

The Local

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-EASTERN REGION OF THE NMRA



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Number 6

New Jersey Division Celebrates Their 40th Anniversary

Article and photographs by Mike McNamara

ATTENDING AN NMRA EVENT these days, whether it is a local division meet, a regional convention or even an NMRA national convention, it is sometimes easy to overlook all of the hard work that went into making such an event possible. I'm not just talking about the organizers of the specific event. Certainly the local board members, the convention chair and convention staff does plenty to ensure a successful and worthwhile event. But I am talking about the pioneers of the NMRA, the men and women who helped lay the groundwork for the NMRA events we enjoy today on a regular basis. These folks paved the way by establishing the organizations that sponsor these events and their contributions need to be remembered.

With this in mind the New Jersey Division took time out during the March 2008 division meet to recognize our 40th anniversary. We added some special events to our usual division meet agenda to look back and remember our past.

The New Jersey Division was the first division to be chartered in the Mid-Eastern Region. In September of 1967, local NMRA members in southern New Jersey met to start the groundwork for creating a local division. A petition was signed and submitted and in February of 1968 the MER Board formally chartered the 1st division spanning central and southern New Jersey. At the MER's Hampton Beach Regional Convention in May of 1968 the charter was officially presented to Gene Colburn, the first Superintendent of the New Jersey Division.

Over the next few years, led by initial Superintendent Gene Colburn and his immediate successors, Bill Birchall and John Johnson (both still active in Division activities), the division estab-

lished a structure and format for activities that is still being followed today. Local meets throughout our geographical area feature clinics, layout visits, contests and door prizes and have been the staple of our activities. These meets bolstered participation and helped feed new members into the NMRA while also providing a valuable membership service to existing NMRA members. Division meets of today still use this basic formula for success and the New Jersey Division has never been stronger.

Over the past 40 years, the Division has evolved and instituted a number of other activities to serve our NMRA members. We started video taping all clinics and providing them on loan to any interested member. We have scheduled joint meets with our neighboring Philadelphia Division to bring different NMRA members together and share clinics. The division has assisted with national conventions, most recently *Independence Junction 2006*, where the division helped facilitate the Silent

Auction. The proceeds of that were fed back into the division to acquire a digital projector, which has been used consistently for clinic presentations.

At our division meet on March 15th, 2008 in Hamilton Township, we celebrated these 40 years by having special banners made and a display of printed items throughout our history. Included were copies of newsletters over the past 20 years, promotional and recruiting material, badges, and relevant articles from **The Local** and material from the regional conventions the division has hosted. After the regular meeting, clinics and door prizes, we sat down as a group to lunch served by the board of directors and



The 40th anniversary birthday cake.

continued on page 4

Keeping In Touch...

By Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager

Each year, **The Local's** publishing schedule calls for me to write this column just before the MER Fall Convention, knowing that you will not be reading it until after the convention. Well at this point in time I know Jane Clarke and her crew have been doing a great job at lining up a great convention for us in Hagerstown. Did we have a great time? I'm sure we did and I hope as many of you as possible came to enjoy the benefits of our region's annual convention.

Now we launch into the best time of year for Model Railroading. November is Model Railroad Month during which we try to show off our great hobby; and the holiday season is always ripe with model railroad memories, both new and old.

Have you browsed by the NMRA National website (www.nmra.org) lately? It continues to improve both in visual appearance and in information content. I noticed a nice little chart that posts membership counts for each region within the NMRA. Hey! As of the end of August, our own Mid-Eastern Region is the largest with our friends to the North, (NER) a close second. The MER holds just over 11 percent of the NMRA National 18-region membership.

I noticed the NMRA National web site also contains lots of organizational "transparency" information. For example you can read the minutes of the last NMRA BOD meeting as well as a plain talk commentary by Tony Koester.

Our campaign to keep in touch with the region's membership has yielded good results. The last issue of **The Local** was delivered to over 1500 members, two-thirds by paper and the rest electronically.

As always *Keep in Touch* with any questions or changes in your subscriptions or addresses. A current address on file saves the MER some money. 

The Local

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The Local welcomes articles, photographs and model railroad related material as contributions to members' mutual enjoyment of the hobby. Materials should have a wide appeal. Editors will exercise all due care of submissions, but contributors should not send originals without having back-up copies of both articles and photographs. Editors, by definition, reserve the right—and have the responsibility—to make corrections, deletions and changes to accommodate space.

The MER website is <http://mer.nmra.org/>

Some Notes from the President

By Roger L. Cason, MMR
President

A DIFFERENT LOOK AT MER CONVENTIONS:

By the time many of you read this, you will have attended the 2009 MER convention hosted by the South Mountain Division in Hagerstown, MD. I'll have to admit that I have enjoyed every MER convention I ever attended. Why? Lots of reasons: reconnecting with friends, seeing new (to me!) layouts, picking up new ideas I can use in my own modeling, entering contests, and watching the auction – to name a few.

But, there's another side to all this. Someone has to do the work to make the thing go . . . which brings me to my reason for raising this issue. In particular, some division has to act as the host for each convention. Although much of the work (for example, registration and contests) will be done by folks supplied by the region, there is still a core of work that is best done by local members.

Why might your division want to be a convention host? Let me suggest several reasons:

“Give back” – You have enjoyed attending conventions hosted by others. Is it time to return the favor? After all, “no host” means “no convention”.

Reduce the attendance cost for your own division members – Your division members can probably commute – i.e. they can enjoy the activities without having to pay for a hotel room, and they may well have minimal transportation costs.

What are the key elements a potential host division should look for? Here are some of the more important ones:

An active and energetic convention committee of five-to-eight people who can assume the many planning and leadership roles needed (management skill is more important here than modeling skill).

Additional people willing to help during the convention weekend.

Interesting layouts to visit.

Adequate facilities for convention lodging and activities. This might mean using a single convention hotel, or alternatively a local civic/convention center plus smaller (and probably lower price) nearby motels.

Some degree of “maturity” as an organization – it is usually not a good idea to ask a brand new division to host a convention.

There are, of course, other attractions whose presence would be helpful – for example, prototype industry tours, non-rail tourist attractions, railroad museums, and local tourist railroads.

Having read the above information, you might ask yourself: do we want to host a regional convention? Let me suggest a substitute question: **when** do we want to host such a convention? And, having asked the question, let me suggest an answer . . . In a perfect world, to allow for good planning and to equalize access, the convention would move around the region in an orderly and predictable manner (as opposed to the more-or-less random movement we have had). Here's a good suggestion from Convention Chairman Clint Hyde that puts the convention in each part of the

region every five years. Nothing is “cast in concrete” at this point, but the listing illustrates the kind of thing we have in mind. In most cases, each division would play host about every ten years.

Maryland (South Mountain or Chesapeake Division) – 2009

Northeast (Philadelphia or New Jersey Division) – 2010

North Carolina (Carolina Piedmont or Carolina Southern Divisions) – 2011

Southern Virginia (Tidewater or James River Division) – 2012

National Capital Area (Potomac Division) – 2013

After 2009, the Maryland area would include the newly-formed Chesapeake Division. In 2014, following this pattern, we would go back to the top of the list.

So, think about this issue. You have enjoyed attending regional conventions. When will it be time for you to play host? Talk to MER Convention Chair Clint Hyde about what might work best in your area and for your division. Clint's contact information is chyde@cox.net; (703) 803-3068.

SOME NATIONAL NEWS ITEMS:

The Hartford convention drew over 1,000 attendees, and returned a larger financial surplus than the Anaheim and Detroit conventions combined.

The Railpass program (\$9.95 for a six-month trial membership) is increasingly successful. About 45 percent of those signing up recently for Railpass have converted to a regular membership when it's time to renew.

A FINAL PERSONAL THOUGHT

I recently experienced some cardiac-type medical problems, and was privileged to receive many “get well” messages and expressions of good will from around the region. Many thanks! Until you've been through something like this, you may not appreciate how much these communications can mean to the morale of the person who is “laid up”. 🏠

Attention All Members:

Due to publishing deadlines the contest results, photographs and articles from the convention will not be published until the January/February 2010 issue. If you have an article or something you would like to see published, please contact me as soon as possible so space can be made available. All of my contact information is listed on page 2.

Thank you,
Steve Kindig, Editor
stevesxpressrr@yahoo.com

then finished things off with birthday cake. The afternoon was spent in the usual fashion visiting a number of local home layouts.

Sometimes in the NMRA it is all too easy to forget how we got to where we are, either at a local, regional or national level. We may get caught up in current events and issues and forget to step back and look at all that has been accomplished and recognize what a great and valuable resource we all have in the NMRA. Milestones, may they be the 40th anniversary of a Division (or the

75th anniversary of the NMRA in 2010) are good times to look back, reflect and of course celebrate.

For more information about the New Jersey Division and its activities, visit www.njdivnmra.org.

MIKE MCNAMARA was the Superintendent of the New Jersey Division and edits the Division's publication, **Clinkers**. Mike had served the Division as Superintendent since the 30th anniversary but has turned over the reigns to a new Superintendent as the Division starts its next 40 years. 📄



NJ Division Board members (left to right), Superintendent Mike McNamara, Director Carl Corsi, Secretary Bob Clegg, Director Chris Widmaier, Assistant Superintendent Ken O'Brien, Treasurer Bob Liberman.



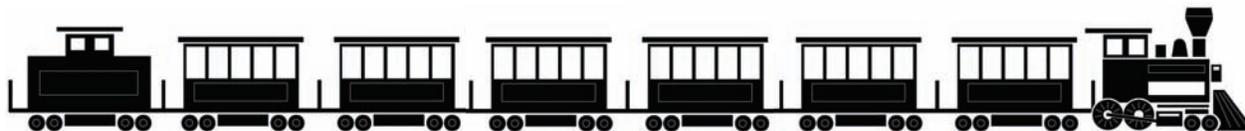
The display of Division artifacts.



One of the many banners placed at entrance to the March 2008 meet.



A view of members enjoying the first clinic.



Did you participate in National Model Railroad month?

I am looking for stories about what you did during November to support National Railroad month. I am also looking for photographs of your models or layouts taken to work. These will be featured in **The Local** in upcoming issues. Contact me at (717) 825-5558 or stevexpressrr@yahoo.com, with your story and photographs! A postal address can be found on page 2. 📄

New Membership Recruitment Program

As an aid to membership recruitment, NMRA recently instituted a six month "Railpass" trial membership program which costs the applicant \$9.95. Building on this idea, the MER is instituting a program whereby it will pay the \$9.95 Railpass fee for interested applicants in the MER. In other words, we are making available FREE six month Railpass trial memberships to encourage recruitment of regular members.

What's covered?

Same as Railpass—receive six issues of **Scale Rails**, three issues of **The Local**, eligibility to attend conventions and meets, eligibility to participate in contests.

What's not covered?

Same as Railpass—applicants cannot vote or hold office, and will not receive the New Member Pak from national (it's rather expensive).

Who can be recruited?

Anyone living within the MER who has not been a member of NMRA during the past thirty months.

How will the recruitment process work?

(1) The prospective member fills out the MER trial membership application form which was sent to all division superintendents (not the standard NMRA Railpass form) (2) The "recruiter" should

also sign the form, and then forward it to: Fred Miller, MER Business Manager, 8960 Challis Hill Lane, Charlotte, NC 28226-2686. (3) Fred will record the information he needs in his data base, and will forward the application to the MER Treasurer. (4) The Treasurer will add the necessary check and forward the application and check to the national headquarters in Chattanooga.

What happens after the member's six month trial period?

The Railpass trial member will receive a standard dues notice from national headquarters. We hope a substantial number of Railpass trial members will sign up to become regular members.

Are there limits on the program?

The MER initially allocated \$2,000 for this program. The Board recently allocated an additional \$1,000 to extend the program to the end of 2010, or when the funds are spent – whichever comes first. When and if we approach either limit, Division Superintendents and members of the MER Board of Directors will be notified. At that time, the program will be evaluated by the MER Board of Directors. If successful, we will try to continue it.

For questions?

Contact Fred Miller, MER Business Manager (mailing address is above, 704-752-5138, tractionfan@aol.com), or Roger L. Cason, MER President (1125 Grinnell Road, Wilmington, DE, 19803-5125, 302-478-2550, rogercason@juno.com). 

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

YES, please sign me up for a free six month Railpass trial membership in the NMRA—which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region, and in my local Division. During this six month period, I understand that I may attend conventions and meets, and participate in contests. I will receive **Scale Rails**, the monthly national magazine, and **The Local**, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office, or receive a New Member Pak.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six month Railpass trial membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Regardless of who pays, six month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person.)

At the end of the six months, I may join NMRA, paying the regular active member dues.

During the past thirty months, I have **not** been a member of NMRA.

=====

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Scale(s): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Signature of "Recruiter": _____
(A Regional or Divisional officer or board member)

=====

When this form is completed, mail it to:

**Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager
8960 Challis Hill Lane
Charlotte, NC 28226-2686**

Do **not** mail it directly to MMR headquarters in Chattanooga, TN.

Date of form: 1/31/07

This is my Turntable. A New Idea For A Turntable/Cradle.

Article and photographs by Don Jennings

I HAVE VISITED many model train layouts at MER Conventions and local divisional layout tours and the first place that is viewed is the train yard. Everyone likes to see the turntable and roundhouse and all the locomotive servicing tracks and supporting buildings that are needed for the layout's operations. This is usually where the owners pride and joy is and where most of the classifying of the train cars is done.

I have a small HO Scale train layout and no room for a turntable or roundhouse, that is before I started looking at the



Photo 1: A 9-inch piece of track was cut out at an escape track for each yard. Four (4) long length small head nails will match up with the underside of the nickel silver rail tips at the end of the bridge.

space I had. There are two small train yards where the yard leads face each other. I took that one joining track between them (an escape track for each yard) and cut out a 9-inch. I then placed a 9-inch ATLAS girder bridge in that space. I also glued



Photo 2: The 9-inch ATLAS girder bridge that becomes a simple turntable/cradle is in place.

two wooden coffee stir sticks to the table by the sides of the girder bridge as a guide/space holder. See photo 2.

This girder bridge (now turntable) is held in place by putting four (4) long length small head nails into the table to match up with the underside of nickel silver rail tips at the ends of the bridge. This is seen in the photo 1.

A small gap between the tabletop and the nail head is needed to make contact to the rails and with the nails. This is your electrical wiring connection to the new turntable on your layout. On the under side of the table, solder wires to the nails and then to the corresponding rails near those nails.

With this electrical connection, there is NO NEED for a reversing loop switch or reversing module. Every time you pick up the bridge and turn it, the bottom of each of the rails makes contact to the top of the nail heads and is always electrically connected and correctly aligned. This girder bridge turntable also makes a good loading cradle to install a locomotive engine on the rails of your layout.

It is very inexpensive and it works.

DON JENNINGS lives in the Carolina Piedmont Division where he models HO Scale. 

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03/09

Word Search

By Joe Hoffman

Find the words. They may be up and down, across or diagonal.

Good Luck!

Answer on page 13.

JOE HOFFMAN lives in North Carolina where he models HO scale. 🚂

Air	Bell	Cab
Caboose	Coal	Diesel
EMD	Engineer	FRED
Freight	GE	Locomotive
Proceed	Rail	Siding
Steam	Track	Turnout

P R E G F F R E D
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C A B O O S E L D

Visit Our Website

Visit the MER's website for all the latest information, contacts and archives www.mer-nmra.org.

(NER) The Hudson-Berkshire Division Announces the "Great Train Expo"

By Paul Hoffman,
President of Hudson-Berkshire Division

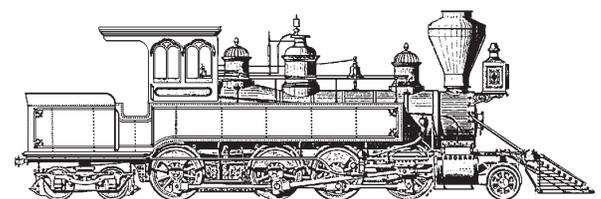
THE HUDSON-BERKSHIRE DIVISION and the Update Train Associates are proud to bring you the annual "Great Train Extravaganza."

The event will be held Sunday, December 6th from 10 AM until 4 PM, at the Empire State Convention Center in downtown Albany, with easy access off I-787 and the NYS Thruway. Price is only \$5 for adults and pre-teens are free when accompanied by an adult.

There will be operating layouts in N, HO and O gauges. This is the ideal place to do your holiday shopping, there will be more than 200 tables of model trains, train sets, parts & accessories, scenery items, books, videos, DVDs, prints, railroad memorabilia and related items for sale. In addition there will be education displays and free seminars.

Many other family activities are being held nearby the same weekend so why not bring the entire family for a fun day out.

For more information please go to our web side www.gtealbany.org or call Dave Halverson at (518) 371-9164. 🚂



"O (Scale) Canada"

Art, Bob, and Ken's Excellent Adventure in Southern Ontario

Article and photographs by Ken Nesper

THIS IS THE STORY of three U.S. model railroaders who were entertained by a host of wonderful Canadian model railroaders during the first weekend in May 2002. Art Selby made the arrangements for the trip working with Don Eastman, MMR, of Blenheim, Ontario, and representatives of three model railroad clubs: Aberfoyle Junction, London Model Railroad Group, and the Model Railroad Club of Toronto.

The planning began in mid-winter and, originally, was to include members of the Harrisburg O Scale Club. At one time, as many as ten model railroaders were on the list and Art was scrambling to find two vans to carry the group and their luggage. For one reason or another, when we crossed the border on May 2nd, there were only three of us: Art Selby of Fairfield, PA; Bob Johnson of Seat Pleasant, MD; and me (Ken Nesper, resident of Washington, DC). Art and I model O scale, Bob was an O scale traction modeler who now dabbles in HO.

We met our trusty tour guides, Don Eastman and Ed Haydon, also an MMR, at Niagara Hobbies in St. Catharines on Thursday afternoon. Ed is an HO modeler who lives in Chatham. We spent



Photo 1: CN freight entering rail line east of Bayview Junction.

about an hour examining the O scale, and HO scale, merchandise, but even with the favorable exchange rates, the purchases were limited. There were no killings on buying brass with U.S. dollars. After a stop for sandwiches and drinks, we headed for our hotel in Guelph.

EAST OF BAYVIEW JUNCTION, MAY 2ND, LATE AFTERNOON:

On the outskirts of Hamilton, Ed showed us a great rail fan location. A pedestrian bridge was built over the shared CN/CP rail line just east of Bayview Junction to connect a parking lot with the Royal Botanical Gardens Centre. This provides the rail fan with a parking lot, an elevated vantage point, and restrooms. In our one-hour stay, we caught an eastbound CN freight and a westbound VIA passenger train. See photo 1.

ABERFOYLE JUNCTION, MAY 2ND, EVENING:

The folks at Aberfoyle Junction graciously opened their railroad for us that evening. See photos 2 and 3. A full description of the railroad is available at the club's web site www.aberfoylejunction.com/tframe.htm. The operating 3-track bridge in Westport, the industrial track work, and the dusk-to-dawn lighting sequence fascinated me. Our hosts ran the lighting sequence for us twice. A couple of us were escorted into the elevated operating tower in the



Photo 2: The Aberfoyle Junction operation bridge at Westport.

middle of the room to see how the railroad was operated. It was a busy night for the Aberfoyle Junction folks since they were also entertaining NMRA President Allen Pollock and Niagara Frontier Region (NFR) Trustee Clark Kooning. It turned out that the Niagara Frontier was holding a regional convention in Kitchener.

After a late supper, we returned to our hotel tired, but very pleased with our first day's adventure.

BAYVIEW JUNCTION, MAY 3RD, MID-MORNING:



Photo 3: City of Wellington and Union Station.

It's snowing! Well, maybe it's sleeting, but it is quite a shock to the three of us from the mid-Atlantic area. I had debated taking the snow scraper out of my car; glad that I didn't. For today's adven-

tures, however, my car stays at the hotel, because Don, with a large SUV, volunteers to drive. Our first scheduled stop is not until mid-day, so we head south, back to Bayview Junction. On the way, we encounter some serious snow, but it's clear blue skies, although cold, at the junction. While we are there, a bus tour from the NFR convention pulls up with about 15-20 model railroaders. They, also, are on their way to something else, but stop to see if they can



Photo 4: The brightly colored VIA locomotive.

spot some trains. In an hour, we saw a VIA passenger train and a CN freight, both headed east. See photo 4. We leave about 10 AM, headed for Toronto.

Our first stop in Toronto was George's Train Shop. It's a nice store, but lacked a large selection of O scale equipment and accessories. Nevertheless, we make a modest contribution to the local economy and confirm our directions to our scheduled stop, the O traction layout of Ivor Walsh. Bob, our former traction modeler, is getting excited since, having been to Walsh's once before, he knows what a treat we are about to experience.

IVOR WALSH'S O TRACTION RAILROAD:

Mr. Walsh modeled, nearly in its entirety, a single line of the Boston Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA). The railroad was on two levels, using the lower level to model the underground portions of the prototype. The scores of trolley cars and buses were



Photo 5: A trolley waits for signal to start running

scratch-built by Mr. Walsh and his associate. After a short demonstration and rulebook explanation, Mr. Walsh handed each of us a throttle. The challenge was watching the traffic lights, the "boarding" light, and the other trolley on your line. A car cannot proceed

if passengers are boarding (indicated by a flashing white light.) Then, you must check the traffic light ahead of you. Oh, and don't forget to ring the bell indicating that you are leaving. See photo 5. We had a great time. On a sadder note, Mr. Walsh died unexpectedly later in 2002.

MODEL RAILROAD CLUB OF TORONTO, EVENING:

After an early supper at "Lion on the Beach" in the Beaches section of Toronto, we head for the Model Railroad Club of Toronto. It was a good thing that Mr. Walsh showed us the way, since I doubt if we would have ever found this building. The club was in the basement of an old industrial building in west Toronto. Our hosts told us that the rooms were once used as test firing ranges for military-grade weapons. The layout covered an area that is approximately 100 feet long and 30 feet wide. Traveling from one end of the point-to-point railroad to the other requires the equivalent of 5 trips around the layout, nearly 1,000 feet. The operating style was walk-around with radio-controlled throttles, rail side



Photo 6: Engine #75 crossing suspension bridge at the Model Railroad Club of Toronto.

operating signals, and a dispatcher. The club's web site is <http://web.mac.com/smacadam1/MRCT/Welcome.html>.

With club member Dave McLean along side to call out the signals, I get to take a 34-car train pulled by a beautiful Berkshire over the railroad. I only over ran one signal when Dave was distracted by a question. Ed took the train back to the main yard. Art and Don spent their time photographing and talking with other club members. All too soon, it's time to head back to the hotel in Guelph.

MAY 4TH:

It's a beautiful morning although there is frost on the windshields. For our first stop, we head southwest to the Elgin County Railway Museum in St. Thomas. The museum (www.ecrm5700.org) was located in one of the few remaining buildings at the former New York Central shops. There was a good fire burning in Essex Terminal 0-6-0 switcher #9 when we arrived. The switcher would graduate to excursion locomotive later in the day. We wandered through the grounds and the building examining the equipment on display. There was also a railroad flea market underway in the building and a museum gift shop.

continued on page 10

From St. Thomas, we drove down to Port Stanley to see the restored station of the London and Port Stanley Railway. After lunch at one of the ubiquitous Tim Horton's, we take another sightseeing detour before heading for the London Model Railroad Group. Don and Ed want to show us the spectacular bridge that the New York Central built across Kettle Valley. We were just ready to leave when Ed heard a steam engine. A few minutes later, our new friend Essex Terminal #9 appeared on the bridge pushing a Kettle Valley coach. The train crosses the bridge, stops, and



Photo 7: #9 on the transfer table at the Elgin County Railway Museum in St. Thomas.

recrossed for our enjoyment. See photo 8. Ed believed that this is the first time that steam has crossed this bridge in 50 years.

A fairly substantial group of members is waiting for us when we arrive at the London Model Railroad Group (www.lmrg.org). What began as a group introduction and walking tour of the railroad soon became five personal tours as each of us is pulled to investigate something that we individually find interesting. Bob, for instance, checked out the traction line that the club is planning to rehabilitate. There was new construction underway in the rear of the room where some members were substantially expanding a narrow gauge connection to the standard gauge railroad. Club members, sitting in an elevated control tower along the wall, start the trains moving. Meanwhile, having traversed a couple of duck-unders, I am given a "tour" of the roundhouse and turntable. I am starting to take some photos when the offer is made to "run trains."



Photo 8: Essex Terminal #9 and coach crosses the bridge in Kettle Valley

I am assigned to cab position 2. My first assignment was to complete the run of a CP Hudson pulling the second section of the circus train. The experience was exhilarating, but completely different from the Toronto club. My attention is primarily focused on the panel in front of me that shows the location of my train, the block availability, and the dispatcher's routing/signaling. Occasionally, I have the opportunity to see my train to judge speed. My mentor is Bob Thomas. At one point, with Bob distracted, I pull the block occupancy plug before my long train has cleared the turnout. Oops! The dispatcher changes the switch under my train causing a massive derailment. It takes a while to clear the mainline. Fortunately, I manage to run a passenger and freight train without incident. My colleagues have to drag me out of the control tower since we have to move on to our next stop.

We are now on our way to Don Eastman's to see his highly regarded and well-publicized C&O Cabin Creek Branch. As we near Chatham, Don takes us on a short detour. We are introduced to a gentleman who has a truly scratch-built railroad in his backyard. We're talking truly large-scale, live steam. He crafted the



Photo 9: Nothing beats the excitement and color of the circus train at the London Model Railroad.

locomotives and cars in his shop, which he also shows us. The railroad has not been operated lately. The second part of the treat is the collection of classic toys and trains that line the basement walls. Two rooms are filled with tinplate trains, trucks, and all kinds of other toys from decades past. It's like a museum. After thank you's and goodbye's, we are headed for a little bit of West Virginia in Blenheim, Ontario.

Don's C&O Cabin Creek Branch was last given national attention in the December 2001 edition of **Model Railroader** magazine. This railroad demonstrated, once again, the modeling possibilities of O scale. It's a small point-to-point railroad, but the scenes, scenery, and detail are fantastic. Don, a professional cabinetmaker, scratch built all the structures on the railroad. Ed, who left us in London because of a family emergency, painted many of Don's locomotives. We gaze and gawk while Don runs a short train down the line for us. We also get a tour of Don's wood shop conveniently located in the next room. All too soon it is time to think about supper and the 2+ hour drive back to Guelph. We share a last supper with Don at a local establishment in Blenheim, exchange addresses and e-mails, and express thank you's and goodbye's, before driving back to the hotel.

MAY 5TH:

The drive home on Sunday is long, but uneventful. We clear the border by 9 AM. We talk about what we have seen and the wonderful people that we met. We catch glimpses of Norfolk Southern locomotives as we pass Enola Yard north of Harrisburg, but there's only time for a short comfort stop. It's nearly 7 PM by the time I get home having dropped off Art in PA and Bob in MD. As I'm pulling my suitcase out of the car, it dawns on me that today it's my birthday. I wonder what kind of a celebration my wife has planned!

KEN NESPER lives in the Potomac Division where he models O scale. 



Photo 10: Don Eastman's Cabin Creek Branch, Carbon Fuel Co. No. 9 at Dakota.

Chuck Davis, Tidewater Division and MER's Newest MMR, #424

By Chuck Davis

RAILROADS WERE pretty much a daily part of my life growing up. My wife, Kathy, and I were both raised in Wilkes-Barre in northeast Pennsylvania. Located in the Wyoming Valley along the Susquehanna River, Wilkes-Barre was a center for anthracite coal. Coal mines, railroads, churches, and bars were located everywhere throughout this once bustling area. Several members of our families worked in the mines or for the railroads that hauled the coal.

I grew up within 3 blocks of the South Wilkes-Barre mine, which was serviced by the Jersey Central railroad, and many of our neighbors worked there. The four tracks of the Lehigh Valley and CNJ mainlines passed within two blocks, and there was nearly a constant procession of trains to hear and watch. My grandfather Davis was a car inspector for the Lehigh Valley at their yard in Wilkes-Barre. I got to ride in one of the yard engines which I never forgot, and to ride on the Black Diamond with him. That started my love for the Valley.

I always enjoyed modeling, and my room was filled with models of planes, ships and cars. By the time I reached high school, I had expanded my 4'x 8' Lionel layout into an L shaped moveable layout with a 26' branch line that covered most of our attic. Toy train magazine articles had opened up a different train modeling perspective for me.

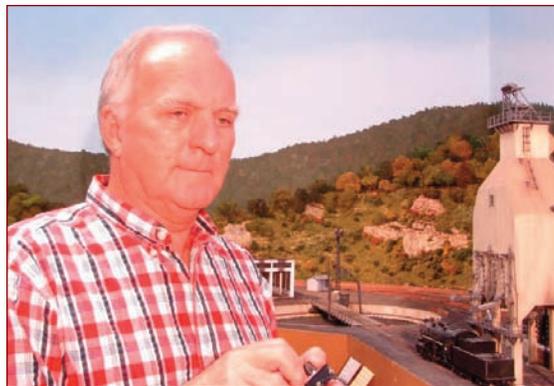
After graduating from college I was commissioned in the Navy. We moved to Norfolk, VA in 1970 and I have spent most of my military and high school math teaching careers here. Shortly after our daughter, Christina, and son, Sean, were born; I bought them an HO Tyco train set. That got me hooked on HO and back into model-

ing. Fortunately there was a large HO club layout in Norfolk about that time which I joined. Learning from them, including MMR Dave Spanagel, kept me in HO at a time when engines were notoriously poor runners.

My first real exposure to the NMRA was at a MER Convention in Richmond in 1975 and then at the national convention in Washington around 1980 when I was stationed there. The tours and clinics really impressed me. After retiring from the Navy and returning to Norfolk, I joined the Tidewater Division and finally the NMRA in 1997. With a lot of encouragement from Linda Coski, Norm Garner, and MMR John "JJ" Johnson, I started entering contests and working toward earning AP certificates.

Managing my tutoring business now keeps me occupied, but provides enough time for making progress on my layout. I like to think of model railroads as an animated, three-dimensional art form. Within artist's license, my layout <http://members.cox.net/mylvrr> depicts several scenes from my youth, and some of the historical and geographical features of the Wyoming Valley area. I really enjoy operating it, and with members from the Tidewater Division have periodic op sessions. Our first little engineer, Harper Ann, and our newest little engineer, Reese Kennedy, also enjoy running it with Pop Pop when they come to visit.

Chuck has earned the following AP Certificates, Master Builder – Cars, Master Builder – Structures, Model Railroad Engineer – Civil, Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical, Chief Dispatcher, Association Volunteer and Model Railroad Author. 



Photos of the Month Collage: The Susquehanna Division Visits Steamtown

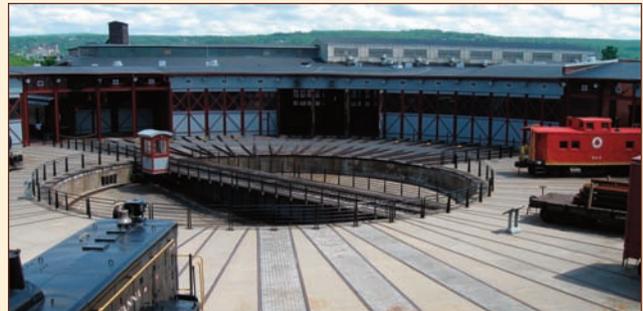
*Information and photographs provided by Gerry Dombroski.
Group shot taken by Phileshia Dombroski (Gerry's daughter)*

The Susquehanna Division recently took a tour of Steamtown in Scranton, PA on May 30th, 2009. The group included division members and guests. The tour took in areas of Steamtown not normally open to public tours. A short train ride behind Canadian Pacific #2317 was also included in the day's events. It was from the roundhouse to bridge 60, to a little past the old Lackawanna railroad station in Scranton and return trip. One lucky member from the group actually rode in the cab of the locomotive for this!

Some members also took in a tour of the Lackawanna Trolley Museum and a trolley ride as well. The trolley ride was from a platform in Steamtown over the old Laurel Line and Erie trackage to the PNC Field, home of the Scranton Wilkes-Barre Yankees and return, a total of about 18 miles.



GERRY lives in the Susquehanna Division where he models HO Scale. He helped organize part of the tours. 



If you would like to showcase (when space is available) an original drawing/painting/sketch, prototype train photograph, layout scene please submit them to the Editor (see page 2 for complete contact information).

A Trip to the 2009 National Convention

Article and photographs by Steven P. August

EDITOR'S NOTE: The 2010 convention (the 75th anniversary of the NMRA) will be held July 11-18, in Milwaukee, WI. The web site for all the details is: www.nmra75.org. If you have something you would like to publish from any convention, please use my contact information on page 2.

ANOTHER SUMMER is past us, the hot and humid time in our area that usually comes without much relief. The one constant that seems to come around every year about this time is NMRA Convention. This year's convention was held in Hartford, CT. Even though I have been involved in model railroading for many years, until recently I had not heard of the NMRA, modeling conventions or train shows for that matter.

Back in 2008, I decided that I would go to an NMRA Convention. So, I said something to a couple friends and we planned to not only go to the convention, but we would leave a couple days early and make a leisurely trip up to Hartford with a couple stops along the way at some railroad landmarks. Prior to leaving, I mentioned to Jack Parker about the trip I planned. Before long Jack Parker and Dave Chance had joined our little trip up to Hartford. We visited the Horseshoe Curve which in the mid-1800's as the railroads moved west across America, revolutionized rail travel by having the tracks rise gradually around the head end of the Allegheny Mountains. The Horseshoe Curve is still a great place to see the big locomotives come by.

We also visited the Allegheny Portage Railroad. This was the predecessor to the Horseshoe Curve. This railroad by means of stationary steam engines, ropes and pulleys moved canal boats up and over the mountains and back into the canals on the other side to continue their journey. The journey over the Allegheny Mountains took about 23 days by wagon or horseback. The incline railroad that was part of the Pennsylvania Main Line cut the travel time down to 4 days.

We also visited Tunnels Park located in Gallitzin, PA. These tunnels spelled the demise of the Allegheny Portage Railroad because the tunnels cut the travel time between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to just 15 hours instead of 4 days on the Allegheny Portage. The first passenger train to come through the tunnels was on February 6th, 1854. The main tunnel was enlarged to accom-

modate double stack trains 1995. Gallitzin is a great place to rail fan, and there is even a hotel with a great balcony overlooking tracks about 100 feet away.

We also visited many other places and after a great 3-day trip of rail fanning, we all arrived in Hartford on Sunday in time to check into the convention and hotel and get ready for clinics to start. The

Hartford National Convention featured more than 200 clinics on everything from Digital Photography on your layout, to programming DCC Chips, classes on JMRI software, to operations, and many, many more things for your layout. I attended a couple Modeling with the Masters clinics, which teach a lot more in depth modeling skills.

There were more than 150 layouts on various tours. There were plenty of self-guided tours, bus tours and even just stop by a layout of someone you know and visit their layout. I never realized how many people were involved in model railroading until I starting meeting lots of people from all over the world, including some from as far away as Australia, Canada, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

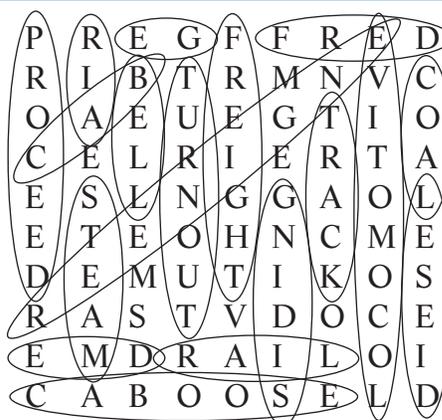
STEVEN AUGUST lives in the Carolina Southern Division where he model HO scale. He is also the Superintendent. 🏠



A train rounds Horseshoe Curve, a rail fan stop on the way to the convention.



The Tunnel's Gallitzin, PA, a rail fan stop on the way to the convention.



Answer to
Word Search
from page 7

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Coming Events

NOVEMBER – ALL MONTH LONG. NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD MONTH!

November 7th. Visit Art Dum's live steam railroad with the Susquehanna Division in Shermansdale, PA. Advance signup is required. Call Wayne Godshall by November 6th at (717) 582-4405 [home] or (717) 215-7776 [cell]. Actual address will be posted on the division's web site www.susquehannanmra.org.

November 7th. Chesapeake Division Mini-Con. The Mini-Con will be held at Mt Pleasant United Methodist church located at 1713 Liberty Grove Rd in Colora, MD. Clinics at 9 AM. A white elephant table/model train garage sale table will also be manned by the division. For more information contact Kurt Thompson at (410) 544-7247 or super.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com.

November 7th. Philadelphia Division Meet. Held at Brandywine Town Center. Corner of Concord Pike (Route 202) & Naaman's Road in Wilmington, DE. Clinics begin at 9 AM. Layout tours at 1 PM. Contact: Greg Shindledecker at greg@shindledecker.com or (610) 383-7767.

November 14th. New Jersey Division Meet held at the Walnut Street School. 411 Walnut Street in Delanco, NJ. Clinics from 9 AM until Noon. Layout tours from 1 PM until 4 PM. Contact Bob Clegg at (856) 696-0463 or BobcatCS@comcast.net.

November 14th. Wade's Train Town Open house. Operated by Carolina Southern Division members, at the Brookford Town Center. 1700 South Center St. in Hickory, NC, 10 AM until 4 PM.

November 20th. TAKE YOUR TRAIN TO WORK DAY. (Please send photographs and stories to the editor!)

November 21st. James River Division Meet held at the Church of the Redeemer. 251 Winterfield Road in Midlothian, VA. Registration opens at 9:30. Clinics start at 10 AM. Contact Robert Alvis at rwalvis@mac.com or (804) 329-4060.

November 29th and 30th. Cheltenham Model Railroad Club Open House. 8000 Old York Road (at railroad bridge), adjacent to Elkins Park Square, Elkins Park, PA. Noon till 4 PM. Admission is free, but donations gratefully accepted. For more information, call (215) 635-9747 or visit www.cheltenhammrr.org.

November 29th and 30th. Greenberg Train Show and Sale held at New Jersey Expo Center. 97 Sunfield Avenue in Edison, NJ. 10 AM until 4 PM both days. Adults: \$7, children under 12 free. For more information visit: www.greenbergshows.com.

December 5th and 6th. Greenberg Train Show and Sale held at Maryland State Fairgrounds. 2200 York Road in Timonium, MD. 10 AM until 4 PM both days. Adults: \$7, children under 12 free. For more information visit www.greenbergshows.com.

December 5th & 6th. Severna Park Model Railroad Club Open House in the B & A Train Station on the Bike Trail. 3 Riggs Road in Severna Park, MD. Noon to 5 PM each day. Admission is free but donations welcomed. For more information contact: Sam Shepherd at (410) 647-6077 or Frank Winner at (410) 647-3335.

December 6th. NER presents the "Great Train Expo". Held at the Empire State Convention Center in Albany, NY. See inside for more information and web site.

December 12th and 13th. Greenberg Train Show and Sale held at Greater Philadelphia Expo Center. 100 Station Avenue in Oaks, PA. 10 AM until 4 PM both days. Adults: \$7, children under 12 free. For more information visit www.greenbergshows.com.

December 12th. Wade's Train Town Open house. Operated by Carolina Southern Division members, at the Brookford Town Center. 1700 South Center St in Hickory, NC. 10 AM until 4 PM.

December 19th and 20th. Greenberg Train Show and Sale held at Richmond Raceway Complex in Richmond, VA. 10 AM until 4 PM both days. Adults: \$7, children under 12 free. For more information visit www.greenbergshows.com. 

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ATTENTION ALL MER MEMBERS:

Do you have a wanted/trade/for sale item(s)? Looking for car-pool options or options for sharing a room? **The Local** is starting classified section for all MER members. Send your classified ad to the Editor at stevespressrr@yahoo.com, or see all the Editor's contact information on page 2.

The ad must include full name and contact information and will be limited to one issue. Word count is also limited to fifty (50) words. Please include your NMRA number for verification purposes (number will not be published).

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**Achievement
 Program
 Update**

*By Charlie Flichman,
 MER AP Manager*

Since the last report in **The Local**, the following Achievement Program certificates were earned and awarded:

Division 3 – Philadelphia
 Nathaniel Brill – *Gold Spike*
 Allan Schappel – *Gold Spike*

Division 4 – Tidewater
 Chuck Davis – *MMR #424*
 Robert Doss – *Chief Dispatcher*

Division 11 – Susquehanna
 Cole Leiphart – *Gold Spike*

In a perfect world, this information will appear soon in **Scale Rails**. This should not deter you from giving recognition locally. Normally you will be able to recognize AP accomplishments long before the names appear in **Scale Rails**. 