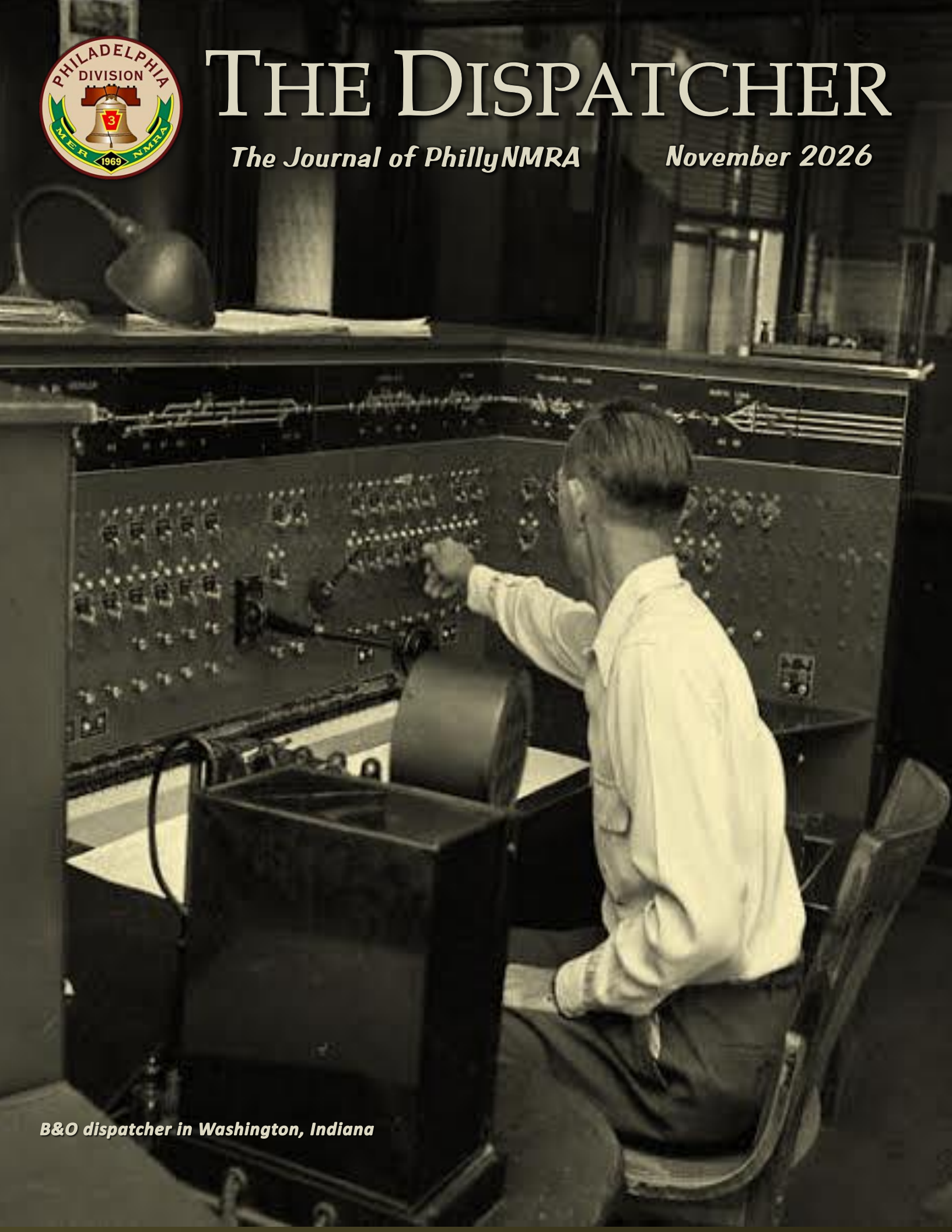
The Dispatcher

The Journal of PhillyNMRA

November 2026



B&O dispatcher in Washington, Indiana

THE DISPATCHER

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

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In this issue...

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





3 Form 19
Division Officials
4 November Meet Details
Upcoming Events
5 November Meet Map
6 Division News
7 September Meet Report
16 Around the Division
Classifieds
Philly Train Trivia
17 Division Organization
Hobby Shops
46 Cincinnati Division Car
Train Trivia Answers
47 MER 2026 Report
51 MER 2026 Layouts
56 MER 2026 Registration
67 Prototype Railroad News
72 For a Laugh
73 Additional Upcoming Events
76 NMRA/MER Publications &
Conventions
77 Division Apparel
78 Golden Spike Application

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 2027. Due out approximately February 1. Deadline for submissions: January 10.

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 mailed summary of upcoming events is available on request.

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Steve Wysowski

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From the Super's Desk

Greetings, model railroaders!

I'm just back from this year's MER convention known as "Tracks to Tidewater." It was held in beautiful Virginia Beach, Virginia. The convention had everything that we have come to expect yearly. There were layout tours, prototype tours, clinics, contests, the banquet, and much more. It was fun meeting up and spending time with friends I have made over the years at these conventions. I also spent time conferring with the other superintendents. We discussed ideas and set up multi-division meets—a valuable give and take. The fall convention is an event I enjoy and look forward to each year. If you have the ability to attend one, I strongly suggest it. Even the ones that could have used improvement were still enjoyable and worth attending.

Our next meet is scheduled for November 7th at the Brandywine Town Center Community Center in North Wilmington, Delaware. The New Jersey Division will be our guests. After the meet, many model railroads will be open as part of the November Open House schedule. You can check the website, modelrailroadopenhouse.com. There will also be a list provided at the meet.

On another note, the region has a few positions open for their board of directors election. You might really consider running. It's an easy way to earn your AP Official certificate. And you can be instrumental in helping to steer the region in positive directions.

I hope to see you all at the meet. Two interesting clinics will be presented and, as usual, coffee, donuts, and Philly soft pretzels will be available along with camaraderie and laughs. Also, if you have any models that need evaluating, please contact Earl Paine or myself so that we can facilitate that at the meet.

I hope to see you November 7th in North Wilmington.

Joe



From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the November issue. Back at the June meet and picnic I gave the attendees an assignment—to write an article on their own layouts, Well, member Andreas Nesemann took it to heart and turned in a colossal composition which graces the pages of this issue. Not only does he receive an A for his writing—he receives an A for his layout! And I think you'll agree. Once you read the article, you certainly want to visit his layout and you're in luck. It's open as part of the Model Railroad Open House event going on as you read this. Check out modelrailroadopenhouse.com for the schedule.

Also included in this issue is a wonderful recap of the 2026 MER convention "Tracks to Tidewater" by Steve Wysowski and Mark Wallace. And Kevin Feeney once again treats us to his recount of a trip, this time to the National Narrow-Gauge Convention in Minnesota. Plenty of good reading for your enjoyment. Hope to see you on the 7th in Wilmington.

Howard

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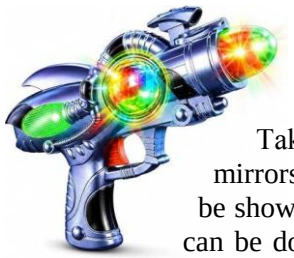
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November Joint Meet with Jersey in Wilmington

On Saturday, November 7, 2026, the Philadelphia Division returns to the Brandywine Town Center Community Center to host a joint meet with the New Jersey Division. The address is 4050 Brandywine Parkway (at US-202 and Naamans Road), Wilmington, DE 19803. Doors open at 8:30am with the program set to begin at 9:00am. Maps and directions on page 5.



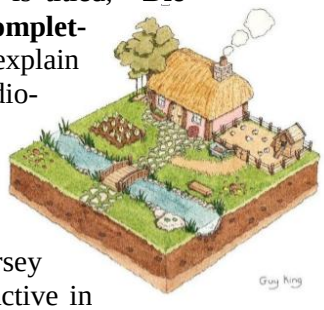
First up, Tom Ghan, a new division member, will be presenting a clinic titled **"Lasers, A Tool For Model Railroaders"** Taking the phrase "it's all smoke and mirrors" to a new level, Tom Ghan will be showing off just some of the things that can be done with a laser machine. Following a safety briefing, a general overview of types of materials and processes that can be done on his laser machine will be shown. Diving into greater details with lots of samples being passed around, projects for the model railroad will be discussed.

Tom had his start in trains, as is typical, with his father's Lionel train layout. Starting on the west coast and following an intermittent participation in the hobby that included dabbling in both HO and N scale, 40 years of life has prepared him to re-engage in the hobby after his retirement from the IT field.

His enjoyment of problem solving and building anything manifests itself in testing new and creative processes to create his vision of the Reading Railroad and Pennsylvania Railroad between Manayunk and Norristown in HO scale in 1927.

When not trying out his latest ideas for his model railroad, he can be found relaxing on his bicycle or competing in wheel-to-wheel car racing.

Our second clinic will be presented by New Jersey Division member Jim Shepard and is titled, **"Dioramas: The Next Step after Completing Your Layout."** Jim will explain the whole rationale for making dioramas, describe step-by-step construction techniques, discuss detailing, and provide several examples.



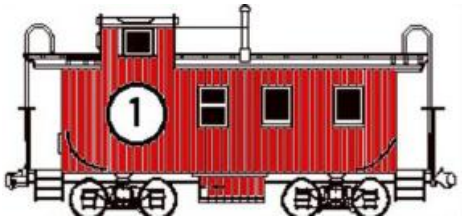
Jim is a long-time New Jersey Division member who's been active in all aspects of model railroading. He is a skilled modeler and his layout has been open for visitation during division meets.

All attendees are encouraged to bring a model or project. Toward the end of the meet, we hold a Show & Tell. It's an open-mike opportunity to share a recently completed project or a glimpse into an in-progress work.

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 ahead of time.

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

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



Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

November 7, 2026 Philadelphia/New Jersey Division Meet Brandywine Town Center 4050 Brandywine Pkwy Wilmington, DE 19701	**January 2027** New Jersey/Philadelphia Division Meet TBA	**January 9–10, 2027** Philadelphia Division Table Greenberg Train Show Greater Philadelphia Expo Center 100 Station Avenue, Oaks, PA 19456
February 2027 Susquehanna/Philadelphia Division Meet TBA	**April 2027** Philadelphia Division Meet TBA	**June 2027** Philadelphia Division Meet/Annual Business Meeting/Picnic Barbeque TBA

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

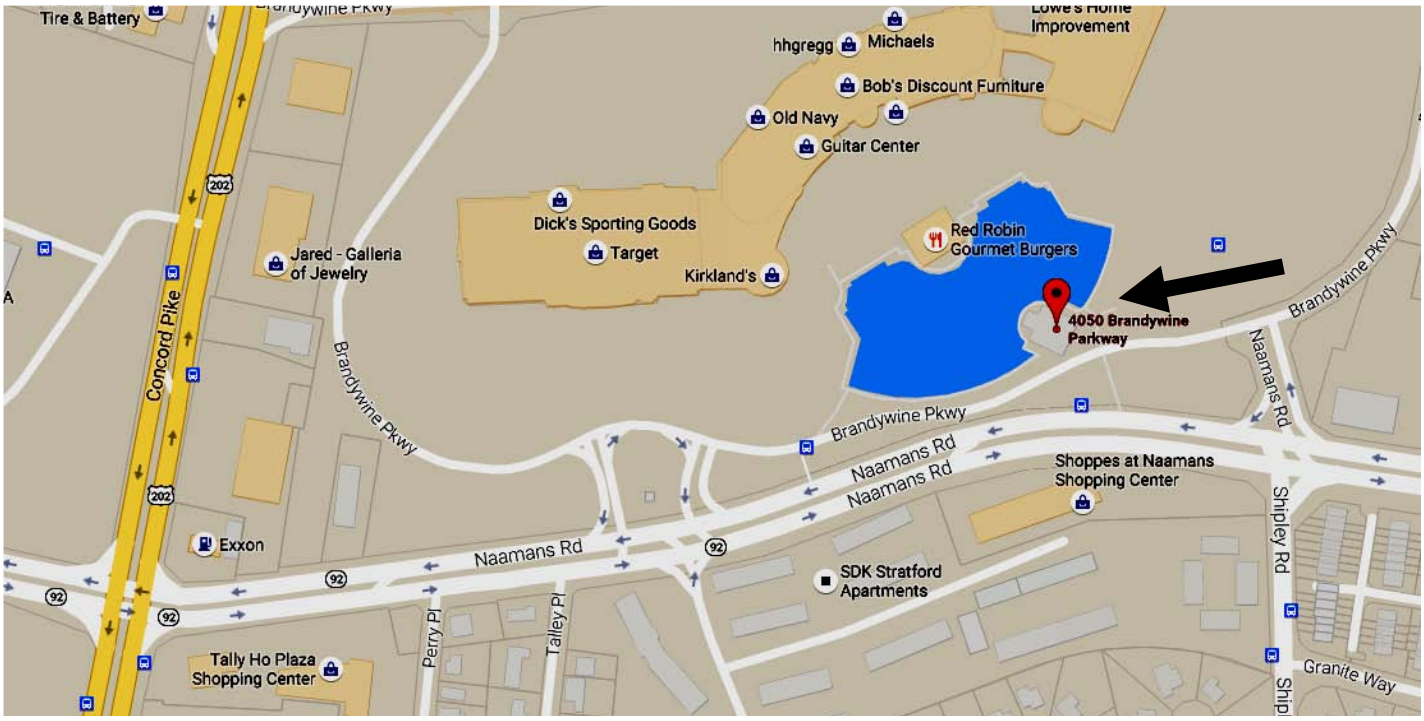
November Meet Maps and Directions

The **Brandywine Town Center** is a large shopping complex located on an "ell"-shaped piece of property near the intersection of the Concord Pike (U.S. 202) and Naamans Road (Del 92). You may remember this as the former site of a race track. One leg of the "ell" joins the Concord Pike. The other leg joins Naamans Road. The complex includes the Regal Cinema, Lowe's, Michael's Arts & Crafts, Target, and many other stores. The main structure is surrounded by a maze-like parking lot which, in turn, is surrounded by a road which circles the perimeter.

The Center's **Community Building** (our meet location) is a separate structure with a prominent central atrium. It is located next to a large decorative fountain, on the south side of the complex near the Naamans Road entrance.

From Concord Pike (U.S. 202) going south – a fraction of a mile south of the PA/DE state line, turn left into the Brandywine Town Center (the marker is the sign for Lowe's and Target, among others). Follow the perimeter road in either direction until you see the Community Building (near the decorative fountain).

From I-95 going south – at the state line, there is a three-way split – I-95, I-295, and Naamans Road (Del 92). Stay to the extreme right, and take the exit to Naamans Road. At the top of the ramp, turn right (west) on to Naamans Road. After a little over four miles, turn right into the Brandywine Town Center (it is opposite Shipley Road, which comes in from the left only). Turn right on to the perimeter road, and then left into the parking lot near the Community Building (which is near the decorative fountain).



Brandywine Town Center
Community Center
4050 Brandywine Parkway
Wilmington, DE 19803

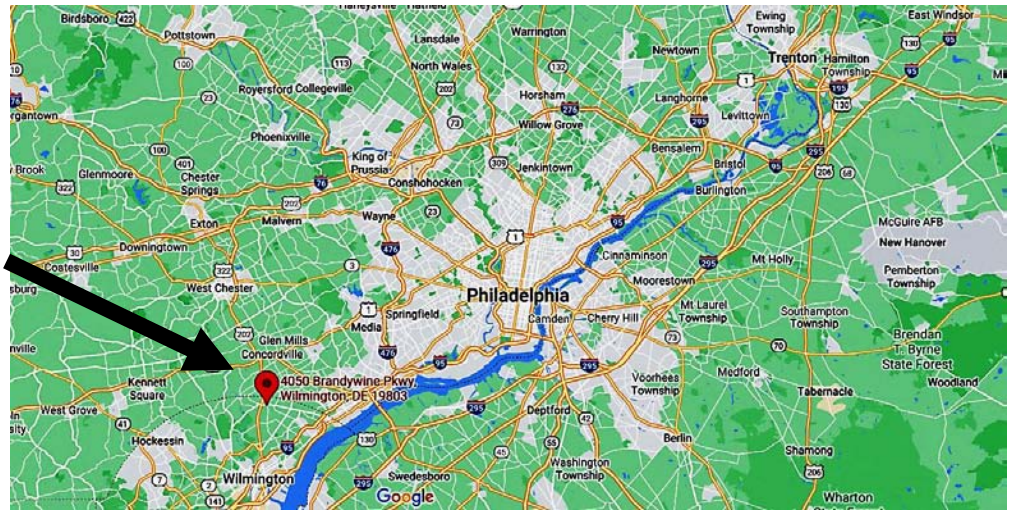


Photo Contest for New Banner

The division will be purchasing a new pull-down-shade banner to advertise and promote the division, the NMRA, and the hobby of model railroading at meets and events. This will contain the NMRA's new logo. We would like to give all our members a chance to have one of their photos included. Our extinguished panel of judges will determine which would be the most appropriate to include in a collage for the sign.

So what if your photo isn't chosen? Well it turns out that everyone's a winner because whether it is or isn't chosen for the sign, it definitely will be published at some point in *The Dispatcher*. I would like to revive a section we used to feature called Around the Division—somewhat similar to Trackside Photos, but including not only layout photos, but any photos or information you'd like to contribute.

Please submit your photos to the editor, Howard Kaplan at hakaplan@rcn.com, and include a caption of any length with any degree of detail you'd like. The captions will not appear on the sign, but everyone's photos will appear in the ATD section in an upcoming issue and will include the caption.

Around the Division

We are reviving the feature called "Around the Division" which includes division news, photos, and any information you'd like to contribute. We'd also like to expand this section to include links to the following:

- Blogs
- Substacks
- Facebook Pages
- Websites
- Layout business cards
- Timetables/paperwork
- Op session news/requests for operators
- Round robin news/requests for new members

and anything else that that pertains to division goings-on. I depend on the membership to provide me with division news so I can pass it on to everyone else through the newsletter.

Photos for *The Dispatcher* Cover

I've mostly been using historic dispatcher-related photos for the covers of *The Dispatcher*, but I would like to feature photos of our own members' layout CTC panels or other control panels and boards. Please send photos and associated information or captions to Editor Howard Kaplan.

WE WELCOME OUR NEW PHILLY DIVISION MEMBER

:Larry Hall, Felton, DE

Potomac Division AP Clinics

The Potomac Division is running a series of clinics on the NMRA AP program in an effort to provide information to our members and answer their questions. The clinics are either virtual or in person and we are opening them to any NMRA member. The virtual clinics are aired through Zoom and require registration to gain access to the actual clinic.

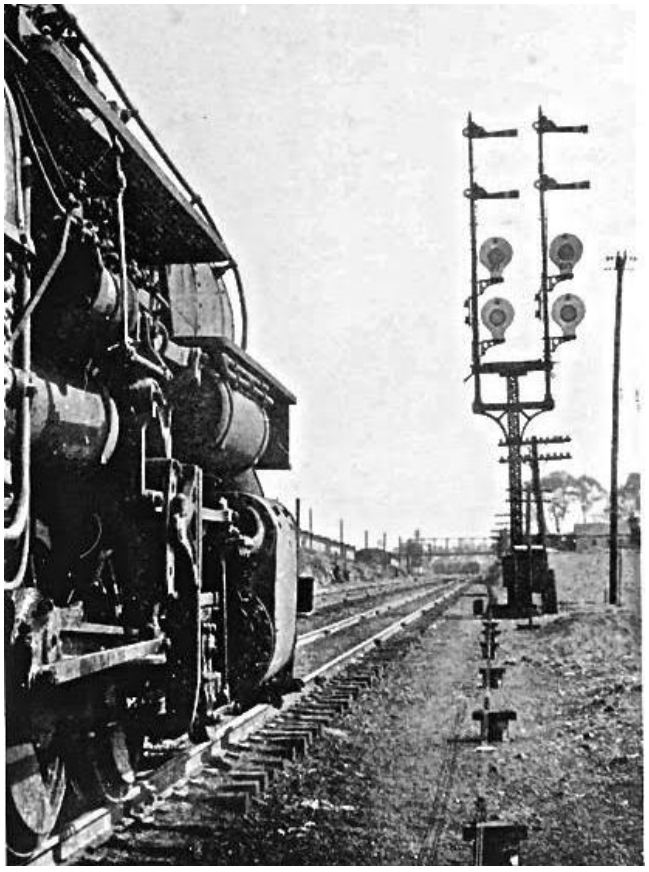
The information on the clinics can be found on our website: https://potomac-nmra.org/pdnewsite/Clinics/2026%20Achievement%20Program%20Series%20Clinics/Potomac%20Division%20AP%20clinic%20schedule

Video Vigilante Cab Ride Layout Videos to Remain Available

After the unfortunate passing of Bill Fagan, there was concern as to whether his wonderful cab-ride videos would continue to be available. We are doing everything we can to insure that his YouTube channel remains up and running and that all his videos remain available to the public. His channel can be accessed at:

https://www.youtube.com/@bfagan777

We are sure that Bill would be very happy to know that his hard work will continue to be appreciated for years to come.



September Meet Report *by Michael Junod, Clerk* *Photos by Michael Junod & Rob Hinkle as noted*



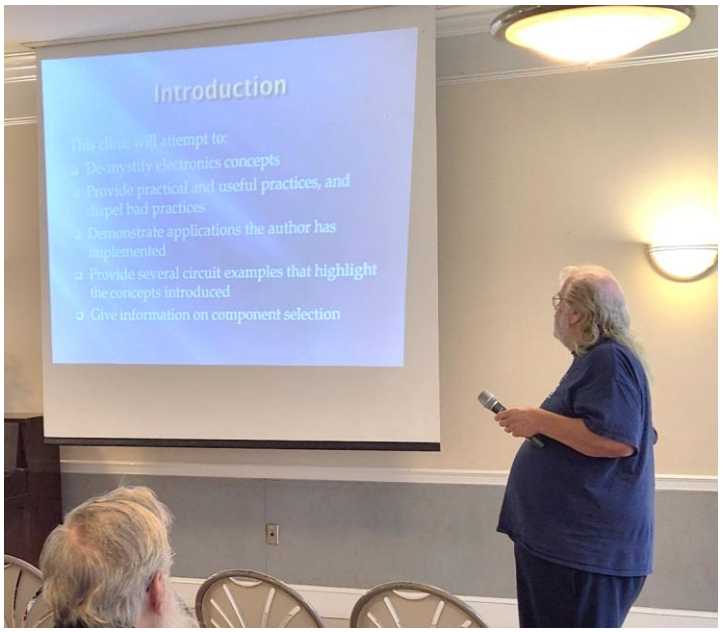
On Saturday, September 26th the Philadelphia Division met at the St. Alban's Railroad Fellowship in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. Twenty-eight Philadelphia Division members were signed in along with four guests. The meeting was held in a meeting room of the St. Alban's Episcopal Church. The plan for this meet was to conduct our usual meeting activities upstairs in the meeting room. Then, after lunch, to participate in an operating session on the StARR layout downstairs.

Philadelphia Division Superintendent Joe Walters called the meet to order at 9:03am. In his opening remarks he expressed thanks for everyone attending. He also thanked the St. Alban's Railroad Fellowship for hosting the meet. Joe briefly spoke about the recent happenings at the regional and national level. He mentioned upcoming events including a Philadelphia Division Board of Directors meeting and the upcoming Mid-Eastern Region convention in Virginia Beach, VA.



Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR delivers his greeting and opening remarks (MJ)

The first clinic was given by Jeff Witt. Jeff, an electrical engineer, discussed many basic electrical and electronic principles used in model railroading. He talked about the correct use of various electronic and electrical devices including LEDs in lighting applications and also discussed many common misuses of these devices. Jeff's clinic clarified what can be mysterious and confusing to many model railroaders. The PDF of his clinic can be downloaded here: https://gdlines.org/NMRA/Electronics_clinic/index.html.



Jeff Witt presents his clinic (MJ)

A break was taken for coffee, doughnuts, and pretzels. Additional 50/50 tickets were sold and door prize tickets were distributed to those who missed them when they checked in.

After the break, some AP certificates were awarded. Jeff Witt received his AP certificates for Model Railroad Author and Association Volunteer. Steve Wysowski received his AP certificate for Association Volunteer.

The second clinic was presented by Frank Martin. This presentation was intended as a "primer" for the upcoming operating session in the afternoon. Frank provided a high-level description of the StARR layout. He explained the various job functions involved with layout operations. Frank also described the rules and forms used in operations. Finally, Frank went over the operating procedures that will be shortly downstairs. The system used by StARR does a very good job of replicating real railroad operations.

After the second clinic, Frank Martin received a certificate of appreciation for presenting the above-mentioned clinic. Also, George Phillips, StARR president, received a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the St. Albans Railroad Fellowship for hosting the meet and afternoon operating session. Door prize winning tickets were drawn and the winning 50/50 ticket was drawn.

For Show and Tell, Eric Hansmann displayed some painted and finished models.

Superintendent Joe Walters thanked the participants for attending and adjourned the meet.

After the meeting, lunch was provided courtesy of the Philadelphia Division. A variety of pizzas along with a selection of hoagies were provided along with soft drinks. With full stomachs the attendees headed downstairs for a very enjoyable afternoon operating the StARR layout side by side with several St. Albans club members.

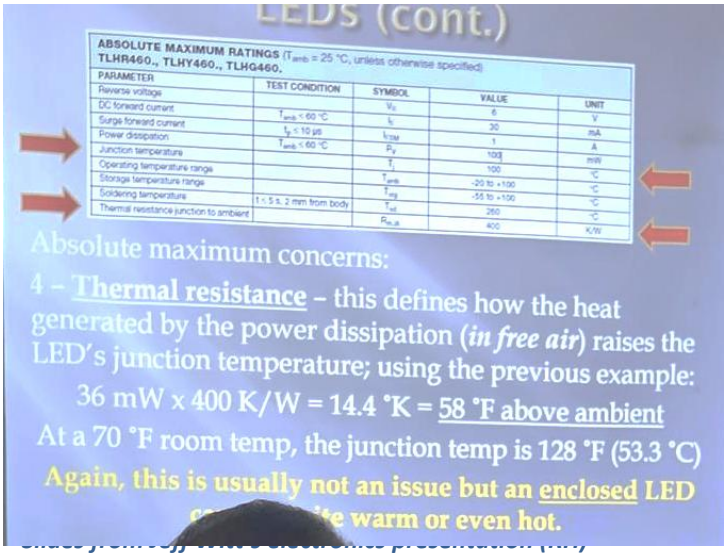
Respectfully submitted – Michael Junod, Clerk

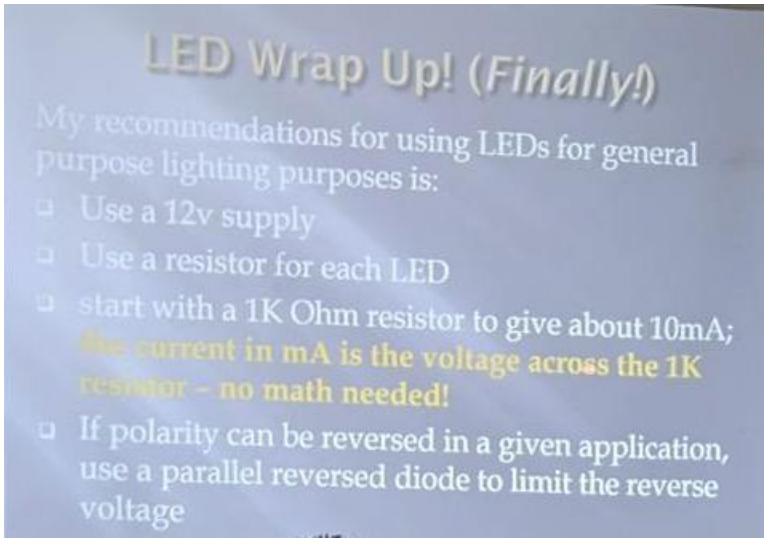


Attentive crowd during Jeff's talk (MJ)



Jeff Witt (R) receives appreciation certificate (RH)









Steve Wysowski receives his AP Association Volunteer (MJ)



← Earl Paine, Achievement Program Coordinator (R) discusses the latest developments in the program as well as member progress. Two members, Jeff Witt and Steve Wysowski are recognized for their most recent achievement. (RH)



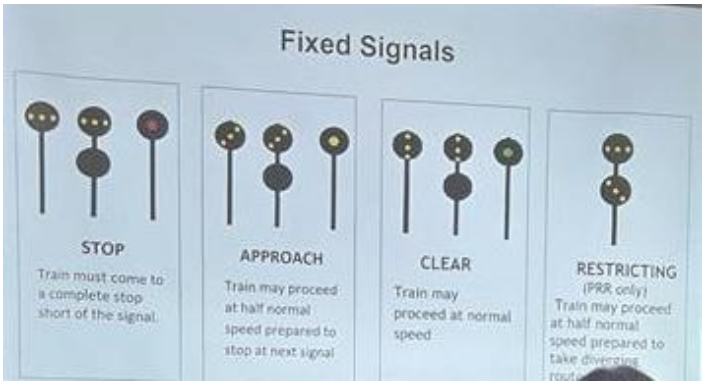
Frank Martin with his presentation on StARR operations (MJ)

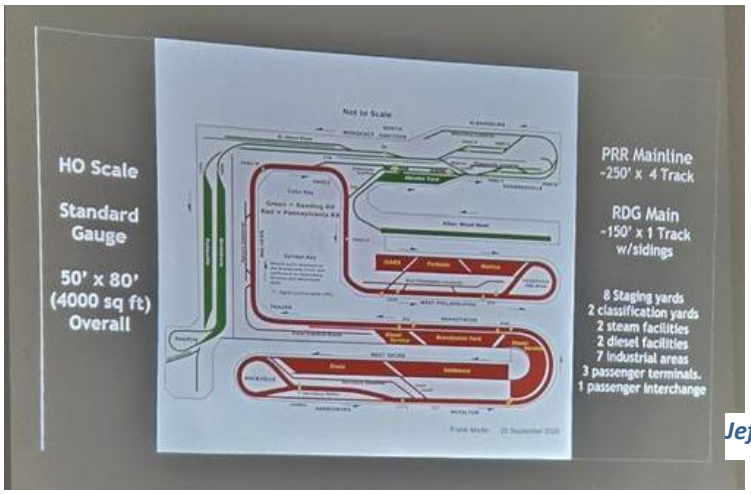


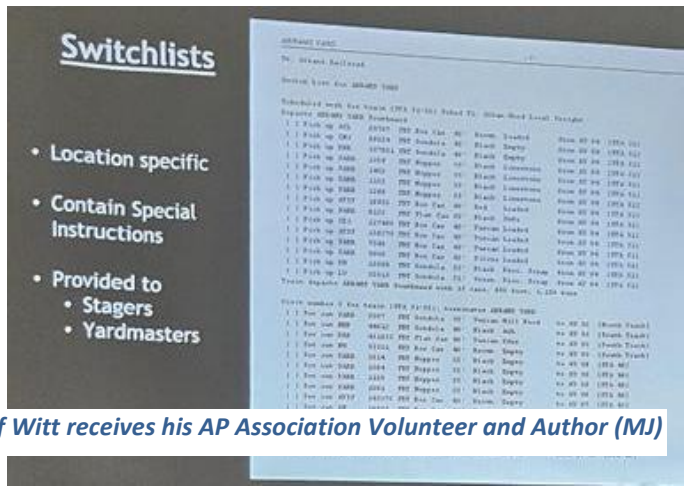
StARR president, George Martin, accepts an appreciation certificate on behalf of the club for hosting the meet and operating session (RH)



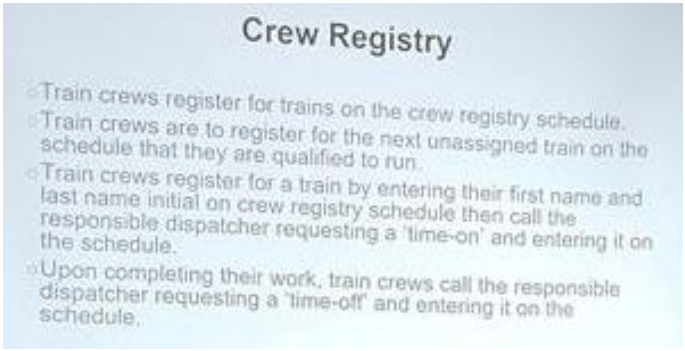
Clinician Frank Martin receives recognition (RH)

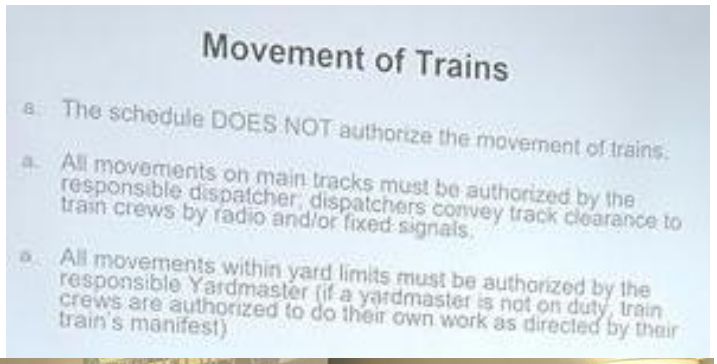






Jeff Witt receives his AP Association Volunteer and Author (MJ)







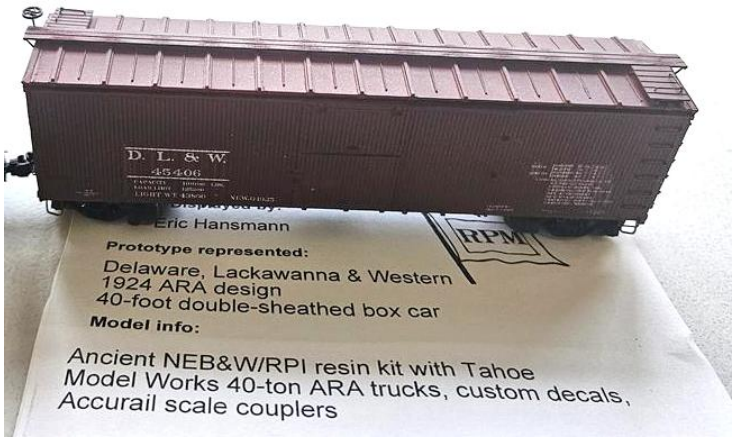
Eric Hansmann takes the mike to describe his Show & Tell displays (below) (RH)



Mark Wallace, Steve Wysowski, and Eric Hansmann share a happy moment (RH)











Alan Silverblatt, Howard Kaplan, Super Joe Walters, MMR (RH)



The food table: Although most had already taken their lunch portions, there was still plenty to choose from for seconds (MJ)



Meet attendees enjoying lunch courtesy of the Philadelphia Division (MJ)

St. Alban's Model Railroad Club

Photos by Michael Junod



A westbound PRR passenger train speeds along the impressive 4-track mainline toward Harrisburg



Westbound PRR passenger train approaches Harrisburg station



Harrisburg Station train shed



A Reading freight approaches Pottsville



StARR President George Phillips manning the Albansburg Tower



The panel and operator for the PRR side of the layout



Fred Monsimer operates a switcher in the steel plant area



A local freight switches industry on the PRR mainline (MJ)



A local freight switches industry on the PRR mainline



An eastbound PRR freight pulls out of Enola



StARR members, including division member Mark Wallace (center), confer near the roundhouse



A young engineer tries his hand at the TimeSaver



Abrams yard is bustling on the Reading side

Photos by Rob Hinkle













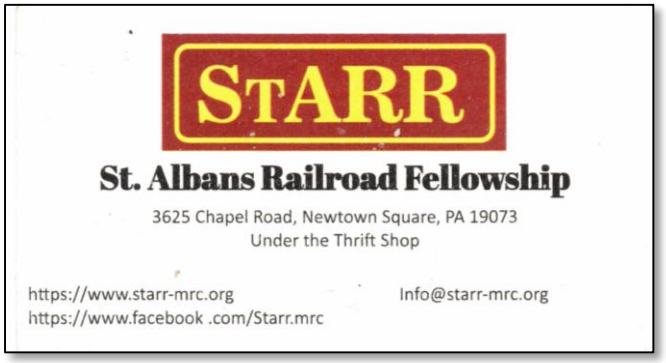
Around the Division

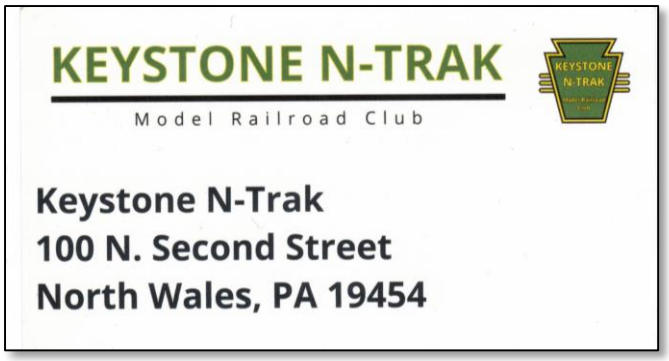
Links

Philadelphia Division Facebook Page:
https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=philadelphia%20division%203%2C%20mer%2C%20nmra

Jeff Witt - Documents my Taggart Transcontinental layout, structure, and rolling stock. Construction starting in December 2012 to the present. It also contains a downloadable PDF operations guide:
http://witt-family.com/LayoutConstruction.htm

Alan Silverblatt - Train DB Plus model railroad database software: https://silverblatt.net/train-db-plus





Classifieds

LAYOUT FOR SALE – Ron Albert's Delaware & Bound Brook
Contact Ken at kennrossiter@gmail.com 267-475-0971

Videos:

Ron - Westbound RR
Ron - Caboose
Ron - Eastbound RR
https://youtu.be/dirtt18nQxA?si=I9xeAOZaE-Cz6Klm

Details and photos: https://www.phillynmra.org/wp-content/uploads/Disp2026-06.pdf

Philly Train Trivia

by Adam Eyring

1) What was used for the first time in the US by the Camden-Trenton River Line?

2) For how many years was there no passenger service on the River Line?

Answers on page 46.

Division Organization

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (elected)

OFFICERS

Superintendent – Joe Walters, MMR (2028)
Assistant Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2027)
Clerk – Michael Junod (2028)
Treasurer – Jeff Witt (2027)

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mike Dettinger – Member Outreach (2028)
Steve Wysowski – Clinics (2027)
Alan Silverblatt – Venues (2027)

APPOINTED POSITIONS

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

HELPER SERVICE

EVENTS

Clinics – Steve Wysowski
Layouts – Chris O'Brien
Venues – Alan Silverblatt
Refreshments – Joe Walters, Kevin Feeney
Door Prizes – Steve Wysowski
Certificates/Awards/Printed Materials – Earl Paine, Howard Kaplan

MEMBERSHIP

Member Outreach – Mike Dettinger, Steve Koffel
Membership Records – Michael Junod

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM - Earl Paine**,** Joe Walters MMR, 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, Joe Walters MMR, Michael Junod
Photography – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Michael Junod, Jeff Witt

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

A Trip along the West-German Railroad Line 195b in 1968

by Andreas Nesemann

Note: Andreas's layout will be open for visitation at the end of November. See modelrailroad openhouse.com for details.

My layout depicts a section of the West-German Kursbuchstrecke 195b in the year 1968. Why 1968? In 1968 the West-German Railroad Deutsche Bundesbahn was in the middle of the steam-to-diesel and -electric transition.

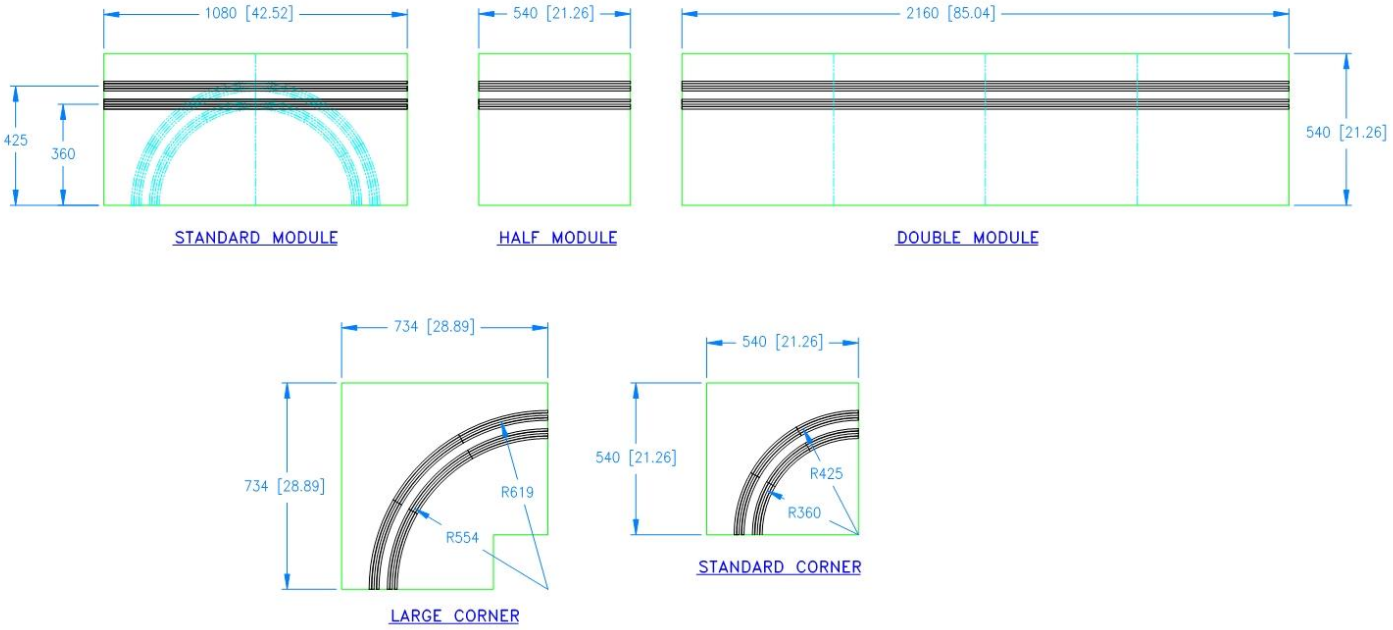
At the same time, the numbering system of the rolling stock got changed.

Therefore, modeling this particular year gave me the opportunity to run steam, diesel, and electric motive power at the same time and also not have to worry about re-numbering/re-lettering rolling stock, which was an un-surmountable obstacle in 1973 when I started the layout.

I follow a real prototype and copied the actual track arrangements as closely as I could within the space ava ilable.

The layout got its start in 1973. At the time I was 17 years old and realized that I would have to move several times during my lifetime. I did not feel like building layouts and then "throw them away" because of necessary moves. The largest move the layout made was in a container from Germany to the US.

In 1973 nobody was talking about modules. In the back of a layout planning book, there was a short section dedicated to "domino" layouts, made up from small pieces, which could be combined in multiple ways depending on the space available. This made sense to me. I decided to work out a pattern where each domino would have the length of six straight sections of Marklin track and the width of three track sections. This led to a basic module size of 1,080mm x 540mm, or 42.5" x 21.25".

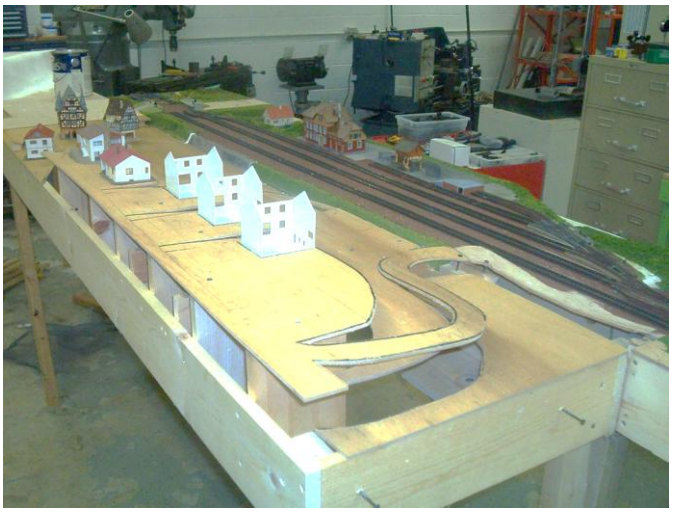


The initial modules were made from 1/2" particle board framed with 1" x 2" pine strips. This proved to be a terrible choice and most of the older modules are now retired. Today's modules are framed with 1" x 6" pine, with cross members every 21.25" and have a 1/4" furniture-grade plywood decking. These modules are lightweight and dimensionally stable for over 30 years. The layout is a combination of modules (with standardized ends) and sections (which will only mate with their dedicated neighbors). Many double modules of 85" length are used. The track level is slightly higher than the height of a filing cabinet, since I used to have filing cabinets underneath several of the modules as support.

This height also allows me to comfortably sit on a chair underneath the layout when doing wiring. However, not everyone is 6' 3" tall as I am, and for some operators this height has proven to be a bit too much. Currently, there are several sturdy step stools available for those who need them.

In the last 30 years, I have built most of the modules offsite to cu t down on the dirt in the layout room. This usually happened at my workplace over major holidays, when no regular work needed to be done. Once a certain level of completion was reached, and the holidays were over, the modules got transported to my house.

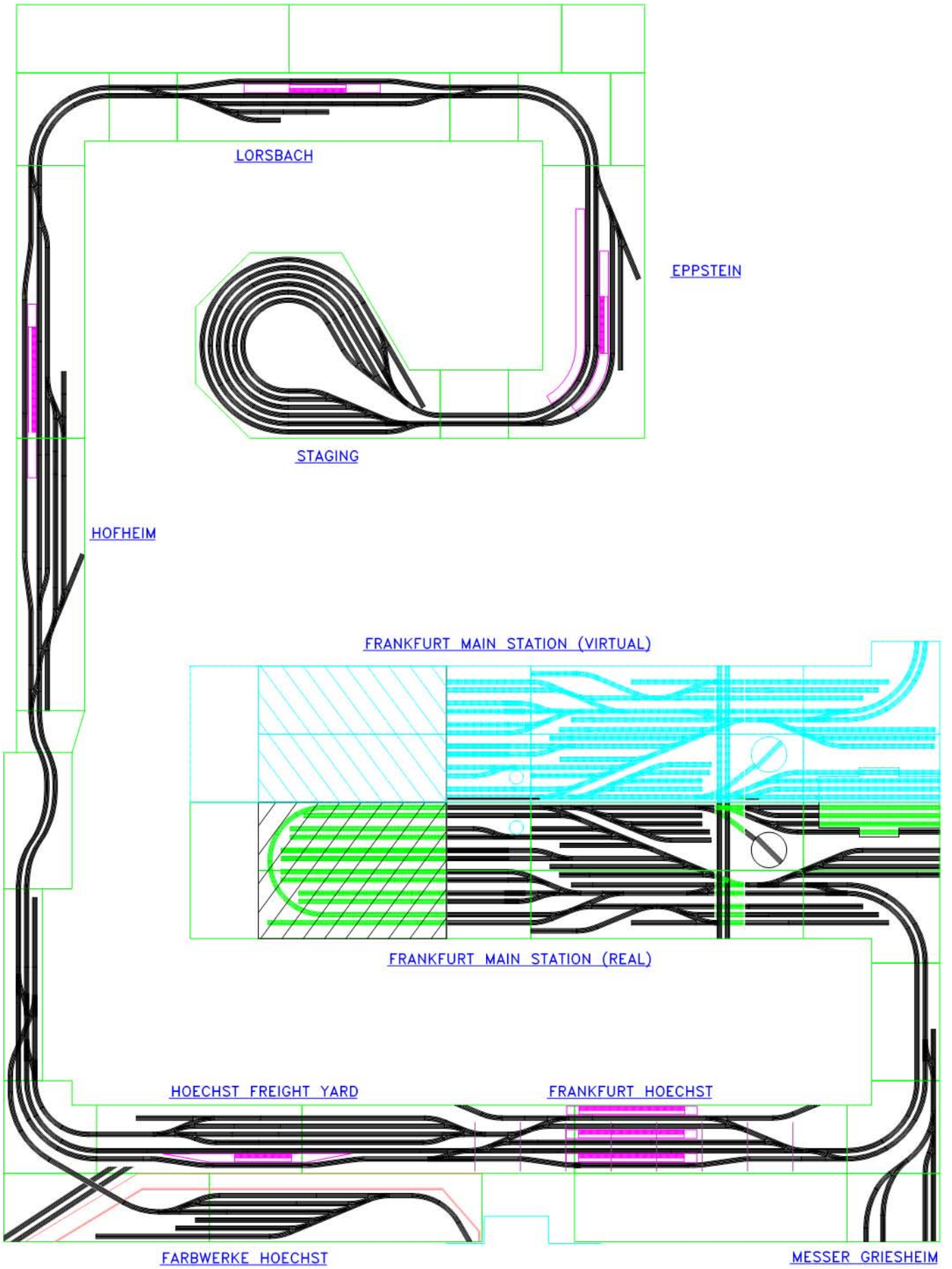




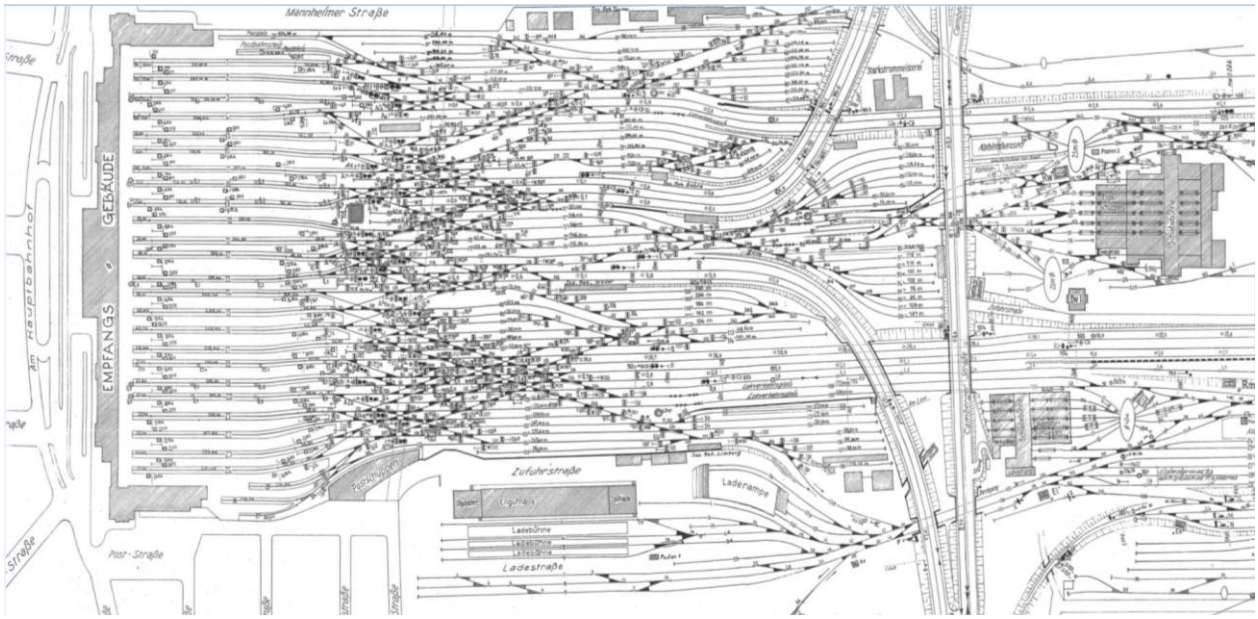


This layout has always been my dream layout as far as track plan and prototype location was concerned. Having grown up 20 miles northwest of the Frankfurt Main Station, it has always been a magical place, with trains coming and going different directions, tracks everywhere and cars and locomotives as far as the eye could see. It just had to be part of the layout, even though this was not possible at an early stage.

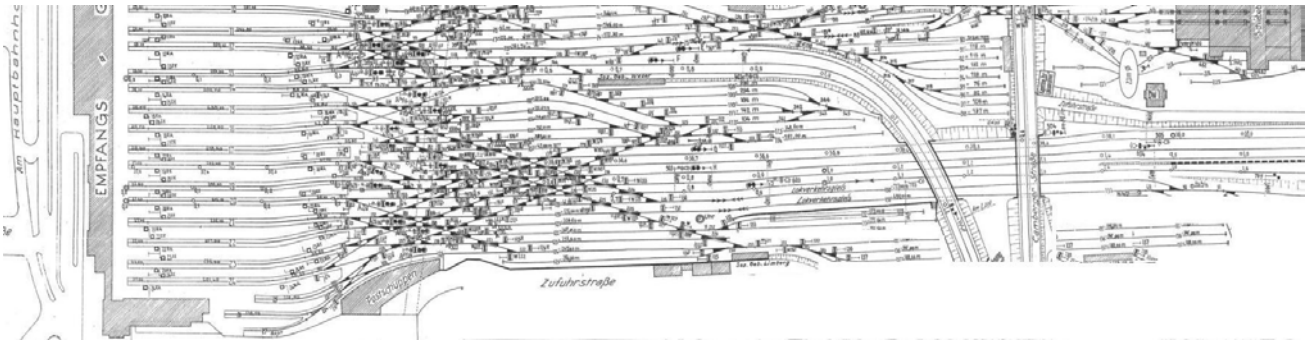
The initial draft of the track plan was developed when I was in third grade during school hours. I got caught by the teacher and sent home with a note: "Andreas does not follow the class, but draws train layouts instead," causing some problems with my mother. Several later refinements were done, resulting in today's plan:


LORSBACH
EPPSTEIN
STAGING
HOFHEIM
FRANKFURT MAIN STATION (VIRTUAL)
FRANKFURT MAIN STATION (REAL)
HOECHST FREIGHT YARD
FRANKFURT HOECHST
FARBWERKE HOECHST
MESSER GRIESHEIM

The Frankfurt Station is quite large with 24 platform tracks. Many different lines are connected to it. From an operational standpoint, I only need tracks 17 through 24. To save space and trackage only one half of the Frankfurt Station, tracks 13 through 24 are built on my layout. Tracks 1 through 12 are "virtual tracks," visible in a mirror going the entire length of the station. I can get away with this cheat because the real station is also close to symmetric:



After a lengthwise cut of the track plan, something similar to what is on my layout emerges:



Enough of the background story; let's go on a trip over the layout. We took a cab to the Frankfurt Main Station, the largest passenger station on my layout.



The station is also a major hub for trolleys, serving many parts of Frankfurt.



We now go to the platform and enter our train.



There is express freight and mail ready to be loaded.



Our train rumbles out of the station.



A look back shows the station shed with all 24 tracks.



If you look carefully, you will be able to make out where the mirror is.



We pass the engine facility, capable of accommodating up to 15 full-length steam locomotives.



Next, we pass over the Mainzer Landstrasse, a major street leading into Frankfurt. Some modeler's license—the silver Mercedes had been owned by Rosemarie Nitribit, a famous Frankfurt prostitute, who had been dead since 1957. It is assumed that her mother sold the car after her death and the Mercedes is now driven by the second owner.



Footnote on some more modeler's license—the beer garden on the right was built by my wife Bobbi some years ago. There was never a beer garden in Frankfurt in 1968. But during open houses, I heard so many times, "You have a German prototype layout; where is your beer garden?" that I decided to have one just to shut up the visitors.

Next, the train passes the Messer Griesheim plant in Frankfurt-Griesheim. This company is a global player in compressed gases and today known as MG Gas. It is a rail-served industry on my model railroad and in real life.



The white mountain in the background was known as the Griesheim Alps because of the snowy look, but was actually a large pile of white, industrial, salt waste on which nothing would grow. Today it is covered with a rubber membrane and top soil and looks green.

We are now entering the town Hoechst, a suburb at the western outskirts of Frankfurt. The underpass is the Koenigsteiner Strasse underpass. As a toddler my parents lived on this street and my mother and I made many trips, with me in a stroller through the underpass. It was always a scary highlight for me as a 2-1/2 year old when a steam train accelerated on top of the bridge above us. This experience traumatized me to a point where I ended up burdened with a lifelong train obsession.

On top of the bridge are empty milk tank cars coming from the MOHA Creamery in Sossenheim, which is on the Bad Soden branch. They will be hooked onto an express train going north, where they will get filled with fresh milk provided by happy cows. Later during the day, they will go back to the creamery.



Hoechst is a busy place with connections to the railroad lines 195c to Bad Soden and 195d to Koenigstein. A train from Koenigstein has just arrived and is ready to continue on to Frankfurt Main Station. The Koenigstein–Frankfurt train is an interesting part of the operating scheme during OP sessions.



In the back, there is a train coming from Limburg also heading toward Frankfurt.



The downtown of Hoechst had the Hertie Department store, which was the anchor store and provided most of what the people living there needed.



But man does not live from bread alone, and for me the most important store was "Schmitt" with its famous red window frames, a combined sporting goods and hobby store. Those of you remembering Mitchell's in Wilmington, know exactly what I am talking about. There is a small train layout in the left front window and model airplanes in the right window. And, of course, a little boy in front of the window with the train layout who cannot get excited enough watching it.



We are now back at the Hoechst Station, following the line into northwest direction.



We are now looking at the Liederbacher Strasse underpass, where the Hoechst Passenger Station (left) connects the Hoechst freight yard (right), which was an important classification yard in 1968.



The Farbwerke Hoechst AG was a major chemical and pharmaceutical company in 1968 and is the major industry served on my layout. The company was Du Pont's largest competitor through the 1980s and got disassembled and sold as piecemeal in the 1990s. I worked there during the second half of the 1970s as a machinist apprentice. Today, many of the buildings still exist and are rented out to other businesses as part of the Hoechst Industrial Park.

The big grey building was a fertilizer silo. I still vividly remember when it caught fire in 1961 sending a large cloud of yellow, toxic smoke over the town, forcing my mother, my sister, and myself to evacuate.





The next picture taken in 2022 gives an overview of the entire Hoechst area and also shows the stuff underneath the layout. The DOS 6.2 computer handled the routing of the yard. It got replaced by a Raspberry Pi in late 2023.



We now leave the Hoechst freight yard and proceed further northwest. The bridge connects to the Farbwerke Hoechst complex, and the apartment buildings in the back are government-sponsored housing near Sindlingen.





I very much regret that the Kriftel Station, which would have been next on this line, had to be omitted. Instead, I have modeled the next station, which is the larger and more interesting Hofheim Station. This model is true to the exact track and signal arrangement in 1968.



There is a team track and a freight house and one rail-served industry, the Adolf Mohr Company, a manufacturer of high-speed paper cutting equipment. They received only incoming freight, which was scrap metal for their smelting operation. All outgoing freight was by truck.





The team track had a transfer crane.



A look at the Hofheim freight house and the station building.



The street side of the Hofheim Station is a busy place, with bus connections to many places not served by rail. The yellow buses were owned by the German Postal Service (Postbus), which shipped everything in 1968: letters, packages, and people. The maroon buses were owned and operated by the German Federal Railroad (Bahnbus) with the purpose of extending their service beyond the end of the rails. Some people called them the "Rubber Railroad."

When in high school, I had to cross the bridge going over the railroad many times because the school was on the top of the hill. While standing on the bridge, I made many attempts to spit into the chimney of a steam locomotive passing underneath. It never worked!



We are now exiting Hofheim following the railroad line into the more rural Taunus Mountains.





After about two miles we enter the south end of the Lorsbach Station. This station is also modeled true to the prototype track and signal arrangement.



.In 1968, Lorsbach was a charming little village with three passenger tracks, a freight house, a team track, and a loading ramp. Since I grew up in Lorsbach from age six on, some extra effort was made as far as the detailing is concerned.







The village was divided by the railroad line. Two-gated railroad crossings allowed vehicles to pass. These crossings have been a major obstacle. The vegetable garden next to the railroad crossing was entirely scratch built by my wife Bobbi long before the many ready-made plants became available. At the very right edge of the picture there is even a scarecrow.





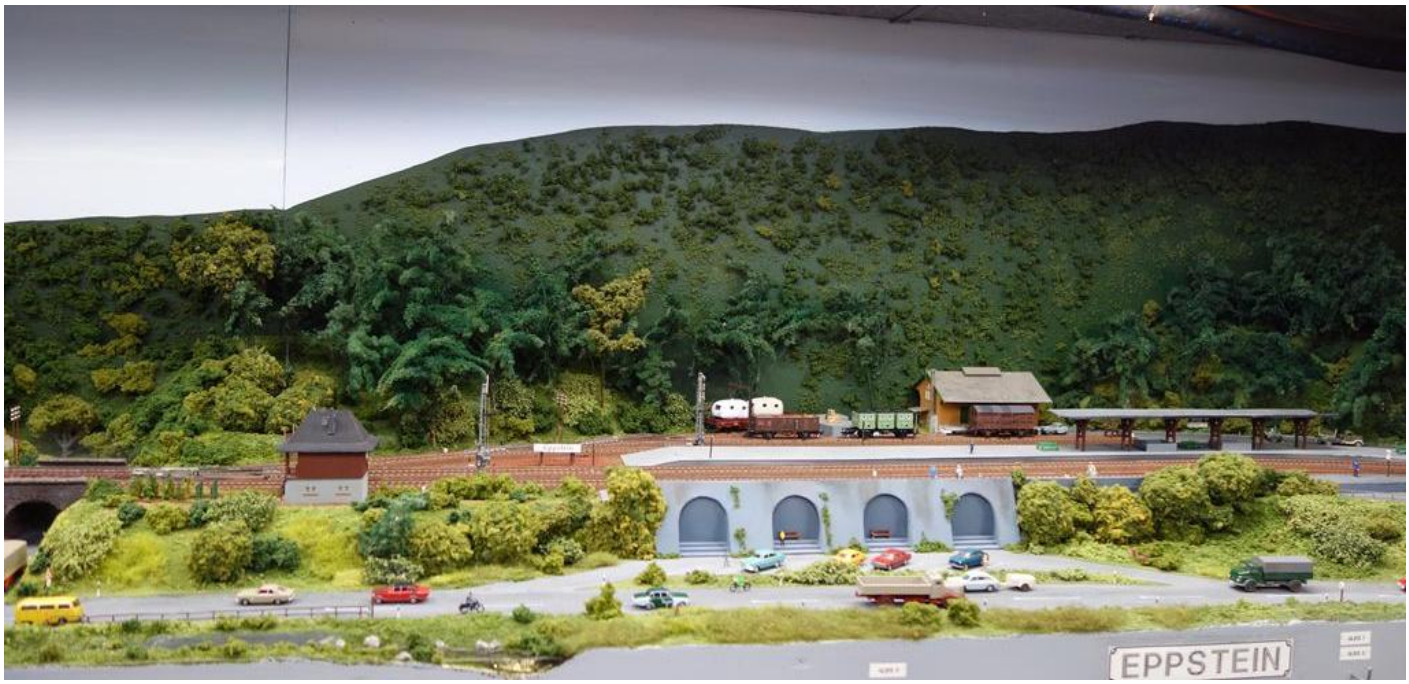
One last look at the Lorsbach Elementary School, the gray building in the center of the picture, where I had to go from first to fourth grade. Fortunately, the schoolyard bordered directly against the railroad, which somewhat compensated for the inconvenience of having to attend classes. In the very foreground is a tiny tunnel opening. This is a pedestrian tunnel and located about halfway between the two-gated railroad crossings.



Next we leave Lorsbach. The factory with the chimney is a modified Pola kit to represent a leather factory, the primary industry in Lorsbach in 1968. None of the five leather factories were rail served and are therefore of no operational interest to the layout. The arched building on top of the mountain is a stylized model of the Bahai Temple, which is located about 1.5 miles west of the railroad line. My mother donated a lemon press and a small cap from an ointment tube so I could make the model.



We finally reach the town of Eppstein, the most northern station of the layout. This station also has a freight house, team track, and loading ramp. The signal tower is totally scratch built from original prototype plans and has detailed interior.



The Eppstein Station building is very close to the prototype and was kit-bashed from a modified Faller kit. The castle in the background is an N-scale building built by my brother in the early 1980s and then passed on to me. The town of Eppstein does have a castle that is open to visitors. However, it looks different and, if modeled, would be located in the aisle way, close to where the camera location is.



In Eppstein the mountains are pretty high and the line passes through the almost 800 feet long Eppstein Tunnel. On my layout only the south portal is shown. Behind the tunnel mouth is the north end staging yard and return loop.



We have now completed a trip over the entire layout.

The layout was built with operation in mind and robustness and reliability were of utmost importance. To me, this means code 100 stainless steel rail, solenoid table-mount switch machines, reliable wiring, and standardization on components as much as possible.

All turnouts are controlled by DCC Decoders. Initially, I used industrial-grade, self-built decoders for the 18-bit Motorola-based DCC format.

Today, the layout is switched over to ESU Switch-Pilot decoders, which are multi-protocol capable. These can handle everything from the most basic 18-bit DCC over the NMRA 47-bit DCC baseline format all the way to the NMRA 70-bit extended DCC format.

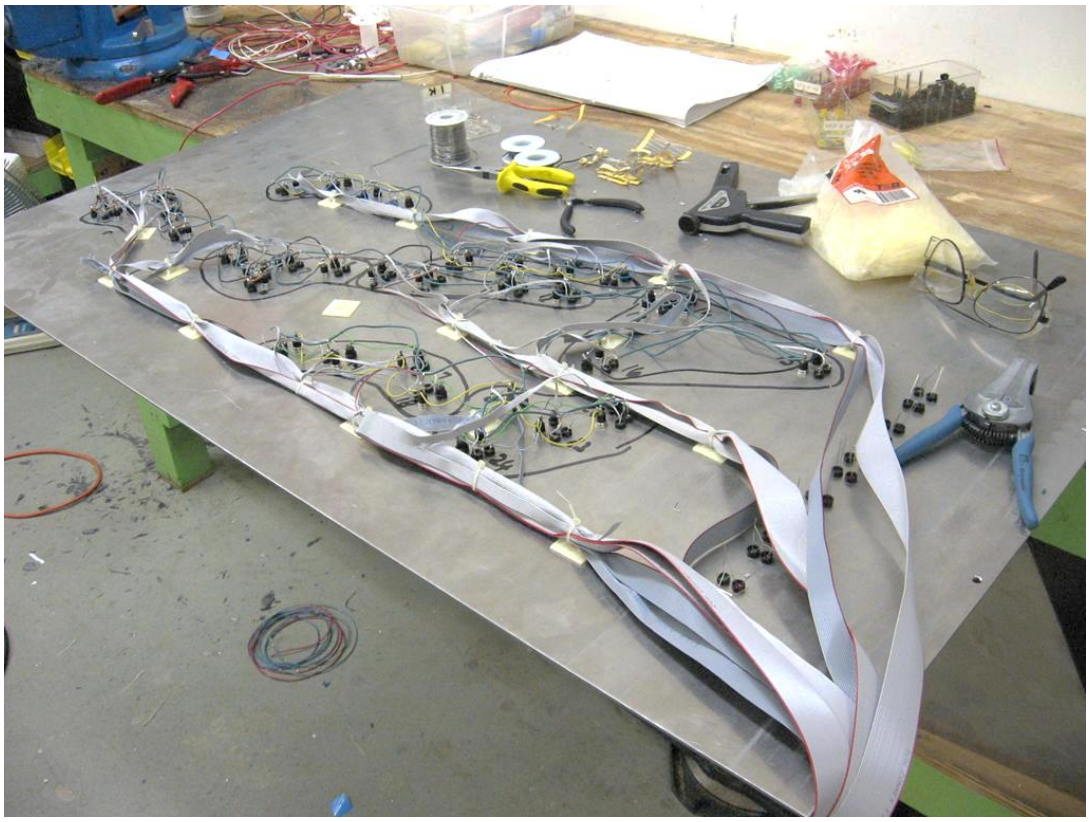
All stations have control panels that allow setting of entire routes by pushing of just two buttons. All routes are interlocked and secured by signals—semaphores on most of the layout except the Frankfurt Main Station, which had light signals in 1968. Engineers must obey the signal aspects, otherwise bad things will happen to their train.

Routing is handled by either DOS 6.2 computers or recently by Raspberry Pi controllers.

Example of DOS-based control panel here at Frankfurt Main Station:



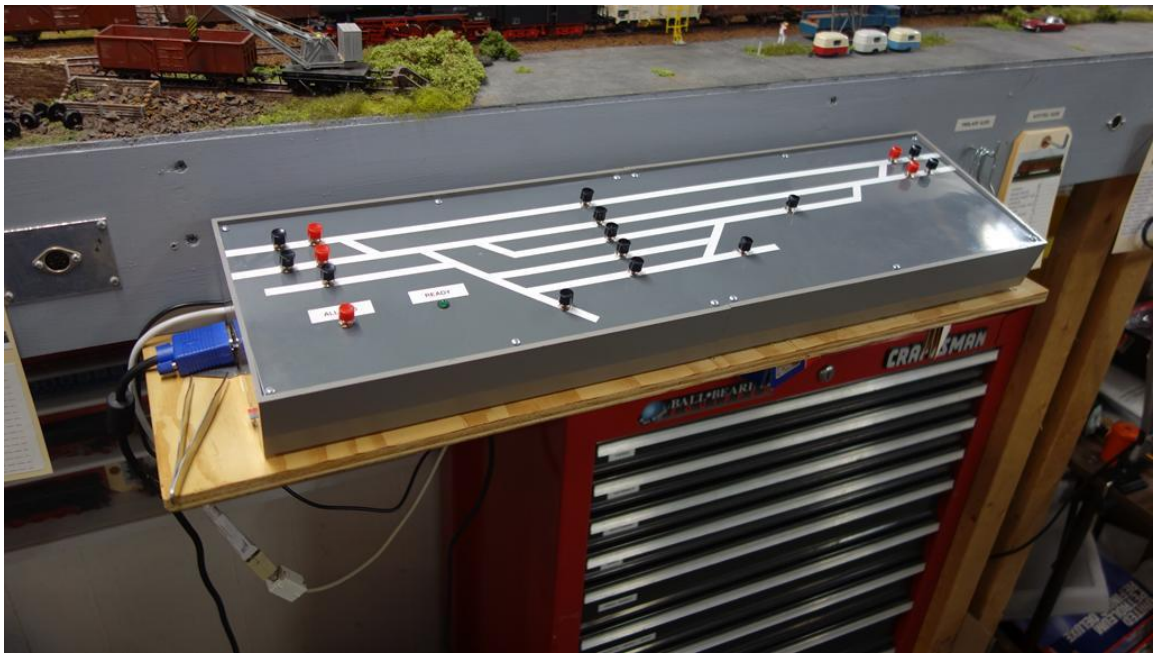


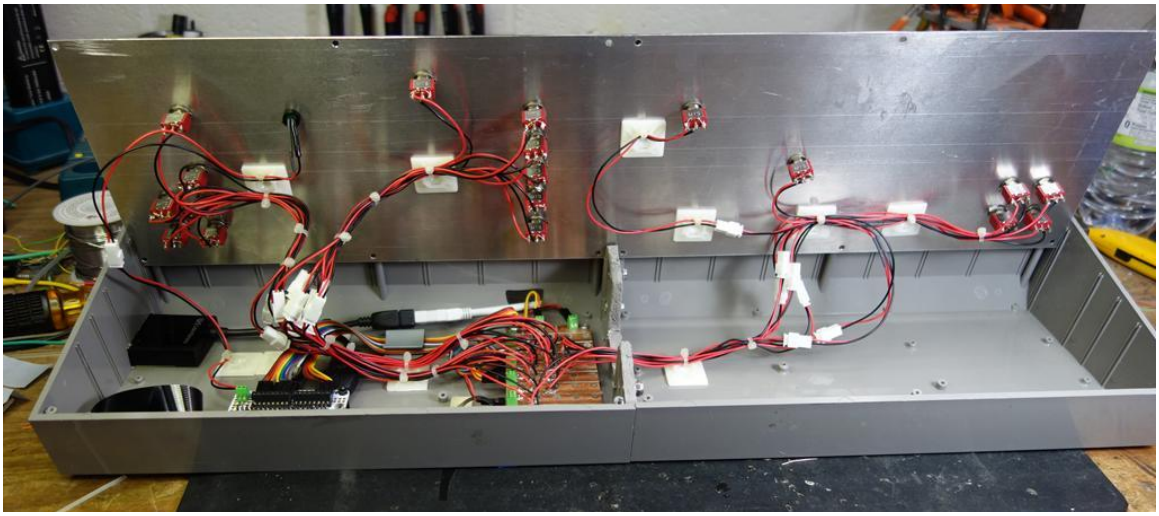


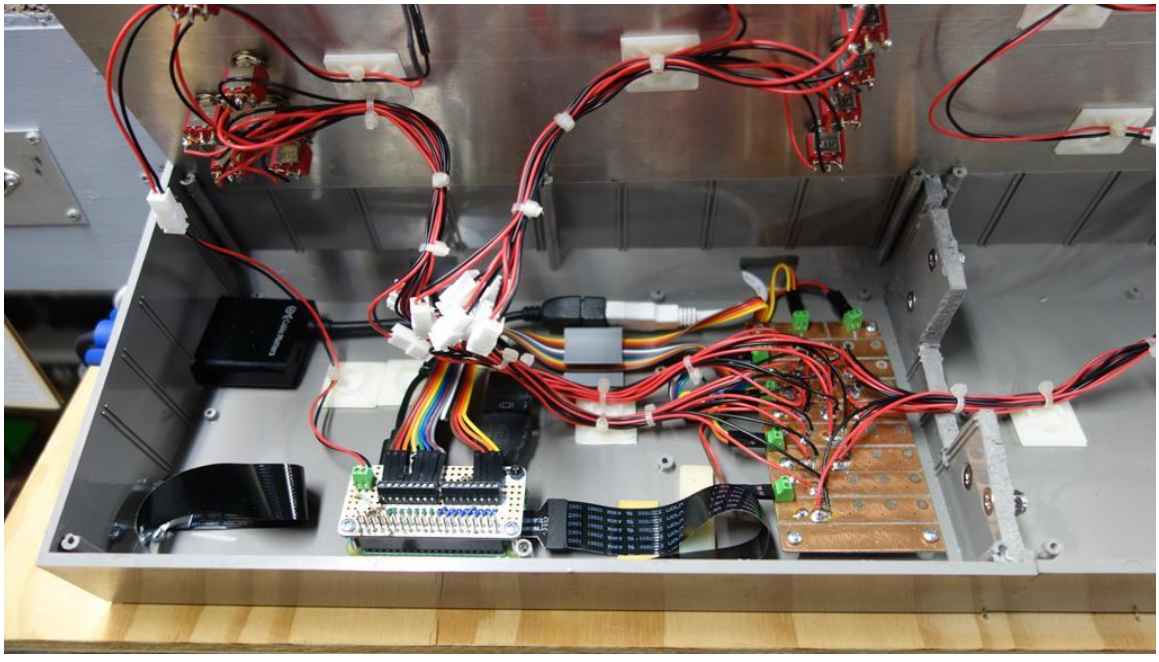
Examples of Raspberry Pi-based control panels here at Hoechst and Hofheim:











As far as train controls are concerned, I have always been a fan of command control systems. The first layout modules were wired for 3-rail DC operation. I messed around with home-built, tone-frequency designs in the 1970s, which were, at best, marginal designs and very unreliable.

Over the years, the following command control systems were installed on my layout in chronological order: CTC-16, Marklin Digital 18-bit (Motorola), Horn Digit 81, Marklin Digital 47-bit, Horn Digit 99, Lenz Digital 47-bit, Digitrax DCS-100, Uhlenbrock Intellibox, Lenz Digital Plus (extended NMRA format) and finally NCE Power Pro Radio with seven wireless throttles with additional WiFi access for Wifitrax-compatible devices.

As soon as the CTC-16 articles appeared in Model Railroader I knew three things: 1) The future of Model Railroading is finally here! 2) This is going to work! I was already familiar with the circuits used since I had used them building radios for my RC planes. CTC-16 was essentially an RC radio system with the high frequency parts omitted, a stroke of genius on Keith Guttierez's part. 3) Why didn't I think of this?

I immediately started building one for myself...and it did not work. Then came the corrections...and in the next issue of *Model Railroader* more corrections. I finally got it to work in 1983 and started installing "receivers" in my larger locomotives. As long as the track was perfectly clean, it worked pretty well.

By the middle of 1985, CTC-16 was outdated, and Marklin started offering its first 18-bit DCC system based on a LENZ design. The reliability, especially on dirty track, was phenomenal, and the decoders were much smaller. The CTC-16 got retired and Marklin Digital was the new control system. Unfortunately, the layout grew and Marklin did not offer walk-around throttles.

Fortunately, Wolfgang Horn (also an early member of the NMRA DCC committee) came to the rescue by offering plans for his DIGIT 81 DCC system with up to 10 walk-around throttles, allowing up to 81 locomotives and utilizing the 18-bit DCC format. So it was "back to the soldering iron" and I built my own system. Wolfgang Horn had done a fantastic job and my system worked as soon as I powered it up.

Again the better product was the enemy of the good product, and Marklin came out with their Marklin Digital = 47-bit system, which also offered up to four infrared walk-around controllers. It utilized Lenz decoders which were the smallest on the market at the time.

And again, Wolfgang Horn came out with his 47-bit version of his DIGIT 81 system, which he now called DIGIT 99, which allowed 99 locos and up to 16 walk-around throttles. Few people know that this system was instrumental to getting the DCC standard established. One of the requirements was that model railroaders must be able to build their own command station from easily available off-the-shelf parts. DIGIT 99 fit the requirements and was an important item during the DCC Standards Committee meetings at the 1993 Valley Forge Express NMRA Convention.

Finally, Lenz came out with Digital Plus, a NMRA baseline compatible DCC system supporting up to 99 locos and up to 32 walk-around throttles. I had to have it: Command Station LZ100 with LV100 Power Station and several LH100 throttles.

For me, Lenz got quickly overtaken by Digitrax with the capability of supporting addresses up to 9999. So I changed again. However, the DCS-100 command station kept hanging up and required resets during operation. I got tired of it.

I then switched to Uhlenbrock Intellibox. The Uhlenbrock DCC system is the “Swiss army knife” of DCC systems. It supports any decoder and connects to any old Marklin input devices as well as all loconet devices. I was able to keep my Digitrax throttles and things worked as they should. One thing kept bugging me though. Throttles had to be plugged in and out to keep up with trains, resulting in times when there was no direct control over the train.

At the time, Lenz promised to offer wireless control, which caused me to give Lenz another try. I bought the latest LZV100 command and power station and had my Lenz LH100 throttles upgraded. I also got a batch of LH90 throttles for those operators preferring a knob. However, the promised wireless throttles never came. The wireless throttles offered today are ONLY for Europe; they have the wrong frequency for US use.

I then decided to give another US manufacturer a go, this time NCE. I bought a Power-Pro wireless starter set and several additional Pro-Cab R throttles. This system is pretty much fitting my needs. Today I have seven wireless and one wired Pro-Cab.

In addition, I have two Power-Cabs, which are used for testing and programming. This is enough for most operating sessions. I have standardized on Pro-Cab throttles only and rejected all Cab-06, Cab-04, or similar. By having only one style of throttle, all throttles get operated exactly the same way making it easier on the people using them.

The entire layout is controlled by a total of six (6) DCC systems. The NCE system controls the trains. Each station has its own DCC system exclusively for turnout and signal control. I am using the old DCC systems mentioned above for this. Except for Digitrax they all work satisfactorily. The computer/Raspberry Pi is connected to their serial port.

My rolling stock is from all different manufacturers: Fleischmann, Kleinbahn, Lima, Marklin, Piko, Roco, Rowa, Trix, Sachsenmodell, and others. Almost every piece of rolling stock has undergone alterations before being allowed on the layout.

The locomotives especially have undergone extensive mechanical and electrical alterations. Reliability is a must! The majority of locomotives has been re-geared and re-motored with coreless can motors (Faulhaber or Maxon). My standard decoder is the Lenz Gold Decoder. It is always connected to a 3-wire keep-alive module with between 1 and 3 Farad capacity. This combination is a prerequisite to reliable operation.





I am part of three revolving operating groups, Tuesday nights (weekly), Wednesday nights (weekly) and Sunday afternoons (bi-monthly). This assures that the layout gets run quite a bit, but making it sometimes difficult to find time for major improvements. During each op session I am recording all problems encountered in a spiral book and have gotten used to getting the problems corrected by the following night. By now, I achieved a satisfactory level of reliability during operating sessions.

There are still many things to be done on the layout. I have another spiral book with a very long to-do list. Every time I cross one item off, two more items need to be added. Per my most recent estimate, the layout should be complete by around my 115th birthday, or so. Until then, I am planning to have the maximum amount of fun with it.

Special Thanks go to the following people (in alphabetical order):
D.C. Cebula for editing the worst of my photos and making them usable.
Andrew Holcomb for improving the weathering of the Frankfurt Station building.
My wife, Bobbi Nesemann for HO-scale gardening and especially for not getting tired of providing the snacks for operating sessions.

Andreas Nesemann, 2026

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

Philly Train Trivia Answers

by Adam Eyring

1) What was used for the first time in the US by the Camden-Trenton River Line?

2) For how many years was there no passenger service on the River Line?

Answers:

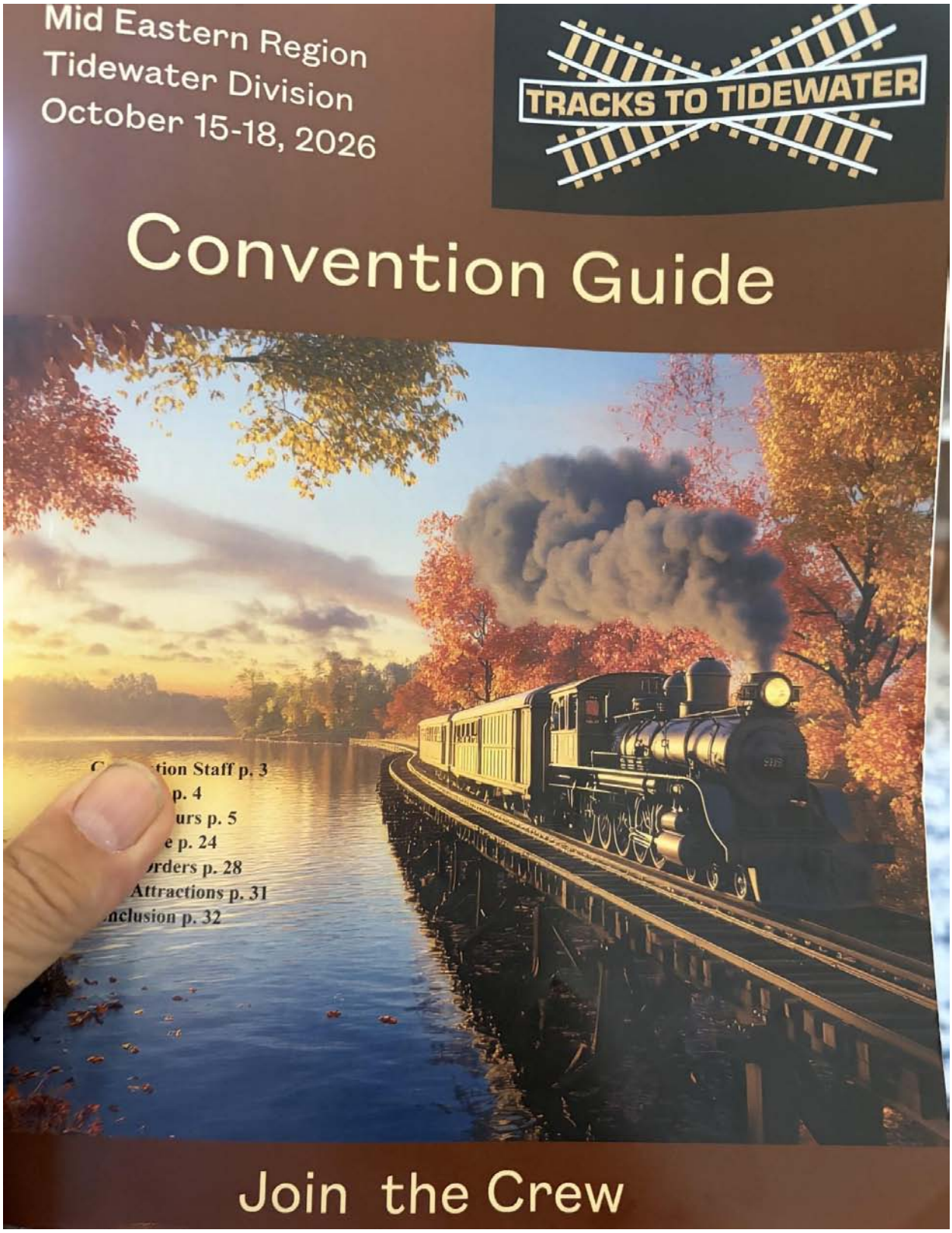
1) Diesel Multiple Unit *attached* cars were used for the first time in the US by the Camden-Trenton River Line.

2) There was no rail passenger service between Camden and Trenton for 41 years. PRR cancelled service in 1963 and the River Line opened in 2004.

MER 2026 Convention Report

by Steve Wysowski

I had the pleasure of attending the 2026 MER Convention in Virginia Beach recently.



There were a ton of activities to choose from and meal provision was handled nicely over the course of the convention.

Our division presented multiple clinics over the four-day event. Joe Walters presented "Building the UP Rotary Snowplow," Kevin Feeney spoke about "UsingToy Diecast Vehicles on an HO-Scale Layout," Mike Dettinger presented multiple clinics;"Building a Log Cabin in N Scale," a participant clinic which he led with "An Introduction to Building Log Cabins." "An Introduction to Table-Top Module Standards" was his third clinic, and his fourth and fifth clinics were back to back make and take clinics on "Building an N-Scale Kato Diorama Circus Module Kit." I presented a clinic on "Scratch Building a Narrow Gauge Turn-of-the-Century Tank Car." Some forty clinics were given and all had nice-sized audiences.

Mark Wallace and I traveled to Virginia together to visited two layouts. It was wonderful having a travel companion, especially as we crossed the Chesapeake Bay Bridge–Tunnel—17 miles of sea exposure…yikes!

I also took part in one ops session on Bob Cook's Virginian Railway, New River Division.



Bob Cook's Virginian.



Mark Nieting's Port of Milwaukee–Jones Island. Each layout was a super detailed gem.

Finally Mark and I visited Chuck Davis's Lehigh Valley RR, also wonderfully detailed.



Coal operations on Chuck Davis's railroad.

I attended many clinics and met some new and old friends. These conventions are a wonderful opportunity to chat with modelers about techniques and philosophy, meeting new friends and catching up with old ones.



Joe Walters chatting with an old friend from the Durham, NC convention.

The presented a monetary prize as part of our Philadelphia Division New Modeler Award to a first-time entrant whose work appeared in the contest room.



Joe presenting our division award.

The culmination event was the Saturday banquet with guest speaker Bill Schafer of Norfolk Southern, retired, who spoke of his career with that railroad.

A great event this year and many thanks to our hosts for their dedication and hard work.

Chuck Davis MMR's Lehigh Valley Railroad (HO)

Steve Wysowski and I visited 2 of the 18 layouts during last week's convention. The first layout visited was Chuck Davis MMR's Lehigh Valley Railroad - LV's Wyoming Division set in northeast Pennsylvania. Chuck's layout is in a room behind his detached garage. Due to the coastal nature of the area, all of the layouts are either upstairs in an attic, somewhere on the first floor or in the garage.

His Lehigh Valley layout is a modular layout depicting several of the railroads serving the Wyoming Valley in Northeast Pennsylvania during the 1940 to 1960 era. Other railroads modeled include the CNJ, PRR, NYO&W, DL&W plus the Laurel lines (L&WV). Operation is centered around the Lehigh Valley Coxton yard with switching and interchange centered in the nearby town of Wilkes-Barre PA.

Chuck frequently hosts operating sessions for members of the Tidewater Division and his layout was featured in the great model railroads, 2015 edition. He's been an enthusiastic and familiar visitor, clinician prototype modeler to the RPM-Valley Forge since 2008, as well as our MER-Philly Express 2025 Convention last year. We were glad to finally get a chance to visit him and his layout to see a little bit of PA in a southern setting.



← CNJ Station in Wilkes-Barre, PA. Built in 1866 and is still standing—the only railroad structure left in Wilkes-Barre



PRR Switching one of the industries on Chuck's layout →



CNJ's Franklin Jct. Tower



Lehigh Valley's Coxton roundhouse with foreground rack for car cards and storing items during an op session



Coxton Coaling dock with passenger steamer topping off its tender

Anthracite Coal Mine facility, Wilkes Barre, PA →





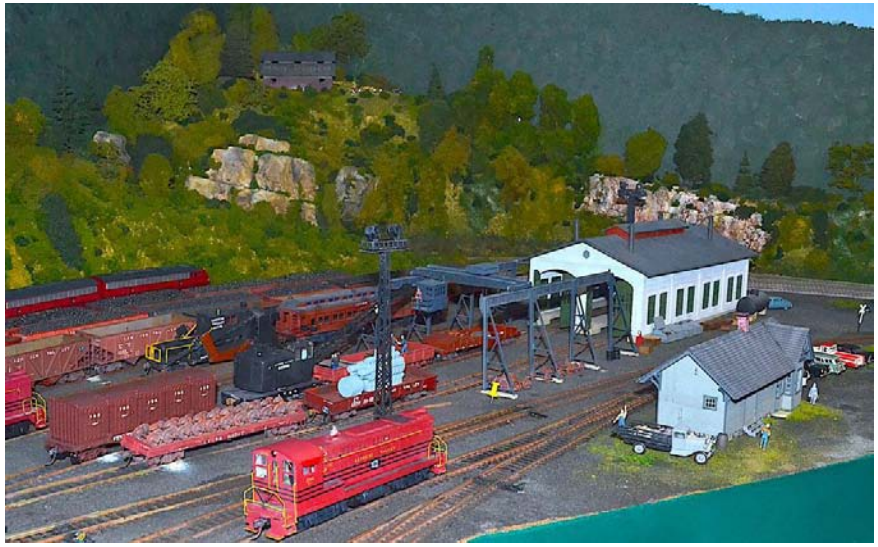
Breaker adjacent to the anthracite mine



Scene of a curving mainline with bridge on the layout



Swift's meatpacking with DL&W switcher



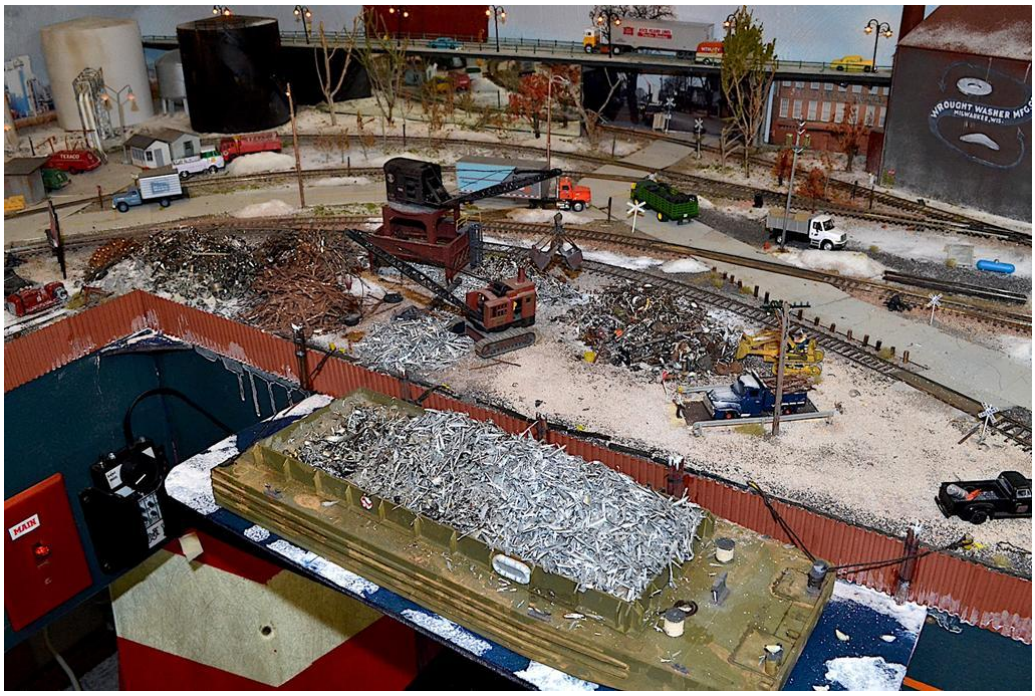
Coxton Yard MOW facility

Mark Nieting's Jones Island–The Port of Milwaukee (HO)

The second layout we visited during last week's convention was Mark Nieting's "Jones Island–The Port of Milwaukee." Mark's an avid 3-rail and tinplate collector, however this was his HO operational switching layout with its unusual winter railroading theme that provided lots of model railfanning.

Mark's childhood in Milwaukee inspired his modeling the Jones Island port area served by the Milwaukee Road and the Chicago and Northwestern which stays close to the actual track plans given the limitations of space in his upstairs room. His era is 1969-1970 with a U-shaped switching layout. Transfers to Jones Island come from four staging tracks to serve various industries including a scrap yard. Operating sessions accommodate up to six with movements by car cards using a regular schedule of trains. The fascia edge of the layout is constructed to appear as a bulkhead made of steel sheet piling. Crews running trains should be aware they are standing in 25 scale feet of water!

Scrap yard and barge →









F-units awaiting next assignment

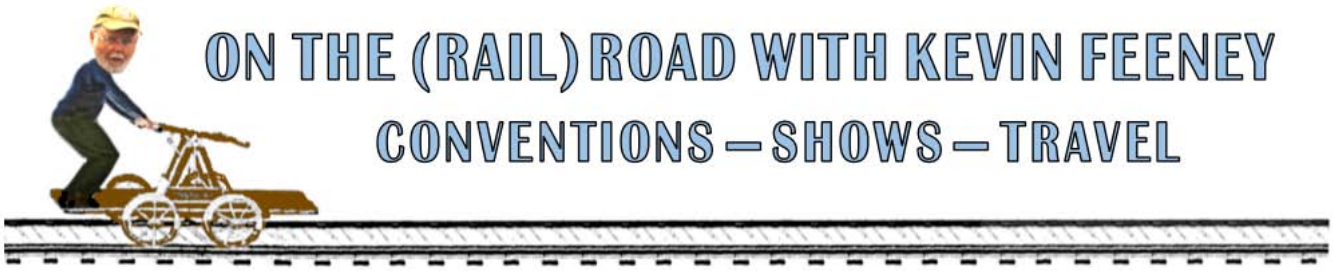
MER 2026 Convention Registration Summary

by Kirk Bateman, Convention Registrar

The total number of primary registrants to the convention is 146. In addition, 33 spouses / significant others and 1 child (18 & under) are registered. The breakdown of primary registrants by division (totaling 129) appears in the attachment. Note that the remaining 17 of the 146 total registrants include 10 non-NMRA members and 7 NMRA members from beyond the MER

Mid-Eastern Region	
Division	**Registrants**
1 New Jersey	9
2 Potomac	10
3 Philadelphia	9
4 Tidewater	34
5 James River	18
10 South Mountain	2
11 Susquehanna	9
12 Carolina Southern	2
13 Carolina Piedmont	24
14 Chesapeake	12
Total	**129**





The National Narrow-Gauge Convention
September 2–6, 2026 in Bloomington, Minnesota

While not a NMRA event, it certainly looked and felt like one. There were clinics, a contest room, layouts, operating sessions, door prizes, and a large vendor room. The man in the orange circle is Charlie Getz who was selling things from the estate of Bob Brown, the long-time editor of the *Narrow Gauge & Shortline Gazette* who died earlier this year. I brought a pile of narrow-gauge publications and D&RGW railroadiana with me to sell. However, there were no white elephant or swap tables. So, during the breaks between clinics, I just laid out the things I had on one of the empty tables. Over the course of the convention, I managed to sell most of what I had with me and took in over $125.



However, there was some association between the NNGC and the NMRA. AP judging was available, more than a few of the presenters and layout owners were MMRs, and the convention was sponsored by the local NMRA division which provided insurance coverage for the event. However, I only saw three attendees that I recognized from the annual NMRA conventions.

The most amazing thing about this event is that there is no national narrow-gauge modeling organization. Per Charlie Getz, a former NMRA official and a name in the narrow-gauge world, this is the reason why the convention is so successful. Each year a different local group is the host. This was the 46th such convention and while it has been held in various places across the US, certain places have hosted it more than once. It has been held 13 times in CO (Denver, Colorado Springs, and Durango), six times near St. Louis, and now twice in Bloomington, MN. The convention will return to Hickory, NC in 2027 and Denver in 2028. While this event was scale neutral, there are other narrow-gauge events that are scale specific, such as the annual Sn3 Symposium and an O-scale narrow-gauge show that is held annually in Harrisburg, PA.

I paid $149 for the early bird registration fee. There were about 475 attendees that were supported by a large group of local volunteers. Per Charlie Getz, the typical prior attendance was about 800 and this year was off for several (unspecified) reasons.

FORMAT

The biggest difference between this and an NMRA convention was that there were clinics from 8am to noon, and then again from 6pm to 9:30pm. The daily six-hour break allowed attendees to get lunch and then go see layouts between 1-5pm, grab a quick dinner and then come back to the convention hotel (a big DoubleTree on I-494 about 10 minutes west of the MSP airport and the Mall of America) for more clinics and visits to the contest and vendor rooms. A local HO Free-Mo group set up their modern modules in a foyer and there was another room with smaller modular layouts and some large dioramas.







CLINICS

There were six clinic rooms so there was a lot to choose from. I skipped the clinics on DCC and 3D printing and attended clinics in two areas. The first group was an often detailed look at individual narrow-gauge railroads. These fit well with my strong interest in historical railroads. These included Minnesota's narrow-gauge railroads which were a mix of logging lines in the north and feeder lines in the south that ran west from the Mississippi River. Others included the Kennebec Central—the shortest (5-miles) 2-foot-gauge railroad in Maine, the Rio Grande

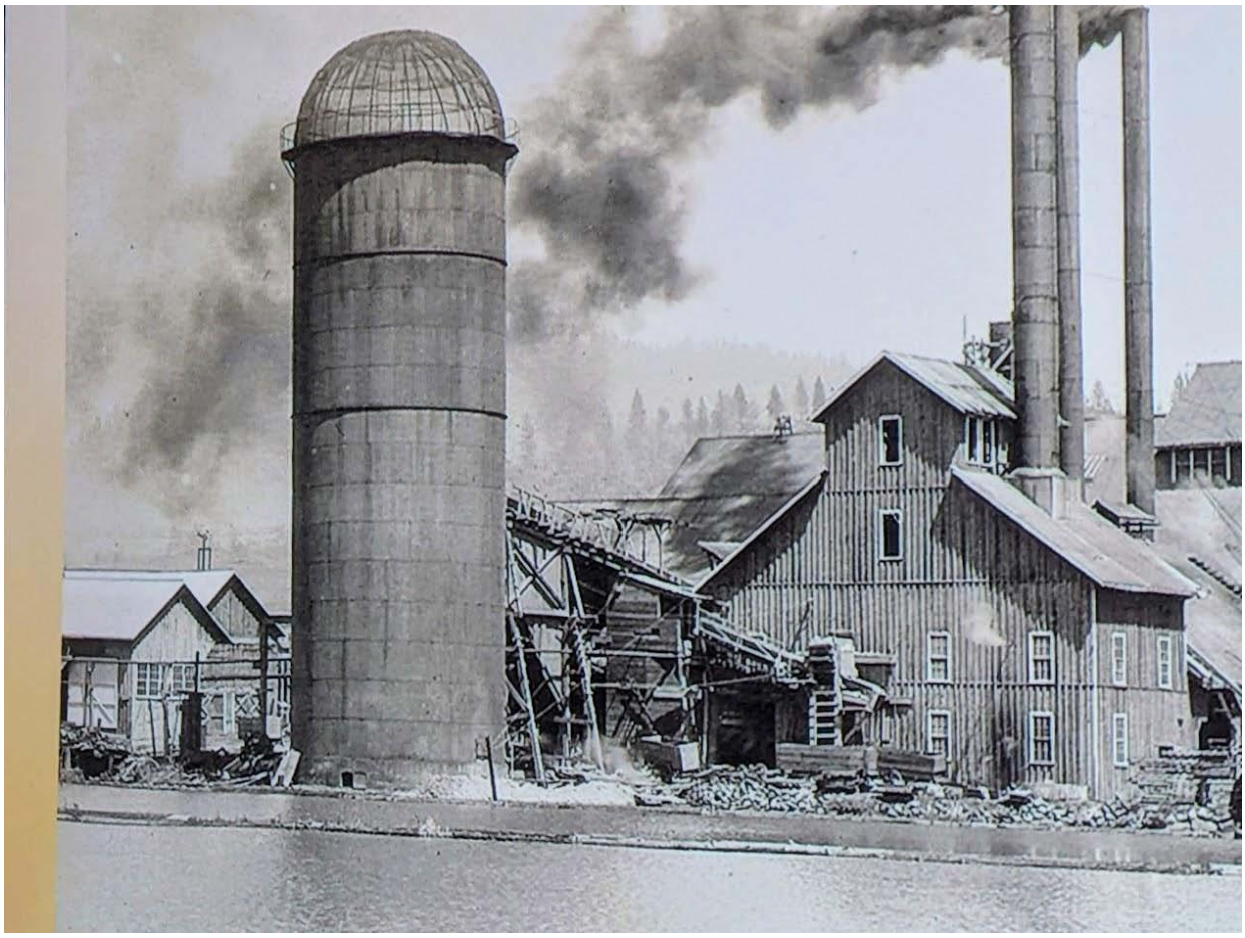


Southern (amazing color slides from just before it shut down in 1952), said to be one of the most rugged and iconic narrow-gauge mountain railroads, the Nevada California Oregon which at its peak was 275-miles long making it the longest narrow-gauge railroad in the US, and the Gilpin Tramway, a 26-mile-long, narrow-gauge railroad near Central City, CO.





The other group of clinics that I attended were on modeling skills. To be a serious narrow-gauge modeler means you need to scratch build rolling stock and structures. The clinics I attended were on making water, building with cardboard, adding details, scratch building, bringing your models to the next level, modeling an auto junkyard, scenery tips, and modeling the inside of the West Side Lumber Company. This last one was extremely valuable to me as I am building a model of the huge slash burner there. The clinic included this picture of the burner, and the presenter had plans that showed the conveyor that fed it.



OPERATING SESSIONS

There were a number of operating sessions offered that were held before, during, and after the convention. The ones held before included two in Thunder Bay, Ontario, 350 miles to the north on Lake Superior. There were standard-gauge and narrow-gauge layouts in several scales available. I signed up to operate on this HO layout on Wednesday afternoon. Carol came with me and en route we stopped in Hasting, MN where this ex-MILW bridge, built in 1981, crosses the Mississippi. This is one of only four lift bridges over that river. Carol dropped me off at 1pm and headed south to see the SPAM Museum in Austin, MN. I went downstairs to the layout and was just blown away by its size. It was located



in a 3,700-square-foot, L-shaped room and the layout contained over 4,000 feet of hand-laid track and 570 scratch-built turnouts. The operating session included over 1,100 ore cars and 1,200 freight cars. It had DCC and on one wall were about 40 Digitrax throttles. This layout was featured in the 2013 issue of *Model Railroad Planning* and has been in many other hobby publications. The owner had worked for three Class 1 railroads, retiring from UP in the early 2010s. There were over a dozen folks there to operate and we were assisted by about the same number from his regular crew.





The massive double-deck layout is set in the early 1940s. On the top deck is a DM&IR line from Duluth to the iron ore mines in the Missabe Range and then on the lower deck is a GN line from Duluth to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul. The guest operators were divided up into three groups. I was in the group that went to Proctor, MN, location of the DM&IR's major yard. I was the first out with M-101, a train with 60-ore cars led by #229, a huge 2-8-8-4 Yellowstone steam locomotive that was built by Baldwin in 1943. I am an occasional operator and have never run a train that was this long. I ran over most of the upper deck to Bovey where the iron ore mines are located. There I had to do some switching and it was confusing. On most model railroads, you can tell an empty ore car/hopper from a full one. The loads are typically removed when empty. However, on this railroad, some cars had ore loads while others didn't. By definition, all the cars in my train were empty and then I had to switch them out and picked up supposedly loaded cars (some of which had loads while others were empty). I made some mistakes and one of the regular crew had to help me get things right. Eventually, I left with another 60-car train and headed back to Proctor. We ran out of time before I could take the train down to the massive ore docks in Duluth. Carol was there to pick me up just after 5pm. I asked her to come see the layout. She didn't want to, but I said that she had to see it. We went back down and she too was blown away by its size. We drove to the convention stopping for dinner at a Cracker Barrel.





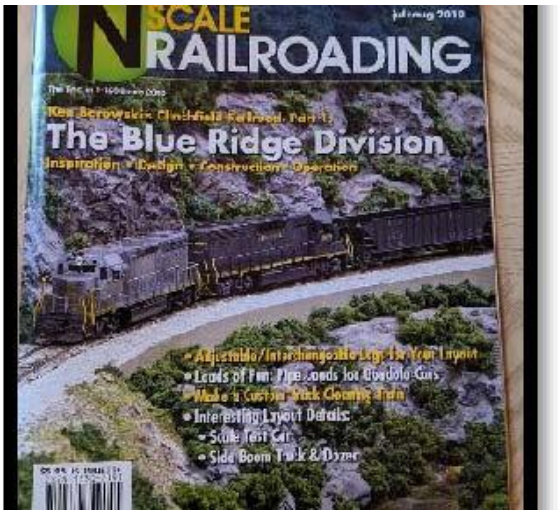
LAYOUTS



For many attendees, seeing the layouts was the major attraction of the convention. I saw layouts on Thursday and Friday afternoon and invited Steve Wysowski, a friend from the NMRA Philly Divison who was attending, to join me on both days.

On Thursday, we managed to see four layouts plus some other sites. The first layout was HOn3 and set in Colorado. It was mostly plywood, but the owner's wife has artistic talent and hand painted the backdrop.





The next layout was N-scale and modeled the Blue Ridge Division of the Clinchfield Railroad. This was probably the most complete and realistic N-scale layout that I have ever seen. It was featured on this magazine cover. Over time the layout has grown. I was very impressed at how it exited one room through a doorframe and then immediately looped into another room. The layout had hosted an op session the previous day for which only three attendees had showed up.



The third layout was all narrow gauge with both HOn3 and HOn30 trackage. It was very well done with several realistic scenes like this:



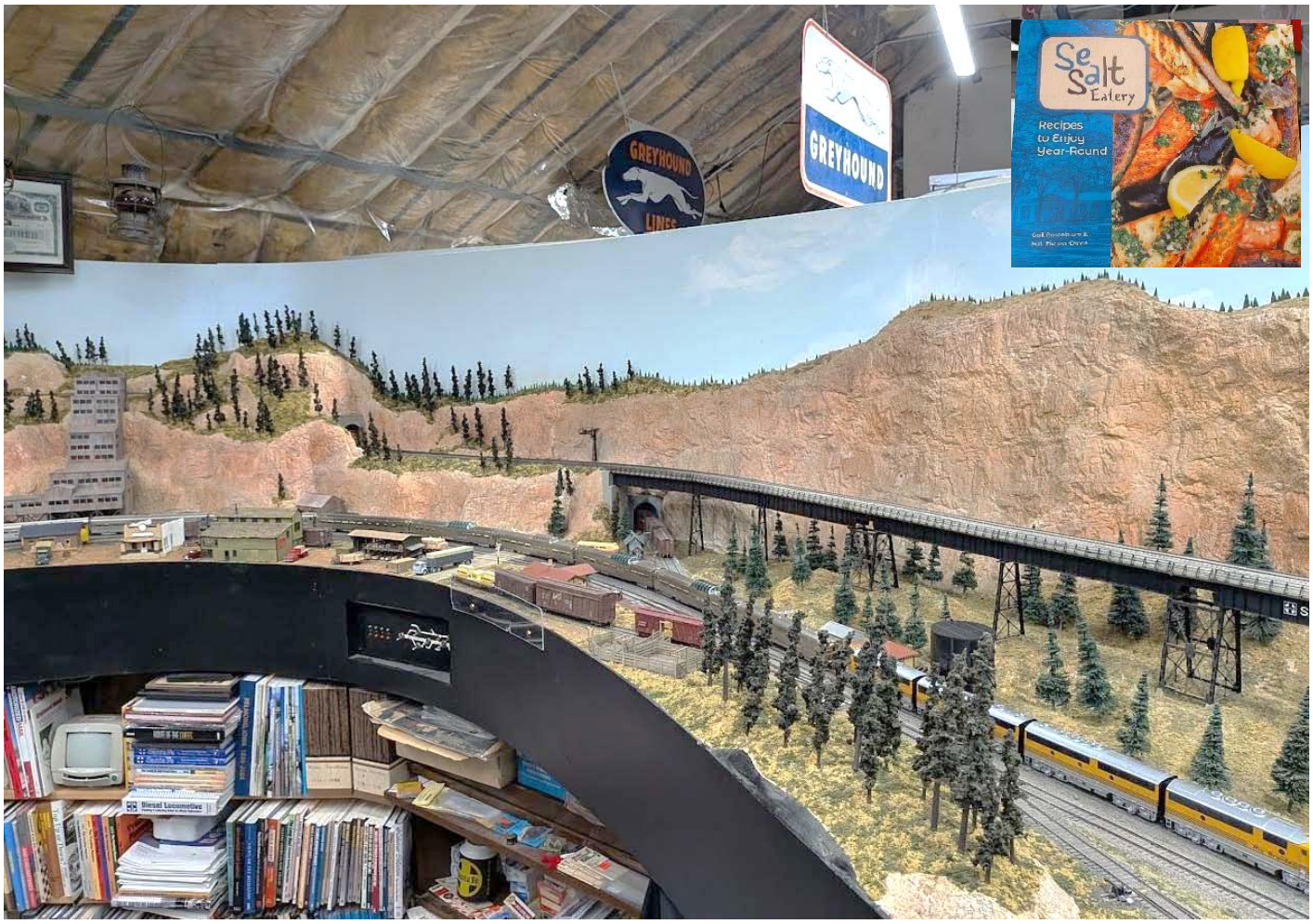


The fourth layout was in Minneapolis and located in the third-floor attic of this historic house, built in the 1880s. The layout was HO with a small amount of HOn3 trackage. The owner, John Hotvet, had been the chair of the NMRA's 1999 convention which I attended and remember well for two reasons.

First, my whole family drove there in our Plymouth minivan. We stopped at Niagara Falls on the way there and crossed Lake Michigan on the *SS Badger*, a former C&O car ferry that still sails and was the last coal-powered boat on the Great Lakes. The second thing was the disastrous Giant Tour to the ore docks in Duluth and then an iron mine in the Missabe Range. Our motor coach drove down deep into the open pit so we could see the operations. Unfortunately, leaving the mine the bus struck oil—a rock ripped open the diesel engine's oil pan. We were initially stuck in the mine pit and then at the mine's office for hours till a replacement bus could be sent to bring us back to St. Paul. John said that tour was the only issue during the whole convention.

Most of the equipment on the layout was Santa Fe. Scattered around the room (and hanging from the ceiling) were essentially a library of railroad books and a massive collection of railroadiana and other transportation momentos.





It was just after 4pm when we left the 4th layout which was located near Minnehaha Creek Park. I know this area well from my many prior visits to MSP. We followed the parkway and came to this former Milwaukee Road depot on what was once a busy branch to the nearby Fort Snelling. That fort was a major induction and training base during WWII. This picture shows Steve Wysowski walking to see the station.

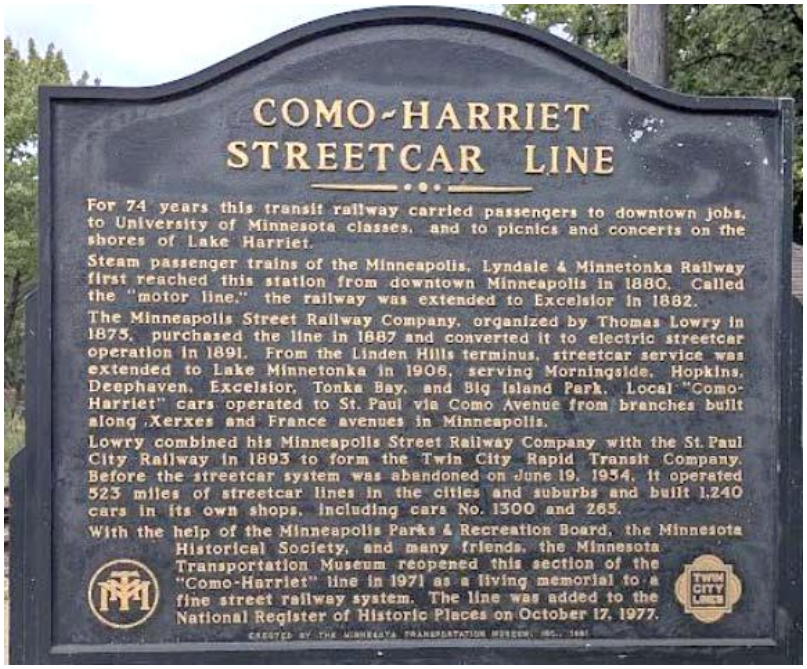


We parked across the street and walked to see Minnehaha Falls. Here the water falls about 53 feet from Minnehaha Creek down towards the Mississippi River. A famous event occurred here in June 1964. President LBJ was visiting Minneapolis seemingly to consider Senator Hubert Humphrey to be his VP running mate. In showing LBJ around Minneapolis, Humphrey wanted to show him the waterfall. The problem was there was a drought that summer and the creek was dry. So being the former mayor of Minneapolis, Humphrey arranged to have the city's fire department run hoses into the creek upstream from the falls. LBJ was taken to the faux falls and didn't have a clue about what he saw that day.

Located next to the falls was a seasonal, outdoor restaurant.where we had an early dinner. Thanks to Steve for paying. We drove back to the hotel and arrived just in time for the 6pm clinics.

On Friday, Steve and e headed out to see layouts and other things. There were no layout maps given out. Instead there was a piece of paper with four QR codes, one of each day's layout tour. The QR link was to an interactive map showing the layouts and other attractions. If you clicked on a particular layout that linked to google maps, supposedly you got the directions. Well, it didn't always work. The first layout we drove to on Friday was just minutes away from the MOA, yet the directions took us way past it to a point on I-35W. We had to turn around and then drive back to a well-done, HOn3 and HOn30 layout set in Colorado.







Steve had mentioned that he is building a trolley for the NMRA's achievement program, so I took him to the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. This historic line, which was operating that day, is the last remaining vestige of the Twin City Rapid Transit Company in Minneapolis. At its peak in the 1920s, TCRT had over 500 miles of urban and interurban track on which ran over 1000 trolleys. It covered a distance of over 50 miles from Stillwater on the east to Lake Minnetonka on the west where it operated a fleet of trolley boats. We watched a restored trolley arrive and leave from a small station that contains a museum. It makes a short run along part of the Minneapolis Chain of Lakes.



We drove to St. Paul to go to the largest hobby store in the Twin Cities. It is located in the basement of a block of buildings on Lexington Ave. Back in May 2020 during the BLM riots that followed the death of George Floyd, many of the buildings in this area were destroyed by arson, but this store was not affected. At the store, I learned it would be moving to a new location that fall and in preparation for that, everything in its massive used train room was 50% off. I bought several kits. Steve was totally amazed by the size of the store and the extent of the merchandise sold there. There are aisles and aisles of model trains, model kits for cars, boats, planes, and military, plus books, magazines, tools, supplies, paint, etc.

From here, we drove to the Midway section of St. Paul so named because it lies on the 45° meridian. Located there is a former Amtrak station which is now a yard for the MN Commercial Railroad. I have been there many times and this was the first time that I saw a locomotive in operation. This is a B36-7 built by GE in 1984 for the Southern Pacific. Also located there was this museum. Unfortunately, we arrived here at 3:15 and it had closed at 3. I had thought it was open till 4pm. Bummer—we could have easily come here first and *then* gone to Scale Model Supplies! With the time remaining we drove to Minneapolis to see some layouts. We had another issue with the maps and could not find one layout. The overall map showed another layout nearby, so we drove there only to find it was the fourth layout we had seen the day before.







We drove back to the neighborhood where we could not find the layout mentioned above. We came to it a different way and quickly saw a line of parked cars and a railroad crossbuck on the lawn. This HO layout was the Maryland & Pennsylvania (the Ma & Pa), a short line between Baltimore and York, PA with some added HOn3 trackage. The layout was literally stuffed into a small room and getting through it was a real challenge. To operate this multi-deck layout, this door to the layout room needs to be closed.

Back at the convention, I attended three more clinics and did a detailed look at the Free-Mo layout in the foyer.

From Virginia Department of Transportation

First Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Segment Opens to Public as VDOT Nears Completion on Project for Cape Charles, Cheriton Segments

First completed 2.2-mile Cape Charles Segment marks major milestone for shared-use path project as work progresses on neighboring Cheriton Segment

August 20, 2026 https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/ Hampton Roads District, Suffolk, VA

Eastern Shore – Following a public ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the Shore Rail Trail Foundation on Thursday, Aug.20, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) opened the first completed section of the Eastern Shore Rail to Trail (ESRT) to the public. The event brought together state, local and community partners who helped move forward the longstanding vision for a 49.1-mile trail that will eventually stretch from Cape Charles to Hallwood.

Constructed as part of a $3.9 million VDOT construction project underway to deliver the ESRT's first two segments in Northampton County, the newly completed Cape Charles Segment provides residents and visitors with a new 2.2-mile shared-use path for walking and bicycling between Cape Charles and Route 13.

Construction of the project's Cheriton Segment remains underway, as the contractor completes the final remaining items on the project, including signage and pavement markings required in order to safely open this segment to the public.



Cyclists participate in the inaugural ride on opening day of the Cape Charles segment of the Eastern Shore Rail to Trail.

This work is currently anticipated to be complete by the overall project's contract completion date in mid-fall.

Project Highlights: Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Cape Charles, Cheriton Segments

The $3.9 million construction contract was awarded to Branscome, Inc., which began construction on the first two segments in April 2025, which include:

- **Cape Charles Segment** The 2.2-mile segment begins at the intersection of Fig Street and Mason Avenue in Cape Charles and extends to the shopping center near Route 13 (Lankford Highway) and Country Place. This segment also includes the addition of a trailhead parking lot at Mason Avenue and Fig Street.
- **Cheriton Segment** This 1.4-mile segment continues northward from Route 13 (Lankford Highway) and Country Place to Route 638 (Sunnyside Road) in Cheriton. A new trailhead parking lot has been constructed just north of Country Place. Improvements also include the addition of 0.5 mile of striped bicycle lanes along Sunnyside Road, extending from the shared-use path to Business Route 13 (South Bayside Road).

For more information on the Eastern Shore Rail to Trail Cape Charles and Cheriton Segments Project, visit https://www.vdot.virginia.gov/projects/hampton-roads-district/eastern-shore-rail-to-trail-project---cape-charles-and-cheriton-segments/.

From Yahoo! News

They came to Spencer - America 250 Locomotive Celebration

Bob Lettenberger

Fri, August 28, 2026 https://www.yahoo.com/news New York, NY

Spencer, NC – While Independence Day, marking America's 250th anniversary, has come and gone, the red, white, and blue is on full display this weekend (Aug. 28-30) at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. Thirty-four diesel locomotives, a group of patriotic TTX boxcars, and one Erie-Lackawanna caboose in U.S. Bicentennial colors have been assembled around the turntable in front of the museum's roundhouse for the America 250 Locomotive Celebration.

The locomotives, ranging from the latest Class I high-tech power to older Alco, EMD and GE units from short lines and museums, arrived from as far away as California. Wearing its Bicentennial paint, Santa Fe SD45-2 No. 7504 traveled

from the Southern California Railway Museum in Perris, Calif., to join the lineup. No. 7504 is one of three locomotives wearing the same paint scheme they carried during the Bicentennial in 1976. (The other two are Milwaukee Road SD40-2 No. 156 now held by the Midwest Railway Preservation Society, and Norfolk & Western SD45 No. 1776 from the Virginia Museum of Transportation.)

More than 5,000 people are expected to attend the event, according to museum officials. This despite late-summer temperatures registering in the high 80s with humidity to match.



The museum operations staff was busy on Thursday, August 27, arranging the locomotives. At times, the project was a matter of inches to align the turntable properly for the next move.
(Photo by Bob Lettenberger)

Trains Magazine and Trains.com are at the museum for the event. We are capturing the sights and sounds of this historic gathering and speaking with representatives of the various railroads and museums that have sent equipment. In both the pages of *Trains,* on Trains.com, and through our social media channels we will take you behind the scenes to find out how the event came together and discuss the development of the America 250 designs.

This display of red, white, blue, and a few other colors is a unique event. And while many of the designs have been featured in *Trains* and on Trains.com when they were announced, there is nothing like seeing them arrayed in front of the museum's roundhouse. Come along with as we explore a moment in railroad history that was 250 years in the making. For more information about the North Carolina Transportation Museum visit its website.



Milwaukee Road No. 156, one of three units wearing its Bicentennial colors, is guided onto the turntable by the museum's switcher.
(Photo by Bob Lettenberger)



The sole Alco representative attending the America 250 Locomotive Celebration is No. 1776 from Genesee Valley Transportation's Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad. The 1970 Alco/MLW M630 wears a paint scheme inspired by the Delaware & Hudson Railway's Bicentennial units.
(Photo by Bob Lettenberger)



Ed. Note: This picture of the TOYX Erie Caboose, shown in Spencer, was not included in this article. I am including it here because, after all, how many people today have seen an actual caboose in service?
(Photographer unknown)

From WBOC-TV

Passenger rail study could connect Delaware, Maryland communities

Jerenie Sands

September 3, 2026 https://www.wboc.com Salisbury, MD

Sussex County, DE – According to WILMAPCO, a study is underway to determine whether passenger rail service could return to parts of Delmarva, potentially connecting Wilmington or Newark with communities in Delaware and Maryland.

The State of Delaware received a Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Identification and Development grant to study the feasibility of extending passenger rail service called "Diamond State Line" south through Kent and Sussex counties to either Salisbury or Berlin, Maryland.

Delaware Transit Corporation and the Delaware Department of Transportation will manage the first step of the study.

From The first step will determine whether the project moves forward. If approved, the next phases would focus on service planning, preliminary engineering and environmental work.

Albert Loyola, Chief Customer Experience Officer at Delaware Transit Corporation, says population growth in Kent and Sussex counties is one reason for interest in expanding passenger rail service.

"There's always been an interest in looking at potentially putting that great rail input into and going into Maryland just because of the growth that's been going on in those counties," he said.

People in the area say they believe passenger rail could help address traffic and transportation needs.

Wynona Sheldon said the area's rapid growth could make another transportation option valuable.

"We all know, this area is rapidly growing in number. So, anything to cut down on the traffic congestion would be wonderful," Sheldon said.

Jeanette Giesecke said the train could also help people who need to travel for medical appointments.

"If you have doctor's appointments and things like that up north, which so many times that happens, that would be a big help, especially to the older population," Giesecke said

\WILMAPCO says specific station locations have not been finalized. The study will determine potential station locations along the route, including towns and activity centers.

WILMAPCO says one goal of the project is to give rural communities more access to educational institutions, medical facilities, housing, and retail and commercial services.

If the project moves into Step 2, officials expect the service development planning process to take approximately two to three years. Officials hope to begin Step 2A in early 2027.

From 1011 NOW News

1 dead after train slams into SUV at railroad crossing, officials say

Luke Tucker and *Gray News staff*

September 4, 2026 https://www.1011now.com/ Lincoln, NE

Hickory, NC – Charges are pending after a train slammed into an SUV at a North Carolina crossing, killing one person.

According to Hickory police, Norfolk Southern train hit the passenger side of a dark-colored Cadillac SUV just before 3:30 a.m. on the tracks crossing 17th Street.

Video of the aftermath showed the vehicle completely destroyed.

One of the passengers died at the scene, while another passenger was taken to a hospital in Charlotte. The driver of the SUV was taken to a local hospital.

While Hickory police did not say why the SUV was on the tracks at the time of the crash, they did say the train track crossing arms were working properly.

Police said charges were pending but did not say who they would be filed against or specify what the offenses were.

Officials have yet to publicly release the names of anyone involved in the crash.

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From WBOC-TV News

Delaware Public Archives exhibit explores how railroads transformed the First State

Adriana Myers

September 10, 2026 http://www.wboc.com Salisbury, MD

Dover, DE – Delawareans can now take a trip back through the state's railroad history with a new exhibit at the Delaware Public Archives.

Tracks, Towns, and Transformation: How the Railroad Changed Delaware opened Thursday, September 10, marking 194 years since the New Castle and Frenchtown Railroad made its first locomotive-drawn journey in 1832.

The exhibit explores how railroads changed more than just transportation, helping shape where communities developed and connecting Delaware farmers and businesses to markets across the region.



Visitors can see historic records and artifacts, including a Pennsylvania Railroad lantern, a conductor's uniform and an original Delaware Railroad Company stock certificate.

The exhibit also features a Delaware-focused model railroad display, designed to give visitors a more immersive look at the state's railroad history.

"Where else can you see the Delaware Railroad replicated model railroad all in one place?" said Maegan Peterman, director and state archivist. "It's really cool that we have that feature here that sort of immerses you in the history that you're reading about and learning about as you walk through the exhibit."

The exhibit is now open at the Delaware Public Archives in Dover.

[Ed. Note: It is not stated in the article, but the HO layout is furnished by the First State Model Railroad Club.**]**

From FOX 2 News

Major damage in Ferguson train derailment; cause still under investigation

Chad Mira

September 21, 2026 https://fox2now.com/ St. Louis, MO

FERGUSON, Mo. — Norfolk Southern is still investigating after 22 train cars derailed in Ferguson Sunday evening and left behind debris and downed power lines along with damaging a railroad bridge.

Heavy-duty machines are working to clear the railcars, with two machines pulling from the front and two pushing from the back. The mainline is expected to be cleared of debris and railcars by 7 p.m. Monday, the train company said, with track and bridge restoration completed by Friday.

Ferguson Police Chief Troy Doyle said the initial concern was whether the train was carrying hazardous materials.

"Whenever you get a call for anywhere up to 20 cars being derailed, it's a concern, but more importantly, we were more concerned with making sure there wasn't any hazardous material," Doyle said.

Police said the train was carrying pickup trucks and SUVs headed for a plant in Wentzville. No one was injured, but neighbors were startled by the derailment.

Jacqueline Nelson lives just three houses from Elizabeth and Ferguson, where the train fell off a bridge.

"What's going on in this area. Why us?" Nelson said.

It was a familiar scene for Nelson. Nearly six years ago to the day, a train derailed in nearly the same spot. Nelson spoke with FOX 2 at the time about the experience.

"With the vibration I was feeling, it was just horrible," she said in 2020.

This time, Nelson immediately recognized the sound and shaking.

"I just said to myself, 'Not again,'" she said.

Nelson said the previous derailment has continued to affect her, particularly during bad weather.

"Especially when we have bad weather. I can't sleep. I noticed from what happened before, I don't want to be in a predicament where I'm caught," she said.

FOX 2 News asked Norfolk Southern whether there is something about the location that makes the railroad less safe. The railroad said it's premature to speculate any relationship between the two incidents.

About 400 people lost power when the train derailed. On Elizabeth Ave., one side of the road had power while the other side did not. On Monday, Nelson helped a neighbor move food into her freezer to keep it fresh.

Outages were restored by late Monday afternoon, according to Ameren Missouri.

Once Norfolk Southern's initial work is done, more assessments need to take place, particularly on a bridge that runs over Elizabeth Ave.

"We have some structural issues that we need to address down at the intersection of Paul and Elizabeth. Once we get some engineers out here to really give us a true assessment is when we're able to update the public," Doyle said.

Depending on these assessments, the police chief said roads could be closed in the area for hours, days, or even weeks.

These are the closures as of Monday:

- Ferguson Avenue will be closed west of Center Avenue to Elizabeth Avenue
- Elizabeth Avenue will be closed at Godfrey Lane
- All lanes at Paul and Ferguson Avenues and Elizabeth Avenue will be closed. Traffic will be diverted west onto Paul from Bermuda.

From Jon David Black via FOX 5 DC – Baltimore County

25 people evacuated after Amtrak train to Miami catches fire in Baltimore County

JT Key

September 24, 2026 https://www.fox5dc.com Washington, DC

Esses. MD – Twenty-five people were evacuated after an Amtrak train caught fire in Essex, Maryland, on Thursday evening, according to Baltimore County Fire officials.

What we know:

Amtrak Train 97 was headed from New York to Miami, Florida, when flames and smoke were reported on the underside of one of the ten cars, company officials said.

Crews responded to the area of Canberra Drive and Waterview Way around 6 p.m. The train was stationary and train traffic in the area was halted as crews addressed the fire.

Officials said the fire was extinguished around 6:30 p.m. and the 25 evacuated passengers were returned to train cars that were not affected by the flames.

At least two people suffered minor injuries, officials said.

The train was inspected before a total of 189 passengers re-boarded, and it continued south around 7:30 p.m., according to Amtrak officials.

From KMDL-FM News 97.3 "The Dawg"

Amtrak Mardi Gras Train Involved Another Fatal Crash Thursday

Bruce Mikells

September 25, 2026 https://973thedawg.com/ Lafayette, LA

One of the reasons why the return of Amtrak passenger rail service was delayed along the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama Gulf Coast was concerns about safety. Amtrak trains travel faster than freight trains, and anyone trying to snake around the crossing arms might realize that after it is too late.

On Thursday morning, just before noon, just such an incident occurred along the Amtrak Mardi Gras route near Theodore, Alabama. Authorities, commenting on evidence from the scene, believe that a vehicle carrying two passengers attempted to bypass the crossing gates at the Bellingrath Road, Peary Road level crossing.

According to the published Amtrak schedule, the Mardi Gras service was enroute to Mobile, Alabama, from New Orleans when the crash happened.

How Many Fatal Crashes Has Amtrak's Mardi Gras Service Been Involved In?

Before yesterday's fatal crash in Alabama, the Mardi Gras Amtrak service had been involved in six to seven total deaths. The reason for the discrepancy in the number is that one of the fatal incidents involved a pedestrian, and circumstances surrounding that incident have not been clarified.

Amtrak began its Mardi Gras service along the Gulf Coast a little over 1 year ago. The service began operating on August 18, 2025. The line has proven to be very popular, with more than 150,000 riders in the first year. This number was well above forecast ridership numbers.

Many municipal governments, as well as the Southern Rail Commission, have created public safety campaigns to remind motorists and pedestrians of the dangers associated with fast-moving trains. As is usually the case, most of the incidents occur when motorists attempt to "beat the train" or "sneak around the barricades". It's just not worth it. If there is a crash, the train is going to win.

What Happens to Train Passengers When There is a Fatal Crash?

If you happen to be a passenger on a train involved in a fatal incident or any incident for that matter, you can kiss your travel timetable goodbye. The train will have to remain on site until investigators finish gathering information.

Train passengers are often told there was a "trespass incident" that is being investigated. According to official Amtrak lingo, that means an unauthorized person or object is on, or near, the railway tracks where they are not legally allowed to be.

The identities of the two people killed in yesterday's crash have not been released. We encourage you to always stop, look, and listen at all railroad crossings, and if the crossing arms are down, do not drive around.

For a Laugh

from the Delmarva Timetable

Questions to Lose Your Mind Over

If you work as a security guard at a Samsung store, are you a Guardian of the Galaxy?

When cats yawn, do deaf people think they are screaming"

At a restaurant, when you are waiting for the server…aren't you the waiter?

Why aren't iPhone chargers called "Apple Juice"?

Me Behave?? Are You Serious??

As a child, I saw Tarzan almost naked, Cinderella arrived home after Midnight, Pinocchio told lies, Alladin was a thief, Batman drove over 200 miles per hour, Snow White lived in a house with 7 men, Popeye smoked a pipe and wore tattoos, Pac Man ran around to digital music while eating pills that enhanced his performance, and Shaggy and Scooby were mystery solving hippies that always had the munchies.

It is not MY fault.

50 Years of Marriage

After 50 years of marriage, a couple was lying in bed one evening, when the wife felt her husband, begin to massage her in ways he hadn't in quite some time. It almost tickled as his fingers started at her neck, and then began moving down past the small of her back.

He then caressed her shoulders and neck, slowly worked his hand down, stopping just over her stomach. He then proceeded to place his hand on her left inner arm, working down her side, passing gently over her butt and down her leg to her calf.

Then, he proceeded up her thigh, stopping just at the uppermost portion of her leg. He continued in the same manner on her right side, then suddenly stopped, rolled over and became silent.

As she had become quite aroused by this caressing, she asked in a loving voice, "Honey, that was wonderful. Why did you stop?"

To which he responded, "I found the remote."

Did you know…..

Fried eggs are the same thing as fried chicken…just at a different age,

Scientists have discovered what happens to socks that get lost in the laundry. They come back as Tupperware lids that do not fit any of your containers.

Studies show that you should never upset a woman. She'll remember stuff that hasn't even happened yet.

Spiders are the only web developers that enjoy getting bugs.

Boomer Thoughts…..What Today's Kids Cannot Comprehend

My friends and I riding in the bed of my father's pickup, driving on the highway at 50-55 mph.

My mother giving me money to go into the store to buy her cigarettes…and the clerk selling them to me.

My parents leaving 5 kids in the car, keys in the ignition and engine running, to go into the store for a quick stop for snacks.

Getting paddled by the principal at school, then getting it again when you got home.

A boy could walk into any hardware store, put a quarter on the counter and walk out with a pocket knife he could call his own. He could walk into school; show his friends the new pocket knife and the teacher would tell him to put it away and not think any more about it.

You could ride a bike all day without anything on your head, elbows or knees.

On a nice summer day, you would go outside, without a cell phone, and the only rule was to be home before the street lights came on. When you got thirsty, everyone would pass around the garden hose for a drink.

The Plan For Today

Every morning I get up and make a responsible plan for the day. By afternoon, the plan and I are no longer speaking to each other.

Additional Upcoming Events

from the Delmarva Timetable

(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 and information. Highlighted events signify St. Stepen's Church event.)

Ongoing 2026 – 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.

Ongoing until October, 2026 – HO Scale Operating Session. DelMarVa Model Railroad Club, 103 E. State St., Delmar, DE. Time: Noon-5p. Watch the "HO Layout News" section of the *DelMarVa Timetable* for exact dates. Anyone with an interest in railroad operations is invited to participate. Club membership is NOT a prerequisite. For more info, contact: info@delmarvamodelrailroadclub.org. **NOTE: Check the "Layout News – HO Layout" section for any changes that may occur.**

Ongoing until November 2026 – Steaming Day at the Marshall Steam Museum at Auburn Heights. 3000 Creek Rd., Hockessin, DE. 1st Sunday of each month. Hours: 12:30-4:30p. Admission: $15-Ages 13+, $10: Ages 12 & under. FREE: Infants under 1 and Friends of Auburn Heights Members.

Ongoing 2026 – Delaware Train Gang. Monthly meetings, 2nd Wednesday. Smyrna Diner, 99 S. Cory Ln., Smyrna, DE. Starting at 1:30p. For more info, contact email: samtrains@outlook.com, or call Sam Eaton 302-373-0534.

Ongoing until July 2027 – Tracks, Towns & Transformation. Delaware Public Archives, 121 MLK Jr Blvd N., Dover, DE. Hours: 8:30a-4p Monday-Friday. Admission: FREE. All aboard for the Delaware Public Archives newest exhibit! For more than a century, railroads transformed Delaware – connecting communities, carrying

people and goods, opening new markets for farmers, fueling industry and changing the fortunes of towns across the state. *Tracks, Towns and Transformation* explores how the arrival and expansion of the railroad reshaped Delaware's landscape, economy, communities and everyday live through historic records, maps, photographs and more from the collections of the Delaware Public Archives. Join us for the exhibit and discover how the railroad helped put Delaware on a new track. See the HO layout furnished by the First State Model Railroad Club.

October 10, 2026 – Patcong Valley Railroad Club Open House. 1308 US 40, Richland, NJ. Hours: 10a-3p. For more information, see our website: https://www.petcongvalleyrailroad.com.

October 14, 2026 – Delmar Pizza Night to Support St. Stephen's Church. 38660 Sussex Hwy., Delmar, DE. Hours: 4p-9p/ When presenting the coupon at checkout, church receives 10% of total bill, excluding tip.

October 17, 2026 – St. Stephen's Fall Festival. St. Stephen's Church, 103 E. State St., Delmar, DE. 10a-3p. Yard Sale 7a-Noon. Kings Oyster Fritters, other refreshments, games for the kids, barrel rides, firetruck rides, pumpkin painting and other crafts, silent auction items. The DelMarVa Model Railroad Club will be open to welcome visitors to look at the model train layouts.

October 17, 2026 – Iron Spike Model Train Museum Fall Model Train Show. New Location: N-Sport Recreation Center, 3101 Recreation Dr., Washington, MO. Hours 9a-3p. Admission: $10. Kids under 12 FREE admission to the Train Show only. For info, call the Museum 636-283-5166 or visit: https://info@ironspike.org.

October 19-21, 2026 – Barry King Memorial Train Show. .Reliance Fire Hall, 1341 W. Market St., York, PA. Hours: 9a-5p each day. Free admission and open to the public. For details, please contact Todd or Bev Metcalf via email at trainsmore@aol.com or call 860-432-2124.

October 20-24, 2026 – York Train Fair sponsored by Train Collectors Association (TCA) Eastern Division. York Expo Center, 334 Carlisle Ave, York, PA. For registration and information please visit https://easterntca.com/event/october-2026-meet/.

October 25, 2026 – 8th Annual NMRA Division 6 Train Show. Prichard Laughlin Civic Center, 7033 Glenn Hwy., Cambridge, OH. Hours: 10a-3p. Admission: $5, Kids under 12 FREE. Operating train layouts, handicapped access, all scales, accessories, scenery, hobby tools and supplies. For more info, visit: https://www.nmrabuckeyedivision/train-show.

November 1, 2026 – Carbon Model Railroad Society Fall Train Meet. Diamond Fire Company Bingo Hall, 110 Maine St., Walnutport, PA. Hours 9a-2p. For details, please visit https://cmrs.info/.

November 21, 2026 – Hartly Train Show. Hartly Volunteer Fire Co., 2898 Arthurville Rd., Hartly, DE. 9a-2p. 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/.

November 21, 2026 – Regal Railways Toy Train & Collectible Show-Brooksville. Hernando County Fairgrounds, 6436 Broad St., Brooksville, FL. Hours: 9a-2p. Admission: $6, kids under 12 FREE. Vendors, test track, running train layouts, FREE parking. Vendors will be on hand selling model trains and accessories. There will also be a running train layout for the kids to enjoy. So come on out and bring the kids. There will be something for everyone. For more info, contact: Joe @ 727-244-1341 or https://www.Regalrailways.com or www.Facebook.com/Regalrailways.

November 24, 28, 2026 – Clinton Central Model Railroad Club Open House. Clinton Central Model Railroad Club, 15 Logan Ave., Lock Haven, PA. Hours: Tues.: 5-8p. Sat.: 10a-4p. Admission: FREE. Great fun for the whole family. KIDS!! Come see Thomas operating on our 40' x 28' double mainline HO Scale layout each day. Also, ask about our scavenger hunt in the layout room. Full DCC with signaling and block detection under JMRI control. Layout features – 2300 ft. of track with diesel and steam sound-equipped locomotives, and current layout upgrades. Be sure to check out our railroad memorabilia and artifacts. Donations of model trains & railroad memorabilia welcomed. Snacks and drinks available. For info, visit: https://www.ccmrr.org.

November 28-29, 2026 – DelMarVa Model Railroad Club Open House. 103 East State Street, Delmar, DE . Enjoy 8,000 square feet of trains operating on seven layouts displaying several scales. Layout in the Camelot Hall on the 2nd floor. Access is stairs only. Hours: Sat.: 11a-4p; on Sun.: Noon-4p. For details, please visit: www.delmarvamodelrailroadclub.org.

November 28-29, 2026 – Thanksgiving Model Train and Vintage Train Show. Roberts Wesleyan University, 2301 Westside Dr., Rochester NY. Open at 9:30 for TTCS

November 28-29, December 5-6, 2026 – Carbon Model Railroad Society Holiday Open House. 529 Ore St., Bowmanston, PA. Hours 1-4p. For details, please visit https://cmrs.info/.

December 5-6, 2026 – DelMarVa Model Railroad Club Open House. 103 East State Street, Delmar, DE . Enjoy 8,000 square feet of trains operating on seven layouts displaying several scales. Layout in the Camelot Hall on the 2nd floor. Access is stairs only. Hours: Sat.: 11a-4p; on Sun.: Noon-4p. For details, please visit: www.delmarvamodelrailroadclub.org. (December 6 is the 40th Anniversary of the club's first open house.)

December 5-6, 2026 – Timonium Greenberg's Train and Toy Show. Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Rd, Timonium, MD. Hours 10a-4p daily. Admission: Adults (Ages 12-61): $15 each. Seniors (Age 62+): $12 each, Children (Ages 6-11): $10 each, Children (Ages 5 and under): Free. For details, please visit: https://marylandstatefair.com/events/category/series/train-show-inc/.

December 8, 19, 22, 27, 29, 2026 - Clinton Central Model Railroad Club Open House. Clinton Central Model Railroad Club, 15 Logan Ave., Lock Haven, PA. Hours: Tues.: 5-8p. Sat.: 10a-4p. Admission: FREE. Great fun for the whole family. KIDS!! Come see Thomas operating on our 40' x 28' double mainline HO Scale layout each day. Also, ask about our scavenger hunt in the layout room. Full DCC with signaling and block detection under JMRI control. Layout features – 2300 ft. of track with diesel and steam sound-equipped locomotives, and current layout upgrades. Be sure to check out our railroad memorabilia and artifacts. Donations of model trains & railroad memorabilia welcomed. Snacks and drinks available. For info, visit: https://www.ccmrr.org.

December 12, 2026 – TCA Keystone Division Meet. Lancaster Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Rd. Lancaster, PA. This is the intersection of US Route 30 and PA Route 72. Hours: 9a-1p with Keystone members admitted at 8am. For details, please contact Russ MacNair, Meet Registrar, email russmacnair@gmail.com or call 717-664-2335.

January 2-3, 9-10, 2027 – DelMarVa Model Railroad Club Open House. 103 East State Street, Delmar, DE. Enjoy 8,000 square feet of trains operating on seven layouts displaying several scales. Layout in the Camelot Hall on the 2nd floor. Access is stairs only Hours: Sat.: 11a-4p; on Sun.: Noon-4p. For details, please visit www.delmarvamodelrailroadclub.org

January 2-3, 2027 – Carbon Model Railroad Society Holiday Open House. 529 Ore St., Bowmanston, PA. Hours 1-4p. For details, please visit https://cmrs.info/,



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nmra virtual model railroad convention

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

Group: https://www.facebook.com/groups/nmragroup/

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

If you missed out on any of our previous events, all of the videos are saved on the NMRA YouTube channel:
http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGModelRailroading

Upcoming NMRA Conventions



2027 Puget Sound Express, Tacoma, WA

2027

2027 Puget Sound Express

Upcoming MER Conventions

Division Apparel

Division apparel is available in the following styles: Short-sleeve polo with or without pocket, short- or long-sleeve button down shirt, and cap. Details can be found on the order websites.

New apparel with NMRA branded logo (logo available in three colors):
https://www.threadsembroideryllc.com/nmra
Email: email@threadsembroideryllc.com





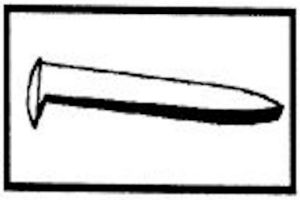
Original apparel with traditional division logo: https://www.daylightsales.net/?s=Philly+nmra&post_type=product
Email: daylightsales@gmail.com





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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