

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11
of the Mid-Eastern Region
of the National Model Railroad Association

<http://www.susquehannanmra.org>

"Serving the Susquehanna Valley"

July 2008

VOL. 16 ISSUE 2

HARRIS RAILROAD SWITCH TOWER

Harrisburg Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
637 Walnut Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-232-6221

ONE OF A KIND INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT HARRIS RAILROAD SWITCH TOWER OPENS TO THE PUBLIC



Located in downtown Harrisburg at the corner of 7th and Walnut Streets (across from The Forum) Harris Railroad Switch Tower, will officially open to the public as an interactive museum on Saturday, June 7th. Harris Railroad Switch Tower is a railroad control tower built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1930 to control all train movements through downtown Harrisburg, PA. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the tower once controlled the switches and signals that routed more than 100 passenger trains a day through the Central Pennsylvania area.

The tower is historically significant because it marked the western terminus of the electrification of the Pennsy's passenger lines. It was there at Harris Tower that the venerable GG1 electric locomotives (one of which is on display in the nearby Harrisburg Transportation Center) would be removed from westbound trains to be replaced by steam and later, diesel locomotives before the trains could continue their westward journeys.

The tower was used by the PRR, the Penn Central Railroad and Amtrak until closing in 1991. Upon closing, the Harrisburg Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society purchased the building and began the process of restoration. Now, after thousands of hours of work by the Chapter's volunteers the tower will be open to the public.

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Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA

The Susquehanna Sidetracks welcomes any model railroad or railroad related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters, reviews, photos, and other items to the editor.

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Visit us on the internet at:

<http://www.susquehannanmra.org>

For information about upcoming events, modeling in the Susquehanna Division, links to web pages for upcoming conventions, and for an electronic copy of this newsletter.

SUPER'S CORNER

By Scott Turner

The time has come for someone new to take over the throttle to drive the division forward. It has been my pleasure to have been the Superintendent for the past 4 years and director the several years prior to that. The division has come a long way in the time, but there is still a lot more work to be done. As you will see on page 4, Jeff Warner is "running" for Superintendent and John Frantz is "running" for Assistant Superintendent. They are running unopposed, but we still need the division members to approve them for these positions. I think both will do a fantastic job and will bring new energy and ideas to the division. So please take a moment and approve them for these offices and return your ballot.

I was not able to make our division meet on June 7th as I was out of the area for work. It is my understanding from those that did make it out to the East Broadtop Railroad and the Rockhill Trolley Museum that they had a great visit in spite of the heat. Thanks to Lee Rainey and Matt Nawn for their help in organizing this meet and for being our guides.

Thanks for letting me be your Superintendent. I appreciate all your support and kind words over the years. Best of luck to you in the future and may all your signals be green!

MER FALL CONVENTION

POTOMAC JUNCTION 2008

The next MER Fall Convention will be Potomac Junction 2008 and will be held in Reston, VA from October 16th through the 19th. There will be layout tours, prototype tours, clinics, contests, operations callboard, a banquet, and an auction. Please see page 5 for the registration for. More information about the convention can be found on their web site at

http://home.comcast.net/~potomac_nmra/MER2008/

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The center piece of the exhibit is the tower's Interlocking Machine and Model Board. The Interlocking Machine is the device that actually controlled the track switches and signals and the Model Board is the lighted map of the area trackage that pinpointed the location of the trains and showed how the signals were set. We've all seen these devices in old movies where the switchmen would throw the levers to route trains onto sidings and so forth. What makes Harris Tower especially interesting is the huge amount of trackage the tower controlled. The Interlocking Machine at Harris has 113 levers and its Model Board contains more than 450 indicator lamps!



What makes Harris Tower truly unique is that the entire Interlocking Machine and Model Board are operable! Visitors to Harris Railroad

Switch Tower can actually operate the levers of the Interlocking Machine and see what happens by way of the lighted Model Board display, exactly as it was done decades ago. The Interlocking Machine and Model Board have been tied into a computer simulation system that is programmed with the actual Pennsylvania Railroad train schedules from the early 1940's. It was during this time - the War Years - that Harris tower was busiest. As "virtual

trains" arrive in the area they are displayed by way of the indicator lights on the Model Board. It is then up to the visitor to throw the proper levers to route the trains to their correct destinations. In this way, rather than simply viewing a static display, visitors to Harris Tower can actually operate the equipment and experience for themselves what it would have been like to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad in its heyday. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other exhibit like Harris Railroad Switch Tower anywhere in the world.



Located at the corner of 7th and Walnut Streets, the tower is still adjacent to very active railroad lines making Harris a perfect vantage point for youngsters and railroad buffs to view and photograph nearly 50 Norfolk Southern and Amtrak trains each day from a safe location, regardless of the weather.

Harris Tower will be open to visitors of all ages on Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., from June 7th through November 1st. Admission is free. For additional information or for group visits, contact the Harrisburg Chapter of the NRHS at 717-232-6221 or by e-mail at HarrisTower@verizon.net.

BY-LAW REVISIONS AND OFFICER ELECTION

We are pleased to announce that the By-Law revisions passed unanimously and have been submitted to the MER for approval.

We had exactly one person nominated for each office (Division Superintendent, Division Assistant Superintendent, and Division Chief Clerk). All offices are to be filled for a two year term starting in July 2008 and ending in June 2010. So, we are asking that you vote to approve or reject these nominations as a group. The board recommends that you approve these officers. If you have any concerns, please feel free to contact Scott Turner or any current Division officer.

Division Superintendent: Jeff Warner (currently a Division Director)

Division Assistant Superintendent: John Frantz

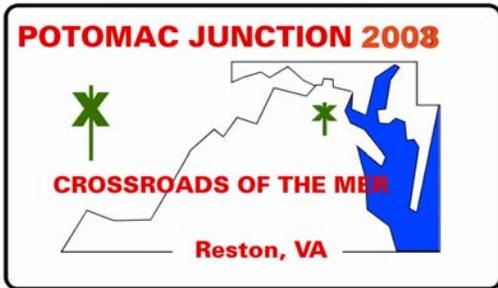
Division Chief Clerk: Paul Tice (currently Division Chief Clerk)

Please mail the following to be postmarked on or before July 25, 2008 to:

NMRA Susquehanna Division 11 Officer Elections
c/o Scott Turner
24 Yankee Drive
Mt. Holly Springs, PA 17065

I approve these officers _____

I reject these officers _____



Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention

October 16 – 19, 2008
 RESTON, VIRGINIA
 ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please enter all names as you wish them to appear on your registration badges:

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other (living at same address): _____

Children (Under age 16 – List all): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-Mail: _____ NMRA # _____

Full Registration (\$50 after September 1) -	\$45 x _____
One-day registration	\$25 x _____
Non-NMRA Member (applied to Rail Pass Membership) -	\$10 x _____
Significant Other -	\$15 x _____
Children:	\$10 x _____
Banquet:	\$40 x _____
Cheap and Easy Trees Clinic	\$ 5 x _____
Building in Wood Post Office Clinic (HO)	\$15 x _____
(O)	\$15 x _____
Building and Coloring Masonry Buildings Clinic:	\$15 x _____

Total Advance Registration Charges: \$ _____

Payment must accompany registration. Make checks payable to: **Potomac Junction 2008**

Send all registrations to:
Potomac Junction
PO Box 447
Swedesboro, NJ 08085

For questions and / or additional information E-Mail – MER-Registrar@comcast.net

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION: The convention will be held at the **Sheraton Reston Hotel**, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20191. The convention rate is \$99.00 (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at (703) 620-9000. When registering be sure to specify the Mid- Eastern Region, NMRA to be sure you get this special rate. (<http://www.Sheraton.com/Reston>)

Additional events will be added when their cost is know. Please check the web page http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008/ for current information.

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Send form to: Paul Tice, 6710 Moul Road, Thomasville, PA 17364

_____ \$4.00 per Year

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The Susquehanna Division is located in the central portion of Pennsylvania. The Counties served are: Adams, Berks, Blair, Cambria, Carbon, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Mifflin, Monroe, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Union, Wayne, Wyoming, and York.

Make checks payable to "Susquehanna Division 11"

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Address _____

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