



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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

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The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce that they will be holding their next meeting on Saturday, November 6th. The meeting will be held at the Brandywine Town Center Community Building, which is located north of Wilmington Delaware just south of the Pennsylvania State line. This is a new meet location. For directions see page 7 of this issue of The Dispatcher.

The doors for the meeting will open at 9:00 AM, with the meeting scheduled to begin at 9:30. Our speakers for this meeting are presenting an interesting variety of topics for your entertainment and education.

Joe Lofland will give a presentation about operations on his Erie Lackawanna based model railroad. Joe's railroad is a growing prototype operations based railroad. Joe is also the operator of a small hobby shop, and the producer of some fine model railroad kits.

Earl Hackett will give a presentation on using castings to build a model of the Wilmington, Delaware Pennsylvania Railroad Station. This presentation is based on an article Earl presented in Mainline Modeler Magazine. Making castings can be a very useful technique to master, and I

am looking forward to this presentation.

Our next clinic will be a presentation by Bill Wills and Earl Somers – A brief preview of the afternoon talk at the Hagley Museum. For about the past year, the Hagley Museum in Wilmington has had a special exhibit titled “Machine, Monument, & Metropolis”. Its subject is New York City's Pennsylvania Station before it was butchered! Focal point of the exhibit is an HO-scale model of the station. Bill Wills led a team of volunteers that built the model. Earl Somers led the effort to install the track work, and to keep the model trains running.

Our contest for this meet will be Photos, and the following are the rules for entering:

Eligibility – any Division member who attends the meet

Maximum number of entries from one person - five

Prints only (color or black-and-white – no slides)

Film or digital (but, please don't enter an image whose composition has been digitally altered (for example, moving people, removing wires, adding smoke, etc.)

Maximum print size – 8” X 12”

Minimum size - none

Masked, mounted or unmounted - but not in a frame

Judging categories – model, and prototype

Judging – popular vote

Ineligible items – prints that have won first place in a Division, Regional, or National contest

During the afternoon, there will be a number of layouts open in the area for you to enjoy. In addition, you are invited to visit the Hagley Museum (there may be a small admission charge) to view the PRR station model

This promises to be an interesting meet, and I hope you will start planning now to join us in this new location. And a hearty thank you to Roger Cason for making the arrangements for this meeting.

Looking for Pictures!

Have you taken any great vacations lately you feel might be of interest to other? Any great train shots you've taken over the years? Send them along to the Dispatcher with your notes on who, what, where, and when. Then don't be surprised if you see them in these pages. We'll print almost anything.

What I did on my summer vacation.

By Steve Salotti

With a title like that, you might think this is a grade school child fulfilling a class assignment near the start of the new school year. And what place does something like that have in a newsletter devoted to model railroading? Not to worry, I haven't turned the Dispatcher over to a grade school student (even though we did it in the past with great results, remember Nathan Ashby Coleman, our former editor? He was a high school student.). Instead I'd like to tell you about one of the best trips I've taken in years.

From August 5th to the 20th a group of 20 people from my church traveled to the small town of Wasilla Alaska, about 1 _ hours north of the city of Anchorage. Our purpose was to rehabilitate a children and youth summer camp located on a beautiful lake and 35 acres of woods. The camp was over 40 years old, and the severe winters and heavy use by children and teens had left it a little worn. The group painted, trimmed, built decks and porches, repaired steps, cleared underbrush, and fixed up recreational facilities.

But for the rail fan side of me, the best part was our trip to Whittier for a whale watch and glacier cruise on Friday the 13th. We drove into Anchorage early in the morning, arriving at the Alaska Railroad station around 9:30. The beautiful old station was immaculately maintained, complete with ticket windows and a large vaulted ceiling. There was even a gift shop where this Grandfather could purchase a nice

little train gift for the sweetest little girl around.

Unfortunately the platform was off limits until just before boarding time, so it wasn't possible to get a good overall shot of the train. Our consist was what I believe was a GP40 locomotive, a baggage car, a coach, and an RDC car for a second coach. The seats in the coach were spacious and comfortable. You could stand straight up without hitting your head on an overhead luggage compartment! And plenty of leg room to boot. What a difference from the airplane flight to Alaska.

We pulled out of the station and headed south along the Cook Inlet for Whittier. The right of way is along the shore of the inlet for almost the entire journey, and we were treated to continuous vistas of unbelievable beauty.

But for the rail fan, the best was yet to be. I noticed that the door to the next car was left open. As the conductor went by I asked if I could go out into the vestibule. He said it was fine, so I grabbed the camera and headed out. The upper part of the door was wide open on both sides of the car, so I could go from side to side to get any shots that looked promising. Soon another rail fan came out, then another. We spent the next two hours taking turns at the different doors as sights came along and the train snaked its way along the inlet, often reaching speeds of near 50 miles an hour. The RDC had the operator's compartment open, so we could go in and check the speed as desired.

Before long the train started to slow, so I looked out to see what was going on. There in front of our train I could see another train sitting on the main and we slowly
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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: January 2005. Due out approx. Jan.1. Deadline: December 15.

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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My Summer Vacation Continued.

changed tracks as we pulled into the passing track for a meet. The other train was a cruise train for one of the major cruise lines, and was powered by two GP40s, and was a mixture of coaches, dinners and dome cars of unknown heritage. Once we were in the clear, the other train headed north. It's most likely destination was Fairbanks, about 400 miles north from where we were. We resumed our journey southward, but not too much later we slowed for a second meet with another passenger train, but this time we held the main. This train had about the same consist as the previous one, and again was a cruise line train. We soon were back up to track speed.

Before long we slowed again, but this time it was for the interlocking at the junction to the Whittier branch. We took the diverging route and continued on our way. Shortly we traversed two tunnels, the second being 2 _ miles in length, and shared with the highway. At each portal there is a parking lot where cars are held. After the train has cleared cars are allowed to proceed through the tunnel, but since it is only one lane, they go one direction only at a time. I understand it can take some time to get through the tunnel if you don't time it right.

We arrived in Whittier and de-trained. From there we went on a 4 hour cruise, but I'm sure rail fans aren't too interested in that part of the trip. Upon our return the train was turned and set to head north. Apparently during the cruise the train is run back to the junction where it is turned on the wye, then backs through or is run through the tunnels from the RDC operator's compartment.

We returned to the train and headed back to Anchorage. The return trip was largely uneventful, except we didn't seem to be making much time. The speed never got above about 20 miles per hour, and after the great ride down it was getting a little dull. Finally after more than two hours the conductor came through and told me we were stuck behind a coal drag. At one point we were stopped on the main, and as I was looking out of the vestibule door I saw two crewmen leave the cab of the locomotive, climb down the embankment and go under a bridge. I wonder what they were doing. After their return we started moving again, and shortly our speed picked up. There in the passing track was the coal drag, finally in the clear. We arrived back in Anchorage over an hour and a half later than we were supposed to. Not too high a price to pay for a great day of railfanning! Below are a few pictures for you to enjoy.



From the Superintendent

Divisionaires

Well, we had a very successful Joint Meet with the NJ Division in September. Even with the bad weather we had 70-80 attendees. However, only about a quarter was Philadelphia Division members. Our Division rolls are about the same as the NJ Division's. Where is everybody? My railroad was open that afternoon, and I had 30-35 people stop in, so the weather certainly didn't hurt. That said, Roger Cason has a good program lined up for the 6 November meet in Delaware. See info elsewhere in this issue. Also, see you there.

This time of year is really the start of the annual "model railroading season"-fall, winter and early spring. There is a huge amount of new stuff out there, locomotives, cars, car kits, new track work, like the PECO Code 83 US style switches--if I were to do my railroad over, I'd go this route (I am giving some semi-serious consideration to rebuilding my railroad into the DL&W--30-70 probability). I've seen these new items at the NMRA Train Show in Seattle, a train show, but also at most of our local hobby shops. I often hear the

old saw "...I can get it cheaper from (fill in the blank) ...". , but most hobby shops offer essentially comparable discounts (no, I don't want to hear that Short Change Sam always...). Sure, shopping around pays off, or not, maybe when you factor in the gas price! Don't forget the additional Division discounts at certain shops. Most of the hobby shops that I frequent are pretty well stocked, many overlapping and complementary. Plus, you can see it there, and if it doesn't work, they'll usually exchange it; try that with Train Show Charlie. And they can and will usually get it for you if it is available. And most good hobby shops will always have a supply of red and green wire. Too often the song the birdie sings is a siren song! As a final note lest you think I am in some way anti-discounter or train show that is not the case at all. I enjoy train shows, usually see a lot of folks I know, and spend way more than I had planned. And sometimes Train Show Charlie does have the best deal around.

JED

Important Renewal Information!

It is once again time for all division members to check their membership date. If your label shows 2004 or earlier, you need to renew your membership by the end of 2004 in order to continue receiving The Philadelphia Dispatcher newsletter. 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 all members will renew early in order to continue receiving their newsletter. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask any board member. It is also important to note that due to the cost of printing and postage, the Division can no longer afford carry those members who do not renew promptly. Your name will be moved to an inactive list.

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.

A couple more vacation pictures for you



A couple more pictures

One Sunday afternoon a few of us headed up to the town of Telkeetna to take a flight through Denali National Park. While we were waiting a coal train and passenger train came through. I ran off and grabbed these shots. Unfortunately the passenger train, two RDCs, came through when we were getting ready to board the plane so I wasn't able to get a shot.



Amtrak exits bulk mail business

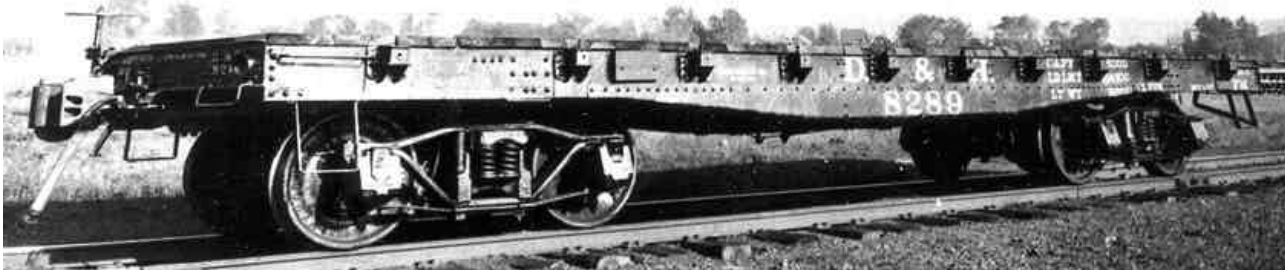
Amtrak will discontinue shipping mail for the US Postal Service in order to concentrate on its core business of transporting passengers, reports the Association of American Railroads. For many Amtrak customers, this will mean an improvement in the schedule of their trains, while two Amtrak services that were primarily extended to accommodate mail and express business are being reduced or eliminated.

"Mail and express no longer makes business sense for Amtrak and has negatively impacted the quality of our passenger service, so the decision has been made to exit the business," said Amtrak President and CEO David L. Gunn in a message to employees. "It is my intention to have all mail and express activity concluded by early October."

In addition to a notification given last week to the Postmaster General, Amtrak is advising officials in Florida, Ohio and Indiana that a limited number of stations will no longer be served by passenger trains as

a result of the railroad's withdrawal from mail and express hauling.

Amtrak has also been in communication with labor unions that represent Amtrak employees affected by the decision. Amtrak's mail and express business was marginal and did not justify the toll it took on passenger operations, Amtrak said. The slower schedules necessitated by longer trains and the switching of express and mail cars at terminals and en route caused passenger dissatisfaction and increased costs. The cost to lease or maintain aging equipment was another factor in the decision to exit the business. Amtrak is making arrangements to dispose of the specialized mail and express handling equipment and the passenger railroad will also reduce the number of locomotives it needs by shortening trains to and from Chicago. Also, maintenance forces can now concentrate on returning other elements of the railroad to a state of good repair without the additional equipment required by the mail and express business.



November Meet Directions

Getting to the meet location is actually quite easy. Curiously, describing how to get there is a little harder. But, here goes

The **Brandywine Town Center** is a large shopping complex located on an “ell”-shaped piece of property near the intersection of the Concord Pike (U.S. 202) and Naamans Road (Del 92). You may remember this as the former site of a race track. One leg of the “ell” joins the Concord Pike. The other leg joins Naamans Road. The complex includes the Regal Cinema, Lowe’s, Michael’s Arts & Crafts, Target, and many other stores. The main structure is surrounded by a maze-like parking lot which, in turn, is surrounded by a road which circles the perimeter.

The Center’s **Community Building** (our meet location) is separate structure with a prominent central atrium. It is located next to a large decorative fountain, on the south side of the complex near the Naamans Road entrance.

From Concord Pike (U.S. 202) going south – a fraction of a mile south of the PA/DE state line, turn left into the Brandywine Town Center (the marker is the sign for Lowe’s and Target, among others). Follow the perimeter road in either direction until you see the Community Building (near the decorative fountain).

From I-95 going south – at the state line, there is a three-way split – I-95, I-295, and Naamans Road (Del 92). Stay to the extreme right, and take the exit to Naamans Road. At the top of the ramp, turn right (west) on to Naamans Road. After a little over four miles, turn right into the Brandywine Town Center (it is opposite Shipley Road, which comes in from the left only). Turn right on to the perimeter road, and then left into the parking lot near the Community Building (which is near the decorative fountain).

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.

Philadelphia Division Meet, Nov. 6th. Brandywine Town Center Community Building (just off 202 right below PA/DE line) Clinics, contest, layout tours. Details elsewhere in this issue of The Dispatcher.

MER Fall Convention. November 11-14, 2004 South Mountain Express, Hagerstown MD. Layout tours, clinics, contests, modular layouts and more. See the MER Local for more information.

Philadelphia Division Meet, January 29th, 2005. GATSME, located in Fort Washington, PA. Clinics, contest. Details to follow in the next issue of The Dispatcher

New Jersey Division Meet. January 21 & 22, 2005 Haddon Twp. area. Clinics 9 – 12 Saturday, layout tours Friday night and Saturday afternoon.

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 4th, 5th, 18th & 19th. January 8th, 9th, 22th, 23rd. GATSME Lines open house in the basement of the New Horizons Montessori

School, Prospect and Madison Avenues, 12 Noon to 4 PM. Admission by donation. For info: Ed Wilson at 215-646-2033 on Thursday evenings. GATSME is a non profit organization.

Cheltenham Model RR Club Open House
November 27 & 28, 2004, January 8 & 9, and 22 & 23, 2005 (Snow dates: Jan. 29 & 30) 12:00 noon till 4:00 PM 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge) Adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA 19027 Call: 215-635-9747 for Information
No admission cost, donations gratefully accepted.

Del Mar Va Model Club Eighteenth annual holiday open house, December 4 & 5, January 8, 9, 1 & 16, 2005. Hours are 11 AM to 5 PM on Saturdays and 12 noon to 5 PM on Sundays. The club is located at 103 E. State Street, Camelot Hall, second floor in Delmar, DE. Large permanent display with N, HO, O-scale and O tinsplate, G gauge plus N-Track. For information, in MD (410) 742 9325, or DE (302) 856 9250.

Philadelphia Division Meet, April 9th, 2005
Montgomery Baptist Church (a new meet location!)
Clinic, contest, layout tours.