40
Union Freight House	Jack Dziadul, MMR	45
Branchlines	Staff	47
Submit an Article	Staff	48
Back on Track	Greg Warth	51



10% OFF: Use code BYMRR10 at checkout.

and [Yorktown](#), where the Revolution was won, are also wonderful historic places to visit.

For Civil War buffs, [Appomattox](#) in central Virginia is the site where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865. Nearby is where the Union soldiers blew up the last railroad supply line available to the Confederate soldiers which resulted in their surrender.

[Port of Virginia](#) with amazingly huge fields of containers and cranes will be one of the excursions planned for the convention along with [Plasser American](#) where maintenance of way equipment is manufactured.

[Hampton Roads, Virginia](#), is a premier, historic deep-water harbor and the third largest port in the U.S. by total tonnage and one of the largest ports in the world. Serving as a critical 21st-century maritime hub, it features the fastest-growing port on the East Coast, acts as a major international shipping channel, and hosts the [largest Navy base in the world](#), including [Oceana Naval Air Station](#). It has an 18 mile wide channel where the James, Nansemond, and Elizabeth Rivers meet. It includes several cities including Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Newport News, Hampton, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, and Suffolk. We are famously known as the place where the first English settlement (Jamestown) started in 1607 and where the famous [Civil War Battle](#) (1862) of the Ironclads (*USS Monitor* vs. *CSS Virginia*, aka *Merrimack*) occurred.

[Railroad History in Hampton Roads](#), also known as the Tidewater region of Virginia, dates back to the mid-19th century and is now dominated by Norfolk Southern and CSX transportation lines. Original lines, like [Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac](#), Norfolk & Western, and Chesapeake & Ohio brought coal, lumber and other goods to the port cities. [Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Southern Railroad](#) was built in 1883 to bring tourists to the new resort area. Smaller railroad lines still operate in the area including the Norfolk and Portsmouth Belt Line ([NPBL](#)), a Class III terminal switching railroad owned jointly by Norfolk Southern and CSX. It connects major carriers and local businesses and interchanges with the [Chesapeake and Albemarle](#) and other railroads. We also have Norfolk Southern's [Lambert's Point](#), the largest, fastest and most efficient coal transloading facility in the Northern Hemisphere.

Oh, and did I mention that the largest HO model railroad in Virginia, the [Chesapeake Bay & Western](#), is located at 110-F Dare Road in Grafton, Virginia, near Yorktown? You won't want to miss that (<https://youtu.be/3XJJ661XkaA>)!

So, "Tracks to Tidewater" should prove to be a great convention. There certainly are lots of things to do here for rail fans and non-rail fans alike. We will have a great selection of clinics and layout tours as well. Registration forms will be available in May.

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 several years:

Alex Belida, MMR

Martin Brechbiel, MMR

And special thanks to all our authors, many of whom came to my rescue these past two weeks when there was a paucity of articles in the cue for *The Local*. Without them, we would have nothing to show you.

Warm regards and

Happy railroading!

P.S. It's your turn. Actually, it's your *chance* to really get involved with the Mid-Eastern Region! I *wanted* this job seven years ago, and I'm really glad I did it. I learned more about the hobby and made more friends than I ever would have otherwise. I truly appreciate that I was given that opportunity, and I have always enjoyed writing about it, and them. But now I am getting close to 80, deeply embedded in management of a model railroad museum and starting a store for model railroaders which has always been one of my dreams. I am also remaining involved in advocacy for better healthcare, my other occupation, which is extremely important to me as you might know.

If you have already been a newsletter editor, and if you are familiar with Word, and/or Pages, you can do this. I'll be your guide and backup for both the editor and publisher for as long as you need. It's a great way to learn more about the hobby, not to mention computer skills, and make friends with the guys in our Region who practice the art so well.


Greg

SAVE THE DATE

Tracks to Tidewater

Oct 15–18, 2026 • Virginia Beach, VA

A large, four-day event organized by National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Tidewater Division for the Mid-Eastern Region (MER), bringing together model railroad enthusiasts for a variety of activities. Events will feature clinics, layout tours, operating sessions, contests, prototype tours, and a banquet to recognize the winners of the contests as well as those who have achieved Master Model Railroader status. The goal is to provide a forum for members to learn, share, and enjoy the hobby of model railroading.



Add to Calendar

228
DAYS

21
HOURS

36
MINUTES

06
SECONDS

What to Expect

- Hands-on clinics from experienced modelers
- Area layout tours and operating sessions
- Vendor hall with tools, kits, and parts
- Meetups, raffles, and community fun

Registration opens Spring 2026.

From the Business Car

By Jack Dziadul, MMR

April 18, 2026



Ladies and Gentlemen, here are a few notes to bring the membership up to speed on what happens behind the curtain.

Completed / In process / Ongoing

- Bi-monthly articles submitted to *The Local*
- Distributed monthly roster reports to Divisions and MER officials in a timely manner (within five days of receipt from Soddy Daisy)
- Worked with Superintendents and Soddy Daisy to assist with resolving membership roster issues.
- Discussed software subscriptions (Mail Gator, MailChimp) with Webmaster Jeff Burch. The Webmaster will be the vendor contact for renewals and submit invoices to Treasurer Bill Wurtzell for payment. No Business Manager processing required.
- Sent letters to the twelve remaining Life Members residing within the MER who are print subscribers of *The Local*. They were offered the opportunity to continue with print subscriptions with an opt-in response to the Business Manager.
- Three print subscribers of *The Local* who resided outside of the MER were dropped from the print subscription list. They resided in California, Louisiana, and Maine.
- Received ad revenue from Alex Belida's *Dead Rail* book \$60, Jack Dziadul's *Ipswich Hobbies* \$35, Greg Warth's *Building Your Model Railroad* \$20. Deposited \$115 to the Morgan Stanley account.
- Received NMRA rebate \$1,396, deposited to the Morgan Stanley account. Six Divisions reconciled to the roster. Four Division memberships did not match the rebate calculation. MER Treasurer was advised. No response as of 4/14 from NMRA HQ to my reconciliation questions.
- Objectives

Short Term

- Stop print *Local* distribution: go opt in with remaining Life Members instead of opt out. This has effectively been accomplished. As of this writing, none have opted to continue receiving the print newsletter.
- Process expenses through the MER Treasurer
- Printing, paper, and postage – none as of this writing

Long Term - still outstanding

- Write / update Business Manager / Assistant Business Manager job descriptions
- Update Business Manager relevant Executive Handbook sections
- Write Standard Operating Procedures for Business Manager responsibilities
- MER President appoint replacement Business Manager on or before 12/31/2027.

MER Membership	Nov 25	Dec 25	Jan 26	Feb 26	Mar 26
1 New Jersey	175	178	172	171	176
2 Potomac	222	222	221	221	220
3 Philadelphia	236	235	230	230	230
4 Tidewater	98	101	99	100	105
5 James River	132	128	130	130	129
10 South Mountain	64	62	59	59	59
11 Susquehanna	180	177	175	169	168
12 Carolina Southern	113	115	113	113	112
13 Carolina Piedmont	187	180	185	188	194
14 Chesapeake	104	104	103	104	104
MER Membership	1,511	1,502	1,487	1,485	1,497



Unfortunately, The Model Railroad Museum of Hampton Roads won't be open during the "Tracks to Tidewater" MER Convention this year. You'll just have to wait 'till we rebuild it for you in a new location. Photo by the Editor.

Board of Directors and Administrative Staff



President
Scott Unger
610-462-0756
president@mer-nmra.com



**Director-at-Large;
Local Editor**
Greg Warth
757-816-8399
gjwarth@mer-nmra.com
local-editor@mer-nmra.com



**AP Manager;
Past President**
Kurt Thompson,
MMR
410-507-3671
apchair@mer-nmra.com



Vice President
Gary Brown
757-641-7671
vp@mer-nmra.com



**Director-at-Large;
MER Photographer**
Bob Bridges
rkbridges@mer-nmra.com



**Nominating
Committee
Chair**
Bob Charles,
MMR
717-763-1848
rcharles@mer-nmra.com



Secretary
Rick Stoneking
856-296-9291
secretary@mer-nmra.com



Director-at-Large
Kevin O'Connor
919-593-2537
kjoconnor@mer-nmra.com



Archivist
Michael Mauer

archives@mer-nmra.com



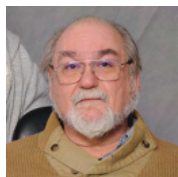
**Treasurer for MER
and Convention**
William "Bill"
Wurtzell
201-819-8701
wwurtzell@mer-nmra.com



Business Manager
Jack Dziadul, MMR
919-721-8757
jackdziadul@gmail.com



Registrar
Kirk Bateman
410-442-0446
mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com



**Assistant Business
Manager**
John Hoyt
410-340-1776
jhoyt@mer-nmra.com



Contest Chair
Dan Peele

Contests@mer-nmra.com



**Assistant
Registrar**
Jim Fisher
443-504-3919
jfisher@mer-nmra.com



**Executive
Convention Chair**
Laura Bateman
410-422-0446
ECC@mer-nmra.com



Webmaster
Jeff Burch
443-280-9127
webmaster@mer-nmra.com

MER Division Superintendents



New Jersey, Division 1:
Glyn Thomas
njdiv.super@gmail.com
Website: njdiv@nmra.org



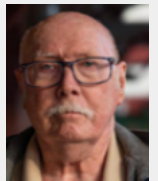
James River, Division 5
Philip R. Taylor
434-589-6006
drphilster@gmail.com
Website: jrdnmra.blogspot.com



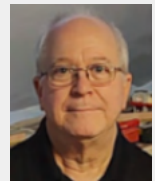
Carolina Southern, Div.12
Andrew Stitt
919-637-1282
superintendent@carolinassouthern.org
Website: [Carolina Southern.org](http://CarolinaSouthern.org)



Potomac Division 2
Ernie Little, MMR
super@potomac-nmra.org
Website: potomac-nmra.org



South Mountain Division 10
Dan Mulhearn
southmountaindiv@gmail.com
Website: Smdnmra.org



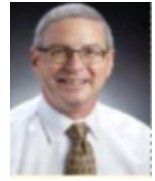
Carolina Piedmont Div.13
Bob Gamble, MMR
superintendent@cpd13.org
Website: cpd13.org



Philadelphia Division 3
Joe Walters, MMR
302-521-5884
josephfwalters@yahoo.com
Website: phillynmra.org



Susquehanna Division 11
Alan Mende
717-469-1047
super@susquehannanmra.org
Website: susquehannanmra.org



Chesapeake Division 14
Kirk Bateman
410-442-0446
super@chesdiv-nmra.org
Website: chesdiv-nmra.org



Tidewater Division 4
Gary Brown
757-641-7671
allegHENYr@yahoo.com
Website: nmra-mer-tidewater.org

YOUR AD COULD BE HERE

Advertise in The Local

If you own a business, you may want to consider advertising here. The rates are very reasonable. Click on the link above to find out more.

Help Wanted:

Does anyone have an MP3/MP4 file of a prototype uncoupling, preferably with the air line parting with the loud hiss of escaping air? If so, send to kurtthompson129@gmail.com.



Kurt Thompson, MMR

NMRA Achievement Program Update

By Kurt Thompson, MMR
MER AP Manager

Update for May/June 2026:

The MER has two new MMRs: **William Lyders** of the Potomac Division is MMR 819; **Alan Balma** of the Tidewater Division is MMR 820. Please join me in congratulating them on their accomplishments. Look for their MMR articles in an upcoming issue of the *NMRA Magazine*.

The following members have earned the noted Achievement Program certificates:

Division 2, Potomac

Steve Jackson
William Lyders
Ernie Little, MMR
Jeff Jordan
Kenneth Wilson

AP certificate Received

Model Railroad Author
Master Builder - Cars
Association Official
Master Builder - Structures
Association Volunteer

Division 4, Tidewater

Alan Balma

Chief Dispatcher

Division 12, Carolina Southern

Dylan Petro
Dick Bronson
Jim Thomas

Master Builder - Scenery
Chief Dispatcher
Chief Dispatcher

Division 13, Carolina Piedmont

Kevin O'Connor
John Sokash

Chief Dispatcher
Model Railroad Author

Division 14, Chesapeake

Scott Wooddell
Kirk Bateman
Greg Meeks

Chief Dispatcher
Association Official
Association Volunteer



Holiday Inn on Greenwich Road in Virginia Beach, VA: Site of the 2026 MER Convention, “Tracks to Tidewater.”

UPCOMING MER CONVENTIONS

- 2026 — Tidewater Division — October 15-18, 2026 — “Tracks to Tidewater,” Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23462
- 2027 — South Mountain Division — Location: Hagerstown, MD

MER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING SCHEDULE

- October 15 at 7pm. Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23462

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

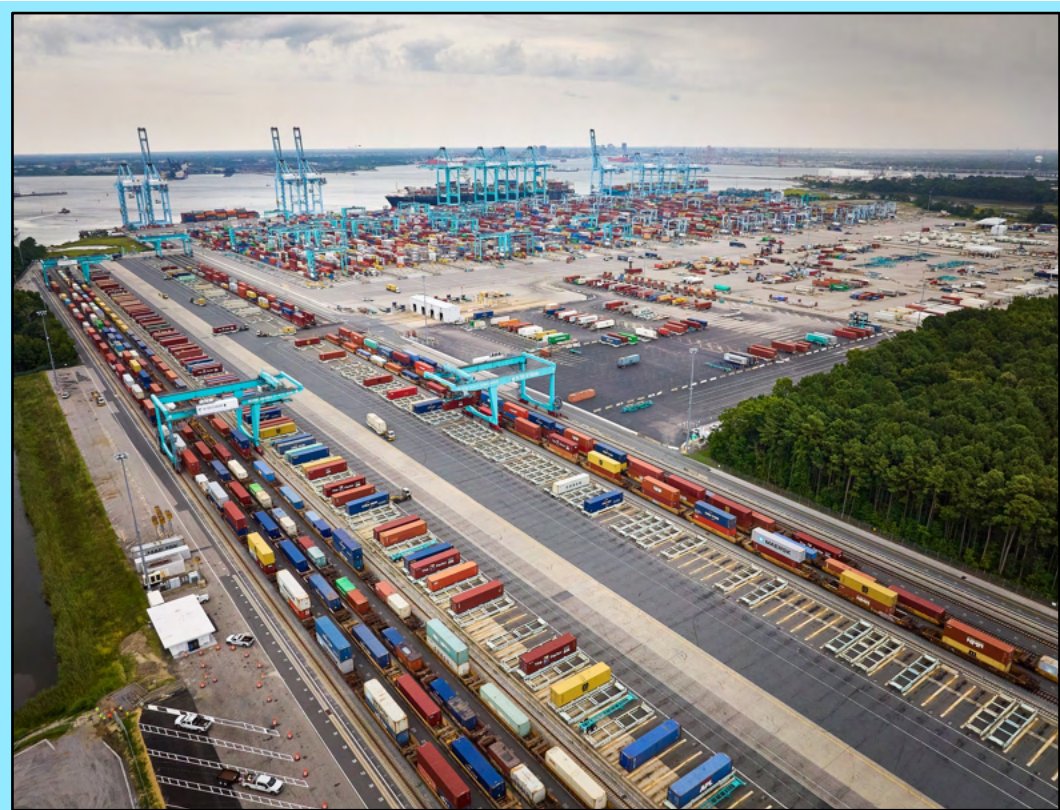
- Call to Order at 7pm Oct. 17, then recessed until 10am on Oct. 18, 2026
Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd. Virginia Beach, VA 23462

UPCOMING CONVENTIONS

Save the Date:

Tracks to Tidewater

October 15-18, 2026 Virginia Beach, VA



2026 NMRA National Convention

July 27 to August 2, 2026



 www.facebook.com/NMRATakesChatt

nmra2026.org

Elections 2026

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, 2026.** 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, 2026** – to ALL of the following nominations process officials:

Nominations Committee:

Chair: Robert Charles, MMR rcharles@aol.com
Jack Dziadul, MMR 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 2026 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, 2026 -- 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, 2026 -- Deadline for mailing paper ballots to members and for commencing electronic voting.

September 3, 2026 -- Deadline for electronic voting, also last day as shown by postmark for mailing paper ballots.

September 7, 2026 -- Deadline for receipt by Balloting Committee of paper ballots sent by mail.

September 14, 2026 -- Deadline for Ballot Committee to transmit results to President, the Director overseeing this committee, and the Business Manager.

September 21, 2026 -- 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, 2026 -- 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! If you haven't done this before, sign up NOW! It's YOUR TURN!

Candidates' Statements

Gary Brown - for President



I am amazed at the number of people who pull together to make the MER what it is. I have seen us overcome the challenges of coming out of the isolation of Covid. I have seen National move to chart an ambitious course for the future growth of the NMRA. This hobby has so much to offer people of all ages, and I hope we will work together to bring more folks of all ages into Model Railroading.

I have learned much during my two terms as the Vice-President of the MER, and feel I am ready to take on the office of President. The work continues slowly to bring a new division to the MER and as President I will continue that process. The MER is also looking to host the NMRA convention in 2030, another project in work. As President I will endeavor to maintain open and timely communication flowing between the Divisions and the MER. I look forward to and will be honored to serve the MER if you will elect me as President.

Michael Mauer - for Vice President



My passion for railroading and model railroading began with my great-grandfather, a New York Central engineer, and has continued for more than two decades of active modeling since 2000. I have been a committed member of the National Model Railroad Association since 2009 and have served on the Palmetto Division Board, gaining valuable experience in division-level leadership, communication, and member engagement. I currently serve as MER Archivist, preserving the Region's historical records, and was recently elected as a Director in the Carolina Piedmont Division.

I strongly support the NMRA's mission of education, fellowship, and the advancement of the hobby. Through clinics, published work, and hands-on modeling, I strive to share knowledge and encourage participation. My current project, the Wood Hog Lumber Co. Railroad, reflects my dedication to craftsmanship and documenting the modeling process.

Professionally, I am an IT Manager at a law firm in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where collaboration, planning, and problem-solving are central to my role. I live in Kernersville, North Carolina, with my wife, Amy, and remain active in railroad preservation through the North Carolina Transportation Museum. As Mid-Eastern Region Vice President, I will work to support divisions, strengthen communication, and ensure the Region continues to thrive.

Rick Stoneking - for Secretary



I currently hold, or have held, multiple positions within the MER and NJ Division of the NMRA including being the current Secretary of the MER since July 2022, and I served as MER Publisher from March 0f 2022 to November 2023. I also currently serve on the NJ Division Board of. I am the Treasurer for the Maryland & Pennsylvania RR Historical Society, and Vice President of the Burlington County Model Railroad Club. Professionally I have a degree in Electrical Engineering and work as an Engineering Manager for a Robotic automation company in Moorestown, NJ. I served in the US Army as a Military Police Officer from 1984 to 1987 active duty, and 1987 to 1990 in the Reserves.

William Wurtzell - for Treasurer



MER qualifications:

- Currently serving first term as Treasurer and member of Regional Board of Directors.
 - Increased Region's income by approximately \$5,300 for the period 2024-2025 by safely investing cash balances.
 - Issued timely financial reports as required by the Board and MER bylaws.
 - Issued semiannual rebates to divisions on a timely basis.
 - Coordinated preparation of Region's annual budgets.
- Serving as James River Division Clerk from 2020 to 2023.

Professional career:

- I am a New York State Certified Public Accountant.
- From 1971 to 2002, employed by a big eight CPA firm in New York City, and employed by two investment banks and a commodities broker as a top-level financial executive, responsible for all financial recordkeeping functions, financial reporting, and regulatory reporting to the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodities Futures Trading Commission.
- From 1992 to 2015, worked as one of two partners owning and managing residential apartments, including all record keeping functions, paying employees, approving tenants, handling evictions and filing tax returns.
- From 2002 to 2022, developed a small accounting practice, providing bookkeeping and tax services to small businesses and individuals.

Summary:

I am a highly qualified accountant and look forward to continuing to serve as MER Treasurer.

Here's Your Chance to Make a Difference!

MER Positions are now open and available for:
Treasurer, Editor, and Publisher


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 rates per year are shown on the right.

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.


Advertising Rates (per year)	
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

IPSWICH HOBBIES



Craftsman Structure Kits

Jack Dziadul



IpswichHobbies.com

919-721-8757

(Continued from p.1) O Scale Bay Window Caboose by Martin Brechbiel, MMR

First up, I like to collect as many of the foreseeably needed parts and supplies into one place (project box) and give that assortment some thought before diving into the build. The number one part of importance was a pair of wood side bay window castings from Scale City Designs ([Photo 1](#)). I also had a handful of freight car doors scavenged from some amazingly cheap Atlas car bodies (\$1/ea!). I think I resold the car bodies minus the doors for \$1/ea. A length of milled wood freight car roof and a recast resin flat car blank were in the mix at the starting line. There were also some Grandt Line No. 52 caboose doors and windows, some Train Craft W-4 windows and K-23 steps, an AB brake casting set from Gloor Craft, and some door supports from PSC. This pile reached critical mass for getting this project started.



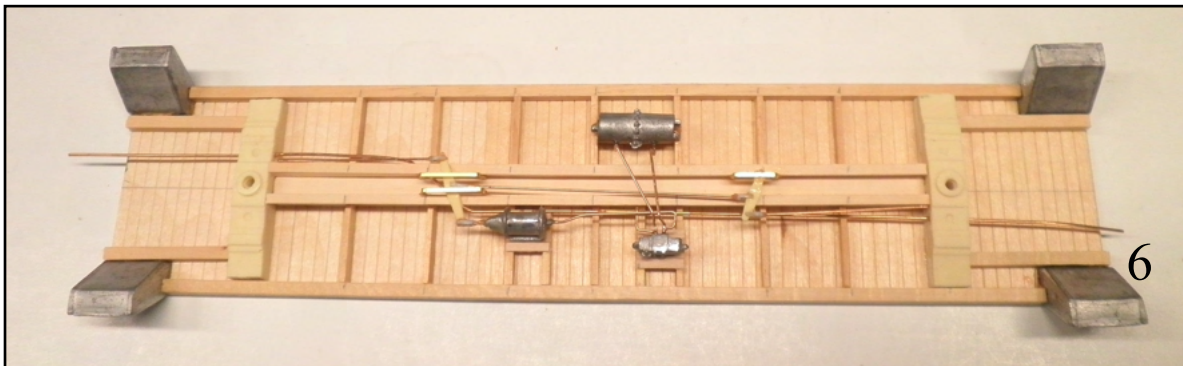
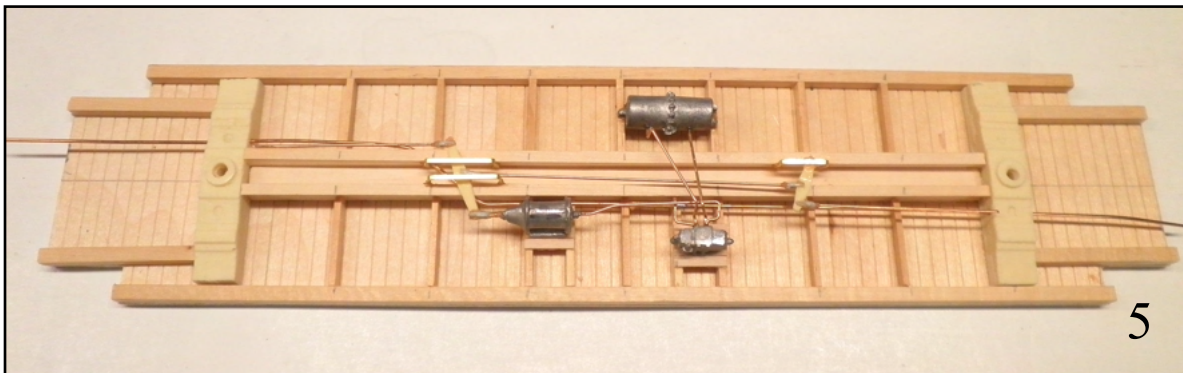
First up in this build was to lay out each of the sides ([Photo 2](#)). I glued up some 1/16" thick scribed siding, cut the car height longer than needed, and dropped the needed parts into place to plan their locations based on my collection of photos of this car. The step at the far left in Photo 2 accounts for the open platform on this car and the Train Craft W-4 windows turned out to be surprisingly close to reasonably accurate in appearance. The bay window and door just have to go where they fit, allowing for the car length, and then there is the other step for the other open platform.

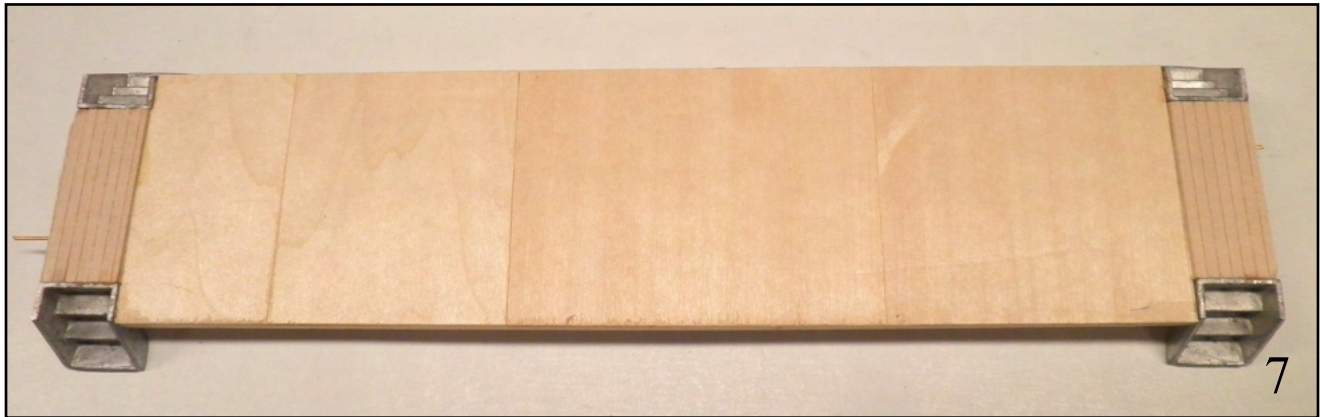


The more I looked at the layout for the sides with the various components in place, the more troubled I was about using that resin flat car blank. Cutting the openings for the steps just seemed overly complicated. As such, I completely abandoned that cast floor and frame in favor of just building up one that would account for the steps from the starting design. This was assembled from 1/32" thick scribed siding over some 1/32" thick sheet basswood so that the platforms where the steps would be installed would have visible scribed siding. Two of my resin cast car bolsters, drilled and tapped for 4-40, and my last bit of Northeastern Scale Lumber milled center sill were added next. The bolsters were cut down on width to allow for the addition of some 3/32" square stock to be added at the side to act as sills and for a good gluing surface for adding the sides ([Photo 3](#)).



Underbody supports (1/16" x 3/32") were added while a train line was threaded through the bolsters and the center sill. Additional 3/32" square stock was added where the steps would be placed inset from the sides ([Photo 4](#)). An AB brake system was installed using the Gloor Craft set of castings drilled to accept plumbing using 0.025" phosphorbronze wire. The brake linkages were made also using 0.025" phosphorbronze wire connected to the brake levers (shaped styrene) using cut down Grandt Line turnbuckles to form clevises. Brake hangers were fashioned from some 0.015" x 0.42" flat brass stock ([Photo 5](#)). The white metal Train Craft steps were added using Goo and CA up against the added 3/32" square stock to complete this stage of the underbody ([Photos 6, 7](#)).

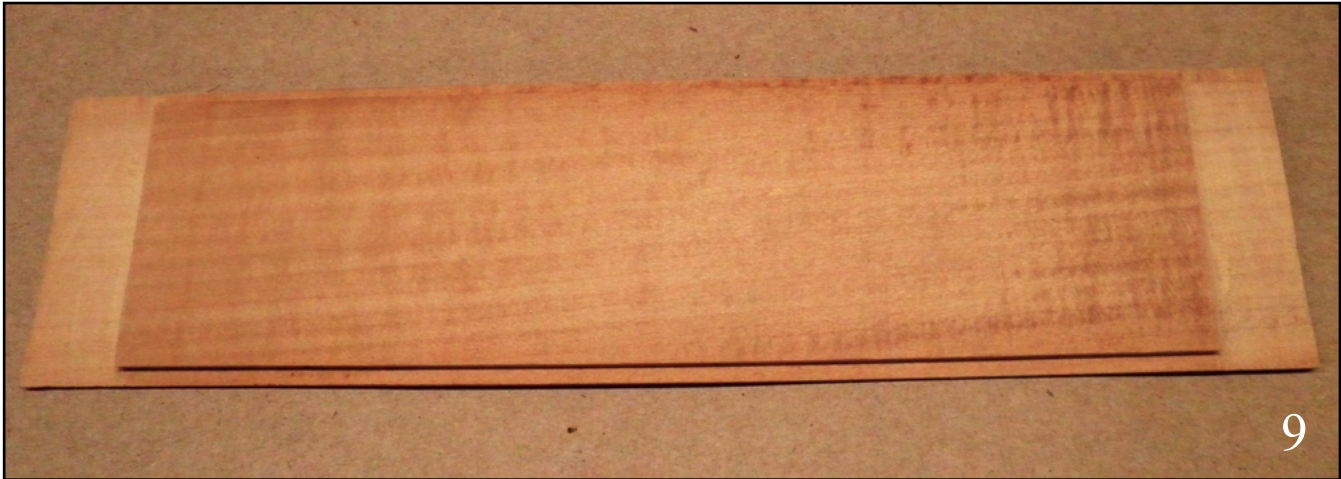




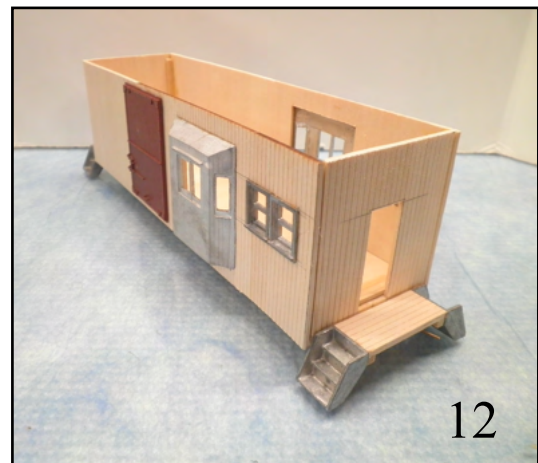
Returning to the sides, the white metal components were cleaned up with files and a sanding block, and scribed siding was opened up to accept these parts. The Train Craft windows were joined together using Goo and CA prior to being inserted into their respective openings ([Photo 8](#)).



The ends of the milled roof section that would overhang the platform were cut back ([Photo 9](#)). This was done using a razor saw and finished with a file and sanding block. A thin veneer of basswood was applied to the ends and shaped to match the contour of the roof.



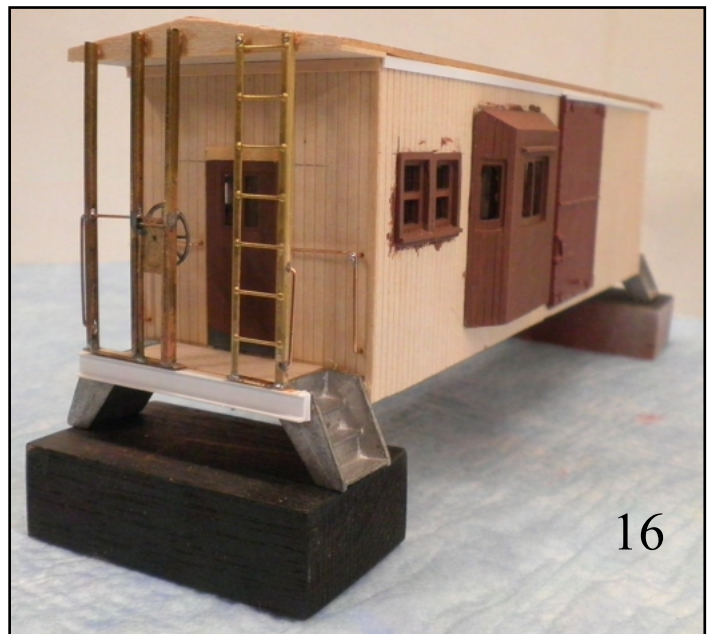
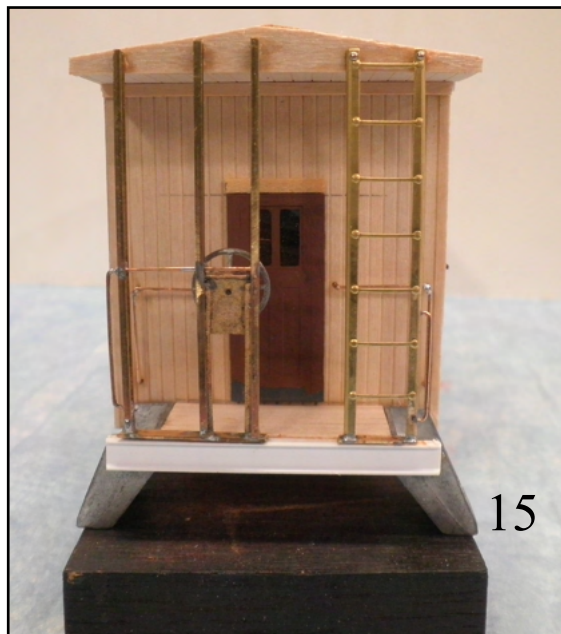
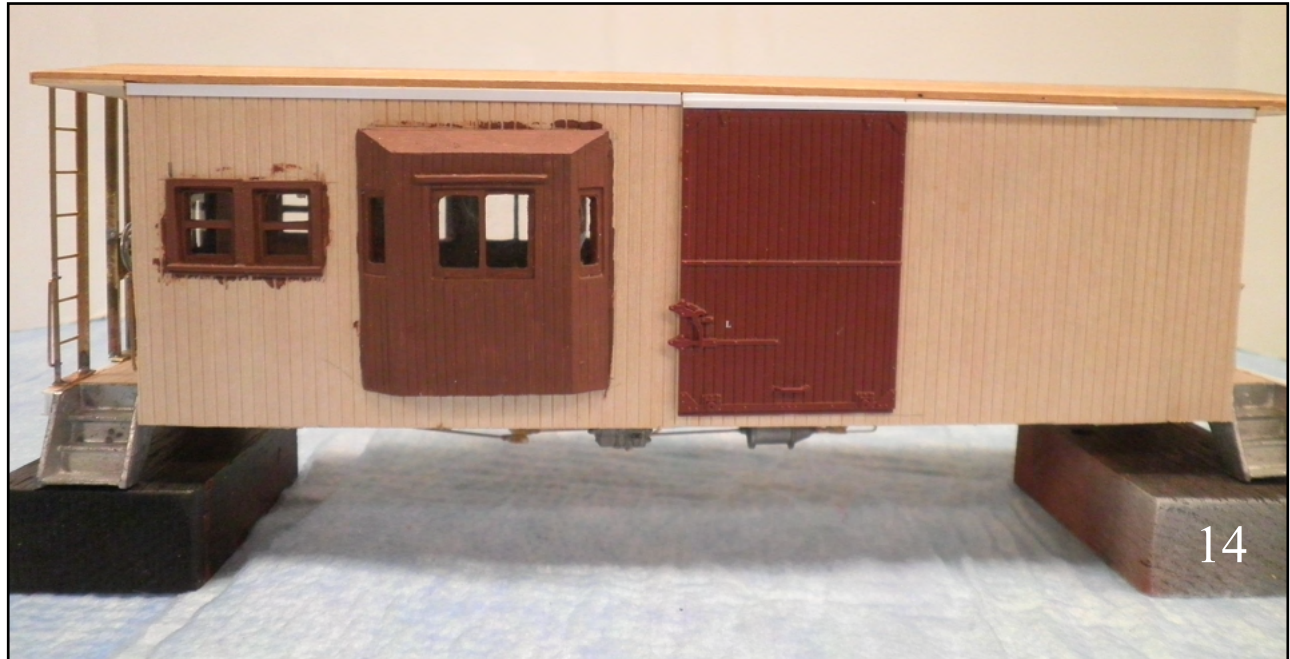
The ends were assembled from the same 1/16" scribed siding and the doors from the Grandt Line No. 52 set ([Photo 10](#)). The car ends were set to the floor width with the door opening centered. Glue blocks were added to the back of the ends prior to assembly of the ends and sides on to the floor. The ends were glued into place and then the sides were added, gluing those to the ends and side sills of the floor ([Photos 11-13](#)).





13

The milled roof was fitted down into the “box” formed by the sides and ends and secured there with Goo and CA. Strip styrene was applied for trim, and above the door, it was built out as a “z” over the door to appear as a runner. The white metal castings were given a primer coat of paint (Red Oxide; Polly Scale) ([Photo 14](#)). Details on the ends were added. First, grab irons were added onto the end walls adjacent to the doors. These were made from 0.025” phosphorbronze wire. Then, the end sills were slightly extended with the addition of a styrene channel. Brass ladder stock was soldered to some 0.015” flat stock at the base and then also soldered to more 0.025” wire on the one side to introduce another grab iron. This unit was mounted to the top of the extended end sill with CA and Goo, and then also pinned into place at the top into the roof. A brass channel was used to sandwich a brake stand casting and soldered together. This unit and a third section of channel were soldered to more 0.015” flat stock to form a mounting base. Before mounting however, these were connected with an additional shaped length of 0.025” wire soldered through to form both a hand rail and a grab iron. A brake wheel was mounted to some scrap 0.028” wire and that was added to the brake stand. This unit was added to the top of the extended end sill with CA and Goo, and then also to the top of the roof ([Photos 15, 16](#)).

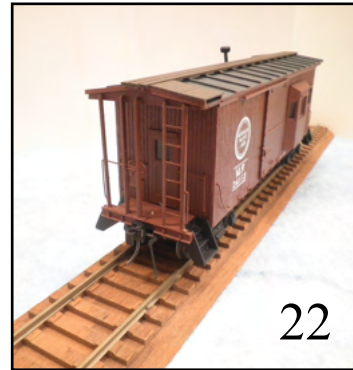


Going back to the sides, grabs were added to the ends near the steps using more 0.025" wire. Door runner supports (Precision Scale) were added under the doors. Roof details were added and then the roof got a coat of paint (Lark Dark Gray; Polly Scale) ([Photos 17, 18](#)). The walls of the entire car were painted (Red Oxide; Polly Scale) ([Photos 19, 20](#)).



To finish the car, all the iron work was also painted (Red Oxide; Polly Scale). The roof walk and platforms, pre-painted (Roof Brown; Polly Scale), were added along with a smoke stack (Engine Black; Polly Scale). The steps were also painted the same black. After gloss coating, decals from K4 were applied and then a day later the entire car was sealed with Matte Clear. Couplers and a pair of leaf spring Andrews trucks were mounted under the car ([Photos 21-23](#)). That stage completed this project and allowed me to check off a car that I wanted to build from a few photos.





Latest from the Contest Room

By Dan Peele



First for some updates.

I have requested the BOD (Board of Directors) to approve the following Special Contests as required by our Executive Handbook (EHB) every two years. The following awards are included:

The Clyde Gerald Award	The Favorite Train Award	The PJ Mattson Memorial Award	The Philadelphia Division New Modeler Award
The President’s Award	The Favorite Model Award	The Chuck Hladik Award	The Ray Bilodeau Narrow Gauge Award

Now the attentive reader will notice this list does not match our website. Well, once approved by the BOD, I’ll ask Jeff Burch, our webmaster, to update our website. There are two current awards being left out. I have found no record of The Blue Lantern Award nor the Great Decals! Award being presented in the past two years. I think farther back than that; however, I’m not doing that research now.

You may also notice that Best in Show is not listed. Best in Show is actually required by the EHB. The Photo Contest and the Module Contest are also required by the EHB. The Photo Contest was discontinued in 2019 by unanimous vote at the July 27, 2019 MER Board Meeting.

For anyone interested in submitting modules for evaluation: At this time the NMRA is re-writing the evaluation criteria for modules. I have communicated with Sam Swanson, our National Contest Chair, and for now, the National Module Contest is evaluated similarly to National’s Photo Contest, which is similar to a three-stage popular vote amongst the evaluators. I have suggested the BOD adopt this temporary evaluation method for modules.

Many of you may recall my questioning the contest categories. To be honest, I asked our superintendents to conduct an informal poll of the members’ thoughts. Should we keep the On-Line / Off-Line distinction for both Structures and Displays? From all responses I have received, it is about 50/50. I did not ask for “I don’t cares” or “Doesn’t matters” so, of the 50/50, how many said stay the same and how many said change, I do not know. As long as it stays 50/50, the categories remain the same.

Of course, I would be remiss in my duties if I did not include the request for evaluators. No photo bribes in this article. You can look back in the past issues of *The Local*; contest results are generally in the Nov-Dec issue each year. I am looking for at least six teams of three with at least one MMR per team.

And more importantly, BUILD!!! We need models for the contest room. Evaluated models in the Contest Room are evaluated by the same guidelines as AP evaluations. Merit Awards are given to any model earning 87.5 points or more.

BUILD

BUILD

BUILD



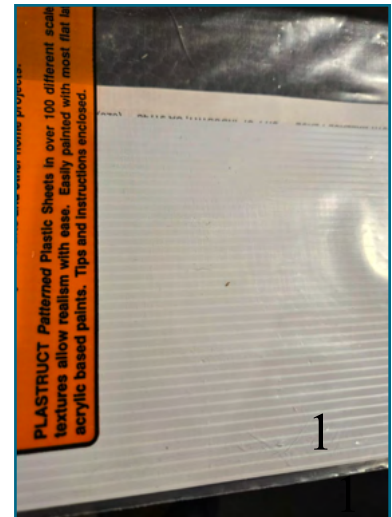
Model Railroad Museum in Prague, Czechia. Photo by the Editor

McDowell Salvage Office

By Jim Allen

If you drive around railyards of any type, you are going to see corrugated steel buildings. You will see them used for almost anything from office to storage or maybe a machine shop. In one of my latest projects I needed an all in one building. I wanted tall doors so that heavy equipment could drive in, and also a small door for the office. I measured the place where it would be located on the layout and drew out the footprint on a piece a paper. I actually had enough to make this building without ordering anything. Three different types of sheet styrene were used. The floor would be concrete. The walls and then the roof would be tin or steel ([Photo 1](#)).

I measured and cut one side wall and then made a copy. I did the same for the front and back walls. Next, I cut out two large doors for sliding doors and one small office door ([Photo 2](#)). I then cut small square tubing pieces to help hold things in place. Once the walls were glued together, I measured and cut the overhanging roof. I used scrap sheet styrene to make trim around the doors, as well as the doors themselves. I left both sliding doors open almost all the way. This was done on purpose to make it more interesting.



For a floor I again used sheet styrene, except this time I used a smooth piece. It was painted a concrete color. I marked the opening of the doors but I did not glue down the walls to the floor just yet. I wanted to weather up inside the doors some and place a few items just inside.

The building itself was now ready for paint and weathering ([Photo 3](#)). Once this was done, I decided to put an antenna on one side as an extra detail. The floor was glued last. Now my building was ready for the scene. I made a sign for the side of the building by designing it on a PC, and then printed it on label paper. The paper sign was placed on a painted piece of smooth thin styrene.



Once the building was secured into place I glued gravel around the building. Using diluted Indian ink, the gravel was colored dark for the many grease and grime spills it has seen over the years. In my case it's part of a locomotive salvage yard. I added locomotive parts and parked a frontend loader nearby ([Photo 5](#)).



Of course, it had to have a soda machine, which led to a man drinking soda. For fun I made a Charlie's Snacks truck for out front. The little truck was something else at one time; however, a quick paint job with some freshly made decals fixed that ([Photos 6,7](#)).

I suspect the scene will continue to grow over time; at least that's the plan.

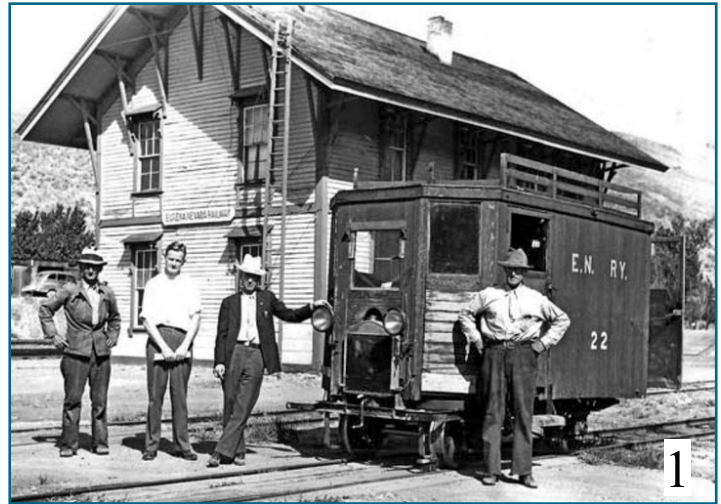


Building an HOn30 Motor Rail Car

By Alex Belida, MMR (Photos by the author)

My modeling interests in recent years have focused on the Eureka and Palisade narrow gauge railroad in Nevada, which in the late 1800s ran some 85 miles between Eureka, a mining town, to Palisade, where it intersected with the transcontinental railroad ([Photo 1](#)).

As the mining tapered off in the 1900s, the railroad became the Eureka Nevada Railway and began using motor rail cars, cheaper to operate than steam engines. The railroad is now defunct and Palisade is a virtual ghost town.



I discovered online a 3D printable plan for the Eureka Nevada's #22 motor rail car in HOn30 ([Photo 2](#)). After a further online search, I found a company that will make 3D prints from plans you provide (printathing.com) and I had one made. The 3D body and underframe are designed to fit on top of a Kato N-scale power chassis (#11-109) ([Photo 3](#)).



When I got the parts, I decided to paint the underframe flat black, the body a greenish-black and added rust color to the wheels of the Kato drive.



I also added the logo decal I had custom made for my Eureka and South Pass Railroad (a name I picked for my HO model railroad long before I knew there was a real Eureka railroad.)

I put a driver in the motor car and added some gear on the roof rack along with a side ladder to access the roof ([Photo 4](#)). I then did test runs on Peco Code 80 Narrow Gauge flextrack I bought (SL-400, 00-9, HOe).



For my final step, I weathered it with Pan Pastels and AK stains. Finally, I couldn't resist hanging a skull over the front window ([Photo 5](#)).

Since I had purchased two of the Kato drives (protectively), I found another HOn30 3D printed motor rail car that would fit on them, a larger steam combine, made by JT's Trains and Stuff and sold on eBay. I weathered it in a similar fashion after applying my logo ([Photo 6](#)).



Now I am building a 2' x 2' narrow gauge Nevada diorama for my motor rail cars on a piece of 1" thick pink foam insulation, lightweight so I can take it to meets and shows. It's a design challenge, and my track plan options are limited. But I hope to design it so that I can run a spur to one edge so I can eventually make a second 2' x 2' module and link the two together.



HO Covered Hopper from the Cincinnati Division

Hello once again to NMRA, MER, Division Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, Directors, News-Letter Editors, Web Masters, Facebook Managers and members in-general. We previously reached out to you in the Fall of 2022 and in subsequent ads since then.

We are getting in touch with you once again with a request to publicize and promote 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>

It would be greatly appreciated if you would make your membership aware of this limited-edition freight car by publicizing it in your Region's and/or Division's web page, newsletter or email blast.

We thank you in advance for your support!

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

Woodland Scenics' - Deep Pour Water™ Murky - Two Thumbs Up

By Alan Balma, MMR (Photos by author)



This is a review of my first attempt using Woodland Scenics Deep Pour Water™ Murky ([Photo 1](#)). I will use DPW in the rest of the article to refer to the product and WS to refer to the company. In the past, I used EnviroTex Light® and ArtResin®. I will compare their results later.

The area to receive the pour was created as usual--that is with a fully sealed and level surface. From experience, the bottom should be rendered flat. The grain in plywood and Homasote cracks, and unnatural bumps can telegraph through the epoxy, especially if you are using clear. There are many ways to cover the imperfections, but I use wall board compound, sand it flat and seal it with a couple of coats of paint. In my case, the pour was in a harbor scene on Canandaigua Lake. Since I was using DPW pre-tinted Murky Water, I chose to paint the bottom with WS Yellow Silt, CW 4535, which enhances the color effect of the epoxy. Since this is a deep-water port scene, a uniform bottom color was appropriate. I unfortunately did not take pictures during the process.



Photo 2: Aloquin Pond on my PRR Elmira Branch S scale layout. The water is ArtResin with WS Water Ripples effects.

For ponds, lakes, and rivers there are many hobby press articles on how to use varying colors of paint and sunken materials to model increasing depths ([Photo 2](#)). Aloquin Pond is painted and detailed using the techniques in both Gerry Leone's print articles and Model Railroad Video Plus videos. This pond was created with ArtResin and the wave effects with WS Water Ripples.

You can pour DPW up to 1/2" deep at a time. I thought that a 1/4" depth would work well since no underwater detail needed to show. My calculations said I would need five boxes to reach this depth. But at about \$31 dollars per 12 fluid ounces, I elected to go with a 3/16" deep pour with four boxes.

Each batch requires 10 minutes of stirring. I did not think my arms would last, so like Huck Finn, I enlisted four friends to do the stirring for me. We closely followed all the WS directions, so I will not repeat them here. From my experience, the biggest problem with epoxy pours is the formation of small bubbles and the process to try to remove them. The number one admonition is to stir slowly! I also preheated the room to 74 degrees the night before and kept that temperature during the curing process. We had great success. There were absolutely no bubbles to remove. I covered the water feature with a piece of cardboard to keep both dust and any drafts from affecting the pour ([Photo 3](#)).

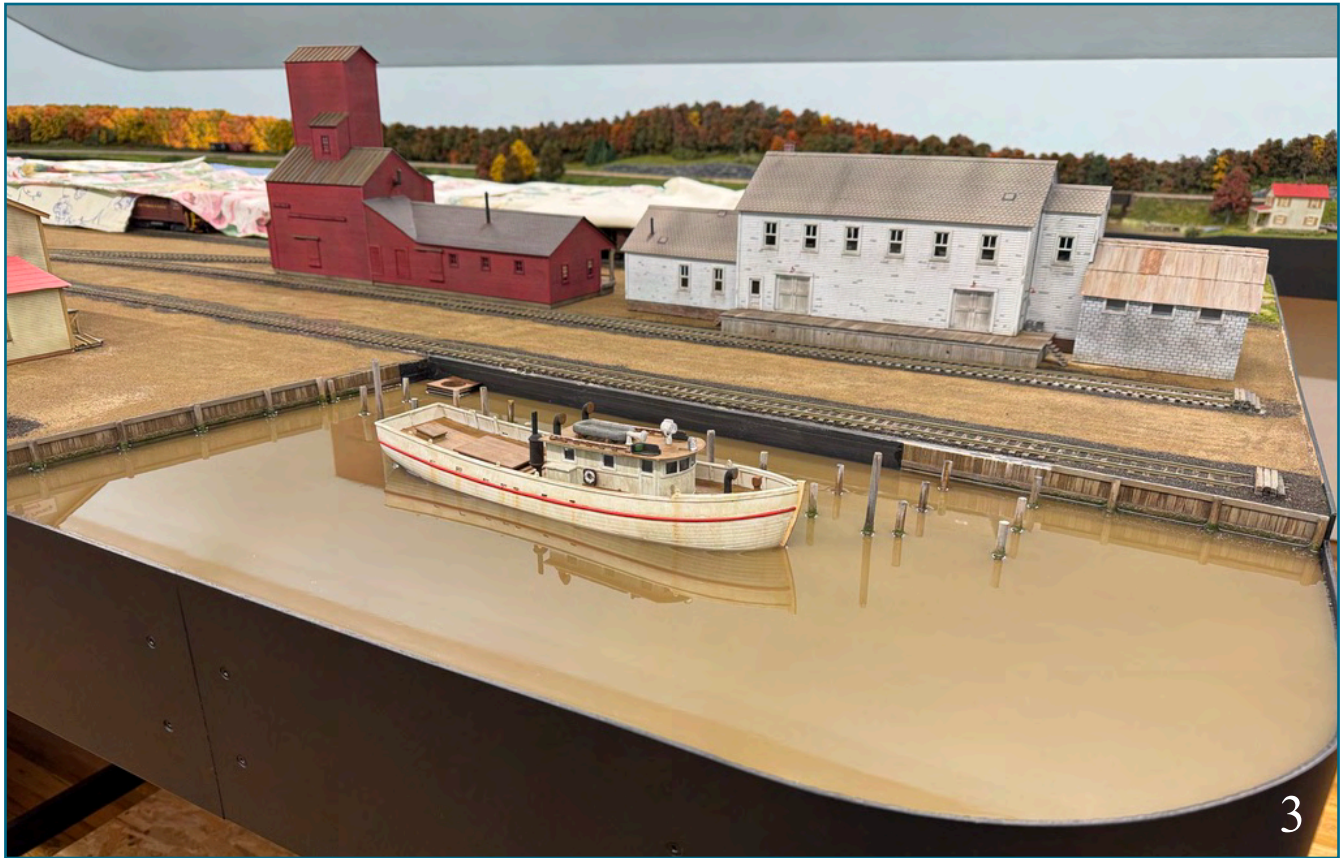


Photo 3: Canandaigua Lake on my PRR Elmira Branch layout. The WS DWP Murky before WS Water Waves were applied. The posts support the covered dock removed for the picture. The boat is embedded in the water.

As per the instructions, I checked the pour after four hours and there were no bubbles or problems. In 24 hours, the surface was hard to the touch. I waited a week before applying WS Water Waves with a stiff 1” brush ([Photo 4](#)).



Photo 4: Canandaigua Lake after the WS Water Waves was applied.

The first product that I had used, EnviroTex Light, produced a glassy smooth surface. It can be poured in thick layers. It is solvent based and should be used with a respirator. If you cannot seal off the room, the chemical smell can be invasive. There were bubbles but I was able to remove them using a propane torch per instructions ([Photo 5](#)). I did not apply any wave effects. Even though I got excellent results, I would not use this product again because of the toxicity.



Photo 5: Lake on my previous freelance starter layout using EnviroTex Lite.

The second product that I used, ArtResin, was chosen because it was non-toxic and from researching, it is very resistant to yellowing. It can only be poured in 1/8" layers. I used this on two projects. Both required two pours to obtain the 1/4" depth that I wanted above which was the first project ([Photo 2](#)). In this project I was able to remove the bubbles with a torch and blowing through a straw. With the second project I was able to remove the bubbles, but some appeared a couple of days later when I applied gloss medium to create the wave effect. I do not know if the bubbles were from the resin or the gloss medium. You have to look closely to see them. They are not apparent in the picture ([Photo 6](#)). I would give this product one thumb up, but worth considering because of cost.



Photo 6: Keuka Inlet made with ArtResin and Gloss Gel waves.

I really liked the Woodland Scenics Deep Pour Water™ Murky – two thumbs up. It was nice that I did not have to guess how much tint to add to get the murky water. WS sells a number of different tints that can be added to their DPW Clear. Non-toxic and no bubbles makes it the top of my list. However, it is expensive compared to the others.

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION 2026 —CHATTANOOGA, TENNESEE

***Coolidge Park: Site
of the 2026
NMRA
National
Convention.
July 27 - August 2,
2026. Registration
Now Open!***

Chattanooga, TN



NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION 2026 - REGISTER NOW

Alex Belida, MMR has written a railroad thriller: At a crowded national model railroad convention, the disappearance of a rare brass locomotive soon escalates into murder and a conspiracy threatening national security. An expert model railroader and a determined reporter follow the trail to uncover a shadowy espionage scheme and they discover the model railroading world can conceal deadly flaws. **DEAD RAIL** is now available on Amazon in [paperback](#) and for [Kindle](#). Also as an eBook-on [Apple](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Smashwords](#) & [Kobo](#).

And Just Released: BLIND SIDING, A SEQUEL!



Mark your
Calendars now!
2026 MER
Convention:
Oct. 15-18



Norfolk Southern Connector Layout is Preparing for Operations

By Ernie Little, MMR

In the past three months I have been preparing my Norfolk Southern Connector, a two level HO scale layout, to allow it to be used for operations sessions. As my layout was not initially designed for operation sessions, I knew at the start of this adventure that I was in for some work to make it happen.

First, I needed to determine what the requirements of my layout were for use in operation sessions. There were several: a need for a timetable for the trains to run, car cards and waybills to provide the operators with what they needed to do, sidings that can accommodate a maximum of five cars, and lastly a series of shakedown to test what I had done with the timetable, car cards and waybills, and the overall performance of the layout.

The first constraint – Timetable. As my 12’ x 20’ layout is small compared to many of the layouts where I have attended operations sessions, I decided that I would use “mother may I” as my method of controlling trains and not use a timetable. This solved the first need I had encountered.

Rpt. Marks	UTLX
Car No.:	643167
Type:	Ethanol Tank Car
Black	Length 50
Notes:	
When empty, Return to:	

Photo 1: Car Card

TM	INTER	1
To:	Dome Petroleum	
	Sarnia, ON	
From:	LaGuardia Energy	
	West Joyceville, Va	
Lading:	Ethanol	
Route:		
HAZARDOUS - FLAMMABLE		
HAZARDOUS - FLAMMABLE		
Route:		
Lading:	Empty Car (Ethanol)	
	Sarnia, ON	
From:	Dome Petroleum	
	West Joyceville, Va	
To:	LaGuardia Energy	
2	INTER	TM

Photo 2: Waybill

The second requirement - Development of car cards and waybills presented a challenge to me. I have several industries on my layout and some of them involve yards and some do not. I researched on the internet and found a Microsoft Excel program, developed by a model railroader, which allowed the development of both items easily. I used my train asset inventory to determine the information for the car cards and had to determine the origins and destinations for the cars involved for the waybills. Using the computer program I had found, entering the needed data into it, and using white and yellow card stock paper, I was able to create and print both essential items and these efforts addressed this need ([Photos 1 and 2](#)).

It was apparent to me that I needed to have a staging yard for the railroad. Up to this point I had run trains between the yards on the layout but never had a “starting” point for them. Rather, locomotives started in one yard and went to the other with return to the original and not as “trains” in operations. This caused me to add two curved turnouts to allow a wye to be formed to allow trains to arrive and depart from a new staging yard that I created ([Photo 3](#)).



Photo 4: Staging Yard



Photo 3: Wye

The new yard ([Photo 4](#)) has four tracks and one is designated as an interchange where cars from other railroads go on and off the NSC. This worked well, but I didn't provide ground throws on the switches involved, and the operators experienced confusion on the position of the switch. To address this issue, I installed ground throws to clarify the switch position.

Now I encountered the most difficult part of the adventure, to see how trains would operate by the “mother may I” system and operators using the car cards and waybills. To do this I ran three monthly shakedown sessions using seasoned operators to run the trains. I developed five trains that did not run on a schedule, but were assigned to the operators who took them on test rides. Notes were taken on what went right and what went wrong with the running of each train.

The shakedown sessions exposed several issues with my layout that I had never encountered before and here are a couple of examples.

Although, I add weight to my rolling stock to meet NMRA standards when I purchase them, I had missed a group of them resulting in a few derailments. This was addressed and then I found that my postal scale was two ounces off (too light). After purchasing a new electronic scale, I was able to fix this issue. I know I will have to go back through the existing rolling stock as they are probably light due to the use of the faulty postal scale.

At a double cross over on the second level, it was discovered that it was shorting if all four switches were not operated to create the requested route ([Photo 5](#)). Although it was DCC compatible it was found that isolation gaps were needed to make it not short if only one of the crossovers was activated. This was fixed by changing the wiring arrangement for the affected tortoise motors, so they were tied to one common DPDT switch and not separate DPDT switches.

At the west entrance to a tunnel leading to a helix, longer cars, such as intermodals, were striking one side of the tunnel entrance due to insufficient clearance. This had not been encountered before as longer cars had never been sent to the second deck.



Photo 5: Crossover



Photo 6: Clearance at Tunnel

With my new intermodal yard being on the second deck this limit had to be eliminated. The fix was to enlarge the tunnel access to provide the needed clearance between long cars and the tunnel entrance wall ([Photo 6](#)).

The train room did not have sufficient lighting. I had several recessed ceiling lights, with incandescent lamps on a dimmer, but the light level did not allow the operators to see the car markings. I had installed some LED strip lights on the layout to illuminate the layout sufficiently to take pictures, but there was a need for more lighting. I changed out the incandescent lamps for 150 watt daylight LED lamps and this solved the lighting issue ([Photo 7](#)).

Although I had installed car boxes at the appropriate points on the layout I forgot an important item needed at each location. This important item was car picks, and I have provided some bamboo skewers that do the job.



Photo 7: Layout Room Lighting

The last issue found was on the second level of my layout in the intermodal/ethanol plant yard where back to back switches caused significant overhang for the longer cars and the longer cars easily derail unless a very low speed is used to negotiate them. This switch configuration is currently being redesigned to make it a ladder arrangement to allow the longer cars to navigate through them ([Photo 8](#)).

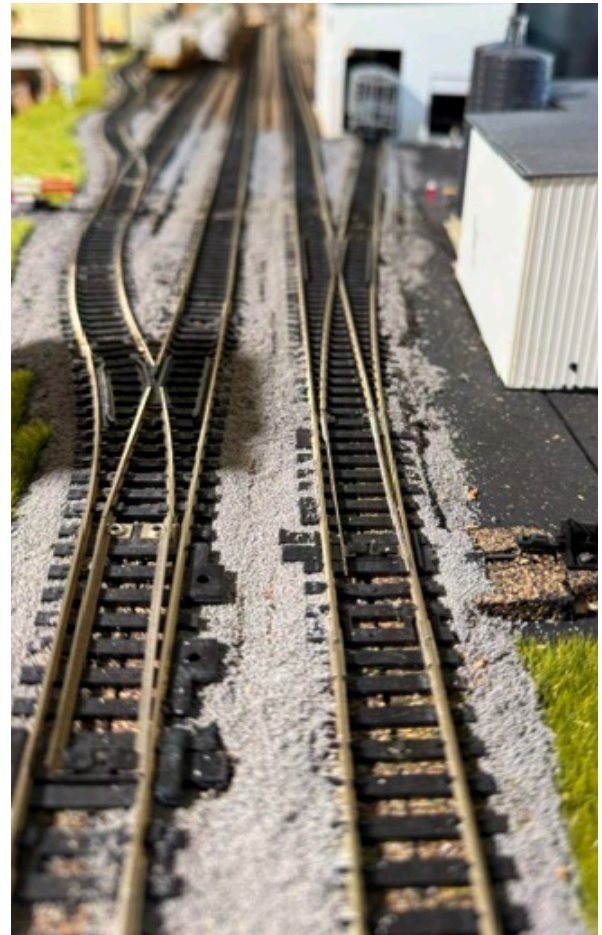


Photo 8: Intermodal Yard

There was also an issue with operators to access the turnout that allows run-a-round movements between two of the tracks. Rather than install a tortoise motor I decided to try a different brand of turnout control that has the same footprint as a tortoise motor, but is shorter in height (approximately 3/4" tall). I installed a Model Railroad Control Systems Mp10. It has all of the capabilities of a tortoise motor, uses a small cam motor to move the slider, and the movement is linear and not on an arc like a tortoise motor. I also didn't want a tall building to hide the motor ([Photo 9](#)).

Next is a picture of the building that houses the MP10 turnout motor with red and green 12v LEDs to show the switch status ([Photo 10](#)).



Photo 9: MP10



Photo 10: Building Housing MP10

As I write this shakedown, number three is scheduled for next week. We have made significant progress, but still need to run more trains to test operations on the layout to assure the layout is ready for prime time Ops.

Union Freight House at Virginia Beach

By Jack Dziadul, MMR (Photos by the author)



“Tracks to Tidewater,” the 2026 Mid-Eastern convention, is October 15-18 at the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach – Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

One of the highlights of the annual Mid-Eastern Region conventions is the lineup of clinics. Hands-on “Make-and-Take” clinics are especially popular. This year’s offering is the Union Freight House by Ipswich Hobbies. Bob Minnis, MMR and I will be leading participants through the steps of building a laser-cut basswood craftsman kit ([Photo 1](#)).

Beginners will have a chance to learn the basics of working with wood. Experienced modelers can practice their skills and learn a few tips to create a foreground quality model. Some of the issues that we will discuss include:

- Planning the outcome – do you want a new, freshly painted look, or a distressed worn-out structure?
- Following a logical order of construction. Yes, read the instructions.
- Bracing for strength and to prevent warping.
- Stains and weathering powders.
- Detailing the interior and dock.
- Hiding mistakes. Yes, we all make them.

We'll dive right in after a brief PowerPoint presentation. The PowerPoint will also be provided to participants in advance, along with a list of tools to bring. The instructors will provide a variety of acrylic paints and stains.

Although the kit is based on the Boston and Maine Railroad prototype that still stands in Union, New Hampshire, the building is a very generic freight house style useful on any railroad. Just change the paint color.

The major components are the four laser-cut basswood walls, the scribed plank floor, and the cardstock roof. Tichy windows simplify the build. The package of sticks just need to be measured and cut for the bracing and building trim pieces ([Photos 2 and 3](#)).



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 - Index
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](#)

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.

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 be 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 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.

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

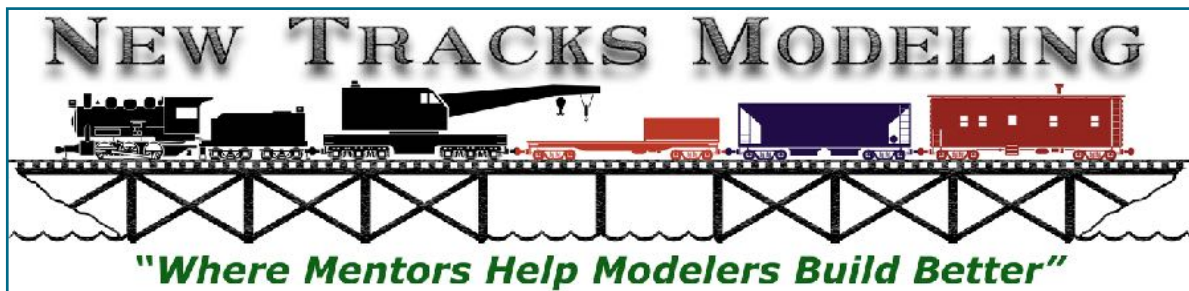


Please only send us your own creative work or that for which you have written permission to use so we can give that source proper credit. We need to avoid any copyright infringement situations. If you have previously published your article or photo in any other magazine or newsletter, including a Division 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.

NMRA Membership Programs and Savings

The NMRA has several money saving programs and discounts exclusively for NMRA Members.

Check out the ones listed on this page!



Back on Track...

All Aboard!

By Greg Warth, Editor

Spring is here, and what better time to roll up your sleeves and get involved with the vibrant community of model railroading. Whether you're a Master Model Railroader (MMR) or just beginning your journey, there are tons of benefits to sustaining your position or joining into the fray. Volunteering your time and energy for your favorite pastime is an investment into your future. Just think of the advantages:

Better health: Exercise your brain. Studies demonstrate that the more you use your brain the less likely you will be to develop the dreaded dementia that appears to be spreading like wildfire as people live longer into their 80s and 90s. Stay active. Go to meetings. Walk. Build layouts.

Educational aspects of the hobby abound. If you hang around other model railroaders enough, some of that is bound to rub off on you. There is so much to learn and it's not *all* about railroading. Reading, writing, math, physics, economics, architecture, carpentry, 3D printing, problem-solving, teamwork, art, history and electronics are just a few of the things you'll get out of it without even trying.

Fellowship and Friendships: These are not small things to be overlooked or disregarded. Companionship and interaction with others keeps us mentally healthy more than we think.

Satisfaction of helping others: Another thing that may seem trivial but it's actually huge. It gives us purpose in life.

Community Engagement: Teaching others. Creating art and models to be appreciated by others in the community, not just to others in your organization but to the public in general. Many of them are amazed at what we can do.

Bringing people together: Just learning how to get along with each other. If we could bring all the leaders of the world together for one month and ask them to build a model railroad together, the planet would be a better place.



Joining together can create many advantages for all those who participate. Hobby stores that partner with the NMRA often provide deep discounts on their products. Conventions can lead to new learning experiences, new skills, new friendships, traveling to interesting places, well-deserved awards for achievements in skill, leadership, volunteerism, and other accomplishments. If you are an arm-chair model railroader, like I once was, get up and get involved. New doors will open. You will enter new worlds of creativity and have a much more fulfilling life than you ever thought possible. Spread the word. Every member should invite one friend to come to the MER Convention this October and see what happens!



[Home](#)

[Contents](#)

51