



THE DISPATCHER

The Journal of PhillyNMRA

May 2022



Female Block Operator at EL (Eldo) Tower on the Pennsylvania Railroad in the Eldorado neighborhood of Altoona demonstrates throwing switches in 1917. Courtesy of AltoonaWorks.info



THE DISPATCHER

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Mid-Eastern Region
National Model Railroad Association



May 2022

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Volume 29, No. 4

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THE DISPATCHER

Submissions: *THE DISPATCHER* welcomes any model railroad- or railroad-related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc. The editors reserve the right to, when necessary, paraphrase portions of the text in order to fit the space available.

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participation—and so will the other members and folks who visit our website and read our publication.

Howard



From the Super’s Desk

Well, it’s that time again! It’s voting season. I don’t mean federal, state, or local elections. I’m talking about voting for the board members who manage your division. Starting this cycle, you can use either a paper ballot or electronic ballots through the app known as “Election buddy.” If you have been an NMRA member, you have already had the opportunity to vote for national and regional board members using Election Buddy. I feel it is important for us to use this technology as we take the division into the 21st century.

By voting in this manner a few things will be accomplished. No stationery or stamps need to be bought, plus time and energy is saved by electronically counting of the votes. And it’s very easy; you’ll be supplied with the ballot through your email with very straightforward instructions.

You need you to choose the method you feel comfortable using. My only request is that you take the time to make your choice. Let’s get out and vote!

Hope to see you all at our meet and picnic on June 11th.

Joe



From the Editor’s Desk

Welcome to our May edition of *The Dispatcher*. In this issue you’ll find information on our upcoming June meet and picnic at Alverthorpe Park in Jenkintown. This will be a special meet, first because we conduct our annual business meeting, including the announcement of the board of directors election results.

And second, because we will finally celebrate our 50th anniversary three years late! Our actual 50th anniversary occurred on May 24, 2019. In 2019 we were busy planning the Liberty Bell Special MER convention, which took place in October of that year. After that, we were all pooped out and decided to delay our celebration until the March 2020 meet. And, of course, you know what happened then—things didn’t work out too well. And with that, all meets were held online until this year. So it just seemed as though the June meet this year would be the appropriate venue to finally celebrate. Better late than never!

Now, when I say I’m out of articles, I’m not kidding. In this issue, the two featured articles are two of our regular columns. Not to diminish their value—both Cup ‘o’ Joe and On the Road are unique, excellent contributions and favorites of our readers. However, if *The Dispatcher* is expected to continue to provide new material, we need contributions from members. As I’ve discussed before, aside from hands-on technique-based articles, layout articles are of particular interest. After all, this is what most of our modeling is all about.

Please, gather together information about your layout, do a write-up if you can—just a sketch or outline is fine, add some photos and forward to me. If you can’t take photos, I or another of our media staff will be happy to take them for you. If you have a drawing of your track plan, you can scan and email it to me, take a picture of it, or photocopy it and mail it to me. This is your chance to contribute to our publication and in the process, earn AP credit. We would very much appreciate your

June Meet & Picnic in Jenkintown

Division Finally Celebrates 50th Anniversary Three Years Late!

The Philadelphia Division will hold its next meet on Saturday, June 11, 2022 at Alverthorpe Park. The official address of the park is Jenkintown Road and Forrest Avenue, Jenkintown, PA 19046. However the picnic entrance is on Fox Chase Road. Detailed maps and directions are on page 7. The gates open at 9:00am and we will begin the festivities at 10am.

First on the agenda is our annual business meeting. Board directors and committee chairmen will deliver their reports, followed by Superintendent Joe Walters discussing the past years events, and then delving into what we have planned for the coming year.



Concluding the business meeting will be the announcement of the results of the board of directors election.

Our clinic will feature director and door prize master Mike Dettinger, whose clinic is titled, “The Worldwide Steam Locomotive.” The title refers to the United States Army Transportation Corps (USATC) S100 Class, an 0-6-0 steam locomotive that was designed for switching duties in Europe and North Africa during World War II. Several were later used on railways in Austria, Great Britain, France, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Palestine, Iraq, Iran, the Netherlands, Israel, and China. Mike will discuss the design, the reasons and motivation for its development, the time periods of use, the possibilities for modeling, and anything else he can think of.



For those who know Mike it should come as no surprise that he would choose to speak on this subject. He will dabble in any and all aspects of model railroading and is often drawn to the unusual or exotic.

All attendees are encouraged to bring a model to the meet. At the end our clinic, we have a show and tell. It is an open mike opportunity to share a recently completed project or give a glimpse of an in-progress work.

As usual we’ll hold our 50/50 raffle, draw for door prizes, and have coffee, donuts, and Philly soft pretzels.

After the morning program, we will hold the long-awaited celebration of the 50th anniversary of the division. Members will be treated to hot dogs, hamburgers, and other picnic goodies. The GATSME club layout located at the Rockledge Model Railroad Museum will be open to visitation until 5pm, as will Kevin Feeney’s in Abington. Please come and join us; we look forward to seeing you all on June 11th.

Make Sure to Vote

By this time all Philadelphia Division members in good standing should have received the election issue of The Dispatcher, which includes the candidates’ statements as well as the paper ballot. Those who have supplied valid email addresses will also have received online ballots via email. We encourage you to choose your method and please vote.



Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

<p>June 11, 2022 Philadelphia Division Meet Alverthorpe Park Picnic Shelter Fox Chase Rd. (see page 7 for details) Jenkintown, PA 19046</p>	<p>August 7–13, 2022 NMRA Convention “Gateway 2022” Marriott Grand, St Louis 800 Washington Ave. St Louis, MO</p>	<p>September 10, 2022 Philadelphia Division Meet Southampton Community Center 913 Willow Street Southampton, PA 18966</p>
<p>October 20–23, 2022 MER Convention “Carolina Special” Hilton University Place 8629 Maynard Keynes Drive Charlotte, NC 28262</p>	<p>November 12, 2022 Philadelphia Division Meet Brandywine Town Center Community Center 4050 Brandywine Parkway Wilmington, DE 19803</p>	<p>December 2022 Philadelphia Division Train Show TBA</p>

Check <http://www.phillynmra.org/regional-timetable> for links to these and other upcoming events.

Maps and Directions for the June Meet

Alverthorpe Park Picnic Shelter

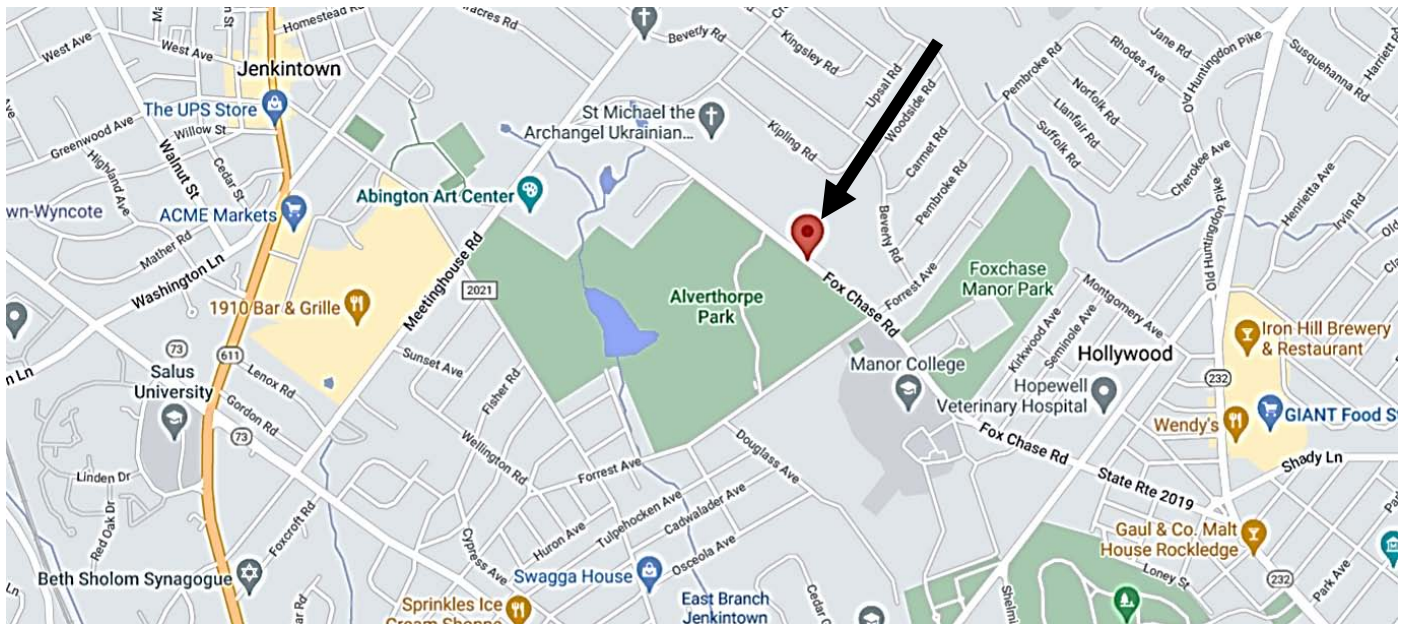
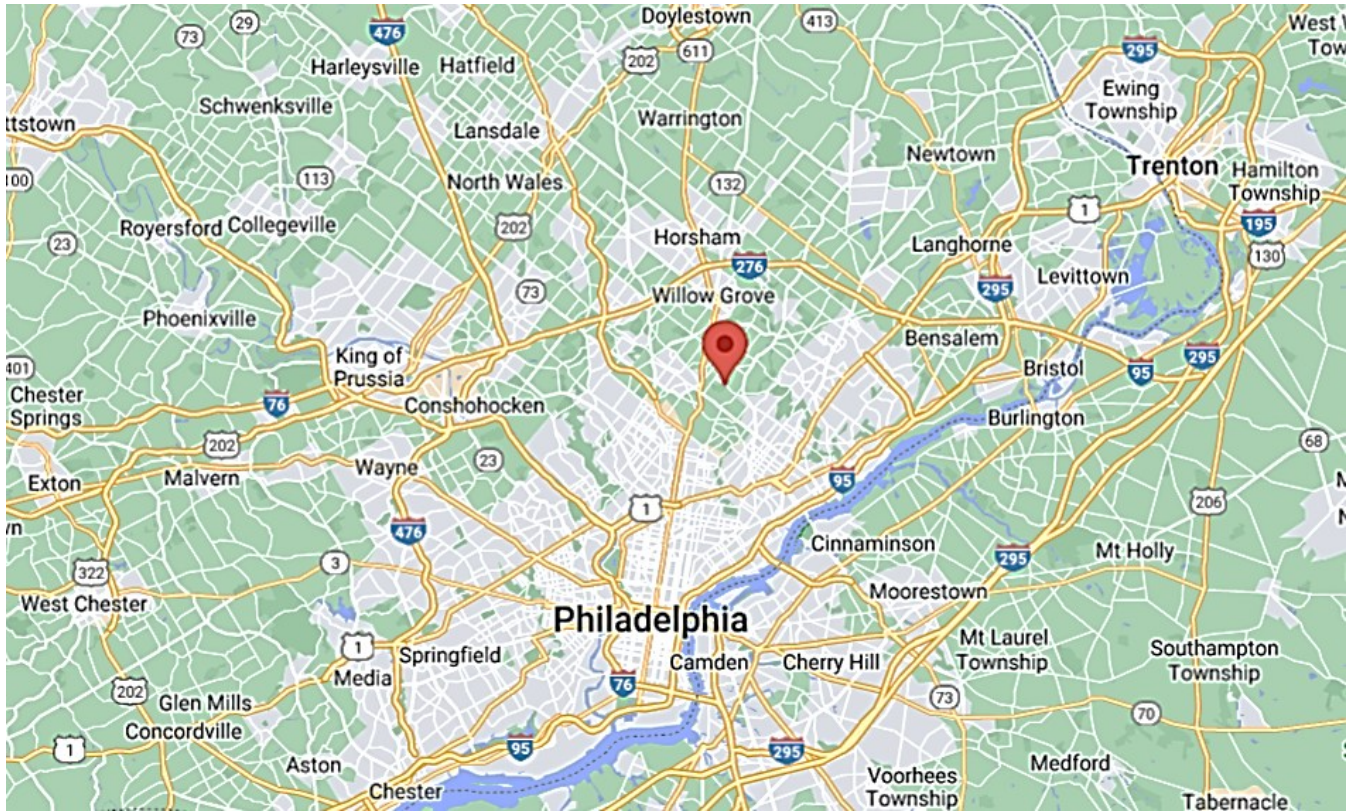
Located on Fox Chase Rd., across from World Mission Society Church of God whose address is 875 Fox Chase Rd., Jenkintown, PA 19046

Coordinates: 40°05'27.4"N 75°06'27.7"W

Gate opens at 9am. Program begins at 10am.



Directions: PA TPK (I-76) to Exit 343 – PA 611. Take PA-611 south into Jenkintown, left on Greenwood Ave., left on Meetinghouse Rd., right on Fox Chase Rd. Consult your online map or GPS for the best route. Use the provided coordinates or the church address for the most accurate location. You'll see a white sign with green lettering and PhillyNMRA signs at the entrance. Once inside, picnic area is to the left and visible at the end of the parking lot.

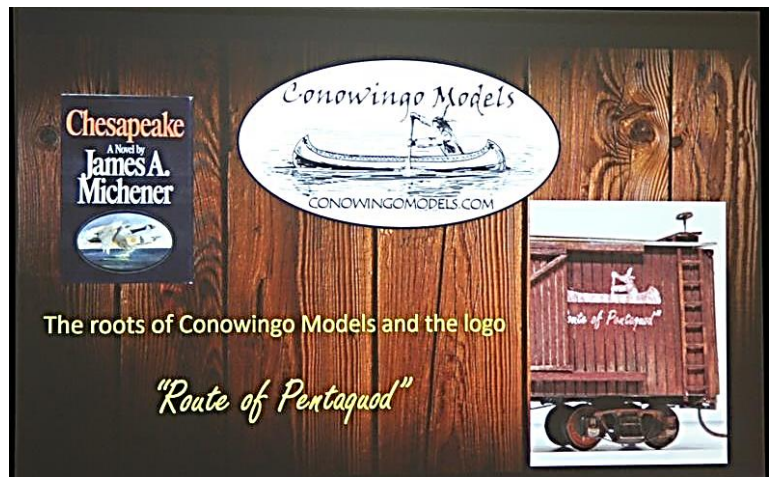




On Saturday, April 9th the Philadelphia Division met in Chester County at the Henrietta Hankin Branch Library in Chester Springs. The meet started at 10am due to the hours of the library, but a good crowd of members were there at the start of the meeting. Superintendent Joe Walters welcomed everyone to the event, giving an update on division business before introducing our first clinician of the day.



Chris Coarse is the owner of Conowingo Models who produces HO- and O-scale wood craftsman kits designed for all abilities. Chris related the history of how he started his company and shared his philosophy and approach to running the business. He then talked about some of the challenges that he's run into while starting this business as well as some of the easier parts of starting out. He then shared information on some of the kits that he has designed showing prototype photos such as bridges and the small church. Next he talked about the various rolling stock kits that he's designed showing examples of each. He moved onto describing more details of the various structure kits, discussing each individual model that he's produced so far. After the prepared part of the clinic was finished there was a good amount of discussion between the audience and Chris about modeling ideas and suggestions. Chris also had a table at the meet showing off various products.



Title slide of Chris Coarse's clinic

We took a break for general browsing of the models on display for show and tell, Mike Dettinger's operating T-TRAK layout, as well as the stuff for sale on the swap tables.



Chip Stevens (left) receives his clinician certificate

After the break, Karen Confer of the Reading Technical and Historical Society's modular layout group talked about the upcoming showings of the modular layout and invited the members of the Philadelphia Division to come help out by operating on the layout. Operators on the layout will receive credit towards their Chief Dispatcher AP certificate.

Continuing with the theme of Achievement Program certificates, our next presenter was Chip Stevens who talked about the stumbling blocks on the way to Master Model Railroader and how to handle and move beyond the roadblocks that come up during the process. Chip talked about the process that he has used on his journey and encouraged others to consider moving forward in the AP/MMR program. The division has a team that's ready to start looking at people's layouts to see what certificates they may qualify for. If you are interested, contact either AP Coordinator Earl Paine or Superintendent Joe Walters, who is an MMR and also serves as the AP Committee chair.

Finally, after we awarded door prizes to all who attended, there was a brief show and tell session before the meet was

adjourned.

Following the morning session, attendees were invited to visit Greg Shindlecker's impressive Western Maryland-themed layout and check out the progress he's made. 📌



Attendees peruse the swap tables



Director Mike Dettinger oversees the door prize table. He made sure that every attendee received a door prize.



An example of Conowingo Models's offerings



Treasurer Kevin Feeney admires Mike Dettinger's T-TRAK layout

WE WELCOME OUR NEW PHILLY DIVISION MEMBERS

Dan Sharapan, Horsham, PA
Michael Byle, Richboro, PA
Keith Holt, Chester Springs, PA
Ralf Meier, Rehoboth Beach, DE
Bradford Wing, Rehoboth Beach, DE

← *Caught in the act! Superintendent Joe Walters and fellow Delawarean John Trout make off with some delicious Philly soft pretzels.*





The super makes his announcements



Clinician Chris Coarse (center) displays his certificate of appreciation



Just hangin' around: (Left to right) Former super John Seibert, Howard Kaplan, Charlie Long, Earl Paine





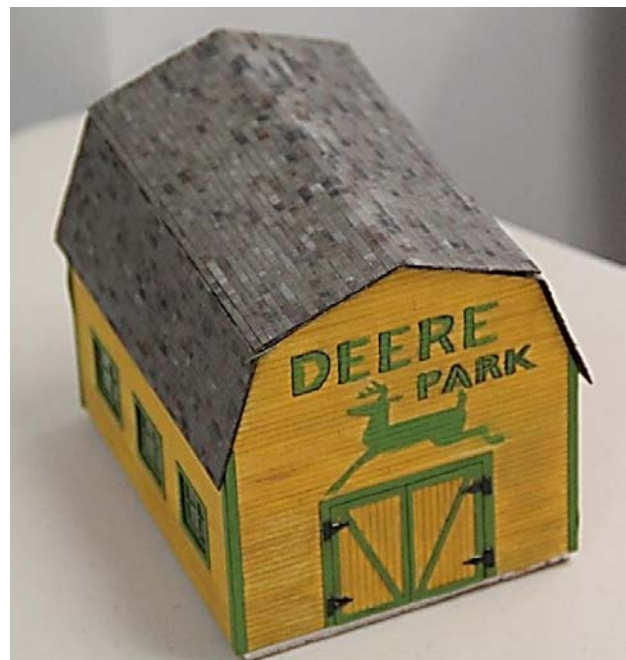
AP Coordinator Earl Paine discusses the latest on member AP progress



Member Steve Hamilton (left) chats with Earl Paine

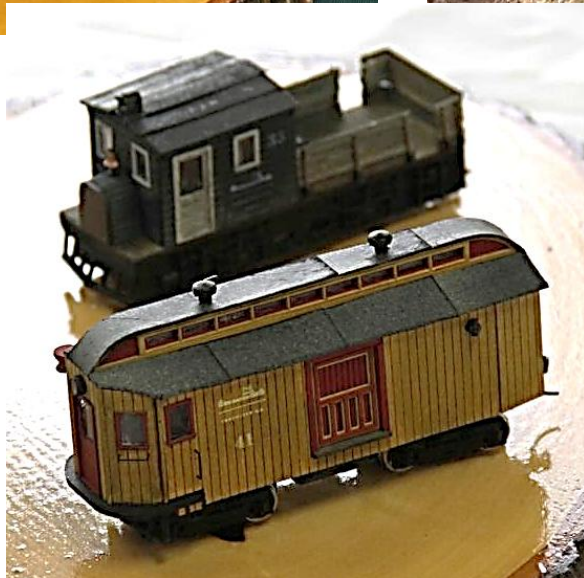


← Member Karen Confer speaks on behalf of the Reading Company Technical and Historical Society's modular layout

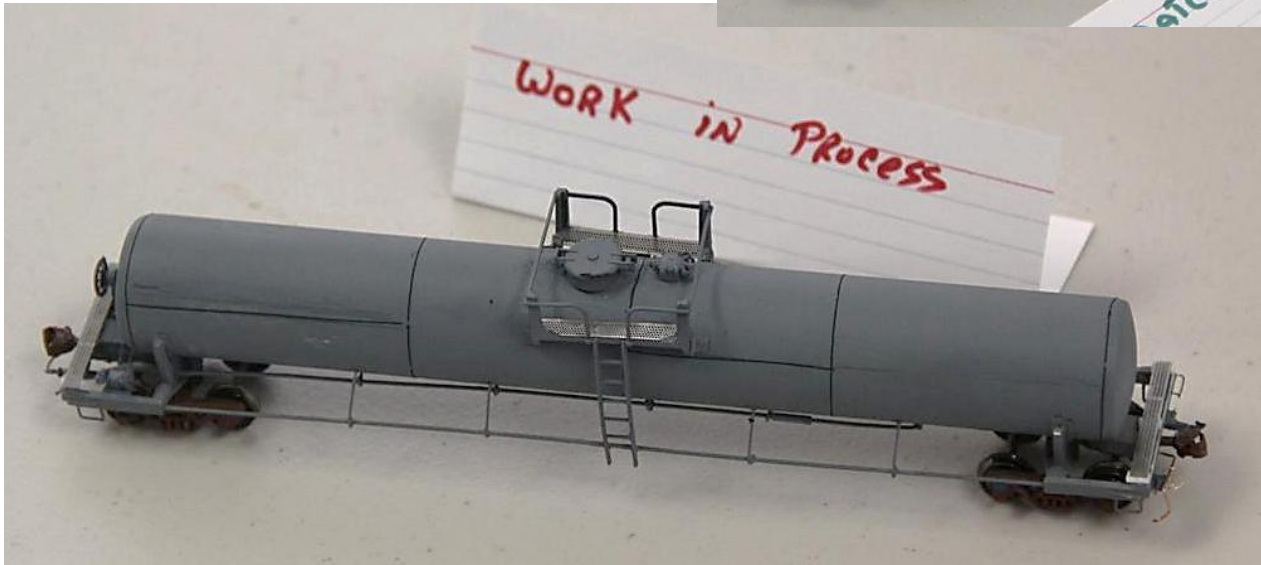
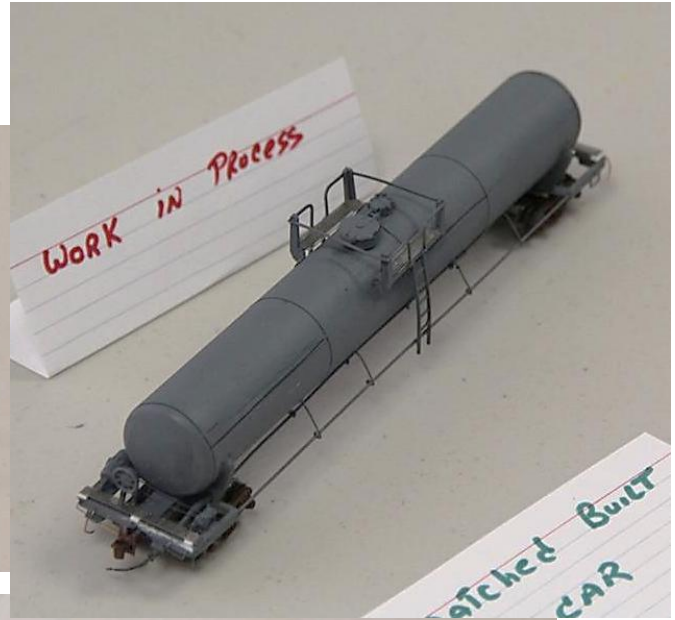


More samples from Conowingo Models





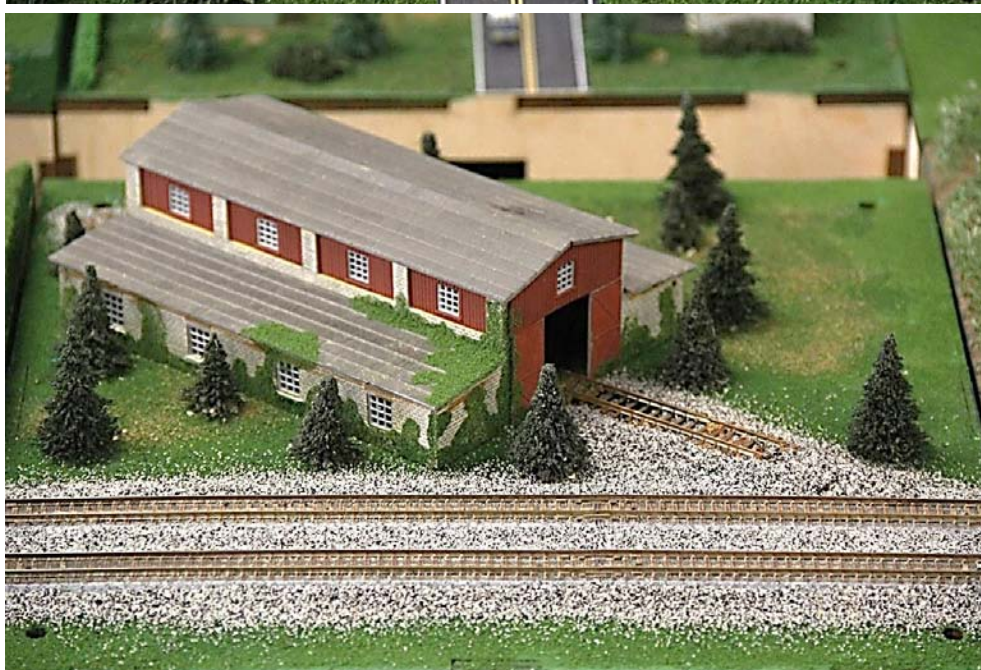
Latest scratch-built projects in the works by Joe Walters, MMR

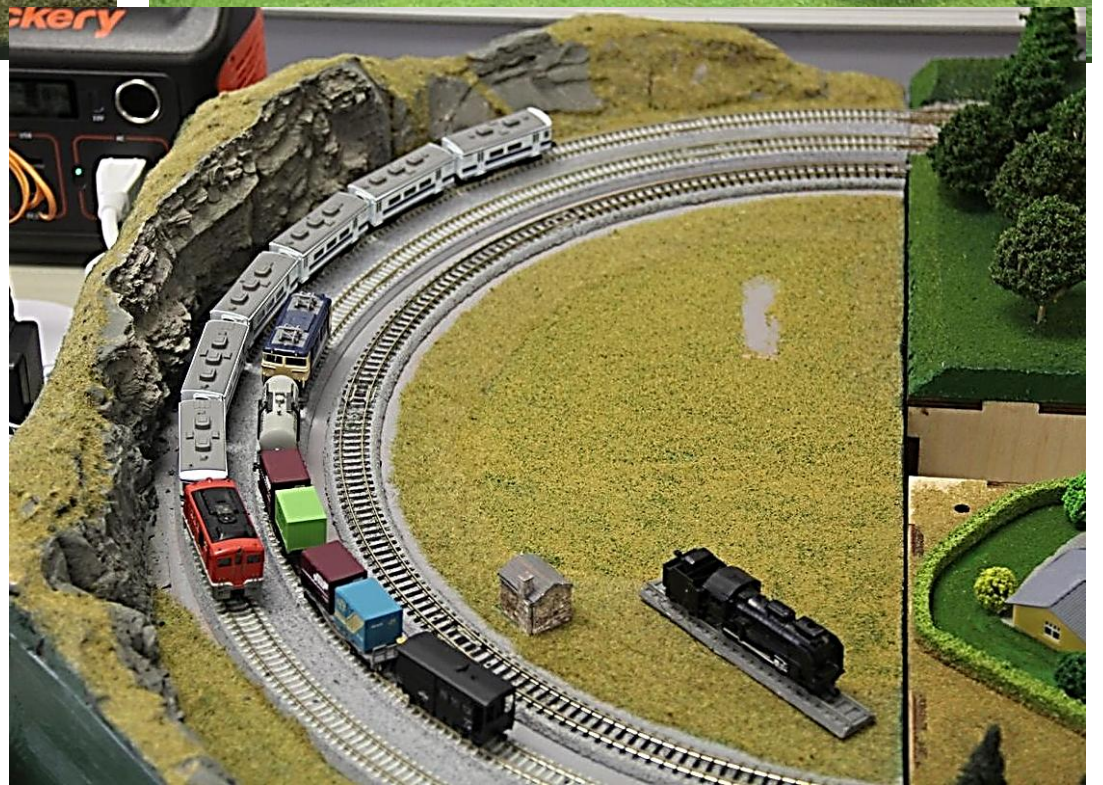


Mike Dettinger's Blue Rail display



Mike Dettinger's T-TRAK layout



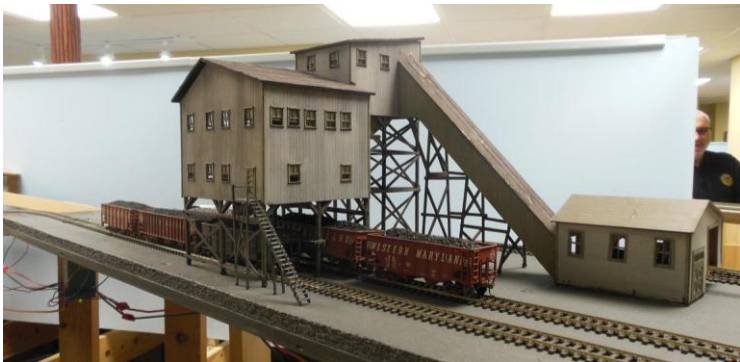
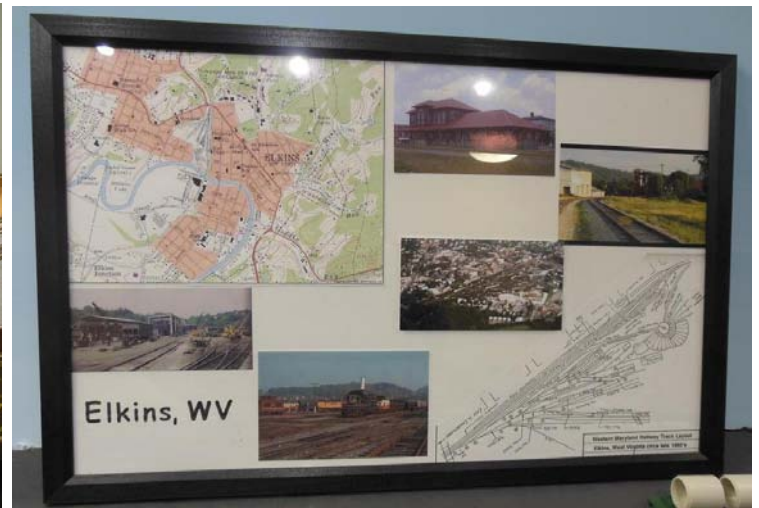


Layout Tour:
Greg & Angel Shindlecker's Western Maryland

Photos by Howard Kaplan

Former division superintendent, Greg Shindlecker and his wife and division member, Angel are known for their innovative, flexible backdrop project. They were kind enough to allow meet attendees to visit their layout and check out their progress.





Division Organization

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (elected)

OFFICERS

Superintendent – Joe Walters, MMR (2022)
Assistant Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2023)
Clerk – Vacant (2022)
Treasurer – Kevin Feeney (2023)

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2022)
Chip Stevens – Publicity (2023)
Jeff Witt – Venues (2023)



AUXILIARY OFFICIALS (appointed)

AP Coordinator – Earl Paine
AP Committee Chair – Joe Walters, MMR
Newsletter Editor/Webmaster – Howard Kaplan

COMMITTEES/DUTIES

EVENTS

Clinics – Mike Dettinger
Layouts – Bill Fagan
Venues – Jeff Witt, Bill Fagan, Howard Kaplan
Refreshments – Bill Fagan, Joe Walters, Kevin Feeney
Door Prizes – Mike Dettinger, Kevin Feeney
Clinic Video – Chip Stevens, Rob Hinkle
Certificates/Awards/Printed Materials – Earl Paine, Howard Kaplan
Publicity – Chip Stevens

MEMBERSHIP

Member Outreach – Chip Stevens
Membership Records – Vacant

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM - Earl Paine, Joe Walters MMR, Bill Fagan, Chip Stevens

DPS – Rob Hinkle

ITEM DONATIONS – Kevin Feeney

MEDIA

Social Media – Rob Hinkle

Webmaster – Howard Kaplan

Newsletter – Howard Kaplan, Earl Paine, Bill Fagan, Joe Walters MMR, Kevin Feeney, Chip Stevens

Layout Video – Bill Fagan

Photography – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Bill Fagan, Rob Ischinger, Mark Wallace

DIVISION APPAREL – Howard Kaplan

Hobby Shops

Be sure to patronize the following hobby shops that are now offering discounts on model railroading purchases to NMRA members:

Henning's Trains
128 South Line Steet
Lansdale, PA 19446
215-362-2442
henningstrains.com

10% in addition to already discounted prices

Please let us know of any hobby shops that would be interested in advertising or offering discounts to NMRA members.

THREE BIG BENEFITS OF NMRA MEMBERSHIP:

15% OFF **25% OFF** **45% OFF**

Those are the discounts that manufacturers and hobby shops in our Partnership Program are giving us right now. Partners like Micro-Mark®, Model Rectifier Corporation®, Badger Airbrush®, Unreal Details®, Hot Wire Foam Factory®, Logic Rail™ Technologies. And over 30 more companies. It's savings that can actually pay for your membership!

And are you taking advantage of our other big benefits? Like 150+ national convention clinic videos. Or over 15 hours of "how-to" videos produced by the biggest names in model railroading videos. Or our directory of model railroad layouts all over the world that you can visit. The list goes on and on.

If you haven't visited www.nmra.org lately, you're missing out on some really great stuff. Starting with a boatload of discounts!



We make it more fun.

THE NEW NMRA MODEL RAILROAD DIRECTORY
IS NOW **ONLINE** and **READY TO USE!**

Now whether you're at home or traveling, you can contact other NMRA members for a layout tour, to talk trains, or even to join in an op session! There are maps, descriptions, photos, videos, and more. And it's only available to NMRA members.

Visit www.nmra.org, log in as a member, and click on "Model RR Directory" to see layouts in your area or to list your own layout (as long as it's an operating home or garden railroad).
Join in the fun!



We make it more fun!



Bill Fagan:

The Video Vigilante



Photos are snapshots from videos by Bill Fagan

Below are examples of some impressive layouts that I've visited. I've videoed layouts in California, Idaho, Maryland, Florida, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. 174 layouts with 767 videos and 2639 followers on YouTube with 1.4 million views.

↓ **United Refrigeration model railroad in their showroom on Roosevelt Blvd in Northeast Philly.** HO scale, 12 x 24, DC. Railroad seems to be professionally made like something you would see in a museum. Lots of action: ski lift, windmills, helicopter, and trains running in loops. Seems to be all foreign buildings, but trains are all American. Flyover: <https://youtu.be/T4GuBn09lnw> Slideshow: <https://youtu.be/XEf1BxAi3FQ>



↓ **Bill Fagan's Reading Pacific.** This is a video of the City of Los Angeles excursion visiting my N scale Reading Pacific railroad making one round trip starting in Allentown. Going through Macgungie, Catasauqua, Alburdis, Reading, West Reading, Johanna, Birdsboro, Perkiomen Junction and returning to Allentown. Video here: https://youtu.be/wTJp1X-4_nl



↓ **Bill Fagan's Reading Pacific.** The Tropicana juice train with borrowed power running on my Reading Pacific Railroad. N scale, entirely Kato Unitrack, Digitrax DCC. This is not a prototypical rendition of any particular area. The town names are real, but not in any particular order. Video here: https://youtu.be/9R_QN_8y3Ls



You can see these videos and other layouts on the Philly Division website: phillynmra.org—just click on Cab Ride Layout Videos. If you want to see future videos send me your email address and I'll put you on the distribution list. Do you want your railroad or a friend's railroad videoed? Email me at wfagan@comcast.net. More to follow in the next issue of *The Dispatcher*.

Enjoy,

Bill



Amfleet I Production Line

In this issue we will discuss the Amfleet 1 production line at the Bear, Delaware shop. Twenty-nine track is used for this purpose, due to its 1200-foot length inside the building. The production line runs from east to west and has 8 spots. We will discuss the heavy work at each spot and omit some of the smaller jobs. The estimated cost for each overhaul in 2004 was \$500,000 per car. This included new ADA bathrooms.

Spot 1

- Toilets are dumped. If new bathrooms are scheduled, walls are removed.
- Cushions are trashed and all the seats are removed

Spot 2

- In-bound electrical inspection
- Wall and floor carpet is removed

Spot 3

- Car is jacked and road trucks removed. Hi-rise trucks are applied. The road trucks are taken to the truck shop.
- All 480-volt under-car wiring is removed
- AC units are removed. Each car has 2 units.
- Car batteries are replaced. Each car has 10 batteries.
- All shocks are removed, both horizontal and vertical

Spot 4

- All new 480-volt wiring is applied
- Battery charger is replaced.
- All temperature control panels are replaced
- Seats are applied
- All air-brake valves are removed
- New air brakes are applied

Spot 5

- New AC units are applied
- All door operators are replaced. The car has 6 of these.
- Wall and floor carpet is replaced
- All new windows are installed
- Wall-mount and aisle pedestals are applied
- A- and B-end diaphragms are removed

Spot 6

- New air brakes are applied
- Couplers are removed and replaced. Yoke and draft gear pads
- A- and B-end diaphragms applied

Spot 7

- New trucks are applied
- New shocks applied
- New cushions are applied

Spot 8 & 9

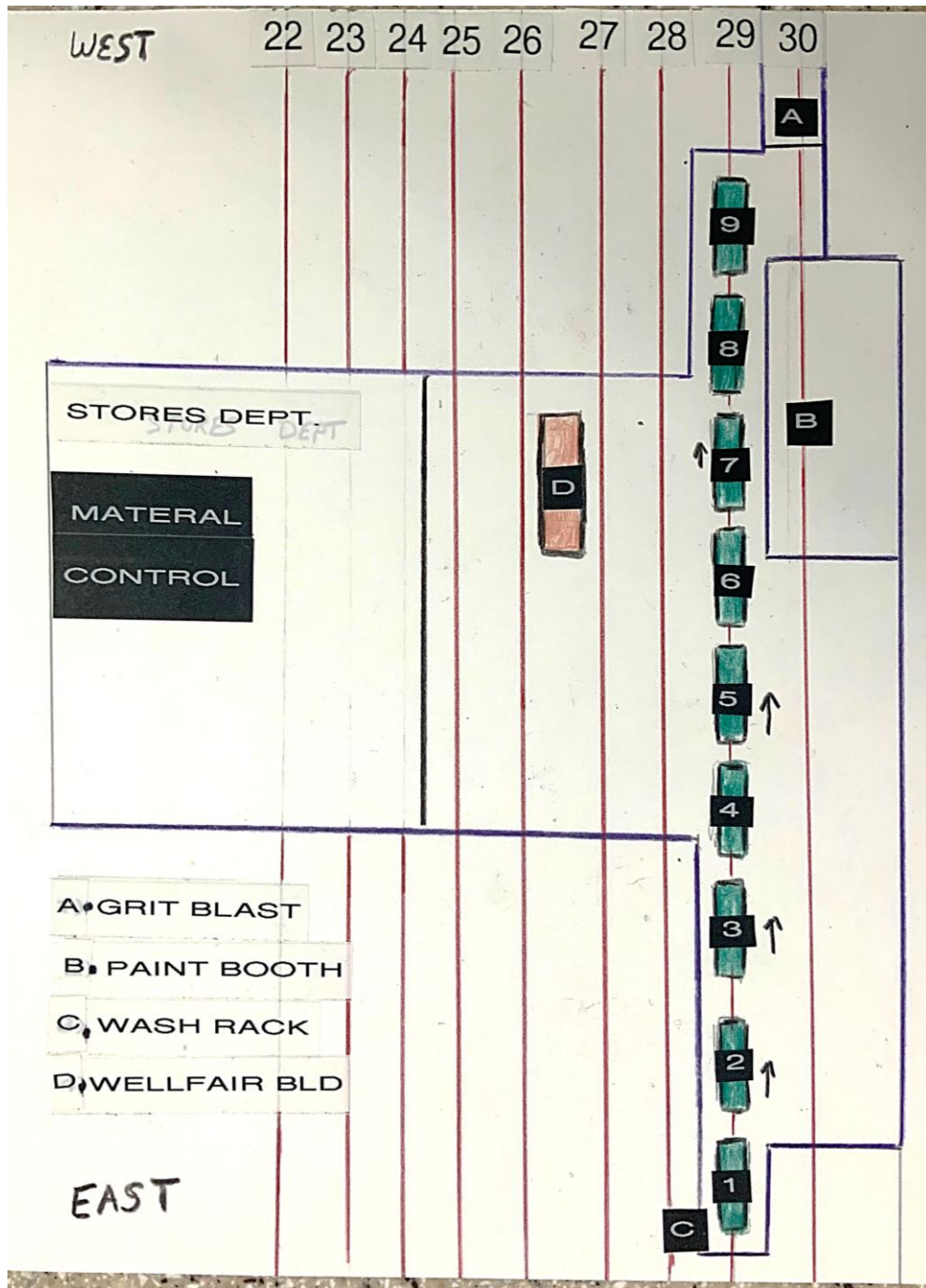
- All final testing is done. The car is ready for service.

I hope you enjoyed reading about the Amfleet restoration process. After 47 years they are still going strong. This is a testament to the Budd Company in Philadelphia who built the car, and the overhaul production line at Bear. I expect to continue to see these cars on the Northeast Corridor for years to come.

The cup is low. It is time to go.

Joe





Employees working on an Amfleet coach at the Bear, Delaware car shops, c. October 2010. Courtesy of Amtrak. This most likely would have been track 29.



ON THE (RAIL) ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL

Texas - January 12, 2022



Fig. 1

We started 2022 just like 2021 with a trip to Texas. On Wednesday 1/12, we flew non-stop from PHL to DFW (Dallas-Ft.Worth). We were scheduled to leave at 8:24AM and left a few minutes early and then arrived in DFW over a half hour early. However, it took almost that long for our bags to arrive, so we saved NO time. We took the bus to the consolidated rental car facility south of the airport complex. Once again Enterprise's rates were absurd so we went with Budget through Priceline and saved over \$200. However, the car I reserved was a manager's choice and we got stuck with a Chrysler Voyager Minivan like we owned maybe 15 years ago.

We headed west towards Lubbock, which was some 340 miles or 5 hours away. We could

have flown there, but still would have had to drive to the Metroplex for the rest of the weekend. One needs to be careful driving in the Metroplex as there are several tolled expressways and special toll lanes in some other highways. The agent at the Budget counter pushed getting their toll pass (only \$7 a day plus tolls) saying if I went through a toll without it there was a \$25 service fee. I told her that I know how to drive around there without paying tolls.

We passed through downtown Ft. Worth, which had been the first stop of our 2021 trip to here. We drove between Tower 55 and the art deco former T&P headquarters building that we saw last year, onto I-30.

We stopped for a bad lunch at a Jack-in-the-Box (Fig.1); Carol said the hamburger was not beef and mine tasted different also. We settled in for some 200 miles on I-30/20. However, we exited in Baird after seeing a sign for a historic rail depot.

At 3PM CST, we stopped in front of a fairly large, former Texas & Pacific Railway (part of MOPAC–Missouri Pacific) passenger depot (Fig. 2). The building is now the local visitor center and transportation museum. A docent was just locking up but he answered some questions on the building and area. He said that UP freight trains go by about every 45 minutes. The depot was once a division point, and across and by the track were once some 50 T&P structures including a roundhouse, stock pens, and an Immigrant's Hotel—all gone except for the depot; the land is now an industrial park. The Bankhead Highway, which was built in the 1920s from Washington DC to San Diego, passed through Baird. In 2009, the local county was first in Texas to erect a monument honoring the nation's first all-weather, coast-to-coast highway (I had never heard of this road before.)



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

We passed through what is left of the town and got back on I-20 only to exit 20 miles later for Abilene. This city (and this part of Texas) was settled fairly late in 1880s.



Abilene was named after the same named city in Kansas. It was a cattle shipping point on the T&P Railway. Today, it has 125,000 folks and Dyees AFB that hosts one of only two B-1B Lancer strategic bomber wings. We drove to the downtown looking for any railroad buildings and were not disappointed; there were three. First was a freight house that is now an event center (Fig. 3). A westbound UP freight was sitting there held by a red signal. I was surprised by this sign on the railroad overpass (Fig. 4). Next was the former T&P Depot, which is now the visitor and convention center (Fig. 5). The folks there were friendly and suggested we stay overnight. The third for railroad maintenance local company that makes candy any.

We got a bit lost and south instead of west onto I-20. In about 45 miles, there was a sign for the National WWII Museum. Carol said she would like me a bit to realize what that (it was certainly closed. We exited onto US 84 in Roscoe a few miles later. From there, it was about 115 miles or 1:45 to Lubbock. Everywhere we looked there were wind turbines (mostly NOT turning) and farm fields that we quickly realized grew cotton. There was a white tint in the fields and it certainly wasn't snow. It really was time for dinner, but the towns were few and far between and no place we saw seemed appealing. As we drove northwest we had a nice view of the sunset just before 6PM CST.

We finally arrived in Lubbock after 7PM, which is my 99th city from a list of the 100 largest in the USA. It was actually # 82 on the list with a 2020 population of some 261K folks. Carol directed us to the Pecan Grill for dinner, which was described as an upscale, contemporary bar and restaurant in the Overton Hotel serving traditional southern fare.



I am not sure of that as I had rib-eye fingers for dinner (Fig. 7). The place was adjacent to the huge campus of Texas Tech University (TTU), which we drove through on the way to our Holiday Inn Express hotel in suburban Wolfforth.

We spent the whole next day, Thursday 1/13, in Lubbock. After breakfast, we drove around the downtown area. To the northeast side was an industrial area that clearly once had lots of railroad tracks. One abandoned track is now a tiny street behind the buildings. Carol took this photo of a UPS truck using the alley to make a delivery (Fig 8).

Lubbock's biggest claim to fame is that it was the birthplace of Buddy Holly. We arrived at the Buddy Holly Center just as it opened at 10AM (Fig.9 & 10). This turned out to be a twofer for me as the center is housed in what was once the local depot for the Ft. Worth & Denver Rwy. (FW&D) that was then owned by CB&Q (now part of BNSF). The depot was built in 1928 and passenger rail service ended in the 1950s.



Fig. 9

“Beatles.” The center is located at 1801 Crickets Avenue.

A small part of the museum was devoted to the FW&D with a map, pictures, and an old safe (Fig.11) that oddly said “railroad,” not “railway.” The neighborhood by the center is known as the Depot Entertainment District and is home to many bars and restaurants. We saw this old ad on the side of one of the buildings (Fig.12).



Fig. 11

Our next stop was at the American Windmill Museum (Fig. 13), which was another twofer for me. As it turns out, the first use of windmills in west Texas was by railroads to pump water for their steam engines and this is the theme inside the museum. Some of the windmills were huge with blades 20-30 feet in diameter. In addition to perhaps 50+ windmills inside, there was a YUGE garden model railroad layout (1/29 scale) with a massive helix that is some 14’ high (Fig. 14). The layout featured several local building and scenes. There was a video camera on one of the trains and we could see ourselves in the monitors as it went by (Fig. 15). We learned that while windmills were initially used to

pump water and only later were they used to generate DC electricity. Some were sold by Zenith so that folks in the 1930s without electricity service could charge 6V batteries during the day and then listen their Zenith radio in the evening. Outside the museum was a single, modern wind turbine. We watched a video of how it was built. The foundation is basically a concrete plug that goes down 20 feet and is about the same in diameter. Like almost all the turbines we saw, it was NOT moving.



Fig. 14

Back to the Depot Entertainment District for lunch at the well-rated Cast Iron Grill. We tried to eat there for dinner the night before, but it is only open for breakfast and lunch. I had the daily special, a casserole named after the King Ranch for \$9.95, that came with two sides (Fig 16). The plate wasn’t what I expected, but was very good. However, I was disappointed when the server told me they were already out of pie for which they are famous.

I certainly knew of Buddy Holly but did not know that when he died in that tragic plane crash on 2/3/59 (the day the music died) in Clear Lake, Iowa, he was just 22 years old. Ironically, more than almost everyone of that era, he had flown thousands of miles across the US, to England, and back, and to Hawaii and on to Australia and back. The center told his life story and had an amazing amount of memorabilia including his motorcycle, his bedroom furniture, his guitars, and the actual eyeglasses he was wearing when the chartered private plane crashed. Interestingly, in 1957, after he changed record labels he had to rename his band. He chose the name “Crickets” after rejecting the name



Fig. 10



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

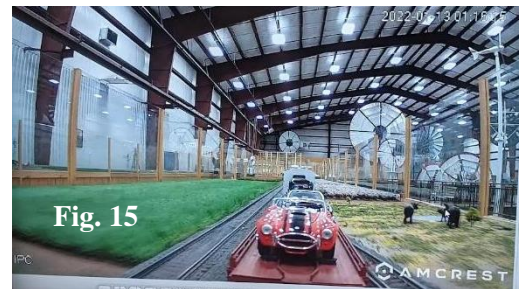


Fig. 15

Fig. 16



We drove through the industrial areas. The area around Lubbock is the largest cotton growing region in the world. We saw several large buildings that stored the picked cotton and mills that gin (remove) the seed. The seed is pressed for cotton seed oil, used as animal food, or replanted for the next year's crop. We also came across this large rail-served grain elevator which, of course, I had to explore (Fig. 17). Parked behind it were two older diesel locomotives.

Next on our tour was a visit to a winery, but in driving there we passed through acres and acres of cotton fields that looked like this AFTER the cotton was picked (Fig. 18).

Turns out the Lubbock area is also the major wine producing area in Texas (which isn't particularly noted for wine). We drove to the Llano Estacado Winery, which is the biggest and which has won

many awards. Carol had had a glass of their moscato with dinner the night before. We each did a five-flight tasting after which Carol had another glass of the moscato, a bottle of which came home with us. We drove back to our hotel catching another nice sunset just before 6PM. We had dinner at Braum's, a hamburger/ice cream/food market chain based in Oklahoma. We had been to them on prior trips.

On Friday, I was up early and took this picture before sunrise from our hotel window (Fig. 19). We checked out of the hotel and tried without success to find the

Fig. 17



Fig. 18



BRAUM'S

Lubbock & Western Railway, a Watco-owned shortline, with some 120 miles of tracks in the area. I had more luck finding a former Santa Fe depot that was moved to Lubbock from Bledsoe, Texas (70 miles away) in the 1970s (Fig. 20). It had housed an antique store.

Next, we headed to the Silent Wings Museum, located at the Lubbock airport (LBB). This museum tells the story of those brave army airman during WWII who were taught in Lubbock to fly (basically how to crash land after which they had to fight with the troops they carried) the Waco gliders that were used on D-Day and in other battles in both the European and Pacific theaters. With the introduction of the helicopter, the army stopped using gliders in 1953. While we were inside the museum I noticed there was a UAL 737 parked outside (Fig. 21).

The passenger terminal for the Preston Smith International Airport was some distance away on the other side of the field. Why was it there? Mystery solved as we were leaving the museum as two busloads of presumably WWII veterans approached the plane for what I assumed was an honor flight to the WWII memorial in DC. However, when

Fig. 19



Fig. 20





Fig. 21

I went to FlightAware to put in the airplane's tail number it said the plane's destination was Waco (?)

Around noon, we left the museum and headed east towards Dallas this time on a local road then ended on US 62 E. We passed more cotton fields (a Google earth view shows many irrigated crop circles) and saw this by a small cotton gin (Fig. 22). East of Crosbyton the ground abruptly changed as we dropped into a wide canyon where the Silver Falls State Park is located. Said to be the largest roadside park in Texas,



Fig. 22

it was initially built by the WPA in 1935. We did not stop because we were looking for a place to have lunch and soon was back up to the normal ground level.

Twenty miles ahead in Dickens we stopped at the J&M Caprock Café. It was interesting local place. I had the lunch special that was a CFS (chicken fried steak). I have seen these on menus for years but never had one before and this was pretty good. From Dickens, it was some 275 more miles to Richardson, our destination for next two nights. Carol drove for a while as we just took in the small towns and the Texas

scenery. I watched for anything railroad, but did not see anything until we reached the town of Jacksboro, some 168 miles later. There we saw this nice, restored depot (Fig. 23). It was locked up, but from a plaque outside I learned it was built in 1909 by the Gulf, Texas & Western Railroad, which was financed by a rich businessman from Scranton, PA. The GT&W became part of the Frisco in 1930 and later in 1940 was absorbed by the Rock Island, but abandoned two years later.



Fig. 23



An hour later, we stopped for dinner at Rudy's Country Store & Bar-B-Q in Denton. This is a Texas-

based chain that we have eaten in before. However, this meal did not go well. The ribs were too spicy for Carol and my smoked prime rib was way too rare for me. Carol ended up getting the prime rib and I went back for turkey, which she said was also too spicy. I gave them a bad review on Facebook and they contacted me and are sending a gift card. From there, it was about 35 miles to our Holiday Inn Express hotel in Richardson. However, it took us over an hour because of rush hour traffic and driving to avoid the tolled President George Bush (#41) Turnpike. This property was nicer than the one in Lubbock that didn't have any soap in the bathroom.

On Saturday 1/15, I headed to the Plano Event Center for the Dallas Area Train Show, which is probably the largest show in Texas. Carol did not feel well and stayed at the hotel. This show is run by the North Council of Railroad Clubs that also includes local NMRA divisions and a NRHS chapter. I went to this show at the same time last year, but this year



Fig. 24

the line to get in was not as long. Once inside, I thought I was in a time warp seeing this sign (Fig. 24). At the show, there were 18 modular layouts in every scale, lots of dealers, and clinics. Like last year I found the show to be a great buying opportunity and more than filled the empty suitcase that I brought with me. I talked with the guys at NMRA's Cowcatcher Division and they reminded me that the NMRA's national convention will be in the Metroplex in August 2023.



Fig. 25

I stayed at the show until almost 3:30PM and drove back to the hotel. We headed to a 4:30PM mass and then tried to eat at a Carrabba's, but the wait was too long. Luckily, Chuy's, a Tex-Mex place next door, was not so crowded (Fig. 25).



Back at the hotel, we watched the Weather Channel to follow the progress of Winter Storm “Izzy.” On Sunday, I went back to the show briefly to buy a few more items and went to see the permanent layout of the Texas Northern Model Railroad Club. I had seen their layout last year but it had some new structures. A new member had this building 3D printed. I took pictures of the layout and when I came home and reviewed my pictures from last year and saw that some from this year were exact dupes of what I took last year.

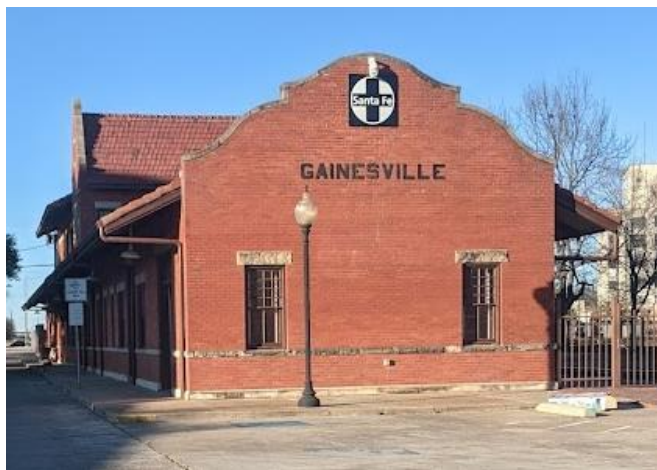
We checked out and headed to see two layouts. The first was in Southlake, about 45 minutes away.



It had a large fictitious railroad representing the Midwest—St. Louis, Chicago, Kansas City, etc. This was just right for me. The layout was in a Texas basement, a large room over the garage. We then headed to the next layout, Red River Free-mo in

Gainesville that was 55 miles up I-35. At times, BNSF ran next to the highway and we saw one northbound freight train. We arrived at the layout just after 4PM only to find it had largely been dismantled. The program said it was open until 9PM, which I thought was odd. I took some pictures and we left. The modules below are of the Wichita, KS station that will we see next month. Wichita is city #100 on my list.

Driving into town, we saw this classic ATSF station that is a current Amtrak stop. Near the station, we found this oil train held by a signal and blocking a crossing.



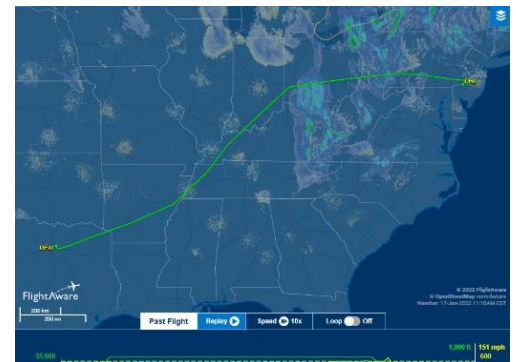
Somewhat disappointed, we head back towards DFW airport, some 65 miles away. We stopped for dinner at a Babe’s, a local chain that serves fried chicken family style (Fig. 26). We had eaten at one on our trip here last year. Typically, the chain’s locations are repurposed old buildings, but their relatively new location in North Richland Hills is faux. Based on our experience last year we told the server to hold back on some of the food (what they gave us last year would have fed four or more). I was surprised when the bill came that we were charged for a second plate when we just split the 4-piece chicken dinner.

From there, it was 15 miles to our hotel near DFW’s rental car center. I booked at a Quality Inn through Priceline and learned that my stay was was pointless! We were up at 5:30AM on MLK day and drove to return the car. It was about a

Fig. 26



15-minute ride from there to Terminal B to check in for our return flight at 8:34AM. Later, I went up to the counter to see where we were on the upgrade list (#8 & #10) and had a nice talk with pilot, Glen, who would be the captain on our flight. He had been an airline pilot for 31 years starting as a flight engineer on a 727. He mentioned the flight would be a bit longer as we were being routed more to the north and that there was a lack of tail winds. Data from FlightAware shows how we flew back to PHL. Captain Glen made several announcements enroute, which is very unusual these days. At the gate, he stood by the cockpit door saying goodbye to passengers. I said the landing was a bit fast and he agreed. Less than an hour later. This was a very nice trip and hopefully more will follow this year.



THREE RECENT TRIPS...BUT ONE DIDN'T HAPPEN

Springfield, MA – January 26-30 2022

28th Annual
Train Show
Thanksgiving 2021 - February 2022



I was seemingly heading right into an approaching winter storm by driving on 1/26 with friend Eric Dervinis to Springfield, MA to attend the annual Railroad Hobby Show there. This show is the usually the largest in the country, filling four buildings in the Big E Fairgrounds and often drawing over 20,000 attendees. The show was cancelled last year so I, for one, was very much looking forward to this year's show.

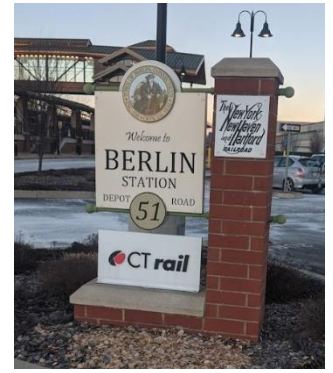
I have been attending this show since the 1980s and for the last few years; Eric and I have taken advantage of a special offer that includes two days of clinics before the show, breakfast and lunch for two days, plus a two-day vendor pass for the show. This year it was priced at \$107, up from \$99, but still a bargain. The preshow events were held in the Monarch Sheraton hotel so we booked a room there for four nights.

During the trip up, we made several stops in CT. First was at Pepe's in Fairfield for the world's best pizza. To those unfamiliar with a New Haven style pizza, they are cooked in a coal (anthracite no less) oven and the slightly burnt edge is normal. We made a brief stop at historic Bishop's Orchard off I-95 to get some cookies for Carol who would be joining us for dinner the next night. Our





next stop was at the Connecticut River Museum in Essex for its Annual Train Show. We have stopped here on previous trips as well. The presenter is Steven Cryan, a local marine/railroad artist, that I have known for years. If anyone is ever driving on I-95 by Old Saybrook, Steve has a permanent layout on display in the Pizzaworks restaurant in a former New Haven freight house next to the train station there, currently served by Amtrak and CT Rail. Eric had seen something about a new train station in Berlin (FYI, in CT you say BUR-lin with the emphasis on the first syllable). Typical of new stations these these day, it is unattended and offers no facilities though clearly meets all of the ADA requirements. The white title with the historic NY,NH&H script was a nice touch.



From our hotel room, we followed winter storm Keenan on the Weather Channel. It seemed that Springfield was right at the cusp between moderate and heavy snow. On Thursday, we attended the clinics in the hotel and that evening Carol, who had been at our daughter Colleen's house for a week, drove up to meet us for dinner. We went to the Storowton Tavern, an authentic New England tavern located in the Big E Fairgrounds. On Friday there were more clinics and it started to snow as we went

out for dinner at the local Pizzeria Uno. This is an annual stop for us, but this year I had no coupon and friends who would have normally joined us were not attending the show. On its website, the Amherst Railway Society (ARS) said that they had NEVER cancelled because of snow. However,



the crawl on the local TV station had one cancellation after another. The governor of Massachusetts urged folks to stay home but did not close the state like the governor of MD once did the weekend of the February Timonium train show.

On Saturday it was 15° with light snow when we headed to the show. There was maybe 3" of accumulation. Once at the Fairgrounds at 8:30AM, it was easy to park right next to one of the buildings. Once inside, the scene was different from prior years. There was lots of space between tables (social distancing?) and clearly some of the normal dealers and various railroad organizations were not there. The Canadian vendors could not cross the border (or maybe not cross back?) and the looming storm made several major dealers decide NOT to come at the last minute. The snow continued into the late afternoon but never amounted to much. Many restaurants were closed that night so a planned dinner with other friends did not happen. The above shows a dying business. Still, Eric and I had a nice meal at Max's Tavern next to the Basketball Hall of Fame.



The picture on the following page was taken on early Sunday morning and is looking west from our hotel room in downtown Springfield. Amtrak's tracks are barely visible just before the Connecticut River. Just to the right edge is west end of the former Boston & Albany bridge, now used by CSXT. I had an early breakfast and walked .3 miles to attend mass at the Catholic Cathedral. It was really cold (4°) but the holy water did not freeze. We were at the show on Sunday from 10AM to about 2PM. We both came home with several real bargains plus normal model railroad supplies. I brought two kits that a friend in NC wanted and will deliver them to him when there later this month.



We drove back to PA stopping to eat dinner in Darien, CT where I worked from 1980-1990. For the train show, the paid attendance over the two days was a mere 5925 folks and over 8700 in total counting dealers, vendors, exhibitors, modular groups and the ARS staff. I talked with one dealer on Sunday who said he made his numbers for the weekend on Saturday. He said these who attended that day (like me and Eric) were there to buy. On Sunday, there were more folks but many were there just to look at the trains (and there were certainly a lot to see!).

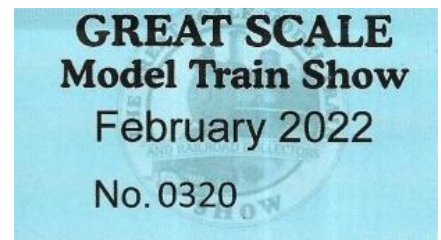
Wichita, Kansas – February 4–8, 2022

This was a long-planned trip that didn't happen. Wichita is the last city I need to visit from my 100 largest US city list. The trip (like most of mine) was timed so I could attend the supposed "Best Train Show" there on Saturday. There is also an excellent aviation museum there as Cessna and Beech aircraft are made there. Boeing once had plant there, but the 737 fuselage is still made there by another company and shipped by rail to Renton, Washington. This I definitely wanted to see.

However, winter storm Landon caused problems for this trip. On Thursday afternoon even with no snow in Philly, American Airlines cancelled our Friday flight to DFW (with connection to ICT) and rebooked us for the same flights on Saturday. Since we were arriving still @11:30AM, the planned activities were still viable. Then on Friday afternoon, AA cancelled the Saturday flights. Rebooking was problematic as Carol and I were in separate reservations (because we were using vouchers) and we were not being offered the same flights or even the same days of travel. We finally bagged the trip; we got two more flight credits from AA and was able to cancel our hotel reservation that had already been changed once. But got stuck with a prepaid car rental at Hertz.

Carol asked me what I was going to do since we were not going anywhere that weekend, so I thought for a minute. First, I changed my eBay listings that were scheduled to start on Monday 2/7 to start on Friday 2/4 at 4PM EST. I time it so that I'm home when the listings end as I must ship within 2 business days of payment, or else I am dinged by eBay in my internal selling rating with them. My phone went "k'ching!" literally seconds after 4PM with things getting bids and/or selling. That evening I wrapped things to mail and had Carol take them to the PO for me on Saturday AM as I decided to attend the Great Scale Model Train Show in Timonium, MD. I have been going to this show for years, too. Sadly, it is not what it used to be. I left the house just before 6AM on Saturday 2/5 and was there by 8:15AM after Wawa and Dunkin' stops. The show did not start until 9AM but I had things to sell on their white elephant tables. Luck for me, I got enough tickets to sell my things (bummer—only two sold!). More tickets did not show up until 11AM. The show was fine for me, not very crowded and I found some great bargains. I had seen some of the dealers that weekend before in Springfield I stayed until 4PM; I was tired, out of money and hungry. I stopped for dinner at a nearby Bertucci using a \$15 coupon. Normally, I drove home from there using a longer route that is toll free, but said, "Screw it" and just drove up I-95 to the Blue Route and then PA Turnpike to home. The \$4 Delaware toll posted to my EZ-PASS account, but am yet to see the \$6 MD toll.

Turns out another group in Wichita holds a train show on September 24—25, 2022 so we will rebook our trip there for that weekend.



Atlanta, GA – February 9, 2022

This was another of my one-day adventure trips—my fifth in the last 14 months. My fare limit for these trips is around \$100 and this one cost \$91, albeit using a duplicate \$50 voucher from AA. My goal, like with the prior one-day trips, was to spend the day riding trains once there.

I had been to Atlanta many times over the years. My first visit there was in 1978 when I was an internal auditor with Gulf+Western. The audited company was in a suburban industrial park. While I was there, Billy Beer was introduced and the distributor was in the same industrial park. I brought a case home on the plane with me to Newark. I put an ad in the Bergen Record and sold (albeit illegally) cans for \$5 each. I still had two cans when we moved from New Canaan to PA in 2019. Other trips to Atlanta include an early 1980s visit to see college friend Debbie from UR and two railroad conventions in the 1990s. I will always remember the second one (the NMRA in 1995) because we arrived there after driving down the Blue Ridge Parkway (and other roads) only to find my father had died the prior day when the temperature in RI reached 106, an all-time high. I flew up and back from there to Providence for his funeral and once we drove back to CT, Carol's father died and then a week later my Uncle Frank McNulty died.

I passed through Atlanta in July 1996 during the Summer Olympics that were held there. In fact, I was in Centennial Olympic Park just two nights after the terrible bombing that happened on July 27, 1996. To enter the park, I had to pass through a hastily constructed security checkpoint manned by a bevy of federal law enforcement officers (Border Patrol, Customs, INS, ATF, etc.). Carol and I attended the Fifth Charles Waldo Haskins Accounting History Seminar that was held on November 12-14, 1998, at the Westin Peachtree Plaza. This is when I finally got serious about finishing my doctoral dissertation, even though it was not completed until Dec. 2003. While we were there, Don Imus, the NYC shock jock, was doing a remote broadcast from the historic Fox Theater. I went over early one morning and said I was from NYC and in Atlanta on business and got in for free to see Don and his whole crew. I was there for another NMRA convention in 2013 with friend Eric. My most recent visit was for the AAA Southeastern Region Meeting in April 2015. I rewrote a senior thesis from Meagan McTeague, an SCSU Honor Student, into an academic paper entitled Relationship between Timing and Reporting of Transactions on Form 4s with SEC within Property and Casualty Insurance Industry. Meagan did a very good job in presenting her paper, such that several folks in the audience assumed she was a PhD student. Later at SCSU, I rewrote two capstone papers from MBA students and presented them at other accounting conferences. It was a nice way to travel—the school paid for it and the rewritten papers (with me as co-author) was considered part of my “research”.

Before I left on this trip, I went to the MARTA website to plan out the day's train activities. MARTA is the local

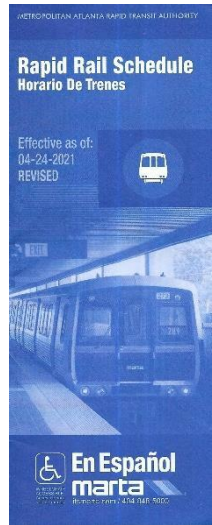


transit agency for Atlanta and the surrounding counties. It started in 1971 with buses and later added rapid rail service. A colorized system map is shown here. The light blue lines are the interstate highways. I-85 enters from the northeast while I-75 comes in from the northwest; south of the I-285 beltway, they join together through the center of Atlanta (this is known locally as the Y) and later split separately again south of I-20. The other colored lines are what MARTA calls rail lines. It is not a conventional railroad, but rather a heavy rail, rapid transit system with 48 miles of standard gauge track powered by a 750v third rail. It reminded me of the METRO in DC and the PATCO High Speed line in South Jersey. Originally, the rail lines were named directionally and some vestige of that still exists as will be explained later. The Blue/Green east-west lines were the first built in 1979. The Red/Gold lines run north south and were added beginning in 1982. The southern end of these lines is at Atlanta's Hartsfield–Jackson International Airport (ATL), which is located some 15 miles south of the downtown. Interestingly, the Gold Line was initially called the Yellow Line but the name was changed after objections from the Asian community. In today's woke environment, one would expect the Red Line to be renamed because it is probably deemed offensive to native Americans.

My AA flight 1110 was scheduled to depart PHL at 7:10AM. In order to get really cheap fares, one must fly really early and return really late. Normally, we take the SEPTA train to PHL and I could have done that (albeit on a 4:55AM train), but had to drive to the airport because my return flight would arrive after the rail service stops. I went to use my reward points for a free day at the Parking Spot only to find my points were removed back in 2021. I had not used them in a while. But I was able to still get a free day of parking at Colonial using my rewards

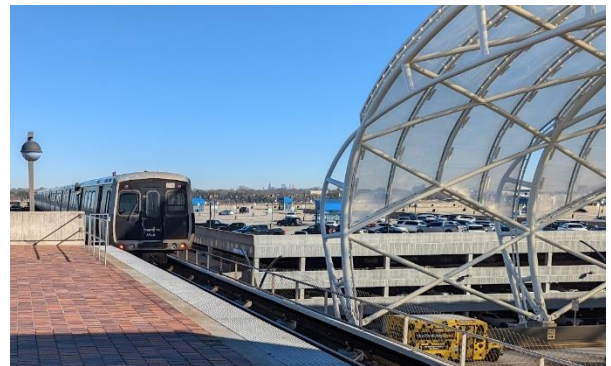
points there. Else the cost would have been almost \$18.

I left the house just before 5AM and was at the off-airport parking lot by 6:40AM driving a circuitous route on I-476. I was in the airport terminal by 6AM and got my first-class boarding pass. I have Platinum Pro status with AA and am eligible for free upgrades on every domestic flight. However, due to heavy passenger loads, it has been a while since I was upgraded. However, this morning there were only 38 folks on board. I have not seen a plane with that few folks since back in mid-2020. The plane left a few minutes early but had to be de-iced due to a hard freeze the night before. Still, we arrived a few minutes ahead of the (padded) schedule. I managed to have the flight attendant make me an iced tea though she spilled ice on my papers/magazine on the adjacent empty seat.



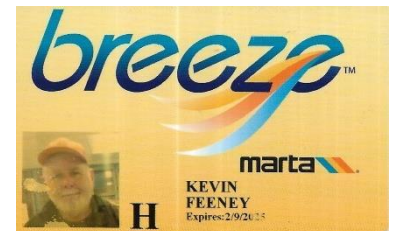
The ATL airport is different than most as the terminal buildings are all linear, parallel and are only connected by an underground rubber-tired, people-mover dubbed the “Plane Train.” We landed in C and I took the Plane Train to the baggage claim area and then walked to the nearby MARTA station. Here the line is elevated; downtown it is underground and at a few places, it is at grade. I was surprised to find they still had paper timetables albeit bilingual in Spanish. The current one says, “Effective as of 04-21-2021 REVISED.” I tried to buy a senior ticket at a manned ticket window, but was told I needed a senior card. As my readers know, I travel extensively and in some cities all you need to do is show your Medicare card to get the senior fare. I was able to get a large MARTA map. So, I walked over to a TVM and brought a one-way ticket for \$2.50 but since I didn’t have a breeze card I was charged an extra \$1. I actually

have a breeze card somewhere in my transit card collection, but even if I had found it, it was probably expired. On the ground were two coins that I picked up, but they did not change my thinking even though they were a new pair of dimes.



Up on the platform, I saw there was another automated people-mover just to the west. This one, called the “Sky Train,” takes travelers to the combined rental car center and an adjacent convention center. A train arrived and I was surprised to see a cleaner board the train. I saw the same practice later at other end points. I took some pictures and boarded a Gold Line train. Soon the elevated line ran parallel to a NS line (former Atlanta & West Point). North of the Garnett Station, the Red Line goes underground and passes under the east-west lines at Five Points, which is the only interchange point among all four lines. I stayed on and passed through (really under) the downtown area. Announcements are made for each stop that include the destination, transit connections, and nearby landmarks. The one for the Arts Center mentioned a shuttle bus to Amtrak’s historic (ex-SR) Peachtree Station, which is a bit out of the way. After the Arts, the line came back to the surface and passed by the NS Armour Yard.

I exited at the Lindbergh Center station, which is the last one before the Red/Yellow Lines split. I walked across the street from the station to MARTA’s headquarters and applied for a free senior breeze card. I had printed out and filled in the application at home beforehand. I had my picture ID card



a few minutes later and then had a MAJOR decision to make. How much money did I need to load onto the card? Each ride would now cost me \$1 so I guessed and added \$5. Back in the station, I boarded the next train, a Red Line one, to North Springs. Just north of Armour Y ard the Red Line uses a massive flyover to cross over the Gold Line (that was constructed first) and the adjacent NS (ex-SR) tracks. Back at ground level, the Red Line runs in the median of the Georgia 400 highway. The line crosses over the I-285 beltway between the Medical Center and Dun

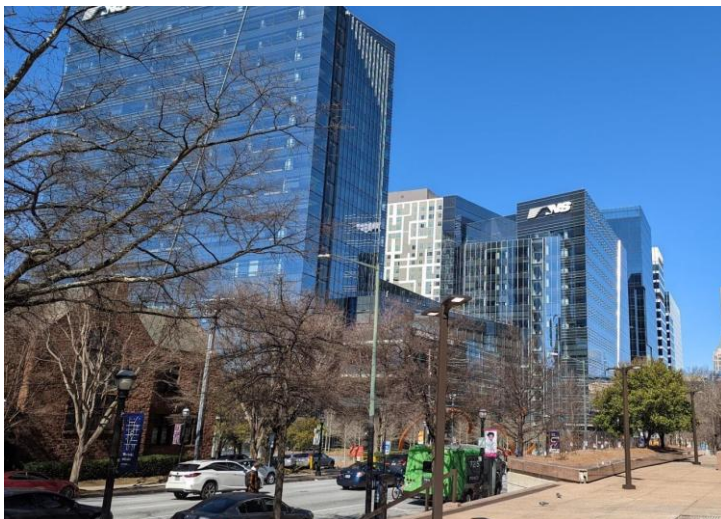
woody stations. There was new construction in several places along the line and I could easily see the soil was the typical Georgian red clay. There was nothing at the last stop except parking lots, which cancelled my plan to work around at the end of the line. I should add that all of the MARTA parking lots that I saw that day was only half full if that.



The station sign in North Springs also said "N-11." It was the 11th stop north from Five Points and the vestige of the directional line names I mentioned earlier.



While there I saw a sign announcing a track replacement project for the Red Line. The line will be shut down after 9PM Friday 2/18 through end of service on Wednesday 2/23, south of the Dunwoody station. There will be replacement bus shuttle and express bus service during the shutdown. Under normal conditions, after 9PM southbound Red Line service terminates at Lindbergh where riders can transfer to a southbound Gold Line train. The entire system shuts down nightly before 2AM. However, it ran 24/7 during the 1996 Olympics, and also back in 1994 MARTA ran extra service during an Amway convention when the organizer guaranteed attendees would purchase at least 50,000 three-day passes costing \$7 each.



I took the next southbound train and exited again at Lindbergh Center. Here the doors opened on both sides of the car. At other stations, they opened on either the left or right side depending on the layout. I boarded the next Gold Line train to Doraville, which is just inside the I-285 Perimeter. The Gold Line runs parallel to a former SR mainline and reached Doraville in 1992. There is a NS (ex-SR) rail yard there built to serve a GM assembly plant that closed in 2009. I could have stayed there and railfanned for a while, but time did not allow for that. So, I boarded a Gold Line train to the airport, but exited at North Avenue. Once at street level, I was surprised to see I was right by Norfolk Southern's new corporate headquarters.



I walked west two blocks for lunch at The Varsity. I have been there before and know it is famous for its onion rings. I ordered the #3 combo with onion rings but the receipt said fries. The clerk yelled onions rings to someone, but my order came with fries. When I said I ordered onion rings, she said, "We going to make it right," and gave me an order of onion rings to go with my fries. I finished the onion rings, but not all the fries. I shared a table with some folks from Florida while a Varsity employee walked around giving everyone there

one of their paper hats.

After lunch, I walked back to the North Avenue station. I took a southbound Red Line train to Five Points. There the Red/Gold Lines run beneath the Blue Green Lines, which were built first and are also underground. The result is a massive, multi-level interchange that reminded me of similar ones in DC or in London. I headed for an eastbound train and the next was a Green Line train, which was different. It only had two cars while the other trains I rode that day all had six cars.

MARTA's rolling stock run as two-car married pairs. The cars are an eclectic mix of similar looking, foreign-made cars from Societe Franco Belge, Hitachi, and Ansaldo Breda. The some of the oldest cars (CQ310s) are stored out of service and seemingly used for parts. The rest of the CQ310s and the Hitachi cars (CQ311s) were refurbished by Alstrom in the 2000s. I exited at the King (as in MLK) Memorial station at it was seemingly next to another railyard. However, the view was largely obstructed by concrete slabs so I just boarded the next train—a Blue one to Indian Creek. Enroute to there, I passed on the south side CSX's Hulsey Intermodal Terminal that handles domestic intermodal freight. Later, I saw MARTA's Avondale maintenance shop and yard on the north side of the track where the older, out-of-service cars are stored and seemingly being stripped for usable parts. MARTA has two other maintenance shops, one by the NS Armour Yard and the other by the airport. It is unclear to me if there is a physical connection between the east-west and north-south lines.



The Indian Creek station is located just outside the I-285 perimeter. The station announcement mentioned a shuttle bus to the Stone Mountain Park. That would have been interesting, but again no time. Instead, I boarded the next westbound train and exited at Ashby to connect to a Green Line train to Bankhead. Here the east-west line is underground and on two levels. Leaving Ashby, the train came about above ground running on a single track and it was into the two-track Bankhead station in about five minutes. The station's platform is very small hence the reason why Green Line trains are only two cars. Per the MARTA website, the area around the Bankhead station is primarily residential and transitional; it has less than 15 parking spaces. After 9PM, the Green Line only operates as a shuttle service between Bankhead and Vine City. In short, I wondered why the Bankhead station even exists. Perhaps it was built as a payback to a local politician? Looking online at MARTA's 2040 Transporting Transit site and other websites, I saw there are proposals to extend the Green Line from both current end points and to build a new Purple light rail line between Avondale and Lindbergh.

Back in Ashby, I came in at the lower level so had to go back upstairs to board a westbound Blue Line train. It was soon above ground and passed through West Lake and was at the final Hamilton E. Holmes station a few minutes later. The same train was the next one out and as the operator walked to change ends, I asked him if I could ask him several questions. Sure. Are MARTA trains subject to FRA (Federal Railroad Administration) rules? He said he never heard of the FRA. Are you covered by a Railroad Retirement pension? The operator said he had a pension from the Amalgamated

Transit Union, Local 732. These two statements confirmed my thinking that MARTA is legally a transit system and not a railroad. By way of background for those readers not into trains, some transit systems are hybrids.

With SEPTA, for example, the bus, trolley, and subway workers are transit workers subject to internal rules and negotiated pensions while regional rail workers are railroad employees, subject to FRA rules and covered by the Railroad Retirement pension scheme. In NYC, while the NYCTA is a transit system, the transit line on Staten Island (SIRT), because of its B&O heritage, is, in fact, a railroad and its workers are railroad employees.

I rode the eastbound Blue Line train to Five Points and transferred to the lower level so I could get the next northbound Red/Gold Line train. It was a quick ride to the Peachtree Center station, which is the deepest in MARTA at 120' below ground.



The bedrock there was so stable that it was left exposed in the station. I looked for signs for the Atlanta Streetcar, but saw none. So, I used my KPS (Kevin's Positioning System) navigation and came out on the street right by the stop for the Streetcar. The Atlanta Streetcar is a 2.5-mile loop; it was built by the city in 2014 and became part of MARTA in 2018. As I was waiting, a white car (a Tesla I learned later) stopped on the track and just sat there. Other cars go behind thinking the person was making a right turn. NO! Eventually they honked and went around. Then the Streetcar came. I went up to car and knocked on the window. The woman open the door and said, "I can't move." Turns out the Tesla's battery was drained. Eventually, three guys came along and offered to push the car. One of them knew about the Tesla. The driver let him get behind the wheel and he tried several things. Nothing. He even tried to put it into "car wash mode." Nothing. So, for almost 30 minutes the Streetcar just sat there. Finally, a tow truck came and moved the dead Testa off the tracks. I had jokingly asked the Streetcar operator if he had any jumper cables.



I finally boarded the Siemens S70 LRV, one of four on the line. The fare was \$1 but it was not setup to take my breeze card. The driver had told me to just get on while we were waiting. I did not see anyone put a dollar into the fare box during my entire ride. The Streetcar goes west towards Centennial Olympic Park and then turns towards the south. Two stops later at Park Place, we sat again because of an accident ahead. Finally, we made the loop out to the MLK sites but were held again for another accident. Along the way, I could see other tracks, perhaps diverging routes. I should mention that the view out the windows was obscured by the Topgolf wrap job on the car. The car barn seemed to be tucked under I-75/85. By now, it had been almost two hours since I exited at Peachtree Center.

At the Woodruff Park stop, I bailed and walked a few block to Underground Atlanta. Here, in a historic gulch created by the original railroad lines into Atlanta, are streets and buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries that were aban-



done as the city built up and over the area. It was “rediscovered” in the late 1960s and became a prime tourist attraction. I wanted to find a nice place for dinner, but having been on the Streetcar for too long, I didn’t have much time. Unfortunately, Underground Atlanta seemed dead so I just crossed the street and went into the Five Points station seeing this relic underground. .

I went to the lower level and got on a southbound train to the airport arriving there just after 6PM. It took a while to get through TSA as only one line was open. My AA flight was leaving from Gate T-11, which is connected to the TSA facility. However, I still went down and got on the Plane Trane riding to Terminal C. I had dinner at Sweet Georgia’s Juke Joint. My original plan was to eat at their downtown location had I completed the Streetcar loop in a timely fashion. But saw they also had an airport location. Unfortunately, the airport location had a very limited menu so I just had a nice pulled pork sandwich. It, like The Varsity, was credit card/debit card only. Back on the Plane Trane it was a bit of maze to finally get to my T-11 gate.



AA 1694 left at 8:09PM (minute early) for a short 227-mile flight to CLT. Normally I look for connection to get extra miles but this routing just came up with the low fare. I was again upgraded to first class. When the flight attendant asked me what I wanted to drink, I said Tito ‘n’ tonic (TnT) with lime. I got miniature bottle of Tito, a glass of ice and a piece of lime. I asked twice for some tonic and by the time I got the can of tonic, it was time to land. I had to just woof down the drink. The bad service was noted in my review of the flight for AA. We arrived in Charlotte’s C Concourse and my 10:26PM flight to Philly was just a few gates away. This flight was totally full. I was #8 on the upgrade list but the smaller A319 only had eight first class seats in total! We left a few minutes early and landed at PHL at 11:42pm, 16 minutes ahead of schedule.

I walked through the empty terminal and over and through the baggage faculty to where the off-airport parking shuttles pick you up. The shuttle came quickly and by 12:15AM I was leaving their lot. I stopped at the adjacent Wawa for a Tasty Kake and was home just after 1AM.

I am looking daily at AA.com for my next one-day adventure. BTW, I still have \$2 left on my breeze card.



New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Car

**Tangent Scale Models Bethlehem 70-Ton
Riveted Drop-End Gondola in HO Scale
All cars are ready-to-run.**

**We have produced the car in two numbers to
commemorate our 50th anniversary:**

1968 & 2018

**The car has reporting marks NJDX, black with
white lettering and data for the 1950s.**

The cost is \$35.00 each

OR

a set of both numbers for \$65.00.

To have them shipped USPS Priority: \$9 for 1 car, \$10.75 for 2 cars

**The cars are available now. Checks should
be made payable to “NJ Division”**

They are selling fast so don't be left out!

(Photos/drawings on next two pages)

Website: <https://njdivnmra.org> for questions

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City, State and Zip code_____

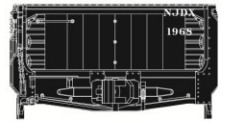
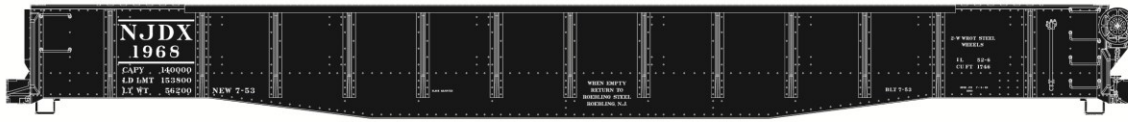
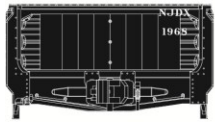
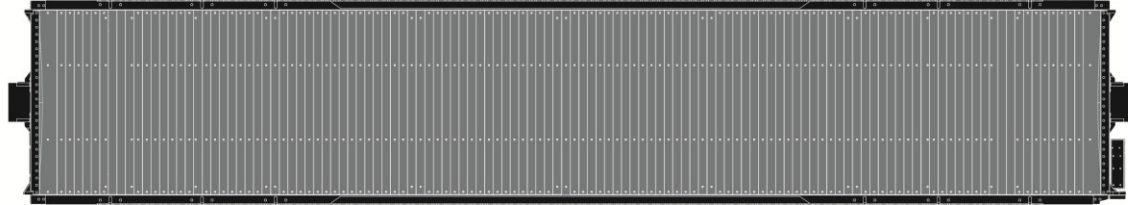
Telephone_____Email_____

See Tangent website for more info support@tangentscalemodels.com

Return this form to NJ Division, P.O. Box 276, Crosswicks, NJ 08515



Artwork for New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Car



TANGENT
SCALE MODELS





Mid-Eastern Region Convention

October 20-23, 2022

Hilton University Place Hotel
Charlotte, NC

- ||||| Special pre-convention tour of the NC Transportation Museum available
- ||||| Lots of clinics on a wide range of topics
- ||||| Many self-drive operating sessions and layout tours
- ||||| Special bus tour to the Southeastern Short Line and Narrow Gauge Museum plus 4 layouts
- ||||| Juried model contest plus available AP evaluations
- ||||| Company store open to member consignments
- ||||| Banquet speaker from a leading manufacturer
- ||||| Four modular layouts in the hotel
- ||||| Lots of time to share tips, tricks and techniques with modelers from around the region

Full information at: <http://carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html>



Carolina Special Look South 2022 MER Convention: Part 1

by Bob Halsey

The next (and best) MER convention will be the Carolina Special Look South 2022 on October 20-23 next year - put those dates in your calendar! Although the last two MER conventions (both in Maryland) were definitely top-quality events, the Carolina Southern Division is well into planning for 2022, and is ensuring that your trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, will be way more than worthwhile! It will be downright memorable!

We have already planned several tours, first: on Oct. 20 to the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) in Spencer (the former main maintenance facility of the Southern Railway, including the huge backshop, large roundhouse and turntable, many historic locomotives, railcars, automobiles, firetrucks, and airplanes. You can get a ride on one of NCTM's own passenger trains (pulled by one of their ex-Southern diesels), and if we are lucky we may get to see an impressive visitor - the N&W 611 large 4-8-4 steam locomotive, which comes to Spencer from Roanoke for regular maintenance. We will also offer a tour of the National Narrow Gauge Museum and Restoration Facility in Newton, where they have several old and not-so-old railcars and locomotives (steam and diesel). The museum not only has the original fully-restored passenger/freight station, but a separate building with several large O, HO, and N gauge layouts. We are also arranging a tour of the Lionel Corporation's development center in Concord to see their latest projects (O and HO).



Of course, we are going to have the usual elements for a successful convention: many clinics (including some you have not seen before!), a company store (formerly "white elephant" room), and the contest room. As a judge ("evaluator") at the last two conventions, I can say that many of the dioramas and rolling stock were not just super-detailed, they were true works of art!

And we will have many layout tours available to visit (too many to list here) including Jack Parker's Piedmont & Western (HO mountain railroad) and Seth Gartner's NYC Piney Fork Branch (with its large detailed steel mill). Both of these were subjects of 2018 cover articles in Mo del Railroader magazine. Also Ed Smith's Erie Railroad (with its amazing 10-arch viaduct bridge), Neal Anderson's basement-filling KKL Railroad, and a number of excellent N gauge layouts.



This spectacular convention will be held at the University Hilton in north Charlotte (just off I-485), with a reduced room rate for convention attendees. Although we are not ready to accept registrations (will be soon), our website (www.carolinasouthern.org) will contain convention details. We have a very interesting Saturday evening banquet speaker lined up - again, more details soon!

For non-modeler attendees (spouses and future adults) there are a number of local attractions: the Mint Art Museum, US National Whitewater Center (whitewater rafting, zip lines, hiking trails), Discovery Place Museum, Duke Energy Explorium, Charlotte Aviation Museum (at the airport), Billy Graham Library and Museum (very interesting!), Charlotte Motor Speedway (you can get really fast rides in NASCAR race cars driven by professional drivers), Concord Mills Mall (it's a big one), and evening dinner cruises on Lake Norman, plus many good restaurants in the area. I have done all of these things!



Get to Charlotte: by train from D.C./Baltimore/Philadelphia, air to Charlotte/Douglas airport, or motor vehicle south via I-95/85 or I-81/77, or west on I-40/85. We will be covering more details in future issues of this newsletter. You don't want to miss this one!

Carolina Special Look South 2022 MER Convention: Part 2 by Bob Halsey

This is shaping up to be one of the best MER conventions ever!



We have several tours lined up – on Thursday October 20 starting at 12:30 pm we are offering a complete tour of the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) backshop, turntable, and roundhouse with its large collection of historic locomotives, railcars, and maintenance/restoration work in progress. They also have many antique/classic autos, firetrucks, and a few aircraft. There is a well-stocked gift shop, and the NCTM is directly across the street from the best (and largest) model railroad store in the state, with its wide variety of inventory which includes many small detail items for those of us into scratch building and dioramas. Another is an all-day excursion tour on Friday October 21 that will include visits to: the KK&L HO basement-sized layout of Neal Anderson (MMR); the restored freight/passenger

depot and Southeastern Narrow Gauge & Shortline Museum in Newton, NC, (including their impressive collection of restored rail cars, diesel and steam locos, and the Model Railroad Center with its O, HO, and N gauge layouts), followed by lunch at the Depot station, and then a couple more unusual layout s in the afternoon! That same day, there will also be an optional guided tour of the Lionel Corporation's development facility in Concord (a few miles north of Charlotte) where they always have something new coming up (both in O and HO).

I can't list all the many layouts available for visiting in this short article, but they are amazing, including the ones mentioned in the last issue of the Local. We are still arranging the clinics and presenters, and have over a dozen scheduled, again too many to list them all here. There is a "Make & Take" session on building a Section House or Crossing Shanty (including a list of tools to bring with you); Modeling the Dixie Flyer (ACL trains 5 & 6); Pullmans for Patients; Modeling Urban Scenes (based on NYC locations); and Model Railroading in a limited space – Downsizing to a shelf layout. The complete list will appear soon in our web site at <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html>, along with other important details such as registering/costs, etc. However, you can make your room reservations now at the Hilton Charlotte University Place on this website and get our discount rate.



And you won't starve to death or have to eat grits and gravy, because there are numerous feeding facilities close to the hotel, including: a barbecue restaurant, a Mediterranean restaurant, an Indian restaurant, a sandwich shop, a milkshake/ice cream bar (I will definitely try that!), and of course, a Chick-fil-A and a McDonald's. When you go to Google Maps you can see the location of the hotel and all of these nearby fine dining places. Expand the map a little and you will see Bojangles and several pizza places. What more could anyone want? You will also notice that the hotel is right off I-85 and close to I-485

It is also close to the light rail station, which quickly takes you to central Charlotte ("uptown") where your non-modelers can see some of the attractions listed in the last issue. That was not a complete list, because I did not mention: the Top Golf driving range (use their clubs to hit near and far holes from a semi-indoor station), the Belk Theater shows, Charlotte Hornets NBA basketball, the Carowinds Amusement Park (roller coaster and other rides), the Duke Mansion, the Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens, the Levine Museum of the New South, and the NASCAR Hall of Fame Museum (with its extremely realistic IMAX "rides"). I did mention the evening dinner cruises on Lake Norman (largest lake in NC) aboard the "Lady of the Lake" or the "Catawba Queen". But younger folks would enjoy visiting the Discovery Place Museum, the movies/arcades in Concord Mills Mall (not far from the hotel), and the whitewater rafting and zip lines at the US National Whitewater Center (it is still warm down here in October!).

Well this is enough preview publicity for now. Next issue we will tell you about more specific details, our website, cool souvenir shirts, the contest room, "company store", etc. But make your plans now to attend the Carolina Special Look South 2022!!

Carolina Special Look South 2022 MER Convention: Part 2 by Bob Halsey

This is the third article in a series aimed at getting everyone psyched up to attend what is going to be the best, and certainly the most well-planned Mid Eastern Region convention ever! Previously we covered some of the excellent tours we have scheduled, especially the North Carolina Transportation Museum (NCTM) which includes the largest roundhouse in North America, with stalls filled with historic steam and diesel engines and railcars, some undergoing restoration. Another tour is to the restored passenger/freight depot, railcars and engines at Newton, including the N, O, and HO layouts in the Model Railroad Building. This tour will start with a visit to Neal Anderson's full basement double-level HO layout, which you can get a preview of by going to www.kklrailroad.com. Then after the Newton visit, there will be a stop at the N scale layout of Gil Brauch, MMR. Other visits you may want to make are to the large multi-deck HO full basement layout of Ed Smith's Erie Railroad circa 1947 (including his 10 arch viaduct) near Hickory, NC, or to Andrew Stitt's On30 East Tennessee & Western North Carolina layout in New London, NC (east of Charlotte). The ET&WNC was a real railroad; parts of it still exist, and you can get short rides on it.



We also mentioned the many activities of interest to non-modelers (both younger and not so young) to encourage you to bring family members when you come down this way (see the Jan/Feb issue of the Local), and the many fine feeding facilities close to the University Hilton hotel. In addition to the many layout tours we have lined up (including two that were written up as cover articles in Model Railroader magazine), we will be presenting a variety of interesting clinics taught by experts from MER and other regions. Some of these include:



- Model railroad industries
- Construction electronics
- Layout sounds
- Tank cars
- Flat car loads
- Airbrushing techniques
- Making a section house or crossing shanty (make & take)
- Junctions, interchanges, and diamonds for your layout
- Southern Railway Murphy Branch
- and many more, too many to list here!

We are still looking to fill the last slots in the schedule. Of course, we will have a contest room, so work on your dioramas and detailed rolling stock, and plan to enter them! We will also have a General Store (formerly called white elephant room) -- this will be a great opportunity for you to donate or sell items you no longer want and would like a fellow modeler to use. There will also be a drawing for prizes.

On Saturday evening 22 October, we will enjoy a banquet with top quality menu choices, from 6 to 9 PM. Our speaker will be Mr. Shane Wilson, owner and CEO of Scale Trains. And finally, as usual at these conventions, there will be a MER business meeting on Sunday morning from 10AM to noon.

Check out the convention website at www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html. You can see the Convention schedule, and by clicking on the hotel link you can make your room reservation – the convention discount rate is \$115/day. If you have any questions, send an email to Neal Anderson, MMR, at 2022chair@carolinasouthern.com. This will be the best NMRA regional convention in all of 2022!



The Reading Company Technical & Historical Society Modular Committee would like to invite members of the Philadelphia Division (and any other division) of the NMRA to join us while we are set-up during train shows, the Pennsylvania Christmas Show in Harrisburg, and most importantly, Reading Days at the Railroad Museum of PA. The Modular needs people who are able to operate trains and possibly dispatch on our JMRI/Digitrax system.

Working within NMRA standards, we desire to enter into a win-win situation where we have more engineers and trains operating on the layout and you have an opportunity to have fun with us while you earn some possible points toward AP Certificates. Now that Covid has “calmed down” it's time to move forward. It may take a few sessions to work out any kinks, so we ask for your patience and understanding.

The Modular has plenty of equipment that can be and is used on the layout. However, if you insist on using your own equipment, it must meet NMRA Modeling Standards, be in good operating condition, and have clean wheels. Please remember that at the RMPA, it is Reading Days and RDG equipment is given priority over other roads. (We do sneak in an occasional predecessor and successor road, too.)

This year's Reading Days are as follows: Wednesday, June 29 through Sunday, July 3; Wednesday, July 6 through Saturday, July 9. Set-up is Tuesday, June 28 – Tear-down is Sunday, July 10.



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 If you missed out on any of our previous events, all of the videos are saved on the NMRA YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/c/NMRAORGMModelRailroading>

Upcoming NMRA Conventions



[Gateway 2022, St. Louis, MO](#)
2022
[Gateway 2022](#)



[2023 Texas Express](#)
2023
[2023 Texas Express](#)

Upcoming MER Conventions

2022 Convention – “Carolina Special Look South in 2022”

Full information at: <http://carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html>

Division Apparel



Polo



Polo with pocket



Cap



Short Sleeve Button-Down



Long Sleeve Button-Down

Our new apparel source is Daylight Sales. Website: <https://www.daylightsales.net/> You can do a search for “PhillyNMRA” to find our items, or [click here](#) for the direct link. Email: daylightsales@gmail.com Phone: (888) 557-9899.

We continue to offer the Port Authority polo, with or without pocket, and the short- and long-sleeve button down shirts. As before, you can have your name added. A new offering is a matching cap. Unfortunately patches are no longer available as our emblem is now being directly embroidered onto the items.

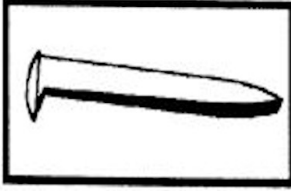
Manufacturer’s descriptions and specs:

POLO

POLO W/POCKET

LONG SLEEVE BUTTON DOWN

SHORT SLEEVE BUTTON DOWN



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM GOLDEN SPIKE AWARD APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS APPLICATION FORM AND SEND TO YOUR REGIONAL OR DIVISIONAL AP CHAIR

Member's Name: _____ NMRA#: _____ EXP: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Prov: _____ Country: _____ Postal Code: _____

Date Submitted: _____ Region: _____

The Golden Spike Award will be awarded to any NMRA member who has completed the Qualifications Checklist, obtained the necessary signatures and who does not hold MMR status. It will be administered by the regional and divisional AP Chairs. AP regulations and definitions apply for scratch building and super detailing. To qualify for the award the member must complete the following checklist, obtain the signature of the divisional AP Chair or another NMRA member designated by the divisional Chair. The divisional Chair will submit the signed form to the regional AP Chair who will issue the Golden Spike Award certificate.

QUALIFICATIONS CHECKLIST:

1. Rolling Stock (Motive Power & Cars):

Display six units of rolling stock either scratch built, craftsman kits or super-detailed commercial kits.

2. Model Railroad Setting (Structures & Scenery)

Construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout including scenery.

Construct five structures either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial kits. If a module has less than five structures, additional structures separate from the scene may be presented.

3. Engineering (Civil & Electrical)

Three types of track required (e.g. turnout, crossing, crossover, etc.). All must be properly ballasted and installed on proper roadbed. Commercial track may be used.

All installed track must be properly wired so that two trains can be operated simultaneously (e.g. double track main, single track main with sidings, and block or command control).

Provide one additional electrical feature such as power operated turnouts, signaling, turnout indication, lighted buildings, etc.

Witness: _____ Print Name: _____ NMRA #: _____

Regional AP Chair: _____ Region: _____

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