



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

Official publication of the Philadelphia Division
of the Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

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IT'S OVER!

It's hard to believe that after more than 5 years of work, in the blink of an eye, Independence Junction 2006 is over. We are still tallying up the damage, but by all accounts the convention met or exceeded all of our hopes and expectations. To every one of you that had a part in this endeavor, the board of the Philadelphia Division and the convention committee managers would like to extend our deepest thanks for a job well done. Based on initial reports we had just over 1,500 registrants at the convention, and over 21,000 people attended the National Train Show. Once we have all the details we will publish them in a future issue of The Dispatcher. Now it's time to get back to Model Railroading!

September Division Meet

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce it will be holding its next meeting on Saturday, September 16th at the Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene, located at 3060 Germantown Pike in Fairview Village, PA. For directions and a map, please see page 7 of this issue of The Dispatcher. The doors will open at 9:00 AM, with the activities starting at 9:30 AM.

Our topic for this meeting is one that should generate much interest among the attendees. What is the one thing people always seem to notice when they come to your railroad? Spend hours doing wiring, lay some new track, add a car or two to the roster, and maybe one or two people will notice. But plant a

few new trees or add some new ground cover and many will notice and say "you've been working on the railroad". If you haven't guessed by now, our topic this month will be scenery. We will have a clinic co-presented by Bob Jann's and Ron Patzer. This clinic has been given at Linn's Junction in Lansdale, and has been very well received.

Bob and Ron will cover many aspects of creating believable model railroad scenery, including ground cover, foliage, streams, and more. This topic is one of the most requested on our last survey, so hope you will plan now to attend.

In addition to the clinic, we will have many of the usual activities you have come to enjoy.

There will be a 50/50 drawing, door prizes, and a contest. This month's contest is Motor Vehicles. Nothing can set the scene more than appropriate period vehicles, and there have been many new releases in this area lately. These range from cast metal and plastic to resin kits. This popular vote contest will be a chance to showcase your talent.

In addition, we will have several local model railroads open for you to visit in the afternoon. As always, remember you are being invited into someone's home, so please be courteous.

We look forward to seeing all of you there, and hope many of the new members we have signed up will come out and introduce themselves.

Now that the convention is over and we've all had a little time to recover, it's time to get back to what this is all about: the hobby of model railroading!

While I'd like to say I've had plenty of time to get things done, that wouldn't quite be true. Since the convention my youngest son graduated from Officers Training School (he's on his way to becoming an Air Force pilot) and gotten married. In addition, my oldest son and family have decided to move, and you know what that means for grand pop. And then there are the always present job responsibilities that make having a few dollars available for "must have" toys that I need to go to each day. And so on and so forth.

However, in spite of all the above, there has been some progress made on the monster in the basement. While at the National Train Show I found more than my share of new trinkets, including several new resin kits that the Susquehanna needed. In addition there were those unfinished ones I bought at the RPM meet back in March (remember that?). So it was back to the workbench for some building time.

While at the show I was happy to see that Sylvan Scale Models had brought out a new truck trailer with the curved roof front. There is one of those (I believe they were made by Fruehauf) rusting in the woods not far from my house, and to me they just scream 1940's. I had planned to measure it this fall once the leaves were off the trees to try a scratch building project, but now they've done the work for me. They are a little pricey, but there's one at the loading dock at the American Hard Rubber

Company in Butler. And as soon as I recover from the wedding there will be a few more sprinkled at loading docks around the railroad.

Also new to the railroad are a couple of stock cars, several box cars (including a B&O round roof car) and one of the new Funaro & Camerlengo Lehigh Valley shorty gons. These gons are very unique and look great in a train. They were at the end of their service life in the era I model, but there were still several in interchange service, so we can squeeze it in and not feel at all guilty.

Also in the works is a remake on the track arrangement at Passaic Junction. This junction with the Erie was one of the largest interchanges on the Susquehanna, and the pathetic version of it I had needed to be improved. I've added a runaround track to simplify switching for the locals crew, and added an extra track for car storage. I've also started making adjustments to the computer data base to start routing more cars here as per the prototype. I don't know if it will be finished by the time of the Division meet, but I at least need to finish most of the track work by then, or the railroad might not operate! Hope you'll attend the meet and stop by to see the progress.

Anything you've been stalled on you want to get finished? Do like I did and make that first cut, then you HAVE to do it. Then for fun schedule an open house to give yourself a deadline for completion. Like they say, nothing like company coming to get you motivated.

Happy Railroading,
Steve

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Submissions: The PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER welcomes any model railroad- or railroad-related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc. Submissions are preferred typed, double-spaced. The editor reserves the right to, when necessary, paraphrase small portions of the text in order to fit the space available.

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From the Super's Desk

Division members, first I'd like to than everyone for all the work they did for a successful Independence Junction Convention. This includes all the folks that helped out at the convention center, and those that put time in showing their layout or helping a layout owner. I know a number of people that never made the convention because they were too busy with layout tours. I also want to thank the New Jersey Division members, since they played a significant role in the convention. I thought over all everything ran smoothly. The tours went well, (the rumor that a tour bus from Valley Forge was found in lower Bucks County turned out to be false), and the National's running of the clinics went well, and took a big burden off the local committee. The train show had a good turn out and the Division picked up about thirty new

members. Speaking of new members, the Mid-Eastern Region Board of Directors voted to include New Castle County Delaware as part of the Philadelphia Division. This adds forty four members and a chance to grow the membership in Delaware. As is our custom, we will be having our November meet in Delaware on November 4th

Not much happened on the layout this summer, as I spent the time in Sullivan County, Pa. I did buy one of those new Blue Point hand throw switch controllers to try out. They look great, but they're expensive! I hope to see every one at the meet on September 16th.

Dick Foley
Superintendent

Your Lucky Day!

I don't want to encourage gambling, but due to a snafu on the part of the company store at Independence Junction, we have a number of Hercules Powder cars left. We are preparing to mount an advertising campaign to sell these cars, so if you didn't get yours they are still available. We will have them available at the September meet and by mail starting soon. Watch

the next issue of the Dispatcher to find out how you can get one.



Important Subscription Information!

It is once again time for all division members to check their membership date. If your label shows 2006 or earlier, you need to renew your subscription by the end of 2006 in order to continue receiving The Philadelphia Dispatcher newsletter. We will not be sending renewal notices, but will include a subscription form in the last two issues of the Dispatcher for the current year. Please mail the form to the Clerk, or bring it to any division meet to renew. We hope all members will renew early in order to continue receiving their newsletter. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any board member. It is also important to note that due to the cost of printing and postage, the Division can no longer afford carry those members who do not renew promptly. Your name will be moved to an inactive list.

New Subscription /Renewal Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

NMRA #: _____ MER #: _____ Div. #: _____

Subscription: \$7.00 per year. Please mail to the Clerk or bring to the next meeting.

Photographing Model Railroads

THE BASICS – Using the camera properly

1. **RTM! RTM!** - Read the Manual! Yes there is a lot of information in most camera manuals for all kinds of photography. Manufacturers want you to make the most out of your camera and usually include way more information than the average user might ever use. Whenever you have a question or problem, check the manual first. You will not be able to absorb all of the info in the manual and probably will not need much of it, but you should have an idea of the camera's capabilities by reading the manual.
2. **TURN OFF THE FLASH.** Unless you want only "snapshots" to show a model or scene quickly. Any camera that I've seen has this option.
3. **LIGHTING** - Provide lighting on the scene in any other method - existing room lights, work lights, lights on extension cords, desk lamps, daylight from a window, etc. The more light you can place on the scene the better.
4. **USE A TRIPOD.** If you turn off the flash, the shutter will have to stay open for a relatively long time. During this time ANY camera movement will make the image blurry. With film cameras the idea has always been to have a good sturdy tripod, because film cameras are usually heavy. Most digital cameras are small and light, so can get by with lighter tripods, although heavier ones can be the best choice. Flimsy tripods can vibrate if the shutter is pushed too hard.
5. **USE THE CAMERA SELF-TIMER.** Most cameras have a self-timer; use it when taking photos even if the camera is on a tripod. Pressing the shutter button can sometimes cause minute vibrations or movement of the camera, resulting in blurry photos. Some cameras have infrared remotes or the ability to accept remote control cords. These are better than using the self-timer as they take less time to trip the shutter.
6. Set the **COLOR BALANCE** in the camera for the type of light you are using. Better cameras will allow you to choose between daylight, fluorescent, incandescent, etc. Improper color balance can be corrected in the computer after shooting if you have a decent graphics program.
7. **CLOSE UP SETTING** – Most digital cameras have a close up setting; it is often shown as a flower icon on the camera body or screen. You should know what the distance range is in this mode; check the manual. Some will focus down to a few inches, others may be farther back. Most overall model railroad photos may not require the close up setting unless you want to get in really close like in the front of an engine, or a shot of a particular detail. For a small scene you will probably be shooting about two feet or so away, so the close up mode will probably not be needed too much. There are so many differences between camera capabilities that it is best to make some tests yourself to determine when the close up setting will be useful.
8. **QUALITY SETTING** – Always use the highest quality image setting on your camera, for the largest file size. You can always make a larger file smaller, but you cannot make a smaller one larger.
9. **ZOOM LENS** – Most digital cameras come with zoom lenses. The "optical zoom" is when the lens actually moves in or out to change the size of the image. Many can also do a "digital zoom" – do not use this for any purpose! All a digital zoom feature does is take the image at the long end of your optical zoom and cut out the center portion, resulting in a poor quality image. You can do the same by cropping an image taken at the long end of the optical zoom. You will get the most depth of focus when using the lens at the widest setting. The more you zoom out, the smaller the depth of focus becomes.
10. **BRIGHTEN THE SHADOWS** – If parts of the model or scene are in deep shadow, there will be nothing to see in the dark areas. Reflect light into the shadows to brighten it up. I made a reflector from two pieces of sturdy white cardboard hinged together with duct tape; this allows the reflector to stand on its own. One side was covered with aluminum foil that I had crumpled up first then flattened before gluing on. This breaks up the reflections so they do not look like a single point of light from a mirror. When less light is needed, I use the plain white side. Make sure when you lighten the shadows that you do not overdo it – there should not be two sources of light.

11. **TEST PHOTOS** – It is a good idea to shoot some test photos with your camera using the above tips, to help judge its capability. Most point and shoot digital cameras will not have a great depth of focus, so test photos taken on your actual layout will help. If you want to take a photo of your favorite engine, a popular _ view of the model may not have the entire engine in focus. Reducing the angle of view towards a side on shot may result in more of the model being in focus.

ADVANCED – Composing Photos

If you've mastered your camera and its controls and are able to get results that are technically acceptable, the next step is to make better photographs. You can take pictures, but you have to make photographs. Many consider fine photographs as art – work that is created by the photographer, as opposed to a "snapshot" that almost anyone could take. Some people have an artistic ability, others can learn it.

There are widely accepted "rules" in photography that aren't really rules – just conventions in composition that can help to make a photo pleasing to the eye. All photos do not have to be taken according to these rules, but they are a good way to learn to see and create a photograph.

(The following is adapted from the Kodak.com website – they can explain their business better than I can):

1. **CHOOSING YOUR MAIN POINT OF INTEREST.** Although you know what your subject is, it can be hard for a viewer to determine your intent if too many elements in your picture make it confusing. Eliminate all unimportant elements by moving closer, zooming in, or choosing a different shooting angle.
2. **ADJUST YOUR ANGLE OF VIEW.** Alter your position - Change your position to emphasize or exaggerate how big or small your subject is. You can also move your camera right or left only a few feet to change the composition dramatically.
3. **PLACING THE SUBJECT OFF-CENTER.** Putting the subject off-center often makes the composition more dynamic and interesting. Even if your subject fills the frame, the most important part of the subject should not be dead center.
4. **FOLLOW THE RULE OF THIRDS.** An easy way to compose off-center pictures is to imagine a tick-tack-toe board over your viewfinder. Avoid placing your subject in that center square, and you have followed the rule of thirds. Try to place your subject along one of the imaginary lines that divides your frame.
5. **WATCH THE HORIZON.** Just as an off-center subject is usually best, so is an off-center—and straight—horizon line. Avoid cutting your picture in half by placing the horizon in the middle of the picture. To accent spaciousness, keep the horizon low in the picture. To suggest closeness, position the horizon high in your picture.
6. **USING LEADING LINES** - Select a camera angle where the natural lines of the scene lead the viewers' eyes into the picture and toward your main center of interest. You can find such a line in a road, a fence, even a shadow. Diagonal lines are dynamic; curved lines are flowing and graceful. You can often find the right line by moving around and choosing an appropriate angle.
7. **INCLUDING OBJECTS IN THE FOREGROUND** - When taking pictures of landscapes, include an object, such as a tree or boulder, in the foreground. Elements in the foreground add a sense of depth to the picture. A person in the foreground helps establish a sense of scale.
8. **FRAMING THE SUBJECT.** - Sometimes you can use the foreground elements to "frame" your subject. Overhanging tree branches, a doorway, or an arch can give a picture the depth it needs to make it more than just another snapshot.
9. **SHOOTING VERTICAL OR HORIZONTAL** - Don't forget that you can turn your camera sideways to take a vertical picture. Try taking both horizontal and vertical pictures of the same subject to see the different effects. A subject that you might usually think of as horizontal can make a stunning vertical picture.

More photography

10. **KEEP PEOPLE BUSY.** The model figures in your scenes should be doing something or be in realistic natural repose. This can be very subjective, but some thoughts on things to avoid might be someone falling off a ladder. How long can they really hang there in space? People engaged in conversation should work well, or doing some window shopping. The possibilities are endless.

11. **FIND UNUSUAL VIEWPOINTS.** All photos do not have to be taken from trackside, or from a "helicopter position"; shoot under trees, from tops of buildings or rolling stock, etc.

12. One of the **MOST IMPORTANT TIPS** is to practice, practice, and practice some more! Nothing beats a lot of experience, finding out what works and what does not. Golfing legend Arnold Palmer replied to someone who said he sure was lucky in golf by saying "Yes, the more I practice the more lucky I become".

Hopefully these thoughts will help you to get started with photographing your models. It would be nice to have some photos to include in The Dispatcher from time to time. We can't afford glossy color, but some photos do reproduce reasonably well in these pages.

Spray painting tip

The biggest pain in trying to paint small plastic pieces with an airbrush, as everyone I'm sure knows, is keeping them from blowing all over the place. I've always used glad wrap instead of double sided tape to lay the parts on while painting since it makes it a lot easier to get them loose after the paint is dry. Recently, instead of the glad wrap in the drawer, I found a box of this new glad "Press'n seal", used to cover left overs in the refrigerator.

Try laying a sheet of "press'n seal" on your work table, sticky side UP, layout your parts for painting, and then touch each one lightly. They will stay right where you want them while painting and still release easily after the paint is dry. When you finish, use a new sheet and repeat to paint other side. Make sure to attach the sheet to some cardboard or other surface so the whole sheet doesn't blow away when you turn on the airbrush!

Pipe Loads for Gondolas

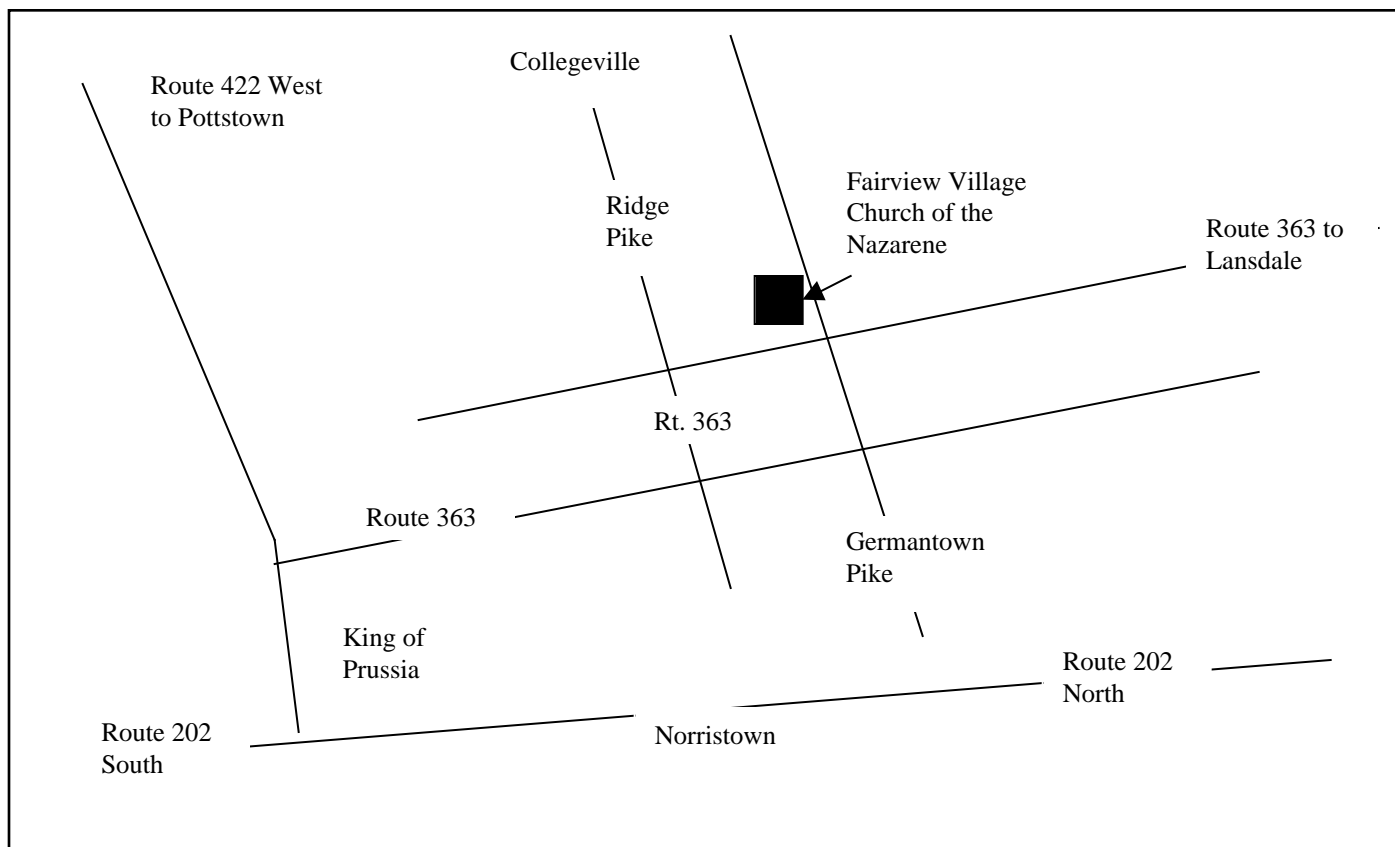
Did you ever try to make a pipe load for a gondola and find the paint won't stick, or getting them all painted uniformly? Here is a little piece I picked up recently that may solve some of those pesky little problems.

Try this: Get some Krylon Fusion spray paint in black, gray, or other pipe color of your choice. This paint is made for plastic lawn furniture, and goes on, and stays on, plastic straws very well. I have used it on the same Smart and Final straws you mentioned, with great success. The trick is the painting fixture. I discovered mine in the bathroom. It is some sort of comb my wife had, which has metal teeth spaced maybe an eighth inch apart, maybe a little more. I did some intense negotiating for that comb, made Liz aware that this would be destructive testing, and slipped the S&F straws over the teeth. Put on a disposable glove and fired away with the spray can. Worked great-the straws are held apart so they don't stick together, and I can shoot twelve or fifteen at a time, then clamp the comb upright in a vice to let the paint dry. Paint dries quickly, and I've been satisfied with the results. Dullcote will stick to the paint, to kill the shine. Pipe heaven!

Need a load for one of these?



Map to Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene



Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene is located at 3060 Germantown Pike in Fairview Village PA. From the King of Prussia area follow 422 West to Route 363. Follow PA 363 North to Germantown Pike. Turn Left onto Germantown Pike, and the church will be approximately mile on your Left. Enter at the 2nd driveway and the meeting will be in the building on your Right as soon as you turn in.

Schedules The following information is presented for your convenience

September 16th Philadelphia Division Meet

Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene 3060 Germantown Pike
Fairview Village PA
Clinic: Scenery
Contest:
Layout tours following

September 23rd New Jersey Division Meet

Vineland New Jersey area
Richland Fire Hall
Clinics and Meeting 9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Clinics and contest.
Layout tours 1:00 – 4:00 PM

October 14th & 15th Timonium Train Show

Great Scale Model Train Show
Timonium MD

November 4th Philadelphia Division Meet

Brandywine Town Center
Community Building (just off 202 right below PA/DE line)
Clinics, contest, layout tours. For more information see the next issue of the Dispatcher.

Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club 60th Anniversary, Congratulations!

The following open house dates are given for your advance planning:
November 25 – 26, 2006
January 6 – 7, 13 – 14, 2007
January 20 – 21, 2007 (snow date)
All dates 12:00 – 4:00 PM
8000 Old York Road (at RR bridge) (adjacent to Elkins Park Square)
Elkins Park, PA 19027
For more information:
215-635-9747

GATSME. See a 50' by 60' HO & Hon3 Scale view of '50s railroading in the Northeastern United States. Many museum quality buildings and trains will be on display and operating. Located in Fort Washington, PA and open the following dates: December 16th, - 17th, 2006. January 6th, 7th, 20th, & 21st, 2007. GATSME Lines open house in the basement at Prospect and Madison Avenues, 12 Noon to 4 PM. Admission by donation. For info: Ed Wilson at 215-646-2033 on Thursday evenings.

October 20-22, 2006 - NER Fall Convention Garden State Comet

Location: Parsippany, NJ
Hotel: Hilton Parsippany
More info: NER web site