



Volume 31

# SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



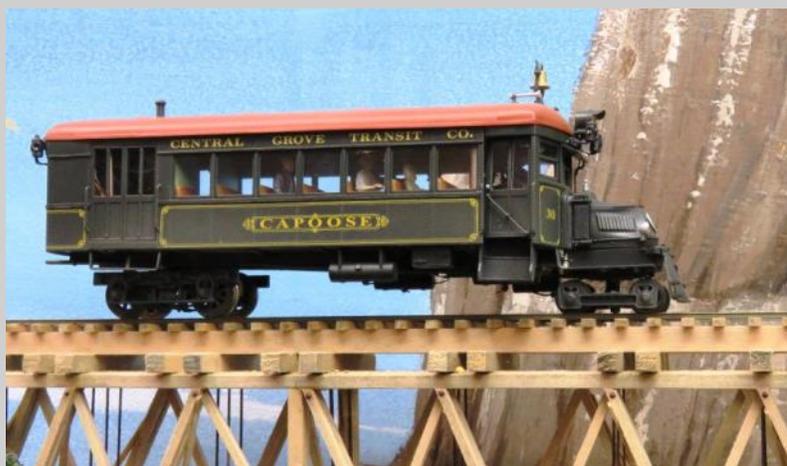
An Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11  
Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Number 3

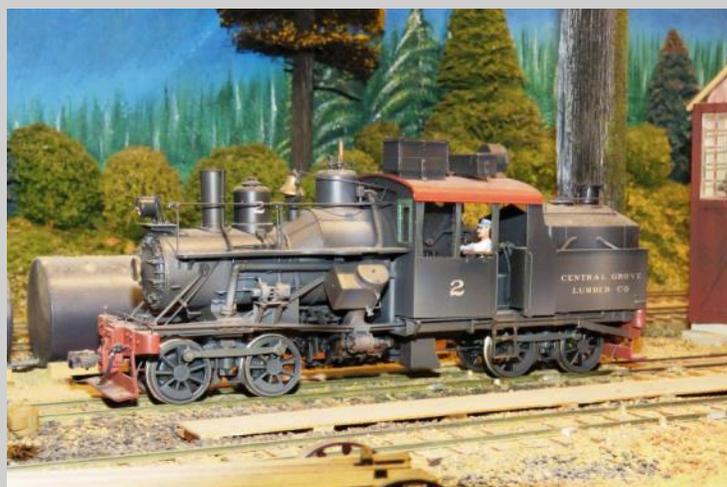


Pictured is a Shay locomotive built from Kemtron kit by master craftsman Bob Love (RIP). The train is crossing the bay with a few oil cars returning from the woods along with a boom and a few cars for repair.

In this issue a very superb layout is featured showing the highly skilled examples of structures, scenery and track design. The creative design for this On3 layout is the brainchild of Tom O'Connor. A professional engineer with a background in nuclear reactors, Tom has spent a considerable amount of time building structures and logging equipment that makes this layout a true gem. For more information and photos turn to page 15.



Precision Scale Company Mack Railbus named "Capoose" crosses the bay bridge with cleaned-up loggers heading to town.



Ex-West Side Heisler #2 sits outside the engine house at Railroad Camp ready to head to the woods for a day's work.

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This small vignette shows a trolley station featured on the modular layout of the Codorus Valley Traction Company. The layout will be open for viewing at the Columbia Crossings River Trail Center in Columbia, PA. This will be just one of the many events offered during Columbia Railroad Day on June 10th. See page 13 for more details.

# From the Superintendent's Desk

And so, it continues – learning how to be a superintendent, that is. I would be remiss in not thanking everyone who has so far helped me in my new position – especially Rich Wurst who reminds me what I should be doing well in advance of when I should be doing it. Elections for Board of Directors' is coming in the near future, so I would appreciate Division members seriously consider running for office. The term for directors is two years with elections occurring in odd years. 2023 is an odd year (in more ways than one, but we'll not discuss politics, weather, or anything else.). See page 5 for BoD Election details.

I'm writing this on April 10<sup>th</sup>, so I can report that I attended the South Mountain Division's Clinics Day in Blue Ridge Summit, PA. I spent quite a bit of time at Bob Johnson's clinic on tuning up old brass steam locomotives. When I introduced myself, Bob commented that I didn't need to be there because I probably knew just about all he was going to say (me, the crazy guy who scratchbuilds and kitbashes steam locomotive in brass). Well, I learned a lot about things I never considered before, like using a bit heavier springing on the geared driver; balancing a locomotive near the center drivers; and double-checking the quartering of drivers. These things are really helping me in my scratch-bashing the chassis of an old Red Ball CNJ 4-6-0 camelback that was missing all its rods and valve gear into a Jersey Central T-26 camelback – one that had an enclosure for the fireman.

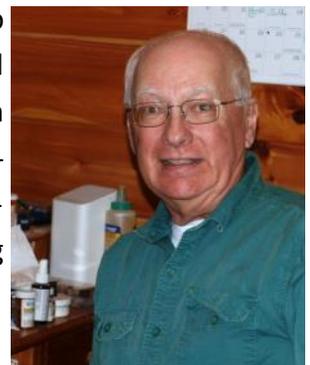


I met up with several Division members at the meet and hope that more of you took advantage of it...and the 10% off everything a Mainline Hobby Supply across the street. They are so well stocked with just about everything you need.

Don't forget that on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> Susquehanna Division members can enjoy the Walkersville Southern Railroad Steam Day. Check out their web site at <https://www.wsrr.org> for times and the fare. Also see the article on page 10 for additional information.

Also in this issue on page 13 is the announcement regarding Columbia Railroad Day being held on Saturday, June 10th. This year's focus will be on regional trolleys!

We need more members to sponsor meetings where we can have a modeler's showcase (everyone enjoys our show-and-tells), a clinic or two, and some home layout visits. Ideally, I'd like to have bimonthly meetings like the one we had in Allentown earlier this year. Sponsoring a meeting doesn't take much. Do you know of a meeting place we can use? Can you give a clinic or know someone who would be willing to present one? Do you or your friends have a layout we could visit? Our church in Dauphin (Dauphin County) has a hall that I can schedule for a small donation. In our division we have many clinicians, and I know that I can arrange at least one nearby layout to visit. There are other things we can do as well. For instance, I am currently working on getting our Division an invitation to the Cornwall Manor's Model Railroad Club.



*Alan*

# Second Section

## Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division 11  
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 15, 2023.

## Board of Directors

### **Superintendent**

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### **Model Showcase Program**

#### **Chairman**

vacant

[showcase@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:showcase@susquehannanmra.org)

### **Membership Chairman**

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[membership@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:membership@susquehannanmra.org)

### **Training**

vacant

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## **Membership Information**

Susquehanna Division website:

[www.susquehannanmra.org](http://www.susquehannanmra.org)

Mid-Eastern Region website:

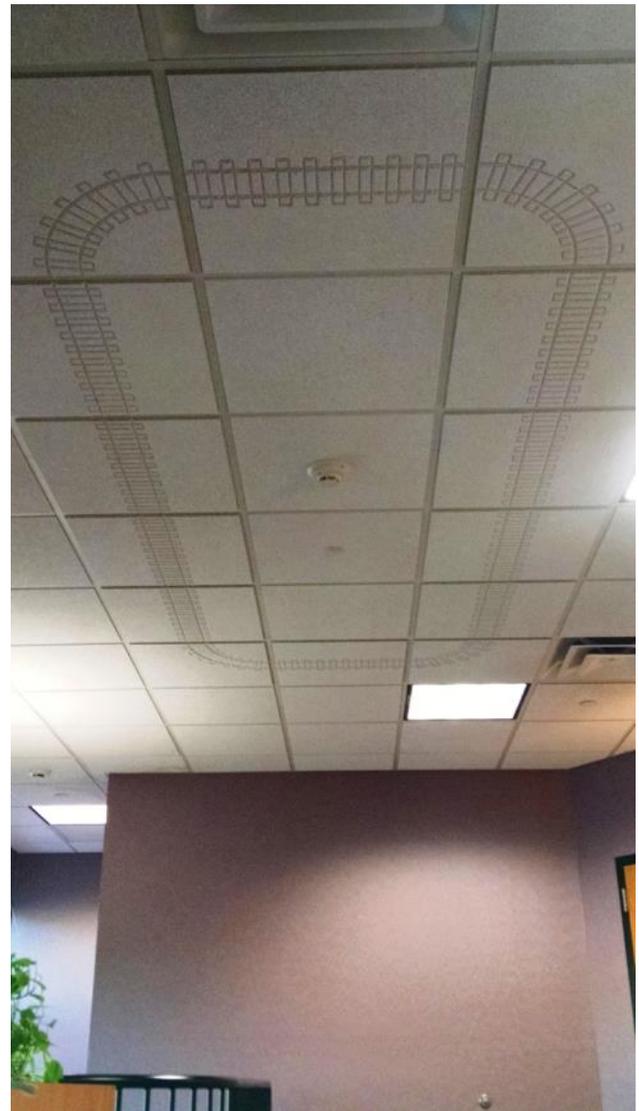
[www.mer-nmra.com](http://www.mer-nmra.com)

## **National Model Railroad Association**

8414 Gulf View Drive, Suite A & B

Soddy Daisy, TN 37379-2200

[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)



Unique railroad ceiling tile which graces the lobby of the Atlas Model Train Company in Hillside, New Jersey.

# Division Board of Directors' Election

It's once again time to ask for nominations for our four Division Director positions. Each will be elected for a two-year term from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2025. To be a Director, you must be a member of the NMRA, reside in the Susquehanna Division 11 area, and be at least 21 years of age. You may nominate yourself or another member you feel is qualified; however, in fairness to that individual please verify they would be willing to serve. If we receive more than four nominees, each will be asked to provide a short (200 words or less) bio that will then be provided to all members.

Some of our current Directors have expressed interest in running for reelection. However, like any other election, all four positions are open for the election. So please be positive, get your name placed on the ballot, and make your case for election.

Ira Silverman Collection, Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania

The timeline for the 2023 Director voting process is:

**May 20, 2023:** This is the submission deadline for nominations. Nominations should be sent to Alan Mende, Superintendent via email at [super@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:super@susquehannanmra.org).

**May 23, 2023:** Candidate bios are due to Alan Mende via email (see above address). Short bios (200 words or less) are required only if there are more than four candidates. Please note that this is so we can distribute the list of candidates. The suggestion is if you are nominating yourself submit your bio with your nomination

**May 26, 2023:** Ballots and nominee bios (only if we receive more than four candidates) will be sent to members via a mass email.

**May 31, 2023:** Deadline for submitting ballots via email to Dean Johnson, Chief Clerk  
[treasurer@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:treasurer@susquehannanmra.org)

**July 2023:** Election results published in the July/August issue of Sidetracks.

Please seriously consider running for a Division Director position. Our annual programs are developed under the leadership of your Board of Directors (BOD) and all Division policies are approved by your BOD. Therefore, this is your opportunity to get involved in deciding the future direction of your NMRA Division. I know most members are very busy with job, family, hobby projects, and other community programs and therefore believe serving on our BOD would simply require too much time. On the contrary, our BOD only meets in person once per year – all other matters are handled by either email or phone. An added incentive is that being a BOD member, you can accumulate points toward the NMRA Achievement Program's Volunteer certificate. That's an unheralded bonus for those working towards the goal of Master Model Railroader!.

So once again, please give this important request your most thoughtful consideration. This is an excellent opportunity for you to have a direct say in how your Division is managed, and it does not require a great deal of your valuable free time. Please send me an email if you have questions about the elections or our BOD operations at [super@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:super@susquehannanmra.org).

Alan Mende

# 2023 HARRISBURG Narrow O Summer Meet

On3 – On30 – On2 - On18

A two day event focused on anything and everything O scale narrow gauge.

**Friday June 9** (11:00 to 6:00)  
and **Saturday June 10** (9:00 to 3:00)

**LOCATION:** **New Hope Church**  
**584 Colonial Club Drive**  
**Harrisburg, Pa. 17112**

Guest admission: \$15 for both days – *Spouses and children under 12 free.*  
Clinics and Maker Spaces demos on going throughout the event.  
Food and drinks: Available throughout the event.

*Due to church rules and insurance restrictions: NO alcohol will be allowed*

**Vendors:** For table information, availability, admission and fees please email us at [millcreekrr@yahoo.com](mailto:millcreekrr@yahoo.com) for detailed information.

For updated information on the event, including the vendor list, Clinic topics, Maker Space presenters and displays along with any additional information or updates can be found on the Meet's Facebookpage under the title "Harrisburg Narrow O Summer Meet".

Most attendees have used either the **Quality Inn Harrisburg-Hershey Area**, 200 N Mountain Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17112 (717) 540-9339 or **The Ramada Inn**, 300 N. Mountain Road, Harrisburg, Pa. 17112 (717)-461-9602 in the past and found it to be a clean, friendly and a good value. Best of all it is located only .9 of a mile or about 3 minutes from the New Hope Church venue.

*The largest all O scale Narrow Gauge event in North America*

# Non-NMRA Event

Now and only through May 14, the [Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania](#) is offering a specially-designed tour of the Norfolk & Western class J locomotive No. 611.

Discover the history of N&W No. 611, including how and why this beautiful engine was saved, an in-depth look at its restoration to operating condition, the impact it has on the railroading community and how N&W No. 611 has become an ambassador of steam, in partnership with various railroad museums and tourist railroads.



The 90-minute tour also includes a tour of the Museum restoration shop and is offered Wednesday through Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and Sunday at 1:00 p.m., and is limited to 12 persons ages 12 and over. The cost per person per tour is \$25.00, in addition to the regular Museum admission.



You may call ahead — (717) 687-8628, ext. 3004 — to book tickets for the N&W No. 611 tour or purchase them when you arrive at the admissions desk. Tour goers are advised to wear safe shoes and otherwise dress accordingly for the outdoor train yard and restoration shop.

Norfolk & Western locomotive No. 611 is currently on exhibit at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania until May 14 in collaboration with the [Virginia Museum of Transportation](#).



## Reading Railroad Days at the Railroad Museum of PA

<http://rrmuseumpa.org/events/>

**Wednesday, June 28 through Saturday, July 8, 2023**

Enjoy the remarkable Reading Railroad trains of eastern Pennsylvania history through tours of Reading Company equipment, a huge operating model railroad and special presentations.

### [Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania](#)

300 Gap Road  
Strasburg, PA 17579

Hours: Thurs-Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 12pm-5pm





**RAILS TO PITTSBURGH 2023**

## **RAILS TO PITTSBURGH 2023 Mid Central NMRA Regional Convention! May 4-7, 2023**

**EVERYTHING YOU WANT IN A GREAT CONVENTION, AND MORE!  
Clinics – Tours – Contests – Non-Rail Activities – Layout Tours  
Banquet – White Elephant Tables – Door Prizes – Railfanning**

Our convention hotel, the Doubletree by Hilton at Cranberry is conveniently located within easy access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and Interstate-79 just north of Pittsburgh. You can visit the city, see Station Square, ride the Duquesne or Monongahela Inclines, railfan and enjoy the area. You are just 15 minutes from Norfolk Southern Mainline and 20 minutes from CSX Mainline.

Here are some of the **POTENTIAL** activities available at the **RAILS TO PITTSBURGH** Convention!

### **A Variety of Rail Tours**

Steel Industry History  
The Bridges of Pittsburgh  
Port Authority Light Rail Shops  
The Pennsylvania Trolley Museum  
Allegheny Valley Railroad and Yard

### **Excellent Clinics**

Western Pennsylvania Railroads  
Steel and Other Industries  
Operations: Real and Simulated  
Modern Railroad Practices  
Modeling Structures, Rolling Stock and Scenery

### **Non-Rail Tours and Clinics**

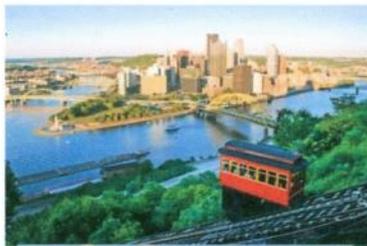
Pittsburgh Glass Factory Tour,  
Card making, Jewelry,

### **Local Attractions**

Carnegie Science Center – National Aviary  
Heinz History Center – Duquesne Incline  
Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium  
Phipps Conservatory – The Andy Warhol Museum

### **Railfanning**

NS & CSX Mainline Action  
W & LE & Union Railroad  
Variety of Local Short lines



For more information, check our website frequently for updates: [www.keystonedivision.org](http://www.keystonedivision.org)

# NMRA Event

## Reminder - Susquehanna Division 11 Event Saturday May 20, 2023

### Walkersville Southern Railroad Steam Day

34 West Pennsylvania Ave

Walkersville, MD 21793

<https://www.wsrr.org>

301-898-0899

**Fare:** Seniors 55+ and Children 2-12 \$18.00; Adult \$22.00

**Use Offer Code NMRA2 to save \$2**

In the Comments section enter NMRA if you want to sit together in a coach



**9:00 AM** - Meet & Greet with Refreshments, tour grounds, model railroad and museum

**11:00 AM** – Steam Train Departs

**12:10 PM** - Lunch on your own, a list of area restaurants will be provided

There are 3 model railroad stores you can visit on your way home.

There will be two open flat cars behind the steamer, plus several enclosed cars and a caboose. The train is handi-capped accessible, just mention that when reserving your tickets. **Departure is 11 AM.** Note that the steam locomotive can shower a little coal dust and water at times. Baseball type hats and glasses are recommended.

Daytime excursions are 1 hour and 10 minutes.

**Reservations Strongly Recommended at – <https://www.wsrr.org>**

Go to Tickets/Calendar; Select Your Train Ride (May, Steam Train Rides); Click May 20 on Calendar

**Fare:** Seniors 55+ and Children 2-12 \$18.00; Adult \$22.00

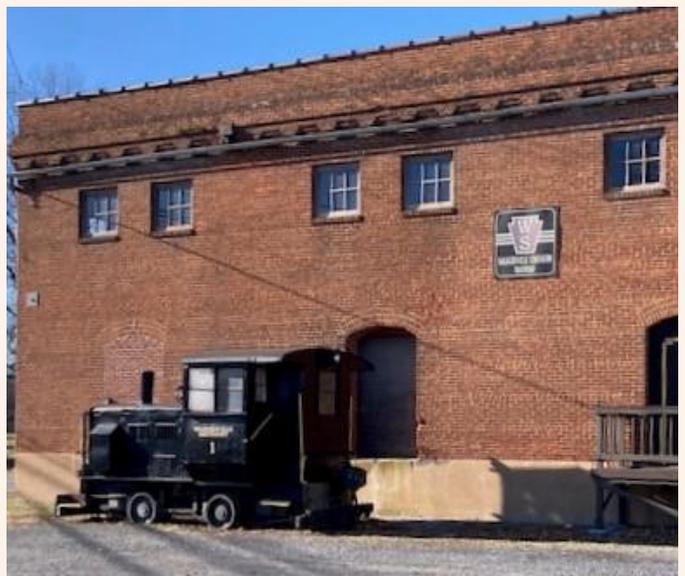
**Use Offer Code NMRA2 to save \$2**

In the Comments section enter NMRA if you want to sit together in a coach

You must reserve and purchase your own tickets. Advance online tickets can generally be purchased up to one-hour before an event. For online ticket purchases, your confirmation e-mail is your receipt.

\*\*\*Be sure to also check your junk/spam folders for your confirmation email\*\*\*

When you arrive at the railroad, simply check in at the ticket office, and your tickets will be waiting for you under your name.



Dan Cupper photo

# NMRA Event (continued)

See the March/April 2023 [Sidetracks](#) for a full list of activities and other information. We hope to see you there on Saturday, May 20th and be ready to get steamed! If you have any questions please call: Don Stafford 301-752-3629 or Howard Oakes 717-424-6165

## Directions

From Harrisburg: Follow US-15 South into Maryland. Continue traveling south past Thurmont, MD for approximately 10.5 miles and turn left with care onto Biggs Ford Rd. Travel 2.2 miles to the station.

From York and Lancaster: Follow US-30 West through York to Cross Keys, take PA-94 South 8 miles to the square in Hanover. Turn right at the square US-194 and go 32 miles to Walkersville. Take E. Frederick St., turn right onto Main St., turn left onto W. Pennsylvania Ave. and go to the station.



# NMRA Event (continued)

## A little history....

The railway line between Walkersville and Frederick was built between 1869 and 1872 as part of the Pennsylvania Railroad Frederick Secondary. The line ran from Columbia, Pennsylvania, through York and Hanover, into Maryland, running through Taneytown, Keymar, Woodsboro, Walkersville, and finally into Frederick. For decades there was a thriving business on the rails as dairy farmers sent milk and eggs to market, and local residents rode the train into Frederick for the day or perhaps north to the "big cities."



In 1968 when the Pennsylvania Railroad merged with the New York Central, the line was part of the resulting Penn Central Railroad. In 1972, Hurricane Agnes hit the Frederick area hard. The resulting flood completely washed out the bridge over the Monocacy River, severing the rail line two miles south of Walkersville. The entire line was put up for sale. The State of Maryland purchased the portion of the line within its borders, only utilizing the section north of Walkersville. For 20 years, the six-mile line between Walkersville and Frederick was out of service.

From 1991 through 1993, Walkersville Southern volunteers cleared the right-of-way of brush and debris. In 1993, the Maryland Department of Transportation chose Walkersville Southern as the operator of the Walkersville-Frederick line. Rebuilding began immediately.

In 1995, Walkersville Southern began reconstruction of the Monocacy River bridge. Limited excursions were run in 1995 while the work progressed. With the completion of the project in March 1996, the first trains in more than 20 years crossed the Monocacy River. The 1998 season marked the first time in more than 25 years that trains had run to Route 26, the current terminus of the line.

Dan Cupper photo

In 2009, the State of Maryland granted access to three more miles of track north of the existing station. Work began immediately to upgrade the track, and we currently run limited operations north out of Walkersville on this rail.

We hope to see you there on Saturday May 20 and be ready to get steamed!

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

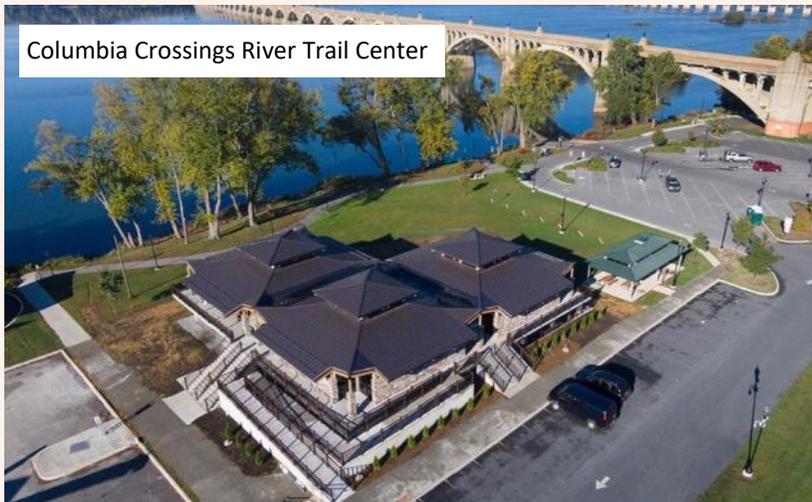


# NMRA Event

## Columbia Railroad Day, Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup>, 9AM to 3PM

A cornucopia of fun and history best describes the 4th Annual Columbia Railroad Day in Columbia, Pennsylvania. Sponsors of the event are the Susquehanna Division of the NMRA, National Railroad Historic Society and the Columbia Historic Preservation Society.

This year's theme is Streetcars and Trolleys. The first location to visit is the Columbia Crossings River Trail Center located at 41 Walnut St. Here there will be four lectures. Beginning at 9AM you will learn about the 1896 'Columbia Trolley Accident'. 10:30 is the time for the history of Lancaster County trolleys. Then at noon we will hear about the Baltimore Streetcar Museum. Finally at 1:30 you can enjoy a pictorial presentation of Columbia, PA trolleys.



Columbia Crossings River Trail Center

Outside at The Crossings will be an encampment of Civil War re-enactors including the Lancaster Fencibles and the Invalid Corp. There will also be a display of World War II vehicles from the WWII Transportation Division.

Travel a bit north to the Columbia Historic Preservation Society at 19-21 N. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. where you will find two large model railroad displays. On the first floor is the O gauge display of the Lower Susquehanna Model Railroad Club and upstairs is the Columbia & Susquehanna Model Railroad club with their huge and continually growing HO display.

Go northeast a bit to 15 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> St. and you will be at the Columbia Market House where there will be train vendors selling railroad memorabilia, accessories and model trains. If you have items you wish to sell, tables are \$20. Contact Chris Vera at (717)572-7149 or email [Columbiahistory717@gmail.com](mailto:Columbiahistory717@gmail.com). There will be a wide variety of food and drink available from Market House vendors. Again this year will be the "Shifter Showdown" a competition between several area restaurants demonstrating their skills in producing the best "Shifter" sandwich, made famous in Columbia's railroad heyday.

Dan Cupper photo



Columbia Historic Preservation Society



Columbia Market House

# NMRA Event (continued)

Finally a bit farther east at 4<sup>th</sup> & Manor Streets will be a display of railroad speeders where rides will be available (extra cost). This event may be reduced to recent news of a large speeder meet in another area. Further information on this part of the event will be available when received.

All locations will be connected by a trolley tour of Columbia with 20 minute intervals per stop. Events are free with the exception of the trolley which will cost only \$5 for all day.

So join us for an event filled day. For further information contact Bill Lesjak at either [wclesjak2@comcast.net](mailto:wclesjak2@comcast.net) or (717)751-2391.



Northern Central Railcar Association members from York, PA



hop-on, hop-off trolley service



# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Company

## 1. What is the name of your layout?

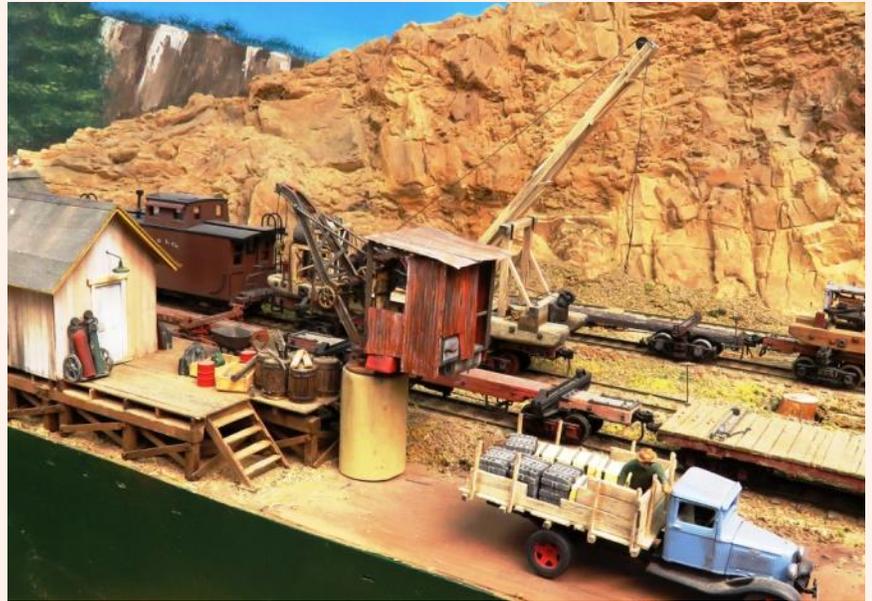
It is named the Central Grove Lumber Co.

## 2. What scale is your layout?

My layout is 1/4" scale with narrow 3-foot gauge track (On3).

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

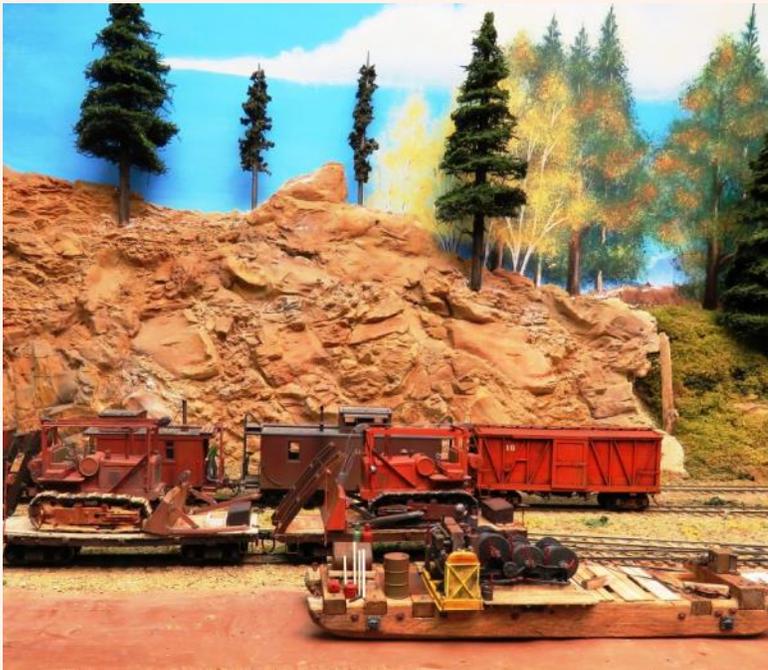
The era represents mid 1920s to 1950. The location is Long Island and Brier Island down the Digby Neck of Nova Scotia (Canada).



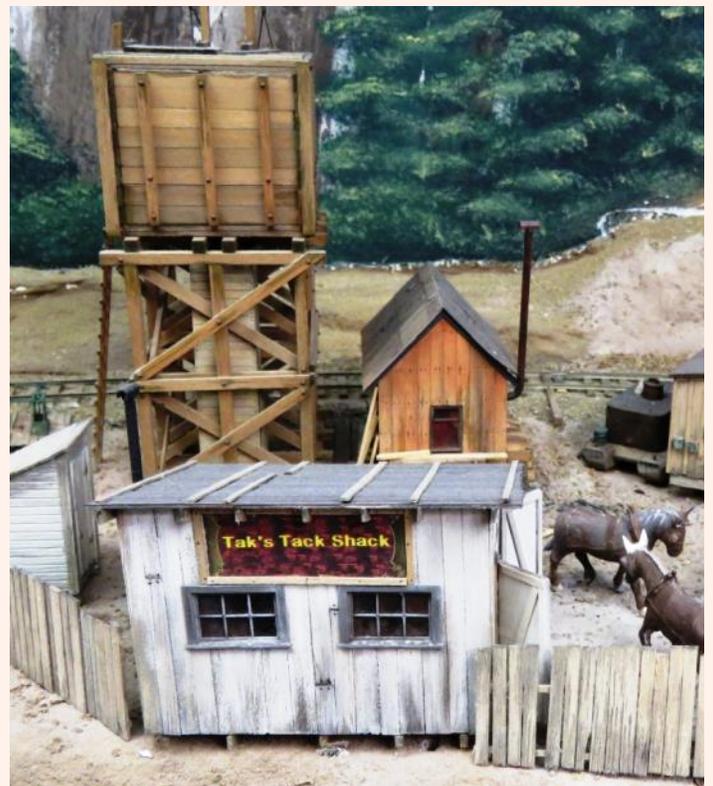
## 4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?

The transfer crane has finished unloading building supplies.

The shelf along the basement walls connects Long Island to Brier Island making the layout a point to point with a wye on one end. The overall size is about 2 feet by 90 feet with one 5-foot section accessible from both sides.



This is the yard at Railroad Camp. A Grandt Line 4 wheel bobber is seen in the rear next to a Beaver Creek model of a Sumpter caboose and a short Wiseman Models boxcar based on the narrow gauge Delta Line near Peach Bottom PA. The sagging flat car is suffering from the weight of a dozer (in need of repair) with another flat car having a dozer going back to work in the forest. In the foreground is a three-drum skidder scratchbuilt using Charlie Brommer machinery kits.



Pictured here is a water stop with adjacent mule and donkey team outfitters yard.

# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)

5. **By what means and brand of equipment do you control your layout?** The control is Digitrax. All engines have SoundTraxx and are being upgraded with keep alive units. There are also several sound modules built into the layout: ocean sounds, water tank / tender refill operations, sawmills sounds and log dump winch operations.



This logging equipment is staged prior to being transported to the job site.



A Charlie Brommer chain drive Mack truck and several log trailers wait to be unloaded.

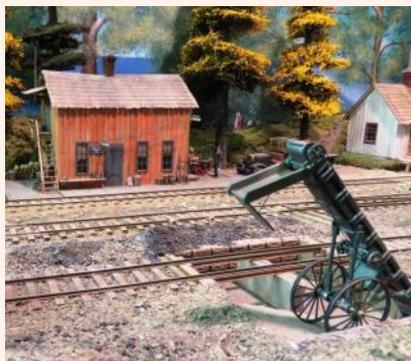
# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)

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

I started building structures, rolling stock, engines and logging equipment in 1985. This was after selling 35 years' worth of S scale equipment and a complete layout. The current Central Grove Lumber Co was started in 1994 when we moved to our current house. After waterproofing the basement, insulating and sheet-rocking the walls, installing a drop ceiling, adding electric outlets and lighting, and, building a shop area for routine wood work, the layout was ready for construction. One big mistake was adding a large wood stove to heat the entire house. The dry heat and dust were not a user-friendly arrangement with DCC and the re-



Here is a scratchbuilt two-story home based on a C&S section house.



This kit-built Fork's Creek station was modified with a second floor entrance and a sagging roof. It is one of the oldest structures on the Central Grove being built in 1988.



Mill Superintendent Bubba Patterson has parked his brand new 1939 Pontiac on the bridge over his favorite fishing spot.



Precision Scale Company Plymouth, ex D&RGW #50, sits outside the two stall engine house with a logging wagon in the foreground. The "BIG 50" does most of the work around the Railroad Camp yards and some work at the mill.

# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)

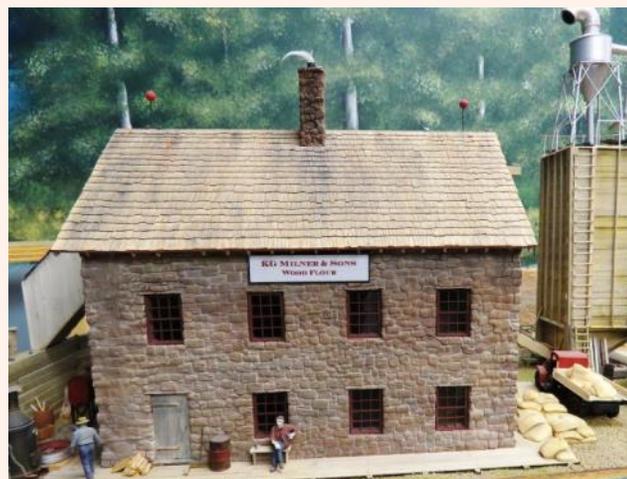
- 7. Do you sponsor Operating Sessions on your layout?** Plans are in place for the future. The trackwork, with exception of a short piece to connect the wye, is finished. Then everything needs to be cleaned up before operations can begin..
- 8. Do you have a track plan diagram for your layout (i.e., JPEG or PDF format)?** No, but one appeared in an issue of Timber Times magazine a few years ago.



In the town of Porter, Granny Tater is hanging out the laundry. The home is from kit named 'Aunt Elenor's House'.



This scene is in the center of the town of Porter. These two scratchbuilt homes used Tom Yorke's kit for a jail as the basement under each. The interiors are detailed and the yard has lots of clutter.



The Wood Flour Mill uses sawdust brought from the sawmill and grinds it into a very fine powder. The powder is then used to make plastics, linoleum and Bakelite.



Here is a close up of the log haul at the Central Grove Lumber Company Mill. This is a scratchbuilt scene based on one used in Nova Scotia. The log pond crew would shove a log over the lift arms which were under water. The lift arms would raise each log to the top of the lift, then gravity would cause the log to roll off onto the ways and into the mill. In the photo, the lift arms are on their way back down to load the next log.

# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)

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

All track is hand laid, code 83 rail with one short section of code 70.

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

The backdrop on Masonite running about 90 feet is a very special feature of the layout. These 4 foot by 8-foot panels are mounted on studs to the wall and provide nice curved corners that are pleasing to the line of sight. There is only one 90-degree corner on the layout. The backdrop was painted by local artist Wendy Curtain of Pine Grove, PA. Her painting of the trees particularly the birch trees are superb. I have had people touch them thinking they were three dimensional. The second item would be the logging equipment (my favorite item to build), then the structures (like the seven-foot-long box truss at the foot of the stairs) and engines.



This is the Central Grove Lumber Company Mill. The Digby Neck is in the southwest region of Nova Scotia. The island is about 1 mile wide and 16 miles long. The towns of Tiverton and Freeport are at each end of the island. Ferry service provides access between the towns and to Brier Island. This is the location represented on the layout (two islands connected by a 7 foot long bridge). Logging is done on one island then logs go to the mill on the other island. Milled lumber then goes to a pier for loading on a ship.



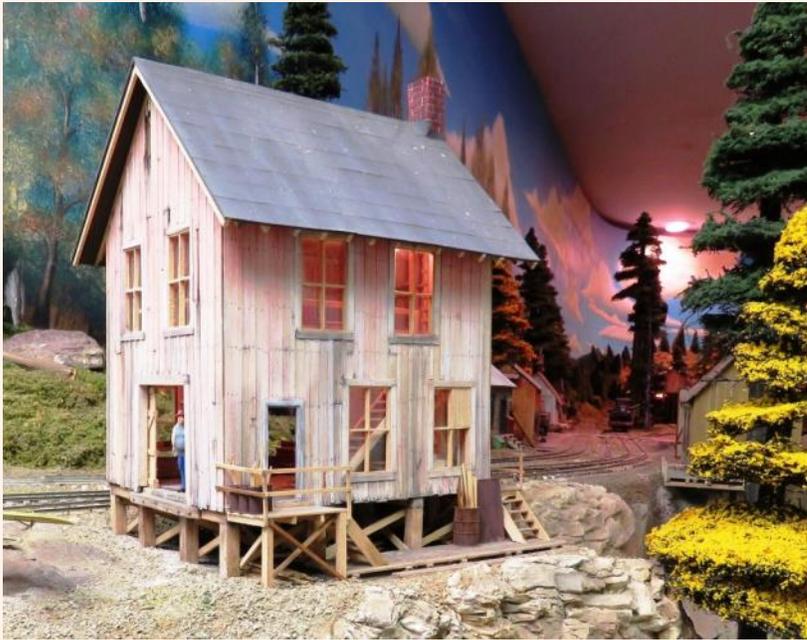
Pictured here is an overview of the sawmill. The water tank is a Banta kit while the slash burner, saw dust hopper and mill are scratchbuilt.



Here is a view of the log pond and log lift at the mill. All features were scratchbuilt. Dust on log pond is starting to look like realistic mud and scum.

# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)

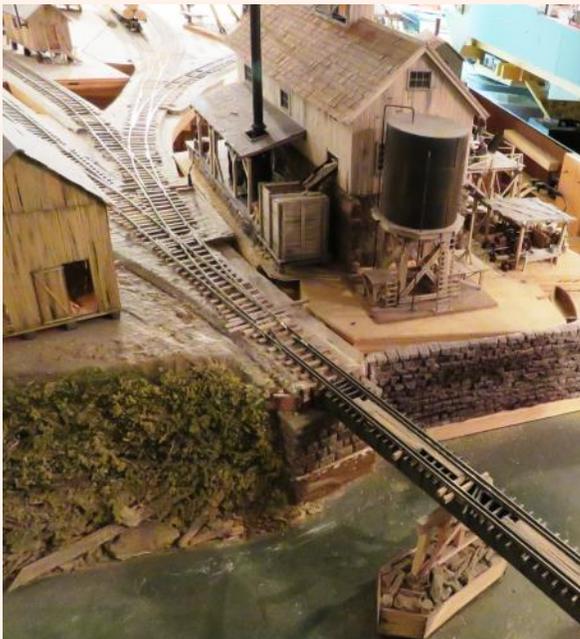
11. **Approximately, how many engines and rolling stock is in your collection? Also, what brand of engines do you run on your layout?** There are about 30 brass locomotives, some factory built and some kit built. There are Shays, Heisler's, Climax types, and a few rod engines like the Sumpter 2-6-6-2. All the engines have DCC and sound. There is one diesel and one Mack bus plus a little Mack center cab. There is also a small Dodge powered pickup truck and a Fordson locomotive from a kit on the layout with no sound.



Sarge's Carpenter Shop started life as a Gloor Craft freight platform. The footprint was enlarged, a second story added, detailed framing installed and interior details added. All features were scratchbuilt. Tom and a friend used to exchange kits at Christmas with the agreement that whatever was given had to be built. Things got out of hand quickly with gifts like 500 piece fire engine kits and large wooden sailing ships. The Gloor Craft freight platform was the result of a "Let's Simplify this" agreement.



Sarge peers out from his shop.



These tracks crossing the creek travel to the lumber mill, log dump and yard. The Shingle Mill can be seen in the center.



This is a scratchbuilt simple Dolbeer donkey skidder powered by a Ford 4 banger.

# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)



Here is a rare Corbin monoplane. Believed to be one of only three built, it was sold as a kit using a model A Ford engine.



Here is a view of the lumber dock at the Central Grove Lumber Mill. Lumber is dried and then shipped to a pier on the opposite end of the layout for loading onto ships for export.



This scratchbuilt, wood fueling platform, was an afternoon project a few years ago.

## Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)



Pictured here is an Arkansas Valley Models kit of a single-stall engine house. The two-story farmhouse was scratchbuilt based on an article in [Railroad Model Craftsman](#). Tom built this farmhouse in S scale and liked it so much he redid it in O scale years later.



An overhead view of the Inside of the single-stall engine house (has removable roof). The details are typical of interiors for most of the buildings on the Central Grove Lumber Company layout.

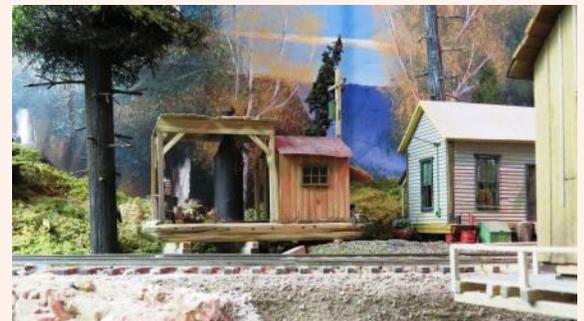
# Tom O'Connor's Central Grove Lumber Co.(continued)



Some machinery in the yard is loaded and ready to head to the woods for work. In the foreground is a Dolbeer skidder made from a Charlie Brommer kit. The middle track has a Keith Wiseman boiler loaded on a flatcar. The background has a Fordson tractor powered skidder and a simple Dolbeer skidder powered by a Ford 4 banger.



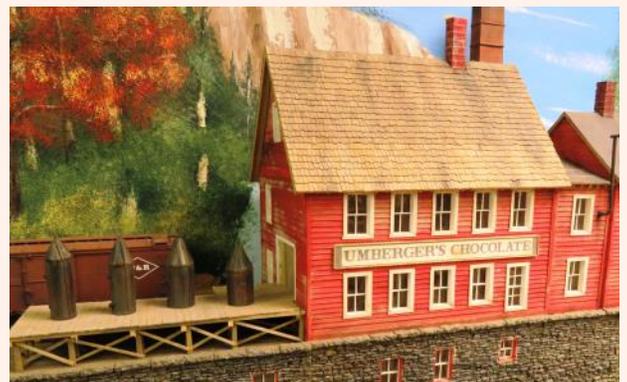
A scratchbuilt shingle mill viewed from its machinery side.



This is the head of the yard at Railroad Camp.



A side view of the scratchbuilt machine shop where donkeys, skidders and boilers are fabricated and repaired.



This factory was scratchbuilt based on a photo from a [Vermont Life](#) calendar.

# MER 'Round the Curve' Convention News

## Operating Sessions: Call Board Railroads

The fall MER convention to be held in Altoona will have four layouts open for operating sessions.

Sessions will be held in the afternoon and evening on Thursday and Friday plus Saturday afternoon. Information will be sent via email or snail mail to operators who sign up for operating sessions so they do not need to go to the convention hotel before reporting for an operating session.

Three of the railroads are located on the east side of Johnstown, PA. They are Frank Coat's Pennsylvania RR, John Bennett's Baltimore and Ohio-Western Maryland- Pittsburgh and West Virginia, and David Baker's Cumberland and Lake Erie. The fourth railroad is Lee Rainey's East Broad Top located in State College.

Since the three railroads near Johnstown are all within a 12-minute drive from each other it would be possible to sign up for an afternoon session at one of the layouts, then eat dinner at one of the many restaurants in the area and attend another operating session in the evening. The afternoon sessions will start at 1:00 p.m. and end at 5:00 p.m. The evening sessions will start at 7:00 p.m. and end at 11:00 p.m. giving one 2 hours to eat dinner and travel between railroads.

On all three Johnstown area railroads after two hours, we will take a short break and switch positions. So all operators get a chance to do more than one job.

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### Frank Coat's Laurel Mountain Division of the PRR

Frank Coat's HO scale Laurel Mountain Division is a fictitious Division of the PRR which occupies most of the basement at roughly 20 X 24 feet, making a main line run of 255 feet. The layout uses NCE DCC with some sound, car cards and waybills. The main yard on the railroad is located about halfway between the two staging yards which are at either end of the main line. This yard has four arrival/departure tracks and eight classification tracks. For those who like switching industries you will want to sign up to operate on Frank's railroad. Along his mainline are eight towns that each have from 2 to 9 industries to switch, plus some coal mines. Also, there are 8 industries that the yard crew switches for a total of 54 industries on the layout. Transfer trains to staging and locals are made up in the main yard. All locals are turns as they leave the yard and go to their assigned town, switch the industries, and then return back to the main yard. During an operating session there is one yard master who runs the yard engine and three to four road crews that run the turns and the transfer trains in and out of staging.



# MER 'Round the Curve' Convention News (continued)



On Frank Coat's Laurel Mountain Division of the PRR. Ray Bossi works the town of Pine Valley. Rick Blackford photo



Frank Coat works the town of Jones Crossing on his Laurel Mountain Division of the PRR. Ray Bossi is running a train in the background. Rick Blackford photo

## John Bennett's B&O-WM-P&WV

John Bennett's HO scale B&O-WM-P&WV RR is a fictitious railroad that occupies a 26' X 52' basement. It is designed for operations with three decks which allow the mainline to reach 350 feet. The railroad can support up to 18 operators. Wireless NCE DCC controls the locomotives with most locomotives having sound. The railroad uses car cards, waybills, train orders, telephones, and has one helper district. Signals protect the two single-track sections of mainline. There are four yards, three connecting railroads and two switching districts that are assigned a dedicated crew member. Johnstown Yard with its three arrival and departure tracks, one running track, and 11 classification tracks is the largest yard on the railroad. Two people are assigned to this yard: a yardmaster who runs the west yard engine, and a helper who works the east end of the yard. Johnstown Yard is perfect for someone who likes working a busy yard as trains are arriving and departing often during an operating session. Somerset has two separate yards. Each has one yardmaster one for coal cars and one for merchandise. Somerset also has two dedicated crews to work the many industries.

While standing on a riser, Todd Griffith works Mingo Junction while Bob Prehoda works the Johnstown and Stoney Creek RR below on John Bennett's B&O-WM-P&WV. David Baker photo



# MER 'Round the Curve' Convention News (continued)

John's railroad has three connecting railroads that are modeled and each gets one crew member during an operating session. The Conemaugh and Black Lick RR serves the Johnstown plant of Bethlehem steel. The Johnstown and Stoney Creek RR serves the Johnstown plant of United States Steel. The Pittsburgh and West Virginia is the newest area on the railroad. It has a yard at Avella and Pittsburgh Jct. The P&WV crews work Avella, Pittsburgh Jct and Rook. All three of these railroads will keep an operator busy for hours.

For those who like coal mines this is the railroad for you as there are a total of 15 mines which are worked out of the Somerset Coal yard. Of, course there are plenty of main lines trains to and from the three staging yards.



On John Bennett's B&O-WM-P&WV, Terry Newell and Don Coulter work the Johnstown Yard while in the background Keith DeVault works the Somerset Coal Yard. David Baker photo



Roy Ward in the foreground and Rick Blackford are working the industries in Somerset on John Bennett's B&O-WM-P&WV. David Baker photo



On David Baker's C&LE RR, Todd Griffith is busy working the Reitz # 5 Mine. David Baker photo

## David Baker's Cumberland and Lake Erie Railroad

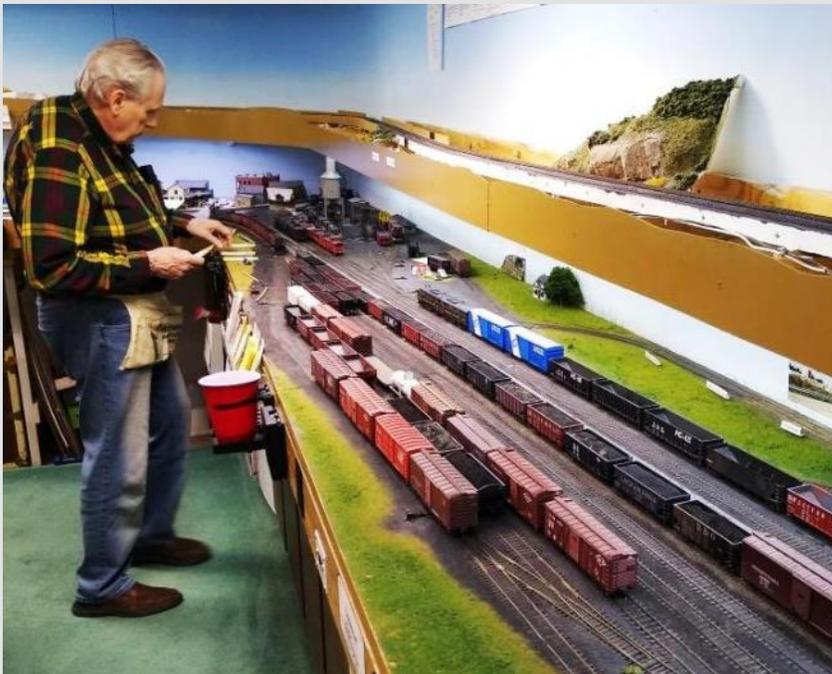
The HO scale point-to-point Cumberland and Lake Erie Railroad was designed to be an operations-oriented railroad with time-table and train order operations using car cards, waybills, telephones, and two helper districts. Control is by wireless NCE DCC with sound. The main line goes around the 36 X 32-foot basement two times in a double-deck arrangement. The railroad is a bridge route between Cumberland, MD and Erie, PA. Only the Laurel Division is modeled as it might have appeared in the summer of 1957. This Division consists of the trackage between Cumberland, MD and Johnstown, PA, plus two branch lines. The railroad follows the route of the Western Maryland Railway from Cumberland to Rockwood, then the B&O's S&C Branch to Johnstown.

# MER 'Round the Curve' Convention News (continued)

Overhead traffic consists of a few through trains that start in staging either at Cumberland or Conpitt (1957 spelling). These trains run over the modeled portion of the railroad, changing crews at Johnstown and Cumberland yards.

Current operations have the following trains arriving and departing the Johnstown yard: two C&LE through freights, one eastbound and one westbound (both have set-outs and pick-ups for Johnstown); two transfer trains, one from Erie and one from Cumberland; two C&LE locals, one east bound and one west bound that originate in Johnstown; east and westbound PRR freights with set-outs and pick-ups for Johnstown; a transfer run to the C&BL (Bethlehem Steel); a transfer run to the Johnstown and Stony Creek Railroad (US Steel, a large coal mine, and many small companies); and a mine run to Hooversville.

Somerset yard receives empty coal cars from Erie, Cumberland, and Johnstown. Trains are sent out of Somerset to the mine at Hooversville, several mines near Meyersdale, and the mines on the Coleman and Boswell Subdivisions. As these trains return with loads, loaded trains are made up and sent to the WM, PRR, and to Lake Erie.



John Bennett is working as the Yardmaster of the Somerset Yard on David Baker's C&LE RR. David Baker photo

Ray Bossi pulls the doodlebug into the engine facility while Rick VanAtta pulls AJ-2 around the bend on the PRR mainline as Scooter Hoovanic in the background is the Johnstown Yardmaster on David Baker's C&LE RR. David Baker photo

## Lee Rainey's East Broad Top Railroad

Lee Rainey's East Broad Top Railroad highlights how much operating fun one can have in a small space and modeling in an unusual scale.

Unlike most layouts, Lee's has no main line. The entire layout represents the town of Mount Union, PA, for many years the largest shipping point on the Middle Division of the PRR, and the junction between the PRR and the East Broad Top Railroad. The layout design places heavy emphasis on recreating the industries that actually existed in Mount Union.

# MER 'Round the Curve' Convention News (continued)

The S/Sn3 layout is 12 X 26 feet in size. Track is primarily hand laid and much of it is dual gauge, as in the prototype location. Track is 90% complete. Scenery is 25% complete and features custom photo backdrops and scratchbuilt buildings. Control is by Lenz DCC. The majority of the locomotives are sound-equipped. Most of the rolling stock is from commercial kits, highlighting how much commercial equipment is available in S scale.

The layout works best with four operators – two crews of conductor and engineer – and the owner/troubleshooter/coach. Operators represent one of the two real yard jobs on the prototype: the Pennsy shifter or the standard-gauge EBT shifter.

From time to time during the 16-scale-hour operating day, mainline eastbound and westbound trains pass through town as they run from one staging yard to the other. The yard crews, working from car cards, waybills, and supporting documents, gather and classify outbound cars in the yard, delivering them to the appropriate main line freight.



A standard-gauge hopper of coal from the cleaning plant has been unloaded at the Harbison-Walker Refractories plant.  
Rich Wurst photo



Two Pennsylvania Railroad trains pass at the entrance to Jacks Narrows on Lee Rainey's PRR and East Broad Top layout.  
Rich Wurst photo



The East Broad Top's standard-gauge switcher #6 moves a load outbound from the coal cleaning plant. The company town of Kistler is visible in the rear across the Juniata River.

Lee Rainey photo

Each mainline run also drops off inbound cars. The shifter crews are responsible to see that they are spotted at the correct location among the two dozen destinations on the layout. In a typical three-real-hour session, 75 cars are handled.

The layout had successfully completed thirty monthly operating sessions until disrupted by COVID.

*article written by David Baker, John Bennett, Frank Coat, and Lee Rainey*

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