



SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division II,

Volume 30

Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Number 6

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway

A Ride on The Main Line

The War of 1812 had ended and the country was expanding by extending its borders westward. New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia were the major seaports which stood to benefit the most in trade to the west. The road system could not handle the increased traffic so we entered into the age of canals, which offered faster service and were cheaper to operate.

New York built the Erie Canal which joined the Hudson River with Lake Erie, thus providing a through waterway from New York City to the Great Lakes. The Erie Canal opened in 1825.

Maryland, replacing their National Road, began the construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal which connected Baltimore with the Ohio River.

As a counter measure, Pennsylvania decided that it wanted to develop its own canal system linking Philadelphia to the frontier city of Pittsburgh and authorized its construction. But when the survey was made, it was found that there was not enough water in the right places for a canal between the Delaware and the Susquehanna Rivers.

In March 1823, the Pennsylvania State Legislature issued a charter for the first railroad in the state. It authorized the construction of an 82 mile railway, from Philadelphia through Lancaster, terminating at Columbia (on the Susquehanna River), as part of the "Main Line of Public Works of the State of Pennsylvania." The nickname, "The Main Line," derived from this early Pennsylvania railroad (continued on page 11).

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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 December 15, 2022.

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Editor's Message

This issue closes out another year...our 30th year of publication. As we look forward to a new year I call on our members to become involved in the Division's activities.

With our sponsorship of the 2023 MER Regional Convention in Altoona, PA, there are opportunities to serve as noted in the article announcing the current committee chairs. Please consider volunteering.

There are additional ways to serve the Division. They include website management, newsletter submissions, layout sharing, and attending scheduled events. These are just a few suggestions.

Remember, helping the Division helps all members!

Best Wishes,

Rich

Division Calendar of Events

November – Division-wide Open House Tour <http://modelrailroadopenhouse.com/>

November 5– Warrenton, VA – Joint Meet with Potomac Division (see page 9)



Re-purposed boxcar with roll up garage doors ends used as movable storage unit at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania.

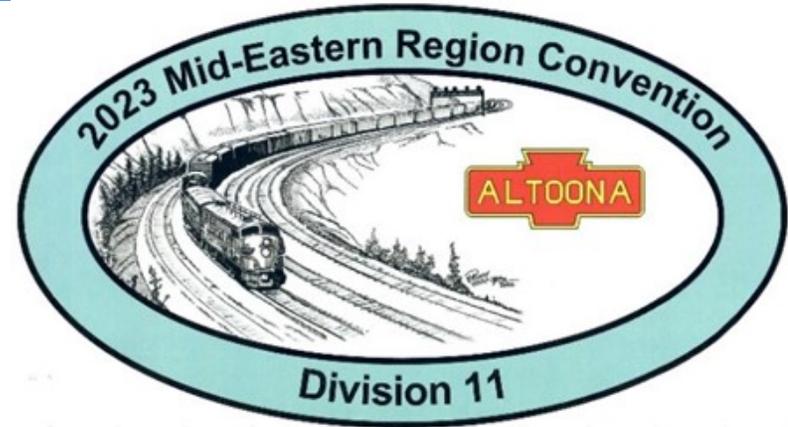
Division Cash Flow Statement

National Model Railroad Association
Mid-Eastern Region
Susquehanna Division #11
Cash Flow Statement
For July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022

<u>Beginning Cash Balance - July 1, 2021</u>		\$9,377.33
 <u>Income for the Year</u>		
Subscription Income	\$85.00	
Donation - Allentown	150.00	
NMRA (MER) Membership Dues	274.50	
East Broad Top RR Train Meet (7/10/2021)	920.00	
Allentown Meet	48.00	
Total Income Received		1,477.50
Total Cash Available		\$10,854.83
 <u>Expenses for the Year</u>		
Postage	\$46.32	
Newsletter Copying	140.28	
Bank Svce Charges	24.00	
Allentown Meet	202.10	
Lancaster Meet	83.94	
Total Expenses		496.64
<u>Ending Cash Balance - June 30, 2022</u>		<u>\$10,358.19</u>
All Undesignated Funds		

respectfully submitted by Dean Johnson, Chief Clerk

NMRA/MER Convention



Volunteers Needed for 2023 MER Convention

As a reminder, our Division 11 will be hosting the 2023 Mid-Eastern Region (MER) annual Convention from October 19-23, 2023 in Altoona, PA. We have a website up and running; see <https://mer2023.org/index.html> . I must say that many of you have stepped up to help and to chair various teams that make up the Local Convention Committee (LCC), and I sincerely thank you for doing so! The current LCC is given at the end of this brief message. Please take note of the OPEN positions. Most of the leaders need volunteers to help with that particular aspect of the convention. Division and MER members are encouraged to contact the leader of their choice to see how they can help make this event a successful and memorable one.

Thank you!
Jerry Lauchle

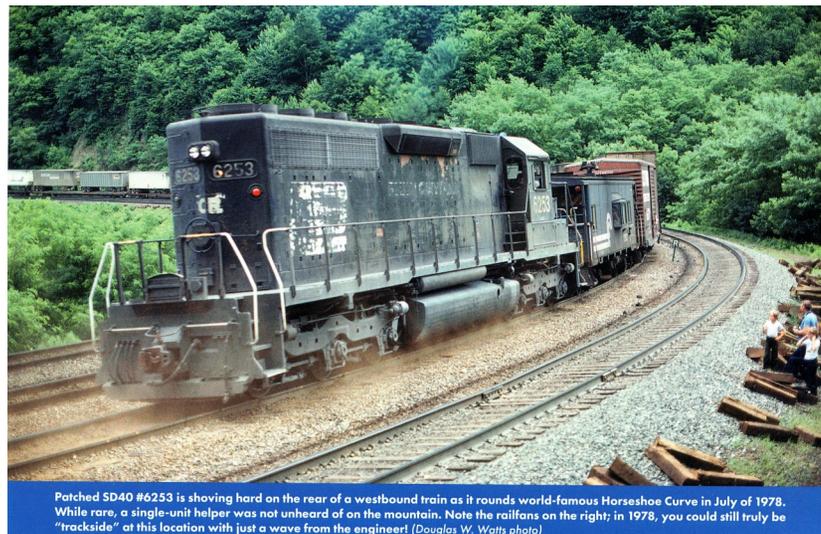
- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| • General Chairman – | Jerry Lauchle, MMR | gcl1@psu.edu | 814-404-6955 |
| • Ex Officio Adviser – | Bob Charles, MMR | rcharles@aol.com | 717-433-4524 |
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| ◊ Publicity Assistant - | Ken Roth | wittabull@yahoo.com | 717-274-2947 |

NMRA/MER Convention (continued)

• In-House Activities Chair –	Brian Kampschroer	treasurer@mer-nmra.com	717-991-7560
• Clinics Chair –	Barry Schmitt	sbschmitt@comcast.net	717-877-1810
◇ Clinics Asst-Chair –	Rich Wurst	rjwurst@comcast.net	717-392-5023
◇ Clinics Asst-Chair –	Forrest Lucas	flucas@atlanticbb.net	814-243-0457
• Company Store Chair –	Howard Oakes	business@mer-nmra.com	717-632-5990
◇ Company Store Assistant –	Keith Frantz	keith.frantz@verizon.net	484-797-8489
• Raffle Chair –	Dean Johnson	drgwdean@hotmail.com	717-629-4179
• Registration Chair –	Kirk Bateman	mer-registrar@mer-nmra.com	410-442-0446
• Registration Desk –	<u>OPEN; need volunteers</u>		
• General Contest Chair –	Alan Mende	contest@mer-nmra.com	717-421-2930
◇ Contest Room Assistant –	<u>OPEN; need volunteers</u>		
• Hotel Layouts Chair –	<u>OPEN; need volunteers</u>		
• Signage Chair –	Tim Himmelberger	tlhimmel@comcast.net	717-454-8033
◇ Signage Assistant –	Ken Roth	wittabull@yahoo.com	717-274-2947
• As Needed Assistant –	Terry Flinchbaugh	tlfnc@comcast.net	814-441-7332

NMRA/MER Convention (continued)

- **Computer-Audio-Visual Chair -** Jack Basiago jbasiago@sprynet.com 256-714-4050
- ◊ **Computer-Audio-Visual Assistants -** *OPEN; need volunteers*
- **Hotel Staff Communication-** Brian Kampschroer treasurer@mer-nmra.com 717-991-7560
- **Layout Visitation Chair -** Gary Nastase gpnastase02j20@gmail.com 814-423-2240
- **Operating Sessions Chair -** David Baker dbakerrr@aol.com 814-269-3993
- **Rails and Non-Rails Tours/Visitation Chair -** Jerry Lauchle, MMR *until a volunteer is identified*
gcl1@psu.edu 814-404-6955
- ◊ Joe DeFrancesco, CEO of Railroaders Memorial Museum will assist idefrancesco@railroadcity.org 814-946-0834
- ◊ Lew Morgan from State College will coordinate excursion on the Everett Railroad lewsmorgan@aol.com 814-280-7700
- ◊ Forrest Lucas from Johnstown will assist as he is able flucas@atlanticbb.net 814-255-3826



Patched SD40 #6253 is showing hard on the rear of a westbound train as it rounds world-famous Horseshoe Curve in July of 1978. While rare, a single-unit helper was not unheard of on the mountain. Note the railfans on the right; in 1978, you could still truly be "trackside" at this location with just a wave from the engineer! (Douglas W. Watts photo)

Potomac Division Joint Meet with other MER Divisions November 5, 2022



The Potomac Division's annual Joint Meet with James River has expanded this year to include the Tidewater and Susquehanna Divisions (and anyone else interested). The meet will take place on Saturday, November 5th at the Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia, starting at 9 AM.

There will be door prizes, a white elephant table, a planned auction of railroad memorabilia and model judging. The centerpiece of the event will be clinics. Three are already locked down:

Ken Wilson- Rolling Stock Brake Systems

Brian Sheron, MMR- Making An Operational Grade Crossing Signal

Norm Reid- Model Railroad Photography

Other clinics will be announced as they are scheduled. There are also plans for layout open house visits in the afternoon.

Admission is free as is the parking. We will pass the hat to take up a donation for the church. Past donations from the Joint Meet have helped build a kids camp for inner city children and a feeding program for children in the U.S. and around the world.

The Church is located at 4361 Lee Highway in Warrenton.

Non-NMRA Event



FIRST FROST[®] TRAIN MEET

November 12 & 13, 2022 · Saturday 9-4 · Sunday 9-3

Train Races · Test Track · Switching and Operating Layouts

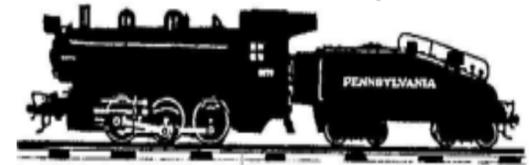
Adults **\$10.00** · Children under 12 **FREE!** w/adult

Allentown Fairgrounds Agricultural Hall

1925 West Chew Street, Allentown, PA 18104

Visit our website for more info or contact us at (610) 442-2859

www.allentowntrainmeet.com



The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

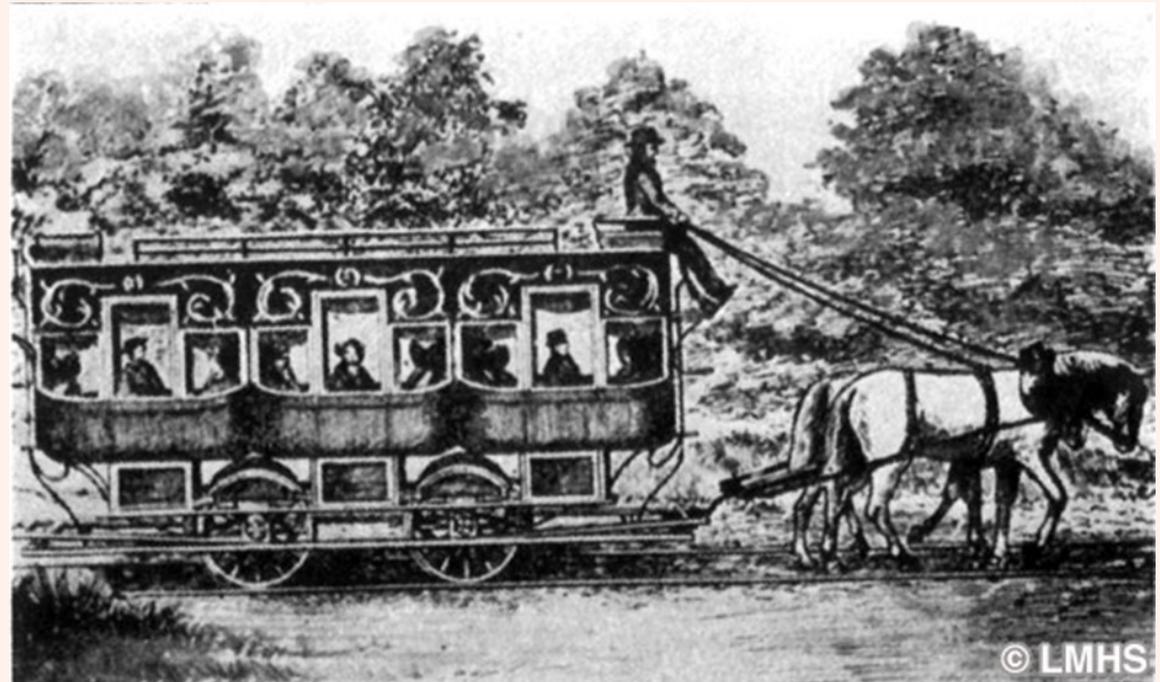
A Train for the Accommodation of Way Passengers will leave
COLUMBIA for PHILADELPHIA
 Every Morning at 11 o'clock, and a like Train will *Leave Philadelphia* each Morning at the same hour, stopping at the following named points:

EASTERN TRAIN.		WESTERN TRAIN.	
Leave Basin at	H. M. 1 P	Arrive at Coatesville	H. M. 3
Arrive at Mountville	11 50	" Gallagherville	3 20
" Hempfield	12 15	" Downingtown	3 40
" Lancaster (dine)	12 30	" Oakland	4 15
" Bird-in-Hand	1 30	" Steamboat	4 45
" Leaman's	1 50	" Paoli	4 55
" Kinser's	2	" Eagle	5
" Gap	2 10	" Brookeville	5 20
" Pennington's	2 30	" Whitehall	5 40
" Parkesburg	2 45	" Philadelphia	6 30
		Leave Philadelphia at	H. M. 11
		Arrive at Whitehall at	12 20
		" Brookeville	12 40
		" Eagle	1
		" Paoli (to dine)	1 20
		" Steamboat	1 50
		" Oakland	2 10
		" Downingtown	2 35
		" Gallagherville	2 55
		" Coatesville	3
		Arrive at Parkesburg	H. M. 3 16
		" Pennington's	3 35
		" Gap	4 10
		" Kinser's	4 25
		" Leaman's	4 35
		" Bird-in-Hand	5 10
		" Lancaster	6 40
		" Hempfield	6 *
		" Mountville	6 20
		" Columbia	7

A. MEHAFFEY,
 Sup't Col. & Phila. R. R.
Alex. Knox Printer, 563 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

A timetable dated April 1, 1837. In this schedule, provision was made for "tarrying" for from five to thirty minutes at each of the stations. These intervals provided time for buying refreshments.

The original Paoli Local, which first ran September 20, 1832.



© LMHS

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

A Government Venture

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway was one of the earliest railroads in America and the first in the world to be built by a government rather than by private enterprise. The contracts for the work were granted by the Canal Commission, under whose supervision the line was operated. Considered a public toll road, individuals and companies paid tolls to the Commission for use of the rails. They also supplied their own horses, rolling stock, and passenger or freight facilities.

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway finally became operational on September 1832, with carts and wagons dragged by horse power on a 20-mile section which began in Philadelphia (at Broad and Vine Streets) and ended at Green Tree Inn, west of Paoli. The first passenger cars were constructed on the same general design as the stage coaches and were nicknamed “fireflies,” so designated because of their brilliant red color. They were drawn by two horses, recruited from the Conestoga wagon traffic. When the idea of locomotives was first conceived, there was great opposition on the part of those who either used the railway or lived near it. They declared that the engines would destroy the value of their property, and that the sparks from them would set fire to their houses and barns. It was not until April 1834 that the first train was drawn from Philadelphia to Lancaster by a locomotive, named the “Black Hawk.” Not until 1836 did locomotives finally displace horsepower. The Baldwin locomotives worked the best. The English ones, while well built, were found too light for the heavily curved and graded American tracks.

Eventually, “The Main Line” expanded from the Philadelphia & Columbia Railway to include the Eastern Division of the Canal (from Columbia to Hollidaysburg, 172 miles); the Allegheny Portage Railway (from Hollidaysburg to Johnstown, 36 miles, crossing the Allegheny Mountains); and the Western Division of the Canal (from Johnstown to Pittsburgh, 104 miles). This network carried passengers, but its primary purpose was freight.

The Railway Route

The railroad began in Philadelphia and headed in a westerly direction:

It crossed the Schuylkill River at the Columbia Bridge and proceeded up the “Incline Plane” at Belmont Plateau.

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

There it turned right and paralleled Belmont Avenue and then followed Conshohocken State Road into Lower Merion.

Still paralleling Conshohocken State Road, it passed through the Cynwyd train station, up Bala Avenue and Bentley Road, and crossed behind the fire house.

It then crossed over to the south side of Montgomery Avenue (Bowman's Bridge).

At All Saints Church, it crossed back over to the north side of Montgomery Avenue and went in front of the Lower Merion High School.

From there it curved left onto Church Road and on to Coulter Avenue to the Athensville (Ardmore) train station.

It followed the tracks of the R5 until Haverford where it again curved left onto (Old) Railroad Avenue to the intersection of Bryn Mawr Avenue and County Line Road.

Here it followed Glenbrook Avenue until it crossed County Line Road, then Lancaster Avenue, then up Montrose Avenue and rejoined the R5 line at the Rosemont station where it continued west and left the Lower Merion area.

A view of the "Incline Plane" from the top of the Belmont Plateau (north of the Belmont Mansion) looking down towards the Schuylkill River in the background. The "Incline Plane" was 2,805 feet long, with a rise of 187 feet. Stationary steam engines raised and lowered the trains with cables and winches.



The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

A New Direction

Shortly after the railroad opened, it became obvious that the “Incline Plane” at the Belmont Plateau was inefficient. Hauling cars up and down the grade created significant delays both to passengers and to freight. It wasn’t until October 1850 that the Broad & Vine to Athenville (Ardmore) line was abandoned and replaced with the 30th & Market Street to Athenville (Ardmore) line which remains today the route of the Paoli Local (R5).

THEN.....

.....NOW

In 1851, the abandoned line was purchased by the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad. The tracks from Broad and Vine to the Columbia Bridge were used by the Reading; the tracks from the “Incline Plane” west to Athenville were kept open for awhile as a possible detour route, but were eventually dismantled.

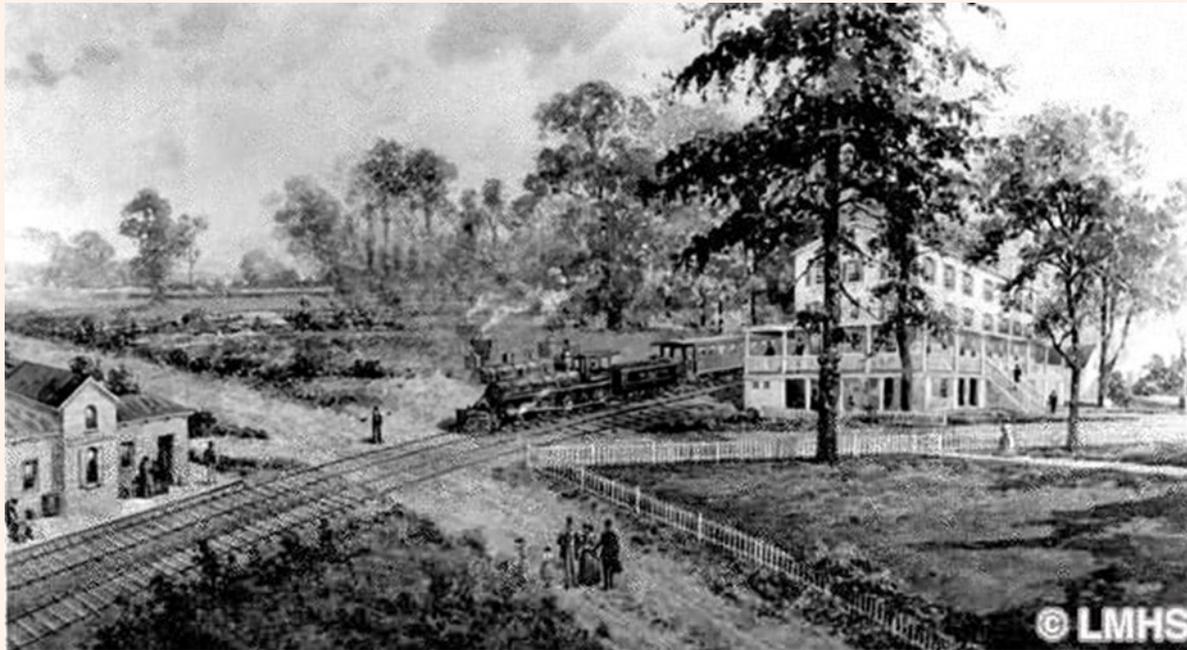


Since transport was accomplished by connecting systems of railroads and canals, the boats were constructed in sections. They could be coupled together when afloat and disconnected and placed on suitably designed eight wheeled cars for transport over the railroad. In this way, freight was carried over the entire systems without transferring from cars to boats, or vice versa.

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

Development of the railroad locomotive marked the beginning of the decline of the canal system. Also, the builders thought that once the system was open, the receipts would pour into the state's coffers. They failed to foresee the huge ongoing maintenance and operational cost required. Therefore, the state decided it wanted to get out of the railroad business. In 1857, the Pennsylvania Railroad, whose original charter was to construct a line from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh only, bought the Philadelphia & Columbia Railway for \$7.5 million. To save money, the Pennsylvania Railroad merely upgraded the Philadelphia & Columbia Railway line tracks and the PRR now had a continuous route from Philadelphia all the way to Pittsburgh. On leaving Philadelphia, the first stop was at the White Hall station, located at the corner of Glenbrook and County Line Roads in Bryn Mawr.NOW

The White Hall Hotel



Old lithograph shows the White Hall depot at left (now The Bryn Mawr Hospital Thrift Shop). The White Hall Hotel on the right was built during the railroad expansion years.

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

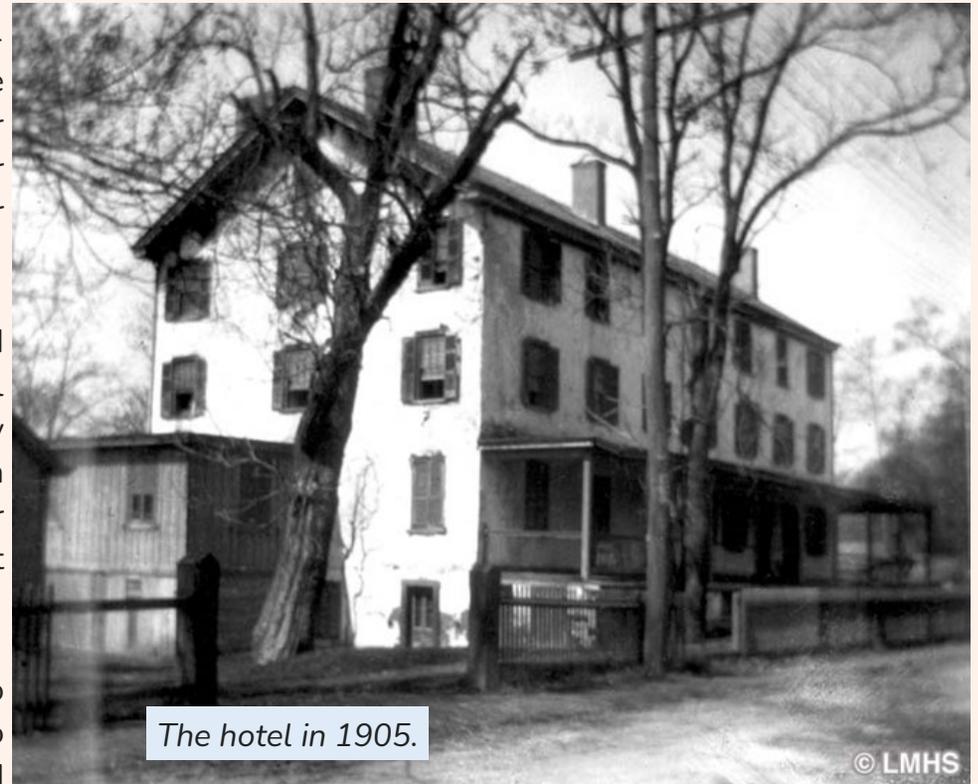
Between 1870 and 1900, the White Hall was the fashionable hotel of choice for summer residents when the Philadelphia & Columbia Railway passed under its rear windows and brought city folk from the overheated town to the country breezes of Bryn Mawr.

The genial host and part owner of the hotel, Charlie Arthur, was a popular figure, no doubt greeting all whose carriages stopped in front of his long porch or who arrived at the railway station across the intersection.

THEN.....
Guests reserved their rooms year after year, even though there were no “sanitary arrangements and no water in the building.” A pump in the yard provided water, candles and lamps served for illumination, and chamber pots came with the rooms. Yet the atmosphere was that of a big house party. Everyone knew everyone else. A nearby ice cream parlor did brisk business and, behind the hotel, across the tracks, was a pleasant grove where children could play and all ages could sit and enjoy summer days. In the late afternoon husbands came by train from their city offices to join their wives, waiting for them dressed in their best. **.....NOW**

THEN
But alas, the glory faded. The Pennsylvania Railroad relocated the mainline tracks, eliminating the curve where the White Hall stood, and its summer gaiety declined. Furthermore, the Pennsy built a magnificent rival beside its new tracks, the great Bryn Mawr Hotel. That hostelry lured the beautiful ladies in their long white dresses away and horse shows, dances, and elegant socials created new diversions.

The White Hall slowly sank into oblivion and ultimately to “boarding house” status. The faithful planned one last party to mark its passing. This end-of-the-19th century event welcomed



The Philadelphia & Columbia Railway (continued)

more than 300 people. The sitting rooms were jammed with merrymakers and 150 guests at a time were served dinner by butlers lent for the occasion. They played games, "Going to Jerusalem" and "Drop the Handkerchief"; a fiddler was found who struck up the "Virginia Reel." The aging building held together throughout the evening.



.....NOW

The depot seen in Civil War era photo.

reprinted courtesy of the Lower Merion Historical Society, written by Gerald A. Francis

The Tool Maven

Uncoupling HO scale locomotives and rolling stock can be problematic because of 'fat fingers', adjacent trains on parallel tracks and even nearby scenery. This problem becomes even more daunting when participating in model train operation sessions.

Over the years manufacturers have produced hand tools that make uncoupling easier and less likely to cause derailments during the uncoupling process. I will review some of the major tools and how they perform the uncoupling task. Lastly, I will share a home-made device that solves the uncoupling problem no current tools solves....that is the uncoupling of passenger cars with close fitting diaphragms.

Kadee manufactures a tool specifically made for uncoupling and replacing tension springs on their brand of couplers. Their Manual Uncoupling Tool #241 (Figure 1) is a plastic rod 5" in length and approximately 3/16" in diameter with one end having a point and the other end having a blade (Figure 2). The tool also aids in the replacement of coupler tension springs with each end serving a specific task. For uncoupling purposes, you insert the blade end into the mating couler jaws and simply twist to unlock the couplers (Figure 3).



Figure 1

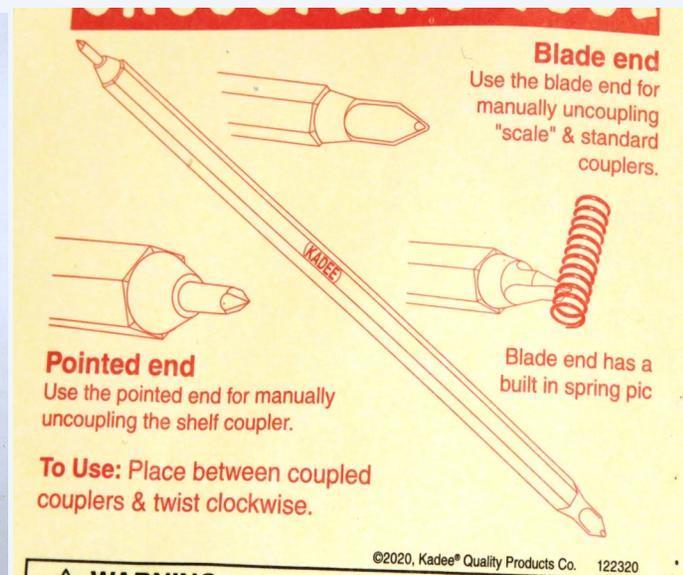


Figure 2

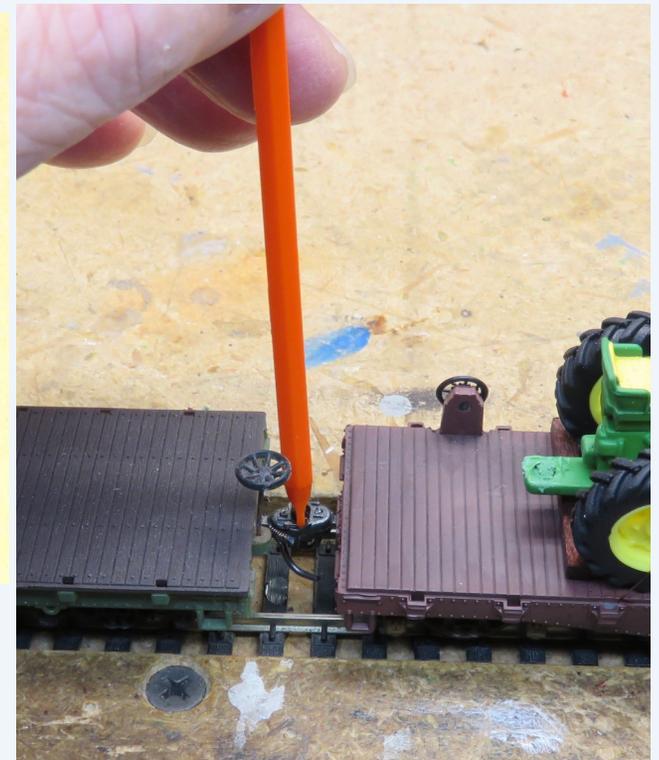


Figure 3

The Tool Maven (continued)

Two uncoupling tools are sold by Micro-Mark. This on-line and mail order company specializes in all manner of hobby tools and supplies. The first tool appears to be a modified stainless steel screwdriver (Figure 4). This tool is also inserted into the coupler and with a twisting action the uncoupling task is completed.

The second offering from Micro-Mark is a lighted uncoupling tool made from acrylic plastic (Figure 5). As is seen in the photo the light source aids in the uncoupling process which applies the same actions as the previous tools.

You can check out the hundreds of products sold by Mucro-Mark by visiting their website <https://www.micromark.com/>

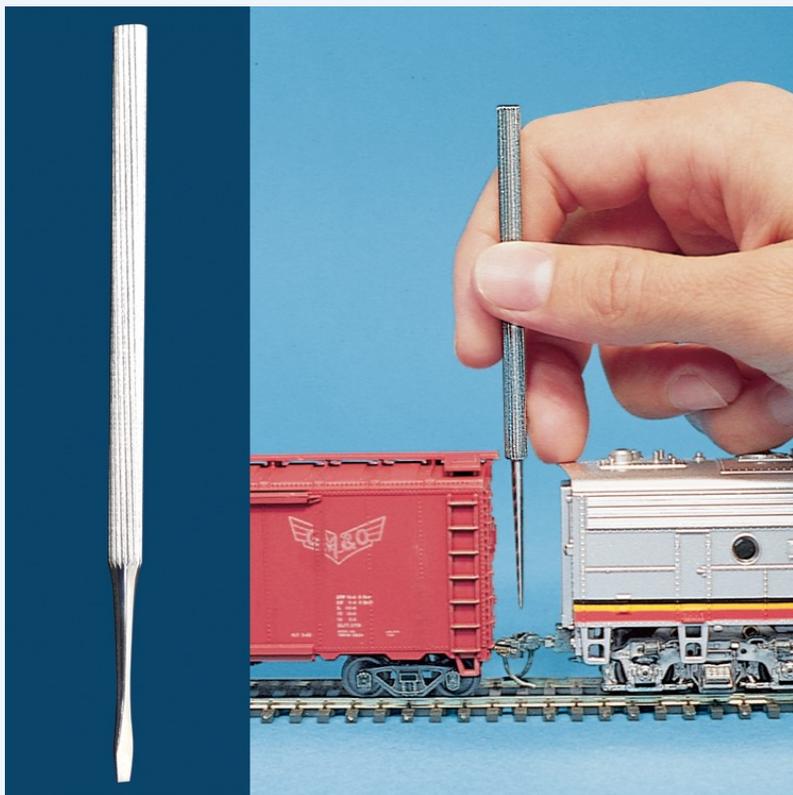


Figure 4



Figure 5

The Tool Maven (continued)

The next tool is rather unique in that it relies on magnetism for uncoupling. This feature is only successful on metal couplers, so if you use plastic couplers this tool is not for you. Rix Products manufactures an uncoupling tool formed into the shape of a lower case 'h'. The top is the finger holding stem and the bottom legs have magnets (Figure 6). The tool is inserted between the coupled cars and the magnets pull the trip pins (air hose replicas) apart thus allowing the uncoupling process to be completed.

Besides relying on manufacturers to produce uncoupling tools, model railroaders have devised their own tools by adapting products produced for different purposes. Take the tried and true, and cheap, food skewers (Figure 7). These thin round wooden rods are best known for skewering meat and vegetables prior to cooking. Well, model railroaders have taken this item and applied it to uncoupling rolling stock (Figure 8). The skewer is simply inserted into the mating couplers and maneuvered with a twisting motion to unopen the couplers. Some modelers have filed the point to form a flat surface which improves the twisting efficiency.



Figure 7



Figure 6

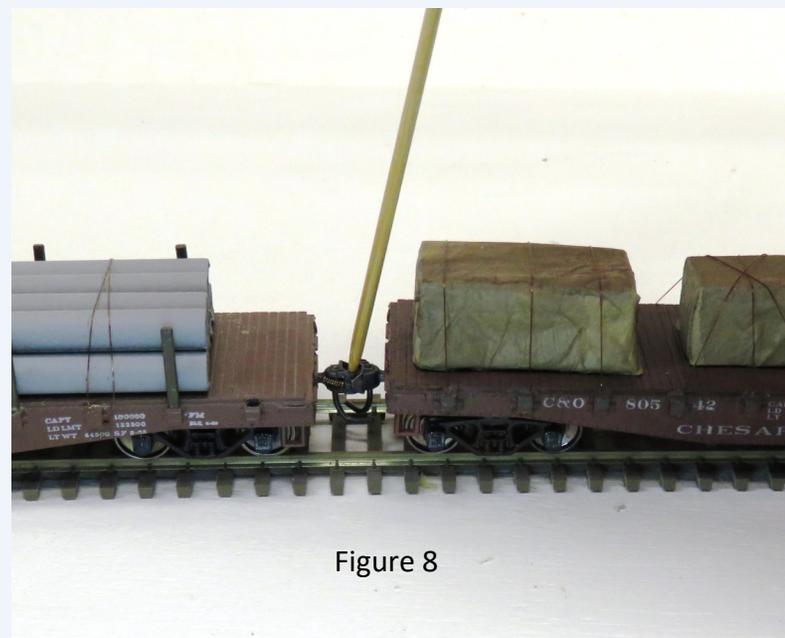


Figure 8

The Tool Maven (continued)

Another uncoupling tool adapted from other uses is a dental brush! While visiting Jerry Lauchle's HO layout I noticed this item and inquired as to its purpose. He explained that the dental brush does a fine job of uncoupling rolling stock! Since Jerry has attained the status of a Master Model Railroader, I assumed that he adapted the tool for use on his layout. He informed me that the dental brush has been used by model railroaders for many years. Evidently the dental brushes come in various sizes, but the medium seems to work best (Figure 9). To use the brush simple insert into the mating couplers and twist. The bristles cause the knuckles to separate and the uncoupling is complete (Figure 10).



Figure 9



Figure 10

The Tool Maven (continued)

All of the aforementioned tools perform the task of uncoupling well for freight cars and locomotives. However, they all fail when confronted by passenger cars with diaphragms. The access to mating couplers is prevented by the diaphragms from each car eliminating the gap between cars. To solve this problem a special homemade tool is needed.

Since the knuckles cannot be accessed for uncoupling from above, the trip pins (replica of the glad hands air hoses) were the answer. Take a small 3/16" or 1/4" dowel rod (or old paint brush handle) and cut it to a length of approximately 6". Next, take some piano wire or similar high tensile strength wire about .65 mm in diameter and cut it about 4" in length. Now drill a hole in the end of the wooden rod so at least 1" of wire can be glued into the rod's end. Use your favorite glue to adhere the metal wire to the wooden rod. After the glue has set begin to bend the wire for best access for your passenger car needs (Figure 11).

To uncouple your passenger cars, approach the cars from the side and grab the nearest trip pins. As you gently pull away from the coupler you will have accomplished the separation of your diaphragm cars (Figure 12).



Figure 11

The Tool Maven (continued)

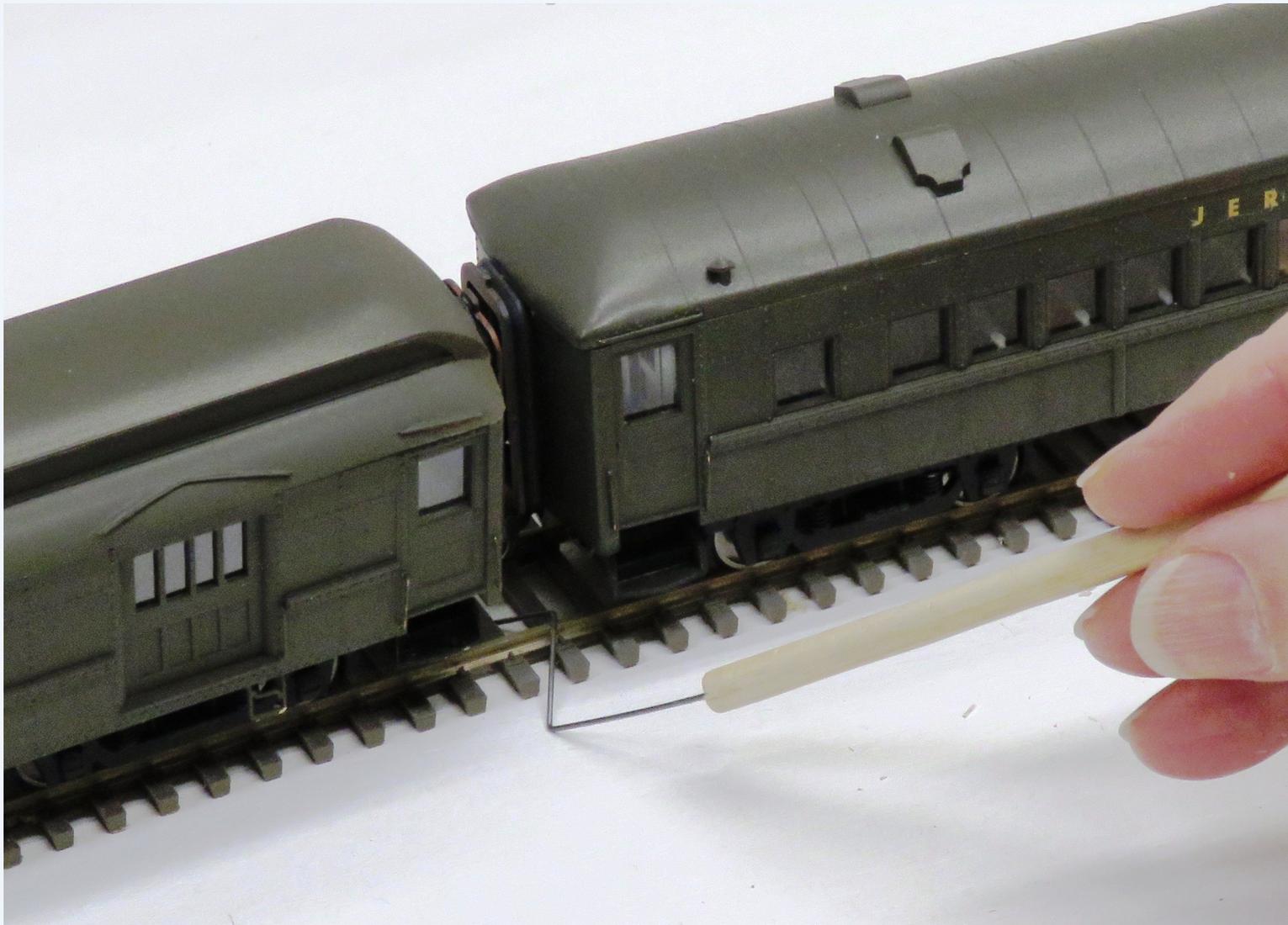


Figure 12

article by Claude Hammer

Susquehanna Sidetracks

POSTAGE

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Of the National Model Railroad Association

5 Hardy Court, Lancaster, PA 17602

