



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER



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

February 2012 Volume 19, Number 1

<http://www.phillynmra.org/>

Railroad Prototype Modelers -Valley Forge starts March 22nd

In case you haven't heard

The Valley Forge RPM meet has gained recognition as one of the finest in the nation.

The event convenes at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Malvern, PA within weeks. Please pre-register now.

The RPM Committee already reports a record number of pre-registrations for 2012.

Registrations must be mailed no later than March 10th, 2012 (see registration packet).

This is one not to miss!

RPM RELATED COVERAGE IN THIS ISSUE

Operation sessions data	printed page 7
List of Clinics and Clinicians	online page 1
Vendor List	online page 9
Ops Layout descriptions	online page 9
Time schedule	online page 11

WEBSITE URL

<http://phillynmra.org/RPMMeet.html>

REGISTRATION PACKET DOWNLOAD URL

<http://phillynmra.org/RPM2012InfoReg.pdf>

Division Car Sales Debut at RPM



The NMRA Philadelphia Division Sales Table will be the initial kick-off location for our latest car offering. This is also the debut of the new two-tier pricing structure designed to provide reduced pricing to Division members in good standing. This reflects the intent of the Division Executive Board to directly benefit their members.

Between 1950 and 1957 the Reading purchased several thousand offset-side 55-ton twin hoppers built by long-time supplier Bethlehem Steel. These cars became one of the largest single classes of cars on the road's roster.

Lasting into the Conrail era, they were used to haul a variety of bulk commodities including anthracite and crushed stone, and with some modifications, sand, slag and ferromanganese ore.

The initial production runs were painted black with the red and white "Anthracite" herald and the road name and other lettering in Railroad Roman.

Beginning in 1952 the road name was changed to the large speed lettering, which is the scheme used for the exquisite Kadee model as the latest offering by the Philadelphia Division.

The cars are available in 6 different numbers exclusive to our Division.

Philadelphia Division – Reading Hopper Pricing Matrix - does not include shipping (Proof of active membership in the Philadelphia Division required)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Philadelphia Division Members only	\$30	\$60	\$87	\$116	\$145	\$168
Non-Members	\$36	\$72	\$105	\$140	\$175	\$200



Greetings everyone. This issue of The Dispatcher traditionally contains major coverage of the bi-annual RPM Valley Forge Meet coming up this March. Time marches on and now the RPM Internet website for the meet has become the main publishing outlet for all details related to the event.

Now that the majority of our membership will be reading this issue on-line, we can merely link our readers to all info related to the meet including late breaking updates!

Having said that, we will continue to publish printed articles in support of the RPM (see the last issue), but they can be shorter allowing us to devote more space to other division news.

<http://www.phillynmra.org/RPMMeet.html>

Above is the RPM Valley Forge URL. Visit it early and often.

Our local RPM has garnered quite the positive national reputation! Kudos to the RPM Committee for doing an outstanding job over the past years continually strengthening this event.

We, as division members, should all be proud of the notoriety that this event has given to the Philadelphia Division. See you there... Earl

From the Superintendent



Jim Kelly stole my thunder. I was going to extol the virtues of the most unjustly maligned of scales when I opened my new March issue of Model Railroader and there, on page 24, Jim had done most of my writing. No, I'm not talking about G scale; I'm talking about N. And for those of you who haven't looked at anything new in N-scale in the last several years, you're in for a surprise.

Jim talked about the code 55 track, low profile wheel sets, Micro-Trains (nee Kadee) couplers....that's right, same thing only smaller, and quick-as-a-wink drop-in decoders replacing your old head light board. What he didn't tell you was the sweetest part....all of that space!!! Coffee table layouts? Maybe, but more importantly, consider the ratio 160:87. That's almost 2 to 1. Geometrically that means you enjoy almost 4 times the layout in the same area as HO. Your tight 18" radius curve just became like it was 33". Bring on the sweeping curves you always wanted. Number 7 turnouts? They can be a minimum and are one of the luxuries of N-scale.

Yeah John, but what about the running? Aren't N-scale locos jerky? In the olden days that was true, but now there's all wheel pick-up, 5 pole skew armature motors and dual flywheels, all of which have been standard on everything N-scale for a long time. I have a Trainmaster that I can throttle so low you can barely detect movement. You can grow old just watching it. I have! Metal wheel sets are the rage now in N for even smoother running.

And economy. Under \$20.00 for a quality ready-to-run freight car. Typically \$110 on average for a diesel with DCC. And speaking of quality, you should check out the rolling stock that is being offered by Atlas Master series, Red Caboose, InterMountain, BLMA, Fox Valley, Micro-Trains, Exact Rail, Bowser and other names familiar to us all.

If you're just starting out in model railroading or looking to make a change because you've dreamed about those full-basement sized layouts but just don't have the room, give N-scale a serious look. I could go on, but our friendly editor Earl asked for a short piece this time, and thanks to Jim Kelly, he's going to get it. Happy Railroading ... John

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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. The editor reserves the right to, when necessary, paraphrase small portions of the text in order to fit the space available.

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It's no secret that the average age of those active in model railroading is on the rise. Much has been written and said concerning attracting younger modelers, but the demographic fact remains that many of us will be facing changing housing requirements in the not so distant future.

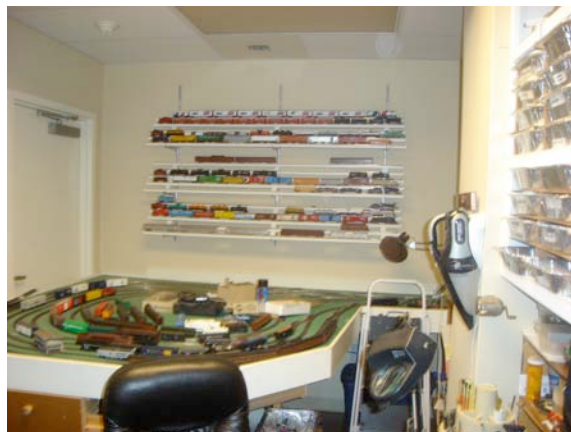
Retirement communities across the nation have recognized that quality of life issues, including hobbies, are as important as physical living arrangements. As a result, many communities install and contribute to hobby areas and actively market them to prospective residents. Such is the case at Shannondell Retirement Community in Audubon, Pa.

I had a recent opportunity as editor of the DISPATCHER to visit Shannondell. I had heard about, but never seen, the "railroad room" located there. I was pleasantly surprised.

My initial contact was with the club's coordinator, Mrs. Betty Smiley, who extended an invitation to visit. She graciously met me at the Shannondell's Ashcroft Clubhouse and escorted me to the railroad clubroom located on the lower level of the center.

Expecting to see a basement room, I was instead escorted through a lower area reminiscent of a fine hotel, and into the spacious 25' x 30' railroad room. Upon entering the room (actually a suite of rooms), you pass a poster describing the club. That poster documents the history and construction of the area and appears in the online section of this issue.

A workshop room as well as an adjacent staging area flank the main railroad display area. Members enjoy well-lighted shop equipment and work areas, including well-appointed workbenches.



which also contribute to the eastern theme and display the residents' modeling work.

The railroad group is open to all residents and currently numbers 48 active members. There are many talented modelers who contribute an enormous amount of knowledge and talent. A seven person executive committee guides the group.

Although private to the Shannondell Community, the club regularly hosts display dates open to relatives, residents and escorted visitors.

There are additional photos of this fine layout in the online version of this issue of the Dispatcher.

During the last several years your Division has invited our friends in the neighboring New Jersey Division to our November meets and the



NJ Division has reciprocated in kind the following January. This past January 7th with good sunny weather, we journeyed to the Haddon Township High School for a morning filled with a variety of model railroading activities.

The morning's format was set up with 8 various clinics that were repeated four times at 30 minutes each. Instead of a single-clinic-at-a-time for everyone, the 'WIP clinic program' approach was utilized similar



to the M.E.R.'s 2009's Princeton Jct. Convention. Members were free to choose attending any of the clinics located at various places or stations, around the school's large cafeteria in any order. Folks could leave early or move quietly between clinics. At the end of each clinic, a bell was rung; people could circulate, get some refreshments, browse or shop at the various vendors present and catch up with old friends. The presenters would take this time to reset their clinic for the next session. The clinics featured a range of opportunities where you could learn how to (1) build a

low cost static-grass applicator, (2) utilize magnets in your railroad, (3) build line-side signals using tubes, standard signal heads, L.E.D.s and levers, (4) brush up on various soldering techniques, (5) learn how to weather cars using chalks featuring our Super, - John Seibert, (6 & 7) 2 different clinics demonstrating a variety of tree or shrub building methods and (8) using the JMRI software to program locomotive decoders featuring the use of a smart phone with a Wi-Fi-computer interface as a command & controller to operate the locomotive. This last clinic was truly a '21st century moment' that I'm sure we'll be seeing more modelers utilizing in the coming years.

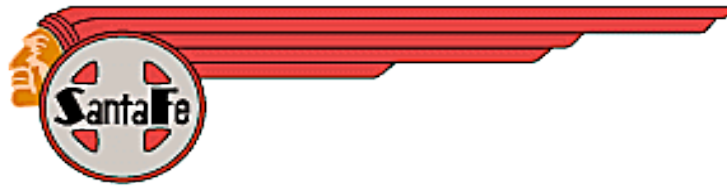


On display is our Division's car project featuring a Kadee RTR Reading offset hopper car and our a mock-up of the Division's new sport-shirt both of which will debut for sale at the Railroad Prototypers Meet in March.

There were 8 different railroads open for visiting between Friday evening, Jan. 6th through Saturday afternoon after the meet that were hosted by various members of the NJ Division through out the south Jersey area.

A special thanks to the NJ Division's Super-Bob Clegg, Clinics Director -John Gallagher and all our friends in the NJ Division, for inviting us and hosting the January Meet. This March 22 to 25 (in place of our normal meet) will be the Valley Forge Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet, in Malvern PA. Please note; you need to pre-register for the Railroad Prototype Modelers so take the time to register as this event attracts a lot of fellow modelers from far and wide. More about this exciting event elsewhere in the Dispatcher. In closing, I hope to see you at the RPM. Should be fun and we'll see you then!

Note: All meet photos courtesy of Eric Dervinis



East Coast Santa Fe Modelers

Welcome to our 20th Annual Spring

East Coast Santa Fe Modelers Spring Convention

Sponsored by Tony's Train Exchange

May 4 & 5, 2012 in Doylestown, PA

The Campus of Delaware Valley College

Clinics – schedule and topics to be announced

Andy Sperandio (who recently retired from his position at *Model Railroader*) returns to the East Coast Santa Fe Modelers to share his knowledge and experience on general railroading areas as well as specific Santa Fe topics.

Ted York (best known for his fabulous modeling of the Cajon Pass area of Southern California) will be visiting us for the first time to share his knowledge and experience with layout construction, lighting, and scenery techniques.

Norm Stenzel from Tony's Trains will be with us again this year. He will be presenting the new QSI Titan sound decoder and providing support for many DCC products, especially Digitrax. Norm will have merchandise for sale at show discounts.

Food service will be a combination of Pizza and campus dining facilities.

We need your registrations as soon as possible. We would like to have as early a response as possible we are inviting the Philadelphia Division of the NMRA again this year. They will also include other NMRA divisions to fill their block of seats. If we have seats available will also extend and invitation to SP and UP groups to fill all available space.

White Elephant tables will be available at \$5.00 each reserve when you register.

Registration is \$25 until April 1, 2012. After that date, it will be \$35. Checks made payable to ECSFM

NMRA PHILADELPHIA DIVISION NOTE:

Philadelphia Division Members in good standing will have their registration paid by the Division

Division PRE-REGISTRATION is required for having your registration paid.

There will be a pre-registration sign-up list at the RPM-Valley Forge Meet Division Sales Table.

You may alternatively pre-register by contacting Board Member Pat McTeigue at:

Email: tonightowl1@comcast.net

Phone: 215-441-8407 (leave a message if Pat doesn't answer)

Pre-registration deadline is April 15th

Another Take on Manual Turnout Control

Modeling on a budget requires that we be on a constant lookout for common materials and products available economically in home centers and other outlets that we can use on our layouts. In addition, items often surround us in our homes, which can be reused on the railroad. Such was the case with the manual turnout controls on my layout.

A scavenger hunt around the house yielded several finds. 1) A box of 60 or more DPDT slide switches salvaged from earlier electronic attempts. 2) Several 8-foot lengths of plastic wall brackets left over from an Armstrong suspended ceiling project, 3) a closet full of older unused wire coat hangers and 4) several plastic venetian blind slats which were leftover from a window project.

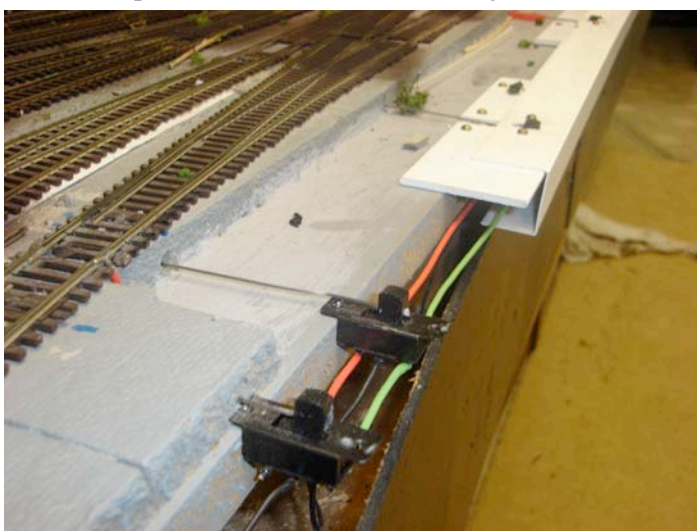
The use of slide switches to manually power turnouts is not a new idea, but what follows is a different approach, which certainly met my financial constraints.

I built the layout benchwork from 20-foot by 10-inch engineered floor joists to avoid legs. All was fine until I realized that I had not allowed access below the plywood sub-roadbed to install any turnout controls. Due to this poor planning, the turnout controls would have to be a “surface” solution. The yard tracks were installed on sheets of ½” homasote.

I started by attaching a DPDT slide switch to the edge of the layout adjacent to each turnout throwbar with a single screw. The switches were temporarily sticking out into the aisle.

I next started drilling an access hole into the side of the homasote roadbed (above the sub-roadbed) with a ¼” x 24” drill bit obtained from Harbor Freight. As long as the homasote is firmly attached to the sub-roadbed the drill bit will quickly excavate a tunnel through the homasote beneath the turnout throwbar. Careful “aiming” of the bit by eye kept the tunnel path accurately aligned to its target throwbar. Some of the throw bars were located 20” back from the aisle.

The wire coat hangers were straightened out into substitutes for more expensive piano wire. I was able to push each coat hanger wire through the homasote surface next to each throwbar down into the drilled out tunnel. A little horizontal pressure forced the wire through the tunnel and out to the slide switch location.



A 90 degree bend was bent into the last ¼” of wire at the throwbar location with the short bend sticking slightly above the homasote. After enlarging the hole in the turnout throwbar it was slightly lifted allowing the wire rod to slide beneath the hole. The throwbar was lowered onto the rod engaging the widened hole. A drop of epoxy was added to the connection point preventing the rod from dropping out of the hole.

A receiving hole the diameter of the hanger wire was drilled through the bakelite handle on the slide switch throw to receive the throw rod. The slide switch was detached from the aisle edge and slid down the throw wire and then reattached to the aisle. I found it unnecessary to bend a “z” into the throw rod to adjust for the possible mechanical mismatch in throw lengths. After adjusting the mechanism a drop of ACC secured the wire

to the slide switch handle. The excess length of wire (now protruding into the aisle) was cut off.

A single electrical attachment to each rail allowed two “busses” (one from each rail) to be run from slide switch to slide switch on the outer terminals of one side of the switch. A wire drop from each turnout frog was attached to center pole of each switch. With the exception of the frogs, all soldering is accomplished from the aisle.

Article continues on page 7 of the on-line section

RPM – Valley Forge -- Operating Sessions

by Jim Dalberg

We are planning several operating sessions prior to the start of the Meet on Friday afternoon.

One of these will be on Thursday evening at the GATSME Club in Fort Washington. The Club location is about 25 miles from the Desmond, a relatively easy drive via US202 and the PA Tpk Exit 339. This evening is the Club's regular monthly operating session, so "no reservation required"—just show up, although a "heads-up" to Val Pistilli (vpistilli@verizon.net) will be appreciated. There may be one or two folks who would like to participate, but will need rides. Knowing who is going may help in this regard. Directions and information at <http://www.gatsme.org>

The other three op sessions will be Friday morning, 23 March. A description will follow, but first some brief Admin comments.

We will meet in the lobby of the Desmond at 0915---this is to make sure everyone has a ride and to pass out some directions, and in the event of no-shows, fill any available slots with those who would like to participate. Once these preliminaries are taken care of, we will shove off for the Layouts, which are about 4 to 7 or 8 miles away. Sessions will start at 10am and last until?? --- Probably 2-2:30 pm or thereabouts.

Signing Up----You need to send me an email (jedalberg@aol.com) indication your 1st, 2nd, 3rd choices.

Note: last time, 2010, we had just about enough people to run all three; if we don't this time, we'll consolidate.

A brief description of each RR is listed on Page 9 of the on-line section of this DISPATCHER.

Call for Division Board Nominations

The Nominations Committee continues the search for candidates who would be willing to run for office for next year's Executive Board. The board consists of 7 members who reorganize yearly to fill the committee positions and offices necessary for the successful running of the Philadelphia Division.

Three board seats are up for election. Although our Bylaws allow for an unlimited number of terms our Board members are limited to 2 consecutive terms for the position of Superintendent, Assistant, Clerk & Treasurer. New blood is not only needed, it is welcomed. Contact any board member for info and to ask any questions. Greg Shindledecker chairs the nominating committee. His email is <mailto:greg@shindledecker.com>. Candidate bios will be included in the next issue.

Ballots will be circulated in the April Dispatcher and the May meet with results of the voting announced at the May joint meet at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown, PA

In upcoming issues

- Basement Waterproofing from a model railroaders perspective
- Report on the Cheltenham Hills Model Railroad Club
- Division election coverage and Candidate Bios
- Division Member layout updates

Planning Ahead ---- Division Meeting 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.

March 23-24-25, 2012 – Valley Forge RPM Meet Desmond Hotel, Great Valley, PA See Coverage in this issue of the Dispatcher.	May 4-5, 2012 – Division Meet Delaware Valley College A repeat of the Joint meet with the East Coast Santa Fe Modelers (see page 5)	NJ Division May Meet Saturday, May 12, 2012 Knights of Columbus Hall 15 East Lacey Rd. Forked River, NJ 08731
September 15, 2012 – Division Meet Montgomery / Delaware County Tentatively set for Drexel Hill, PA	Oct 18-21, 2012 MER Convention Hilton Garden Inn, Suffolk, VA	The Dispatcher will be happy to display hobby related dates submitted by members

ADDITIONAL PAGES OF PHOTOS AND INFO IS LOCATED IN THE ON-LINE EDITION
(MAKE SURE THE CLERK HAS YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS)

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Official publication of the Philadelphia Division
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**4325 Wendy Way
Schwenksville, PA 19473**

Inside:
Shannondell MRRC
RPM coverage
Call for nominations
Manual turnout throws

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.

Iron Horse Hobby Shop

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

Herb's Hobbies and Crafts

200 W. State St. in Doylestown
\$25 of free merchandise for every \$250 spent

Bussinger Trains

Old Ambler Station, Ambler
10-12% off retail

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 194446
5% in addition to already discounted prices

VIEW THE DISPATCHER ONLINE !! ADDITIONAL PHOTOS, NATIONAL NMRA REPORTS AND

RPM – Valley Forge Clinic List

This is a preliminary listing-- topic titles and additional clinicians will be added periodically--stay tuned!

Larry Kline	P&LE's Gateway Yard
Ralph DeBlasi	Designing the LV's Wyoming Division
	Restoration of an Alco C420
Vince Lee	Growing Up CNJ
John Teichmoeller	B&O's Marine Operations in Baltimore Harbor
	Prototype and HO Model Slag and Ingot Cars
Rich Newmiller	Realistic Scenery 101
Dave Hopson	Fade to Black - PRR and PC
Bruce Elliott	Wooden B&O Interlocking Towers in HO Scale
Keith DeVault	The B&O's Cumberland Division - the West End
Keith Albright	Designing a Samll Layout for Large Scale Operations
Ed Olszewski	DL&W Marine Operations Around Oswego
Nick Fry	B&O's Baltimore Division: From the Foothills to Philadelphia - Part I & II
Jim Harr	Detailing and Modifying Pre-Built Models
George Losse	Reading Open Hopper Cars in the 1950's
Craig Bisgeier	Beyond Pratt: Building Better Truss Bridge Models
Stan Rydarowicz	Panel Side Hoppers
Larry DeYoung	Erie Lackawanna: The Evolution of a Paint Scheme
Bob Karig	Anthracite and the O&W
Mike Rose	Modeling Mehoopany
Jim Schweitzer	TT & TO in One Act
Dick Flock	Unique Rolling Stock
John Greene	Reading Gas-Electric Cars
Bill Schaumberg	A Ride on the Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee
Tony Koester	Creative Structure Kitbashing
Todd Sullivan	Sleuthing the PRR Schuylkill Branch's North End
Paul Dolkos	Modeling Head End Passenger Operations
Ben Hom	Green Dot at 28: Rolling Stock of the NEB&W
Dave Ramos	Waybill Car Forwarding
Ralph Heiss	Seven Interchanges in Only Four Feet
Jim Hertzog	Exploring the Shamokin Division
Den Lippert	Diesel Detail 101
Eric Dervinis	Nottingham Mine and Breaker in Plymouth, PA, 1863 to 1950's - History and Modeling Ideas.
Jim Dalberg	Modeling Anthracite Roads
Steve Funaro	Reading Box Cars
	ACF High Walkway Tank Cars
Mike Schleigh	Hide Car Report
Steve Stewart	The Lehigh and New England
John Roberts	Modeling Port Operations - C&O Railway - Newport News VA
Ramon Rhodes	TBD
Eric Hansmann	The Newburgh & South Shore Railway
	Modeling Railroads Before the Depression
Ron Hoess	Modeling Open Loads by the Book
Henry Freeman	Tehachapi
Fred Lagno	Realistic Model Railroad Photography, Part 2
Karl Siefert	DCC - Sound Installation
Chuck Davis	Magnetic uncouplers
Mike Rabbitt	Modeling a Steel Mill Sinter Plant
Ted Dilorio	Modeling The Ma & Pa

Around the Division



Figure 1 - Superintendent John Seibert, always the N scale enthusiast, works on his Reading W & N branch expansion



Figure 2 - Dispatcher Editor Earl Paine sits over his future level 1 turntable pit to work the scenery on level three



Figure 3 - Immediately below the third level (figure 2) Earl has started the "pre-tunnel-liner" forestation of level 2.



Figure 4 - Dr. Bill Erskine displays the engine terminal of his large 3-rail New Haven layout at his recent open house



Figure 5 - Pat McTeigues layout continues to grow forests



Figure 6 - Don Borden paints his backdrops even in the staging areas!



Figure 7 - Nick Brownsberger fearlessly expanding his layout.

Shannondell Additional Photos



Figure 1 - Documentary poster greeting visitors to the Shannondell Clubroom



Figure 2 - One of the peninsulas depicting a busy town



Figure 3 - The sprawling passenger terminal area

More from Shannondell



Figure 1 - Shannondell Modelers enjoy well-appointed shop and modeling facilities adjacent to the main railroad room

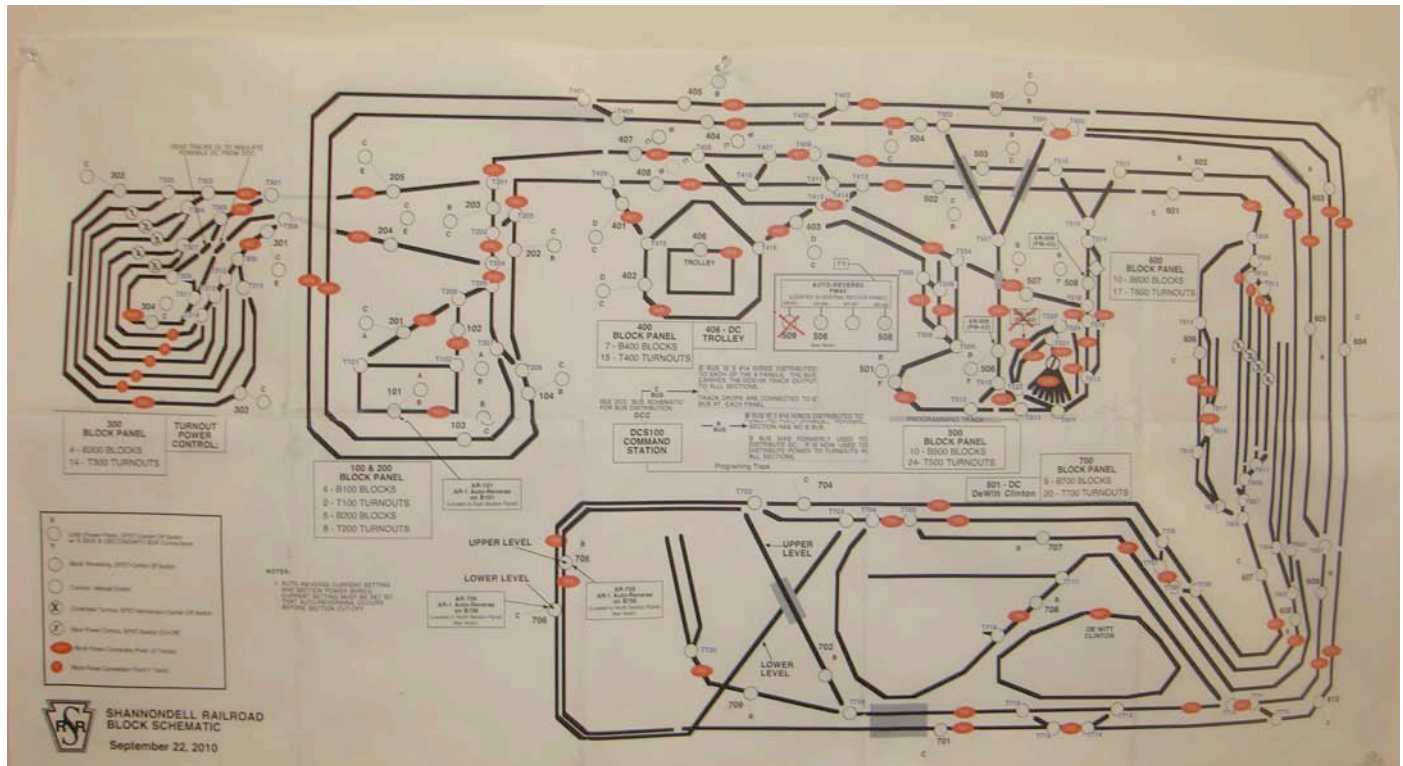


Figure 2 - Layout schematic including DCC wiring scheme and future signaling plans

WORD HAS IT ... that members of the Division Executive Board will be modeling the new Division shirts at the RPM Meet. Treasurer Howard Kaplan has done yeoman work in the design and procurement process. Thanks Howard! The shirts are now available to order. See online page 12 for additional information and an order form.

More Photos from Shannondell



The Dispatcher seeks to cover more clubs and layouts within our Divisions' boundaries. Several more articles are in preparation but we can always use more. Contact the Dispatcher Editor with information about as yet unknown layouts in the area.

It's a new year and a new InfoNet News eblast!

- The Kalmbach Library's immensely popular "**The Postwar Freight Car Fleet**" book has sold out.
- The **Grand Rails 2012 Convention still has some space left for modular layouts** at the National Train Show so if someone in your Division or Region wants to show the world what they've done, go to www.gr2012.org and click on the "Contact us" page. Have them tell the committee what they've done and the committee will get things rolling.
- More Grand Rails 2012 news: The convention has some **great things planned for non-rails**. There's a cooking demo that will make attendees think they're watching a stand-up comedian do a cooking show and great entertainment at the luncheon in one of the most beautiful ballrooms in the country. There's also a ride on a dune schooner to see the 1100 acre Saugatuck Dunes! Have non-rails go to www.gr2012.org for all the details.

And some of last month's important news bears repeating:

This year **registration for Grand Rails 2012 will be handled in a new way**. Instead of the large registration package inserted into *NMRA Magazine*, the full package can be downloaded from www.gr2012.org. Those who prefer a printed piece can send their request, along with their name and address to: GR 2012 Registrar, 4165 Costa NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525. There will also be a registration form and ad appearing in an upcoming issue of *NMRA Magazine*.

NMRA elections. The official ballot was prepared by the National Nominating Committee according to the procedures laid out in the Regulations and the Executive Handbook (available at www.nmra.org). It will appear as an insert in the center of the February issue of *NMRA Magazine*, which will be mailed to all voting members. Ballots must be returned to NMRA headquarters, "Attention Ballot Committee," and must be postmarked by April 10, 2012 and received by April 15, 2012. Here are the job titles and candidates as they appear on the ballot:

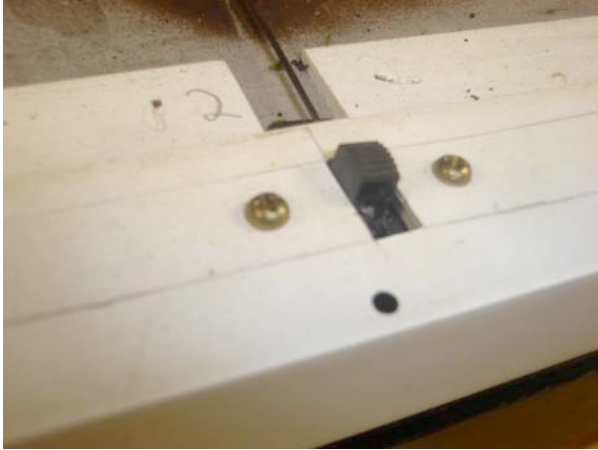
- President: Charles W. Getz, IV, HLM
- Vice President - Administration: Howard Goodwin Clark Kooning, MMR Dave Thornton
- Vice President - Special Projects: Bill Kaufman James "Lump" Lupfer
- At-Large North American Director Mike Brestel Miles Hale, MMR
- Eastern District Director John Roberts, MMR, HLM
- Pacific District Director Mike Bartlett Kelly Loyd Rob Peterson.

*And if you're changing email addresses, please let me know at this email address: **NMRA-infonet@earthlink.net***

Gerry Leone, MMR
NMRA Communications Director

.... continued from page 7 of the printed section

All worked well at this point except for the fact that the slide switches were still sticking out in the aisle where they could catch on passing operators. The eight-foot long plastic wall brackets solved both the protection problem as well as the aesthetic one.



After carefully marking the wide edge of the long ceiling bracket, a $\frac{1}{4}$ " by $\frac{1}{2}$ " rectangular hole was cut for each switch allowing the slide switch handles to protrude through the holes. The 8 foot brackets were cut to length and lowered over the slide switches. The other two sides of the bracket wrapped around to hide the slide switches and wiring to form a neat installation.

In order to clear the wire throw rods, the brackets had to be shimmed up to clear the wires. This was done with short two-inch sections of venetian blind, but any $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick shim material would work as well. The shims had the added benefit of lowering the handles into the holes. In some areas two levels of shims were used because I was not careful and drilled the bakelite handles too high.

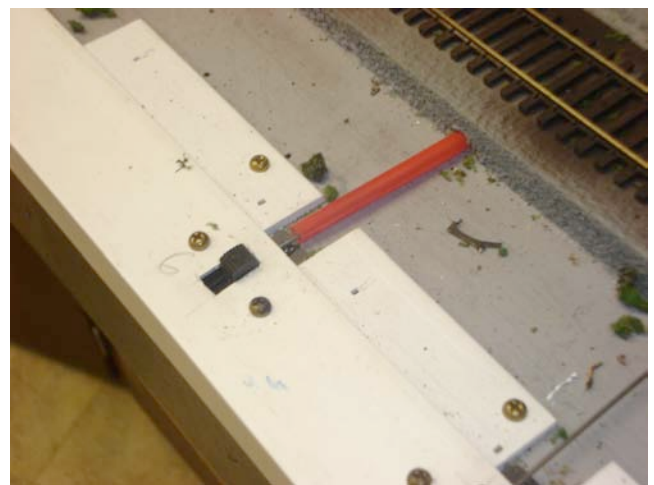
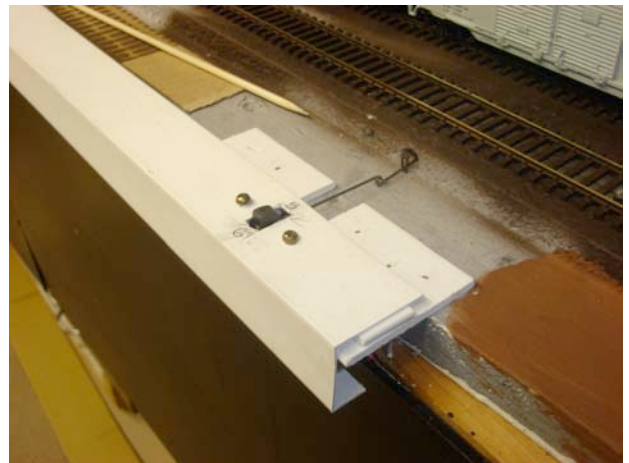
The shims were screwed (or nailed) to the benchwork. The brackets are therefore removeable for access to the switches and wiring or for spray-painting outside.

The installation of the brackets provides a smooth surface, which will not catch the clothing of operators walking up and down the aisles. They are also easily painted and/or labeled to assist unfamiliar operators locate the proper switch.

The brass screws flanking each switch also give a tactile alert the presence of the switch when sliding a hand down the strip. I find this an aid when concentrating on uncoupling or car shunting. When scenery is installed, free fast food soda straws will be cut lengthwise and installed over the wire throws to protect them from whatever scenery medium is used.

Thus far I am very satisfied with this method of manual turnout control. All mechanical parts have held up well to a year's constant usage. I have been using pencil markings on the strips thus far and will be attaching more permanent labels soon. I am even planning to add raised dot (similar to Braille) indicators to assist fellow operator Pat McTeigue and other visually impaired operators find the proper controls.

Next will be the attachment of car-card holders to the strips corresponding to each track. The sky's the limit!



Andy Sperandio to Appear at May Joint Meet

**Mark your calendars for the joint meet this Spring on May 4-5, 2012!
See page 5 of the printed section of this newsletter for more information**

Well known author, clinician and now retired editor of MODEL RAILROADER magazine, Andy Sperandio, will be one of the lead clinicians at the upcoming May joint meet of the NMRA, Philadelphia Division and the East Coast Santa Fe Modelers. Andy is an authority on the Santa Fe but also is one of the preeminent writers on prototypical operations today. He will be presenting clinics on varied topics which will interest not only the Santa Fe crew, but also the NMRA eastern roads modelers.

Ted York will also be attending and presenting clinics. Ted hails from Utah and has a well-known HO scale railroad depicting the San Bernardino area of the Santa Fe. His layout is very well represented on the internet as an operating railroad and he participates in several "ops till you drop" weekends.

In addition, specialists from Tony's Train Exchange (in Vermont) will again be present to present the latest in electronics and sound for all in attendance.

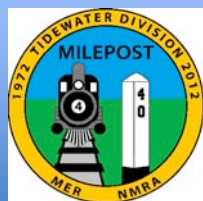
The combination of the two organizations' efforts on the May 2012 ECSF/NMRA meet make possible the appearance of these nationally recognized presenters.

Once again, the NMRA Philly Division Board has voted to fund the registration fee for Philly Division members in good standing.

There will be a pre-registration sign-up list published in the next Dispatcher as there was last year. Pre-registration will be required for the division to pay for members' attendance. Look for that information as well as much more complete coverage of the event in April.



<http://www.gr2012.org/>



Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention

Milepost 40

October 18th to October 21st, 2012

Convention Hotel:

Hilton Garden Inn
100 East Constance Road
Suffolk, VA 23434



RPM – VALLEY FORGE 2012 OPERATING SESSION LAYOUT DESCRIPTIONS

Main portion of article is located on page 7 of the printed section:

A brief description of each RR follows----

1. Bill and Martha Blackburn's Great Valley Division of the Pennsylvania RR. Mainly a freight hauler with 13 daily passenger trains, 23 freights and other jobs. The theme of operations is mainly local work with the main line freights dropping off and picking up At Paoli, with the many local freights departing from there to the branches. Motive power is brass steam, all sound equipped. NCE DCC, car card operation. The railroad is completely scenicked.
2. Steve Salotti's New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad. Set in 1949, in Northern New Jersey between Little Ferry (main yard) and the western connection with the L&NE at Hainesburg, the railroad features road freights, many locals, interchange operations, waterfront/industrial switching and passenger operations between Jersey City and Butler. The railroad operates on TT&TO, so you will have to pay attention to the schedules. Digitrax DCC.
3. Jim Dalberg's Lackawanna Railroad. I should tell you that I have changed my railroad from its original Lehigh Valley/CNJ to the DL&W (Lackawanna). This occurred about 3 years ago. The railroad represents the prototype between Hoboken and Scranton/west/staging, and the Erie between Hoboken (Jersey City) and Port Jervis/west. Mostly in North Jersey, part in Pennsylvania-- in the Anthracite region. Currently set about 1957 (Erie was in Hoboken by that time), with a few era-mixing liberties. Sequence operation, through passenger service, commuters, local switching operations and road freights. Two main yards—Jersey City and Port Morris plus the Hoboken passenger terminal. CNJ line serving Wharton/Rockaway—mostly switching. Car card/waybill, Digitrax, bring FRS radios. Railroad needs 14-15, but can operate with less—more gets too crowded.

RPM – Valley Forge Vendors

Bethlehem Car Works

Shortline Products

Stella Scale Models

JJL Models

Nick & Nora Designs

Funaro & Camerlengo

Bob's Photos

Pro Custom Hobbies

Matthew Herson

Scale Creations

Brad Bower

Stan Rydarowicz

Motrak Models

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

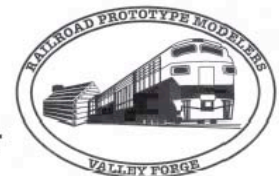
Sponsored by Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA

March 23-25, 2012

at the

**Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference Center
Malvern, PA**

**Clinics
Model Displays
Vendors' Room
Sunday Home Layout Tour
Operating Sessions**



INFORMATION AND UPDATES

www.phillynmra.org

OR

Paul Backenstose
103 West Uwchlan Avenue
Downtown PA 19335

(Please include an SSAE for a reply)
prrpaul@aol.com or (610) 269-2763

INTERESTED IN PRESENTING A CLINIC?

Jim Dalberg
610-648-0089 or jedalberg@aol.com

VENDOR INFORMATION

Steve Salotti
610-489-1940 or Salotti.Steve@gmail.com

New Membership Recruitment Program

As an aid to membership recruitment, NMRA recently instituted a six month "Railpass" trial membership program which costs the applicant \$9.95. Building on this idea, the MER is instituting a program whereby it will pay the \$9.95 Railpass fee for interested applicants in the MER. In other words, we are making available FREE six month Railpass trial memberships to encourage recruitment of regular members.

What's covered?

Same as Railpass—receive six issues of NMRA Magazine, three issues of The Local, eligibility to attend conventions and meets, eligibility to participate in contests.

What's not covered?

Same as Railpass—applicants cannot vote or hold office, and will not receive the New Member Pak from national (it's rather expensive).

Who can be recruited?

Anyone living within the MER who has not been a member of NMRA during the past two years.

How will the recruitment process work?

(1) The prospective member fills out the MER trial membership application form which was sent to all division superintendents (not the standard NMRA Railpass form) (2) The "recruiter" should also sign the form, and then forward it to: Fred Miller, MER Business Manager, 333 W. Trade St, Unit #2504, Charlotte, NC 28202-1961. (3) Fred will record the information he needs in his data base, and will forward the application to the MER Treasurer. (4) The Treasurer will add the necessary check and forward the application and check to the national headquarters in Chattanooga.

What happens after the member's six month trial period?

The Railpass trial member will receive a standard dues notice from national headquarters. We hope a substantial number of Railpass trial members will sign up to become regular members.

Are there limits on the program?

The MER initially allocated \$2,000 for this program. The Board recently allocated an additional \$1,000 to extend the program to the end of 2010, or when the funds are spent – whichever comes first. When and if we approach either limit, Division Superintendents and members of the MER Board of Directors will be notified. At that time, the program will be evaluated by the MER Board of Directors. If successful, we will try to continue it.

For questions?

Contact Fred Miller, MER Business Manager (mailing address is above, 704-332-1753, tractionfan@aol.com), or John Janosko, MER President (see contact information on page 2). □

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

YES, please sign me up for a free six month Railpass trial membership in the NMRA—which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region, and in my local Division. During this six month period, I understand that I may attend conventions and meets, and participate in contests. I will receive NMRA Magazine, the monthly national magazine, and The Local, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office, or receive a New Member Pak.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six month Railpass trial membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Regardless of who pays, six month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person.)

At the end of the six months, I may join NMRA, paying the regular active member dues. During the past two years, I have not been a member of NMRA.

===== Name: Street Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone: ()

Email:

Scale(s): Date of Birth:

Signature of Applicant:

Signature of Sponsor: (Required) (A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

=====

Date of form: 1/31/07

When this form is completed, mail it to:

Fred Miller, MMR MER Business Manager 333 W. Trade St, Unit #2504 Charlotte, NC 28202-1961

Do not mail it directly to MMRA headquarters in Chattanooga, TN.

RPM – VALLEY FORGE TIMETABLE

(Check website for last minute changes)

Thursday March 22

Evening Operating session See below

Friday March 23

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Operating sessions See below

5:30 p.m. Registration open – Conference Center

Vendors Room and Models Display Room open **FOR SETUP ONLY**

7 p.m. Clinics begin, Vendors Room and Models Display Room open

11 p.m. Clinics end, Vendors Room and Models Display Room closed

Saturday March 24

8:30 a.m. Registration open

9 a.m. Clinics begin, Vendors Room and Models Display Room open

4:30-5:30 Happy Hour/cash bar – Desmond lobby

5:30-7 p.m. Buffet dinner (see description below), Vendors Room and Models Display Room closed

7 p.m. Clinics resume, Vendors Room and Models Display Room open

10 p.m. Vendors Room and Models Display Room closed

Sunday March 25

9 a.m. Registration open

Clinics begin, Vendors Room and Models Display Room open

10:30 a.m. last Clinics begin

12:00 Vendors Room closed ---teardown

Models Display Room closed ---**ALL MODELS MUST BE PICKED UP BY 11 A.M.**

12:30 p.m.- 4 p.m. Home Layouts open

Maps will be provided at the registration desk

You must wear your RPM-Valley Forge name badge to visit these layouts

DINNER

On Saturday, a dinner (not a banquet) will be held. There will be no speeches or awards. The dinner will be

buffet style, with a cash bar available. The cost is \$37. Only 60 tickets are available.

OPERATING SESSIONS

Information on operations located elsewhere in this issue. In order to sign up for any of the operating sessions, you must contact Jim Dalberg by phone at 610 648-0089 or by e mail at jedalberg@aol.com

DIVISION SHIRTS

The official Philadelphia Division sport shirts are now available for purchase by members. The shirt is a black, cotton/polyester knit polo with the division logo on the left chest and, if you desire, your first name embroidered on the right chest. Shirts may be ordered by mail using the form below, or at the upcoming RPM meet. Shirts ordered by March 31 will be in your hands in time for the May meet. In addition, a limited number of shirts without names will be available for direct purchase at the RPM meet.

DIVISION SHIRT ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, ST, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Circle Shirt Size: S M L XL @ \$15 2XL @ \$17 3XL @ \$19 4XL @ \$21

First Name added @ \$3 No Yes Name as you'd like it to appear: _____

Check one: _____ USPS Priority Shipping @ \$5 _____ Pick up directly from Howard

Total enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to: **PHILA DIV NMRA**

**Contact Howard to make pick up
arrangements or with any questions.**

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

