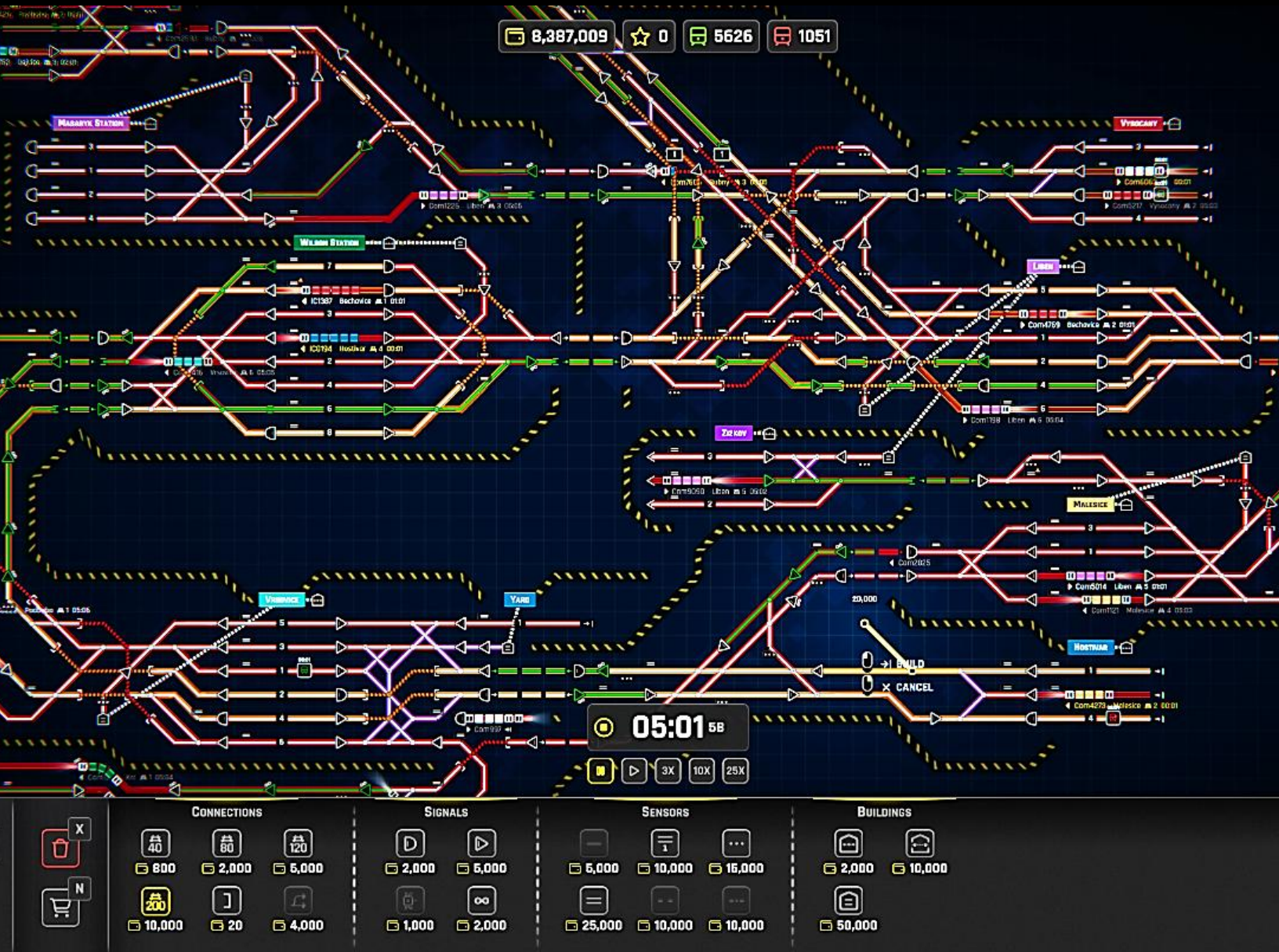




THE DISPATCHER

The Journal of Philly NMRA

April 2024



Screenshot from Rail Route, an innovative railway network simulation game.

Players have the opportunity to design, build, and expand their own rail system, transforming a small network into a complex and thriving railway.

Starting with just a few stations, players design railway lines, manage contracts, and watch their first train complete its route. As the network expands, the game unlocks new technologies, introducing more trains and automation tools. This isn't just adding new features—each expansion increases complexity, testing the player's strategy and planning abilities. More info at <https://railroute.eu>



THE DISPATCHER

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



April 2024

PhillyNMRA.org

Volume 31, No. 3

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THE DISPATCHER

Submissions: *THE DISPATCHER* welcomes any model or prototype railroad-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.

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From the Super’s Desk

We’ve had a busy couple of months! In January, we had a joint meet with the New Jersey Division; in February, we met with Susquehanna. It’s always great to mix ideas and people. In March, I attended the RPM–Valley Forge meet, in Malvern, PA, which turned out to be a very successful convention. Hats off to all the RPM staff who made this event possible. It was well organized and conducted mostly by members of our division. By attending these events, we have an opportunity to make new friends and re-new old friendships.

All of you should have received a survey from the NMRA asking what you expect from your membership. I urge members to participate in this as it will steer future events. We are fortunate to have a young president who listens to all members. We need youth in our hobby is to survive and ultimately grow. If you want to see changes, this is your opportunity. Fill out the survey.

We will soon be sending out ballots for the upcoming election of division board members in June. As with last year, we will be using Election Buddy, as well as paper ballots. You may only vote once; use the method of your choice. As an active member, you will be instrumental in shaping the next board of directors.

The MER is looking for volunteers to run for office. Anyone interested in serving or in making changes at the regional level should take advantage of this opportunity. If interested, inform a division official or contact an official of the MER directly. Info is available on their website at mer-nmra.com.

Our next division meet will be in Collegeville, PA, on April 20, 2024. It will be held at a new venue, the Trinity Reform Church. Coffee, donuts, and pretzels will be provided. There will be two clinics held along with door prizes, our 50/50 raffle, and show and tell. We hope to see you there.

On June 8, 2024, we will once again gather at Alverthorpe Park in Jenkintown, PA for our annual business meeting. Board of director election results will be announced at this time. After the business portion of the meet, there will be a hands-on clinic given by Mike Dettinger. This will be followed by our annual barbecue. You don't want to miss it! There will be door prizes, free food, and camaraderie with your fellow modelers.

I hope to see you all at the April meet.

Joe



From the Editor’s Desk

Welcome to our April 2024 print edition of *The Dispatcher*. As usual, we start out with information on the upcoming April meet to be held at a new venue, the Trinity Reform Church in Collegeville, PA.

Our feature article in this edition by Eric Hansmann details all the steps he uses to weather a piece of rolling stock. After reading this you’ll have the confidence to dive into a wreathing project yourself.

As usual, Clerk Charles Long provides us with a recap on the previous meet along with excellent photo coverage by Assistant Superintendent Rob Hinkle. Please enjoy, and hope to see you at the April meet.

Howard

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Next Stop: Collegeville

On Saturday, April 20, 2024, the Philadelphia Division will hold its early spring meet at a new venue, the Trinity Reformed Church, 532 East Main Street, Collegeville, PA 19426. Doors open at 8:30am with the program set to begin at 9am. Maps and directions on page 5.

Our first clinic will be presented by Philadelphia Division Clinics Chair Mike Dettinger titled “The Kato Miniature Diorama Circus.” The only way to be a successful model railroader is to build models. Modeling great Lance Mindheim promotes the exploration of new modeling techniques by building test models on a “plank.” In other words, just build a test version to get a feel for a new technique you would like to learn before turning it loose on your permanent layout.

Taking Lance’s plank idea a little further, it is possible to try different techniques out on a small module, which, if successful, could be used as a display base or joined with other modules to run trains.

The Kato N-Scale Miniature Diorama Circus can be thought of as T-TRAK “lite.” Instead of a square foot, the module is under 24-square inches. But it is plenty large to try new techniques. We will be providing Miniature Diorama Circus modules to attendees of the June meet, however, I wanted to introduce this new way to model trains just to get everyone involved.



By now there is little doubt that most division members can recite Mike’s bio by heart, but we’ll repeat it for those newcomers. Mike is what you might call a “fringe” modeler...or “a little of this and a little of that.” If it’s odd or obscure, he’ll model it and put a decoder in it and/or animate it. He has authored numerous articles on his projects, most recently a log cabin made from toothpicks. His latest preoccupation is with N-scale T-TRAK modules, having most notably presented a clinic on a Japanese powered N-scale railcar with cab-view camera mounted inside. He has also presented on varied topics such as modeling corn and rail joiners.

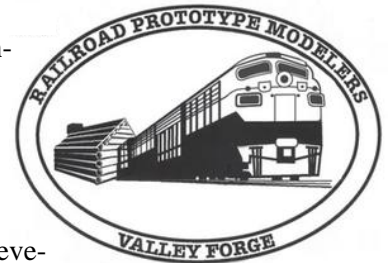
For our second presentation, the members of the Railroad Prototype Modelers (RPM) Valley Forge will present a summary of the highlights of the recent 2024 meet. More than counting rivets, the RPM honors the history of the railroads through the research and craftsmanship that goes into bringing a historically accurate model to life.

Participants have the opportunity to bring in their mod-

els—finished or in progress; the opportunity to attend clinics that focus on rail history; operations or planning; enjoy a lunch with modelers; participate in operation sessions, browse vendor rooms with great products; and visit local area layouts.

Members of the Philadelphia Division were instrumental in the formation and continuation of this great biannual show.

All attendees are encouraged to bring a model to the meet to display and discuss, if you like, during our Show and Tell session.



In addition, the Achievement Program Committee is now judging models at the meets. If you wish to have a model judged, please inform either Earl Paine or Joe Walters in advance of the meet.

As usual we’ll hold our 50/50 raffle, draw for door prizes, and have coffee, donuts, and Philly soft pretzels.

The afternoon features some excellent model railroads for visitation. Hope you can make it!



Call for Nominations

Well, it’s that time again. Every spring, the Philadelphia Division holds its annual election for the board of directors. There are seven total board positions, three (3) of which are open for election or re-election this year. The term is for two (2) years. The board then elects officers from among the directors. This is your opportunity to take an active role in the operation and direction of the division. Board members are expected to attend board meetings (every two months online via Zoom) and all



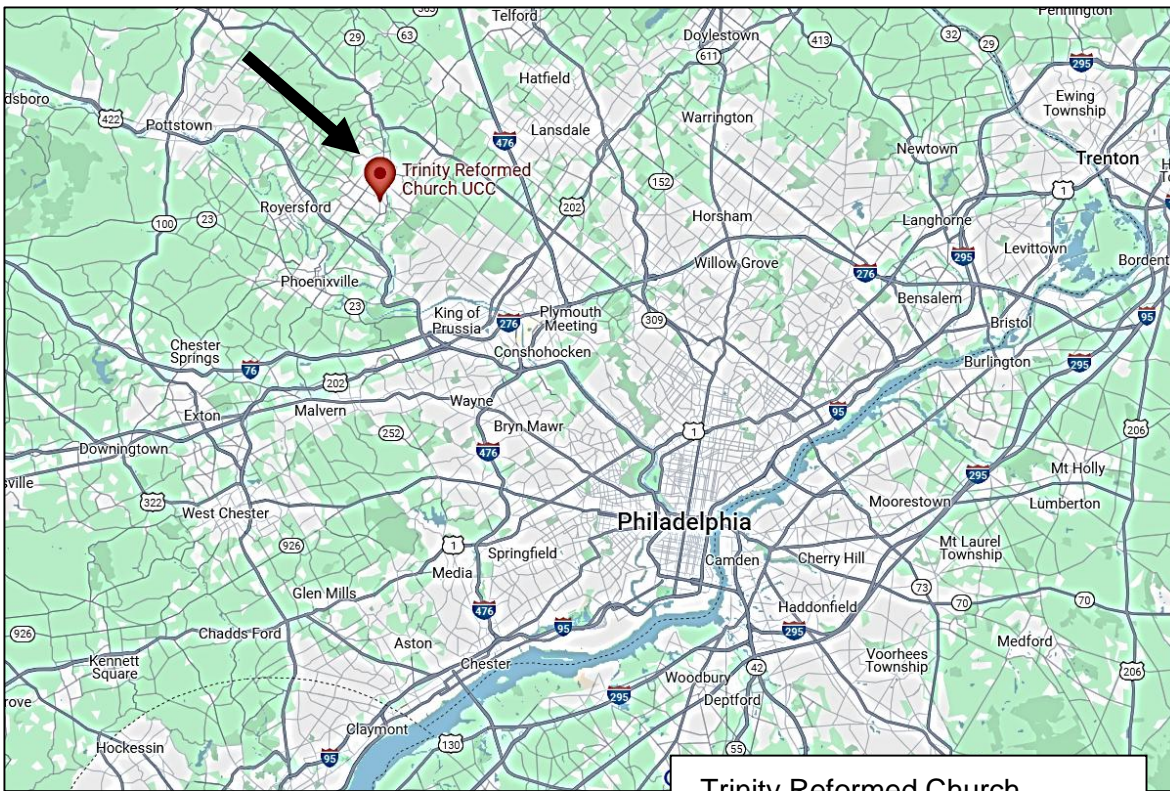
meets—or at least aim to. If interested, please supply a bio and photo to the editor, Howard Kaplan, and contact a member of the nominating committee: Rob Hinkle, Mike Dettinger, Jeff Witt, and Steve Wysowski.



If elected office is too big a step, consider volunteering to chair or work on a committee. Any participation counts as credit toward your AP Volunteer certificate.

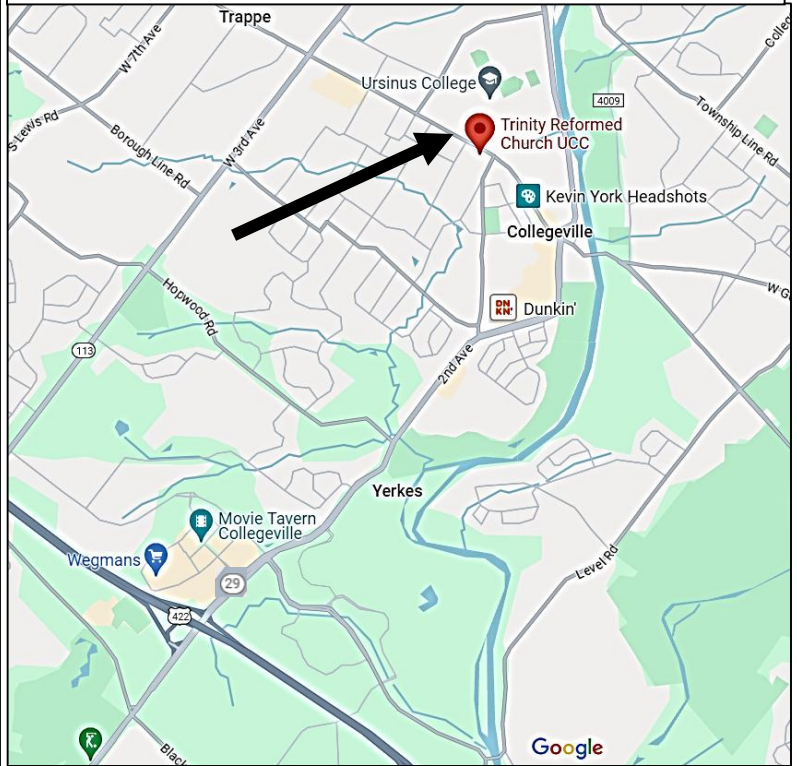
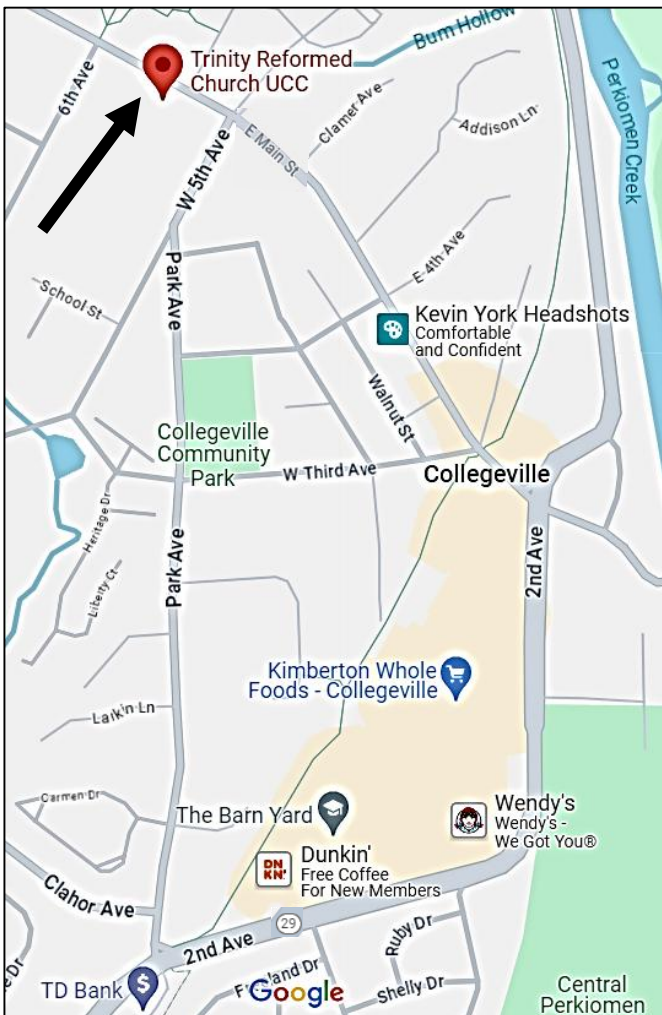


Maps and Directions to the April Meet



Trinity Reformed Church
532 East Main Street
Collegeville, PA 19426.

US-422 W to exit for Phoenixville/Collegeville PA-29. Right onto PA-29 N (S. Collegeville Rd. becomes 2nd Ave.) Bear left onto Park Ave. Bear right on to 5th Ave. Left onto E. Main St. 0.2 mile. Church on left.



Layouts, Clinicians, and Authors Needed

The Philadelphia Division is putting out a request for members willing to open their model railroads to visitation from attendees at our meets. Back as recently as 2019 for the MER convention we held, we boasted a bevy of layouts. Unfortunately, since that time many owners of layouts have either moved or passed away. Furthermore, due to liability concerns, we have to limit visitation to layouts of NMRA members only. So now we're at a point where it is becoming challenging to find layouts available for viewing after meets.

Please realize that a layout need not be scenicked or "finished" in order to be visited. There are many steps required in the building of a model railroad—steps we all must journey through—and therefore a layout in ANY stage of construction—even just benchwork—is fair game for visitation. Plus, think of it this way—if visitors see your layout in early stages, you could potentially receive suggestions on improving some aspect which will save you headaches later on. Having folks look at different phases can be very instructive. Also keep in mind that you do accrue volunteer credit toward the Achievement Program.

Now on to clinicians. We try to have two clinicians at

each of our meets. After a while we see the same faces over and over. As interesting as their projects may be, our "regulars" shouldn't be burdened with doing all the clinics. We are asking for volunteers to step up and contribute.

If you need help with PowerPoint or any other technical issues, we can provide assistance. Don't think that your topic won't be of interest. People have presented clinics on some of the most esoteric topics which turned out to be extremely popular. Also, just because you may have given a clinic elsewhere, such as an RPM, doesn't mean you can't repeat the same clinic at one of our meets—even the meet following that event. Yes, some may have already seen it, but you can be assured that most have not. And the benefit to the division far outweighs the concerns of repetition for a few. Let's get some fresh faces involved.

Needless to say the same follows for authors as has been mentioned repeatedly in the editor's column. Any aspect of model or prototype railroading is fair game. Also remember that clinics and written contributions will qualify you for either volunteer or author AP credit, whichever is applicable.



Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

<p>April 20, 2024 Philadelphia Division Meet Trinity Reformed Church 532 East Main Street Collegeville, PA 19426</p>	<p>June 8, 2024 Philadelphia Division Meet/Picnic Alverthorpe Park Jenkintown Road & Forrest Avenue Jenkintown, PA 19046</p>	<p>August 3, 2024 NJ/Philadelphia Division Joint Meet Switlik Park Rec Building 5 Fisher Place Hamilton, NJ 08620</p>
<p>August 4–11, 2024 NMRA Convention "Surfliner" Westin Long Beach 333 East Ocean Blvd. Long Beach, CA</p>	<p>September 7, 2024 Philadelphia Division Meet Horsham Twp. Community Center 1025 Horsham Road Horsham, PA 19044</p>	<p>October 17–20, 2024 MER Convention "Piedmont Junction" Marriott at Research Triangle Park 4700 Guardian Drive Durham, NC 27703</p>

Check <http://www.phillynmra.org/regional-timetable> for links to these and other upcoming events.

February Meet Report *by Charles Long, Clerk*

Photos by Rob Hinkle



On Saturday, February 24th the Philadelphia Division met at the Southampton Community Center. This was a joint meet with the Susquehanna Division and delayed from the originally planned date of February 17th. Twenty-seven Philadelphia Division members were signed in along with five additional guests for a total of 32. This does not include the additional NMRA members and guests signed in at the Susquehanna Division table.

Superintendent Joe Walters of the Philadelphia Division and Superintendent Alan Mende of the Susquehanna Division welcomed everyone and discussed upcoming events for both divisions.

The first clinic presentation was by David Ellis of the Susquehanna Division who discussed how he is planning a new model railroad after moving from northwest to northeast Pennsylvania.

After a break for soft pretzels, coffee, and doughnuts, 50/50 raffle tickets were sold. Steve Wysowski was presented with an achievement award.

WE WELCOME OUR NEW PHILLY DIVISION MEMBERS

Patrick Osborne, Perkasio, PA
William M. Hawk III, Philadelphia, PA
William A. Kight II, Smyrna, DE



Philly Division Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR opens the meet and greets the crowd

The second clinic presentation was by Eric Hansmann who presented the research materials he is utilizing to model the Allegheny Yard Branch of the B&O in Pittsburgh in the 1924 time frame.

After the meet, attendees were invited to visit Michael Junod's nearby home and tour his basement O-scale traction layout.



Susquehanna Division Superintendent Alan Mende delivers his opening remarks



Susquehanna clinician David Ellis delivers his presentation...



and receives his appreciation certificate



Division director Steve Wysowski (L) receives his AP Scenery certificate from AP Coordinator Earl Paine



Eric Hansmann receives his clinician certificate



An example of Eric's scratch-built handiwork



Mike Junod receives thanks for having his layout open for visitation



Jersey Division members Mike Prokop and Bill Howard displayed their goodies on a swap table, including the Jersey Division car





Superintendent Joe Walters strategically places his "winning" ticket in the box as Clerk Charles Long watches in disbelief



Mike Dettinger and David Ellis kibbitz at the front table



Break time



Mike Dettinger sets up the door prizes



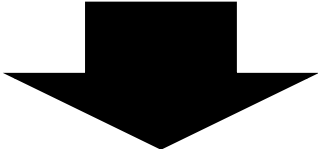
Former Clerk Mark Wallace (L) and Mike Dettinger catch up



Former Treasurer Brian Good (L) and Steve Salotti, MMR reminisce



Watch out! The super's coming!

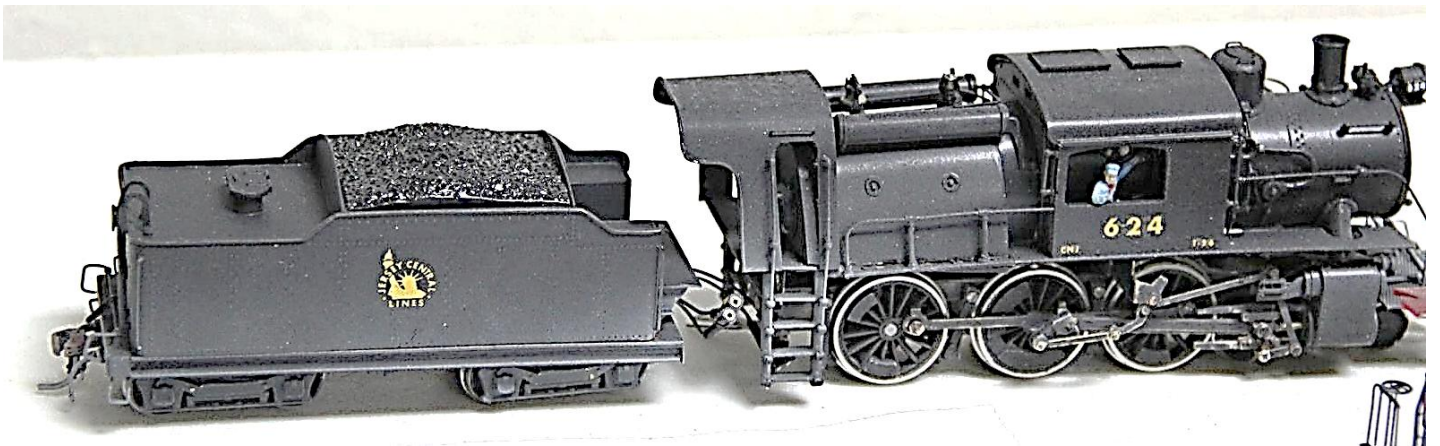




Philly Division member Fred Monsimer talks about his assortment of homemade road and railroad signs



Susquehanna super and MER contest chair, Alan Mende, discusses the projects he displayed (right and below) CNJ #91261 – scratch built using “Gingerbread Stop” plans



CNJ #624 – T-26 6-4-0. Scratch built except for the chassis and tender





Western Maryland dope shed – O-scale. Scratch built from prototype photo and data from the WMRHS Blue Mountain Express. Prototype was on the Ridgely, WV RIP track area.



Santa Fe tool shed – S-scale. Scratch built in styrene from own measurements and photographs. Prototype located in Hurley, NM.

Division Organization

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (elected)

OFFICERS

Superintendent – Joe Walters, MMR (2024)
Assistant Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2025)
Clerk – Charles Long (2024)
Treasurer – Kevin Feeney (2025)

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2024)
Steve Wysowski – Member Outreach (2025)
Jeff Witt – Venues (2025)



AUXILLIARY OFFICIALS (appointed)

AP Coordinator – Earl Paine
AP Committee Chair – Joe Walters, MMR
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster – Howard Kaplan

HELPER SERVICE

EVENTS

Clinics – Mike Dettinger
Layouts – Bill Fagan
Venues – Jeff Witt, Kevin Feeney, Steve Hamilton,
Steve Wysowski
Refreshments – Bill Fagan, Joe Walters, Kevin Feeney
Door Prizes – Mike Dettinger, Kevin Feeney
Clinic Video – Chip Stevens, Rob Hinkle
Certificates/Awards/Printed Materials – Earl Paine,
Howard Kaplan

MEMBERSHIP

Member Outreach – Steve Wysowski
Membership Records – Charles Long

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM - Earl Paine, Joe Walters MMR,
Bill Fagan, Chip Stevens, Steve Hamilton, Mark Wallace

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
Layout Video – Bill Fagan
Photography – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Bill Fagan

DIVISION APPAREL – Howard Kaplan

Hobby Shops

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

Henning's Trains
128 South Line Steet
Lansdale, PA 19446
215-362-2442
henningstrains.com

10% in addition to already discounted prices

Please let us know of any hobby shops that would be interested in advertising or offering discounts to NMRA members.

Two members of the Philadelphia Division Board of Directors who attended this event were kind enough to submit reports based on their experience:

Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet a Huge Success

by Steve Wysowski



Over three hundred model railroaders attended the Valley Forge Railroad Prototype Modelers (RPM) meet at the Desmond Hotel in Malvern on March 22, 23, and 24. The meet featured some 58 clinics, several ops sessions, vendor tables, model displays, and multiple home tours of model railroads.

Chair for the event was Philadelphia Division member Steve Salotti, MMR who led a wonderful team consisting of all-NMRA members: Gary Stroh and Drew Marshall of the New Jersey Division, and Val Pistilli, Rob Hinkle, Andy Hart, and Mark Wallace of Philly.

Ops sessions were coordinated by Mark Wallace and began on Thursday evening. The meet showcases prototypical modeling and supports those who have an interest in that area whether they are beginners or seasoned modelers.

Some 58 clinics were given. Rob Hinkle assembled a wide array of presenters who offered information on various prototypes. A few of these presenters were authors whose articles have appeared in *Model Railroader*, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, and other national publications. Eric Hansmann and Mike Dettinger were two Philadelphia Division members who presented. It should be noted that a few clinicians emailed electronic versions of their presentation to anyone in attendance who wanted a copy.

There was a model display room. Prototype structures and motive power were showcased. There was also a vendor room that provided opportunities for historical societies and legitimate businesses, be they hobby shops or railroad model manufacturers, to offer a variety of hobby-related merchandise geared toward the prototype modeler.

A lunch was offered on Saturday to anyone who paid for one, and some 80 people enjoyed sandwiches, snacks, desserts, and a beverage provided by the hotel. It allowed participants the chance to relax and come together onsite during this event.

This meet was not about who's doing what or where; rather the focus was directed toward the models. Contests were not held since most of the constituency are focused on operations, research, history, and sharing knowledge and information. Many are trying new techniques that don't exactly fit with a contest or merit award system. However their craft and attention to detail is brilliant. Usually some of the SIGs (special interest groups) are involved, too. The biannual meets are more about furthering all kinds of model railroad knowledge on a more rigorous, serious level.

A little bit of the history of the RPM. The original concept was of a loosely-networked community of modelers within the larger umbrella of the hobby, but slanted in the direction of modeling following a prototype or prototypical methods. RPM–Valley Forge began as a committee within the Philadelphia Division, and is now organized as an independent, 100% NMRA Club formally set up as a non-profit.

The original team and their dedication to the model railroad hobby is noteworthy. The late Dick Foley along with Paul Backenstose, Jim Dalberg MMR, Fred Alston, Ken McCorry, Steve Salotti MMR, Andy Hart, and Val Pistilli are all in their own way comprehensive modelers. They are very good at engaging in most parts of the hobby in an expert manner. The prototype modeling thread can be seen to run through their efforts as model railroaders.

This meet was well designed and came off flawlessly. It will again take place in two years. 

Railroad Prototype Modelers–Valley Forge by Charles Long



Last month I attended the Railroad Prototype Modelers–Valley Forge meet which was held at the Desmond Conference and Event facility, a DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton in Malvern, PA. The RPM was organized by a 100% NMRA Club over three days from Friday, March 22nd through Sunday, March 24th.

On Friday evening I arrived at the Desmond and picked up my registration as I had preregistered on the RPM–Valley Forge website. The 3rd floor conference level had a double-sized room set up for vendors. The vendors were not the typical train show vendors selling toy train items, but rather “boutique” dealers such as B&O and Chessie historical societies, Rapido, Funaro & Camerlengo, and Load Man. Bob's Photo had a

separate room. Also on the 3rd floor was a large amphitheater for the most popular clinics, three smaller rooms and a medium room for clinics, and a larger room for the display of participants' models. An additional clinic room was located on the first floor lobby level. What I saw looking down the aisles of the vendor and model display rooms was truly impressive and inspiring.

The first clinic I attended was at 7pm on Friday presented by John Brown, MMR entitled, "Auto Frames on the Railroad." My interest in this clinic was sparked by my train watching along the Reading branch at 11th & Erie between 1954 and 1966 and remembering the cars loaded with frames that I thought were probably produced at the Budd Company's Hunting Park Avenue facility. However, one of the photos presented in the clinic showed a car lettered "Return to RDG, Philmont, PA" so I learned that Budd also produced frames at the rail division's Red Lion plant.

I then attended Alan Mende's clinic, "Powering a Little Critter." This involved taking a Funaro & Camerlengo Plymouth Rod-connected, Gas-Mechanical Engine, static model and powering it. The final clinic I attended was an introduction to 3D Central, a new company in Richmond, VA specializing in various aspects of 3D printing. It was presented by their new employee, Matt Herman, who previously was with Bowser and LokSound. I believe at a previous RPM I attended a LokSound clinic presented by Matt.

I arrived a little late on Saturday and did not attend any of the 9:00am clinics, but instead spent quality time at the vendor and model display rooms. At 10:30am I attended the popular clinic by Tony Koester on the progress he has made on his Nickel Plate railroad.

At 2:30pm I attended Steven Meyer's clinic concerning his research on the Duquesne Steel Works along the Monongahela River near Pittsburgh as an inspiration for his planned HO railroad. At 4pm, being a traction modeler, I, of course, attended Ron Hoess's clinic, "Modeling Early PRR Catenary Infrastructure."

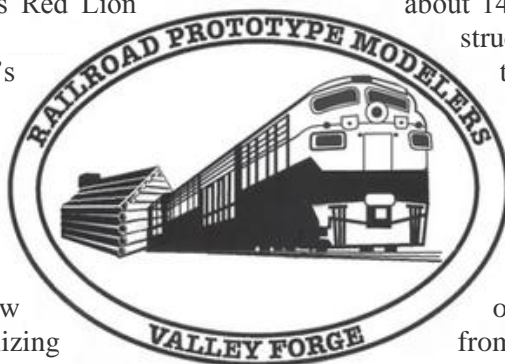
At 5:30 the vendor and model display rooms closed for a dinner break, and I made a short trip, along with several others, around the corner to a Chick-Fil-A for a grilled chicken sandwich, waffle fries, and lemonade.

The 7pm clinic by Todd Hermann focused on the research, planning, and building of downtown Catawauqua, PA on his HO-scale Lehigh & New England layout. He discussed his approach to selectively editing and compressing the prototype scene, scratch building prototype structures, and the addition of the Lehigh Valley Transit streetcar line that served the town.

The final clinic I attended on Saturday was at 8:30pm presented by Richard Newmiller, MMR. Rich presented on scratch building the Colgate Manufacturing Facility in Jersey City, NJ. The prototype was the first reinforced concrete structure built in Jersey City. It stood facing Manhattan along the Hudson River for about 140 years. Rich's interpretation of this structure and its iconic 50-foot clock and toothpaste sign required over 2,500 pieces of styrene and wire braces for the building and its roof top steel sign structure. There are 185 commercial Tichy windows that were modified prior to installation, and the unique circle-top windows on the upper floor are resin castings from a scratch-built master.

Sunday morning, I attended Alan Mende's PowerPoint clinic on the techniques he uses to scratch build locomotives. It reminded me of watching George Stock, the professional model maker, who pioneered HO in the 1930s and is on the NMRA list of Pioneers of Model Railroading. At the end of the presentation, Alan asked anyone interested in a copy to list their email address. When I got home, a pdf copy of the presentation was in my email inbox.

I then took advantage of the home layouts that were open. My first stop was to visit the PRR North Philadelphia and Chestnut Hill Branch modeled by Ron Hoess in Chadds Ford, PA. Next, I visited Ken McCorry in Eagle, PA—always impressive to see. Finally, I visited Earl Paine to see the latest improvements to his Reading Railroad in Skippack, PA. 🚂



Step-by-Step Weathering

by Eric Hansmann



After I build, paint, and decal a freight car model, it's time to apply weathering so it looks like it's been traveling a few thousand miles. The lead image shows the final appearance. Let's take a look at the steps I took to arrive there.

After the decals are applied and dry, I spray a gloss coat of Future acrylic floor finish to seal the work. This has a new product name of Pledge FloorCare Multi-Surface Finish.

Flat coat



The model in the top part of this image has only the gloss coat applied. The bottom model shows the model after a tinted flat coat was applied.

The flat coat started with a little thinner, then a pipette and a half draw of Model Master Acryl flat, then two drops of Vallejo burnt umber. I stirred this with a toothpick for about a minute in the paint cup. I use an Iwaata Eclipse HP-BCS siphon feed, dual action airbrush.

I sprayed one flat coat then waited a few minutes to review the model. I thought it was light so I sprayed another coat. I liked the coverage after the second coat and set the model aside while I cleaned up the airbrush. Notice how the red tone of the original car color, Vallejo Cavalry brown (70.982), has changed.

Layers

I think of weathering as layers that have accumulated over time. This flat coat is the first layer that cuts the bright white of the lettering and the freshness of the car color.

The prototype C&O automobile box cars came into service in August 1923 and I model November 1926. I'm often thinking about how much weathering would take effect in the years before my time period.

Paint details and wash



Car roofs are one of the most visible parts of our model freight cars

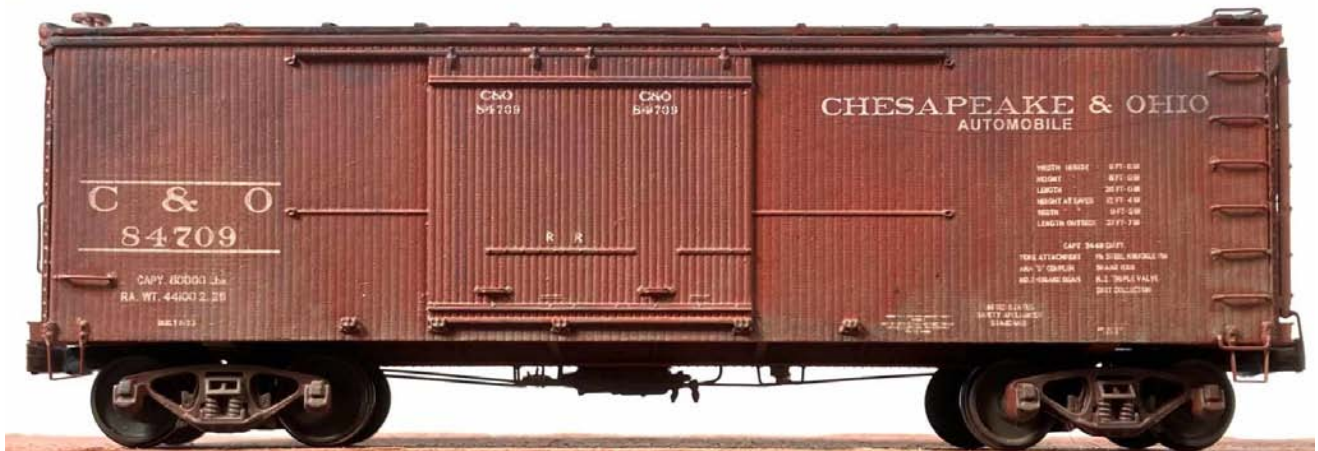
I started on the roof, randomly daubing Vallejo Model Air light grey with a microbrush to represent paint failure spots on the galvanized roof section. I kept the paint failure spots minimal. Several parts of the running boards were painted with khaki and light grey colors to represent replaced and worn boards. I applied Vallejo Model Wash dark brown with a wide brush and ended up with the appearance in the above photo.



I continued applying the wash. While I liked how the roof looked, the sides seemed too dark. I rinsed out the brush and applied distilled water to remove some of the work. A cotton swab mopped up the excess using downward strokes. I snapped the above photo after this step. I was a bit concerned with the appearance but pushed forward.



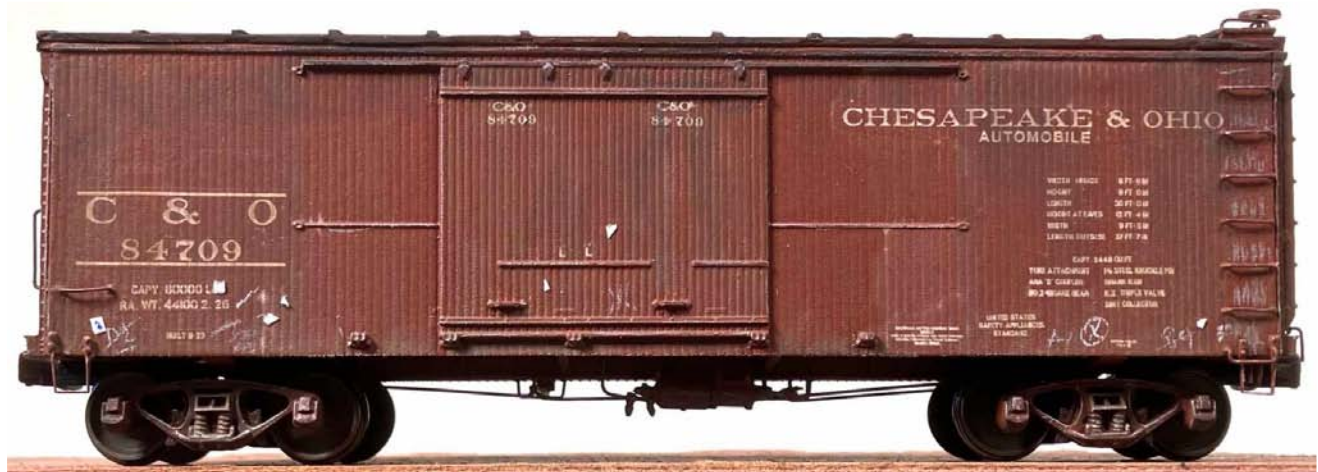
Pan Pastels



I scrubbed my favorite Pan Pastel soot color onto the roof (PP 820.1 Neutral Grey Extra Dark). I also hit upper portions of the car sides and ends with a lighter application.

Road dust was applied next using PP 780.5 Raw Umber along the side sills and some lower areas. The car ends and trucks also received this color. The image above captures these steps.

Final layers

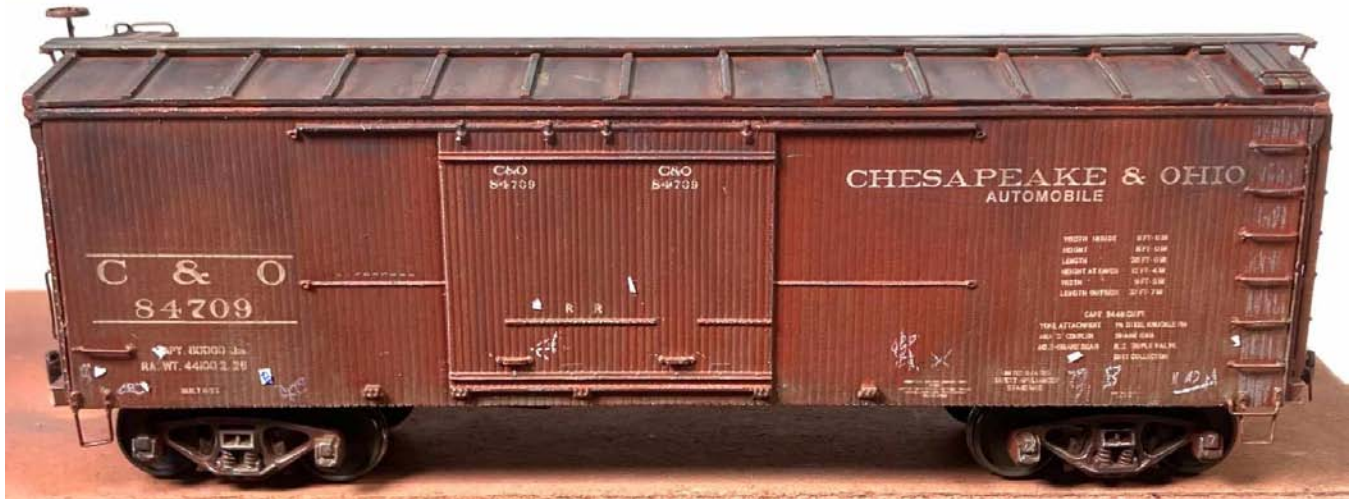


Prismacolor pencil highlights are my next step. A 10% Cool Grey color is my favorite for highlighting edges. I also used a 30% Warm Grey in a few areas, mainly the scuff marks at the grab iron ladders. I used both pencils for the chalk marks. The Warm Grey presents an older mark that has not fully disappeared.

I often see route cards and remnants of cards and placards on wood sheathed cars. I use small bits of paper to represent these elements. I cut the route cards as small rectangles, while the card remnants are ripped as bits from the same strip of paper as the cards. I apply a dot of canopy glue to the car side, wet an end of a toothpick and pick up the card remnant, then place the remnant onto the glue dot. These are simple weathering layer additions.

The car ends receive similar treatments. I use a very light grey or tan color to represent the dried mud splash from other car wheels that tend to streak on the ends. The end placard boards have usually lost some of the original car color and often bear remains of old placards.





After a couple hours of work spread over a couple of days, the weathering layers are complete. Another freight car is ready for service.

I find it best to weather a few cars at a time. You will get into a rhythm while working on the different layers. I always recommend modelers start weathering on older AHM or Tyco car as practice. There are many different materials and methods. Pick a few materials and see how they work. The practice isn't just about color, but how different materials can affect the appearance. I always start with a flat coat as it gives tooth to the surface for weathering to stay in place.

Lastly, I do not apply a final overspray to seal the work. I've not seen much of the Pan Pastel material disappear through handling. My models are handled quite a bit. Many are packed for travel to RPM events. They are unpacked at the event and repacked to head home. A final overspray often blows away a noticeable amount of Pan Pastel material. Your mileage may vary.

I hope these tips encourage you to weather some freight cars.



About the author...

Eric Hansmann has been model railroading since the mid-1970s and built his first HO-scale layout following a John Armstrong plan in an Atlas track plan book. He has had articles published in the Layout Design Journal, Model Railroad Hobbyist, Model Railroad Planning, and Railroad Model Craftsman.

Eric was consumed by the narrow-gauge bug for several years, but settled into HO-scale prototype modeling, focusing on the mid-1920s. He moved to Philadelphia in February of 2023 and unpacked his HO-scale B&O Wheeling Freight Terminal in a 10x16 space. It offers a different pace for operations. He is working on designing, building, and operating a new layout inspired by a forgotten B&O branch in Pittsburgh—the Allegheny Yard Branch on which he spoke in February.

He posts regular hobby activity updates to his blog (<http://designbuildop.hansmanns.org/>), and manages the Resin Car Works blog (<http://blog.resincarworks.com/>).



Bill Fagan: *The Video Vigilante*



Photos are snapshots from videos/slideshows by Bill Fagan

Below are examples of some impressive layouts that I've visited. I've videoed layouts in California, Idaho, Maryland, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. 188 layouts with 812 videos and 2826 followers on YouTube with 1.5 million views.

↓ Richard Newmiller, MMR - PRR Dresher Division

Construction started 8/2016 and the layout was completed in 7 years. This free-lanced, prototype HO scale layout set in the mid-1960s is a walk-in design occupying a 14 ft. x 20 ft. area with 490 feet of track. The dual-track mainline leaves Greenwich yard, climbs a 2.25% grade into the mountains and interchanges with the saw mill and logging businesses. Operations are enhanced with 3 staging tracks, team tracks, passing sidings, multiple crossovers and 28 switching sidings that serve 30 customers. The NCE-DCC layout has multiple, scratch-built, exceptional quality structures, 3 of which earned the Best-in-Show award in judged NMRA contests. Scenery is complete, all motive power is sound equipped.

Here's a video of his railroad: <https://youtu.be/73Nt-VL3wps?si=ZO-3b-Gtek5wn7IJ>





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 wfagan@comcast.net. More to follow in the next issue of *The Dispatcher*.

Enjoy,

Bill



Andreas Nesemann – Frankfurt, Germany

We are rich with model railroads in our division. Many layouts can be viewed during the November Model Railroad Open House Event. For those who do not know, November is Model Railroading Month. In this region, you can visit layouts in four states: Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.

One such layout belongs to division member Andreas Nesemann. He has opened his layout to visitors in November for many years. He resides in my home state of Delaware and models European/German railways in 3-rail HO. I have visited his model railway several times, each time discovering something new; this time I took particular notice of the small clips on the locomotives that make contact with the center rail. The layout performed flawlessly and the scenery was well done. The electronics are also top notch and include working signals, turnout matrix, and operating protection gates. The layout has many scratch-built structures, none more impressive than his Munich train shed. Andreas is truly an outstanding modeler.

Join me in a cup of joe as you enjoy the following photographs taken during my last visit.











ON THE (RAIL) ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL

Cocoa Beach - January 3–7, 2024

This meet is a great way to start the year. This was supposedly the very first RPM meet over 20 years ago. I have attended it for each of the last few years, sometimes with my wife and other years with friend Eric Dervinis. It is described as “an NMRA sanctioned event,” meaning that they are most likely set up as a 100% NMRA club and therefore covered by the NMRA’s liability policy. There were 210 attendees this year and over 300 folks in total.

Eric and I flew down on Wednesday, January 3rd even though the meet did not start until Thursday afternoon. We did this out of caution as one year our flight was cancelled due to a snowstorm. We flew together on AA from PHL to MCO (Orlando), though on separate reservations. I flew using miles while Eric had an AA voucher that he was given last August when he took a bump while flying to the NMRA’s annual convention in DFW.

After arrival in MCO around 4:30pm, we got my two checked bags and then headed to Hertz where Eric did not get the car he reserved. We left with a slightly smaller SUV and headed east on the Beeline Expressway to



Cocoa Beach. The new Brightline trains run on newly-built track just south of the expressway, and a train passed us by going 125mph making it the fastest conventional train in the US. FYI, Amtrak’s current Acela trains reach a maximum speed of 150mph (240km/h) in regular service on just four short sections of track totaling 41 miles in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Brightline’s service between West Palm Beach (WPB) and MCO started late last September. As we approached Port Canaveral, there were a number of cars pulled over to both sides of the bridge/causeway. Next, there was a bright flash to the northeast as the SpaceX Falcon 9 on the Ovzon 3 Mission launched from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station's Launch Complex 40 at 6:04pm. I have never seen a launch before, and this one



was viewable for only a few seconds before the rocket flew into the heavy cloud cover. We stopped for dinner at the Florida Fresh Grill, the highest rated restaurant in Cocoa Beach. I have eaten there several times before. We checked into the Oceanfront Hilton where the meet has been held since its inception. When we were there last year, the hotel was being renovated and surprisingly that was still going on when we arrived.

Thursday 1/4

The meet did not start until that evening, so our plan was to railfan Brightline which runs on the FEC track in Cocoa, FL about 15 miles from the hotel on Cocoa Beach island. The FEC tracks run along Florida's coastline from Miami to Jacksonville. Brightline has run on the FEC tracks north of Miami to WPB for several years. The service from WPB to MCO started late last September. There are no stops



between those two stations because people in those counties long opposed the service. The new line to MCO joins the FEC mainline in Cocoa. As part of the project, additional trackage was installed between WPB and Cocoa while other trackage was straightened. We did not have a rail map with us so just winged it and came to an industrial area that was a bit north of the track to MCO. Construction is a big industry in Florida and FEC hauls lots of sand and gravel. On closer examination, I saw that one of the Ortner style hoppers cars (photo below) was pretty new and noticed this labeling on the car. FYI, FEC is currently owned by Grupo México.

We looped around and passed under the Brightline tracks, but could not see any place to stop. So we drove south into Cocoa and had lunch at a Wawa. Afterwards, we stopped at a grade crossing by the former FEC passenger station; passenger service ended in 1968 (next page).





The track there is now used as a transload facility by a local cement company. There was a line of cement between the rails that had hardened and was acting as additional ballast. I went online to see when the Brightline trains would pass by. For most of the day, there is a memory schedule with trains leaving WPB for MCO at :03 and leaving MCO for WPB at :50.



I figured it would be about a half hour from MCO to where we were standing and sure enough the southbound train passed at 1:24pm. From its website I saw that the train that left WPB at 12:03pm and would arrive at MCO at 2:15pm, meaning the northbound train should arrive there about 1:45pm. It arrived at 1:43pm.



All of its Siemens Charger locomotives are painted the same, but each trainset is a different color. However, it was difficult to see the colors from where we were standing. A few minutes later, a FEC high-rail vehicle went by slowly to the north.

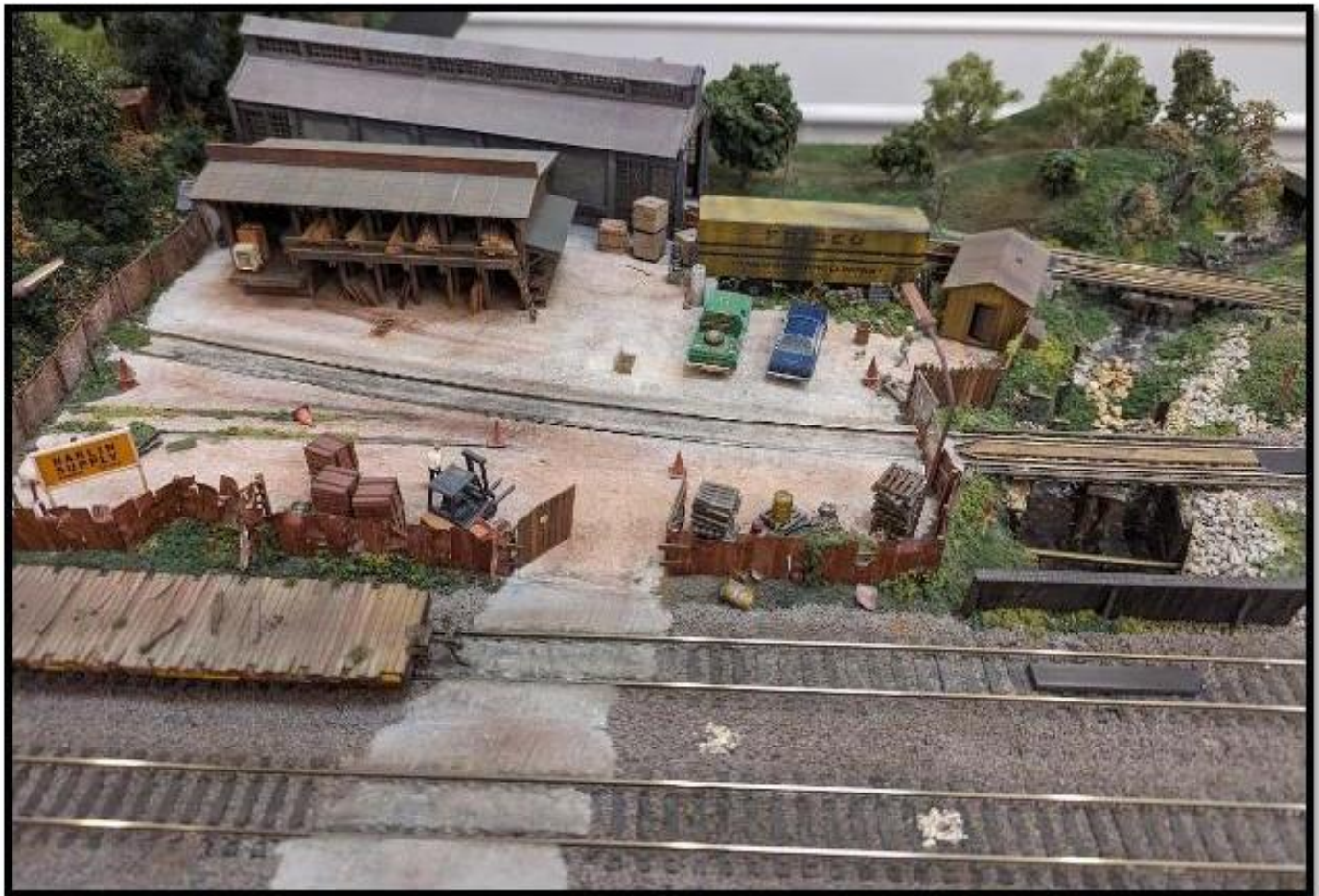
We headed back to the hotel so I could set up my free sales table. I brought an assortment of HO models and timetables to sell. For the length of the show, I alternated between attending clinics and being at my table. Total sales were \$106.

The clinics started after we had a mediocre dinner at the Cocoa Beach Fish Camp restaurant. From the name I would have thought it was a seafood place, but most things on the menu, including pig wings (?) were NOT from the ocean.

I skipped the 7pm clinics and at 8:30pm attended one on the Belt Railway of Chicago that explained its long and interesting history.

Friday 1/5

This was a full day of clinics with breaks when I could be at my table, or shopping at other tables or viewing the hundreds of models on display. Bob's Photos is a regular at RPM meets and at this show he occupied a central area between the lobby and the vendor/display room. In addition to his normal wares, he had acquired a huge collection of brass, books, and detail parts from the estate of the founder of Reboxx. There were also two modular layouts on display: a smaller HO one and a larger N-scale one featuring Brightline that has been at the meet before.



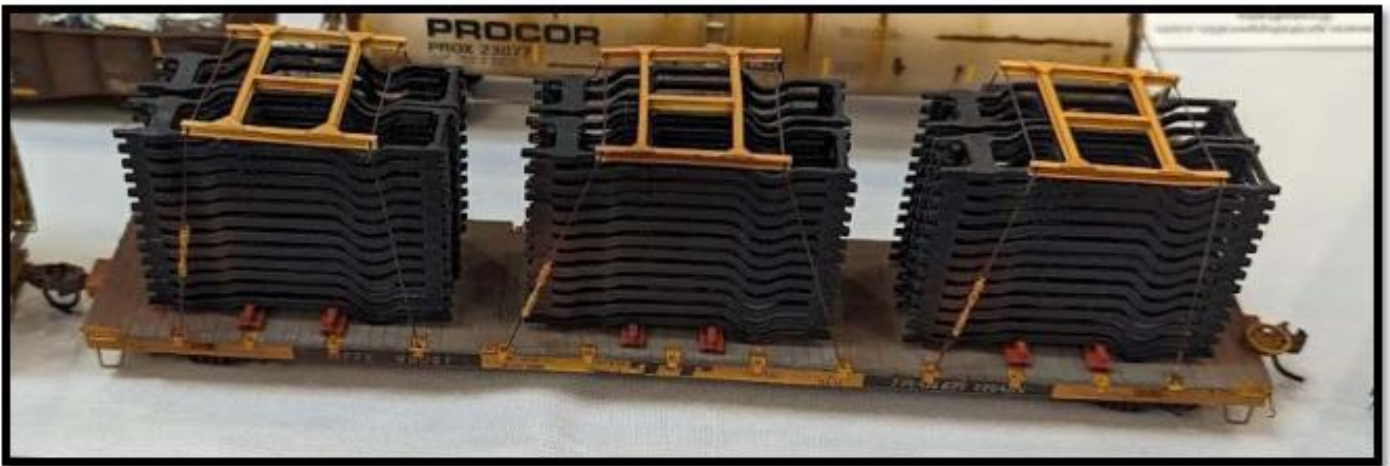


In terms of clinics, I started at 9am with one on freight car lettering and stencils by Stephen Priest, MMR, followed by one that was mistitled. It was called “Christmas Mail Trains,” but was really about the seasonal trains added one year in the late 1960s between NYC and Florida. I skipped the 1pm clinics, and then attended “Modeling MOW Equipment” at 2:30pm. I skipped the 4pm ones, and then it was time for dinner.

We joined a group of attendees, including Tony Koester, at Squid Lips. At 7pm, I attended another clinic with Stephen Priest on Thrall 86-foot auto parts cars. This is the third product from Classic One Model Works of which Stephen is one of the principals. At 8:30pm, there was a very interesting presentation titled, “Piermont and the Northern End of the Erie’s Northern Branch.” The actual location is just south of the Tappan Zee Bridge (I refuse to call it the King Cuomo I Bridge). I have driven through that area many times and wondered about the historic trackage there.

Saturday 1/6

This was the last day of the meet. I started at 9am with a clinic on autoframe loads. The presenter (from Canada) was totally engrossed with these, having many cars on his layout. He showed one picture of a Reading gondola in Philmont, PA loaded with frames. I emailed a Reading expert back home and found out that these had come from the Budd factory in northeast Philly; a train of frames would leave the small yard there at the end of the evening rush. The picture above was the presenter’s model in the display area of a later-era, loaded flatcar.



At 10:30am, I saw a presentation by the curator of the Pullman Library after which we went for lunch at the local McDonald’s where this flock of birds was waiting for their lunch.



Across the street is Ron Jon's, currently the largest surf shop in the world. The chain started in 1959 in Ship



Bottom, NJ on Long Beach Island.

Back at the meet, I skipped the 1pm clinics, and at 2:30pm attended “Operating Like the Prototype” by Tony Thompson. You would not expect a clinic like this at a RPM meet where the emphasis is on very detailed models. At 4pm it was time for “Penn Central Cabins & Cabooses.” I was amazed at the variety from PRR, NYC, NH, and even new ones built for PC. I knew two of the photographers whose pictures were included in the presentation.

For dinner, I had a very decent pie at Mangia & Bevi Pizzeria Napoletana. Given there is NO good pizza where I live in PA, I am pizza deprived.

I skipped the 7pm clinics, and at 8:30pm attended one on Brightline's Orlando expansion. The presenter had worked on the expansion and had taken many videos using his drone. During the Q&A at the end, it was mentioned that Brightline has bought acres of land in northern Cocoa near a Walmart Supercenter for a station and other real estate development. At 10pm, there was a drawing for door prizes. Each attendee had received a free strip of tickets and could buy more of them if desired. There was a lunch bag by each donated item and you would drop in a ticket if you wanted to win that item. I waited until near the end to do this and found one bag that was empty. I put in one ticket and won an older set of three Bev-Bel/TMI hoppers decorated for L&N. When home, I put this on eBay and sold it for \$18.50. Eric did not win any door prizes, but later learned he had won a \$50 gift card from ISE. I have their “Squealer,” but he doesn't want that on his layout.

Sunday 1/7

Eric and I had breakfast at a Waffle House, after which he drove me to Our Saviour Catholic Church so I could attend the 10:15am Mass. I had been to Mass there in prior years, as well. He picked me up 45 minutes later with someone else from the meet who needed a ride to MCO. However, we did not drive directly to the airport, but instead stopped at Martin Megregian's huge O-scale (2-rail) layout on Merritt Island. The layout was on the upper level over a three-car and RV garage. His property was waterfront on the Indian River.



The smiling woman over the roundhouse is Cinthia Priest, Editor of the *NMRA Magazine*, who arrived with the crew from Classic One Model Works (to the right of her).



The layout utilized a mushroom-type design such that the layout continues behind the backdrop.



There was a plaque buildup on one wall, but I guess that is okay because Martin is a retired dentist and also MMR #633.



We left the layout and headed to MCO making a food and gas stop at a Wawa just east of the airport. We returned the rental car, and I checked in for our flight. I had two suitcases to check in full of the stuff that didn't sell. The regular line for TSA was extremely long so I was glad I had TSA Pre-Clear, even though that line was longer than what I usually see at PHL. I was upgraded again even though I was flying with miles. Our flight left the gate late, and then was further delayed when just before taking off, we had to return to the gate. A young woman passenger refused to buckle her seat belt. Exiting the plane, she walked by me carrying a young child. It seemed odd that neither one of them had a coat nor did they have any carry-on luggage. The rest of the flight was uneventful. At PHL, I retrieved my bags and caught the train to Jenkintown where Carol picked me up.

The Prototype Rails dates for next year were announced at the meet. Normally it's the first weekend in January, but in 2025 it will be the second weekend, January 9th through 12th.



ON THE (RAIL) ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

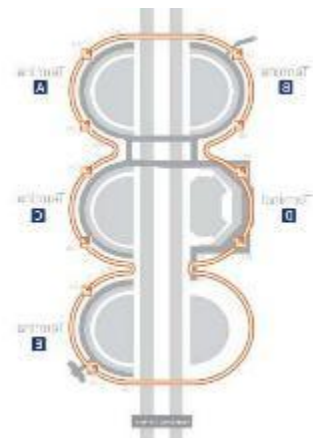
CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL



A TRIP TO JAPAN WITH A STOPOVER AT DFW JANUARY 9–22, 2024

We had talked about this trip for a while. I had previously been to Japan five times. The first trip was back in 1988 when the company I was working for (Zotos) was sold to Shiseido, a Japanese cosmetic company. I was made the CFO and went to Japan on business for a week. When I lived in Korea in 2012, I went to Japan on four weekend trips. Last summer, I entered a lottery to ride on a Japanese “cruise train.” Yes, there are several of these there. Think of a private train with sleepers, a dining car, lounge car, locomotives, etc., that travels around Japan. It stops at various places to see the sites. The ones I tried for only take 40 folks at a time and we weren’t picked for trips in January through March. So, we decided to just go on our own.

Looking at possible flights, there were several ways to fly Japan on AA or on JAL, its One World partner. We could fly via JFK, BOS, SFO, and LAX. However, the most sensible routing for us time and money wise was PHL–DFW–HND (the closer in of Tokyo’s two airports). We were looking at going there in mid-January and then looking at the calendar, I realized that we would return to DFW the same weekend as the Plano train show which I have attended for the last three years and planned to attend in 2024. So, I tried to buy tickets with a stopover in DFW and the cost went up almost \$1000 from \$1642 round trip. I tried booking PHL–DFW round trip and DFW–HND round trip and that cost was almost \$2300. I appealed for help on a Yahoo chat group for AA flyers and someone said to book PHL–HND–LAX and LAX–DFW (stopover)–PHL. That cost came to \$1,752 for each in coach as we planned to upgrade on the DFW–HND leg using systemwide upgrade (SWUs) vouchers that I get from AA for achieving certain point levels annually. The most recent SWUs came in December after our trip to Portugal for hitting 175K loyalty points. On 12/26/23, we received an email offer from AA to upgrade to premium economy for \$2705 each; sorry, no thanks.



Tuesday 1/9

My daughter, Erin is staying with us for a while so she was able to drive us to Jenkintown for an early 5:54am train to be safe for our 8:20am flight to DFW. I hoped for an upgrade, but we were 10 and 11 on a really long list. So, we settled for our normal exit row seating and with no one in front of me in 11F. The plane left a bit early and it was just over 1,300 miles to DFW and the flight took three hours and forty-five minutes. However, we landed at the far eastern edge of the airport and literally spent a half hour cruising the tarmac there until we came to our gate in B. The captain even apologized for the long taxi. DFW is a huge complex with five terminals and AA flies from all of them (using A/B/C exclusively). From B, after going through TSA, we had to take the automated Skylink people mover to get to D. We were in a hurry as the long taxi cut into our available lounge time (meaning lunch).

As soon as we landed, I called AA to request use of two SWUs on the next leg, DFW–HND. The reason I did not do this before we left PHL is I did not want to waste the SWUs on the PHL–DFW segment. They are good for up to three segments on the same trip. It is quite possible that had I done that, we could have been upgraded using the SWUs (vs. the normal upgrade I could have received due to my EP status) on the flight to DFW and then NOT on the flight to Japan. That is a total waste. This happened to us back in May on the return from Israel when we were NOT upgraded on TLV–JFK but I was later upgraded on BOS–PHL. I complained to AA and luckily, they restored the SWU that I unknowingly used on the short connecting flight.



This time we got lucky and were upgraded and to my great surprise were moved from coach to business class. I would have thought that we would be upgraded to premium economy (PE). The two prior times (PHL–DUB and PHL–MAD) we had used SWUs, we were originally ticketed in PE. Score! AA was offering the business class seats for over \$10K the day before we checked in. The business cabin seating on this 787-8 was 1-2-1 and we were assigned two aisle flatbed seats but we could certainly live with that since this was for FREE.



We were well served. On a lark, I went with the Japanese meal and these were the appetizers.



I binge-watched most of the sixth season of Young Sheldon, some of which I had seen before. From my seat, I was able to follow our route from video monitor on the bulkhead wall. As you can see, we travelled over southern Alaska and came very close to Russia once on the other side of the Pacific. The total distance traveled was about 6,500 miles. Eventually, I lay down for some sleep. In addition to the normal amenity kit, AA gave me a pair of PJs to wear. I did not wear them and hope to sell them on eBay to an aviation fan. There are no window shades on the 787. The windows darken automatically like some sunglasses. We were woken up about an hour before we landed for a snack. The cabin crew were all seasoned veterans, some of which seemed to be older than us!

Wednesday 1/10

We landed in Tokyo’s Haneda Airport just after 4:30pm when it was dark. We had a very long walk from our arrival gate on an extension of T3 to where we cleared immigration and customs. The officials there were very efficient and we passed through quickly. Once outside, we headed to the counter that sold bus tickets. We needed to get to Shin-Yokohama so we could get a JR train to Osaka. Shin in Japanese means new. When the first Shinkansen (new main line) rail line was built in 1964 for that year’s olympics, it was not possible to bring the new line into certain cities. Until that point Japanese trains were all cape gauge (42” or 3.5’). However, the Shinkansen line was built to standard gauge and in many cases elevated in urban areas. It was possible to get to Shin-Yokohama by rail from HND, but that involved two rail lines and a change of stations in the middle. Too complicated given we just arrived!

I had looked at the bus schedules before we left so I had an idea of what is involved. When I bought the tickets at 900¥ each (\$6.27), the agent told us where to stand for the bus. The Japanese are extremely regimented and the level of human involvement far exceeds anything in the US or the EU. The bus came some time before 6pm, stopped at the other two terminals, and we were at the Shin -Yokohama station about 45 minutes later. There were machines to buy tickets but we just walked up to the manned counter. I had investigated getting a JR rail pass, but it was much more expensive than the travel that we planned to do. Everyone seemed to speak some English. The next two trains were sold out, but there were literally other trains every few minutes. So, we got two coach seats on the 2018 (everything there uses the 24-hour clock) departure to Hiroshima that would arrive in Osaka at 2227. The train was a Nozomi or N700 model that hits a top speed of 300 kph (186 mph). The tickets cost 14190¥ each (\$98.45) for a trip of 385km (222 miles). Unlike Amtrak, we were assigned to particular seats in this



particular car. The seating was 3-2 and we had the middle and aisle seat. However, there were two empty seats nearby so I sat in a window seat for the trip.



My ability to take a good picture of the arriving train was blocked by movable gates at the edge of the platform. We settled in for the relatively short two-hour+ ride. There wasn't much to see since it was dark and we were moving really fast. The train only made two stops, but strangely the display in the car showed the name of other stations as we blew by them. Eventually I got up and walked most of the 16-car train and saw the sign above. No one checked our tickets; two train crew plus a railroad policeman walked through the train bowing as they entered and exited each car. I was surprised there was no food service on board. Most folks on board had food and drinks. There were vending machines and a small store on the platform in Shin-Yokohama.

We arrived on time in Osaka. I booked a Holiday Inn Express that was near the station for which had printed out a map showing its location. Addresses there use a block system that is difficult even for the locals to understand. I am usually good with directions, but had trouble getting my bearings because there were too many exits from the station. Eventually, we made it down to the street and as I was studying the map, a young man offered help. Turns out he had attended St. Joe's University in Philly for a semester and spoke reasonable English. He walked with us for a bit and then pointed us in the right direction. The Holiday Inn Express was three short blocks away. However, we stopped first to buy some sodas for Carol and something for breakfast for me. I had booked the hotel without breakfast. It was a modern building and we had a room with a city view on the 10th floor. The amazing thing was that there was a washer/dryer combo unit in our room. We knew this in advance and planned to wash clothes there before we checked out on Saturday. After a long day, we hit the sack.

Thursday 1/11

There were two pleasant surprises at the hotel. First, because of my status with HI, we were given free breakfast (1800¥ per person). Second, there was a free shuttle to the station. The breakfast was a mix of western and Japanese food (rice, salads, and fishy things). We took the shuttle to the station even though in the daylight we could have easily found the station. We were dropped off by a huge bicycle parking lot under the train station with attendants. There were gates for the bikes to enter and then pay when you left.



Once inside, we headed to the Osaka Metro station. Osaka is Japan's second largest city with a metro population of about 19 million folks. The city has a well-developed subway system with nine lines that connect with JR and private railroads. The subway lines have a name, letter, and are color coded; the stations are numbered. Oddly, some of the signage was only in English. We tried to buy tickets from a vending machine, but it would not take a credit card. So, we had to get some yen. An attendant directed us to a 7-11 ATM where I withdrew 10,000¥ (\$70.06) from my cash account at Fidelity. The 7-11 ATM charged a small fee, but Fidelity rebates that. The ticket vending machine (TVM) was very different from anything in the US but was similar to the self-service cash registers we saw in most stores during the trip. The transit there (and in the rest of Japan) is priced by distance or stop, with fares starting about 200¥. However, a one day Eco card was available for 820¥ (\$5.74) each so we bought that.





It turns out that the M (Red) line was above ground at Shin-Osaka but went below ground once we crossed over the Dojimagawa River. We switched to the Green line and got off to see the **Osaka Castle** located in a 261-acre central park. I had been *to* this when I was in Osaka

by myself back in 2012. This time we walked inside the huge stone walls of the castle that was built in the 16th century. It was destroyed and rebuilt several times during Japan's lengthy civil wars that lasted until 1867 when a young Meiji emperor was proclaimed the leader of Japan. Admission was free to the grounds but we paid 600¥ (\$4.16) to enter the central building or 'keep' that was reconstructed in 1931. I learned later that had we shown our Eco card we would have received a small discount. The building was very crowded. We were able to take an elevator up several levels and then walk up two more levels to an observation deck. On our way down, the floors were full of historical items from the Shogun eras. Below is the view to the south. The brick building to the immediate left was a military headquarters built, in an European style, in the 1930s when the castle served as an army base.





We decided to eat dinner in the Shin-Osaka train station. At a lower level, there were “streets” with various small food stands and restaurants, all of which had very realistic plastic models of the food they served, like this one above. We went into a small place and ordered rice bowls with shrimp and other things. The food was okay, but when we went to pay the folks there who spoke virtually no English, immediately said “cash only.” Our dinner cost 2500¥ (\$17.50) and we had the yen to pay for it. We caught the shuttle back to the hotel and called it an early night.

Friday 1/12



Carol joined me for breakfast this day. After which we rode the shuttle back to the train station. We bought subway tickets to Namba Station. This is a huge underground complex that goes for blocks and we finally came up at Exit #4 for the station for the Nankai Railway (a private railroad) that offers service to the Kansai Airport (KIX). KIX is often described as the floating airport as it was built on an artificial island in the middle of Osaka Bay and is located 40kms from the city center. I had flown into here from Seoul Korea when I visited Osaka in 2012. I wanted to ride the Rapi:t Express train, which is a retro style six-car trainset that runs with limited stops between Namba and KIX. We splurged and rode in the spacious *Super Seats* that were 1-2.



These cost 1,569 ¥ (\$10.75) each. We could not buy a return ticket because we did not know what time we would return. The 10:35 train traveled through urbanized industrial areas before crossing to KIX on the Sky Gate Bridge R, the longest double-decked truss bridge in the world at 12,300 feet. We arrived at 11:05.

You might wonder why we were traveling to KIX. Yes, the ride on the Rapi:t was interesting, but the real reason was to visit the Sky View Observation Hall. It is located at the end of one of the runways and has a number of aviation displays including a 1/72 model of the main terminal.

We caught a free bus from the terminal and were there a few minutes later.



I bought some things in the gift shop and an hour later, we were back at the main terminal. We took a regular express train back to Namba that only cost 970¥ (\$6.69) each. In the KIX train station, I learned we could have ridden a JR Express train to KIX from Shin-Osaka and then rode back to Osaka on the Rapi:t. We stopped for a snack lunch in the Nankai station. There was a Belgian waffle stand there that I stopped at back in 2012.

Leaving the station to the streets, we walked down some shopping streets to the Dotonbori District that is one of Osaka's principal tourist and nightlife areas. The District runs along the Dotonbori Canal that has boats that cruise up and down the canal under several bridges.



One store even had a Ferris wheel that went through and over the building.



Along the canal is this giant neon sign which is a historic landmark. After the boat ride, we walked down the side of the canal stopping at a few stores and stands. Carol had some more beef on a stick. We stopped at a bookstore trying to buy a book requested by one of my model railroad friends. I saw signs for a frozen food buffet. This I had to see. Turns out you paid a fixed price of 1200¥ (\$8.40) for 45 minutes during which you could eat as much as you wanted from over 200 kinds of frozen food that you popped into one of the 30 microwaves, except for the frozen desserts. Soft drinks were included or you could opt for an all you can drink liquor plan. Oddly all the signage was in English. Carol checked out the offerings but decided it was not for us.

Eventually, we got to the subway and rode back to Shin-Osaka. The Kawasaki cars had smart displays that showed the layout of each station. Note that the exits (in yellow) are numbered (next page).





It was the end of the business day and the car was full. Note how almost everyone was dressed the same. I would say that about half of the folks there (and elsewhere in Japan) wore masks. We went to the food “streets” again. I had a kaisen combo that cost 1500¥ (\$10.50) and just had glasses of water with my meals. This is what I had to eat.

We took the shuttle back to the HI and once in the room washed three days of dirty clothes. The combo washer/dryer was fine for the wash but the dryer was complicated and the instructions were in Japanese. We had to spread out the still wet clothes to dry and even put some of them back in the dryer the next morning. We packed up as we were leaving early the next morning for Kyoto.



Saturday 1/13

Carol joined me again for breakfast. We got our things from the room and checked out. The three nights cost \$342.72. We took the shuttle to the station and headed to where the regular JR trains are. We could have taken a Shinkansen, but since Kyoto was only 39km away, we opted for a local commuter train. I think it cost like 500-600¥



each but I could not keep the ticket stubs. The electric MU train only took about 25 minutes even with several stops. We had talked about what to see in Kyoto. Tops on my list was the railway museum while Carol wanted to see the FushimiInari Shrine. FYI, shrines are Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan, while temples are Buddhist, which came to Japan in the 6th century from what is now Korea. The railway museum was an easy, one-stop ride from the train station. The shrine was a bit south from Kyoto Station but easily reachable via another JR line and we decided to go there first. Once in Kyoto Station, we went down to a lower level and a few minutes later were riding a very crowded train to the shrine. Turns out this is a very popular place for the locals to visit especially on Saturday. This is the view of the station there.



When we tried to exit, our tickets would not open the gates. All train tickets there have a money value and there were machines at every exit where one could make a fare adjustment. However, a female railroad employee came up to us and asked to see our tickets and told us how much more was due. We paid about 200¥ each or \$1.40 after which she took our tickets and let us pass through the gate by the office.

We followed the crowd to the shrine that was a short distance away. This was the entrance to the shrine. Kyoto was the capital of Japan for over 1,000 years (until 1868) and remains the country's cultural capital. This shrine is part of that culture. It sure seems orange to me, my favorite color, but the Japanese said it was red. Inside, Shinto priests were holding a service.

My right knee hurt so I stayed near this part of the shrine, while Carol followed the trail up the adjacent mountain. I watched folks make offerings and write prayers? requests? on pieces of paper that were tied onto bamboo frames that were set up for that purpose. Meanwhile, on her hike Carol came across scores of "red" arches that were donated by followers. Their names (in Japanese) appeared on the side of each arch. She was gone for about 25 minutes during



which I just milled around till I found a place to sit down.

We bought a train ticket from there to the stop for the Kyoto Railway Museum but had to change trains in Kyoto Station. While walking to the other train, we stopped by a sign for the Hello Kitty Train. During our trip, we saw other trains and subway cars decorated for various cartoon characters. We also passed this sign (below left).



It was only one stop to the Kyoto Railway Museum that among other buildings includes a historic station and roundhouse. The admission was 1,500¥ (\$10.50) and Carol said she did not want to go in. Next to the museum was a park with other things so she hung out there while I visited the museum for 1.25 hours. There was a lot to see and I certainly could have spent much more time there.

The railroad came late to Japan; the first line opened in 1873. The railroads were all privately owned until Japan Railways (JR) was founded in 1949 to facilitate the post-war reconstruction. There were 54 historic trains on display: outside under a shed, inside a building added in 2016, and in or by the roundhouse. There were various exhibits on the functional parts of the railroads, including an interesting display of machines that produced paper tickets. What follows is just a mere sample of what I saw.

This was the first SHINKANSEN that was called the Bullet Train. Service started on Oct. 1 1964 between Tokyo and Osaka just in time for the first Tokyo Olympics. It initially reduced the travel time from six hours, forty minutes to four hours; a year later, after the new service was proven, the travel time was further reduced to three hours, ten minutes. Today, the *Nozomi* trains that we rode cover the same distance in two hours, thirty minutes. However, there was one problem at the start. The speed of the fast train created a vacuum effect that sucked up the ballast. They solved this by gluing down the ballast just like model railroaders do.



The paint scheme above left is reminiscent of the Great Northern or Northern Pacific Railways. The train on the right is the Global Express 999 that was based on a C62 class steam engine. Galaxy Express 999 was a Japanese TV manga series that debuted in 1978 and is still popular.

There were other exhibits about 999 inside the museum (right and next page).

The floor of the main hall was full of other historic locomotives with other exhibits spread out over two floors.





There were also several layouts. This one below was a large 2-rail O scale. There was a huge HO layout in a special room on the second floor with theater type seating. It was automated and offered a special show several times a day. I watched part of one show.



Short on time, I headed outside to see the large, restored roundhouse and turntable.



By the turntable, one locomotive was lightly steaming. Apparently, the museum offers a short ride behind a smaller steam engine. I picked up some coal that friend Eric can add to his layout.



To me the above sign is obvious, but perhaps others were not aware. I exited through the former Nijo Station House built in 1904. It is one of the oldest surviving Japanese wooden stations. Inside, there is a small museum and gift shop selling toy and some model trains. There was a nice model of the roundhouse complex.





Leaving the museum grounds, I found Carol. We took the JR train back to the Kyoto Station and switched to the



subway. Kyoto only has two subway lines that form a cross (see map on next page). This is a map of the station where we changed lines. We rode two stops exiting by the Nijo-jo Castle. I booked the Crown Plaza there and requested a room that faced the castle.

This was the view from our room. It was time for dinner. We ate early each day because we usually only had



snacks for lunch. The Crown Plaza had several restaurants, but their prices were absurd. The dinner buffet was 6000¥ (\$42) per person and the steak restaurant was 15000¥ (\$105) per person, both way above my pay grade. I looked on Trip Advisor and saw there was a hamburger place 7 miles away so we tried to walk there. We never found it, but instead went into what seemed to be a Japanese diner that was part of a chain from Yokohama. We ordered food from a trilingual tablet that was served almost immediately. The prices were very reasonable, but the portions were small so we just ordered more food. Still, the bill was only 1290¥ (\$9.03). My knee was hurting so we took a taxi back to the hotel. Taxis there are normally a special Toyota model that is black and driven by a uniformed driver usually wearing white gloves and a mask. Since they drive on the other side of the road, the driver presses a button that opens the rear door on the other side. The ride only cost 500¥ (\$3.50) and I have yet to mention there is NO tipping in Japan.



Sunday 1/14

We were up early and Carol joined me for what was a huge buffet breakfast. It used the same space we had seen the night before for their dinner buffet. There was a chef making omelets and Carol had one of them. (I don't like eggs.) I had a plate full like this both days and made a large cup of iced tea to go with it.



We walked to the subway entrance across the street and rode an escalator down to track level. This is a major stop because it is near the Nijo Castle. We bought an all-day ticket for 800¥ (\$5.60) each and rode two stops on the Tozai Line to the City Hall exit.

We were heading to 10:30 Mass at the Kawaramachi Church, the Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier. It is one of three Catholic churches there. There are only about 431,000 Catholics in Japan (0.34% of the total population). A posting on Trip Advisor said the church was hard to find but we had no problem. It is a smaller building shaped like a triangle with a nice end wall made of stained glass. The Mass was in Japanese; there was an English

language Mass at 12:30, but we thought that was too late. After Mass, we walked through the lower level where there was a religious store and meeting rooms. The entrance to the church was under construction and leaving by a different way, we could see that a new office building was being constructed next to it and it seemed a new church entrance was part of the plan. As we were walking to the subway, a couple that was in church stopped us. The man was a Filipino American who has lived in Japan for 35 years and had taught English. His wife was younger and Japanese. They told us some places to see in Kyoto.



Our first stop was Kyoto City Hall, which is a western style building, built in 1927. FYI, because of Kyoto's



cultural significance, the US did not bomb the city during WWII. There was a museum inside, but it was closed. I am not a car guy, but it seemed most of the cars we saw there were similar to the Japanese cars sold in the US. An exception being the small boxy car in the picture above. We walked around and took an escalator down to the level of the subway, which had a small shopping street with stores like this.



We got back on the subway. At the end of each train, there was a uniformed conductor with white gloves hanging out the window like this.



We rode to a stop near the Kyoto Gyoen National Garden, which includes the former Imperial Palace complex. We had trouble crossing the street because there was some type of running event for young girls. Luckily, it was near the end of the race and finally the police removed the barricades so we could cross the street. The garden site is huge, a large rectangular enclosure 1,300 meters (4,300 feet) north to south and 700 meters (2,300 feet) east to west covering some 261 acres. We didn't have a map and as it was, we walked across the top and then entered the park. We should have entered from the side and it would have been a lot less walking for my sore knee. Eventually, we came to the palace complex that was open that day and free. Our luck continued as once inside, there was a free English language tour in a while so, we sat and waited. I should mention that almost every place/site/train that we visited or rode on in Japan had free wi-fi so we got caught up on the news and emails. The tour covered mostly the exterior of the buildings and some of the gardens. To enter one building, you had to remove your shoes, so just Carol went in. I don't go without shoes.

The roof of this gate structure is composed of many layers of cypress bark, effectively similar to a thatched roof in Ireland. It has to be replaced every 30 years or so.



We were there for over two hours after which we got back on the subway and rode down to the Central Station area. I wanted to see the Kyoto Tower that is across from the station. The tower was supposed to open during the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, but it was not finished until the end of 1964. It is 131 m (430ft) high and sits on top of a nine-story building that houses a hotel and shopping complex. We saw a sign for this Lego exhibit but could not find it despite a map (in Japanese) giving its location. We walked around the inside of the station looking at the various stores and shops. We decided it was time for an early dinner (no lunch) and headed down to here for dinner.

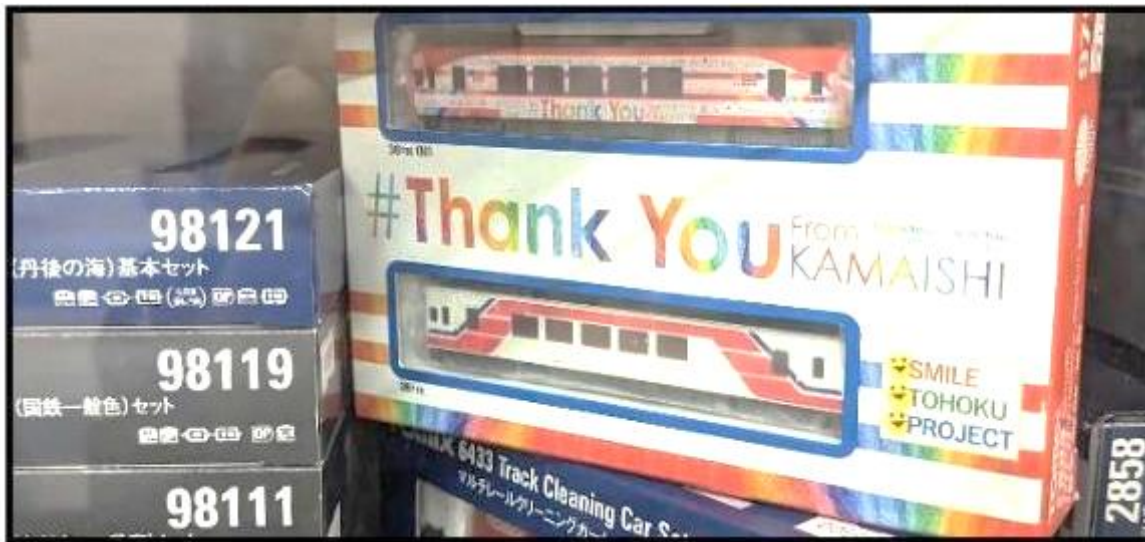




This was a long “street” full of restaurants and some stores under the Kyoto Station. I don’t remember where we ate (no pictures) but it cost \$38.07 on my Mastercard account.

After dining, we got back on the Green subway line and switched to the Orange line and rode past where got off for church. We were heading to the Gion part of Kyoto that was noted for geishas. Walking there,

and I went in for a quick look. There were models of Japanese trains in N/HO plus military/airplane kits. We kept



walking and came to this shrine. There were some young girls in geisha clothing, but the father said no pictures.



We kept walking and saw a geisha theater, but it did not seem to be open. We came to this major intersection where folks just seemed to be walking around. We followed the crowd one way, crossed the street, and came back on the other side. All of the walkways were covered and lit up. My knee was hurting so we got into a cab. The driver spoke no English and did not understand me saying “subway” so I just pointed. Actually, all he had to do was drive up the street to the subway entrance. When I saw the McD by the exit, I said stop and we got out. The fare was 500¥



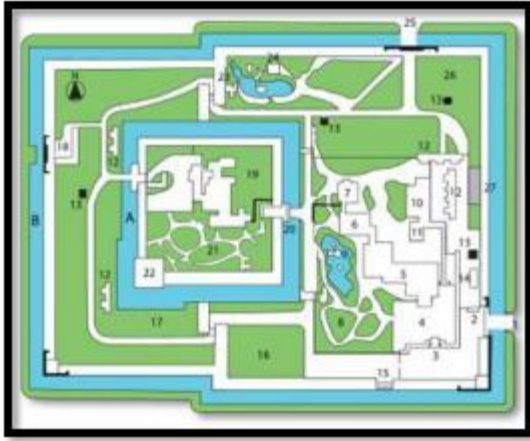
(\$3.50). On the subway, it was just a few stops to the castle exit. Back at the Crown Plaza, we packed up for an early morning, and went to bed.

Monday 1/15

We were up early and went down to the buffet and ate what we had the day before. We went back to the room and



got our coats so we could walk across the street to the Nijo-jo Castle. But first I took the above picture of the model that was in the Crown Plaza’s lobby. I have two comments on the model. First the hotel is included in the upper right. Second, the large building in the lower right, the central keep, or tenshu, was struck by lightning and burned to the ground in 1750 and not replaced. The castle was built in the 17th century and was the residence of the Tokugawa shōguns. After the emperor was restored to power in 1868, the castle became imperial property.



We arrived just as it was opening at 8:45 and bought our tickets. I was surprised at the 1300¥ (\$9.10) cost for each of us given what we paid in Osaka and the free National Gardens. However, it was a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We got a brochure and set out on the self-guided tour that took about 1.75 hours. There was a light rain when we started the tour. Once inside the grounds, I was surprised that there were moats, because on the model in the hotel lobby, the moats had been painted white, making them inconspicuous.. We stopped at several locations to take pictures.



This was a major entry gate that was full of metal ornamentation that looked like Stars of David.



This is how they protected certain trees for the winter. There were only a few other folks walking around the castle. The moats were filled with giant carp (koi) and fish food was available for purchase.

When we came to where the central keep was, we walked up several levels to the top. At the start of the day, my knee was okay to do this. This picture is towards our hotel (next page).





We ended up making a big loop and came out where we entered. We crossed over the street to the hotel to get our bags that were still in the room. I had told them we would check out about 11:30. The bill for the two nights was 45164¥ (\$307.99) plus a 400¥ (\$5.54) city tax. The cost was admittedly high as we could have easily stayed elsewhere for less than \$100 a night. However, I knew the rate when I booked and felt it was worth it given the hotel's location and convenience. The lavish breakfast buffet (free with my status) made it even better. Turns out the hotel had a shuttle to the train station so we rode that at noon and were in the station 20 minutes later. I went to the Shinkansen window and bought tickets for Nozomi train #368 at 12:54 splurging for the Green car. These tickets cost 37,680¥ (\$261.05) for both of us. I thought we were in an airplane once inside the car. The route was the same



as the ride to Osaka on the 10th, except in daylight. At times, we ran along the coasts and at other times we blew past farm fields that were next to the tracks.

FYI, the average Japanese farm is tiny, only about 7 acres. Until recently, only individuals could own farmland, but the farmers there are aging out and dying off. In 2020, there were almost 1 million acres of unused or abandoned farmland due to a lack of farmers. Recently the law was changed to allow corporations to buy farmland and some of the unused/abandoned acreage has been returned to agricultural use (next page).



I had asked for a window seat on the left so I would have this nice view of Mt. Fuji.

I could see it for some time before and after I took this picture. I was surprised by the snow cover. The mountain



is a sleeping volcano; the last eruption was in 1707. It is the tallest mountain in Japan at 12,388 ft and is a major Japanese culture icon and tourist attraction. The ride was uneventful and we arrived in Tokyo Station on time at 15:06. There were only three stops enroute: Nagoya, Shin Yokohama, and Shinagawa (oddly the Shin is part of the name).

While I was in Cocoa Beach, Carol was tasked with finding our Tokyo hotel. I had looked and there were no IHG (Holiday Inn) properties near Tokyo Station and ditto for the other chains that we normally use. She used the AA Advantage Hotel scheme to find the Karaksa Hotel Tokyo Station as she needed the bonus loyalty points to make AA's Platinum Pro status for the first time. She booked two nights with money and two nights using her AA award miles. Before we left, I printed out a detailed map of the area around Tokyo Station. We worked our way through the maze that is Tokyo Station and made it to the appropriate exit. With a crowd of folks, we crossed a major street and

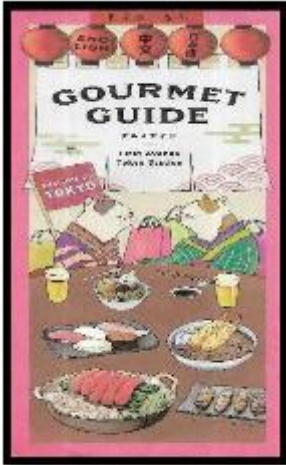


then the hotel was just around the corner on a side street. The hotel's lobby was tiny and it included the breakfast area. There were other folks trying to check in and there was a large amount of luggage against the wall. Clearly, this was not like the Crown Plaza. However, don't get me wrong, it was worth what we paid and the location was ideal. I skipped trying to use a check-in machine and was helped by a woman behind the counter. We got a comfortable room with two beds on the 4th floor that had a side view of the adjacent building. However, there was an ice machine just down the hall. Just in from the street was a turntable that was used to spin the cars coming up from its underground parking garage. When I win the lottery, I am supposed to have something



like this built on my friend Eric's driveway so I can more easily turn my car around when I leave his house after an operating session on his model railroad.

We settled into our room and then left to walk back to Tokyo Station. By the entrance was a Daimaru Department Store so we walked in to check it out. The first floor was full of small booths with young female clerks selling wrapped, fancy gift boxes of cookies, candy, and fruit, plus there was an EU style bakery stand. I bought some things at that stand for my breakfast the next day as I booked the Karaksa Hotel without breakfast. There is no store selling food things like this in the US. Once in the station, we head to First Avenue. This is a massive three-level shopping and restaurant area under the Tokyo Station similar to the "streets" we had seen under the Osaka and Kyoto Stations. I had grabbed a brochure



for it when we arrived in Tokyo Station. I recalled being there when I came to

Tokyo in Fall 2012 for a weekend while living in the ROK. We took an escalator down to a lower level that had four sections: *Gourmet Road*, *Ramen Street*, *Okashi Street*, and *Character Street*. The latter had stores and pop-up booths for many different cartoons, animes, and movie characters. There were also stores selling toy vehicles and toy trains. Tomica is the Matchbox of Japan selling different size vehicles in the same small box such that the scales vary from 1/90 to 1/320. Plarail is a push toy train somewhat like Brio trains. I think that both stores are owned by the same company. Admittedly, it was the end of the business day, but the stores and the streets were fairly crowded.



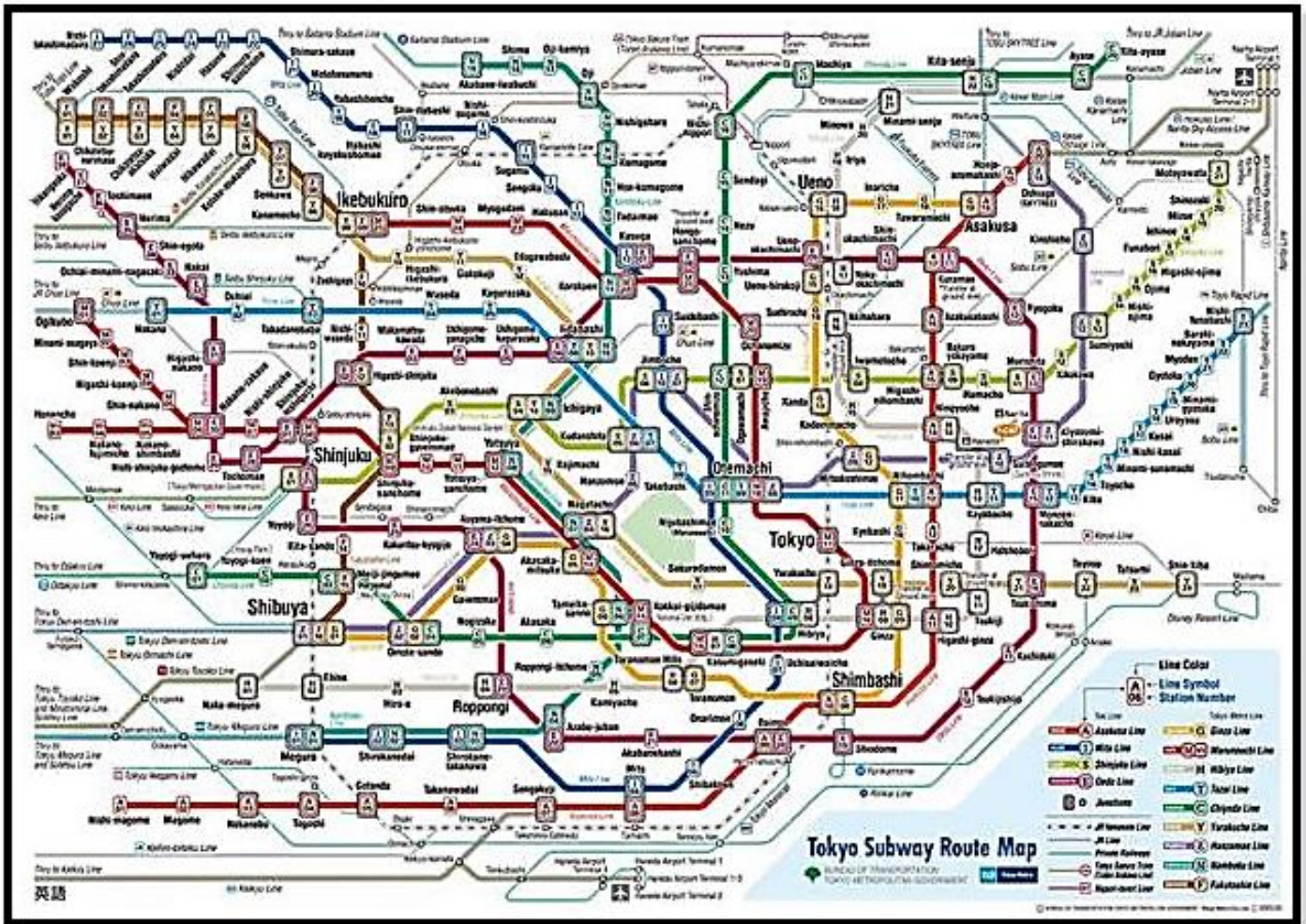


Eventually we found a place to eat called **Yakitori Ichidori**. Carol had chicken on sticks and I had a bowl of rice with a bowl of small shrimps. Carol would not have one because they still had their heads on. My food was good but not filling enough so I ended up eating the roll that I bought in the dept. store intend for my next day's breakfast. Dinner cost \$27.44 and then we bought some desserts from



one of the other stands. We saved all of our receipts and in retro spec should have written what each was for. While the store name on the receipt usually was in English, the rest was all in Japanese.

After dinner we walked around the Avenue for a while and then passed under the train station to the entrance to the Tokyo Subway. The subway system is huge and at first the map seems quite intimidating. However, each line has a unique letter and color code. All of the stations are numbered. The fare varies by distance.





A special ticket allowing unlimited travel on the Metro and one private subway company is available for foreign visitors for 24/48/72 hours. Thinking ahead, it was a good thing that we brought our passports with us as the clerk even checked the entry visa stamp. We went for the 72-hour card that cost 1500¥ (\$10.50) each, cash only but clearly a real



bargain. Our first ride was one stop on the M line to the Ginza, Tokyo's most glamorous shopping district. As in Osaka and Kyoto, access to the trains from the platform was controlled by movable gates. Also, I noted that most riders used IC or PASMO cards, whereas in Kyoto and Osaka it seemed most folks used regular fare tickets.

When we came up the streets in the Ginza, the buildings were all very glitzy. However, I was confused at first so we walked in the wrong direction. Turning around, we headed to the Kabuki-za Theater. Carol wanted to find out



about its performance of the traditional kabuki drama form. We found out the schedule for the next day, but the cheap tickets we wanted were only on the day of the performance. We walked around a bit more and then headed to a different subway line that would take us back near our hotel. In the second Ginza subway station, we found this detailed map of the area. On the reverse was a large system map, better than the small map we got from our hotel. For the next three days, we were able to pick up these detailed maps at every major station where we exited. However, even with the map, we got off at the wrong exit for our hotel. It wasn't really wrong, just one stop earlier than where we should have gotten off. We just walked to the hotel, but first stopped at a 7-11 for something for my breakfast and some Coke Zeros for Carol.



21,000 in Japan including over 2,800 in Tokyo. They were everywhere we went: on the streets, in the subway complexes, and even in the lobbies of some office buildings and hotels; some were even within sight of another 7-11. Mind you the stores were usually quite small, like the size of a classroom. Plus, there were several other convenience store chains operating in Tokyo and elsewhere in Japan. The 7-11s had automated, self-service cash registers that took money or a credit card for the tiniest of purchases, but only after the clerk rang things up. The stores were open 24/7 and by law all of the packaged food items can only stay on the shelves for a day.



Tuesday 1/16

After breakfast in the room, we headed to the G11 stop on the Ginza line. This is where we should have exited last night. Instead, we got off at G10. However, we came to the Takashimaya Department Store, the oldest department store in Japan. We went into its annex building which was open then for its food stands. The regular store was in the next building and it did not open until later. We ended up returning to this store several times. We got to the Kabuki-za Theater before the box office opened and had to wait a bit. We bought the cheapest tickets that were 800¥ (\$5.60) each and cash only. This ticket allowed us to see a short 22-minute presentation from nosebleed seats high up in the theater. The show that day actually ran for several hours with breaks between the stories. The prices for reserved seats for the whole show ranged from 4000¥ (\$28) to 20000¥ (\$140)—actually a bargain compared to what Carol pays for Broadway show tickets.

This is the view from the center of the balcony. Our seats were off to the left side and were actually ok. We could



not take any pictures during the performance which seemed like an opera or ballet to me. The all-male performers wore whiteface like their appearance in this flyer.



They were supported by about dozen musicians playing traditional instruments. Afterwards, we went down to the basement which had a complex of souvenir shops, a 7-11, and cafes. Carol bought some postcards, and a cloth that hangs on the wall.



Eventually, we left and headed to the Shinjuku Station area. Friend Charlie Getz had reached out to a leading Japanese model railroader to get me the name of a hobby store to visit. It was a chain and one of its locations was near this train station. It was confusing when we came to the street level, but we followed the map I printed out to a shopping district nearby. We could not find the store until we saw a sign showing the location of the stores in the district. The store was several levels, with trains on one, military models on another, and Bai and Gundam transformer models and anime characters on another. The model trains were a mix of HO, N (Kato), and Z. However, there were also 1/80-scale models that run on HO track, supposedly representing the equipment that runs on their Cape (narrow) gauge track. The kit above costs \$65 and all prices there included a 10% consumption tax. There were signs in most stores we visited offering tax-free shopping on items costing at least 5000¥. The other floors were interesting as well. The female anime and similar characters can be somewhat revealing and this one was tame compared with others. Many Japanese men are into what is essentially borderline kiddy porn.



We had not made any plans for the rest of the day. Looking at the map and where we were, I could see that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building was just a few blocks to the west and it had a free observation deck. So we headed there. FYI, the Tokyo Metro Government. is one of 47 prefectures (like our states) in Japan and it includes 39 cities, towns, and villages, plus several island chains, one of which lies 1000km (621 miles) south of Tokyo in the Pacific Ocean! As we approached the government. building, I was surprised to see some homeless folks sleeping on the street under a plaza.

Once inside, we found out the observation deck was closed for maintenance, but we could still go to their cafeteria on the 32nd floor. We got a pass and up we went. The cafeteria was very large with lines on the floor for particular types of food, but it was closed for the



day. There were signs with the prices, which were quite low (like 500¥), meaning that the cost of the meals was subsidized by the government. There were also two small stores selling snacks. This is the view back towards the Shinjuku Station seeing the Cocoon Tower, a 50-story building that houses three educational institutions, one of which is a medical school. The building is the second-tallest educational building in the world. We sat and rested for a while and then went back to the lobby that had a large tourism office. We got a few brochures. Walking back to the station a different way, we came to this shrine.



We headed back to Tokyo Station. We stopped at a street that was still lit up from the holidays.



It was dinnertime and Carol did not want to eat at any place with the plastic food. We had to walk under Tokyo Station and in doing so came across yet another “street” with restaurants. We ate at Shake & Chips which presented itself as a British pub with fish and chips. I had that while Carol just had the fish. The meal with some beverages cost \$40.23, our most expensive meal yet. Walking back to the hotel, we stopped in the Daimaru Department Store and I bought a small loaf of raisin bread for my breakfast on Wednesday.

Wednesday 1/17

We slept in later than the other days, till 8pm. We split the loaf of raisin bread. It was good, but was even better when I had had a piece the night before. I made plans to buy another loaf when leaving Tokyo. We walked towards the G11 subway stop and went into the Takashimaya Department Store which we had seen on Monday eve. It has three connected buildings. We started in the annex building which has food on the first floor and took the elevator to the 7th floor that supposedly had “hobbies.” Nope, it was lifestyle boutiques. We rode down to the 5th floor which had a walkway over to the main building. We rode up to the 7th floor in an elevator with a young female operator. I have not seen this since I went up to my father’s office in the Empire State Building in the late 1950s. We wanted to see the kimonos which took up a large part of the floor. The prices ranged from a few hundred dollars to well over \$10,000. This one was over \$33,000 with the sash. We looked at ones for kids and they were expensive, too. A clerk gave Carol a catalog to take home in case we wanted to





order one for Emmet. We started to go down in the elevator and saw that it went to a basement level that connected with the subway. However, we were stunned when we got to the basement as it was a huge food hall with prepared food of every type, wine, sake, coffee, desserts, etc. Carol looked at a small tray of rare (raw!) roast beef and said let's come back here for dinner.

When we got to the subway, it was yet another huge concourse with upscale stores that seemingly ran for blocks under that major street. I guess we walked three blocks underground. Once on the subway, we rode to A17 thinking we could easily connect to the Dedo Line (E). As it turned out, we had to exit to the street, walk two blocks and then go back down to the subway. At least it was a walk through a different type of neighborhood. From there, we rode one more stop to E12 -

Ryogoku. This was near the main Sumo arena and right at that time there were daily matches. Walking there, we came to a vending machine selling Dr. Pepper. So finally, I could have something else to drink besides water or iced tea. We approached the arena from the rear and came across this wrestler who wasn't very big.



Continuing around to the other side of the arena, there were booths, food trucks, and a crowd waiting to see the wrestlers arrive. I knew that day's matches were sold out, but a scalper offered me a ticket for 8,000¥ (\$56), but I told him that was above my pay grade. I could sense some excitement there as this was a major sporting event. So, we stood and watched for a while and took these pictures.



We needed to cross the Sumida River and there was a large bridge, but it was only for trains. So, we had to walk several blocks. I was hungry so we stopped at a McD doing a big business.



This was the view at the river.



Once across, we turned onto the street and walked over a branch of the river that was full of boats. We came to the A line and rode a few stops to the Sky Tree Tower. This is a 634m (2080 feet) broadcast and observation tower built in 2011 that is the tallest in the world. It sits on top of a major real estate development undertaken by the Tobu Railway at the Oshiage Station. It was very confusing to enter and then we found it very crowded with Japanese folks. We saw some but not many foreign visitors. Finally at a ticket window at 14:15 and we were able to buy a timed admission ticket for 15:00 to the Tembo Deck (350 m) for 2100¥ (\$14.70) each. Tickets for the higher Tembo Galleria (450 m) were already sold out for the day. We sat for a while and then stood in line until we boarded one of four large-capacity, hi-speed elevators made by Toshiba. We traveled up in 50 seconds as the elevator hit a top speed of 600 m per minute (22 mph). The gallery was packed and it took a while until we could get a clear view at one for the windows. Outside was hazy. On a clear day, one can see Mt. Fuji. We walked all

the way around and took some pictures including this “rare” shot of both of us. Then, we were forced to walk down to the 345 m and then 340 m level to reboard the elevators to the 5th floor base level. On the elevated levels, there were stores, cafes, and some type of extra fare attraction.

Leaving the complex was just as confusing as when we entered. We ended up in the basement and then had to go outside and around the building. Eventually, we came to where the subway was, but first had to walk through a shopping ”street.” Some stores were getting ready for February 14.



When I was down in the subway, I realized that this station was an end of the line. However, the same train continued under a different number (and presumably fare) to Narita, Tokyo’s other airport that was 62km (49 minutes) away. Oh, by the way, all of the subway trains we saw in Japan were powered by a pantograph on the car’s roof. (Perhaps third rail is illegal there like in CT.) We rode the A line to A17, but that was a mistake so we got back on and rode to exit A18 – Asakusa. When we came to the street, we had this view of the Sky Tree Tower. There were some Jehovah

Witnesses standing on the corner, and then a Japanese couple nearby started to talk with us. They asked where we going and they took us to the temple that we wanted to see. It was close by. There we learned they were JW missionaries, too, as the man told me there were over 200,000 JW's in Japan and gave me a card explaining how I could join a bible study group. This was a huge lantern behind the temple. A group of young girls were having their picture taken in front of the temple. I jumped behind them to get into the picture, but one girl almost screamed when she saw me. So, I stood back and let them have a picture without me.



Walking back to the subway, we passed a place offering Kobi steak sushi. We rode back to Tokyo Station,

but on a line that exited on the other (west) side of it. This allowed us to see the actual historic station that was built in 1914. There have been modifications and repairs over the years with a major renovation that began in 2007 and took until 2012 when it became the Tokyo Station Hotel. On a lark, I had considered staying there but the rate was over \$500 a night. Someone was doing a shot for a bridal magazine with sleeveless gowns then, despite it being freezing cold and windy.

We entered the hotel for a brief look and were immediately confronted by several staff members. We said we just wanted to see the inside, and then left. We tried to get to the other side of the station complex, but the other two

entrances just went to the JR trains. So, we went back down to the subway and rode one stop on the M line to the T line where we exited at the first stop Nihonbashi, We walked through the underground complex until we came to the Takashimaya Department Store and went shopping for dinner in the huge food hall. Walking back to our hotel, we saw a large bookstore and I was able to purchase the anime book that a model railroad friend wanted. We sat down in the breakfast area of our hotel and had all of this for dinner. The beef was for Carol and the shrimp for me. The bottle of sake was too dry. The total came to 4737¥ (\$33.16).



Thursday 1/18

This was our last full day in Tokyo. We were up early so we could head to the fish market or at least what I thought was the famous fish market. We walked to Nihonbashi and then rode one stop on the T line and then two stops on the H line to Tsukiji. We followed signs, but this wasn't the fish market I saw back in 2012, but instead a



huge outdoor market. A tour gave us a map showing perhaps hundreds of stands spread out over a several-block area. There were stands selling all kinds of seafood and other things. Carol had a hot omelet on a stick for 200¥ (\$1.40). Another stand was selling four *white* strawberries on a stick for 1500¥ (\$10.50). I would have liked to have a single huge king crab leg, but it was 6000¥ (\$42). I did not understand the sign on the bowl of empty crab shells. Most booths were cash only with signs in English saying that, though clearly most of the visitors were Japanese.



Walking back to the subway, we came to the very large Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. We found an elevator to take us to the main level as my knee was already bothering me. I expected to see a large Buddha statue inside, but it was closed off from the worship hall. I guess it is only viewable for services. Folks were burning incense and the smell bothered me so I went outside to sit down. Carol went to look at a group of statues and small shrines along the front wall that had signs explaining them in English. I saw that English Dharma services were offered monthly with the next one being on January.27th.





Carol wanted to go see the Imperial Place, but there was no easy way to get there by subway from where we were. Instead, we rode back on the H line to Ueno, a large rail station complex. Had we been able to book the cruise train I tried for, we would have boarded it there. We stopped for snacks and I had some perfect garlic bread that was fresh out of the oven. Adjacent to Ueno is a large park with several museums so we headed there. We passed several groups of young students; all students in Japan wear uniforms to school. Some type of special event was being set up in the middle of the park with many booths for food, sake, and beer.

We continued walking and came to the National Museum, which is the oldest museum in Japan. Being over 70, I was able to get in free while Carol paid 1000¥ (\$7). This was a large, two-story stone building that was full of antique artwork and other national treasures.



I was amazed on the workmanship and details on an 8th-century lacquered box. It was interesting to learn that Japan imported large quantities of china from China during what we call the Middle Ages. This Japanese-made, large (maybe 3-foot-tall) ceramic vase was exhibited at the 1893 World's Fair held in Chicago. There were some exhibit areas that were hands-on. At one, I was able to use various wood stamps on a blank postcard. My card did not come out well. However, in the next area, Japanese Culture Plaza, I was able to accurately recreate this "ukiyo-e" print using a series of wood stamps and colored ink. When completed, it could be sent as a postcard. The original image was done in 1794 during the Edo period. We left the museum after about two hours and walked back to Ueno Station through the park.



We rode the H line south to H10 where we could transfer to the Y line, though this transfer was done on the surface and the map showed this. On the Y line, we rode three stops to Y17 as this stop seemed like it was the closest to the Imperial Palace. Unfortunately, there was no escalator or elevator and we had a long climb up to the surface. We could see the moats and the walls of the fortress, but we needed to walk some distance to actually see any part of the Imperial Palace. We continued and walked up a ramp to this palace gate that is used by the emperor for ceremonial purposes or when foreign ambassadors present their credentials. The palace is the official residence of the emperor and is only open to the public on January 2nd and his birthday.



There is a large open area to the east of the palace grounds. Today's Tokyo Station is a few blocks in and beneath the most distant building.



Back on the Y line, we rode to the connection for the G Ginza line, but it was a 690m-long underground walk. There were signs that counted down the distance as we walked. On the Ginza line, we rode to G12 for the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. Since I had missed National Pizza Week back in the states, I decided to come here to what is supposedly the fourth best pizza place in the entire world. (Pepe's in New Haven is first on my list.) We walked through a very upscale lobby and boarded an elevator for The Pizza Bar on the 38th (floor).

It was 4:45pm when we walked into the place which did not open till 5:30pm, but as it turned out that was the least of our problems. A woman at the desk asked if we had a reservation, which we didn't, but said she said she could seat us at 5:30pm. However, they were NOT doing a la carte pizza that evening. Instead, there was a fixed meal serving eight courses of pizza. You would get one slice during each course. The thought of having several weird kinds of pizza and waiting for the next slice was served did not thrill me—but the 12500¥ price per person plus a 10% service charge (the only one we saw on the trip) was a non-starter. I told the woman that was way above my pay grade and we left. Dinner for both of us would have cost \$192.50.



We walked to the other side of the building where there was a bar and talked with one of the staff while we admired the sunset to the west. Disappointed, we headed back to the subway for our last ride to Nihombashi. Luckily, there was about one hour left on our 72-hour subway passes. Had we eaten there, we would have had to pay for the subway ride back.



Using the underground complex, we walked to what was seemingly our favorite place, the Takashimaya Department Store and rode an elevator up to a floor that was full of restaurants. We went into an Italian place and ordered a pizza and a pasta dish. The menu said each person had to order food and a drink, otherwise I would have ordered a larger-size pizza. I thought the pizza was decent, but Carol did not like the meat on the top of it. This turned out to be our most expensive meal of the trip (\$43.54). Before we left the building, I went down to the food hall and bought two pieces of cake costing 1620¥ (\$11.34) for dessert and something for my Friday breakfast. While walking to our hotel, we made I thought would be our last stop at a 7-11. I bought a bottle of the sparkling sake to take home.

Once in the room. I had my piece of cake with a can of Dr. Pepper. I checked on our flights back on the next day. While we would board our HND–LAX flight at 4:25pm first, our connecting flight LAX–DFW at 12:45pm appeared first in my AA account because of the time difference. Also because of the time difference, I could NOT check in for the LAX–DFW flight, and for some unknown reason could not check in on the HND–DFW flight either, which was an AA code-share flight. The actual flight was on JAL 016. We packed up and went to sleep.

Friday 1/19

This was our last day in Japan and since we would be crossing the International Date Line to the East, it would be a really long day for us. We woke up at 8am but were not in a hurry to leave since the flight from Tokyo wasn't until late in the afternoon. I try to eat the chocolate breadstick I bought the night before, only to find it was full of nuts (I do not eat nuts). Annoyed, I left the hotel and walked to the nearby 7-11, but didn't see anything I wanted. Across the street was a Family Mart where I bought a chocolate waffle and another pastry. However, back in the room I found that the pastry had nuts too. So, all I had for breakfast was a small waffle and was not a happy camper.

We made a Wi-Fi call to Erin to talk about some family finances, and called my friend Eric to find out about the Philly weather. There had been two minor snowstorms while we were gone. These were the first measurable snows there in almost two years. We left the hotel about 11am. The checkout was nothing as the room was prepaid with money and AA award miles; we paid the 400¥ city hotel tax when we checked in. Before entering the station, we stopped in the Daimaru Department Store to buy another loaf of their great raisin bread. I wanted to eat it then but wisely, as it turned out, saved it for breakfast on the plane. Instead, I got a ring pastry like I had another day so I was sure of getting NO NUTS.

In the station, I walked up to the JR counter to buy our tickets to the Haneda Airport. However, the JR trains don't actually go there. One would have to connect to a private railroad or take the Monorail that was built for the 1964 Olympics. I knew there was a special fare that included JR and the Monorail, but the JR counter could only sell us JR tickets, and the TVMs there were only for Shinkansen tickets. So, we walked over to where the regular JR TVMs were and bought the combo tickets for 680¥ (\$4.76) each. I thought this might happen and had saved 1500¥ for this in case. Pointless, because we could have charged the tickets! We had withdrawn another 10000¥ from an ATM to buy the Tokyo subway passes back on Monday.

Through the turn gates, we headed up to platform #6. I took a few pictures of the trains on other platforms, like this N700 Shinkansen, before boarding a JR LTD Express to Hamamatsuchō, which was the next station. There we



exited JR and went up to board the Monorail (next page).

As mentioned, the Monorail was built for the 1964 Olympics and originally only stopped at HND and Hamamatsuchō. Over the years, local stops were added and the equipment was modernized. I should mention that except for the airport where the tracks are partially below ground, the rest of the 11-mile line is elevated and traverses far above the tracks of JR and the private railroads.

The train twisted and turned between buildings until it came to a river that it followed to HND. There are three terminals at HND and it was unclear where our flight would leave from. The web said that international flights leave from #2 and #3, so we rode to #2 where the flight were all ANA. We were flying JAL. We got on the next Monorail train and rode back to #3.



We were able to easily check in at the first class counter and then clear security and immigration quickly such that we had 3.5 hours until our flight. I had some concerns about our seats since we had been assigned row 47 when I bought the tickets. We never sit this far back on a plane. I asked the agent if these were the best seats available and she moved us to row 45, an exit row. We were able to use JAL's first class lounge which had a great view of the tarmac, and I watched this AA 777 leave. However, the lounge was virtually empty when we entered.



We had to get outside and walk to adjacent Terminal 4. At check-in, I asked if we could get on an earlier flight. The agent said yes, but we probably would be better staying with what we had. Only middle seats were available. So, we stayed with our 12:45pm flight. The TSA line was very short, and I found a dime. (In Japan I had found 102¥. On one occasion I had found a one yen coin (\$.007) and the clerk in the store wanted me to give it to the person in front of me. I said it was there already. Not sure if she understood me.) We were able to use the higher level Flagship lounge and were sitting down there at 10:20am. I looked at the FlightAware app for JAL 016 and saw the flight made quite an arc going across the Pacific.

Eventually we went down for our flight to DFW which boarded at 12:10pm. We were far down the list for an upgrade so were content with our exit row seats. I had 11F, my favorite seat, where there is no seat ahead of me in the earlier row. Once we took off, we passed mountains with snow, but the rest of the trip was mostly brown, dry desert and the like till we approached the DFW Metroplex from the south. I don't know when or where we landed as I lost the paper with my notes. We got our checked bags and headed for the bus to the combined rental car facility for our Hertz car.

We had issues (car had too many miles on it so agent had to override it and then something with my credit card) exiting their garage. Immediately upon exiting, I noticed there were NO headlights. I got out and confirmed this after playing around with the control knob. We hadn't gone a mile so we turned around and exchanged the car. This time we had no issues leaving their garage. We stayed in DFW till Monday so I could attend the Plano train show. However, I am going to end this travel tale here as it is already at a record length. I

will write up the train show and send to my railroad friends sometime later this week. If anyone else would like to read it, just email me.

Here are some general comments about the trip and Japan. We checked the weather before we left and went without winter clothes. The temperatures there were in the 40s and 50s, except for one cold day in Tokyo. However, we also spent considerable amount of time underground and on trains. The country is extremely clean; we saw very little trash, and only minimal urban graffiti. We felt very safe everywhere we went. Folks there were very polite to us. We were offered seats on the subway. Despite only knowing a few words in Japanese, we managed quite easily. FYI, Japanese writing/words use two alphabets and hundreds of Chinese characters. We had to pay cash for the transit fares and some admissions, but were able to charge everything else. We had a very nice time and would recommend others to go there.

One last note. We lost three things on this trip. My green sunglasses were lost first. I got them free, but I really liked them. Carol lost her metal drink cup as we were buying the tickets for the train to HND. No doubt someone there turned it in, but she'll never get it. Luckily, Colleen gave her a similar one for Christmas. Most significantly, I lost my Irish passport somewhere towards the end of the trip. I did not use it or need it while in Japan. However, I always travel with it as an additional piece of ID should my wallet be lost or stolen. It will be a pain to replace it. Ireland requires a police report and I am in the process of obtaining one from the DPS at DFW where I most likely lost it. Fortunately, we don't have any trips scheduled to the EU as of now.

FUTURE SHOWS/EVENTS

YORK TRAIN SHOW - April 15-17 & April 18-20, 2024. This is a very large show held annually in the York PA Expo Center (fairgrounds) hosted by the **Eastern Division of the TCA**. The TCA is a somewhat closed organization. Until recently, the only way one could join was to be recommended by an existing member. That has changed but the majority of their **April 18-20** show is in halls that are **only**² open to TCA members. For 2024, they have added a three day *PRE-SHOW* in the Purple Hall and the admission is FREE. It will be held on: Monday 4/15 (10am-4pm), Tuesday 4/16 (9am -4pm) and Wednesday 4/17 (9am -1pm). The regular *York Train Show* will be held on April 18-20, 2024 when *only* the Orange Hall is open to the public.

² Non-TCA members may attend once as a "guest" and have full access to the member halls. I did this LYR and by signing up, I am now on their mailing list and recently received the packet for the April 2024 shows.,

NORTHEAST LARGE SCALE TRAIN SHOW - April 27-28, 2024. This show, now in its second year, is also presented by the *ARS* at the Big E Fairgrounds in W. Springfield, MA.

GREAT SCALE MODEL TRAIN SHOW - April 27-28, 2024. This is the next show in Timonium, MD. I will have discount show flyers at the Philly Division's meet on April 20th

NERpm - NewEngland/Northeast Rpm - May 31- June 1, 2024. This is an annual event that will be held in

Springfield MA for the second year but at a different hotel..

NARROW GAUGE O SUMMER MEET – June 7-8, 2024, Harrisburg, PA

40th TCA NATIONAL CONVENTION - June 15-23, 2024. Lancaster, PA

30th NATIONAL N-SCALE CONVENTION - June 18-23, 2024, Bethlehem, PA

2024 NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION - August 4-11 2024, Long Beach, CA. The last time this convention was in Long Beach was 1996 and I was there. I am going this year with my wife and granddaughter.

NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION – September 11-14, 2024, Pittsburgh, PA

PIEDMONT JUNCTION (2024 MER CONVENTION) October 17-20, 2024, Raleigh, NC. *NOTE THE NEW DATES!*

Cincinnati Division, MCR

N&W HC-46 ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper

Using Accurail's 2200 Series ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper as the basis, we are offering it in a Norfolk & Western repaint scheme. These cars are N&W class HC-46 and are from an original batch of fifty built by in 1966 by ACF with the Round Herald paint scheme. Subsequently some cars went through a general maintenance program and were repainted in the block N&W livery. Photos were found showing at least three of these cars (road numbers 170753, 170768 and 170794) were reweighed at some later date because that area is "patched out" on the car with the new data displayed. Those same photos place these three cars as being in service in 1992 and 2004. It is these three, highly unique, road numbers that Cincinnati Division 7 is now offering for sale as limited edition kits.



Pricing is \$25 per car, or a 3-car set at \$70. Shipping (via USPS Priority) is \$10.40 for one car and \$17.10 for two to three cars. Ohio residents, please add 7.8% sales tax on the total price of the kits and the shipping/handling fee. Customers outside the USA, please **contact us** for shipping arrangements and charges.

To order, please send **your email and phone** information along with a **check or money order** in US dollars, payable to Cincinnati Division 7, MCR, NMRA, to:

Cincinnati Division 7 Car Projects
c/o Paul Maciulewicz
9151 Congress Court
West Chester, Ohio 45069

Contact our **Car Projects Chairperson** with any questions.

<https://www.cincy-div7.org/car-projects.html>

PRICE NOW \$20 PER CAR! HURRY WHILE QUANTITIES LAST! SHIPPING COSTS REMAIN THE SAME

New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Gondola

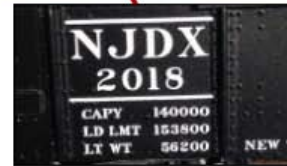
50th Anniversary Gondola

A review of the cars. They are \$35 each, or a set of two for \$65. Car numbers are 1968 and 2018, which was the year that the New Jersey Division was founded and the year we celebrated our 50th anniversary. The model is from Tangent Models and is a superb model of a 52'6" Riveted Drop End Gondola with 70 ton trucks. The placement of the brake wheel on the side is an identifying feature of a drop end Gondola. They're ready to run and come with Kadee couplers.

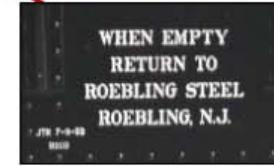
We acquired equal amounts of the two car numbers. Cash or check will consummate the deal and you'll be hauling stuff around your layout in no time!

These are excellent looking and beautifully running cars, but, a car not decorated for a prototypical railroad, they do have the look of a gondola that you might see in any train consist from the 1930's to the 1980's.

To order cars Contact Mike Prokop at njwrr@aol.com or by mail use the Order Sheet. USPS Priority Mail postage is: \$9 for one car and \$10.75 for two cars.



The Reporting Marks "NJD" for this car Identify the owner as the New Jersey Division and the "X" designates a Private or Non-railroad owner.



This Stencil indicates the Gondola is in Assigned Service to Roebling Steel. It must be returned to Roebling after its load has been delivered.

The car body is black with white lettering and data conforming to the 1950s

The cost is \$35.00 for one car or a set of both numbers for \$65.00

A check made payable to the NJ Division must be included

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Telephone _____

See Tangent website for more information
support@tangentscalemodels.com
Return this form to NJ Division NMRA;
PO Box 276, Crosswicks, NJ 08515-0276



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virtual model railroad convention

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Upcoming NMRA Conventions



Upcoming MER Conventions

MER 2024 – Piedmont Junction
 October 17-20, 2024
<https://piedmontjunction.cpd13.org/>

From *Trains* Three-train NS incident unfolded in less than a minute, NTSB investigator tells township council Nine cars, two locomotives derailed in Saturday accident in Pennsylvania March 7, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI

Lower Saucon Township, PA – A National Transportation Safety Board investigator has filled in town officials on additional details of last weekend’s incident collision and derailment involving three Norfolk Southern trains, saying a total of nine railcars derailed in the incident, WFMZ-TV reports. Ruben Payan, who is leading the NTSB team looking at train operations, signals, and train control, mechanical systems, and human performance, spoke to the township council at a meeting Wednesday night, March 6, about the incident that sent locomotives, diesel fuel, and plastic pellets into the Lehigh River on Saturday [see “Three-train NS accident in Pennsylvania ...,” *Trains News Wire*, March 2, 2024].

The incident happened quickly, he said: an eastbound train stopped at a signal was rear-ended by an intermodal train, derailing three intermodal cars into an adjacent track; less than a minute later, a westbound train hit those cars, sending the locomotives of that train into the river and derailing six cars. Previous reports had not offered a count on the number of cars involved. Three of the six derailed cars from the westbound train were empty but contained ethanol and butane residue, he said, but were not breached and did not leak any fluids. Payan said “minimal” diesel fuel entered the river. Payan, asked about monitoring systems, said the trains were operating with positive train control, but that at a speed under the system threshold, “the system no longer maintains train separations.” Asked about claims on social media that softening of the roadbed from water runoff was a cause of the incident, Payan said track was not a contributing factor.

From *Trains* CSX CEO unveils Family Lines heritage unit on social media Locomotive is 11th in railroad’s heritage series March 8, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI **Waycross, GA** – CSX Transportation CEO Joe Hinrichs has debuted railroad’s latest heritage locomotive, this one honoring the Family Lines System, in a post on his LinkedIn account. It is the 11th locomotive in the CSX series, and like the others combines the current CSX scheme at the front of the locomotive with the predecessor scheme on the long hood. “This celebrates a time when Seaboard Coast Line, Clinchfield, and L&N rail lines all came together from 1972-1982, eventually becoming Seaboard System before CSX became a reality,” Hinrichs wrote. “Another great job by our team

in Waycross, Ga [where the locomotive was painted]. We enjoy celebrating our past while creating the future together as ONE CSX team! Thanks everyone.” The Family Lines unit follows February’s unveiling of a locomotive honoring the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac. Others have honored the Baltimore & Ohio, Chessie System, Seaboard System, Conrail, Chesapeake & Ohio, Louisville & Nashville, Atlantic Coast Line, New York Central, and Monon. **The latest CSX heritage locomotive honors the Family Lines System. (Photo by CSX)**

From *Trains* East Broad Top starts rebuilding track south of Rockhill Furnace Dormant since 1956, segment is first step in reopening rugged main line March 14, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI **Rockhill Furnace, PA** – A track crew began restoring East Broad Top Railroad’s main line south of here this week, a first step toward reopening the narrow-gauge steam tourist line’s 20-mile route to Robertsdale, Pa., a former mountain mining center that produced the semibituminous coal that was EBT’s revenue-freight lifeblood for more than 80 years. About three dozen people gathered for informal remarks at the State Route 475 rural grade crossing about a mile south of EBT’s headquarters, yard, and shop complex. They represented a combination of EBT Foundation, Inc., employees and volunteer track-crew members of the Friends of the East Broad Top Railroad, a nonprofit auxiliary group that counts 2,100 members.

“This is a big deal,” said Brad Esposito, EBT general manager. “It’s a big deal for East Broad Top, a big deal for the Friends, and a big deal for the community. This is not happening anywhere else in the U.S., bringing a monster back to life.” This is the first segment to be restored that has not seen trains of any kind since 1956. The railroad had previously restored the mile of track from the shops to the crossing, but only for speeders and light work trains. Esposito announced that the Friends group has already reached its 2024 fund-raising goal of \$220,000, of which \$40,000 is earmarked to purchase track supplies, and that the Friends will direct any further amount collected toward additional trackwork. In addition, EBT has won state funding to aid the extension. In a prepared statement, FEBT President Andy Van Scyoc said, “The partnership between the EBTF and the FEBT continues to strengthen and bear more fruit each year. Our members are unified in ensuring continued progress on rebuilding the EBT mainline.” The 33-mile railroad, a National Historic Landmark, carried coal, ore, and timber until shutting down in 1956.

The Kovalchick family bought it and revived a 4½-mile segment for steam tourist service from 1960 to 2011,

and a non-profit, the Foundation, bought most of the property in 2020 for restoration and historical and educational purposes. The foundation's first task was to reopen the tourist portion of the route north of Rockhill Furnace, which it accomplished in 2021. It achieved another milestone by restoring one of its six Baldwin 2-8-2 Mikado steam locomotives in February 2023. The engine made history in October by running to the then south end of operable track at the Odd Fellows Cemetery crossing, the first use of steam power that far on the main line since 1956 [See "EBT No. 16 rolls onto newly reopened track," *Trains News Wire*, Oct. 10, 2023]. All track work is carried out by a combination of two full-time foundation staff members and by volunteers from the Friends, who show up in varying numbers two or three days each week. The Friends group is led by Gene Tucker [see "'Friar Tuck' and the East Broad Top," *News Wire*, Oct. 13, 2022], a retired Episcopalian minister with experience in track building that he gained working for a nearby railroad while in the military.

For EBT Foundation employee Henry G. Long Jr., one of the two full-time track-crew members, the extension represents the fulfillment of hopes for him and thousands of other EBT admirers. "It feels good to see something that was hoped for, for so many years," he said. "Now it's happening. It if it hadn't been for employees [and Friends] of the last 40 to 50 years, this place wouldn't be here." Long worked in heavy equipment for Metro East Industries, Rail Mechanical Services, and Pennsy Supply before coming on board with the Foundation in 2021. But he's been around EBT and the adjacent Rockhill Trolley Museum since the mid-1990s. When he told the late EBT general manager Stanley Hall that he wanted to learn railroading skills, Hall directed him to the trolley museum to start picking up the basics. From there, he learned how to fire an EBT steam engine and served as a brakeman on the passenger train from 2000 to the closing of the first tourist-railroad era in 2011. He's been the museum's track supervisor since 2005, and just before hiring on with EBT, he oversaw construction of a 3-foot-gauge park railroad in Dayton, Ohio. The roadbed has been cleared of brush for about 2 miles to a point south of the village of Pogue, location of a 268-foot-long steel bridge over the Aughwick Creek. Of that distance, Long said, "6,000 to 7,000 feet are graded and ready for track." Depending on weather and the number of volunteers who show up at each work session, he said, a crew can lay 200 to 300 feet of track per day.

From *Trains* Reading & Northern continues to develop Nesquehoning campus Former fire apparatus factory will feature locomotive shops, new passenger station March 14, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI **Port Clinton, PA** – The Reading & Northern Railroad

this week updated progress on its development of the former KME Fire Apparatus industrial complex in Nesquehoning Borough, which is being developed for a variety of uses by the railroad, including a new passenger station. The nine-building, 10-acre facility was acquired by the railroad in 2022, and is near the center of the R&N system [see "Reading & Northern buys Nesquehoning, Pa., factory complex," *Trains News Wire*, April 21, 2022]. Tracks are under construction to connect to some of the existing buildings, which will be used for serving of the R&N diesel fleet, now at 63 locomotives.

Company automobiles and trucks are also serviced at the facility; other buildings house the maintenance-of-way, signals, real estate, and passenger departments. The railroad plans to introduce the Nesquehoning Regional Railroad Station this year, operating two of its Iron Horse Rambles with T-1 class 4-8-4 No. 2102 from the facility: June 22 to Tunkhannock and Aug. 17 to Pittston. There will also be an Aug. 18 excursion from Nesquehoning to Pittston with the railroad's F unit diesels. Plans currently call for a station platform as well as an additional main track to accommodate traffic. Passenger information is available here. The railroad will also relaunch its Black Diamond Company Store, currently an online-only platform, at the Nesquehoning campus. The store will also have a display at the Jim Thorpe, Pa., station on peak weekends. The railroad will also relaunch its Black Diamond Company Store, currently an online-only platform, at the Nesquehoning campus. The store will also have a display at the Jim Thorpe, Pa., station on peak weekends.

From Lewes Junction Railroad & Bridge Association newsletter Evidence of Nassau Station, one of only four passenger stations between Georgetown and Lewes on the Junction Breakwater Railroad, remains at the corner of Nassau and New Roads in Lewes. In 1870 a passenger station was constructed, and a small community sprang up, including facilities to support the rail shipment of goods from the local fruit and canning industries. In the 1920s, freight operations diversified to include dairy transportation from Nassau Station. The Supplee-Wills-Jones-Milk Company built a milk station facility that included a cold storage building along a railroad spur at Nassau Station, giving dairy farmers in the Lewes-Rehoboth area access to new markets. Supplier-Willis-Jones Milk Supply Cold Storage Building at Nassau Rd., 1928; note the milk cans on the loading dock. (Source - DelDOT Hist Survey)

The cold storage building associated with this milk station remains on the north side of the former railroad right-of-way and the current Lewes-Georgetown rail-trail. The former Nassau station is located an easy 20-minute bike ride from the caboos. The bakery and distillery that sit next door couldn't possibly have anything to do with

the attractiveness of the destination to your correspondent. (Many thanks to the Delaware Department of Transportation for much of the above information. For more information and photos, see the DelDOT kiosk next to the trail at Nassau Station.)

From Trains Baltimore Bridge Tragedy to Affect Rail Traffic with Port Access Blocked Bill Stephens March 26, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI **Baltimore, MD** – The tragic collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge today (March 26) after a ship strike has cut off the Port of Baltimore’s busiest terminals from Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean beyond. At least six people remain unaccounted for after the container ship *Dali* struck the bridge about 1:28 a.m. today, CNN reports. With rescue and recovery operations still under way, it’s unclear how long the debris from the bridge will block the Patapsco River. But for now, ships can’t reach or leave the port’s container terminals, roll on-roll off auto and construction machinery terminals, and coal terminals. CSX and Norfolk Southern serve the port, along with the short line Canton Railroad.

The port had a record 2023 and is the largest automobile import facility on the East Coast. Last year it handled 750,000 vehicles, many of which moved inland by rail. Port of Baltimore terminals that are blocked include: CSX’s Curtis Bay Coal Piers, which handles export coal produced at mines primarily in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The Seagirt container terminal and adjacent Intermodal Container Transfer Facility □ The Dundalk Marine Terminal, the port’s largest general cargo facility, which handles containers, automobiles, farm and construction equipment, as well as wood pulp and steel. The Fairfield automobile terminal. Port officials, in an update on X, formerly called Twitter, said vessel traffic in and out of the port is suspended until further notice.

The port is still handling cargo that’s currently inside of its terminals. “This is a major disaster and will create significant problems on the U.S. East Coast for U.S. importers and exporters,” says Lars Jensen, a maritime trade expert. “The bridge collapse will mean that for the time being it will not be possible to get to the container terminals — or a range of the other port terminals — in Baltimore,” he says. “In 2023 the terminals handled 1.1 million TEU. This is some 21,000 TEU per week which now has to be routed through other ports in the region.” TEU, or twenty-foot equivalent units, is the common measure of international containers. Baltimore’s container volume is dwarfed by the Ports of New York and New Jersey, as well as the Port of Virginia. In the fourth quarter, for example, Baltimore handled 265,000 TEU compared to 2 million at New York/New Jersey and 850,000 at Norfolk, Va. “Should the Baltimore cargo be spread solely on the two nearest major container ports, NY/NJ and Norfolk,

this would result in a throughput increase for those ports of just under 10%,” Jensen says. “The perhaps more critical question is to which degree truck and rail infrastructure can rapidly absorb such a 10% increase.” CSX told customers to expect delays in the wake of the bridge collapse. “While freight traffic has not been entirely halted in the region, certain commodities have been affected by the incident. CSX is actively communicating with customers to provide updates on their shipment statuses as the situation evolves,” the railroad said in a statement. CSX said it has the capacity to dispatch additional trains to CSX-served coal terminals in Baltimore. “Contingency plans are being implemented and CSX is in contact with existing coal customers through these terminals,” the railroad said.

“The company currently intends to keep its Curtis Bay Coal Pier facility operational but will continue to assess the circumstances to determine appropriate actions moving forward.” All international intermodal shipments destined for Baltimore have been suspended, CSX said: “The CSX team is working with international customers to identify alternative solutions to support cargo movement to and from Baltimore. It’s important to note that domestic intermodal traffic on CSX destined for local Baltimore remains unaffected.” CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs expressed support for the community. “Our hearts go out to the individuals and families impacted by the tragic events surrounding the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse,” he said in a statement. “The State of Maryland and the City of Baltimore have been central to our operations for nearly two centuries, and we remain deeply connected to this dynamic region.

We stand in solidarity with the community during this difficult time.” Paul Barnes, CEO of Canton Railroad parent Canton Development, says the closure of port facilities will have a major impact on rail traffic. “First and foremost, my thoughts and prayers are with those lives lost in this tragic incident and with their families,” Barnes says. “The entire Port of Baltimore is closed for who knows how long. This will adversely impact the Canton Railroad specifically and Baltimore rail opens. “We will continue to interchange with CSXT and NS as we still have domestic rail customers, including through our beautiful Boston Street transload facility,” he adds. “This will greatly impact our traffic with international warehouse partners Rukert Terminals, Terminal Corp. and B&E Storage, all significant customers, just when opportunities were starting to grow. Norfolk Southern said it was working with customers affected by the port outage. “We are working directly with affected international customers, port partners, and state officials to help maintain the integrity of the global supply chain. Ports on the East Coast are resilient and have the capacity to serve the flow of freight,” the railroad said in a statement. “Our network

touches every major port on the eastern seaboard, and we have proactively reached out to help our customers and provide alternate routing solutions. Significant supply chain events demand a rapid response approach, frequent communication, and innovative solutions, and Norfolk Southern is doing all three of these things to help our customers and partners navigate through this challenge.”

From the Institute for Energy Research via David Legates California Proposes to Ban Diesel Trains and Has Asked EPA for a Waiver *Institute of Energy Research* March 29, 2024

www.instituteforenergyresearch.org/ Washington DC Biden’s Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has requested comments on a waiver sought by the California Air Resources Board to implement new proposed state regulations on freight rail trains that are stricter than the current national Clean Air Act standards. Under California’s proposed rule, starting in 2030, no train older than 23 years may operate in the state, despite locomotives usually lasting 40 years. The proposal also calls for increased use of zeroemissions technology to transport freight from ports and throughout railyards. Starting in 2030, half of all new trains must be “zero-emission,” and by 2035, *all* new trains must be zeroemission. The rule would essentially guarantee all train fleets would be zero-emission no later than 2058. The proposal will also ban locomotives in the state from idling longer than 30 minutes if they are equipped with an automatic shutoff. If the waiver is approved by EPA, it will not only affect rail travel in California, but nationwide as well as the same locomotive is used across state borders. Comments are to be filed by April 22, 2024. Because transitioning from diesel-powered trains to electric trains is prohibitively expensive,

California will require all train companies in the state to set aside almost a billion dollars each starting in 2026 to fund an eventual transition to a battery-powered fleet. Locomotive operators would be required to deposit funds into a trust account based on their emissions in California, which can be used to invest in newer mandated locomotives or infrastructure. Train companies cannot fund the transition now because the technology for a completely batterypowered train does not exist. Freight trains are huge and heavy and must operate in the extreme cold and climb steep heights through mountains. Cold weather and steep inclines have proven to reduce the range of truck electric vehicles by half. It would be far worse for freight trains, which carry much heavier loads. The damage from California’s freight rail regulation would be devastating. Since trains do not switch when crossing state borders, train fleets would be forced to update their entire fleet to make sure they complied with the ban on engines older than 23 years. Also, since almost all freight train compa-

nies operate in California, they would all be forced to start contributing almost a billion dollars a year to the mandatory transition fund. Since 40 percent of all long-haul freight traffic is delivered by train, it would mean price increases for almost all consumers.

Finally, since an operative commercially available prototype does not exist, every train company would face regulatory uncertainty as the 2030 and 2035 fleet mandates kick in. The waiver and the proposal in unnecessary as the national Clean Air Act standard for trains ensures that diesel freight is not contributing to bad air quality or other health concerns. U.S. rail can move a ton of freight nearly 500 miles on a single gallon of fuel, which is much cleaner than if the merchandise was moved by truck. Freight railways transport roughly 1.6 billion tons of goods nationwide across nearly 140,000 miles. California is setting unrealistic targets and unachievable timelines that will undoubtedly lead to higher prices for the goods and services and fewer options for consumers. California is the nation’s largest agriculture producer, which means that increased costs for freight will drive food inflation, as well as goods coming from China that are imported into California ports. Further, its push for a zero-emission transportation sector is useless since China is currently adding two new coal plants every week and is the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Rail accounts for only about 2 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions from the U.S. transportation sector. If President Biden is looking for an opportunity to lower prices for consumers, he should start by rejecting California’s freight rail waiver. **Conclusion** California started the EV car mandate that grew to 17 states and nationwide regulations when the Obama Administration granted California a waiver to set its own fuel economy standards. EPA also recently approved California rules requiring zero-emission trucks to make up between 40 percent and 75 percent of sales by 2035, depending on the type. California is now set to use the same ploy for rail, with a waiver application into the Biden administration that will let California set its own emission standards for locomotives that are designed to force electric locomotives to replace diesel. Because a locomotive is not switched across state lines, the locomotive mandate will be forced upon the rail industry nationwide, which will increase prices on consumers as 40 percent of U.S. freight is moved by rail. The California rail mandate clearly interferes with the interstate commerce clause in the Constitution that guarantees the free flow of commerce. California’s rule will be expensive for rail companies and increased costs for them will mean higher prices for many goods that move by rail for Americans, who are looking for lower costs having been hit by Bidenomics and its inflationary effects for over three years



Upcoming Events (www.railserve.com & *Mid Atlantic Train Show List*)

April 20-21, 2024 – 9th N-Scale Gathering by the Atlantic County 4H Club and New Jersey Southern N-TRAK. Atlantic County 4H Grounds. 3210 Philadelphia Ave, Egg Harbor City, NJ. Multiple model train clubs along with modular N & T Trak Displays. For details, please visit www.therailwire.net. For layout participation, please contact Eric Seidelmann, njsntrak@gmail.com or 609-234-6843. For vendor questions please contact John Kern, kernc101@comcast.net. You can download the show flyer from <https://trainville.com/shows.html#>

April, 27, 2024 – The Delaware Train Show. Nur Shrine Center, Route. 13 / 198 South DuPont Highway, New Castle, DE. 9a-2p. Admission is \$5.00, children under the age of 12 are free \$10.00 Early Buyers (8:00a Admission.) It will feature over 150 tables of trains, accessories, slot cars and some toys. Delaware Train Show will have a diversity of trains in all Scales and makes. We will have a variety of unique dealers coming from up and down the east coast. The show has grown bigger every year. This show will have a train layout on display by The Strasburg Model RR Club of N.J. Train show is Saturday only.

April 27, 2024 - Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum Train Show. Washington County Ag. Center, 7303 Sharpsburg Pike, Boonsboro, MD, 9a-1:30p. The railroad museum (17230 Shepherdstown Pike, Sharpstown, MD) will be open from 10a-1:30p. For more info, phone 301-800-9829 or email: hmrrm@myactv.net.

April 27-28, 2024 – Timonium Great Scale Model Train and Railroad Collectors Show. Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Rd., Timonium, MD. Hours 9a-4p on Sat and 10a-4p on Sunday. For details, please visit <https://www.gsmts.com/index.htm>.

May 4, 2024 – Delaware Seaside Train Show Spring Fling. Hope Center-Ocean View, DE. 97 Central Ave., (Intersection of DE Rt. 26 (Atlantic Ave.) & Central Ave.), Ocean View, DE. 9a-2p. Admission: \$6, kids 10 & under, FREE. Operating layouts. Refreshments. Door prizes. 50/50 raffle. For more information, visit our website: www.delawareseasiderailroadclub.com.


May 11, 2024 – National Train Day at the Caboose. 111 Adams Ave., Lewes, DE. 9a-3p. Free admission. The Lewes Junction Railroad and the Lewes Public Library are joining forces to celebrate National Train Day. The

LJRBA will have activities at their PRR Caboose outside (weather permitting). The LPL will have speakers and activities inside.

May 11, 2024 – The Mebane Train Display. 209 West Jackson Street, Mebane, NC. All openings are free to the public with the exception of the March Train Show. Hours for the Train Show are from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM and an admission of \$5.00 is charged at the entrance to the gymnasium where the show is held. The gymnasium is located next to the Display building. For more information visit: <https://thembanetraindisplay.com/>

May 19, 2024 – The Brick Train & Show. Brick Elks Lodge #2151, 2491 Hooper Ave., Brick, NJ. 9a-2p. Admission: \$7, kids under 10 FREE. We have assembled some of the finest dealers in the hobby today. If you are interested in toy trains, pre-war, post-war or new production, this is the show for you. All gauges and manufacturers represented. Featuring the area's premier model train and toy dealers. Operating layouts, door prizes, fine refreshments served from opening to close. Test track to operate that new purchase. Train repairs.

June 8, 2024 – The Mebane Train Display. 209 West Jackson Street, Mebane, NC. All openings are free to the public with the exception of the March Train Show. Hours for the Train Show are from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM and an admission of \$5.00 is charged at the entrance to the gymnasium where the show is held. The gymnasium is located next to the Display building. For more information visit: <https://thembanetraindisplay.com/>

June 18-23, 2024 – The 30th National N Scale Convention hosted by the N Scale Enthusiast. This year's convention will be held at the Wind Creek Casino Resort, 77 Wind Creek Bethlehem, PA. For more information, visit: <https://www.nationalscaleconvention.com/> 

Division Apparel



Polo



Polo with pocket



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We continue to offer the Port Authority polo, with or without pocket, and the short- and long-sleeve button down shirts. As before, you can have your name added. A new offering is a matching cap. Unfortunately patches are no longer available as our emblem is now being directly embroidered onto the items.

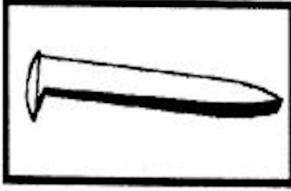
Manufacturer’s descriptions and specs:

POLO

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Address: _____ City: _____

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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.

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