
SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



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



NOVEMBER
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING



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November Membership Meeting

The Susquehanna Division held an in-person membership meeting on Saturday morning, November 15, 2025. The meeting was held at the Good Hope Fire Company in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. This facility proves to be an excellent one with a large screen, good lighting, and plenty of space, tables, and chairs.

At this gathering our two clinics focused on the NMRA Achievement Program. One by Alan Mende looked at the Motive Power certificate and how the requirements are more easily achievable than one might expect. The other clinic, by David Ellis, explored the Achievement Program overall and how aspects of the program might be helpful even if you are not going for Master Model Railroader status. PDFs of both of these clinics as well as presentations given at other Susquehanna Division events are available on our website:

<https://susquehannanmra.org/presentation/>.

Other typical features of our meetings include initial social time with coffee and donuts, a free raffle where all attendees receive a raffle ticket to choose from the railroad items brought for the

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raffle, and an opportunity for members to share what they have been working on that we call the Modeler's Showcase. The November gathering's Modeler's Showcase featured a couple of Central of New Jersey locomotives that Alan built for another member. An additional feature of the November Modeler's showcase included a number of modules brought by Richard Clouser. Among the modules that Richard displayed were Mini Dioramas and more freelanced ones that he built from leftover insulation foam; both featured Kato Unitrack to lock the modules together. Richard shared a printout of a document that provides guidelines to the Mini Dioramas. A link to the guide can be found [here](#). If a couple of other members would consider following up with these tabletop dioramas we could have a small display layout at our events!

Modeler's Showcase



After the Meeting . . .

A local model railroad club, the Keystone Model Railroad Historical Society, opened for the afternoon, providing an opportunity for our members to view their impressive model railroad in operation. Many of our members visited their open house.

One feature of their organization is the number of younger members. I noticed club members in their teens as well as twenties or thirties operating

while I visited. In chatting with a spokesperson for the club, he mentioned that a number of years ago they started making a point of welcoming youth during their open houses and



offering them the chance to try running trains and to return to the club. “Being friendly” and engaging visitors appears to have paid dividends. Another feature of their railroad is the number of highly detailed mini scenes along their impressive model railroad.

Article and Photographs: David Ellis

From the Superintendent's Desk

It's that holiday time of year and the weather has gotten colder. It is a perfect time to go to your layout room and work on your railroad. It is especially true for me since it has been ten years since I completed my 16x20-foot layout room. Thanks to Kevin Macomber, who helped me paint the walls sky blue and to my brother, Bob, who helped me get everything out of the room that wasn't railroad related, I have finally started my next layout—the South Branch of the Jersey Central Railroad that ran from Somerville to Flemington, NJ, set in 1953. It's about time to start because I have already built many models of buildings along the 15-1/2 mile branch line and need a place to put them.



It has been a bit of a difficult year for the division. Our fantastic Susquehanna Sidetracks editor, Rich Wurst has retired. Kevin Macomber was going to take over that position, but found that he would be spreading himself too thin, so he has withdrawn. Our board of directors is

reevaluating our position on a newsletter. We are investigating several alternatives. We will, however, keep you informed by mass emailings.

Our next meet will be on January 12, 2026. It will be an online membership meeting (Monday @ 7:00 PM) on Zoom. Then on February 28, 2026 we will have an in-person joint membership meeting with Philly Division at the Upper Southampton Community Center, 913 Willow Street, Southampton, PA 18966. We have agreed to present one clinic at this meet. If you are willing to do that, please let me know as soon as possible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Law", is positioned to the right of the paragraph.

Notes From the Board of Directors

The officers and directors meet regularly on Zoom to discuss the “business” of the division, make decisions, and engage in planning. Any member is welcome to join us and/or bring up agenda items for the board. You can contact any of us (email addresses are provided on the “Second Section” page) with questions, agenda items, or the link to the next BoD meeting.

During the last few months, in addition to the normal operations of the division, we were mainly focused on planning for the 2026 schedule of membership meetings and activities for the Susquehanna Division. The results, a blend of in-person and online meetings on Zoom are discussed in the “Upcoming Events” section on page 6. We are hoping that by planning some hands-on activities at a few of our in-person venues we might gain more participation from our membership. We are also planning a special event at East Broad Top this summer, so be sure to **save the date: August 15, 2026**. We will provide more details as the planning for the EBT event develops.

Please feel free to contact the board with topics or activities that you think would be engaging for the membership of your division!

Second Section

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division 11
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA

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National Model Railroad Association

<https://www.nmra.org/>

Mid-Eastern Region

<https://mer-nmra.com/>

Susquehanna Division

<https://susquehannanmra.org/>

Note From the New Editor

We had some last minute and unexpected changes with the transition from our excellent former editor, Rich Wurst. This resulted in extensive discussion at the board level about the status and form of the *Susquehanna Sidetracks* moving forward. Ultimately, I took on the responsibility, and for a variety of reasons volunteered to continue with a similar form of newsletter. Primarily, I used this initial issue under my editorship to create a template for use moving forward, as I will be using a different publishing application than the one Rich was using.

As a participant in the discussion referenced above and as the new editor, my first consideration is around the purpose of our newsletter. First of all, dissemination of information will be a major goal; both about upcoming events and what is going on with the division. A second goal may be helping model railroaders move forward with building or improving their railroads. I will be asking for contributions of articles to help with those goals. More about that next time!

David Ellis

Upcoming Events

SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION:

January 12, 2026: Online on Zoom, **Monday at 7:00 p.m.**

Invitation link emailed to the membership. We will have two clinics by modelers with a need to scratch build, either modeling a lesser known railroad or a rare scale—Jim Mattern with scratch building rolling stock and Scott Lister (joining us from South Carolina) scratch building a station.

February 28, 2026: Joint Meeting with the Philly Division; back to the Saturday morning meeting schedule starting at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be at the Upper Southampton Community Center located at 913 Willow Street, Southampton, PA 18966. Additional details can be found on our website or that of the Philly Division.

May 16, 2026: In-person membership meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the Zion Lutheran Church in Dauphin PA. We are looking at having demonstrations and hands-on stations tentatively including locomotive maintenance and DCC installation basics along with non-airbrush rolling stock weathering techniques.

August 15, 2026: Save this date for a full day East Broad Top outing. This looks to be a great event with lots of different possibilities including shop tours, steam rides, and more.

September 19, 2026: In-person membership meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the Good Hope Fire Company in Mechanicsburg, PA.

November, 2026: Virtual layout visit on Zoom.

NMRA CONVENTIONS:

July 27 - August 2, 2026: NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, TN

SCENIC CITY EXPRESS

October 15 - 18, 2026: NMRA MER Convention in Virginia Beach, VA.

TRACKS TO TIDEWATER



NON-NMRA UPCOMING EVENTS:



January 24 - 25, 2026

Amherst Railroad Hobby Show

West Springfield, MA

AMHERST HOBBY SHOW

Saturday, March 14, 2026

Harrisburg Train Show

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

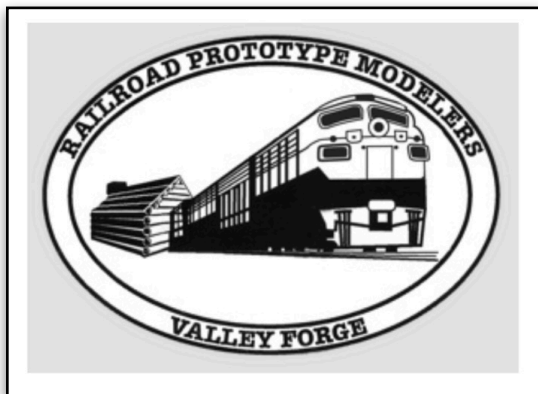
The Scottish Rite Harrisburg

2701 N. 3rd Street

Harrisburg, PA 17110



HARRISBURG TRAIN SHOW



March 19 - 22, 2026

Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

Malvern, PA

RPM VALLEY FORGE