



Volume 28

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



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

Number 5

Bill Lesjak's unnamed HO model railroad is a wondrous mix of eclectic scenes and rolling stock. See and read more about Bill's endeavors starting on page 8.



Jim Long's Western Maryland Railroad is a basement filling experience complete with layout, precision work area and extensive wood-working shop. Check out his handywork starting on page 13.

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OOPS!



Richard Gladulich Collection

From the Superintendent's Desk – Tim Himmelberger

As I sit here composing my column I have been reflecting on this past year. I know of no way to describe it. As you are probably well aware of by now all events have been canceled for the rest of the year. My only hope is that next year we can begin to get back to normal. And that may mean 'The New Normal' whatever that may be.

On another note, I have been busy working on the layout. My latest project has been making turnouts by hand. I have invested in the point form tool and the stock rail tool so I can file them to shape. They sure beat using a Dremel to grind the rails which is what I had done years ago. I have also purchased the point solder jig for number 4, 5 and 6 turnouts. That works very well. Again, in the past I had a cardboard template with the appropriate size points drawn on in pencil. I would then use the wooden clothes pins clamps to hold the rails for soldering. Having said that, I have been using the paper template that FasTracks provides to build my turnouts. You just have to keep checking the gauge of the rails often. However, it does work very well. The paper templates are fine, It's just you need to keep checking your gauges to make sure you are holding it in gauge for the turnout. Going forward I will be building some dual gauge turnouts. For those I will probably invest in the fixture from FasTracks.

Since I am building turnout that tells you I pretty much have run out of what turnouts I had left from the previous layout. That also lets you know that I'm talking about dual gauge I am working on the top level of the layout. All in all, progress this past year has been pretty good. Still, I have a fair amount of track to lay on the top level. But the end is in sight. Then comes the fun job of starting to get some scenery and buildings on the layout to make it look like something other than the 'Plywood Central'.

I trust there are others of you who have been making good use of the time to work on your layout. As for me, it's about time to think about getting back down in the basement and doing some work on the layout.

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 October 15, 2020

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Editor's Message

Greetings!

Time has passed with the only progress in model railroading being a personal activity. I'm sure many of you have focused more attention on your individual model railroad interests than on any other avocation. This pandemic has forced us to think small and act locally.

I miss the interaction with fellow modelers and the experience of swap meets, NMRA events, layout visitations, etc. I hope that this newsletter will help to fill the void in our present hobby situation.

As of this issue I have exhausted my sources of layout visits. I need members to come forward and share their layout photos and information for future issues of Sidetracks. Submitting information is very simple and doesn't require any significant amount of time. At this point in time members need to share their experiences with other members.

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

Stay well!

Rich



2020 Division Calendar of Events

February 29, Allentown, PA - Scott Unger

April 4, New Holland, PA - Pat Mulrooney and Jeff Thompson **(canceled Covid 19)**

May 2, Columbia Railroad Day - Barry Schmitt, Bill Lesjack **(canceled Covid 19)**

June 20, New Oxford, PA - Phil Peters and Howard Oakes **(canceled Covid 19)**

August 22, Denver, PA - Dennis Blank **(canceled Covid 19)**

September 19-20- Susquehanna Division/Mainline Hobby Open House

(canceled Covid 19)

Oct 2 – 3, LSOP - Wayne Betty **(canceled Covid 19)**

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

(canceled Covid 19)

Another Oops!



HCRY #3011 GP40-2W photo courtesy of Huron Central Railway

The NMRA Achievement Program in The Coronavirus Era

With the advent of this nasty virus -- the stay-at-home orders, mask wearing, risk to seniors and all the rest, questions have arisen about lots of things. As we all know, Division meets, region conventions and national conventions have been canceled until further notice, and likely until there is a vaccine. This raises the specific, "How do I manage to qualify for achievement awards, particularly for those that need quality judging?" This is even more pertinent, since it is likely we will have more time to spend on our railroads.

The answer is easier than you may think. NMRA has made getting awards accessible for all of us. First, all required forms for the various awards can be found on the NMRA web site. Go to nmra.org and click on *education/achievement program/forms*. There you will find all the necessary materials for submission. Under the Requirements section you will find all the information necessary for submission for each award, as well as much more in terms of descriptive information on qualification.

Let's review the categories. The entry level award is **Golden Spike**. Checking the requirements here we find that there is no qualitative judging requirement, only "display." The objective here is getting started with both your layout and the AP. Qualification can be done completely on-line! Simply fill out the application form and attach the appropriate photos of your work demonstrating compliance with each of the requirements. Then e-mail or snail mail to me for processing. It is that easy!

Service to the Hobby, the first awards section we will discuss includes:

- Association Volunteer
- Author
- Association Official

Many of us already have accumulated some points toward Volunteer in our work on division events, open houses, the Susquehanna Convention and other involvement. All three categories involve simple documentation of the work done and completion of the SOQ to qualify. This can be accomplished easily on-line and submitted for processing.

The second area of achievement is Construction and Operation of a model railroad. The awards available in this category are:

- Chief Dispatcher
- Model Railroad Engineer – Civil
- Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical.

For Dispatcher, the requirement is for submission of the appropriate forms which can be done entirely on-line. Civil has a number of requirements, one of which requires merit judging. Happily, this can be done on-line as well with a video presentation of the required trackwork. Around 2017, the criteria for a Merit Award in Civil was changed so that there are only three (3) pass-fail criteria:

1. scratch build three elements of trackwork out of a number of options
2. the track meets standards as measured by the appropriate gauge
3. a self-propelled locomotive will successfully traverse all routes.

Meet these three criteria and your trackwork earns a Merit Award.

The Electrical category can be completed totally on-line as well. Note that each area requires you to “wire and demonstrate satisfactory electrical operation.” This means that a video presentation of each of the required features in operation will meet the requirement. The remainder involves paperwork submission which is easily done on-line.

The third area is Model Railroad Equipment, namely:

Master Builder Motive Power

Master Builder – Cars

Here we deal with a bit more complication, as a qualitative assessment is required. A score of 87.5 out of 125 must be attained in order to receive a merit award on a given model. Under Motive Power, three self-propelled models must be built, one of which is scratchbuilt. All must be super-detailed and must qualify to win a merit award. For Master Builder – Cars, eight models are required, four of which must be scratchbuilt. Four of the eight must win merit awards. While judging in these categories *is* permissible under the rules via photo and/or video, I will tell you having attempted to do so that it can be a challenging undertaking and may result in a lack of final conclusion until a direct assessment can be made. Successfully judging remotely will require extremely detailed photo/video and explanations of the work done. The quality of the craftsmanship, including details, will have to be obvious in the visuals. Not an easy task, but it can be done.

Lastly, we come to the **fourth area of railroad setting**, consisting of:

Master Builder – Scenery

Master Builder – Structures

Master Builder - Prototype Models

Once again as with Rolling Stock, the same caveats apply, as each requires qualitative judging with the accompanying challenges. In my opinion judging is best and fairest in these categories if done in person. Due to the difficulties in photos, the structures area virtually demands on-site judging. For the others, I will repeat, it is not an easy task, but can be accomplished.

Finally, you can find detailed information on all categories, including MMR, on the NMRA web site. If you want to discuss any part of the AP including Golden Spike, please feel free to contact your division AP chair or Dave Chance,



article submitted by Bob Charles, MMR

Bill Lesjak's Layout

Hi my name is Bill and I play with trains. As with many of you I started with Lionel under the tree, then Lionel and American Flyer on the ping pong table and finally to my first HO empire on this same ping pong table with additions. This first empire ended in 1960 when my mother remarried and we moved to a house without room for a layout. I was interested in model cars at this point where I devoted a large amount of time. Years later and married and in a house with a large unfinished basement, my dreams of a new model railroad empire began. I had been building HO engine kits from Bowser and collecting the motive power necessary to model my favorite railroads, Union Pacific, Southern Pacific and Santa Fe. Several articulated and long wheel-base engines were in my collection and I had my plans all made to model the Barstow, California area where all of these railroads met. I collected maps and photos and was anxiously waiting to start construction. Well that all fell apart. I was just too busy with work and renovating the house we bought and then found myself actively engaged in the hobby of antique automobiles. I'm sure we all have had similar experiences.



Eureka! Several years ago I found myself retired and living in a house with a downstairs family room just waiting for a layout to be built. This time I had space limitations and obstructions that necessitated a layout much smaller than I wished but at least I finally had the time to begin my new railroad empire. I realized my dreams of modeling long sweeping curves and seeing long freights being hauled by my Challengers, Big Boys and other engines were not to be accomplished. However, I forged ahead designing a layout that would enable me to enjoy running my trains. I managed to get all of my engines, which were new in the box and DC powered, running very well with the exception of the Big Boy which did not survive all the moves and had to be scrapped.



Bill Lesjak's Layout



I had begun construction of my layout when I attended my first Susquehanna Division meeting followed by joining the NMRA. I thoroughly enjoyed the clinics and seeing the lengths members went to producing wonderful scale models of motive power, structures and rolling stock. I was far enough along with construction of my layout when I understood that I needed to make a decision as to what type of layout I wanted. I decided the best course for me was to design a freelance layout and not model any specific region. I did restrict myself to the transition period of steam to diesel in the mid fifties. I did think for a short time of starting over and modeling a specific area which would have entailed purchasing equipment more appropriate to the area I had for a layout.

The deciding factor was when my wife and I attended a train show and she fell in love with the streamlined Dreyfus Hudson engine of the New York Central. Well, this wasn't exactly what I had in mind with all of my UP, SP and Santa Fe motive power, but since she supported my hobby so well I succumbed to her desires and I bought the NYC Hudson along with a consist of passenger cars. I was now conscious of the fact that my layout would be truly freelance and we would both enjoy having equipment from whatever railroad producing the engine designs we enjoyed.



So my layout consists of things that bring me pleasure even though they might not be as prototypical as they should be. Be it the Fuller Brewery (which in reality is located in Chiswick in London, England) to the constant sightings of Bigfoot throughout the forested areas or the various varieties of motive power with different road names.

Bill Lesjak's Layout



The lesson learned was that we all must take pleasure in and respect all of our fellow modelers whatever their taste or skill level. This is a fun hobby and I mean FUN! Besides all the visual pleasure of the hobby, it embraces a variety of tasks that add to the enjoyment. I was in the animated film business for over twenty years and what drew me to this occupation as an artist was the variety of skills necessary to produce our product. Model railroading is similar in that it entails so many different activities so you never get bored. Basic construction involves design planning, carpentry, and electrical work. Then there was scenery, structures, modeling of rolling stock and motive power and so much more. For instance, if you get bored working on a structure you can take a break and detail and weather some rolling stock.



Bill Lesjak's Layout

So this is the story of my layout which is still under construction but getting somewhat close to completion. When it is done I can then move to further detailing of equipment and scenery because it is true "the devil does lie in the details". I hope you have enjoyed my story and the few pictures included and if I can be of any help to my fellow modelers just give me a call.

Thank you, Bill.



EDITOR'S NOTE:

I usually send out to contributing layout owners a list of questions that, when answered give a general overview of the layout. Bill wrote his own description as well as answered my questions.

Bill's responses are included for additional information.

Bill Lesjak's Layout

1. What is the name of your layout?

Billy's Layout.....no it does not have a name.

2. What scale is your layout? HO

3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?

Era 1954-55. Location is wherever you wish it to be.

4. What is the overall dimensions of your layout?

Approximately 200 square feet.

5. By what means and brand of equipment do you control your layout?

DC (MRC Powerpack) and DCS (MTH DCS Master).

6. When did you first begin construction of your layout?

2013

7. Do you sponsor Operating Sessions on your layout?

No.

8. Do you have a track plan diagram for your layout (i.e. JPEG or PDF format)?

No.

9. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code?

Most of the track is code 100 Atlas Flextrack with some code 83. The turnouts are Peco.

10. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)?

No bragging is allowed.



article and photos by Bill Lesjak

Jim Long's Western Maryland Layout

1. What is the name of your layout?

The Western Maryland – Thomas Subdivision

2. What scale is your layout?

H0

3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?

The general location is Western Maryland and West Virginia from Cumberland, Md. to Elkins, W.Va. Scenery is typical but freelanced. I run early 1900 steam locomotives, but also modern diesels, not at the same time.

4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?

40' X 30'

5. By what means and brand of equipment do you control your layout?

I use North Coast Engineering DCC with one booster.

6. When did you first begin construction of your layout?

2008



Jim Long's Western Maryland Layout

7. Do you sponsor Operating Sessions on your layout?

No

8. Do you have a track plan diagram for your layout (i.e. JPEG or PDF format)?

I have track plans for each area of the layout. They are hand drawn to scale on graph paper and show radius of curves, turnout numbers, elevation of track, and general location of structures.



9. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code?

The track is Atlas code 83 nickel silver flex track. I primarily use Shinohara turnouts but also have some Atlas. Hard to reach turnouts and yard turnouts are operated by Tortoise switch machines. Turnouts close to the front of the layout are hand operated with Caboose Industry operators. Some of the frogs on the large and curved turnouts are powered from the double pull, double throw contacts on the Tortoises units or from double pull, double throw toggle switches on the fascia adjacent to the turnout.



Jim Long's Western Maryland Layout

10. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)?

The layout is set in the mountainous area of Western Maryland and West Virginia. Therefore, the layout has an abundance of mountains, tunnels, rivers, and lakes. Several of the major scenes include a scratchbuilt dam, lake, river and power house; the Thomas Lumber Mill with log pond, mill building, power house, pumping station, and rail service yard; the town of Cumberland with passenger station, downtown business area and major rail yard; the Elkins rail yard with turntable, round house, steam engine facilities, etc; the company town of Clair; and the Colin Coal Mine. There is also a scratch-built wood trestle over a stream cut deep in a rocky canyon.

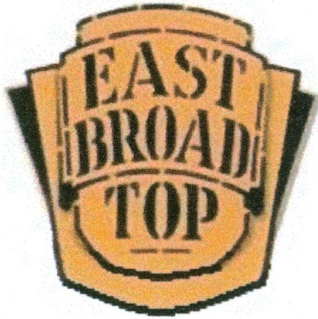


Jim Long's Western Maryland Layout



Jim Long's Western Maryland Layout





WITH A SPLASH OF GRAPE JUICE, EAST BROAD TOP RETURNS TO OPERATION

ROCKHILL FURNACE, Pa., Aug. 13, 2020, By Wayne Laepple, Trains News Wire — On Aug. 13, 1960, Millie Kovalchick smashed a bottle of Canada Dry ginger ale on the front coupler of East Broad Top Railroad 2-8-2



MILLIE KOVALCHICK LINSKY BREAKS A BOTTLE OF WHITE GRAPE JUICE OVER THE FRONT COUPLER OF EAST BROAD TOP No. 12 — "MILLIE," THE LOCOMOTIVE NAMED FOR HER — RE-ENACTING HER CHRISTENING OF THE ENGINE ON AUG. 13, 1960 - WAYNE LAEPPLE

No. 12, officially reopening the East Broad Top as a tourist carrier. Sixty years to the day later, Millie Kovalchick Linsky did it again — this time with white grape juice — to reopen the beloved narrow gauge line for the third time.

The ceremony, held under a hot sun with three generations of the Kovalchick family looking on, as well as over 100 local residents, employees, and Friends of the East Broad Top, marks the debut of the East Broad Top Foundation's operation of the storied narrow

gauge railroad.

During his brief remarks, former EBT president Joseph Kovalchick, whose father Nick bought the railroad in 1956 shortly after it closed down, reminded the audience of how his father "carried the torch for the EBT from 1956 until

EAST BROAD TOP NEWS

his death in 1977.” Kovalchick said he was proud to have carried on the family tradition from 1977 until 2011. He also presented the deed for 25 additional acres of land in the area to Henry Posner, chairman of the East Broad Top Foundation, Inc., which purchased the railroad from Kovalchick in February.



GAS-ELECTRIC CAR M-1 AND OFFICE CAR No. 20, ORBISONIA, MAKE THE FIRST OFFICIAL PASSENGER TRIP ON THE REOPENED EAST BROAD TOP. THEY ARE SHOWN NEAR THE ENYART ROAD CROSSING, THE END OF REHABILITATED TRACK - WAYNE LAEPPL

The program then moved to the roundhouse, where engine No. 16 was parked outside. “We’re returning to an earlier tradition of the East Broad, that of naming locomotives after important people,” Posner announced, as general manager Brad Esposito unveiled the side of the engine’s cab, revealing the name “Nick” in script beneath the number. “This is a copy of Nick’s actual signature,” Posner said.

A short while later, the EBT’s famous gas-electric car M-1 and presidential coach No. 20 Orbisonia made the first official passenger trip, with the Kovalchick family and other dignitaries aboard. The train ran only about three-quarters of a mile north to Enyart Road, as far as track repairs have progressed. After the train backed to Orbisonia Station, GE diesel M-5 led the first public train since December 2011. Additional trains were scheduled for Thursday afternoon, Friday, and on the weekend.

Though the EBT’s iconic 2-8-2s were cold, several were on display, with Nos. 12 and 15 near the station; Nos. 17 and 18 in the yard, coupled to cuts of cars; No. 16, outside the roundhouse, stripped down for its pending FRA boiler inspection; and No. 14 occupying stall eight in the roundhouse, the newly refurbished work area. The rest of the roundhouse was empty, for the first time in at least 60 years.

article courtesy of the Lancaster Chapter, N.R.H.S.

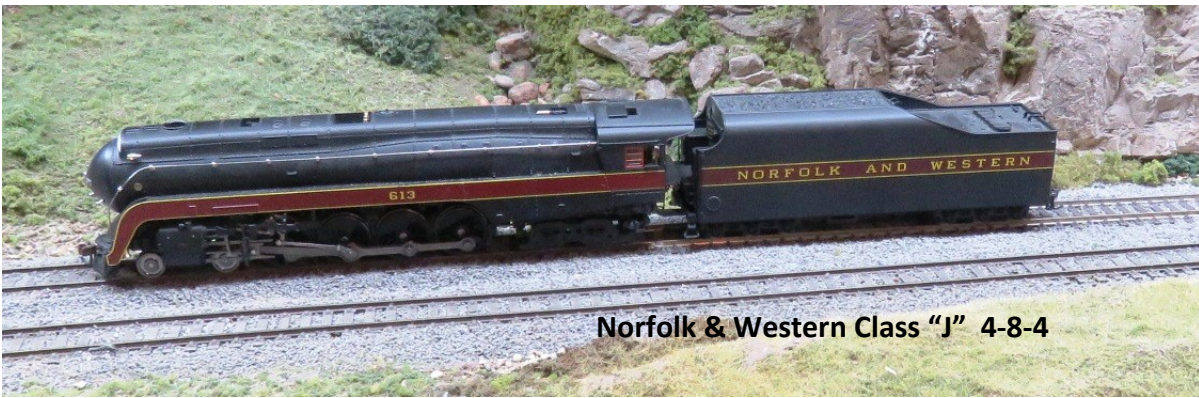
The Frugal (Cheap) Model Railroader

Besides being frugal (cheap), I also suffer from ‘fat’ fingers and ‘shaky’ phalanges. Whenever I tried to place rolling stock on my club’s layout, I become frustrated as wheels did not line up properly on the rails. I resorted to using a Rix Rail-it. This device has served me well for aligning freight cars and diesels to track.

Steam engines (4-8-4, 6-8-6, etc.) didn’t work very well with the railer since their length, in some cases, exceeded 12”. This problem needed a answer. After researching methods used by other hobbyists, I still didn’t find a suitable solution.



Rix Rail-it 12” HO rail/wheel alignment tool



Norfolk & Western Class “J” 4-8-4

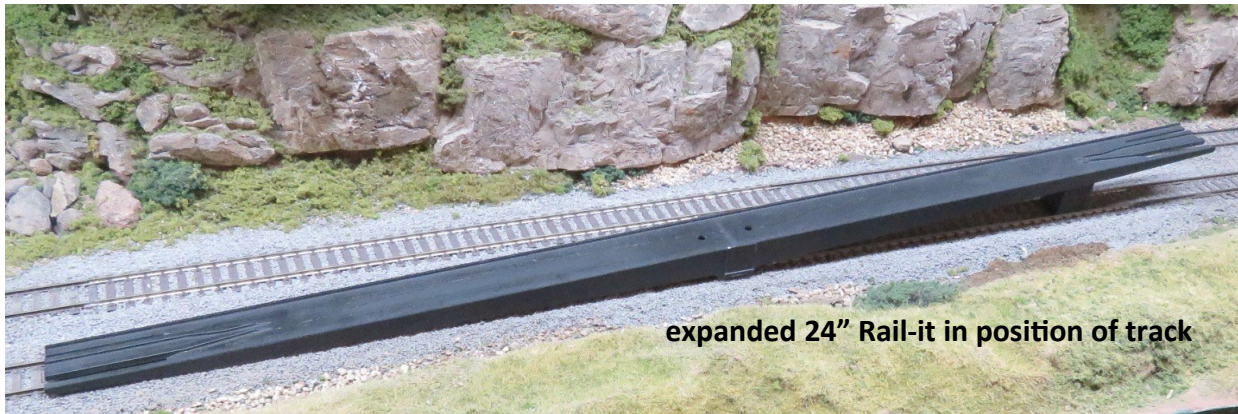


Milwaukee Road S3 #261 4-8-4 Northern



PRR S2 #6200 6-8-6 Steam Turbine

Since the Rix product worked well for 12" and smaller rolling stock, why not double it's length. I proceeded to marry two railers together, back to back, by gluing their ends together and adding fish plates to the joints on each side of the railer. This resulted in a suitable length but needed support at the elevated end of the enlarged railer. I carefully measured and cut a block of wood that would nest between the rails and cut an appropriate angle that mated to the underside of the railer. This block was eventually glued and screwed in place.



expanded 24" Rail-it in position of track

Now, whenever my long steamers need to meet the rails my expanded railer adequately lowers the engines onto the track with all wheels properly aligned! An inexpensive and fully functional, specialized jig has solved my 'finger' problem.




side view of expanded Rail-it



modified Rail-it ready to line up engine wheels

article and photos by Ben Kubelski

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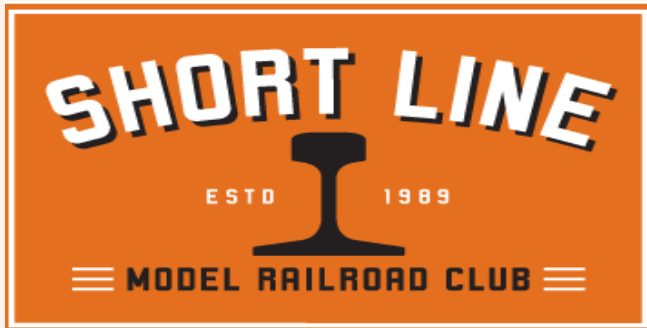
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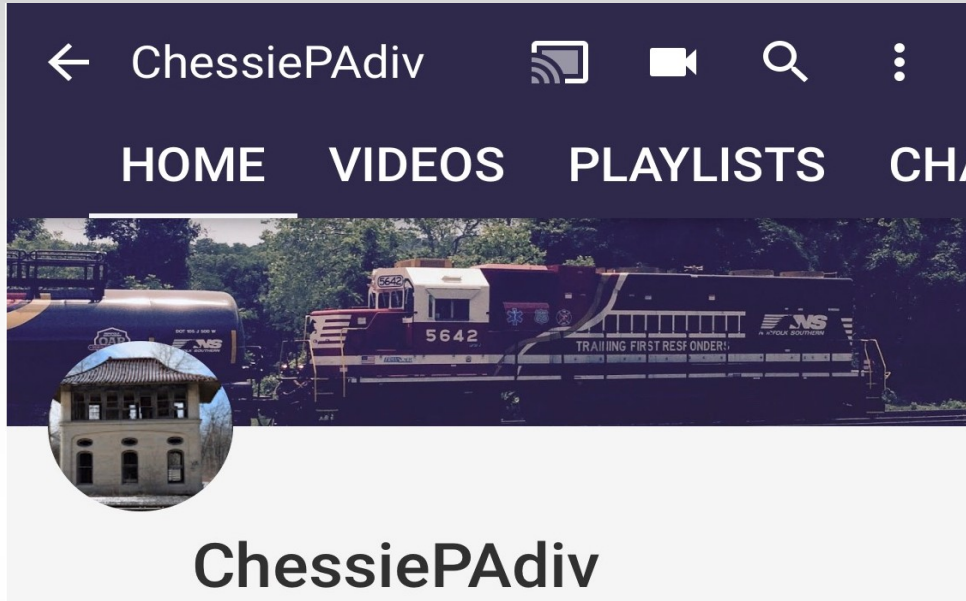
Thursday Evenings 7-9 PM

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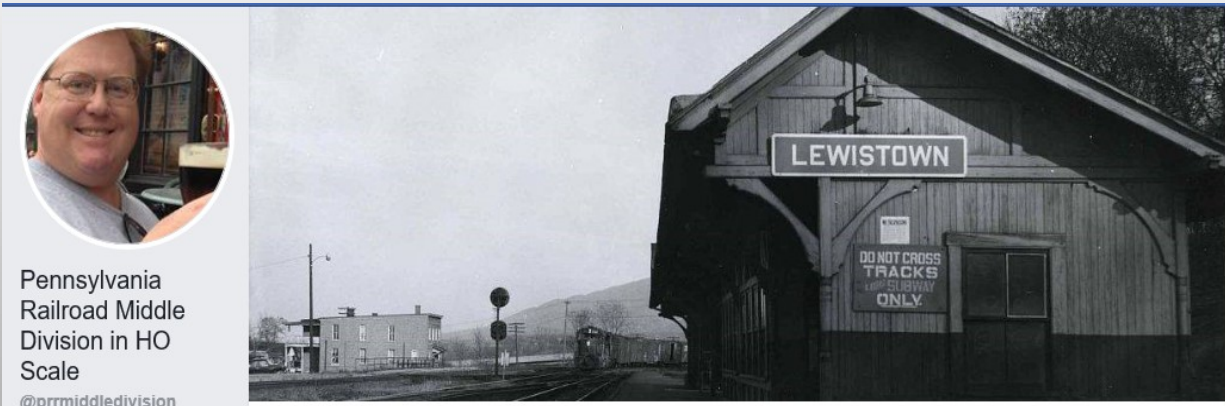
Members' Section

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



Members' Section

Robert Getty has built a web application that indexes every segment of Ken Paterson's "What's Neat" YouTube show for Model Railroad Hobbyist Magazine. It's free to use and member's might find it quite useful: <https://wnindex.theconsist.com>

Sample screen shot below:

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What's Neat Index

When Daniel Coombs isn't around to help find that segment!

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Railroad Yard at Greenfield Village in Dearborn, MI.