

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division II,

Volume 30

Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Number 3



yard switcher in Union City Yard

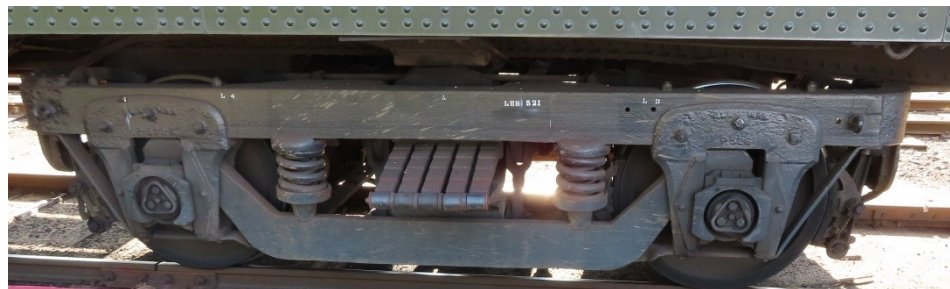
Bert Mahr's Conrail and Eastern Railroad is a masterful work in S scale. This layout is a multi-level around the basement track plan. It is highly detailed, having city, industrial and rural landscapes that offer unique model railroading examples. The article continues on page 20.



tugboat in Mertzboro Harbor

In This Issue

Bert Mahr's Conrail and Eastern Railroad	1, 20-29
Superintendent's Message	3
Second Section	4
Division Calendar of Events	5
Division Officer Election	6
Division Officer Candidate Bio	7
Division Officer Election Ballot	8
NMRA Events	9-16
NMRA Event Recap	17-19



From the Superintendent's Desk

I sit here to write what I thought was going to be my last Superintendent's Message. I am extremely frustrated by the lack of interest from anyone wanting to serve our Division. I have received no inquiries about running for either Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. I only put my name down for Superintendent simply because I don't want to see everything fold up. There is no nominee for Assistant Superintendent so if you want to run write your name in. I am extremely thankful Dean Johnson stepped forward to run for Chief Clerk.

Jerry Lauchle has volunteered to chair the 2023 MER Convention, which will be held in Altoona, PA. I know he has been contacting a number of you to serve as committee chairs within the convention committee. We are looking forward to having another fine convention sponsored by the Susquehanna Division.

May 7th is the Columbia Railroad Day Event. Bill Lesjak and Barry Schmitt have been working hard to put together an outstanding program. There will be a short Division business meeting in the morning at 10 AM. This will be a time to catch up since we haven't had many meetings over the last couple of years. Please see the article on page 9.

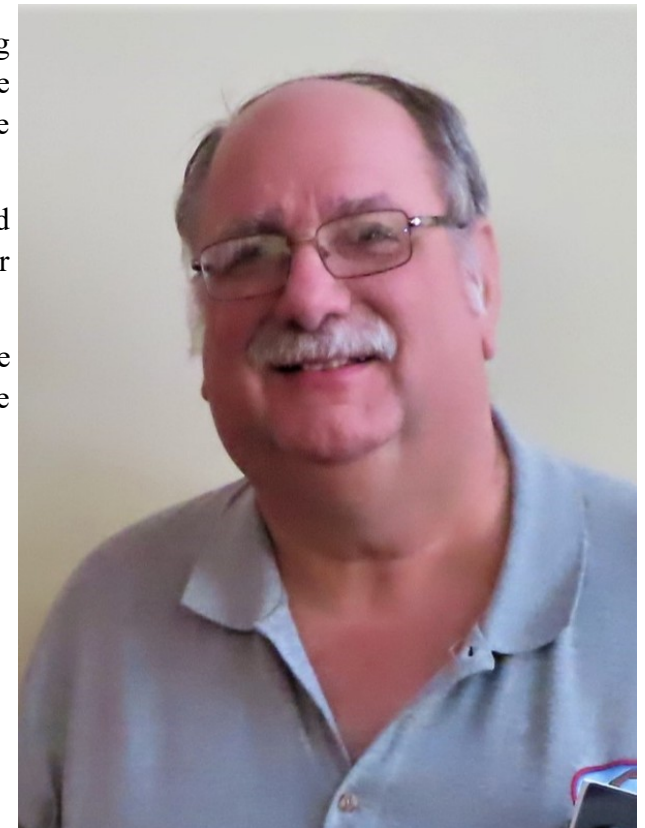
June 18th we will have an event in New Oxford, PA. And again Howard Oakes, Don Stafford and Phil Peters have been working hard on this meeting. This promises to be another great day. For more details, please see the article on page 10.

Lastly, a reminder about the officer election ballot. Please consider running as a write-in candidate for either Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. Trust me, I have no problem stepping aside if someone else wants to run for Superintendent.

I am looking forward to seeing you at each of our upcoming events.

It is time to go back to the basement and work on the trains.

Tim



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 June 5, 2022.

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This is the step-step-off trolley available during
Columbia Railroad Day, Saturday, May 7th.

Division Calendar of Events

- May 7 – Columbia Railroad Day – Bill Lesjak and Barry Schmitt
- June 18 – New Oxford – Phil Peters, Don Stafford and Howard Oakes
- September 17 & 18– Blue Ridge Summit – Mainline Hobby Supply Open House Tour
- October – LSOP – Wayne Betty
- October 20 – 23– Charlotte, NC, MER Convention, Carolina Southern Division
- November – Division-wide Open House Tour
- November 19 – Warrenton, VA – Joint Meet with Potomac Division



Strasburg Railroad SW9 switcher #8618 approaches the East Strasburg Station. This EMD SW9 was rebuilt by ATSF Railroad (original owner) as a SSB1200.

Division Officer Election

It's May which means it's time to elect our officers for the next two years: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024. Our Division By-laws establish a seven-member BOD - three elected Officers (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Chief Clerk), and four at-large Directors. The officers are elected to a two-year term in even-numbered years and hold office from July 1 of that year to June 30 of the following second year. The four BOD Directors are elected to two-year terms in odd numbered years with our current directors serving the term July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2023.

I am extremely frustrated by the total lack of involvement since no one has stepped up to run for Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent. I have served as Superintendent for six years now. It is time for new leadership. Reluctantly I have placed my name in nomination for Superintendent. Assistant Superintendent is open. We will be looking for write-in votes. Actually, for both positions. If you write in someone's name other than your own, please confirm that they will serve if elected. So, it is with some regret I will say that presenting the slate of officers is somewhat easy this year. The reason being is all two candidates are running unopposed. The list of candidates is as follows: Their email addresses are provided if you would like to contact them.

You can only vote for candidates for each office. The candidates are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Superintendent: | Tim Himmelberger |
| Assistant Superintendent: | no nomination , write-in only |
| Chief Clerk: | Dean Johnson |



Division Officer Candidate Bio

Name: Dean Johnson

Address: 505 Nathan Dr., Ephrata, PA 17522

Phone Number: 717-629-4179

Division Officer Position: Chief Clerk (Secretary – Treasurer)

Brief Bio:

My name is Dean Johnson, and I am seeking the Division Officer Position: Chief Clerk (Secretary – Treasurer). I have been a member of both the NMRA (#102717 OB 30/11) and TCA (#95-40698) for many years. I started model railroading in 1985 buying Bachmann and Athearn trains. I built a small layout but it turned out to be a complete FLOP!!! After a couple of years, I upgraded to Kato and Atlas models along with nickel silver flex track. This really was my first great start in modeling railroads. Since then, newer models along with much newer technology has taken over. I eventually was introduced to brass engines for which I have a few models by PFM, Key Imports, Westside and others.

I worked at Campbell Soup Company for thirty-four years. The first eighteen years I worked for the Frozen Food Division in many different positions, such as accountant, financial analyst, general manager and controller.

My last assignment was Divisional Controller for the Fresh Foods Division. This division consisted of twelve different plants throughout the United States with 2,200 employees. I served in this position for fifteen years. I then spent one year at World Headquarters in Camden, NJ before retiring.

Prior to retiring from, I did become involved with local government. I served on the Adamstown, PA Borough Council for twelve years which included ten years as Borough Council President. I was involved with many committees that covered a wide range of activities. After a year off from Borough Council, I ran for Mayor. I served as Adamstown, PA Mayor for six years and just resigned prior to downsizing and moving to a 55+ community in Ephrata, PA.

With the credentials listed in the above preceding paragraphs I hope this would qualify me as Chief Clerk for the Susquehanna Division. I look forward to working with all of you.

Thank You,

Dean M. Johnson

Division Officer Election Ballot

NMRA SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION 11 (MER) 2018 OFFICER BALLOT

Your BOD has approved electronic (email) voting for this election cycle in addition to traditional USPS ballot mailing. You do not have to use the below ballot form – use whatever format works best for you. Send your ballot to Pat Mulrooney, at padywgn@comcast.net or Pat Mulrooney, c/o NMRA, 206 Stoever Drive, New Holland, PA 17557. Pat will confirm every received ballot with either an email or post card response based on your delivery mode. Deadline for receipt by either delivery method is May 31, 2022. Results will be presented in the July Sidetracks.

ONLY VOTE FOR ONE (1) CANDIDATE FOR EACH OFFICE

You may write in any member of our Division. However please confirm with that person that they will be willing to serve in that capacity.

SUPERINTENDENT

_____ Tim Himmelberger

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

_____ Write in – No Nomination

CHIEF CLERK

_____ Dean Johnson

Notify of Ballot Receipt: Your Name (print): _____

Email Address: _____

Home Address (if sent by USPS): _____

(Questions – call Tim Himmelberger at 717-454-8033)

NMRA Event

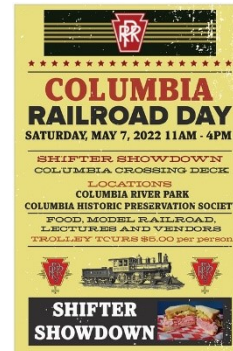
COLUMBIA RAILROAD DAY

Saturday, May 7, 2022

The Columbia Historic Preservation Society and the Susquehanna Division of the NMRA will host a special event in Columbia, PA. This year's program will feature lectures about the Pennsylvania Railroad, trolley tours of historic Columbia, PA, HO and O scale model railroad layouts, memorabilia and model railroad vendors, speeder rides, displays of military transport vehicles, Civil War encampment featuring the Lancaster Fencibles and the Invalid Corps and a unique Shifter Sandwich tasting contest!

Event presentations will be offered at the Columbia Crossings Trail Center on the banks of the Susquehanna River in Columbia, PA. The event will begin with a Division Meeting at 10 AM, followed by formal presentations:

- 11-11:15 Opening Introduction
- 11:15-12:15 Peter Green- The Pennsylvania Railroad
- 12:30-1:00 Bruce Herr- History of the Shifter Sandwich
- 1:00-2:00 THE SHIFTER SHOWDOWN (located on Trail Center Deck)
- 2:00-3:00 Dan Rapack- The Harris Tower, Then and Now
- 3:00-4:00 Bill Lesjack and Brian Abramo- Photos of railroading in Columbia and the construction of the Port Deposit Line



Trolley tours will be continuous throughout the day with step on/step off opportunities (\$5.00 cost).

The Columbia & Susquehanna Model Railroad (HO scale) and the Lower Susquehanna Model Railroad (O scale) will be open for visitors during the day. Both model railroads are located several blocks (walking distance) from the Trail Center at 21 North 2nd. Street in Columbia.

The planned speeder rides have now been confirmed. Speeders are small, gas-powered inspection cars that usually held two track maintenance workers. We have received track use authorization so visitors can experience riding the 'rails' for a short jaunt in Columbia. A nominal fee for this experience will be charged.

Since all other Columbia Railroad Days events are free, plan a visit to this annual historic and educational day! If you have any questions concerning the event, please contact Bill Lesjak (717-751-2391).

NMRA Event

NMRA Susquehanna Division 11 Event

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Cross Keys Village, The Brethren Home Community

Harmony Ridge Building, Encore Room

2990 Carlisle Pike

New Oxford PA 17350

<https://www.crosskeysvillage.org>

Contact: Don Stafford 301-752-3629; Howard Oakes 717-424-6165

Directions: At the intersection to US 30 and PA 94 go west on US 30 for ¼ mile. Take the first left into the Brethren Home, turn right on Harmony Dr., follow the signs to Harmony Ridge and turn left into the big parking lot. Go through the main doors and turn right to the Encore Room.

8:30 AM - Meet & Greet with Refreshments

9:00 AM - Presentations begin

12:00 PM - Lunch on your own and tours

Guest speaker Lisa Matsinger, FRA, U.S. Department of Transportation will discuss railroad safety and trends in the railroad industry. She also will give insight into all those safety details that are on, or should be on, our prototype models plus answer your questions on safety appliances in use today.

New Oxford Train Station
Museum interior



NMRA Event (continued)

Since we are close to the former Western Maryland Dutch Line (now CSX) a short history will be presented. We'll discuss the two divergent mainlines which separate at Glyndon MD and reconverge at Highfield MD.

The Western Maryland New Oxford Train Station Museum and next-door Conewago Valley club layout will be open for us. The station museum has many lanterns, signs, collectibles, a PRR caboose and other fascinating railroad artifacts.



Western Maryland Railway, New Oxford Train Station Museum

NMRA Event (continued)



some of the numerous railroad lanterns at the station museum

restored PRR bobber caboose #476582 parked on the grounds of the New Oxford Station



NMRA Event (continued)



view from the station window

unique railroad lantern chandelier hanging in the station museum



NMRA Event (continued)

Ed Horvath built a 4 x 8 railroad based upon an article by Glenn Wagner in a 1959 edition of Boys Life magazine. He then built a 2 x 8 yard and engine servicing addition from a subsequent issue. A girder bridge and trestle in other magazine articles are also on the layout. Ed's slide program explains why and how he built this layout which has a laser cut sub-roadbed sheet. This layout will be open for viewing. You won't want to miss this unique presentation.



Ed Horvath's bridge and trestle



Ed Horvath's tower and bridges

NMRA Event (continued)



Ed Horvath's lumber company

Ed Horvath's trackside crane



NMRA Event (continued)

The Conewago Valley club has recently updated its track and wiring and will give you an opportunity to see a large layout under re-construction in their baggage car. Be sure to take a look at the existing telltale nearby the station.



multi-span and piers at the Conewago Valley Model Railroad Club

Other layouts will be open in the afternoon for your viewing enjoyment. There are two nearby model railroad hobby shops you may want to catch on your way home. Directions will be provided.

NMRA Event Recap (March 12th)

March 12th the Susquehanna Division of the NMRA held a Division Business Meeting and Clinics at The Crossings at Rocky Springs Clubhouse in Lancaster. Pat Mulrooney and I have only been working at getting this particular meeting together for the last two years. Covid and all the wonderful challenges that it has presented have kept us from getting it set up and done. And then the weather..... Despite the snowstorm that tried to dampen things this meeting and clinics went off without a hitch although there was one minor adjustment. Tim Himmelberger was not able to make it due to ice in his neighborhood so Pat Mulrooney filled in and did an outstanding job of presenting the Division's business.

Following the business meeting, a break with coffee and Shady Maple donuts (man those things were huge - and delicious) we began the clinics with the first presentation by Joel Mitchell of Dwarvin Enterprises. He brought a full display of his lighting products and walked us through the advantages and use of fiber optics for building and vehicle lighting. He also showed us some of their latest products one of which is an animated crossing signal and train movement signals. At the end of his presentation, he gave all in attendance a one-time 20% discount coupon for their products. As an aside, Dwarvin became a partner in the NMRA's partners program this month which gets all NMRA members a 10% discount on their website, Dwarvin.com.

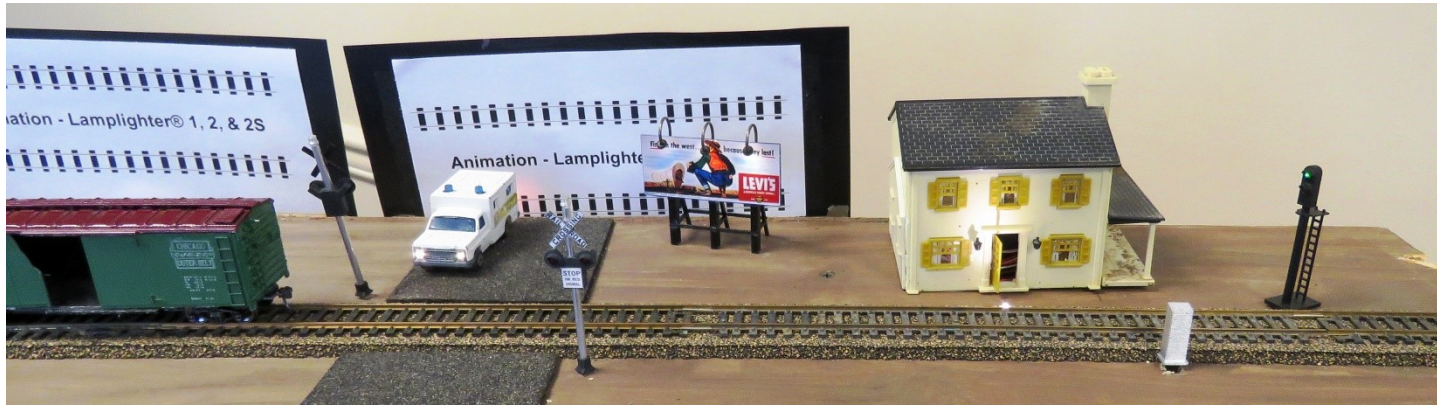


Dwarvin module with lighting examples



Joel Mitchell, Dwarvin Enterprises

NMRA Event Recap (continued)



Dwarvin module showing their crossing signals (with audio), track signal and lamplighter billboard illumination

Our next clinician was our very own Alan Mende. Alan presented a fantastic clinic on scratchbuilding. Rather than a how-to clinic (although he did offer some great tips), it was more of a "why-not-do-it" presentation. He explained that he started scratchbuilding when he first began in the hobby because, as he said, "if you wanted it and the manufacturers didn't offer it, the only way to get it was to build it yourself" - which he did. And that's not just for buildings and line side structures. Alan shared numerous examples of Jersey Central motive power and rolling stock that he built himself from scratch. With that he had many examples of how he accomplished getting the materials for his projects by sourcing from market available detail parts to out and out making the part himself.

Alan is very enthusiastic about scratchbuilding and has been published numerous times in **Railroad Model Craftsman**. If you get the chance to attend a clinic that he presents, you should. He makes a compelling argument for doing it no matter what level of modeling you may think you're on.



Alan Mende

NMRA Event Recap (continued)



Crossings at Rocky Springs Clubhouse during the March 12th Event

After the clinics we adjourned to the snowy ride home. Although there were to be layout visits, they were subsequently cancelled due to the weather, but Pat Mulrooney was home and open for anyone who would venture the trek to New Holland.

A big thank you and shout out to Rich Wurst for securing our meeting location and his hard work setting up the rooms for the meeting and refreshments. Ben Kubelski is right; he's quite a guy.

Jeff Thompson
Director
Susquehanna Division NMRA

Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued from page 1)

1. What is the name of your layout?

Conrail & Eastern Railroad

2. What scale is your layout?

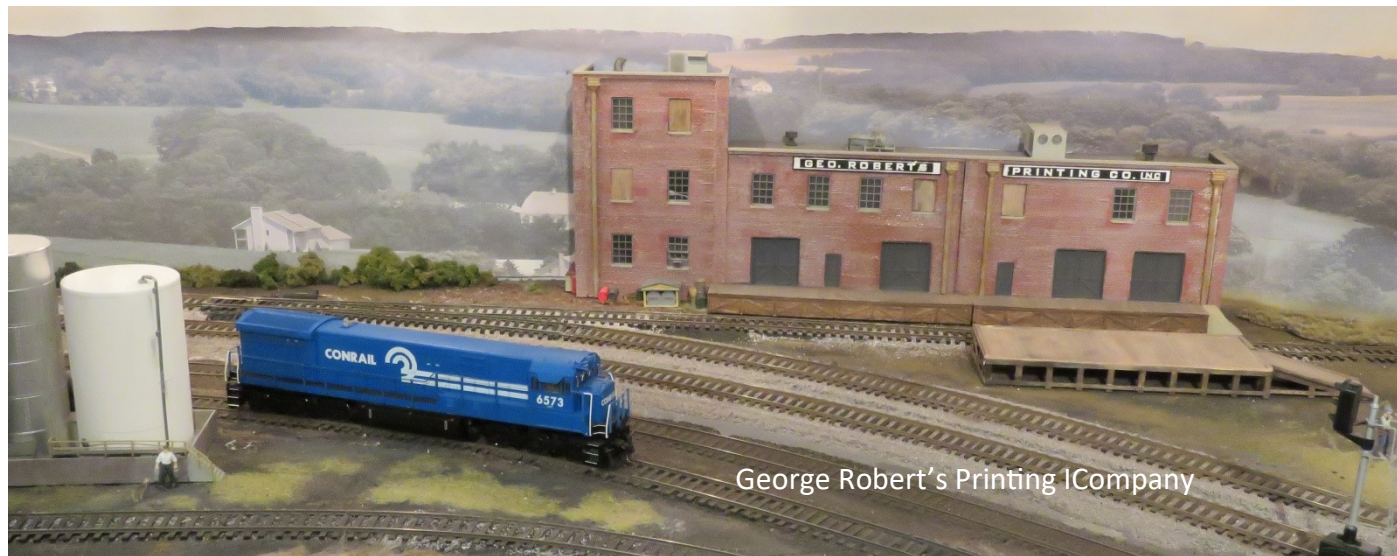
S scale

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

Early Conrail days, that way I could also use the predecessor paint schemes in addition to blue.

4. What is the overall dimensions of your layout?

The layout measures 24' X 36'. There are two levels of track covering more than half of the layout.



Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)

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

I use DCC for train control. I have a Digitrax system with simplex radio throttles and WIFI.

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

About 1998.

7. Do you sponsor Operating Sessions on your layout?

Yes. I started holding monthly operating sessions in November 2014. I shut down during the COVID pandemic, but have since resumed.



caboose track in Union City Yard



ladder track in Union City Yard

Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)

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

Not really. The mainline is a folded dogbone. It is double-decked with stacked staging/return loops. The two levels are connected by a two and a half turn helix that is partially exposed and scened. The layout also has one major yard and engine terminal, an operating barge system, and one larger industrial switching area.

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

The layout uses Code 100 flex track made by Shinohara. Turnouts are mostly Shinohara #6 and #8, with the remainder by Tomalco Track.



Glacier Gravel Pit and West Mountain Portal



The mainline is seen in the lower left with Glacier Gravel Operations in the center. West Mountain Portal (part of the helix) can be seen in the upper right of the photo.

Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)

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

Most visitors like the helix that is partially exposed and has scenery. They also like my scenery and my use of commercial photographic backdrops.

The unique feature is the operating barge system, where the barges are actually changed during operating sessions. I have twelve barges in use and each barge has its own storage location under the layout. This lets me store over a hundred cars off the layout, but they will return to the layout after several operating sessions. This adds to the variety of cars in use during the operating session.



Loaded barge in Mertzboro Harbor with extra barge storage beneath the layout.



This view shows the double track mainline entering the helix.

Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)

10. Approximately, how many engines and rolling stock are in your collection? Also, what brand of engines do you run on your layout?

There are approximately twenty engines on the layout with some more stored underneath. Engines are a mix of S Helper Service, American Models, and brass. I have over 200 cars, which are a mix of S Helper Service, American Model, S Scale America, a few converted American Flyer, some built from various kits, and some brass



Conrail Fairbanks Morse H24-66 Trainmaster (still painted in Reading livery) heads a freight coming out of the West Mountain Portal on the helix.

The Union City Engine House can be seen in the right foreground. The yard has Jersey Central F3's, a Delaware & Hudson RS11 and a Reading F3. Conrail had not yet repainted these engines in their paint scheme.

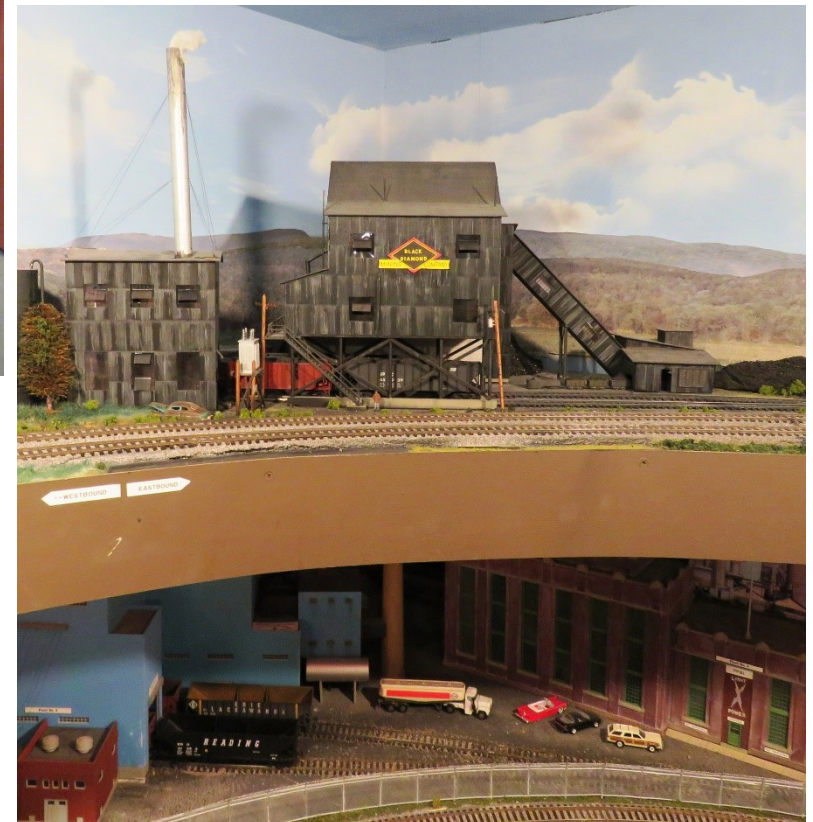


Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)



Pictured here is Bert's barge storage rack area directly under the layout. During operations he can change out barges (which are each loaded with rolling stock). All told, he has over one hundred cars to move out of the dock area!

Black Diamond Mining Company situated on the upper level of the layout. A power plant is located on the lower level.



Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)



Green Lumber Company



Continental Container Company

Ennis Steel Erectors delivery/shipping yard



Eskimo Brand Frozen Foods



Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)



Bethlehem Steel Mill with upper level staging loop



Conrail barge switcher heading toward car float barge in Mertzboro Harbor.

Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)



trucking terminal on the upper level



rolling stock on the lower level staging loop



lower level staging loop



Conrail (ex Reading) F3 emerging from the Union Engine House

Bert Mahr's Conrail & Eastern Railroad (continued)



Fairbanks Morse H24-66 Trainmaster emerging from the West Mountain Portal near the Glacier Gravel Pit



Conrail barge switcher with idler cars



Bert's modeling workbench

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