



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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

May 2002
Volume 9, Number 2

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that we will be conducting our next meeting on Saturday, June 15th. The meet will be held at Saint Alban's Church in Newtown Square, PA. The church is located on Chapel Road in Newtown Square, just north of the intersection of Routes 3 and 252. For a map please see page 7 of this issue of the Dispatcher.

The doors will open at 9:00 A.M. with the clinics and other activities starting at approximately 9:30 A.M. We encourage all division members to attend this very important meeting.

The meet will begin with a most unusual clinic. Our popular vote contest for the meet will be craftsman car kits. These kits are those put out by Westerfield, Funaro & Camerlengo, Sunshine Models and others. These are not your average "shake the box" kits. The builders of the kits will be asked to briefly describe their models and any challenges they encountered while building them. The models will then be entered into the contest for your voting during the break. Don't like to speak in public? Don't worry, if you are too shy, one of our raucous division officers will

describe your efforts for you. Look around that railroad and bring your favorite model for all to learn from.

The next item on the agenda will be the election of the new Board of Directors for the Philadelphia Division. The recently approved Bylaws call for the election of a seven member Board of Directors. Elsewhere in this issue of the Dispatcher is the slate of officers for your consideration. If you are not able to attend this important meeting, you may mail the ballot to the clerk at the address listed on page 2 of this issue. All mailed ballots must be received by June 12th to be included.

And then, for the highlight of the day, the Philadelphia Division will be conducting the first in a very long time **Division Auction!** Yes, that's correct. Now is the time to look over those piles of treasures you have been hoarding. There are sure to be items there that you will never use. Here is the perfect opportunity to not only get rid of things you will never have a use for, but a great chance to make money to buy other items.

For complete Auction rules, please see page 5 of this issue of the Dispatcher. This auction is open to Division

members only, but you can join the Division the day of the auction. The Division reserves the right to limit the number of items any one member may bring to the auction, and we reserve the right to limit the overall time.

And most important of all, bring money, and lots of it. Registration for the items to be entered in the auction will be accepted starting at 9:00 A.M., with the auction beginning at approximately 10:00 A.M.

Due to the possibility of this event carrying over into the early afternoon there will be no layout tours scheduled for this meet. We will have door prize drawings at several times during the morning.

Election Results

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that by a unanimous vote the membership has accepted the new bylaws as proposed by the bylaws committee. These bylaws take effect immediately. Please review the copy provided you in the November issue of the Dispatcher. If you would like another copy, please make your request to the clerk.

As has often been said, one of the best things about this hobby is the great bunch of interesting people you get to meet. Some of them are indeed what we would term "characters", but the vast majority are people that we would take pride in calling friends.

During a recent trip to the nation's capital to take part in an operations weekend, I again had the opportunity to meet and operate on several different layouts. The personality of each owner showed in both the way the layout was constructed and the way that the orientation was conducted. In each case there was always something to be learned that could be used to improve our own modeling skills.

The first gentleman's layout that I visited was a retired military man. He had earned the rank of General during his career, and the way he ran the pre-session orientation and post session debriefing showed the skill and planning he had used during his career.

We met in the family room at 0950 for a welcome and training time. Using his laser pointer, the General took us through a series of charts that showed the prototype he was following (Southern's famous "Rathole" Division), the layout plan as he had developed it, and the traffic flow of both the prototype and model. This was followed by more charts showing a pictorial explanation of the traffic (in case we didn't understand), and then the crew charts. Each guest and regular operator had an assignment, and the plan for their day was all ready to go. We finally got downstairs at 1030 to see a 50' X 60' wonderful rendition of the

"Rathole". And the best part was that each crewmember knew what to do and how to do it. We all enjoyed a full day of operation, and except for the occasional mechanical glitch, the session went off flawlessly.

The debriefing started at 1600 hours, with the General asking for feedback in a number of areas, including mechanical performance and ways to improve the session.

One of the other layouts I operated on was located out in the rural areas of Maryland. Our host met us outside where we chatted a while, including talking about some of the Civil War history the area was famous for. His laid back-relaxed style was a definite change from the previous experience. What struck me the most about his layout was the incredible amount of organization and finish displayed. The entire fascia was done with stained oak trim and white Melamine panels. The towns and industries were all neatly labeled. And underneath the layout were furniture quality shelves, with rows of kit boxes and other supplies, all neatly arranged. He also used a mechanics tool box (the kind on wheels) to store scenery supplies. When he works on projects he just rolls it to where he will be working.

This experience has caused me to rethink both the way I orient new operators to my own layout and how I store supplies. Maybe its time to do a little house cleaning. I know those tool boxes are available at Sears and Home Depot, and if I re-arrange some of those shelves, maybe I'll be able to find those parts I'm looking for.

Happy Railroading

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Editor

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Collegeville, Pa, 19426
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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: Sept. 2002. Due out approx. Sept. 5. Deadline: August 15th.

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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Dues: \$8.00 per year

National Model Railroad Association

4121 Cromwell Road
Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119
(615) 892-2946
Dues: \$45.00 per year

From the Superintendent - final entry

I would first like to say "Thank you!" to all of those members of the Division who have continuously assisted myself, John Nawn, and Steve Salotti in the workings of the Division. Without you, we all could not have gotten done what we needed to.

I'd also like to thank those that provided assistance during Keystone Junction 2001. Another milestone placed before the Region that won't be surpassed any time soon. And in the midst of all of this mayhem, we "volunteered" to put on the national convention in 2006. Okay, what were we thinking?

Really though, the central core of volunteers for 2006 have quite a number of conventions under their belts. If you want to join the fun, let one of us know. And yes, it really is a lot of fun.

Good luck with your endeavors and full steam ahead!

Timothy J Palmer, Superintendent
Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA

This meet, we have to elect a new governing board. I appreciate my chance to guide the Division, but now it's time for more of the folks to enjoy themselves. So, please vote for the Board members, and give them your support, like you've given your support to me.

We are currently working within the national guidelines, as far as the by-laws are concerned. The voting ensured we were within compliance. Now to the important business...

Finally, summer is almost upon us. Not that we had much of a winter. It's time to break out the lawn chairs, coolers (with appropriate liquid refreshment), and enjoy those trackside photo opportunities. (Or baseball games, fishing, etc.)

Bylaws Update!

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that by a unanimous vote the proposed new bylaws have been accepted. The new bylaws are now in place, and will be used for the governing of the Division from this date on. In accordance with those bylaws there will be a few changes in how the Division operates.

The first order of business will be the election of new officers. The following list of members is offered for your consideration to fill the 7 member Board or Trustees. From these members, the Board will elect your next Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Clerk.

Paul Backenstose	Yes _____ No _____	Ken McCorry	Yes _____ No _____
Ray Biladeau	Yes _____ No _____	Tim Palmer	Yes _____ No _____
Jim Dalberg	Yes _____ No _____	Steve Salotti	Yes _____ No _____
Dick Foley	Yes _____ No _____		

The second major change is that we will no longer be able to offer the Subscriber service. Those of you that are not current members of the NMRA and the MER will not be able to renew. If you would like to continue receiving The Dispatcher and attend Division meets you must furnish current membership numbers. If you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact any Division officer.

The Division is would like to extend a special word of thanks to member Dick Foley for his work on the nominating committee.

Bryn Athyn Post Office celebrates its centennial

FROM THE GLOBE OF GLENSIDE (MONTGOMERY COUNTY) PA

At first glance, the Bryn Athyn Post Office on Fetters Mill Road looks like a post office from an old western movie.

The back of the building still has the look of an old train station, which it also housed for many years, with railroad tracks that run along the bank of the Pennypack Creek. On Tuesday, a number of local residents converged on the old post office to celebrate its 100th anniversary. According to postal records, the Bryn Athyn Post Office was established April 7, 1902.

To commemorate the event, Larry Eastwood, a retired postal service supervisor, has prepared a limited edition special postcard. The Bryn Athyn Post Office and train station holds a special place in Eastwood's heart. His boyhood home, which he lived in from 1943 until 1969, was right across the creek. "I briefly worked at the post office around Christmastime when I was in high school," Eastwood said. "I watched the train go by here for years." Eastwood is a fountain of historical information about the post office and the train station, which has been out of service since 1983.

One of the most famous stories surrounding the post office and station is the tragic accident of 1921, when two trains crashed head-on killing 27 and injuring 70. Eastwood said the ensuing fire killed more people than were killed in the crash. "The postmaster at the time

was J. Russell Clayton, who notified the nearest rescue squad," Eastwood said. "Trouble was, none of the local fire departments had a rescue squad. The closest one was at Abington Hospital."

According to Eastwood, during the early days of the Bryn Athyn Post Office, the postmaster served the dual roles of postmaster and train station agent. When he wasn't selling stamps or sorting mail, the postmaster-train station agent would sell train tickets and handle baggage.

Eastwood said he feels fortunate to have grown up in such a scenic area. He envisions a bright future for the Bryn Athyn Post Office. All the residents love the place and help with the upkeep, he said. At Christmas they install decorative lights and they plant flowers in the pot outside the main entrance in the spring. Residents regard it a meeting place. "People come here from all over," Eastwood said. "It's like a rural post office in suburbia." Eastwood said SEPTA previously announced plans to put the train tracks back into service, but not before 2006.

Rethinking Rail Travel

The nation's highway system does not make a profit. Nor does the commercial aviation system. Nor does passenger rail. However, only one of these three vital links in America's transportation network, the railroad, is being asked to break even. Congress must abandon its fantasy that Amtrak can be self-sufficient. Only then can it engage in an honest debate about the kind of passenger rail system the country needs, and how to pay for it.

In 1997, in exchange for meager subsidies, Congress required that Amtrak be "operationally self-sufficient" by December of this year, or else. It is "or else" time, and the Amtrak Reform Council, created by the same law, is calling for radical restructuring. The council suggests that Amtrak be broken up into a regulatory agency, a regional body to assume ownership of the Northeast corridor track and an operating company. It would also like to open up certain routes to private competitors.

The council raises valid questions about Amtrak's accountability under the current arrangement, but new bureaucracies and privatization are not necessarily the solution. The fundamental problem undermining the nation's rail system, after all, is chronic underinvestment.

Long-distance trains with such evocative names as the Empire Builder and the Sunset Limited may have nostalgia value for train buffs and political value for members of Congress whose districts they service. But when one assesses the nation's transportation needs and available resources, it is hard not to conclude that they are an unaffordable extravagance. An honest debate about the future of passenger rail is long overdue. If it takes place, America can still salvage and strengthen the train system it really needs. -New York Times, Marty Benard

Philadelphia Division Live Auction Rules

1. Each seller must fill out an auction registration form for the items for sale in each lot.
2. Required information will be the seller's Division membership number and a description of the items being sold
3. No Minimum Bid is required. If a minimum bid is placed on the item the lowest minimum bid permitted will be \$5.00. If necessary, items must be combined to meet the \$5.00 minimum bid.
4. Bidders (Buyers) will use their Division membership number as the buyer number.
5. Sellers will pay the 10% of the selling price to the Division. Sellers may buy back any of their own items but will still be charged the 10% fee. There will be no charge for claiming any unsold items.
6. Sellers may lower their minimum bid, if any, after the start of the auction but not below the minimum bid of \$5.00.
7. Buyers may pick up and pay for the item immediately after being awarded the item by the auctioneer, or pick up the items and pay for them when the buyer is done bidding or when the auction is concluded.
8. The buyers will pay for their winning items first. After all the buyers have paid for their items, then the sellers will be paid. If, for some reason, the seller can not be available at that time, he will be paid by check by mail after the close of the auction.
9. Any unsold items will be claimed after the auction is finished. If the seller has to leave before the end of the auction, one of the auction workers will check you out and return unsold items to you.
10. No buying or negotiating for items will be permitted once the items have been placed in the auction.
11. Payment for items purchased must be with cash (lots of it) and by check. We cannot accept credit cards.
12. All unclaimed items, sold or unsold, will be kept by the committee for a certain time period and then fought over by the auction committee members.

Derailment prompts CSX ban on private passenger equipment

Any of you thinking about acquiring some used equipment? Here is a little tidbit of information for you to ponder.

After a derailment recently involving deadheading non-Amtrak passenger cars, CSX says it won't haul private passenger cars in its freight trains until further notice.

Former Long Island Rail Road coaches bound for the Pennsylvania short line New Hope & Ivyland derailed in the consist of train Q406-11 near Baltimore on April 12, prompting the ban. No one was injured in the derailment, although one person was aboard one of the passenger cars.

The American Association of Private Railcar Owners could not be reached for comment on how the CSX bulletin will affect private car movements

What to do after the auction when you're new locomotive won't work

By Jim Pond, Philadelphia Division, NMRA

Over the past 30 years I have acquired a number of HO steam locomotives. Most were purchased at model railroad meets, auctions, or have been given to me by friends who had no interest in HO model railroading. In each instance there were great expectations and great disappointments. As a result I have learned to keep my expectations low with the understanding that some work would be required to get them performing well.

As an example, I have selected a recent purchase obtained in the silent auction at the Keystone Junction 2001 held by the Philadelphia Division. The prize was a Bowser L-1 Mikado 2-8-2. Lying in its box it looked great. I made a bid that was a winner. I was pleased. When I removed the L-1 from its box for analysis I found the mechanism jammed so tight that nothing moved, not even the backlash in the gears. I removed the boiler and carefully examined each component. The motor was removed and tested. It was functioning.

Suspecting problems in the valve gear mechanism I looked for interference but had difficulty in finding any obvious problem. One thing that experience has taught me is to look for misassembly of valve gear. Sometimes it is because the person who did the assembly could not relate to the left- and right-hand relationships and got the assembly slightly wrong. In this instance with the L-1 there was a binding problem. A review of several Bowser HO Reference Manuals revealed that the valve hanger was bent back from the initial 90 degrees to about 60 degrees. I restored the hanger to 90 and placed it back on the underframe. This helped but there still was a bind.

I was looking for smooth operation by pushing the locomotive underframe with wheels and drive mechanism but without the motor. Further examination showed that one of the short crankpin screws was out of tolerance. Its shoulder was too narrow for the side rods. A replacement screw solved that problem.

Using a small pointed plier I went over each member of the drive. I decided that the rivets were too loose, so I replaced each one with a fresh rivet. Soon I had a smooth operating mechanism.

While this was taking place, Bowser announced a new DC-71 motor with skew wound armature, new magnet material and double-insulated armature. I exchanged the old motor for the new model.

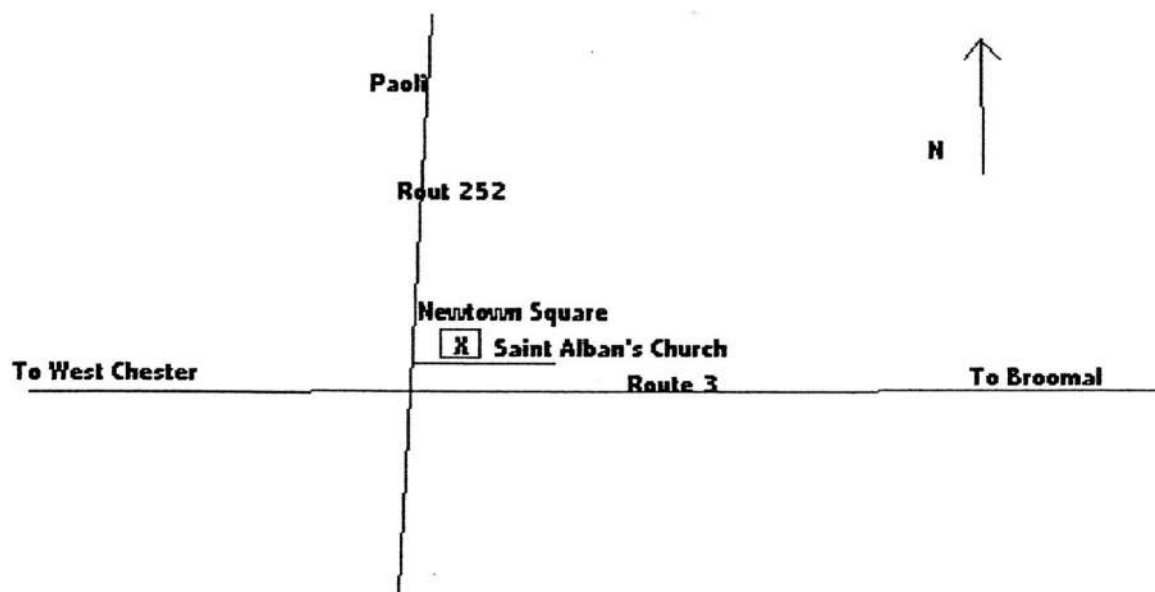
Each of these relatively minor changes and adjustments resulted in a very smooth and powerful locomotive. It now far exceeds my initial expectations.

To date I have reworked the following locomotives: Penn Line H-9 Consolidation, Bowser K-11 Pacific, the L-1 Mikado and a Bowser T-1 Duplex. I have also helped others straighten out their Bowser K-4 Pacific and Mantua Mikados.

The most unusual problem I encountered were some locomotives that ran backwards. Not in reverse, mind you, but backwards. In the older motors it is possible to reposition a lug atop the brushes to change polarity of the motor. I finally adopted a procedure for detecting this by running a commercial model, such as a Mantua, with the locomotive being tested. If they go in opposite directions, the motor is wired incorrectly.



Map to Saint Alban's Church in Newtown Square



Saint Alban's is located on Chapel Road in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. Chapel Road is accessible from any direction except Route 252 south. When coming south on 252, continue to Route 3 east, turn left onto Route 3, and then left at the first traffic signal. Follow this to Saint Alban's Circle, go around the circle to Chapel Road and go west to the church

Schedules

Philadelphia Division Meet, June 15th, Saint Alban's Church in Newtown Square, PA. Elections, clinics, auction. All members are encouraged to attend this important event.

New Jersey Division meet. June 1, 2002 Garden Layout tour, south New Jersey area. For more information contact the New Jersey Division at:
Mike McNamara,

P.O. Box 232, Haddon Heights,
NJ 08035-0232

June 6 - 9, 2002

Richmond Rails

MER Spring Convention,
Richmond VA. Sponsored by the
James River Division
Clinics, contests, prototype tours,
non-rail activities. For more
information see the MER Local,
or check out their WEB site at:
www.richmondrails.homestead.com

Philadelphia Division Meet
Tentative date: September 21, at
Fairview Village Church of the
Nazarene. Clinics, contest layout
tours. Details to follow.

October 4 - 6, 2002

Cherry Hill Depot

MER Fall convention, Cherry
Hill New Jersey. Clinics,
contests, prototype tours,
operations callboard, non-rail
activities. See the MER Local for
more details.

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Inside: Division Meet
Prototype News
And more!

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

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

(Abracadabra)
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 19446
5% in addition to already discounted prices

Bussinger Trains

Old Ambler Station, Ambler
10-12% off retail