



Volume 32

# SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



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

Number 1

## Tom Jacobs' HO Scale Reading Division Layout

The Reading Railroad is in my blood, literally. I grew up a stone's throw from the Reading Railroad's massive yard and shop complex in Reading, PA, and my grandfather and great-grandfather both worked in the Reading Locomotive Shops during the steam and transition eras. So, when I became a model railroader in the early 1990s, my choice of prototype was pretty much made for me. Over the next several years, I built a few small 4x8 and switching layouts that provided varying degrees of satisfaction, but I always had my eye on a larger layout that would support robust operations like those I read about in *Model Railroader* and other magazines. Fast forward to 2012. The kids are in college and I'm ready to begin planning the "lifetime layout." Living in a bi-level home, I don't have a basement in which to build a layout, so I built a dedicated 20'x36' building in my yard to house the layout. The "Barn" has its own electric service, HVAC and security system so I'm able to work on the layout comfortably year-round. After more than a year of track planning working with Bob Sprague of [www.bobstrackplans.com](http://www.bobstrackplans.com), construction started in the summer of 2014, and completed final trackwork in the fall of 2023. During the past 9 years, I've also started building structures, and now it's time to get serious about building scenery and bringing the railroad to life.

My layout depicts the Reading Railroad's Reading Division between Allentown and Rutherford (Harrisburg) in 1975 timeframe – after the Penn Central merger but prior to the formation of Conrail. Starting in Allentown (east end staging) and working our way west, the railroad travels on the Reading's East Penn Branch, passing through the towns of Alburtis, Fleetwood and Temple before arriving at Belt Line Junction. From here, we can either enter the Reading Belt Line to bypass



Reading Yard, or enter Reading Yard. Also at this point, the Reading's Main Line from the coal regions and Newberry Junction staging come on to the layout. On the other end of Reading Yard, we can either enter the Main Line to the Philadelphia and Wilmington staging yard, or take the Lebanon Valley Branch to Wyomissing Junction, the western connection point with the Belt Line. The design we've built allows us to move traffic to and from all four points of the Reading system – Rutherford/West, Allentown/East, Newberry Junction/North, Philadelphia & Wilmington/South.

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Pictured on the left is Dan Horting riding his live steam K4 PRR engine. Dan recently completed another phase of construction on his multi-year project.

Dan's engine project was featured in a past **Sidetracks** issue. Hopefully, an update on his K4 completion will be featured in the near future.

# In Memoriam

## Patrick (Pat) R. Mulrooney

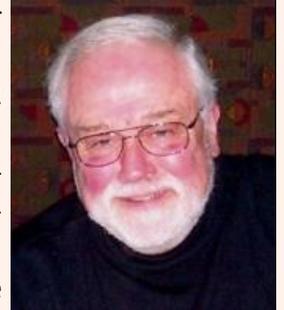
October 2, 1940 – November 15, 2023

Patrick R. Mulrooney, 83, of New Holland, passed away at home on Wednesday, November 15th. Born in Darby, he was the son of the late Arthur J. and Madeline M. (Green) Mulrooney. Pat was the loving husband of Helen G. (O'Brien) Mulrooney, with whom he celebrated 62 years of marriage in October.

Pat worked for UPS from 1963 to 1972, afterward, he went on to work as the Fleet Maintenance Manager for Philadelphia Newspapers, Inc. where he worked for 30 years until his retirement.

Of the Catholic Faith, Pat was a parishioner of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church where he served as a Eucharistic Minister. A 4th Degree Knight, Pat belonged to the Knights of Columbus, Fr. John Schmalhofer Council 13451. A model railroad enthusiast, Pat belonged to the National Model Railroad Association and Delmarva Railroad Club. He also enjoyed gardening and was a retired Master Gardener.

In addition to his wife, Helen, he is survived by his children: Patrick, Jr., husband of Susan, of Spring Grove, Erin, of Ithaca, NY, Heather, of King of Prussia, and Timothy, of Quarryville; 9 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and a brother. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by 4 sisters.



### Memories of Pat

Pat never took himself too seriously, not even during his years as President of the Delmarva Model Railroad Club. He always had a smile that was contagious and if his smile didn't make you feel good, he would quickly tell a joke and make you laugh.

He enjoyed carpentry. I remember asking him to build a simple box to hold the "921" number boards that are hanging over the HO layout.

Remember I said "simple". Pat showed up about 3-4 weeks later with a box that just stumped me. His idea of "simple" was a lot MORE elaborate than was ever expected.

Pat was a great person to be around.

Jeff Schockley

Pat contributed to the Susquehanna Division in so many ways. He served as a Director for several terms and assisted in organizing multiple Division events. His layout was opened to the public and other NMRA members during November's Model Railroad Month and as a fixture on local layout tours.

Pat was very proud of his HO layout and had it featured in a past **Sidetracks** issue. His skills and talents manifested themselves in his basement 'empire'.

Pat was instrumental in the 2017 MER Reginal Convention in 2017. He was expecting to assist in this year's Altoona Convention but was held back by his health. It was with sadness that we learned of his passing. Pat will be sorely missed as a friend and fellow modeler. He was a true gentlemen!

Rich Wurst

# Superintendent's Desk

First off, I want to wish all of you a Happy New Year, and I hope you all got something railroad related for Christmas.

There is good news and bad news here in the new year. I tried my best to schedule a meet in the April/May time period at Cornwall Manor, but ultimately their model railroad club has declined. The good news is that there is enough time for you (yeah, everyone of you) to suggest a meet venue in April or May. Currently, we have these projected meets:

- February 17, 2024 - A joint meeting w/Philadelphia division – Southampton Community Center.
- April/May 2024 – **OPEN**
- June 2024 – Columbia Railroad Day, Columbia, PA
- August 2024 – Railroad Museum of PA, Strasburg, PA
- October 2024 – Steamtown, Scranton, PA
- November 2024 – Open Houses

So put your thinking caps on and let me know your ideas.

Our December meet in Mechanicsburg went off without a hitch. We had some fine models in the Modeler's Showcase (I apologize; I went over my 5 minute time limit). I understand the layout tours were enjoyed by all. I spent all my time at Bob Charles' layout because he had some projects he wanted me to work on.

We also had something new – a Modeler's Forum – where everyone had the opportunity to ask questions and offer tips on how to go about different things. I'd like to have a Modeler's Mentorship area on the division website where members can volunteer their knowledge in various aspect of model railroading to others. If you are knowledgeable in areas such as soldering, weathering, DCC installations, etc., contact our webmaster or assistant webmaster to have your name added to the list. I'll take the first step: Sign me up for soldering, adding details, and working with brass.

Please be sure to mark you calendars for our joint meet with the Philly Division on Saturday, February 17, 2024 from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM at the Southampton Community Center, 913 Willow Street, Southampton, PA 18966. Philly members came to our February 2023 meet in Allentown. Let's all go there.

Alan



# Second Section

## Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division 11  
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA  
655 Willow Valley Square, L-308 Lancaster,  
PA 17602

Contributing to Susquehanna Sidetracks:  
Sidetracks welcomes contributions from our 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. The deadline for submission for the next issue is February 15, 2024.

### Officers and Directors

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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

## Convention Company Store Message

At the convention in Altoona, someone purchased a book and HO Southern Pacific car from the Company Store and mistakenly left them in the lobby. These items were brought to the Company Store but no one ever came by looking for them. If you, or someone you know, purchased these two items, please contact Howard Oakes at [business@mer-nmra.com](mailto:business@mer-nmra.com) or 717-424-6165 to claim them.

## Editor's Message

Greetings to All,

Another year has begun and with it a chance to become better modelers and have opportunities to make new friends. Whenever I mingle with fellow NMRA members, I continuously am amazed at their high level of workmanship and their willingness to share their knowledge! By rubbing elbows with such people, we can only rise to a higher level of modeling and positive camaraderie.

Our Division Board of Directors challenge each of you to get involved and 'mingle' with other members. Planning continues for more and regionally located events for all our members and, hopefully, guests. The next event is February 17th. Hope to see you there!



## Cabin Fever Model Engineering Expo Show & Auctions

For Questions Call: 800-789-5068 or  
Email: [info@cabinfeverauctions.com](mailto:info@cabinfeverauctions.com)



<a href="#">Cabin Fever Expo</a>	<a href="#">Vendors</a>	<a href="#">Exhibitors</a>	<a href="#">Consignment Sales Area</a>	<a href="#">Featured Models</a>	<a href="#">More</a>
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# 27th Annual Cabin Fever Expo January 12-13, 2024

**January 12-13, 2024**

**Lebanon Valley Expo Center  
80 Rocherty Road  
Lebanon, PA 17042**



**SHOW: January 12-13, 2024**

Friday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Saturday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**ONLINE AUCTIONS: Check back soon for details**

**VENDOR/EXHIBITOR  
PRE-REGISTRATION**

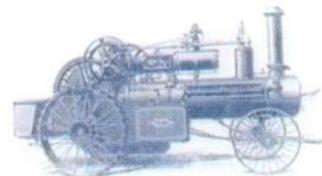
Thursday 3PM - 7PM and Friday 8AM

**VENDORS & EXHIBITORS MAY BEGIN SETUP**

Thursday 3PM - 7PM and Friday 8AM

**AUCTION PREVIEW**

Thursday 3PM - 7PM



## Railroad Prototype Modelers- Valley Forge

March 22-24, 2024

Sponsored by a 100% NMRA Club



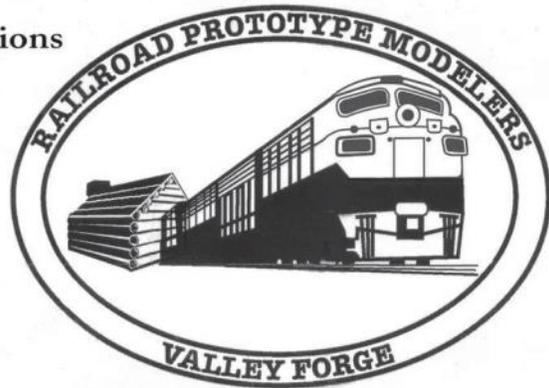
Thursday & Friday Operating Sessions

Many Clinics

Model Displays

Vendor Rooms

Sunday Home Layout Tours



For information and updates  
[rpmvalleyforge.com](http://rpmvalleyforge.com)

### Registrar

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### Clinic Information

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Drew Marshall

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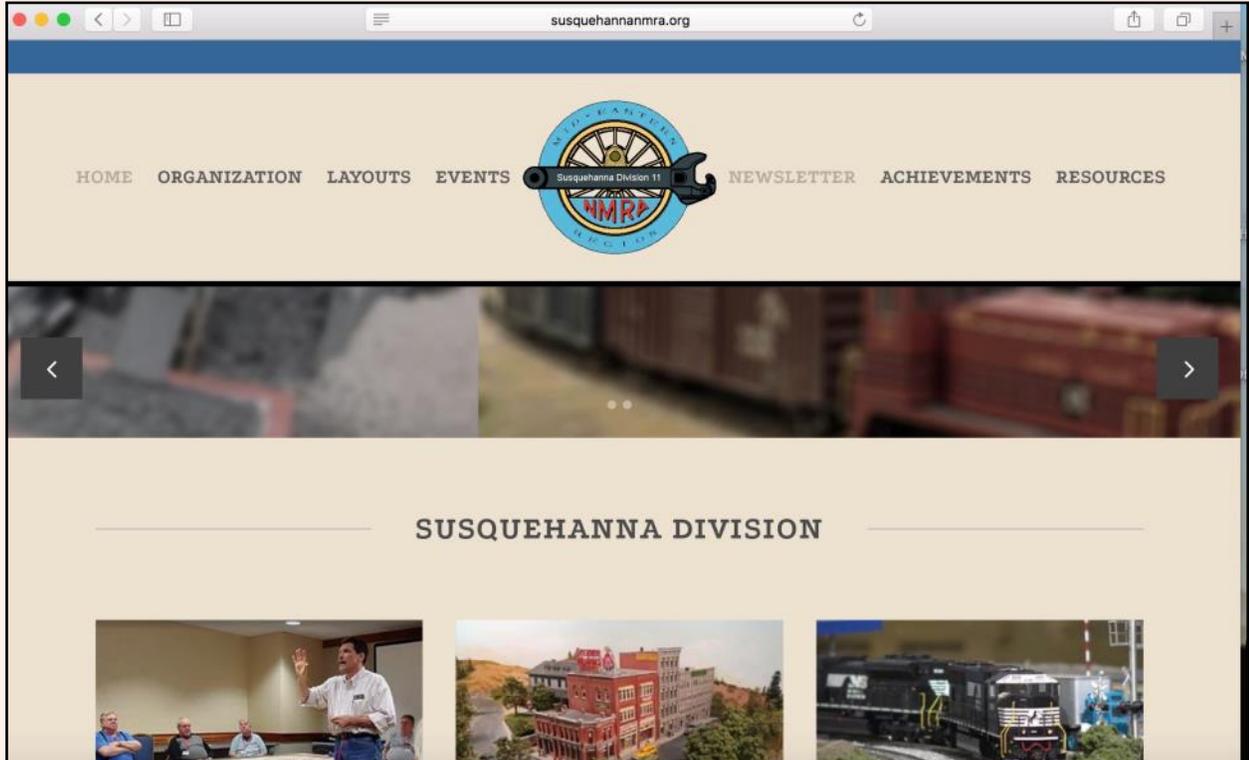
### Ops Sessions

Mark Wallace

[mwallace665@verizon.net](mailto:mwallace665@verizon.net)

# Susquehanna Division Website Update

In November the Division's webmaster, David Collison, created and posted a new version of the Susquehanna Division's website at <https://susquehannanmra.org>. One feature of this WordPress-based website is that additional people can be added as editors or administrators. I have taken on the role of assistant webmaster and can edit or add content within the pages. My initial focus is to keep the dates, times, and locations of the meetings and events of our division, other nearby NMRA activities, and other model railroad events posted in a timely manner. As the officers and board of directors of the division work to increase participation of the membership, we plan to use the website, in addition to the *Susquehanna Sidetracks*, to communicate with the membership.



Moving forward, David and I plan to do more than just keep the "Events" page up to date. The website will continue as a source for current and archived copies of the *Susquehanna Sidetracks* newsletter. We have already started to update the "Organization" page by publishing current information about the leadership's focus for this year, listing current officers, and providing links to some important documents. At the time that I am writing this, the contact links to the officers are good, but we need to work on some of the other contact links. I am also working to double-check several of the other pages to make sure the information is complete and up to date. We are also exploring the possibility of activating a blog section called "News and Views." At our most recent in-person meeting several members brought up the notion of starting an online forum on the website. That is not practical as a part of a WordPress site, and we are not prepared to create a separate one. However, the NMRA Interchange has channels for questions and advice on a wide variety of model railroad topics, functioning much like an online forum. As we move forward with developing the blog page, an introduction to using the NMRA Interchange will be on my short list of topics to include.

Our plan is to continue to update our website to improve communication within the division, support our members, and otherwise promote the hobby of model railroading. As we will be continuing to update, please be sure to refresh or reload frequently. Please communicate with me, the [assist-webmaster](#), with corrections and ideas to improve the usefulness of the website.

David Ellis, Assistant Webmaster

# Atlas Model Train Celebration

## News Release from Atlas Model Railroad Company, Inc.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Atlas in 2024, we have partnered with NJ TRANSIT to wrap a prototype locomotive with a brand new paint scheme celebrating 100 years of Atlas. NJ TRANSIT #4503 has been wrapped with commemorative 100th anniversary artwork that was designed in-house at Atlas and will be placed in service on the NJ TRANSIT Raritan Valley Line effective November 17th, 2023. An official unveiling and press event will be held in New Jersey's Newark Penn Station on Wednesday, November 29th at 8:30 AM. Atlas company officers, employees and NJ TRANSIT leadership will be present for this momentous occasion.

When the newly wrapped NJ TRANSIT #4503 enters service, Atlas will be holding a photography contest for eagle-eyed train enthusiasts who spot and photograph this locomotive traversing the NJ TRANSIT rails. Details of the contest will be announced soon, so stay tuned to the Atlas website and social media sites for more information. Last month, Atlas announced a replica model of this commemorative ALP-45DP locomotive along with Bombardier passenger car models decorated in special 100th anniversary paint schemes that celebrate our company's long history. The offering includes ALP-45DP locomotives, cab cars, multi-level trailers and multi-level trailers with toilets. The Founders Car multilevel trailer features the years Atlas has been in operation and the names of the founders, Stephan J. Schaffan Sr. and Stephan J. Schaffan Jr. The cab car features a thank you to our loyal customers and the toilet car is adorned with a cartoon drawing from the Atlas archives of Steve Jr. Locomotives are available for separate sale and in 3-packs while the cab car and trailers are only sold in 3-packs. While these models are no longer offered for guaranteed pre-order, orders can still be placed and will be fulfilled while supplies remain.

Atlas Tool Company was founded by Stephan Schaffan Sr. in 1924 as a general machine shop in a small garage at 330 Waverly Avenue in Newark, New Jersey. His son, Stephan Schaffan Jr. joined him in the business in 1933. As a frequent visitor to the local hobby shop, he would often ask the owner if there was anything he could do to earn some extra spending money. Tired of listening to his requests, the hobby-store owner threw some model railroad track parts his way and said, "Here, see if you can improve on this". In those days, railroad modelers had to assemble and build everything from scratch. Steve Jr. created a "switch kit" which sold so well, that the entire family worked on them in the basement at night, while doing business as usual in the machine shop during the day.

Steve Jr.'s accomplishments include engineering the stapling of rail to fiber track, inventing the first practical rail joiner and pre-assembled turnouts and flexible track—all of which helped to popularize model railroading and assisted in the creation of a mass-market hobby. As the business grew, their manufacturing needs went beyond what the small garage could provide, so in 1947 Steve and his father had the first factory built in Hillside, New Jersey at 413 Florence Avenue. On September 30th, 1949, Atlas Tool Company Inc. was officially incorporated as a New Jersey company.



# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)

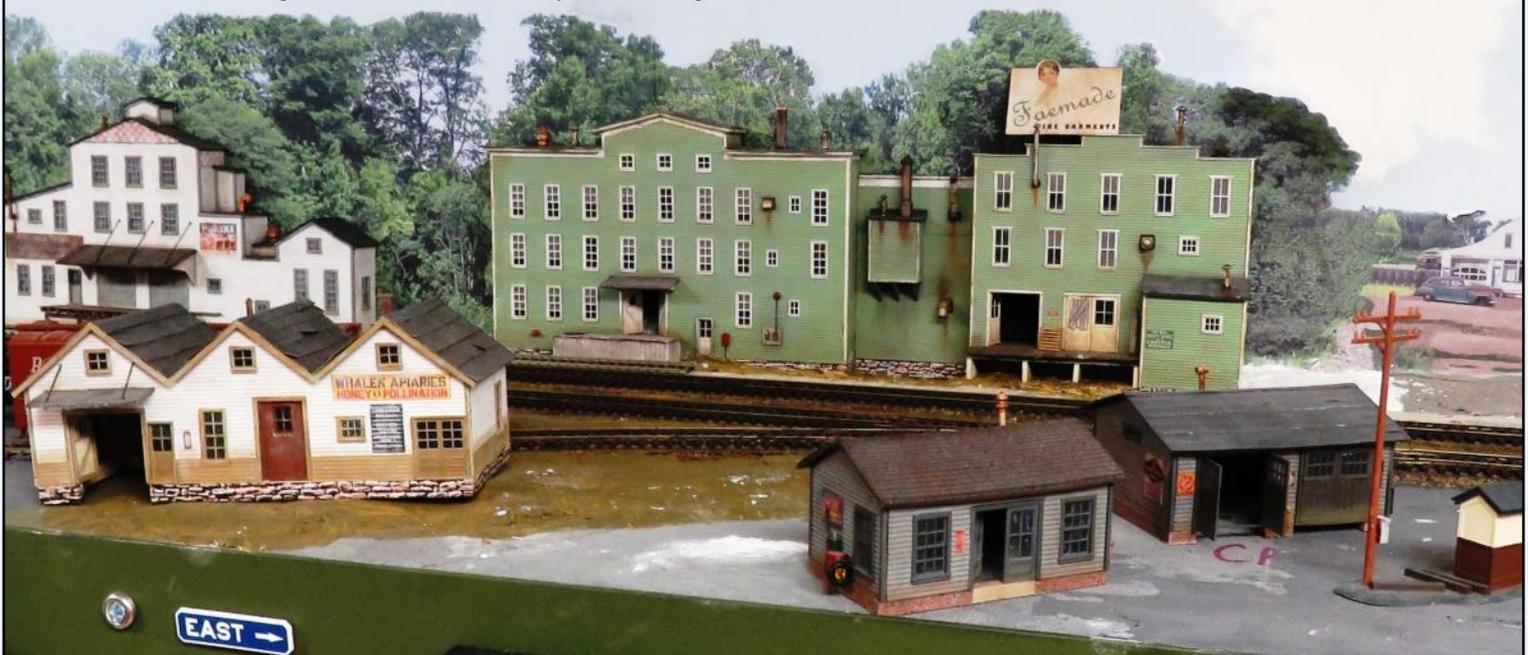
Continuing west from here, we pass through Myerstown where there's a team track and the large Sterling Drug plant before arriving in the city of Lebanon, where there are several lineside industries. Horn-town Yard is on the west end of town, and is where the local crew that works the industries in Lebanon is based. Road trains pick up and drop off cuts of cars here. Heading out of Lebanon, we pass through Annville and Millard's limestone quarry and arrive at

A yellow and green Reading caboose brings up the rear of an ore train bound for Bethlehem Steel on the East Penn Branch.



Hershey, home of the sprawling Hershey Chocolate plant. A dedicated switch crew works here, moving raw materials (cocoa beans, sugar, etc.) to the plant spurs and collecting cars of finished chocolate products for pickup by

A view of the industries at Annville on the Lebanon Valley Branch: Annville Feeds and Fae Manufacturing to the rear of the layout, and Carbone's service station in the foreground. The small Whalen Apiaries building needs to be relocated.



road freights. Heading out of Hershey, we pass through the small town of Hummelstown, again with a team track and an industrial spur for McKesson Chemical before arriving at TARA interlocking, which is the entrance to the Rutherford staging yard.

A pair of GP40-2s lead the ore train into Albutis on their way to Bethlehem.



# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)

Looking down into the 3-turn East Penn helix between Mertztown and Fleetwood.



Another view of the helix. The Lebanon Valley Branch tracks to Myerstown can be seen above the helix.



I've got between 50-60 locomotives from a variety of manufacturers (primarily Kato, Atlas, Proto200, Bowser and Athearn) and around 400 freight cars of various makes on the layout. While this has been sufficient for initial shakedown operations, now that Reading Yard has been completed, I will likely need about 100 more freight cars to fill the need for remaining trains to operate the full planned schedule. The layout is controlled by Digitrax wireless DCC, and I also have a wireless adapter connected so that operators can use WiThrottle on their mobile devices, as well as a ProtoThrottle or TCS wireless throttles. Visible track on the double-track main line is Code 83, while staging yard tracks and the hidden tracks on the Belt Line are Code 100. Turnouts are primarily commercial turnouts from a mix of manufacturers (Atlas, Peco, and Walthers); however, the east-end yard ladder for Rutherford Yard is a beautiful curved compound ladder that was hand laid by Val Pistilli and James Mattern. Val also hand-laid a double curved crossover between Myerstown and Lebanon. Turnouts are controlled by Tam Valley Depot servo switch machines, which are connected to Quad-LNS boards that both drive the servos and provide turnout position information to the Digitrax Loconet, which in turn is connected to the computer and JMRI via an RR-CirKits LocoBuffer.



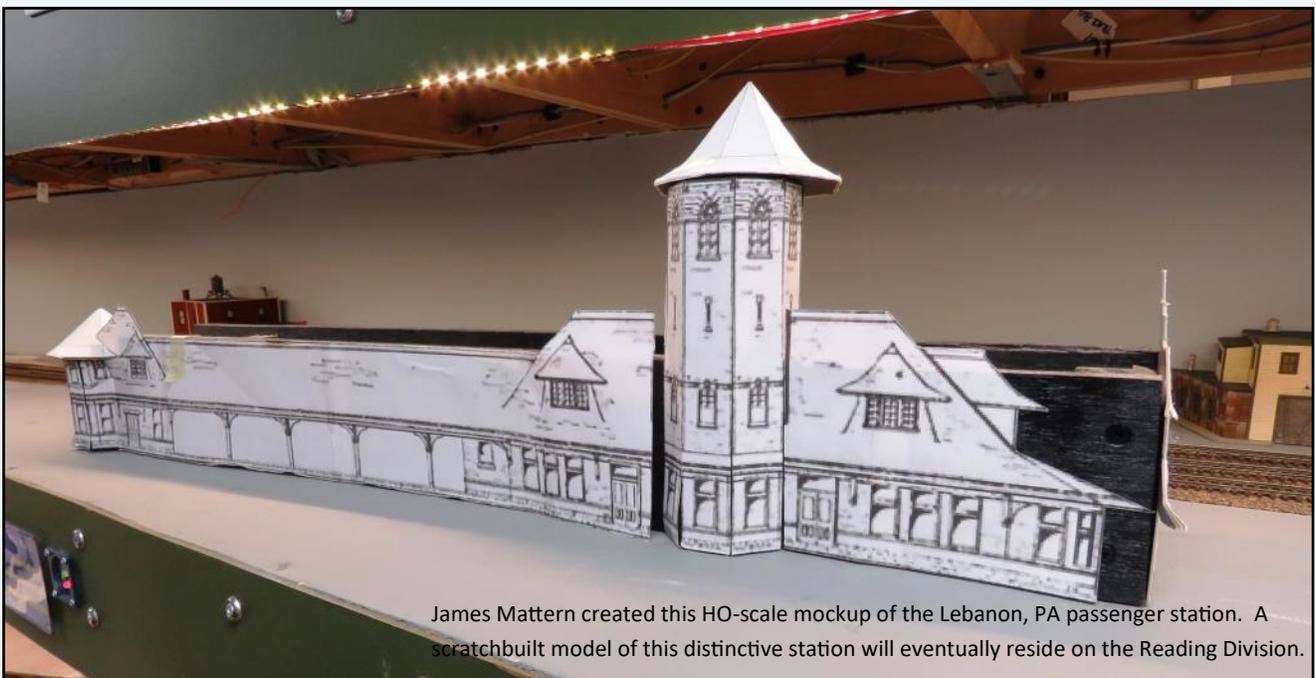
A view of the residential district of Annville, including Calvaresi's corner grocery, named after a store Tom frequented while growing up in Reading.

# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)



A brace of Reading GP39-2s lead train AH-9 west toward Rutherford Yard (west end staging) outside of Harrisburg.

This computer connection is important since I've used JMRI's PanelPro feature to create a replica Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) machine to control the layout and operate the layout's signal system. There are 7 signaled interlockings on the layout that are controlled by the Dispatcher, and the CTC machine replicates all of the features of the prototype to drive signal aspects and indications based on switch positions and traffic conditions on the layout. Intermediate block signals are placed between the interlockings and operate automatically based on track occupancy. To make this system work, I've built occupancy detection onto all the tracks using RR-Cirkit's BOD-8 occupancy boards, and all the freight cars have resistors on wheelsets to drive current detection. While the signal system is still under construction, it functions well and cuts down on radio traffic during operations since crews can operate their trains based on signal indication upon leaving their starting point. At this time, the computer driving the CTC machine is in the layout room, but eventually will be moved into the house to separate the dispatcher from the railroad and add some realism during operations. Through JMRI's web server feature, it will also be possible to dispatch the railroad remotely in the future. I've always been interested in railroad signals, and have spent a lot of time researching prototype signaling practices to make the CTC/signal system operate as realistically as possible so that crews will have a prototypical experience while operating the layout – the work I've done to this point on the CTC system is probably the feature of the railroad of which I'm the proudest – it's very exciting to watch the signals change aspects, dropping to red as a train passes, it's just like standing trackside!



James Mattern created this HO-scale mockup of the Lebanon, PA passenger station. A scratchbuilt model of this distinctive station will eventually reside on the Reading Division.

# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)

Speaking of operations, while I haven't begun formal operating sessions yet, we did have a successful "shakedown session" in March of 2022 to stress-test the layout that went well and "proved the concept" of the layout's design. The freight schedule is based on the actual Reading Railroad freight schedule from that era, and calls for 22 through freights running across the system, along with several locals operating out of Rutherford, Lebanon, Reading and Allentown. Once operations begin in earnest, I'm expecting a crew of 10-11 operators: Dispatcher, Reading Yardmaster, two yard crews at Reading, local crews at Lebanon and Hershey, and 4-5 road crews. Crews will use FRS radios to communicate with the Dispatcher, and I'm planning to use the intercom feature of a cordless phone system for the Dispatcher to communicate with the yards. I plan to use a sequence timetable based on the prototype instead of a fast clock, and have not determined the extent to which we'll use any kind of Train Orders.

Reese Electric Supply is a FOS Models craftsman kit temporarily located in Hummelstown on the upper level of the railroad.



Some limestone cars sitting in a siding at Hershey.



A view of Horntown Yard west of Lebanon. This was a location at which through trains would drop off cuts of cars to be delivered to industries in Lebanon. Take note of the small boy in the background who has come out of his yard to watch the action.



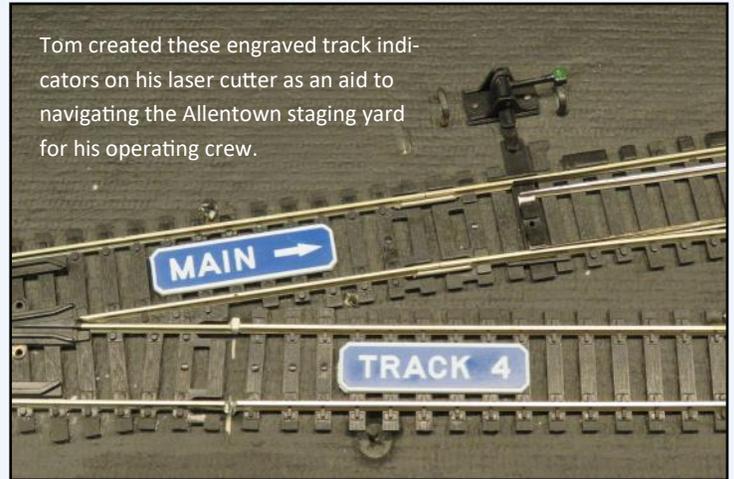
SW1500 #2761 switches some limestone cars in the Hershey storage yard before sending them on their way east to Bethlehem Steel.

# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)

I hope you've enjoyed this brief tour of my Reading Division layout – I'm excited for what the future of the railroad holds as we start working on scenery and plan to begin operations. If you'd like to learn more, I invite you to follow along with my progress at my Facebook page "Tom Jacobs' 1970s Reading Company Reading Division in HO Scale" <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2017109971860776> Happy Model Railroading, and Keep it in Run 8!  
Tom Jacobs



A view of the Digitrax power supply, command station and PSX circuit breaker in the center aisle of the layout. Additional boosters and circuit breakers are installed around the layout for power and short management.



Tom created these engraved track indicators on his laser cutter as an aid to navigating the Allentown staging yard for his operating crew.



A Lehigh Valley gondola with air-activated cement containers. This car was Tom's first kitbashed model and was built following a *Model Railroader* article by noted Reading modeler and author Jim Hertzog



A view of Reading Yard, the main classification yard on the layout. The RIP track shop building can be seen in the upper right corner.



Tom designed and cut the car card/waybill boxes using his laser, and has started to create car cards and waybills to start operations.

# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)



Some more cars have found their way to Horntown Yard, including a Virginian and Ohio reefer and some flatcars with various loads.

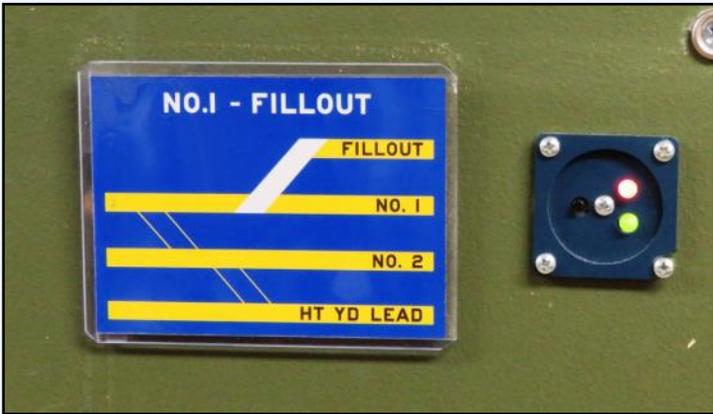


Another view of Reading Yard. The Lehigh Valley snowbird in the background came in from Allentown, where it had been pushing westbound freights on the East Penn Branch.



Trackage in Hershey with some more limestone cars and structures in the background. These all will find their forever homes elsewhere on the layout.

# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)



An example of the fascia-mounted turnout controllers and the accompanying track diagram. The color of the LEDs shows the position of the switch, and the diagram (which is inside a baseball card sleeve) indicates the switch associated with the controller.



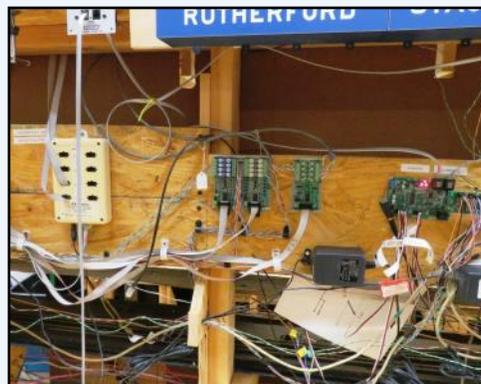
The track occupancy panel for Rutherford Yard, which is on the upper level of the layout. Given the height of the yard, Tom built several of these panels so operators can tell at a glance whether staging tracks are available.



A view of the beautiful HANDLAID double crossover at Avon (between Myerstown and Lebanon) built by Val Pistilli.



James Mattern created this HO scale mockup of the Cornwall Railroad Yard Office, which sat along the Reading's crossing of the Cornwall in Lebanon. Given his enthusiasm for the Cornwall, we've given him the exclusive rights to scenic this part of the layout!



A view of more of the electronics on the layout. These boards drive block occupancy, the servos that control turnouts, and the signals around the railroad. All of this hardware is connected to a computer and controlled via JMRI (Java Model Railroad Interface).

# Tom Jacobs' Reading Division Layout (continued)



The team track at Myerstown. This wraparound loading dock was referred to as the "slot" by local crews.



A view of a portion of the rolling stock fleet occupying Reading Yard.



A long view of Reading Yard, which occupies one entire wall of the 20'x36' barn that houses the Reading Division.



Another view of Reading Yard. Tom has between 300-400 cars on the rail-road from many different manufacturers, but has yet to weather many of them. All cars have Kadee couplers and resistors on the axles to support occupancy detection, and are weighted to NMRA standards before being put into service.

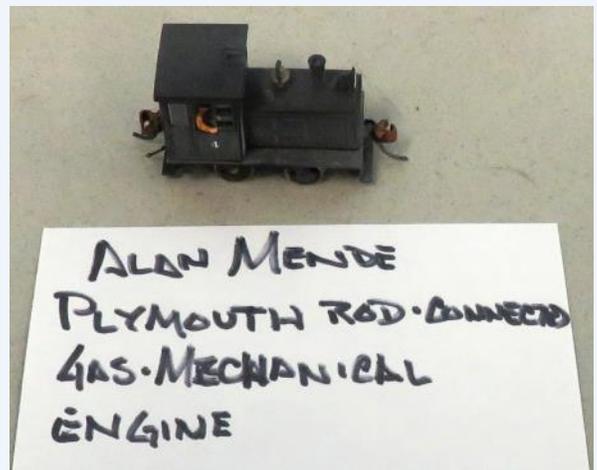
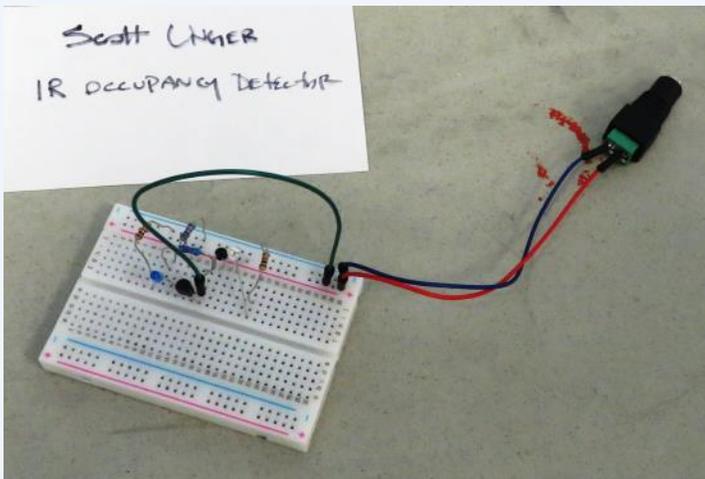
# Model Showcase

At the Division's Mechanicsburg Event on Saturday, December 9th, Bill Lesjak, Model Showcase Chairperson, moderated the return of 'Model Showcase' as a feature of Division meetings. The event attracted almost thirty members and guests from Maryland, southeastern Pennsylvania and northeastern Pennsylvania!

In addition to a regular business meeting, the agenda included a clinic on powering a resin 'critter' by Alan Mende, Modeler's Forum and Modeler's Showcase. Almost ten attendees brought examples of under construction projects and finished rolling stock/structures. Each presenter had five minutes to describe and explain their particular modeling efforts. Questions were fielded by each modeler which clarified and enhanced each presentation.

The Division graciously thanks Bill for volunteering as Model Showcase Chairperson. This popular activity enables novice and experienced hobbyists an opportunity for sharing their handiwork. The Division invites more members to share their work at future events.

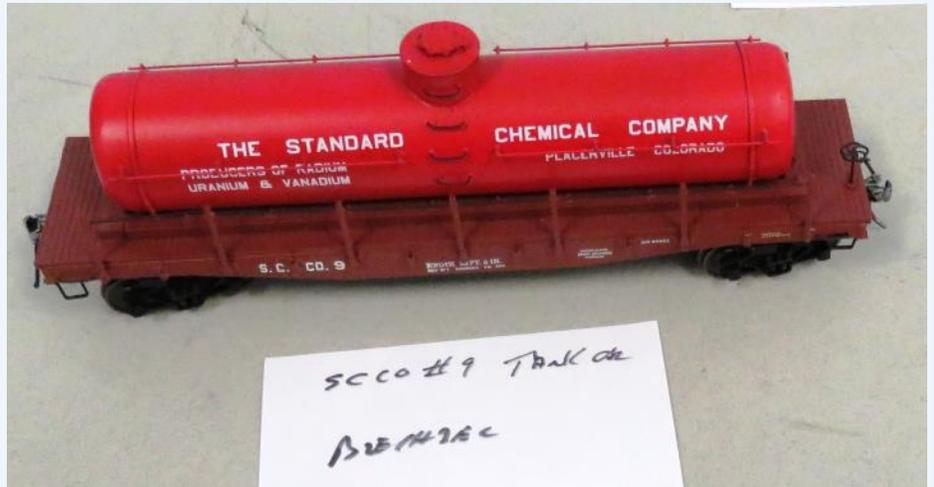
The following photos were seen at Mechanicsburg:



# Model Showcase (continued)



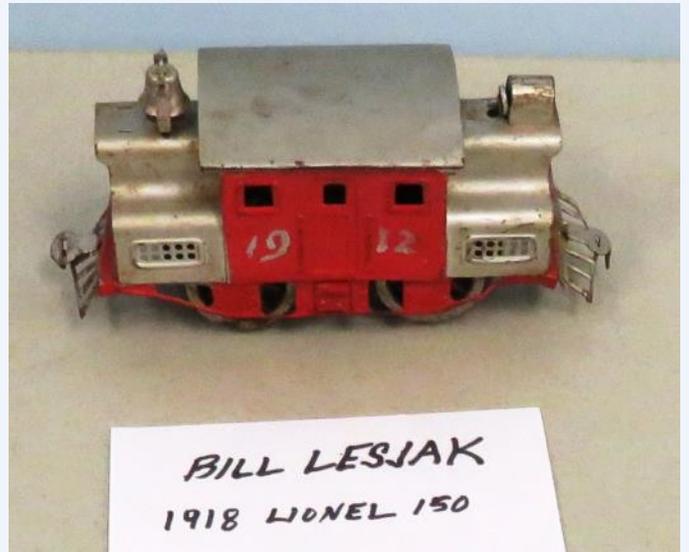
ALAN MENDE  
CNT CLASS T-26  
4-G.O #624



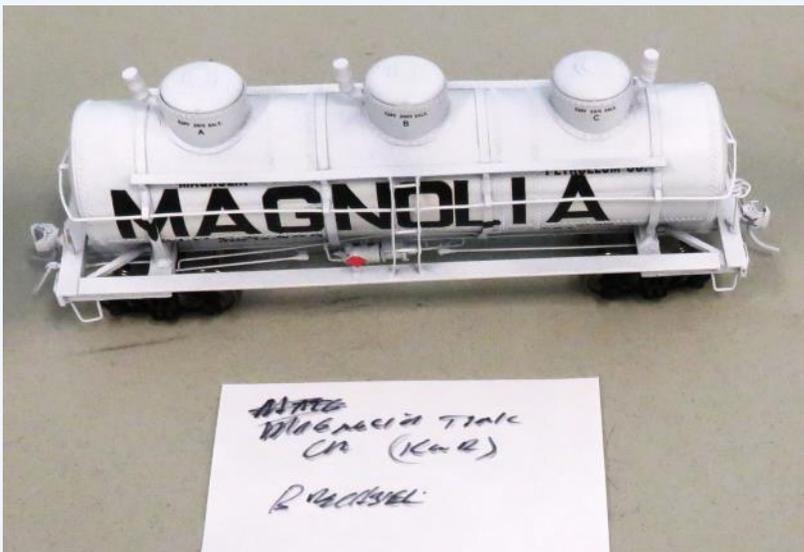
SCCO #9 Tank car  
BEMZAC



MONIE CAR w/ HOIST  
BEMZAC



BILL LESJAK  
1918 LIONEL 150

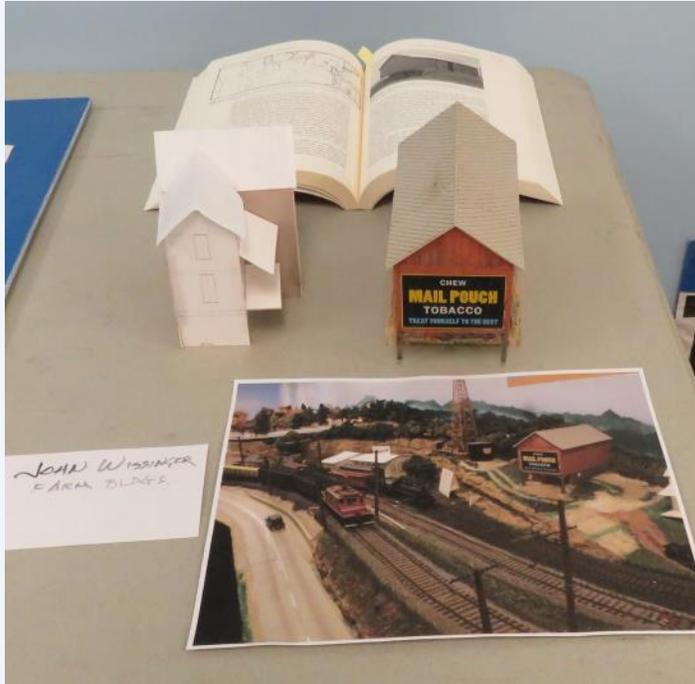


ASTEC  
Magnolia Tank  
CR (K&N)  
BEMZAC



DAVE ELLIS  
ITLA Laser Cut  
POOL HOUSE

# Model Showcase (continued)



**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM  
MASTER BUILDER CARS  
JUDGING FORM  
May 2006**

PLEASE ATTACH THIS FORM TO A COMPLETED STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS (SOQ) FORM.

Member's Name: Jerry Britton NMRA #: 129339  
 Date Submitted: 12/9/2023 Region: MER  
 Model: Tichy 10,000 Gallon Tank Car AMLX #SF 42

The undersigned judges certify that the model or railroad rolling stock described above, built by the above named NMRA member, has been personally examined by two or more judges appointed by the Region AP Chair; that the model is either scratchbuilt or is superdetailed (as defined in the NMRA AP Regulations "DEFINITIONS" Section); is operational and meets all applicable NMRA Standards; has earned a minimum score of 87.5 points; and has been awarded a Merit Award.

**MERIT AWARD SCORING SCHEDULE**

DESCRIPTION	POINTS	SCORE	NOTE
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# MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 2

## Model Contest Room Report

**Alan Mende**, MER General Contest Chair

Once again, this year's contest room was fortunate to be the host of some exceptional, high-quality models. Our host, the Susquehanna Division, provided us with a large, well-lit space which made for a quality contest experience in 2023.

A special thank-you goes out to our model contest judges. We were fortunate to have Bob Charles, Ken Montero, Scott Unger, Chuck Davis, and Patrick Flash as our lead judges. Our other judges were Michael DeSensi, Jack Dziadul, Rob Hinkle, Earl Paine, Ray Persing, JW Snyder, Charles Stevens, Jr., and Dennis Vaccaro. Kurt Thompson was our administrative judge. I also want to thank Robert (Robby) Alvis, Gary Nastase, and Ken Roth for their help in assisting me with paperwork, taking in models, and running errands.

We had 44 models entered with 34 being entered for judging. Of the models 34 judged models, 21 received Merit Awards in 9 categories. That means 62% of the models entered achieved Merit Awards. Of those Merit Awards, 14 achieved a score of 100 or more points out of a possible 125.

### THE CONTEST WINNERS

#### **Model Contests:**

Steam – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Alex Belida – Vertical boiler engine\*

Diesel – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Mike DeSensi – Santa Fe GP30

Freight Car – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Chris Lasher - DJJX scrap gondola\*

Non-Revenue Car – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Joe Walters - 200-ton wreck crane\*

Caboose – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Steve Salotti - Susquehanna caboose

Passenger Car – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Ed Smith - Erie RPO car\*

Structure On-Line – 1<sup>st</sup> place – Don Winn - Yorkville depot\*

Structure Off-Line – 1<sup>st</sup> place tie – John Pursell – Arrow Brewery\*

Don Winn - Curbside LTD\*

Display On-Line – 1<sup>st</sup> place Jerry Lauchle - O.W Houts & Son & O'Neills Fabrication\*

# MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 2

## Model Contest Room Report (continued)

### The Special Awards:

The MER also supports an array of Special Awards that complement the judged model contest.

Clyde Gerald Kitbash Award: the best kitbashed model in the model contest.

John Pursell – Bartender's home and pub

The Philadelphia New Modeler Award: given to the first-time entrant in MER model contest with the highest point score. (A cash prize and large plaque this year!)

Kevin O'Connor - Pulpwood hauler\*

Ray Bilodeau MER Narrow Gauge Award

None awarded this year

Favorite Train - chosen by popular vote

Ed Smith – Erie Military Train

Favorite Model - chosen by popular vote

Keith Iritsky - C. Drew & Co. Ironworks\*

Bob Liberman Award – sponsored by the NJ Division

Ed Smith - Erie RPO car\*

Chuck Hladik Memorial Award: sponsored by the James River Division (JRD), awarded to any model that represents a railroad in the south.

Kevin O'Connor – ACL phosphate hopper

The President's Award: The President's Award for 2024 was chosen by MER President, Scott Unger, and given for a model representing a forestry theme. This broad category of forestry could include cars for finished products so boxcars, flat cars, and center beam cars as well as related structures could also be valid entries.

Mathew Hosford – 15-ton Crane\*

# MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 2

## Model Contest Room Report (continued)

**Best-in-Show:** given to the entry with the highest point's score in the model contest this year a 120 points! This award includes to the recipient the cost of registration to next year's convention in Durham, North Carolina.

in

Jerry Lauchle, MMR - O.W Houts & Son & O'Neills Fabrication\*

Next year's President's Award is yet to be determined

If you have any questions about NMRA or MER contest rules, regulations, NMRA judging of models, would like to be a Judge, have contest questions of any kind, complaints, suggestions, or whatever you might want to talk about, contact Alan Mende, MER General Contest Chair at: [contests@mer-nmra.com](mailto:contests@mer-nmra.com).

### First Place Steam

Alex Belida - Vertical boiler engine



### First Place Diesel

Mike DeSensi - custom painted Santa Fe GP30



### First Place Freight Car

Chris Lasher - DJJX scrap gondola



### First Place – Non-Revenue

Joe Walters - 200-ton wreck crane



# MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 2

## Model Contest Room Report (continued)

### First Place Caboose

Steve Salotti - Susquehanna caboose



### First Place Passenger Car

Ed Smith - Erie RPO car



### On-Line Structures

Don Winn - Yorkville depot



### Off-Line Structures - Tie

John Pursell - Arrow Brewery



### Off-Line Structures - Tie

Don Winn - Curbside LTD



### Online Display

Jerry Lauchle - O.W Houts & Son & O'Neills Fabrication



# MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 2

## Model Contest Room Report (continued)

### Off-Line Display

Chuck Endreola - Escaping the Noose



### First Place Module

Michael B. Dettinger – Horseshoe Curve in N-Scale



### Best In Show

Jerry Lauchle - O.W Houts & Son & O'Neills Fabrication



### President's Award

Mathew Hosford – 15- Ton Crane



### The Clyde Gerald Award

John Pursell Bartender's home and pub



### Philadelphia Division New Modeler Award

Kevin O'Connor - Pulpwood hauler



# MER Altoona Convention Report - Part 2

## Model Contest Room Report (continued)

**Bob Liberman Award**  
Ed Smith - Erie RPO car



**Favorite Train**  
Ed Smith – Erie Military Train



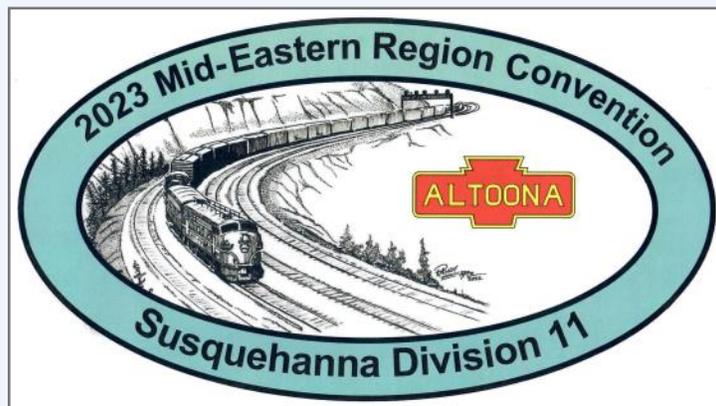
**Favorite Model**  
Keith Iritsky - C. Drew & Co. Ironworks



**Chuck Hladik Award**  
Kevin O'Connor - ACL phosphate hopper



all contest photos courtesy of Jerry Lauchle, MMR



# Model Railroad for Sale

Jim Long is planning to move to Bethany Village, a continuous care community, in the next couple months. Bethany Village is where Jim has helped with their model railroads for many years. Therefore, Jim needs to dismantle and sell off his layout and collection of rolling stock.

Brief description of the layout:

- roughly 30' by 60' around the wall with two 5' peninsulas
- 600' +/- of HO track
- 66 turnouts, about half with tortoise switch machines
- 97 buildings:

lumber mill and pond

lumber yard

2- 2 bay engine houses

6 stall round house

large remote controlled Walthers turntable

coaling tower

ice house

coal mine

2 station areas

one large town

soccer field

boy scout camp

transformer plant

water tanks

water treatment plant

misc. small structures.

- NCE DCC radio control system with one booster, and many small switches on control panels
- DCC locomotives (**see following page for complete roster with details**)

Compensation is negotiable, including removal of switch machines and buildings. The layout is located at 895 Grandon Way, Mechanicsburg, Pa. 17050. Contact Jim at [smlgf2000@aol.com](mailto:smlgf2000@aol.com) or 717/756/2107.

# Model Railroad for Sale (continued)

## Jim Long's inventory of engines for sale:

MODEL RAILROAD HO LOCOMOTIVE INVENTORY								
Engine #	Consist #	Road Name	Engine Type	DC	DCC	Sound	Make	Notes
<b>STEAM</b>								
S-1	50	Cass	3 Ton Shay	Y	Soundtraxx (JLL)	ST Tsunami750	Bachmann Spectrum	
S-2	55	Unlettered	3 Ton Shay	Y	TCS		Bachmann Spectrum	
S-3	30	Unlettered	3 Truck Climax	Y	Factory		Bachmann Spectrum	Replaced 2 truck
S-4	350	Unlettered	4-6-0		Soundtraxx	Soundtraxx	Bachmann Spectrum	
S-5	758	WM	2-8-0 Consolid.		Soundtraxx		Bachmann Spectrum	
S-6	1737	Pennsy	4-6-2 K4		Proto	Protosound 3	MTH	
S-7	330	Unlettered	2-8-2 Lt. Mikado	Y	Soundtraxx (JLL)	Tsunami TSU 1000	Athearn Genises	
S-8	1218	Norfolk & West.	2-6-6-2 Consolid.		NCE D13SRD	Factory	Broadway Limited	
S-9	1641	C & O	2-6-6-6 Consolid.		Loc Sound	Loc Sound V3.5	Rivarossi	
S-10	3985	U P	4-6-6-4 Challenge	Y	Lenz LE103XF		Rivarossi	Old Unit
S-11	955	WM	2-6-6-2 Consolid.	Y	Soundtraxx (JLL)	Tsunami TSU 1000	Mantua	Old time Logging
S-12	121	GN	4-4-0 American	Y	Factory	NO	Bachmann Spectrum	9/15
S-13	795	Unlettered	2-8-0 Consolid.	Y	Factory	Factory	Broadway Limited	12/14
S-14	6736	Pennsy	4-8-2 M1B	Y	Factory	Factory	Broadway Limited	
Engine #	Consist #	Road Name	Engine Type	DC	DCC	Sound	Make	Notes
<b>DIESEL</b>								
D-1	1802	Alaska	GP 38	Y			Walters	Good Older Unit
D-2	9769	Pennsy	F 8	Y			Tyco	Older Unit
D-3		Undecorated	F 7	Y			Kato	Older Unit
D-4		Black	2-2 Yrd Goat	Y			Tyco	Older Unit
D-5		Pennsy	404 S-1 Switcher	Y			Tyco	Older Unit
D-6	28	WM	GP 9I-High Nose		NCE-N141P (JLL)		Proto 2000/Life Like	
D-7	7432	WM	SD 35 Low Nose		Atlas Master		Atlas	
	129	WM	S-1 Switcher		NCE KRS-SR (JLL)		Stewart	
D-8	227	Amtrak	EMD 40PH A	Y			Bachmann Spectrum	Older Unit
D-9	496	Amtrak	B Unit -Dummy					Older Unit
D-10	242	WM	F7A		DH163IP		Walters	
D-11		WM	F7B - Dummy				Walters	
D-12	632	CSX	GE AC 6000		NCE-N141P (JLL)		Broadway Limited	Consist 36
D-13	9003	CSX	C44-9W		DH123D (JLL)		Athearn	Consist 36
D-14	7600	B&O Chessie	SD-40		DH165K (JLL)	BLI	Broadway Limited	Consist 76
D-15	6557	C&O Chessie	SD40-2		N141P (JLL)		Kato	Consist 76
D-16	7614	CSX Chessie	SD 40-2 Dummy				Athearn	Consist 76
D-17	9603	BNSF	SD70ACE		Soundtraxx	Tsunami	Athearn Genesis	
D-18								
D-19	7665	BNSF	ES44DC		Dgitrax	Dgitrax	Tower	
D-20	1641	BNSF	G44-9W		DH123		Athearn	
D-21	5852A	Pennsy	E7A		QSI	QSI	Proto 2000	
D-22	5852B	Pennsy	E7B Dummy				Proto 2000	
D-23	5807	Pennsy	E8A Passenger		NCE D133P	BWI	BWI	Consist 58
D-24	5808	Pennsy	E8B Passenger		NCE D133P	BWI	BWI	Consist 58
D-25	8004	C&O	F7A Passenger		Soundtraxx	Tsunami	Athearn Genesis	Consist 8004
D-26	8502	C&O	F7AB Passenger		Soundtraxx	Tsunami	Athearn Genesis	Consist 8004
D-27	161	Amtrak VB	P42 Passenger		Soundtraxx	Tsunami	KATO	Consist 161
D-28	188	Amtrak VB	P42 Passenger		Soundtraxx (JLL)	no	KATO	Consist 161
D-29	9303	BNSF	SD70ACe		Soundtraxx	Tsunami	Athearn Genesis	11/10
D-30	1996	South. Pac. Herit.	SD70ACe		Soundtraxx	Tsunami	Athearn Genesis	2013
D-31	1068	Erie Heritage	SD70ACe		MTH	MTH	MTH	01/14
	198	Western Maryland	RS-3		DCC onboard EZ	NO	Bachman	2015 Grbg train sh

**ITEMS SOLD TOGETHER:** Kato Amtrak - 2 Phase Vb - 2 locomotive, DCC and 9 cars

Chesapeake and Ohio F7 A and B, DCC engines, baggage car and 5 lighted cars

Pennsylvania E8A and B, DCC units (D23 and D24)

# Model Railroad for Sale (continued)

some photos of Jim Long's Layout



# NMRA's Partnership Program

Be sure to check out the savings associated with your NMRA membership. Before you make future purchases compare the discounts available from participating model railroad manufacturers.

## NMRA's Partnership Program



### PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NMRA members can log in and click on the **Benefits** tab to view the **NMRA Partnership Program**. Please patronize all of our partners for some fantastic discounts as an NMRA member!

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Deluxe Materials  
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East Coast Circuits  
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Micro-Mark  
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Motrak Models  
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December 2023

## Partnership Program