



The

Relay

A publication of the Chesapeake Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

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View From The Cupola



2010 3rd Quarter

By Kurt Thompson

“Where to begin?” Dorothy asked of the Munchkins. And they resoundingly said, “at the beginning, of course.”

So here we are and we're not in Kansas anymore, fellow Division members.

In July, several members made the trek to Milwaukee to participate in the NMRA 75th Anniversary convention. A week or so later, we all received our copy of the new *NMRA Magazine*. And we all found out that we had a new logo to go with our next 75 years.

On Sunday, July 25th, we held our July meeting up at the Knights of Columbus Hall up in Owings Mills. Travers Stavac and Arthur Boyd shared with us about the convention. Travers talked about the operating sessions he participated in while at the convention. Arthur shared about his experiences with operating sessions and other clinics.

Before the meeting ended, Anton Mazza did an impromptu clinic on the two CP and CN models he had been working. He had reworked basic models with more detail parts and showed us the books and photos he used as references. Now all we need to do is get Anton to get those models judged for the Achievement Program. He'd be 2/3 of the way to his Motive Power Certificate.

Between these two presentations, we had a large discussion about the new logo and the method chosen by the National Board of Directors to present it to the membership. In quick rehash, two motions were passed by the members present. One was to let the National BOD know we do not like the logo. The second was that we did not

like the way the new logo was selected and dropped on the membership at large.

On Saturday, August 21st, I responded to a discussion being held by the MER Superintendents and MER Board, including Roger Cason, our current MER President. I expressed the Division's displeasure at the new logo and method of delivery. I shared my email to the MER Board and fellow Superintendents with you as a Division. Then on Sunday, August 22, 2010, I sent an email to members of the NMRA National BOD, including the President, Past President, World Director at Large, VP of Administration, and the Eastern Area Director. Beginning Monday morning, I received

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**My Trip to Milwaukee for the 75th
NMRA
Convention in July 2010**
By Greg Meeks

My trip began with a short flight Sunday afternoon. Milwaukee is relatively centrally located between the coasts so it wasn't long before I arrived ready for my first event that evening: a Beer and Brat fest in a small city park a couple blocks from the Convention. I meet a couple friends and had a pleasant evening before attending a clinic and preparing for a very full week ahead. One benefit was the very pleasant and relatively cool weather in Wisconsin that week, excepting the 6 tornados and 5 inches of rain in one night. They say a tornado sounds like a freight train, but for once, I was happy not to hear that sound!



Monday morning began with a Layout Tour. If you aren't familiar with NMRA National Conventions, most tours occur on a travel coach/bus that seats 48-56 people. We drove an hour or so to the first of 4 layouts. We saw three relatively average HO layouts first. I say average

Our Conventioneer! because NMRA Convention layouts are often some of the most spectacular you'll ever see. These were very nice home layouts and the owners were justifiably proud. The final layout was 7 1/2" live steam. We rode around on either passenger or freight cars like a bunch of kids! It was a blast. One car did manage to tip over when everyone leaned the same way to get pictures, but fortunately no one was injured. That's excitement.

I spent Monday evening on a cruise through the Milwaukee River and out into Lake Michigan. Best beer of the trip was called "Spotted Cow", a local micro-brew. One fun aspect of following the National Convention around the U.S. is the chance to try new food, drink, and customs in each locale. Tuesday began with a tour of the Wisconsin Southern Railroad shops. The highlight there was watching a crew roll a locomotive axle with gear back under a truck. I also got a full tour of Walthers including the shipping area and a glimpse at the original model of the Los Angeles Station unveiled that weekend at the National Train Show. Tuesday evening was the first of

two Operations Sessions.

Wednesday is contest day. I spent around 7 long and difficult hours as a judge. We had about 70 models to look at. Doing the math, that is 10 an hour or about 1 every 6 minutes on average. It's exhausting, but extremely rewarding because I got to see and examine some beautiful models. Our team of two judges provided feedback on every single model. Sometimes it was simply "wow", but we tried to encourage many of the kids to try their hands at scratch building. Highlights included several dioramas, a large ship (lake barge/rail ferry), an F/G scale piece of lumber equipment, several depots, several cabooses, and one bandstand scratch built by a teenage lady. It was especially gratifying to see several entries built by young folk. Of course, Bill Day's Hullett Ore unloader, complete with animation, was a hit as always. Several people remarked they visit just to see what new thing he has done. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Bill previewed the Hullett at the Hagerstown convention last Fall.

*Lake barge/
rail ferry*



I returned to more conventional fun Thursday. Another layout tour closer to Milwaukee had two very nice HO OpSig (Operations Special Interest Group) layouts. The second one was my Friday night operations layout so I took an opportunity to become familiar with the trackage. A spectacular 50x75 foot, yes foot, layout in the back of a shopping center by the North American Prototype Modelers highlighted this tour. It took around 30 minutes to just walk through all the aisles and follow the track. They had a gorgeous steel girder and "glass" terminal station there that was around 5 feet by 5 feet, yes feet. The other layout was S scale and the gentleman concentrated on populating his roughly 15'x15' layout with people. A population sign indicated 3344 figures on the layout and they represented just about every imaginable human activity. I'm not joking. I have pictures.

To get back on track, I rode the East Troy Electric

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Railway Dinner Train that evening. It's an operational railroad run by volunteers that handles freight and excursions. The cars were beautifully kept. Two highlights for me on this tour were that I sat with a gentleman from Norway and also with the Volunteer Coordinator and her husband. We had a lot of fun and I now have some information should I ever get to visit Norway and take a train ride.

*East Troy Electric
Railway Dinner
Train*



Friday arrived before I knew it and so opened the National Train Show. The NTS isn't necessarily the biggest train show around, but you can seldom find most of the major players in the model railroading world all together in one place. It does appear that more and more manufacturing announcements are coming out on the Internet throughout the year so there were fewer releases held just for the NTS. However, there were some. Walthers is releasing a premium line of cars this year instead of the traditional industry series. They are also releasing HO and N DCC turntables with retrofit kits available. There was a digital, remote, automatic coupler available from an independent manufacturer. Atlas had 53' articulated well cars and new coil cars. IRC has the ES44DC locomotive. Athearn has the Veranda turbine and SD70Ace. MRC's JTT line of trees was very nice and, I think, Scenic Express came out with dandelions. Like I need more of those even in HO scale! Sadly, the Lego exhibit was much reduced from other conventions. This happens at some conventions, but it was a little surprising given the numerous, high-quality modular groups present. The NTS was unique in one other way – you could get beer in the Convention Center. However, it was Miller Genuine Draft or Miller Lite. By the way, if you weren't aware, Milwaukee is home to Miller.

Saturday, I visited the NTS again before heading home-ward. Unfortunately, the cost of the hotel forced me to

trim the trip by a day. I was not able to get Convention rates since the main hotel had sold out before I booked. My advice is book early and split the cost if you can find a roommate. I usually spend around \$2000 to attend a National Convention. That's my big vacation for the year, but it's still a goodly sum of money and many people can't afford it especially with this economy. The NMRA is trying to trim costs. Grand Rapids will have some self-drive tours to save on bus costs. Split the cost of a rental car with three of your friends. Economics are a fact of life, but if you purchase a couple high-end locomotives a year, you're already spending quite a bit on the hobby. Things are nice (duh, we're model railroaders), but friends and experiences are important, too.



*One of the
sights at
the NTS.*



So, why do I choose to go? If the above activities didn't convince you, here are some additional reasons. I came home with 426 pictures and several short movies. I also mysteriously ended up with a Tonys Train Exchange RRAmpMeter for DCC (very useful for my modular group, too), a Centerline track-cleaning car, a Walthers "sample" model of the White Tower restaurant, and lots of other little goodies. Some I could buy elsewhere, but some were unique. On one tour we had lunch at a Wisconsin wildlife center with about the nicest state employees I've ever encountered and a view of the Wisconsin marsh that is critical habitat to hundreds of migratory bird species. I learned a ton about signaling (yes, there really is low voltage electricity running through prototype rails for signaling purposes) at one of the clinics. I did not see many clinics this time, but they are often a highlight for many people. My friend and I had a phenomenal time at the second Operations session. There was one derailment when someone started a train out at warp speed in over three hours and 20+ trains. Boy, I wish I could say that about my layout! The first was okay (I

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know never to use power-routing turnouts for operations without some extra work!). I got to meet the guy now running Napierville for the Railroad Prototype Modelers. I also acquired an cow-themed oven mitt, stuffed cow, and I Love Cows refrigerator magnet. I passed on the udder-shaped shot glasses and the What happens in Wisconsin, stays in Wisconsin, but nothing ever happens in Wisconsin shirt. Apparently, they have a lot of time in the winter to think these things up! Milwaukee and Wisconsin were beautiful and the people were very friendly.

And, finally, the best reason to attend conventions: to meet my railroad friends. I attended with two guys from Maryland, but met another Marylander the first day and another friend, Mark, who attended for a couple days near the end. I saw Jimmy from Texas (loves prototype tours), Marty from Michigan (loves layout tours), Richard and Neil from Wisconsin, Bill and Carla from Virginia, Arthur from Maryland (who spent most of his time in operations) and I'm sure I'm leaving someone out. I met people from all over including Norway, the U.K. New Zealand, Australia, and Denmark. A special thought goes out to a couple railroading families who were unable to make it this year for various reasons – hope to see you all next time.



Well, those are just the highlights. I had fun and learned a lot about modeling, railroading, and even a couple new jokes. Most of them I can share – just ask me when you see me around, in Princeton for the MER convention, or in Sacramento next year. It will be here before you know it. By the way, early registration ends something like September 1st so if you are planning on going, you can save a few dollars by signing up now.



Greg



Website Update

By Russ Forte

We have improved the division website! *The new benefits include:*

No ads – nice!

No cost to the division – even nicer!

Much more storage - The old web host limited us to 25Mbytes of space, the space on the new host is “unlimited”.

Server side scripting – this allows dynamic web pages and use of databases which will provide a much higher quality site.

The first improvement you'll see is a real Members Exchange page which will allow you to create an account on the website and access a secure area – the Exchange page being the first item. Only people listed on the division roster will be allowed to create accounts on the server. This will keep entities with less than honest motivation from gathering information about the web site users. The new URL is <http://chesapeake.x10.mx/>

So we have tons of space to showcase your layout on the Gallery page. Send me () those images – or video! - of your layout. Or maybe there's a video of a clinic you would like to share. Let me know what you would like to see on the site and we can collaborate to make it happen.



A Message from the Editor.....

Hi, my name is John Darlington, and I have been asked to take over as **The Relay's** new editor. Most of you know, that Joe Cucchiaro asked to be relieved of his duties as editor, and I volunteered to step in and to try to fill his shoes. As Kurt mentioned in his e-mail to Division members, Joe has done a superlative job getting **The Relay** up and running and producing a quality product that we all can all be proud of. While I have been producing newsletters for over 15 years, I know that I will have my work cut out for me in trying to measure up to Joe's standards.

I have been an NMRA member for 10 years, I am an N-Scaler, and an active member of the Baltimore Area N-Trak Club (BANTRAK) since 1983. I retired as a commercial insurance broker this past June, and my wife and I have lived in Timonium since 1986. We have a daughter, Jill and a son John and we have been blessed with three grandchildren.

Now that you know something about me, how about telling us something about you. For me it is hard to keep names and faces together, especially when we see each other so infrequently. Therefore, I would like to start a feature in **The Relay** in which a Division member provides a thumbnail sketch of who they are and what they do. It is a way in which we can all get to know one another better. If you think this idea has merit, please send me your info at **newsletter.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com** and I will publish it. A photograph would be helpful as well.

Speaking of publishing, I would like to set out the very basic ground rules for submitting an article for publishing in **The Relay**. First of all, articles should be sent to **newsletter.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com** no later than the middle of the month prior to publication (January, April, July, & October each year). There will also be a reminder printed in each edition. Secondly, please produce your article in MS Word or a compatible program. Third, please type the article in the 12 pt Times New Roman font. Finally, if you have photographs or graphs, please send them in a separate message, and DO NOT embed them in your article. Embedded pho-

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Superintendent: Kurt Thompson
Super.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

Assistant Superintendent: Jeff Hedge
jmhedge@zoominternet.net

Director-At-Large: Arthur Boyd
Directoratlg.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

Paymaster: Gerhard Klose
waterkraut@verizon.net

Clerk: Ivan DeMay
Ivanr_demay@yahoo.com

Achievement Program: Greg Meeks
crcsxfan@aol.com

Division Newsletter: John Darlington
Newsletter.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

Webmaster: Russell Forte
Web.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

<http://www.trainweb.org/chesapeakemernmra/index.html>

tos and graphs can cause problems in formatting the article for final publication.

As Kurt also mentioned in his e-mail, **The Relay** is your newsletter. We must depend on Division members to provide the bulk of material for publication. I think that you will find that writing an article or two is kind of fun. While I plan to contribute to the article supply from time to time, I will have my hands full putting **The Relay** together and I will depend upon you for content. Give it a shot!

John

Capt. Pliny G. Holt, USN (Ret.)

Sept. 8, 1910-Jan. 4, 2010

By John Teichmoeller

In January of 2010 we lost an accomplished modeler and a truly accomplished individual. I have seen small notices of his passing in only two places in the enthusiast press, namely the May-June 2010 issue of *The Local* and another place I can't remember. The definitive obituary ran in the January 10, 2010 *Washington Post*. I can't compete with this comprehensive treatise on his life and accomplishments (and I would not be surprised if Capt. Holt himself wrote it). However, ever since 2001 I have had the following article on my "roundtuit list" but regrettably never got "roundtuit."

For starters, let me say that I didn't really know Capt. Holt but met him twice upon the occasion of an open house of his model railroad. He was, of course, a Master Model Railroader, No. 178. The layout I visited, most recently in August of 2001, was an N-scale layout based on the Southern Pacific out of Oakland, California. The layout was well covered in *Great Model Railroads 1993* with the usual fine photography by Paul Dolkos. However, the layout is not what I planned to write about. Instead, on my initial visit I was extremely impressed by Capt. Holt's workshop area, and vowed to take some photos of it the next time I visited--which I did and which this present article is about. I never had a chance to talk to Capt. Holt about these photos; I thought I might see him at the Mid Eastern Region Convention at Hagerstown in 2009, but his declining health perhaps prevented him from attending. Also unfortunately, I was too involved with the final months of work prior to retiring myself to arrange to visit him personally. What a regret. At any rate, I will let the photo captions elaborate:



Photo 1. Abandoned grade crossing in driveway.

Capt. Holt lived in a cul-de-sac in Potomac, MD. As you walked up to his driveway, you couldn't help but notice the 7 1/2" gauge abandoned grade crossing at the end of the driveway. Before N scale, he was into live steam with, I am told a loop of track around his yard and a trestle in the back. I understand he had a live steam 2-8-2 and 4-6-2.



Photo 2. Pliny's Break Area

Well, probably one of the more important parts of the workshop, with the well-worn easy chair (aimed at a TV mounted from the rafters), coffee (or tea) cup (with supply of tea on the shelf), pipe, box of Munchkins and tins of cookies. It doesn't show in this photo, but I believe he had a rather elaborate rack for a collection of tobacco pipes he had fabricated from plywood and mounted on one of the floor columns nearby.



Photo 3. "Electrical-electronics workstation.

Visible is not only wire but also files and rotary tool bits for other modeling and numerous drawers and cubbyholes for parts and material so I am guessing he worked on motive power here also.

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Photo 4. General Modeling Workstation

This appears to be an “omnibus” modeling workstation. We see among other things a Panavise,, two drill presses, files, a meter board, more cubbyholes, solder, a slide out work shelf, a hand-crank pencil sharpener, and 3 pantograph lights. The tool chest on the right looks like it contains ¼ electric drills and other larger size hand tools.



Photo 5. Machining center

Here we see a milling machine and another plywood appliance mounted to the ceiling column to hold working drawings.



Photo 6. Paint station

It's not hard to tell what went on here, with the cans of thinner, paper towel roll within easy reach and paint-

stained floor and waste basket. I believe there was a paint booth nearby out of the photograph.

Perhaps some of Capt. Holt's crew can add some additional insights to the above. My bottom line take on this is that I truly regret I did not get to know him.



John

Membership, Subscriptions and Article Submissions

To become a member of the Chesapeake Division of the NMRA, please contact any Board Member, fill out the form for a free Railpass (page 14) or join us at our next Annual Group Meeting on , Saturday, November 6, 2010, Knights of Columbus Hall, 10855 Stang Road, Owings Mills, Maryland

Copies of *The Relay*

To receive electronic versions of *The Relay*, send an e-mail message to Didrik Thede at dthede@earthlink.net

If you would prefer to receive printed copies, please send a check for \$6 (payable to the Chesapeake Division, MER, NMRA) to Gerhard Klose, 208 Holly Road, Edgewater, MD 21037

Articles for *The Relay*

To submit an article for future publication in *The Relay*, please send it to the Newsletter editor, John Darlington, at jjdjr3@verizon.net. no later than

December 10, 2010

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responses from each of these individuals. Their replies and my initial email are all posted on our website. Please take time to read my email out and their (in some cases, multiple) responses. *(See Page 9 through 11)*

After reading them and sharing them with some members of the Division board directly, I have come to a couple of conclusions. The old adage "just because you're paranoid, doesn't mean they are not out to get you" is alive and well in the NMRA at the National level. Reading the two notes from Mr. Tony Koester left me feeling offended. If I was working in the US Government under former President Bush, I wouldn't have felt any more attacked for saying feelings and facts that contradict the NMRA National "party line."

If you feel any thing about this subject, please let me know or if you choose to email the Regional or National BOD, please carbon copy me in on the note.

As one last item about the National logo change, I was told by MER President Roger Cason that no Division is being required to add this new logo to their website, banner, or newsletter. At this time, Chesapeake Division is not choosing to include the new national logo in any of our printed divisional materials.

On Sept. 19th, we met at the Western Maryland Historical Society Museum in Union Bridge. The Museum is located in the original WM Station. WMHS showed off their building, displays, and their model layout in the basement. Several Division members also brought some of their WM themed models for Bring and Brag.

Looking forward, the Division is not having an October meeting so we don't conflict with the MER Convention which is Sept. 30th through October 3rd. But on Saturday, November 6th, we will have our Annual Group Meeting.

Right now we have 4 clinics on tap: Building Scenery with Don Marvel and Jack Keene; Contest Judging with Greg Meeks and Martin Breibel; the B&O Historical Society Archives by the BOHS Chief Archivist; and Using a Layout Design Service by Fred Scheer. Other things going on will be any Bring and Brag you want to show and share, a White Elephant yard sale table, MARRS group will be displaying several modules (but not a fully operational layout). We will also be voting on two positions for the Chesapeake Division board: Assistant Superintendent and Director-at-Large. Lunch will be available at the meeting, provided by the Knights of Columbus.

Future meetings: in January, a clinic on using CADRail by Didrik Thede; February, a clinic by Steve King on model railroad operations.

Hopefully we'll be setting the stage for an Operations Saturday for some time in March. I've already made a call for anyone with a layout who would like to host an operating session for your fellow Division members. I'm still looking for more volunteers to host.

Elsewhere in this issue are articles from Noel Widdifield about our candidates for the two positions; rules and information on our One Square Foot contest; my updated Superintendent's Wish List; and other articles by us for the good and information of your fellow Division members.

Kurt

E-Mail Traffic on the NMRA “Logo” Issue

On 8/22/10 5:16 PM, "Kurt Thompson, Superintendent, Chesapeake Division" <super.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com> wrote:

Mr. Mike Bretsel, nmra President, et al.

The members of the Chesapeake Division of the Mid-Eastern Region met on July 25, 2010. At this meeting, members shared with us about their trip to Milwaukee for the 75th Anniversary National Convention.

By the time of our division meeting, we had each received our copy of the organization's magazine, the nmra magazine. This sparked a long discussion about the new look of the nmra.org (lowercased, which is not appropriate).

We are appalled at the changes brought about by the Board of Directors, including the new logo itself, the method it was presented to the membership, and the “new” presentation format of our organization's name.

The new logo is not representative of our organization. Though the old/prior logo was more era-specific, it was obvious that the organization was involved in trains in some manner. The new logo does not immediately convey the same idea. As others have said, it can be easily misconstrued to be a religious symbol (variation of the Muslim crescent) or a more risqué/provocative image of a woman's breast. Without the words “National Model Railroad Association” on the logo, who can reasonably assumed/suspect that we are model railroaders. “nmra.org” could stand for any number of things and I will not take this point further.

As for the reasoning that our new logo tells of interoperability, that holds no merit. This new logo does not speak of interoperability in any way, shape or form. This is a weak and useless defense of an new logo that was foisted upon the membership.

As for the method of unveiling this new image, the Chesapeake Division is not happy with it. To drop a new logo on our organization without doing some focus study or letting the general membership know that a logo change was being considered was not appropriate behavior from the Board of Directors. This introduction reminds me of two things: the midnight departure of the Baltimore Colts football team to Indianapolis many years ago and the rush by train crews at interchanges to complete the work in the dark. The term coming to mind is “midnight shove.”

Finally, using “nmra.org” in all lowercase letters is not grammatically correct. An acronym by its very nature is to be capitalized for each of the starting letters for each of its major (non-article) words. We should never bow to the whims of modern society (and kids who text without regards to proper grammar) just to try and bring them to the organization. Following the trend is not good policy.

None of my division members are contemplating leaving the organization but are very miffed/frustrated at the way this issue was brought about and handled. I don't care how many "positive" notes they publish in our magazine, whatever they are calling it now, but from the Chesapeake Division there is a far more negative feeling about this than any positive.

Please restore the National Model Railroad Association its full name and proper acronym, NMRA.

Respectfully,

Kurt Thompson, Superintendent

Chesapeake Division, MER, NMRA (which I will always capitalize since that's grammatically correct)

Kurt--

Please feel free to continue capitalizing NMRA. I will as well. And when I talk to someone who's not familiar with the NMRA, I'll continue to refer to it as the National Model Railroad Association. That's only practical.

My division had its meeting last Sunday. There were about 100 members in attendance. No one there, other than the new NMRA treasurer/CFO, had any more warning about the changes than your or any other division did. But interestingly, the reaction of those members to the magazine name and appearance change, and to the new logo, was overwhelmingly positive. VP-Admin Dave Thorton told me that he went to two division meetings in Michigan last week and the acceptance of the changes was high there as well. My mail over the last two weeks has turned decidedly in favor of the changes. So the changes are receiving quite a bit of support from many members.

The logo introduction was done the way it was to generate excitement, and I believe it accomplished that goal. I think that as time goes by, the new logo will be accepted by most people in much the same way as the old one was. As you say, a logo is not worth joining or quitting over, and most people don't think about logos most of the time. I didn't join the NMRA in 1966 because of the logo, and while I like the new one, I'm not staying because of it and I wouldn't have quit had we kept the old one (which is still in effect and can still be used if desired).

I am copying this reply to Randy Kerka, the MCR Cincinnati Division 7 Superintendent, in case he should care to make any additional comment about the Cincinnati Division 7 reaction.

Mike Brestel

Kurt,

I attended two different division meetings in the North Central Region within the last week. There were over 100 members present between both divisions. As vice president, I was asked to make a presentation about what is happening in the NMRA. Due to comments that have been received about the new logo (some positive, some negative, and some non committal - yes, we have received comments of all three types), I discussed the new logo at both meetings. If there were any negative feelings, I was there to hear them. I did not receive one negative comment from any of those 100 plus present between the two meetings, but I did receive a couple of positive comments.

Obviously, the new logo is a controversial subject. However, the negative comments about the new logo do not reflect the opinions of many of the members. Don't take that as a criticism of your comments, I'm just stating a fact. On the other hand, it is important that we do hear the comments and opinions of the members.

Let me present a few of the facts that are behind the thinking that drove the decisions that led to a new logo and other changes in the NMRA that are underway. In 1993, the average age of an NMRA member was 54.1; today it is 63.8. The average age of the NMRA members has increased 9.7 years in 17 years. We are an aging group, gaining nearly 0.6 years in average age for every year that passes. We are not attracting younger members the way we once did 25 or more years ago. That is a trend that will eventually lead to a rapid fall off in membership, due to aging of the membership, and the eventual demise of the NMRA as we know it.

Many of those outside of the NMRA, especially younger model railroaders, think of the NMRA as an old guys group. Our logo has been a steam locomotive driver since 1937, when steam ruled the rails virtually everywhere. The last steam locomotives ran in class one service in the US 50 years ago. Most younger model railroaders model the diesel era. (I'm 60 and vividly remember steam in service; my 55 and 54 year old brothers do

not). We felt that the NMRA needed to convey an image that was more up to date than a steam era locomotive driver. (By the way, I model steam and own over 20 brass, 2 rail O scale steam locomotives, so I do understand the attachment to the steam era - personally I love it and do not intend ever change). The logo needed to convey a timeless, non era specific image that stated what we, the NMRA, are about, and that we are not just a bunch of 64 year old guys living in the past (which we are not, but we need to portray that). We also felt that it needed to convey a feeling of changing with the times. We considered a lot of different logos; a semaphore signal, a silhouette of a steam locomotive as well as a diesel, and so on. Most of them also conveyed the same steam era feeling or were era specific. The wheel on a rail is timeless and it does speak to what brought the NMRA together in the first place and is still one of our fundamental reasons of being, that is, standards and interoperability.

We now live in the digital, dot com, age and the Internet is here to stay. It is definitely not one of, but the means of communication with those under 30. We, the NMRA, need to recognize that and move in that direction. The use of nmra.org helps to convey that image to younger people, who need to be a target audience for us in the future.

Is the logo perfect? Of course not. Could it change or evolve in the future? Sure it can. But the key thing to keep in mind is the pressing need that we have in the NMRA to attract younger members and to change with the times. The BOD decided that the 75th anniversary year was an appropriate time to kick off the efforts.

Feel free to keep me abreast of comments that you or your division have.

Dave Thornton
NMRA - Vice President of Administration

Hi, Kurt.

The lower-case "nmra" and the Howard Fat typeface are to convey the image of the "n" being a tunnel portal, which ties in with our new nmra.org website slogan, "Your portal to MORE fun in scale model railroading!" In other uses, as Mike said, it is still appropriate to capitalize "NMRA."

The NMRA will need to move increasing amounts of our deliverable content to our website to (1) save money and (2) meet today's expectations of almost instantaneous communications. That's why the new logo and the website home page stress "nmra.org" and "portal."

Based on feedback we've received from other NMRA members, most (but not all!) either quickly grasped or have come to understand the larger issues that are behind the rebranding program and new logo, and hence come to appreciate it. The NMRA was founded because of wheel-on-rail incompatibility problems, and to use that symbology as our new logo -- which was deliberately made somewhat abstract -- is most appropriate. But some don't and won't like the new imagery, which we expected going in. Change is seldom greeted with open arms. Fortunately, the professionals in the model railroad industry with whom I've spoken personally have congratulated us on the new look, which they observed as "long overdue." And some of the more progressive divisions such as the new "all-electronic" Michiana Division near South Bend, Ind., have really taken the new imagery and run with it.

Thanks nonetheless for your feedback, Kurt. I'm sorry you and your associates are distressed with the new imagery, but we hope you will see it as the crucial step forward it represents and embrace it as many other divisions have already done.

Tony Koester
ALDWW

Election of Officers—Candidate Statements

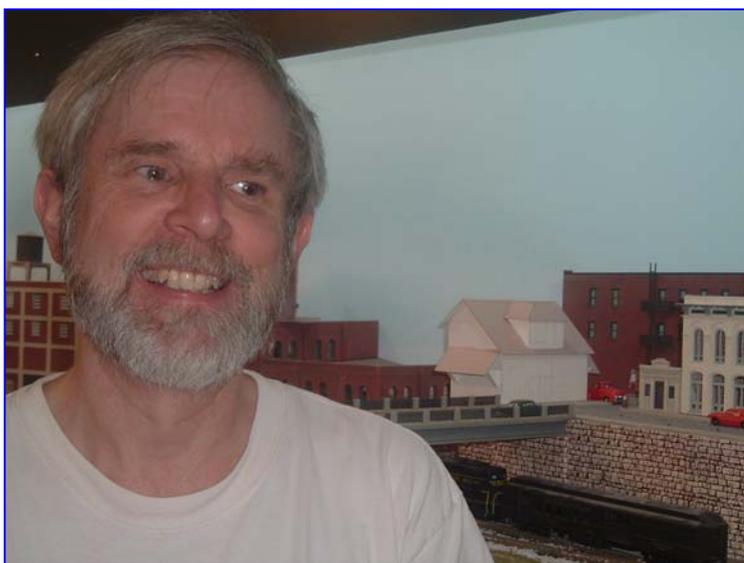
Submitted by Noel Widdifield
Chairman, Nominations Committee

The Annual Group meeting brings an important event for the members as that it is where we will elect the Assistant Superintendent and the Member-at-Large for the Board of Directors for the Group.

The election will be held on Saturday, November 6, 2010 during the Annual Group Meeting. The vote will be by those division members present at the Meeting.

Two of our members have agreed to run for these offices and to introduce themselves to those who don't know them we asked each to provide a picture and a candidate statement.

Tom Casey



**Tom Casey is running for the
position of
Assistant Superintendent**

“I am an architect in Baltimore who has been interested and active in model railroading since childhood. I work in HO and my current railroad is loosely based on the Western Maryland between Baltimore and Gettysburg. A number of tours at Sparrows Point have caused me to create the beginnings of a steel mill along the line.

I believe that the division exists to help create the social network that helps us to enjoy the hobby more. Otherwise it's too easy to slip down into the basement and work on something alone and forget that there are other people interested in what we do.

My vision for the division includes a variety of activities to appeal to the varying tastes and needs of the members. I would like the division to sponsor opportunities for operating sessions, perhaps coupled with layout visits or layout visits with a short workshop on a topic relevant to the layout being visited along with the more traditional activities.”

(Continued on page 13)

Arthur Boyd



Arthur Boyd is running for the position of Director-at-Large

“As a life member of both the NMRA and the MER, I’ve gotten a lot over the years out of NMRA membership. Now as one of the founding group for our new Division, I’ve been keeping eyes and ears open for ways to enhance the ‘fun factor’ as we grow this Division and the model railroad hobby fellowship.

Our bylaws say the role of the Director at Large is to do whatever the Superintendent asks. I’ve been more proactive than that, suggesting things that I or we together might do to benefit our members. Gathering ‘best practices’ and “interesting ideas’ from other Divisions as to what they do that has been successful, pursuing internet leads to some of the most active Divisions, looking at web sites and newsletters of other Divisions, and speaking to people at conventions (both NMRA, other regions, other scale-specific groups and so forth) has been an enjoyable exercise. It is exciting to think about what we could adapt for use right here in the Chesapeake Division!

The Chesapeake Division is at a critical place in its ‘childhood.’ Barely more than a year old, we are toddlers and need to get steady and strong legs under this new creature. Our track record is pretty good so far, and something to build on. How do we involve more people in volunteering to ‘grow the fun’? How do we build up a repertoire of successful and repeatable activities, so the Division can grow – and survive past the initial founding leadership? These are things on which I would focus as Director at Large.

Trains have been in my blood since that proverbial childhood tinsplate train set (Marx not Lionel). I’ve modeled in HO, TT, and now N, and operated on layouts in nearly every scale. My professional experiences of being a non-profit manager, program developer and fundraiser will bring added perspective to the role of Director at Large.

The NMRA has recognized that the local Divisions are where the action is – or should be. It is an exciting time to be launching our Division!”

Additional nominations and self nominations will be accepted from the floor at the meeting next month.

The meeting will be held on November 6th at the Knights of Columbus Hall, Stang Rd, Owings Mills, MD. The actual address is posted on the website.

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free “Railpass” Trial Membership

YES, please sign me up for a free six-month Railpass Trial Membership in the NMRA, which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region and my local Division. During the six-month period, I understand that I may attend conventions, meets, and participate in contests. I will receive the NMRA Magazine, the monthly national publication, and The Local, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office or receive a New Member Pack.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six-month Railpass Trial Membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Note: Regardless of who pays, the six-month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person) At the end of the six month period, I may join the NMRA by paying the regular active member dues.

During the past thirty months, I have not been a member of the NMRA.

Name: _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____

Scale (s): _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Signature of “Recruiter:” _____

(a Regional Officer or Board Member)

Next Division Meeting on Saturday November 6, 2010

Our next Division Meeting will be held on **Saturday**, November 6, 2010. This will be our Annual Group Meeting.

Location: Knights of Columbus Hall, 10855 Stang Road, Owings Mills, Maryland

Time: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Scheduled Activities: Election of Officers; One Square Foot Contest, 4 Clinics, White Elephant Table, Module Displays and more
(See Kurt Thompson’s “View From The Cupola” for details)



What Can You Do with One Square Foot?

A new Chesapeake Division contest

By Kurt Thompson

One square foot. Well you can't dance and you can't rock and roll. But maybe, just maybe you can learn to model scenery in an area of one square foot. Yes, folks, one square foot. One hundred and forty-four square inches.

I'll be honest with you all. I've never done scenery. The first model railroad operating group I belonged to back in the last 80s already had all the scenery in place and the layout had been operational for several years before I become a junior member of the RifRaf. Now I've been helping Jeff Mutter build his layout for the past several years and now we're into the scenery phase of it.

Luckily, Jeff has a specific prototype in mind and several capable (read that as experienced) scenery builders on our work crew. I'm not one of them. This is definitely a new phase of the hobby for me.

With that in mind, at the Division Board meeting back in March, we came up with an idea to help people like me get past the scenery phobia. Thus was born the One Square Foot contest.

At the November Annual Group meeting, Don Marvel and Jack Keene will be demonstrating scenery techniques you can use for doing scenery. In particular, they will be building it on a small (you guessed it) 1-square foot of Styrofoam.

Once the clinic is done, the fun begins. Everyone who comes to the AGM will be given their own piece of Styrofoam to build a bit of scenery on. At the March 2011 Division meeting, we'll have a popular vote contest for all the folks who bring back their completed scene.

Now for a couple very basic rules. The scene can be anything you want, but please remember this is not about buildings or structures. A small milk platform/shed, loading dock, etc would be fine, but don't fill the entire space up with a building. Also, no train cars or engines, applying the same "it's scenery, not cars/locomotives logic." The idea here is to practice your scenery building techniques. There is no scale requirement. Build your scene in any scale.

Last item: Jack and I were talking a couple weeks ago about the contest. Please note that you are not limited to a 12-inch square piece of Styrofoam We're only asking you to model 144 square inches. At the AGM, we will have 12-inch squares and 9 by 16 inch rectangular pieces available, so you can choose the shape you want.

Please come to the AGM and learn some scenery. Then definitely come back in March and show off your handiwork. I'm sure we can find a prize or two or three for the top vote getters.

Any questions, contact me and I'll get you in touch with Fathers Nature (Don and Jack).

Kurt

Photo Collage—Chesapeake Division Meeting
Western Maryland Railroad Museum 9/19/10

