

Filling in
the
Model Contest / Judging Forms

Adapted from Northeastern Region - NMRA
By Bob Hamm, MMR – 11-26-09
Model Contest chairman

Model Contest / Judging Forms

I gotta fill out what?

- **The model contest is a core convention activity.**
- **We try to make it enjoyable for entrants, staff and spectators.**
- **Your models are judged on a point score basis**
 - **Competitively with other similar models for place awards**
 - **Against a minimum point level for merit awards for AP**
- **We also try to keep the administration to a minimum and require only two forms for entry**
 - **Registration form**
 - **Model description form**
- **Forms readily available**
 - **Website**
 - **Contest room**
 - **By request**

Model Contest Forms

Registration Form

- **Category – Defines groups of similar models**
 - **Loco – Steam**
 - **Loco – Other (includes diesel electric, traction, etc.)**
 - **Freight cars**
 - **Passenger cars**
 - **Non-Revenue cars – (includes MOW and)**
 - **Cabooses**
 - **Structures (on-line & off-line)**
 - **Displays (on-line & off-line)**
- **Special Awards**
 - **New Modeler – First time entrant in MER contest room**
 - **Kit-Bash**
 - **Narrow Gauge Award**
 - **Etc.....**
- **Other personal data to establish eligibility & ownership**
 - **Who are you, etc....**
 - **Is it your model?**

Model Contest Forms

Model Description Form

- **A clear & succinct description is essential to achieving the maximum point score.**
- **You don't have to use the form, but must present the same info in the same order.**
- **Typed is better than hand-written!!!!**
- **Generally more info is better than less, but.....**
 - Try to limit to the form + one 1 page(not including prototype info).
 - Too much info & it all probably won't get read by judges - Time!
- **Keep description, short, concise, clipped!**
- **Include the most important info where the judges can see it!**
 - Don't bury information!!!

Best Strategy – Type in the form completely and concisely with most important stuff up front!

Model Contest Forms

Model Description Form

Best Strategy – Type in the form completely and concisely with most important stuff up front!

The Judging Guidelines – get a copy!!!

Tailor your write-up to address what Judges look for...

Get your content from the starting point!!

Take notes and pictures as you build!

Reconstructing what you did 6 months later is hard...

But, where do get that content and what goes where???

Model Contest Forms

Matrix Judging & Factors

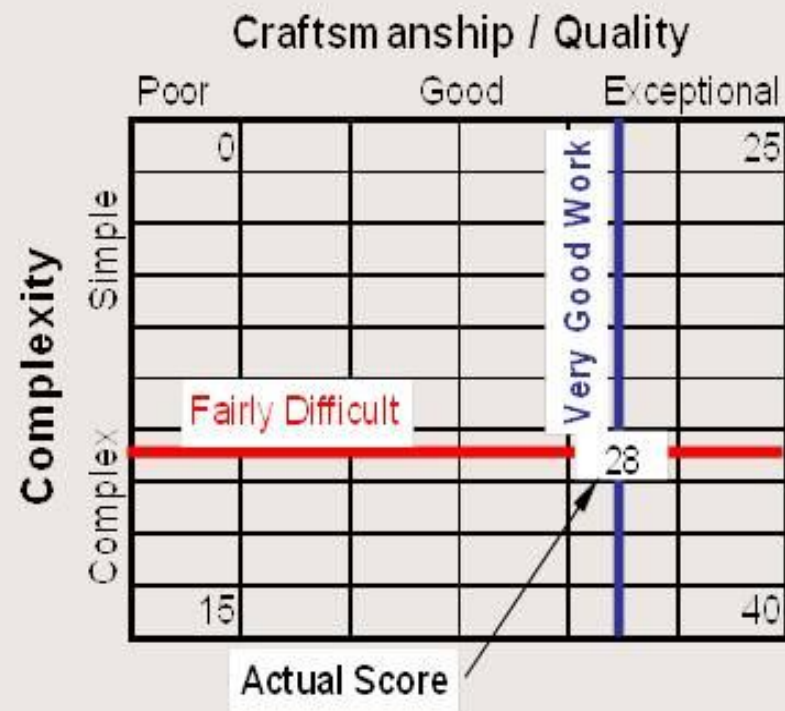
- Matrix judging looks at complexity vs. how well the modeler measured up for that factor. For example:

- **Construction**

- **Total no. of points for all factors = 125**

- **Judging Factors**

- **Conformity - 25 pts**
- **Construction - 40 pts**
- **Detail - 20 pts.**
- **Appearance - 25 pts**
- **Scratch-built - 15 pts**



Model Contest Forms

Construction – 40 pts.

- **Quality & craftsmanship** - how well is the model built
- **Matrix** – physical complexity of structure or car vs. quality & craftsmanship of construction
- **Describe materials and techniques used in construction particularly unusual methods such as making molds and casting parts, machining parts, jigs and fixtures, etc.**
- **Complexity of the model is very important in this category, and larger, generally more complicated models, will have a higher scoring range than simple models, for example, an outhouse vs. a large multi-building mill complex**

Best Strategy – Choose a model of at least moderate complexity, do a high quality job of construction and do a good job describing its construction!

Model Contest Forms

Conformity – 25 pts.

- **Prototype or prototype intent of model**
- **Matrix - Complexity of prototype vs. how well you captured those features in your model**
- **Do good job of describing the prototype.**
- **If free lance, describe type of prototype to establish construction practices – prototypical practice.**
- **Be sure to attach prototype plans, photos and other documentation – recommended limit w/o documentation is 15 points.**
- **If your specific model deviates from the prototype information that you provide → explain why!**

Best Strategy – Choose a model with more vs. fewer prototype features & use 1-2 photos for documentation. More is not always better!

Model Contest Forms

Detail – 20 pts.

- **Key word is quantity. The more the better!**
- **Matrix – Complexity of details vs. quantity added to model**
- **Name every single part you added and/or use labels and arrows on prototype photos showing the details.**
- **Make a list of all of the detail parts you made & added**
- **Make a list of all of the commercial parts you added.**

Best Strategy – Detail, detail, detail; describe and show on prototype photos!

Model Contest Forms

Finish & Lettering – 20 pts.

- **Check the boxes then describe the materials and techniques used to finish the model; use more rather than less detail in your description**
- **Matrix – Complexity of finish vs. quality of finish applied**
- **Describe state of prototype you are trying to achieve, new, old, clean or weathered.**
- **Be sure to appropriately finish (paint) every visible aspect of model. The Judges will look everywhere (including inside structures)!!!!.**

Best Strategy – make sure every visible feature is finished. Adding a little weathering makes the finish more appealing and complex.

Model Contest Forms

Scratchbuilt - 15 pts

- **This factor establishes how much of the model is scratch-built from basic materials like strip wood and flat sheeting rather than pre-molded or laser-cut parts**
- **Scratchbuilt = Greater Effort / Skill = Greater Point Potential!**
- **Matrix – Complexity of model vs. how much of the model is scratch-built**
- **Describe completely all of the features and parts you built from scratch – make lists!**
- **Kits built straight from box limit points, typically 10 out of 15; scratchbuild for maximum score –15 pts.**

Best Strategy – scratchbuild your model or make sure you modify or augment a kit-built model with a lot of scratch-built parts. List all of the scratchbuilt parts on the form.

Model Contest Forms

Model Description Form

An alternate strategy.....(originally from Noll Horan, MMR)

1) Write everything down from start to finish in Word;

Take notes and pictures as you build!

Reconstructing what you did 6 months later is hard...

2) Copy and Paste that into each section of the form

There's a lot of overlap in content for each category!

3) Edit out the information that doesn't belong!

4) Save (!) & Print the form....

Model Contest Forms

They're really not so bad...

- **Filling out forms is a small fraction of construction time. You've done a great job! Take a little time to savor describing your masterpiece.**
- **Just like creating a resume -- a concise, well-written model description form presents your model best & helps the judges award the maximum number of points to give you the best chance of reaching that Merit Award and/or taking home a 1st place plaque or Special Award plaque.**
- **All of us on the MER contest staff & judges have been there (and most are still there!).**
- **One of the goals to be make this a fair & even system has been an effort now for several years in the MER.**

***Best Strategy – Don't take it too seriously; work hard & have fun.
It's only a hobby!!***

Model Contest Forms

Where are they.....

- **On the Nat'l web site you can find the Guidelines, and the entry and judging forms in pdf and Word format.**
 - <http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/apforms.html>
- **On the MER web site are all of the forms in pdf and Word format and a link back to the Nat'l site**
 - <http://mer-nmra.com/Achievement.html>
- **On the Yahoo MER Mailbag site in the Files section you can find the Guidelines, and all of the forms in pdf and Word format.**
 - <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/MERMailbag/info>
- **And, you can contact me directly → martinwb@verizon.net**

Model Contest Forms

THE END

And now 2 examples.....

JUDGES' SCORE SHEET for NMRA MODEL CONTEST

Model Description: NYC Box car #277345

Entry No. _____

Describe the model in detail. Check all of the items that apply. Add additional data where applicable. Attach extra pages with photos/plans/drawings and additional description as needed to convey to the judges why and what you did to build this model. Add as much additional information as needed to provide information about the work you did and the techniques you used.

1. CONSTRUCTION (Maximum 40 Points)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drew my own plans. | <input type="checkbox"/> Followed construction article | Points Awarded |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used prototype plans | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit cardstock | <input type="checkbox"/> Soldered |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Used kit plans | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit plastic | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit glass | <input type="checkbox"/> Made patterns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used commercial plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit wood | <input type="checkbox"/> Crosskitted or kitbashed | <input type="checkbox"/> Made molds |

Describe in detail how model was built, complexity of construction, and materials used:

Car started as a Tichy Single sheath "flat" kit. Brake rigging, cut levers, and grabs bent from brass wire. Used basswood for interior walls

2. DETAIL (Maximum 20 Points)

Describe complexity, difficulty, refinement, amount of additional detail parts added. Brake rigging, cut levers and grabs bent from brass wire. U=Interior walls made from basswood. Chalk marks done with decals. Car started as a "flat" kit.

3. CONFORMITY (Maximum 25 Points)

Give information as to prototype modeled or explain logic of design. Include copies of photos, drawings and plans. This car is from series 277000-277499 that remained in NYC service from 1917-1953. I have been unable to locate a photo

4. FINISH and LETTERING (Maximum 25 Points)

Finish: Weathered Non-weathered Spray Airbrush Mask and spray
Signs & Lettering: Decals Hand letter Dry Transfers Photo reduction Photo etching
Describe finish and lettering methods in detail
Airbrushed with Floquil box car red. Kit supplied decals and decal chalk marks. Grunge for trucks.

5. SCRATCHBUILDING. (Maximum 15 Points)

List all parts you have fabricated. Note any special or unusual features added. Brake rigging, cut levers and grab irons all bent from brass wire. Used a pair of grab bending pliers from Micro-Mark to get them exact size.

This space for Contest Committee only.

Score Tabulated by _____ Verified by _____

NMRA Contest Form 902 Rev B, 23 July 2000. All previous versions of this Form are obsolete.

FINAL TOTAL



JUDGES' COMMENT SHEET

Entry

23

CONSTRUCTION: Interior door and roof not completed. Some gap issues with bottom side. Excellent job with Kit.

DETAIL:

Nice brake detail, airline steps @ bolster
Nice touch on interior walls

CONFORMITY:

No documentation - No points

FINISH & LETTERING:

MONO CHROMATIC APPEARANCE SEEMS TO DETRACT —
TRUCKS ONE COLOR, FOR EXAMPLE. DECAL EDGES SHOW.
SCREWS ON TRUCKS RAW

SCRATCHBUILT: AIR HOSES, NEED MORE INFORMATION
ON SCRATCHBUILT PARTS

Judge's Score Sheet for NMRA Merit Award Judging

Model Description: Lemaster's Post Office Entry No. _____

Describe the model in detail. Check the items that apply. Add additional data. Attach extra pages with photos/plans/drawings and additional description as needed. Add as much additional information as possible about techniques and work incurred.

MS Word Users: Type in blue text areas and copy appropriate box: or

1. CONSTRUCTION (Maximum 40 points)

- | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drew my own plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Followed construction article | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit cardstock | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Soldered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used prototype plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit plastic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit glass | <input type="checkbox"/> Made patterns | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used kit plans | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut and fit wood | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-kit or kit bashed | <input type="checkbox"/> Made molds | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used commercial plans | | | | |

Describe in detail how model was built, complexity of construction, methods used:

Building was built up from the foundation using cut up modified castings and individual bricks to create a foundation from a prior older building that was used for this building that includes a slight skewing of the entire building to account for use of a recycled unstable foundation. Floor joists and sills are built board by board and the floor, walls, and roofing

Points Awarded

2. DETAIL (Maximum 20 points)

Describe complexity, difficulty, refinement, amount of additional detail added

Building was built up from the foundation using cut up modified castings and individual bricks. This was sheet material that was rough cut on a bandsaw and then leveled with individual ceramic bricks to create a "recycled" foundation. The sill plates and side sills were also set slightly skewed on the foundation to achieve the impact of an old building that was

Points Awarded

3. CONFORMITY (Maximum 25 points)

Give information as to prototype modeled, or explain logic of design. Include photos, drawings and plans:

Prototype for this is a merging of several small town rural post office in Franklin County, PA that I experienced in my youth as well as a few that remain standing today. Plans are my own and are provided in the manuscript (supplemental information) being submitted for publication in O Scale Trains. The design was to emulate a common theme of a gathering point in the front space where customers would come to the post office not unlike a

Points Awarded

4. FINISH and LETTERING (Maximum 25 points)

- Finish* Weathered Not weathered Sprayed Brushed Mask and spray
Signs & Lettering Decals Hand Letter Dry Transfer Photo Reduction Photo Etching

Exterior: The exterior walls and floor were 1st stained with Minwax (mixture), hand painted with Floquil Wisc. Central Maroon GL, followed by Polly Scale Milwaukee Rd Grey. The roofing was painted with Polly Scale Grimy Black with the tar paper seams sealed with Polly Scale Steam Black. Dry brushing was done with Roof Brown, Rust, several different tones

Points Awarded

5. SCRATCH BUILDING (Maximum 15 Points)

List all parts you have fabricated. Note any special or unusual features added.

Basically the entire structure is scratch built from the foundation up using modified materials combined with sheet scribed or milled wood and individual boards to replicate build a real building. The walls were laminated for strength, for appearance, and to produce a double lap joint in assembly of the corners. Stairways were created from modified Rusty Stumps

Points Awarded

This space is for Contest Committee only

Score Tabulated by _____ Verified by _____

FINAL TOTAL

1) (con't) were made from scribed siding or clapboard. Walls were made from laminated clapboard and scribed siding with added wainscoting with openings cut for modified window castings (glazed and trimmed to fit and sill details removed) with all added trim around the doors and windows. Door castings were replaced with wood doors with added details (knobs & locks and glazing). Roof rafters all are individual boards assembled so that the roof is removable for interior. All roofing was cut to scale sheet sections and individually applied in proper overlapping fashion. Porch roof is supported by modified (cut in 1/2 and reshaped castings). Some of the detail parts (crates & barrels) on porch are resin castings that I made.

2) (con't) built on an unstable foundation. The flooring joists were individual boards that support a scribed siding sheet for the floor. The walls were built up individually from milled clapboard with a lamination of scribed siding for the interior such that the corner joint would result in a double lap joint. A full interior has been included down to the wainscoting and trim boards around the doors and windows with both the doors and windows being modified, replaced with wood were applicable, and glazed. The removable roof was made based on board by board rafters assemble in place into the roofing scribed siding to make it removable as a lift from the rear and slide out from under the trim / splash board on the back of the false front wall. The built-in post office was assembled from several laser cut kits along with a handful of Berkshire Valley parts (desk, safe, file cabinet, books, lamp, typewriter, phone, clock, etc) and details. The checker players were lifted from a Woodland Scenics set although the dog came from Artista as did the Post Master. The stove was assembled from a Don Winter kit and set up on stones to spare the floor. The smoke jack on the outside is from Turner Model works and actually does connect through the wall to the interior stovepipe.

3) (con't) storefront so made for the front porch and steps up into that space. The side entrance goes directly behind the counter which created a space solely accessible to the postmaster. The desk and files and safe were then safely behind the counter and while that might necessitate a exit and entrance to fire the stove, there seems to always be a codger or tow about to tend to that activity. Another aspect that I really wanted to explore with this model is included in the settling/deforming of the house. Good stone was never wasted and a seemingly good foundation was frequently recycled – a few bricks to shim it into something close to level was a routine practice. And, having the structure then shift and go out of square and level was an equally common result. I kept this one close to level but shifted it slightly out of square and built the lift out roof to adjust to this skewed condition.

4) (con't) of greys, and with Oily Black. Chalk dustings and Bragdon Powers were applied to the exterior. A final air brush overspraying of Grimy Black was done last. Doors and windows & trim were painted and glazed before installation and after the exterior painting step. Interior: The walls and trim were all pre-painted during the assembly process with Polly Scale paints. The exposed wood was stained. The entrance sign was printed, framed, stained, and painted.

5) (con` t) parts cut to fit and be supported by appropriate bracing. The removable roof was assembled from individual rafters built in place to insure that the roof sheathing would be removable from under the false front wall trim. The top of the false front wall in the front was also dressed up a bit with some molding and strip wood to create a little fancy molding effect. All of the end exposed end grain was sealed over with trim boards as well the corners. The side entrance stairway was also differentiated from the front entrance and needed a brick added to keep the ends up out of the dirt and mud.

**There is always room
for improvement on
both sides of the fence!**