



THE DISPATCH

The Journal of PhillyNMRA

June 2024



*Long Island Railroad's
VAN Tower interlocking machine
and model board,
Vanderbilt Avenue Yard,
Brooklyn, NY – April 1978.
William Madden photo,
Dave Keller archive.*

[http://www.trainsarefun.com/
lirr/lirr%20towers/lirrtowers.htm](http://www.trainsarefun.com/lirr/lirr%20towers/lirrtowers.htm)



THE DISPATCHER

Official Publication of the Philadelphia Division
Mid-Eastern Region
National Model Railroad Association



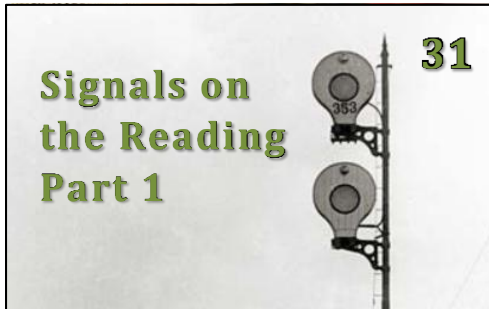
June 2024

PhillyNMRA.org

Volume 31, No. 5

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THE DISPATCHER

Submissions: *THE DISPATCHER* welcomes any model or prototype 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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Bill Fagan, Joe Walters MMR



From the Super's Desk

What's your thing? Lately, I've been thinking about what I receive from this hobby. Most importantly, I receive enjoyment and satisfaction from operating my railroad monthly. Seeing it come alive while in the company of my friends is particularly enjoyable.

My second favorite part of this hobby is scratch building rolling stock. I started scratch building in 2019. Since that time, I have been continuously building freight cars and motor power. There is something special about starting with styrene and finishing with a quality model. The mental challenge of this activity is both stimulating and rewarding. My models have been in four different regional conventions. I have won six first-place prizes, an accomplishment in and of itself. In the process of building the models, I take plenty of pictures which are then used in clinic presentations which I share with the division. By presenting these clinics and sharing both my failures and accomplishments, I feel I help my fellow modelers. I hope that through this process of sharing, I encourage others to try scratch building.

What is your thing? Do you have a skill that you could pass along to help other modelers? Are you an electronic whiz? Are you proficient in 3D printing? Is painting and weathering your forte? If you could pass your knowledge on to others, we would love to hear from you. If public speaking is not your thing, Howard Kaplan is always looking for articles for *The Dispatcher*.

I hope to see you at our annual business meeting/barbecue on June 8th at Alverthorpe Park in Jenkintown. Mike Dettinger will be presenting a unique hands-on clinic focusing on scenery. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Also, election season for division board of directors is almost over. If you haven't voted, now is your chance. Either mail in your printed ballot or vote online.

The MER is still looking for volunteers to step up and fill vacant positions. This is your opportunity to make change where you feel it is needed.

As school lets out and we travel more, please be careful. Have a safe, enjoyable, and train-filled summer.

Joe

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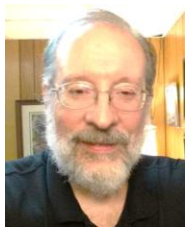
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From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to our June 2024 online edition of *The Dispatcher*. As usual, we start out with information regarding the upcoming June meet which comprises of our annual business meeting followed by Mike Dettinger's hands-on workshop clinic, our barbecue/picnic, and finally the opportunity to visit two first-class model railroad.

Our feature article in this edition is actually a reprint from a journal from 1944 about signals on the Reading. While it is fascinating to uncover such gems from the past, one main reason for this was that I have had no articles submitted by division members. Eric Hansmann has been kind enough to allow me to dip into his blog for material, but this needs to involve more people. Please consider contributing. How about product reviews? Everyone makes purchases, and the possibilities for reviews are literally endless.

Of course, we have our usual columns—the meet recap, Video Vigilante, and On the Road (Joe Walters's coffee cup broke, so Cup o' Joe won't be in this issue). Please enjoy, and hope to see you at Alverthorpe Park on June 8th.

Howard

June Meet at Alverthorpe Park in Jenkintown

On Saturday, June 8, 2024, the Philadelphia Division will hold its annual business meeting and picnic/barbeque at Alverthorpe Park, Jenkintown Road and Forrest Avenue in Jenkintown, PA. The actual picnic entrance is on Fox Chase Road. See the detailed maps and directions on page 6. The gates open at 9am with the festivities to begin 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 year's 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. As a member of the division, this is your chance to see what has been happening and have a chance to ask questions and offer suggestions for the division's continued operation.



The morning's program then continues with Mike Dettinger's hands-on workshop on the Kato Miniature Diorama Circus. Mike introduced us to this new concept in modular railroading at our last meet.

The following is Mike's description of what he has planned this time:

Come join the Kato Miniature Diorama Circus. This "circus," which I like to call "T-TRAK Lite," is a modeler participation activity that starts with a small unfinished diorama. Your blank canvas is a one-inch foam base with an attached piece of 9mm-gauge track.

Part of the Philly Division's mission is to promote the model railroading hobby. In that light, these dioramas will be provided to all our event attendees, including guests, while our supplies last. If you are planning on coming to the June meet and would like to participate—and I would strongly encourage you to do both—we would ask you to bring the following:

- Old newspaper to protect the tables
- Xactos knives
- Paintbrushes
- Glues
- Masking tape
- Any detail parts or model kits that you would like to incorporate into your diorama
- The commitment to finish your diorama and bring it to a future meet

In addition to your blank canvases, the Philly Division will be bringing these supplies to share with our participants:

- Completed dioramas for inspiration
- Craft paints
- Ground covers
- Ground foam adhesive and pipettes
- Hot foam cutter and extra foam pieces to build up your scenery
- A selection of found objects that you may want to



incorporate on your dioramas

- Experienced modelers to assist as needed

Once finished, the diorama can be displayed, or joined with other mini-dioramas allowing an operating train display. We are planning to join our finished dioramas with a running train at the September and November meets.



Great model railroaders are never born, but only come into being by practicing their craft. It is very important to try new scenery techniques, but it is equally important to try unfamiliar techniques on a test platform. The miniature dioramas are just that—an opportunity to try something different. If the mini-diorama is successful, you have learned a new technique that can be applied to your permanent layout. We look forward to having you join our picnic and participate in our little circus. We think that you will enjoy it very much.

All attendees are encouraged to bring a model to the

meet to display and discuss, if you like, for Show & Tell.

In addition, the Achievement Program Committee is now judging models at the meets. If you wish to have a model judged, please inform either Earl Paine or Joe Walters in advance of the meet.

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 indulge in hot dogs, hamburgers, and other picnic goodies, all prepared with the expertise of our grillmasters, Jeff Witt and Bill Fagan. If you intend to come, RSVP to Director Jeff Witt, (contact info on page 2 masthead). You can still change your mind either way, but we want to get an idea of how much food to buy.

After lunch, two excellent layouts will be open to visitation, one of which will be the Rockledge Model Railroad Museum. Please come and join us for fun and feast. We look forward to seeing you all on June 8th. 📌

Don't Forget to Vote

All Philadelphia Division members have been mailed the election issue of *The Dispatcher* which includes the bios and statements of the candidates running for the board of directors. The ballot can be found on the last page.



This issue has also been posted on the division website, phillynmra.org, and the ballot can be printed out if your mailed one was misplaced or lost.

In addition, members have been emailed an electronic ballot via Election Buddy. Either method is perfectly fine, but please choose only one and make sure to vote by the end of May. 📌

Train Show Director Needed

The Philadelphia Division in conjunction with the Rockledge Model Railroad Museum, a.k.a. GATSM, has put on a very successful model train show in early December for the last two years at the Cannstatters Volks-

fest-Verein beer garden/restaurant in northeast Philadelphia. The organizer of this event, Kevin Feeney, has had to step down and the division is looking for another individual to serve as director. One need not do all the work involved—it can easily be delegated out to several individuals, each responsible for a particular aspect. And Kevin can supply the information regarding those aspects. And Rockledge has foot soldiers ready to help. We just need somebody to take the lead and manage it. Anyone willing to do so is requested to contact Kevin Feeney or Jeff Witt (contact info on page 2). 📌

MER Asking for Candidates

The MER has noted that there are no members of the Philadelphia Division currently serving on its board of directors, and would like to have representation from our division. If you are interested in running for a regional board position, please contact Nominating Committee Chair Bob Charles, MMR, rcharles@mer-nmra.com or 717-763-1848. If you are interested in effecting change or improvement in the operation of the MER, this is your opportunity to make a difference. Not to mention the fact that that this is a good way to earn credit toward your AP "Official" certificate. 📌

Save Big on NMRA Dues

Grouper is a radically new benefit from your current health plan that recognizes the profound social benefits of activities like model railroading. They partner with Medicare Advantage and Medicare Supplement plans to cover the annual NMRA Membership Dues for eligible members age 65 and above. See <https://www.nmra.org/grouper> for more details. Finally a benefit to being old! 📌

WE WELCOME OUR NEW PHILLY DIVISION MEMBERS
John J. Skreenock, West Chester, PA
Norman C. Sundstrom, Yardley, PA
Steven Kantor, Narberth, PA

Planning Ahead – Division Meets & Other Upcoming Events

<p>June 8, 2024 Philadelphia Division Meet/Picnic Alverthorpe Park Jenkintown Road & Forrest Avenue Jenkintown, PA 19046</p>	<p>August 3, 2024 NJ/Philadelphia Division Joint Meet Switlik Park Rec Building 5 Fisher Place Hamilton, NJ 08620</p>	<p>August 4–11, 2024 NMRA Convention "Surfliner" Westin Long Beach 333 East Ocean Blvd. Long Beach, CA</p>
<p>September 7, 2024 Philadelphia Division Meet Horsham Twp. Community Center 1025 Horsham Road Horsham, PA 19044</p>	<p>October 17–20, 2024 MER Convention "Piedmond Junction" Marriott at Research Triangle Park 4700 Guardian Drive Durham, NC 27703</p>	<p>November 9, 2024 Philadelphia Division Meet Brandywine Town Center 4050 Brandywine Parkway Wilmington, DE 19803</p>

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

Maps and Directions to the June Meet

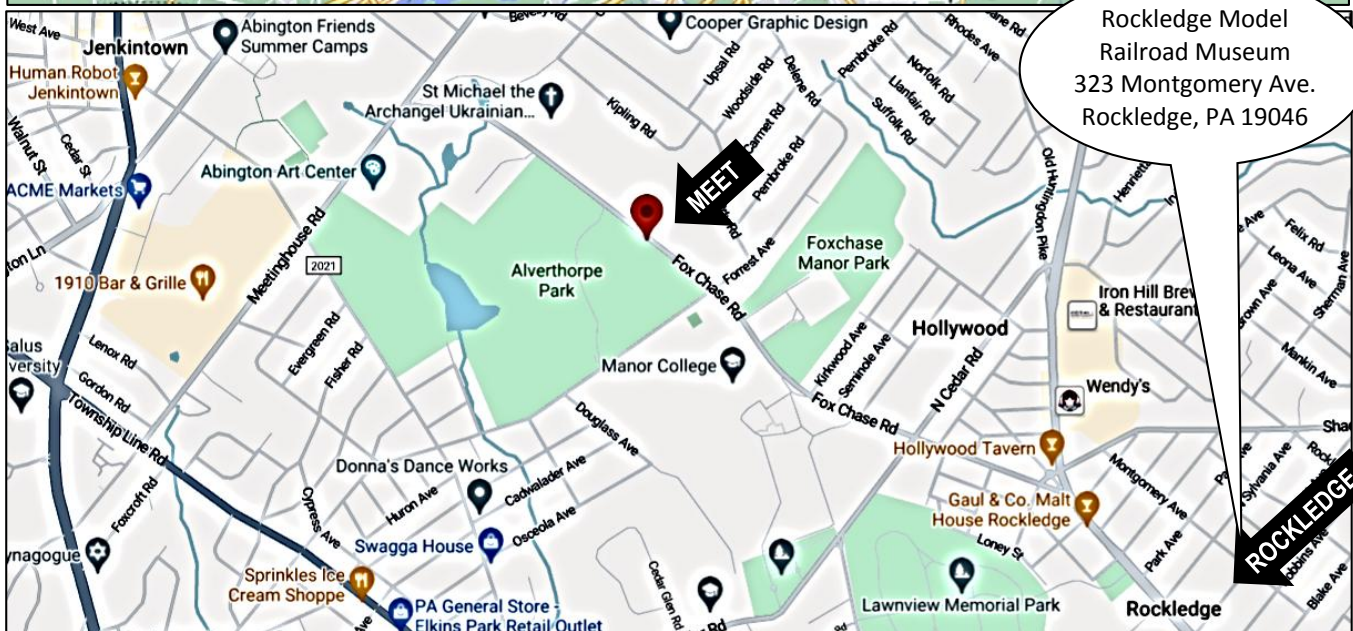
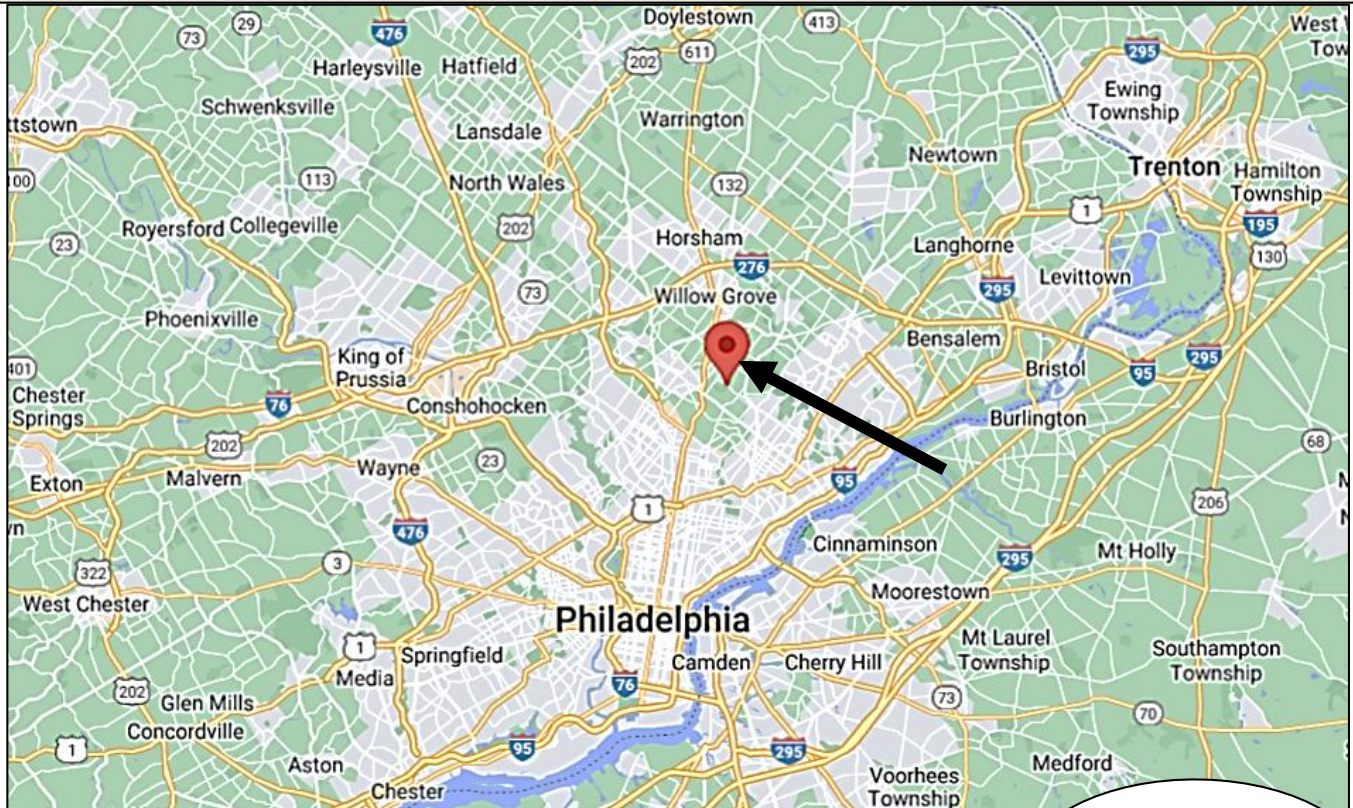
Alverthorpe Park Picnic Shelter

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 20th the Philadelphia Division met at the Trinity Reformed Church in Collegeville, PA. Thirty-one Philadelphia Division members were in attendance. Superintendent Joe Walters of the welcomed everyone and discussed upcoming events.

The first clinic presentation was by Mark Wallace who gave a great review of the RPM–Valley Forge meet (Railway Prototype Modelers) held at the Desmond Conference Center in Malvern, PA, March 22–24, 2024.

Earl Paine indicated the Achievement Program was active and that six certificates had been awarded in the past six months. He took the opportunity at this meet to personally award certificates for Model Railroad Engineer–Civil, Model Railroad Engineer–Electrical, and Scenery to Steve Richardson. Additionally, we expect to have two more MMRs in the division within the next year.

The second clinic presentation was by Mike Dettinger who introduced the Kato Miniature Diorama Circus, a novel and interesting method of modular model railroading. The idea was to prepare the group for his hands-on clinic on making these modules to be held at the June meet.

After the final break for doughnuts, soft pretzels, and coffee, the last 50/50 raffle tickets were sold. Steve Richardson was the winner, and he generously donated his winnings back to the division as he has done in the past. Tickets were then drawn for the multiple door prizes.



Superintendent Joe Walters, MMR greets the attendees

After the meet, many of the attendees met for lunch at the Collegeville Diner. Attendees were also invited to visit Steve Wysowski’s nearby home and tour his narrow-gauge, New England-themed layout. Visits were also made to MMR Steve Salotti’s HO layout modeling the New York, Susquehanna and Western in North Jersey. Also open were the layouts of Bill Erskine and Earl Paine who are neighbors in the same 55-plus community in nearby Skippack. Earl models the Reading in HO, while Bill’s layout is O 3-rail Lionel.

We thank Director Steve Wysowski for procuring the venue, Mark and Mike for their clinics, the layout owners for their hospitality, and all the attendees for coming. Hope you enjoyed yourselves.



Open house layout owners receive appreciation certificates. L to R: Earl Paine, Layout Coordinator Bill Fagan, Steve Salotti, MMR, Steve Wysowski



Steve Richardson (R) earns three AP certificates. On the left is AP coordinator Earl Paine, and center is AP committee member Bill Fagan helping to display them.



Mark Wallace (left photo) and Mike Dettinger (right photo) receive their clinician certificates



Members chat while waiting for the meet to begin



Crowd listens attentively as Mark Wallace explains the history of the RPM



Members check in and buy 50/50 tickets

Delawareans Dick Lush (L) and Joe Walters catch up



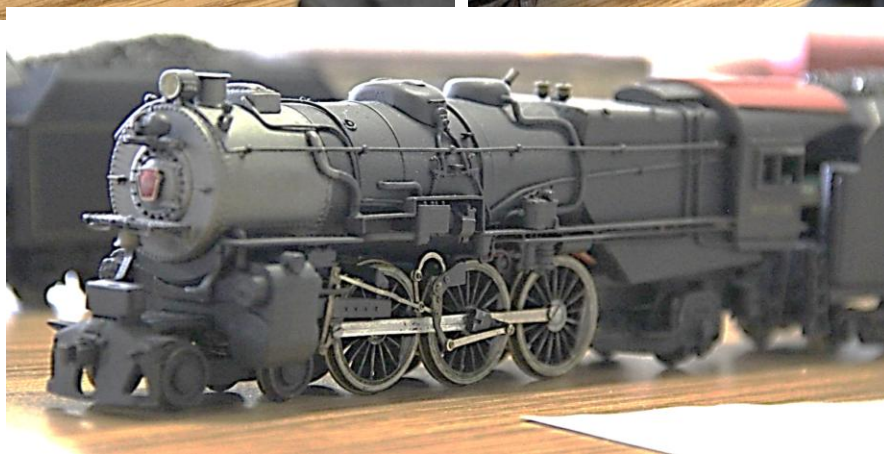
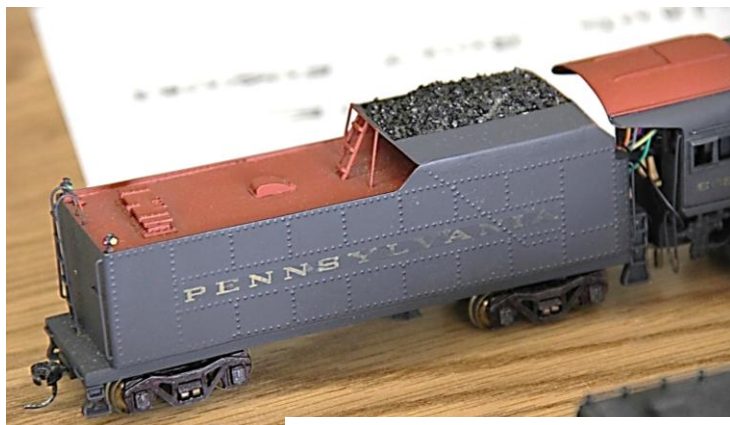
Fred Monsimer checks out Kevin Feeney's tables

*Three Steves! What are the odds?
L to R: Division Director Steve
Wysowski, Steve Salotti, MMR,
and Steve Richardson.*

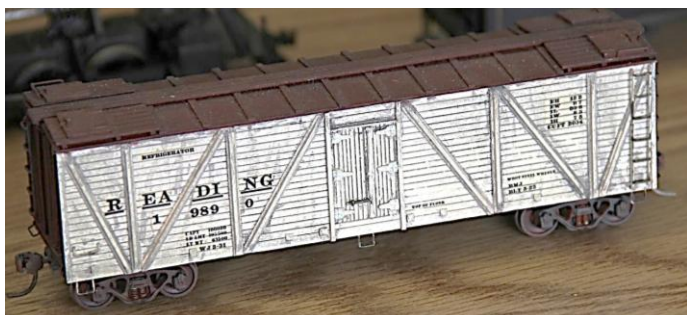


Show & Tell

Rick Cline's scratch-built locomotives



Rick's scratch-built Reading reefer—photos taken in two different lighting modes



Joe Walters, MMR – scatch-built TP-56 locomotive



Eric Hansmann – A pair of recently-released Accurail, 36-foot, double-sheathed boxcars with fishbelly underframes in Western Maryland paint and lettering.

I compared the models with a 1912 AC&F builder image and they were pretty close. Here are the upgraded details (next caption):



- * Removed the cast-on, L-shaped grab irons on the running board laterals and made new parts from 0.0125-inch-diameter wire
- * Installed supports under the brake platform and running board ends
- * Installed a Tichy retainer valve with an air line of 0.008-inch-diameter wire
- * Added the vertical staff hand brake rod and wheel
- * Installed Tahoe Model Works AC&F arch bar trucks
- * Installed Accurail Accumate scale-size couplers

Renumbering decals are on the way for new car numbers. The weigh data will be updated for a 1926 appearance. Then these cars will be weathered.

Mike Dettinger -

Kato Miniature Diorama Circus –
modules arranged in an oval for train
running.



Fred Monsimer -

*Some projects in progress. Two uses for Plastruct hemispheres:
Dome on top of building (left) and bottom of a water tank (right).*



Sway-back Flatcar – Scratch built for in-plant use at a steel mill. Grab irons bent from brass wire. Stirrup steps bent from brass flat bar stock and attached with Tichy NBW castings. Car-puller brackets from Kadee couplers.



Bill Erskine's Lionel RR (O 3-rail)



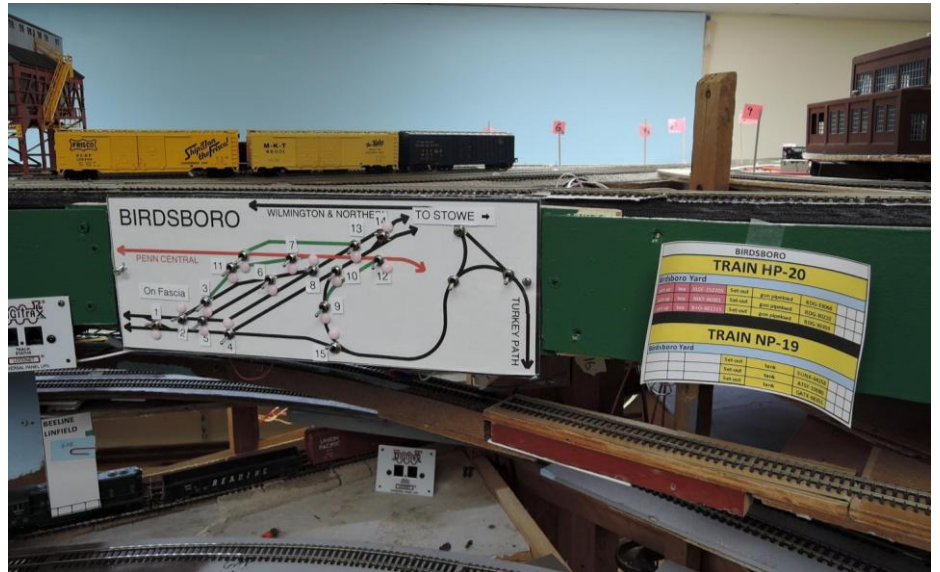


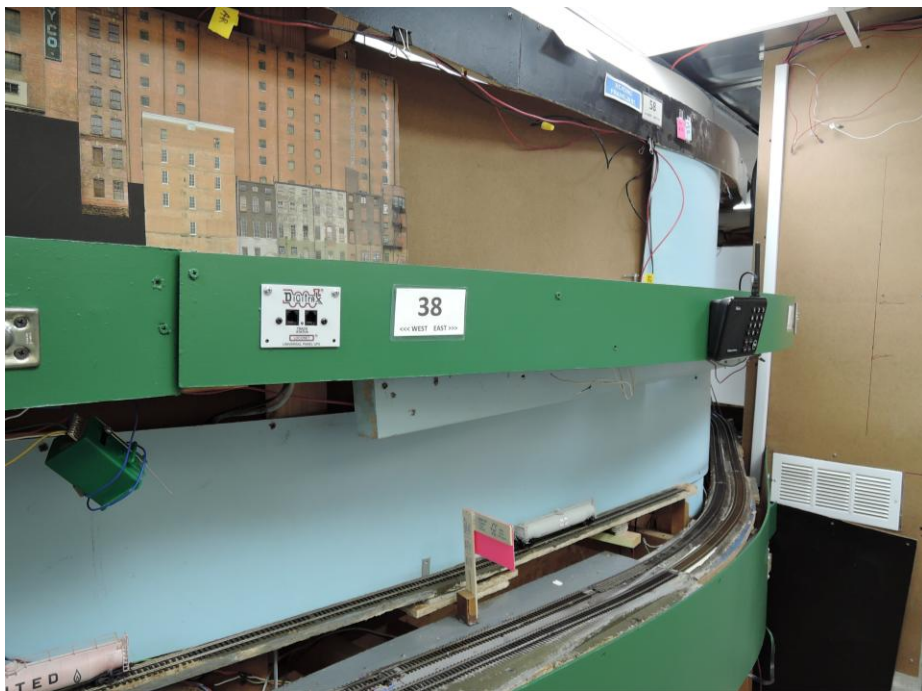


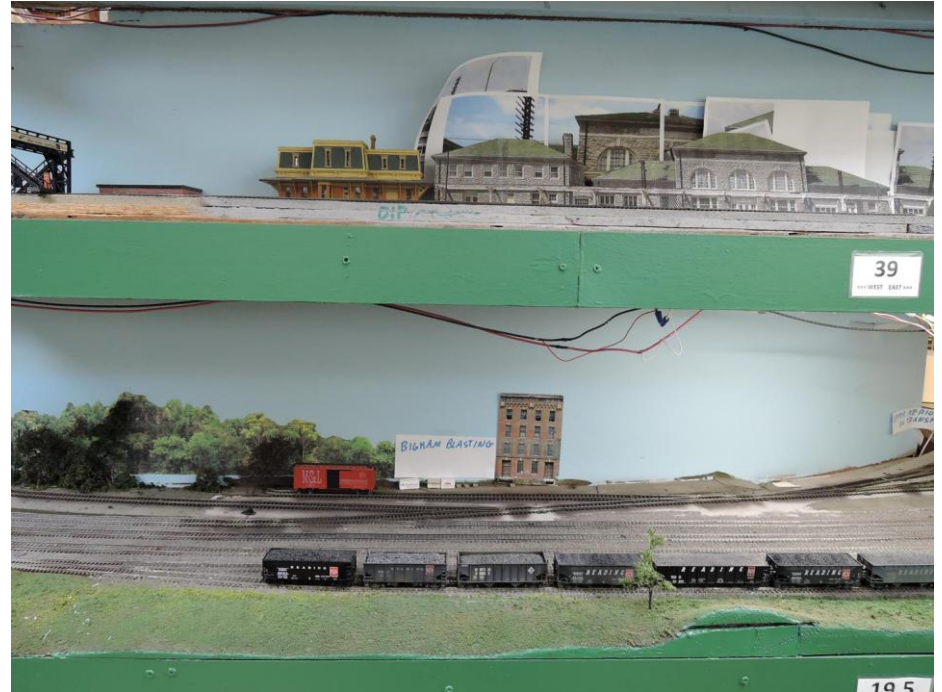


Earl Paine's Reading (HO)









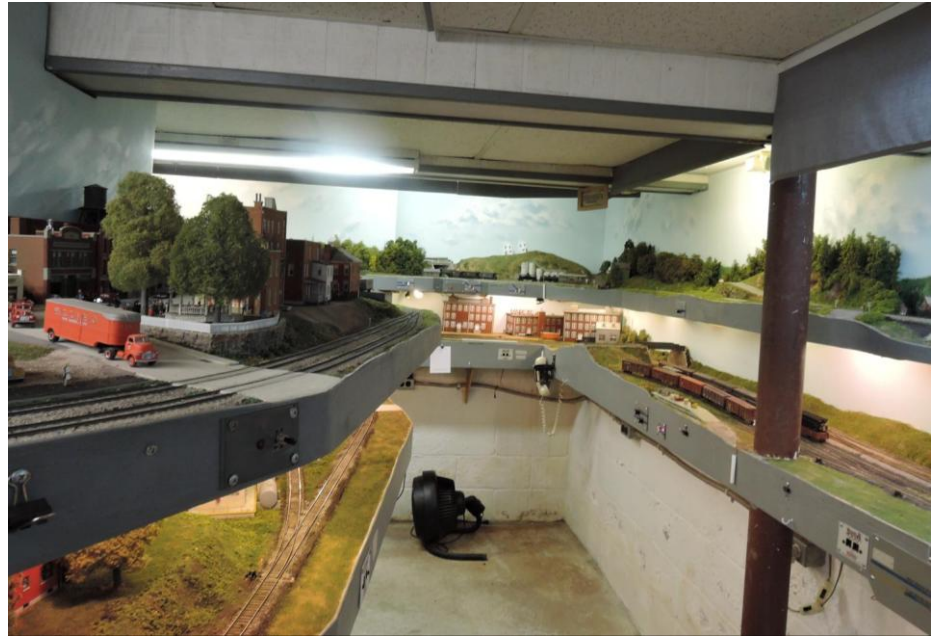


Steve Salotti's NYS&W (HO)









Steve Wysowski's Ansonia & Birmingham (HOn3)









Division Organization

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (elected)

OFFICERS

Superintendent – Joe Walters, MMR (2024)
Assistant Superintendent – Rob Hinkle (2025)
Clerk – Charles Long (2024)
Treasurer – Kevin Feeney (2025)

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Mike Dettinger – Clinics (2024)
Steve Wysowski – Member Outreach (2025)
Jeff Witt – Venues (2025)



AUXILLIARY OFFICIALS (appointed)

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

HELPER SERVICE

EVENTS

Clinics – Mike Dettinger
Layouts – Bill Fagan
Venues – Jeff Witt, Kevin Feeney, Steve Hamilton,
Steve Wysowski
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

MEMBERSHIP

Member Outreach – Steve Wysowski
Membership Records – Charles Long

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM - Earl Paine, Joe Walters MMR,
Bill Fagan, Chip Stevens, Steve Hamilton, Mark Wallace

OPS – 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
Layout Video – Bill Fagan
Photography – Rob Hinkle, Howard Kaplan, Bill Fagan

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:

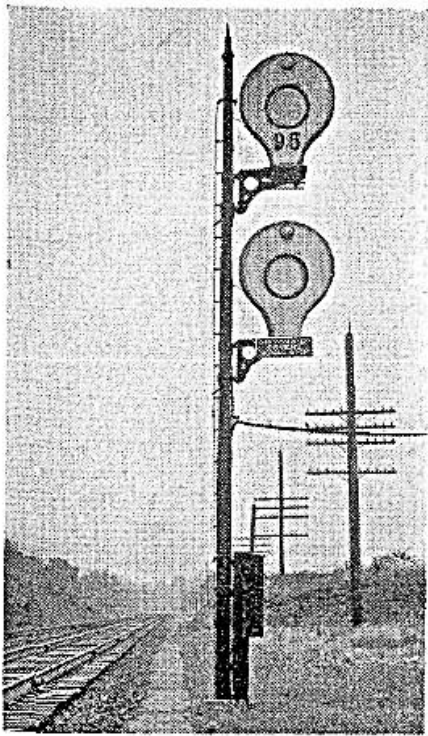
Henning's Trains
128 South Line Steet
Lansdale, PA 19446
215-362-2442
henningstrains.com

10% in addition to already discounted prices

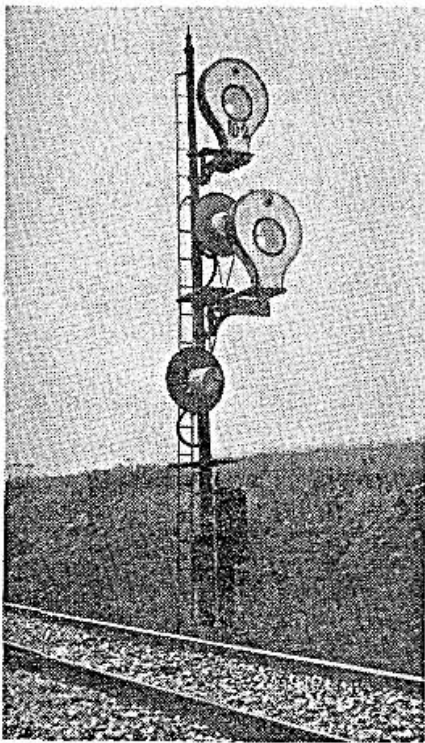
Please let us know of any hobby shops that would be interested in advertising or offering discounts to NMRA members.

Light-Type Signals Installed on the Reading

Reprint of an article in *Railway Signaling*, February 1944



An enclosed disk automatic signal



Above—Lower disk unit on a special platform while the light signals are being installed
Right—An automatic block using search-signal and marker

On the Reading, the replacement of enclosed-disk type home and distant signals with modern color-light type, including respacing of signals to provide a liberal margin of safety in stopping distances between signals, together with the installation of "SS" protection and substitution of light signals for wire-pulled semaphores at interlockings, as a part of an extensive modernization program started in 1941, has introduced a number of interesting features. The territory involved includes the two and four main track branch connecting with the Baltimore & Ohio at Park Junction and extending to Wayne Junction, where connection is made to the Reading's New York Branch, and the territory between Woodlane in the Philadelphia area and Reading, Pa., on what is known as the Main Line.

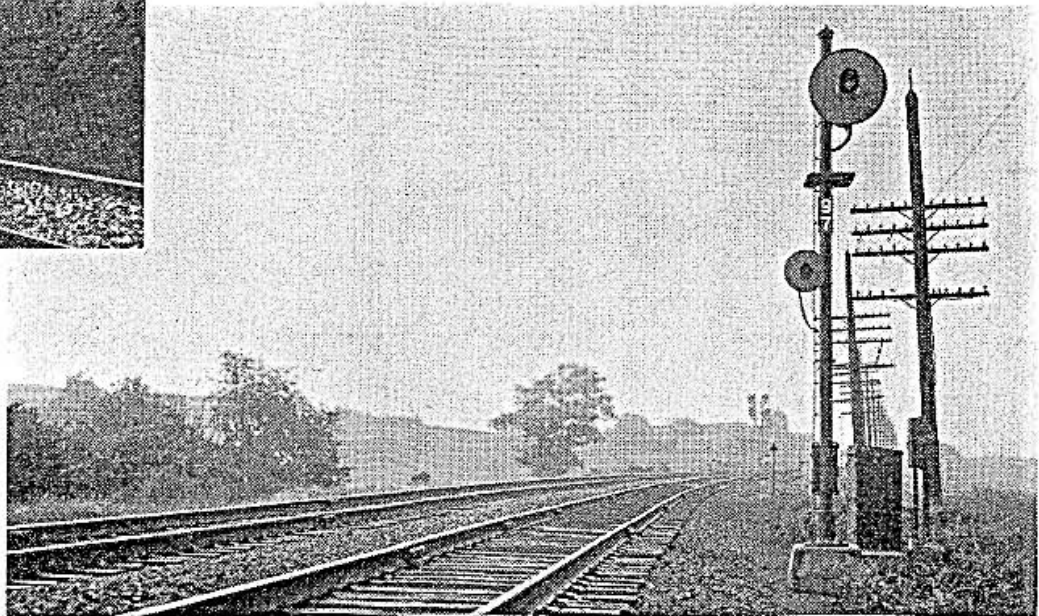
The enclosed-disk home and distant signals, originally furnished by the Hall Switch & Signal Company, were installed around 1900, and, at interlockings, wire-pulled or pipe-connected semaphore route arms, together with home and disk automatic signals located on the same mast, made up an early form of semi-automatic home signal. Practically all of the semaphore and enclosed-disk signals were oil lighted.

Except where new signaling in the form of extensions to existing signaling and additional interlockings were installed, using power-operated semaphore or light-type signals, the original enclosed-disk type of signal remained in service until the replacement herein described.

Changes in Masts

Where no change was to be made in the location of signals, old masts were continued in service by temporarily moving the lower Hall head to an extended platform and installing the new light units on the existing masts. An accompanying picture of automatic signal 102, during the construction period, illustrates how the light units were installed at a lower elevation than the original enclosed-disk signals. The Reading Company standard is to place the automatic signal unit with the red lens 17 ft. above the top of the rail and the marker, or the lower signal unit, 10 ft. above the rail.

Where respacing of signals required an installation at a new location, the mast, which had been originally set in concrete foundation poured in the field, was cut off at the top of foundation with a burning torch. Then this old mast was re-



Part 1 in a series on signals used on the Reading

Extensive program of replacing disk and semaphore signals with search-light signals includes numerous features such as plastic weatherproof insulation on the new signal line wires

By E. W. Reich

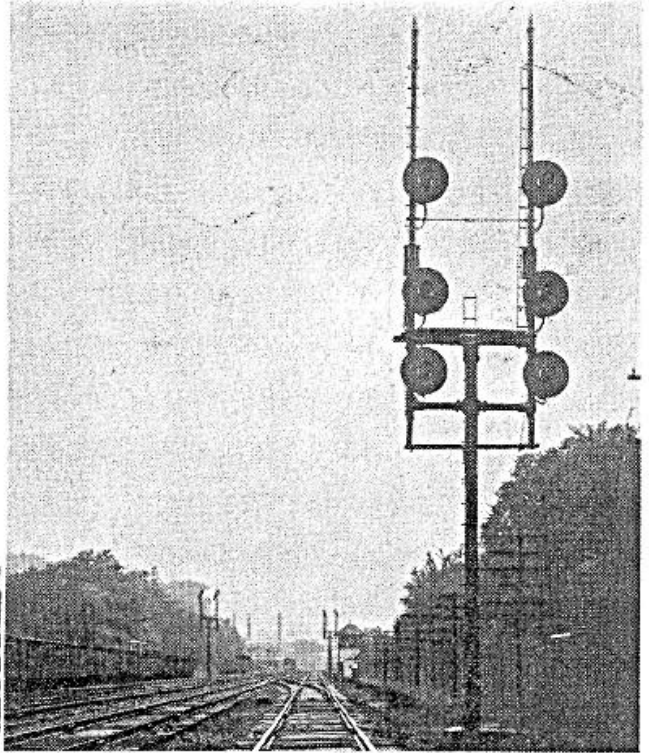
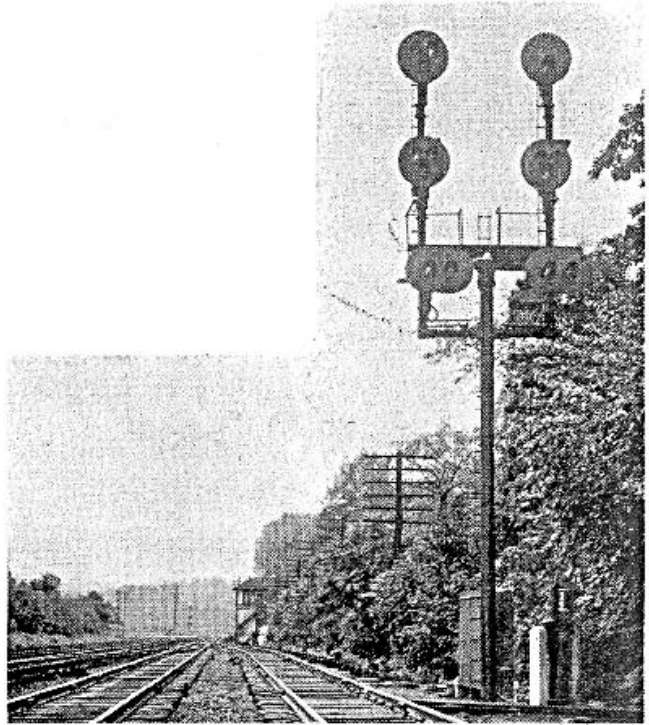
Signal Engineer, Reading Company,
Philadelphia, Pa.

used in a new A.A.R. base casting. After the same manner, bracket poles were retained in service or re-located by applying new bases. Tops of dolls were cut off due to the lower over-all height required by light-type signals. Automatic signal 97, after new light units had been placed in service, is shown in one of the illustrations.

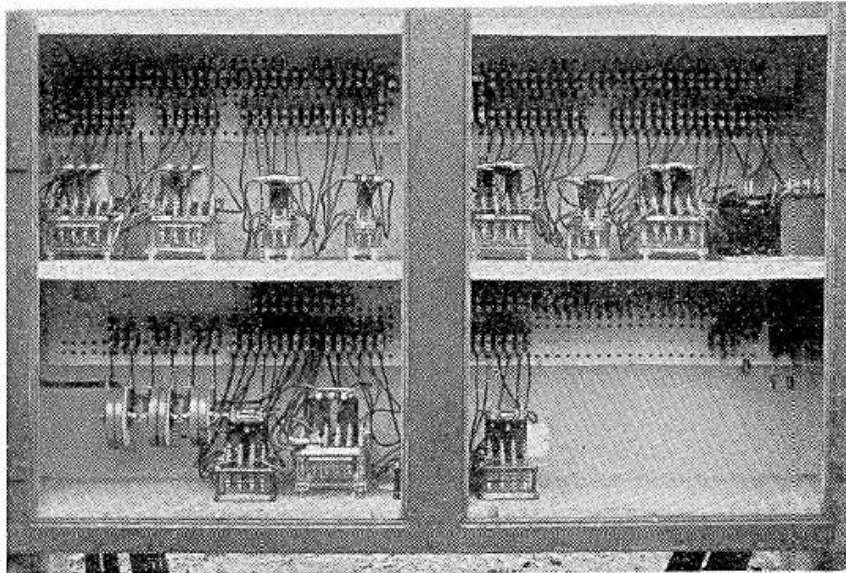
Track Connections and Switch Circuit Controllers

Connections to rails were made by installing two-way boot-legs on the side of track adjacent to relay housing, and then installing long track

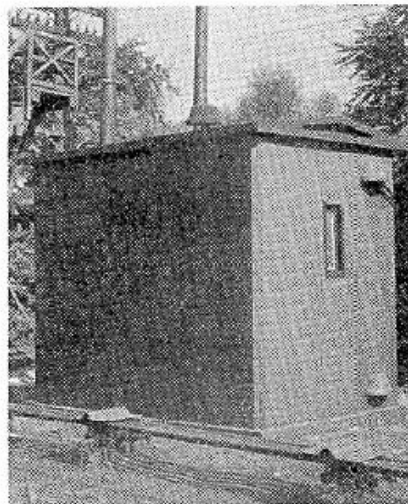
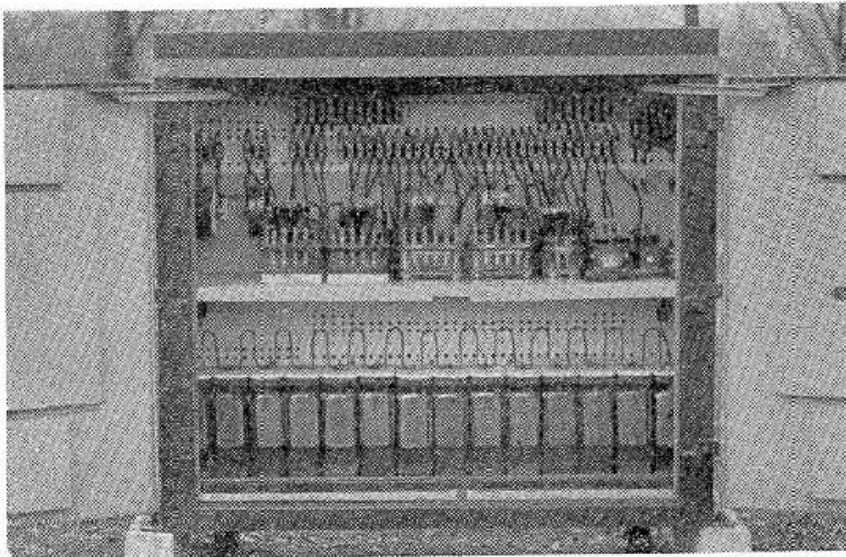
Upper view — Color-light home signals
Right — A view made before high masts for old semaphores were taken down
Below—Double boot-leg with connection to far rail attached to side of tie



New switch circuit controller



Above—Discharge resistors connected across rails
Below—Typical case in a-c. primary territory



Left—Line terminal box. Above—Sectional concrete house

circuit connectors stapled to the side of tie and extending to the far rail.

Each turnout switch and derail, connecting to main track in automatic territory, is equipped with a new switch circuit controller with a self-centering device which will cause the controller arm to move to the center position in the event of a break in the operating rod or connection to the switch point. The controller end of the operating rod is fitted with a ball-and-socket spring connection which automatically compensates for wear, a gooseneck connection being employed to connect the other end of operating rod to the switch point lug. Underground cables to circuit controllers are terminated in a riser-box from which individual wires extend to the controller through the flexible steel conduit.

Instrument Cases

Sheet-metal instrument cases at automatic signals and interlockings are the Reading standard design and are mounted on pre-cast foundation pedestals. These pedestals, which are 3 ft. by 26 in. by 5 in. top, and 8 in. at the base, are installed with approximately 1 ft. of the pedestal extending above the level of the ground and are tied together mechanically by a pre-cast concrete strut located just below the ground level. The relays are set on shock-absorber bases. The Thyrite discharge resistors, shown on the extreme left of lower shelf, are bridged across rails at each end of all track circuits and are used in lieu of arresters. The mid point of each Thyrite resistor is tied in with ground network, including a driven earth ground which is connected to special lug on the side of the metal relay housing. One of the illustrations shows a typical relay case at an automatic signal in a-c. primary territory where the control circuits are energized from rectifiers connecting to a 60-cycle, a-c. power supply, and the signals are approach lighted from this same supply, the primary battery acting as a reserve.

Power Supply

Prior to the installation of light-type signals, the disk signals were energized from a 66-volt d-c. discharge line, which connected to storage cells located at various points along line, each bank of cells operating approximately 10 miles of double, three and four-track signaling. In the interest of conserving line wire, new signals were operated on the local storage or primary bat-

tery until the d-c. storage line circuit could be converted to 440-volt, 60-cycle a-c. distribution line. A typical line terminal box houses a plug-type 440-volt switch, a 440 to 110-volt dry-type transformer and low-voltage arresters across the 110-volt bus.

Lightning protection for the 440-volt distribution line is provided by the installation of Pellet-type arresters, mounted on the crossarms. The ground connection to these arresters is tied in to the metal transformer housing, low-voltage arresters within this housing, and to the steel messenger used to support the line drops from open aerial line wires to the relay housing. By tying all grounded apparatus and earth grounds together at a given location, the lightning potentials are equalized. In addition to the lightning protection previously referred to, all low-voltage line-controlled circuits are protected by arresters located in terminal and instrument cases, and the lighting circuits by a special rare-gas type arrester connected across the lighting bus.

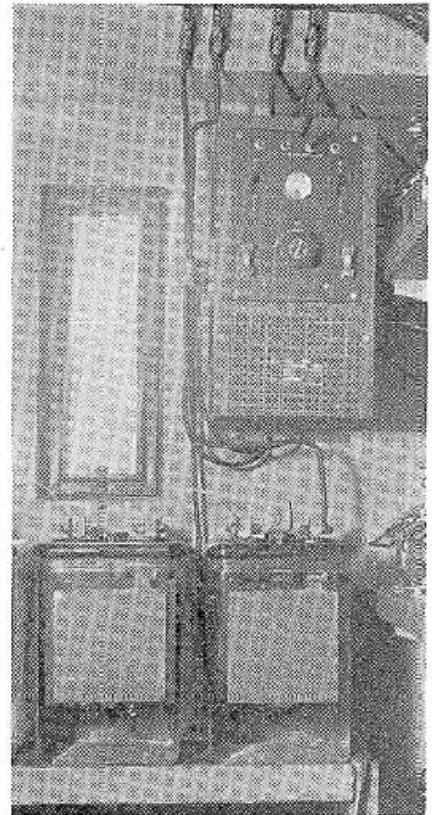
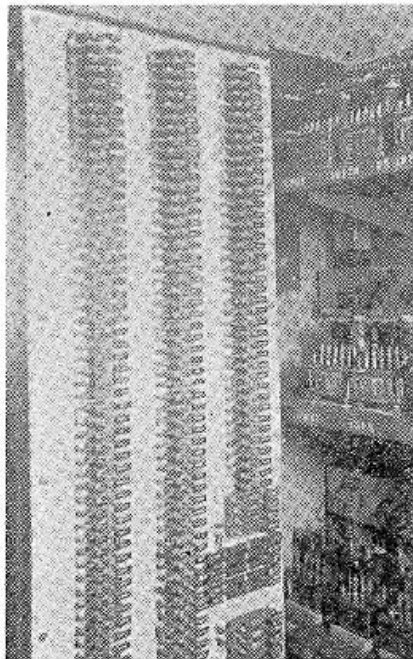
Plastic Weatherproof Insulation

The low-voltage signal line control circuits on a large portion of the territory are on conventional weatherproof No. 10 and No. 12 hard-drawn copper line wires. Where this old line wire was in poor condition, it was replaced in 1941 with No. 10 Copperweld steel, 40 per cent conductivity wire, processed with Formex. The use of Formex as a protection and insulation on low-voltage aerial signal control wires is entirely new. Previous to this installation, the use of Formex, which is a plastic, was limited to motor and apparatus coils. This plastic, which is a compound of inert mineral materials, is expected to be impervious to weathering, and, as it has a dielectric of approximately 4400 volts, its insulation value is superior to weatherproofing. The use of Formex insulated wire reduces the overall circumference of the wire, and thereby the ice loading, all of which has proved advantageous during winter ice storms. This new type of wire is tied to standard glass low-voltage crossarm insulators with No. 10 copper, processed with the same insulating material. The line connections are made with an improved mechanical type of connector.

Changes at Interlockings

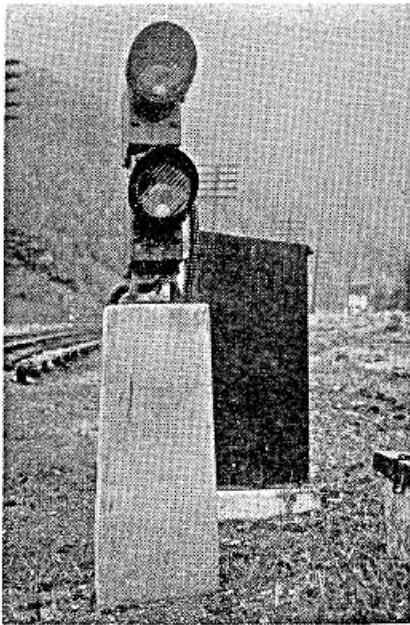
Most of the smaller interlockings, within the territory where the signals were respaced and modernized,

Right—Storage battery and rectifier at rear of house
Below—A terminal board and vertical wire chases



Above—Plug in type polar switch repeater relays
Below—Typical searchlight type home signals





Four-aspect dwarf

are mechanical plants. The modernization included the installation of forced-drop electric locks and approach locking, with a minimum number of time releases to effect an emergency release. To forestall an operator inadvertently clearing a signal for a route leading against current of traffic, an arrangement has been installed which places a requirement on the operator of operating an exit push button, in addition to the reversing signal lever, before a signal will clear with the route set against the current of traffic.

Another new feature is the use of pre-fabricated sectionalized relay housings at interlockings. These relay houses, built to Reading Company specifications, provide a fire-proof structure for the housing of all control apparatus involved in the interlocking network, transformers, storage battery for the interlockings and rectifiers. These houses, which are a standard width of 6 ft., are available in any length in multiples of 2 ft., the vertical side sections being 2 ft. in width. All sections are cast concrete, water-proofed and agitated in the molds at the time of manufacture. The sections are cored for the purpose of limiting the weight. The wall sections are held together by means of steel insert plates and eccentric nuts and bolts to establish uniform spacing. Each section, including the sectional roof, is designed with a ship-lap joint arranged to permit the introduction of caulking compound which insures that structure will be weatherproof. The vertical side sections of the relay house are mounted on reinforced sills which are placed on sub-founda-

tions placed in excavation 24 in. to 30 in. deep to provide a solid footing. The flooring consists of reinforced pre-cast slabs resting on the floor rail, which is an integral part of the base sill.

Each relay house is provided with shelves supported by metal brackets and attached to side walls by means of inserts. In addition, the shelf brackets provide support for an open-top type concrete wire chase with openings of sufficient size to accommodate all wiring without crowding. The wire chases thus provided, permit easy access to each shelf. All circuits entering the relay house are terminated on a main terminal board from which connections are run through inside wire chases using Flamenol insulated wire.

Plug-in-Relays

A special feature of the interlocking work is the use of a plug-in type of polarized switch-repeating relays, the plug-in panels being designed in individual relay units so as to permit installing the exact number, plus one spare, at any interlocking.

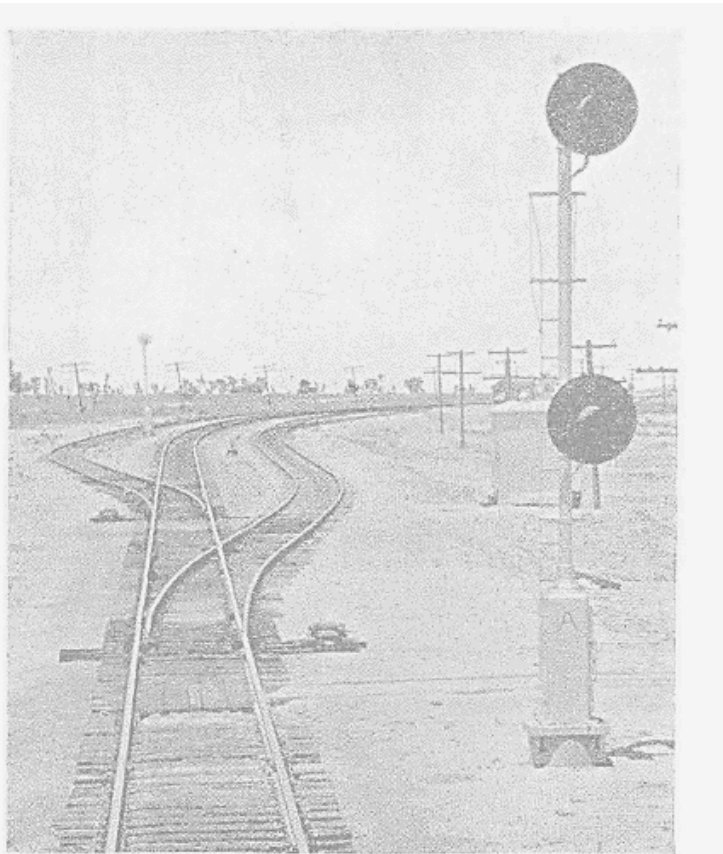
At each interlocking, wall-type indicators have been replaced by small model boards suspended over the interlocking machine whereon tracks are shown as a single line diagram.

"OS" and receding track circuits are distinguished by color and by lights located within the track circuit, and signal indications are repeated by colored lights.

Four-Aspect Dwarfs

A typical three light interlocking home signal is shown in one of the accompanying illustrations. Where trains enter main track with current of traffic, a four-position dwarf-type signal, mounted on concrete pedestal, displays block indication. These signals are arranged to display "Stop," "Approach," "Clear Slow" or "Restricting."

Practically all of the materials required for the work described herein were ordered in 1941, and the construction work actually started in December of the same year. The work has been retarded by a shortage of trained signalmen. Plans for the entire project were developed by Reading's Signal Engineering organization, and construction work in the field was performed by the regularly assigned Signal Department Division maintenance organizations under the supervision of respective Division Supervisors, and W. L. Scott, representing the engineering office as Supervisor of Signal Construction.



West end of double passing track layout at Cima, Nev., in C.T.C. territory on the Union Pacific



Bill Fagan:

The Video Vigilante



Photos are snapshots from videos/slideshows 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. 188 layouts with 812 videos and 2826 followers on YouTube with 1.5 million views.

↓ Konrad Richter's Ashland Sycamore Hill RR

N Scale layout depicting the ASH, Lakes Division from White Ash to Oak Ridge. See this video here: https://youtu.be/Sv3_q4W-mPc?si=F3OWj00hHYOUSdXh



↓ Bob Hubbard's Bangor & Navesink RR

HO Scale with working catenary. Sadly Bob passed away last year. See the video here: <https://youtu.be/4PZgGfG0Q90?si=eo7pxHMmCIRwCp-q>



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*.



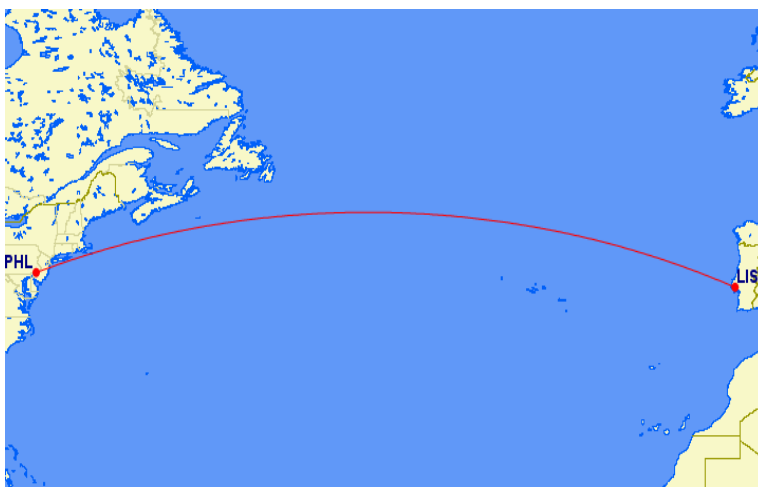
ON THE (RAIL) ROAD WITH KEVIN FEENEY

CONVENTIONS – SHOWS – TRAVEL

A WEEK IN PORTUGAL – December 10–17, 2023

I wasn't even aware that AA flew to Lisbon (LIS) from PHL and that the flight was just over six hours. I found it looking at a dynamic route map showing where AA flies from PHL. I flew to LIS for a weekend when I lived in Bulgaria (2011-2012). This trip will cover more of the country. The same week last year we were in Romania on a guided tour through Transylvania.

Regrettably, I never wrote up that very interesting trip. We booked our flights in coach last August and thought we would upgrade. Just after Thanksgiving, I received an offer from AA to upgrade to premium economy for \$350 each. However, I did not immediately act upon it and when I tried a few days later, I found that the offer had expired. We could have upgraded with miles but we would also have to pay substantial fees.



Portugal is economically the weakest country in western Europe. It has a population of just over 10 million with over 40% of its people living in/near Lisbon or Porto, its second largest city. Its population hasn't grown as some of its citizens have moved to other EU countries for better economic opportunities. Despite the relatively small local population, the Portuguese language is widely spoken by over 225 million people as it is also the official language in Brazil, six African countries, one in Asia, and two in Oceania. I don't speak it, but it is close enough to Spanish that I figured I would get by. This was the only word I learned and it means thank you. This was on a trash can. The weather forecast for Portugal was temperatures in the high 40s to high 50s with passing showers on Tuesday and Wednesday. So, we left our winter coats, hats, and gloves at home.

OBRIGADO

Sunday 12/10

I actually checked in the night before at 9:25pm. I had to enter our passport information again. When I got to the next step, it said an upgrade to premium economy (PE) was available for \$0. Really? I took it. The only negative is that all the window seats were taken so we got two aisle seats in the middle section with an empty seat between us. The plane was a Boeing 787-8, the smallest version of this plane. There were 20 business class seats (1-2-1), just 20 premium economy (2-4-2), and 176 coach (3-3-3) though 48 were listed as main cabin (extra meaning a tad more leg room).

We took the 4:28pm train from Jenkintown and arrived at PHL about 5:20pm. This was a bit early, but better safe than sorry. We checked in at the B terminal as the AA lounge in A West is still not open. I traveled on my US passport this time. In the past when traveling to the EU, I would use my Ireland passport, but we had issues on the return from Bucharest last September. I could not check in online as it said I needed a green card, visa or electronic authorization. We were through TSA PreClear in a flash and went to the AA lounge that was quite crowded. We had some food and just waited for our flight to be called and then made the long walk to the gate in A West.

With the upgrade, we were assigned the first row in PE, but I moved us back one row as I don't like bulkhead seats. The plane was certainly not full. There were about 10 empty seats in PE. Carol and I had aisle seats with two empty seats between us. We settled in for our 9:20pm departure and left 1 minute early. We took off to the north and soon were across New Jersey to near Toms River. We flew to the northeast just south of Long Island and later Cape Cod. Even though Lisbon's latitude is 38.74 vs. Philadelphia at 39.95, the plane still made an arc across the

Atlantic. We were quickly served dinner, which in PE is more food and supposedly higher quality. I binge-watched 4 episodes of Ted Lasso from the 2nd season before trying to get a bit of sleep on what was relatively a short 6-hour, 24-minute flight. We mostly flew at 40,000 feet and at times were going over 620 mph ground speed. With less than an hour to go, we were awakened for breakfast. We came in north of Lisbon and circled to the west to land at 8:43am (12 minutes early) with a five-hour time change.

Monday 12/11

I was very surprised that we came into an open airport. Normally on international flights, you land and are taken through a sterile corridor to clear immigration, etc. In Lisbon, we could have boarded a connecting flight from Terminal 1 without doing any of that. TAP is the national airline and it dominates the Lisbon airport. I went through immigration with my Ireland passport with no problem while Carol had to wait in a longer line for international visitors. We waited for our bags and we were ready to leave in less than 45 minutes. We headed to the metro. I had checked this out beforehand.

The red line terminates at the airport and then runs south along the Tagus River Estuary. Three stops from Lisbon is the Oriente Station that also has service from Comboios de Portugal (CP), the national railroad company. We would take the train north some 300km (188 miles) to Porto. I had reviewed the schedule beforehand and saw there was frequent service with intercity and somewhat faster Alfa Pendular tilting trains. I could have bought tickets online, but did not know how much time it would take to exit the airport, get to the station, etc. As we were walking out, a Viking rep called out to me thinking I was there for their Douro River Cruise. Not this time!

Once in the Oriente Station, there was no signage directing us to the trains that were clearly on an upper level. We were in no hurry so first we went into a nearby supermarket to buy some food to eat on the approximately three-hour trip. Once back in the station, we went up a level only to find a closed ticket window. I left Carol with the bags and walked around until I found an open window and one that sold tickets for intercity trains. I tried to buy our tickets, but learned you must provide ID for each passenger, so I walked back to Carol to get her passport. I got the same man at the window which was helpful. I bought two forward-facing seats (I do NOT ride backwards) on IC621 at 11:39am, scheduled for 3 hours, 14 minutes for first class senior fares of 19€ each (\$41 in total).



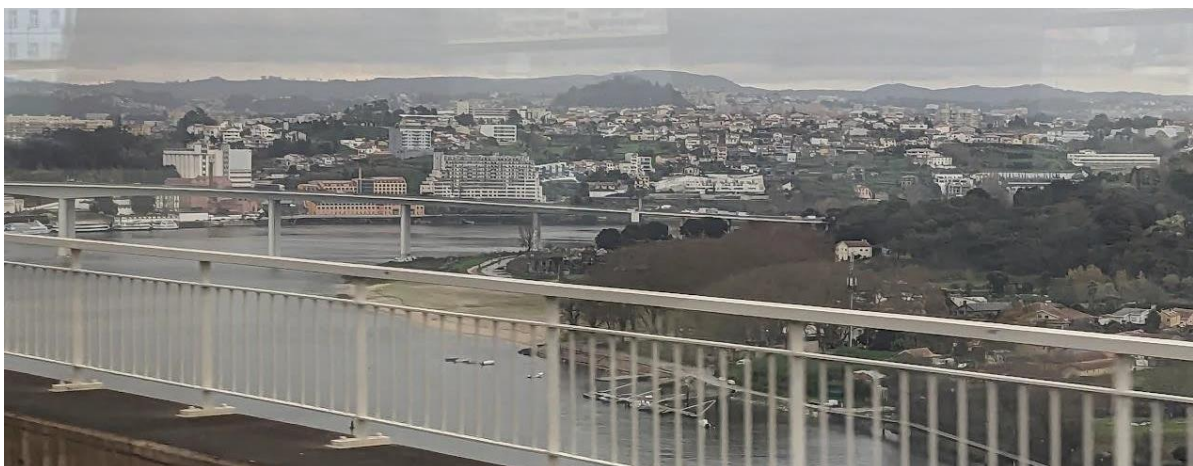
We went up on the platform. Carol wanted to be in the sun while I wanted to railfan. What I saw was a mixture of typical electric MUs (above) and conventional coaches, but with one peculiarity. The tracks are set for the so-called Iberian gauge of 1.668mm (5 feet 5-21/32 inches). This is the second-widest gauge in regular usage anywhere in the world. (Standard gauge used in the US and most elsewhere is 4' 8.5"). The modernistic station was built in 1998 for the Expo '98 (1998 Lisbon Specialized Expo) and there were maybe eight tracks.

Eventually our train came, but I did not see any signage with details of the consist. I said we should stand in the middle and our car #81 turned out to be second from the rear. It was split with half serving as the café car for the train. Our reserved window/aisle seats were just right and in the second section. We settled in for the ride. At first, the train ran next to the Tagus River, which is the longest on the Iberian Peninsula. We passed some maritime facilities and could see stacks of 20' and 40' containers. There were some smaller mountains after we passed the end of the estuary and eventually, the landscape was mostly agriculture. There were a number of stops.

As we approached Porto, the train crossed the Douro River on a high bridge and came into the Campanhã Railway Station that is used for intercity trains and much of Porto's extensive commuter service. The station had a mix of through and stub-end tracks totaling 16. Here the trains were similar, but I also saw a diesel MU that looked like a Budd car.



After a rest stop for Carol, we boarded one of the commuter lines for the short ride to the São Bento Railway Station that is located in the city proper. This station has several stub-end tracks that fed directly from railway tunnels. The station was built in 1910 and is historically significant.





We had some issues booking a hotel there. Just after Thanksgiving, I was trying to use AA Advantage hotels under Carol's name so that she could get needed loyalty points, but the website wasn't working right. When I returned to it a few days before we left, some of the hotels we looked at down by the river were fully booked. Eventually, I booked a boutique hotel that said it was only .75km from the Sao Bento Station and I had printed out a map on how to get there. We don't use our cellphones when overseas as it costs at least \$20 a day. But now we faced two issues. First, there was massive construction outside the station and we could not leave in our intended direction. Second, I was unaware of the topology—it was an uphill walk to the hotel pulling our suitcases.

We tried, but clearly did not know where to go and in desperation got into a cab. Because of the construction, a central plaza, and lots of one-way streets, we rode a lot more than .75km. The ride to the Chic & Basic Gravity Hotel cost 5€ (\$5.41). There was a Christmas tree in the lobby, but it was attached upside down to the ceiling, and similar

weird things throughout the hotel. We got a welcome glass of port wine (named from Porto) and headed to our room to have a nap. (I walked right into the mirror at the end of the hall by our room the next day.) We awoke 2 hours later and had dinner at the hotel. It was early night as the jet lag affects me much more as I get older.



Tuesday 12/12

We were up early because we had an all day tour of the Douro Valley that I had booked online in advance through Living Tours for 169€ (\$191 with a 5% new customer discount). The tour included two wineries for tastings, a river cruise, and lunch. Their office was next to the Sao Bento Station. The clerk at the hotel's front desk gave us a map and showed us the easy way to walk there that was totally different from what I had printed out in advance from Google maps. The walk was just a few turns and all downhill. We came upon the local branch of the Bank of Portugal where a large truck of, no doubt, cash was being unloaded. There were cops with machine guns everywhere. I didn't book the hotel with breakfast because Carol was still drinking her protein shake and the 15€ additional daily charge was above my paygrade. Instead, I bought some pastries and two bottles of lemonade from a café by the station and tour office.

The pastries were good, but the lemonade was not. In the EU, they put artificial sweeteners into many regular beverages. I hate the taste of them, but drank one bottle anyway. Immediately, I started to feel sick on the bus as we left. We arrived in a rest stop about an hour later and I felt worse. I asked Carol to bring me back a bottle of water so I could get rid of the fake taste. I drank that and was sicker. Luckily, I made it off the bus before I puked a few times. The bus continued and I tried to just sleep. We got to the Douro Valley and it was very scenic, but with light rain.

At the first winery, I stayed on the bus while Carol went for the tasting the tour. The following is from her: *The winery was Croft's Quinta da Roêda, a 250-year-old establishment. We saw a mix of lemon, orange and olive trees as we walked through the vineyard. The guide talked about spacing of the vines and the ground cover that were part of their organic growing process. Once in their building, we were seated for a tasting of three wines: bianco, ruby, and tawny port. These were a different taste for me as I normally drink semi-sweet red/white wines. However, once past the first taste, all three were quite good and even better with the chocolate that my table mates all shared with me. Then it was back to the bus and Kevin looked a bit better.*

While Carol was in the winery, the bus drove into Pinhão to refuel. The petrol station was close to the town's train station. The driver repeated the ride back to Croft's so I saw the sights again.



By this time, I was feeling a bit better and was able to drink some water without throwing up. Eventually Carol and the group returned to the van, which rode back into Pinhão, but this time drove down to the Douro River for our boat ride. It seemed that we were combined with two other tour groups as we filled all the chairs on the boat. We had a one-hour cruise up and then back on Douro. We passed several wineries, a westbound Viking long boat, and a short, diesel-powered CP train heading to Pinhão. There was a light rain most of the time and some fog/mist on the upper mountains. Oddly, there was no narration as we cruised.



We rode for about 35 minutes to the next winery through several valley, the sides of which were all terraced with grapevines everywhere. I forgot the name of that winery, but then remembered that I took this cork as a souvenir. They have been around since 1952—just like me! The winery is actually of a co-op of 550 local growers and is located in a small village in the heart of the demarcated wine region of Douro. When we arrived, there were two Viking motor coaches parked so this was one of their tours on the Douro River Cruise.





We had a several-course lunch, but I only ate a little. Several wines were served during the meal, and afterwards there were glasses of port and a shot of grappa, which is 77% alcohol and made from grape pomace. Next, we toured their wine museum that had large stone vats where they actually do crush the grapes by having people stomp on them. We were told this is done to raise the temperature of the grapes to aid in the fermentation. There was a stand selling their wines and other items, but we did not buy anything. From there, it was about 75 minutes back to Porto and it was dark when we arrived. However, there was a Christmas market next to the train station so we stopped for a look.



Now knowing where the hotel was, we walked back a slightly different way to see more of the local buildings, some of which were covered in ceramic tiles. This is a common architectural feature in Portugal. I still was not feeling the best so I just went to sleep. Carol watched TV and ate some snacks.

Wednesday 12/13

Before checking out, I went to a nearby bakery and bought my breakfast. I grabbed a cup of tea from the hotel's buffet and made an iced tea. We checked out and headed to Sao Bento, but yet another way. We just headed downhill and turned towards the left. Historically, Porto was known for its trams. While the tracks and wires were in place, we didn't see any. Cars were parked on the tracks and in some places the tracks seemingly dead ended. When I googled this to find out why, I learned the remaining tram service was suspended due to construction of the new metro pink line. This is the same construction that made it hard to find our hotel when we arrived.

In the Sao Bento Station, I was a bit confused. I did not see any trains to Campanhã listed on the display board for the particular track on which we had arrived. So, I went to the ticket counter to ask and was told they all go

there. The display board merely showed the final destination. Duh! I should have known that. A few minutes later, we were in Campanhã for our 10:38am train back to Lisbon. Knowing we would take this train, I had bought the tickets online before we left the US. The senior fare was the same in euros but the USD was \$43 or slightly more. We were early so I had time to explore the station area. Turns out several METRO lines come to the surface at the edge of it. We waited on the platform for our train where I saw a sign showing the consist, which was exactly the same as the one on the trip here.



This time we were in car #11 that would be the first car on the train right behind the electric locomotive.

Before leaving, I had printed out the details of the trip and followed it as the train made a dozen stops. The train was several minutes late at the intermediate stops but arrived in Lisbon's **Santa Apolonia** Station on time at 13:53. Beneath the station is one end of Lisbon's METRO Blue line so we headed there.



We added 5€s to metro cards we already had and then rode five stops to Marques de Pombel Plaza. The Marques was a Portuguese reformer and virtual ruler of the country from 1750 to 1777. A statue of him is located in the middle of a major traffic intersection. It was also three blocks from our Holiday Inn Express hotel for the next four nights. It was a short, easy walk, but it gave us a good sense of the city. The hotel was in an older building with a huge metal spiral stairway in the interior central core. We had a decent-sized room on the third floor, though the ground floor was floor 0; the breakfast room was on floor -1 (basement). Carol settled in while I searched online using the hotel's Wi-Fi for a place to eat dinner later.

We walked back to the plaza which was next to a large park that was hosting Wonderland Lisboa. This was a Christmas market with rides and a portable skating rink even though the temperature was about 50°. We made a big loop through it and then headed back towards the hotel. People there typically eat late, like 7:30pm, but it was 5:30pm and we were hungry. There were several places nearby to choose from. We went to one well-rated place,



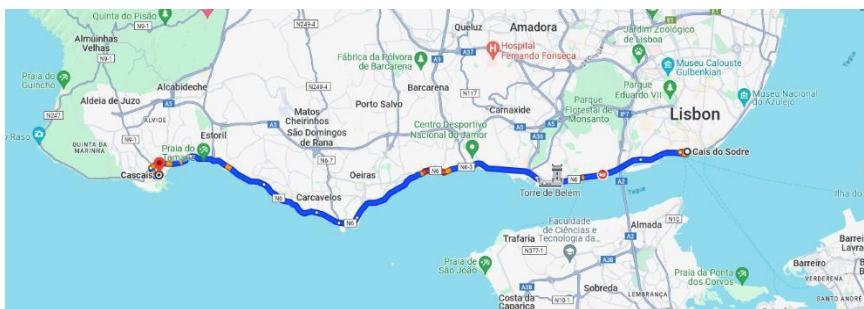
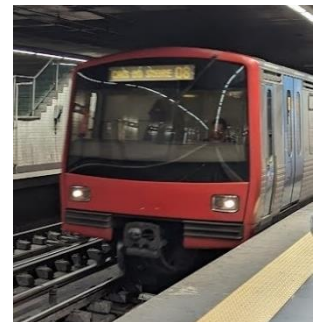
but the things on the menu were just too funky. Across the street was Slang, so we ate there. Since we were the only ones there, we got excellent service from the staff there. Carol had a pork shank with cauliflower puree, while I had a local cod dish. The server was English and the bartender made us a huge pitcher of sangria. In talking with him, he asked where we were from and I said Philly. Turns out he would be flying through



PHL in February on his way to Cancun for vacation. He said he had a long layover and wanted to see the Rocky statue. I offered to be his tour guide and gave him my email so he could contact me. We'll see if that happens.

Thursday 12/14

I went down for the breakfast, which was a typical European buffet. We left the hotel and walked a few blocks down a central avenue to a different metro station. We rode the blue line to the junction with the green line and then rode that to Cais do Sodre, which is a riverside train station at the bottom of Lisbon. There, we switched to an electrified CP commuter line to Cascais, which is on the Atlantic Ocean about 30km (19 miles) to the east. I bought a ticket for Carol and then saw it came on the same fare card as the metro cards we already had, so I just added 5€ to my card. The ride took about 40 minutes with frequent stops. However, it was very scenic as the tracks were right next to the river, and



then the ocean in most places. I had made the same trip when I was in Lisbon back in 2012. In Cascais there is a beach. Carol put her foot in the water and said it wasn't too cold. There also are marinas plus lots of stores and restaurants. We walked around and came to yet another Christmas market where Carol bought a gift for one of her relatives.

It was time for lunch and the places there all had touts that tried to get us to sit down. We just picked one and had a nice lunch. We had similar dishes, which were like a fish stew. We went to the PO there to buy a stamp for Carol's postcard, but there was a long line.





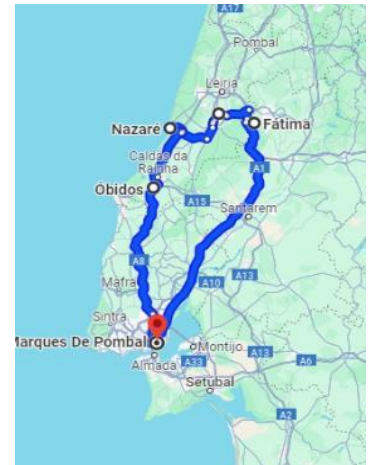
Back in the train station, Carol bought a soda and we rode this yellow train back to Lisbon. There, we walked along the water's edge and saw a passenger ferry that goes to the other side of the river. We walked around the train station to enter from the other side and



saw one of the small trams that Lisbon is famous for. I didn't see any restaurant charges or pictures from dinner that night so guess we just had snacks after the big late lunch.

Friday 12/15

Before we left the US, I booked an all-day tour from Lisbon to Fátima, Batalha, Nazaré, and Óbidos from the same company we used for the Douro Valley tour in Porto. In total, the tour covered over 315 kms (197 miles) and cost 144€ (\$163) for both of us with a 5% first-time customer discount. As it turned out, it was well worth it. The confirmation gave the GPS coordinates for the start of the tour and it was just outside the park with Wonderland. It said to look for someone with a red coat, but we didn't see anyone. We waited and after a few minutes I walked over to



a ticket window for Gray Line tours and found that the tour was actually with them. We waited for our group to be formed and just after 9am left in a small van with eight other tourists plus a trilingual guide (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) and driver. The guide pointed out some of Lisbon's sights as we drove to a highway that at first was parallel to the rail line to Porto. As we were further along, we passed small mountains that are covered with

eucalyptus trees that were brought in from Australia and are used to make paper.

After about 1.5 hours, we arrived in Fatima, now a town of some 13,000 folks. However, back in 1917, it was a small farming village when the Blessed Virgin Mary is said to have appeared to three child shepherds. As such, it is now a major Catholic shrine and pilgrimage site. We saw signs for the holy site, but were first taken to a super-sized store selling statues of the BVM in various sizes, hundreds of rosary beads, and other religious articles. It also had bathrooms, and a coffee shop. We bought a statue for our priest back home.





Next, the guide dropped us off by the shrine and said she would pick us up after lunch. I did not know what to expect, though my mind pictured something like the grotto at Lourdes. In Fatima, the visions were on a tree that had since died from folk taking cuttings as a relic. Here there was a yuge paved open area with large churches at both ends and the actual shrine off to one side. We went into the basilica church to attend the 11am mass in Portuguese. Afterwards, we saw where two of the child shepherds are buried. Both died from the Spanish flu a few years after the apparitions. The third child became Sister Maria Lúcia, and died in 2005 at age 97. We stopped by the actual shrine where folks were buying candles to light as an offering. We walked across the open area to the modern church at the other end, which can seat over 8000.



Under the plaza area was a chapel where priests were hearing confessions in various languages. The one in English was an Indian priest studying for a PhD in Rome, and came here on his break.



We left the area and walked into town looking for a place for lunch. I wanted a hamburger and the man at one place said they had them. We sat down and no one came to take our order. Instead, a few minutes later, two nice burgers with bacon showed up. After that I ordered a nice flan for dessert.

We met up with the tour group and headed to the second stop, a medieval monastery in Batalha.



Construction started in 1386 and ended about 1520. It was used by the Dominicans until the mid-18th century after which it was abandoned and fell into ruins. It was restored in the late 19th and early 20th century becoming first a national monument and later a museum. In 1983, it was added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites.



It was about a half hour until our next stop in Nazare that is a traditional fishing village and now also a beach resort. Our stop was on the top of an adjacent mountain that gave us this view.



Carol bought some nuts from a vendor dressed in traditional clothing with seven layers. It was said that a wife dressed like this when her husband went off for work for a week. Each day she removed one of the layers so by the time he got home there wasn't much clothes left for him to remove.



It was about another half hour to our fourth and final stop in Obidos. This was a medieval village surrounded by a 14th century fort. It is said to be one of the most picturesque places in Portugal, and there were hundreds of tourists there. Perhaps more than usual as the place was specially decorated for Christmas. We walked



down the narrow main street that was lined with shops selling souvenirs and a locally-made cherry liquor that was served in a small, solid chocolate cup. We bought a small bottle of the liquor and two stuffed cod fish cakes for 10€ that we had later for dinner.



It was about a 1.25 hr ride back to Lisbon, and it was dark. We got back and saw the Wonderland Christmas Market was quite crowded. We walked to a supermarket and bought some takeout food to go with our cod cakes and ate our dinner in our hotel's breakfast room.

Saturday 12/16



This was our last day in Lisbon and we set out to see the most of it by riding on a hop on/hop off tour bus. There were actually three competing tour companies. We went with the yellow bus that is run by Carris, the City's bus company. That company offered a variety of tours on buses, trams, and boats, but more importantly their one day ticket was



also good for the public trams, funiculars, and a unique feature in Lisbon, lifts.

The ticket cost 21€ each (total \$46) and we were able to board the bus just a few blocks from our hotel. We went on the Belem tour, but where we boarded was near the end of the tour. It went through part of the downtown, and then we exited at Praca da Figueira. This was a large square set up with food vendors. As a snack, we split a piece of chocolate yule log cake that was very good.

We walked around a bit and then reboarded a Belem tour bus. The tour went west and ended up down along the river where there are many museums. We passed a transit museum, but did not stop. We exited at the Torre de Belem that was a fort on the river. There along the river, we had a nice view of the April 25th Bridge. The bridge, which looks very much like the Golden Gate in San Francisco, is named for the 1974 date of the revolution that overthrew Portugal's authoritarian government. In 1990, an electrified rail line was added to the lower level as allowed for in its 1966 construction. The yellow bus ran every 25 minutes, so we were able to board the next one and rode to the cruise terminal. There we walked around



and saw this large group of Bird, Lime, and other electric scooters.



There were a number of restaurants there but we weren't hungry. Back on the bus, we rode to the ending/starting point. I should mention that the sidewalks and even some of the streets were made out of small cut stones. It is known as Portuguese pavement and some of the patterns were quite elaborate. From there we walked a few blocks to one of the public trams and rode for over an hour. The narrow gauge line twisted and turned as it ran through narrow streets. It also went up to the higher level, and then came back down. The ride was free with our yellow bus ticket or else it would have cost 3€ each.

Eventually, we came back to where we started, and then we walked through a pedestrian zone where Carol saw a store going out of business and bought a red/black flannel dress for Christmas for 8€. We had trouble finding the Santa Justa Lift. This is a public elevator that goes to an upper level and looks a bit like the Eiffel Tower. There was a line so we had to wait awhile. The ride was free with our yellow bus ticket; otherwise it would have been 5.30€ each. Unfortunately, the observation deck was closed so we just looked out, and then rode back down. The pictures that follow show 147' tall lift and the view from the top.





There was public Wi-Fi on the lift, and I looked for a restaurant for dinner. I saw a nice one on Tripadvisor, but then we could not find it. However, we were on a street with many restaurants. We picked one with a sign showing special prices, but it was a bit of bait and switch as they had a cover charge and even charged for butter. Carol had lamb chops and I had an unusual dish of pork and clams. Still the food was very good and the ultimate \$53 cost



was reasonable. The staff at this restaurant were all from Nepal. At other restaurants, the staff was from Bangladesh. Tipping there was not a big deal and we generally just left 10% though at some places it had to be in cash.

Back on the ground, we walked over to yet another Christmas market, but this was the nicest one we saw in Lisbon. We walked through, but did not buy anything.



Since we had used up the money on the metro cards, we decided to walk to our hotel that was several blocks away but uphill. We stopped to ride one of three funiculars that are in Lisbon. The fare was 3.90€ each (and each way), but again free with our yellow bus ticket. This was a tram that was over 100 years old that was raised in the back to keep it level. On the top of the roof was a pantograph. The well-used control unit or “chopper” was made by GE.



Back down the hill, we continued our walk and were in the hotel about 15 minutes later. Carol stopped to buy a soda en route. We packed up and made it an early night as we had a 9am flight back to PHL the next morning.

Sunday 12/17

As we checked out, I asked the clerk to call a taxi to take us to the airport. It came promptly and it was a quick ride to the Lisbon airport as there was no traffic at 6am on a Sunday. The ride cost 15€ which we paid in cash. I was surprised by the number of folks in the terminal at that hour. We found where to check-in for our flight. We had been offered an upgrade for money when we checked-in on Saturday morning, but passed. I should mention that I was surprised by the time of the return flight given that our flight there arrived around 9am. Turns out that AA changed the schedule such that the PHL–LIS flight now left at 7:30pm and arrived about 7:30am. I asked about what lounge we could use and the agent said to go immediately to the gate as several folks had missed the flight the day before. We cleared immigration quickly, though this time Carol was done before me. We headed to the gate and had to walk through the duty-free stores that had signs saying that people from UK were now eligible to shop there. One of the stores was selling expensive tins of sardines and other fish. It looked like cat food tins to me (next page).



Leaving the stores, I saw a sign for the lounges so we went there. If I am up that early, I must eat something. It was a generic lounge that served many airlines. I ate a few pastries and made an iced tea. Eventually, we left and made it to the gate where I was surprised to see two other AA planes nearby. Turns out AA flies there from MIA, CLT, and DFW in addition to PHL. On the ground by our 787-8 were these markings showing where the various aircraft should stop, some of which were for planes no longer in service like B753.





We boarded and had window and aisle seats in row 11, and the middle seat was empty. The plane was about two thirds full. We left around 9am and took off to the northeast and then made a big arc to head to the west. Doing so we passed over the Vasco da Gama Bridge, which is 12km (7.5 miles) long and the longest in the EU. The bridge was built for the 1988 Lisbon World Exposition. As we continued the turn to the west, I had a nice view of the April 25th Bridge.

I settled in for the 7'45" flight across the Atlantic. We were served a dinner meal about 1.5 hours later, followed by a snack an hour before we landed. I rewatched one of the Ted Lasso episodes that I watched on the flight over as it takes several views before I can fully understand the English dialogue. I also watched Elf for the umpteenth time and then a new sci-fi, dark comedy movie called Jules that I would recommend. We landed a bit early and were kept on the plane until just

before noon as that is when CBE opens. We were quickly off the plane and were one of the first ones through immigration. There were no more paper forms and the officer just asked a few questions about food, and then we were just waived through customs.



If it had been a weekday we would have been able to make a 12:40pm train, but with the weekend schedule, we had to wait till 1:10pm, and by 2:04pm we were in Jenkintown. We drove home and did a few things before heading to the 4:30pm Mass at our church.

RECENT & FUTURE TRAIN SHOWS

I don't follow sports; I don't fish or play golf. However, I sure do get to a lot of train shows.

PLANO/IRVING TEXAS - January 20–22, 2024

This was my fourth time at this two-day show that is probably the biggest one in Texas. It is probably unique in that it isn't sponsored by a single club, but rather by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs, a consortium of 24 clubs and organizations. This includes two NMRA Divisions, the local NRHS chapter, and 21 model railroad clubs / modular groups in a variety of scales. The attendance this year was 4,933 including kids.

This year, I probably came the furthest to attend, given I actually flew to Dallas Fort Worth (DFW), and spent a weekend there, on the way back from an eleven-day trip to Japan. This show was held at the Plano Event Centre, which is a full service, multi-purpose venue with 86,400 sq. ft. of flexible space. The show opened at 10am and as I approached the building, I could see there was construction going on by the front side. So, I entered through one of the side doors and paid my \$10 entry fee with a credit card.

The main room has modular layouts in the center and vendor/ sale tables along the walls, while the halls and smaller rooms have vendors and sale tables from the various clubs and groups. I have always found these tables to be a major buying opportunity. One year, I bought 10 Sunshine and other vintage kits for \$2 each and was able to sell them on eBay for MANY times that. There were other layouts in two of the side rooms and in the central hall. Having been there before, I knew the general locations but found that some groups had moved this year.

This group was in the center hall, just behind the organizer's booth. It included some realistic and fantasy scenes. The module on the right was very relevant to me, given I was just in Japan.



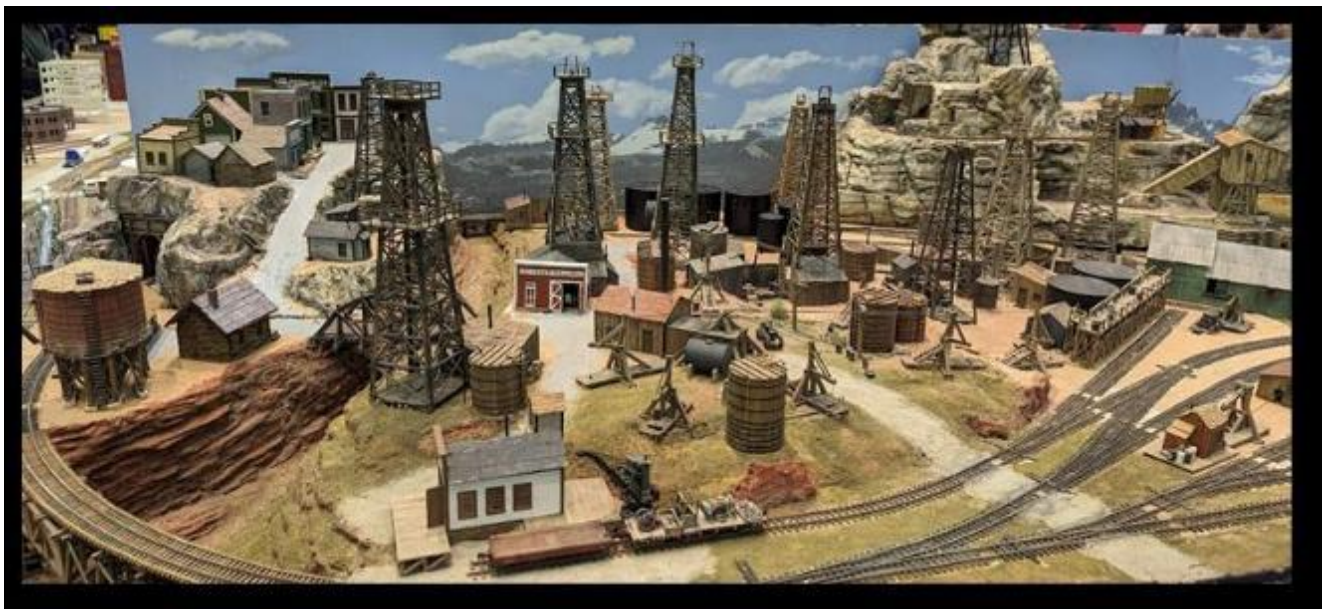
Model railroad purists would take issue with the *Candyland* module, however the public does find ones like this interesting and it does bring folks into the hobby. In fact, at the NMRA booth in the center of the main room, attendees were able to make a mini diorama using Kato N track and other materials. In the main hallway, there was a display of similar dioramas made previously.

This huge mountain was on the Lone Star Flyer (S scale) layout.





Being in Texas, hav ing oil wells on this HO western theme layout certainly made sense to me.



Having a stockyard also makes sense.





This scene was on a nice On30 layout.

This neat scene is on a HO modular layout from the Denton Model Railroad Club. I had seen this scene before when I saw some modules set up at their club location during a prior visit. The red car is a classic Athearn Blue Box 40 foot pulpwood bulkhead flatcar. Having the freight car on a siding would have made more sense to me.



I was there for several hours looking at the modular layouts and shopping at the dealer and club tables. I bought a bunch of HO vehicles for Eric Dervinis. I regularly shop for him and two other friends at the shows I attend. If I see something that I think they might want, I just snap a pix and send them a text with it and the price. They let me know if they want it or not. The folks from Spring Creek Model Trains in Nebraska filled one of the side rooms. I made some great buys for my layout and for resale. One table was selling large-size, ATSF employee timetables from the 1930s. I bought a plastic sleeve that had three of them for \$5 and it sold for \$62 on eBay; a single ATSF ETT that also cost me

\$5, sold for \$22.75. I am sorry that I did not buy the whole pile that was available. Selling things like this certainly helps to cover the costs of my train show trips! On the other hand, I bought a Westerfield resin kit for another friend from one club table and when I looked later, the box with lots of tissue paper was basically empty. More on this later in this report.

At the show, there was a schedule of clinics that ran during the day. I have attended some of the clinics in the past when I was at the show for the whole day, but not this year. There was also a layout tour. This year there were 12 layouts available at varying times over that weekend. I left the show about 1:30pm and went back to pick up my wife Carol who had slept in (after the flights from Tokyo) at a nearby Holiday Inn. We headed out to see two of the layouts. The first was an individual in Plano. Sometimes my wife likes to just stay in the car, but she came in to see this vintage-style HO layout and ended up being part of the show. The older modeler, who seemed to have a set regime, had installed a number of 12V lights and operating features and he asked Carol to throw the switches.



However, there was one operating feature that just blew me away. In the very back of the layout you can see tunnel portals and what seems to be a roadway between them. Well, the road operated too. Turns out the modeler had glued various HO automobiles to two sandpaper belts that represented the roads. When Carol threw the appropriate switch the two lanes of traffic moved in opposite directions and continued to do so until the switch was thrown again. The streetlights on the roadway were lit too. I was able to walk around to the back of the layout and see how this worked. It was really strange to see the cars flip upside down as the belt ran over a pulley assembly at the end. Presumably there was a similar setup in the tunnel at the other end. Amazing!

We left there and drove to the TNMRC in the northern part of Dallas. I know this club very well, having visited it when I attended the Plano shows in January 2021, 2022, and 2023. I was also at this club for two operating sessions during the Texas Express, the NMRA's Annual Convention that was held in nearby Irving, late last August. I was a yardmaster at

each operating session, accumulating time in that category for my Chief Dispatcher AP Certificate. The club now hosts weekly operating sessions if you are ever in the area (first photo on next page).

The club rents space in a modern commercial development and has built a very large HO layout and has started work on a smaller N scale one as you enter their space. The HO track plan is a series of looping peninsulas. On the back side of the room, there is a large steel mill in the right rear corner and a large city scene in the left rear corner. There are several major yards and a variety of other scenes, all of which are very well done. The second photo on the next page is of a model that was scratch built by one of the club members.

VISIT US TODAY!!

OPEN HOUSE



OPEN HOUSE

Texas Northern Model Railroad Club

**Our club layout is open to the public today
Hours are 10:00am - 6:00pm ADMISSION IS FREE**

Located at 11999 Plano RD Suite #154 (Between Forest LN and Walnut ST)

Come see the largest permanent model railroad club in the Dallas area. Our HO SCALE display is over 2,000 sq ft.

We currently have over 90 members!



Mountain Line



HO Layout Track Design



Steel Mill



City Scene

Club hosts a weekly Rail Operations Session



NEW MEMBERS Are Welcome!

N SCALE LAYOUT UNDER CONSTRUCTION Many areas have been recently upgraded!

TNMRC is a 501c3 Organization and is an NMRA Affiliate Club

Visit our website: www.texasnorthern.org



While some scenes are reflective of Texas, the layout does not follow any particular prototype. Members run their own equipment, so of course I was very pleased to see an ICRR locomotive with some yellow Peabody Coal hoppers in the background.



Nor is there a particular era. Witness this steam engine pulling a sting of classic 40-foot reefers.



We left the club, went for a nice Mexican dinner in Irving and then drove to a different Holiday Inn there where we stayed for Saturday and Sunday nights. As luck would have it, our room faced the elevated tracks of the DART line that goes to the DFW airport from the east (Dallas). TEXRail goes to DFW from the west (Ft. Worth) and by next year there will be a new DART Silver Line to DFW from Plano. This was the view out our hotel window every few minutes.





On Sunday morning, we went to Mass at the chapel on the University of Dallas campus and then headed out for some sightseeing and more layouts. Our first stop was at the Irving Archives and Museum. This is a 22,000-square-foot facility that opened in a government building back in February 2020. For some reason, admission that day was free. In the museum, we learned how Irving grew from a small town that was plotted by some early 20th century entrepreneurs alongside a stop on the Rock Island Railroad to a city with a population of over 255,000. Once formalized as a town, Irving grew by annexing unincorporated land and is located approximately midway between Dallas and Ft. Worth. The railroads there played a big part in Irving's early growth, while the huge DFW Airport that opened in 1974 and covers 26.9 sq. miles (bigger than the island of Manhattan in NYC) has been a more recent factor. The museum abuts Rock Island Road and the building faces what were the original RI tracks that are now operated by Trinity Rail

Express (TRE).

We left the museum and drove past the TRE station that was a short distance away. As we approached Irving's original downtown, I saw the depot on the prior page in its Heritage Park. It is a replica of the depot that was built in Irving by the Chicago, Rock Island & Gulf Railway in 1904. At one time, Texas required railroads operating in the state to be locally incorporated. Each Class I that operated there, like the RI, had a Texas subsidiary. The SP had the SSW (Cotton Belt) while MOPAC had the T&P. On the side of the building was this odd looking FW&D caboose. A historical plaque in front of it said it was built from an old wooden box car during WWII.



We drove towards the North Texas N-Trak club, but had trouble finding their location. We had its address but when we got there all I could see was a closed up hobby store. Finally looking around I saw a small sign with the club's name on an adjacent door. Once inside, I learned the owner of the former hobby store had started the club which remained with a permanent layout there. Two members were present, one of which was setting up to operate his train. We spoke for a while and then I left to see another layout. Carol waited in the car.

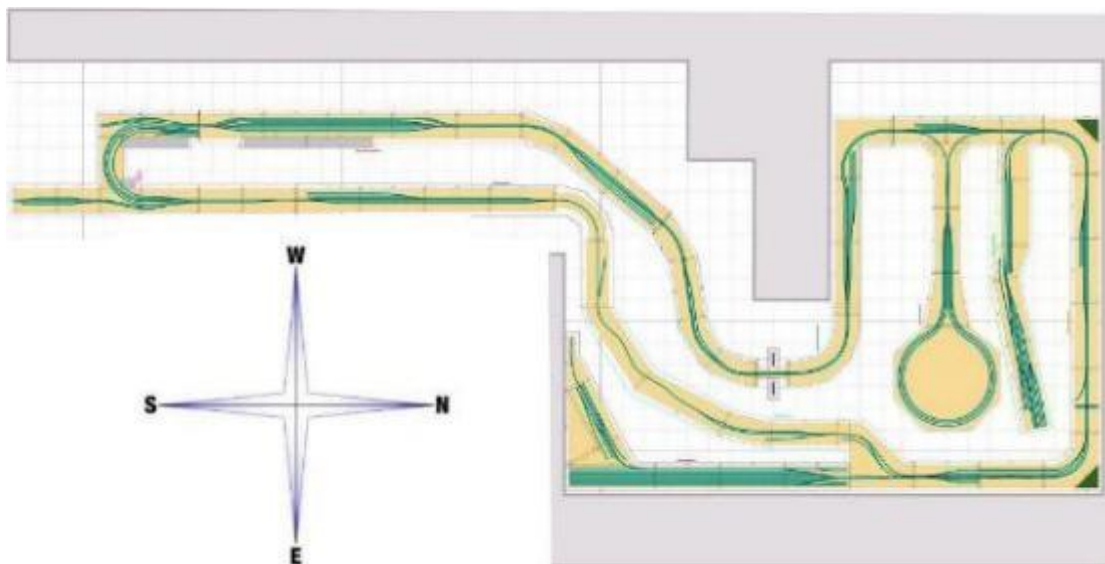
The next layout was the Tarrant County Modular Model Railroad Association in Hurst and again we had some trouble finding it. The



GPS took us to a strip shopping center. At past shows, there was a booklet with directions on how to get to each layout. This year, the show went hi-tech; the only thing available was a QR code on the show desk that brought up an abbreviated list of the available layouts and their street address. We drove down the center until I saw these doors and to be honest, I was trepidatious about going in. I had never been there before. The doors were small and one looked broken.



However, inside was a HO free-mo layout that was something else. I lifted the track plan below from the Texas Express website and marked the location of the entry doors in orange. The TCMMRA layout was featured at last year's NMRA convention.



Carol joined me to see this layout that started small and then continued into the back of their rented space. Since it was built to free-mo standards, the layout could be (easily?) taken down and moved if the club had to change locations. The layout was outstanding. I took perhaps a dozen pictures so this is just a small sample.





I spoke with some club members and learned the layout is only open to the public a few days a year with this day being one of them. It was getting late so we left for the last layout that we intended to see that day and it was located in Southlake. We ended up approaching the layout from the southwest and did not realize until I drove up to the house that I had seen it before.

This was an individual's layout that was built in a large bonus room over his two-car garage. It was a massive layout that filled the space. Being set in the Midwest (IL; MO; KS), it was of interest to me and seeing GM&O and IC equipment made it even better. However, the owner likes lots of railroads and since it is his layout, he made the rules. He models 1952 (my favorite year—when I was born) and pretends there was a railroad convention that year in St. Louis and each railroad that attended brought a passenger train. Hence, this was his version of St. Louis Union Station.



This was the view in the other direction. Carol stayed in the car as she saw it last year.



While we were done with model railroads that day, I wasn't done with trains. We were having dinner in Grapevine with a friend whom I worked with at Kennecott and Gartner, and who once lived near us in New Canaan, CT. Right by the restaurant where we were meeting is this railroad (next page).



One of its locomotives was parked in siding across the street, but more amazing was this car.



This is an SPV2000, a diesel MU railcar built by the Budd Company between 1978 and 1981. It was intended as the successor to Budd's popular RDC, produced in the 1950s, and utilized the body of the Budd-designed Amfleet passenger cars. However, it was an operational and mechanical failure. Railfans jokingly referred to it as the Seldom Powered Vehicle. This particular example still has the original ConnDOT paint scheme and herald on it. ConnDOT purchased a group of these for intercity service between New Haven, Hartford, and Springfield, and for commuter service on the Danbury line. They were pulled from service around 1986 and later were neutered (demotored) and used for the initial service on ConnDOT's Shore Line East. This was a real thrill for me as I saw these cars operate firsthand when I lived in Connecticut back then.

Also, there is a stop in Graveline for TEXRail that runs on what was once Cotton Belt trackage. I have ridden this service several times, most recently at last summer's NMRA convention. As we started to leave the heritage railroad station, the crossing signals and gates went off. A minute later, this train bound for DFW airport stopped at the small passenger shelter there.



TEXRail uses Stadler-built DMUs (diesel multiple units) that were based on trainsets originally built for the Swiss Federal Railways. These are called FLIRT, an acronym for Fast Light Intercity/ Regional Train and have proven to be very reliable. By the way, Stadler is the same company that made the unique DMUs used on NJT's River Line.

At 6:30pm, we had a nice dinner with our friend and then drove back to our hotel in Irving. On Monday, 1/22, we returned our rental car at DFW and flew home to PHL on American Airlines.

WEST SPRINGFIELD, MA - January 24–28

I was home for less than two days, barely time to unpack and get caught up, when it was time to leave for my next train show. This was the annual Railroad Hobby Show, sponsored by the Amherst Railway Society (ARS). This is the largest railroad-themed show in the country and this year's record attendance of 22,657 at the gate (and a total population of 26,157) certainly confirmed that. This show is held annually on the last weekend (Saturday/Sunday) of January. So, you might be asking yourself why I would leave on a Wednesday. Well, the answer is simple. For the last few years, the ARS has offered two days (Thursday/Friday) of modeling clinics before the show and I have driven up early for them with Eric Dervinis. Originally, the clinics were run by Miles Hale's Model Railroad University. However, more recently the clinics have been organized by Mike Dettinger of the NMRA's Philly Division and Barry Rosier from the NMRA's New Jersey Division. Barry is also a key member of the Strasburg Model Railroad Club. To make things more interesting, we had persuaded Doug Auburg, who lives in Washington State near Portland, OR, to attend this year. Attending this show was a bucket list item for him. Doug has been an NMRA member for over 50 years, and had served on its BOD, and as a national officer. Eric and I have known him for decades. Doug also headed the NMRA's 1994 and 2015 annual conventions which were sponsored by the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club. Last year, we hosted Charlie Getz, a past NMRA president, at the Railroad Hobby Show. Charlie is also a columnist in the *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette* magazine and he wrote up his trip to Massachusetts in its September 2023 issue.

Originally Doug was supposed to fly into PHL, arriving late on Monday afternoon and just after I flew in from DFW. I was going to host him for two nights, and on Tuesday we had planned to see my club's (Rockledge Model Railroad Museum) layout and ride some of SEPTA. Things changed dramatically when a door panel popped off a 737 Max 9 and Alaska Airlines cancelled his flights to PHL after part of its mostly 737 fleet was grounded. FYI, the



door panel landed not far from Doug's home in Battle Grounds, WA. He quickly came up with a Plan B and was able to book flights into Hartford's Bradley Airport (BDL) for Wednesday. Eric picked me up that day around noon and we drove towards Hartford in fog. We made it to BDL to pick up Doug, but were an hour late due to the surprisingly heavy traffic. This didn't seem to bother Doug as he treated us to a quick dinner at Bear's Smokehouse Barbecue, right by BDL. From there it was a short drive to the Sheraton Monarch Hotel in downtown Springfield where we stayed for the next four nights.

Attending the clinics is basically a no-brainer. For \$110 per person, attendees got two days of clinics that included some free make 'n' takes, breakfast and lunch both days, and a two-day vendor ticket to the Railroad Hobby Show. On Thursday, we were up early for breakfast as the clinics started at 8:15am. I went to one on making cardstock models that was followed by two sessions during which we were supposed to make the paper switch tower offered by Clever Models. I made a feeble attempt to build it, but nevertheless found the sessions useful and interesting. Mike Dettinger is always into obscure things and I attended his presentation on the USATC S100 locomotive. This was an 0-6-0 steam locomotive built in the USA during WWII (and copied in Europe after the war) intended for switching (shunting) duties in Europe after D-Day. Mike ran through the history of this remarkable locomotive, some of which actually were still in operation in the late 2000s, more than 65 years after they were built.



After lunch, I tried to make a small HO scale shed using matchsticks, but the glue took too long to dry. I brought the three completed wall pieces home and if I can find the sheet with the plans, hope to finish it. I need to cut the walls to length, trim the slides to a slope, and add a roof. Next was a very interesting presentation by a modeler who spent his work career as a civil engineer, mostly working on railroad projects including electrification of the NEC between New Haven and Boston. I ended the day attending a presentation by the Reading Company Technical & Historical Society on its modular layout. I have seen this layout at many shows in the MER. Last year, it came to this show for the first time and won the award for the best modular layout. The layout returned this year sized at 18' x 160' and won another award.



For dinner, Eric, Doug, and Ed Slintak (head of the NMRA's Meeting & Trade Show Department) and I drove here.

This is a railroad-themed restaurant in Palmer, MA that is located in the former Union Station opened in 1884 by the Boston & Albany and a predecessor of the Central Vermont. We have eaten there before, though usually on a Friday night when it is packed with show attendees. This time there were some empty tables. While we were eating, the Boston section of the Lake Shore (aka the Late for Sure) went by on the adjacent CSX tracks and the building shook. This is Eric and Ed.



After dinner, we went railfanning in the dark. Next to the restaurant is a small yard and office for the New England Central Railroad (NECR). NECR is the successor to the Central Vermont and is a shortline owned by Genesee & Wyoming. Here it interchanges with CSX. NECR 3317 is a SD40T-2, built in 1980 as a tunnel motor for the SP.



Driving back to Springfield, we stopped for dessert at a Friendly's. For the first time ever, Doug had an ice cream cone covered with rainbow "jimmies."

Friday was another day of clinics. I started with one that ran three sessions. It was a make 'n' take, hosted by the couple that owns Nick & Nora. This company is in Delaware and offers a line of craftsman kits, does custom work, and has booths at major shows selling their kits and relevant supplies. They showed us their finished design which most modelers, including myself, seem to follow. We started with a piece of foam board and some building pieces then were able to rummage through the boxes of detailed parts and scenery material they brought with them. I actually finished this time, and while I cannot use this on my ICRR layout, it certainly showed me ideas and techniques that I might use.



After lunch, I sat through three different clinics from Class I Model Works. This is a relatively new company that was started by Stephen Priest, MMR, that makes "state of the art" HO models. Stephen's first presentation drew on his actual railroad experience on the Santa Fe and talked about the little things that can make a big difference on your models and layout. Some of what was presented was taken from a clinic he gave on stenciling at the Cocoa Beach RPM meet earlier in the month. The second clinic was a detailed look at their HO scale GSC flatcar.

can make a big difference on your models and layout. Some of what was presented was taken from a clinic he gave on stenciling at the Cocoa Beach RPM meet earlier in the month. The second clinic was a detailed look at their HO scale GSC flatcar.



The interesting things about their depressed center car is that many railroads had at least one; they were used for decades and given that they were used to ship oversized and heavy loads, the cars could easily be found on any railroad. In the third clinic, Stephen told and showed how back in 2022, he managed a group of volunteers and paid help in Kansas City that recreated the bicentennial paint scheme that appeared on ATSF 5704 back in 1976. This locomotive was one of five SD45-2s that received that unique paint scheme. The whole story of how the unit was saved, prepped, painted, and lettered was absolutely amazing and shows what can be done when a group of dedicated folks work together and luck comes their way. After being displayed in the KC area for a while, the locomotive was sent to the Southern California Railway Museum (SCRM) in Perris, California. In SCRM, the locomotive is being restored to full operating condition by a group of volunteers, many of which once worked in the Santa Fe's former San Bernardino Shops. This image is from the web showing 5704 and the crew that worked on the project. I hope to see the locomotive this summer, when I am in Southern California for the 2024 NMRA convention in Long Beach.



My final clinic was with Mike Dettinger and this one was definitely different. Mike is a T-TRAK modeler and on his modules he runs an assortment of Japanese prototype and fantasy trains. He also includes miniature figures from the Japanese Railway Staff Uniform Girls Collection. Many Japanese men have a fixation with young women and when these railroad figures were first issued a few years ago, they really took off. They became highly collectable and were selling for more than their issued prices. There have been multiple collections of these “testudo museum” PVC figures (approximately 10cm. high) issued, and now accessories for the figures are available. The figures took on lives of their own in the social media, as back stories were developed for each character. When I was in Japan in January, I purchased a recent book on them that Mike had asked me to buy for him. His presentation was a “railroad fashion show” where he read the back stories while Barry showed us the appropriate figures. Definitely a unique clinic and to each his own!



For dinner that evening, Eric, Doug, and I ate at the historic Storowton Tavern in West Springfield. This is a circa 1789 structure that now resides on the fairgrounds of the Eastern States Exposition (aka The Big E) as part of the recreated Storowton Village. The fairgrounds are where the Railway Hobby Show is held. Eating there is an annual tradition for us.

Finally on Saturday, it was time for the show that opens to the public at 9am. A free shuttle bus is offered from

the Monarch Hotel to those who stay there without a car. A fair number of people do come to Springfield on Amtrak. We left the hotel about 8:15am so I could make a breakfast stop at Dunkin'. In prior years, the Monarch's special show room rate included breakfast, but to hold the rate this year, the free breakfast was eliminated. Eric and Doug went for the replacement paid breakfast buffet in the hotel. From experience, we know to enter the fairgrounds using the rear gate and then park close to the four buildings (with over 370,000 sq. ft.) that are used for the show. There was already a line waiting to get in by the Better Living Center. No doubt those guys purchased their tickets online in advance of the show. Tickets for adults were \$15 each, with those 15 and under admitted free. With our pass, we just walked into the Young Building and began our two-day adventure. For Eric and me, there are strong social aspects to the show as we run into many people that we know from past shows, the NMRA, and other organizations. My first stop is always at the booth of the Western Connecticut Chapter of the NRHS that I belonged to for many years when I lived in CT. It was nice to see my friend Garf there and to my surprise, Tony White, president of the NRH, as well. Tony is also a longtime friend. Currently, I am on the BOD of the NRHS and serve as controller of the NRHS fund.

I will not bore you with a blow-by-blow of what I saw at the show—just to say that there were perhaps a thousand tables (costing \$180 each) and 50+ modular layouts. The 370 exhibitors included every major manufacture in the hobby and some smaller ones, the hobby press, dealers of various sizes (Spring Creek and White Rose had very sizable booths), many railroad historical societies, scores of railroad museums, tourist railroads, railroad-themed B&Bs, etc. A program book was available listing all of the exhibitors, but oddly this year there was no map. There were over 30 new exhibitors this year. Participation in the show is by invitation only and ARS maintains a waiting list of those wanting to be at the show. People have been thrown out of the show for selling non-rail-related items, or as in the case of Bob's Photos, refusing to take down an image of the Confederate flag. Here are a sample of images from the show.









After a long day and several car runs, it was time to leave. I had completely gone through three buildings and was about halfway through the Better Living Center that is the biggest one. The show was definitely packed that day. At times, the aisles in Young and Mallory were totally full. The three of us had dinner with some friends from South Jersey at the Student Prince, a German restaurant a few blocks from the hotel. Given the mild winter weather, we parked at the hotel and then walked there. In prior years, this would have been impossible due to cold and/or snow. I finally managed to take a picture of Doug as he studied the menu. He had the pork chop while I had the jager schnitzel, but when the bill came, I was surprised by an up-charge for the veal version.



One nice thing about the Monarch Hotel's location is that Springfield's Catholic Cathedral, St. Michael's, is only several blocks away. So on Sunday morning I had an easy walk there to attend the 8:30am Mass. One

year, the temperature there was well below freezing. It had been so cold in the church that the holy water almost froze! The cathedral is just past this sign.



Eric and Doug picked me up there a few minutes after 9am. There was a third person, a Canadian, in the car with them getting a ride to the show. Eric made another Dunkin' stop for me and we were in the fairgrounds just after 9:30am. The show opens at 10am on Sunday. We parked the car and I made a dash to the Better Living Center to cover the tables I didn't see on Saturday.

I made a few more purchases on Sunday. I had actually spent all of my cash on Saturday. Eric paid me for the cars I bought for him in Plano. Doug paid me for his dinner at the Student Prince. Without asking, the server gave us one bill for the five of us at the table. I offered to pay the bill; being a retired CPA it would be easy for me to divvy it up. I finally saw Gordy, the NMRA president, at the show. For the second year in a row, the NMRA held its mid-year BOD meeting at the show and ran an expanded booth (see top picture on previous page) by the main entrance of the Better Living Center. In the area there where the show gathered together the makers of craftsman building kits, I saw a man wearing a badge from the TNMRC in Dallas. In talking with him, I mentioned being at the Plano Show and his club the week before. He asked me how I liked them. I said it was good except I had one problem. I purchased a resin kit at his club's sale table for \$5 but the box was basically empty. He said he was the club's VP and that should not have happened. I was very surprised when he took out his wallet and just gave me \$5.



We agreed to meet at Eric's car at noon. Doug and I were there on time while Eric was a few minutes late. We headed back to PA and stayed on the west side of the Connecticut River till we came to I-91. We drove on the Wilbur Cross and Merritt Parkways in CT and then down a connector to I-95 in Bridgeport. The reason for going that way was to get to Pepe's Pizza in Fairfield so that Doug could have some of the world's best pizza! I have taken Eric there several times before.



Eric and Doug split a small pie while I ordered a large sausage and mushroom (S&M) pie for myself plus box to take the uneaten slices home. After the pizzas were served, it took a few minutes for Doug to ask why they were burned on the edges. Eric and I explained this happens from baking them in an oven heated with anthracite coal. I jokingly said they grind up the coal and sprinkle it on the edges.

We left for an uneventful drive back. We rode across the Tappan Zee Bridge, then across North Jersey on US-202, and then into PA. I don't know what time we arrived in Abington. I gave Doug a quick tour on my

ICRR layout set in August 1969, housed in my backyard train shed. Doug left with Eric who lives about 50 minutes to the west of my house. When they arrived there, Doug got to see Eric's 1956-era DL&W layout, the "Bloom." Early the next morning, Eric drove Doug to PHL for his flights home and then shipped a box with Doug's purchases that would not fit in his suitcase. Doug was in his home in Washington State later that day and emailed to thank both of us for our hospitality.

TIMONIUM, MD - February 3, 2024

This show is the biggest in the Mid-Atlantic Region, but certainly not what it was just a few years ago. Started by Howard Zane decades ago, the show was originally "scale only" meaning no Lionel, toys, or tinsplate. Howard eventually let in the "hi-railers" and then sold the show in 2014. The new owners now allow dealers with Lionel, American Flyer, etc., and have eliminated the summer show. It now runs three times a year: February, April, and October at the Maryland State Fairgrounds with the February show being the biggest.

I used to go regularly BC (Before Covid) and had not been to one of their shows in over a year. I think the last one I went to was in October 2022 and it was very disappointing. There were more than a few empty tables and even a modular group in the main hall. I was home in early February 2024 and decided to attend their February 3rd show. I left my house in Abington just after 6am and was there by 8:15am even though the show did not open until 9am. Why? To put things on the White Elephant tables there. I have always done well selling things there. I walked in through a side door only to find the White Elephant tables were almost full. Nevertheless, I sat down and started to fill out the necessary tickets for about 50 items. This was a mix of railroadians from an estate I am selling, some books, and some rolling stock. This took about an hour, after which I headed to the far end of the Cow Palace Building where the modular groups are.

While it is always interesting to see the layouts, in the past I have found the best buys at the club sales tables, and this year was no exception. I ended up making a car run and when I returned to the building, I paid my \$11 admission (\$1 off w/coupon). Back inside, I went up and down the aisles with Lionel/Flyer dealers. Those dealers buy collections that often include some HO and generally price it to sell. I made a few minor purchases.

I went to my car to have something to drink about 11am and as I was entering the building, I found an unused admission ticket on the ground that I sold to a man in line for \$10. Score! I spent the rest of the day there doing a deep dive on the tables in main and center rooms finding lots of good buys. Late in the day, I was accumulating my purchases in a cardboard soda tray that I carried from table to table. I bought some parts and went to put them in the tray but to my horrors—NO TRAY. I spent the next 20 minutes retracing my steps until I found the tray sitting on a dealer's table on the other side of the main hall.

Here are some pictures from this show. This (next page) is definitely "unabridged." I saw these modules on the floor of the Mallory complex in West Springfield the prior weekend but it wasn't as long then.





This setup (left) in the rear of the main hall mimics what the ARS Show has done for the last few years in the middle of the Better Living Center. I had seen most of these vendors in West Springfield the weekend before. I have never seen Spring Creek Model Train in Timonium before. Their booth here was a bit smaller than what they had in West Springfield. White Rose Hobbies is a brick and mortar store near York.

PA that is a newcomer to the show scene. It had a huge booth in West Springfield and a similar-sized one at this show. This company recently purchased Bethlehem Car Works from John Greene's estate.

One of my friends follows the color of this woman's hair (right). It is different at each show.

This group models Japanese trains, some of which I had seen full size just two weeks before. This was an amazing scene. This is just part of a collection that once belonged to the man who owned Reboxx. There was another row on the other aisle with even more boxes of HO cars. For those who are not familiar with Reboxx, this company started making



and selling replacement boxes and foam to hold HO brass locomotives and passenger cars. It later made replacement wheel sets of varying axle lengths through an association with InterMountain. It seems the man (don't know his name) died last year and left a 5000-square-foot building filled with model trains. Apparently, this man lent money to InterMountain, who made the Reboxx wheel sets, and was repaid in kind. A dealer was selling these in the center room at very reasonable prices. In the main room, Bob's Photos was selling the same man's railroad book collection for \$15 each. Bob was also selling the same book collection the previous month at the Cocoa Beach RPM along with hundreds of pieces of the guy's brass, hundreds of Sunshine resin kits, and countless packs of detail parts.

I walked the show until almost 4:30pm by which time I had literally spent all my money. I checked out at the white elephant tables where I sold about \$130 and netted 85% of that. As I was leaving the building, I saw a dealer selling new Athearn dummy F Units in the original boxes for \$5 each. I bought four (ATSF, Southern, D&RGW, C&BW) with the money I then had. I listed them on eBay later that evening when I was home and the DRG&W one sold for \$13 the next day. I left the show and stopped at a nearby Bertucci's for dinner. I was on the road by 6pm and drove back via a longer, but toll-free, route and was home just after 8:30pm. A long day!



FUTURE SHOWS/EVENTS

- **NERPM - NewEngland/Northeast RPM - May 31- June 1, 2024.** This is an annual event that will be held in Springfield, MA for the second year but at a different hotel.
- **NARROW GAUGE O SUMMER MEET – June 7-8, 2024,** Harrisburg, PA
- **40th TCA NATIONAL CONVENTION - June 15-23, 2024.** Lancaster, PA
- **30th NATIONAL N-SCALE CONVENTION - June 18-23, 2024,** Bethlehem, PA
- **2024 NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION - August 4-11 2024,** Long Beach, CA. The last time this convention was in Long Beach was 1996 and I was there. I am going this year with my wife and granddaughter.
- **NATIONAL NARROW GAUGE CONVENTION – September 11-14, 2024,** Pittsburgh, PA
 - **PIEDMONT JUNCTION (2024 MER CONVENTION) October 17-20, 2024,** Raleigh, NC. *NOTE THE NEW DATES!*

PRICE NOW \$20 PER CAR! HURRY WHILE QUANTITIES LAST! SHIPPING COSTS REMAIN THE SAME

New Jersey Division 50th Anniversary Gondola

50th Anniversary Gondola

A review of the cars. They are \$35 each, or a set of two for \$65. Car numbers are 1968 and 2018, which was the year that the New Jersey Division was founded and the year we celebrated our 50th anniversary. The model is from Tangent Models and is a superb model of a 52'6" Riveted Drop End Gondola with 70 ton trucks. The placement of the brake wheel on the side is an identifying feature of a drop end Gondola. They're ready to run and come with Kadee couplers.

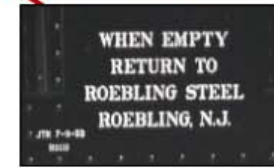
We acquired equal amounts of the two car numbers. Cash or check will consummate the deal and you'll be hauling stuff around your layout in no time!

These are excellent looking and beautifully running cars, but, a car not decorated for a prototypical railroad, they do have the look of a gondola that you might see in any train consist from the 1930's to the 1980's.

To order cars Contact Mike Prokop at njwrr@aol.com or by mail use the Order Sheet. USPS Priority Mail postage is: \$9 for one car and \$10.75 for two cars.



The Reporting Marks "NJD" for this car identify the owner as the New Jersey Division and the "X" designates a Private or Non-railroad owner.



This Stencil indicates the Gondola is in Assigned Service to Roebling Steel. It must be returned to Roebling after its load has been delivered.

The car body is black with white lettering and data conforming to the 1950s

The cost is \$35.00 for one car or a set of both numbers for \$65.00
A check made payable to the NJ Division must be included

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Telephone _____

See Tangent website for more information
support@tangentscalemodels.com
Return this form to NJ Division NMRA;
PO Box 276, Crosswicks, NJ 08515-0276



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October 17-20, 2024

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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



Upcoming MER Conventions

MER 2024 – Piedmont Junction
October 17-20, 2024

<https://piedmontjunction.cpd13.org/>

N&W HC-46 ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper

Using Accurail's 2200 Series ACF 2-Bay Covered Hopper as the basis, we are offering it in a Norfolk & Western repaint scheme. These cars are N&W class HC-46 and are from an original batch of fifty built by in 1966 by ACF with the Round Herald paint scheme. Subsequently some cars went through a general maintenance program and were repainted in the block N&W livery. Photos were found showing at least three of these cars (road numbers 170753, 170768 and 170794) were reweighed at some later date because that area is "patched out" on the car with the new data displayed. Those same photos place these three cars as being in service in 1992 and 2004. It is these three, highly unique, road numbers that Cincinnati Division 7 is now offering for sale as limited edition kits.

Pricing is \$25 per car, or a 3-car set at \$70. Shipping (via USPS Priority) is \$10.40 for one car and \$17.10 for two to three cars. Ohio residents, please add 7.8% sales tax on the total price of the kits and the shipping/handling fee. Customers outside the USA, please **contact us** for shipping arrangements and charges.

To order, please send **your email and phone** information along with a **check or money order** in US dollars, payable to Cincinnati Division 7, MCR, NMRA, to:

Cincinnati Division 7 Car Projects
c/o Paul Maciulewicz
9151 Congress Court
West Chester, Ohio 45069



Contact our **Car Projects Chairperson** with any questions.

<https://www.cincy-div7.org/car-projects.html>

Railroad News

CSX prepares to detour container and coal traffic bound for Baltimore *Bill Stephens*

In the wake of the Francis Scott Key Bridge disaster, the railroad will launch dedicated intermodal service between Baltimore and the Port of New York and New Jersey, and send export coal to terminals in Newport News, Va. April 1, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha, WI>

Jacksonville, FL – CSX this week will begin providing international intermodal shippers with a detour around the closed Port of Baltimore. The railroad says it will launch dedicated service between Baltimore and the Port of New York and New Jersey in response to the March 26 collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, which fell into the Patapsco River and blocked access to the port after a container ship struck one of its piers. “Leveraging strategic partnerships with steamship lines, CSX will transport freight between New York and Baltimore through its established international sales network, ensuring continuity for affected shipments,” the railroad said. Last week CSX executives, including CEO Joe Hinrichs, visited coal terminals in Newport News, Va., million tons of coal annually.

From WDEL radio Driver hurt after crash with train in Middletown *Mark Fowser* Apr 2, 2024

<https://www.wdel.com/Wilmington, DE> A woman is hospitalized in serious condition after her car was hit by a train Tuesday afternoon on the north side of Middletown. New Castle County Paramedics said the 81-year-old woman was extricated from the vehicle following the collision on North Broad Street near Cedar Lane Road at about 2:20 p.m. The woman suffered head- and other injuries and possible internal injuries. Middletown Police are investigating the incident. Middletown officers, County paramedics and members of Volunteer Hose Company of Middletown responded.

From Trains Norfolk Southern begins detour moves of coal that normally moves through Port of Baltimore *Bill Stephens*

The first train was delivered today to the railroad’s Lambert’s Point terminal in Norfolk, Va., as Norfolk Southern works with automotive, intermodal, and break bulk customers on alternate port options April 3, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha, WI> **Atlanta, GA** – Norfolk Southern today delivered the first coal train diverted from the closed Port of

to discuss exporting coal that normally would be sent to the railroad’s Curtis Bay Piers in Baltimore, which handles coal produced in West Virginia and Pennsylvania.

“At CSX we work hard to be ‘part of the solution’ by working closely with all stakeholders to serve our customers better,” Hinrichs wrote on LinkedIn. The CSX team visited the Kinder Morgan Pier IX and Dominion Terminal Associates terminal in Newport News. Hinrichs and Chief Commercial Officer Kevin Boone also spent time with employees at CSX’s car shop and other facilities in Newport News. “Given the tragedy in Baltimore, we are going to need to move more coal trains through Newport News on behalf of our customers and we wanted to make sure we connected with our team on the ground there to see how we can help,” Hinrichs wrote. “Another example of our ONE CSX team in action to serve our customers better.” Newport News is no stranger to handling coal normally shipped through Curtis Bay. The Curtis Bay terminal was shut down for more than a month following a Dec. 30, 2021 explosion that heavily damaged the facility that can handle 14

Baltimore to the railroad’s Lambert’s Point coal terminal in Norfolk, Va. The collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge following a March 26 strike by a container ship blocked access to the NS-served Consol coal terminal. “At Norfolk Southern, we understand the importance of rapid response, frequent communication, and innovative solutions during significant supply chain events,”

NS Chief Marketing Officer Ed Elkins said in a statement. “Leveraging our extensive franchise footprint and strategic partnerships with ocean carriers, short line railroads, East Coast ports, and other transportation providers, we are providing our customers with a flexible, reliable service product that they can count on in this time of need.” Baltimore, the No. 2 coal port on the East Coast, handles coal mined primarily in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. Lamberts Point, the largest coal export terminal in the Northern Hemisphere, has the capacity to take on diversions from Baltimore.

Meanwhile, NS on Friday will launch dedicated international intermodal service between the Elizabeth Marine Terminal at the Port of New York and

New Jersey and the Seagirt Marine Terminal in Baltimore offered by CSX — will provide a way around the blocked marine access to Seagirt. NS says it is in discussions with terminal operator Ports America to extend the new intermodal service directly ondock at the Seagirt Intermodal Container Transfer Facility. “Ports America is committed to deploying solutions that prioritize our customers’ needs,” Rob Kusiciel, chief commercial officer of Ports America, said in a statement. “Partnering with Norfolk Southern to manage the flow of cargo was a natural step for us to take in maintaining supply chain fluidity in the face of this crisis.” NS subsidiary Triple Crown Services will work directly with cargo owners who need door-to-door service. The railroad says it is in constant contact with affected international customers, ports, and state officials to keep supply chains moving. NS is, for example, collaborating with the Port of Virginia regarding key service points like the Virginia Inland Port in Front Royal, to serve regions further afield, such as Western Maryland, Southern Pennsylvania, and Northern Virginia.

Although Norfolk Southern’s Baltimore automotive facility is not affected by the port outage, traffic destined to and from the Dundalk Marine Terminal is. NS has placed an embargo on traffic bound to Dundalk and is working with auto manufacturers on alternative ports in Florida, Georgia, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. Baltimore is the top automotive port on the East Coast. Norfolk Southern also is assisting multiple customers with break bulk cargo that traditionally moves through the Port of Baltimore, including lumber, pulp, and roll-on/roll-off traffic. One option for these customers is shifting their traffic to Fairwinds Landing in Norfolk. It remains unclear how long the Port of Baltimore will remain closed while crews remove bridge debris from the shipping channel in the Patapsco River.

From *Trains* The latest CSX heritage locomotive: Western Maryland *Bill Stephens*

The Western Maryland unit is the 12th heritage locomotive to emerge from the CSX paint shop in Waycross, Ga. April 4, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha, WI>

CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs today released the first photos of the railroad’s Western Maryland heritage locomotive. The unit, No. 1852 in honor of the Western Maryland’s founding year, was rolled out of the paint shop in Waycross, Ga., and into the sun. It includes the railroad’s fireball logo. CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs released photos of the railroad’s Western Maryland heritage locomotive on

timore. The NS service — like similar service now April 4, 2024, after it emerged from the paint shop in Waycross, Ga. (Photo by CSX) “Here is the latest Heritage Locomotive



from our talented ONE CSX team in Waycross, Ga.,” Hinrichs wrote on LinkedIn. “The Western Maryland Railroad was started in 1852 in Baltimore, Maryland, and eventually became part of the Chessie System which then became CSX. Great history of coal and freight service in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virgjoy.” The CSX heritage fleet has now grown to a dozen units representing predecessor lines. Among them: Family Lines; Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac; Baltimore & Ohio; Chessie System; Seaboard System; Conrail; Chesapeake & Ohio; Louisville & Nashville; Atlantic Coast Line; New York Central; and Monon.

From *Trains*

SEPTA opens new Drexel Station at 30th Street Transit hub’s new name reflects university naming rights April 9, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha, WI>

Philadelphia, PA — Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority and other officials on Monday marked the opening of the rebuilt and renamed Drexel Station at 30th Street, the transit up for transit and bus lines adjacent to the station served by Amtrak and SEPTA Regional Rail. The new station name reflects a \$3.1 million endowment from Drexel University, granting naming rights for five years, the Philadelphia Tribune reports.

Overall, the station project was funded by \$15 million in U.S. Department of Transportation BUILD (Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development) grant funding and \$34.2 million in state Department of Transportation funds. Improvements include a new glass headhouse and canopy; upgraded elevators, escalators and stairs; an improved mezzanine with enhanced lighting and better connections between transit services, and new flooring and tiling. “The reconstruction of this flagship station will not only improve mobility and enhance access for SEPTA customers; it also demonstrates how transit infrastructure investments build communities and support regional economic growth,” SEPTA

CEO and General Manager Leslie S. Richards said in a press release. The station is served by the Market-Frankford rapid transit line and T, 10, 11, 13, and 34 trolley lines. It is the first to display the elements of the SEPTA Metro Wayfinding initiative, a plan that aims to emphasize the entire SEPTA network rather than its individual elements [see “SEPTA plans rebranding ...,” *Trains News Wire*, Sept. 8, 2021]. More Septa Metro signage will debut as the year progresses.

From *Trains* Amtrak chooses contractor for Unified Operations Center in Wilmington Project including national operations facilities, dispatching center for part of Northeast Corridor to be completed in 2027 April 9, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI WILMINGTON, Del. — Wohlsen Construction Co. has been awarded the contract for Amtrak’s Unified Operations Center project in Wilmington, Del., the company announced



Amtrak has named the contractor for the project to create its Unified Operations Center in Wilmington, Del. (Photo by Tevebaugh Architecture)

The project, expected to cost more than \$53 million, will build a 24-hour operations center for national operations, including fleet and onboard crew assignments and coordination of the response to service disruptions. A data center will also support system resiliency. The facility will also include the dispatching center for Amtrak’s Mid-Atlantic Division, which oversees all train movements in the Washington-Philadelphia-Harrisburg corridor. The facility will be at the 164,789-square-foot Renaissance Centre in downtown Wilmington. It will allow relocation of the current Consolidated National Operating Cen-

ter and Wilmington Dispatching Office from a flood-vulnerable location next to the Christina River.

From CBS News Norfolk Southern agrees to pay \$600 million for East Palestine, Ohio, train derailment April 9, 2024 <http://www.cbsnews.com> New York, NY Norfolk Southern has agreed to pay \$600 million in a class-action lawsuit settlement related to last year's fiery train derailment that affected East Palestine, Ohio. The company said Tuesday that the agreement, if approved by the court, will resolve all class action claims within a 20-mile radius from the derailment and, for those residents who choose to participate, personal injury claims within a 10-mile radius from the derailment. About 50 cars of the freight train — which had roughly 150 cars and three locomotives — derailed on the outskirts of East Palestine, near the Pennsylvania state line, with some cars transporting hazardous materials. An evacuation covered 1,500 to 2,000 of the town's approximately 4,800 to 4,900 residents. Norfolk Southern added that individuals and businesses will be able to use compensation from the settlement in any manner they see fit to address potential adverse impacts from the derailment, which could include health care needs, property restoration and compensation for any net business loss. Individuals within 10-miles of the derailment may, at their discretion, choose to receive additional compensation for any past, current, or future personal injury from the derailment.

From *Trains* SEPTA cancels contract with CRRC for bilevel commuter cars No cars had been delivered in 45-car order placed in 2017 April 12, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/> Waukesha, WI

Philadelphia, PA – The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority has “terminated with cause” its contract with the U.S. affiliate of Chinese railcar manufacturer CRRC for 45 bilevel commuter railcars, the Philadelphia Inquirer reports. The contract was awarded in 2017, and the first cars were to have been completed in 2019 [see “SEPTA awards bid for Chinese bilevel cars,” *Trains News Wire*, March 24, 2017], but none have been delivered. The \$185 million contract underbid Bombardier, the only other finalist, by \$34 million; it came at a time when CRRC had yet to deliver any equipment in North America, but had orders in hand for equipment in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

SEPTA said in a statement that it is “assessing its options for recouping funds that have been spent on the project.” That is more than \$50 million, the *Inquirer* reports. The locomotive-hauled SEPTA cars, CRRC’s first commuter cars for North America, were to have seated 130 passengers and were intended to address crowding that had developed on SEPTA’s commuter lines since 2000. By 2019, they were already a year behind schedule, and in 2022, the *Inquirer* reports, SEPTA CEO Leslie S. Richards had reported issues with wiring, emergency exit windows, and failed watertightness and brake-test failures. CRRC, a state-owned company, is the world’s largest rolling stock manufacturer. The SEPTA contract was with CRRC MA, the affiliate of the Chinese firm that opened a factory in Springfield, Mass., to meet “Buy America” requirements for a 404-car order for Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority rapid-transit equipment. The first portion of that order was placed in 2014 and remains years from completion; it has been plagued with quality-control issues and operational problems for the cars that have reached service.

In March, the MBTA agreed to pay \$148 million beyond the initial \$870 million of the two-part in an effort to see it completed by 2027 [see “MBTA to pay more ...,” News Wire, March 29, 2024]. Without the additional funds, the MBTA said the order would have been completed no earlier than 2029. Subsequent diplomatic tensions between the U.S. and China, security concerns, and congressional and industry concerns over CRRC’s potential to set artificially low prices — along with its issues in fulfilling its first American contracts — have essentially driven the Chinese manufacturer out of the U.S. passenger rail market. One provision of the MBTA agreement to complete its Red and Orange Line cars gives the transit agency an option to buy the Springfield, Mass., plant if CRRC sells it.

From *Trains* Vermont Rail System to acquire New Hampshire Central Railroad will become system’s seventh short line April 10, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha, WI>

Burlington, VT - Vermont Rail System has reached an agreement purchase assets and operating rights of the New Hampshire Central Railroad to expand its operations in northern New Hampshire, the companies announced Tuesday. “VRS has a 60-year tradition of helping local businesses with efficient and

reliable freight service,” Selden Houghton, Vermont Rail System president, said in a statement, “and we are excited at the opportunity to grow and expand by providing economical rail service to customers in northern New Hampshire.

New Hampshire Central, founded in 1993, operates more than 56 miles of track leased from the state between North Stratford and Colebrook and between Groveton and Littleton, N.H., interchanging with the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad. It will continue to operate under the New Hampshire Central name. New Hampshire Central owner Edward W. Jeffrey said, “I couldn’t be happier to know that such a dedicated group will continue to serve New Hampshire businesses and grow this important link to the regional and national rail network.” The railroad will become the seventh in the Vermont Rail System, which currently operates more than 400 miles of track in Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York through its Vermont Railway, Green Mountain Railroad, Clarendon & Pittsford Railroad, Washington County Railroad; New York & Odgensburg Railway, and New England Southern Railroad. The New Hampshire Central deal is subject to state and federal regulatory approval.

From *Trains* CSX donates \$50,000 to Key Bridge Fund Fund supports individuals, small businesses, communities hit by disaster April 10, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha, WI>

Baltimore, MD – CSX has donated \$50,000 to the **Maryland Tough Baltimore Strong Key Bridge Fund**, the railroad has announced. The fund, established by the Baltimore Community Foundation, supports families, port workers, first responders, small businesses, and communities affected by the March 26 Key Bridge tragedy. “Our thoughts and prayers are with those impacted by this tragedy,” said CSX CEO Joe Hinrichs, who highlighted the company’s nearly two-century connection to the area. “As we navigate these challenging times, CSX remains committed to assisting our neighbors throughout this community on their path to recovery.” Those interested in learning more about and supporting the fund, visit: <https://bcf.org/maryland-tough-baltimore-strong-key-bridge-fund/>

From *Trains* New display, event space opens at Railroaders Memorial Museum Dan Cupper Luther G. Smith Memorial Yard honors railroader who founded Brotherhood’s

Relief & Compensation Fund April 18, 2024
<https://www.trains.com/Waukesha,WI>

Altoona, PA – Officials of the North American Railway Foundation dedicated an outdoor display and event venue — the Luther G. Smith Memorial Yard — here today (Thursday, April 18) at the Railroaders Memorial Museum. The public space is bracketed by the museum’s Master Mechanics Building and Norfolk Southern’s Pittsburgh Line. Costing \$1.9 million, the project accomplished several goals, including cleaning up, regrading, and reorganizing the nearly 1-acre area at the museum’s entrance, installing sidewalks and lights, and moving several pieces of rolling stock indoors to prepare them for restoration. Behind it was a desire to establish a tribute to Smith (1870- 1938), a Pennsylvania Railroad engineer who started the nonprofit Brotherhood’s Relief & Compensation Fund, the parent organization to the foundation. After his own union rebuffed his proposals, Smith in 1912 set up an independent voluntary mutual reserve fund to supply income insurance to railroaders who were “held out of service” (suspended) as discipline for a rule violation. BRCF started with about 100 members on the PRR Middle Division (Altoona-Harrisburg) and now has 20,000 members across the U.S. and Canada.

From *Trains* Two charged with stealing track from Connecticut heritage railroad State Environmental Conservation Police make arrests in February theft April 19, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha,WI>

Old Saybrook, CT – Two people have been arrested and charged with stealing nearly a halfmile of track used by the Essex Steam Train heritage railroad and selling it for scrap, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has announced. Jason Hubbard, 47, and Nicole Hooghkirk, 38, of Clinton, Conn., were arrested on April 9 after being identified through an investigation by the agency’s Environmental Conservation Police, with assistance from the Valley Railroad Co., operator of the Essex Steam Train. Eyewitnesses reported track being removed from behind a store in Old Saybrook on Feb. 26;

Hubbard and Hooghkirk are alleged to have removed a total of four-tenths of a mile of track from the 12 miles of state-owned trackage in the Connecticut Valley State Railroad Park; that track is leased to the Valley Railroad Co. The pair faces charges including first-degree damage to railroad property,

first-degree criminal mischief, second-degree reckless endangerment, and fourth-degree larceny, as well as related “conspiracy to commit” charges. They were arraigned on April 9; Hooghkirk was released on an appearance bond, while Hubbard was held on a court-set bond of \$5,000. The Essex Steam Train operates a variety of excursions on more than 21 miles of a former New Haven line with three steam locomotives — Alco 2-8-2 No. 40, built in 1920 and first operated in logging service by California’s Minarets & Western Railway; Alco 2-8-0 No. 97, built in 1923 and first operated by Alabama’s Birmingham & Southeastern in 1926; and Chinese-built 2-8-2 No. 3025, constructed in 1989. The railroad also has a pair of diesels it uses in dinner-train service. More information is available at the Essex Steam Train & Steamboat website.

From WRDE News Maintenance work to start on Main Street railroad crossing *Torie Seagraves* April 27, 2024 <http://www.wrde.com> Rehoboth Beach, DE

Dagsboro, DE – General maintenance work by Delmarva Central Railroad Company forces will be at the railroad crossing on Main Street, says DelDOT. Work is estimated to begin at 7 a.m. on Monday, April 29. DelDOT says the work will require intermittent lane closures of Main Street at the Railroad Crossing and is expected to be completed by Thursday, May 2 by 5 p.m. For more information, visit DelDOT's website.

From *Trains* BNSF Train Derailed by Tornado In Nebraska No injuries reported in Friday afternoon incident April 27, 2024 <https://www.trains.com/Waukesha,WI>

Waverly, NE – A BNSF train was derailed this afternoon when it was struck by a tornado between Waverly and Lincoln, Neb.. The tornado was one of a series in an outbreak across the Midwest today (Friday, April 26). KSBN-TV reports the incident occurred about 3:25 p.m., according to a BNSF representative. There were no injuries to the crew and no hazardous materials were released. Waverly, on BNSF’s Creston Subdivision, is about 12 miles northeast of Lincoln, Neb. The Rural Radio Network reported a second train was also derailed, according to the Lancaster emergency manager, but that report remains unconfirmed. At least three people were injured as at least 60 tornadoes were reported across five states, CNN reports.



Upcoming Events (www.railservice.com & *Mid-Atlantic Train Show List*)

Ongoing 2024 – Tour the Red Caboose. PRR 477123, built in 1917, at the Lewes Junction Railroad & Bridge Association. 1st & 3rd Sundays. Hours 10a-2p, weather permitting. The caboose is located between the Lewes Public Library and the Lewes History Museum, 111 Adams Ave., Lewes DE. For details, please visit: www.lewesjunctionrr.org.

June 8, 2024 – The Mebane Train Display. 209 West Jackson Street, Mebane, NC. All openings are free to the public with the exception of the March Train Show. Hours for the Train Show are from 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM and an admission of \$5.00 is charged at the entrance to the gymnasium where the show is held. The gymnasium is located next to the Display building. For more information visit: <https://themebanetraindisplay.com/>


June 8-9, 2024 – Strasburg’s Summer of ’63. Strasburg Rail Road, 301 Gap Road Ronks, PA. The summer of 1863 comes alive aboard the fully narrated, 45-minute excursion train ride along the 4.5-mile stretch (9 miles round trip) pulled by a historic steam locomotive traveling through 2,500 acres of the picturesque Lancaster County Amish countryside. In the early summer of 1863, the Confederate Army’s goal was to march north to capture Lancaster and Harrisburg with Philadelphia as their ultimate goal. However, on June 28, 1863, the wooden covered bridge spanning the 1-milewide Susquehanna River was burned, which prevented the Confederates from crossing the river. They turned around and headed west to a small town named Gettysburg where the two armies met July 1 – 3.

But what if the bridge never burned, and the Confederates marched across the river and the Union troops had to defend Lancaster and the railroads from the approaching Confederate forces? What if the Southern troops made it to the sleepy town of Strasburg on their march to Philadelphia? Passengers visiting the Strasburg Rail Road will experience this historical fictional scenario through the sights, sounds, and smells of 1863. Live encampments, roaming uniformed troops, small battle skirmishes, artillery demonstrations, and more will happen on

the train and around the mall. (Note: All battle skirmishes between the North and South will happen along the line and require a ticket to view.) Battles/skirmishes – each that tells a part of the story – will occur during the following train times. 12:00p, 2p, 4p, 6p (Saturday only). [Guests aboard the train can view each battle separately or ride multiple times to see different portions of the fictional story.]

June 18-23, 2024 – The 30th National N Scale Convention hosted by the N Scale Enthusiast. This year's convention will be held at the Wind Creek Casino Resort, 77 Wind Creek Bethlehem, PA. For more information, visit: <https://www.nationalscaleconvention.com/>

July 13-14, 2024 – Greenberg’s Train & Toy Show. Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks, PA. 10a-4p. More info at: www.trainshow.com.

August 10-11, 2024 – Greenberg’s Train & Toy Show. New Jersey Convention and Exposition Center, 97 Sunfield Ave., Edison, NJ. 10a-4p. More info at: www.trainshow.com. 

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.

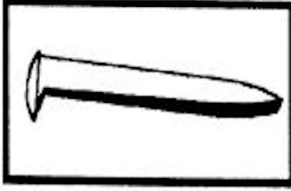
Manufacturer’s descriptions and specs:

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: _____

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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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