

THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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

September 2000
Volume 7, Number 3

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that we will be holding our first meet of the fall train season on Saturday September 16th at the Holy Spirit School in Sharon Hill, PA. All members are encouraged to attend, and why not consider bringing a friend! The doors will open at 9:30, with the clinics starting at 10:00.

The clinic schedule for the meet has not been finalized at press time (have you ever tried to get a hold of people during the August vacation time?), but we are anticipating having an interesting and varied program for your enjoyment.

Keystone Junction Clinicians

Here is an excellent opportunity for you to practice your clinic before the big date. If you would like to participate, please contact John Nawn at the earliest possible date.

In addition to the clinics, we will have the usual activities, including contest and door prizes, and layout tours.

Our popular vote contest for this meet will be Photos. The photos can be of any subject, prototype or model, and any size, Mounted or not. Here is a great chance to bring out some of those great Conrail shots you took during the days before the merger when trains still moved in this area. If there are sufficient entries we will divide the contest into prototype and model and award prizes to the winners in both categories.

In addition, we will be having a raffle as a fundraiser for the Division. Members have donated several kits, and at least one of these will be available. Tickets will be available as you register. These tickets are separate from the normal door prize tickets.

During the afternoon, there will be several layouts available for your visit. At press time there were several

interesting layouts on board with more in the works.

Dealer tables are available for this meet by contacting John Nawn at:

610 461 8644

At the conclusion of the meet, there will be an important meeting of all staff members for Keystone Junction '01. All staff is encouraged to attend and bring an update of progress in your area of responsibility. If you were interested in getting involved with the planning for this great model railroad event, this would be a good opportunity to meet the staff and offer your services. There will be a working lunch for staff members.

November Meet set

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce the date for the November meet has been set for November 4th. The meet will take place at the Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene.

One thing I feel to be an indisputable fact: this is absolutely the best time to be involved in the hobby of model railroading. Never before have we had so many choices of products and services to help us in pursuit of our goals.

Who would have thought about ten years ago that today we would have so many choices of motive power, and I'm not just talking about paint schemes. I mean not only do we have new types of locomotives in correct paint schemes, but the details such as headlights, fan placement, ditch lights, etc. are all correct for the individual road names. Have you seen the drop steps on those new Atlas GP-40s? And talk about smooth running! Right out of the box these units will pull an incredible string of cars at prototype speeds.

And not to forget the beautiful new steam locomotives coming onto the market. I had opportunity to use the new 0-8-0 switcher from Life Like in their Proto 2000 line at my last operating session. Right out of the box, plug in a decoder, and off and shifting cars for over three hours without a hitch. Not bad at all, considering the amount of time "tinkering" it used to take to get a steam locomotive to run well, even the high priced brass units. I guess when the new Decapods come out we'll have to roll the clock back two years to get into the time frame when the Sussie Q still had them (I model '49, Sussie retired hers in '47).

Which brings up a whole new "train" of thought. Never before have we had so much historical data available to guide us in our search for realism. As an example, on my own layout I had included an Armour packing plant

and the movement of stock cars to service it. I knew that the Pennsylvania Railroad delivered stock cars to the Susquehanna until the mid-sixties, but never realized that the Erie also delivered them at the Passaic Junction interchange. Through a friend, I came into copies of numerous train consists that showed car types, owners, numbers, and routings for the period I model. With just a little adjustment, I was able to re-route the traffic to a more accurate pattern.

It's always nice to hear someone who is familiar with what you are modeling say; "it's just like the real thing".

Sometimes it can also get a little expensive. As I was looking over the aforementioned lists, I noticed there were a preponderance of cars from the mid-west. Now I had assumed the Susquehanna would have lots of cars from the PRR and NYC, the two largest roads in the area. But as fact would have it most of the cars were DT&I, Wabash, and other Detroit area railroads. Looking over my roster, there was only one Wabash car and not a single one from the DT&I (remember that the DT&I was the Ford railroad, and there is a Ford plant in Edgewater, just my luck). Off to the hobby shop, order some of Bowers great DT&I box cars, and get them on the road. Wonderful! Look, some of the car numbers are nearly identical! Hey, quick visit to the DT&I Historical Society web page to get more information. Wait, you mean the DT&I had sold all those cars by '47, and their scheme is wrong?

NO! IT'S NOT FAIR!!!!

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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 2000. Due out approx. October 15th. Deadline: October 5.

Membership: \$5.00 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."

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From the Superintendent

Once again, we end another great summer! Hopefully, everyone was able to break away from the routine and enjoy themselves. The daylight hours are getting shorter, the temperature a little colder (although this year you couldn't get a good feel for the summer temps.), and football gets underway. It's time to return to working on the layout, preparing it for tours (or at least dreaming about it).

I'd like to thank those that attended the June meet. Although lightly attended (it is always a tough one to fill), two excellent clinics were presented. Steve Wolfhope made a very interesting presentation on Garden Railroading. He explained both the how to's and some of the philosophy of garden railroading. It was interesting to learn that many garden railroaders are more gardeners than railroaders. Mike Rabbitt presented another of his interesting clinics on Steel Operations. Thanks again to you both.

Although we usually hold a joint meet with the New Jersey Division, this September we won't be in order to meet with all the folks involved with Keystone Junction. This meeting will be over a working lunch (after the meet). This will be our first large-scale meeting, where we can get problems out in the open and resolved. The Convention looks to be a great time for those of

you attending.

The September meet will be located at the Holy Spirit School in Sharon Hill, PA. We had a meet there about two years ago. See page one for details and the map elsewhere in this issue for directions. If you are a committee member please plan on attending. Our featured clinicians will include Jim Hart (former Division Superintendent) and Sam Parker who will give a presentation on their trip to the National Convention in San Jose.

I received a phone call from Norm Garner (V.P., M.E.R.) concerning the status of the subscribers within our division. It seems that in 1997, the topic was brought up at National and the word was that subscribers need to become full-fledged members. In the MER, there are only three divisions with this type, with Philadelphia being one of them. Officially, we're to take action to rectify the situation (in other words, encourage these folks to join outright) before National does. If you know of anyone who might need the gentle push, assist them. I wouldn't want to think we shoved them aside, or lost a potential member due to ignorance.

I've heard from several division members that San Jose was an enjoyable time. We'll just have to wait for an update at the next meet.

Timothy J. Palmer
Superintendent, Philadelphia Division

Schedules

GATSME Lines Open House: You are invited to attend the GATSME Lines open house on the following dates: Nov. 18 & 19, Dec. 1 & 2, and Jan. 6, 7, 20, & 21. Hours are from Noon until 4 PM all dates. The club is located at the corner of Prospect and Madison Avenues in Fort Washington, PA. For more information call: 215 646 2033.

Philadelphia Division Meet November 4th at Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene. More

information to follow in the next issue of the Dispatcher.

October 5 – 8, 2000 MER Fall Convention. Joint convention with the NER and MCR. Juniata Junction – Y2K4 Hotel: Ramada Inn Altoona, PA More Information: (856) 467 3385

New Jersey Division Meets: September 30th Delran Division Meet Delran Municipal Building

900 Chester Ave. Delran NJ Clinics & Meeting 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Layouts 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM Contest TBA

November 4th Atlantic City-Hamonton area (Tentative) Clinics & Meeting 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM Layouts 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM Contest TBA

To get you're listing here send it to the Editor by the date on Pg. 2.

With Denver Union Station also being a stub end terminal, entry to the station is via a back up move through the wye. There are only two tracks in the station, the one we are occupying and one for the Ski Train with its former Rio Grande coaches. The coaches look splendid in their former DRG&W yellow paint, but the F-units are gone replaced by three F40s with a UP AC6000 on the point. Although painted in the DRG&W scheme, the coaches carry Amtrak reporting marks identified by the word "Amtrak" and an Amtrak car number in small black letters at the ends of each car. Denver Union Station is a fabulous train station with a large waiting area in a grand hall with vaulted ceilings three stories high. On top of the massive stone station there is a large sign encouraging riders to "Travel By Train". The station, however, only hosts two trains per day ! The east and west bound CZ. In season, of course, it also hosts the ski trains, but there are no commuter or other Amtrak trains that stop here. From here, the CZ proceeds westward over the fabled DRG&W, but we detrain here to begin our own Colorado odyssey.

Our first stop in Denver, was of course, the model railroaders' nirvana: Caboose Hobbies. What a store. It was, without a doubt, the most well stocked hobby shop I have ever been in. Highlights were the book, locomotive and car selections. The prototype book selection was one of the most complete I have ever seen. The brass selection, however, although representative of all scales, was not as extensive as Mitchell's. If you are going to Colorado, send \$5.00 to Caboose Hobbies before you go, and they will send you brochures for most of the railroad attractions in the state and a 5% discount in the store. Since it is almost a guarantee that you'll drop over a hundred bucks if you walk through the door, it's well worth your five bucks.

Colorado has a ton of railroad attractions and tourist lines.

1. The Cripple Creek and Victor Narrow Gauge. We ruled this one out early. It's about a four-mile round trip behind a 15-ton, 0-4-0 narrow gauge steam locomotive.
2. The Canon City & Royal Gorge Railroad. This is a diesel powered, 24 mile ride through Royal Gorge, behind on of the D&RGW F-units. I saw the power and consist, but it was too dark to get good shots. Our schedule didn't permit a trip on this train.
3. The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. Reportedly, it is the star attraction as railroad rides go,

and I plan to return one day to ride it, but it is so far off the beaten path (on the Colorado/New Mexico border), I couldn't get over to it.

4. The Leadville, Colorado & Southern Railroad. Another diesel powered 2 1/2-hour ride. The attraction here is that the train leaves from Leadville, the highest incorporated city in the US.

5. The Durango & Silverton Railroad. Perhaps the most famous Colorado narrow gauge of them all. I didn't ride this one either, (\$53.00 per adult!), but I did follow the line, sort of, between the two cities. And the two cities are a contrast of times and eras. Silverton is the typical "western" town with dirt streets and false front buildings. The rail yard here is open air and quite accessible. There were about three dozen narrow gauge freight cars present including a D&RGW narrow gauge wreck crane, some narrow gauge tanks and the famous stock cars. There was also one of the k-series narrow gauge mikados in the yard, with a Baldwin builder's plate, of course. Durango on the other hand seemed like the "main line" of Colorado. The town reminded me a little of New Hope, only larger and much wealthier. The steam railroad facilities in Durango are well hidden from the public and there is no way to get anywhere close to get pictures, unless you actually ride the train. Durango is the headquarters of the operation with all of the operating steam locomotives stored there.

6. Georgetown Loop Railroad. We did ride this fascinating little railroad behind a narrow gauge shay ! The trip was fantastic. The line travels from Georgetown to Silver Plume, only two miles apart, but it traverses over four and one half miles of track to do it. The line crosses Clear Creek four times, double backs on itself once and the highlight of the trip is the 95' high Devil's Gate High Bridge where the railroad actually crosses over itself. The line has an average grade of 2.5% over the entire 4 1/2 miles, includes two 28 degree curves and one 30 degree curve (that's an 18" radius in HO scale). In addition to the shay, the railroad has a number of narrow gauge steam and diesel locomotives, and all the equipment is quite accessible at the Silver Plume shops. And a brief word about the temperature; although it was July 31, the morning temperature was in the 50's.

There are also trolley operations in Colorado. In Fort Collins, they operate a Birney Car route through a suburban setting on in street and center median trackage. And, of course it wasn't running when I was there (story of my life). Fort Collins also hosts a BN mainline with about 10 blocks of in street running down one of the major east-west drags. I

actually did catch an eastbound freight rumbling through town. It was a unique experience and I got some great shots

Let's not forget the Pike's Peak Cog Railroad, also. I had ridden this train 20 years ago, so we opted to drive to the top this time, but this is an authentic railroad operation, The Manitou Springs and Pikes Peak Railroad. Although now operated with Swiss built diesel m-u trains, the line at one time hosted Baldwin built steam locomotives, one of which can be seen at the Colorado Railroad Museum.

Which brings us to the Colorado Railroad Museum, in Golden. Although not on par with Strasburg or Baltimore, it is a very nice facility, with all equipment stored outside. All the equipment is set up to be easily photographed. Highlights include a number of RGS & D&RGW mikados, some freshly painted D&RGW F-units (wow) and two galloping geese. Unfortunately, nothing runs, it is all static display. Again, a great gift shop with an excellent book section.

I did have a chance to do some railfanning, also. I spent the better part of an afternoon in Grand Junction, shooting east and west bounds on the D&RGW main line. Although owned by UP now, I saw more BN and ATSF trains than anything else. I did see a pair of SP U-boats, which came into Grand Junction from the south on the old Montrose line. And for those wondering, the Tennessee Pass line is still very much in place. We stayed in Salida one night, which was a former helper station on the east side of the continental divide. The rails are still there and the line is still clear although, the heavy accumulation of rust would suggest that no train had passed in quite some time. The Royal Gorge train also operates on a portion of the old Tennessee Pass line.

One of the most interesting static displays was buried deep in a National Park, Curricianti. Established as a National Park around a series of flood control and water supply dam projects, one of the dam projects flooded the upstream portion of an old D&RGW narrow gauge line along the Gunnison River. In fact, it appeared that the vehicle access road to this particular dam was built on the old ROW. Near the foot of the dam, there remained an original steel, deck truss bridge over a tributary to the main creek. On the bridge is positioned a narrow gauge mikado, a boxcar and a caboose that have been cosmetically restored. It was a neat little display and fairly vandal proof since

the bridge and the display was suspended 50 feet over the creek and there was no connection to either bank. You could stand on the adjacent vehicle bridge and get photos of the equipment with the sheer rock walls as a backdrop and by framing the picture just right, you could take a picture so that you could never tell that it was just a stand alone bridge.

On the return, the CZ consist was essentially the same, but this time the coaches were up front followed by the lounge, diner and sleeper. There was however, a metroliner coach sandwiched between the locomotives and the baggage cars. It obviously was in non-revenue transport.

And thus ends our second Amtrak odyssey. Another one this year ? I doubt it. This summer finds me in Knoxville, TN, and although an active railroad town (including a famous triple crossing), Amtrak doesn't go anywhere near Knoxville. However, I would again suggest that if you ever wanted to take a cross-country Amtrak journey, you do it soon. By law, Amtrak is required to be self-sufficient by 2002. If they are not, the oversight board can vote to dissolve Amtrak. They have made great strides in both rider ship and cost cutting, but Amtrak is still not self-sufficient. In fact, the only segment that is profitable is the northeast corridor. Consider also the new Acela brand name for the NEC operation. Within a year, you won't even see "Amtrak" on the NEC. It appears that Amtrak may be positioning itself to spin off the rest of the system and operate the NEC as a stand-alone entity, possibly in anticipation of any board actions in 2002. I can't believe, however, that all other Amtrak service would disappear. I'm sure some of the more famous name trains, such as the Empire Builder and CZ, would be operated perhaps as individual entities, by the host railroads themselves or by some form of reincarnated Amtrak. Nonetheless though, there may be drastic changes to the passenger rail market in 2002.

On the road again,

John

Now that you've had an opportunity to hear about John's experiences, how about you? We would love to have stories or articles about your area of interest. Contact the Editor for more information. He will write it, you just provide the facts!

Keystone Korner

With each passing day we are drawing closer to the date for Keystone Junction 2001. Have you made your plans yet to attend this exciting convention? Set aside **March 29th through April 1st, 2001** now, and plan on being at the **Great Valley Sheraton Hotel** at the intersection of Routes 202 and 30 in Frazer, PA. The committee is hard at work trying to put together a program that will not only meet, but also far exceed what happened at Brandywine Junction '97.

At presstime, the following are among our list of featured clinicians:

Andy Sperandeo	Operations
Bill Schaumberg	Tunnel Hill
John Armstrong	TBA
Jim Hertzog	Reading update
Bob Charles	TBA
Mike Rabbitt	Steel Mills
George Way	Allegheny Valley
Steve Salotti	TT&TO on the NYS&W
Dave Palmer	ZOO Tower
George Hughes	DCC
Tim Palmer	Railfanning the area
Roger Cason	Scenery
Panel Discussions	
Hands on DCC Clinic	

There is a balanced list of topics and clinicians too many to list here. You are sure to find something to your liking and many ideas for you to use in your modeling efforts.

In addition to the interesting clinicians, we are working on a number of excursions and railfan adventures. These are not yet finalized, but we expect most to come through.

Lukens Steel tour	Confirmed
Reading & Northern trip	
Amtrak's 30 th St Station	Confirmed
PECO's Eddystone plant	Confirmed
Frazer Shops	Confirmed

We are also planning to include many of the features found at other region conventions, such as

company store, model contests, door prizes, etc. There will also be both a silent and a live Auction! So start setting aside surplus items for you to include in these fun events, (which of us doesn't have more kits than we could build in two lifetimes!). In addition, we are planning to have a Philadelphia Division signature item, an on site Train Show! There will be nearly seventy tables of your favorite items from dealers from around the area. This show will be open to convention attendees for an hour before being opened to the public, and is FREE to registered conventioners. It doesn't get any better than that!

Another popular feature will be the Operations Callboard. This was the second item to sell out at Brandywine Junction, so we have added new layouts and expanded the number of spaces, but doesn't delay as we expect a record attendance for this popular item.

If you enjoy layout tours, then this is the convention for you! We expect to have over thirty layouts on the self guided tours, These will include many of the premier layouts in Pennsylvania and northern Delaware. This area is famous for it's concentration of quality home and club layouts. No matter what your tastes, you can find something to enjoy.

And for those who wish to bring their spouse along, we are also working on a number of exciting activities for their enjoyment. We are planning tours to Longwood Gardens, the Hagley Museum, and shopping, among others.

We expect many of these activities to fill up quickly, so we encourage all to register as soon as the form is available. The form should be available at the next Division Meet. If you are a member of the Keystone Club, you will receive a form as soon as they come from the printer to give you first choice of the planned activities!

Will we see YOU at the Junction?

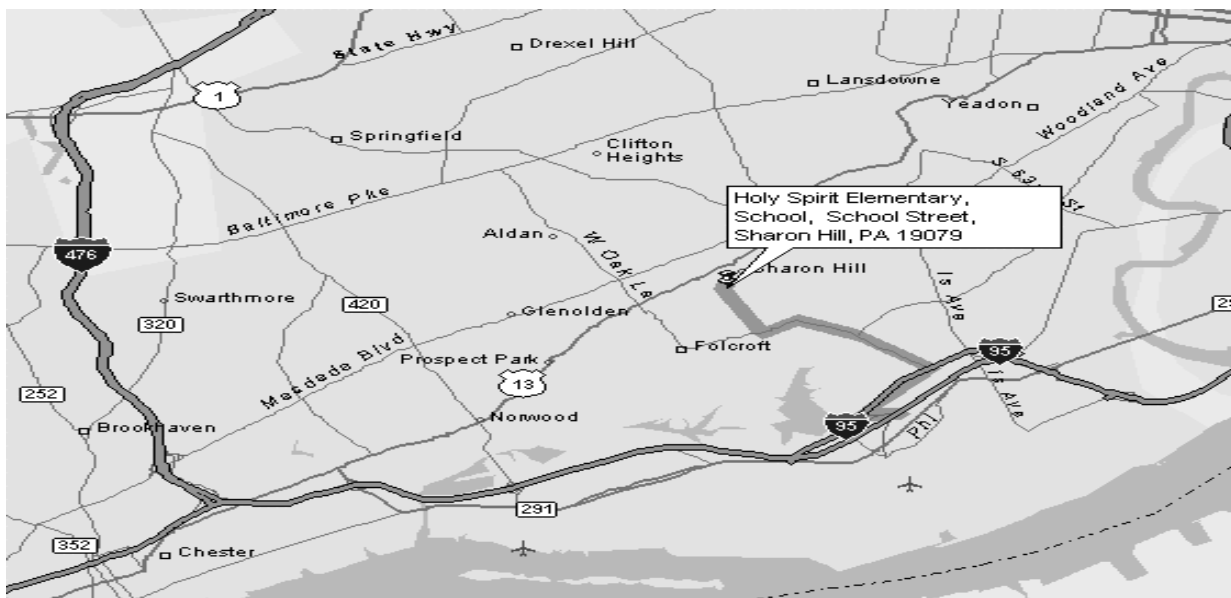
Directions to Holy Spirit

From the North and East via I-95: Take I-95 south to the Philadelphia Airport Exit. Stay in right hand lane. Follow signs for PA Route 291 and exit. At end of exit ramp (traffic light) turn right onto Bartram Avenue East. Follow Bartram Avenue to the second traffic light and turn left onto 84th Street, which turns into Calcon Hook Road (when you cross the Darby Creek from Philadelphia to Delaware County). Follow 84th Street/Calcon Hook Road to the fourth traffic light, which will be Sharon Avenue. Turn right and follow Sharon Avenue through the traffic light, across the railroad tracks and into Sharon Hill. After crossing the tracks, look for the second cross street on your right, this will be School Street. Turn right, you will first pass the church, the rectory and then the school on your left. After passing the school, turn left into the driveway/parking lot. The gym is behind the school; the doors will be on your left.

From the West and South via the Blue Route, I-476: Take the Blue Route South to I-95. Take I-95 north to the Airport Exit (about 5 miles). Exit and follow road to first traffic light. Turn left onto Bartram Avenue. Follow Bartram Avenue to the third traffic light and turn left onto 84th Street, which turns into Calcon Hook Road (when you cross the Darby Creek from Philadelphia to Delaware County). Follow 84th Street/Calcon Hook Road to the fourth traffic light, which will be Sharon Avenue. Turn right and follow Sharon Avenue through the traffic light, across the railroad tracks and into Sharon Hill. . After crossing the tracks, look for the second cross street on your right, this will be School Street. Turn right, you will first pass the church, the rectory and then the school on your left. After passing the school, turn left into the driveway/parking lot. The gym is behind the school; the doors will be on your left.

From Delaware County: Sharon Hill is bisected by Chester Pike, US Route 13. Take Lansdowne Avenue or Springfield Road south to McDade Blvd, and turn right. Chester Pike and McDade Blvd intersect at the traffic signal just west of Springfield Road. Go straight through the intersection and up the hill to Sharon Hill. Go to the fourth traffic light, Sharon Avenue (Acme Shopping Center on the right), and turn left. Follow Sharon Avenue past the Fire Station, Library, and Municipal Building on your right, the next street on your left is School Street. Turn left, you will first pass the church, the rectory and then the school on your left. After passing the school, turn left into the driveway/parking lot. The gym is behind the school; the doors will be on your left.

Clifton Avenue also intersects Chester Pike at the Acme Shopping center. From Clifton Avenue south, turn left onto Chester Pike then right onto Sharon Avenue at the next light. Follow Sharon Avenue past the Fire Station, Library, and Municipal Building on your right, the next street on your left is School Street. Turn left, you will first pass the church, the rectory and then the school on your left. After passing the school, turn left into the driveway/parking lot. The gym is behind the school; the doors will be on your left.



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. 6th 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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Inside: September Meet
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 And more!

Do you need to renew? If the date on your mailing label is highlighted, please renew promptly. Thank you for renewing promptly.