



# THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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

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The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that we will be holding a joint meet and family day with the Susquehanna Division on Saturday, September 11<sup>th</sup> at the Strasburg Railroad in Strasburg, Pennsylvania. Members are encouraged to bring their families and come as early as you like and participate in the activities that are planned for the day.

The meet will officially begin with a picnic lunch at Carpenters Grove at 11:40 AM. You will need to arrive early enough to take the 11:00 AM train to the grove in order to be there on time. There are only limited facilities at the grove, so you will need to plan on providing for your own needs. Lunch and beverages may be purchased at the railroad's shops or you may bring them from home.

At 1 P.M. we will be given a tour of the Strasburg Railroad's shops and facilities. This is an unusual opportunity to get an up-close view of a fully functional steam

locomotive and car shop complex.

For the railroad enthusiast, the Strasburg area is loaded with things to do and see. The Toy Train museum, Railroad Pennsylvania Museum of Pa, local hobby shops, the Caboose Motel, the list could go on and on.

For the spouses, the Strasburg area is full of things to do including unique shops and boutiques, buggy rides, and museums and attractions too numerous to mention. The Pennsylvania Dutch area is world famous for its unique atmosphere and rural charm.

Due to the nature of this meet, there will be no contests or traditional clinics given. There may be some announcements made during the lunch at Carpenters grove. We hope that all division members will plan on attending this unusual meet, and will bring their spouse for a fun day of touring in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country.

You will need to purchase a ticket to the grove, so be sure to arrive early. The division

officers will be there to process renewals and to answer any other questions you may have.

See page 7 for a map to the Strasburg Railroad.

## Calling all Authors!

The editor is in desperate need of division members to get involved in the production of the Dispatcher. Without your help, this magazine will become very limited in nature and scope.

Do you have a modeling tip that would help other modelers, a new product you have tried and want to review, or will you prepare an article describing your or a friend's layout?

Whatever the idea may be, you don't have to create the entire article. If you can prepare an outline I will be glad to format it for publication. So let's get those pencils sharpened! Any articles you write can be used as credit towards your Author certificate in the Achievement Program.

## FORM 19

One of the most frequently asked questions that comes up when people are invited to join the NMRA is "what will I get out of it".

If you think about it for a minute, the most obvious answer will be the Bulletin and standards. But probably one of the most important and most difficult to define is that of member camaraderie. This is both the hardest to clearly define and yet probably the most valuable of all.

I know for myself, for many years I did the hobby as a "lone wolf", building my layout alone and only occasionally attending train shows or meets. While I was enjoying what I was doing, there always seemed to be something missing.

Finally I decided to try getting involved in the Philadelphia Division and the NMRA in general. Sure, I had been a member in the past, but had never taken an active part. Like so many others I felt my only benefit, was the Bulletin.

With some fear and trepidation, I volunteered to run as Assistant Superintendent with some guy named John Nawn who I had never met. While I was unable to attend the election, with no one running against us we were easily elected.

John and I finally met about a month later and started to work together to promote the Division and the NMRA. And, as they say, the rest is history. During our time as officers John and I

worked on many projects together and in the process became friends.

Also during this time I started to meet many people who shared similar interests in operation and layout design. From this group of people I became involved in a round robin operating group. These weekly operating sessions have become one of the principal means of enjoying this great hobby for me.

Now how about you. Do you sit back and look for what the NMRA or Philadelphia Division can do for you? Or are you willing to step out and try something a little different.

In an organization of this type there is always something to do. Will you help to organize a meet location (your local church or civic group hall), will you open your layout for an open house, will you give a clinic (any topic or length), or how about an article for the Dispatcher ☺? I'm sure Jim Hart would be thrilled to be swamped with requests for any of the above.

On page 6 of this issue there is a survey form. I would like to encourage each member of the Division to take the time to fill this out and return it to me. With the number and diversity of members we have in this division we should be able to develop a fantastic resource to use for future modeling projects. Happy Railroading

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Official publication of the  
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### Editor

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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.

**Next issue:** November '99. Due out approx. October 20th. Deadline: October 10.

**Membership:** \$3.00 per year. Address all membership applications, renewals, address changes, etc. to the Clerk. If the date in the upper-right corner of your mailing label is highlighted, your membership will expire soon. Please pay at the next meet or mail payment to the Clerk. Make checks payable to "Philadelphia Division, NMRA."

### Division Personnel:

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#### National Model Railroad Association

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Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119  
(615) 892-2946  
Dues: \$32.00 per year

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## From the Superintendent:

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Well the leaves are starting to fall and summer is quickly coming to an end. I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and was able to get a lot of model railroading done.

Your treasurer Sam Parker and I went on a trip from Steamtown to East Stroudsburg on July 5. The train stopped in Cresco for lunch. After lunch we reloaded the train to continue our trip. Unfortunately as we were preparing to leave Cresco, Our train was rear-ended by another Locomotive. The man sitting across the aisle from us hit his head on the window post and had to be taken to the hospital for stitches. In fact 13 people were taken to local hospitals although none were admitted. I never saw so many ambulances. They had a full-fledged disaster drill that afternoon. There was a TV helicopter flying overhead. That night I saw a piece on Action News with pictures of the train. We were driven back to Steamtown in school buses and got a refund but it was not the train trip I was expecting. Maybe we'll have better luck next year.

Speaking of Sam Parker, Sam won 1st and 2nd place in the photography contest at the MER convention in Lynchburg VA this April. The next MER convention will be held at Hagerstown Md. from November 11 to the 14th. John Armstrong, Tony Koester, Marty McGuirk and Bill Schaumburg are scheduled to present a clinic. I urge everyone who has never been to a MER convention to consider attending the Hub City Limited in November. Hagerstown is a great railroad town, with a lot to see and many great layouts to visit. The convention will be at the Ramada Inn and will be hosted by the South Mountain Division. If you have never attended a National or Regional convention, you are missing one of the best benefits of your NMRA membership.

The next meeting of the Philadelphia Division will be held at the Strasburg Railroad on September 11. This will be a joint meeting with the Susquehanna Division. Lynn Moedinger will give a tour of the Strasburg shops. Plus, just across the street from the railroad is the Pennsylvania Railroad Museum, one of the finest collections of equipment on the East Coast. There will not be a contest at this meeting. Bring your lunch for a picnic at Carpenters picnic groves or you may buy it at the railroad. This should be a great family affair, and I hope to see everyone there.

I enjoyed seeing everyone at the May 15 meeting in Delaware. I would like to thank Roger Cason for his clinic on Operation on a small Layout, and also Rad Mead who showed us the history and operation of the Hagley Museum layout. Both gave excellent presentations and I hope we can meet in Northern Delaware again. If you belong to a church or organization that has a hall we can rent please let me know. I am always looking for new places to hold our Division meetings. If you would like to give a clinic on a Railroad related topic, real or model, let me know.

I would like to express the Division's gratitude to the following Layout host at the May meeting. With such a large selection of layouts, it was impossible to see them all. Thank you to all who took the time to open their layouts for our viewing. Make sure you express your thanks to anyone who opens for the Division.

Carl Huth	Joe Walters	Bruce Friedman
Earl Hackett	Roger Casson	Charles Chandler II
Ken Donahue	Larry Donahue	Charles Grant

Hagley Museum

I hope everyone has had a healthy summer. I look forward to seeing you in September at the Strasburg Railroad. Our November meeting will be at The Church of the Nazarene in Fairview Village on November 6.

Jim Hart

Division Superintendent

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## Editor to Abandon HO scale New York, Susquehanna & Western!

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In a surprise announcement at the most recent Susquehanna operating session, Dispatcher Editor Steve Salotti announced to the crew that he would soon begin dismantling the current version of the railroad. This decision has been reached in order to clear the room in preparation for a switch to a G Gauge layout based on a logging theme. The stunned crew was left speechless.

Ok, so it isn't really true, I'm not going to tear up my Susquehanna based HO layout, but hopefully the announcement got your attention. What I would like to tell you about is a recent project layout for my church's summer Bible School program. This year's theme was the Joy Express, and it featured several railroad characters and the room was decorated in a railroad motif.

As part of the decorations, our children's pastor approached me and asked if I knew where he might be able to get some sort of toy train display. After giving it some thought, I offered to build a small portable layout for him. At first I considered using Lionel trains since I had some old track available, but coming up with suitable locomotives and cars proved to be a problem. This display needed to be in a room with up to 200 children, and I couldn't guarantee that some of the equipment might not get damaged. Under those circumstances I wouldn't blame anyone for not wanting to lend me their equipment.

As I considered my options, one-day the thought came to look into a G Gauge train set. A quick call to Linda at Lin's Junction at Henning's Scale Models confirmed that a Bachmann G Gauge set and some buildings could be purchased for around \$200.00. Due to the size of the equipment, it would take less of it to fill the 4 X 8 area, plus the large size would make it easier for the smaller children to handle.

The plan that materialized was to have an oval of track centered on a sheet of plywood with a view block/backdrop down the center. This would give a scene about 2 feet deep, with the track going through a tunnel at each end. This would also give a place to store equipment behind the backdrop since the layout of the room would prevent all but the most adventurous children from going behind the layout. At first I wanted to include a siding for switching (that's the operator in me), but finally decided to limit it to a loop.

On Sunday afternoon I constructed two sturdy saw horses and a tabletop with a 4X8 sheet of plywood. The unit had to be portable but strong enough to let the children get close to it without fear of it falling over.

When I arrived at Lin's Junction, to my dismay I learned that the smallest loop of G gauge track would be too wide for the 4X8 sheet of plywood, so I would have to add an extension to the back. I finally decided to use Bachmanns Paul Bunyan logging set with LGB track, since LGB had the smallest radius curves available in sectional track. To my great surprise, Paul and Linda had decided to donate the train and track to the project! I was then able to use more of my funds to buy the structures and scenic material to complete the project.

Armed with the necessary supplies, I plunged into the project, and with less than a week till the program started there was little time to waste. Adding the

extension to the backside of the board and laying the track went quickly. Looking through my supply of material yielded some Woodland Scenics ballast. This was spread along the tracks (it takes a lot more of those little bags to cover track that large), and then I started to shape it to a realistic contour. Looking at the length of track that needed to be ballasted, there had to be a quicker way. Picking up my hammer, I tried tapping the tabletop along each side of the track, and to my delight, the ballast neatly "tamped" itself into place. Using the standard wet water and diluted white glue technique; the ballasting was soon completed.

The backdrop was added next using a 2-foot by 8-foot piece of tempered Masonite with holes cut in each end for tunnels for the train to pass through. This was painted sky blue with clouds added using white paint.

At this point, I called in the assistance of Steve Leatherman, a young railfan from the church. He, his father Doug and myself spent a busy evening laying out mountains made from Styrofoam sheets cut and stacked. This was then covered with a layer of plaster gauze, whetted and allowed to dry. Next came a layer of earth colored latex paint sprinkled with fine soil and various shades of ground foam. Diluted white glue was used to bond everything together. The mountains and other scenic effects were made removable as the unit was built in a spare room at my house and had to be moved to the

## G – Gauge (continued)

church, including going down one flight of stairs and through several doorways.

A street was layed out coming from one corner of the layout, crossing the tracks and ending in the center of the area between the backdrop and tracks. A platform large enough to hold a small train station model was constructed out of stained stripwood, with a parking area added along each side. Steve Leatherman took the station and another structure kit home with him to build.

Trees were made using a variety of techniques, including using Bamboo meat skewers with furnace filter branches for the Pine trees, and twig armatures with foilage net and ground foam for the deciduous trees. Due to the scale, these trees needed to be **big** to look anything like trees, not just bushes! They required a lot of ground foam and hair spray, far

more than I am used to using for my HO scale trees. They were planted by poking the foam with an awl and pushing the trunks into the ground.

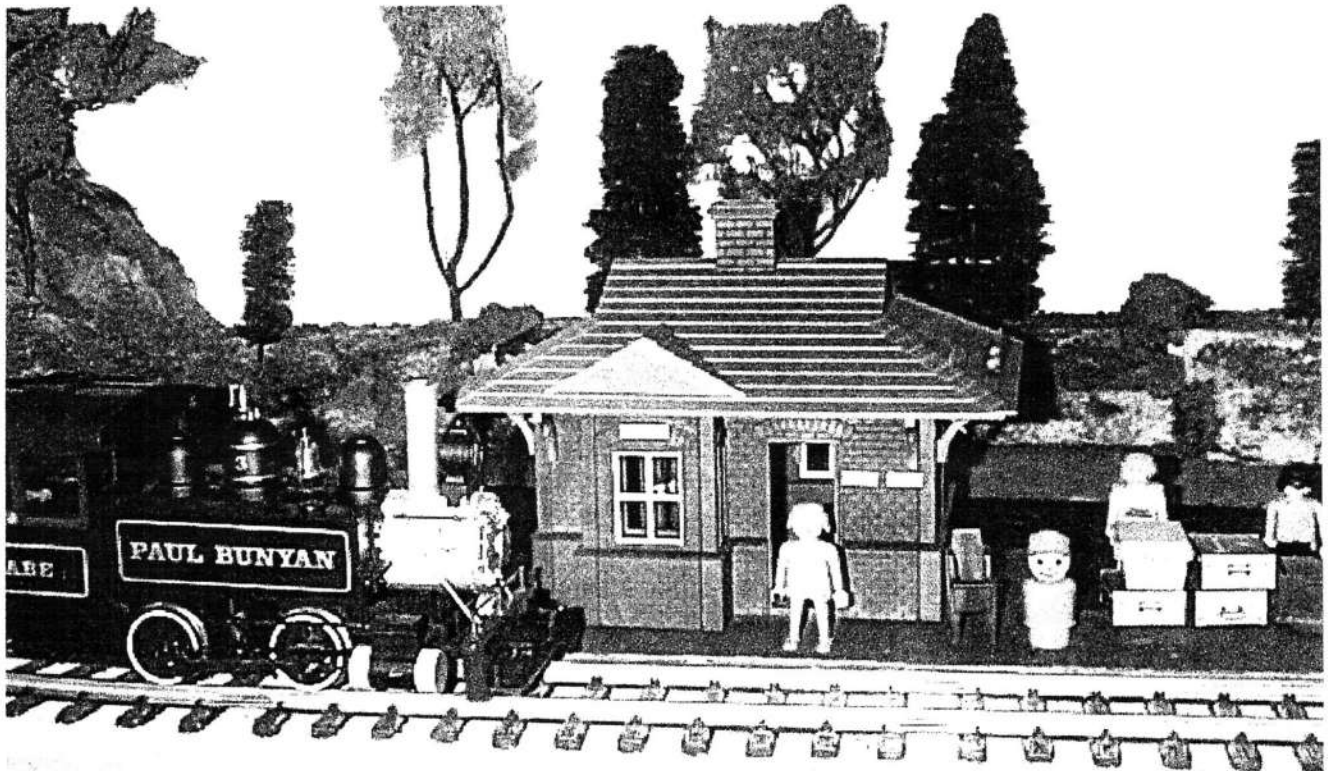
The next step was to look for some appropriate detail parts to bring the scene to life. My wife Jackie suggested our youngest sons toy collection in the attic, from which we selected an assortment of Playmobil figures and accessories. These are just about perfect for G-Gauge, and at one time they even had a train set for use with them (I never could get anybody to buy me that set).

Things were looking up. With only one day left till the program started, it was time to move the whole affair to church. I drafted one of my sons, and at the agreed upon time we disassembled the unit and loaded it onto my trailer. The mountains, buildings, train and figures were loaded into the car and off we

went. Set-up at church took about an hour to complete.

Through out the summer months, the platform has been used by many different children, and from the reports I have received is one of the childrens favorite parts of the room. I have gone by many times and found children running the train. In spite of it's location and amount of use, it has held up very well and has been a fun addition to the program.

I would like to express my thanks to Paul and Linda Maynard from Lin's Junction for their support in helping to make this possible. While the programs primary purpose is to teach children about God, who knows how many future model railroaders will come from their exposure to: "The Joy Express".



## Philadelphia Division Information Survey

Have you ever wondered what color the Northampton & Bath painted its locomotives, or when the Reading retired its last steamer? If so, the odds are good someone in the Philadelphia Division knows the answer, or at least where you might be able to find it. The only problem is; who is that person.

To that end, I would like to try a little survey of member interests. This is not a typical survey to find out how you feel about any one subject, but an information gathering instead. I would like to gather a file of sources for members to use for research purposes. This

information would be made available to members of the division on request. If you have a request, you can contact me at either the Snail Mail or E-mail address listed on page 2 of the newsletter, and I will direct you to the appropriate source. If you have any sources for information you feel might be helpful, please indicate so on the form. Hopefully we will be able to develop a nice reference resource for our members, or a source for networking possibilities. I'll get things started: anybody need any information on the Susquehanna?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

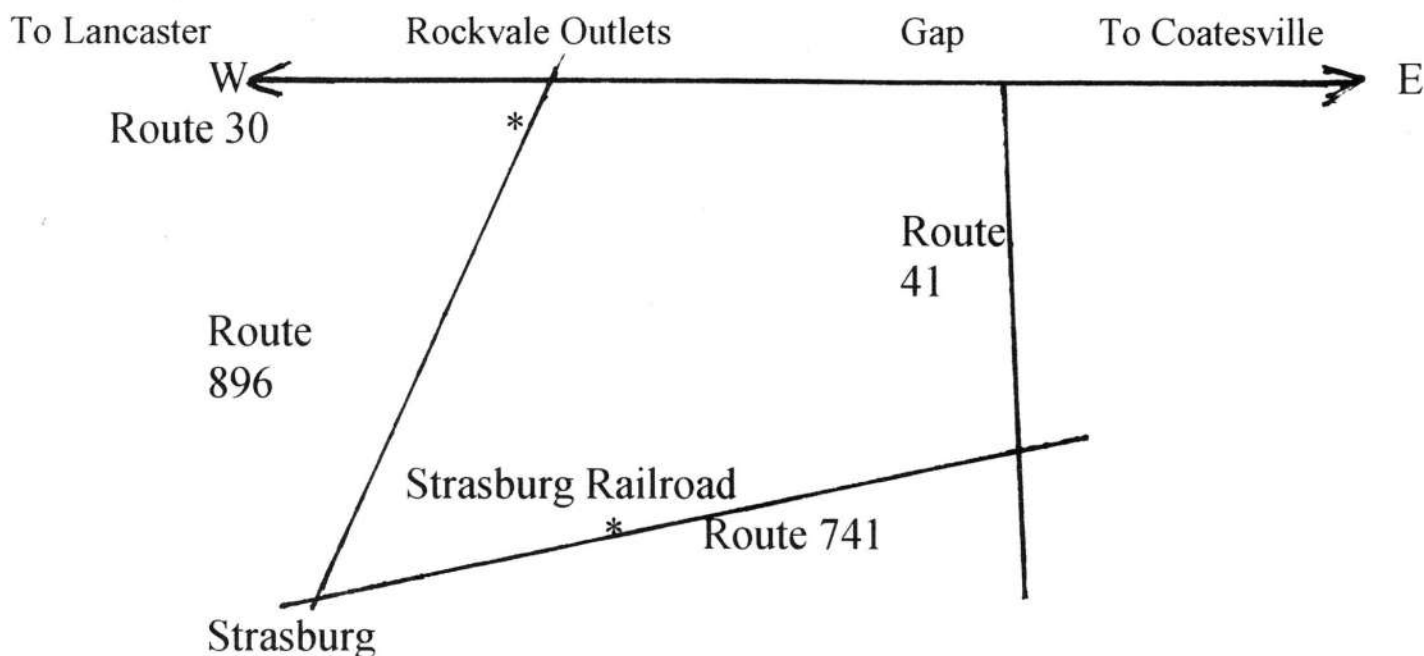
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone # Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Night: \_\_\_\_\_

Modeling information  
 Prototype \_\_\_\_\_ Scale \_\_\_\_\_ Era \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location Modeled \_\_\_\_\_ Control System \_\_\_\_\_  
 Layout (Y/N) \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Style \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests or Prototype Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_

I will keep your name confidential if you indicate so on the survey. If I get a request for information you might be able to answer, I'll pass the name along to you and you can make any contacts needed.

## Map to the Strasburg Railroad.



## Items for Sale

The Philadelphia Division is please to offer its members this free service. If you have items you would to sell or trade, send the information to the Editor, and we will include it in the next issue of the Dispatcher, space permitting.

**For Sale:** Used Switchmaster machines. I am converting portions of my railroad to use ground throws for sidings and

yard tracks, and have several surplus machines available. They include mounting hardware but not the throw rod mechanism. This will need to be fabricated from wire and brass tubing. Instructions will be included. Machines are \$5.00 each or 6 for \$25.00. Guaranteed to operate. Call Steve Salotti

**For Sale:** Home built walkaround pushbutton DC

control system. This system was built from an article in Model Railroader magazine, and includes two cabs with hand units, plus wire and plugs to build a complete network. I used this unit for several years before converting to command control. Unit has pulse power and sufficient power to run multiple unit consists on each throttle. Complete set for only \$50.00. Call Steve Salotti

## OIG Releases Assessment of Amtrak Financial Needs Through FY 2002

The Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General today released an independent assessment of Amtrak's financial needs through Fiscal Year 2000. The assessment found: Amtrak's financial condition is reflected accurately in its financial statements and reports and possibly overstates an operating loss by \$25 million;

Amtrak's Strategic Business Plan, revised in March 1998, indicated that Amtrak will incur a cash loss of \$368 million in 2003, and a cash loss for the 1999 through 2003 period of \$2.1 billion. In addition, several financial projections may not be achieved. If they are not, that will increase Amtrak's projected cash loss. If the plan was followed, without any modifications, the assessment projected Amtrak could have a cash loss of \$535 million in 2003, and a total cash loss for the 1999 through 2003 period of \$2.9 billion.

Amtrak has sufficient capital resources over the next 2 years to complete most of its 1998 business plan actions and implementation of high-speed rail service along the Northeast Corridor. Depending on the level of capital investment needs assumed, anticipated Federal funds (\$2.2 billion during the plan period) will fail to meet these needs by between \$0.5 billion and \$1.8 billion for the period 1999 through 2003. This shortfall emphasizes how critical it is for Amtrak to reduce its operating losses. Every dollar the loss is reduced frees another dollar for capital investment.

## **Discounts for Division Members at Local Hobby Shops**

Be sure to patronize the area's hobby shops that are now offering discounts on model railroading purchases to members of the Philadelphia Division.

### **Kenwood Model Hobbies**

Various train shows throughout the division  
10% discount  
Call (610) 532 2253 for details

### **Iron Horse Hobby Shop**

60 S. 6<sup>th</sup> St. in Reading  
10% discount with \$10 min purchase

### **Nick Logothetis**

(Abracadata)  
2 Buck Run  
Thornton, PA 19373  
(610) 399 3469

### **Mitchell's Family Store**

2119 Concord Pike (202) in Wilmington DE  
10% discount on train department items

### **Herb's Hobbies and Crafts**

200 W. State St. in Doylestown  
\$25 of free merchandise for every \$250 spent

### **Nicholas Smith Trains**

2343 West Chester Pike (3) in Bromall  
10% discount (excludes O & G items)

### **Lin's Junction at Henning Scale Models**

128 South Line St.  
Lansdale, PA 194446  
5% in addition to already discounted prices

### **Bussinger Trains**

Old Ambler Station, Ambler  
10-12% off retail

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## **The Philadelphia Dispatcher**

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417 Wedgewood Lane  
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Do you need to renew?

Inside:    **September Meet**  
              **G Gauge Adventure**  
              **Member Survey**

**Important Notice:** After this issue of the Dispatcher went to print, new information about the September meet has come in. Please note these changes. The Susquehanna Division will be providing cups and drinks for the meet. All division members are to bring their own food. Please meet at the Railbus around 10:00 A.M. Closed toe shoes must be worn to attend the shop tour.