

# ***SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS***



**An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division II,**

**Volume 30**

**Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA**

**Number 4**

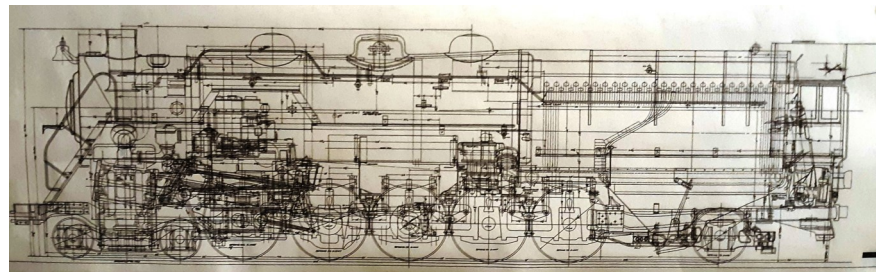
Quaker Valley Yard in Lynnsburg



**Bob Bucklew's HO scale Quaker Valley Railroad is the featured layout in this newsletter issue. Bob is not only a skilled modeler, but also a JMRI (Java Model Railroad Interface) expert. JMRI is a model railroad computer software interface that can control locomotives, signals, switches, etc. Read all about Bob's sophisticated layout continuing on page 13.**

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## From the Superintendent's Desk

I would like to open this month's column with a very big thank you to Paul Tice for his many years of service to the Division as Clerk. Paul has served as a clerk since day one. Up until now he has been our only Clerk. For the last two election cycles he asked if anyone else wanted to run he would step aside. This time Dean Johnson has stepped forward and has won the position. Congratulations to Dean. Also, I'd like to say congratulations to Rich Wurst who is now the assistant superintendent. I will pass on making any comment on the returning superintendent. The election results are on page 6.

The next event will be Mainline Hobbies Open House in September. October will bring us the Mideast Regional Convention in Charlotte.

Jerry Lauchle has been very busy working on 2023 convention. He is still looking for people to help with the convention. There are a variety of positions that are open and need volunteers. The organization, management and operation of the 2023 MER/Susquehanna Division Convention requires our members step forward and assist in tasks whether large or small. There is something for everyone.

There are also some positions that need to be filled for the Division. The first is John Wissinger has stepped down as the Model Showcase Chair so we need a new person to step into that position. Also, David Collison is still looking for some help as the assistant for the website.

I am looking forward to seeing you at one of the 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 August 15, 2022.

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## Division Calendar of Events

- September 17 & 18– Blue Ridge Summit – Mainline Hobby Open House Tour
- October – LSOP – Wayne Betty <http://www.wsbcos.com/Div11/LSOP/LSOP%20Current/default.htm>
- 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



# Division Officer Election

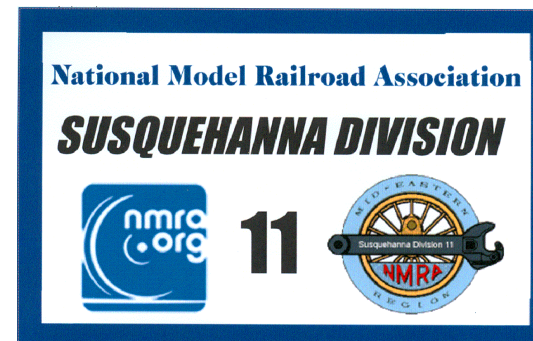
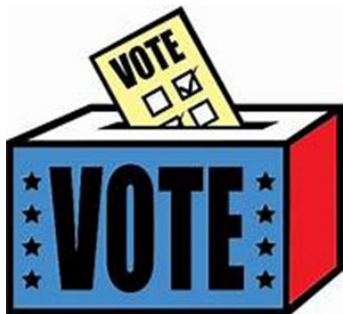
## OFFICER ELECTION RESULTS

There were only 11 ballots submitted for the recent Susquehanna Division Officer Election. It was so easy to vote that I am really disappointed in the small number of votes cast.

The tabulated results are:

<b>Superintendent:</b>	<b>Tim Himmelberger</b>	<b>10 VOTES</b>
<b>Assistant Superintendent:</b>	<b>Rich Wurst</b>	<b>10 VOTES (write-in)</b>
<b>Chief Clerk:</b>	<b>Dean Johnson</b>	<b>11 VOTES</b>

Respectfully submitted: Pat Mulrooney, Susquehanna Division 11 Director



# 2022 Mid-Eastern Region Convention

### Carolina Special Look South in 2022

The Carolina Southern Division is proud to be the sponsor of the 2022 Convention of the Mid-Eastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association called the CAROLINA SPECIAL which will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina. This annual event provides a venue for NMRA Model Railroaders from Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia, plus parts of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and North and South Carolina to gather and share their craftsmanship and skill, enjoy the fellowship of fellow ferroequinologists, visit local layouts and prototype rail operations, and to generally have a good time.



**LOOK SOUTH IN 2022**

<http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html>

# NMRA/MER Convention Announcement

## *Round the Curve to Altoona 2023*

### Mid-Eastern Region Convention



RRPicturesArchives.NET Image Contributed by Thomas C. Ayers



Tim Pavlic II photo

**October 19-22, 2023**

**Altoona Grand Hotel**

**Hosted by the Susquehanna Division 11**



<https://mer2023.org/index.html>



# NMRA Event Recap

## May 7 Columbia Railroad Days After Event Report

Our 4<sup>th</sup> scheduled Columbia Railroad Day theme song was, “Rain and wind go away to return again another day!” Much like last year’s event but thankfully not quite as cold. It appears Mom Nature doesn’t want us holding such events in Columbia PA on the first Saturday of the month.

Here’s the good news: For starters we had three excellent Columbia-focused lectures by experts in their field of PRR history. Peter Green walked us from the early 1820’s when the PRR began their initial horse-drawn and later steam-powered trains from Philly to Columbia where their freight and passengers were transloaded onto canal boats for the voyage to Pittsburg via the newly built canal system and Allegheny Portage Railroad.

Our next speaker was Brian Herr, an interesting former Columbia resident, who provided the history of the locally famous Columbia Shifter Sandwich which was the choice lunch selection of the many Pennsy and Reading yard crews back when Columbia had large yard operations. Following his talk, a Shifter Sandwich cookoff was held where several local eateries vied for the tastiest Shifter, and the winner was none other than the owner of Rose’s Deli and More.

Our third speaker was Dan Raypak who presented an insightful history of the Harris Tower located near the Amtrak Station in Harrisburg and similar in operation to the COLA Interlocking Tower located just a few hundred feet from our meeting location. Dan explained the function of Harris Tower and all the work he and several members of the Harrisburg Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society (NRHS) spent in rebuilding the facility to its original condition. Today visitors can actually perform all the operations former tower crewmembers performed back in the day while using modern computer simulation processes as they handle sample WW II railroad operations in and around Harrisburg and Enola. Also, he made the first official announcement about the recent transfer of ownership to the Harrisburg NRHS Chapter of the former PRR Power Office that resides in the upper level of the Harrisburg Amtrak Station. That office, until its recent relocation to the Amtrak operations center in Wilmington DE, previously had control of all overhead electrification systems from Harrisburg east.

Another vast improvement over past Columbia Railroad Day event was the City’s offer to locate all our lectures inside the Columbia Crossing River Trails Center, location of various vendors under a large covered upper deck, excellent audio/visual equipment, and plenty of parking. Last year’s event, while mostly operating at the same facility, had to present the various lectures from the covered deck that was wide open to the blustery winds, rain, and cold temps. Those conditions made it so uncomfortable that few visitors could last a full presentation let alone the three scheduled offerings. Thankfully this year most all of our programs were inside and away from the rain and cool temps - a vast improvement.

## NMRA Event Recap (continued)

Two other great successes: first, the facility that previously housed the Columbia Historic Preservation Society (CHIPS) at 21 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Street has now been restructured to primarily display two model railroads. On the first floor is a large O-Scale modular layout that takes up most of the area. And as before the second floor continues to house the large and ever-expanding Columbia and Susquehanna HO Model Railroad Club. Our other very successful activity was the hop-on, hop-off trolley shuttle that stopped at all event locations, local restaurants, and included extensive historic announcements about the many local sites.

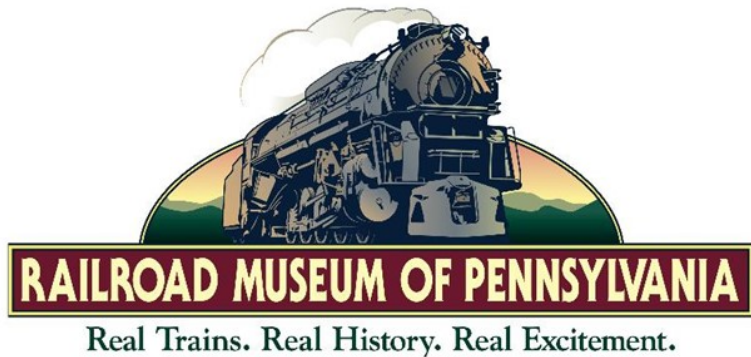
Now, for the disappointing news. Mother Nature's weather fury spoiled several great outside activities: first and foremost, numerous scheduled rail speeder crews had to cancel due to problematic wet rails that prevented all day rides to attendees from the city northward and back – a real bummer. Also, several Civil War reenactors and their campsites, military display vehicles, and a large group of area food vendors who even under the main pavilion would be too exposed to uncomfortable conditions. So next year we do not plan to tell Mom Nature of our planned date and may even employ some disinformation tactics, but we will provide all planned info to our hopeful attendees such as you, your family, and friends.

So promise not to tell her it's next June 10 – hope to see you there!

Barry Schmitt



# Non-NMRA Event



## Model Railroading Days at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

**Saturday, August 20 and Sunday, August 21. Regular Museum hours**

Watch the world of operating model trains in action and see static displays from a variety of different participating groups and clubs. Experience the *Pennsylvania Middle Division* HO scale operating layout in the second floor gallery and the *Pennsylvania Landscapes* HO scale operating layout in Stewart Junction Railway Education Center. Both layouts are crafted and maintained primarily by Museum volunteers. Stewart Junction also features hands-on model trains from the G scale High Iron Challenge to LEGOs. Regular Museum admission.



Pennsylvania Landscapes layout scene



Middle Division Layout scene

# Non-NMRA Event

## READING RAILROAD MODELERS MEET



# X



**SEPTEMBER 16-17-18, 2022**



**Reading Railroad Heritage Museum  
500 South 3rd Street Hamburg, PA**

### READING RAILROAD MODELERS MEET X OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Please PRINT the information below and mail with proper fees to:

**READING RAILROAD MODELERS MEET X  
PO Box 15143 Reading, PA 19612-5143**

A confirmation letter with your official entry number and final event outline, will be mailed/emailed to you in mid-September 2022. All entries MUST be postmarked by September 1, 2022. You CAN register AT the Meet!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDITIONAL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

#### READING RAILROAD MODELERS MEET X ENTRY FEES

Please make checks and/or money orders payable in US FUNDS to: **RCT&HS** Children under 18 are FREE with a paid adult entry for Wall Street or Crusader entry only.

#### The Wall Street

attending WITH Model Display - \$30 (4' table space)  
Early bird registration \$20 BEFORE August 15

#### The Crusader

attending WITHOUT Model Display - \$40  
Early bird registration \$30 BEFORE August 15

#### Reading Terminal Service

attending ONLINE - \$15

#### The BeeLine Service

vendor table \$15 each (8 foot table - limit 2)

Reading Railroad Modelers Meet X Event T-Shirt is available PRE-ORDER ONLY by September 1, 2022

	QTY	PRICE	TOTAL
WALL STREET		\$20/30	
CRUSADER		\$30/40	
BEE LINE SERVICE		\$15	
RDG TERM SERV		\$15	
Event T-shirt			
small		\$22	
medium		\$22	
large		\$22	
X Large		\$22	
XX Large		\$25	
XXX Large		\$25	
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>			

### EVENT HIGHLIGHTS and FEATURES

displays of Reading and Anthracite Railroad modeling  
Reading and Anthracite Railroad inspired layout tours  
clinics on Reading & Anthracite Railroad modeling & history  
social hour to meet-greet your fellow modelers  
vendors selling Reading Railroad & other items

Door Prize raffle from major sponsors!!  
Certificate Awards for popular vote models  
event t-shirts for sale (pre-order only)  
make great new model railroad friends!  
"White elephant" sales table for registered modelers

More Information and Updates Go To- [www.ReadingRRMM.com](http://www.ReadingRRMM.com)



Hosted by: **The Reading Railroad Heritage Museum,  
Reading Company Technical & Historical Society  
and Anthracite Railroads Historical Society**

**Anthracite Railroads  
Historical Society, Inc.**



#### OTHER EVENT SPONSORS



# Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued from page 1)

## Quaker Valley Railroad

operating Whiting Dumper at the Titus Generating Station in Lynnsburg

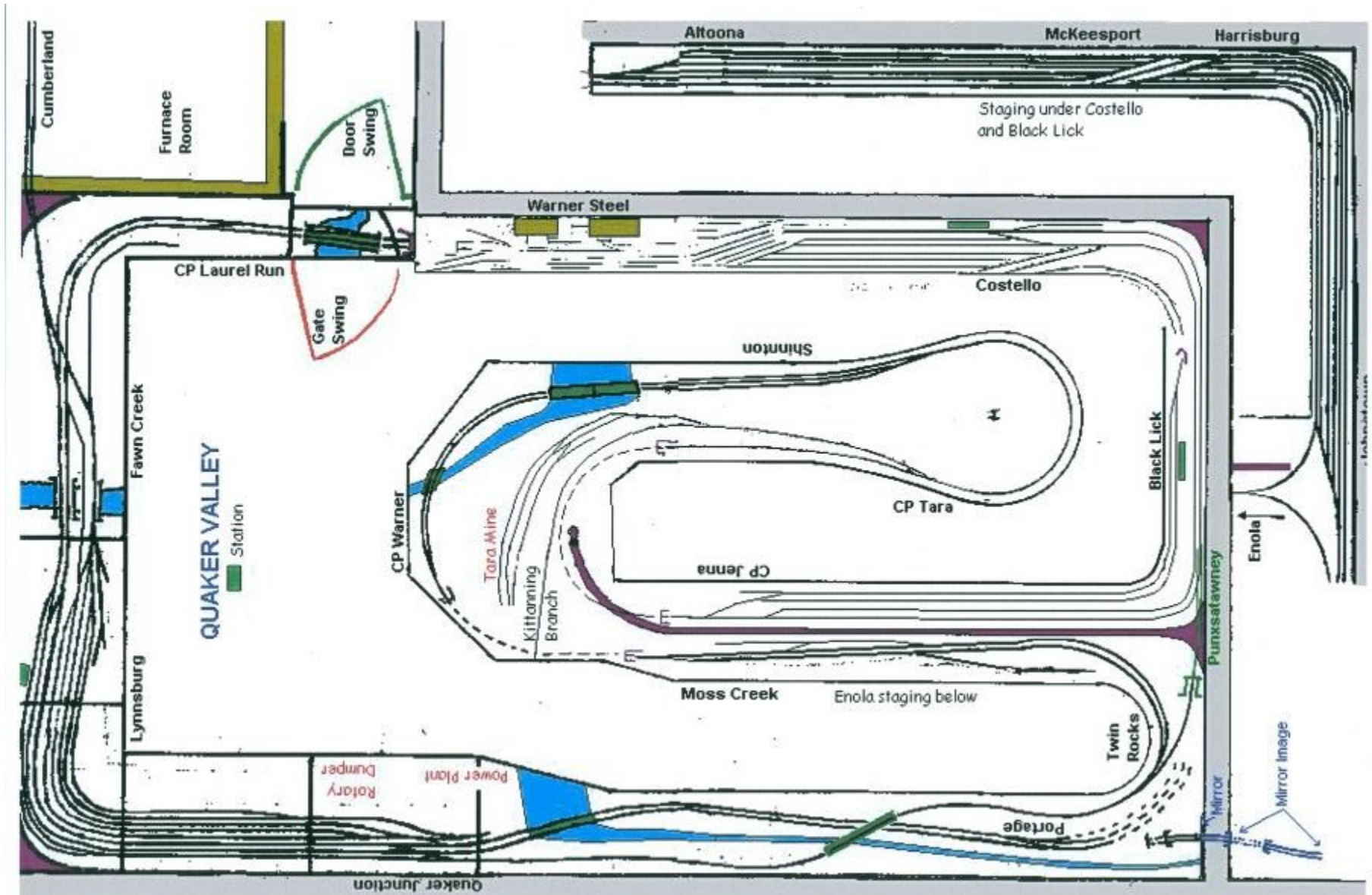
It is September 1977 in Western Pennsylvania and the young Consolidated Rail Corporation is just getting its feet on the ground in the coal regions of the Allegheny Mountains. New units are on order and Conrail's new blue scheme is showing up on a variety of recently shopped equipment. But the majority of the power found trackside is still in the schemes of the many fallen flags absorbed by Conrail; Penn Central, Reading, Lehigh Valley and Erie Lackawanna. Also showing up are hastily renumbered units, with just a quick touch up of the cab sides and number boards. Each consist offers a smorgasbord of sights and sounds as Alcos, GEs and EMDs team up.

The Quaker Valley is a short line that runs from the Conrail interchange at Lynnsburg, just west of Altoona, northward to Buffalo. Chessie freights have trackage rights over a



portion of the QV on their way from Cumberland northward as well. The Quaker Valley was created from remnants of the D&H and many of the inherited locos still sport the yellow and blue scheme of that railroad, but with a new quaker logo.

# Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)



## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

The HO scale 110-foot-long Conrail double track main line circles the wall in a 21' x 37' basement room dedicated to the layout. The single-track Quaker Valley main line leaves Conrail at Lynnsburg and continues on a walk around peninsular plan for 125 feet with several passing sidings and three branches. It terminates at the town of Costello which is dominated by a steel mill and yard. Hidden tracks accommodate 20 trains "off stage" including through tracks on the Conrail main line representing Altoona, Johnstown, McKeesport and Harrisburg. Stub staging tracks represent Enola, Cumberland (B&O), Punxsutawney and Homer City. Minimum 14 foot long passing sidings provide the Dispatcher plenty of opportunities to keep the relatively long freights moving.



SW8 PC #8642 yard switcher at Quaker Junction



Allegheny Paint factory at Shinnton



double track span across Kittanning Creek

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

The Quaker Valley has been using a North Coast Engineering NCE 5 amp Power House Pro DCC system since 1999. The old control panel with rotary switches has been retired and the railroad has been controlled by a JMRI Panel Pro software CTC panel since 2003. It is now located on a touch monitor. All main line turnouts are now controlled by accessory decoders from the CTC panel and all main line blocks are detected. Signaling is the next big electronics project but the first PRR style position light signal is in operation. Bob has worked extensively with the JMRI group to document the use of CTC panels. Bob's JMRI tutorial from 2012 is still on the JMRI clinics page. Most recently Bob authored an article on "Virtual Signaling" in the June 2015 issue of "Model Railroad Hobbyist" magazine.



Quaker Valley GP38-2 #730 in ex-Delaware & Hudson Railroad paint scheme



## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

The Quaker Valley layout uses a walk around approach to layout design and entry is through a swinging gate with a double track bridge across the aisle at the only door. The gate construction was documented in an article in the February 2013 issue of the online **Model Railroad Hobbyist** magazine. The town of Costello is located above the staging yard of Altoona/McKeesport. Sliding Masonite panels conceal the mainline Conrail staging yards. The stub staging at Enola is off a wye from the Conrail main line and located under Moss Creek.



## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

Visible track is mostly code 83 flex track, but there is a lot of code 100 track existing from the original railroad construction in suburban Philadelphia in the 1980s. There is still a brass Atlas turnout in service in the Harrisburg staging yard.

Scenery is about 60 percent complete, including covered corner backdrops to the ceiling, hard shell scenery and fiber fill - ground foam trees and ground cover. Three water scenes have been completed using two-part epoxy.



Conrail cabin car bringing up the rear of a freight near Shinnton



Warner Steel blast furnace Lynda at Costello

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

The city backdrops include a number of false front buildings and kitbashed structures which tower above the rail yards below. An operating rotary dumper which was featured in the December 1979 Railroad Model Craftsman is in operation at the power plant at Lynnsburg. Three-foot aisles, 2 percent grades and 30" to 48" radius curves and benchwork from 44" to 62" high provide a variety of scenes and vantage points.

Several Atlas and Athearn locomotives from the 1980s survive with DCC decoders today. More recent acquisitions include Bachman, Bowser and Kato. About one third of the locos in operation today have sound decoders. Rolling stock includes Athearn, Atlas, Con-Cor, McKean, Roundhouse, Walthers and many others. More information on Bob's Quaker Valley can be found on the web site [www.quaker-valley.com](http://www.quaker-valley.com).



a view across the Lynnsburg Yard



Robin Hood Flour complex at Costello

# Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

The Lynnsburg Hotel is a resin Magnuson Models kit.



uptown Lynnsburg



Tara Mine sits on a hilltop above the Kitanning Creek.

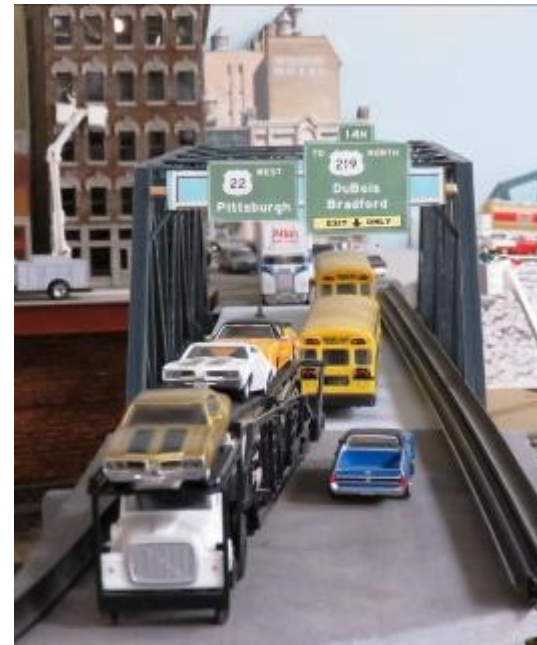


PC and QV diesels awaiting service at Costello

# Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)



farmhouse and barn adjacent to the Conrail main line



school buses, car carrier and private vehicles contribute to the rush hour traffic in Lynnsburg



Titus Generating Station sits on the edge of an aisle fascia



Goodwin Brick Kilns are always busy at Twin Rocks.

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)



Conrail traffic on the single track Quaker Valley main passes over Sharman Creek and the Conrail main line.



The double track Conrail bridge sits on the aisle entrance gate.



wide-vision Conrail cabin car #22135 at work



Quaker Valley power for the mine run waits at Costello.

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

Quaker Valley ALCO C424 #403



Conrail has not had a chance to repaint Reading ALCO C630 #5307.

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)

boxcars awaiting loading from Buffalo Industries at Twin Rocks



Warner Steel electric furnace at Costello





# Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)



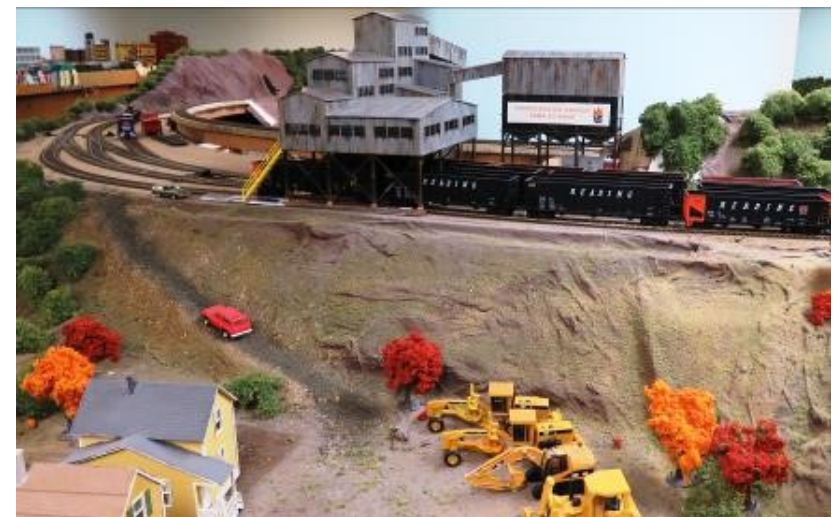
Traffic is backed up in Lynnburg.



This barn and out building sits adjacent to the Conrail main line and Sharman Creek.



cabin car ready track in front of Cambria Furniture in Lynnburg



Tara Mine on the QV Kittanning Branch sits above some company homes.

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)



Quaker Valley EMD SW9 yard switcher #602 in front of the apartments in Costello



Bicentennial colors in the cabin car ready track at Costello



Consolidated Energy Tara #3 Mine on the QV Kittanning Branch



Conrail yard switchers at Lynnsburg

## Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad (continued)



model railroader and JMRI guru Bob Bucklew



Lynnsburg Yard



The retired DC control panel is seen on the left and the JMRI CTC panels are pictured on the laptops on the right.



The Quaker Valley has leased C & O GP9 #5903 to supplement the D & H acquisition.

# The Frugal Model Railroader

During the 1980's AHM sold several HO calcium carbide carrier cars manufactured by Roco in Austria. These cars were offered at a low price, targeting children's train sets. They are still available in used condition on EBAY and probably area train shows. These cars have little detail, truck mounted hook-horn couplers, oversized stirrup steps, plastic wheels and no calcium carbide containers. As such, they are toy-like. The cars were made in various colors representing railroads such as the Sante Fe, Chicago & Northwestern, Western Maryland, Penn Central, Chesapeake & Ohio and the Milwaukee Road.



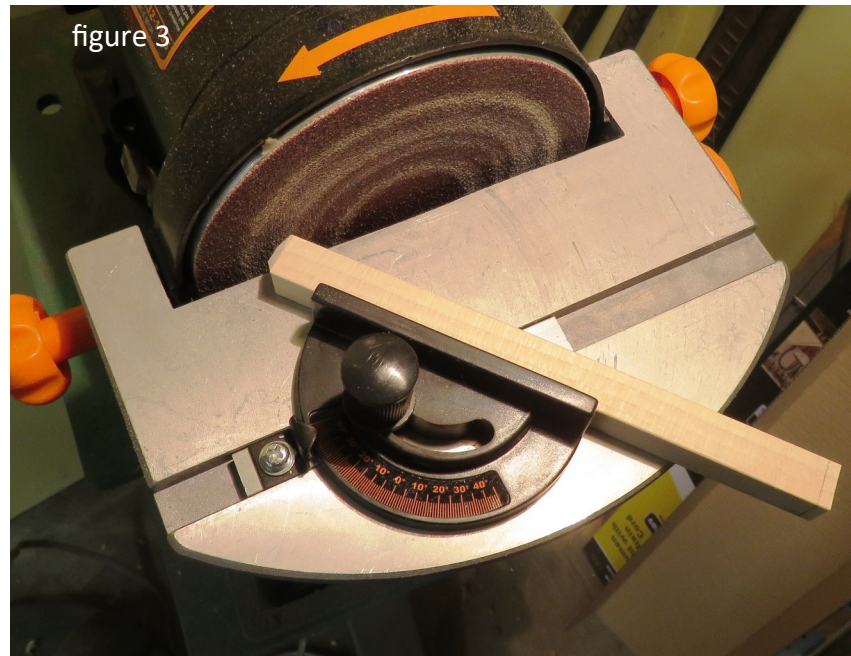
I became fascinated by these cars and did some background checking. Calcium carbide is a chemical compound utilized in industrial and commercial applications. The compound is used in production of acetylene and calcium cyanamide (fertilizer). Needless to say, it is corrosive and hazardous to transport. Special rail cars were designed and built for the safe movement of

The project began by removing the original trucks with their couplers, coupler pockets and plastic wheels. Kadee coupler boxes were attached to the underframe and Kadee #148 whisker couplers added. Next, the trucks were replaced and metal wheelsets installed. The stirrup steps were then cut away and replaced by .55 mm wire bent to the required shape and secured to the body (figure 1, next page)..

## The Frugal Model Railroader (continued)

I was able to purchase a car on EBAY. However, it did not come with the appropriate containers. After considerable research I found no manufactured parts that would be appropriate for the containers. I then designed a container having a square, rectangular metal container with chamfered top edges and a lift ring.

To begin making the containers I cut  $\frac{1}{2}$ " square rods of close grain wood (poplar). Next I marked the chamfer lines on each rod end (figure 2) and sanded the 45 degree angle using a small disc sander. (figure 3) Each rod was then cut to a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " length (figure 4, next page). Each shortened rod was again marked for the chamfer and sanded to the correct angle.



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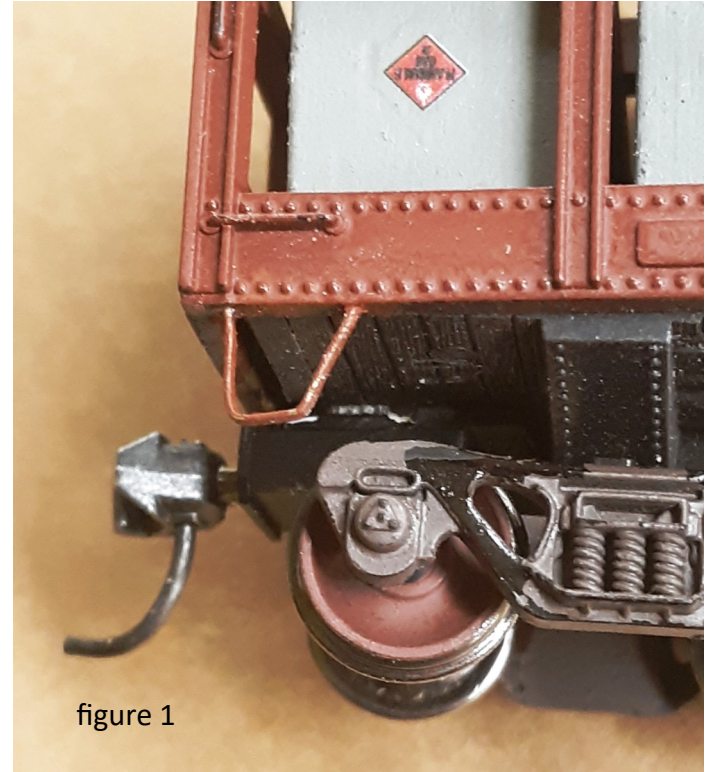


figure 1

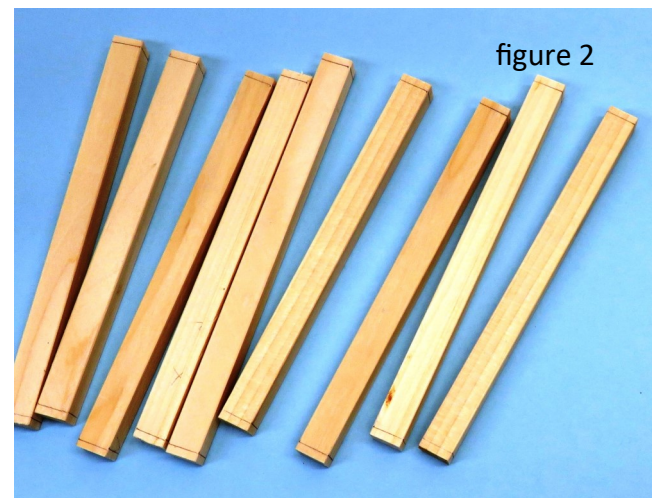
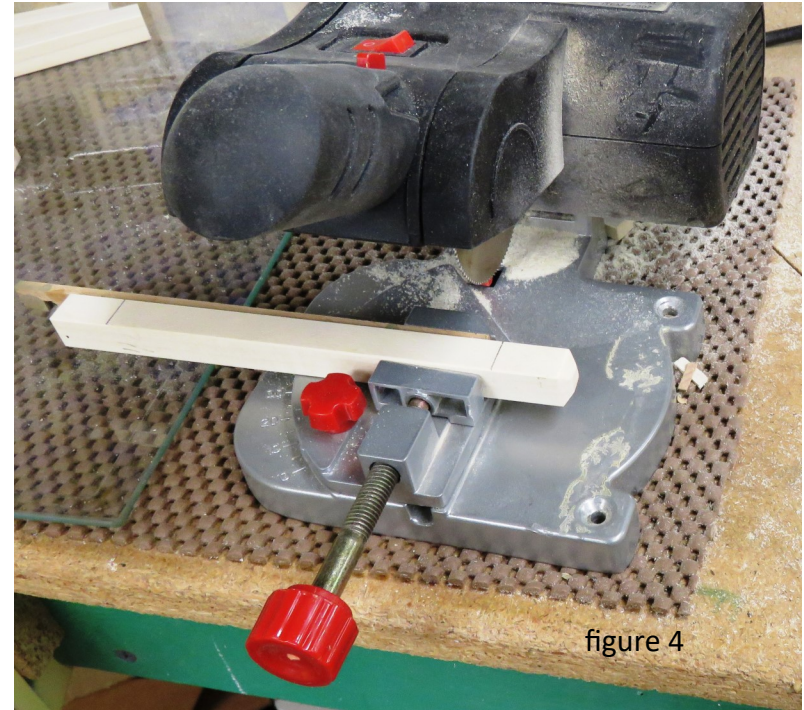
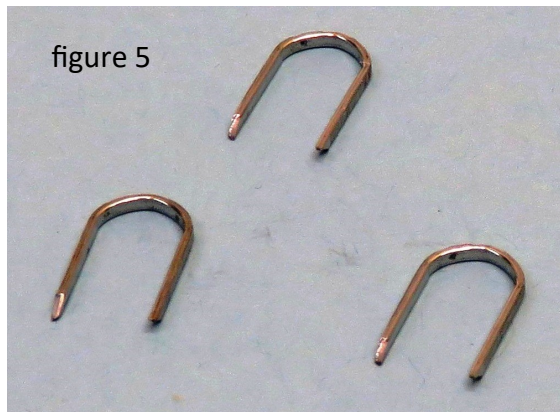


figure 2

## The Frugal Model Railroader (continued)

After sanding each container two holes were drilled in the top. These holes accepted  $\frac{1}{4}$ " cable staples (figure 5). The staples became the lifting eye for each container. Upon final painting, hazardous placards decals were applied. The containers were then inserted and glued into the car body frame (figure 6).



I was so pleased with the result I started buying up other AHM calcium carbide cars and now have a fleet of five!



article and photos by Ben Kubelski

**Susquehanna Sidetracks**

**POSTAGE**

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