



Volume 28

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11,
Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Number 2



AMHERST RAILWAY SOCIETY

The Amherst Railway Society was founded in 1963. This society has grown to over 400 railway enthusiasts (the majority residing in MA). Located in Palmer, MA it is the site of the society and the home to seven railroads.

Two model railroad clubs operate within the Amherst Railway Society - the Amherst Belt Lines and the Dry Hill Model Railroad Club. The Amherst Belt Lines is a **modular** layout, while the Dry Hill Model Railroad Club operates a **sectional** layout. The difference is that a sectional layout has a common theme that holds it together – scenery, era, purpose – and gives it the look of a completed layout. A sectional layout almost always goes together the same way all the time, with exceptions only for pieces that are missing or added during the life of the layout.

A modular layout can have a common theme, but relies solely on a standard interface between different modules for assembly. This means that a modular layout can be assembled in any sequence to present a new layout at different shows – the Amherst Belt Lines has rarely, if ever, assembled a layout the same way twice. It also means that if a piece is missing or added, there is little planning required to make the piece fit with other modules.

Amherst Railway Society members are eligible to participate in one or both of the model railroad clubs. Additionally, plans are underway for a permanent, fixed layout, thereby providing three types of layouts for members to operate and the community to enjoy.

Since 1985 the Society has sponsored the annual Railroad Hobby Show at the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield, MA during the last weekend in January. This model railroad show is the largest hobby event in the United States. In size it covers 472,000 sq. ft. in four buildings, plus 10 acres for outdoor exhibits and a live steam locomotive that runs on 100 feet of track. The January, 2020 show attracted 21,534 visitors (does not include vendors, exhibitors and model railroad operators) over a two-day event (up about 600 each of the last two years). Profits from the shows not only



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From the Superintendent's Desk – Tim Himmelberger

As I sit at my computer writing this column, I am still trying to process the big announcement yesterday in Orbisonia/Rock Hill, PA where a non-profit group purchased the East Broad Top Railroad (see **page 7 for news release**). I for one am looking forward to the day where I can once again ride the EBT . I am sure that we are all wishing them the best.

Our next meeting which Pat Mulrooney and Jeff Thompson are working on will be the April 4th meeting in New Holland. Please see their article on page 14.

May 2nd is Columbia Railroad day in Columbia, where else would that be held. Please see Barry Schmitt's article on page 17.

Further out, Phil Peters and Howard Oakes are working on the meeting for June 20th in New Oxford, PA. Dennis Blank is working on another meeting in Denver on August 22nd. October 2nd and 3rd Wayne Betty is working on putting together the annual LSOP, or operate until you drop event. It is not too early to start making plans for this years convention. The dates are October 15th to the 18th. It will be at the Crowne Plaza Charlotte, NC. The year concludes with the November Open House Tour.

This year we will be electing our slate of officers for the Division. So please consider this carefully. The convention gave many of you the opportunity to serve and serve well. This is one more opportunity. Please see the article detailing the nomination process on page 6.

The Division web page has been moved to the new site. For now, the website will look the same. However, that will change as we move forward. We all owe a debt of thanks to Wayne Betty for furnishing the division web page for years at no cost to the Division.

Time to go back in the basement and work on trains. Progress has been made as the mainline progresses into the helix, gaining elevation towards the top level.



Tim Himmelberger

Second Section

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
5 Hardy Court, Lancaster, PA 17602

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 April 18, 2020

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www.nmra.org

Editor's Message

Greetings!

Since the last issue of *Sidetracks* no one has contacted me with any features, news events or model railroad clubs wishing to be spotlighted. The newsletter is our Division means of communication. I would be most grateful for members contributing feedback and input.

Let's hear from members in the northeastern part of our Division. I'm sure there are numerous clubs and personal layouts that would gladly share their layouts with all our other members. Just a few photos and a short description of your work would be of interest to all. Why not brag a little!

As always any articles, events or photos you wish to have published please contact me via email (rjwurst@comcast.net or editor@susquehannanmra.org).

Rich



**Broadway Limited 4-6-2 Heavy Pacific CNJ
'Blue Comet'**

2020 Division Calendar of Events

April 4 – New Holland, PA - Pat Mulrooney and Jeff Thompson

May 2 - Columbia Railroad Day, Columbia, PA – Barry Schmitt and Bill Lesjak

June 20 – New Oxford, PA – Phil Peters and Howard Oakes

August 22– Denver, PA- Dennis Blank

Oct 2 – 3 – LSOP – Wayne Betty

October 15 – 18 Charlotte, NC, MER Convention, Carolina Southern Division

Nov 7 – 8, 14 – 15, 21 – 22 Section-wide Open House Tour



Harold Werthwein's ERIE RAILROAD

Division Officer Nominations

It is now 2020. This being an even numbered year it's once again time to ask for nominations for our three Division Officer positions. They are: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and Clerk (Secretary – Treasurer). Each will be elected for a two-year term from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022. To be an Officer, you must be a member of the NMRA, reside in the Susquehanna Division 11 area, and be at least 21 years of age. You may nominate yourself or another member you feel is qualified; however, in fairness to that individual please verify they would be willing to serve. If we receive more than four nominees each will be asked to provide a short (200 words or less) bio-sketch that will then be provided to all members in the May edition of Sidetracks.

The timeline for the 2020 Officer voting program is:

March 30, 2020: Submit nominations to Tim Himmelberger, Superintendent, either by phone at 717-454-8033 or email at super@susquehannanmra.org. I need to know so that if need be, I can turn the dogs loose for some serious recruiting.

April 15, 2020: Candidate bio-sketches due either to Tim by email (see above address) or USPS (19 Penny Lane, Lebanon, PA 17046). Short bio-sketches (200 words or less) required only if there are more than one candidate for each office. Please note that this is so we can get it out in the May Sidetracks.) Please note our Sidetracks editor, Rich Wurst is doing an excellent job. He is putting forth an extra effort in getting Sidetracks out in a timely manner. Trust me that is no mean feat. So please be considerate as he gets everything together for the newsletter and having it distributed in a timely manner. The suggestion is if you are nominating yourself submit your bio-sketch with your nomination.

May 1, 2020: Ballots and nominee bio-sketches (only if we receive more than one candidate for any position) sent to members in the May edition of Sidetracks for vote.

May 31, 2020: Ballots received by either email or USPS.

July 2020: Vote announced in July Sidetracks.

Please seriously consider running for a Division Officer position. Our annual programs are developed under the leadership of your Board of Directors (BOD) and all Division policies are approved by your BOD. Therefore, this is your opportunity to get involved in deciding the future direction of your NMRA Division. I know most members are very busy with job, family, hobby projects, and other community programs and therefore believe serving on our BOD would simply require too much time. On the contrary, our BOD only meets in person once per year – all other matters are handled by either email or phone. So once again, please give this important request your most thoughtful consideration. This is an excellent opportunity for you to have a direct say in how your Division is managed, and it does not require a great deal of your valuable free time. Please give me a call or send me an email if you have questions about the elections or our BOD operations at super@susquehannanmra.org or 717-454-8033.

East Broad Top News Release

February 14, 2020

Dear Friend of the East Broad Top,

Today, the East Broad Top Railroad announced that the Kovalchick family has agreed to sell the railroad in its entirety to the non-profit EBT Foundation, Inc. a newly formed group of prominent railroad industry figures, philanthropists, and longtime EBT enthusiasts.

The Kovalchick family has been a gracious steward of the East Broad Top Railroad for over 60 years. They kept this unique national treasure alive by running excursions for 50 years and have maintained it intact as a single collection of magnificent artifacts until a new and able custodian could be identified and readied to take on the awesome responsibility.

The new group is led by one of our own, Brad Esposito. Brad is a professional railroader with a background in both operations and management. He has been a member and active FEBT volunteer for many years. David Brightbill and Lawrence Biemiller round out the Foundation's management team. Both of their ties run deep; David is a former EBT employee, FEBT member, and Railways to Yesterday Board member while Lawrence is FEBT's own Secretary, long-time volunteer, and shop tour guide.

The Foundation is determined to preserve every possible aspect of the railroad and to restore operations. The long-term hope is to expand operations to areas not accessed since 1956.

As successful as Brad and his team have been in recruiting both staff and financial resources, he has clearly expressed that the EBT's survival and future success is also heavily dependent upon us, the Friends of the East Broad Top. Your Directors and I have been working closely with him and his team to define and develop the ways that the FEBT will be a part of the future EBT and how our resources can be best brought to bear.

FEBT restoration volunteers have often said that 'we don't know what the future may hold, but we're working to ensure the EBT is ready for it when it arrives.' Now that there is a clearly defined future path for the EBT, we must all pitch in to help ensure this future is successful and enduring.



You can support this future in two ways: financial contributions and volunteer help. Our restoration funds will continue to support the restoration work that FEBT volunteers do all around the railroad. This now must proceed at an even faster pace to assist the resumption of operations. In order to accelerate the pace of work, we also need additional volunteers more than ever. As only one example, the Foundation has expressed that completion of Combine 14 is a priority and we need your help to accomplish this.

For nearly four decades, FEBT has been working to preserve the memory of the East Broad Top Railroad. This unique National Historic Landmark showcases both industrial technology in its original context and the way people lived and worked during the first half of the 20th Century.

Through letters, *Timber Transfer*, and the new FEBT website, we'll keep you up to date on the progress as FEBT partners with the Foundation to return the EBT to a vibrant historical experience. In the meantime, FEBT continues to welcome your donations, and your hands-on help in Rockhill and Robertsdale. Donations may be sent to:

Ray Davidowski
FEBT Fundraising Treasurer
PO Box 81
Sarver, PA 16055

FEBTfundraisingtreasurer@gmail.com

Please make checks payable to FEBT. You may also donate online (credit card and Paypal accepted) at the FEBT Company Store: <https://febt.org/Costore/>

For information about volunteer opportunities at the railroad in 2020, visit febt.org/volunteer/

Yours truly,

Andrew H. Van Scyoc, President

Friends of the East Broad Top, Inc .

vanscyoc@gmail.com



AMHERST RAILWAY SOCIETY, continued from page 1

assist the Society financially but provide grants and donations to non-profit museums, organizations and foundations which promote education, restoration and furtherance of railroad heritage.

Planning for the show is a year-round project. The 2021 show managers have already begun contacting manufacturers, model railroad clubs, model railroad vendors, food vendors, etc. The show director's position is a full-time job!

I was privileged to attend this year's show. It was an overwhelming experience! What I found unique was the representation of all the major model train and accessory manufacturers. The ability to speak directly with manufacturer's sales people about current and planned products was very enlightening. Additionally, hundreds of private vendors offered items that were both common and uncommon. Modular and sectional model railroad clubs representing all scales set up and operated their layouts for visitors. Show organizers and several manufacturers offered workshops that offered training for hundreds of topics. Overall, visiting the Amherst Show was a thrill. When you think you have seen it all there seems to be more to see, hear and experience! If you have never attended this show be sure to place it on your 'model railroading' bucket list!







Monson Railroad Narrow Gauge live steam 0-4-0



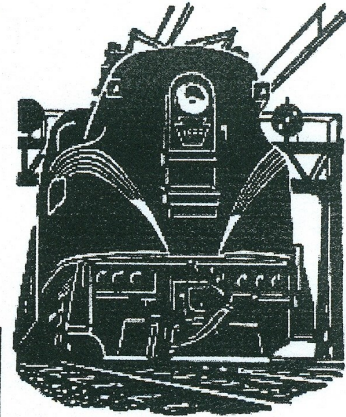
article and photos by Humphrey (Hump) Yard

Thirty Fourth Annual Harrisburg

RAILROAD SHOW & COLLECTORS MARKET

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2020

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



**I. W. Abel Union Hall
(Steelworkers Union)
200 Gibson Street
Steelton, PA 17113**

**HARRIS TOWER WILL BE
OPEN THIS DAY. SEE
NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS.**

Conveniently located 1 mile south of I-83 in Harrisburg. From I-83 N, use exit 44B, then go south on 19th Street to Gibson. Turn right. From I-83 S, use exit 44B, make a left at stop sign, then left on Paxton St., then right onto 19th St. to Gibson St. Turn right on Gibson.

- Railroadiana
- Movies
- Model Railroad Items
- Snack Bar
- Train Layouts
- Test Track
- Program on Railroads of Lemoine at 11 am.

SPONSORED BY THE HARRISBURG CHAPTER, NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. (a non-profit educational organization)

Donation at the Door: \$5.00 Children under 12: FREE

Vendor Information: _____ Date _____

Name _____ Types of items sold _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (D) _____ (N) _____ e-mail _____

_____ (#) 8' Tables @ \$25.00 each = \$ _____

Note: Each table includes two admissions. Make check to Harrisburg Chapter, NRHS.

_____ (#) Additional admissions = \$ _____

Total Enclosed = \$ _____ Wall space _____ Electricity _____

Information and Table Reservations: Mark Irvin, 3814 Leyland Dr., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Telephone: 717-732-3867 (For table confirmation, please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

Website: <http://harrisburgnrhs.org>

E/mail address: irvinwepfer@msn.com

Harrisburg Chapter NRHS will not be responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items or any accidents of any kind.

NOTICE: All vendors are responsible for collecting 6% PA Sales Tax. State law requires that all vendors have a temporary or permanent PA Sales Tax License. The Chapter's Promoters License No. is 10001519.

Harris Tower

ONE OF A KIND INTERACTIVE EXHIBIT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Located in downtown Harrisburg at the corner of 7th and Walnut Streets (across from The Forum), Harris Tower Railroad Museum will be open for visits on March 14, 2020. The Museum 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 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. After an extensive restoration project spanning more than 15 years and thousands of dollars and volunteer hours, Harris Tower opened to the public as a living history, interpretive rail museum in 2008. The centerpiece of the exhibit is the tower's Interlocking Machine and Model Board, both of which are fully operable. Visitors to Harris 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 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.**

The tower lies adjacent to very active railroad lines, making Harris a perfect vantage point for youngsters and railroad buffs to view and photograph dozens of Norfolk Southern and Amtrak trains each day from a safe location, regardless of the weather. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. From the train show at the Union Hall, go downhill on Gibson Street and right on Rt. 230 (Cameron St.). Proceed underneath three overhead bridges until you get to Market St. Turn left on Market. Immediately after the next overhead bridge (railroad), turn right on Fifth, then right at the light on Walnut. Harris Tower is directly ahead; the parking lot is just past the Tower on the right. When you are ready to leave, turn right from the parking lot to exit. For a schedule of times when Harris is open during 2020 or for additional information or for group visits visit www.harristower.org or contact the Harrisburg Chapter of the NRHS at 717-232-6221 or by e-mail at HarrisTower@verizon.net.



APRIL DIVISION MEET

April 4, 2020

The April Division meet will be held in New Holland, PA. The location is Our Lady of Lourdes Social Hall, at 150 Water St., New Holland, PA 17557. The event will begin at 9 AM with coffee and donuts and some time to socialize with other members and discuss their latest efforts with their railroads. The Division Business Meeting will commence at 9:30 and wrap up about 10:15. The meeting will include announcements and updates about the Division and Region as well as dates and locations of future NMRA events. It also includes the introduction of new members and the presentation of any awards and achievement certificates earned by Division members since the last meeting

We're having two clinics that morning, one on **The Basics of Scratch Building** presented by Alan Mende and the other on **Fiber Optic Lighting** by Michael Groves with Dwarvin "Lighting without Wiring". Both of these gentlemen have extensive knowledge in their areas of expertise and are sure to provide interesting and informative clinics.

Introducing Lighting without Wiring by Dwarvin Enterprises

If you are tired of wiring, join the club. I moved my layout from one state to another and found after several years of waiting to reassemble it that most of the labels had fallen off the wires. So, after converting the system to DCC I was left with the challenge - how to add lighting again without all that wiring spaghetti.

The solution was to invent a very high intensity light source so that I could use optical fiber. While that took several years of fooling around, it eventually came together and I used it on my layout with great success. With my grandchildren coming of age we decided to take it commercial, and so Dwarvin Enterprises was formed.

We produce the so called Lamplighter™ Starter Kits that get you up and running lighting buildings in less than minutes [Lamplighter Starter Kit].

It's a 3 step process:

1. Mount the Lamplighter box under your layout.
2. Drill a hole under the building to be lit.
3. Insert the fiber into the box and up into the building, and you are done.



The two great advantages of this system is **no wiring is needed** and **no knowledge of electronics is required!**

We also provide a range of different lights for scenery, or you can make your own.

Here are a couple of images from customers who have used the lighting:



At Christmas time it's great to add a bit of the season to a layout. So we focused on a scratch built pub, took some fiber, shaped it, painted it, nicked it and colored the nicks red and green using markers. The result is a more appealing pub, to which one of my customers remarked, "I like how you did it, but more than that, I'd like to be at the pub this Christmas"!





Following the clinics there will be a modeler's showcase where everyone is encouraged to bring a model to discuss. The model does not have to be finished, it can be a work in progress, a drawing, a mock up or anything that you have been working on that could provide insight and interest to other modelers. Following the meeting, a list of local eateries will be provided along with directions to local model railroads that will be open for tours. Save the date, we look forward to seeing you on April 4th.

article submitted by Pat Mulrooney

NMRA Event

Columbia Railroad Day- Saturday May 2, 2020

The Susquehanna Division of the NMRA, Lancaster PA NRHS Chapter, the Columbia Historic Preservation Society, and the Columbia & Reading Railway Company (CORY) are sponsoring the 2nd Annual Columbia Railroad Day. Last year this premier event was a huge success with over 500 attendees who enjoyed all the railroading activities available to them from model railroading, historical lectures and a visit to the CORY facilities.

The 2020 event will feature a Civil War theme and will be held at three locations in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Attendees will be able to visit the Columbia Historic Preservation Society at 21 North 2nd St., where they can enjoy the large HO Columbia & Susquehanna Model Railroad Club on the 2nd floor (club photo on right). On the first floor, the Lower Susquehanna Model Railroad Club will be displaying their "O" Gauge modular layout which will be surrounded by various model railroad displays and activities presented by the NMRA Susquehanna Division.



The second location will be the Columbia Crossings River Trails Center (see photo below) located at 41 Walnut Street where lectures will focus on the history of railroading during the Civil War. Currently scheduled to appear are Park Manager and Ranger Doug Bosley from the Allegheny Portage Railroad Historic Site discussing Civil War canals and their link to the railroads in the area which moved troops and supplies during the conflict. Scott Mingus, a noted author, will be discussing Civil War railroads from Gettysburg to Columbia. Well-known historian, author and model railroader Bernard Kempinski will provide two presentations – one on Railroads of the Civil War and another describing his Civil War model railroad - The Aquia Line. And lastly, there will be a presentation describing how the Underground Railroad used the railways around Columbia. There will be food available at this site from "Rosies" - a well-known Columbia restaurant featuring the local favorite "The Shifter". There are also plans for a Civil War encampment by the river with re-enactors talking about the war.



Photo courtesy of the Columbia Crossings
River Trail Center website

The third location will be an open house at the Columbia and Reading Railway Company and their sister firm Rail Mechanical Services, Inc (RMS) located at 380 South 4th St. On the next page are photos of several activities featured at the CORY facility during last year's event. There will be maintenance demonstrations of the work they do such as hot riveting. Participants will be able to see their current restoration projects and view the equipment they use to do their work. There are many other activities being planned at the CORY site to include a return of several local chapter Speeder groups. Food may also be available here as well as a possible bluegrass band. Various vendors will be present selling everything from model railroading items to railroad memorabilia. This is a great place to visit to see what is involved working on a real (yes, 1:1 scale) railroad.



Columbia & Reading ALCO S2 switcher



Rail Mechanical Services restoration of a Baltimore PCC



Speeders on display at Rail Mechanical Services yard

Rail Mechanical Services building a coach for 'Steam into History'

Getting around to the three sites will be easy. You can walk or drive between the first two sites, drive to the third or take the Hop-On Hop-Off trolley bus (see photo below) that will operate continuously between all three locations. Also, additional historical information will be provided as you travel through Columbia.



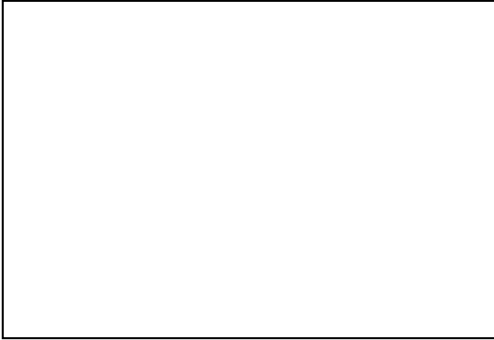
The all-day program will run from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, and all the activities are free. The only charge is a one time all-day \$5.00 charge for riding the trolley. Clearly, this is a can't miss railroad focused event for rail aficionados of any age and specific interest.

Should you have any questions about this rain or shine program contact **Bill Lesjak** at wclesjak2@comcast.net or call 717-751-2391.

Columbia & Susquehanna Model Railroad Club photos



article submitted by Bill Lesjak
and Barry Schmitt



LOOK SOUTH IN 2020

Carolina Southern Division is proud to be hosting the
MER 2020 Convention **October 15-18**

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN

Convention activities will include:

- ◆ A wide selection of model railroading clinics, including some by nationally recognized names in the hobby
- ◆ Tour of the North Carolina Transportation Museum Back Shop and other non-public areas
- ◆ Tour of the Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum
- ◆ Tour of Wade's Train World in Brookford, a layout maintained by the CSD
- ◆ HO, S and N scale operating layouts in the Convention Hotel
- ◆ Home layout tours in the area, to include The Piedmont & Western and NYC Piney Fork Branch, which were both cover stories in *Model Railroader*
- ◆ Operating Sessions

START THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AT THIS LINK:

<http://carolinasouthern.org>

PIKE ADS

*The Standard Railroad of the World
Meets the Narrow Gauge of the East*

Modeling the Pennsylvania and East Broad Top Railroads in S/Sn3

Visitors welcome by appointment
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Masonic Village & Elizabethtown
Model RR Club

Meets 7:30 PM First Tuesday
Sept—June

One Masonic Drive
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Phone 717-361-5180

Open Houses the first weekend
monthly October thru April

Sat-Sun 2-4 PM

Extra times at Christmas



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*Route
of
the
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PENNSYLVANIA 17028-8824

PHONE: (717)-469-1047

EMAIL: ALANMENDE@YAHOO.COM



Mountain Division

Freelance-Cumberland, MD to Elkins, WV

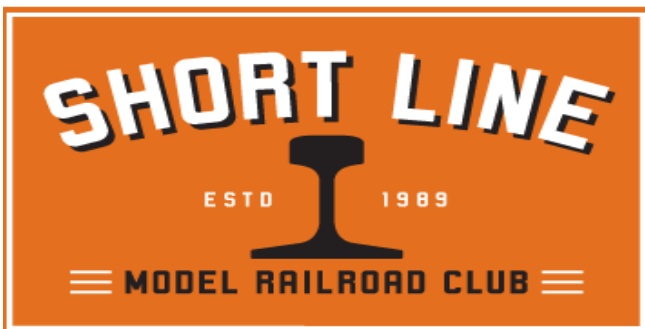
"Mountains, Lumber and Coal"

Jim Long

Chief Engineer

Mechanicsburg, PA

Visitors Welcome - Contact smlgf2000@aol.com

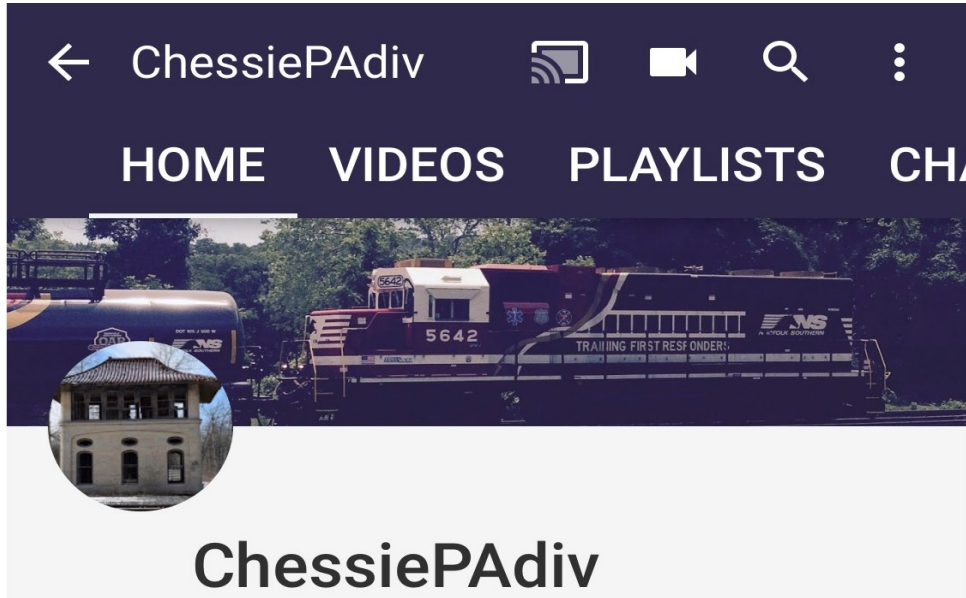


Pike Ads are available for \$10 for a 6- issue year. For information about placing an ad, please contact SIDETRACKS editor,

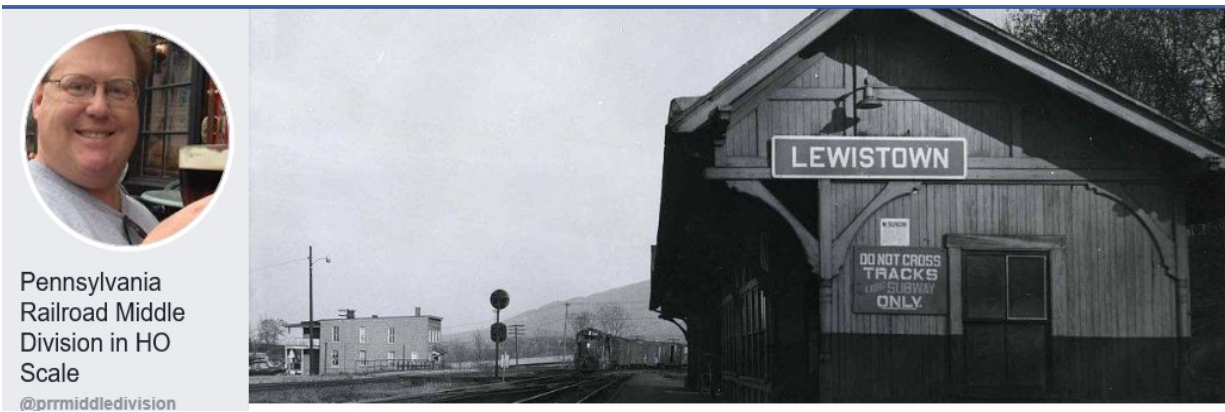
Members' Section

If you have a YouTube page, Facebook page for your railroad, or a blog please consider including a link to it here. Please submit your items to the editor in an email with a photo or two for inclusion in our newsletter.

Scott Unger's Chessie System Pa Division



Jerry Britton's Pennsylvania RR Middle Division in HO



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The Station



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New Cumberland, PA
Phone: 717-774-7096**

Please call for directions

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Saturday 10-5
Sunday 1-5

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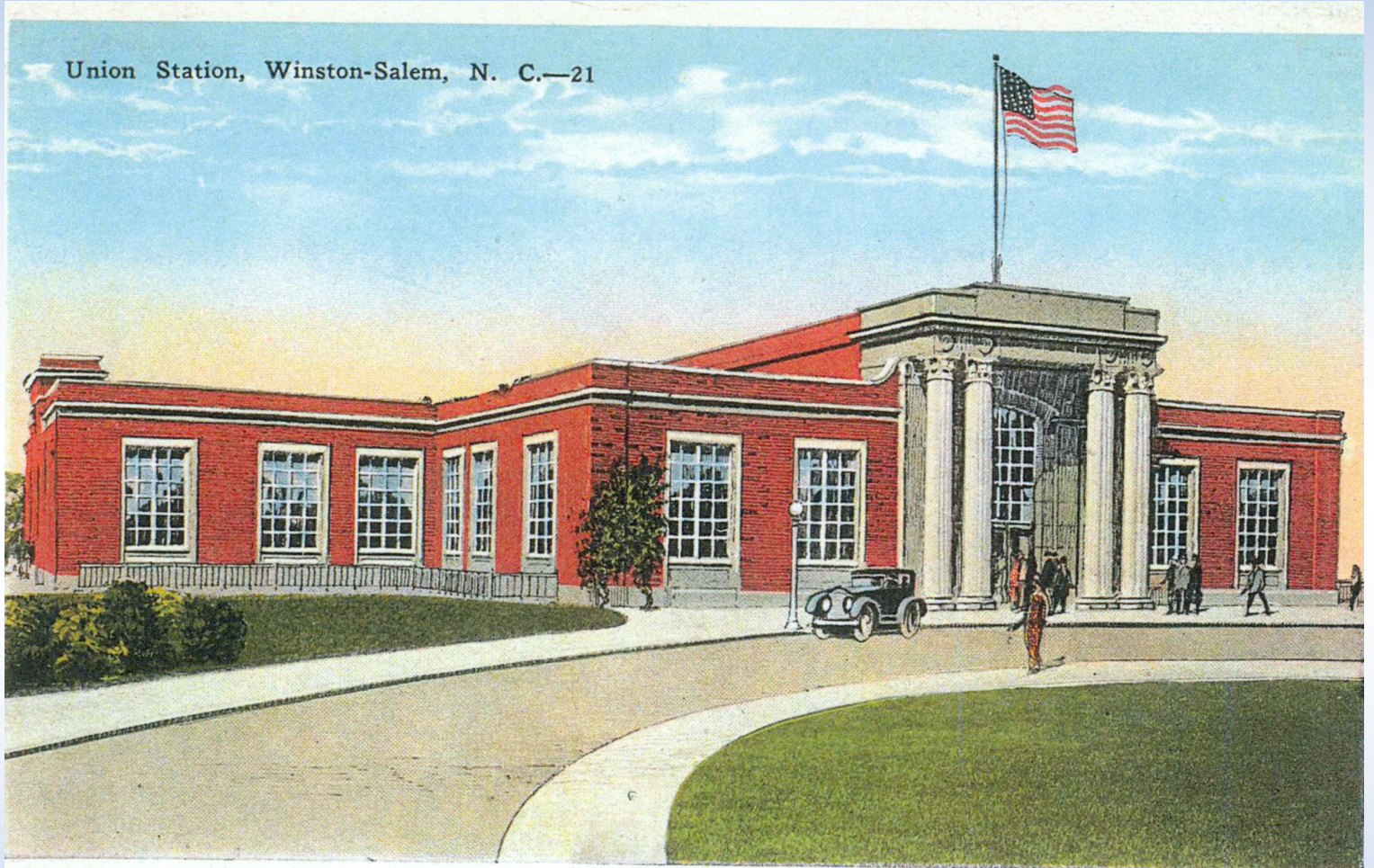
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