



# THE DISPATCH

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



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## Outdoor June Division Meet in Skippack Cancelled – Meet Moved to Following Saturday on Zoom

We had originally planned to hold our June meet in person at a new venue, the Montgomery County 4H Center in Collegeville near Skippack. Unfortunately it didn't work out and the event had to be cancelled. The meet will instead be held a week later on **Saturday, June 19th at 9AM online on Zoom**. Members are asked to please mail in your ballots to Clerk Mark Wallace, 665 Bonny Brook Ave., Collegeville, PA 19426. The election results will be announced at that time. Zoom login details will be emailed in advance of the meet next week.

The morning session commences with our annual business meeting. Officials will deliver their reports, followed by the announcement of the results of our board of directors election. We will attempt to keep this part of the meet as brief and non-sleep inducing as possible.



materials, including the power supplies, the tools involved, and how to bend the tube and wire for each light fixture.

There are many different types of lighting, as there are many different fixtures. Once you get started, you will enjoy the new look of your layout and having done it on a low budget. Plus you'll be proud to have built them your-

self rather than someone from across the globe. Plus who knows, you may want to build them for your friends or the club you belong to.

There are likely few in the division who by now aren't familiar with the name and face of Joe Walters, MMR. Aside from currently serving as our assis-

stant superintendent, he has presented many clinics and writes a regular column for *The Dispatcher*. He was also a major contributor to the 2019 MER convention. He has literally worked on the railroad all his life, and in his inimitable style he relates one particular memory in his column in this issue.

Director **Mike Dettinger** has been trying out his Quizzo railroad trivia game on the division board and feels it's now ready for prime time. One possible format will be to have the board election candidates as panelists. You won't want to miss this contest.

As part of the program we will have an expanded show and tell session. We urge attendees to show and discuss whatever projects they've been working on. Having been cooped up for over a year, we're hoping there will be plenty of participants.

We had high hopes for an in-person meet, but it just didn't work out. Hopefully we'll be able to follow through in September. Meanwhile, tune in on the 19th and enjoy the show!



This meet will include a single clinic titled, **"Building Budget Lighting for Your Layout,"** presented by Assistant Superintendent **Joe Walters, MMR**. Layout lighting can mean many things to many people: there is overhead lighting, side lighting, and then there is model lighting. This includes light fixtures attached to buildings, parking lot lighting, street lamps, and interior lighting. Adding lights puts the finishing touching on any layout.

Most modelers apply lights to an area when most of the construction is finished, not right away. How many of you have seen lightning on a bare plywood layout? I am sure not many. As you will see, adding lighting fixtures will improve your layout and impress the folks who view it.

Our clinic for this meeting will have Joe show you how to build various types of light fixtures with LED's, 1/16" tube, and casting materials to populate your layout with quality lighting. Also discussed will be where to find the



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## Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

**June 19, 2021**

Philadelphia Division Meet  
Virtual Online Meet

**September 11, 2021**

Philadelphia Division Meet  
Abington Twp. (tentative)  
Details TBA

**November 13, 2021**

Philly/NJ Division Joint Meet  
Brandywine Town Center  
4050 Brandywine Pkwy  
Wilmington, DE

**August 21–22, 2021**

Philadelphia Division Table  
Greenberg's Train & Toy Show  
Oaks, PA

**October 21–24, 2021**

MER Convention “Mt. Clare Jct.”  
[mtclarejct.com](http://mtclarejct.com)  
Hunt Valley, MD

**January 2022**

New Jersey/Philadelphia Division Meet  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Merchantville, NJ

### **We Welcome Our New Philly Division Members**

Roger Weiss, Yardley, PA  
Bernard August, Newark, DE  
Nicholas Scull, Willow Grove, PA



### From the Super...

Hopefully this will be the last *Dispatcher* where I have to mention COVID-19. As vaccination rates continue to increase through the division areas, the CDC continues to relax restrictions for any fully vaccinated people including reducing social distancing and the need for masks.

As a result, we've decided to hold our June meet as an in-person event. Our plan is to hold it outdoors in a pavilion at the 4-H center located near Skippack, Pennsylvania.

Our June meet will start with the annual business meeting where we will provide the usual updates on all division business. Next, we will handle the results of the election for the division and then move on to the usual program as listed elsewhere in *The Dispatcher*.

The Greenberg's Train & Toy Show is returning to Oaks, PA the weekend of August 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. The division will have a table there to show off what's going on the division and intro-

duce more people to the division and the NMRA.

Then looking forward towards September and beyond we expect that we will be back towards normal meets. Joe and I have been discussing different types of meets to try to energize the membership; some of the ideas include borrowing concepts such as Jersey Division's "Work in Progress" quick clinics where people can rotate among different tables each presenting a different topic. We are always looking at more ideas for things people would like to see, so feel free to email the board with any suggestions.

Registration has opened for this year's MER convention which is being held in Hunt Valley, Maryland starting on Thursday October 21<sup>st</sup> through Sunday October 24<sup>th</sup>. The website for the convention is [mtclarejct.com](http://mtclarejct.com) and I hope to see a lot of division members there.

As always stay safe and hope to see everyone in person sooner than later.

*Rob*



### From the Editor...

Welcome to our late spring edition of *The Dispatcher*. Life derailment this issue resulted in an abbreviated version. We suffered a fire in our home which resulted in loss of information

from November through March. If those of you who submitted articles during that period would indulge me and resend them, I would be very grateful. And, of course, new material is always appreciated.

*Howard*

### In Memoriam

**JONATHAN BLACK:** Jonathan was a life member of the NMRA and long-time member of the division. While not a frequenter of meets, he was an avid and talented modeler as exemplified by his impressive period railroad, the Bear Mountain. Members can see photos of his model railroad at the Layout section of the division website, [phillynmra.org](http://phillynmra.org).

**TED FORT:** Sadly Ted passed away in April of this year. I remember sponsoring him for a RailPass membership

back in 2014, and he has been an active member and avid modeler ever since. He modeled the main line of the PRR, which he called the Paoli Local, and had just perfected a clever technique of producing very realistic catenary. He held open houses over the years, and visitors were impressed by not only his beautifully scenicked layout, but also his collection of railroad memorabilia. The Philadelphia Division and model railroad community has suffered a loss with his passing.

## THE DISPATCHER

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**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.

**Next Issue:** Aug. 2021. Due out approx. Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>. Deadline: Aug. 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Online Subscription:** Free. Make sure the Clerk has your current e-mail address and that you keep your info updated at [nmra.org/members](http://nmra.org/members).

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## Division Organization

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS (elected)

#### OFFICERS

**Superintendent** – Rob Hinkle (2021)  
**Assistant Superintendent** – Joe Walters, MMR (2022)  
**Clerk** – Mark Wallace (2022)  
**Treasurer** – Howard Kaplan (2021)

#### DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2022)  
Chip Stevens – Publicity (2021)  
Kevin Feeney – Item Donations (2021)



**PhillyNMRA**

### AUXILLIARY OFFICIALS (appointed)

**AP Coordinator** – Earl Paine  
**AP Committee Chair** – Joe Walters, MMR  
**Newsletter Editor/Webmaster** – Howard Kaplan

### COMMITTEES/DUTIES

#### EVENTS

**Clinics** – Mike Dettinger  
**Layouts** – Bill Fagan  
**Door Prizes** – Mike Dettinger  
**Clinic Video** – Chip Stevens  
**Audio** – Howard Kaplan  
**Signs/Printed Materials** – Howard Kaplan  
**Certificates/Awards** – Howard Kaplan  
**Publicity** – Chip Stevens\*

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Member Outreach** – Rob Hinkle, Chip Stevens  
**Membership Records** – Mark Wallace

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Earl Paine, Joe Walters MMR\*, Bill Fagan

**OPS** – Rob Hinkle

**ITEM DONATIONS** – Kevin Feeney

#### MEDIA

**Social Media** – Rob Hinkle  
**Webmaster** – Howard Kaplan  
**Newsletter** – Howard Kaplan (editor), Earl Paine, Bill Fagan, Joe Walters MMR, Kevin Feeney, Chip Stevens  
**Layout Video** – Bill Fagan  
**Photography** – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Bill Fagan, Rob Ischinger, Mark Wallace

**DIVISION APPAREL** – Howard Kaplan

## Hobby Shops

**Discounts for NMRA Members at Local Hobby Shops**  
Be sure to patronize the following hobby shops that are now offering discounts on model railroading purchases to NMRA members:

**Nicholas Smith Trains**  
2343 West Chester Pike (PA-3)  
Broomall, PA 19008  
610-353-8585  
nicholassmithtrains.com  
10% discount (excludes O & G items)

**Henning's Trains**  
128 South Line Steet  
Lansdale, PA 19446  
215-362-2442  
henningstrains.com  
10% in addition to already discounted prices





Soldiering on in the early spring as we traditionally do, the division held another online Zoom meet beginning at 9am, Saturday April 10<sup>th</sup> for a time of distanced fellowship with members, seasoned with some good model railroading discussion

and sharing. Our meetings using the Zoom format continue to be hosted by Earl Paine who is also our AP Coordinator. Superintendent Rob Hinkle called the meeting to order shortly past 9 with over two dozen members in attendance.

Barry Rosier from the Jersey Division presented the first clinic as a how-to for constructing buildings for scenicking called ***Modeling with Cardstock.*** Barry's clinic featured a popular method of constructing model buildings used by many of today's professional architectural model builders. Barry prints copies of elevations and facades using a color laser printer to produce the walls and roofs in a manner such that they can be assembled into decent looking, seriously detailed buildings.

Color laser printing is superior to inkjet printing for detail and in the way the paper receives the ink. Using a variety of cardstock and heavy paper materials easily found at local big box office supply stores or hobby shops (yes, please do not forget our hobby shops!), walls, roofs, elevations, and components such as doors, windows, shingles, and signs can be printed, cut out, layered, and glued to create accurately detailed models.

Methodically reviewing the kinds of cardstock and tools, Barry provided a short how-to on assembling the printed sheets into some decent looking model buildings. He demonstrated how these techniques could be applied to other things like bridges and boats, as well as a variety of building types. He presented links to companies who also print and sell models ready for construction for those who want to skip the measuring and drawing and get right into cutting and gluing. Barry shared a couple of buildings he has recently constructed suggesting that a well-organized plan and simple design that would then look good on the

layout could be constructed in an evening or weekend.

Over the years Barry has presented several clinics to the division and most recently those featuring the construction of buildings to scale that fit correctly to a model scene, diorama, or model railroad layout. He's a member of Model Railroading University and a Model Railroading Team

Live member as well as an accomplished model railroad builder. Barry ended his clinic with a good round of question and answers from the online audience. We hope that our members try out some of these techniques.

After a short break, Barry's partner in model railroading from the YouTube Model Railroaders and division director Mike Dettinger, presented a second scenery-based clinic titled, ***Farmer Mike's Corny Adventure.*** Mike is an avid T-TRAK modular kind of builder fashioning small table top boxes with a variety of scenes that are mostly in N-scale. His modeling consists of a variety of subjects including farming, featuring fields of amber waves of grain...or corn. When the eye strain gets to be too much, Mike models agriculture in various scales demonstrating how the base, furrows, and spacing differ based on the scale. Many of us who are working on layouts already have a good assortment of tools and basic scenery supplies that can yield satisfying looking fields, lots, or gardens full of thriving crops to enhance the empty spaces on a module that are often in need of filling. Mike's range and

expertise in "corny" modeling extends beyond mere crops or corn-in-rows, but also includes crop circles and corn mazes along with theories or imagined scenes about who made them! Not interested in scratch building a corn field? Mike discussed several manufactured items that, when installed with a little weathering, look pretty good at three feet or more. There followed a general discussion from various members on what I continue to call, "modeling while flattening the curve." Here we had various members presenting examples of projects they've been working on with some good back and forth that all ended about



Above and below: Examples of Barry's structures



11:30am. Our thanks to Superintendent Rob, Assistant Super Joe, Zoom meeting host & AP Coordinator Earl Paine, guest clinician Barry Rosier, and all you who tuned in contributing to another successful Philly Division meet.

**Tracks Ahead:** By this time many of you have received your vaccinations or have reached the time of full immunity where many former socializing activities pre-pandemic might be able to resume. Your board of directors



*Left and above: Scenes from Mike Dettinger's Corny Adventure*

have planned an annual business meeting in a location that is convivial to having a good-sized group meet in a location that meets the guidelines. See page one for details and page two for directions. Stay safe and hope to see you all there. 🇹



## ON THE (RAIL)ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

### CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL

*Text, photos, and images by Kevin Feeny unless otherwise noted*

## BETHLEHEM TRAIN SHOW

This show consisted of 22 tables in what is normally the parking lot of the Lehigh & Keystone Valley Model Railroad Club and Museum. Admission was free to the show as well as the club. If you've never seen the model railroad, it's very impressive and worth a special trip. <https://lkvmodelrailroad.com/open-houses>





# NORTH CAROLINA OUTER BANKS

This was a bucket list trip. There is no way to fly there. I looked into flying to Norfolk, VA and Wilmington, NC, but both airports would have required redundant driving. So instead on March 23rd we flew to New Bern, NC (EWN—Coastal Carolina Regional Airport) allowing us to make a circle trip. New Bern is a small, riverfront city in eastern North Carolina, first settled by German-Swiss folks in the early 1700s, hence the name.

Like other trips, we started from the Jenkintown, PA SEPTA station where we can park our car for \$1 a day and ride to the PHL airport for free with our senior passes. We arrived at PHL just after 9AM in plenty of time for our 10:29AM flight to CLT (Charlotte Douglas International Airport). We did not get a complementary upgrade beforehand but had exit row seats for the routine 449-mile flight. As we were boarding, we were pleasantly surprised by a last minute upgrade. En route there was what was once the normal first class service. Have not seen this in over a year.

In CLT, we had a long walk from terminal C to our connecting RJ (Royal Jordanian) flight in E at 1:25PM. We've made similar connections many times in the past. We had been upgraded for that 221-mile flight to EWN before leaving home. We arrived at 2:30pm at a very small airport with just three gates. Presently, only American Airlines flies there from CLT; previously Delta had flown there from ATL. We picked up our Enterprise rental car and headed to the Tyron Palace in time for the 3:30PM tour. This complex was built in the 18th century in Georgian style as the Capitol of then British colony. The palace had fallen into disrepair till nicely restored in the mid-20th century.

We headed to the downtown area with blocks of historic buildings, one of which is where Pepsi-Cola was invented in 1898. Now, the former drug store is a mini-museum and souvenir store for anything and everything Pepsi and Mountain Dew. There were railroad tracks in the streets, but we didn't see any trains. After driving around, we headed to our Holiday Inn Express hotel on a commercial strip. We had a reasonably priced, decent dinner at SCNB (Smithfield's Chicken 'n' Bar-B-Q), a local chain. I opened a zipper compartment on my suitcase and was very surprised to see a small plastic folder with my SEPTA and other travel cards that had been missing since our trip to DFW (Dallas Fort Worth) back in January. I had reported my SEPTA card lost and had paid to replace it. Wonder if now I have two valid cards?

On Wednesday morning, the "grab 'n' go" breakfast at the hotel was a total waste so we ate at a nearby Waffle House. We headed out on a leisurely drive through eastern North Carolina. This area is

largely agricultural; it leads the nation in growing sweet potatoes. We saw other farms that grow cotton and peanuts in season, plus there were extensive forestry operations. For some distance on Route 17, we paralleled train tracks owned by NS. Interestingly, these tracks once belonged to a different Norfolk Southern Railway—a small Class I railroad that operated between Norfolk and Charlotte. It was acquired by Southern Railway in 1974, which later merged with the N&W forming today's Norfolk Southern. Further north, we crossed some ex-ACL tracks (now CSX) and more original NS trackage. We never saw any trains, just a few freight cars on a siding and a hi-rail track inspection vehicle.

We stopped in Plymouth, the location of the last Confederate victory in the Civil War. This was in April 1864 and was short lived as Union troops recaptured the area a short time later. A small museum is located in what appeared to be a former train station. Outside were an unmarked boxcar and a Southern Railway-style caboose. We crossed Albemarle Sound on a long bridge. Stopped to see the oldest brick house (c. 1730) in NC and eventually arrived at Elizabeth City, another riverfront city that dates back to colonial times. We spent about an hour in a very well done museum of its local history in the visitor center. Outside of the city is the largest USCG (Coast Guard) base and air station in the US. We did not see it, but later saw Coast Guard aircraft patrolling offshore.



We headed down the Currituck Peninsula on Route 158 to where it crossed over to the Outer Banks. The Outer Banks are some 200 miles long and actually begin near Sandbridge, Virginia where what was once a barrier island is now actually attached to the US mainland. Unlike Long Beach Island and the other New Jersey barrier islands that are just offshore, parts of OBX are over 25 miles from the mainland. We headed north to Corolla, where NC Route 12 ends. To drive farther north

where there is a herd of wild horses and the isolated town of Carova (NC and VA) Beach, one needs a 4WD vehicle. Corolla also has one of four lighthouses on the OBX, each of which is distinctive. We got to the Currituck Beach Light Station just as it was closing at 5PM but would not have tried to climb the 220 steps (approx. 150 feet) in any case. Along the oceanfront were scores of very expensive houses that have been built since the 1990s. This part of the OBX was the last to be developed.

Reversing direction, we headed south. We stopped briefly in Duck, which was a US Navy bombing range





from WWII through the mid-1960s. Signs on the sides of the road still warn of unexploded ammunition! The next town, Southern Shores is more developed as it is the closer to the NC mainland. Route 158 became four lanes wide (known here as the by-pass) and NC Route 12 (two lanes) continues south further to east, one block in from the ocean. The area known as “Kitty Hawk” is actually the town of Kill Devil Hills. It is from here that the Wright Brothers supposedly made the first

manned, controlled, and powered flight in 1903. (Some believe that Gustave Whitehead had previously flown a monoplane near Bridgeport, CT in 1901). From our trip to Cass, West Virginia back in October 2019, we know that a lumber mill there supplied the white spruce lumber for the brothers’ plane. We had the best hushpuppies ever at *Milner’s Seafood and Steak Restaurant*. As it turned out, our hotel, a Comfort Inn was just across the street (NC-12).

We deliberately made this trip now as opposed to during the summer for several reasons. We went knowing some places would not be open. We saw signs saying, “see you soon,” “opening this weekend,” or “opening April 1<sup>st</sup>,” The Comfort Inn was on the beach but is an older tired-looking property in the midst of being updated somewhat. However, our non-oceanfront room only cost \$126 for both nights including tax. I can’t imagine what the peak summer rate would be. The next morning, we headed to beach just to walk around and collect shells and VERY small rocks that I use on my HO layout. We then drove to the Wright Brothers National Memorial paying \$20 to enter. There is a large monument on the largest hill, life-size models of their plane, a museum in the visitor center, and even an actual small airport. For the rest of the afternoon, we drove around there and Nags Head before heading back to the hotel. Dinner was mediocre ribs at Pigman’s BBQ.

On Friday, we left the hotel and head south. We left the OBX and drove west on US-64 to Roanoke Island. Our plan was to see the North Carolina Aquarium there, but when we arrived found it was closed to walk-in visitors—open for advanced sales only. So, we headed to the other attraction on the island, the Fort Raleigh National Historical Site. Here in the late 16th century, was the first permanent British settlement in the New World. One of the organizers returned to England for more supplies and when he returned a few years later, the entire colony had totally disappeared. To this day, no one knows what happened to the “Lost Colony.”

We returned to OBX where we en-



tered the Cape Hatteras National Seashore Park which was created in 1937. The park stretches for some 70 miles. We drove through what are called Pea and Bodie Islands, but the inlets that once made them separate have disappeared. Bodie Island has a lighthouse that was built in 1872. We stopped at the visitor center and I bought a book on NC Highway 12 that I have yet to read. At Oregon Inlet, there is a fishing center for marlin and other game fish. From there, the Gulf Stream and continental shelf are only about 15 miles offshore.

We crossed to Hatteras Island over a modern bridge that curves up and across the inlet. As we continued to



drive south at times the island was less than 200 feet wide. Strong winds pile up sand on both sides of NC-12. Further south, near the village of Rodanthe, a 2.4-mile-long bridge (shaped like a Jersey jug handle) is being slowly built out into Pamlico Sound, replacing a stretch of NC-12 that regularly washes out following hurricanes and other storms. After the bridge is completed, that section of NC-12 will be abandoned.

We drove to the far west end of Hatteras Island for two reasons. We wanted to see how the ferries to Orcas Island worked and wanted to visit the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. There are over 2000 shipwrecks in this area thanks to the Diamond Shoals and German U-boats during WWII. The wind was howling as we left the museum and headed back to Buxton to see the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, which was built in 1870. It is the world’s second tallest brick lighthouse at 198.5 feet. In 1999, the lighthouse was moved about 2000 feet inland because the shoreline was disappearing. We stayed in Buxton at a legacy-style motel, which was okay albeit a bit pricey. There are NO national chain hotels on Hatteras Island. We had a nice seafood dinner at the well-rated Diamond Shoals Restaurant.



The motel did not serve breakfast, nor could we find any place to buy baked goods. So our breakfast consisted of Little Debbie’s snacks from a small grocery store. We drove about 10 miles to the ferry, which is free. Orcas Island is within sight of Hatteras, but the ferry makes a long loop out into the sound to avoid a crab breeding area and several sandbars. The ferry, *Croatan*, carried about 30 cars; the trip was scheduled for an hour but took longer because of fog. We stayed in the car the whole trip and could not see much of anything except fog.



We landed at the far eastern end of Ocracoke and had about a 15-mile drive to the town. Along the way, we passed the pony pen for some of the wild horses that live on the island. In town, we made our fourth lighthouse stop.

The Ocracoke Lighthouse is much shorter than the others we saw, but was built in 1823 making it the second oldest one in the country. We drove around the small village stopping to talk with a young woman who was having her houses raised for \$60K. She mentioned that in a recent named storm the entire island was covered with several feet of water. We stopped at the British Cemetery where members of the Royal Navy were buried after their armed trawler was torpedoed off-shore during WWII. We headed to the ferry dock, having reserved the 1PM sailing to Cedar Island. This costs \$15 and takes 2.25 hours. Cedar Island, once separate, is now part of the mainland. However, this voyage was not to be.



We were the first in line just before noon and there was a separate line for another ferry to Swan Quarter on the mainland that takes 2.75 hours. After 1PM, a ferry came in and it was much bigger than the one from Hatteras. The cars and trucks exited, but then the gate was closed. After a while one of ferry employees came over to say the other inbound ferry was stuck in fog and that out-

bound service was on hold. I got out of the car and walked around reading the various signs, displays, etc. I walked to the water edge and could not see much of anything, and we waited. Just before 2PM, the cars in other line started to leave. A guy walked over and told us the ferries were cancelled and pointed to the ticket booth to get a refund. "Screw that," I thought, and made a beeline out of town and back to the Hatteras ferry. I passed a few cars trying to do the same, hoping that we would be able to get on the 3PM ferry.

There was a long line for the ferry. We parked and I got out to count; we were about #25. Then a few folks got out of line so we moved up and then there was a parked car in line with no one in it so I just went around moving further up in line. We ended up boarding in the middle of the ferry. The weather was fine, so I stayed out of the car the whole trip. I started talking with a man who lived here 50 years ago and was back for first time. This time I could see the long loop the ferry made into the sound.



Back in Hatteras, we now faced a 214-mile drive to our hotel near the MCAS in Cherry Point NC. Had we ridden the ferry to Cedar Island, it would only have been a 55-mile drive and we would have been able to see Moreland City right on the ocean along the way. We had even made reservations to attend the 5:30PM mass there. So much for our circle trip as we drove the length of Hatteras Island again and then up the next peninsula to where Route 64 West begins. We had a poor, quick dinner at a KFC and left after 6PM. The first part along Route 64 was swampy, but even-



ually the surrounding land became very agricultural and sometimes treed. Eventually, we came to the where we turned onto 64 on the trip out, so turned left (south). Carol was driving and it was raining with lightning and some thunder. She swerved to miss a raccoon and we almost went off the road. Eventually, we got to New Bern, but our hotel was 15 miles south of there. We got to the Holiday Inn about 9:15PM. We had a nice big room with a king bed. The next morning (Sunday) I was surprised when I looked out the window and saw three historic USMC aircraft in front of the local visitor center. The hotel served a hot breakfast and we were on our way just after 9AM.

After a stop to gas up the car, we were In the EWN terminal by 9:30AM. We returned the car (had driven 669 miles—85% more than what we planned) and got our boarding passes including an upgrade on CLT–PHL flight but did NOT check our bags. The RJ flight was totally full; (there are only two flights to CLT on Sunday vs. five on Saturday). The crew arrived and I noticed there were two

captains, one younger and one much older. I assume the younger one was just promoted and was having a final check ride. As we were boarding and again just before our takeoff, several USMC AV8B Harriers took off from EWN. Boy were they loud but being STOL/VTOL aircraft, they didn't use much of the runway to take off. We left early and arrived in CLT early after a very poor landing. Arriving at terminal slot E6 (vs. say E50) shortened our walk to the PHL flight in terminal B. CLT was packed like I have seen it many times before COVID. We both had window seats in first class. There was NO food service en route so we ate the chocolate chip cookies I had brought at CVS the night before. We left CLT 10 minutes early and



were 18 minutes early into PHL. The reason we did not check our bags was so we would be able to make the 3:10PM train (next one would be an hour later), but since we were early this was moot. The train arrived in Jenkin-town just after 4PM in perfect time to make the 4:30PM mass at our parish church there. Dinner was takeout from the Chipotle near our house. And by 5:30PM we were home!

Our two round-trip tickets cost \$358.80. We ended up being upgraded on 3 of 4 segments. Because of the 500-mile minimum, we each earned 2000 Elite Qualifying Miles (EQMs) for the trip, but only 1032 actual award miles because of the low fare. So much for this trip. Our next travel adventure was on April 9th when we flew to Fort Myers, Florida (RSW-Southwest Florida International Airport) to see my sister Kathy's new home.

## ASHVILLE TRAIN SHOW



This is the largest model train show in western North Carolina. I have family and friends there where I can stay with and have attended this show annually for the last decade or so. This included the most recent show on Friday [yes Friday] and Saturday Feb. 26/27. With NC's COVID restrictions there was some question about whether the show would happen, but it came off just fine. Most of the shows/RR conventions locally and across the country that I would have attended have been cancelled, making my trip here even more important.

This annual [the 31st] show is hosted by **The Western North Carolina Model Railroaders is a 100% NMRA club** [<http://www.wncmrr.org/>] **that has a modular HO layout and other activities.** Sadly, Fred Coleman who led the show for the last few years died in early February from heart issues. He was also very active in the local NMRA division and there was a very touching memorial table for him at the

show.

The show is held in a fairgrounds just across from the Asheville Airport [AVL]. It is good sized with over 200 tables. One of my modeler friends who retired there from CT had told me there would be about 40 empty tables but I did not see that when I got to the show around 2pm after flying down from PHL on Friday AM.

Everyone one was wearing masks and the attendance did seem less than in previous years. Noticeably absent were the Apple Valley Model RR club and the local NMRA division. There also were fewer modular layouts. However, there were several new vendors there from OH, KY, GA and other places. I particularly enjoyed going thru the boxes and boxes of HO stuff at the TRAINZ booth.

One table was promoting the annual Narrow-Gauge convention that is scheduled for Hickory NC this coming September.



I was there till about 7pm and came home with a suitcase full of bargains and parts. At one table, I bought the current March issues of *MR*, *Trains* and *Classic Trains* [all three for a buck] to read on my return flights.

Their 2022 show is scheduled for March 4th & 5th and I hope to attend.

On a local note, the group that sponsored the Hatboro Train Show each December has said no more shows in the future. Their 2020 show was cancelled. This leaves a void with no other shows in this part of the Philly suburbs. 🚂





Photos from alamy.com

## Chance of rain?

As many of you know, I have spent my adult life working for the railroad in the mechanical department. I started out as a car repairman/car inspector. I retired as assistant superintendent of car overhaul at the Bear (Delaware) back shop for Amtrak.

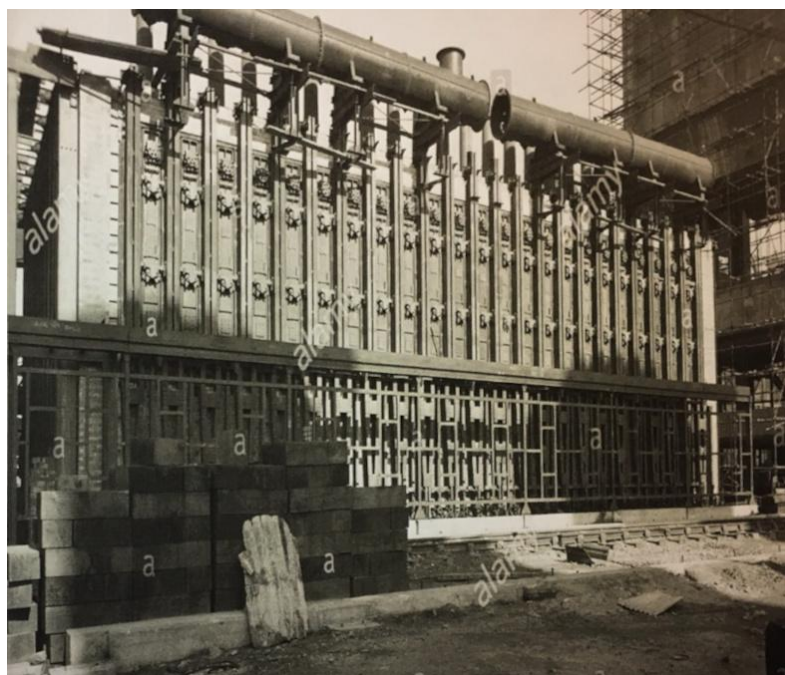
As a “green” car inspector, I was working at Abrams Yard outside of Norristown, PA. In the spring of 1975, I found myself working at the Alan Wood Steel mill in Norristown, with a veteran of 40 years working for Reading. We were inspecting/repairing empty hoppers at the plant’s coke ovens. The work included changing brake shoes and air hoses, and oiling the journal boxes. I was amazed by the coke operation being done in this plant. Twenty-five ovens cooking coke until it was burning red hot was quite impressive. The load was pushed into an overworked, burned-to-the-crisp gondola. Once the gondola was filled, it moved 100 yards to a quenching tower where large amounts of water were dumped on the load. This caused a large cloud of steam to rise up 100 feet in the air.

After inspection and repairs, we went to have lunch in the truck. While eating, I noticed it rained for a few minutes then stopped. This occurred every 10 minutes. I turned to the old head and said, “I thought it was supposed to be sunny all day with no rain.” At that point he stopped chewing, turned and looked at me and said, “The railroad is hiring morons.” He noted that we were downwind from the quenching tower. The steam was falling on our truck. He asked how I could be so stupid. He also bemoaned that the damn kids (new employees) were ruining the railroad. I have learned many things from the old timers. They taught me great things throughout the years.

I look back and smile at this incident. As a senior manager at the Amtrak facilities, I had the opportunity to sit on hundreds of interviews and I have hired many people. As it became my turn to retire, I found myself saying, “The damn kids are ruining this railroad.” Maybe the old timer was right!

Life goes full circle. The cup is low.

*Joe*



Front of coke ovens



Hot coal being pushed out of the coke oven into a waiting gondola







*Closer look at gondola being filled with hot coal*



*Quenching tower at right*



with  
**Chip  
Stevens**



**B**een there, done that. How many times when you were growing up did you hear a parent say, “Do as I say?” The underlying message sometimes included, “Don’t do as I do,” but I will wager you never said that out loud.

I raise this point because several articles ago, I raised and praised the virtues of backing up everything you ever enter into your computer. I strongly recommended backing data up to another hard drive or memory stick, assuring you that under most circumstances that precious information would survive any catastrophe that might arise. Such as a hard drive wearing out or worse, crashing. “Do as I say!”

Last week, I went through a hard drive replacement—kind of akin to getting a tooth filled without novocaine or gas. The computer came back late Tuesday afternoon. I saved moving furniture to plug it in until Wednesday morning. Once plugged in, the real labor began. Restoring the furniture to its rightful places was easy enough. The data? That is when the real battles began. I was not a real fan of Quicken before the hard drives demise. I am an even lesser fan now. The technicians that performed the brain transplant told me after they ran my credit card that all my old data had been transferred to the new solid-state drive. Guess what?

But the real trial has been the restoration of information from OneDrive. For longer than I want to think about or admit, I have had an ongoing battle trying to finish my

Author certificate for Master Model Railroader. In early 2019, I carefully built an Excel spreadsheet to catalog all my articles, seminar scripts, and online efforts. They were backed up to two separate thumb drives and saved on the desktop PC, of course. But here is where the first major problem occurred. They were all saved using titles that did not match the index spreadsheet. For some strange reason I cannot fathom, our AP Chair and his Regional counterpart want things organized. And, at the time all this “saving” was going on, I was not a Dropbox subscriber, so they did not get there, either, under any title. Lesson learned: before you back up anything have a consistent plan regarding how you are going to recall files if and when you need them. And you will need them.

Now to Dropbox. There may be other online back-up services, but I am partial to Dropbox. Partial may be a substitution for lazy. It is what I am used to, so I have not looked at or for alternatives. If you can remember your user name and password, you can access any file saved to Dropbox from almost any computer anywhere. You can even access your files from your smartphone. Wearing bifocals, that is not a task I plan to undertake anytime soon.

The conclusions to be drawn from my experiences are twofold. Keep me in mind before you save any data to any storage medium and save the most important “stuff” to an offsite dedicated source. “Do as I say, don’t do as I do!” 📌



## Bill Fagan: *The Video Vigilante*

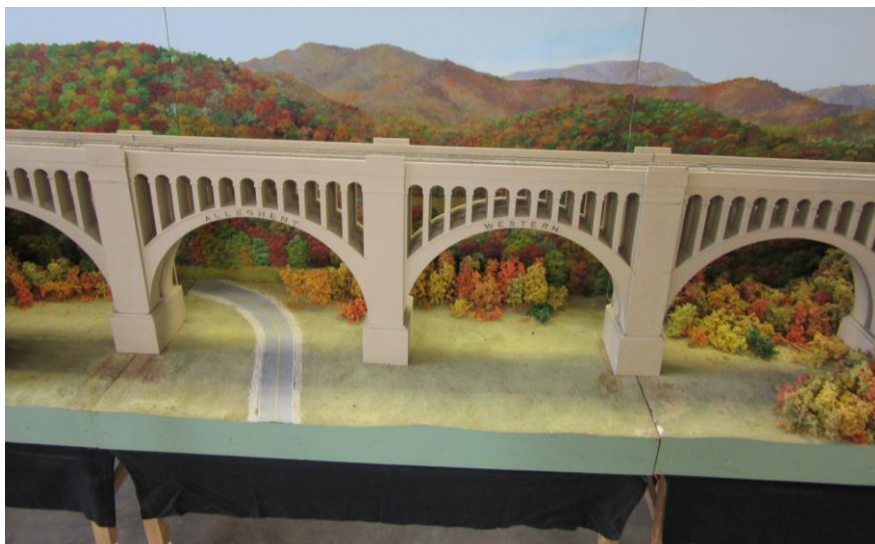


Photos by Bill Fagan unless otherwise noted

Below are some videos of layouts that I've recently visited. I've videoed layouts in California, Idaho, Maryland, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. 174 layouts with 746 videos and 2495 followers on YouTube with 1.3 million views.

### Allegheny West Lines MRRC→

is a fictional creation of proto/freelanced railroads: Southern, Northern, and South Penn. Much like the Chessie System, the three railroads found that the best way to survive was together under one banner. It's an HO modular group with DCC Digitrax. This video was taken at the new home of GATSME which is under construction located in Rockledge, PA just outside Philadelphia. See the video here: [https://youtu.be/V66\\_Y0I4IDE](https://youtu.be/V66_Y0I4IDE)



HOWARD KAPLAN

### ← Alden Smith

The rugged mountains of Maryland, with their emphasis on coal mining, have long captured his interest. The layout, set in 1950-1954 and earlier, is in two connecting rooms with a swing down bridge. Dimensions are 18 x 23 and 26 x 8. It is a point-to-point, around-the-walls configuration. Powered by Digitrax, the layout uses a car card system. It allows 3-5 operators to control 16 scheduled work orders. Twenty-two first generation WM diesels and several steam locos provide the motive power. Hidden staging and a reversing loop allow flexibility. Main line run is 116 feet. You can see the video here: <https://youtu.be/AcdOcDqyce8> Sadly Alden passed away earlier this year and will be very much missed.





ROB HINKLE

### ← **Bill Blackburn**

Bill Blackburn's PRR Great Valley Division. Is an imaginary line using local place names. Mostly a freight line with daily passenger trains. Motive power is brass steam equipped with Soundtraxx decoders. North Coast Engineering DCC. Car card system, about 700 cars. 75 wood kits (Cambell with a few scratch built) and some Walthers. See the video here: <https://youtu.be/66FDiMguMn8>

### **Chris Conaway →**

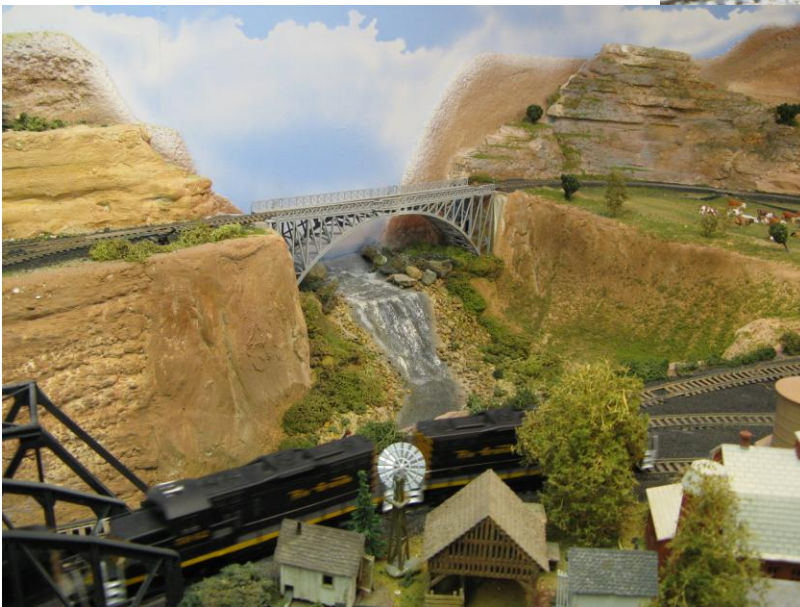
B&O / PC Columbus and Newark Division RR main line and branch line to Zanesville, Ohio. HO Scale. Digitrax DCC controlled. Very nice scenery. You can see the video here: <https://youtu.be/EQ4eHSMAGBw>



ROB ISCHINGER

### ← **Mert Gertner**

HO Scale, highly scenicked, excellent details. See the video here: <https://youtu.be/jSUr-9XepxU>



ROB ISCHINGER

You can see these videos and other layouts on the Philly Division website: [phillynmra.org](http://phillynmra.org)—just click on Cab Ride Layout Videos on the home page. If you want to see future videos send me your email address and I'll put you on the distribution list. Do you want your railroad or a friend's railroad videoed? Email me at [bfagan777@hotmail.com](mailto:bfagan777@hotmail.com). More to follow in the next issue of *The Dispatcher*.

Enjoy,

*Bill*



## **New Jersey Division 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Car**

**Tangent Scale Models Bethlehem 70-Ton  
Riveted Drop-End Gondola in HO Scale  
All cars are ready-to-run.**

**We have produced the car in two numbers to  
commemorate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary:**

**1968    &    2018**

**The car has reporting marks NJDX, black with  
white lettering and data for the 1950s.**

**The cost is \$35.00 each**

**OR**

**a set of both numbers for \$65.00.**

**To have them shipped USPS Priority: \$9 for 1 car, \$10.75 for 2 cars**

**The cars are available now. Checks should  
be made payable to “NJ Division”**

**They are selling fast so don’t be left out!**

**(Photos/drawings on next two pages)**

**Website: <https://njdivnmra.org> for questions**

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

City, State and Zip code\_\_\_\_\_

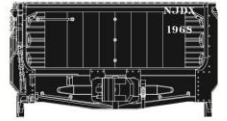
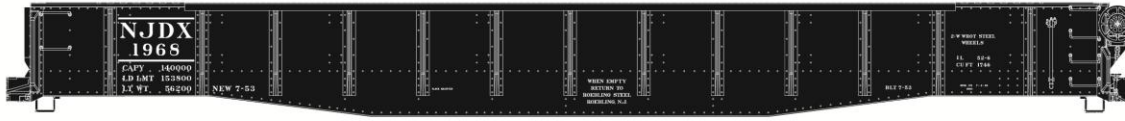
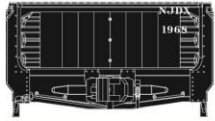
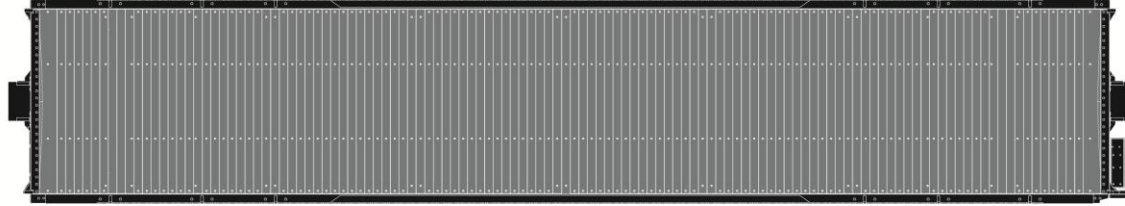
Telephone\_\_\_\_\_Email\_\_\_\_\_

See Tangent website for more info [support@tangentscalemodels.com](mailto:support@tangentscalemodels.com)

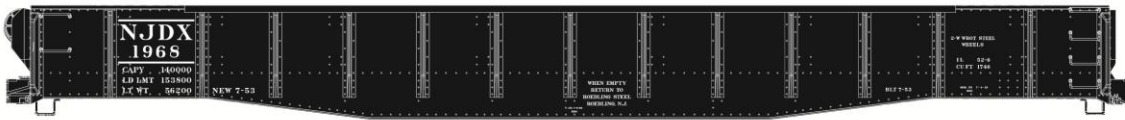
Return this form to NJ Division, P.O. Box 276, Crosswicks, NJ 08515



# Artwork for New Jersey Division 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Car



**TANGENT**  
SCALE MODELS







**MOUNT CLARE JUNCTION**  
MER 2021 - BALTIMORE, MD

*Announcing Mount Clare Junction 2021!*

We couldn't wait to share the good news: Mount Clare Junction, the NMRA Mid-Eastern Region convention, will take place October 21-24, 2021 at the Marriott Delta Hunt Valley, Maryland. More news to come (including a killer lineup of clinicians, layouts and prototypes), so stay tuned and save the date!

**CREATIVE  
INVENTIVE  
ARTISTIC**

Click above to view the convention commercial.

<https://mtclarejct.com/>



[Click here](#) for the May/June issue



[Click here](#) for the May/June issue



[Click here](#) for the May issue



[Click here](#) for the latest dispatch



Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NMRA.org/>

Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nmrargroup/>

YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGMModelRailroading>

If you missed out on any of our previous events, all of the videos are saved on the NMRA YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGMModelRailroading>

## Upcoming NMRA Conventions



[NMRA 2021 Santa Clara - Now Virtual!](#)

2021

<http://www.pcrnmra.org/NMRA2021/>

## Upcoming MER Conventions

**2021 Convention** – Chesapeake Division – Oct. 21 - 24, 2021 - Delta by Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, 245 Shawan Road, Hunt Valley, MD <https://mtclarejct.com>

**2022 Convention** – “Carolina Special Look South in 2022”



## Division Apparel



Short Sleeve Polo



Division Patch



Short Sleeve Button-Down Work Shirt  
(name can be added)\*



Long Sleeve Button-Down Work Shirt  
(name can be added)\*

\* Name and patch positions reversed for shirts with pocket

**ORDER FORM ON NEXT PAGE**

For more information check out these websites and search for the appropriate model number:

**Port Authority** – [www.portauthority.com](http://www.portauthority.com)

Polos: K500, K500P (pocket), K500LS (long sleeve), K500LSP (long sleeve w/pocket)

Button Down: S508 (short sleeve), S608 (long sleeve)

**Gildan** – [www.gildan.com](http://www.gildan.com)

Sweatshirts: Pullover (G180), Pullover w/hood (G185), Zip-up w/hood (G186)



# Philadelphia Division Apparel Order Form

All apparel comes in **black** (the official Division color), with Division patch sewn and ironed on, and, if desired, first name embroidered

**POLO:** Port Authority "Silk Touch" 65/35 polyester/cotton, soft, comfortable, lightweight, virtually wrinkle-free, available in short or long sleeves, with or without pocket (K500, K500P, K500LS, K500LSP)

**BUTTON-DOWN SHIRT:** Port Authority "Easy Care" Twill, 55/45 cotton/polyester, available in short or long sleeves, both with pocket (S508, S608)

**SWEATSHIRT:** Gildan "Heavy Blend" 50/50 cotton/polyester, available in crown-neck pullover, pullover hoodie, and zip-up hoodie (G180, G185, G186)

**Note:** Larger sizes are available—just ask

Size	Price (subject to change)							
S-XL	<b>PRICING HAS CHANGED – CONTACT US FOR A QUOTE</b>							
2XL								
3XL								

No pocket	Pocket	Long Sleeve	Long Sleeve + pocket	Short Sleeve	Long Sleeve	Pullover	Pullover Hoodie	Zip-up Hoodie
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Polo

Button-  
Down

Sweatshirt

Name

Address

City, St, Zip

Phone

Email

Signature

Mail to: PhillyNMRA Sales  
620 Edmonds Ave., Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Questions: 610-626-4506  
phillynmra@gmail.com

First name as you'd like it to appear  
(if desired – add \$5 each shirt)

Qty Price Total

1	↓ Enter Size ↓											
2												
3												
4												
5												

(All shirts come with sewn-on patch) **Additional Patches @ \$5 each**

**SHIPPING COSTS HAVE CHANGED – CONTACT US FOR A QUOTE**

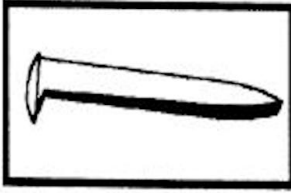
**PICKUP:** Future meet or by special arrangement

Free

Make check payable to: PHILA DIV NMRA

We accept PayPal–email for invoice: phillynmra@gmail.com

**TOTAL**



## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FORM AND SEND TO YOUR REGIONAL OR DIVISIONAL AP CHAIR

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA#: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP: \_\_\_\_\_

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

State/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_

The Golden Spike Award will be awarded to any NMRA member who has completed the Qualifications Checklist, obtained the necessary signatures and who does not hold MMR status. It will be administered by the regional and divisional AP Chairs. AP regulations and definitions apply for scratch building and super detailing. To qualify for the award the member must complete the following checklist, obtain the signature of the divisional AP Chair or another NMRA member designated by the divisional Chair. The divisional Chair will submit the signed form to the regional AP Chair who will issue the Golden Spike Award certificate.

### QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

#### 1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

Display six units of rolling stock either scratch built, craftsman kits or super-detailed commercial kits.

#### 2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout including scenery.

Construct five structures either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial kits. If a module has less than five structures, additional structures separate from the scene may be presented.

#### 3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

Three types of track required (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial track may be used.

All installed track must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (e.g. double track main, single track main with sidings, and block or command control).

Provide one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ NMRA #: \_\_\_\_\_

Regional AP Chair: \_\_\_\_\_ Region: \_\_\_\_\_



# Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's just what happens when you join the National Model Railroad Association and take part in the Achievement Program.

No, it's not a bunch of contests. It's modelers helping modelers become better modelers, to get the most out of their hobby. It's a way to hone your skills and become the modeler you've always wanted to be.

And it's just one of many benefits of NMRA membership.

It's never too late to start improving your modeling skills. And your hobby.



**We make it more fun.**  
[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

