



THE PHILADELPHIA DISPATCHER

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



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Division Leadership Reorganizes

As is customary and per our bylaws, the newly formed Board of Directors (BOD) for the 2013-14 term held a short meeting to elect this year's officers. This meeting was held just prior to the June BOD meeting on June 13th, which closes out our year ending June 30th. The following offices for '13-14 were filled: Joe Bergmaier as superintendent, Charles Butsch as assistant superintendent, Howard Kaplan as treasurer; and Mark Wallace as clerk. Rob Hinkle, John Seibert, and Pat McTeigue will serve as members at large.

John Seibert has found it necessary to step down as superintendent for personal reasons. Greg Shindledecker and Brian Good are bringing their board presence to a close, having served formerly as superintendent and treasurer respectively, and both as at-large directors. We heartily thank them for their valuable service and leadership, having donated much time and effort to the division over the past years. The next board meeting is slated for September 12th.

September 28th Division Meet to be Held in Montgomery County

We are pleased to announce that the upcoming September meet we will be held at the Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene. The church is located in Fairview Village (Eagleville post office), between Norristown and Collegeville in Montgomery County PA. A map and directions can be found on page 7.

Doors open at 8:30am for registration with the meeting commencing promptly at 9:00 and featuring the following clinics:

First up will be Bob Charles, former NMRA and MER president and current Achievement Program coordinator of the Susquehanna Division. Bob will be discussing, not surprisingly, the NMRA Achievement Program.

Clinic #2 will be co-presented by Bill Fagan and Earl Paine. Bill will discuss his YouTube videography techniques, which he has developed on various area

layouts. He will be using Earl's Reading-themed layout as a video subject. Earl will be discussing some of the design philosophy behind his railroad which relates to the video. His layout will be open in the afternoon.

The third clinic will be presented by Mike Rabbitt on the topic of railroad operations of steel mill open-hearth furnaces. He will have on display his highly detailed, open-hearth model complete with all the equipment and track arrangements, and will be using it for demonstration during his clinic. Mike has agreed to open his layout to the members in the afternoon.

Steve Salotti's layout will be open, as well. Both Steve's and Earl's layouts are located in the Collegeville/Skipack area. Mike's is located in the Wayne/King of Prussia area. Maps and directions will be provided at the meet.

Dispatcher Changes Page Numbering Scheme

The vast majority of our members are now reading *The Dispatcher* electronic version online. The page-numbering scheme starting with this issue has been changed to reflect that fact.

No longer will online pages receive separate numbering. Numbering will now be sequential from 1 to 20 or beyond. Pages 1 through 8 will still be the printed edition sent to those who pay for a printed subscription, but page 9 and beyond will appear only in the electronic version.

The mass acceptance of iPads and eReaders is forcing the publishing industry to rethink delivery strategies and *The Dispatcher* is no different!

As usual, we seek input from all members as things change. Feel free to contact any board member or committee chair with your thoughts.

**Rockville, Maryland MER Meet
info located on page 11 (online)**

From Our Outgoing Super

It's been a fast two years. As of the last board meeting, I have decided to take a pass at remaining as the superintendent for the next two-year term. This is due to personal reasons having nothing to do with the NMRA or model railroading. I look forward to the opportunity to do it again someday. I am staying on the board and will continue to be an active member of the events committee. My good friend, Joe Bergmaier, will be your new superintendent and I am looking forward to working with him in his new position. Joe has some great ideas regarding reaching out to our membership to learn what we can do to spark more interest in the division and the NMRA.

I will be moving sometime soon but will be staying within the division. This involves downsizing my digs and that involves a bittersweet component. My N-scale Wilmington and Northern has already been dismantled, but it will live on in a new location. I can now go back and fix the things that were bugging me. A dry basement is paramount in my selection process for a townhouse. In fact, a dry basement, a few rooms, a roof, bathroom and kitchen are about all I need. Oh, and plumbing and electricity. Let's not forget that.

The new and improved Wilmington and Northern layout will pay more attention to the Wilmington end. There aren't many photos available of the industries served in Wilmington or the Reading freight station. If you are aware of any, please let me know. Many survive of the Beech Street engine terminal, the Delaware River Float Bridge and Elsmere Junction. I finally got hold of the old Bee Line article on the Reading in Wilmington done by Wilmington native John Hall. It

makes sense of the track arrangements and the B&O connections in Elsmere and Wilmington itself. Can't wait to sit down at the computer and plan it out once I have the dimensions to that new layout room. 🍷

From Our Incoming Super

Autumn is just around the corner, and like the weather, there are also changes in our division.

My good friend, John Seibert stepped down as the superintendent due to personal reasons. While he has passed the torch to me, John will continue to serve on the board and handle a number of the jobs that are vital to the division's success. Please join me in thanking John for his years of tireless service.

A brief overview of my background is that I have served as the assistant superintendent for the past three years under John and Greg Shindledecker. Hopefully they have taught me well.

I've been involved (on and off) in model railroading since I caught the disease from my father about 60 years ago. From what I have heard there is NO known cure for this affliction! I was born in Reading territory (Port Richmond and American Street), but moved to PRR turf when I was six years old. Most of my early memories are of GG-1s barreling down the NY corridor. So I basically have bipolar railroad interests: the Reading & PRR. I'm currently building my lifelong dream incorporating both roads. The lower level is the Reading's Lebanon Valley branch from Reading to Rutherford Yard with transfer service to Enola Yard. From there, the second level is the Middle Division from Harrisburg to Altoona. Finally after a trip around the prototypical (what have I been drinking!) helix we arrive in Altoona. At this point we swap engines and cabins and add helper service to make the climb up Horseshoe Curve and on to the tunnels at Gallitzin.

Now you know everything you need to know about my railroad heritage. In my next "From the Super" column I will give you a rundown about what we are planning for the coming year... stay tuned. 🍷

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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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Once again National Train Day coincided with our division meet held this past May 11 as a joint event with the East Coast Santa Fe Modelers (or ECSFM) at the Delaware Valley College Campus in Bucks County. Although the ECSFM is independent of the NMRA and our division, many of their members belong to both groups. The members of the ECSFM, as its name suggests, are devoted to modeling the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway and developing prototypically correct models of cars, locomotives, and structures, and to further understand its history. This event allows them to meet with manufacturers to provide input for future product development. Though far away from the territory where the prototype railroad ranged, the ECSFM group is part of a larger network of Santa Fe modelers. The group normally meets once a year with events, auction and guest speakers. While they charge for the meet, the cost was *free* to Philadelphia Division members following the registration process.

Although the ECSFM portion of the meet was billed as a Friday night/all-day Saturday affair, our division met early Saturday morning to conduct our annual business meeting. According to the division's bylaws, this meeting should occur in either May or June each year. The results of the election for Board of Directors were announced. The slate of four candidates on this year's ballot, featuring incumbents Howard Kaplan and John Seibert plus new nominees Charles Butsch and Rob Hinkle were elected to a two-year term of office. Neither Superintendent John Seibert nor Assistant Superintendent Joe Bergmaier were available so Mark and Howard conducted the business meeting.

Mark described the recent development on the board as well as an appeal to members interested in conducting future clinics. The upcoming year's schedule of division meets were run down so members could mark their calendars early. Treasurer Howard Kaplan reviewed the division's financial situation, our ongoing hopper car project, and the division shirts. Our editor, Earl Paine, requested more articles and volunteer help with producing future editions of *The Dispatcher*. The future of the printed version was discussed with assurances that members could still sign up to receive it for an annual fee. However, the demand continues to shift toward the online version as other kinds of computerized social media gain in popularity.

Our meeting adjourned and we proceeded to the morning's clinic featuring TCS's John Forsythe and son David debuting the new line of WOW Sound Decoders that were briefly mentioned at the March meet in Quakertown. Let me say that with respect to the future of sound quality in model railroading, the bar has been

significantly raised, as these decoders surpass both Soundtraxx and QSI for fidelity and ease of programming.

The Forsythes described their recording and methods used in gathering the various kinds of sound and the way they are processed and reproduced. While other decoders utilize 8- or 12-bit processing with lesser sampling rates, these sound decoders utilize the 16-bit, 44,100 MHz, CD standard originally developed by Philips/Sony and long used in our consumer electronics. There is no background noise at all. The Forsythes described their development of a steam locomotive decoder that utilized Nickel Plate's 2-8-4 #765 for various components such as the compressors, brakes, reversing, steam cocks, blow down, and so forth.



Figure 1 – Train Control Systems presentation

Since the decoder uses “back EMF” to synchronize the chuff with the driver rotation there is no longer a need for a separate cam or similar syncing device. Although there were issues with the DCC timing out, the features and advantages of the new decoders outweighed the technical difficulties. Member Don Borden described how he and TCS are beta testing decoders using the 2-10-2 steamers he uses on his layout.

After a short break we were treated to an encore of Ramon Rhodes's clinic on the ATSF in Chicago featuring a block-by-block series of detailed photographs and diagrams. The portions of the railroad between Dearborn Station (shared by Eastern roads like the PRR) to Joliet Illinois, that included a study of the various supporting engine houses, car shops, stations, junctions, and line-side activity.

Then, this year's special, guest speaker, former *Model Railroader* Editor Andy Sperandio, gave a clinic on modeling a specific variety of Pullman cars utilized in the consist of the El Capitan train in the 1940s and early '50s. Andy reviewed for us his methodical research and techniques for altering the details on several different kinds of passenger cars to obtain the prototypically correct look. He also shared his methods for converting the models, labels, and aids previously used in a

slideshow clinic to the kind of PowerPoint-type presentation used for many of our clinics.

We broke for lunch with most of us utilizing the college's dining hall for some fellowship and networking. After lunch, there was an auction held that featured donations of books, locomotives, cars, models of buildings, kits, decoders, Santa Fe models and DCC equipment.



Figure 1 – Andy Sperandio presenting his clinic

The afternoon's clinics were based on a round robin or rotational type of clinic with several groups headed by Andy and the TCS group. I attended the TCS clinic and was treated to more features of their WOW decoders that also include the onboard "Keep Alive" sound that allows a locomotive to move over dirty or unpowered track for several feet. Now if they can just deal with the current surge issues, it would mean that switch frogs would no longer have to be wired. With onboard programming or using JMRI computing, TCS has done away with the need for cumbersome CV (control value) programming as well

as the need for a signal booster! Finally, the cost is the same as the present decoders on the market. They also intend to develop diesel decoders, but given the high level of fidelity, old heads will turn if the prime mover, horn, or given combination are not accurate. Safe to say (without



Figure 2 – One of the round robin clinics offered at the meet giving specific product endorsements) the future of the hobby sounds exciting.

We ended the session with an early dinner call at about 4:15. My schedule would not allow me to stay any further even though I knew there were more activities extending into the evening that included an ops session at Don Borden's Cajon Pass layout.

A gracious thank you to Jim Albanowski, Don Borden, Mike Davis, Andy Sperandio, Ramon Rhodes, John and David Forsythe, plus the many others who helped coordinate a successful, joint ECSFM/May Philly Division Meet. Our next meet will be held on September 28th at the Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene in Fairview Village, Montgomery County. There are a promised round of clinics, layouts, and an ops session. See you then! 🚂

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Be sure to reach out to and welcome our new NMRA Philadelphia Division members as they attend our events...

Ron Albert
Ethan Benardete
Terry Horst
Pat Mulrooney

Gregory Piscorik
Richard Sauerwine
Thomas Densmore

M. Ludrick
William Wilson
Gary Sugden

AROUND THE DIVISION



Member Bill Fagan volunteered to help Pat McTeigue with track cleaning at a recent round robin session. Little did Bill know that the trackage in question was 60" above the floor and very difficult to reach. Trooper that he is, Bill made the climb, cleaned the track and carefully climbed down. He is now convinced that model railroading is fun (most of the time)!



A little about my railroad...

I started with an empty basement and worked for several years, building my large, lifetime, project railroad. I decided to focus on the Reading's East Penn Branch that runs from Allentown Yard to Reading Yard. I used the Lehigh Valley as a traffic source running through Allentown Yard from Oak Island in New Jersey to Buffalo, NY.

There are five levels with two operation levels and three separate staging levels. The lowest level is the Bethlehem Steel coal and ore staging yards, which is occupied by unit trains. The main lower level includes from east to west, Phillipsburg staging, Bethlehem Steel including Florence Yard and Pig Yard, Allentown Yard including the Bethlehem Engine Terminal, the receiving yard for the hump, the classification yard, and the arrival/departure yard and finally Lehighton staging.

Across the Lehigh River from Allentown Yard is the East Penn Yard. Leaving Allentown we go to a slightly higher level for the beginning of the East Penn Branch at East Penn Junction. This level includes the Perkiomen Branch interchange in Emmaus, and Macungie. This leads us to the helix, which takes us to Alburtis on the upper main level, the starting point of the Catasauqua and Fogelsville Branch. The other towns on the upper level are Topton, the Kutztown interchange and branch, Lyons, Fleetwood, Blandon, Tuckerton, and Temple. The Evansville Industrial Branch leaves the main just north of Temple extending to Allentown Portland Cement in Evansville. Leaving Temple heading South / west, there is a slight climb through Belt Line to a slightly higher level for Reading which is over the helix. The upper staging yard is just beyond Reading. It represents Port Richmond and East Side Yard in Philadelphia, and Rutherford in Harrisburg.



The layout was divided into four DCC booster divisions, two for the lower level and two for the upper level. The lowest staging level has one reversing block for exiting the loop tracks under the helix. The middle staging level has four reversing blocks as a result of the Lehighton loop being inside the Phillipsburg loop. The Lehighton track crosses the Phillipsburg track twice. The upper level has three reversing blocks where the main tracks fold back on themselves.

When I was running the layout by myself, I had resolved the electrical problems that I encountered. I was pretty confident that what I had built to that point was running smoothly and correctly. I joined a round robin group which meant more working helpers and operators. The round robin group was a great help in keeping me motivated along with their great support in completing the main line and industrial sidings along the way. I can remember their first visit, which resulted in my helix being converted from a circle to an oval, and that meant I had to move my gas dryer out of the way. It was a good idea in the long run, but caused a lot of layout rework and washer and dryer relocation activities.

I soon found myself participating in a second round robin group, which meant even more helpers and new operators to get familiar with the railroad. The upper level was originally wired for DC operations. The lower level was wired from the DCC perspective. Having several trains running at the same time turned up a few new problems. The beginning of a reversing block that could not be seen from the other end of the block presented one of them. What happened was that one train was exiting the reversing block while another train was entering at the other end causing a short because the reverser could not handle the polarity changes at both ends simultaneously.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In my division travels I have received much feedback about the value of sharing the wisdom and knowledge of our members on the local level.

Despite the fact that some of the information covered might be available elsewhere (or online), all felt that there is value in reading a "local take" on the material being covered.

In addition, the ability to ask questions of, and follow up with our local authors at meets and local gatherings strengthens the reasons for such articles.

With that in mind, the accompanying article by Pat McTeigue fit the bill perfectly and is offered for your perusal.

Feel free to discuss the article contents with Pat or his helpers anytime. We can all learn from each other!

Look for more such articles in the future. Let *The Dispatcher* know what you are doing or planning. Material submitted does not have to be "publication ready." I have proofreading and editing help as needed.

block in half, which meant you would be able to see the tail end of a train leaving the reversing block as you entered the block. If you stopped, you would at least be able to see the other train involved in the situation. Yes, I use metal wheels on all my freight cars and cabooses. They cause a brief short which triggers a reversing event.

But this was not “the big short.” That occurred when both of the boosters on the lower level would short out at the same time, thereby shutting down all the lower level visible area and the associated staging. The cause wasn’t readily apparent based on the train activity that was taking place. This problem hadn’t occurred until there were several operators busy on the lower level and a short occurred. We surmised that there must be a “cross connection” in the feeder wiring somewhere on the lower level and to find it we would have to check every feeder drop and ensure that they were connected to the correct buss pair. There were over thirty buss pairs involved and several feeder drops per buss.

Being a blind layout owner at this point in time (I lost my sight in an automobile accident a few years back), I couldn’t envision someone taking on a challenge like this, so I initially was considering living with the problem. Before we started down that road, I was convinced by some friends that I should consider installing more short circuit protectors so that a short would affect smaller segments of the layout. We revisited my documentation of the layout block wiring diagrams and planned a renumbering of the blocks, and divided each booster into four power districts. Boy, am I glad I documented my wiring as I built the railroad.

The workhorse behind the new power supply board was Don Borden. We used DCC Specialties (formally Tony’s Train Exchange) PS4 short circuit protectors and his reversers. Nick Brownsburger worked with Don and me to check out all the feeder drops and eventually found the one pair that was connected to the wrong buss, which caused the crossover between the boosters. My input to the process was explaining the original wiring plan and helping to determine good locations for separating the power districts.

Don implemented one booster at a time. This went well until we reached the last booster, which supplied the Reading area. We ran into some phasing issues and problems with one reverser that was managing three blocks. Don’t tell anyone, but I think my wiring might have been different from my documentation for this area. Things were running okay before we started the changes, so I’m guessing I had things installed differently on the power distribution barrier strips than the way I had documented it. It took several weeks of problem solving changes but eventually, enough things were changed and then reversed in order to learn what worked and what didn’t to resolve those problems. Several people were involved in this process, but Richard Stamm was the last person with his hands in the pie. (That means he made the final fix.)

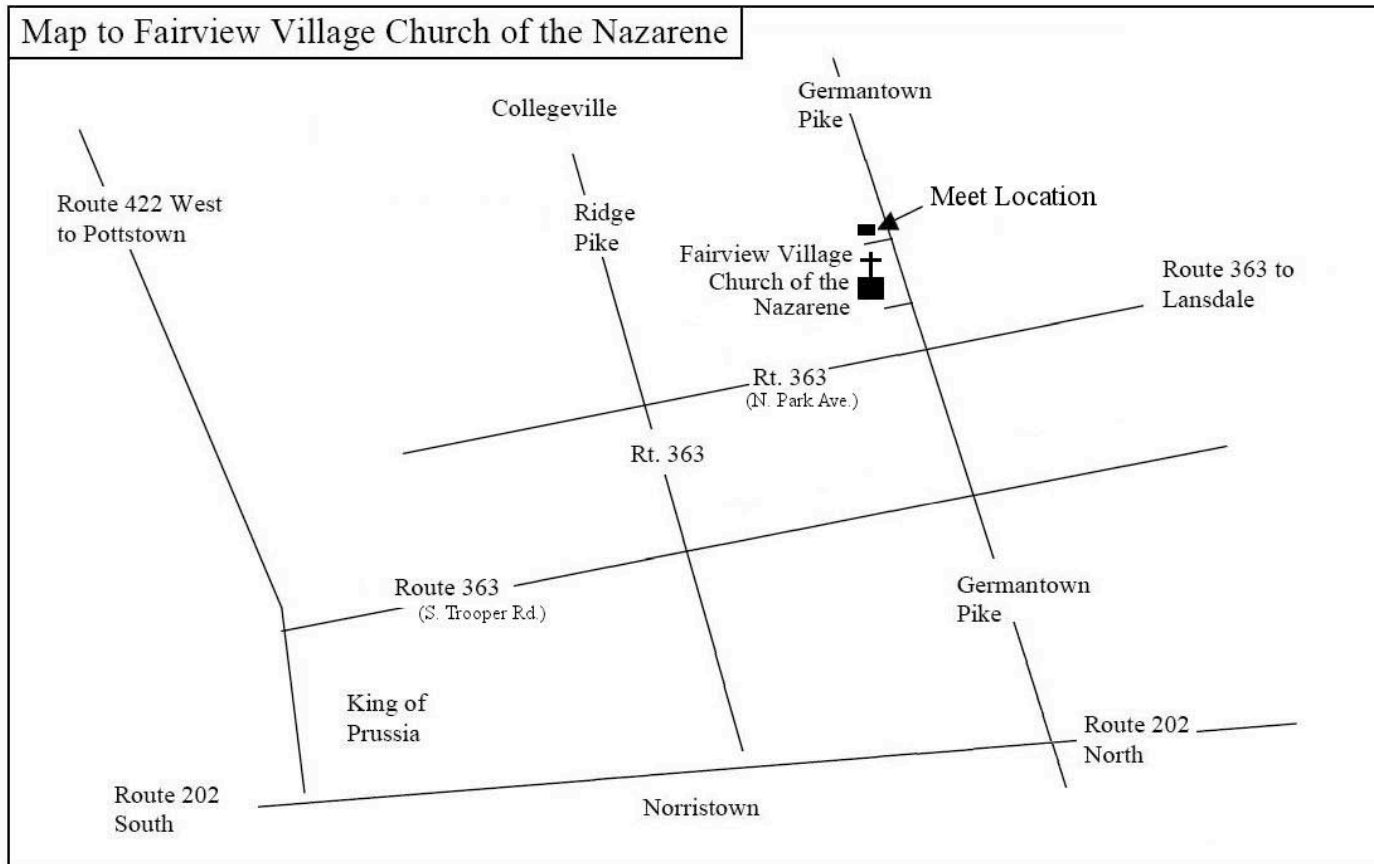
Now that all the wiring was done, I wanted to do a quality control review to ensure that all the blocks on the railroad were getting power and that they were connected to the correct power district. The way to do this was the good old “quarter test.” Wouldn’t you know it, the first block to be tested was supplied power by an EasyDCC booster. After all of the testing and work that had been done to this point, the new DCC circuit breakers now refused to react to any shorts in the power districts that used those boosters. The booster reacted to the short, but the short circuit protectors didn’t. I wish I could have seen the looks on people’s faces when this happened. Doing some research, Don found some information about this on the Internet. It happens that the EasyDCC short detection circuit reacted faster than the DCC Specialties short detection circuit. So much for system compatibility! By changing a resistor on the EasyDCC circuit board, we were able to slow it down so the DCC Specialties short circuit protection equipment could react before the booster recognized the short. Problem solved.

Another change we made was to not supply any track power from the Digitrax Chief. This way, if a significant hard short is encountered in what would have been the Chief’s booster area, the other boosters would still get their commands signals from the command station and the short will only affect a power district within the booster that has taken over the booster responsibility from the Chief. It is so good to have cleared up The Big Short and minimized the effect of minor shorts during operations. And, it’s good to have friends that would take on such a big, tedious problem. 🍕



Figure 1 – Overview of Pat McTeigue's rear aisle

SEPTEMBER MEET DIRECTIONS ...



Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene is located at 3044 Germantown Pike in Fairview Village (Eagleville, PA 19403). From the King of Prussia area follow 422 West to Route 363. Follow PA 363 North to Germantown Pike. Turn Left onto Germantown Pike, and the church will be approximately ¼ mile on your Left. Enter at the 2nd driveway and the meeting will be in the building on your Right as soon as you turn in

QuikTips

...by Dave Messer

Car Weights ... All cars should follow NMRA Recommended Practice for weight to improve operation. Rather than spend money for commercial car weights, use machine screw nuts (¼" x 20, available in bulk packs from Home Depot and Lowes), to allow more flexibility in adding weight. They should be secured in place with ACC or water-based, contact cement.

~ QuikTips by Dave Messer is a regular feature of *The Dispatcher* ~

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. It will be included on a first come, first served, space available basis.

September 14, 2013 New Jersey Division Meet Swedesboro Fire House Swedesboro, NJ	September 28, 2013 Philadelphia Division Meet Fairview Village Church of the Nazarene Fairview Village (Eagleville, PA)	October 10-12, 2013 MER Convention Rockville Crowne Plaza Rockville, MD
November 2, 2013 Philadelphia Division Meet Brandywine Town Center Wilmington, DE	January 11, 2014 Joint Meet – Phila. & NJ Divisions Haddon Township High School Westmont, NJ	March 28-30, 2014 RPM Valley Forge Meet Desmond Great Valley Hotel Malvern, PA

***The Dispatcher* is happy to post model railroad related events. Please submit relevant info to the editor.**

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Inside:

- September Meet Info
- New Board of Directors
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- In Search of... "The Big Short"
- Upcoming Events

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

Bussinger Trains

Old Ambler Station, Ambler
10-12% off retail

J & D Whistle Stop

106 East Broad Street
Quakertown, PA 18951
15% discount on non-sale items

Lin's Junction

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

Nicholas Smith Trains

2343 West Chester Pike (3) in Broomall
10% discount (excludes O & G items)

**VIEW THE DISPATCHER ONLINE! ADDITIONAL ARTICLES, PHOTOS, ANNOUNCEMENTS,
SALE ITEMS AND ORDER FORMS, MER & NMRA REPORTS, AND MORE!**

On Saturday morning, April 20th, 2013, I attended a meet hosted by the Susquehanna Division of the MER at the Freemason Cultural Center at the Masonic Village in Elizabethtown, PA, in Lancaster County. The village is a pastoral setting of old and new buildings situated on gently rolling hills reminiscent of "the village" in the television series, "The Prisoner." At any moment I expected to see a weather balloon bouncing down one of the paths. (Anyone who remembers the program will understand that reference.)

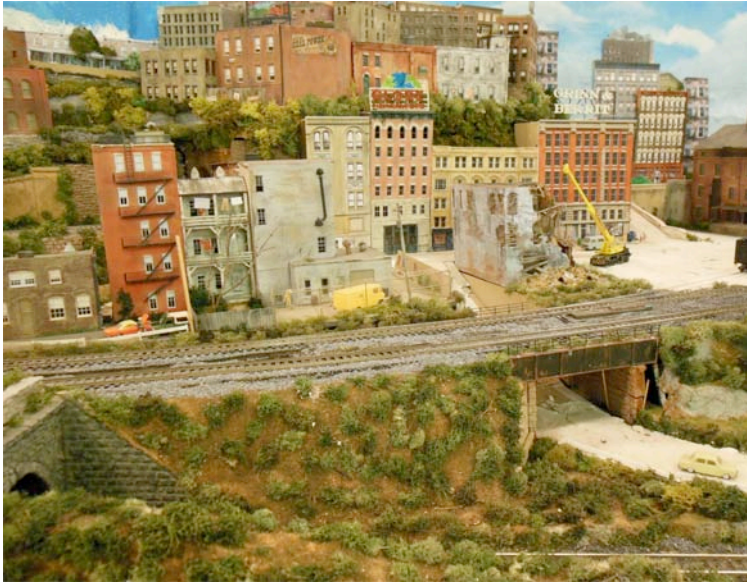


Figure 1 – Columbia Historical Society layout

competition, but rather a way to recognize and be proud of one's own achievements in model railroading--in other words, to pat oneself on the back. Furthermore, one should realize that even the most accomplished modelers stumbled early on, and one should not be embarrassed or ashamed of his work (unless it's really bad).

The second clinic was given by Jody Gontero of the Short Line MRR Club in Ephrata on using the Fast Tracks system for handlaying turnouts. Fast Tracks makes high quality templates machined out of aluminum for every scale and for just about every turnout and crossing pattern you can think of. And if they don't already have the pattern you need, they'll custom make it for you. They are pricey, but a solution many have found is to combine resources to purchase a single template to share. In addition, the company produces jigs for easier and faster production of point and stock rails and frogs, as well as flexible strips of ties, prefabricated in the shape of turnouts for those interested in custom building curved turnouts.

The clinics I did not attend were: 1) An Introduction to DCC, presented by Assistant Superintendent Wayne Betty, and 2) Board Member Ron Parisi describing how he built his award-winning NYC gondola converted to cement service.

The afternoon layouts were all very impressive and I suspect most, if not all, will be included on the November Open House Layout roster, which has now expanded to encompass the Susquehanna Division counties. Photos of all four layouts are included elsewhere in the online version of *The Dispatcher*.

First was the Masonic Village's own nearby club building which included a very extensive and beautifully scenicked O-3-rail layout, as well as N and HO layouts in various stages of construction, and a cute, little Z scale

After several minutes of exchanging the model railroaders' version of the masonic handshake, we got started. The first talk, given by Superintendent Barry Schmitt, was an introduction to the Susquehanna Division using a PowerPoint presentation to illustrate the geographical extent of the division, to list and introduce the officers, board members, and committee chairmen, and to describe the upcoming events. This was followed by four one-hour clinics, two at a time given simultaneously in each of two different rooms.

The first clinic I attended was presented by the Susquehanna Division's AP chairman and former president of the MER and NMRA, Bob Charles. The topic, not surprisingly, was the NMRA's Achievement Program. Bob is an enthusiastic and dynamic speaker and I was particularly interested in his philosophy and approach toward administering the program. The take away message to NMRA members is that the AP program is not a



Figure 2 – Z scale at the Masonic Village

layout tucked right where you'd expect it—inside a suitcase. There was also a small S gauge (American Flyer) layout and a G gauge layout suspended from the ceiling. They really covered all the bases.

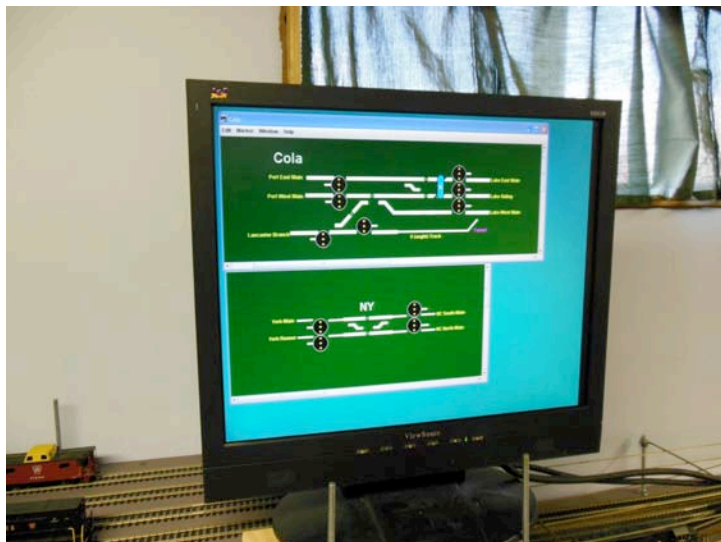


Figure 1 – One of Wayne Betty's JMRI panels

modeled after the town of Columbia itself.

My last stop before heading home was the Short Line Model Railroad Club in Ephrata. This was yet another mostly scenicked, very impressive HO layout located in the basement of a medical office building in the downtown area. This is a club that uses Fast Tracks for its turnouts and crossings, and members were seated at desks in the process of building turnouts so visitors could witness the technique first hand.

All in all It was a thoroughly enjoyable Saturday and I'm glad I made the trek, although without a GPS it was challenging. While the Susquehanna Division clearly has its act together, our own Philadelphia Division really does distinguish itself in one respect: We provide better directions and maps. 📍

Next up was Wayne Betty's Lancaster & Atlantic HO layout in nearby Mount Joy, PA. Wayne (who gave the clinic on DCC) is an electronics and computer expert, so his idea of scenery was several flat screen monitors placed at strategic locations on the layout to serve as JMRI "towers" complete with depicted interlocking signals. Clearly operations is his thing. Wayne is thinking about "real" scenery, but that may be as far as it gets.

I next traveled south to Columbia, PA to view the Columbia Historical Society's HO Model Railroad located on the first floor of a beautiful, old, converted church. This layout was quite large and mostly scenicked with quite overwhelming, urban, downtown and industrial areas (being a city boy I'm partial to that), and one particular section



Figure 2 – Action Shot on the Short Line Model Railroad Club



Figures 3 & 4 – Wayne Betty's layout

Rockville, Maryland MER Meet News

If you haven't booked the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Rockville, Maryland for the C&P Junction Convention on Columbus Day weekend, October 10-13, now's the time! Hotel operators are standing by to give you the special MER room rate. C & P Junction delivers clinics, layouts, call boards, contests, white elephant bargains, a banquet, an auction and more.

In the Washington and Baltimore metropolitan areas, you can also visit many attractions. The Crowne Plaza Hotel (www.cprockville.com) will provide a free shuttle to the D.C. Metro and other points.

CONVENTION WEBSITE

<http://home.comcast.net/~CandP2013/>

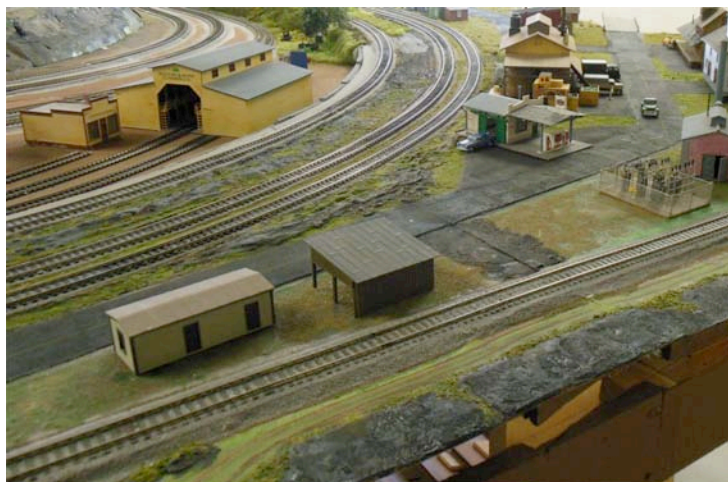
For questions, email CandP2013@comcast.net.
Marshall Abrams, Potomac Division, Co-chairman
Kurt Thompson, Chesapeake Division, Co-chairman

Columbia Historical Society Layout Photos



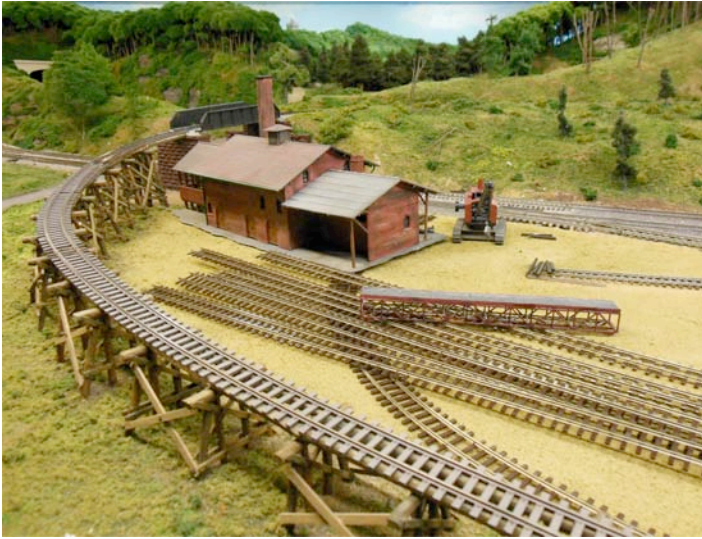
ALL PHOTOS FROM SUSQUEHANNA MEET BY HOWARD KAPLAN

Photos from the Masonic Village Model Railroad Club, Elizabethtown, PA



These photos (along with the others in the online pages) accompany the article submitted by our treasurer, Howard Kaplan, which can be found on page 9 of this issue. *The Dispatcher* encourages submission of coverage, photos and articles from any local member attending a NMRA event. Be advised that membership in the NMRA entitles entry to all NMRA events worldwide.

Photos from the Short Line Model Railroad Club, Ephrata, PA



AROUND THE DIVISION

The Dispatcher is seeking photos of happenings and layouts from throughout the division. Help us feature the ongoing work of our members. We are especially interested in previously unknown layouts under construction. Send your photos to:

earlpaine@verizon.net



ONLY FROM THE PHILLY DIVISION!

Close-up, high-resolution photo of the 2012 division car offering.

The cars are offered with six different numbers exclusive to the Philadelphia Division.

Online sales details (with shipping costs) can be found in *The Dispatcher* and on the division website,

www.phillynmra.org

CAR ORDER FORM ON NEXT PAGE

Photo by Val Pistilli

DIVISION SHIRT ORDER FORM

The shirt is the Port Authority *Silk Touch* polo, a black, cotton/polyester knit with the division logo on the left chest and, if you desire, your first name embroidered on the right chest. Shirts may be ordered at most meets or anytime by mail. Multiple orders for non-identical shirts should be placed on separate forms.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Circle Shirt Size: S M L XL @ \$15 2X @ \$17 3X @ \$19 Quantity: _____

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

Check one: _____ Shipped @ \$5 + \$2 ea add'l _____ Pick up at next/future meet

Total: \$ _____ Make checks payable to: **PHILA DIV NMRA**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mail to: **Philly Division Shirts, P. O. Box 117, Drexel Hill, PA 19026**

Info/Questions: **610-626-4506** hakaplan@rcn.com

PLEASE USE ORDER FORMS IN *THE DISPATCHER* OR ON THE DIVISION WEBSITE

www.phillynmra.org

Philadelphia Division Car Sales Form

Philadelphia Division is extending its discount pricing to all Mid-Eastern Region members. Print this form, fill in the blanks. Remember to enter your NMRA number to get MER member discount.

Pricing Matrix - MER Members (Proof of active membership in the MER required for discount pricing)						
Number of cars:	1	2	3	4	5	6
MER Members only	\$30	\$60	\$87	\$116	\$145	\$168
Shipping First car is \$7.50, plus 'add xx'	\$7.50	add \$3.00	add \$6	add \$9	add \$12	add \$15
Total:	\$37.50	\$70.50	\$100.50	\$132.50	\$164.50	\$190.50

Enter your NMRA membership number here:

NOTE: DISCOUNTED PRICES WILL NOT BE HONORED IF YOU ARE NOT A MER MEMBER. Your payment will be returned.

Pricing Matrix - NON-MER Members						
Number of cars:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Non-MER Members	\$36	\$72	\$105	\$140	\$175	\$200
Shipping First car is \$7.50, plus 'add xx'	\$7.50	add \$3.00	add \$6	add \$9	add \$12	add \$15
Total:	\$43.50	\$82.50	\$118.50	\$156.50	\$194.50	\$222.50

Number of cars: .	Amount Enclosed: .
-------------------	--------------------

Send cars to

Name:

Address:

Address2:

City:	State:	Zip:
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Email:

Payments are accepted via:

1) **MONEY ORDER** with this form, payable to "Phila Div NMRA".

2) or via PayPal. For PayPal, please email us at phillynmra@gmail.com and we'll send you a payment invoice. Make sure to include the number of cars desired and your NMRA membership number if you are requesting the MER member discount. You do not need a PayPal account to send money.

Mail Form to:
Philly Division Cars
P.O. Box 117
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

Sponsored by Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA

March 28 - 30, 2014

at the

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

Clinics

Friday Operating Sessions

Model Displays

Vendor Room

Sunday Home Layout Tour



Information & Updates

www.phillynmra.org

or

Paul Backenstose

103 West Uwchlan Ave.

Downingtown 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



EXCLUSIVE NEW JERSEY DIVISION CAR

Don't be left out!

Your New Jersey Division has teamed with Bowser Manufacturing to bring you this

PRR H-30 covered hopper

These freight cars are similar to the standard Bowser offering, but have subtle “return to...” lettering that makes them uniquely South Jersey even though they were found throughout the Pennsylvania Railroad system and its connections.

The build date is 5-35 so they are appropriate for all eras from steam through the early 70s.

Scheduled to arrive in September, these ready to run cars are being offered at \$25 each, or a set of four different numbers for \$90.

If you have questions, or to reserve yours now, email BobcatCS@comcast.net with “H30” in the subject line or call (856) 696-0463.



eBULLETIN

2013 Election Special

Editors:

[Gerry Leone](#), [Chuck Diljak](#), and [Tracy McKibben](#)

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The NMRA eBulletin is an official bi-monthly production of the National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Publishing Department (Mike Brestel, Manager). Its purpose is to keep every NMRA member informed about organization news and events. If you know of an NMRA member who is not receiving this mailing, please direct them to [here](#) to update their email address. If you no longer wish to receive these mailings, please don't mark them as SPAM. Instead, click the Safe Unsubscribe link at the bottom of this page. ©2013 National Model Railroad Association, Inc., 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421.

Voting Results Announced

May 2, 2013 - Today NMRA Secretary John Stevens announced the results of the voting which took place earlier in the year for three Board positions. The results aren't considered official until the Board of Directors meets this July in Atlanta and accepts the report of the Ballot Committee.

At-Large Worldwide Director

Mike Brestel (446)
Larry Smith (295)
Stan Ames (291)
Leslie Eaton (56)

Atlantic District Director

Kathy Millatt (74)
Alain Kap (17)

Western District Director

Jack Hamilton (263)
Larry Alfred (155)

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)

When completed, sponsor should forward this application to the division clerk:

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

Clerk should mail to:
Bob Price, MER Business Manager
666 Princeton Ave.
Collingswood, NJ 08108
Do not mail directly to NMRA.



eBULLETIN

2013 Convention Extra

Central and Canadian Directors to be Elected in 2014



This year the NMRA will elect Directors from the Central District and Canada. Any member in good standing is eligible to serve in those offices. This is your opportunity to be a part of the leadership team to guide our NMRA future.

You are strongly encouraged to take the leap and enter your name in nomination. Please contact Clark Kooning (ckooning@MSN.com) for more information or to throw your name into the hat.

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Editors:

[Gerry Leone](#), [Chuck Diljak](#), and [Tracy McKibben](#)

::

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Welcome to this NMRA eBulletin Convention Extra!



PEACHTREE EXPRESS
NMRA National Convention
nmra2013.org

Here are some highlights of what happened at the Board of Directors Meeting over the weekend:

- New Director Kathy Millatt, from the British Region, joined the Board as the new Atlantic Director. Former President Mike Brestel joined the Board as the new At-Large World-Wide Director. And Western Director Jack Hamilton was returned for another term.

- Don Phillips has taken over the position of Publications Department Manager, succeeding Mike Brestel, and Bruce De Young is the new Education Department Manager, replacing John

Lowrance.

- Ed and Gay Liesse of the Pacific Northwest Region were recognized with a "Fellow of the NMRA" award for their tireless promotional activities and support for the NMRA.

- The NMRA Gallery Exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum has raised over \$530,000 - enough to begin construction. Bids have been received and a contract for a final design and fabrication will be signed soon. It's estimated that a total of up to \$750,000 will be needed to complete the project. As promised, no member dues money will be used for the project, which relies on contributions. Projected opening date is Fall, 2014.

- The NMRA's long-range plan, named "NMRA 2018," is underway under the leadership of Director Jack Hamilton. This plan will help ensure the future of the NMRA.

- The NMRA's clinic matrix program, called EduTRAIN, is continuing to be developed. Originally started by Jim Six in the Michiana Division, this template will assist Regions and Divisions in presenting clinics and is an exciting new way to look at clinic presentations. Help will be provided in topics and the best way of presenting clinics. These are just suggestions not mandates to assist Regions and Divisions.

- Page Martin, the NMRA's Marketing Director, continues to develop exciting new projects. The latest, "Build a Memory," is designed to be offered by Home Depot stores during their Saturday morning hands-on clinics. "Build A Memory" shows participants how to build 4'x4' layout using products from Home Depot, Walthers, Bachmann, and Woodland Scenics. Joel Priest, MMR, and Cinthia Priest built the demo layout in 7 days, along with a little help from NMRA Magazine editor Stephen Priest, MMR. The demo layout is currently on display at the Atlanta convention. We hope to introduce this program in six large-market Home Depot stores this fall, then expand into many more areas by the end of 2015.

- The Board of Directors awarded the 2017 convention bid to Orlando, Florida. It promises to be a world-class model railroad convention, coupled with deep discounts to Disney attractions - a win/win for the entire family. Prices will be extremely affordable.

- The Peachtree Express convention is currently underway in Atlanta and is already proving to be an amazing event. If you couldn't make it, be sure to register now for the Cleveland convention next year!

A Few Words from the President

DIVISIONS: THE SOUL OF THE NMRA

Normally a "division" is not a good thing; it means you are taking a whole and dividing it into parts, which are inferior to the whole. But the exact inverse occurs within the NMRA. The local chapters, or "divisions," are without question the most important level of the NMRA because this is where 90% of our members interact with the organization.



Part of the benefit of the improved and modernized NMRA regulatory scheme enacted by the members a few years back was the ability of any NMRA member to attend any regional or division meet without charge, or I should say, without being charged any amount different than the local NMRA member. For example, some divisions charge a small fee to pay for the cost of a meeting hall; Visitors would also be expected to contribute. That is what "unified membership" is all about. You are an NMRA member no matter where you are and no matter what NMRA event you attend. In fact, "membership" within a division only becomes an issue when local elections are held.

As part of the Long Range Plan 2018 process under the able guidance of Director Jack Hamilton, you will be hearing a lot more about the importance of divisions and the need for vertical integration. That fancy term simply means that the NMRA is one organization and not one national, 17 regional, and 157 local organizations. Even the United States Internal Revenue Service has recognized this fact with a recent clarification of its non-profit regulatory scheme by stating that divisions of an organization which is already a non-profit may also claim non-profit status with a minimum of paperwork while maintaining complete control over their programs and financing. This is a very exciting, new development, which we are in the process of defining and exploring, and we hope to apply organization wide in the future. This is one of the best ways that National could help local branches of the NMRA operate.

The NMRA is a single organization. We are organized in a way that the essential services and programs we offer are not administered far away in Chattanooga, but at a local level through your division and through the region. This approach also allows us to have the British Region and the Australasian Region offering different kinds of experiences in their respective territories. But they are still a part of the NMRA. You can attend a convention in Sydney or London or Kansas City or Winnipeg. You can become a Master Model Railroader in any of those places. You can enter contests and expect those contests to be judged professionally. You can attend clinics and master the skills needed to become a model railroader. Thus the concept of "vertical integration" and the importance of "division" fit together like a hand in a glove.

[Charlie Getz](#)

Strategic Plan NMRA 2018 Progress Update

Last July the NMRA began the process of reviewing and revising its Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to map out the direction the NMRA will take to support our members and carry out the Association's mission as it moves forward. The first step was to collect input and recommendations from the membership. Armed with responses from over 200 members, a team made up of individuals appointed by the Region Presidents reviewed the input, identified specific desired outcomes, and developed worksheets that described what would be required to achieve that outcome. The worksheets were then consolidated and assembled into a number of specific "Outcome Sheets" which were prioritized by the team. The final package was drafted from that effort and was presented to the Board and Officers for their review and comment on June 1. The revised Strategic Plan, "NMRA 2018," will be considered by the Board for approval in Atlanta.

Your Layout Can Help Us Promote National Model Railroad Month!



Got a good layout? Can you write a good story about it and take a few pictures of it? If so, you could be part of the NMRA Marketing Team's nationwide promotion of this year's National Model Railroad Month.

We announced this call to arms last month and we are pleased to say we had a great response! But we need more submissions! For those of you who have submitted, thank you for your time. The Marketing Department will be getting back to you in late September to make arrangements with you. Our plan is to have stories and photos in various media outlets, print and video, during National Model Railroad Month in November.

We still need some more layouts for consideration. We are looking for at least 10 more modelers to prepare layout articles and photos that can be used in local, regional, and national publications all around the country. These don't have to be museum-quality layouts, just layouts in any scale that their modelers are proud of. What we are looking for are purely your descriptions of your layouts. (i.e. history, back story, scale, challenges, etc.)

The only restriction is that it must be a U.S. layout. (non-U.S. members won't be left out - there's news coming in the near future!) The deadline is soon - so hurry! Please send two photos of your layout and a 200-word write-up on why you feel you're the "face of model railroading" to marketing@hq.nmra.org. Mark the subject line as NMRRM Submission.

Annual Board Meeting Details

The Board of Directors of the NMRA will hold its annual end-of-year meeting at the Renaissance Atlanta Waverly Hotel and Convention Center - the convention's host hotel. The Board will hold a closed-session caucus on Friday evening, July 12. Attendance is by invitation only. The regular Board meeting begins at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 13, and is open to the membership. The name of the meeting room will be posted in the hotel. Among the many items on the agenda is a proposal for term limits for Officers and Directors. If you're interested in how your organization is governed or have opinions that you would like the Board to hear, please plan to attend.

Master Model Railroaders

510: Charles Day, MER

511: Joseph J. Nichols, Jr., SER

512: E.J. Merkel, LSR

513: Joseph Giuseppe Aymar, PCR



Coming in the next issues of *NMRA Magazine*...

Background layout sound
Furniture factory drawings
Peachtree Express highlights
National modeling contest winners

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Chattanooga, TN 37421
Phone: (423) 892-2846
Fax: (423) 899-4869
www.nmra.org

Don't let this happen to you!



Be sure to renew your NMRA membership promptly.