



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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

September 2008
Volume 15, Number 4

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce the date and location for its next meeting. The meeting will be held on Saturday, September 20th at the Montgomery Baptist Church, located at 610 Bethlehem Pike (PA Route 309) between the towns of Colmar and Montgomeryville. For directions and a map please see page 7 of this issue. The doors will open at 9:00 AM with the meeting starting at 9:30.

There will be two clinics presented at this meet. The first will be Railroad Mileposts, presented by Fred Monsimer. This clinic was scheduled for a previous meet but was postponed due to time constraints. In this clinic you will learn how to add these often overlooked but important parts of any railroad right of way. Though the clinic will focus on PRR style posts, the information presented can be easily transferred to your own favorite prototype.

Our second clinic will be presented by Dick Landt and will be about hand laying track. This will be an introduction to hand laying track and will cover the supplies, tools, and basics of how to lay ties and rail. There will be an opportunity to try your hand at laying rail after the presentation.

If you can bring a spiking tool (or needle nose pliers) that will help give more people a chance to try it. There will be 5 sections of track prefabricated with ties glued down so you can experience how to spike and gauge the rail. Dick will have sufficient gages for 5 groups to try this on their own. This is a unique way to try your hand at this vanishing art form.

Our popular vote contest for the meet will be open top hoppers. They can be loads or empties, scratch built or kit, weathered or just from the paint shop. We had a pretty good showing at the last meet, so let's see if we can continue the trend.

In addition there will be door prizes and our traditional 50/50 drawing.

After the meet there will be several local layouts open for you to tour. Remember you are a guest in someone's home so please behave accordingly as you always do.

There will be coffee and donuts available for your enjoyment for a small donation. In addition, at the conclusion of the meet there are a number of local establishments where you can obtain lunch. Information will be provided at the meet.

As the old song says "See you in September"!

Reward Your Efforts – Participate in the Achievement Program

The NMRA Achievement Program provides a special way for model railroaders to reward the hard work they have put into their modeling, their service to the NMRA or to the hobby. Quite a few members of the Philadelphia Division certainly qualify for one or more of the modeling Certificates, and those who served on the IJ2006 Committee or the Division Board are eligible for the service Certificates as well. The first step is to read the requirements carefully to determine that you have satisfied all points for each Certificate, and then download the forms in Word format for easy fill-in. Just go to the NMRA website

www.nmra.org/achievement/apforms.html. As the Philadelphia Division AP Coordinator, I am always available to help with any questions and to review your modeling and the documentation when you are ready for submission. You can contact me at dmesserpr@comcast.net or (610) 948-2191.

Dave Messer MMR

Now that summer is beginning to fade away it's time to get back into the basement (unless of course you're like one gentleman I know who only works on his railroad in the summer because he doesn't like the heat outdoors). What projects do you have going on at the moment? How about giving a mini clinic about some of them at a future division meet? Yes, that pain in the neck is still here looking for your input to the division.

In June of this year the division conducted its elections for the Board of Directors. As per the division bylaws those members elected to the board meet to select the various officers for the division. The results are as follows:

Superintendent:

Greg Schindledecker. Greg lives near Downingtown PA and is in the process of building a large representation of the Western Maryland Railroad. He has given clinics on its design and was very active on the planning committee for Independence Junction '06 (remember that?). He has been a division member since 1999.

Assistant Superintendent:

John Seibert. John lives near Collegeville PA, and is in the process of starting a new N scale model of the Readings Wilmington & Northern branch in the 50's. John has been a division member for 6 years and also volunteered at IJ '06.

Clerk:

Earl Paine. Earl lives near Skippack, PA and has been a division member since 2006. He is modeling the Reading Railroad main line from Conshohocken to Belt Line in HO. He served IJ

'06 as a tour guide and in other areas.

Treasurer:

Brian Good. Brian lives near Harleysville, and is in the process of building an HO railroad based on the PRR's Schuylkill division. Brian has been a division member for 6 years and worked on the IJ '06 committee as the Fan Trip Manager and has recently received his Gold Spike award. He is working towards his Master Model Railroader certificate.

Board Members:

The following members of the board are three that have continued their service from the previous board. There continuity of service has helped to make the transition to a new board very smooth.

Dave Messer: Achievement Program Coordinator

Rich Newmiler: Secretary (par excellence)

Val Pistilli: Web Site Manager (with a big thank you to the GATME Club for hosting the division for free for many years).

The division would like to thank these folks for stepping up to serve us. Without their willingness to work the division would cease to be a viable organization.

In addition, the division would like to extend deep appreciation to those who have served in the past. Among those are Jim Dalberg, Dick Foley, Dick Landt, and Steve Salotti.

Oh, by the way, one of the board's first decisions was to re-appoint the editor. Sorry, but for now you'll just have to keep reading my drivel.

Happy Railroading,
Steve

**THE PHILADELPHIA
DISPATCHER**

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

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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: Nov. 2008. Due out approx. Oct. 20th. Deadline: Oct. 10th.

Subscription: \$7.00 per year. Address all subscription applications, renewals; address changes, etc. to the Clerk. If the date in the upper-right corner of your mailing label is highlighted, your subscription 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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National Model Railroad Association
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(615) 892-2946
Dues: \$51.00 per year,

From the Super's Desk

With the approach of fall, it seems that nature is not the only entity with changes in store. First, the Division has completed a "changing of the guard" with a new board of directors. Our first job as the new board is to sincerely thank the outgoing BOD members: Dick Foley, Jim Dalberg, Steve Salotti and Dick Landt, for their dedication & service to the Division. Steve Salotti has graciously agreed to continue as Dispatcher Editor. All of these great guys have agreed to guide the new members until they are comfortable with their respective duties.

So, who's carrying the torch forward? I'd like to introduce the new board – including each person's responsibility: John Seibert will be our Assistant Superintendent; Earl Paine, Clerk; Brian Good is the Treasurer; Dave Messer will continue as AP Coordinator; Val Pistilli will also continue as Webmaster and Rich Newmiller will continue as Secretary. I will complete the team as the new Superintendent.

Speaking of changes, August has given us an early taste of fall this year. Doesn't it feel like time to get back into the basement and re-connect

with those languishing projects? I know I have been bitten by the urge these past few weeks. I've been walking past my Western Maryland Rwy, plywood edition, since I finished the bench work last spring. I've been dogged by helix installation issues and have been dreading the day when all the excuses run out. That time is now. My goal is to have my mainline finished by open house season in November 2009. Those of you who know me also know that I'm really sticking my neck out on this one! Stay tuned – the whole debacle could actually be worth an article in the Dispatcher.

In closing, I'd like to ask for a favor that would bring about a big change in our Division: invite a friend to our Division meets. Between clinics, inspiring layout tours, and the chance to meet and interact with others in the hobby, we have a lot to offer.

Greg Shindledecker
Superintendent

New Division Car Project!

The Philadelphia Division is pleased to announce the release of its newest project, a Reading Panel side hopper. Some may say such a car never existed, yet a careful search of the Readings roster will reveal that there was indeed one such car of this type on the Reading. In addition, old timers that worked for the company confirm that it did indeed exist and they had seen it many times at Port Richmond in Philadelphia. Working with Accurail we have re-created this one of a kind car for your own layout. The number selected is correct for this car, but we have arranged with Accurail to make available for a small fee numbers so you can

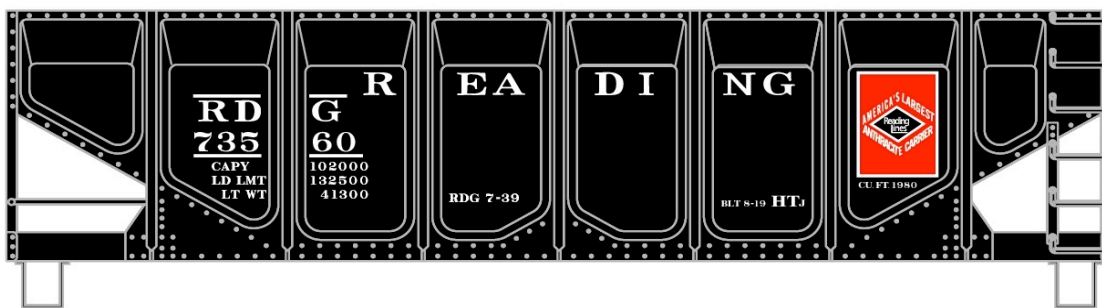
change as many of the cars numbers as you wish. Below is the artwork for the car. The cars are in stock and will be available at all Division meets and by mail at:

Philadelphia Division Cars
308 W. Walnut St.

North Wales PA, 19545-3323

Cars are \$15 each. Shipping \$7 for 1st model, 2 or more models, add \$3.00 each. Money orders preferred, checks must clear prior to shipping. Make Money Order payable to Philadelphia Division MER.

RDG
73560



What I did on my summer... uh winter Vacation

Once again your editor (me) had the opportunity to do a little traveling. This time the trip was to a place that people don't normally travel to during good weather, much less during the winter. But in March of this year my wife Jackie and I found ourselves traveling to the country of Russia. The trip was personal in nature, so I won't go into the why, but at 7:10 PM on March 2nd we flew out of JFK headed for Moscow. Now you may wonder what this could have to do with trains or model railroads, but here's where it may get interesting to you.

We arrived in Moscow on Monday morning, and after taking care of a little business we boarded a train at 8:00 PM on Tuesday evening. Our destination was the city off Cheboksary, a 13 hour train ride due east from Moscow. Now this wasn't a Pullman sleeping car, but it was as close as I've ever had the privilege of riding. The car was very similar to this photo of a model produced by Red Star Railways.



Unfortunately my photos of the actual car are not available, but more on that later. We pulled out of Moscow Station just about right on the advertised and started our journey into the night. Since the trip was in winter and it was quite dark there wasn't much to see out the window, but I kept my nose glued to it anyway in the hopes of gaining insight into the Russian rail system.

After awhile I knew I needed some sleep so climbed into the upper berth. We were in a 4 berth compartment, but Jackie and I were the only two in it (it was easier to leave the suitcases on the other bottom berth than heave them up into the baggage compartment or top bunk). The berths were 1 person only and went across the car rather than along it as in a Pullman berth. The train gently rocked along at about 45 – 50 miles per hour into the Russian night.

After several hours of fitful sleep the train slowed, and as I looked out the partly frosted window I found we were moving past a freight yard. It was still very

dark, but in the dim light I could make out a small hump yard and a large number of freight cars of various types. Many looked to be older designs like single sheathed wooden 50' box cars. And as I found out later, they were. All of these that I saw had been sealed shut with hatches added in the roofs and were used for bulk loading of dry granular products. After our return to Moscow I saw several in a yard up close, but unfortunately I did not have my camera with me. When I returned the next day they were gone.

As we moved slowly past the yard I noticed several large diesel locomotives working various tracks. It was dark and I couldn't see much, but they seemed very large and powerful. Again, when we got back to Moscow I was able to get up close to one, and this time I had a camera. More on that subject later.

As the dawn began to break I was able to spend time looking out the window as we traversed the snow covered countryside. The line we were on was double tracked, and from time to time we passed small towns or the occasional industry spur. As here in the US some were out of service, including one rather large complex which I could not photograph or get a clear idea of what they had done there in the past.

Also, as the train would go around curves I could get a glimpse of the full train. We were about 10 cars back from the locomotives (two apparently diesel units) and about 2 cars, all in a dark sort of Pullman Green color. We were still doing between 45 – 50 miles per hour. And as the line undulated through the more or less flat country side the train would alternately slow and then accelerate.

Around 7:00 AM we finally arrived at our destination, the city of Cheboksary. The train made a long gradual descent into the city, located on the banks of the Volga River deep in central Russia. There were some industry tracks we went past, and most seemed still in service. One looked like a cement plant type operation. Cheboksary is a moderately large city and a port on the Volga, but most of the traffic seemed to be passengers. And in the dead of winter there were no boats moving anywhere. Unfortunately we must have crossed the river at night somewhere as I could not get a view of a bridge, and if my grasp of the geography is correct the city is on the opposite side of the river from Moscow. Too bad, the river is quite wide and it must be an interesting bridge.

As we pulled into town the station proved to be quite impressive. While not large, the depot was very well maintained, and the platforms thoroughly cleared of snow. Shortly after arrival we met our hosts and moved by taxi into the city.

We spent 14 days in the home of a very nice family in Cheboksary. And while we did get to ride their extensive trolley and bus system, we didn't have access to a car so I couldn't get out and chase any trains or investigate the area. Besides, it was winter, and considering that Russia is about the same Latitude as Canada and the nearly daily snows, there wasn't much motivation to go out and half freeze to death. While visiting with the family I did learn that generally speaking the trains are very popular with the people. The tickets are reasonable, and most business travelers use them to get to Moscow and other cities. Many run over night, so you buy your ticket, board the train and sleep as you travel. You arrive in the city in the early morning, conduct your business and travel home on the train that evening. In addition, your train ticket price includes a meal (simple and plain, but not too bad) and as much tea as you like (as far as I can tell tea is the most popular beverage in Russia after Vodka).

As soon as our business was concluded we again set out for Moscow by train. Here is where a little confusion comes in that I have not been able to sort out. After we left Cheboksary heading east after what seemed a rather short ride the train came to a stop in a town with a freight yard on the opposite side of the tracks from the station platform. We were allowed to de-train as the stop was going to be several minutes long. I got off and looked around. The tracks were electrified, which I did not remember from our trip in. In addition, they were doing something with the locomotives, it looked like changing them. Again I didn't remember seeing this on the way into town, and the trip out had been much shorter than the time I had been awake on the way to Cheboksary.

When we arrived in Moscow the porter told us to get off as quickly as possible since the train needed to be serviced and was to be moved to the coach yard. In the hurry, as near as we can tell a towel was laid on the table where our camera was sitting. And there went most of the pictures I had taken on the return trip. Fortunately most of our other pictures had been off loaded onto disks so all were not lost.

We spent the next 10 days or so concluding our business in Moscow. Again without a car it was difficult to get around, but I did notice a rail line running near where we were staying. One morning I rose early and headed off to get as close to it as possible. After about a 15 minute walk I found a passenger station, and to my utter delight, there was a freight yard and roundhouse right behind it. In addition there was a wonderful walking bridge the crossed over the area, probably about ¼ mile long. So

you know where I spent much of my free time over the next few days. This is where, on the first day I saw those converted wooden box cars mentioned earlier.

The next day I returned to the yard with a borrowed camera and took quite a few pictures. Among the subjects were a couple of diesel and electric locomotives. Most of the early shots were taken from the bridge, but I noticed several people who seemed to be taking a shortcut through the engine service area, so as I got braver I decided to try it myself. After walking down the steps and into the engine terminal I get some good side views of a few engines.

At this point I want to give credit to my friend Chris White from Red Star Railways. Chris produces and imports models of Russian railway equipment, and helped me to identify the units shown here. To view his products go to www.redstarrailways.com. The photo of a coach used in this article is one of his models.

This first one is of a ChME2 class locomotive. 522 units of this class were built between 1959 and 1965. This particular unit is one of the later ones built and were slightly heavier and larger. Chris notes that this unit is very well maintained, and may be headed for a museum. This may be supported by the fact it was at this shop where the roundhouse near by was getting a facelift and new roof.



The next unit shown is a class ChME3, and was designed as a heavier cousin to the first unit shown. This switcher proved to be so successful there were 7,454 units built between 1965 and 1989. Most of this class is still in service at locations across the Soviet Union. This unit is the same as other locomotives that I had seen elsewhere in my travels. The unit shown is not all cleaned up with a nice new paint job, but is still laboring away doing what it was created to do. This is the same type of locomotive I saw elsewhere in our travels. One thing I did see was when this unit started,

Winter Vacation..... even more

there was a large cloud of smoke that emitted from the stack, much like that from an Alco unit here in the states. They were quite impressive as they worked around the yard.



The next unit shown is one of the electric passenger units. Many of the lines around Moscow are electrified and these units were on many of the trains (there were other types I saw but often I was not in a position where I could get good clean shots). My friend Chris says these twin units were Skoda at Plzen, Czechoslovakia between 1983 and 1994. They develop 4185 horse power per unit and operate from 3000 volt DC. They are classed ChS7, and while the Soviets built most of their freight and mixed traffic locomotives domestically, nearly all of their passenger units were imported from the Skoda works. These units have performed well with 286 placed in service, and most are in operation today.



As I poked around I noticed some steam coming from the back area of the engine terminal. I followed it back, and to my great joy, there sat two Russian steam locomotives, one under steam! The units both looked in very good repair, but were back from the open areas with a fence partially enclosing them. There was a rail worker nearby, so I approached him and asked in my broken Russian if I could take a picture or two of the units. There was no mistaking his immediate reply: Nyet! with his arms crossed. When I asked Chris about this he said they most likely were owned by a tour company, and are run from time to time in the Moscow area.

Well, I hope you have enjoyed this little adventure, and if I had more space I would love to tell you more, but for now this will have to do.

Steve

Important Subscription Information!

It is once again time for all division members to check their membership date. If your label shows 2007 or earlier, you need to renew your subscription by the end of 2008 in order to continue receiving The Philadelphia Dispatcher newsletter. We will not be sending renewal notices, but will include a subscription 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

New Subscription /Renewal Form

Name: _____

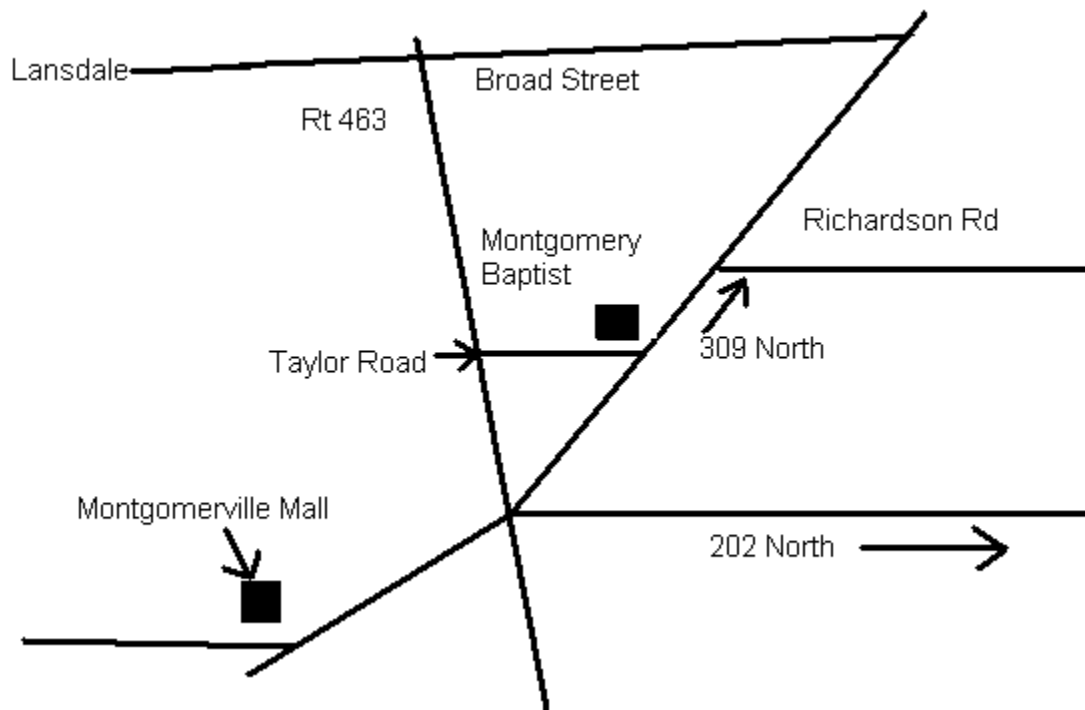
Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

NMRA #: _____ MER #: _____ Div. #: _____

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

Map to Montgomery Baptist Church



Montgomery Baptist Church is located at 510 Bethlehem Pike (Route 309) between the towns of Montgomeryville and Colmar. From Montgomeryville, go North on Route 309 to the intersection of Taylor Road. The church will be just past the intersection on the left side of Route 309. Coming from Colmar, follow Route 309 South and watch for the church on your right.

Schedules The following information is presented for your convenience

September 20th Philadelphia

Division Meet:

Montgomery Baptist Church
Rte. 309 and Taylor Rd.
Montgomeryville, PA
Clinics, contest, layout tours
See page 1 of this issue of the
Dispatcher for more information.

September 11 – 14, 2008

Empire Junction

NER fall convention,
Syracuse, New York
www.empirejunction.org

October 16 – 19, 2008

Potomac Junction

MER Fall Convention
Reston, Virginia
www.home.comcast.net/~Potomacnmra/mer2008

October 11th & 12th Timonium Train Show

Great Scale Model Train Show
Timonium MD (410)-730-1036

November 8th Philadelphia Division Meet

Brandywine Town Center
Community Building (just off 202
right below PA/DE line) Clinics,
contest, layout tours. For more
information see the next issue of the
Dispatcher.

Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club

The following open house dates are
given for your advance planning:
November 29 – 30, 2008
January 3 – 4, 10 – 11, 2009
January 17 – 18, 2009 (snow date)
All dates 12:00 – 4:00 PM
Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad club

8000 Old York Road (at RR bridge)
(adjacent to Elkins Park Square)
Elkins Park, PA 19027
For more information: 215-635-9747
No admission cost, donations
gratefully accepted.

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 & 7
2008, January 10, 11, 24, & 25 and
March 7 & 8 2009. GATSME Lines
open house in the basement at
Prospect and Madison Avenues, 12
Noon to 4 PM. Admission by
donation. For info: Ed Wilson at 215-
646-2033 on Thursday evenings.

The Philadelphia Dispatcher

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46 Meadow Road
Collegeville, PA 19426

Inside: Election Results
Vacation

X

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

8436 Perry Hwy, Rt. 19
Pgh., PA 15237-5228
10% discount (412)-364-2913

Iron Horse Hobby Shop

60 S. 6th St. in Reading
10% discount with \$10 min purchase

Main Line Hobbies

2915 Hannah Ave
East Norriton, PA 610-275-4340
20% off list prices

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 Broomall
10% discount (excludes O & G items)

Lin's Junction

128 South Line St.
Lansdale, PA 19446
5% in addition to already discounted prices

Bussinger Trains

Old Ambler Station, Ambler
10-12% off retail