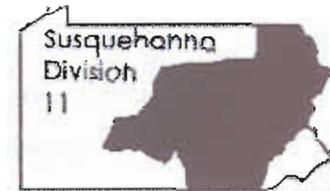


Susquehanna Sidetracks



Serving the Susquehanna Valley, MER, NMRA, Inc.

Official Publication of the Susquehanna Division 11
of the Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

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Please visit the Official Division web site at <http://moosevalley.org/nmra/index.htm>

I hope you had a great holiday season and very happy New Year! I was very lucky to find a new engine under the tree and a few more freight cars. Hopefully you received some new things for your model railroad.

NMRA Dues Changing

This year is going to hold some changes for the NMRA. As you are aware, the single dues structure was approved last year and will go into effect this coming September. This means that you will only pay dues at the National level and will automatically be a member of the Region and the Division as well. How much (if any) the Region or the Division will see from Nationals is still uncertain at this time. More information about this change will be forthcoming in the next few issues of the Local and at our division meets.

Division Newsletter

Starting next year (2006) the Division newsletter will be available electronically via email to all members (and if you would like it electronically now, just sent an email to Scott Turner to request this). If you would like to receive a paper copy of the newsletter or do not have email to receive it electronically, you will need to subscribe to the newsletter for a yearly fee. At this time it is expected to be \$3 per year, but this could increase if the postage increases. This change is needed because of the new National dues structure and the lack of funds coming to the Division to support the cost for printing and mailing the newsletter. If you have any questions about this, please contact one of the Division officers.

Volunteers Needed

The Philadelphia Division, MER, NMRA is hosting the 2006 national convention. They are looking for some volunteers to help with the convention. If

you would like to help out, please visit the convention website at www.ij2006.org for more information and how to sign up to help!

Down the Tracks

Great Scale Model Train Show

Timonium, MD

February 5-6, 2005

April 16-17, 2005

9 AM - 4 PM Saturday

10 AM - 4 PM Sunday

<http://www.gsmts.com>

Railroad Prototype Modelers Seminar - East

Monroeville, PA

March 11-12, 2005

Cincinnati Limited 2005

NMRA National Convention

Cincinnati, OH

July 3 - 9, 2005

<http://www.cl2005.com>

Rails to Raleigh

MER Fall 2005 Convention

Raleigh, NC

October 27 - 30, 2005

<http://www.trainweb.org/cpd13/mer05/index.html>

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Submissions: The Susquehanna Sidetracks welcomes any model railroad or railroad related material. Members are encouraged to send in articles, letters to the editor, reviews, etc.

Super's Corner – Scott Turner

Another year has come and gone. Time sure does fly! I hope you had a great holiday season.

I had a great time at the MER convention in Hagerstown in November. The members of the South Mountain Division did an excellent job with the convention. Our division was well represented at the convention, with several of you giving clinics or judging in the model contest room or working the auction. I found the clinics to be very good and covered a wide variety of topics. My favorite one was on tank cars. This clinic covered the different types of tank cars, how they are used in the prototype and how to use them in our model railroads. It even covered how to model the industries the tank cars served. When not in meetings or clinics, I was able to get out and visit some of the model railroads in the area. They had a lot open each day of the convention. Some that are "completed" and others that were just starting out. I enjoy seeing how others build their layouts and I always learn from them. One of the home layouts I visited had a 12 inch to the foot C&O caboose, 2 different signal lights, and a telephone pool in the yard beside his house (see the photo of the caboose below). The caboose was open for us to go inside. How awesome would it be to have this in your yard?? The next MER Convention is in Raleigh, NC at the end of October. Make plans now to attend.

I hope to see you at the division meet in February. We are working on some exciting meets for the coming months. Remember, this is YOUR division too, the division officers want to hear from you with ideas on what you would like to do for the meets and how we can improve our turn out at events? Feel free to call or email me, I would like to hear from you.



Next Susquehanna Division Meet - Saturday, February 26, 2005 - 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Susquehanna Division 11 is pleased to announce the next division meet will be held at Bob Martin's Central Pennsylvania Railroad (CPRR) in HO scale on Saturday, February 26, 2005 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM. This meet is open to all division members and their guests. Planned activities include: a division meeting to bring you up to date on the division happenings and changes at the National and Regional levels; a clinic by Master Model Railroader Charlie Potter on painting HO figures; a short clinic on the Car Card/Waybill operating system; a mini operating session on the CPRR (Digitrax radio DCC); and several train videos will be played for your viewing pleasure. The mini operations session will include several "switching" jobs as well as a few trains to run around the railroad. Also, as usual when at Bob's, there will also be a white elephant table with whatever you'd like to sell. MER President Clint Hyde and MER Vice President Noll Horan (MMR) will be joining us for this meet. They will be available to answer any questions you have about the region and nationals, including the new single dues structure. So make plans now to spend the afternoon with your fellow model railroads.

DIRECTIONS:

CPRR
45 West Locust Lane
York, PA 17402 (717-848-3640)

From Route 30: Turn north on to N. George St (left if eastbound & right if westbound); go about 1 & 7/10 miles to Longview (on left at Appliances Unlimited); left on Longview to stop sign (Locust Lane); right on W. Locust Lane; third house on left at red cabooses mailbox. Go around right side of house and enter through screen porch.

From I 83 Northbound: Exit 22 (old exit 10); north on N. George St/PA 181 for about 9/10 mile to Longview and follow directions above.

From I 83 Southbound: Exit 24 (old exit 11); turn left at light; go about 9/10 mile to signal light at "T" intersection (George St); right on George St for about 9/10 mile; just before top of hill turn right on to W. Locust Lane. Third house on right at red cabooses mailbox.

Park in Bob's driveway or along the north side of the road (same side as the house) or along the fence in front of Bob's or one house west at 55 (Bob's son).

CAUTION: WHEN LEAVING, NO LEFT TURN ONTO GEORGE ST FROM LOCUST LANE. GO TO LONGVIEW (ABOUT 200' WEST) AND TAKE LONGVIEW TO GEORGE ST). RIGHT TURN FROM LOCUST LANE ON TO GEORGE ST IS OK.

Decoders Lose Their Minds! or Read the Instructions, Dummy by Bob Martin

For quite awhile, I've had an occasional problem on the Central Pennsylvania Railroad (CPRR) with a decoder reverting to default or a loco running away for no apparent reason. During three consecutive CPRR operating sessions, I had three different locomotives "lose their mind", i.e. the decoder went to default settings. The next day when I re-programmed the decoder, everything was OK.

I think I have solved the problem. I think (hope) it was low voltage on the loco net. When I installed the system a couple years ago, including a loco net auxiliary power supply, I didn't wire the UP3's (throttle plug-in panels) together (as called for in the instructions). A couple of my advisors said "nah, you don't need to do that, I don't". The system worked but many months later, when we plugged in a bunch of throttles we sometimes had a few malfunctions. I should mention that initially I had 10UP3 Universal Panels

(Digitrax Plug In panels) and later expanded to 12. During the past 3 months, I added 2 more UP3's and the problems seem to have gotten slightly worse (I now have 14).

The CPRR brain trust kicked the problem around at the August operating session and the consensus was that the UP's ought to be connected. Little did we realize that that's what the instructions said! The brain trust also said "you need an aux power supply". "I have had one hooked up for over a year", I said, "and it doesn't seem to do any good". "Ummmm", they said! The day after August operating session, I looked at the instructions and said "x@#*&\$#%". Guess I should have paid attention to the instructions. Anyhow, I ran a wire to the first two UP3's after the one connected to the auxiliary supply and the voltage jumped up to around 12.5 (+ -). All have been wired together and I've since added another PS 12. Problem solved, I hope! Yeah, yeah, I know, when all else fails, read the instructions!

The moral to this story is, and I think I've said it before in this publication, **READ AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS!!!**