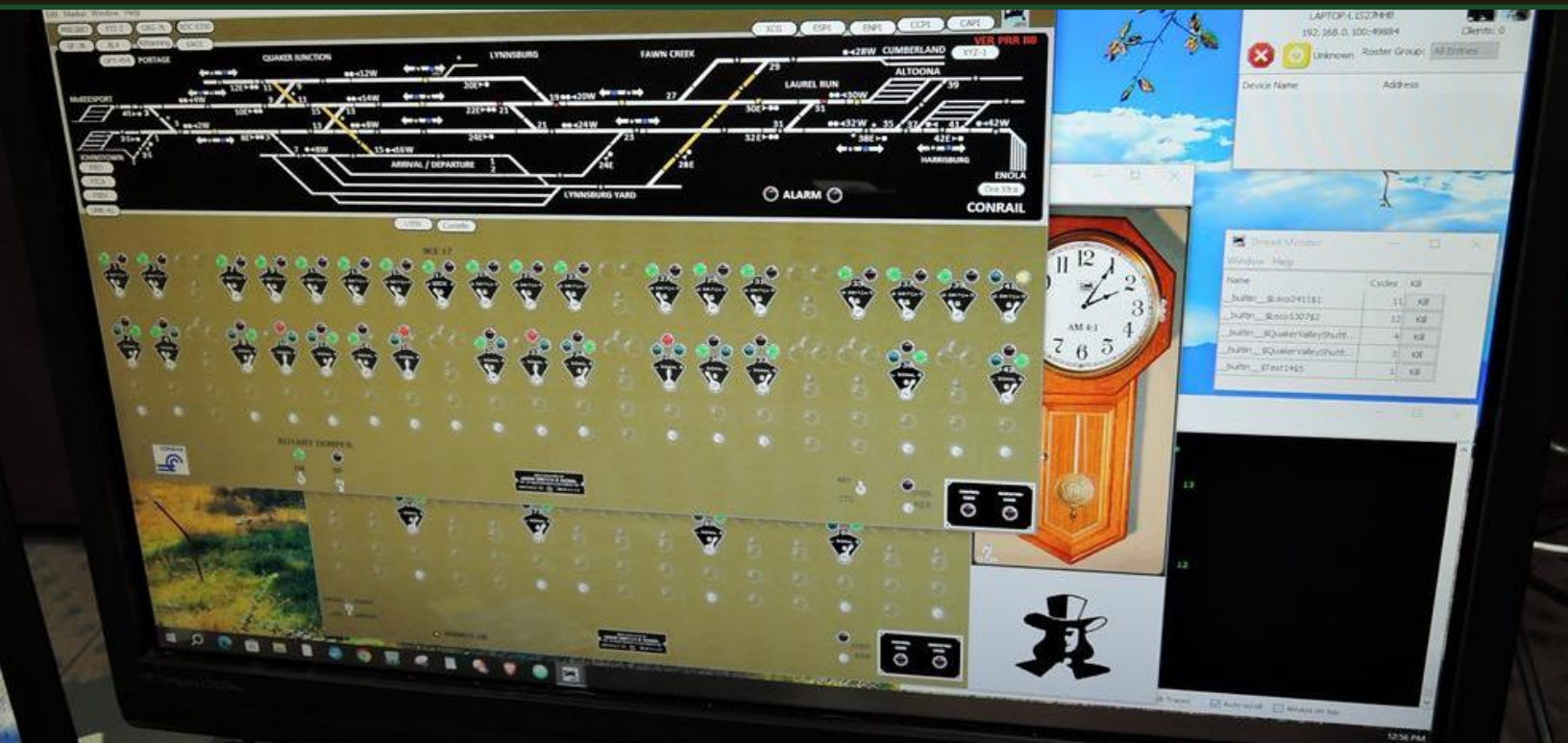
The Dispatcher

The Journal of PhillyNMRA January 2026

Above: Old School - This was the prevailing method of train control when Chris Saporito began his PRR layout over 25 years ago. He has since added Digitrax DCC, but still runs DC.
Below: New School - JMRI panel on Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Lines. Bob uses NCE DCC.
Photos of both layouts begin on page 20. (Howard Kaplan photos)



THE DISPATCHER

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

January 2026 | **PhillyNMRA.org** | **Volume 33, No. 1**

In this issue...

ONLINE NAVIGATION: Click on any page to be taken there. Click on any footer to return here.

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.

Next Issue: February 2025. Due out approximately February 10. Deadline for submissions: February 1.

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

Print version: Print subscriptions are no longer available. A brief summary of upcoming events is mailed to new members.

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From the Super's Desk

It has been a very successful year! In 2025, besides our six regular division meets, we also hosted the regional convention in October, which turned out to be extremely successful. Our annual business meeting/barbecue held in June has become a members' favorite.

We have a full calendar lined up for 2026. To start out, joint division meets are planned for January and February. The new year brings new goals for our division. By now you may have seen or heard information about NMRA's "Vision 2035." This is an ambitious, 10-year plan to double the organization's membership. There are a lot of moving parts involved. The main focus of the plan is to strive toward all divisions using the same standard checklist of uniform goals. From the information that I have seen, we are 90 percent compliant at this time.

The plan also involves revised graphics including a new logo, which you'll be seeing in future online and printed material.

I look forward to working with all members to increase member satisfaction. Stay tuned. There will be much more information to follow.

On a different note, if you have one of our NMRA open house signs from the convention, please drop it off at one of our upcoming meets so that it can be forwarded to the Tidewater division to be used for their convention coming up this October. If you are unable to drop it off yourself, please make arrangements with someone in the division to pick it up.

I hope everyone had a great holiday spending time with your friends and family. Happy New Year!

.

Joe

From the Editor's Desk

Well, 2025 has come to an end. It's a good time to reflect back on the year over all the model and prototype railroading we have engaged in—our own layouts, projects, operations, railfanning, trips. And what better way to reflect back than to write about it and share it with the other members. And wouldn't you know it, I've run out of articles again and would welcome more contributions from our division members.

As I've mentioned in the past, all that's required to be an author is your passion and enthusiasm. Write something up in your own way, add whatever diagrams, photos, or other materials you may have, and we'll add the polish. Any topic on any aspect of railroading or modeling is fair game. And don't forget that it counts toward your AP Author certificate.

Sure, I can borrow material from other publications, but I'd much rather it come from our own members. So why not make it a new year's resolution to share your interests and work with others. And on that note, Happy New Year! Hope you can make it to the meet in Jersey.

Howard

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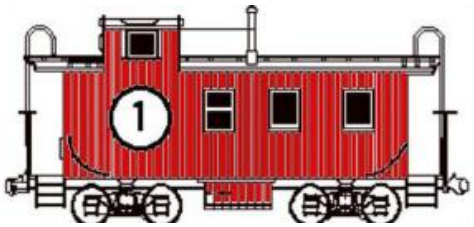
Joint January Meet with Jersey

On Saturday January 17, 2026 we gather at the Deptford Senior Center, 1341 Tanyard Road, Sewell, NJ 08080 for a joint meet hosted by the New Jersey Division. The time is 9:00am with doors opening at 8:30. Directions and maps on page 5.

Our morning program will begin with our own **Mike Dettinger** and his presentation of **"Table Top Module Survey and Overview."**

A number of new tabletop modular standards have evolved in the last five years. This clinic examines those of the of the most popular modular formats. Tabletop modules are designed to sit on an existing tabletop or the floor as individual modules and do not have their own legs. The benefit is that model railroaders minimize the carpentry and maximize the railroading. For this reason among others, this form of modular railroading is quickly growing in popularity.



Mike currently serves as the the Philadelphia Division's clinics chair, and has presented a variety of clinics and written many articles for the division newsletter. He recently presented clinics at the MER convention on the Kato Mini-Modules and of late, tabletop modular railroading has become his particular focus.

Fred Willis of the New Jersey Division will present the second clinic titled "**The Design and History of Early British Locomotives**." In 1830 the first steam locomotive for American use, The Stourbridge Lion, arrived in the US from Britain. Even though it was primitive, it was built on 25 years of locomotive development and knowledge. This clinic will describe the first 25 years of British steam locomotive development, when there was no industry knowledge to draw on.

Fred is life member of the NMRA and a member of the New Jersey Division. New England railroads, particularly in Maine in 1900, are his primary prototype interest. His primary modeling activities are scratch building structures and cars and researching the history of small railroads and locomotive designs.

Please note that the clinic order is subject to change.

All are encouraged to bring model displays. The topic of focus this meet is a picture of something on layout. As usual, there will be door prizes, a raffle, and swap tables (come early if you want one). In addition, a "last chance table," where you can pick up models and modeling stuff and/or donate stuff you want to get rid of—free, of course. Coffee will be provided.

The afternoon fare consists of model railroad open houses. Layout information will be distributed at the meet. Hope you all can make it!

Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

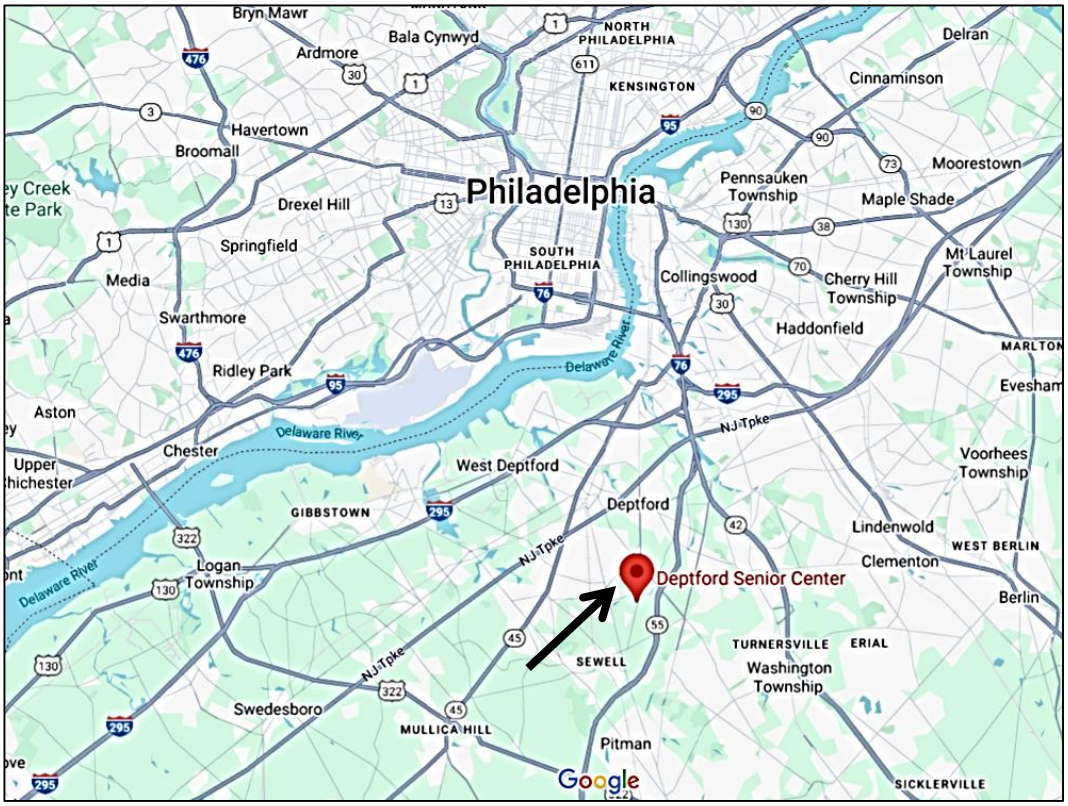
January 10–11, 2026 Greenberg Show – PhillyNMRA Table Greater Philadelphia Expo Center 100 Station Ave. Oaks, PA 19456	**January 17, 2026** NJ / Philly Division Joint Meet Deptford Senior Center 1341 Tanyard Road Sewell, NJ 08080	**February 28, 2026** Philly/Susquehanna Division Joint Meet Upper Southampton Community Center 913 Willow St. Southampton, PA 18966
April 11. 2026 Philadelphia Division Meet Peter Becker Community 815 Maplewood Drive Harleysville, PA 19438	**June 13 2026*** Philadelphia Division Meet/Picnic Alverthorpe Park Jenkintown Road & Forrest Avenue Jenkintown, PA 19046	**July 28–August 2, 2026** NMRA Convention "Scenic City Express" Chattanooga Marriott Downtown Two Carter Street Chattanooga, TN 37402

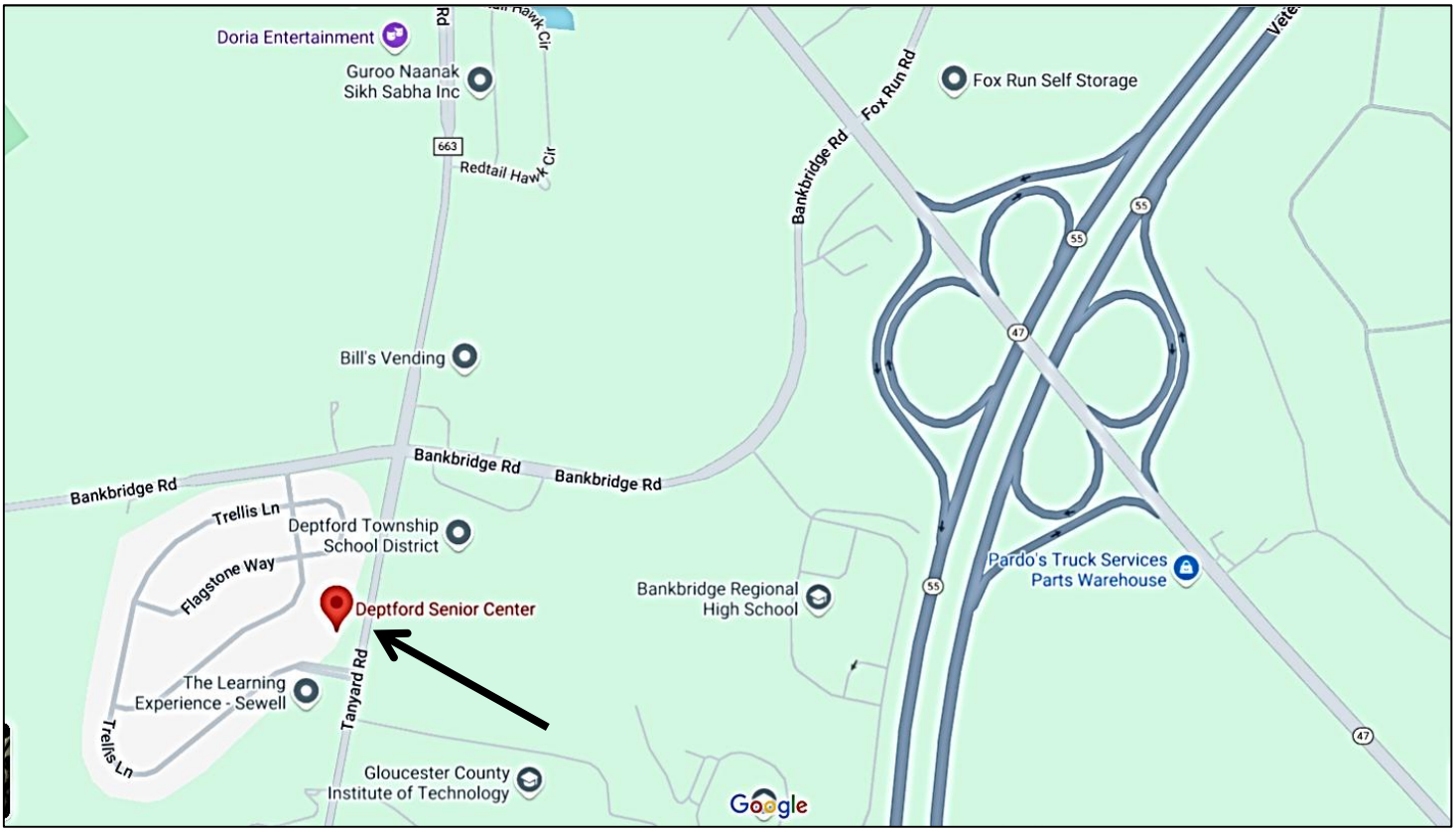
*tentative Check http://www.phillynmra.org/regional-timetable for links to these and other upcoming events.

Directions to the January Meet

Deptford Senior Center
1341 Tanyard Road
Sewell, NJ 08080

For those traveling on Rt. 55 either northbound or southbound, exit 56B will put you on Rt. 47 north. Go to first traffic signal at Bankbridge Road. Turn left onto Bankbridge. Drive until you see the Deptford Middle School on the left. The intersection is with Tanyard Road. Turn left on-to Tanyard Road. The Senior Center is on the right a short distance (across from the athletic fields of the school). Enter the Senior Center parking via a right turn onto Trellis Lane.





Open House Hosted at Peter Becker

On Saturday, October 18th and Sunday, the 19th The Peter Becker Community Model Railroad Club held its first open house as a member of the National Model Railroad Association.

Seated at the table are Mike Taylor, standing in the second row left to right, Joe Morris, Dale Woodland, Jim Rich (club president) Dick Schmoyer, and Larry Moss.

For those who were unable to attend our open house, type the following into your browser: **Inside the Peter Becker Community Railroad Club**. This will take you to our webpage which includes about twenty minutes of videos showing the layout operations.

If you are interested in scheduling a personal visit, please contact a member of the marketing team at 215-256-9501. They will arrange for an appointment with a member of the railroad club.

November Meet Report *by Michael Junod, clerk* *Photos by Rob Hinkle*

On Saturday, November 8th the Philadelphia Division met at the Brandywine Town Center Community Center in Wilmington, Delaware. This was a joint meet with the New Jersey Division and sponsored by the Philadelphia Division. Twenty-seven Philadelphia division members were signed in with a total attendance including New Jersey Division members and guests of 45.

Staff from both divisions arrive early to set up

Philadelphia Division Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR called the meet to order at 9:07am. In his opening remarks he expressed thanks for a successful recent MER convention hosted by the Philadelphia Division in October at King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. He mentioned the upcoming Philadelphia Division board meeting on December 4th and also welcomed the New Jersey Division attendees. New Jersey Division Superintendent Glyn Thomas, MMR then gave his opening remarks and thanked the Philadelphia Division for hosting.

Jeff Witt and Joe Walters set out the refreshments

The first clinic was given by Joe Walters, MMR. He described the construction of his award-winning model of a Schnabel car. Joe's model represents the largest Schnabel car ever built. Joe described the construction techniques as well as materials used from the small initial bolsters and frames up to the completed car. Along the way he also described the unique design features of the prototype that makes this particular model so interesting and challenging.

A break was taken for soft pretzels, coffee, and doughnuts, and for the sale of raffle tickets. After the break, some unfinished MER convention business was conducted with the awarding of First Place in Structures to Steve Richardson for his 11-story building. Steve also received the Philadelphia New Modeler Award. The New Jersey Division then awarded an AP certificate for Chief Dispatcher to Tim Palmer.

Attendees check in

The second clinic was presented by Glyn Thomas, MMR. He discussed the history of the zinc ore industry in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania and the involvement of the Central Railroad of New Jersey and Lehigh and Hudson River Railroad in the transportation of products in the zinc ore industry. He described the evolution of the rail vehicles involved and the traffic routes. He also described his efforts to model some of the unique prototypes in zinc ore service.

Drawing were held for the 50/50 raffle and door prizes and a number of prize items were distributed.

Several attendees from both the Philadelphia and New Jersey Divisions participated in a show and tell. There also was an adjacent area with several buy-and-sell display tables set up.

Superintendents Glyn Thomas and Joe Walters thanked the participants for attending the joint meet.

After the meet, attendees were invited to visit several nearby layouts. These layouts included Bill Kachel's Pennsylvania RR Cosmopolitan Division, Joe Walters's Northeast Lines, David Guessford's B&O, and John Trout's PRR.

WE WELCOME OUR NEW PHILLY DIVISION MEMBERS

Eileen Ert, North Wales, PA
James Fee, North Wales, PA
Frank Hujber, Levittown, PA
Patrick Murphy, Gilbertsville, PA

Attentive audience during Joe Walters's clinic

Steve Richardson (R) stands ready to answer questions as attendees check out his Timesaver

L to R: Jersey Director Thom Radice, Treasurer Jeff Witt, and Clerk Michael Junod man the front table while Glyn Thomas presents his clinic

Joe Walters, MMR receives his clinician certificate from Assistant Super Rob Hinkle

Steve Richardson (R) receives his award of First Place in Structures for his 11-story building which he entered at the Philly Express MER convention. Steve also received the Philadelphia New Modeler Award.

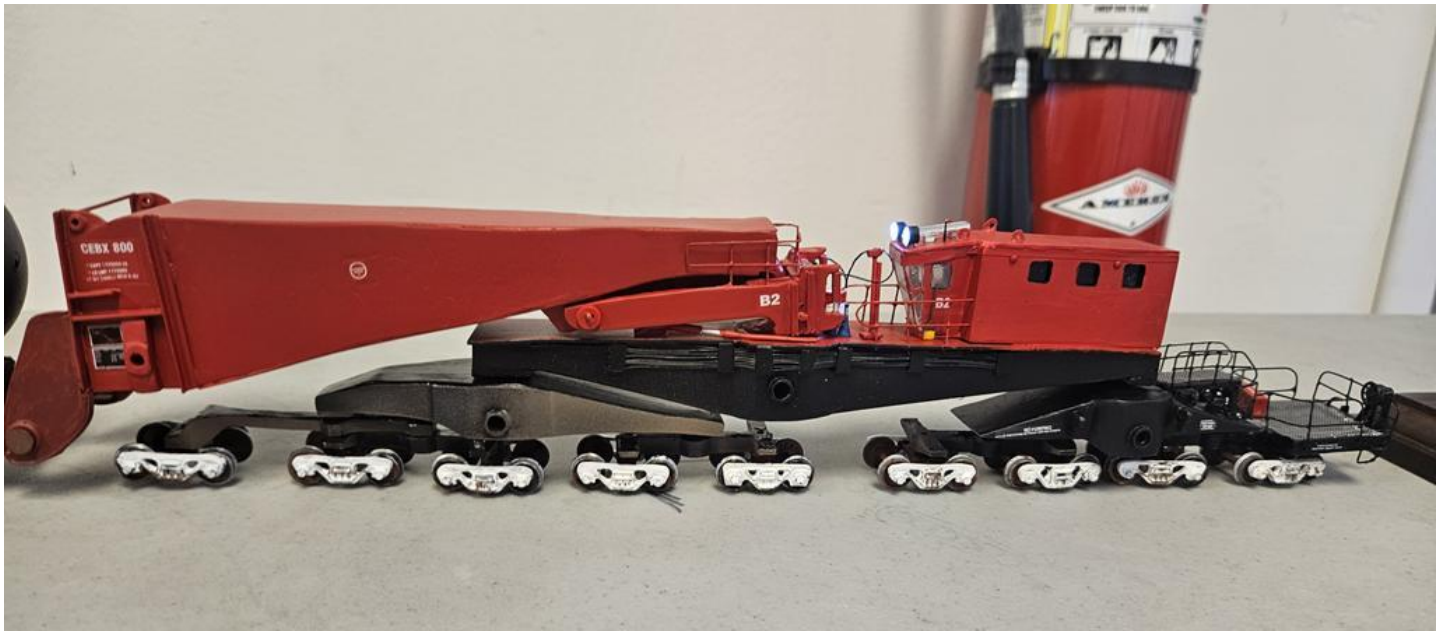
Jersey Super Glyn Thomas, MMR receives his clinician certificate from Philly Super Joe Walters, MMR

A fine turnout

Attendees gather for Show & Tell as Philly member Fred Monsimer describes his project

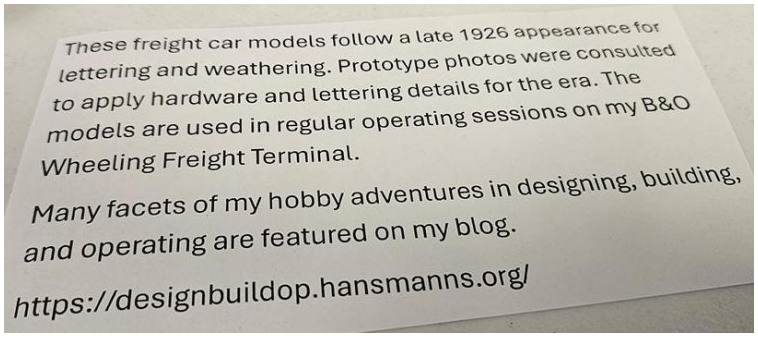
More Show & Tell activity

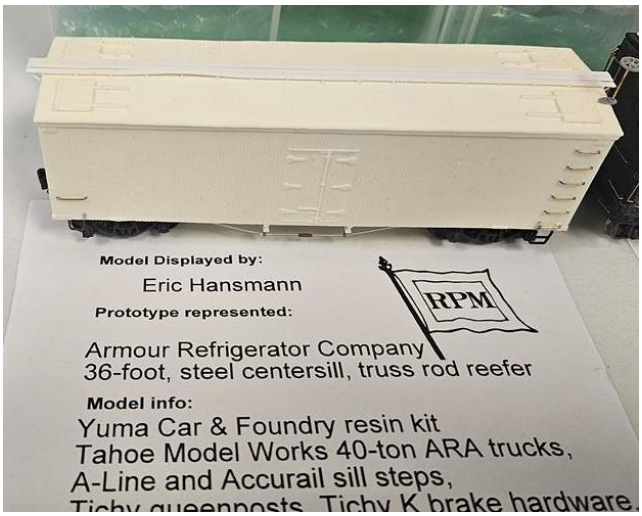
Schnabel Car - Joe Walters, MMR

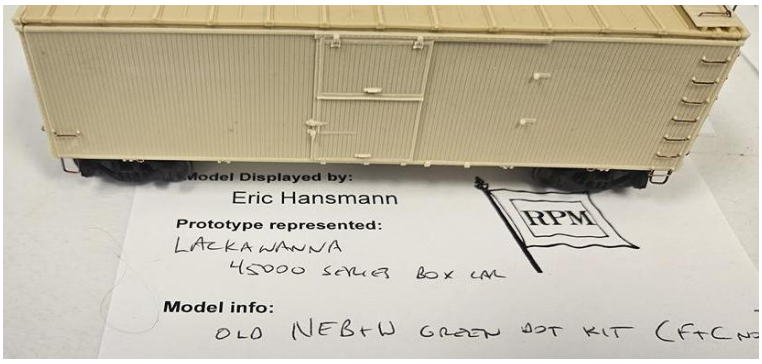


Zinc ore cars - Glyn Thomas, MMR

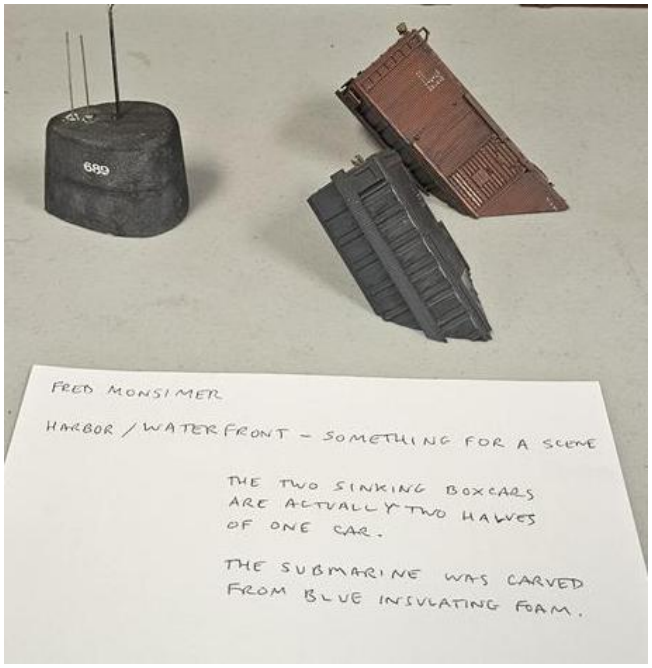
Eric Hansmann's car projects







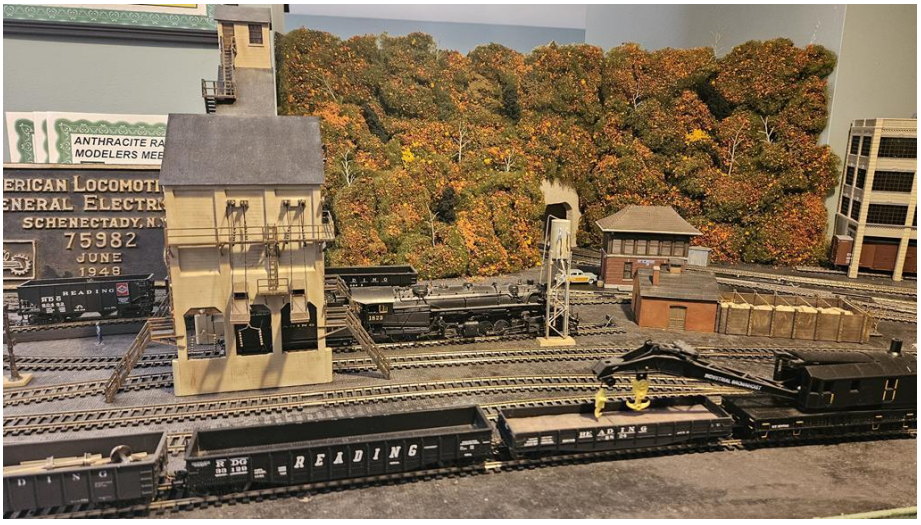
Mike Dettinger's BlueRail layout



Fred Monsimer's project: sinking boxcars - 2 halves of one boxcar; submarine carved from blue foam

Philadelphia Electric flat (unidentified contributor)

Layout Tour – Dave Adams's Reading Railroad (HO)

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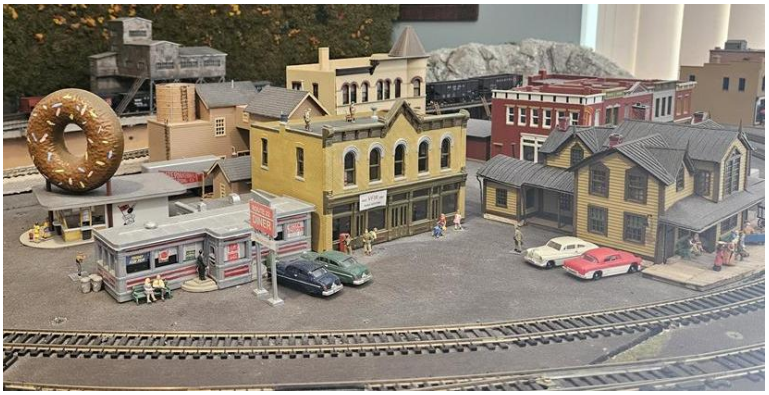


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Division Organization

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Assistant Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2027)
Clerk – Michael Junod (2026)
Treasurer – Jeff Witt (2027)

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Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2026)
Steve Wysowski – Member Outreach (2027)
Alan Silverblatt – Venues (2027)

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

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Layouts – Bill Fagan
Venues – Alan Silverblatt
Refreshments – Bill Fagan, Joe Walters, Kevin Feeney
Door Prizes – Mike Dettinger, Kevin Feeney
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OPS – Rob Hinkle

ITEM DONATIONS – Kevin Feeney

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Webmaster – Howard Kaplan
Newsletter – Howard Kaplan, Earl Paine, Bill Fagan, Joe Walters MMR, Michael Junod
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

My Timesaver

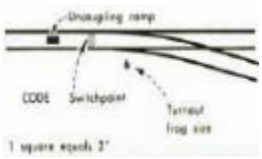
A Tribute to John Allen

by Stephen Richardson

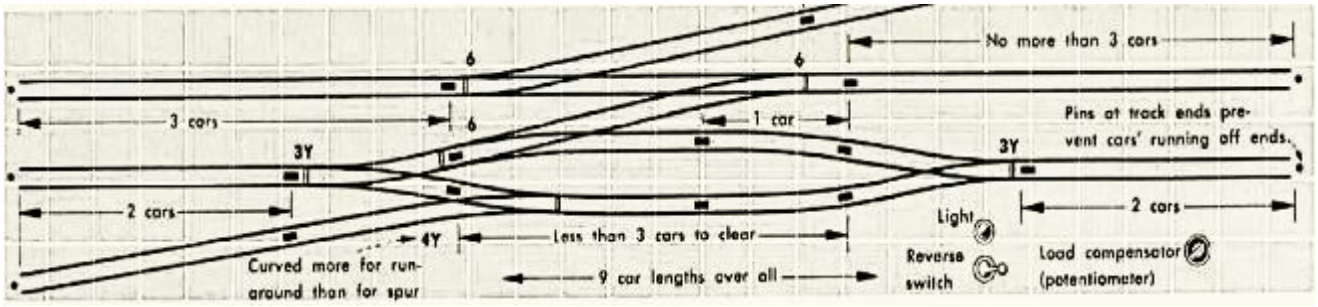
In November 1972 John Allen presented his Timesaver switching puzzle in *Model Railroader* magazine. The thought of building that has lurked in my mind since then. When I was finally able to justify the time and expense of building a layout, I tried to incorporate a timesaver in that work, but it just didn't fit with my other givens and druthers, or, honestly, my skills.

In the interim I have collected several more articles and related notes.

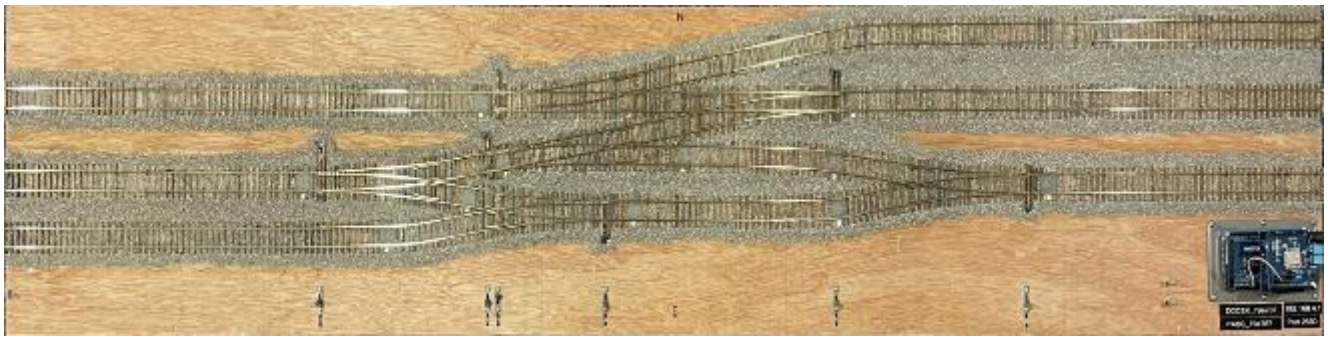
- 5 Ideas for a shelf layout - Steven Otte May 9, 2022, Model Railroader forum.
- The Snap-Track Timesaver; Russ Cain; *Model Railroader,* October 1976, pp. 67-69.
- One of my towns is a Timesaver; Ed Vondrak, *Model Railroader*, November 1977, pp. 96-97.
- The Timesaver in a loop; Ed Vondrak *Model Railroader*, February 1979.
- HOn3 Timesaver; Bob McMahon; Model Railroader Information Station article on Trains.com.
- John Allen's Timesaver revisited; Ed Vondrak; Possibly also from the Model Railroader Information Station article.
- Switching in a small town; Peter Vassallo; *Model Railroader,* September 2016.



The time has finally come to make this real. Here is John Allen's diagram:



This is my version:



I had several goals in building this "layout."

- Hand lay code 70 rail
- Manual thrown turnouts
- Magnetic uncouplers as invisible as possible
- Arduino DCC Controller with Wifi
- Learn switching strategy
- The challenge of building a new toy using unfamiliar technology

Details

Roadbed: Previously I had used Homasote roadbed. It is easy to work with and holds spikes well, but it's messy and requires digging out power tools to machine it into shape. Milled homasote roadbed is available, but I did not have any in stock and I was looking for a more "economical" solution. On my last trip to purchase sheet plastic, I got a sheet of 1/8" thick expanded foam PVC. This can be cut with a knife or scissors with no mess. It seemed to hold spikes well, so that is what I used. Subsequently I have discovered that some of the stability of the spikes came from the underlying plywood even though they only extended about 1/32" into the plywood. When completed, the combination of glued ties and ballast, and spikes has served to hold the trackwork fast.

Manual turnouts: Initially I had planned to use Caboose ground throws, but I did not have enough in stock, and was concerned that finding suitable locations for them was difficult. I didn't want to reach around the cars and locomotive, potentially knocking them off the track, resulting in frustration and damage. The tolerances are tight for the rolling stock and human hands alike. I also had concerns about using 'finger flick' over-center springs on the throwrods. In my experience this can dislodge the points from the printed circuit board (PC) throwrods, ending the fun. The resolution was to design and build (3D print) "remote" levers and cranks. Details of the mechanism are discussed in a separate article.

Uncouplers: Following a lot of experimentation, I found a way to configure small, rare-earth magnets just under the rails that would allow using the uncoupling and delayed features of Kadee couplers. This was based on a review of "Totally Hidden Uncouplers" that I had saved from years ago. Details of the uncoupler background and design are in a separate article.

Controller: For me, electronics are magic, so I just had to try building a DCC controller with an Arduino using the instructions published on the dcc-ex.com Web site. Along the same lines, I wanted to use a retired iPhone throttle to run the trains. I was pleased to find that this simply works - just follow the published instructions. But, there's more: I have a NCE PowerCab that I connected so that the timesaver could be used for testing and programming locomotives, well, ones that can fit anyway. The attached NCE USB Interface allows connecting a computer with JMRI to interrogate and configure decoders.

Learn switching strategy: This is an on-going task. Fiendish is how this track configuration is often described, and that is accurate in my opinion. This small layout can provide hours of amusement.

Statistics:

- Cost:
  - Trackwork ~$100
  - Arduino Controller: ~90
- Time: Irrelevant. Many hours of design, experimentation, and build over several months.

Timesaver Uncouplers

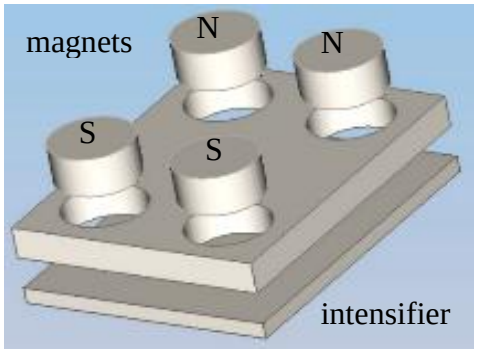
John Allen's Timesaver layout employs many uncouplers—11 to be exact. In order for the switching to be fun, these need to be reliable. To this I added one more feature, I want them to enable the delayed feature of Kadee uncouplers so that cars can be pushed to the end of the siding tracks. I also wanted the uncouplers to be out of view, buried in the roadbed.

Initially, I planned to use Kadee's under-track uncouplers. In order to make these fit in the confines of this track plan, they need to be cut much shorter—at least half of the stock length. The magnets can be scored and snapped as described in the Kadee directions, but when the steel intensifier plate is added, the thickness exceeded 1/8" roadbed on this layout.

Another option using rare earth magnets was described in an article in the September 2007 issue of *Model Railroad News*. The manufacturer, S&L Enterprises in Sykesville, MD, is apparently closed, however some sets of these "Totally Hidden Uncouplers" are still showing as available on eBay. The article describes in detail how the uncouplers are assembled, which led me to believe that I would be able to cobble something together to do the job.

I purchased small rare earth 5mm diameter by 2.8mm magnets on Amazon which will fit under the track. After a lot of fiddling, I learned that although they were strong, they would not move the couplers as I needed when positioned under the ties. Taking the hint from other uncoupler magnets, I cut a piece of steel to place under the magnets (cut from a Simpson Strong Tie plate). This got me much closer to the goal, but was not quite enough. I found that the magnets with the steel "intensifier" needed to be up against the bottom of the rails to cause the couplers to open.

A bit of experimentation was needed to find the best position for the magnets in the plane of the base of the rails. For these magnets, that is slightly wider than centered under the rails. Two sets of magnets are separated by 5/16" along the rail, and 1/2" between the rails. A plastic template was printed to hold the magnets in this position on the steel plate. The magnets must be oriented with the "north" ends under one rail, and the "south" ends under the opposite rail. In order to camoflage the uncoupler, a piece of 0.010" styrene sits between the magnets and the base of the rail.



Exploded view of the uncoupler

The uncoupling range is approximately the width of one tie marked with a white spot on the tie. These were only tested with Kadee 148 whisker couplers, I suspect that others may behave differently. Usually the uncoupling and delayed feature work, although sometimes a little help with a pencil, skewer, or similar tool is needed, especially for uncouplers located under turnouts. Some free rolling cars, especially hoppers with steel weights on the bottom, frustrate clean coupling and uncoupling as they are pulled by the magnets. Finally, the layout must be level to avoid unwanted movement when uncoupling.

I suspect that if the roadbed was thicker, doubling these magnets, and maybe the steel plate, would allow locating them under the ties totally out of view. As always, your mileage may vary….

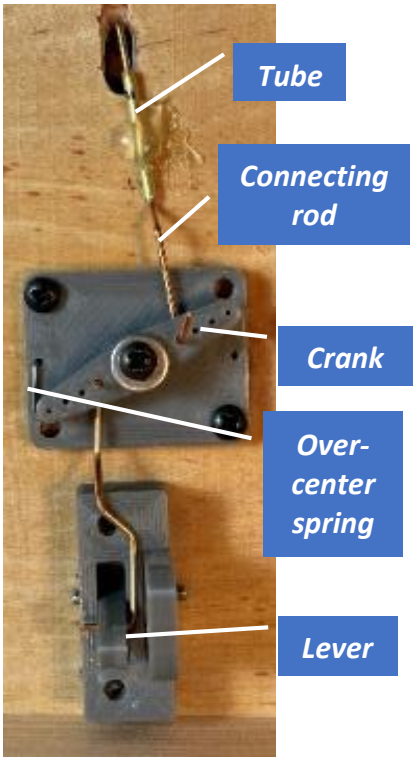
Manual Turnout Controls

I wanted simple control levers to enable switching on a copy of John Allen's Timesaver module. The goal was that these levers would provide a snap action to hold the points, and that it would not be necessary to reach over the module to move them. I also wanted the mechanism to provide some protection against overzealous force from damaging the hand laid trackwork and end the game.

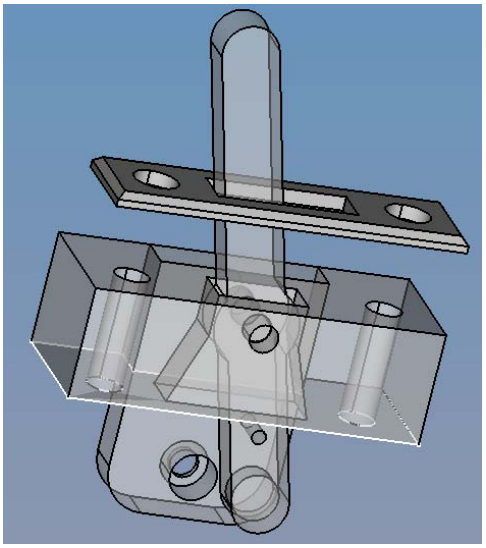
Pictured here are the top and underside views of one control. The components are the operator's lever on the top side, and a crank assembly with over-center spring and connecting rods underneath.

The operator's lever and crank assembly are 3D-printed components made of FDM-printed PLA plastic using a Creality Ender 3V2 printer. PLA is easy to print and somewhat forgiving, however ABS may be necessary if the stresses are too great. The holes for the screws, pivots, and wires are printed undersized so that they can be drilled out to accurate dimensions.

Top View



Under Layout View



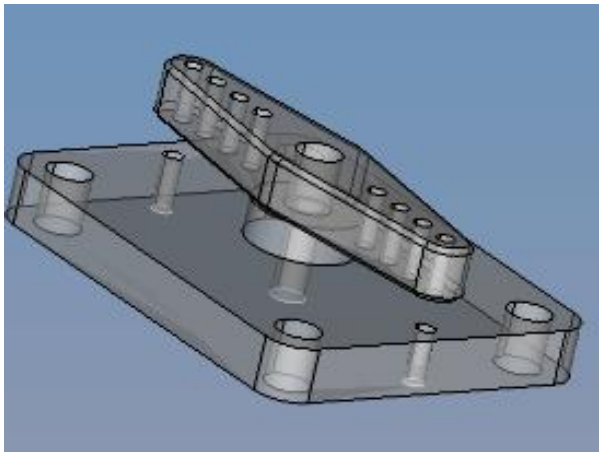
The crank assembly translates the lever action so that the switch points move in the same direction as the lever. This part also provides a convenient location for the over-center spring that yields the snap action to move and hold the points in position. The spring is 0.020 inch music wire bent into a "V" shape with right angle bends at the ends that engage the crank and base. The "V" is ¼ inch deep.

The connecting rods are 0.032" Tichy phosphor bronze wire. This wire is a bit too flexible on its own, so it is run through 1/16th inch tubing to make the linkage stiffer where it bends up to engage the switch throwrod.

I expected to use magnets to force the operator's lever to the end positions and thus hold the switch points in position. However, I learned that

even strong rare earth magnets do not have sufficient force unless they are directly next to each other. I used 1/8" x 1/16" magnets glued into recesses in the lever and the lever base. The repulsion between these magnets forces the lever away from the center position, but provides little force at the end points. The magnets may contribute to the feel of the controls, but are insufficient to hold the switch points tight.

I considered switching the scheme to use attracting magnets to pull the lever to the two end positions, however I was concerned that the magnets would eventually pull themselves out of the recesses and foul the mechanism. In the illustration, the recesses for the magnets are shown at the bottom of the base piece and lever. (3D printing hint: the part of the base that holds the magnet—the backstop—is printed separately in order to get a correctly dimensioned pocket for the magnet to be pressed in. It must be printed flat for that.)



A section of 2mm diameter finishing nail is pressed into the base and lever to assemble this part. The hole in the lever is drilled out to allow free rotation.

The crank base center is drilled and tapped for a 2-56 bolt.

Note: all of this was designed to work on a module built on ¼" plywood. The crank will work on any thickness platform, but the lever will need some modifications to work on a thicker platform. Changes to the lever may dictate changes to the crank if the "throw" of the lever is longer than what the crank can accommodate.

About the author…

I am a native of the Philadelphia suburbs not far from the PRR Media/West Chester line. Trains were part of our lives. Like many others I model to relive those memories and to satisfy the inventor and tinkerer within. It was a special treat to take the train to center city to have lunch with my Dad or go shopping with my grandmother. I wore my copies of Model Railroader and Model Railroad Craftsman thin, and tried a few things presented there. The next 50 years were college, work, marriage and children, but always reading and dreaming about what I saw in those magazines.

Philly Train Trivia

by Howard Kaplan

1) Darby, Pennsylvania is the site of what unique railroad feature?

2) The Fortuna station in Hatfield, PA on SEPTA's Doylestown line holds an unusual distinction. What is it?

Answers on page 35.

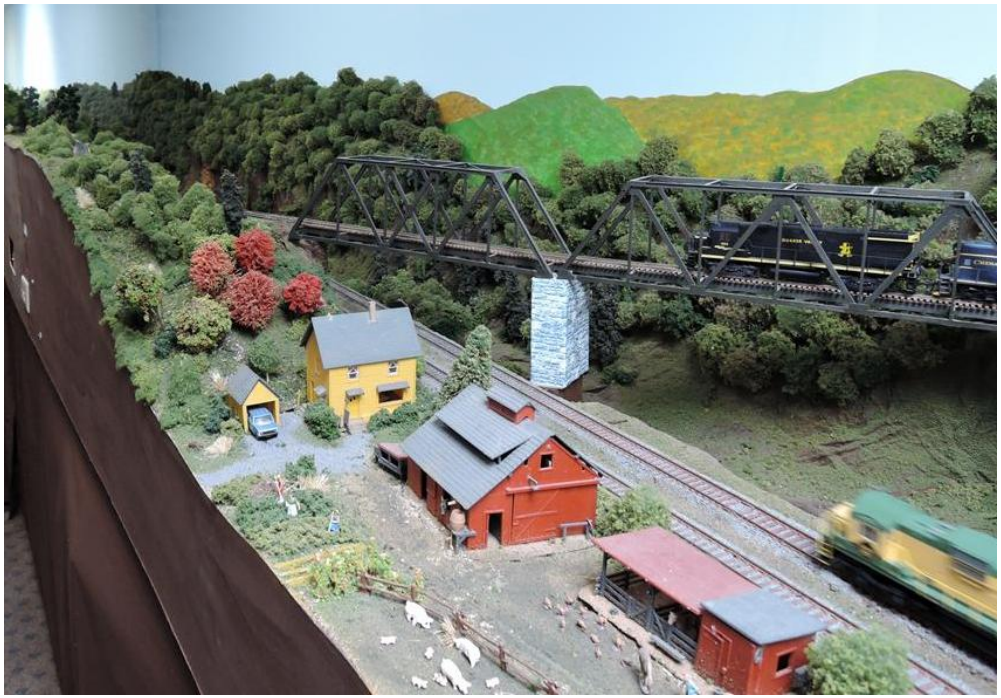
Photos by Howard Kaplan

Chris Saporito's PRR (HO), Mohnton, PA


MID-STATES
CHICAGO EXPRESS...


MID-STATES

Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley RR (HO), Shillington, PA



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. 191 layouts with 816 videos and 2,870 followers on YouTube with 1.518 million views.

↓ **Mark Kessler's Susquehanna Division of the PRR:** HO scale , Digitrax DCC, 2 levels, 99% excellent scenery complete, mostley steam engines with some diesel, very large storage yard. See video here: https://youtu.be/JHahO5NqVW8?si=wZ26MciLDyQDxPMd

↓ **Old Bosie MRRC:** An N scale railroad set in the western US. Layout is located in Boise, Idaho. See video here: https://youtu.be/Shcs1oEhOAY?si=Zd8JRgMKJ63cZFmn

↓ **Nampa MRRC:** HO Scale. Starts out in Pasco, up the helix down the long slope to Hinkle to Ontario and Nampa. See video here: https://youtu.be/qDu5pOOb6wQ?si=cB36xqsoOYMp05Ae

↓ **Konrad Richter:** N-scale layout depicting the Ashland Sycamore Hill, Lakes Division from White Ash to Oak Ridge. See video here: https://youtu.be/kapkCc6vW-w?si=fb_Sb2hZhzkfuY65

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

White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad

by Linda Long

Linda Long is a contributor to the DelMarVa Timetable, the publication of the DelMarVa Model Railroad Club.

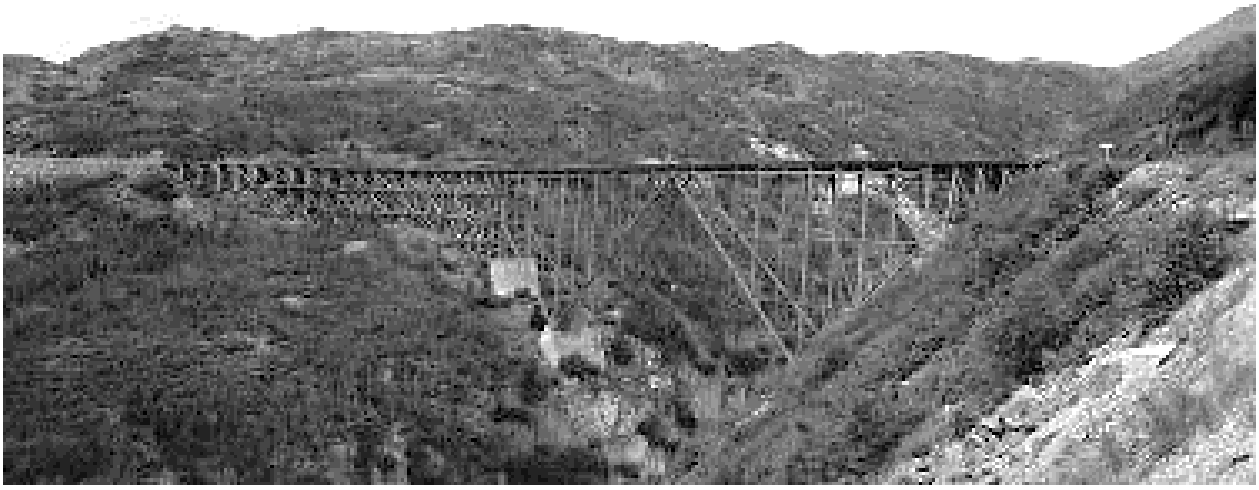
My husband and I recently took a cruise through the Alaska Inside Passage. Our last port of call was Skagway, Alaska. While there we took the opportunity to ride the White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad. It was interesting to learn why and how it was built.

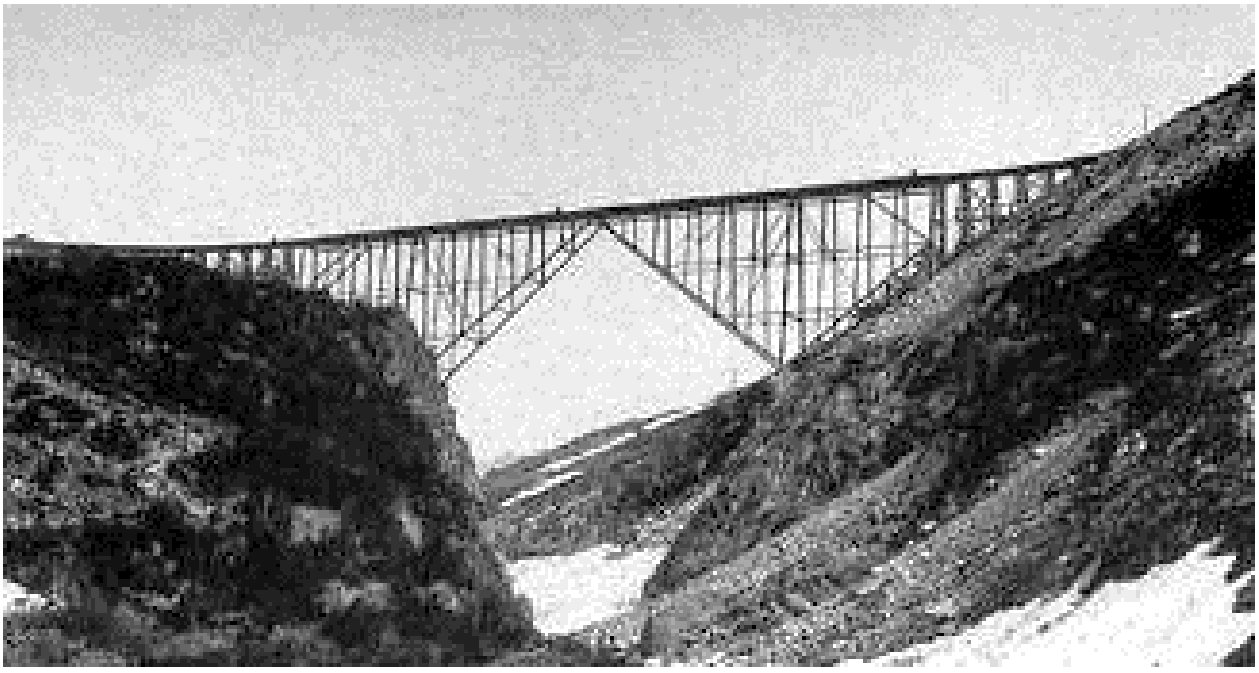
In July of 1897, several men returning to San Francisco from the Klondike on the steamship Excelsior, men who had been penniless just months ago, disembarked the ship with jars, satchels, and cases filled with gold. Days later the steamship Portland docked in Seattle carrying 68 miners on board, returning with a ton of gold. The news spread and the country went gold crazy. Within days thousands flocked to west coast towns from San Francisco to Vancouver hoping to book passage to Skagway, Alaska to start their trek to the Klondike.

Once in Skagway the stampeders were still 600 miles from the Klondike. The first obstacle was the coastal mountain range. There were two trails: the Chilkoot Trail, which was shorter but steeper, and the White Pass Trail, which was longer and less steep. Once at the summit they reached the Canadian border. One of the prerequisites for the stampeders to pass into Canada was to have in their procession 1 to 1½ tons of supplies per person, enough food, clothing, and shelter to last one year. It didn't take long for entrepreneurs to note the difficulties the stampeders faced and ideas started flowing. Tramlines, tunnels, and hot air balloons were proposed. In the end, a narrow-gauge railway seemed most feasible. Enter Michael Heney. Heney was an experienced and well-respected rail builder from Canada. Heney had hiked the White Pass trail to the summit. He felt a railroad could be built through the mountain pass though it would be expensive. Most people felt the project would be too expensive and would run behind schedule and be over budget. In April 1898, Heney was sitting in a Skagway hotel sipping a drink when he had a chance meeting with representatives of Close Brothers, an English investment bank. The reps had also hiked the White Pass trail and came to the same conclusion as other nay sayers. Heney did not give up. As he sipped Scotch with the gentlemen, he argued that while the railway would be expensive, it had the possibility of becoming a transportation corridor. It piqued their interest and by morning a preliminary construction plan was in place. The railway would be 110 miles long, linking Skagway, Alaska with Whitehorse, Yukon. It would be narrow-gauge since a 36" rail bed requires less materials, can handle sharper curves, and is easier to build.

Construction began May 28, 1898. There were a large number of stampeders sitting idle in Skagway eager to earn some cash to fund their endeavors. Workers were paid $3 a day and with overtime could earn $100 a month. As many as 2,000 laborers at any one time hacked and blasted the route for the rail bed. A total of 450 tons of black powder were used for the project. More than 3,000 ties were required to gain a single mile of railway. In addition to the rail bed, enormous bridges and tunnels had to be built. The most impressive was the steel cantilever bridge that spanned a wide canyon.

It was the tallest of its kind when it was completed. The White Pass and Yukon Route Railway was declared an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.





Crews came and went, it is estimated that more than 35,000 men worked on building the railway. Less than 35 fatalities were recorded. That is an amazingly low number of deaths considering men dangled a thousand feet or more above the ground on hemp ropes, pry bars in hand, dislodging rocks that remained after the black powder blasts. The very same black powder blasts they just set in the rock by chiseling holes in the rock, filling with black powder, lighting the powder, and swinging away on the ropes while the black powder did its job.

During the first summer, Heney took advantage of the midnight sun. Men worked in shifts around the clock. On July 21, 1898, the first excursion train reached Rocky Point, about seven miles from Skagway.

During the winter progress slowed. Crews worked shifts of only one hour due to the numbing cold. Snow drifts reached as much as 35 feet and temperatures dipped to -65 degrees. However, on February 20, 1899, the first locomotive reached White Pass summit and history was made. The railway at White Pass summit reaches an altitude of 2,888 feet. The rail gains this altitude over about 20 miles with an average grade of 2.6%, with some areas reaching 3.9%. The WP&YR is one of the steepest in the world.

As everyone celebrated reaching the summit, Michael Heney was busy planning the next phase of the project, reaching Bennet. Michael Heney's vision was to continue the railway north to Bennett in British Columbia, then on to Carcross and Whitehorse in the Yukon. Shipment of freight along this route would help raise capital for the corporation.

The last 70 miles of the railway, between Bennet and Whitehorse, turned out to be challenging. Once again skeptics speculated the project would be over budget and behind schedule. Heney decided to divide his now experienced crew into two groups. The first crew laid track from Bennett to Carcross, the second crew from Carcross to Whitehorse. The second crew reached Whitehorse in June 1900. The first crew reached Carcross July 1900. On July 29, 1900 the golden spike was driven at Carcross connecting the railway and completing the project. Final cost was ten million dollars and took 26 months to complete. As a result of Heney's vision to open a freight corridor, the construction costs were fully paid by completion of the project. One observation to note, by the time the railway was complete, the original reason for building the railway over White Pass Summit, the gold rush, was over.

The White Pass and Yukon Route Railway established a modern trade network throughout the Yukon River watershed and beyond. It brought goods and services never before available in the north. Mines were created, not for gold but for minerals such as lead and zinc. Significant amounts of ore could now be transported to Skagway to be loaded on ships. The company started containerized shipping, a practice that spread throughout the world. They were the first to try loading large steel containers with cargo to be loaded on ships. Eventually these containers would be refrigerated, further expanding the range of goods that could be shipped.

Michael Heney's vision to link Skagway and Whitehorse by rail had a long-lasting impact on the area; the north would never be the same.

The railway continued to operate as a shipping corridor until 1982 when world metal prices plummeted. The mines were closed and the WP&YR suspended operations. In 1988 the railway was reinvented as a tourist attraction. The line was reopened to operate as a narrow-gauge excursion railroad between Skagway and White Pass Summit. The line was later extended to Bennett in the 1990s and to Carcross in 2007.

Currently the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway has two vintage steam locomotives. No.69 is a Baldwin 2-8-0 built for WP&YR in 1908. It spent the next 48 years pushing and pulling freight and passengers over the White Pass. The pride of the fleet, No.73, is a fully restored 1947 Baldwin 2-8-2 Mikado class steam locomotive. It was given an immense overhaul in 2018 to ensure her use for years to come.

In addition to the two steam locomotives, WP&YR also has 20 diesel engines from various decades, 92 passenger cars, and an array of track maintenance equipment. During a typical summer season, they have 45 employees working nearly 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide necessary service to the fleet and tracks. It is a very well-maintained operation.

The WP&YR excursion from Skagway to White Pass Summit and back was definitely the highlight of our Alaskan cruise. We've been there, done that, but we didn't get a t-shirt. However, we did each get a baseball cap with a golden spike embroidered on the bill. These caps are only available for sale on the train. So, if you ever see someone wearing one of these caps, introduce yourself and ask them about their experience riding the White Pass and Yukon Route

Steamtown's Future: Railroad Heritage at a Crossroads

John Hankey

Steamtown has the potential to redefine railroad heritage in America

August 29, 2025 https://www.trains.com

Waukesha, WI

Thirty years after its grand opening as a unit of the National Park Service, Steamtown National Historic Site in Scranton, Pa., is at a crossroads.

Whether you admire or disdain it, know nothing about it, or simply hope for its survival, it remains a significant railroad preservation effort. Steamtown has the potential to expand the ways we think about railroad heritage and could redefine the ways future generations understand how railroad mobility helped shape America.

Or it could be left to wither by a federal agency under great stress, with hundreds of NPS units competing for diminishing resources while dealing with increasing demands. No one has yet described the situation in such stark terms. But to me, the risks look all too real.

Time for a reset

The present moment seems particularly ripe for a reset. It has been almost 70 years since Steamtown took shape as a concept and project, and 40 years since its authorization as a National Historic Site. In a rapidly changing world, an occasional course correction is not just prudent — it may mean long-term survival.

We should be clear about a few basic realities. Steamtown is a unit of the National Park Service, and has to conform to the NPS mission and process. Its audience is not the 150,000 serious railroad enthusiasts, but 340 million Americans.

NPS administers 433 wildly diverse sites and parks with a staff of roughly 18,000 full- and part-time employees. If it were a railroad, it would rank with the Class Is in complexity.

Steamtown is one of five railroad-focused sites nestled within that vast NPS enterprise. The others are Golden Spike National Historical Park , celebrating the completion of the Pacific railroad; Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site , which is primarily railroad archeology; Pullman National Historical Park in Chicago; and Cuyahoga Valley National Park , which hosts a partner's excursion operation. Another half-dozen NPS units have some kind of railroad component.

Steamtown, with its varied program of railroad operations, is part of a very small cohort. As such, it does not fit easily into the usual NPS categories, never has, never will. It isn't exactly an orphan, but the very nature of railroad heritage preservation and operations introduces multiple challenges that NPS policy and procedures are not well-equipped to handle.

Steamtown recently welcomed a new superintendent — its sixth, not counting a few in interim capacities. My strong impression is that Jeremy Komasz is the right person at the right time with the right skills. The superintendent of Steamtown does not need to be a railroad expert or historian. The ability to lead, administrative savvy, open-mindedness, and courage are more important.

Komasz comes from "the outside" — specifically, the U.S. Navy and defense industry. He continues to serve as a SEAL and is a captain in the Naval Reserves. His degree from The George Washington University is in International Relations with a minor in History. I imagine his M.A. from the Naval War College in Strategic Studies, and his experience with tribal relations in Afghanistan will help him negotiate the sometimes tribal world of railroad preservation.

The military, railroading, and the National Park Service share a strong sense of mission, and understand strategy, tactics, logistics, and process. Less remarked upon are parallel traditions of accommodations, work-arounds, and ways to make rules work in your favor. The goal is not to avoid or subvert the NPS process, but to complement Steamtown's work with the help of volunteers, colleague institutions, and its Official Philanthropic Partner, the Iron Horse Society.

What Next?

There is no "best way" to address how Steamtown's future unfolds. I'm certain NPS has its priorities, and Komasz brings both military and corporate approaches to visioning, planning, and strategy. Still, I'd like to think that lessons and insights from our particular branch of cultural resource management — Train World — will be part of the mix.

Let's start with a pause, review, exploration of options, and perhaps restart on a better basis. This review might develop a clear understanding of what Steamtown can, and cannot, do as an NPS unit. That would be coupled with an outline what the site would like to do — short-and long-term objectives, needs, wants, deficiencies, and so forth. A Dutch uncle would suggest that Steamtown acknowledge it is part of many other relevant communities, and pay more attention to colleague institutions — especially in history of industry and technology, railroad preservation, and heritage operations. NPS,

and many of its sites, tend to be inwardly focused and seemingly aloof. Komasz has already begun the kind of outreach that, to my knowledge, none of his predecessors seriously undertook. I'd like to think we will reciprocate.

There will be some heavy lifting, but all of us — the National Park Service, the railroad heritage community, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the region, and even potential visitors — have a great deal to lose if we can't help SNHS regain its footing and boost its visitation.

We can do many things to encourage Steamtown's renaissance. First, we simply need to accept Steamtown as it is now, not what we think was promised four decades ago. Those were vastly different times, and reality outran good intentions. At some point it does no good to nitpick, complain of deficiencies, or critique without contributing something as well. Visits are always in order. Joining the Iron Horse Society is substantive and helpful.

Better yet, let your Senator or Representative know you appreciate NPS efforts to conserve and present the story of American railroading. We all know how important grease is to squeaky wheels. We need to squeak more.

Celebrate the fact that the National Park Service regards railroad heritage as part of our nation's heritage. Steamtown will never be the country's largest or most important railroad site or collection, but it can punch far above its weight.

A New Era?

What do we, as a large and diverse community of railroad interests, think Steamtown should aspire to become? That may seem like an amusing thought experiment but good ideas tend to rise to the top, and gradually gain traction. Collectively, Train World has thousands of years of experience presenting our slice of the American Experience to all sorts of audiences. It is in our best interest to help Steamtown reach as many people as possible with the most interesting and persuasive messages we can devise. It is a safe bet that whatever good works come out of a rejuvenated Steamtown will be useful at other railroad sites.

Now also would be a fine time for a symposium to assess the overall state of railway heritage and preservation, and where it might be in 10 or 20 years. We did that sort of thing years ago, and accomplished a lot. Zoom will not do.

Railway heritage, NPS, and Steamtown share many broad concerns, such as how we engage young people as visitors and as potential participants. How do we train future generations in the often-arcane ways of traditional railroad work? At the other extreme, every operator of steam locomotives in the country — including NPS — comes under the same strict regulatory regime. As they were at the California State Railroad Museum and Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, a gathering at Steamtown would offer context, examples, and the chance to build relationships.

It's also time to revisit Steamtown's own mission. NPS has changed, as have Steamtown's many audiences.

The academic fields of railroad history, history of technology, and American cultural history have matured greatly and offer a large and sophisticated set of tools. A symposium at Steamtown, about Steamtown and the future of railroad heritage, is overdue. Why not envision Steamtown as a presentation of American railroading, but in the larger, richer context of America's First Industrial Revolution? Make it an integrated account of how railroad mobility, coal, and iron made it possible to settle the continent and create great cities. Nothing Steamtown has done would be wasted — but its opportunities for growth and relevance (and new resources) would expand considerably.

With a more comprehensive and coherent agenda, we can legitimately ask other people (industries, agencies, foundations, interest groups) to share some of the costs. In any event, we have to start somewhere, and a new superintendent from a different cut of cloth is an excellent next step. No single leader can revive an institution the size of Steamtown by himself, or even with the small — but capable — staff he has to work with. We should be careful not to expect too much too soon. But I also have a hunch that whatever the job throws at him, Komasz will find a way over, around, or through it.

Our mission, should we choose to accept it, is to put the past behind us and think creatively about what could happen. While we can't change anything that unfolded in the last 40 years, we absolutely can do things differently in the next 40.

From Jon David Black via *Fire Apparatus Magazine*

Train Strikes FD Apparatus While Crews Battle Fire at Industrial Building

Jonathan Miller
September 12, 2025 https://www.fireapparatusmagazine.com/
Wyoming, MI

Moline, IL – A train struck a Moline Fire Department apparatus that was positioned near the tracks while battling a fire in an outside container at an industrial building Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025, the department said in a press release.

The fire truck sustained damage, but no firefighters were injured. The rig was placed back in service after evaluation.

The fire department responded to a report of an outside industrial dust collector on fire at Williams, White & Company. The first engine company arrived to find a large metal industrial container with heavy smoke showing. The container

was positioned at the rear of the industrial building, near the alley and in close proximity to nearby railroad tracks.

Fire crews worked on scene to contain the fire, using saws to open the metal container and allow water to reach the seat of the fire. The fire was brought under control and mostly contained within 45-50 minutes.

No evacuation of the business was necessary, and no injuries to workers or firefighters were reported.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

From *Trains*

CSX reopens storm-ravaged Blue Ridge Subdivision

The first train traversed the former Clinchfield Railroad over the weekend

August 29, 2025 https://www.trains.com

Waukesha, WI

CSX's rebuilt Blue Ridge Subdivision — the former Clinchfield Railroad in eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina which was heavily damaged by flooding after Hurricane Helene last fall — hosted its first revenue freight train over the weekend.

With Clinchfield heritage locomotive No. 1902 on the point, train U248-20 traversed the line on Saturday.

CSX is planning an official reopening ceremony for next week.

The approximately $450 million rebuild project was necessary after historic flooding destroyed nearly 60 miles of track, bridges, and roadbed, with the Nolichucky River Gorge between Erwin, Tenn. and Spruce Pine, N.C. being the hardest-hit section of the railroad.

Although the line hosts only five to seven trains per day, including coal trains, the route serves as a relief valve for the railroad's other north-south corridors, executives have said.

CSX's Clinchfield heritage unit was painted at the railroad's shop in Waycross, Ga. (Photo by CSX)

From John Nawn via Micro-Trains Line, Inc.

Industry Announcement:

Atlas Model Railroad Company Acquired Assets of Micro-Trains Line. Co

November 19, 2025

Talent, OR – Micro-Trains Line Company, Inc. announced today that is has been acquired by Atlas Model Railroad Co., which includes substantially all assets of Micro-Trains Line Co., the Talent, Oregon-based manufacturer renowned for its precision N and Z scale model trains and couplers. The transaction marks a significant expansion of Atlas's manufacturing and product development capabilities within the U.S. hobby industry.

Under the agreement, Atlas will assume ownership of Micro-Trains' molds, tooling, and associated intellectual property, ensuring continued production of the brand's hallmark products. Production will transition into Atlas' global manufacturing and supply network, ensuring continued availability and consistent quality standards worldwide.

Eric D. Smith, President of Micro-Trains Line Co., added: "Our family and team are proud of what Micro-Trains has meant to hobbyists everywhere. Atlas's commitment to excellence and long-term investment in the model railroad com-

munity makes them the right partner to continue our story."

Both companies emphasized that the integration will focus on preserving the authenticity of Micro-Trains' designs while leveraging Atlas's engineering, logistics, production capabilities to broaden innovation and future product offerings."

Smith also wants to thank our industry counterparts, many of whom we have worked so closely with making this hobby a true enjoyment to be part of. And a very special thank you to the model railroad consumers; your interest and patronage of our model trains is much appreciated.

Micro-Trains in Talent, OR. will continue to accept and process orders until our finished model train single car releases, multi-packs, trucks, couplers tools and accessories are sold out. This includes our December releases.

In closing, we once again extend our sincerest thanks to all, and wish everyone great success in all your future endeavors.

For a Laugh

Strange News Event

A truckload of hair, weighing 2,000 pounds, to be used to make wigs, spilled onto a New Jersey road. Police are still combing the area.

Some People Should Not Sit Together

Additional Upcoming Events

(Mid Atlantic Train Show List, Model Train Shows And Schedules 2.0 Facebook page and subscribers)
(**Highlighted events signify club participation**. **Highlighted events signify tentative club participation.)**
Ongoing 2025 – Tour the Red Caboose. PRR 477123, built in 1917, at the Lewes Junction Railroad & Bridge Association. 1st & 3rd Sundays. Hours: 10a-2p, weather permitting. The caboose is located between the Lewes Public Library and the Lewes History Museum, 111 Adams Ave., Lewes DE. For more information, please visit: www.lewesjunctionrr.org.
December 2, 2025-January 8, 2026 – Eagle Line Railroad Model Railroad Display. 12169 Ober Ln., Ridgely, MD. Every Tuesday & Thursday. Hours: 7p-9p. Handicapped accessible. FREE admission. Donations appreciated. Santa will visit Tuesday, December 23. **Open House Sunday December 21, 28, 2025 & January 4, 2026. Hours: 1p-4p.** Call 410-310-2861 or visit: http://www.EagleLineRailroad.com .

January 3-4, 10-11, 2026 – DelMarVa Model Railroad Club Annual Open House. 103 E. State St., Delmar, DE. Saturday: 11a-4p; Sunday: Noon-4p. Free parking and admission. 8,000 sq ft of trains. 7 layouts displaying T-Scale to G-Scale, raffle prizes, white elephant table, "Seek and Find" scavenger hunt game, food and drink by St. Stephen's Church youth group, railroad videos playing throughout the day. For more info, call 302-548-4586 or visit our website: http://www.delmarvamodelrailroadclub.org/.

January 4, 2026 – Long Island Classic Toy Train Show Presents All Gauge Toy Train Show & Swap Meet. The Fireman's Memorial Park, 555 Heling Blvd. (off Wellwood Avel & Hartford St.), Lindenhurst, NY. Hours: 8:30a-1p. Admission: $5, kids 17 & under FREE w/paid admission. Repair parts and services, hobby tools available, all types of model railroad equipment, Hess items, plastic and die-cast vehicles, test track for N, HO, O and Standard gauges, food concession for breakfast and lunch. Handicapped accessible. Fire hall access number (day of show only): 631-957-7536. For more show info: John Mitchell – 917-596-3494 or John Miata – 516-353-1751.

January 3-4, 17-18, 2026 – St. Albans Model Railroad Club Open House. St. Albans Episcopal Church, 3625 Chapel Rd., Newtown Square, PA (in the basement under the Thrift Shop.) Hours: 1p-4p. Admission: FREE, donations appreciated. We apologize, but we are currently not handicapped accessible. Our HO model railroad is inspired by the industrial operations of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Reading Railroad. The setting is southern Pennsylvania in the 1940's, 50's and 60's. Our layout fills more than 4,000 sq. ft. of space with more than 3,000 ft. of track and there are more than 100 locomotives and 1,000 pieces of rolling stock. Whereas the modeled era is mid-Twentieth Century, the control of the trains is strictly Twenty First Century, the railroad employs a state-of-the-art digital control system. For more info, visit our website: https://www.StARR-mrc.org .

January 10-11, 2026 – Greenberg's Great Train and Toy Show – Oaks. Greater Philadelphia Convention Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks, PA 19456. Hours to be announced. For details, please visit: https://www.trainshow.com .

February 7-8, 21-22, 2025 – St. Albans Model Railroad Club Open House. St. Albans Episcopal Church, 3625 Chapel Rd., Newtown Square, PA (in the basement under the Thrift Shop.) Hours: 1p-4p. Admission: FREE, donations appreciated. We apologize, but we are currently not handicapped accessible. Our HO model railroad is inspired by the industrial operations of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Reading Railroad. The setting is southern Pennsylvania in the 1940's, 50's and 60's. Our layout fills more than 4,000 sq. ft. of space with more than 3,000 ft. of track and there are more than 100 locomotives and 1,000 pieces of rolling stock. Whereas the modeled era is mid-Twentieth Century, the control of the trains is strictly Twenty First Century, the railroad employs a state-of-the-art digital control system. For more info, visit our website: https://www.StARR-mrc.org .

February 8, 2026 – Long Island Classic Toy Train Show Presents All Gauge Toy Train Show & Swap Meet. The Fireman's Memorial Park, 555 Heling Blvd. (off Wellwood Avel & Hartford St.), Lindenhurst, NY. Hours: 8:30a-1p. Admission: $5, kids 17 & under FREE w/paid admission. Repair parts and services, hobby tools available, all types of model railroad equipment, Hess items, plastic and die-cast vehicles, test track for N, HO, O and Standard gauges, food concession for breakfast and lunch. Handicapped accessible. Fire hall access number (day of show only): 631-957-7536. For more show info: John Mitchell – 917-596-3494 or John Miata – 516-353-1751.

February 1, 14, 15, 2026 – Saint Alban's Railroad Open House. Saint Alban's Episcopal Church, 3625 Chapel Rd., Newtown Square, PA. 1p-4p. The St. Alban's Model Railroad (StARR) is an HO scale layout that fills more than 4,000 sq. ft. of space with more than 2,000 ft. of track, more than 1,000 pieces of rolling stock and over 100 locomotives. It is a freelanced railroad inspired by the mainline of the PRR between Philadelphia and Harrisburg and a branch line between Perkiomen and Reading and their industrial operations in the steam-to-diesel transition era between 1940 to 1980. The site is NOT handicapped accessible at this time.

For more information visit our website: www.StARR-mrc.org .

February 28, 2025 – Seaford Volunteer Fire Co. Train & Toy Show. Seaford Vol. Fire Co., 302 E King St., Seaford, DE. 9a-2p. Admission: $5, kids under 12 FREE with paying adult. 45 vendors, from 5 states, with over 150 tables of merchandise for sale. There will also be 3 large operating train layouts for everyone to view. SVFD auxiliary and members will be selling refreshments on the 2nd floor. For more info, call 302-629-3112.

March 14, 2026 – 38th Annual Harrisburg Railroad Show & Collectors Market. Sponsored by the Harrisburg Chapter National Railway Historical Society. The Scottish Rite Harrisburg, 2701 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg, PA. Hours: 9a-3p. Admission: $5, kids under 12 FREE. Featuring: railroadiana, model railroad items, books, videos, apparel, operating train layouts, test tracks, snack bar, program on Conrail at 11a by Larry DeYoung. For table reservations, contact Mark Irvin, 3814 Leyland Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA, 717-343-7182. For show info, visit: https://harrisburgnrhs.org or email: harrisburgtrainshow@gmail.com .

March 15, 2026 – Long Island Classic Toy Train Show Presents All Gauge Toy Train Show & Swap Meet. The Fireman's Memorial Park, 555 Heling Blvd. (off Wellwood Avel & Hartford St.), Lindenhurst, NY. Hours: 8:30a-1p. Admission: $5, kids 17 & under FREE w/paid admission. Repair parts and services, hobby tools available, all types of

model railroad equipment, Hess items, plastic and die-cast vehicles, test track for N, HO, O and Standard gauges, food concession for breakfast and lunch. Handicapped accessible. Fire hall access number (day of show only): 631-957-7536. For more show info: John Mitchell – 917-596-3494 or John Miata – 516-353-1751.

March 21-22, 2026 – Railfest 2026. Presented by National Model Railroad Association MCR – Divison 5**,** Lakeland Community College, 7700 Clocktower Dr. (State Rt. 306 at I-90, Exit 193), Kirkland, OH. Hours: 10a-4p. Admission: $9, two-day pass: $14, couple: $14, family: $14 (two adults with kids under 18). Featuring dealers, new/used items, exhibitors, operating layouts, books, magazines, apparel, collectibles, food services available at reasonable prices. For more info, visit: https://www.railfest.org , email: railfest@mcr5.org , or Facebook: www.facebook.com/RailfestTrainshow .

March 21, 2026 – Hartly Train Show. Hartly Volunteer Fire Co., 2898 Arthurville Rd., Hartly, DE. 9a-3p. Admission: $5, kids 12 and under FREE. Over 150 tables of toys and trains. A model train will be on display in the engine bay. Food is available for purchase made by the Ladies Axillary. For more info, visit: https://hartlyfire51.com/

Cincinnati Division, MCR

We'd like to make all NMRA members aware of a new, Limited Edition, HO scale freight car that Cincinnati Division 7, Mid-Central Region is now offering for sale/purchase. It is a N&W HC-46 ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper in a unique repaint scheme with patched-out data; available in 3 different road numbers.
The following link provides details about it as well as pricing, shipping and ordering information.
https://cincy-div7.org/car-projects

Train Trivia Answers

by Howard Kaplan

1) Darby, Pennsylvania is the site of what unique railroad feature?

Answer: It is the only existing railroad/trolley/highway grade crossing in North America. The CSX (single track) (formerly B&O) crosses the #11 trolley (2 tracks), all embedded in Chester Pike (US-13). In B&O times the railroad line was double tracked as well, hence earning the site the moniker "Darby Diamond." The diamond is typically replaced every 5-7 years and was once again replaced by CSX in October 2025.

2) The Fortuna station in Hatfield, PA on SEPTA's Doylestown line holds a unusual distinction. What is it?

Answer: It was named for a cow. A Reading train hit and killed a farmer's cow, and the naming was part of the settlement. The station is located on Cowpath Road (PA-463), originally an actual cow path.

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.

SALE

The Reporting Marks "NJDX" 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

SALE

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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http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGModelRailroading

Upcoming NMRA Conventions

2026 Scenic City Express, Chattanooga, TN

2026

2026 NMRA National Convention – Chattanooga, TN

Upcoming MER Conventions

Division Apparel

Polo

Polo with pocket

Cap

Short Sleeve Button-Down

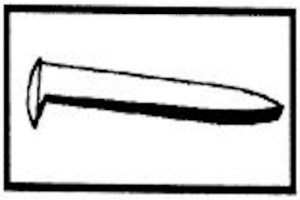
Long Sleeve Button-Down

Our new apparel source is Daylight Sales. Website: https://www.daylightsales.net/ You can do a search for "PhillyNMRA" to find our items, or click here for the direct link. Email: daylightsales@gmail.com Phone: (888) 557-9899.

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 | POLO W/POCKET | LONG SLEEVE BUTTON DOWN | SHORT SLEEVE BUTTON DOWN



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM
GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD
APPLICATION FORM

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

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

Address: _____ City: _____

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

Date Submitted: _____ Region: _____

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

QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

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

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout including scenery.
Construct five structures either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial kits. If a module has less than five structures, additional structures separate from the scene may be presented.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

Three types of track required (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial track may be used.
All installed track must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (e.g. double track main, single track main with sidings, and block or command control).
Provide one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Witness: _____ Print Name: _____ NMRA #: _____

Regional AP Chair: _____ Region: _____

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