



THE DISPATCHER

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



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★★★ ELECTION ISSUE ★★★

Greetings, NMRA members! This special election edition of our newsletter, *The Dispatcher*, has been mailed to all Philadelphia Division members. The issue is also available in color on our website at www.phillynmra.org. Any NMRA member residing in the Pennsylvania counties of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or Philadelphia, or anywhere in the state of Delaware, is automatically a member of the Philadelphia Division.

Each spring we hold elections for open positions on our Board of Directors. This year's election was originally planned to take place at the annual business meeting just prior to the morning clinic session at the June 6, 2020 Division Meet at the West Whiteland Township Building, 101 Commerce Drive, Exton, PA 19341. Naturally the occurrence of this event depends on the COVID-19 situation. With that in mind, we may attempt an "online meet" instead. Regardless, all ballots are to be mailed this year.

The Division bylaws direct us to elect a total of seven board members for two-year terms, four positions of which on odd years, and the other three on even years. The board members then elect four officers from

among themselves, while the remaining three serve as directors at large.

As of this time, nominations are closed. Below and on the following pages are the statements of each of the candidates running for office. The ballot can be found on the inserted page along with some survey questions. Kindly indicate your choices as directed, answer the questions, and follow the mailing instructions. Make sure the mailing address is visible on one side after folding. The election results will be announced at the June meet—in whatever format it occurs—and via email announcement, as well as being posted on the website. Additional copies of this issue and ballots can be downloaded and printed from the Division website, www.phillynmra.org.

Aside from the election, this mailing serves to introduce you to the Division should you not be aware of its existence, and also to inform you of upcoming events, a schedule of which can be found on page 4. More information regarding any COVID-19 developments will be listed in the upcoming May issue of *The Dispatcher* and posted on our Division website, www.phillynmra.org, as well as through emails.

Candidate Bios/Statements (in alphabetical order)



Mike Dettinger

Model Railroading, if it is done right, is a marvelous adventure. Opportunities abound to participate in woodwork, history, photography, drafting, computer programming and scripting, electronics and wiring, mechanical engineering, architecture, sculpting, operations, and landscaping, just to name a few. There are so many facets to this hobby that it is impossible to do all of them without any kind of help. Before finding the NMRA, I wandered aimlessly dabbling with this and that, never able to connect the dots between the end vision and my humble starting point.

As I surround myself with other rail enthusiasts, my model train experience is much more enjoyable. Not only have I developed model railroading skills, I have found that my excitement about trains has also grown. I am no longer trapped on the Isle of Sodor with its great plywood plain and its single giant blue spruce.

I enjoy the friendships that I have cultivated with other model railroad enthusiasts. I hesitate to call model railroading a fraternity, as I truly believe that this hobby can be just as rewarding to our female members. I have learned many new techniques and I have been challenged to learn even more new and different things. And with this freely given knowledge, I am moved to share what I have learned with the NMRA membership. Be that through conducting clinics or providing representation and service for the membership.

I would ask the membership to consider my reelection to the board and continue with me on a journey to promote the hobby of model railroading and our journey of personal growth, focused on:

- Breaking down the perceived barriers that prevent potential members from joining the NMRA
- Strengthening the social bonds of model railroading and teamwork
- Promoting model building creativity and excellence



Kevin Feeney

I have been an NMRA member since 1985. I joined at the Milwaukee Convention that year and have been to every national convention since save 2012 and last year. I “discovered” the NJ Division in 1986 and have attended their meetings ever since. In the mid-1990s, I started a brand-new division in the NER and was its superintendent and newsletter editor for several years. I co-chaired two NER conventions and have attended countless regional conventions in 13 different regions. I was on the NMRA board of directors for several years and served as treasurer for one year.

For years, I participated in the Philly Division when I was in the area. My wife and I had a high-rise condo as our weekend house in Center City from 2004- 2015. I became more involved with this division after finally selling our house in Connecticut and moving to Abington on 1/31/2019. My wife and I ran the white elephant sales at the MER convention in King of Prussia last October.

I have a medium-sized HO layout in a garage. It depicts the Illinois Central Railroad set in July 1969 between Chicago and E. St. Louis. Other modeling interests include: IT, TP&W, and the GM&O. I hold AP certificates as volunteer, author, and official, and am working on chief dispatcher and scenery. I am also a member of the Philadelphia Chapter of the NRHS.

I am a retired CPA who ended my 43-year career teaching accounting. I have written extensively about railroad accounting and railroad annual reports including presenting over 25 clinics at NMRA conventions.

Having been involved with the NMRA at all three levels, I know how important the division level is. It is the place where most folks become involved with the NMRA. I would like to serve as an ambassador to welcome new members and talk with guests about the benefits of the NMRA. I would like to see the division participate in area train shows, perhaps through a small modular layout.

I would welcome your vote for director. Thanks.



Mark Wallace

I have had the honor to serve you as both a Division Director and Clerk of our Division over the last decade. Time flies indeed. In those roles and especially at our Meets, Op sessions, or visiting various layouts, it’s been wonderful to meet so many interesting folks in model railroading. As a member of the NMRA and Philadelphia Division since 2006, my continuing goal is to strengthen the role the Division can play as your “personal” contact person for model railroading. With our other Board members, we have developed a creative and varied program that included some exciting Meets for all of you to attend as well as last fall’s “MER- Libery Bell Special.”

Just briefly as a re-introduction: For most of my life I’ve been interested in railroading as a rail fan and a modeler. An architect in private practice, I enjoy designing layouts using computer-aided design programs and kit bashing models. As a member of the Western Maryland Historical Society, I continue studying their line’s infrastructure and rolling stock. I model a small portion of the WM in HO scale and guest operate on several of our members’ layouts. I am also involved with modular layout design, T-TRAK, the techniques of dispatching, yard mastering, and building dioramas for photographing models, as well as “scale sound” for locomotives.

While dealing with the challenges of being a small business owner, I balance my hobby time with attending ops sessions and contributing to a Tuesday Night Round Robin that is coordinated by several of our Division members. I have been visiting and operating on several different layouts and even have dispatched on a few. I’ve been working toward several achievement certificates in my spare time and encourage as many members as I can to look into this program as a way of focusing your modeling activities.

I continue to be aware of and appreciate the wide variety of scale model railroading that our members build and operate. Through our Division’s meetings and programs, I continue to see wonderful opportunities to educate and immerse 

THE DISPATCHER

Editor / Publisher

Howard Kaplan 610-626-4506
620 Edmonds Ave.
Drexel Hill, PA 19026
howard@phillynmra.org

Proofreader: Gail Kaplan

Submissions: THE DISPATCHER welcomes any model railroad- or railroad-related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc. The editors reserve the right to, when necessary, paraphrase portions of the text in order to fit the space available.

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Division Personnel:

Superintendent / Member Outreach

Charles Butsch 610-446-2375
227 Mill Road
Havertown, PA 19083
cabutsch@gmail.com

Assistant Superintendent / Ops /

Rob Hinkle **Social Media**
1755 Slayton Dr.
Blue Bell, PA 19422 610-279-2394
robhink@comcast.net

Clerk / Membership

Mark Wallace 610-454-9510
665 Bonny Brook Ave.
Trappe, PA 19426
mwallace665@verizon.net

Treasurer / Webmaster

Howard Kaplan 610-626-4506
620 Edmonds Ave.
Drexel Hill, PA 19026
hakaplan@rcn.com

Directors at Large

Layouts / Video - Bill Fagan
wfagan@comcast.net 215-675-4098

Clinics - Mike Dettinger
detting@comcast.net 610-280-7528

Publicity - Chip Stevens 774-283-2681
ReadingChip@yahoo.com

Achievement Program Coordinator

Earl Paine 610-831-9466
4325 Wendy Way
Schwenksville, PA 19473
earlpaine@verizon.net

(Mark Wallace continued)

both members and non-members into the exciting hobby of model railroading. Continuing to grow our membership and maintain a healthy, welcoming organization where modelers can share techniques and new ideas, is my ongoing goal for sustaining our active community of railroad modelers.



Joe Walters

Growing up in Philadelphia, I, like so many children, had an American Flyer train set running around my Christmas tree. Living three blocks from the Northeast corridor at Holmesburg Tower, I saw my fair share of real passenger and freight trains. As a matter of fact, I dodged many while trespassing on their tracks. From an early age I was intrigued by the workings of both the small and the much larger. It was no surprise when I chose working on a railroad as my career.

I served four years in the Marine Corps after high school graduation. While attending school on the GI Bill, I secured a job with the Reading Railroad as a coach cleaner. I rose through the ranks as Reading became Conrail. After ten years of service I made a change. I joined Amtrak in the back shops. During my tenure with Amtrak, I supervised locomotive and passenger car overhauls. I eventually became Assistant Superintendent of the Mechanical Department. I retired in 2004.

I became interested in model railroading when one of my car repairmen introduced me to his layout. I thought it would be a great hobby and a way to spend time with my three sons. It turns out they were more interested in sharing their time with girls. Nonetheless, I caught the bug.

After a move to Delaware in 1991, I started to build my current layout. During the time of building, I joined a Wednesday night operating crew which consisted of twenty people. These men met every Wednesday to operate different railroads. This group has been in existence for thirty years. With such a large gathering, information and inspiration is plentiful. By 1992, my layout was part of the round robin rotation with these gentlemen. I owe a great deal of gratitude to them.

In 2016, while hosting an open house of my layout, I met Philadelphia Division member of the NMRA, William Fagan. He asked if he could videotape the railroad, and submit the video of the layout for a Golden Spike award. Not being an NMRA member at the time, I had no idea what that was. To my surprise, it was the opening for the AP program, and my introduction to becoming a master model railroader. I suppose you could conclude that Bill was my inspiration for starting this journey. I appreciate his interest in furthering my ability through my hobby. This in turn led to my quickly earning all of the appropriate certificates to qualify me for my Master Model Railroader #644, which I earned in October of 2019.

My hope is to be able to assist AP Coordinator Earl Paine with judging and in managing the Achievement program. As a board member, I would pledge to work with the board and Division to promote enthusiasm for the AP among Division members and model railroading in general.



Jeff Witt

Like many of us, Lionel trains around the Christmas tree are my earliest memories of model railroading. This was followed by a year-round Lionel platform. But what really caught my interest was my Dad's still-born HO layout, which never got far but had enough track for a boy to push cars around on. Then, when a little older, I discovered his stash of magazines, which contained the magic and art of John Allen. I and my brother Steve were hooked! An N-scale layout in my early teenage years and an HO 5x9 in the '80s followed. Career and family obligations kept me in the armchair until my daughter graduated college and moved out, freeing up a bedroom for my next layout and current project, the freelance Taggart Transcontinental.

I joined the NMRA in 2003, but didn't start attending meets until much later. When I did, I realized what I was missing! I still occasionally miss a meet due to personal conflicts, but try to make them all. The friendly faces and enthusiasm for the hobby of our division members keeps me coming back. With encouragement from Dave Messer and Earl Paine, I earned three AP certificates in 2018. I have been able to share my admiration for John Allen by giving clinics for our division, the New Jersey Division, and most recently at the 2019 MER Convention. Along the way I have seen some incredible craftsmanship and met the creators whose talent humbles me.

My candidacy brings no particular agenda with it, other than to help the generous volunteers who have given so much for so long with the many tasks and obligations they have, and to learn from them so that the Division can build a deeper "back bench" for the future. Although there are those who feel that the NMRA is no longer relevant to the hobby, I vehemently disagree. I believe this is a "big tent" hobby, and that while social media is a great asset, it is not a replacement for real human interactions. The NMRA plays a major role in promoting and creating opportunities for these personal interactions.

On a personal note, I am still a few years from retirement from my role as a Senior Member of Technical Staff at ON Semiconductor, where I design integrated circuits and drive design methodologies. I have been married for 39 years, and have a grown daughter and son who have left the nest. I own and run two John Allen tribute web sites, "gdlines.org" and "gdlines.info," as well as actively participate in a groups.io G&D group and a G&D Facebook group. Sometimes I find time to work on the Taggart Transcontinental, too! Thanks for reading.

Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events (all events tentative)

<p>June 6, 2020 Philadelphia Division Meet TBA http://www.phillynmra.org/</p>	<p>September 12, 2020 Philadelphia Division Meet Perkasie Fire Company (tentative) Perkasie, PA</p>	<p>October 15–18, 2020 Carolina Special MER Convention Crowne Plaza Charlotte/Executive Park Charlotte, NC</p>
<p>November 7, 2020 Philadelphia/NJ Division Joint Meet Brandywine Town Center Wilmington, DE</p>	<p>January 2021 NJ/Philadelphia Division Joint Meet Grace Episcopal Church Merchantville, NJ</p>	<p>April 2021 Philadelphia Division Meet TBA http://www.phillynmra.org/</p>

Check <http://www.phillynmra.org/regional-timetable> for links to these and other upcoming events.

- June Meet Info
- Candidate Statements
- Upcoming Events
- 2020 Election Ballot

Inside:

**620 Edmonds Avenue
Drexel Hill, PA 19026**

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Survey Questions:

- 1. Do you have a layout? _____ Scale _____
 If so, would you be willing to host a layout open house at a future meet? _____
 Note that layouts need not be finished—a layout in any stage of construction would be welcome
- 2. Would you be interested in presenting a clinic at a future meet? _____
 If so, any particular topic? _____
- 3. Would you be interested in participating in a particular committee or just helping out? _____
 If so, anything in particular? _____
- 4. Would you be interested in becoming involved with a Division modular layout? _____
 If so, any particular form factor? (circle all that apply)
 T-TRAK Free-Mo N HO S O Other _____
 Note that the Division is already in possession of several N-scale T-TRAK modules which
 may be incorporated in a future educational or modular layout program

2020 Philadelphia Division Ballot

Name:

Email:

NOTE: Only paid-up, NMRA Philadelphia Division members in good standing may vote. Railpass and family members may not vote, having agreed to postpone that right until or unless joining as full members.

**Please vote for not more than three (3) candidates for Board of Directors.
Ballots indicating choices for more than 3 candidates will be disregarded.**

_____ Mike Dettinger	_____ Mark Wallace	_____ Jeff Witt
_____ Kevin Feeney	_____ Joe Walters	NOTE: Copies of the ballot and election issue can be downloaded and printed from the Division website, phillynmra.org

Mailing instructions:

- 1. Fold page trifold so that address on reverse side is visible (see fold lines)
- 2. Tape closed
- 3. Write your return address (or affix a return address label)
- 4. Place stamp (no extra postage required)
- 5. Mail to: **Charles Butsch, 227 Mill Road., Havertown, PA 19083-3717**

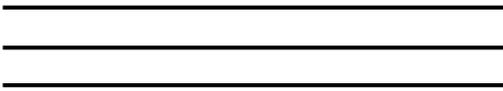
Questions:

Charles Butsch, Nominating Committee Chair: 610-446-2375 or cabutsch@gmail.com
Mark Wallace, Clerk: 610-454-9510 or mwallace665@verizon.net

POSTMARK NO LATER THAN MAY 30TH

Election results will be announced at the June meet (in whatever format it occurs) and via email announcement, as well as being posted on the Division website. Ballots will be destroyed immediately following tally and reporting of election results. Only your name and email will remain with the survey.

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Charles Butsch
227 Mill Road
Havertown, PA 19083-3717

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