



# THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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

September 2003  
Volume 10, Number 3

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The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that it will be holding its next meeting on Friday and Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. This meet will be unusual in that there will be layouts open for your visit on Friday evening from 7:00 PM until 10:00 PM. For maps to the layouts that are open please look elsewhere in this issue of the Dispatcher.

Then on Saturday morning there will be clinics presented for your enjoyment at Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene, located at 3060 Germantown Pike in Fairview Village, PA. The meeting will take place in the barn, located on the north side of the church property. The morning meeting will begin at 10:00 AM, with the doors opening at 9:30.

Our clinic schedule for the day includes some interesting presentations. The first will be Rich Newmiller's clinic on building model railroad structures. Rich's clinic describes the construction of 8 buildings that are wall mounted and directly adjacent to a rail yard. To maximize track space, these buildings range in depth from flats (3/8" deep) to shallow elevated structures (3" deep) with rail service at the ground level.

The construction methods include combining kits, kit-bashing and scratch building. The applied details are a combination of commercial and scratch built components. One of the buildings (Tidewater Grain Co.) won First Place, the Blue Lantern award, the Marv Kershner Memorial award and Best-in-Show at the Cherry Hill Depot 2002 Convention.

Our second clinic will be presented by Mike Rabbit. Mike, who has spent countless hours researching the steel making process, will give a presentation on steel mill railroads, covering the interrelation between the mills and the nation's railroads. These presentations are always interesting and packed with information.

Then, starting at 1:00 in the afternoon, there will be a Division first; we are sponsoring an Operations Callboard. For a fee of \$5.00, you will be assigned to an operating model railroad for the afternoon. We have several layouts lined up, but space is still limited. Funds from this event will be used to keep the Division in the black. Tickets will be sold during the morning clinic session. Note that there will be no layout tours on Saturday afternoon.

Our contest for this meet will be open loads. These loads can be any type or scale, but they must be in or on a car. Take a look around your pike and see if you don't have a load or two that are eye catching or different.

Dealer tables are available. If you would like to reserve one please contact the Editor at the number listed elsewhere in this issue of the Dispatcher. Coffee and donuts will also be available for a donation.

Mark your calendar now and set aside the time to be a part of this unusual meeting format. We hope to see many of you there on the 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>.

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## Important Announcement!

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Please note that I am changing my E-mail address. The new address is similar, but please make note of the change, and update your address book now, before you forget! The new address is:

[jmsfca@netzero.net](mailto:jmsfca@netzero.net)

The old address will cease very soon.

Steve Salotti

Once again we have survived another summer, and what a different one it has been. While there were a few hot days, most of it seemed to be monsoon like. There is one advantage to that though. Let's face it, if we can't mow, or play golf, or go camping, or whatever your favorite outdoor activity is, you might as well work on the railroad. I hope you used this opportunity to get a lot done on your project list.

Looking at my own railroad, I guess I can't brag too much. There are just so many things calling for attention, like finishing some more of the fascia, or laying the track in the Edgewater yard (or even finishing planning it!), or doing some of the scenery near the yard. Or looking in a different direction, how about finishing some of the structures I've started? Let's see, there's the Okonite plant in Paterson, and the American Hard Rubber Company in Pompton Lakes, the coal yard and the George W Brewster plant in Hackensack. And the list could go on, and with open house season approaching it's time to start making a little more progress.

One project that has been languishing on the bench for some time is a small white home based on a picture from a Christmas card a friend sent us many years ago. I had built the walls, added the roof, and even installed some of the windows. But many parts were left undone, like no shingles, no shutters, missing windows, no chimney, and the list could go on. Well, we went to Ocean City New Jersey for a week in late August. And since I'm a morning person but no one else is, I decided to make use of this time. I packed the building and all the supplies I

thought I'd need in a toll box, and took it with me. Then, every morning after riding my bike on the boardwalk, I sat at the dining room table and worked on that building and a couple of other projects. While it isn't finished yet (the shingles didn't suit my taste) it will soon takes its place on the layout. Now that means I have to do the plaster and fascia work in that area, which also means I have to finish the track work and wiring in the engine terminal located under it (ever try to lay track in an area with no overhead clearance?). Sounds like I just made more work for myself. Oh well, that's the price of progress.

Another good thing that came out of that vacation is work done on a small passenger station for Crystal Lake. The Susquehanna had a neat little station there that I have wanted to build for some time. Having the windows and siding available along with some time made for real progress on that one. No, it's not done, but it is looking good. And when it gets set in its place, it will complete a scene that has looked rather odd for some time.

So that is the sad saga of my progress to date. How about you? Will there be an open house at your layout this year so we can all enjoy your efforts? Remember, it doesn't take much to entertain most of us. We always enjoy seeing someone else's work and no matter how large or small the layout it is worth the visit. I hope you'll stop by to see mine some time.

Happy Railroading

Steve Salotti

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### Editor

Stephen F. Salotti  
46 Meadow Road  
Collegeville, Pa, 19426  
(610) 489 1940

**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:** Nov. 2003. Due out approx. Nov. 1. Deadline: Oct. 15th.

**Membership:** \$7.00 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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9 Roosevelt Ave  
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(302) 636 0888

merbusmanager@msn.com

Dues: \$8.00 per year

### National Model Railroad Association

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

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## From the Superintendent

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Division Aires,

We are now coming to the end of summer, which for some means the approach of the model railroad season (for the record, I am a year round model railroader). We have several meets planned for the upcoming model railroad "year". The 27 September meet will feature two clinics; then in the afternoon we have arranged for operating sessions (Ops Call Board) on Win Gross' and Steve Salotti's railroads. Both are DCC operations, so if you haven't experienced that, give it a try. There will be four railroads open for inspection (I was going to say viewing) Friday evening; evening visits are something that haven't been done in awhile and we will see how it works out.

As most of you are aware, the Philadelphia Division Board of Directors has determined that it is necessary to raise the annual Division dues to \$7.00, effective June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Also, from now on, the dues year will coincide with the calendar year. All current memberships will be extended to December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year they expire. To keep things in perspective, the increase translates to about two cups of coffee a year.

The increase is necessary because of the cost of doing business--space rental/gratuity, mailing costs, etc. As information, the NJ Division has essentially the same problems: Mike McNamara had a good explanation in the last "Cinders", the Division publication; rather than doubling the bill, you can read it at their website.

We are always looking for future clinicians from the membership. Look through your stuff and put something together: any subject related to model railroading or its larger cousin, the prototype. We'd also like to expand our horizons with some new model railroads for us to visit, there are usually some railroads out there that no one knows about, or that maybe one or two of us have hears about. Keep in mind that this is your Division, and we all need to do our part--like clinics or model railroads, as two examples--if we are to make it fun for all. And in this regard, the Independence Junction 2006 committee is looking for volunteers. Join now--Uncle John wants you!

Jim Dalberg

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## Important Renewal Information!

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As announced in the last issue of the Dispatcher, we are beginning a new system for membership. All current members have had their memberships extended to December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year it expires, and all future membership cycles will be based on a calendar year. We will not be sending renewal notices, but will include a membership 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 this system will simplify the process for both the membership and the clerk. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any board member. Please also note that dues have been increased to \$7.00 per year as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003

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### Membership Renewal Form

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

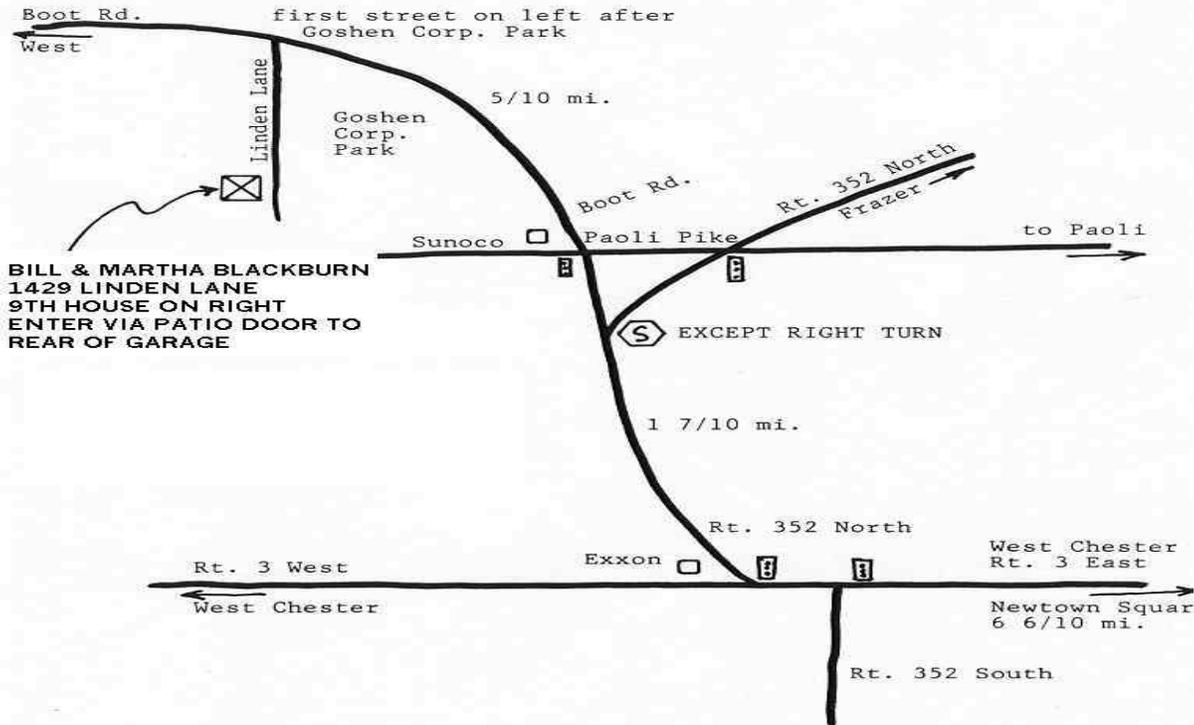
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_ MER #: \_\_\_\_\_ Div. #: \_\_\_\_\_

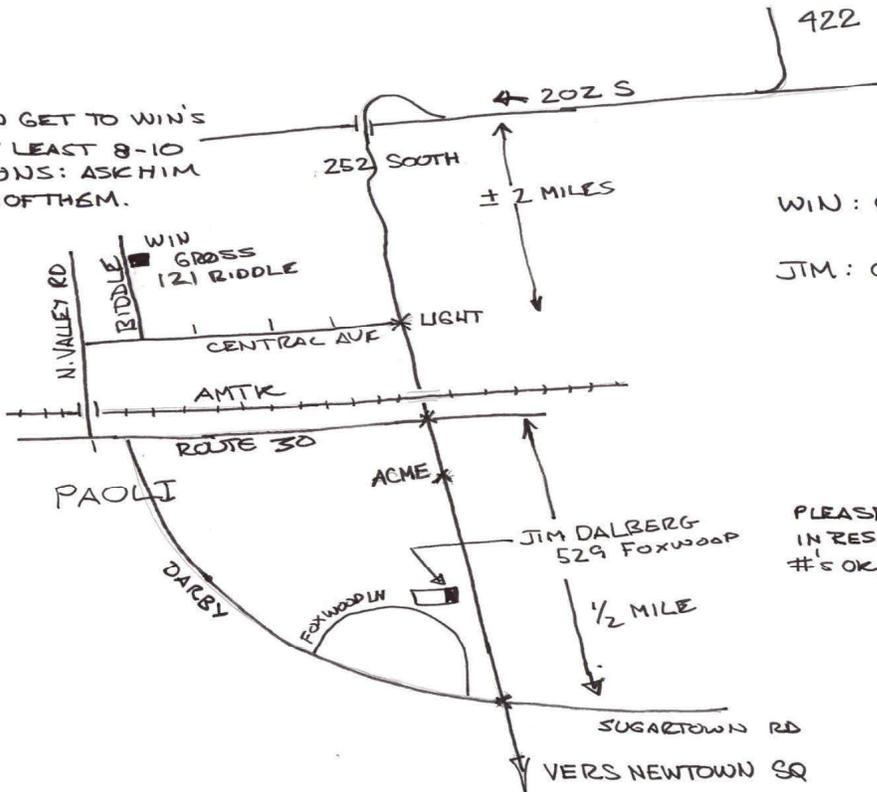
Dues: \$7.00 per year. Please mail to the Clerk or bring to the next meeting.

# Maps for September 26<sup>th</sup> layout tours

**BILL & MARTHA BLACKBURN**  
 1429 LINDEN LANE  
 WEST CHESTER, PA  
 610-430-1660



YOU CAN GET TO WIN'S FROM AT LEAST 8-10 DIRECTIONS: ASK HIM FOR ALL OF THEM.



WIN: OPEN FRI, 26 SEP 7-10

JIM: OPEN FRI, 26 SEP 7-10

NOT TO SCALE

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## Remote Control of Locomotives

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In the last issue we included an article on remote control of locomotives as published by the Association of American Railroads. This month we are publishing a response from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

### **BLE outraged at decision on remote control trains**

CLEVELAND, January 10 --- A decision issued today by Arbitrator Gil Vernon, Chairman of Special Board of Adjustment No. 1141, opens the door for the nationwide operation of unmanned remote control trains, a controversial practice that could compromise safety and lead to widespread job losses, according to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE).

BLE International President Don Hahs expressed outrage at Vernon's decision, which upholds the assignment of remote control jobs to a newly created position known as "remote control operator," instead of professional locomotive engineers. President Hahs predicted that between 4,000 and 5,000 members of the United Transportation Union could lose their jobs due to the implementation of remote control trains.

"First and foremost, the decision creates serious safety concerns for railroad employees and the general public," President Hahs said. "Trains carrying nuclear waste and other hazardous materials will now be operated -- at least in terminal operations -- by employees who have as little as 80 hours of training.

"Secondly, the decision violates more than 150 years of established practice, ignoring federally certified locomotive engineers as the only craft responsible for moving and operating trains. The decision also fails to recognize current collective bargaining agreements, local and national agreements, and years of past practice."

President Hahs also expressed concern that the actions of the Federal Railroad Administration --- the nation's rail safety watchdog -- contributed to the magnitude of today's decision by failing in its duty to protect public safety and the safety of railroad employees.

"In essence, the FRA circumvented its own regulations -- 49 CFR Part 240 -- by creating a deskilled engine craft (remote control operator)," he said.

In addition, the FRA has failed to adopt enforceable federal regulations to govern the operation of remote control trains. As of today, it has only issued recommended guidelines to cover limited operations.

The BLE President also charged that over the past three decades, the United Transportation Union and railroad management have conspired to eliminate numerous railroad positions, usually through attrition and sharing of the savings.

"Today's decision is illogical and does not conform to years of established practice," he said. "The UTU's 1985 national agreement, which provides for the forced promotion to locomotive engineer, established the precedent of engineer as the prevailing craft. Eighteen years later, the carriers and UTU have collaborated to change this scenario for self-serving reasons, thereby denying the very people they forced to take promotion access to the remote control work."

President Hahs stressed that while the loss of locomotive engineer jobs is important, the public should be gravely concerned about their safety now that lesser trained and lesser qualified operators will be running

trains by using questionable remote control technology.

“The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers will continue to press for adequate training of remote control operators, who will now begin handling carloads of spent nuclear waste and other deadly substances. Citizens should also be concerned about the remote control technology itself because it is not totally reliable. Any piece of equipment, like the remote control devices, will malfunction at some point. No matter how reliable they are, they will fail.

“More than 30 accidents and derailments involving remote control were reported to the BLE in the past 11 months, and I believe it is not the fault of the employees. These workers have not received adequate training prior to being thrown to the wolves. This situation is a ticking time bomb.

“Since September 25, four U.S. cities -- Baton Rouge, La., Shreveport, La., Detroit, Mich., and Marysville, Mich., -- have cited safety concerns in the adoption of resolutions banning remote control operations and/or calling upon the Federal Railroad Administration to adopt enforceable regulations to govern the use of the technology,” he said.

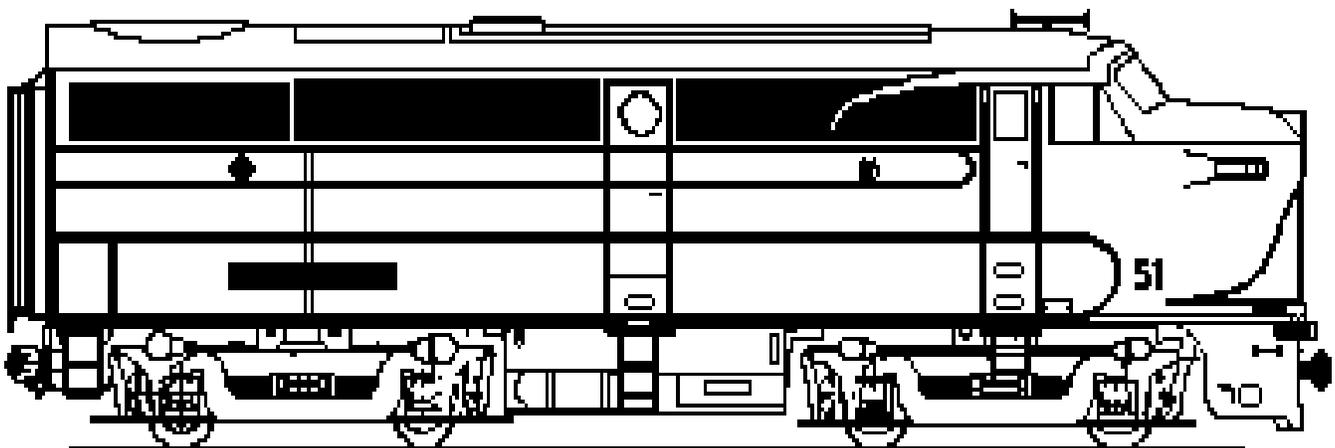
In addition to safety concerns, these city councils cited the threat of terrorist attacks that specifically targeted U.S. railroads as one of the reasons for banning remote control trains. The U.S. Department of Transportation issued this terrorist warning to U.S. railroads on October 22. Several other cities are considering similar measures.

“It is my belief that in order to ensure safety, each remote control assignment should have at least one federally certified locomotive engineer as a member of the crew.”

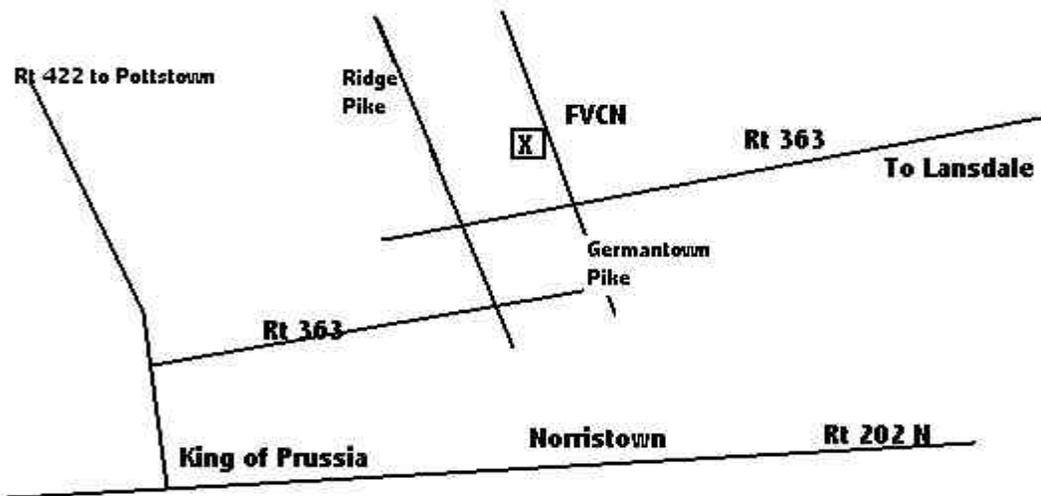
President Hahs said today’s ruling marked a sad day for railroad operating employees.

“The bottom line is that the biggest losers, unfortunately, are the very members both organizations represent,” he said. “The BLE and UTU will lose one job on every assignment — period — for payment of one hour and 32 minutes. There are no winners today as far as operating crews are concerned. The winners are rail management and the manufacturers of remote control devices.”

President Hahs will promptly set up urgent meetings with the FRA and the National Carriers Conference Committee to press for resolution of BLE’s safety concerns and other issues regarding this matter.



## September Meet Directions



## Schedules

The Philadelphia division is pleased to offer the following activity dates for your planning. If you have an item you would like included, please contact the editor. They will be included on a first come, first served space available basis.

**New Jersey Division Meet.** September 27<sup>th</sup>. Deptford Municipal Building, Route 47 & 534, Deptford New Jersey. Clinics and Meet 9 – 12. Layouts 1 – 4.

**Potomac Junction.** Fall MER Convention, Oct. 10 – 13 Reston VA. Hotel: Sheraton Reston See MER Local for more details

**Timonium.** October 11 & 12, Great Scale Model Train Show. Timonium, MD For info: [www.gsmts.com](http://www.gsmts.com) or 410-730-1036.

**Philadelphia Division Meet,** Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Tentatively set for Downingtown Borough Hall. Details to follow in the next Dispatcher.

**New Jersey Division Meet.** November 15<sup>th</sup> – Trenton. Switlick Recreation Center, Kim Valley Road and Fisher Place. Meeting 9 – 12, Layout tours 1 – 4.

**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 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, & 25<sup>th</sup>. GATSME Lines open house in the basement of the New Horizons Montessori School, Prospect and Madison Avenues, 12 Noon to 4 PM on weekends and 7 to 9 PM on Fridays. Admission by donation. For info: Ed Wilson at 215-646-2033 on Thursday evenings. GATSME is a non profit organization.

**Pennsylvania, Elkins Park,** Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club. Open house, November 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>. December 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup>, and January 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. 8000 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA. 12 noon to 4 P.M. Admission donations accepted. For more information; Bruce Binder, 7430 Bingham Street, Philadelphia, PA 19111, 215-722-4542 or 215-635-9747.

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46 Meadow Road  
Collegeville, PA 19426

Inside: Division Meet  
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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. 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