



THE DISPATCH

The Journal of PhillyNMRA

August 2020

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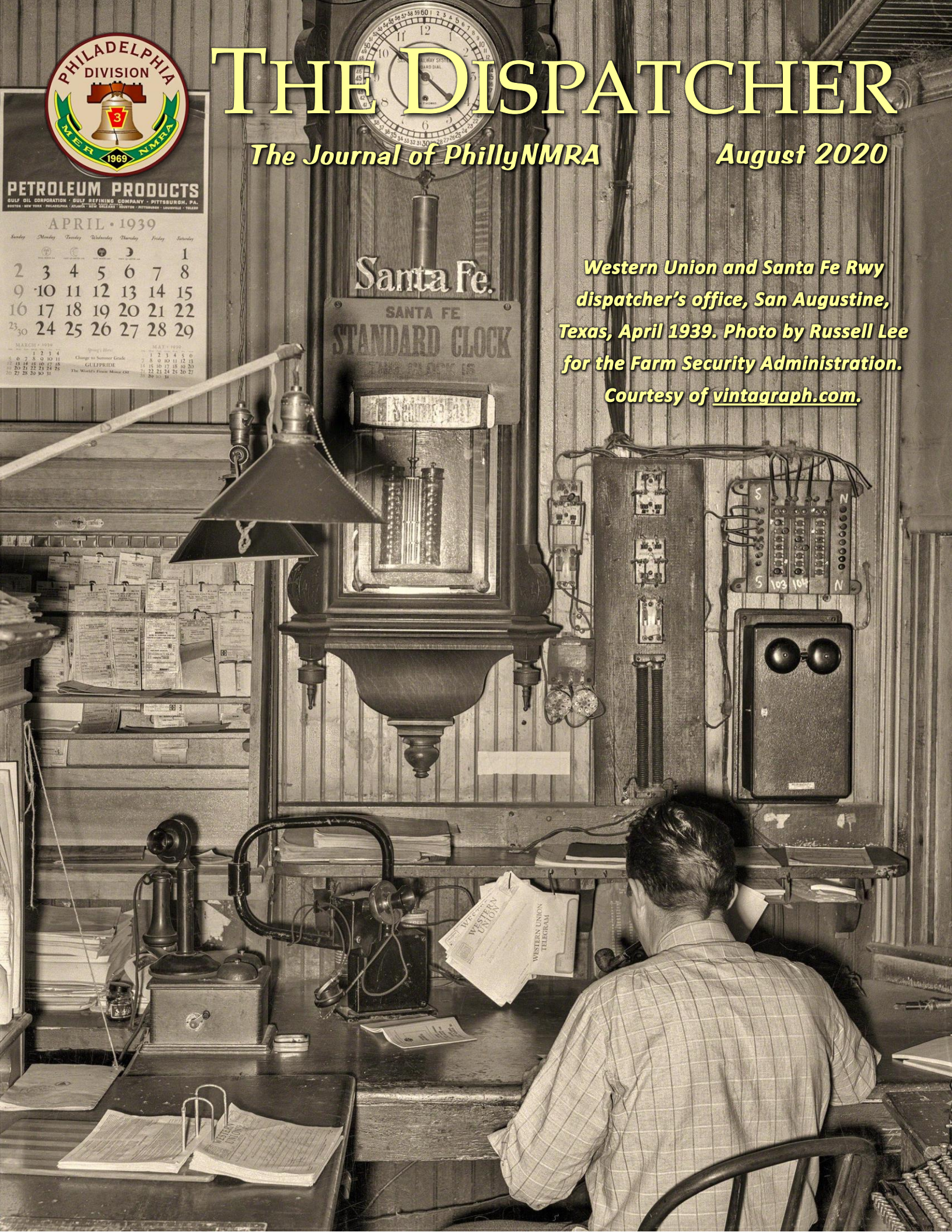
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Santa Fe.

SANTA FE
STANDARD CLOCK

*Western Union and Santa Fe Rwy
dispatcher's office, San Augustine,
Texas, April 1939. Photo by Russell Lee
for the Farm Security Administration.*

Courtesy of vintagraph.com.





THE DISPATCH

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



August 2020

PhillyNMRA.org

Volume 27, No. 4

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THE DISPATCH

Submissions: THE DISPATCH welcomes any model railroad- or rail-road-related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc. The editors reserve the right to, when necessary, paraphrase portions of the text in order to fit the space available.

Next Issue: October 2020. Due out approximately October 7th.
Deadline for submissions: September 21st.

Online Subscription: Free. Make sure the Clerk has your current email address and that you keep your info updated at nmra.org/members.

Print/Mail Subscription (b&w, first 8 pages): \$10.00 per year or \$2.00 per single issue. Send all print subscription applications, renewals, address changes, and payment to the Treasurer. Make checks payable to "Philadelphia Division, NMRA."

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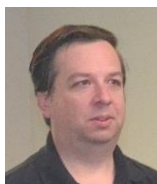
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From the Super...

At the end of June Charles Butsch informed me that unfortunately he needed to step down from his position as superintendent of the division as well as his elected board position. I shared the information with the entire board and based on our election results of June it was decided that we would offer Kevin Feeney the opportunity to finish out Charles's term on the board.

I want to thank Charles for all his hard work that he has put in as superintendent of the division. Being superintendent involves a lot of work behind the scenes to make everything run as smoothly as possible. Charles was instrumental in organizing the volunteers at last year's MER convention.

In early July the board held our reorganization meeting which set all of the officers for the next year ending in June 2021; the results are as follows:

Superintendent: Rob Hinkle
Asst. Superintendent: Joe Walters
Treasurer: Howard Kaplan
Clerk: Mark Wallace

For our upcoming September meet the board has decided to hold the meeting via Zoom again. You will find more details on the connection and what will be offered elsewhere in the newsletter. It was our feeling that with the current gathering restrictions in

place for an indoor meeting, it would not be worth trying to hold an in-person meet at this time.

For November we have not ruled out trying to hold the meet at our usual location in Wilmington, DE, but the ongoing coronavirus will obviously affect our opportunities at that time. Look for further updates on the website and Facebook page, as well as the next issue of *The Dispatcher*.

Thank you goes out to all the division members who answered the questionnaire section of the recent division ballot. We are compiling the results of the questions and will use the information in future division functions as we return to more normal times.

Have you been able to make a lot of progress on your model railroad during this COVID-19 time? If so, we'd love to put some of those photos into *The Dispatcher*. Contact Howard Kaplan for information. Or maybe post them on our division members' Facebook group called "Philly Division NMRA Members." This is specifically set up for division members and some other local friends to post what you've been working on, get inspiration, or have discussions. Keep in mind that it's a private group so you'll need to request to be added by one of the admins.

Stay safe and healthy and we will see you in September.

Rob



From the Editor...

Welcome to our late summer edition of *The Dispatcher*. In this issue we present yet another excellent article, this time directly related to the clinic that was the focus of June's online meet. Director Mike Dettinger provides a more in-depth look at his toothpick log cabins utilizing very clever techniques.

And if you happened to miss that meet, Clerk Mark Wallace will fill you in with all the details in his comprehensive meet recap.

Incidentally, if you happen to be engaged in a project—for example, a model, working on your layout, or any railfanning past or present—might I encourage you to write about it and submit the article to *The Dispatcher*, especially as I am approaching the bottom of my stack of submissions. I can't say exactly *when* it will be published, but I can guarantee that it will. And, of course, AP Author credit accrues upon submission. Hope to see you all on September 19th.

Howard

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September Division Meet to be Held Online

On Saturday, September 19, 2020 the Philadelphia Division will be meeting online using the Zoom conference program as we did with the June meet. Login will begin at 8:30am with the program starting at 9:00am.

If you plan to attend and would like to be able to be seen by others, you would need a webcam. These are typically integrated into most laptops and pads. If you don't have one, they can be purchased online or from any computer, electronics, or office supply retailer. Smart phones have the capability built in. If you just want to attend and don't care about being seen, you will be provided with links to download the application onto your device and to join the meeting online to view the proceedings. Phone numbers will be supplied to call in so that you can receive the audio and participate verbally if you desire (calling in is not required if you have webcam capability). An email will be sent in advance with all the pertinent information and instructions.

The program will consist of two clinics. First up will be **Assistant Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR** presenting on his latest scratchbuilding project, *"The 200-ton Diesel Wreck Crane."*



Derricks, wreck cranes, "the big hook,"—when railroads have a major derailment causing delays, they call for the big machinery. These cranes were expensive, involving labor, locomotives, and train crews. They traveled at low speeds and took up track time.

In the early days of railroading, locomotives and rolling stock were light and easy to rerail with jacks, wrench and blocking, and hand labor. As locomotives and rolling stock started being made out of steel, their weight became an issue. The search was on to find a way to tackle the problem. Enter the wreck crane.

All cranes are the same in basic design and function. The railroad just mounted a crane on a heavy-duty flatcar to transport the crane to the job site. The crane is only one of many pieces of retired equipment that make up the wreck train—a kitchen car, sleeper car, block car, and tool car make up a typical wreck train.

All early cranes were powered by steam; then around the 1940s, diesels were starting to be used as a power source that was far cheaper to operate and maintain. Not having to maintain

a boiler was a big cost savings.

In today's world, most railroads prefer to use outside sources to clean up derailments and rights of way. These contractors move in all of their equipment on flatbed trucks so as not to tie up track time, which the transportation people like.

Joe personally worked the 30th Street wreck train as a car repairman for about five years before becoming a supervisor. He has many good stories and memories of those years—very dangerous, but the overtime was great!

Joe will show and describe how he scratch built a 200-ton diesel wreck crane using styrene and styrene shapes. This is Joe's twelfth scratch-built piece of rolling stock since 2017.

Next on the docket will be **Division Clerk Mark Wallace, AIA** revisiting a clinic he presented at the 2019 MER Convention titled *"The Layout Room or Railroading without Raising the Roof."*

Many of us have been sequestered these past months and perhaps are itching or at least looking to start a new layout or refurbish an existing layout. If you don't already have a model railroad or layout space, or you've been meaning to straighten up that garage or basement disaster once and for all so you can set up a model railroad area, now is the perfect opportunity!

We'll review basic and not so basic aspects of planning where your layout resides. Planning the layout is an extension of your house's "recreational space" and not just a "man cave." This clinic is for everyone from the "lone wolf" to a layout owner who hosts a large group operating on an extensive or intricate layout with a variety of activities.

We'll run a short history of the hobby and why space for a layout is a serious must for modelers. We'll look at various parts of the house as possible locations. Why build modular? We will cover things like calculating aisle widths, discuss room finishes, electrical power, lighting types, humidity, and other safety considerations that all factor in.

As a practicing architect, planner, and fellow railroad modeler (both building and as an operator), I have looked at unused spaces with clients for lots of ideas for possible



NEXT DIVISION MEET: Saturday, November 7, 2020
Brandywine Town Center Community Center, Wilmington, DE
Actual format to be determined. Check at PhillyNMRA.org for details.

recreational or hobby activities. When the idea of model railroading space is mentioned, I always get a “pause” or a “second look!” Like most modern hobby activities, a model railroad deserves its own space, too. Taking it a step further in this 40-minute presentation with questions and answers might kick-start your own building efforts.

The remainder of the morning’s program will consist of a group show and tell where members can discuss what they’ve been working on during the past several months. Please check online at phillynmra.org for any further updates. In addition, an email blast will be sent in advance to members with further details.

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that the Philadelphia Division announces the passing of Mike Rabbitt. A long-time member, Mike was our steel industry aficionado. There are likely few that rivaled him in not only knowledge and expertise in the field, but in the quality of his modeling, especially as it related to or interacted with railroads.


Mike had amassed a vast collection of steel industry documents from which he scratch built a variety of massive, complex, and amazing structures, such as blast furnaces, mills and every associated building you could imagine. Most notable were his resourceful and ingenious scratch-building techniques.

Photos of his original layout and structures can be found on the division website. When Mike moved a few years ago, he dismantled the layout and ended up donating many of the structures to the St. Alban’s club (StARR).

Mike was a personable guy who naturally loved to talk about his passion. If you showed interest, you had a friend for life. “Mr. Steel” will be missed.

Newsletter Articles Needed

The pile of articles for *The Dispatcher* is nearly exhausted and more are now needed. I would encourage members to please sit down and put something together. What to write about? If you are a member of the NMRA, clearly you have a passion for some aspect of railroading or model railroading. Just write down your thoughts. It need not be a dissertation. It doesn’t matter whether you think others will be interested. Trust me, some will. In fact, some will be delighted that finally someone has written about their own passion.

What did you do over the summer? Write it down. Don’t have much to say? Take a bunch of photos. Write some text describing them. Submit it. That’s all there is to it. I’ll polish it up and make it look like a “real” article. And you’ll be famous! And as I’ve mentioned many times, this counts toward Achievement Program credit toward the Author certificate. It doesn’t matter when your article is published. When you submit it, you’ve got the credit. And trust me, it will be published sooner or later. 

Achievement Program Report

by Earl Paine, AP Coordinator



Greetings to all from the Achievement Program. We are up and running and adjusting to the Corona realities that we all face.

The transition of the AP coordinator position from the late Dave Messer, MMR to me has been smooth, and I’d like to thank Dave’s wife, Jo-Ann Messer, for her help transferring Dave’s paperwork and notes to me. Joe Walters, MMR is stepping into the committee chairmanship (my old position) and he will be actively assisting me with judging and advising as we move forward. Thanks in advance, Joe!


There are several AP certificates which will be presented as soon as we can have a face-to-face meet, whenever that might be. Depending on decisions made by the division board, that might be further down the road than expected. If so, we will find a way to award them over social media or a Zoom conference.

NMRA national has been testing different formats for online judging to alleviate the need for a personal visit to

judge the various certificates. The complexity of that “electronic” task varies from certificate to certificate. Some are easily judged remotely (such as Electrical, Volunteer, and Chief Dispatcher), and others require close-up views of models, scenery, track and structures. I can host unlimited Zoom conferences for any AP-related communications or tasks. We will report back to you as things develop on the “remote judging” front.

In the meantime, please continue to submit your applications and supporting paperwork. Joe and I will endeavor to make things happen at our end. Depending on circumstances, we are willing to mask up, and social distance a judging visit, if necessary.

The Corona “stay at home orders,” although burdensome to us all, might allow us more “safe” modeling time to work on AP certificates. We hope that is the case.

Please don’t hesitate to contact either Joe or myself with questions or concerns. Our contact info is on the masthead of all Philly Division newsletters. Stay healthy and keep on modeling. 

We Welcome Our New Philly Division Members

Marc Ferm, Philadelphia, PA
Bob Mitchell, King Of Prussia, PA



2020 has been a weirdly crazy year especially when adapting to a disease where none of us wants to “repeat history,” badly, get sick and... ! Well hobbies were invented to take our minds off of life’s dangers in the wee small hours by building something that looks like a better world; and then a train runs through it!

The Challenge: Although we marked and celebrated our 50th year ending in May of this year that included the MER “Liberty Bell Special” back in October, we had planned by the spring of 2020 to celebrate with just our Philly Division members in the form of a meet and a meal or lunch. We were planning this in earnest when the stay-at-home, house orders were issued back in March. Our usual meeting places closed. The NMRA declared our social activities “non-essential” for insurance and guidance purposes. So like all good model railroaders, we adapt!

The Back Story to the Process: Many of us who were working from our houses or stuck at home started using, doing, or experimenting with Zoom, FaceTime, and other forms of online meetings as a method offering some social interaction while maintaining safe distances. Webinars were already a thing where a host could demonstrate products, programs, or ideas to an audience. How could these technologies be adapted to a group of model railroaders with varying degrees of tech, wifi, computing, and a wide range of experience? Your board successfully met online and started planning a way to hold a meet and make it easy to join in and participate.

Our inspiration for a virtual business meet came from our neighboring division that was among the first to be hit hard by the pandemic and specifically north New Jersey. We were curious and supportive when the Garden State Division cohosted their May Meet with Annual Business Meeting along with the Jersey Division. Some 70+ modelers tuned on Saturday morning, May 16th to watch a snappy business meeting open, conduct business, do an election, and adjourn in about 15 minutes. Then they presented two clinics featuring photos, video, and some snappy Q & A. Ironically the first clinic involved methods of using toilet paper. The other inspirational moment was their “Show & Tell” rebranded, “Model Railroading while Flattening the Curve” that presented nine different examples of what members were building. There was a template we could follow.

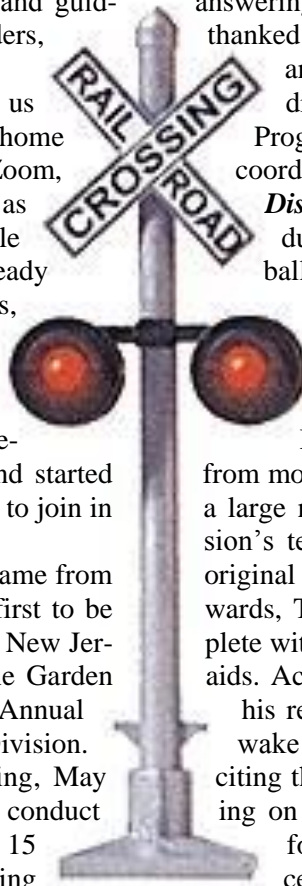
Since our bylaws require an annual election and business meeting, we set aside Saturday, June 6th as our first virtual division annual business meeting. The nominating committee had put forth a slate of five candidates to fill three positions. Ballots were sent out and received. We

organized the usual charts and reports but scaled things back while still communicating what was going on. There was a plus side: no venue, no schlepping stuff, no setup, no coffee to make, and no tear down afterwards. Just log in. And it’s here that we thank Rob Hinkle and Mike Dettinger for figuring out the best way to organize and to host the meet. Instead of a donation to a venue, we “donated” to Zoom since the free time allowance had recently ended.

Superintendent Charles Butsch opened the meet and thanked the nominees for their agreeing to stand for the position of director. I noted with Rob, there were about 27 people viewing, so we were good quorum-wise. And so the three highest recipients of votes, Mike Dettinger, Mark Wallace, and Joe Walters, MMR were declared elected. A special thanks again to Jeff Witt and Kevin Feeney for answering the call of the nominating committee. Charles thanked Bill Fagan as a retiring Director for his time and efforts these last several years as layout coordinator and in serving on the Achievement Program committee. Bill will continue as layout coordinator and will continue his contributions to *The Dispatcher* as “Video Vigilante.” A motion was duly made, seconded, and approved to destroy the ballots.

Clerk Mark Wallace gave his report that included activities, people, ops, and especially the loss of a past Superintendent, Dick Foley, and Achievement Program Manager Dave Messer, MMR. The division’s roster fluctuates from month to month at about 290+ members. There are a large number of life members living within the division’s territory and the NMRA continues to honor its original membership promises to all of them. Afterwards, Treasurer Howard Kaplan gave his report complete with balance sheet, profit and loss, and other visual aids. Achievement Program Chair Earl Paine presented his report on the AP’s activities and situation in the wake of Dave Messer’s passing. There are some exciting things in the pipeline with many members working on various certificates. Along with Earl, we look forward to a time when we can meet and pass out certificates to each of the recipients. After some questions and answers, the floor was opened for further discussion. After a few short comments, the annual business meeting portion adjourned at about 9:20am. Not bad!

Our only clinic was Mike Dettinger’s building small cabins. Mike models in N scale so he works in the world of, how do we say, tiny! Mike demonstrated methods of using bamboo skewers, toothpicks, and glue to build or construct walls. He uses old business cards to construct the roofs and floors. The structures are painted, stained, and weathered a number of different ways to obtain a variety of different looks. Mike has experimented with a



variety of methods and shared with us what works best for him. The cabins are reminiscent of Dick Proenneke's "Alone in the Wilderness" series as seen on PBS or on video. See page 5 for Mike's article based on this clinic.

We held a brief chat period with some questions and answers, the meet ending about 10:15am. Short, but no fellowship, no layouts to visit, no luncheon get-togethers, and no time to network afterwards. This was different. However there was no drive time, no getting up early, no dress code (it's a Zoom thing), and most of us ended up with late morning time for other things.

Basically the "sharing" of our hobby experiences are for now, "different." But the experiences do not stop evolving and throughout the NMRA and Philly Division we will continue to look for ways to enhance this sharing of our model railroading hobby until one day when it's safe to socially meet again. And speaking of future meets,

while the anticipated testing and contact tracing have not materialized that would foster public confidence to meet and visit once more, your Philly Division will continue remote meeting for the time being. As other institutions such as sporting, entertainment, and scholastic activities become safe to engage in, model railroading, too, will someday become a safer activity for many of us to participate.

So next month we are planning to meet once more on September 19, 2020 on a Zoom program that can be conveniently viewed at home. We will feature two clinics, one given by Joe Walters, MMR, and one myself, along with show and tell by individuals who are willing to share their time with us. So please don't forget our next meet and to quote an old song, "See you in September!" Stay safe, everyone!



Division Organization

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (elected)

OFFICERS

Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2021)

Assistant Superintendent – Joe Walters, MMR (2022)

Clerk – Mark Wallace (2022)

Treasurer – Howard Kaplan (2021)

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2022)

Chip Stevens – Publicity (2021)

Kevin Feeney – Item Donations/Door Prizes (2021)



PhillyNMRA

AUXILLIARY OFFICIALS (appointed)

AP Coordinator – Earl Paine

AP Committee Chair – Joe Walters, MMR

Newsletter Editor/Webmaster – Howard Kaplan

COMMITTEES/DUTIES

EVENTS

Clinics – Mike Dettinger*

Layouts – Bill Fagan*

Venues – Howard Kaplan, Earl Hackett

Refreshments – Bill Fagan

Door Prizes – Mike Dettinger

Clinic Video – Chip Stevens

Audio – Howard Kaplan

Signs/Printed Materials – Howard Kaplan

Certificates/Awards – Howard Kaplan

Publicity – Chip Stevens*

MEMBERSHIP

Member Outreach – Rob Hinkle

Membership Records – Mark Wallace

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Earl Paine, Joe Walters MMR*, Bill Fagan

OPS – Rob Hinkle*

ITEM DONATIONS – Kevin Feeney

MEDIA

Social Media – Rob Hinkle

Webmaster – Howard Kaplan

Newsletter – Howard Kaplan*, Earl Paine, Bill Fagan, Joe Walters MMR, Kevin Feeney, Chip Stevens

Layout Video – Bill Fagan

Photography – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Bill Fagan, Rob Ischinger, Mark Wallace

DIVISION APPAREL – Howard Kaplan

* Chairman

The COVID Cabin

A Dollar Model Project in N or O Scale

by Michael B. Dettinger

Introduction, Inspiration and Application

My wife said that I looked like Grizzly Adams. I looked at my brown CockerPoo with her short snout; she was looking like a little bear cub. In my COVID isolation, I sometimes feel like I am alone in the wilderness. Then the dog yips at a random squirrel or bird in the yard and the whole mountain man illusion is broken. However, a seed was planted.

Log cabins were the structure of choice in the American wilderness. The wood did not require extensive preparation for usage and the cabin could be assembled relatively quickly. In Downingtown, PA, a local park features a very old log cabin. Built in 1701 when Downingtown was the western frontier, the structure has survived over 300 years.

While log cabins are not a uniquely American construction, they have become the iconic structures of the American wilderness. Politicians in the 1800s used the log cabin to reinforce their ties to the American people. Lincoln was not the first American President to be born in a log cabin nor was he the first President associated with log cabins. Still, Lincoln has an almost mythical connection to the log cabin.

As the dog stops barking, I start slipping back into my mountain man illusion. I remember watching a guy build a log cabin in Alaska. It was popular fare on PBS in the 1970s. It was grainy 8mm footage of a cabin under construction and this guy did everything himself. Richard Proenneke was building his log cabin about the same time that men were walking on the moon. Proenneke built just about every fitting and fixture of his cabin himself. He even made his own door hinges out of tin cans.

When I was young, building my own cabin seemed a very cool thing to do. My urge to build a log cabin is



strong, however, now that I am a little older, I will settle for building a model. There are several excellent laser-cut log cabin kits on the market, but for this project a kit did not feel quite right.

Richard Proenneke did not have a kit delivered to his site in Alaska—he built a log cabin by using or repurposing the materials on hand. It was almost like he was issuing a challenge: build a model cabin using or repurposing materials that I already had.

My project uses round toothpicks, old business cards and a little piece of 1/8" square strip wood for bracing and the chimney. Before the days of social distancing, toothpicks and business cards could essentially be acquired for free by going about a daily routine. The strip wood is about 20 cents per foot, so we are well under the \$1 mark. So the price of the project is right.

The longevity of the log cabin as a rustic castle transcends the passage of time. A hunting cabin could break up the monotony of a large section of trees. In a park or recreational area, a log cabin could be a cherished artifact. There are many campgrounds that feature some cabins for those who would like the wilderness experience but not ready to spend time in a tent. And finally log homes that are still being constructed today.

Bill of Materials

- 40 round toothpicks
- 3 old business cards
- 2 bamboo skewers (O-scale model only)
- 1/8" square basswood
- N-scale brick paper (N-scale model only)
- Masking tape (shingled roof)
- Ground foam (sod/moss roof)
- A selection of paints and stains.
- Tacky or wood glue ("Fast Grab Tacky Glue" is recommended)

Tool List

- Hobby knife and cutting mat
- Metal ruler
- Pencil
- Square
- Round needle file (roughly the same diameter of a toothpick)
- Flat file
- Black Sharpie
- Scissors

Cabin Options

The log cabin build follows the same general instructions for all five options. It is important to pick your option before beginning. Option specific steps are called out along the way.

N Scale

Shingled Roof or Sod Roof



The roof profile is the first decision that needs to be made. A shingled roof is taller than the sod roof. As such, it affects the layout of the cabin core on the business card. The sod roof is more rustic and can be finished quicker, however a shingled roof gives a more modern and civilized appearance.

Internal Chimney or External Chimney



The rule of thumb is that external chimneys are more popular in the south, however it is not a hard fast rule. Internal fireplaces take up valuable living space from your cabin floorplan, however an internal chimney is simpler to model. An external chimney, however is iconic.

O Scale



This option is not a log cabin, per se, as it is an elevated food cache. Leaving food inside a wilderness cabin is an invitation that most wild-life will not pass up. Food needs to be stored in a location that is difficult for wildlife to reach. This food cache is based on the food cache used by Richard Proenneke. The O-scale food cache has the same general dimensions of the N-scale log cabins with only the addition of bamboo skewers for legs to elevate the food safely above the reach of wild animals. The Proenneke cache was 9 feet off the ground and required a ladder to reach.

Build Steps

For this project, the toothpicks can be either round, square with round tip, or fancy/elegant versions. The rounds are dowel-like when prepped. The square toothpicks provide more surface area for gluing to the inner cardboard core. The front-facing corners can be rounded by gently running a hobby knife along the edge to soften the edge. Fancy toothpick toppers can be saved and used as railing spindles in a different project. Flat toothpick varieties will be of very limited use in this project.

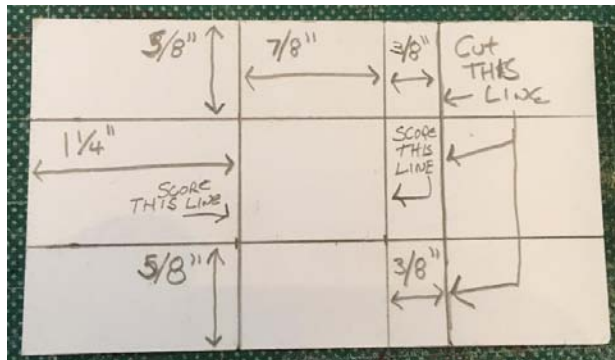


1. Prepare the toothpicks.

Cut 16 toothpicks to 1-1/4" lengths and cut 16 more toothpicks to 1-5/8" length. These operations will require two cuts. The first cut is to eliminate the

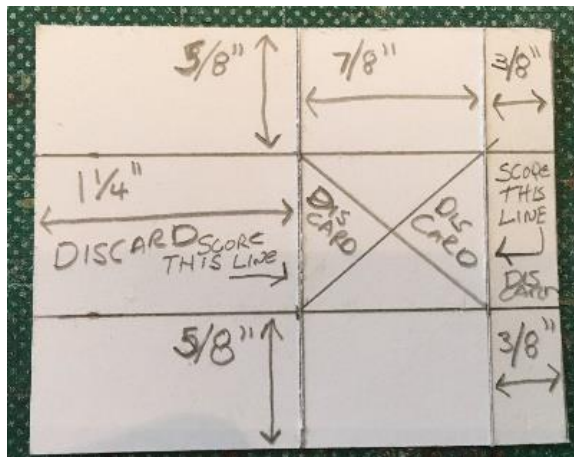
tapered end. The second cut should preserve as much of the untapered section of the toothpick as possible. The goal is to have stock that is very similar to a dowel.

2. Lay out the inner cardboard core of the log cabin model.



Lay the business card on the cutting mat in landscape format with blank side facing up. Using the square, draw a line 1-1/4" from the edge. Draw a second line 7/8" further to the right and draw a third vertical line 3/8" further to the right. Everything to the right of the third line will be discarded. Using the square, draw a line across the length of the card 5/8" from the top of the card. Draw a second line 5/8" from the bottom of the card. Proceed to step a below if you are building a shingled roof or to step b if you prefer a sod roof.

a. N-Scale Shingle Roof



Use a ruler to draw two lines that connect the four corners of the center box on the business card. This will create a steeper roof line for the inner core.

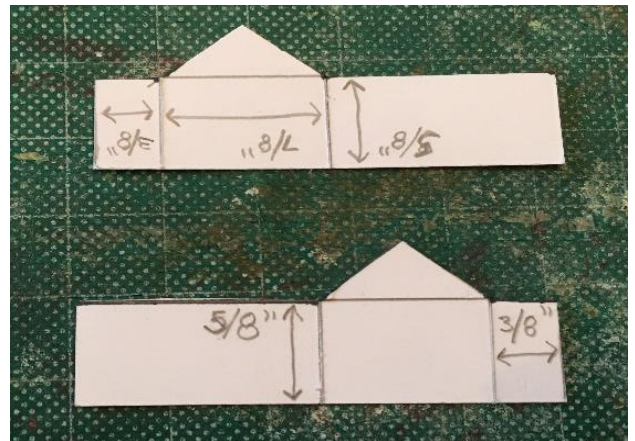
b. N-Scale Sod Roof and O-Scale Extra Line

Using the square, draw a line lengthwise half the distance between the top and bottom. This will create two center boxes on the business card. For each of the two boxes, use a ruler to draw a line connecting the four corners. When completed you will have two boxes containing an "X" vertically. This will create a lower roof

line for the sod roof.

3. Cut out the inner cardboard core and assemble the two parts.

Simply cut on the two dark lines. This will yield two parts similar to the ones below.



4. Draw and cut out floor.

The floor is a simple 1-3/8" x 7/8" rectangle cut out of an old business card.

5. Using the 1/8" stripwood, brace and square up the walls and floors.

Note that the floor will extend past the longer walls. This is to provide additional surface area for gluing in the first two logs in place.

6. Install the first log course.

- a. Start the first log course by gluing two of the 1-5/8" cut toothpicks to the bottom of the longer sides of the inner cardboard core.
- b. File two round grooves halfway through each of the attached longer toothpicks. This is called "saddle notching" and it differs from the traditional "Lincoln Log" style of log notching. Saddle notching was pre-ferred by Swedish and English Quaker builders. In N scale, however, the difference in the two techniques is difficult to detect.
- c. Fit two of the shorter 1-1/4" toothpicks into the groove. Additional filing may be required. When the fit is satisfactory, glue the toothpick into the grooves and against the short wall of the card inner core.



- d. File two round grooves halfway through each of the mounted short toothpicks.



7. Continue the filing, fitting, and gluing process outlined in steps 6a through d to add additional log courses. The model should have seven full log courses when completed, however based on your selected options, you will need to pause and perform some option specific actions:
 - a. O-Scale Lower End Log: After 2 and half courses are in place, prepare two short logs by filing the end saddle cuts. Do not glue them in place; set them aside for installation later. Continue building log courses.
 - b. N-Scale Door: After six courses are in place, determine the location of the door and file a 1/4" wide groove for the door. Continue building log courses.



- c. O-Scale Hatch: After six courses are in place, file a 5/8" wide groove for the hatch on the end wall. Continue building log courses.
 - d. N-Scale External chimney: After seven courses are in place, determine the chimney location on the end wall and file a 1/4" wide groove for the chimney.
8. Cut the whole toothpicks for building up the remaining area on the end walls of the cardboard

core. Note that the toothpicks should extend past the inner card core. They will be filed to shape in the next step.

9. Using the flat file shape the roof line.
10. Cut and prepare the roof out of an old business card. Fit the roof to the cabin. Additional filing may be required to get a good fit.
11. O Scale: glue the two short logs you prepared in step 7a to the bottom of the short wall on the cache.
12. O Scale: Cut the bamboo skewers 5/8" longer than desired. Create a hole in all four corners of the cache floor and insert the skewers in place. When satisfied, glue the skewers in place.
13. Paint the log cabin with a brown base color.
14. Build the chimney.

Only the N-scale projects use a chimney. Based on your selection, 14a is the step for an external chimney. Step 14b is for building an internal chimney. The O-scale project does not require a chimney. O scalers can skip ahead to step 16.

a. The external chimney

Cut a single 5/8" piece of 1/8" square strip-wood. Paint this piece brick red or wrap it in a piece of N-scale brick paper.

b. Internal chimney

The internal chimney is constructed from 1/8" square strip wood. The first piece is 5/8" and the second is 1-1/4". Place the two pieces side by side and glue. This structure can be painted brick red or stone gray based on your preference. The internal chimney can also be laminated with N- scale stone or brick texture paper.

15. Installing the Chimney

Step 15a is for the installation of an external chimney. Step 15b is for the installation of an internal chimney.

- a. N-Scale External Chimney: File a 1/8" groove above the 1/4" groove carved for the chimney in step 7d. Fit the chimney and when satisfied glue the chimney in place. You will need to notch the roof to accommodate the chimney. Make sure that the notch in the roof fits snugly around the chimney.
- b. N-Scale Internal Chimney: Glue the chimney to the inside wall in the desired location. Cut a hole in the roof for the chimney. Make sure that the hole in the roof fits snugly around the chimney.

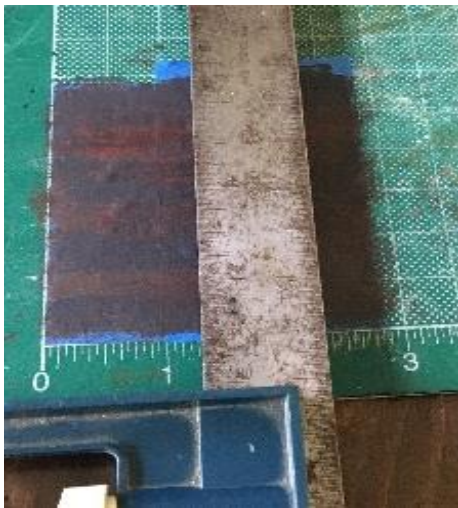
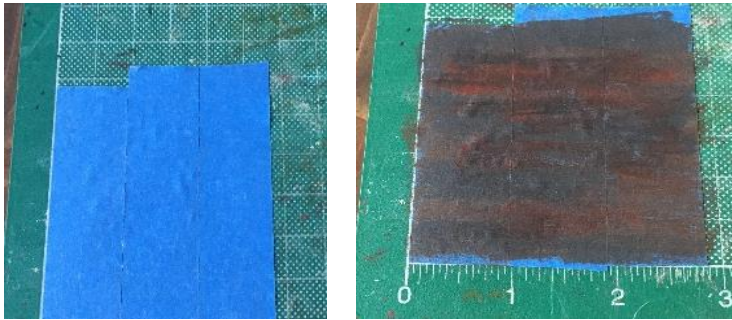
16. Roof

Step 16a is for the installation of a shingled roof. Step 16b is for the installation of a sod roof. Note the O-scale project uses a sod roof.

a. N-Scale Shingle Roof

- i. Draw guidelines on the roof every 1/16" using a square and a pencil.

- ii. Place a length of masking tape on your cutting mat.
- iii. Paint the tape with three or four colors for shingles.
- iv. Using a straight edge, cut the masking tape into 1/8" strips.



- v. Using the guidelines on the roof, apply the masking tape like a row of shingles.

b. Sod Roof



17. Doors, Shutters, or Hatches

To keep the build as simple as possible, I did not introduce any openings into the log courses for windows or hatches. In the world of rustic log cabins, there are only simple window openings which are closed with a simple wood shutter. It is

possible for a modeler who would like to add windows to do so, however this project assumed that the cabin would be built in a rustic fashion with closed windows. The doors, shutters, and hatch are built from a business card. For the N-scale project, steps 17a and 17b are required for doors and shutters. For the O-scale project, jump to step 17c and build the hatch.

a. N-Scale Doors



- i. Cut a 1/4" x 1/2" rectangle from the business card.
- ii. Cut a 1/16" wide strip of masking tape.
- iii. Attach the masking tape on the door for bracing.
- iv. Paint the door.
- v. Attach the door in its slot that was filed above.

b. N-Scale Window Shutters

- i. Cut 1/4" squares from the business card.
- ii. Paint the shutters.
- iii. Glue the shutters in place wherever you would like a window.

c. O-Scale Build Hatch



- i. Cut a 1/2" x 5/8" rectangle from the card.
- ii. Cut a 3/8" x 1/2" rectangle from the card and

cut all four corners. This is the hatch.

- iii. Cut three 3/16" x 3/8" rectangles from the business card. These are the hinges and latches.
- iv. Center the hatch on the larger rectangle and glue it in place.
- v. Glue the two hinges to one side of the hatch and glue the latch on the other side.
- vi. Paint with grays and silvers.

18. Weather the cabin. Dry brushing with a light color will make the logs pop. Plant the cabin and enjoy your work.

Finishing Ideas

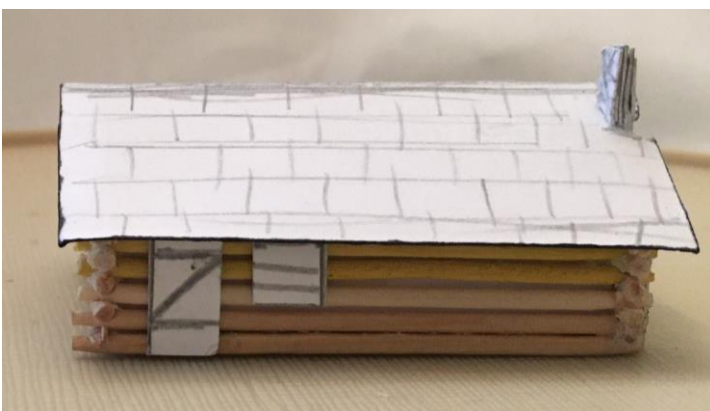
Traditional log cabins are some shade of brown. Light brown for new construction and darker brown for an older cabin. Doors and windows can be a natural wood color or painted in a complementary color. Log cabins can also be whitewashed to preserve the wood and deter insects. This

recipe for creating whitewash came from the Downingtown, PA Log House website:

To 1.8 quarts of water, add ½ pound of salt and 2½ pounds of hydrated lime with constant stirring. Let the mixture stand overnight. Before using, add 1 ounce of alum and 6 tablespoons of molasses. Add sufficient water to make 1 gallon.

The space between logs is filled with material called chinking. In my mind, N scale is small enough to omit the application of chinking. In a larger scale, or if you would like to try something a little different, chinking can be simulated with spackling or joint compound. Apply the spackling with a small putty knife and use a damp rag to remove the excess.

The logs should be painted a couple of shades darker than desired if chinking or whitewashing are desired. Both techniques will lighten the base color of the logs by their application.





Additional Research

Richard Proenneke and His Cabin

<https://www.nps.gov/lac/learn/historyculture/proennekes-cabin.htm>

Downingtown Log House

<https://www.downingtown.org/historic-commission/pages/history-log-house>

Model Railroader

June 1964, "Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree...", pp. 64-66, A Dollar Model Project by E. L. Moore

October 1980, "Log Cabin Depot," pp. 102-105 by Ron Williams

About the Author

Mike Dettinger is not your run-of-the-mill model railroader. He has a passion for oddities, DCC, animation, and overall outside-the-box modeling. He put on a popular T-TRAK clinic at last year's MER convention, and frequently gives clinics and writes articles for the Division. He currently serves on the Board of Directors as Clinics Chair.





THE DISPATCHER recently visited the northern Delaware area and captured photos of John Trout's wonderful model railroad. John has built many structures representing prototype buildings on his layout. John's backdrops and overall scenery are outstanding! Look for more from John in future issues.



Duttons Machine Shop, located in Bradford, PA



Bradford, PA passenger station; blank area in front of station will have houses later.



McCafferty's Logging Camp, located in Bradford, PA





Cresson Bridge, located in Cresson, PA



Bradford, PA engine house



Ossman Hardware, located in Bradford, PA



McCafferty's Logging Camp, located in Bradford, PA





Town of Muir, PA, looking west ↑ and east ↓





Joe continues to super-detail every area of his layout!



↓↑ Engine servicing facilities at West Yard ↗



Hanging clothes on a sunny day



Liberty Bakery, located in Red Lion, PA



Car inspector's building at Otter Yard outside of Pittsburgh, PA



Still on the air...

In this issue we will be discussing a multi-purpose valve. This is an important part of the air brake system. The name of the valve is the “dirt collector/cut-out cock.”

We will discuss the dirt collector side first (see Figure 1). Just before the pipe bracket, we find the dirt collector which is integrated within the cut-out cock. All air must go through this trap that collects gravel, small stones, dirt, and moisture. How can dirt get in the air system? The answer is simple. Any time the air hoses are disconnected, wind blows foreign material into them. Any time the cars move across the grade crossing, the uncoupled hose will pick up small stones and debris.

Inside the dirt collector, there is something known as a “high hat” that spins at a high rate of speed. This knocks down dirt and foreign substances into the cup. This action keeps foreign material out of the pipe bracket (Figure 2).

The second function of the valve is the cut-out cock. Long ago when air brakes were new, if a car developed air brake problems en route, there would be a great delay while awaiting mechanical forces to fix the problem. In modern times, each piece of equipment now has a cut out-cock. If a problem arises en route now, a train crew member cuts out the car and they continue to their destination. When the train crew reaches its destination, mechanical department employees are notified of the air brake problem. They will then either fix the problem or send the car to a shop for repairs.

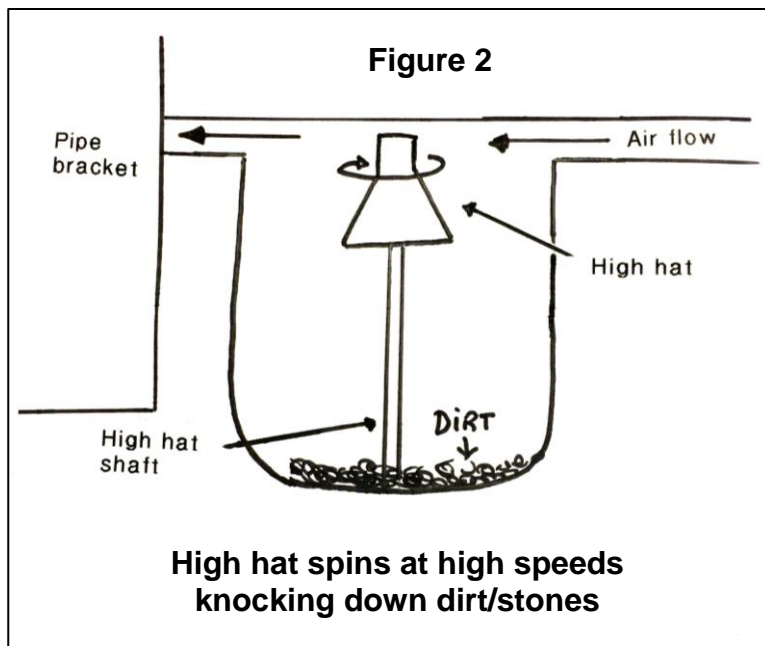


Figure 1

Dirt Collector/Cut-out Cock

WABTECH CORP.

In Figure 3 (next page) we see a picture of the cock in the open position.

Figure 4 (next page) shows the cut-out cock in the closed position. This car has no brakes and needs mechanical attention.

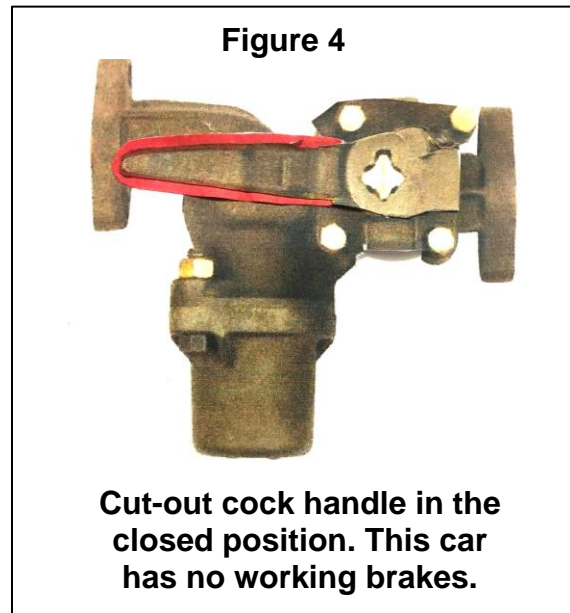
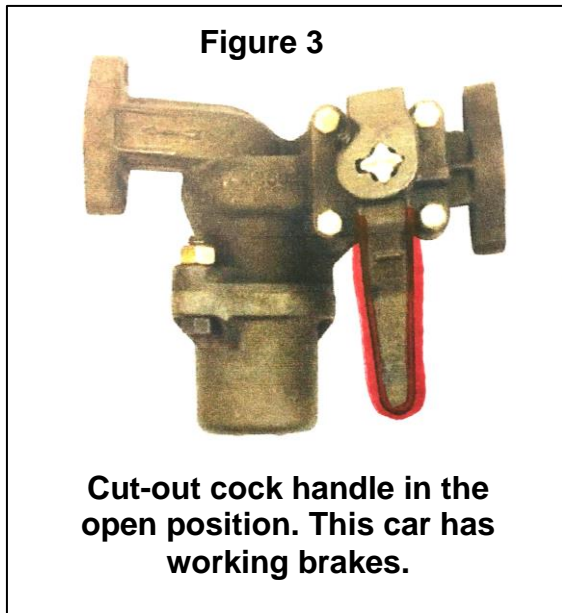
I hope this helps you to understand that there is more to the air brake system than meets the eye.

Well, my cup is low, so it's time to go. Join me again next issue when we explore more about the mechanics of rolling stock. See you then.

Joe

DRAWING BY JOE WALTERS, MMR

CONTINUED



Note that the cut-out cock handle is outlined in red. This is only for illustration purposes. On an actual car the handle is not red.

Also note that the cock positions are opposite from what one would typically see in plumbing, pneumatic, or hydraulics applications.

Hobby Shops

Be sure to patronize the following hobby shops that are now offering discounts on model railroading purchases to NMRA members:

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nicholassmithtrains.com
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 Lansdale, PA 19446
 215-362-2442
henningstrains.com
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And are you taking advantage of our other big benefits? Like 150+ national convention clinic videos. Or over 15 hours of "how-to" videos produced by the biggest names in model railroading videos. Or our directory of model railroad layouts all over the world that you can visit. The list goes on and on.

If you haven't visited www.nmra.org lately, you're missing out on some really great stuff. Starting with a boatload of discounts!

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THE NEW NMRA MODEL RAILROAD DIRECTORY
 IS NOW **ONLINE** and **READY to USE!**

Now whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more. And it's only available to NMRA members.

Visit www.nmra.org, log in as a member, and click on "Model RR Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout (as long as it's an operating home or garden railroad). Join in the fun!

 **We make it more fun!**

RETRO TYCO: A TYCO Trains Preservation Project

by Robert Putnick

Hello, fellow Philly NMRA members! It is an honor for me to write this article, describing my latest layout project. First, a little introduction; my name is Robert Putnick and I'm a teenager who is an obsessed model railroader, specializing in HO scale and N scale and all DC-power trains. Two of my layouts are located under the "Layouts" section of our division's website: the Ephrata Valley Railroad (N) and the Horse-shoe Curve Branch Line (HO).

Now, to the point: My latest layout is entitled "RETRO TYCO" and serves as a preservation project of anything and everything TYCO. Started about 7 months ago [this article was submitted on 12/1/2018], RETRO TYCO is constructed on a 4' x 5' sheet of plywood, and features one main line with one connecting siding and three "dead-end" sidings. Also, a simple, oval-shaped slot-car racetrack is elevated above the layout by 9-inch pieces of wood. There's a primitive locomotive yard located near the front of the layout, along with rolling stock display in the center, and additional storage beneath the layout. Indeed, RETRO TYCO looks like a vintage, basic toy



train set-up, which is precisely the effect I intended. All railroad track is vintage brass rail (down to the individual track connectors) and is made by a variety of manufacturers—Bachmann, Atlas, and TYCO being the main three—while the slot track is Aurora. It's because of this that I wish to specify that RETRO TYCO is 99% TYCO - for literally everything but the railroad and slot track, was made by TYCO.

Though small, RETRO TYCO boasts some of TYCO's famed accessories, the majority of which from the "Brown Box Era" of the 1970-80s, including: Steam Whistle in Billboard, Ore Dump Car, Clementine Gold Mine, Piggyback Loader & Unloader, Giant Operating Crane, Pipe Loader, and more! The layout also features two different authentic TYCO Tunnels, both of which were made at the end of the "Red Box Era" in 1969 and are rather hard to find now; in fact, I originally had no clue that TYCO even produced a tunnel (see photos on next page).





As far as locomotive power, all trains which operate on RETRO TYCO are of course TYCO and all feature original PowerTorque trucks—just some Liberty Oil for lubrication and traction tires, and these locos run very well. My collection features some of TYCO's most popular locomotives, such as the Rock

Island RF-16A "Shark," the flashy Chattanooga GP20, "Spirit of '76" ALCO C430, "Comin' 'Round the Mountain" SD24, the "Chattanooga Choo Choo," and "Silver Streak" ALCO C430, to name a few (see photos below).



Rolling Stock is entirely from the "Brown Box Era" and so far, although it would be great to preserve every TYCO train car, to date I've been focusing on the most popular and the scarcest. Some of the most popular include: Red Santa Fe wreck crane & maintenance car, Purina reefer, Heinz "Pickle" reefer, Dairymen's League reefer, Durango stock car, Wesson Vegetable Oil tanker, Jell-O 50' boxcar, Sara Lee 62' express reefer, and Popsicle 62' express reefer. I have also been fortunate to obtain some scarcer TYCO train cars, such as: Pepsi 62' box car, Del Monte 62' box car, Westinghouse Appliances 50' box car, Chef Boyardee 50' box car, Oscar Meyer reefer, Bekins piggyback trailers and car, and United States Steel flat car with magnetic orange girders (see photos below).



With regard to slot cars, I have a small collection of TYCO US1 vehicles, such as dump trucks, tractor trailers, and the Mack ladder fire engine, as well as a few general TYCO slot cars.

Furthermore, the left-rear corner of the layout is especially dedicated to TYCO's entry into producing movie/TV show train sets by preserving relics of an A-Team train set I found. The scene is not complete yet, but as you can see, the "blue" troops, tanks, and jeeps are in place for a shoot out, while a member of the A-Team will be parachuting in as part of the display. I'm lacking the original TYCO A-Team helicopter and van, but gladly have the entire train from the set.

Lastly, the license plates hanging on the front of

the layout were made on BuildASign.com, and are high-quality renderings of two designs which I personally created in Google Slides, while the third is an image of a real TYCO slogan.



RETRO TYCO is still an ongoing project. Since the time of this writing both this layout and the Horseshoe Curve Branch Line were dismantled. I actually re-used the Horseshoe Curve Branch Line benchwork to create a 5' x 8' "RETRO TYCO 2" which has been an epic project and is still a work in progress. I do anticipate adding more to it and to my TYCO collection over time.





Bill Fagan: *The Video Vigilante*



Photos by Bill Fagan

Below are some videos of layouts that I've recently visited. I've videoed layouts in California, Idaho, Maryland, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. 173 layouts with 741 videos and 2290 followers on YouTube with 1.213 million views.

Steve Mallery: PRR Buffalo Line →

A retired prototype dispatcher for Norfolk Southern working the same geographical area that he models, runs his mid-1960's era PRR Buffalo Line from South Williamsport, PA, to GJ interlocking outside of Buffalo, NY as a point-to-point model railroad with three staging yards representing Enola, PA, Buffalo, NY, and Erie, PA.

The principal classification yard at Renovo is supplemented by four small local yards. Half of the 250 feet of HO scale single-track mainline with passing sidings is on two levels. This allows plenty of space on the center peninsula single-level half for the main physical model railroad feature, the heavy helper grade necessitating helper assistance for both uphill shoves and downhill braking.

Depending on traffic, two helper crews are often required. The model railroad is located in a 28' x 34' room.

<https://youtu.be/IWZwzKjfU>



Larry Reynolds: Pennsylvania RR →

HO layout representing the Altoona district from Enola Yard to Tunnel Hill going through Horseshoe curve. Railroad is 27' x 43' point to point; 310' 4-track main line. Digitrax DCC. With 262 engines, 800+ freight cars and 120 passenger cars.

<https://youtu.be/5bzKVZ7iy-I>





← **Ed Sproles: New England & Western RR**
 A freelanced 60's to early 70's timeframe.
 Layout is 34' x 30', HO Scale, NCE DCC with
 operating signals. Most track is hand laid. Lay-
 out is a twice around double-track mainline with
 two secondary lines paralleling parts of the
 route. Op sessions usually take about 2 hours
 with six operators.
<https://youtu.be/UFuZS7fB7qc>

Shannondell MRRC →
 Group model railroad club in a
 retirement community. HO Scale. Very nice.
<https://youtu.be/VgETm5MzQRM>



← **Norma Toll: Colorado Railroad**
 HO Scale. A work in progress. Represents
 the Colorado area including Deer Mountain.
 Structures are fantastic with many details.
 All work was done by Norma.
<https://youtu.be/gtJf1G3Ptgg>

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

Enjoy,

Bill



ON THE (RAIL) ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL

TIMONIUM

This two-day show is held four times a year at the Maryland State Fairgrounds. I used to go several times a year, but lately am down to once a year. I attended the show on Saturday February 1st, which used to be the biggest. However, the show has shrunk over the years as eBay and online selling have taken their toll. On the plus side, there are more modules layout now than before.

Total attendance for the weekend was over 4,000. At its peak, this show would draw over 7,000. It did not seem very crowded when I was there. The promoter's post show report said that some vendors did better on Sunday (Super Bowl Sunday), which is usually much slower. The report mentioned that while there were seven fewer vendors, the table count was up by 24. However, one reason for this is that you rent tables for Saturday only. This included our own Jim Dalberg who, with the help of Eric Dervinis, sold off about 300 spare HO cars for \$5 each.

Normally, the next show would be held in April, but they pushed it back to May 1st and 2nd to avoid religious holidays. Their fall show has been moved up to October 3rd and 4th to avoid a conflict with the York TCA show.

SPRING THAW

On Saturday February 22nd, I traveled north to this show run by the Allentown Train Meet Associates. The ATMA guys claim it to be the largest unaffiliated show in the East, but I am not sure exactly what that means. I have seen them wearing their ATMA uniforms at other shows, which seems a bit pompous to me.

It has been a while since I attended one of their shows. The reason is that it is mostly Lionel and toy trains. Still, I came home with some HO bargains and railroadingiana. So if you like trains like I do, it is worth a visit occasionally, plus there are there ever popular train races for the kids. There were also two large HO layouts including the Strasburg Railroad group.

Admission is a bit high at \$10, yet this year it was packed! You could barely move in the aisles in the front part until after lunch time. There is on-site food, but I did a car run and had lunch in the adjacent farmers market. ATMA will run a similar show on Nov. 14th and 15th called "First Frost."

ALLENTOWN TRAIN MEET

01037

www.allentowntrainmeet.com

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NORTH CAROLINA/COLORADO (Unexpectedly, my last trip for quite a while!)

With friends and family living near Asheville, NC, I am a regular visitor to that area. One of my trips is always timed so I can attend the annual WNC Train Show. This show has usually been held on the first weekend of March, but this year was moved up to Friday Feb 28th and Saturday Feb 29th. No Sunday train shows in this part of the bible belt! My wife and I flew down early on the 28th and I got into the show, which started at noon, by 1:30pm.

This is a mid-sized show held in the Expo Building at the local fairgrounds. There were about 200 tables plus a number of operating layouts in several scales. The local NMRA division had tables as did the local Apple Valley Model Railroad Club which I have seen on prior visits. This area has lots of retirees, so the show is always a great buying opportunity. One year I brought about 20 Sunshine and other resin kits for \$5 each. Selling them certainly covered the airfare on that trip! Other purchased items over the years have had price stickers from Mitchell's, Ted's Engine House, and Sattlers over in Haddonfield, NJ.

This was the second year my wife came on the show trip and

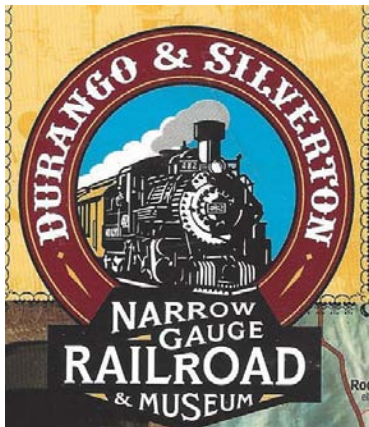
to make it interesting for her, I added another sight in the area. Last year it was Gatlinburg, Tennessee (tacky tacky). This year we drove across the Smokies to Knoxville, which is probably the biggest city in the USA that I had never been to. We stopped at the historic Southern and L&N stations. We tasted wine in the Southern one, repurposed as an event venue. Then we drove to Oak Ridge, the secret Atomic City during WWII. There we stumbled on a weird collection of locomotives and some other railcars. There was a very new visitor center, but it wasn't open then.

We returned to North Carolina and stayed a night with an old friend from Connecticut, Dan Lang, whose great B&M layout is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8cLmfMjCkw>. From the AVL airport, we flew to Chicago and changed to a Denver flight arriving in late afternoon. Enterprise Car Rental is located west of the airport alongside the tracks for the RTD's electric heavy rail service to Denver International Airport.

We headed south, parallel to the front range, spending the night in Pueblo. The next morning, we explored its historical **Union Station** with an active mainline (UP/BNSF) and the **Pueblo**

Railway Museum's collection of railroad equipment. We drove further south and headed west across the bottom of Colorado. Our first stop was in Alamosa, once a center of the D&RGW's narrow-gauge operations. Today it is the headquarters for the San Luis & Rio Grande. This line, which is part of Ed Ellis's bankrupt Iowa Pacific empire, once ran tourist trains up the La Veta Pass. Eric Dervinis and I rode this back in 2009. The thrill for me was seeing the Iowa Pacific passenger equipment painted in the Illinois Central's Panama Limited orange and chocolate brown paint scheme. As we drove west, we passed hundreds of coal hoppers that SLRG is storing.

We ended the day in Durango which was full of tourists. We tried to eat at several places downtown, but all were full with long waits. The next day was the primary purpose of the trip—a winter ride on the Durango & Silverton. I splurged for the highest class of service in the last car. This included some food and souvenirs plus a great view from the rear of the car. In the winter, the train only travels to Cascade Canyon covering some 25 of the D&S's 45 miles. Here we could exit but I was disappointed there was only a little snow. Remember Philly only had 3" this year. I mentioned my disappointment to our car host who told us that we should have been here last year!



After the D&S train trip, I took a quick spin thru their muse-

RTD-THE RIDE



My wife and I traveled to Colorado in early March to participate in several railroad activities including rides on Denver's **Regional Transport District**. RTD was created in 1969 and has grown considerably over the years to where it now operates over 170 bus routes (including 8 "Skyride" routes to

Denver International Airport (DIA) and 11 rail lines (a mix of light and heavy rail). The transit network really took off after "Fastracks," a voter initiative, was approved in 2004.

On previous trips to Denver, I rode several of the light rail lines; that service started in 1994 and has grown over the years to where 170 Siemens LRVs now operate on 8 lines that radiate out from Denver. On this trip, I boarded the W (West) line at 6:43am and rode 12.1 miles from the JeffCo Government Center Station in Golden to the light rail station adjacent to the Union Station Transit Center in downtown Denver in 39 minutes. The route included two major bridges running alongside a highway and, closer in, some existing railroad right-of-way, before making a loop west of Denver passing Mile High Stadium and Elitch Gardens. The W line has been in operation since April 26, 2013 with 15 stations, many of which have large parking garages. I parked for free at the Golden Station.

Ticketing is done through TVMs or the MyRide app. There is a simplified fare structure based on zones. The regular local fare (1-2 zones) is \$3; the regional fare (3 zones) is \$5.25, while the fare to the airport is \$10.50. In all cases, the ticket is good for

um before we headed out on a long night-time drive to Denver, made even longer by a wrong turn in the middle of the Rockies. On Saturday, 3/7, I attended the Rocky Mountain Train Show and the next day visited the Colorado Model Railroad Museum (see separate write-ups). On Monday, the 9th enroute to the airport, I made a brief stop at Caboose Hobbies (<https://www.caboosehobbies.com/>) and was totally disappointed as the shelves were almost devoid of new stock. We flew home via O'Hare and just a few days later, life as we knew it changed dramatically as COVID-19 spread through the country.

With that, my list of planned trips and railroad events for the rest of the year started to disappear beginning with the cancellation of the NJ Division meeting on 3/14. Next to go was the Philly NRHS meeting, the NRHS mid-year meeting near Cincinnati that would have included **EnterTRAINment Junction** and a train show in Dayton, our April division meet, the annual Illinois Terminal convention, Timonium and other train shows, the Midwest Regional Convention in Peoria, the annual NRHS convention at Knotts Berry Farm, the annual NMRA Convention & National Train Show, and finally the "yuge" RPM meet held near St. Louis at the end of July.

As I write this (5/20/20) I am "safe" at home. I have worked on some small kits and done some work on my layout. I used the time to sort through my extensive collection to find kits and freight cars that I will never need or build. I have sold these on eBay along with a whole bunch of donated items for GATSME, the Philly NRHS chapter, and even some HO items for the Philly division.

I can't wait to get back on the show floor or attend a hobby convention. Hopefully things will settle down soon and I'll be able to attend the NER and MER conventions in October.

three hours on both bus and rail services. Discounts are available for seniors with Medicare cards, so I paid just \$2.60 for a regional ticket. The rail system is honor-based so there were no turnstiles like what SEPTA has installed in Center City.

The neighborhood around Denver's historic **Union Station** is now called **LoDo** and has been extensively redeveloped. To me, it had a European feel. Three light rail lines (C, E, and W) terminate on a single track that is connected to Union Station by a two-block, two-level bus concourse. Walking through the concourse, very early on a Monday morning, I saw (and smelled) a large number of homeless people. The completely renovated 1914 Beaux-Arts **Union Station** is now home to several fancy restaurants, bars, boutique shops, and the 112-room Crawford Hotel. While the hotel lobby serves as Amtrak's waiting room, armed private security guards were there to make sure others do not overstay their welcome.

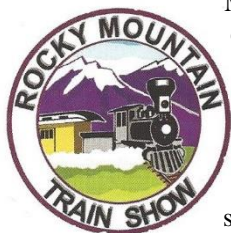
Immediately outside **Union Station** are several stub-end tracks. On the most distant one, I saw several Amtrak cars, no doubt from the *California Zephyr*. Train No. 5 is carded for a 7:05am arrival after traveling 1038 miles from Chicago. The other tracks are used for RTD's commuter rail service that consists of three lines: A to DIA, B to Westminster, and G to Wheat Ridge. This service began in 2016 using 66 Hyundai Rotem Silverliner V cars that are very similar to same cars on SEPTA. RTD's commuter rail lines were the first ones built with PTC from the start and were plagued with grade crossing issues when the service started. Interestingly, DIA, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, was designed and built to allow for rail service

when it opened in 1995.

RTD cars still lack bathrooms. There are no steps since it is all high level platforms. The cars are in married pairs, and the engineer sits in a full-width cab. The seating, at least on the A line, is different with luggage racks and 2-by-2 seating at the center of the cars. I didn't have time for a long ride so I just jumped on a 7:45am airport train and exited a few minutes later at the 38th & Blake Station that was adjacent to seven Union Pacific tracks. I

ROCKY MOUNTAIN TRAIN SHOW

WOW! This show was something!



My wife and I booked a trip to Colorado centered around this show which was held March 7-8, 2020. It was said to be "the Largest Train Show west of the Mississippi" and they weren't lying.

Hosted the Rocky Mountain Division/Train Collectors Association, the show has 120,000 square feet of displays, layouts, and vendors of *all* scales. RMD/TCA has long been an innovative group and was the first TCA group to open up their events to the public in the 1980s. The show has grown considerably over the years, moving to the Denver Mart eleven years ago and adding 35,000 square feet to the event in 2019.

I was able to purchase my ticket online in advance, so I was

really regretted leaving my phone in the hotel room that morning!

I was in Union Station at 8:04am and walked back to the light rail station. I boarded the next train, which was an E line, exiting at Auraria West. There I boarded a W train at 8:36am and by 9:09 was back in Golden. While on that train, I saw a notice about proposed service reductions in May due to an ongoing shortage of bus and rail operators.

able to walk right in when it opened at 10am despite a lengthy line. Attendees were given a 20-page program that was produced by the folks who published *Cowcatcher* magazine. The program listed 28 manufacturers—all of the majors except Walthers, and 20 layouts in a variety of scales.

There were a series of clinics and presentations that included one by Ed Dickens from UP on Big Boy No. 4014 that I am sorry I missed. Modeling clinics included one by Pennsylvania-based Dwarvin Enterprises, whose lights were just featured in the April issue of *MR*. Boy Scouts were able to complete the railroad merit badge through some hands-on activities in clinic room and stops at various booths and layouts on the show floor.

As always, I found a number of great buys, particularly at the NMRA's and several railroad museum booths. I tried to limit what I brought, but still had to buy another suitcase at a thrift shop before flying home from Denver.

COLORADO MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM

This museum, which has been open for over ten years, has been on my "must visit" list for a while. It is located in a modern building in Greeley, Colorado about an hour northeast of Denver, adjacent to the UP mainline between Denver and Cheyenne. At least three UP trains ran by while we were in the museum

We drove here on Sunday, 3/8 after visiting the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden that morning. Admission was \$7 each; we saved \$2 using the coupon that was in the program from the Rocky Mountain Train Show.

The museum's HO layout is something to



see! It is completely finished and models the Oregon, California & Eastern Railroad as the Weyerhaeuser-owned OC&E appeared in 1975. The layout covers 5500 square feet and includes a port area, extensive lumbering operations, 15 bridges, 12 tunnels, and over 28,000 trees. Operations are handled by an actual CTC machine. The walls of the museum are covered in railroadians and several displays.

After visiting the museum, we followed the UP line north to Cheyenne catching several trains along the way. We tried to visit the historic Cheyenne Depot, but it was closed by the time we got there.

NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT (and the beginning of COVID-19)

When my wife and I moved to Abington in January of 2019, we left our daughter and her family still living in Connecticut. With my granddaughter's day care closed because of COVID, my wife and her other grandmother have taken turns watching the kid, so her parents could go to work. My wife was there the week before Easter, and I decided to take Amtrak up to New London on Saturday, April 11th to be there on Easter.

First, I needed to get to 30th Street. I knew SEPTA had cut back the regional rail service substantially. On the SEPTA website, I saw a notice of the cutbacks but NO schedules. Eric Dervinis had mentioned to me that the Main Line was on a two-hour schedule, so I wondered about the lines near me. I usually board the train at Jenkintown or Noble. When I saw NO service on the West Trenton Line, that ruled out Noble. Using a Google transit search tool, I found my ONLY choices around noon from Jenkintown were:

Warminster Train at 11:28am arriving 30th at 11:59am.

Lansdale train at 12:18pm arriving 30th at 12:49pm.

Even though both lines were on a two-hour schedule, because of the timing Jenkintown effectively had hourly service. I went for the earlier train just to be safe.

I arrived at Jenkintown at 11:15am to find the lot virtually empty. I parked by the station and paid my \$1 to cover Monday as we were driving back that evening. I was the only person on the platform and panicked when I checked the "Next to Arrive" screen on the SEPTA app. It said, "No service for four hours!" What to do? I could certainly drive to 30th in time for my 1:19pm Amtrak train (#88), or maybe drive to Trenton, where I have parked before on similar trips to CT. However, soon I heard a distant train whistle and then another. The three-car train led by #424 arrived a few minutes late at 11:31am.

Wearing a mask (because I heard SEPTA was requiring one),

I quickly boarded and headed to the second car. There was no problem social distancing as there were only two other passengers in the front half of the car. I stuck my senior key card on the end door window and the crew nodded. I never saw them check or pull tickets on the ride in. Even though we made all stops except North Broad, very few got on or off.

With the crew change at Suburban Station, this became an airport train, and several passengers did board with suitcases. There also were two flight crew members, a TSA agent, and another airport worker on board. I exited at 30th around noon. The turnstile gates were open, and the Dunkin' Donuts there was



closed. I walked down the ramp to the main level which was virtually deserted. There were two Amtrak cops, one redcap, a few other Amtrak personnel, and just a handful of passengers. Yet the display board showed ten trains.

I walked around a bit, but soon heard an announcement for a train to Boston. I ran to look at the display board and saw #82 carded for 12:15pm. I ran to the ticket window and asked the sole agent on duty if I could get on that train. She said, since I was traveling with points (only 2720 less than prior trips), I would have to call Guest Rewards. But as I started to walk away, she suggested I go see if they would let me on the train. I ran down the stairs and the train was there. It was virtually empty. I looked in two cars for the crew but nada. I stood on the platform and eventually the train pulled away.

Back upstairs, I went to the Wendy's for lunch as it was the only place open. As it was, you had to yell in your order from the hall then the food and money were passed back and forth in a plastic tray while the doorway was partially blocked by sheet of clear plastic.

Eventually my train was called, and I headed down with a woman with two kids, a businessman with a suitcase, and two college-aged travelers. The normal seven-car consist pulled in at 1:15pm led by engine #622. As it moved down the platform I could see there was virtually nobody on board. I worked my way toward the front and boarded a car with only a handful of folks. My ticket was quickly scanned and I settled in for a trip up the Northeast Corridor. Just north of the Frankford El I was surprised to see a long NS freight

train heading south on the easternmost track. Since virtually no one was traveling, there was minimum dwell time. We were out of Trenton (TRE) at 1:50, Metropark (MET) at 2:13, Newark Airport (EWR) at 2:26, and Newark (NWK) at 2:30. After leaving the tunnel, we passed some construction before arriving in Penn Station (NYP) at 2:49pm, three minutes late.

The stop in NYC seemed shorter than normal and we were underway at 3:00. I went to bathroom in rear of car and counted only four other passengers in my car. I have always enjoyed the view from the Hell Gate Bridge as we entered the Bronx. North of Co-Op City, there was a loud buzzing coming from the closet in the front of my car. Eventually a crew member came and tried to stop it but could not. Then the train stopped and looking out the window, I saw the engineer (wearing a mask) looking under my car. Soon the conductor was on the ground, too. We sat there for maybe 15 minutes and I moved to the next car to get away from the buzzing noise. At 3:37, we stopped again by the old Knickerbocker Press building in New Rochelle, NY that you can see from I-95. This is where the line from NYP joins the shore line

After the stop in New Rochelle at 3:53, I went through my car and saw I was the only passenger. I finally got my ride in a private car! As a crew member walked by, I asked what was the problem. He was said it was a hot bearing alarm and the car would need to be inspected at New Haven. From the platform display in Stamford (the next stop) I could see that we were running 23 minutes late. I had tried to use the Amtrak app to check the train status, but it kept freezing. We were out Bridgeport at 4:37 and into New Haven at 5:00, where the yard was full of Metro-North and CT Rail cars. We left at 5:15 and when my ticket was scanned again, I asked the conductor how many were on board and he said I was the third passenger he saw. I also asked about the wheel issue and he said they inspected the car and it was okay. If they had needed to set out the car, that would have been more of a delay.



We were out of Old Saybrook at 5:45, crossed the Connecticut River on a bridge that needs to be replaced and arrived in New London at 6:00pm, 20 minutes late. The station is on a sharp curve and the conductor told me I would need to wait until he installed a bridge plate. I said, "Come on, I'm a big boy and can easily span the [maybe 9"] gap." He nodded and I was off and the only one to depart. The historic, red brick New London station was built in 1887 as a Union Station that served the Central Vermont and a line that later became part of the New Haven. The CV ran passenger trains to there until 1949. Besides Amtrak, NLC is the easternmost stop on CT Rail. The station has an

unusual mix of high- and low-level platforms.

All in all, the trip went just fine. I was not worried or concerned especially given the scarcity of passengers. Amtrak served me well. However, that was not the case later in April. I wanted to attend the demonstration to re-open the Commonwealth in Harrisburg on Monday, April 20th but could not because Keystone Service was suspended due to the COVID mess.



New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Car

**Tangent Scale Models Bethlehem 70-Ton
Riveted Drop-End Gondola in HO Scale**

All cars are ready-to-run.

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

1968 & 2018

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

The cost is \$35.00 each

OR

a set of both numbers for \$65.00.

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

They are selling fast so don't be left out!

(Photos on next two pages)

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

Name_____

Address_____

City, State and Zip code_____

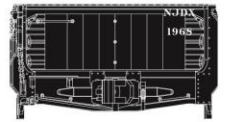
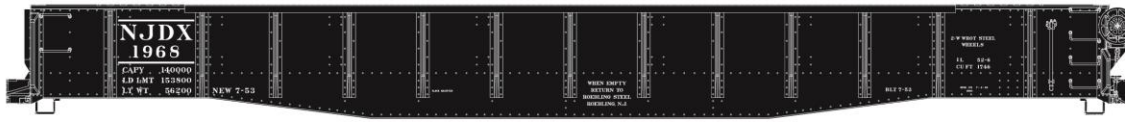
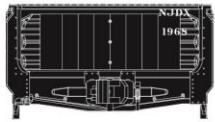
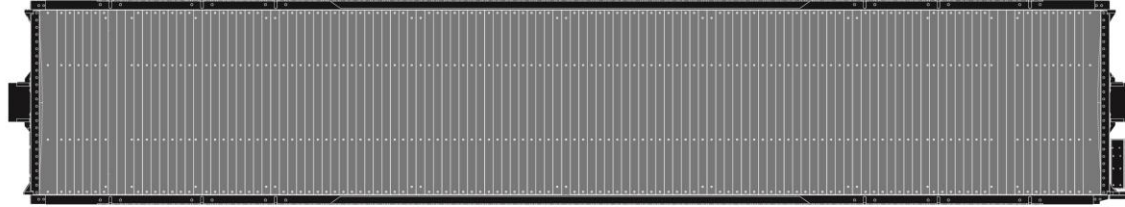
Telephone_____Email_____

See Tangent website for more info support@tangentscalemodels.com

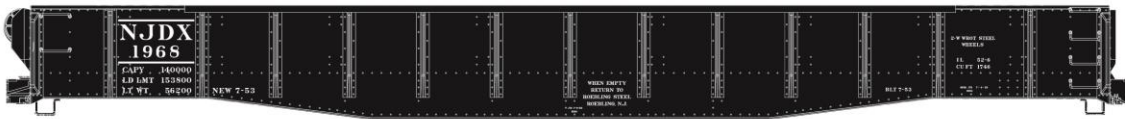
Return this form to NJ Division, P.O. Box 276, Crosswicks, NJ 08515



Artwork for New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Car



TANGENT
SCALE MODELS





[Click here](#) for the July/August issue



[Click here](#) for the July/August issue



[Click here](#) for the August issue



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

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

YouTube channel:

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

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

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

Upcoming NMRA Conventions

[NMRA 2021 Santa Clara](#)

2021

Division Apparel



Short Sleeve Polo



Division Patch



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



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

* Name and patch positions reversed for shirts with pocket

ORDER FORM ON NEXT PAGE

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

Port Authority - www.portauthority.com

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

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

Gildan - www.gildan.com

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

Philadelphia Division Apparel Order Form	All apparel comes in black (the official Division color), with Division patch sewn and ironed on, and, if desired, first name embroidered
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Philadelphia Division Apparel Order Form	All apparel comes in black (the official Division color), with Division patch sewn and ironed on, and, if desired, first name embroidered
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POLO: Port Authority “Silk Touch” 65/35 polyester/cotton, soft, comfortable, lightweight, virtually wrinkle-free, available in short or long sleeves, with or without pocket (K500, K500P, K500LS, K500LSP)


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


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

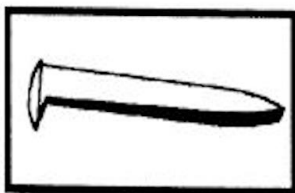
Note: Larger sizes are available—just ask

Size		Price (subject to change)										Name							
S-XL		PRICING HAS CHANGED – CONTACT US FOR A QUOTE										Address							
2XL												City, St, Zip							
3XL												Phone							
												Email							
		Signature																	
		No pocket		Pocket		Long Sleeve		Long Sleeve + pocket		Short Sleeve		Long Sleeve		Pullover		Pullover Hoodie		Zip-up Hoodie	
		Polo				Button-Down		Sweatshirt		First name as you'd like it to appear (if desired – add \$5 each shirt)				Qty	Price	Total			
1	↓ Enter Size ↓																		
2																			
3																			
4																			
5																			
(All shirts come with sewn-on patch) Additional Patches@ \$5 each																			
SHIPPING COSTS HAVE CHANGED – CONTACT US FOR A QUOTE																			
PICKUP: Future meet or by special arrangement																Free			
Make check payable to: PHILA DIV NMRA										We accept PayPal–email for invoice: phillynmra@gmail.com				TOTAL					

Liberty Bell Special MER 2019 CONVENTION APPAREL ORDER FORM (Descriptions and color chart on next page)

SIZE	↓ PRICE (\$) ↓										NAME					
3XL	36	34	39		39						ADDRESS					
2XL	34	32	37		37						CITY, ST, ZIP					
S-XL	32	30	35		35						PHONE					
XS		30		35		35					EMAIL					
		POLO		BUTTON DOWN			DENIM			SIGNATURE						
		WITH POCKET	NO POCKET	LADIES POLO	SHORT SLEEVE	LONG SLEEVE	LADIES SHORT SLEEVE	LADIES LONG SLEEVE	SHORT SLEEVE	LONG SLEEVE	LADIES SHORT SLEEVE	LADIES LONG SLEEVE	PAYMENT TYPE: _____ CHECK _____ CARD			
													CARD NUMBER: _____		EXP: _____	CVV: _____
Card info may be phoned in, but a signature is still needed, so form must also be mailed or faxed. Checks made out to: PHILA DIV NMRA. Mail to: HOWARD KAPLAN, 620 EDMONDS AVE., DREXEL HILL, PA 19026. VOICE: 610-626-4506 FAX: 610-622-3020 (between noon and midnight)																
													COLOR	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
1	↓ ENTER SIZE ↓															
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
																
		PICKUP BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT											FREE			
		SHIPPING COSTS HAVE CHANGED – CONTACT US FOR A QUOTE														
		TOTAL														

<div></div> <div>Liberty Bell Special CONVENTION APPAREL COLOR CHART</div>		SILVER	NEON YELLOW	LIME	KHAKI	OYSTER	NEON PINK	KELLY GREEN	CAROLINA BLUE	BLUE	GOLD	GREEN	GREY	HIBISCUS	LAVENDER	LIGHT BLUE	LIGHT STONE	BANANA	MAGENTA	MAUI	ORANGE	PINK	RED	RUST	SUNFLOWER	TURQUOISE	STONE	YELLOW	MINT
POLO	POLO/LADIES POLO									•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
	POLO WITH POCKET									•			•										•			•			
BUTTON DOWN	SHORT SLEEVE									•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•			•	•	
	LONG SLEEVE									•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•			•	•	
	LADIES SHORT SLEEVE									•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	
	LADIES LONG SLEEVE									•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	
DESCRIPTIONS	POLO	A great-looking, cotton/polyester pique knit that is cool, comfortable, and wrinkle resistant. This shirt has a soft, silky feel against the skin. You'll love it! Liberty Bell Special logo on left chest area. Sizes S-3XL (XS-3XL for ladies version).																											
	BUTTON DOWN	A comfortable wash-and-wear shirt—thicker than a dress shirt—with a velvety feel that will make you want to wear it again and again. Cotton/poly blend. Wrinkle resistant. Liberty Bell Special logo on left chest. Sizes S-3XL (Ladies version XS-3XL, no pocket).																											
	DENIM	With sturdy construction, a generous cut, and soft garment washing, this great-looking, faded blue denim shirt is sure to become one of your favorites.100% cotton. Liberty Bell Special logo on left chest area. No pocket. Sizes S-3XL (Ladies version XS-3XL, no pocket).																											



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD APPLICATION FORM

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

Member's Name: _____ NMRA#: _____ EXP: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Prov: _____ Country: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date Submitted: _____ Region: _____

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

QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

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

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

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

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

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

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

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

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

Witness: _____ Print Name: _____ NMRA #: _____

Regional AP Chair: _____ Region: _____

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