



Susquehanna Sidetracks

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

January 2014

Volume 22 Number 1

From the Superintendent's Desk *Barry Schmitt*

HAPPY 2014 TO ALL!

Hope all of you had a joyful, peaceful, and relaxing holiday season and are now hard at work in your railroad room building your layout – whether it be a 2' x 4' module like I'm starting or a full basement empire. Mother Nature has certainly provided the incentive to keep us focused on our hobby.

By now all of you have had the opportunity to review our extensive 2014 event plan. Our 2014 Event Planning Committee had three main goals: 1 - provide a variety of events (manufacturer and historical site visits, layout open houses, operating opportunities, and clinics), 2 - hold at least one event in each of our four Sub-Divisions (North, South, East, and West), and 3 - provide that plan to you before the start of the year so you can begin planning your attendance well in advance instead of hearing about an event just weeks before it is set to happen. We owe the seven committee members a hearty round of applause and a well-deserved pat on the back when you see them for their tireless efforts. Those members and where they live are:

Wayne Betty (Mt Joy), David Collison (Lancaster), Forrest Lucas (Johnstown), Lee Rainey (State College), Howard Oakes (Abbottstown), Ron Smith (Mechanicsburg), and John Wissinger (MMR, Myerstown). Our 2015 planning committee will begin their deliberations in August, so if you would like to become a member of that planning group, contact me before the end of June.

One additional 2014 event is still being finalized as this newsletter goes to press, and all the details will be presented in our March *Sidetracks*. So mark your calendars now for Saturday September 6th, when our Division and Rob McClenaghan, owner of Lancaster hobby shop Choo Choo Nuts, will jointly sponsor an all-day event at the Strasburg Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. The event will begin with morning clinics presented by both model railroad manufacturers and fellow model railroaders. Lunch will be on your own at any of the nearby eateries. In the afternoon we will tour the Museum's exceptional model railroad and devote the remainder of the day

See **Super's Desk** on page 2

Schedules

Tree Making Clinic

Jan 14, 2014 Masonic Village & E-Town
Model RR Club, Elizabethtown PA

Division Meet

Feb. 8, 2014 Grace United Methodist
Church, Mechanicsburg PA

NMRA National Convention

July 13 – July 20, 2014
Cleveland OH

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

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna Division
Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA
467 Lovell Court
Hummelstown, PA 17036

Contributing to Susquehanna Sidetracks

Sidetracks welcomes contributions from Division membership. Letters, articles, photos and other items may be mailed or emailed to the Superintendent at the address listed above. Please include return postage if you would like materials returned. Deadline for submission for the next issue is 2-15-14

Board of Directors 2013-2014

Superintendent

Barry Schmitt
bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org

Asst. Superintendent

Wayne Betty
wsb@susquehannanmra.org

Chief Clerk

Paul Tice
ptice@susquehannanmra.org

Director/Membership Chairman

Howard Oakes
hoakes@susquehannanmra.org

Director

Dave Collison
dcollison@susquehannanmra.org

Director

Ron Parisi
rparisi@susquehannanmra.org

Director

Lee Rainey
lrainey@susquehannanmra.org

Committee Chairman

Achievement Program Chairman

Robert Charles, MMR
rcharles@susquehannanmra.org

Training & Clinic Chairman

Alan Mende
amende@susquehannanmra.org

Model Showcase Program Chairman

John Wissinger, MMR
jwissinger@susquehannanmra.org

Sidetracks Editor

Ron Smith
rsmith@susquehannanmra.org

Membership Information

Online newsletter is always available at Susquehanna Division website.

www.susquehannanmra.org

National Model Railroad Association
4121 Cromwell Road
Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119

www.nmra.org

to touring the inside and outside museum displays as well as an up front and close tour of their extensive back shops. The reason we are announcing this event now is that it occurs at the end of the Labor Day holiday week, and we want to be sure you have sufficient time to include it in your long range family planning. Our project officer for this event is Rich Wurst – a Division member, member of The Friends of the Railroad Museum, and a modeler who helped develop the Museum model railroad display.

Hopefully many of you will take advantage of the E-Town and Masonic Village Model Railroad Club tree making mini-clinic to be held on January 14. The dynamic tree making duo of Gary Joline and Jay Green have developed an excellent process that yields very durable trees of all sizes and shapes. Their mini-clinic will be held during their normal Tuesday evening layout work session. Due to limited space be sure to call Jay Green at 717-679-0067 to reserve your seat. There are probably as many tree making methods as Mother Nature's variety of trees but the process developed by Gary and Jay certainly yields some of the most durable and layout pleasing results I've seen. I am sure you will enjoy this educational Tuesday evening clinic

On February 8 we will hold our first traditional Division morning clinics and afternoon layout open houses and a historical train station visit thrown in to spice up the event. Ron Smith, our project officer, has a separate article devoted to all

that is planned for what is shaping up to be a very interesting model railroading day. Be sure to bring your pride and joy model for display and an opportunity to tell us why it is special to you. One of the morning clinics will be devoted to a member describing why he decided to scratch build an HO Shay locomotive. You simply have to see this masterpiece of craftsmanship to believe it, and builder Alan Mende will even demonstrate it in action. This little jewel won Best of Show and an Achievement Program Certificate at the October Mid-East Region Convention this past October. You will also get to visit Ron Smith's nearby excellent N-Scale layout and tour Master Model Railroader (MMR) Bob Charles superb home layout in nearby Camp Hill. So February 8 will certainly be a great kickoff event for our 2014 program and I look forward to seeing you there.

For our first venture at holding our November 2013 Division-wide 22 layout open house project in recognition of National Model Railroad Month, it was very successful and we learned a lot. As explained in the December *Sidetracks Express* 2014 Event Program our 2nd November Division-wide open house program will allow layout owners to be open either Saturday, Sunday, or both days on the weekend for their Sub-Division event. This will allow additional layouts to be included in the program and permit folks who work on Saturday or have other scheduled activities the opportunity to visit layouts on days they are available. We will also develop a map for each Sub-Division that will show the location

See **Super's Desk** on page 3

From **Super's Desk** page 2

of all the layouts and it will be color coded by days open. And finally we plan to have all the open layouts posted to a special Division website address by September 15 which will provide at least 45-days advanced notice so you can build an effective visit schedule. However, to be successful it depends on many layouts being open in each Sub Division so start planning now about what you need to do to get your basement empire ready for the November event. And don't believe anything less than 100% scenery completion and everything running to perfection is required. On the contrary, I received many positive comments from those who visited layouts under construction or in various stages of development. All of us in the Division extend a special thanks to those of you who opened your layouts for our first undertaking last November, and we sincerely hope you will graciously agree to be open again this coming November. And finally, I want to extend a special thanks to Jerry Britton who orchestrated our first November layout open house extravaganza.

Speaking of Jerry, we extend our congratulations to him for earning the Master Builder Scenery Achievement Program certificate last fall. He is well on his way to joining that elite group of modelers who have earned the distinction of being recognized as

Master Model Railroaders. I had the privilege of seeing his under-construction basement empire about a year ago and look forward to it being included in a future open house.

While June may seem a long way off now is the time to start thinking about elections of your Division Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Chief Clerk. Wayne Betty and Paul Tice, your current Assistant Super and Chief Clerk, respectively, plan to run for reelection and I fully support both of them – they have done an exceptional job these past 18 months. However my old bones tell me it is time to hang up my Super spurs, push back from the computer, and wind my way down the stairs to the train room to begin some quality model railroading. So I urge each of you to give serious thought to tossing your hat in the upcoming election ring and run for Superintendent. This is your Division - during the past 18 months I've received suggestions about how to better run our railroad and I'm sure many members have quietly, and some not so quietly, said things could be done better. Now you have the opportunity to make it so. Some would say "I don't have any Division leadership experience." Well guess what – I had absolutely zip-zero Division experience and took the reins with less than two weeks' notice, and, I'm sure a few might

say it shows, but here we are still in business. Like I always hear from clinicians who just completed presenting what seemed like an extremely difficult and involved project, they all say, "Hey, if I can do it anyone can do it!"

So give the idea of stepping forward and offering to take over the reins serious thought, talk about it with your modeling friends, and, if you have questions, please give me a call. It has definitely been a very rewarding experience and in many ways has been very much like my 50-year flying career – mostly day to day routine stuff with a few moments of absolute terror; however, if I can do it so can you!

Hopefully by now everyone has posted our eight, and as of now, nine events on your calendars. And while a few will require preregistration due to number of attendee limitations all of them are open to all members, your family, and fellow model railroader friends. I look forward to seeing you at any and hopefully all of our scheduled events. And please take my request to seriously consider running for the Division Superintendent position.

Enjoy this wonderful hobby and share it with others!



From the Editor

Ron Smith

2014 SIDETRACKS HOME DELIVERY PROGRAM

By Barry Schmitt

Several members have either no home internet service or very slow dial-up service which precludes them from viewing our Sidetracks and Sidetracks Express newsletters. There are also several members who have full internet service but like to have a hard copy to read away from their computer. At present there are 24 such members receiving United States Postal Service (USPS) home delivery of their Sidetracks.

The 2014 home delivery cost is \$11 per member - these fees are used to offset most of the reproduction and mailing costs. Each home delivery member will have a SSAE and note included with this Sidetracks, and the note will list how much you owe for 2014. Because of previous multi-year pay-in-advance special programs some members will either owe nothing or less than the full \$11 for 2014. Each home delivery member will have their appropriate billing status reflected in the enclosed note.

Please enclose your check (no cash please) payable to NMRA Susquehanna Division 11 in the enclosed SSAE and mail by February 15, 2014 - your cancelled check will serve as your receipt. If we do not receive your payment by February 15 we assume you do not want to continue receiving your home

delivery copy and this January issue will be your last.

If you have any questions about our Sidetracks home delivery program or this payment process please call me at 717-877-1810 or email me at:

bschmitt@susquehannamra.org

Also, for our new members, you can view the latest and all previous Sidetracks at:

www.susquehannamra.org

Select the Susquehanna Sidetracks Newsletters link.

Happy New Year!

I hope you had a nice Christmas and that 2014 will be a good year for all of you. The upcoming winter months provide most of us with the opportunity to get some serious modeling done, and I hope that applies to me this year as well.

I enjoyed November's National Model Railroading Month, as I hosted almost 20 visitors to my N Scale layout on the first Saturday of November. Ruth and I visited five layouts in the Allentown area on the following Saturday. Those layouts ranged from benchwork-under-construction to mostly-scenicked to an outdoor garden railroad model of the Tehachapi Loop. It made for a full but delightful Saturday. Please see the

Upcoming Events page for more info on model shows that are scheduled for the next three months.

One of the bonuses of visiting those layouts was the opportunity to talk with the modelers and ask questions about their layouts and how they achieved their goals. Those conversations led to plans for articles for *Sidetracks* later in 2014.

This issue completes my first year as your Editor. If you have any suggestions on how to make the newsletter better and more effective, please drop me a note. We'd like you to tell us about your layout too, so please send in your photos of op sessions you've attended, modeling projects you've been working on, and your tips and techniques.

Also, we encourage you to bring your models to Division meetings for display in the Model Showcase portion of our meets.

My contact information is

rsmith@susquehannamra.org

I hope to meet you at one of our upcoming events.

Ron

FOCUS HOBBY SHOP: Cool Trains, Salunga PA

Ron Parisi

Cool Trains

So to hear Ted, the proprietor of **Cool Trains** tell it, Salunga was chosen as the stores' location because it is mid-point between Manheim, Lancaster and Lebanon. He felt it was the ideal location not so much for geography but because it was equally accessible to the hobbyists of those cities to augment or replace shops in those cities. A rather noble thought. And he was right - they have been drawn to his shop located in the heart of 'downtown' Salunga.



Downtown may be a stretch of the word however, as I'm not sure that the great looking brick factory building diagonally across the street that sports a hand painted out giant sign that read 'White Owl Cigars' and the larger brick structure directly across the street that was a vestigial feed mill – now being converted into an office complex could be considered a downtown...but no never mind, "**Cool Trains**" is the reason that a model railroader should go there. And 'Cool Trains' is thriving.



The first thing one notices upon entering the store is its wide, generous aisles. Secondly, it is well lit! These two facts may not be so important for the younger hobbyists, but for us graying, widening, glasses-wearing old steamers it is a pleasure to shop and pass someone not worrying about squeezing past intimately to the front or back or taking something off the shelf to hold it in the light just to see what it is.

As soon as one enters the store, one sees arrayed around the central checkout counter (always manned by Ted or his long time sales associate, Dave) various popular-brand plastic ship and plane models, name-brand modeling tools and a chock full Evergreen Styrene display rack. A little further down the aisles one passes acres of model paints, fully displayed in their racks. Further down in the store the model trains come to the fore with Lionel, Walthers and Atlas being among the most prominent brands. As one reaches the large rear area of the store, in addition to many R-T-R sets, there are huge display cases of vintage items for sale and well displayed.

FOCUS HOBBY SHOP: Cool Trains, Salunga PA

Ron Parisi

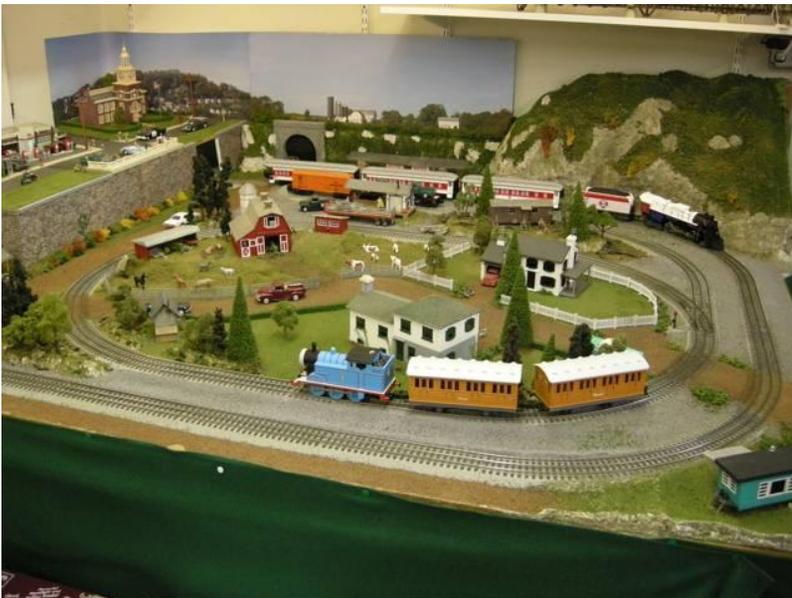


Detail parts, accessories and track reside here as well as the no-store-is –complete-without Wood land Scenics Spinner racks. The jewel in the crown back here is the ‘O’ gauge display layout complete with Thomas the Tank Engine, Annie and Clarabelle lapping the ‘Polar Express’ While I was there a young engineer was watching their progress intently while Dad had the opportunity to peruse what he wanted.



Because I plunged so quickly into this Hobby Nirvana, I almost forgot the room off to the left of the register area. This is definitely the room to purchase a gift for mom or the family as it contains railroad themed items such as puzzles, some handicraft items and more sets of R-T-R trains.

FOCUS HOBBY SHOP: Cool Trains, Salunga PA
Ron Parisi



Cool Trains is surprisingly easy to get to if you ignore your GPS that takes you through some weird convolutions. From Harrisburg I took I-283 towards Lancaster and took the Ebenshade Road exit. At the end of the exit ramp I turned right onto Ebenshade, stayed straight through the first traffic light, then made a left turn onto Old Harrisburg Pike that becomes Main Street. I continued for about a mile and a quarter. The blue and brick store with its frontier facade is on the right at the corner of Main and Stony Battery Road. Parking is easy around the back. In addition to being able to special order, they will ship anywhere.

COOL TRAINS
106 West Main Street SALUNGA, PA 17538 (717) 898-7119

www.cooltrains.com

Upcoming Events – In or Near Our Division

Mark your calendars for these upcoming activities!!

Jan 5-26, 2014

**Sundays ONLY 1-4 PM, Frederick County
Society of Model Engineers
423 E Patrick St, Frederick MD
Annual Open House
www.fcsme.com**

Jan 5-6 and 11-12, 2014

**The Short Line Model RR Club
11 S. State Street, Ephrata PA
(Entrance at rear of building)
www.slmc.com**

January 11-12, 2014

**Greenberg's Toy & Train Show
York, PA
10-4 each day. \$8 adults, kids under 12 free
www.greenbergshows.com**

January 14, 2014

**Tree Making Clinic
Masonic Village & E-Town Model RR Club,
Elizabethtown PA
(See the November *Sidetracks* for details)**

January 18-19, 2014

**World's Greatest Hobby On Tour
Greater Philadelphia Expo Center
Oaks, PA
www.WHGShow.com**

January 18-19, 2014

**Greenberg's Toy & Train Show
Monroeville, PA
10-4 each day. \$8 adults, kids under 12 free
www.greenbergshows.com**

Jan 25-26, 2014

**Amherst Railway Society
Railroad Hobby Show
Eastern States Exposition Center
1305 Memorial Ave, West Springfield MA
Saturday 9-5, Sunday 10-5
Admission: \$10/day, + \$5 Parking
(Yes, this is a day's drive away for most of our
members but it is the largest train show in the
East. Ed.)**

February 8, 2014, 9-3

**Susquehanna Div 11 Meet
Mechanicsburg, PA
Grace United Methodist Church,
216 S. Market Street, Mechanicsburg PA
(see write-up elsewhere in this issue)**

March 28-30, 2014

**Railroad Prototype Modelers
Valley Forge Meet
Desmond Great Valley Hotel
One Liberty Blvd, Malvern PA
www.phillynmra.org**

Free Railpass Trial Membership Sponsored by the MER

Do you know a modeler who needs a nudge to take the next step to become more involved in this wonderful hobby? The trial membership program may be just what is needed to further a modeler's development, skills and interest.

The NMRA began a 6 month 'Railpass' trial membership program which costs the applicant \$9.95. The Mid-Eastern Region (MER) has built on this program by paying the \$9.95 Railpass fee for applicants residing in the MER. In other words, the MER is furnishing a free 6 month NMRA membership to encourage the recruitment of new members.

Railpass applicants will receive 6 issues of the NMRA Magazine, 3 issues of the Local, eligibility to attend conventions and meets and to participate in contests. Railpass applicants cannot vote or hold office, and will not receive the New Member Pak from national. Anyone living within the MER who has not been an NMRA member during the past 2 years can use this program.

The prospective member fills out the free MER Railpass membership application form on page 23 of this issue (not the standard NMRA Railpass form), and give it to a Division Director who will sign and forward it to the MER for processing. Do not send this to Bob Price or the NMRA headquarters in Chattanooga, TN; the MER will forward the application to the NMRA with the payment.

Building the PRR Middle Division

Story by Jerry Britton

Mann's Narrows and My Take on SuperTrees



A Baldwin switcher leads a string of H30 hoppers westbound on the Milroy Secondary at Mann's Narrows.

In my last installment, we discussed Yeagertown on the Milroy Secondary and my method of creating fascia control panels. This month we head eastward on the Milroy line to a scenic area known as Mann's Narrows.

In modern times, as you head westbound on U.S. 322 beyond Lewistown, about a mile after the Burnham exit, the highway passes through a gap in the mountains, just before reaching Reedsville. This is Mann's Narrows.

The gap was named after that family that owned it. Back in the day, settlers would claim the gaps in the mountains, then toll travelers for the use of the low grade route through their property rather than having to hike up over the mountain. The Mann's were also known for their axe factory there, which later moved to downtown Lewistown. Mann axes are well known among firefighters.

The modern highway was built during the mid-1950's. The old 322 remains, and was actually upgraded in recent years. The railroad tracks are long gone, having not been rebuilt following their destruction during Hurricane Agnes in 1972. However, the right-of-way is still very clear and walkable. At one time a trolley line also connected Reedsville with Lewistown, but it was removed long before my modeling time.

The one constant over time has been the Kishocoquillas Creek, a beautiful cascading stream that I am told is an excellent trout stream. Part of its beauty is its' translucent blue hues of the water, the result of limestone in suspension. In fact, at one location upstream, the creek actually goes underground and through a limestone cave.

Knowing that pouring resin to create a stream can be messy, and that the scene directly below the area would be at risk, I set out to fully complete this area before moving on to basic track work elsewhere.

I installed my sub roadbed, roadbed, and track, wired it, and confirmed operation. I then created a cardboard mesh to depict the rough base for the mountains. Over this went two layers of plaster cloth. I experimented with paper towels dipped in plaster,

Building the PRR Middle Division

but determined it was for the birds! You can only do about two square feet at a time before the plaster bath sets up. I tried Woodland Scenics plaster cloth for a section and loved it. Instead of dipping into plaster that sets up quickly, you dip it into water which activates plaster that is already embedded in the cloth. You can actually do massive sections as long as you have a supply of water. I found generic plaster cloth available from Blick online, or a local craft store, such as Michaels. You needn't pay the high cost for Woodland Scenics, which is the main complaint most people use against plaster cloth.

I then used plaster to glue hydrocal castings of rock outcroppings onto the ends of the mountains. I colored them with very watered-down samples of various craft paints, using colors such as Licorice (black), Burnt Umber, Burnt Sienna, etc. You start with the light colors and work darker, just blotting areas. It's amazing how simple it is to get excellent results. I found the technique online and this was my first stab at it.

Next I covered all other areas with a quarter inch or so of SculptaMold. I wanted to create a base for "planting" trees. This stuff is kind of a cross between paper mache, plaster, etc. It comes in a coarse powder form. You mix it with water to create the consistency you want, then apply it like joint compound. It is very shapeable.

I then painted all of the ground a brown color and over coated with Flock & Turf Scenic Textures from Scenic Express for ground cover. I used their Deadfall Forest Debris at the very back/top to create shadows and Green Adirondack Blend in the closer, more open areas.



A high level view of Mann's Narrows showing the rock outcroppings and an emergency water stop.

Next was adding trees. I used SuperTrees from Scenic Express. They can get expensive, but having seen the results on other model railroads I decided that I couldn't use anything but. It took about two boxes of material to complete the Mann's Narrows area. More later...

For the stream, I painted the stream bed in increasingly darker colors to represent the deeper areas. Pretty common technique; no secrets there. The challenge was in creating the translucent aqua appearance of the water.

I participate in the forum at <http://www.kitforums.com>. This site is full of folks doing advanced scenery and building craftsman's kits. You'll find the likes of David Frary, Jimmy Deignan, Doug Foscale, and many other "legends" there. The forum can be a bit intimidating and is not for the casual modeler. Anyway, I asked them how I might approach the stream and they suggested iridescent paint used by taxidermists. Hmmm! I checked this out but found it incredibly expensive. But it got me thinking.

I went to Walmart as they have a fairly decent selection of craft paints. They didn't have what I thought I was looking for, but on a whim I tried something else. Hey, it cost less than \$1.50 to try! I went home with bottles of Neon Blue and Neon Green. They were very bright... this couldn't possibly work, could it?

I mixed equal amounts of the two colors in an empty air brush bottle. Wow, the color was still way too bright, but it was kind of the right hue. More hmmm!

Knowing that I would be mixing it with resin, specifically Envirotex Lite, I theorized that if only a touch were added, I might get rid of the brightness while retaining the color. I mixed up a test batch of resin, added a drop of the color, poured it into a paper plate and let it set up overnight. To my delight, it was absolutely perfect! On the layout I mixed one (big) drop to 8 ounces of resin. I am very pleased with the results.

To create the rapids effect, I used Woodland Scenics Water Effects. I added a dab of white paint so the rapids would not dry clear. Seems to have worked.

This past October I had the Mann's Narrows section of the model railroad successfully judged towards my NMRA AP Scenery award.

My Take on Super Trees

Since first seeing Super Trees on a few local layouts years ago, I knew I wanted them. But in looking into them I found them to be expensive and having intimidating instructions. I know folks who pick their own weeds for making tree structures, but that wasn't for me. So I grabbed a box of Super Trees at the Timonium show to experiment with.

The original instructions called for boiling the structures, then hanging them for a day, weighted with clothes pins, to straighten them out, then spray painting them. Next step is dipping them in matte medium (glue) and dredging through a pan of leaf material. I envisioned the time and mess of the boiling and straightening process, the mess of the glue, and the end result of dredging the gluey mess through leaf material. Clearly the leftover leaf material would not be reusable. Sigh!

Then I found an online demonstration where a user used a soldering gun to straighten the trees. Instead of boiling and hanging the structures, he would gently hold the structure with any bow facing upward. With a low temp soldering iron, he would gently touch and apply pressure to the outside of the branch. This straightened the branch. Not only was it a clean process, but it told me to think outside of the box about building Super Trees!

Another tidbit that I picked up was the use of extreme hold hair spray as a final overcoat for trees to prevent leaves from falling off. That set in motion my process for building Super Trees.

First, I pick apart the large structures to create the structure sizes I need. This is consistent with the package instructions. If straightening is required — which seldom has been to date — I use the soldering iron process. I "plant" the resulting structures on

Building the PRR Middle Division

a long, narrow piece of foam board into which I have created nail holes about six inches apart.



Second, I spray paint all of the trees on the board a base tree color — some sort of tan or gray. Use the cheapest spray paint you can find. Allow to dry overnight.

Third, I pour my leaf material onto a tray or paper towels. I use Noch leaf material. I often mix yellow with green, or red with yellow, to depict various levels of change in the fall. I also spread out an area of paper towels to create a hair spray overspray area that can be disposed of.

Fourth, holding a structure by the base, I hold it over the spray area and spray it with the hair spray. That's right, I'm actually using the hair spray as glue! If it can set the leaves as a final step, why can't it be used as the glue? I've never heard of anyone else doing this, but many of my trees are now a year old and they are not shedding!

Quickly move the structure over the leaf material. Grab a large pinch-full with your free hand and drizzle it over the structure. Most will stick and the excess will fall back into the pile underneath — without being covered with gobs of glue! Repeat until the tree is covered. You may need to do large trees in sections. Simply go back and forth between hair spray and leaf material.

Fifth, give the leaved structure a final overcoat of hair spray and then replant it on the foam board and allow to dry overnight.

Sixth and final, use a nail and hammer to create a setting hole in the scenery into which to “plant” the tree. When you get a complete area done, you might do a quick pass with an overspray of hair spray. I plan to apply an overspray every year or so.

You can read more about the model railroad and its progress at its blog, *Middle Division Musings*, at <http://jbritton.pennsyrr.com>.

Jerry Britton

Photos from the November Open House Tours

Article by Ron Smith; Photos by Ron Parisi and Ron Smith

For several years southeastern PA has been home to Open House layout tours in November in support of National Model Railroad Month. Member Jerry Britton has been one of the organizers for this annual event, which has grown over the years to include groups in New Jersey and Delaware. In 2013, Our Susquehanna Division joined in, expanding the area to include central PA in this event. We had Division members open their layouts for visitors during the first three Saturdays of November.

My layout was open on the first Saturday, and I had visitors from as far away as New Jersey and northern Virginia! On the second Saturday my better half, Ruth, and I traveled to the Allentown area to see five layouts. At one of them, we met the same couple from New Jersey who had been to my layout the week before! We also ran into Ron Parisi, who provided some of the photos for this article.

All five layouts were nicely presented and had something of interest, and we enjoyed talking with the owners. I wasn't able to get photos of member Tom Matthews' NYO&W layout, but that will be rectified in future issues as he will be preparing an article on some of the features of his benchwork. He provided the photos of his benchwork for this story.

We hope that we will be able to have even more layouts open in 2014; we would particularly like to see members from our northern area participate.



Above and below: Bob Bucklew's Quaker Valley RR



Photos from the November Open House Tours

Article by Ron Smith; Photos by Ron Parisi and Ron Smith



Above and Below: Charles Kadyk's Pennsylvania & New England RR



Above and Below: Chris Saporito's PRR



Photos from the November Open House Tours

Article by Ron Smith; Photos by Ron Parisi and Ron Smith



Above and Below: David and T.J. Weber's Outdoor Tehachapi Loop



Above and below: Benchwork on Tom Matthews' NYO&W.



February Clinic: Rolling the Dice with Industry Cards

Article by Ron Smith

February 8, 2014 Division Meet Mechanicsburg, PA

Grace United Methodist Church
216 S. Market Street, Mechanicsburg PA 17055

For our first Division Meet of 2014, we will gather at Grace United Methodist Church in Mechanicsburg. The meeting will start at 9 AM with coffee and snacks, registration and a brief business meeting. The morning clinics start at 9:30 and include a session on using Industry Cards and dice for operating; our first Model Showcase session; and a presentation by Alan Mende on his award-winning Shay and the thought process behind choosing that particular prototype to model.

Lunch will be on your own at any of the several restaurants that are within walking distance or a short drive from our venue. The afternoon's main event is a tour of the restored former Cumberland Valley (PRR) train station and station master's quarters, guided by a docent from the Mechanicsburg Museum Association. The Museum will be open from noon to 3 PM. Also, we have two home layouts and a club layout open for visiting. Bob Charles' HO scale layout, my N scale Erie / EL layout, and the Keystone Model Railroad Club will be open until 3 PM on the 8th. Directions to these layouts will be provided at the meeting.

In case of inclement weather, a decision will be made by Friday evening about cancellation and an e-mail will be sent to members with e-mail. You may also call me at 717-253-1431 the morning of the 8th.

We hope to see you there!

Operating with Industry Cards Clinic

My first exposure to operating with car cards was almost 25 years ago, when I was a regular operator on a layout that used the original "Doug Smith" system from 1961. When I built a new layout in the early 2000's, I purchased the popular car-card and 4-cycle waybill system from Micro-Mark. The system worked well but when I read an article in *Model Railroader* by Dwight Smith describing his car forwarding system, I immediately converted to it. An article about how I implemented Dwight's system using Excel was published in the November 2011 *NMRA Magazine*.

Then in March 2012, *NMRA Magazine* published an article by Hank TenWolde describing his car-forwarding system he called "Car Orders". The difference is that instead of having a card for every car on the layout, there is a card for every industry spot on the layout. This system does not need or use the reporting marks on the freight car, which is a big plus for us N Scalers whose eyes are aging at an alarming rate. I quickly nuked my car cards in favor of industry cards.

However, on top of this new card system I overlaid an additional feature – random-length freight trains. Based on a *Model Railroader* article from 1976, I roll dice to determine how many cars to set out and pick up at each town.

I have two die for each town on my layout. A red one determines how many cars to set out ("red" for "stop") and a green one determines how many cars will be picked up ("green" for "go"). Using appropriately-colored dots of paint, I modified the face of the die to change the odds. For example, I changed the "six" to a "zero". The total number on the red die equals the total number on the green die, so that over time everything remains in balance.

February Clinic: Rolling the Dice with Industry Cards

Article by Ron Smith

After rolling the dice, I record the number of cars to be picked up and set out on a Train Order. I make up the trains in Staging, hand the throttle and the cards to the engineer and off they go!

This system is easy to setup and use. All the industry cards and Train Orders were produced in Excel on my computer, and are the same size as the car cards from the Micro-Mark system so that they fit in my existing waybill boxes. You can make the cards any size you want, and the Industry Cards can be made to appear more like prototype waybills if you choose.

I will have examples of these cards and an Excel template at my clinic.

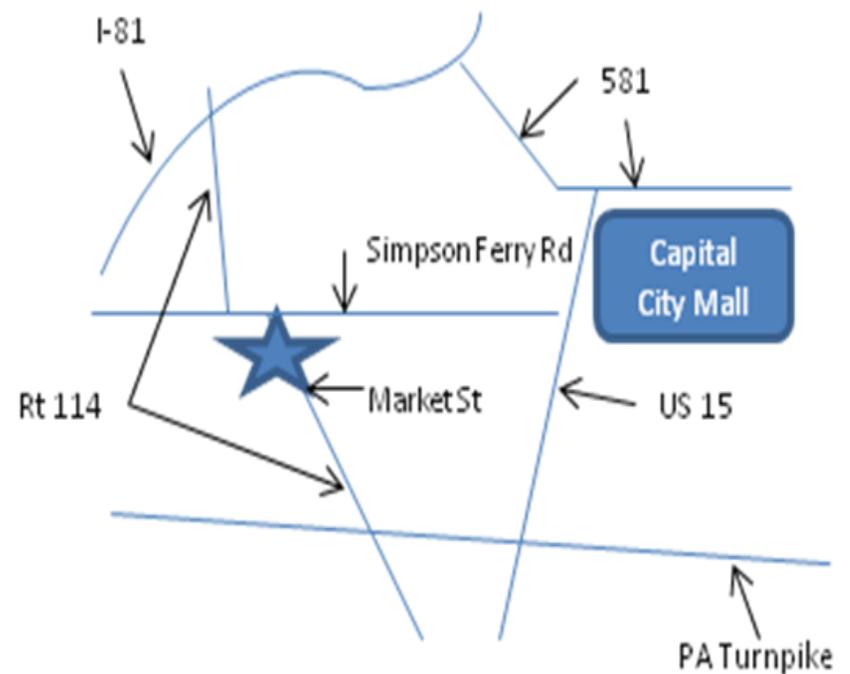
Directions to Grace United Methodist Church, Mechanicsburg. It is on the corner of Simpson Street and S. Market Street (PA 114):

From the PA Turnpike: Take the Gettysburg Exit (#236) and take the right-hand exit to go south on US 15 towards Gettysburg. Stay in that lane and take the Cumberland Parkway exit. Follow Cumberland Parkway to the second traffic light and turn right onto S. Market Street / PA Rt 114. Go two miles to the first traffic light; Grace UMC is on the left corner. Turn left at the light and make an immediate left into the church parking lot; additional parking is available in the alley next to the church.

From US 11 / RT 15 / 581 (Camp Hill / Harrisburg): Proceed south on US 15 and take the exit for Lower Allen Drive. Turn right onto Lower Allen Drive and go to the second traffic light; turn left onto Simpson Ferry Road. Follow Simpson Ferry Rd to Mechanicsburg; Grace UMC is on the corner of Simpson and S. Market; proceed through the light and make an immediate left

into the church parking lot; additional parking is available in the alley next to the church.

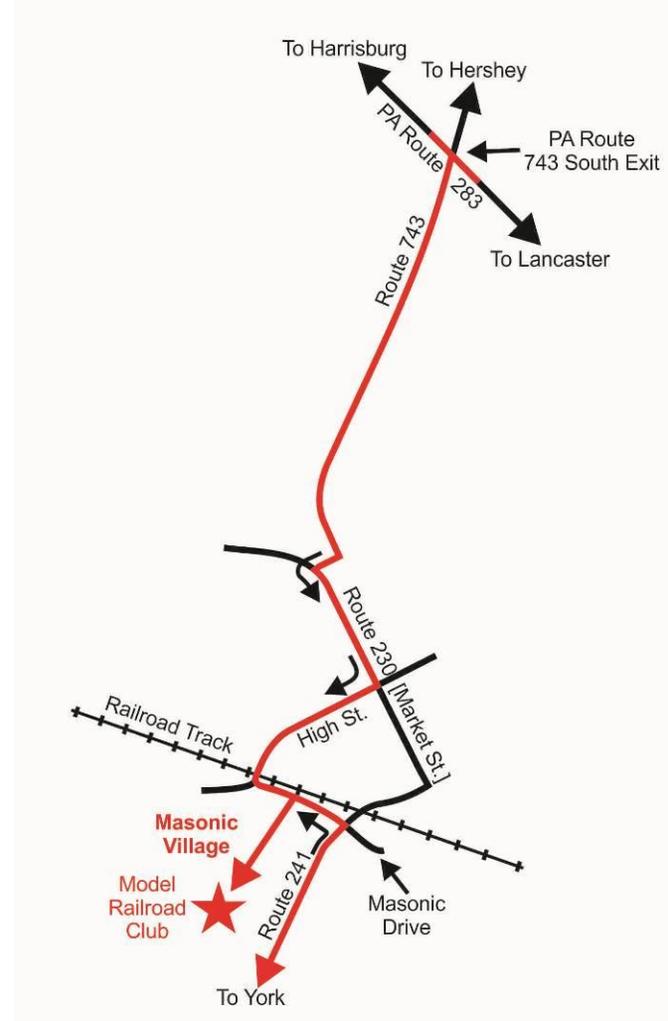
From I-81: Take Exit 57 and proceed south on PA Rt 114 to downtown Mechanicsburg (approx. 7 miles). Cross over Main Street and turn left at the next light onto Simpson Street. Grace UMC is on the corner at the next traffic light; turn into the parking lot just before the church. (Note, you will pass First United Methodist Church before your reach Grace UMC.)



Directions to the January Tree-Making Clinic

Directions: A map from the intersection of PA 743 and PA 283 to the club is presented at the right. Since you will most likely be arriving after dark please follow these driving instructions: The driving distance from the 283/743 intersection to entering the Masonic Village campus is 3 miles. As per the map you will enter the campus on Free Mason Drive – the tree-lined main entrance road just to the south of the E-Town Amtrak station. Follow that road until you reach a “Y” intersection and bear left, drive past the large Cultural Center on your right, drive past the Ben Franklin printing press statue on your right, and then turn left into the Model Railroad parking lot - easily identified by the flashing railroad cross-bucks sign. After entering the campus there are signs all along your route on your right directing you to all sorts of places of which one is the Model Railroad Club. The distance from entering the campus to the Club parking lot is ½ mile.

(Please see the November Sidetracks for a full description of this event)



Jay Green

A Report on LSOP5

Wayne Betty

Unlike the weather of the recent weeks, the weather for the weekend of October 5th was perfect for operating model railroads. Twenty-three participants from AR, CT, IN, MA, NJ, NY, OH, PA TN, VA and VT arrived here to operate on 6 layouts in two divisions.

The Lehigh Division featured the layouts of Larry Reynolds' PRR Altoona Area, Gale Smith's Lehigh Valley and Jim Hertzog's Reading Shamokin Division. Operators: Clay Smith, Gregg Heeter, David Baker, Mike Evens, Mark Nolan, Glenn Glasstetter, John Gromly, John Bennett, John Farrell, Perry Muir, Fran Revitt, Rich Steiner, Dale Desser & Ross Kudlick all arrived at Larry Reynolds' house on time and were forced to pose for the photo below.



The session went well and ended with no broken knuckles or lost trains. Saturday found the crews at Gale Smith's multi deck Lehigh Valley layout. The afternoon was spent working coal on Jim Hertzog's Shamokin Division.

The overall impression that I received from those attending was great company and the trains were ok too! It seems that an Italian restaurant was well attended after Jim Hertzog's session too. Another measure of how much the Lehigh section was enjoyed; 75% of those responding are planning to attend LSOP6!

A Report on LSOP5

Wayne Betty

While the guys up north were gathering at Larry's, the Susquehanna Division was getting started on Bob Martin's Central Pennsylvania Railroad in Emigsville. I think there may have been a dispatcher melt down caused by a local crew and a through train crew, causing some consternation. I understand that a picture was taken of said event, but is unavailable for printing!

The next morning the Susquehanna group featuring: Sudro Brown, Tom Lowery, Tim McCollum, John Wissinger, Lew Jones, Barry Schmitt, Ron Heiser & Jim Schweitzer with Kevin Zuercher and Will Shields joining us in the afternoon, met at my house and again a group picture was the first order of business.



It was only three and one half hours later, with lots of interesting discussions of the massive amount of scenery on the Lancaster and Atlantic Rail Road that we adjourned from my basement to the relative calm of Gus's for Lunch. Then it was off to Steven Mallery's PRR Buffalo Line for some mountain railroading.

I think that all the layout owners will join me in thanking our local crews. Without their help and participation we would not have been able to have this event! A real big tip of the hat to all the local crew who volunteered for another weekend of model railroading. LSOP6 coming soon!

Wayne Betty, Assistant Superintendent, NMRA, MER Div 11.

Susquehanna Sidetracks

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna
Division, NMRA

The York Miniature Model Railroad Club Turns 70!

By Barry Schmitt

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MINIATURE RAILROAD CLUB OF YORK

By just about any standard anything, anyone, or any organization that turns 70-years old definitely has met the test of time. This past November 29th many local residents, York Mayor Bracey, State Representative Seth Grove, club members, and I had the opportunity to attend a truly special occasion – the 70th anniversary open house at the York Miniature Model Railroad Club. Think of all the long time model railroad clubs across the country that you know of or have visited - I doubt any of them have been continuously working at our great hobby for 70 years.

The York Club was organized on November 29, 1943, and was officially incorporated in 1948. They initially started building an OO gauge layout and soon afterwards converted to O gauge in November 1945. Their first public showing was in January 1946. Their present building, which was designed from the ground up solely for model railroading, was constructed in 1955 and significantly expanded to its current configuration in 1966. Photo 1 and 2 below show the current club building and the anniversary sign that greeted visitors to the celebration.

The official name of their railroad is the York Connecting Railroad. Their layout operates two mainlines and each is approximately three scale miles long. There are also two very large yards and multiple industries including a recently complete steel mill. In addition to the two mainlines they also operate an extensive branch line that connects all the various industrial settings, and that line includes an amazing six-plus scale miles of track.

One of their biggest electrical projects the club accomplished over these past 70 years was recently converting the entire layout to DCC. Just think of the scope of such a project for a layout that is approximately 90' feet long and is multilevel in many areas – many hours by many members crawling underneath the relatively low benchwork – ouch! A Dispatcher, who is elevated above the layout and located in the center of the building for optimum viewing of all operations, controls all movements on the main and branch lines.

I hope you schedule a visit this year to visit this historic and exceptional club. They are located at 381 Wheatfield Street in York. For more information about the club suggest you visit their website at WWW.MRRCY.COM. Division member Alan Frame is a longtime member of the club and gave me a first rate tour of their operation – see Alan in Photo 3 below. And to whet your appetite for visiting the club I included a picture of the scene you first see on your left when entering their building – see Photo 4 below.

Barry

The York Miniature Model Railroad Club Turns 70!

By Barry Schmitt



Figure 1 Club Building



Figure 3 Alan Frame



Figure 2 Welcome Sign



Figure 4 View when you enter the building

Free Railpass Trial Membership Sponsored by the MER

**National Model Railroad Association (NMRA)
Mid-Eastern Region
Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership**

Yes, please sign me up for a free six-month Railpass trial membership in the NMRA – which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region and in my local Division. During this six month period, I understand that I may attend conventions and meets, and participate in contests. I will receive **NMRA Magazine**, the national monthly magazine, and **The Local**, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office, or receive a New Member Pack.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six month Railpass trial membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Regardless of who pays, six month \$9.95 memberships are available once to each person.) At the end of the six months, I may join the NMRA, paying the regular active member dues.

During the past two years, I have **not** been a member of the NMRA.

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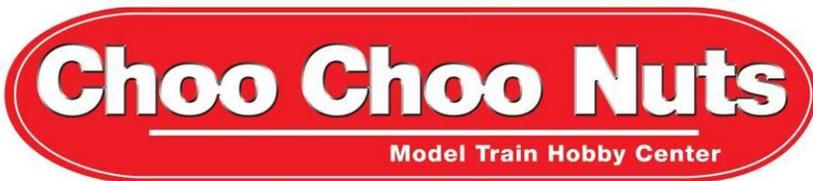
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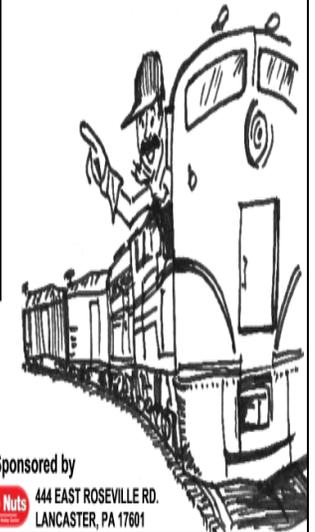
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MODEL TRAIN DISPLAY SHOW SCHEDULE

	November	December-2013								Janua		
	30th	1st	7th	8th	14th	15th	21st	22nd	28th	29th	4th	5th
SHORT LINE MODEL RR CLUB 11 S. State Street Ephrata PA Open 1pm - 4pm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MODEL RR CLUB of YORK 381 Wheatfield St. York PA Open 1pm - 5pm	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
C.H.I.P.S. 19-21 N. 2nd ST. Columbia PA Open 1pm - 4pm		X		X		X		X		X		X

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Susquehanna Sidetracks

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