



SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS

An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division,
Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA
Vol 24 No. 1



In case you've forgotten what Winter is supposed to look like....

From the Superintendent's Desk – Barry Schmitt

Happy 2016 to All!

Here we go – the start of another year and all its great opportunities. It's also time for those often-broken New Year's resolutions. My main model railroad resolution for 2016 is both simple and one I intend to keep – move from armchair planning to start of construction on my B&O 1965 Clarksburg to Weston WV N-scale railroad. I'll continue working on the Masonic Village Club O-Scale layout and the Ephrata Short Line Club HO layout, but the time is now for me to either start building or sell my extensive collection and selling just ain't gonna happen! So look out wife and neighbors – the smell of fresh cut lumber is just around the corner! I wish you success with your modeling resolutions that you intend to keep and hopefully one of them is to prepare a Sidetracks article about your efforts.

2016 will also see the national presidential campaigns finally come to an end with elections in November – hot doggy! Besides those elections you will also be asked to elect new Susquehanna Division officers who will mark on for duty effective July 1. There are three positions to be elected - Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Chief Clerk (Treasurer). Time will tell if Wayne Betty, your Assistant Super, and Paul Tice, your Chief Clerk will run for reelection, but for sure you will elect a new Super. So start thinking now about placing your hat in the ring to lead your Division for the next two years – July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2018. And don't for a moment believe you are not qualified because you have no Division leadership experience. I won the uncontested election in 2012 because no one else was willing to run. It obviously didn't matter at the time that I had absolutely no Division leadership experience. In fact I probably attended less than 10 events in the preceding 10 years before I took office due to my “always there – never here” job. So every Division member has at least as much “experience” as I had. All that really matters is your desire to actively serve the members and have a passion for this great hobby – qualities I'd bet just about every one of you possess. So call or email me and let's talk about placing your name on the election ballot!

Reviewing the 2016 Division Event Plan on page 4 you will see there are no planned events in our northern and western counties this year. It is not because we favor other areas as some have suggested – it's simply because no one proposed events in those areas. If you or your club has programs to suggest please contact any BOD member and make your recommendations. And don't think we only consider events that have the potential for large attendance; on the contrary, last year we had a very enjoyable event in the Scranton area and another at the Reading Railroad Heritage Museum in Hamburg PA. Both of those events only drew about 20 attendees each but those who attended rated them thoroughly enjoyable (well, except maybe for the downpour at the coal mine museum). While we would definitely appreciate you volunteering to lead your suggested project, we realize that might cause you to stay silent. In order to make it as easy and non-committal as possible please provide your suggestion and then let us figure out how best to make it happen. Bottom line – this is your NMRA organization and your event planning team strives to present programs throughout our widely dispersed area. However, to successfully achieve that goal we need to hear from you; otherwise, the choices are up to the few who do their best to develop programs for all our members.

(continued on page 4)

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division
 Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
 138 Old School House Lane
 Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Contributing to Susquehanna Sidetracks

Sidetracks welcomes contributions from the Division membership. Letters, articles, photos and other items may be sent to the Editor at the e-mail address listed below or the street address above. Deadline for submission for the next issue is February 23, 2016.

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Cover photo credit: Ron Smith
 Inset credit: Ron Smith

Editor's Notes

Happy New Year everyone!

I hope you had an enjoyable Holiday season. I'm sure winter is approaching, but our record-warm December made traveling for the Holiday much easier.

Did you get out to visit any of the layouts that were open as part of November's model layout tours? I had the opportunity to visit some of the layouts in our Mountain Subdivision and really enjoyed the daytrip. Photographic evidence appears beginning on page 17.

Barry provides a nice overview of our 2016 events, and Wayne has a feature on the recent LSOP-7 event. We also have a link to the website for the MER Convention in Durham, NC in October. We hope to see you at some of these events this year.

As always, comments and suggestions that would improve *Sidetracks* are always welcome; my contact info is at the left.

Happy modeling!

Ron

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!

Roger Goff
 Greg Kokolus
 William Ramsey
 Ruth St. John

East Earl, PA
 Mertztown, PA
 Muncy, PA
 Mechanicsburg, PA



Baldwin # 26 after restoration at Steamtown.
 Photo courtesy of Randy Knaub.

(Super's Corner from page 2)

I call your attention to the article on page 9 about our first 2016 event in Mechanicsburg. This has become a regular and very enjoyable annual event. Ron Smith has arranged for two excellent clinics this year in addition to our popular Model Showcase clinic and three great nearby layouts. So far Ron has a 100% acceptable travel weather record, and I am confident he will arrange hassle free winter weather for February 20 – hear that Ron! So let's begin 2016 with excellent attendance and lots of great models on display. And for those who need a special lure to venture out in winter know there will be plenty of hot coffee, tea, and donuts for all – that alone convinces me to fly back for the event from warm and sunny Florida!

January begins another year for our Sidetracks home delivery program. We have several members who do not have email capability or simply wish to have a hard copy of the newsletter in addition to email access. To keep costs as low as possible the home delivery newsletter is only printed in black and white. If you desire home delivery contact Howard Oakes and send him a check made out to NMRA Susquehanna Division for the \$15 2016 rate. For those currently in the program if your check is not received by February 15 we will assume you no longer want home delivery and future copies will not be mailed. Howard's contact info is: hoakes@susquehannanmra.org, 717-632-5990, and his address is Susquehanna Sidetracks Home Delivery, c/o Howard Oakes, 301 Moulstown Road, Abbottstown PA 17301-8912.

Here's wishing you and your families a wonderful 2016 and great modeling!



2015 Susquehanna Division Planned Events

Your hard working project team developed seven events for 2016 and a summary of each is presented on the following pages. Please mark these events on your calendar and plan to attend all or as many as possible. Also consider reaching out and inviting a model railroading friend to join you – as they say, the more the merrier! A short recap of the full year program is also included at the end of this article that can occupy one of those handy refrigerator magnets for ready access. If you have any questions about a specific event kindly contact the appropriate event project officer.

Event 1: February 20 – Mechanicsburg PA

Title: Winter Meeting.

Project Officer: Ron Smith (rsmith@susquehannanmra.org).

Location: Grace United Methodist Church, 216 South Market Street, Mechanicsburg PA *(same location as last February)*

Schedule: See the detailed schedule in the feature article on page 9.

Comments: All attendees are requested to bring a model for the Model Showcase clinic. It can be your pride and joy, something under construction, a new purchase, and in any scale – in short, anything related to model railroading and will fit through the door. All will be on display throughout the morning program, and each model owner will have up to 5 minutes to describe your item. This is not a judging event - it's simply an opportunity to share some aspect of this great hobby with your fellow modelers. See John Wissinger's article on page 9.

Event 2: April 16 – Blue Ridge Summit PA.

Title: Blue Ridge Summit Mini-Con.

Project Officer: Barry Schmitt (bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org or 717-877-1810).

Location: Blue Ridge Fire & Rescue, 13063 Monterey Lane, Blue Ridge Summit PA. The fire hall is directly across the street from Mainline Hobby Supply.

Schedule: 9AM–4PM with informal clinics 9AM–1PM and formal clinics from 1PM–4PM.

Comments: This will be the 4th mini-con put on by Mainline Hobby Supply. In the past they were sponsored by the NMRA South Mountain Division (SMD). However, this year it will be a joint event sponsored by both the SMD and your Susquehanna Division (SD). The Apr event will follow the proven plan of previous mini-cons. The morning will be devoted to “informal” clinics, modular layouts, and a few vendors. The afternoon program will include “formal” clinics. Two of the three formal clinics will include Steam Into History Tourist Railroad and TCS Wow Sounds. Lunch will be available on site inside the fire hall. And of course the Mainline Hobby Supply shop will be open all day for your shopping enjoyment.

The morning “informal” clinics include a variety of interesting topics. Planned topics are: Passenger Car Details, Scenery from Your Backyard, Glue-Shell Scenery, Casting Rocks-Wet, Casting Rocks-Dry, Structure Painting and Making Window Glass Using Crystal Clear, Model Railroading on a Budget, Figure and Vehicle-Painting along with Weathering, Layout Design, Layout Construction and Design, Frugal (Cheap) Modeling, and Styrene Structure Building. If you would like to present an “informal” clinic contact the project officer by January 20.

The third afternoon formal clinic will be a unique interactive program where the theme will be, “You should model this railroad and here's why.” The first clinic segment will include a series of 3 to 5-minute presentations by members of both divisions who will speak on behalf of the railroad of their choice. Each speaker will advocate his or her railroad and include some pictures of the prototype, model, or both. Prototype railroad presentations are not required – speakers are also encouraged to advocate freelance or proto-freelance layouts or other interesting suggestions. After the presentations are completed there will be a very interesting “round table” discussion led by SMD member and moderator Bob Johnson. Bob will present questions to the speakers – some known to the speakers for their advanced planning and a few surprise questions to keep the program lively and spontaneous. Bob will also accept questions from the audience. This will certainly be a most interesting clinic and be a lot of fun. So don't leave early – plan to stay until the afternoon program is over.

Event 3: May 14, Quakertown PA.

Title: Eastern Sub Division Program.

Project Officer: Howard Oakes (hoakes@susquehannamra.org).

Location and Schedule: The program will include morning clinics in the Quakertown PA Train Station at 15 Front Street and afternoon layout visits in the area. The exact details of the program are still being developed. If you would like to offer your model railroad empire to the afternoon layout visit program please contact Howard. And remember a final fully sceniced layout is not required - many modelers enjoy viewing a layout under construction. There are several eateries close to the station for lunch and the well-stocked and friendly J&D Whistle Stop Hobbies shop is just across the tracks on East Broad Street and will be open until 5PM. The detailed event plan will be presented in the March Sidetracks.

Event 4: June 26, Rahns PA.

Title: Live Steam Day.

Project Officer: Dan Horting (dhorting@susquehannamra.org).

Location: PA Live Steamers (PLS), Rahns PA - approximately 7 miles north of Valley Forge.

Schedule: 11AM-Approximately 4PM.

Comments: The program will begin with an introduction covering the extensive history, construction, and operation of the railroad. The PLS operates a variety of live steam and diesel equipment in 1.5", 1.0", ¾" scale, and 1 gauge on an elevated track. Train rides will be provided to those who wish to take a loop around their extensive grounds. All facets of this very specialized segment of model railroading will be on display along with detailed presentations. Directions as well as the detailed agenda will be provided in the March Sidetracks.

Event 5: September 17-18, Blue Ridge Summit PA.

Title: Mainline Hobby Weekend Layout Open Houses.

Project Officer: Ron Smith (rsmith@susquehannamra.org).

Location: Mainline Hobby Supply, 15066 Buchanan Trail East, Blue Ridge Summit PA.

Schedule: 9AM-4PM Saturday (17th) and 11AM-4PM Sunday (18th).

Comments: Our Division has sponsored this event for many years. Although Mainline Hobby is not physically in our assigned Division area, they are just across the Adams County line which is our southern-most county. More importantly they have always provided excellent support to members throughout our Division and particularly those residing in our southern counties.

In May we will contact layout owners within our Division area who participated last year and request your continued support for our 2016 program. If you would like to open your layout for the 2016 event kindly contact our project officer. The primary requirement for participation is being within an hour or so ride from Blue Ridge Summit. There are also many layouts within the South Mountain Division area that will be open. Free map booklets to all layouts will be available both days at the Mainline Hobby registration desk.

There were 25 layouts open last year with over 250 visitors. All popular scales are represented – from N to G. We had 10 layouts from our Susquehanna Division area. A final key attraction at this event - Mainline Hobby will be open each day and offering several special discounts during the event.

Event 6: September 30 and October 1, 2016, Central Susquehanna Valley and Allentown/Lehigh Valley.

Title: LSOP8.

Project Officer: Wayne Betty (wsb@susquehannanmra.org).

Location: Three layouts in the Greater Harrisburg-Lancaster area and three layouts in the Greater Allentown-Lehigh Valley area.

Schedule: In each area, one layout on Friday evening (Sep 30) and two layouts on Saturday (Oct 1).

Comments: For helpful information about this very popular annual operations event, schedules for all six layouts, registration procedures, and the registration form, kindly review the website at: <http://www.susquehannanmra.org/LSOP/LSOP8/default.htm>.

Event 7: November 5-20, 2016, Division-Wide Layout Open Houses.

Title: Susquehanna Division Grand Layout Tour.

Project Officer: Looking for volunteers. If interested in managing this great event or have questions contact Barry at sbschmitt@susquehannanmra.org or 717-877-1810.

Location: All 32 Division-Wide counties.

Schedule: The three weekend events are Nov 5-6, 12-13, and 19-20. The southern sub program will be over the Nov 5-6 weekend and the mountain and eastern sub weekend selections will be determined later this month and announced in the March Sidetracks.

Comments: The November 2016 Grand Layout Tour program will be our fourth Division-wide 32 county layout open house event in support of National Model Railroad month. Every year we added new layouts to the tour. If you haven't opened your empire to the program, will hope you join our 2016 venture. The Mountain and Eastern Subs dates will be presented in the March Sidetracks and a more extensive project article in the May issue. If interested in adding your layout to the Grand Layout Tour kindly contact Barry at sbschmitt@susquehannanmra.org or 717-877-1810.

Thanks to the excellent project management of this event since 2013 by Lee Rainey this year's project should not require a great deal of time for the new project officer. This is a great opportunity for a Division member to get their feet wet in helping us provide top quality programs for all of our members. Simply put – without volunteer help no events would be possible. And please don't believe you must live within the greater Harrisburg- Lancaster area to be a project manager or that you'll be flying solo without assistance. Lee managed this project for two years while living in State College and spending a great deal of time on business and personal trips throughout the country. And equally important, Lee advises he will be just an email or phone call away whenever you need advice or help. So if you want to volunteer as our Grand Layout Tour project manager or have questions contact Lee at lrainey@susquehannanmra.org or 814-404-3968.

2016 Susquehanna Division Event Plan - When, What & Where

Feb 20, Clinics and Layout Visits, Mechanicsburg PA.

Apr 16, Mini-Con, Blue Ridge Summit PA.

May ?, Clinics and Layout Visits, Eastern PA Area.

June 26, Live Steam Day, Rahns PA.

Sep 17-18, Mainline Hobby Layout Open House Weekend, Blue Ridge Summit PA.

Sep 30-Oct 1, LSOP8, Lancaster-Harrisburg and Allentown-Lehigh Valley.

Nov 5-6, 12-13, and 19-20, Division Grand Layout Tour, Division-Wide.

Note: follow event updates in future Sidetracks newsletters.



2017 MER Convention

At last September’s BOD meeting the Division placed our name in the hat to host the 2017 MER Convention. Although the official decision will be made at the MER BOD meeting later this month we have been assured we will host for the 2017 convention.

Since then we formed our 2017 Convention Planning Committee and held two initial organizational meetings – November 16 and December 7. At the December meeting we selected Bob Charles (MMR) as our Local Convention Chairman (LCC) and Brian Kampschroer as our Assistant Local Convention Chairman (LCC-Assist). We are very fortunate to have Bob leading our program where he will call on his many years of experiences as NMRA President, leadership at regional and division level, and chairman of the very successful 1985 National Convention in Valley Forge. Brian also brings extensive experience as NMRA Convention Chairman and designation as a Professional Meeting Planner. Other members of the committee are David Collison, Howard Oakes, Wayne Betty, Lee Rainey, Ron Smith, Paul Tice, Rich Wurst, Dan Horting, John Wissinger (MMR), Bill Lesjak, Jim Long, Forrest Lucas, Harry Haddon, Brian Brandt, Pat Mulrooney, Rob McClenaghan, and Barry Schmitt.

Our main focus right now is selecting a convention hotel. Hotels in Altoona, Gettysburg, Carlisle, greater Harrisburg, and Lancaster have been visited. The top candidates will be presented at the next committee meeting where we will select our final hotel choice. Once that is decided we will begin fleshing out the program, setting convention dates, appointing subcommittee chairman, and selecting the convention name. If you would like to serve on the planning committee kindly contact either Bob Charles or Brian Kampschroer at bcharles@susquehannanmra.org or rrelf@aol.com respectively.

We will keep you up to date on this major project in future Sidetracks.

February 20th, 2016 Division Meet

Division 11 will once again hold a winter meeting at Grace United Methodist Church in Mechanicsburg, PA. The date is set for Saturday February 20th at 9 AM. The doors will open at 8:45.

In addition to our Business Meeting, we have two clinicians lined up along with our Model Showcase program. Rich Wurst will present a clinic on modeling frugally, and Jim Long will discuss spline roadbed and his mountain scenery techniques. Three layouts are scheduled to be open for afternoon visits, including the Keystone Model RR Club; Bob Charles in Camp Hill; and Jim Long (where you can see the results of his clinic).

9:00 – 9:15: Meet, greet, and registration with coffee and donuts.

9:15 – 9:30: Welcome and information for the good of the Division.

9:30 – 10:15: Clinic 1 – Spine Roadbed Construction and My 10 Steps to Building Mountain Scenery – Clinician: Jim Long.

10:15 – 10:30: Break.

10:30 – 11:15: Clinic 2 – The Frugal (Cheap) Model Railroader – Clinician: Rich Wurst (see below).

11:15 – 11:25: Break.

11:25 – 12:10: Clinic 3 – Model Showcase – Facilitator: John Wissinger, MMR (see next page).

12:10 – 12:30: Closing and handout afternoon layout maps.

12:30 – 1:15: Lunch on your own – list of nearby eateries will be available.

1:15 – 4:00: Layout visits - Bob Charles (MMR) in Camp Hill, and Jim Long and the Keystone Model Railroad Club in Mechanicsburg.

There is a map to the morning meeting location on the next page. We hope to see you there!

THE FRUGAL (CHEAP) MODEL RAILROADER

Model railroaders are a unique type of hobbyist. Our hobby has all levels of skill and experience. However, there is one common characteristic that I have observed over the years. That trait is frugality (also known more commonly as being cheap). We all want the best and most accurate locomotives, rolling stock, structures, accessories and scenery; yet we balk at paying top dollar for these items.

As a premier frugalist, I would like to share some ideas, thoughts and concepts that rely on common household items many consider disposable trash. Your outlook on these simple items will focus on the 'what ifs', 'how can I use it' and combining parts as well as selective cannibalism. We will explore the uses of fishing line, tape cores, bottle caps, fabric accessories, coffee stirrers, drinking straws, security envelopes, aluminum foil, plastic wheelsets, modeling scrap, etc. All of these recyclables can be applied to accent scenery, construct car loads, add details to layouts and **save money!**

Please join me and experience the world of the Frugal Model Railroader!

Rich Wurst

Model Showcase

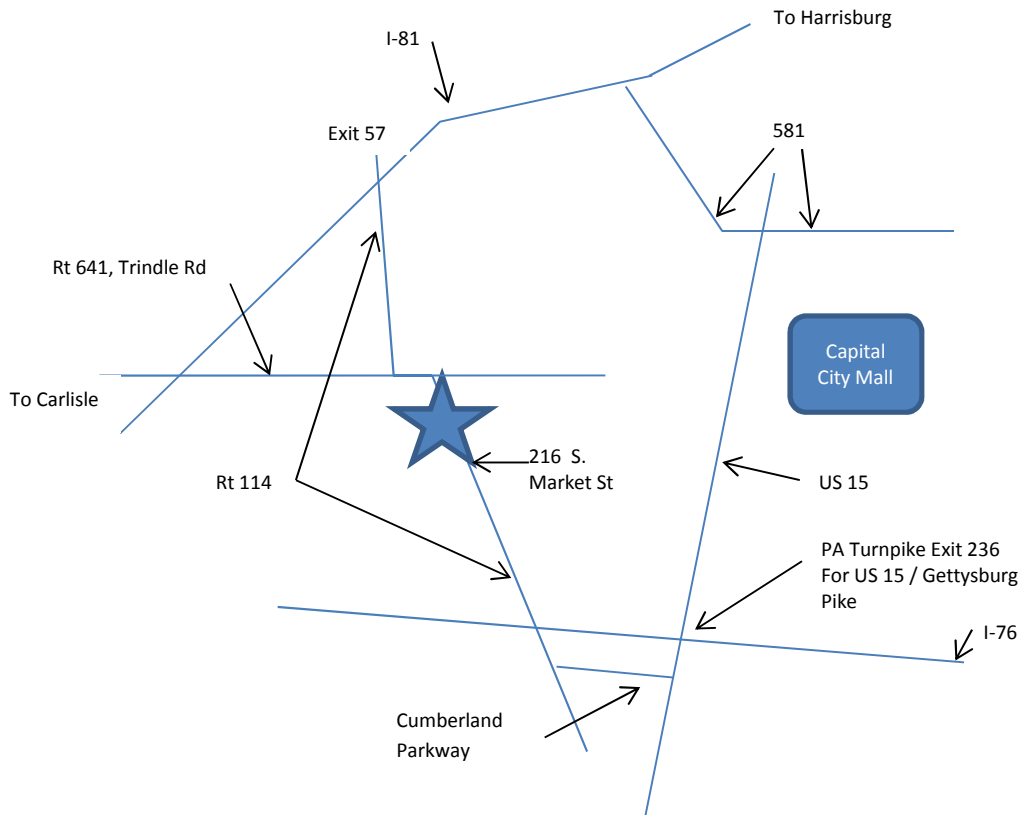
We will be having a Model Showcase event at our February meeting. I would like everyone to bring in a model to show. I was very disappointed at the turnout at the last meeting; there were only 3 or 4 models. Unfortunately I had a funeral to attend and I left before the meeting started and got back just as it was ending.

As I have mentioned in previous articles regarding the Model Showcase, this is intended for all members to bring a model to show to the other modelers in the room. This is not meant for the best modelers to show off their super modeling skills. I have been a member of several divisions in other regions and their model displays are well attended. I recently received the Pittsburgh division (MCR) newsletter and in their December meeting there were 9 models on display. In the Livonia MI division (NCR) meeting there were 31 models on display, because the custom there is for each member to bring in a model or pay a "fine." At the Lansing MI division (NCR) newsletter, I counted photographs of 11 models. Having attended their division meetings for over 10 years, I am sure there were more models that did not make it into the newsletter.

So guys, let's get on the ball and see if we can beat those divisions. Don't be afraid to show a model. You may be surprised at the comments you get. As a suggestion, the theme this month will be house cars (box, refrigerator, cabooses, etc.) in any form, kits, kit-bashed, ready to run, scratch built, weathered, non-weathered etc. and in any scale, gauge etc. You can display other models also. Near each model please put your name and what the model is on a card, it will make it easier for me to write an article for the next Susquehanna Sidetracks.

John Wissinger

Map to Grace United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg PA



Grace United Methodist Church is on the corner of S. Market Street (Rt 114) and Simpson Street in downtown Mechanicsburg. If you have any questions about the event, please contact me at rsmith@susquehannamra.org.

Pike Ads are available for \$10 for a 6-issue year. This fee helps to further offset the cost of mailing hard-copy newsletters, and your support is greatly appreciated. For information about placing an ad, please contact Ron Smith at rsmith@susquehannamra.org

PIKE ADS



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One Masonic Drive
 Elizabethtown, PA 17022
 Phone: 717-361-5180

Open Houses the first weekend monthly Sept. thru April: Sat-Sun 2 - 4 PM. Extra times at Christmas

Masonic Village & Elizabethtown Model RR Club.
 Meets 7:30 PM the first Tuesday Sept- June



FORKS RIDGE RAILWAY




Gary P. Nastase-President & CEO
 Kathleen A. Nastase-Train Wifey
 207 State Street
 Woodbury, PA 16695
gpnastase@aol.com

Route of the Whitetail



B&O WESTON SUBDIVISION
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THE BALTIMORE & OHIO RAILROAD



Ron Smith

Modeling the Southern Tier of New York in N Scale
 717-253-1431
rs25760@hotmail.com



SHORT LINE
 ESTD 1989
MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

WWW.SLMRC.COM
 11 S. STATE STREET | EPHRATA, PA

Saturdays and Sundays

**Jan 2-3 and 9-10, 1-4 PM
Ephrata, PA**

The Short Line Model RR Club 26th
Annual Holiday Train Show
11 S. State Street (entrance at rear
of building). Free, donations
welcome.

Saturdays and Sundays

**Jan 9-10 & 23-24, Noon-4 PM
Elkins Park, PA**

Cheltenham Hills Model RR Club
8000 Old York Rd (located in the
former Reading RR train station!)

<http://www.cheltenham-hillsmrr.org>

Saturdays and Sundays

**Jan 9-10, 16-17 & 23-24
Phoenixville PA**

Winter Open House at Schuylkill
Valley Model RR Club, 400 S. Main
Street, free admission.

4 layouts covering 1000 sq. ft.

www.svmrc.com

Jan 23-24, 2016

York, PA

Greenburg Train Show
York Expo Center

www.TrainShow.com

**Jan 30-31 2016 W. Springfield MA
Railroad Hobby Show**

Eastern States Exposition Center
W. Springfield MA
Advanced purchase is \$14 each day
or \$25 for both days. See:

www.railroadhobbyshow.com

*(Admittedly a day's drive from most of
our members, but one of the largest
shows on the East Coast. – Ed.)*

Saturday Feb 20, 2016

Mechanicsburg PA 9 AM – 4 PM

Division 11 Meet
Grace United Methodist Church
214 S. Market Street
See page 9 for more details

Saturday March 12, 2016

Churchville, PA

Southampton Railroad Station
Society Symposium examining
railroads and their impact on
southeastern PA. \$35, includes
lunch. Numerous guest speakers.
Meeting at North & Southampton
Reformed Church, 1380 Bristol Rd.
*(Website is not up to date; refer to
ad in January Railpace p.6.)*

March 18-20, 2016

Malvern, PA

**Railroad Prototype Modelers
Meet \$35 Registration**

Desmond Great Valley Hotel,
Malvern PA (Valley Forge)
Operating sessions, 60 prototype
clinics, Sunday Open House Tours
www.RPMValleyForge.com

2016 Division 10 & 11 Mini-Con

**Blue Ridge Summit, PA
Saturday April 16th**

See page 5 for more details

**2016 N Scale Enthusiast National
Convention**

**Overland Park, KS
June 29 – July 3**

2016 NMRA Convention

**Indianapolis, IN
July 3-10**

**2016 National Narrow Gauge
Convention**

**Augusta, ME
September 7-10**



October 20-23, 2016

**2016 MER Fall
Convention**

Tracks to the Triangle

www.mer2016.org



Make your plans now to join us next Fall
from October 20 – 23, 2016 at Tracks to
the Triangle in Durham, NC!

LSOP-7

The Lehigh/Susquehanna OPerations weekend number 7 kicked off on Friday October 2 as Larry Reynolds (Lehigh) and Mike Hartlet's (Susquehanna) hosted first sessions in this Operations weekend. There were a total of 26 participants in both areas, spanning operations on 6 layouts. In addition to the participants and the layout owners, there were at least 10 local crew members participating.



The crew picture at Larry Reynolds session on Friday night.



The Altoona yard crew for Larry Reynolds session pauses before a very busy session. From left to right: Bob Lyter (local crew), David Collison (LSOP7), Jim Hertzog (layout owner), Doug Watts (local crew and past president of the OPSIG) and Ross Kudlick (LSOP7)



Altoona yard a few minutes later, as all crews get busy.



Larry Reynolds checks out the operation at MG tower during the session.



That's Division 11 Director David Collison in the foreground and OPSIG President Jim Dalberg (middle) operating on Jim Hertzog's Reading Shamokin Division.



Friday night at Mike Hartlett's, Jeff Thompson takes time out from working the Blue Mountain yard to give us wave...

On November 14th I traveled to the Altoona / State College area to visit some of the layouts that were participating in our Open House Tours. Although kind of a gray and damp day for the most part, it was a most enjoyable journey!



Above: An overview of Gary Nastase's Forks' Ridge Railway. Much of this layout was salvaged from a previous layout and re-purposed for the new basement.



Above: Another view of the progress Gary has made recently. Speaking from experience, there is nothing like hosting an Open House to find some motivation...

Below: Gary and his wife Kathleen pose with Ruth St. John (the new Mrs. Ron Smith!) and Forrest Lucas.



Fortunately for me Ruth had her camera, as your not-so-bright Editor brought his camera but left the SD card at home!

Below: Gary has a small fleet of hoppers lettered for his home road, the Forks Ridge Railway.



I do hope Gary's layout recovered from my unsolicited DCC advice...

My next visit was Lee Rainey's home. Lee had several narrow gauge modules setup in one portion of his basement, and is currently working on an HO / HO3 representation of the PRR and EBT in Mt. Union.



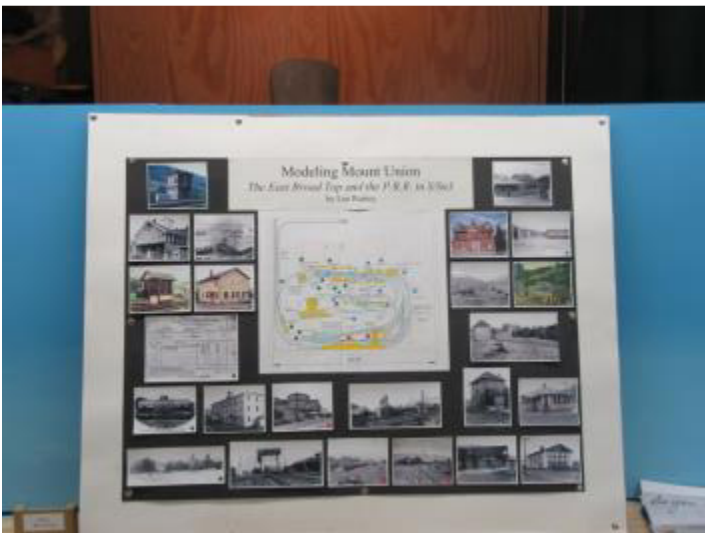
Above: Lee discusses the industries that once existed in Mt. Union with a visitor. Division 11 member Bob Schildt is in the background taking it all in.



Above: A set of S scale narrow gauge Free-Mo modules based on Maine two-footers.

Below: Various historic photos of structures in Mt. Union and the trackplan that will incorporate them.

Below: Another two-foot gauge module. Note the foundation at left that allows for removal of structures for transport.



My next stop was Jere Herr's home to see his Lancaster-based Pennsylvania Railroad layout.



Above: Upon entering the layout room, I was greeted by the sight of double-headed GG-1's!



Above: A reverse loop and staging tracks occupy one end of the layout room.

Below: Lancaster station is a busy place. Jere and his crew regularly operate the layout, running passenger trains and local freights.



Below: Jere has built a circus scene. In the background is a block of homes that are based on his childhood home in Lancaster.



Then it was on to the Bald Eagle Railroad of Tom Vaughn. This is an “S” Hi-Rail layout based on the Nittany and Bald Eagle Railroad, which passes near Tom’s house. Tom uses Digitrax DCC and hosts operating sessions once a month.



I also visited Todd Treaster’s N scale masterpiece , but did not take photos. (Guess I was too overwhelmed by so much N scale!) There literally were not enough hours in the day to see all the layouts available in the Mountain Subdivision!

On behalf of the BOD I wish to thank all the folks who opened their homes to visitors during our entire November Layout Tour event, and a special note of thanks to the wives and family members of the layout hosts. All of you whom I met were very gracious and this event would not be possible without your support.

Ron Smith

The Station



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