

SUSQUEHANNA SIDETRACKS



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



**SUPERINTENDENT'S
DESK**



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From the New Superintendent's Desk

As we move into summer many of us shift our focus away from model railroading. Gardening, travel, and other seasonal activities occupy our time. I still try to fit in some time with my railroad, if for no other reason than the basement is often the coolest part of our house during hot weather. Here at the Susquehanna Division, as we move into summer, we have one major event planned—our visit to the East Broad Top Railroad on August 15. Barry Schmidt has been planning our visit, and he has an update in this issue. With so many options at the EBT, we don't have a suggested agenda; you are on your own to plan what you want to do. We chose that day because it is the only day in August with the option for riding the brand new southbound route towards Pogue.

This summer brings change to our division's leadership team with two new officers elected as of July 1. After some reluctance, I agreed to run for superintendent. Frankly, I am more comfortable taking on tasks behind the scenes, but sometimes one needs to move past their comfort level and take on a challenge. Jim Mattern also volunteered to run as assistant superintendent and was elected. As the new superintendent, I first want to thank Alan Mende and Chris Kier for their service as superintendent and assistant superintendent over the last few years. I also want to thank Dean Johnson for agreeing to run again as our chief clerk/treasurer. Moving forward, I am really

appreciative of Dean’s staying on to provide some continuity and stability. While stepping down from the leadership team, Chris will continue to keep our communications technology afloat. Alan has agreed to fill in one of the director positions that Jim and I vacated. We still need someone to step into the fourth director’s position.

Your leadership team’s focus for the past few years has been on trying to stimulate more engagement or participation from the membership. We have not found a magic bullet solution, so that effort will continue. Working behind the scenes I have tried to do my part to help make sure the division has solid communication with the members via variety of tools: the Susquehanna Sidetracks, our website (<https://susquehannanmra.org/>), and email blasts. Keeping clear communication will continue to be a priority. One slight shift in focus I anticipate may be working towards a more explicit emphasis on planning, building, or operating model railroads.

My wife and I have tickets for one of the train and tour combos on the EBT on August 15, and I hope to see some of you there. I suspect it is going to be a popular day, so you might consider getting your tickets soon.

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SUSQUEHANNA
DIVISION

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Big Boy No. 4014 -

Photo by Jim Mattern



August 15 East Broad Top Railroad (EBT) Event – The Latest

By Barry Schmitt

Logo from EBT

Hopefully, by now you have made your reservations for the August 15 Susquehanna Division event at the EBT. If not, we urge you to do so soon, as it is expected to be one of their busiest weekends before schools begin opening the following week. In either case, please note the schedule changes for the trolley museum/rides and the railroad club below as you make your plans for the rapidly approaching day.

While roaming around the event areas, try to wear your Susquehanna Division ID badge and be on the lookout for a few attendees wearing white hats. They will be members of your Division Board of Directors who would like to meet you and provide any assistance. And kindly let us know what events you would like to see next year as our event planning team has recently started working on building that program.

The following significant event schedule changes have occurred since those presented in our May Sidetracks newsletter:

ROCKHILL TROLLEY MUSEUM OPERATING SCHEDULE CHANGE:

Their new Friday through Sunday trolley departures are 12:45, 2:00, 3:15, and 4:30 p.m. Their news release attributes the July 1 effective change due to the EBT operating new rail bikes on the trolley line's standard gauge tracks Friday through Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Their museum store hours are still being finalized and will be announced once updated. This change eliminates the previously offered 11:15 a.m. ride and adds fifteen minutes to the remaining ride departures included in our May *Susquehanna Sidetracks* article. Questions: Rockhill Trolley Museum phone contact on Friday – Sunday operating days 814-447-9576, and non-operating days 610-428-7200.

EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD:

A recent call to their reservation office revealed that current reservations for the only Saturday south steam ride to Pogue at 3:00 p.m. is rapidly filling for their fully enclosed coaches. For example, one full tour bus has purchased tickets for that ride. Again, we recommend making your reservations early to avoid sold-out seats.

Also, during the above call, we inquired about their recent website announcement of a new four passenger Allegheny Rail Riders Rail Bikes offering. Sounds great, but as of June 26, the EBT reservation team advised that the program is still under development. Reading between the lines and with the recent trolley museum announcement that EBT will be adding standard gauge bike rides to the trolley tracks soon, it portends waiting for future implementation announcements.

BRICKTOWN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB:

Unfortunately, our May *Sidetracks* article listed their open hours as 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, the club is normally open Saturdays only until 3:00 p.m. After discussion with the club, we reached a tentative agreement. The club will stay open from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. only if our division commits to at least ten people visiting during that time period. We need to notify the club of this commitment by July 29. So, if you want to visit from 3:00 to 5:00, and you can commit to that visit, please advise Barry Schmitt by email at sbschmitt1763@gmail.com before July 29.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN THOUGHTS:

For those members driving from the east and northeast, I-81, I-78, and the PA Turnpike all converge in Harrisburg where there are then two main routes to Rockhill/Orbisonia: Turnpike to Ft Littleton and US-522 north to the EBT, or US-322 to Lewistown, US-22 to Mount Union and US-522 south to the EBT. The turnpike is the fastest, but only by eleven minutes according to Google Maps. Besides cost savings, the US-322/22/522 route via Mount Union also adds just five additional minutes to your trip should you stop and visit the great Mount Union Bricktown all-NMRA club. Their address: 300 West Small St, Mount Union PA, 17066. A truly fascinating club.

We look forward to seeing you at the EBT on August 15!

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 Editor

As the editor, I see at least two purposes 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, that I need help with, is helping model railroaders move forward with building or improving their railroads. I will be asking for contributions from you to help with those goals.

Whether you know of an upcoming event that may be of interest to division members or you have an idea for a model railroading related article, the first step is to contact me at editor@susquehannanmra.org. In general, if you would like to contribute an article, attach the text to an email in Word (.doc or .docx) with minimal formatting. Attach any photos or illustrations in jpeg format separately. Please make sure that the photos are yours or used with permission and credited.

Susquehanna Division Meetings

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. Our next Board of Directors meeting will be on Monday, July 13, 2026. With several of our board members becoming officers, we need to replace them on the board. Please consider being willing to step up to fill a vacant spot on your division’s leadership team!

We held our most recent membership meeting at the Zion Lutheran Church in Dauphin on May 16.



During the “state of the division” segment, Bob Charles presented Alan Mende with the “Association Official” AP Certificate. After the raffle, we participated in several presentations and hands-on activities. Jerry Lauchle, MMR took us through the process of building wire armature trees. You can download a PDF of his slide show on our website’s [Presentation Library](#). Chris Kier led a presentation on DCC decoder installation. You can also download his helpful

PDF slide show on the same page of our website.

We experimented with setting up hands-on stations at the meeting. Chris set up a table to demonstrate some of the materials from his clinic. Members got to try out some different weathering techniques at two other tables. Alan shared using Doc O’Brien’s weathering powders and pastel chalks, while I led a table in trying out Pan Pastels and Panel Line Accent Colors.



Meeting Photos by Barry Schmitt

Modeling Pages:

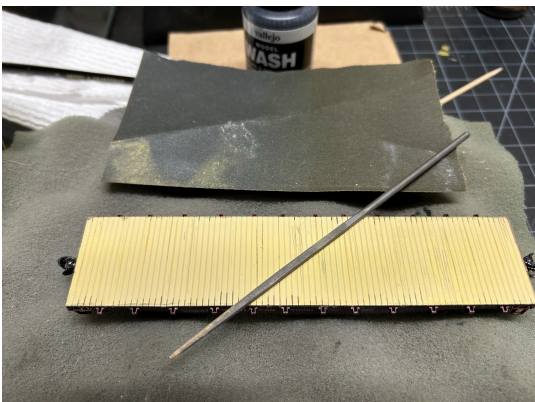
Weathering a Ready-To-Run Flatcar

Article and Photos: David Ellis



Plastic flatcar deck after weathering

After sharing Tamiya Panel Line Accent Colors at our latest in-person meeting's round tables, I decided to try them out on an HO scale flat car from my stash of cars. My set of standards for rolling stock includes weathering, among others, before I approve it for use on my railroad.



While nicely detailed, this flatcar's initial monochromatic deck definitely didn't live up to my standards. After applying a wash to the sides and ends of the car, I roughed up the wood deck with a triangular file, added some scratches with a fine razor saw, and sanded the surface with a fine sand paper. I worked parallel to the direction of the deck planking with all these steps.

I remembered reading an article in the January 2025 *NMRA Magazine* where Charles Goodrich, MMR used Tamiya Panel Line to recreate the look of wood on the deck of a plastic O scale flat car. After rereading his article, I went ahead and tried out his techniques. The Panel Line Accent is a very thin enamel paint designed to wick into lines, gratings, or details through capillary action. I did make sure that it settled into the gaps between the deck planks, but like Mr. Goodrich, I also painted the wood surface with the product.



Unlike in the article, I applied the brown and black Panel Liner wet on wet. After letting it dry overnight, this is what it looked like. To try to match the prototype photo I was following, I didn't stop there. With weathering, like scenery, layering is an important approach. I also used some Pan Pastels, a coat of Dull Coat, and some acrylic Grimy Black brushed on individual boards of the deck as well as on the trucks and side sills.

Modeling Pages:

Resources From The NMRA Website

The [NMRA website](#) contains several avenues for improving modeling skills under the Education Tab. Let's explore what is offered for going into a deeper dive with weathering. Under the Beginner's Guide, we find a section on [Weathering as Part 10](#). As registered members, we can also check out the Edutrain clinics where we would find [one on weathering](#). While these clinics are designed as a premade slide show for giving a presentation, one can glean from them. Also, as registered members, we might check out the National Convention Clinics where we would find [this one on using Pan Pastels and other pigments](#) recorded at the 2018 Kansas City Convention.

Upcoming Events

BIG BOY NO. 4014 IS IN PENNSYLVANIA THROUGH 7/12/26:

Union Pacific No. 4014 East Coast Schedule

SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION:

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. Details are at:

EAST BROAD TOP RAILROAD EVENT

September 19, 2026: In-person membership meeting at 9:00 a.m. at the Good Hope Fire Company in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. One of the clinics under development will be hands-on with improving your soldering skills as a goal.

November, 2026: Virtual layout visit on Zoom. This is in the planning stages, but we are going to try to tour an outstanding railroad from “the far north of the division” live during our online meeting.

NMRA CONVENTIONS:

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

SCENIC CITY EXPRESS

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

TRACKS TO TIDEWATER

Registration is now open for Tracks To Tidewater, our MER convention.

NON-NMRA CONVENTIONS:

September 18, 19, and 20, 2026: Anthracite Railroad Modelers and RR Meet XIV

ANTHRACITE RAILROAD MEET