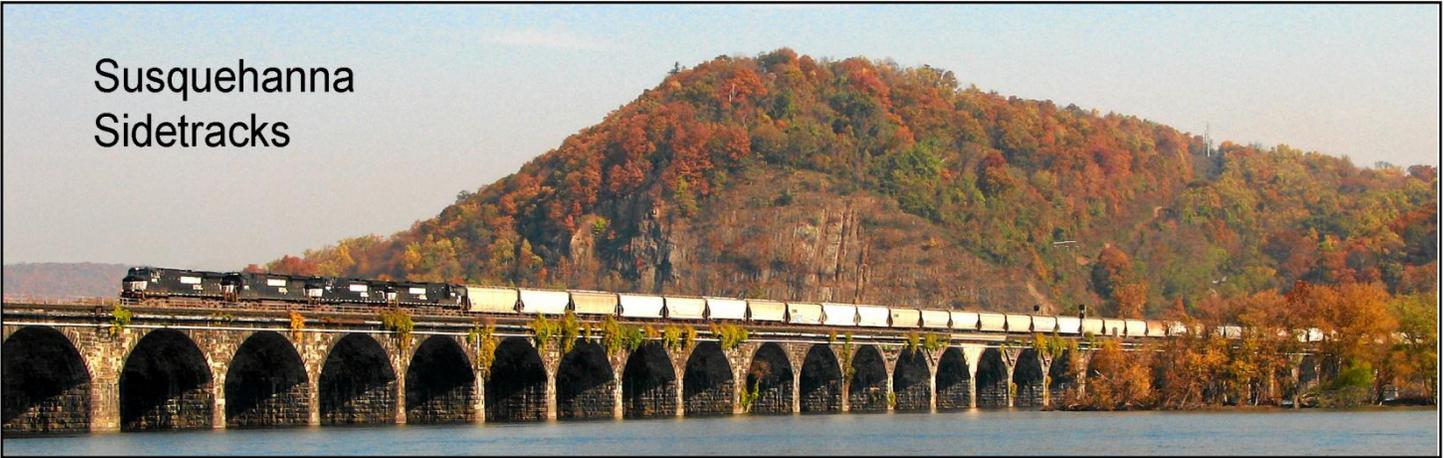


Susquehanna Sidetracks



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

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October 2012

Volume 20 Issue 5

November 10 Model Railroad Open Houses



Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley Railroad

Seven model railroads located in the division will be open on Saturday, November 10, 2012. More information on the open houses (including times and directions) can be found in Division Happenings on page 2 and pages 4-11 of this newsletter. PLEASE abide by posted times for open houses.

Banner photo courtesy of Christopher Muller, <http://www.steamphotos.com/>

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Division Happenings

Barry Schmitt – Superintendent and Newsletter Editor

Our Division has two remaining 2012 modeling events. First, during the Oct 5 and 6 weekend we are once again sponsoring the 6-layout LSOPS 4 marathon weekend operating sessions. The 6 operating layouts include 3 in central PA and 3 in the Allentown/Reading area - each is well known for their exceptional operating environments. The 3 layouts in central PA are owned by Bob Martin, Steven Mallery, and Jeff Warner, and the 3 to the east are the property of Larry Reynolds, Jim Hertzog, and Gale Smith. We plan to sponsor this event again next year, and I encourage you to sign up early to experience this ultimate model railroading experience.

Our final event is on Nov 10, where 7 home layouts will be open in the greater Reading area. Descriptions of the layouts and driving directions follow my comments. We offer many thanks to each layout owner for all the work they put into preparing for this event, and extend special thanks to member Charles Kadyk for his organizing efforts and opening his home layout. All of the layouts will be open from Noon to 5:00 PM except Dennis Blank's which will be open from Noon to 8:00 PM. To help locate the layouts each owner will have white railroad style crossbuck signs placed by their driveways. I hope to see many of you at these layouts as I plan to fly back from sunny and warm FL to attend. Now I make one simple request to Charles as he makes final preparations – please schedule nice weather!

Our last sponsored event included 5 open layouts on Sep 15 and 16 in conjunction with a larger weekend parade of open layouts sponsored by Mainline Hobby Supply in Blue Ridge Summit PA. Hopefully you were able to visit the following layouts sponsored by our Division: Bob Martin's Central Pennsylvania Railroad (CPRR) in York, Dave Trone's modest size West Penn Railroad (38' x 70') in Gleneville (near Hanover), Tim Rasinski's PATAPSCO Neck Railroad in Gettysburg, Jeff Warner's PRR/RDG/WM South Central Region Railroad in Etters, and the Keystone Model Railroad Historical Society club layout in Mechanicsburg. I planned to visit all 5 but car problems enroute to Dave and Tim's on Sat restricted my visits to only Bob and Jeff's layouts. On Sun using my wife's car I visited the Mechanicsburg club layout along with 4 other layouts included in Mainline Hobby Supply's offerings.

It was inspiring to see the high quality of craftsmanship presented by each modeler and I thank them all for opening their homes and clubs to us. We will sponsor a similar program next year in conjunction with Mainline Hobby Supply - if you want to add your layout to the event please let me know. Division Director Ron Parisi took 4 pictures during the event and they are presented following my comments.

Unfortunately Jeff Warner decided to suddenly resign his Director, Sidetracks Editor, and Webmaster positions last week due to continuing health problems. All of us in the Division and Mid-East Region will miss his years of devotion to our membership and we are glad that he will continue to hold monthly operating sessions. Thankfully, Wayne Betty, our Division Assistant Superintendent, volunteered to assume Webmaster duties and I have assumed the Sidetracks Editor duties until volunteers step forward for those positions. Due to other pressing division projects we will defer holding an election for the vacant Director position until later this year. So please give serious consideration to stepping forward and volunteering for one of these important positions. We strive very hard and I believe are quite successful in placing as little time demands on our leadership team as possible because we well know many of us are still working, have important family responsibilities, and most importantly – each of us is first and foremost model railroaders which also requires much of our limited time.

I have one other unfortunate piece of bad news. The well designed and executed Steigal Valley Model Railroad Club located in Manheim, PA, is no longer in operation. They had a great modeling team and their craftsmanship was second to none – a real loss for our hobby.

Director Ron Parisi and I will attend the Mid-East Region Convention October 18-21 in Suffolk, VA. If you have any issues or suggestions that you would like presented please let us know. We will include a summary of convention happenings in our next Sidetracks.

The major focus of your leadership team is now aimed at planning several events for 2013. One of my major goals since assuming my position is to have more events scattered throughout our large and diverse territory. As you may know our area encompasses 32 PA counties where we currently have 252 members. Next year our goal is to present events in or near Johnstown, Altoona, State College, York, Lancaster, Scranton, Reading, Allentown, and Harrisburg. While we may not set attendance records at each we want to reach more of our dispersed membership. Some of these areas may be combined into slightly larger groupings but there will be more division events. Also, we have begun the initial steps in conducting join events with our sister NMRA divisions that border us. Obviously, making such widely dispersed happenings successful will depend on you volunteering to help with both time and ideas. In the next few weeks I will be contacting several members in these areas who have expressed interest in developing such activities and those who have helped in the past. So let's all commit ourselves to more model railroading events in 2013 and start ringing my phone off the hook or wearing out my computer email system with suggestions, desires, and raised hands to help.

Per our advertising policy, two advertisements are at the end of this newsletter. PLEASE visit these fine retailers and let them know you saw their ads here and that their money was well spent. Their support helps us off-set the costs of printing and mailing the newsletter, and any surplus goes into our general fund. Please support them as they help support us.

So fellow modelers, start your engines - full steam and/or Notch 8 ahead!

November 10 Model Railroad Open Houses

Northern Central Railroad's South Mountain Division – Guy Wilson

Noon to 5:00 PM



It is early summer 1953 on the HO scale Northern Central Railroad's South Mountain Division. The layout is located in a 1600 sq. ft. walk in basement dedicated to the railroad. As I am a lone wolf modeler progress has been slow but steady.

The layout models the line from a connection with the CNJ at Allentown to Harrisburg. Points east and west will be represented by stub end staging. The unmodeled western end of the layout is the never completed Southern Pennsylvania Railroad. An in depth history of the NCR is available at the open house.

The main yard at Harrisburg is 1 HO scale mile long and supports trains up to 35 cars. All first level bench work is in and work has started on the second deck. The first deck main line is approximately 270' long with a minimum curve radius of 36". All yard turnouts are #6 hand thrown using slide switches or wood dowel/cabinet knob controls of my own design.

The layout is controlled by Digitrax using wired and wireless throttles. I'm using the JMRI interface and through my wireless network anyone with an iPhone or Android smart phone can operate the layout with the appropriate app. Many of my locomotives are sound equipped and I have basic throttles for use by small children.

Scenery is about to begin in the yard and passenger terminal areas and the two center peninsulas will feature a large integrated steel mill with blast, Bessemer and open hearth furnaces. My basement has ground level entry with a large parking area right at the door. All aisles are 4' with a few choke points a bit narrower. The layout is linear walk around with no hidden track.

Layout Specifications:

Scale: HO

Layout Style: Linear walk around

Period/Era: Summer, 1953

Control: Digitrax

Address: 1130 Steffy Road, Stevens, PA 17578

Directions:

Northbound US 222 from Lancaster. Take the Ephrata exit and continue straight across Rt. 322 at the end of the exit ramp. Continue to follow Hahnstown Road for about 4 miles. The road has many sharp curves and Amish farms/children so please observe the speed limit.

At close to the 4 mile mark you'll top a small rise and then the road dips and turns sharply left and starts to climb. The next road to the right, about 100' from the curve is Red Run Road. Turn right on Red Run and after about 200' the road dips and turns sharply right. Your view will be blocked by a white barn on the right as you approach the curve. Steffy Road is to your left in the middle of the curve.

Ease up to the barn and check for oncoming traffic before you make the left turn onto Steffy. Our house is about 400' down the road. The house is blue and sits back off the road. We have several large rocks in the front yard and I'll have cross bucks at the end of the drive. There is a large parking area to the right of the house and the basement entrance is at the base of the stairs on that end of the house.

Southbound US 222 from Reading. If you are on the turnpike take the Reading exit, #286 and follow Colonel Howard Blvd out to Rt. 272; it will be the third traffic light.

If South on Rt. 222 from Reading take the Pa turnpike exit and turn right at the bottom of the ramp.

You are now also on Colonel Howard Blvd and the next light will be Rt. 272. There is a Turkey Hill convenience store to your left front and a Dunkin Donuts off to your left. Turn left at the light and follow 272 south for about 2 miles.

When you come to the second traffic light there will be a Sunoco on your right. Turn left at the light and drive just under 2 miles staying on the same road. You'll go thru a 4 way stop just down from 272 and a bit further up you'll go under the Rt. 222 overpass. After passing a garage with an LP gas tank you'll go thru an s curve and after the road straightens out watch for a sudden drop in the road. Chestnut Hill Road will be on your left as the road starts to drop and about 100' further down Red Run Road will be on your left. Turn left on Red Run and the directions will be the same as above. Turn left about 100' up at the white barn, watching for oncoming traffic and then look for my house about 300-400' up on the left. The house number is also on the mail box post with the high reflective blue sign.

Pennsylvania and New England Railroad - Charles Kadyk

Noon to 5:00 PM

It's the mid 1950's and PRR and the B&M are working to move freight and passengers from the Harrisburg to New England areas via the Poughkeepsie Bridge Route, heading northeast from Rockville with the PRR connection just below the famous Rockville bridge, along the ridge of Blue Mountain up and through New Jersey and up into New York with connections along the way with the Reading, the Lehigh Valley, Susie Q and the DLW before reaching Maybrook yard. After that major connection with the New Haven the PNE moves up and across the Berkshires to Boston via the B&M then on to Northern New England and the Canadian Maritimes.

This frequently leads to a mixed bag of power with PRR, B&M and MEC steam and diesel running freight and passenger both directions, coal north to New England and New England Mill and Paper goods southwest. Most of the time fast freights will change from PNE or New England Power to PRR at Kertville Yard which is the major classification point near the city of Charlestown with it's passenger terminal where one can get a comfortable ride up through the picturesque country side of the southern Poconos up through and across the soaring Poughkeepsie bridge into New England, through the Berkshire Mountains then onto Boston. Convenient connections can be made at Charlestown to Reading, Harrisburg, Reading (via the PRR Schuylkill Division) and Philadelphia and also point North. Charlestown has some unusual industries such as the Bodfish Bassoon Works and the Fedorkowitz Windsock company just to name a few.

The railroad is about 25 by 25 shelf style with a peninsula in the middle which is the stub terminal of Charlestown. All towns on the RR represent various members of the family. The Charlestown/Kertville area is in the Hamburg PA area of the real world with another yard at Pen Argyl. Maybrook is the northern staging with Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Reading represented by Blue Mountain staging roughly north of Hamburg. The RR is a "what if" of the LNE had it had a some stronger financial backing in the late 1800's to withstand the financial panics of the 1880's.

Control is NCE with JMRI used for dispatching, track detection and eventually signaling. Circuitry for detection and signaling is by RR-cirkits.com.

Address: 28 Flickinger Rd., Mohnton, PA 19540

Directions from I-176. Take exit 7, then turn south on PA 10 to PA 568 west, go under I-176, take first left onto Gunhart Rd. At the "T" turn right onto Sell Rd. Go about a 1/2 mile and just past a red barn turn left onto Flickinger Rd. We are the 2nd house in.

Layout Specifications

Scale: HO

Layout Style: Linear walk around with 2 levels connected by a helix.

Period/Era: Transition era

Track: Atlas Code 100

Turnouts: Peco, Shinohara, Atlas

Minimum Radius: 27"

Maximum Grade: 2%

Control: NCE Power House Pro DCC

Car Forwarding: Car Cards & Waybills

DLW and BR - Joshua Blay

Noon - 5:00 pm

This is a unique combination of British and American layouts side by side or one on top of another. It represents the transition era on Josh's branch of the Lackawanna in upstate PA and nearby NY. The layouts also offer a neat homage to his English parents with a typical Suburban layout of Kent or Sussex on the lower level.

Layout Specifications:

Scale: HO

Layout Style: Linear walkaround

Period/Era: Transition era

Track: Atlas Code 83:

Control: Digitrax

Address: 6 Charlemont Court, Shillington, PA 19607

Directions:

US 222 North from Lancaster and Ephrata to US 222 Business, shortly after exit is Right turn onto Abercam Drive. If you reach Tom Sturgis Pretzels you've gone too far. Take next left on Charlemont Drive then take next into Charlemont Court. (townhouses).

Birdsboro and Reading - Dennis Blank Jr.

Noon - 8:00 pm

The layout is currently under construction. It has very nice scenery so far and displays serious attention to detail with what Dennis has so far. Dennis is prototype railroader so his layout speaks of his experience. He makes the most of a smaller space.

Layout Specifications:

Scale: HO

Layout Style: Island walkaround

Period/Era: Early diesel era

Track: Atlas Code 83

Control: Digitrax

Dispatcher: Under development

Car Forwarding: Under development

Address: 2998 West Newport Road, Ronks, PA 17572

Directions:

Take US 222 north from Lancaster to PA 772 east exit. Continue on PA 772 east to Leola then turn left on PA 23/PA 772 then south on PA 772. Continue south on PA 772, cross over the "Amishman's Highway (uncompleted interstate type road), continue on PA 772 until you get to the corner of PA 772 and the Mascot Rd. The house is on the corner. If you reach the right turn onto the Hess Rd. then you've gone too far.

PRR - Chris Saporito

Noon - 5:00 pm

Chris' layout is a snapshot of various places he and his brother built or experienced over the years. He has excellent mountain scenery with a bit of the Rockville bridge and at least 2 towns.

Layout Specifications:

Scale: HO

Layout Style: Linear walkaround

Period/Era: Transition era

Track: Atlas Code 83:

Control: Digitrax

Dispatcher: Not in use at this time

Car Forwarding: No operating scenario at this time

Address: 813 Kurtz Mill Road (PA Route 568), Mohnton, PA 19540

Directions:

US 222 North from Lancaster and Ephrata to PA 568, take the Adamstown exit. Then go east on PA 568 thru Knauers (PA 625). Continue on PA 568 until you pass Maple Grove Road and then start looking to the left for 813 Kurtz Mill Road. If you pass Candy Road you've gone 2 houses too far.

PRR Schuylkill Division - Joel Holubec

Noon - 5:00 PM



It's 1951 and the Pennsylvania Railroad's Schuylkill Division has lost most of its passenger traffic to the Reading; however, freight is still going strong in an east bound direction. Anthracite from the mines north of Pottsville is gathered at Carbon yard and then makes two daily trips to Philadelphia. Steel mills and other businesses also require two trains daily to Philly and Ernest yard for shipments westbound. Plus other line side businesses in Norristown, Spring City, Stowe, Reading and Pottsville keep the railroad busy. Two daily passenger trains still make the round trip between Reading and Norristown with a handful of commuters. Steam remains king on the mail line with Decapods,

Mikados and Consolidations doing the majority of the freight work. However, diesels now run the yards and those Baldwin Transfer units will soon be making their way up the line.

The layout is 25' by 11' with a five turn helix connecting the two levels. The track plan is a true point to point operation designed for lots of wayside switching and represents Norristown to Pottsville on the layout with Philadelphia and Ernest yard at the east end staging and various other points north of Pottsville at the west end staging. Control is via Digitrax with some engines having sound. Track work is about 80% complete as the entire Norristown area needs to be developed along with the engines facilities at Pottsville and a few sidings. Scenery, representing autumn, is only about 20% complete.

Layout Specifications:

Scale: HO

Layout Style: Linear walkaround

Period/Era: Transition era

Track: Atlas Code 83:

Control: Digitrax

Address: 109 Sunset Drive, Bernville, PA 19056

Directions:

From Interstate 78, take Shartlesville exit, #23. Go south on Mountain road, towards Shartlesville for about 1/8 mile. At the tee, make a left onto Old Route 22 (Hex highway) and go for another 1/8 mile and make the second right, immediately past the old Shartlesville hotel, onto Wolf Creek road. Go 3/4 miles and bear left onto Valley Road. Go another 3/4 miles and make a left onto Sunset Drive and we are the second house on the right, on Sunset.

Quaker Valley Railroad – Bob Bucklew

Noon - 5:00 PM



It is September 1977 in Western Pennsylvania and the young Consolidated Rail Corporation is just getting its feet on the ground in the coal regions of the Allegheny Mountains. New units are on order and Conrail's new blue scheme is showing up on a variety of recently shopped equipment. But the

majority of the power found trackside is still in the schemes of the many fallen flags absorbed by Conrail; Penn Central, Reading, Lehigh Valley and Erie Lackawanna. Also showing up are hastily renumbered units, with just a quick touch up of the cab sides and number boards. Each consist offers a smorgasbord of sights and sounds as Alcos, GEs and EMDs team up.

The Quaker Valley is a short line that runs from the Conrail interchange at Lynnsburg, just west of Altoona, northward to Buffalo. Chessie freights have trackage rights over a portion of the QV on their way from Cumberland northward as well. The Quaker Valley was created from remnants of the D&H and many of the inherited locos still sport the yellow and blue scheme of that railroad, but with a new Quaker logo.

The 110 foot long Conrail double track main line circles the wall in a 21' x 37' basement room dedicated to the layout. The single track Quaker Valley main line leaves Conrail at Lynnsburg and continues on a walk around peninsular plan for 125 feet with several passing sidings and three branches. It terminates at the town of Costello which is dominated by a steel mill and yard. Hidden tracks accommodate 20 trains "off stage" including through tracks on the Conrail main line representing Altoona, Johnstown, McKeesport and Harrisburg. Stub tracks represent Enola, Cumberland (B&O), Punxsutawney and Homer City. Minimum 14 foot long passing sidings provide the Dispatcher plenty of opportunities to keep the relatively long freights moving.

The Quaker Valley has been using a North Coast Engineering NCE 5 amp Power Pro DCC system since 1999. The old control panel with rotary switches has been retired and the railroad has been controlled by a JMRI software CTC panel since 2003. All main line turnouts are now controlled by accessory decoders from the touch screen CTC panel. See more info at www.quaker-valley.com

Layout Specifications

Scale: HO

Track: Atlas Code 83 & 100

Layout Style: Linear walkaround

Period/Era: Modern, prototype freelance.

Track: Atlas Code 83 & 100

Turnouts: Peco, Shinohara, Atlas, Micro Engineering

Minimum Radius: 30" mainline, 28" branch

Maximum Grade: 2.1% (except 4% Kittaning Branch)

Control: NCE Power House Pro DCC

Detection: NCE BD20 and RR-Cirkit BOD8

Dispatcher: Touch monitor CTC Panel using JMRI Panel pro

Car Forwarding: Car Cards & Waybills

Address: 18 Fawn Drive, Shillington PA 19607 (GPS - use Cumru Twp)

Directions:

From I-176 South, exit at Green Hills (exit 7). Turn left at light onto PA 10 south. Turn right at next light (1/2 mile) onto Pheasant/Kachel Blvd.

From I-176 North, exit at Green Hills (exit 7). Turn left from ramp onto PA 10 north. Turn left at next light (3/4 mile) onto Pheasant/Kachel Blvd.

The first two rights take you into the Green Hills Corporate Center (Penske & Worley-Parsons) Take the third right onto Pheasant Road. Follow Pheasant about 1/2 mile to a left on Fawn Drive. #18 is top of hill on the right.

Parking in the drive is okay, also the lane across the street or anywhere you can get off the road. Please use basement entrance from the driveway. Wheelchair accessible.

Special Note: Open house jewelry show upstairs for the ladies

Mainline Hobbies Open House

The following photos were taken on September 15th and 16th during Mainline Hobbies open house.



It couldn't have been a more beautiful day, sunny and mild. A well placed sign announced the event. At Mainline Hobby Supply, the lot was jumping but there was parking in the back.



Tom Wright and Keith Bell are at the registers of the shop. Great store...well organized, well stocked and of course the choice of type of merchandise was unparalleled.



Tim Rasinski at his Patapsco Neck Railroad circa 1944. Great era appropriate cars and locomotives on great track work....



Tim's Highland Coal Company a beautiful kit and scratch built model that captures the era's flavor wonderfully...



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