



# Susquehanna Sidetracks

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

May 2014

Volume 22 Number 3

## From the Superintendent's Desk

*Barry Schmitt*

Hello Everyone,

It somewhat appears Spring has sprung or at least it is trying! Now comes that annual tug-of-war between continuing work on our great model railroad projects down in our man-caves (or family-caves or whatever room the CINC-Wife has deeded to us) and the call of all of those pent-up outdoor chores and activities. I keep telling myself – balance the two – while facing the reality of all the work that was so well hidden beneath out extended snow cover.

I hope you enjoy reading all the articles in our monthly NMRA Magazine as I do. Besides the interesting modeling articles in our latest May issue I was particularly impressed after reading the national recognition given to two of our Division members on page 49 - James Long of Mechanicsburg for earning both the Golden Spike Award and Master Builder–Scenery AP Certificate and Jerry Britton of Etters for earning his Model Railroad Author AP Certificate. Our Division Achievement

Program Chairman Bob Charles (MMR) also congratulates both members in his AP article on page 17 where Bob also challenges all of us to seriously begin working towards earning our own certificates. Also in that NMRA issue new MMR Don Fowler presented the below conclusions after looking back at his journey through the NMRA AP program to achieving his Master Model Railroader award - (MMR #518):

- You probably already qualify for some of the certificates.
- You will be your own worst enemy by imagining that it's harder than it is.
- You will underestimate your model railroading abilities.
- Your friends are your greatest asset and will support you in your quest.
- Your local AP Chair (Bob Charles, MMR) and MMR's (John Wissinger) want you to succeed and will support you as well.

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

## Schedules

### Division Meet

May 10, 2014 Masonic Village,  
Elizabethtown PA

### East Broad Top RR

June 28, 2014, Rockhill Furnace PA

### Bowser / Weaver Tour

July 10, 2014  
Montoursville / Northumberland PA

### NMRA National Convention

July 13 – July 20, 2014, Cleveland OH

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Banner photo courtesy of Keith Latimer

## 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 6-15-14.

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[www.susquehannanmra.org](http://www.susquehannanmra.org)

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National Model Railroad Association  
8414 Gulf View Dr, Suite A & B  
Soddy Daisy, TN 37379-2200  
[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

Great thoughts Don - now it's time for you to investigate the AP program and contact Bob Charles to see what you need to do to begin that most satisfying journey.

Be sure to read about our trio of events scheduled during May, June, and July. The first is just a few days away – our Division meeting on May 10 at the Masonic Village - same location as April 2013 - which is just south of the Elizabethtown Amtrak station. That event includes three great morning clinics and offers three well known and well developed area model railroad clubs for your viewing. For more details see the event article on page 5.

Then on June 28 we head west for an all-day immersion in 1:1 railroading as we visit the East Broad Top (EBT) railroad and Rockhill Trolley Museum. Leading that event will be Lee Rainey – nationally recognized authority on all things EBT, author of East Broad Top, and one of our Division Directors. To be sure Lee has sufficient tour guides and assuring sufficient seats are available for the trolley ride, all attendees must register to attend this outing and pay the \$18 event fee at the EBT check-in tent. And be prepared to pay with either cash or check - credit cards will not be accepted. For registration procedures and more details about the event see Lee's article on page 7.

Our July event - specifically Thursday, July 10 – will be held in our Northern Sub-Division. Howard Oakes, another Division

Director, has developed a tour of the Bowser factory and company English Hobby Shop in Montoursville and later that day a tour of the Weaver manufacturing facility (also maker of Scalecoat paints) in Northumberland. Because of company tour size considerations this will also be a registered outing, but there will be no charge. See Howard's article about the event and registration procedures on page 8. And like all our other 2014 events they are open to all model railroaders.

Our remaining 2014 events include two in September (see pages 10 and 11), one in October (LSOP6 at page 13), and our Division-wide layout open house program in support of National Model Railroad Month in November (also on page 11). So be sure to mark your calendars so you don't miss these varied and very interesting programs.

I commend your attention to the September 6 event article at page 10. This all day gathering at the PA Railroad Museum was added to our 2014 event schedule in late November and was announced at our February 8 meeting in Mechanicsburg. However, no details were available at that time. Since then several members have stepped forward to help flesh out that event as explained in the article. I would like to offer special thanks to members John Wissinger (MMR), Rich Wurst, and Bill Lesjak for volunteering to help build this very interesting model railroading day in a truly great railroad setting.

You'll also notice a new Sidetracks advertiser – Mainline Hobby Supply of Blue Ridge Summit. Bonnie and Brian Wolfe have been long time supporters of our hobby and the NMRA. We look forward to again co-sponsoring their September 20-21 weekend layout open house program. So the next time you visit their great model railroad-focused hobby shop, please thank them for their years of loyal support to our Division and model railroaders everywhere.

Finally, please read about our upcoming Division officer elections at page 19. To date no one has indicated an interest is running for any of the positions. So here's my final plea – consider putting your name in the hat.

I look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming May 10 meeting at the Masonic Village Welcome Center Brossman Ballroom!

Happy modeling!



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!

The Susquehanna Division offers a hearty Welcome to new members who have joined the NMRA this year. In alphabetical order:

George Bailey  
Thomas Baligush  
Chris Bergin  
Dean Brenner  
David Gruel  
Henry Hendershot  
Tim Himmelberger  
John Meshey  
Mike Nease  
George Oehmke  
Wainwright Schroeder

Denver PA  
Johnstown PA  
New Oxford PA  
Mount Joy PA  
Manheim PA  
Danville PA  
Lebanon PA  
Dover PA  
York PA  
Allentown PA  
Montoursville PA

We hope to meet you at one of our upcoming events!



## Second Section – Notes from the Editor

by Ron Smith

Greetings Everyone!

After a winter that was challenging, Spring is in the air and it is a delight to be out trackside again. I model the Erie-Lackawanna and its predecessors and in early April I attended the ELHS Spring Meet in New Jersey. Not only did I meet some interesting people and learn a lot more about my favorite prototype, I also picked up some new books – railroad historical societies can be well worth your membership dues! I also took advantage of the trip to do some railfanning along the former Erie mainline, and returned home with new enthusiasm to get some work done on my layout. Despite the fact the line is a mere shadow of its former self, I found numerous photo opportunities for remaining bridges and structures to incorporate into this or a future layout. I also have several locomotives that are awaiting DCC decoder installations, a process which hopefully will be underway by the time you read this.

This month we present Part 2 of Tom Matthews' story about building benchwork for his NYO&W layout. Tom built a swing gate to cross a main aisle in order to better-support his operating scheme; see page 14 for some photos of his work.

We have a new advertiser supporting *Sidetracks* this month. Mainline Hobby Supply has joined The Station and Choo Choo Nuts in supporting the Susquehanna Division, please be sure to support these hobby shops whenever you can. If you visit their stores, please be sure to mention you saw their ad here.

This month's Hobby Shop feature article is about English's Model Railroad Supply in Montoursville PA. We hope you have enjoyed this series of articles.

Elsewhere in this issue you'll find articles about upcoming events in our Division. We have a busy year lined up, and we appreciate the efforts of those folks who are putting the events together. Remember, the NMRA is a volunteer organization so we need willing hands to make things happen.

I will most likely not be able to attend the National in Cleveland this year, but if anyone would like to provide a write-up and photos for the September *Sidetracks*, please send me a note.

We encourage you to bring your models to Division meetings for display in the Model Showcase portion of our clinic-style meets. We had a lot of participation at the inaugural event in February, which was a delight to see.

My contact information is

[rsmith@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:rsmith@susquehannanmra.org)

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

*Ron*

## 2014 Division Events

### May 10, 2014 Division Meet, Elizabethtown, PA

#### **“ATTENTION IN THE STATION, THE SUSQUEHANNA DIVISION DAYLIGHT SPECIAL WILL SOON BE BOARDING FOR THE MASONIC VILLAGE WELCOME CENTER BROSSMAN BALLROOM!”**

Yep, we're just a few days away from another great gathering of model railroaders in an absolutely fantastic setting. Like last April we'll enjoy the comforts of a great meeting room, enjoy two very educational clinics, get the opportunity to share our pride and joy modeling projects with attendees during our second Model Showcase program, and spend the afternoon visiting three excellent area club layouts. And as an added treat we'll have fresh coffee and donuts for all. So bring a model railroad friend, bring a friend who might be interested in the hobby, bring your family, or simply come alone – but come and enjoy a day dedicated to our great hobby!

A map of showing how to get to the Masonic Village Welcome Center from I-283 is provided on the next page. Maps from the Welcome Center to the three afternoon layouts will be provided at the gathering. Questions - contact Barry Schmitt at

[www.bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:www.bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org)

or call me at 717-877-1810. I look forward to seeing you there!

#### **“FINAL CALL – ALL ABOARD!”**

#### **Timetable:**

0900-0930 – New Member and Guest Introductions and General Division Highlights.

0930-1045 – Welcome to the East Broad Top Railroad (EBT) and Rockville Trolley Museum. Lee Rainey, who is a Division Director and President of The Friends of the East Broad Top Railroad, will provide a short historical sketch of the EBT, bring us up to date on the current happenings at the EBT, and then outline the activities planned for our June 28 Susquehanna Division Day at the EBT and other area attractions.

1045-1215 – An Introduction to the New Dead Rail Operating System. Our clinician, Steve Sherrill, will describe the newest technology coming to our great hobby – Dead Rail. This system does not use any electrical interface between the throttle, rails, and a locomotive; instead, engine power is controlled by a direct link to an in-locomotive battery – much like the sophisticated remotely controlled systems used in high tech airplane flying models. Steve will demonstrate this newest technology on his portable modular model railroad layout that will be operational so we can see the system in action.

1215-1PM – Model Showcase. This new program was introduced at our February 8 event in Mechanicsburg by member John Wissinger, MMR. Be sure to look over your model railroad collection and bring an engine, rolling stock, structure, mini module, or any other model item that is special to you and tell us why you deem it special. Each modeler will be allowed five-minutes to tell their story; however, giving such a presentation is not required. Also, be advised, this is not a model contest – it's just a chance to see and enjoy what is special to our members.

1-1:30 – Lunch On-The-Run.

## 2014 Division Events

1:30-4:30PM – Layout Open House Visits. We currently have three club layouts that have agreed to be open for attendee visits.

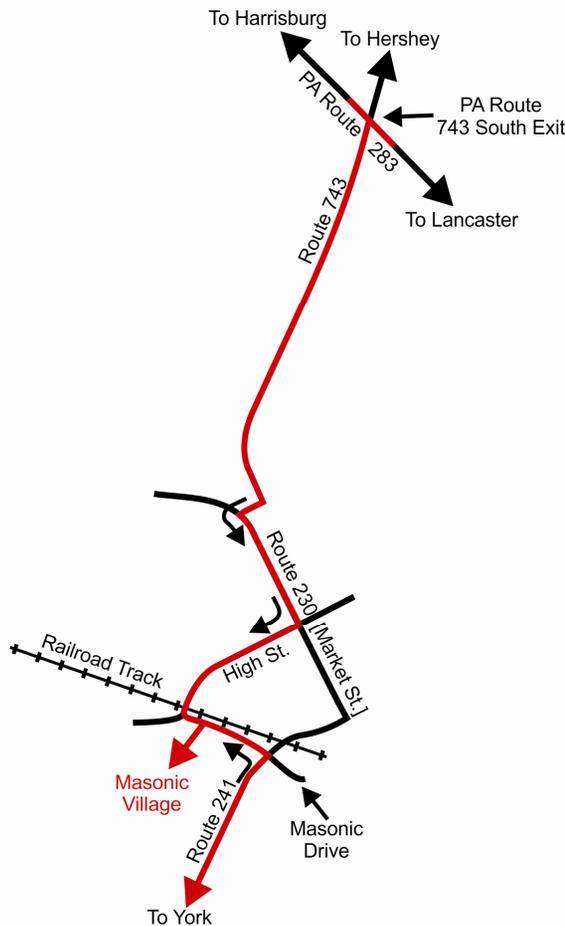
Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend this most interesting day of model railroading. All segments of this event are open to the public so bring along your family or another model railroad friend.

### DIRECTIONS TO THE MASONIC FREEMASON CULTURAL CENTER

From Harrisburg drive East on I-283 and from Lancaster drive West on I-283 and exit at Route 743 South. Follow the red route on the map. When you enter the tree-lined Masonic Village road follow the signs to the Freemason Culture Center. It will eventually be on your right and has a drive under entry portico. Park anywhere near the building and enter under the portico. Once inside there will be signs directing you to the Brossman Ballroom, and there will be a helpful guide at the visitor desk.

If traveling from the York area follow Route 30 East and take the Columbia Exit. Follow Route 441 North to Bainbridge. Turn right onto Route 241. After approximately 4 miles, turn left onto Masonic Drive (just before going under the Amtrak railroad bridge). Continue to the Masonic Village entrance on your left. Follow the signs to the Freemason Culture Center. It will eventually be on your right and has a drive under entry portico. Park anywhere near the building and enter under the portico. Once inside there will be signs directing you to the Brossman Ballroom, and there will be a helpful guide at the visitor desk.

*Project Officer: Barry Schmitt*



## 2014 Division Events

### **June 28, 2014, Rockhill Furnace, PA Susquehanna Division Meet**

Grab your calendar and mark in ink our main outdoors Division attraction of 2014! **Saturday, June 28, 2014**, will be Susquehanna Division Day at the East Broad Top Railroad and the Rockhill Trolley Museum. Your busy day will begin with a visit to the Rockhill Trolley Museum, which operates historic standard gauge trolleys over a scenic right of way. This part of the event includes a trolley ride, informational talks about the equipment and location by the motorman and conductor, a guided car-barn tour, and a visit to the Museum Store.

Next on the agenda will be a guided tour of the East Broad Top (EBT) Narrow Gauge Railroad machine shops, roundhouse, and yard. The EBT has been described by the Smithsonian as “the best preserved example of a 1900 industrial site anywhere in the country.” The site includes a complete railroad machine shop, six steam locomotives, and rolling stock dating back to the 1880s. Also on the tour will be a visit to the car restoration facility operated by the Friends of the East Broad Top.

The GPS address for this great all-day event is 421 Meadow Street, Rockhill Furnace, which is located in Huntingdon County PA, but be aware that some GPS devices get confused in the Pennsylvania ridge country. If yours tells you to take State Route 655 or Route 475, don't believe it!

The correct routing is very easy: If traveling from the east or west on the PA Turnpike, simply drive 17 miles north of the Fort Littleton exit on the turnpike (exit 180) via US Route 522 and turn left at the traffic light in Orbisonia.

If traveling from the east or west on US Route 22, again take US Route 522 south from Mount Union to Orbisonia and go right at the light. Watch for our NMRA signs in Orbisonia. Activities run from 10:30am - 4:00pm. Admission to the tours and trolley ride is \$18, and there is free parking.

Seating on the vintage trolley cars is limited and we need to have enough tour guides on hand, so event registration is required. To register and reserve your seat please call Lee Rainey at 814-867-7878 or email him at [leerainey@aol.com](mailto:leerainey@aol.com). This great railroading day is open to all model railroaders, so come as a group, family, with a model railroader friend, or simply by yourself, and be prepared to witness and enjoy railroading of years gone by.

*Project Officer: Lee Rainey*



### **July 10, 2014 – Bowser Mfg, English's Model Railroad Supply, and Weaver Visit**

We have scheduled tours to Bowser Manufacturing/English's Model Railroad Supply and Weaver Scale Models on **Thursday, July 10**. You will not want to miss this opportunity; be sure to add this to your model railroading calendar. The weekday visit is necessary because tours are not available on weekends.

Bowser is located in Montoursville, PA and has been a well-recognized model railroading name for decades. Their hobby shop, English's Model Railroad Supply, is co-located with the Bowser facility, and will be visited during our tour. This large store is well stocked and we've allowed an hour for browsing and purchasing your favorite items. Weaver, another highly respected model railroading name, is located in Northumberland, PA where they also produce the well-known line of Scalecoat model paints.

This is your chance to see how models are made with injection molding machines, pad printing of road names, assembly and testing, etc. And you can ask the experts questions on the state of the hobby, modeling trends and their vision of the hobby's future. It is our goal to offer Division activities throughout our large territory. Therefore, we look forward to meeting many of our northern members at this event.

To make this event a success:

1 – Due to company-imposed tour size limitations you must register by e-mail with Howard Oakes at [hoakes@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:hoakes@susquehannanmra.org) by **July 3<sup>rd</sup>**. If you don't have

email, call Howard at 717-632-5990. Attendees must be at least 12 years of age.

2 - If you would like to purchase Scalecoat paints (\$25 minimum + 6% Sales tax), and pick them up at the Weaver facility, which saves shipping costs, go to their website listed below. Click on Ordering Info, complete the form and send it to them before July 3<sup>rd</sup> with a note that you will pick up on the July 10 tour. You may pay at time of pick up by cash, money order or credit card but **no** personal checks.

#### **Itinerary -**

From the south:

7:45 AM – Departing the Harrisburg area for Montoursville: From Enola it is 92 miles and roughly 1 hr: 45 min. North of Duncannon the drive is mostly 4 lanes, a beautiful route along the Susquehanna River and for several miles it parallels the Norfolk Southern mainline. Car pools are encouraged. Check the Bowser website if you are driving from other directions.

9:30 AM – Arrive Bowser, tour their facility and English's Model Railroad Supply. There is a small parking lot in front of the building but plenty of on street parking. We will assemble in the parking lot, weather permitting, and then enter the facility. After the tour you will have plenty of time to shop in their well-stocked store.

11:30 AM – Lunch; several restaurants are less than 3 miles north on Broad St. heading towards Williamsport. Restaurants include the usual fast food places plus Hoss's, Red Lobster, Friday's, Pizza Hut, etc. This area is near an entrance to I-180 which we will enter as we head south towards Northumberland for the afternoon Weaver tour.

## 2014 Division Events

12:45 PM – Depart for Weaver in Northumberland, which is 35 miles south and will take about 45 min.

1:30 PM – Arrive Weaver.

On Point Township Drive (Rt. 11) turn left before the Goodwill Restaurant into the American Legion Post #44 entrance to gain access to the Weaver parking lot. We will assemble in the parking lot, weather permitting, and then enter the facility. Check the Weaver website if you are driving from other directions.

2:30 PM – Depart Weaver for home. It is 54 miles, and about a 1 hr: 20 min drive south to the Enola/Harrisburg area.

So mark your calendar and be sure to register now for this great day dedicated to model railroading - **Thursday, July 10, 2014.**

Below are the addresses for your GPS. Specific driving directions from all areas are listed on the websites along with their extensive list of fine products.

(A) Bowser Mfg & English's Model Railroad Supply

201 Streibeigh Lane  
Montoursville, PA 17754

(570) 368-2516

<http://www.bowser-trains.com/>

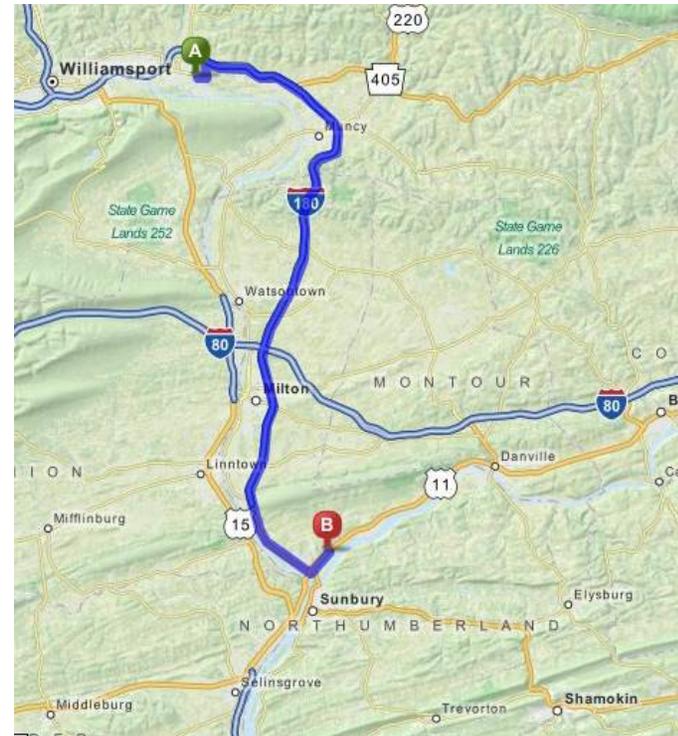
(B) Weaver Models (Scalecoat paints)

315 Point Township Drive (turn into the American Legion parking lot)

Northumberland, PA 17857

(570) 473-9434

<http://www.weavermodels.com/>



*Project Officer: Howard Oakes*

### **September 6 NMRA Susquehanna Division Prelude to A Fall Model Railroading Spectacular**

While that title might seem a bit over-the-top we truly think it appropriately describes our September 6 Model Railroading Day at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania located in Strasburg. This all day Saturday program is sure to satisfy just about every model railroader's interest – historic 1:1 scale exhibits, a hands-on laser kit building clinic, back-shop tours of the museum's extensive maintenance and restoration facilities, and several other educational clinics. For example, here are some of our planned clinics: Introduction to Structure Scratch Building, Model Railroading in Small Places, Scenery Making Made Easy, Weathering, Air Brushing 101, Tree Making, and many more. To show what a great host the museum is they offered and we eagerly accepted the opportunity to hold a few of our clinics throughout the day in their Reading #800 electric MU passenger car – a car that was introduced in the 1930s and ran in regular service up to the 1980s.

Just last week we firmed up a hands-on Make-And-Take clinic by Branchline Trains – maker of Laser-Art Structures. Attendees at this clinic will actually build, under the supervision of a company representative, one of their introductory laser kits and then be able to take it home. The kits will be provided by local hobby shop and event sponsor Choo Choo Nuts of Lancaster. Owner Rob McClenaghan will also provide adhesives and tools needed to build each kit during the clinic. Rob is also diligently working on lining up a few additional manufacturers for clinic presentations. And finally we have contacted several area

modular clubs in hopes some will accept our invitation to be present and operate at the museum.

The Museum has provided us a great special admission fee for this event. NMRA members and family members will pay a \$9 pre-registration fee and non-NMRA members will pay a \$12 pre-registration fee. To receive those special rates attendees must pre-register and pay by August 15. And be advised, those rates include the back-shop tours which will not be available to walk-in customers. For those who do not register and pay by August 15, they will pay the normal Museum entrance fees and will not have access to the back-shop tours. And finally, this event will be limited to the first 100 who pre-register due to facility limitations. So register soon to assure you get to enjoy all that will be offered! Further details will be discussed at our May 10 Masonic Village Division meeting – see page 5. Questions – call me at 717-877-1810 or email me at

[bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org).

So mark your calendar today for this fun filled model railroading day at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania – **a true Prelude to a Fall Model Railroading Spectacular!**

## 2014 Division Events

### Mainline Hobby Supply September 20-21 Weekend Layout Open House Happening

Once again it's time to mark your calendar for another weekend of layout open houses in our Southern Sub-Division and the South Mountain Division area. We, as co-sponsors of the event, will be manning a table at the Mainline Hobby Shop where we'll handout layout maps, answer questions, and offer Rail-Pass membership applications to hopeful new NMRA members. And of course the hobby shop will be open extended hours both days: 9-5 on Saturday and 12-5 on Sunday.

If you opened your layout last year for this well-attended and popular weekend event and would like to do so again this year please notify either Brian or Bonnie Wolfe at 717-794-2860 or drop them an email at [mainlinehobby@comcast.net](mailto:mainlinehobby@comcast.net) or contact our Division project officer for the event, Ron Smith, at [rsmith@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:rsmith@susquehannanmra.org) or 717-253-1431. Layout owners may be open either Saturday, Sunday, or both days, so be sure to let them know your preference. Also, if you have a layout that is within 1.5 hours or so from Blue Ridge Summit and would like to join the program please contact Brian, Bonnie or Ron – they would very much like to add you to the program.

And don't think that just because your layout is not 100% finished that model railroaders will not want to visit your developing empire. On the contrary, viewing layouts in various building stages or expansion is very popular. Both experienced and those new to the hobby get to see your construction methods and design concepts which adds to all our modeling knowledge.

And lastly, be advised their website recently changed to [www.mainlinehobby.net](http://www.mainlinehobby.net)

### November Division-Wide National Model Railroad Month Layout Open House Program

We have begun planning for our second year offering of this great pre-holiday season program. Last year was our first attempt at presenting such a far reaching project and learned several lessons. From that experience we are implementing two major changes this year – we are consolidating our four Sub-Divisions into three and dividing Sub-Division project management responsibilities.

Last year there were no offered layouts in our Northern Sub-Division. Also, we unfortunately scheduled our Western Sub open house weekend during a Penn State home football game which prevented several State College layouts from being open. This year we are combining both the Western and Northern Sub-Divisions into what we call our Mountain Sub-Division. All counties in the two previous subs will simply roll into the new Mountain Sub. In addition we are starting a vigorous member outreach program in those counties that comprised our former Northern Sub-Division. One or two town hall-like meetings will be scheduled in mid-May or early June to meet with as many of our northern members as possible and hopefully identify a few members, local modelers, and/or clubs who would be willing to open their layouts for our November open house program. That meeting will also start the process of determining what events our northern tier members would like scheduled in their area during 2015. If you would be willing to help develop that meeting please contact me ASAP so a date and meeting place can be arranged and all our members in our northern counties get notified.

## 2014 Division Events

Since we are developing this consolidated Mountain Sub-Division we decided to retain the weekend of November 8-9 for the program because the Penn State football team will be away that weekend. And for your clarification the counties that will comprise the new Mountain Sub-Division and their number of NMRA members are, in alphabetical order: Blair(4), Cambria (6), Centre (9), Columbia(1), Huntington (1), Juniata (0), Luzerne (5), Lycoming (9), Mifflin (0), Montour (1), Northumberland (1), Snyder (0), Sullivan (0), Susquehanna (1), Union (1), Wayne (0), and Wyoming (0) – that's 17 of our 32 counties and 39 of our 254 Division members .

The second major change from last year is that management of this year's program will be divided between our Division and member Jerry Britton through his Susquehanna Valley Model Railroaders (SVMR). Associated with this structural realignment will involve changing the dates for the Southern Sub-Division open houses from the originally scheduled November 22-23 weekend to November 1-2. Our Eastern Sub layout open dates will remain November 15-16 and the newly consolidated Mountain Sub-Division will be open as discussed above over the November 8-9 weekend.

For those of you in the new Mountain Sub your project officers for the November 8-9 open house program are Forrest Lucas, email [flucas@atlanticbb.net](mailto:flucas@atlanticbb.net) or 814-243-0457, and Lee Rainey at [lrainey@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:lrainey@susquehannanmra.org) or 814-404-3968. They have begun contacting layout owners who participated in last year's November open house program and several other layout owners who have expressed interest in joining our 2014 program. If you or a friend is interested in adding your layout to the program please contact either of them.

We hope to have a project officer selected for our Eastern Sub by mid-May. In the meantime I will contact those who opened their layouts last year and respectfully request they participate again this year. If you, a friend, or a club you know of would like to join our project or have questions about the event please contact me at [bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:bschmitt@susquehannanmra.org) or call me at 717-877-1810. As soon as our Eastern Sub project officer is selected I will send an email to all Eastern Sub members announcing his name and contact information.

Celebrating National Model Railroad Month by visiting near-by layouts is a great way to make new hobby friends in your area. Last year we had several members visit layouts all across our Division either with their family or friends and several car caravans did the same. So if you want to dedicate one, two, or all three weekends to visit model railroads across the Keystone State we'll have consolidated sub-division maps posted to our website for all the layouts that plan to be open in both the Mountain and Eastern Sub-Divisions. And may we suggest that if you plan to visit layouts in the solo mode why not invite a non-NMRA member to join you and maybe help him or her catch the model railroading bug that bit you some time ago – it's a great hobby to share with friends!

## Upcoming Events Calendar

Prototype or Model RR Events Happening In or Near Our Division

**May 10, 2014**

**Susquehanna Division Meet  
Masonic Village Welcome Center,  
Elizabethtown PA**

See page 5 for details

**May 17-18, 2014**

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual N-Scale Weekend  
Hilliard, OH**

Franklin County Fairgrounds  
4100 Columbia Street

Saturday 10-5, Sunday 9-3

[www.centralohiontrak.org](http://www.centralohiontrak.org)

*(Yes, this is a day's drive away for most of our members but it's a great show for the N Scalers among us. Ed.)*

**May 31, 2014**

**Potomac Division Mini-Con  
Annandale VA**

St. Matthew's Methodist Church  
8617 Little River Turnpike  
8 AM – 4 PM ADM \$10  
8 scheduled clinics

**June 28, 2014**

**Visit to The East Broad Top RR  
Rockhill Furnace, PA**

See page 7 for details

**June 25-29, 2014**

**N Scale Convention  
Roanoke, VA**

[www.NScaleEnthusiast.com](http://www.NScaleEnthusiast.com)

**July 10, 2014 (Thursday)**

**Susquehanna Division Outing  
Montoursville, PA**

We'll be visiting Bowser Mfg & Weaver Mfg for a tour of their facilities! See page 8 for details

**July 13-20, 2014**

**NMRA National Convention  
Cleveland, OH**

[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

**August 23-24, 2013**

**N Scale Weekend  
Bedford PA**

This is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Show!

**September 6, 2014**

**Strasburg PA  
Model Railroading Day at The Railroad  
Museum of PA**

See p. 10 for details!

**September 20-21, 2014**

**Mainline Hobby Supply Open House  
Blue Ridge Summit PA**

[www.mainlinehobby.net](http://www.mainlinehobby.net)

### LSOP6

LSOP6 is scheduled for Friday October 3 and October 4 2014. The Lehigh sessions are now filled and there are 2 spots open for Susquehanna.

This is a great opportunity to get involved with operations. Never operated? Not a problem, each layout has local crews helping and are always happy to help.

And did I mention the cost? Well, there is no cost to operate any of these layouts – you are responsible for your own food and lodging – and there are some neat places to stay in both areas.

So please check it out @

<http://www.susquehannamra.org/LSOP/LSOP6/default.htm>

Or drop me an email:

[wsb@susquehannamra.org?subject=LSOP56](mailto:wsb@susquehannamra.org?subject=LSOP56)

Wayne Betty

## How the Benchwork Makes It Happen

As a refresher from the March issue, my objective is to build a model of the New York Ontario & Western in the final ten years over an eleven mile stretch from Cornwall to Campbell Hall. In the first installment, I mentioned Newburgh. That's the next town north (timetable west) of Cornwall on the NYC West shore. (I know I'm building the NYO&W but couldn't leave out some more NY Central.) This article discusses fabricating the gate that gets us there across the Moodna Creek (isle) and into Newburgh.

Building a swing-gate was necessary to carry the NY Central West Shore across an aisle as the northbound track from Cornwall to Newburgh is only 42 inches above the floor. What's more, the staging track under it is only 30 inches above the floor. Unless we're playing Limbo music, I don't think anyone would want to crawl under that.

I started by building a sturdy "Post" for the hinged end (see Figure 1 at right). The heavy 2" X 4" construction using high-quality lumber helps ensure a solid foundation for the gate.

Sturdy hinges were applied to the post and a 3/4 inch plywood "door" attached. A frame was built to the door with lots of screws and glue. See figures 2 and 3.

Experience tells us that nothing ALWAYS stays the way you build it, even in a climate controlled basement. Therefore a truss rod was added from the top at the hinge corner to the opposite bottom corner (figures 4 & 5). Hopefully, this would allow for adjustments if any warping or drooping was encountered. A copious amount of wood glue was used to hold the track and rails in alignment at the gaps.



Figure 1



Figure 2

## Planning for the NYO&W

Article by Tom Matthews



Figure 3



Figure 5



Figure 4

It's been two years since the gate was built and it has maintained alignment well until recently. Now is a different story because the Cornwall track laid on 3/4 inch Plywood and 1/2 inch Homasote™ has lifted slightly.

Even with the painting using shellac it seems to have warped slightly upward (see figure 6, next page). I have re-enforced the plywood under Cornwall with 1 inch angle iron from the hinge (not the gate hinge but the hinge that allows all of Cornwall to be lifted as shown in previous article) to the outer edge in six locations along the length of Cornwall yard. This has stiffened the yard and there seems to be no problem now.

So far this has been a challenging but rewarding exercise in designing benchwork for a unique situation. Hopefully the ideas presented here will be useful to you.

## Planning for the NYO&W

Article by Tom Matthews

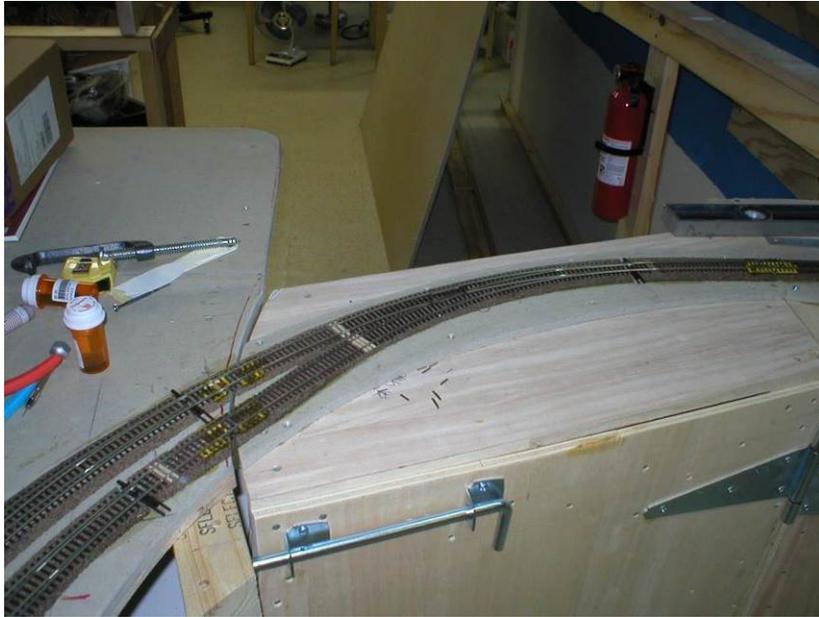


Figure 6

As a sidebar to the benchwork article, I ran across an issue with the trackwork in a nearby area of my layout. A new Walthers curved turnout was being particularly nasty. I had not noticed the points sticking before installing the track. A Tortoise was installed and worked correctly, but the points were binding. They just would not settle correctly to either side.

When touched with a small point they would "jump" to the selected position, so the tension was sufficient in both directions. Upon close examination (see fig. 7) it was noticed that the clearance between the stationary ties and the moving "tie" was very tight. A simple fix was to snip the connecting plastic (along the outside of the rail) and slide the three-tie section away from the moving tie about .032" (using the .032 wire that I was using for the Tortoise machine as a thickness gauge). This allowed the moving tie to free itself on both edges (figure 8).

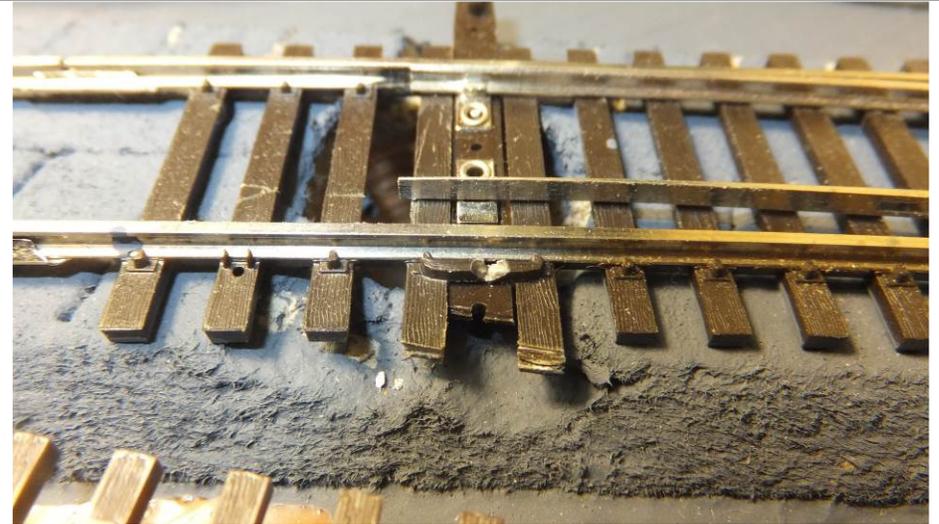


Figure 7



Figure 8

Isn't it amazing how a close-up picture can expose things? The track is hanging over the edge a bit showing the rough edge of the Homasote™. Really rough...

Tom Matthews

## Achievement Program News

Article by Bob Charles, MMR

In terms of the **Achievement Program**, 2014 has started with a judging trip to visit the excellent layout of Jim Long of Hampden Township. Jim qualified for both a Golden Spike and a Master Builder - Scenery certificate. Jim tells us that on the horizon he has some additional work planned to qualify for Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical. Congratulations to Jim, and thanks to Alan Mende and Brian Kampschroer who assisted in the judging efforts.

There are a number of others working on additional AP certificates. Jerry Britton qualified in the late fall for a scenery certificate and with some work has several more certificates in the hopper. Congrats to him. At the recent division meet in Mechanicsburg we saw the stellar work of Ron Parisi. As noted at the meet, Ron took a Best-in-Show with his scratchbuilt New York Central cement car at the fall MER convention in 2012. Ron is hard at work on his qualification for Master Builder – Cars and this Merit Award is another step in that direction. By the way, if memory serves, Ron received some 121 of a possible 125 points for this outstanding model. I'm guessing he should soon be ready for completion of the award.

Ron is not alone in his work on AP awards. Alan Mende displayed some of his fabulous models including his **scratchbuilt** Shay (whew!) at Mechanicsburg and presented some of his techniques. His work is so complete I was under the misapprehension he had already qualified for MMR. He assured me he is working hard toward that end.

What about you????? I'll bet many of you have models of which you are very proud and may well qualify for AP awards. Never got involved??? Well, why not? It really isn't that hard. Maybe the place to start is with a Golden Spike. I know there are a lot of railroads out there that will qualify with minimal attention. So,

what do you need to do to get started? Simply go to the NMRA website under the heading of "Education Programs" <Achievement Program>. There you will see that there are only three items on the Golden Spike checklist:

### -Rolling Stock

### -Model Railroad Setting

### -Engineering

On this same web page you see some added explanation of the three items and a source for definitions. Each of these categories has an explanation as to what must be presented for inspection to qualify. It's important to note that none of the check list items have to be JUDGED, but they do have to be WITNESSED by an appointed member of the Division. Of course, you must also be a member of the NMRA and show your current membership card.

In my experience over the last never mind how many years with the Achievement Program, the most difficult part of the Golden Spike Award is the first item, namely, "Display 6 units of rolling stock, either scratch built, craftsman kits or super detailed commercial models". Again note no judging is involved, only displaying your finished models to the witness. If you have been building a few challenging rolling stock kits for a while you probably already have completed this item. If you have a question of what is meant by the terms scratch built etc., the NMRA website is the source for definitions.

## Achievement Program News

Article by Bob Charles, MMR

The next two items are pretty well explained on the Application form. For instance, "the 8 square feet of layout with scenery" could be a 2' X 4' section of a modular layout with scenery. The last item requires some ballasted track work that can be used by two trains at once along with an added electrical feature. When you think you have satisfied the entire check list, call me and we'll make a date to visit your models.

The Golden Spike Award is meant to be an introduction to the Achievement Program and it is not difficult. Just meet the check list requirements and have your work witnessed. You can get the

items witnessed and the form signed by me, Barry Schmitt or someone Barry would designate. It is just that simple.

With thanks to PJ Mattson MMR and Dick Genthner MMR for their creative assistance, I look forward to a number of you receiving your first, hopefully of many, AP Awards.

*Bob Charles*

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

### **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 24 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.

## Division BOD Elections – June 2014

Barry Schmitt

### June 2014 Division Officers Elections

This serves as our final announcement concerning nominations for our upcoming elections of Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Chief Clerk for the term July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2016. In spite of all my requests for nominees so far the response has been thunderously silent. Please consider running for one of these leadership positions.

Kindly forward all nominations either by e-mail or USPS to our Nominating Committee Chairman so as to arrive at his address by Friday, May 23, 2014. Your Nominating Committee members are:

Chairman, John Wissinger (MMR), email:  
[jwissinger@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:jwissinger@susquehannanmra.org)  
23 Thorndale Drive, Myerstown PA 17067-3128

Richard Wurst, e-mail:  
[rjwurst@comcast.net](mailto:rjwurst@comcast.net)  
5 Hardy Drive, Lancaster PA 17602-4176

David Collison, e-mail:  
[dcollison@susquehannanmra.org](mailto:dcollison@susquehannanmra.org)  
100 Nursery Lane, Lancaster PA 17603-4225.

You may nominate yourself or another member for any of the positions. However, should you nominate another member please be sure they are a member in good standing and are willing to accept the position if elected. Job descriptions for each position are in our By-Laws – see

[www.susquehannanmra.org/docs/bylaws.pdf](http://www.susquehannanmra.org/docs/bylaws.pdf)

In accordance with our Division By-Laws, if there is more than one nominee for a position those nominees will be contacted by the Committee Chairman and required to submit a 200 word or less bio-sketch. The slate of nominees will be sent to all email members and via USPS for those without email addresses by June 6 in a Sidetracks Express issue. That issue will also include your ballot. All ballots must be received by the Committee Chairman not later than Monday, June 23.

Your BOD has once again approved voting by email. The voting procedures will be presented on the ballot. The new officers will be announced in the July 2014 Sidetracks.

## English's Model Railroad Shop

by Ron Parisi

### ENGLISH'S MODEL RAILROAD SHOP REVIEW APRIL 2014 "SIZE DOES MATTER"

The Susquehanna Division brass wanted me to reconnoiter Bowser Manufacturing and English's Model Railroad shop prior to our planned tour in July and write a review for the May issue of Sidetracks. Okay, okay the 'brass' was our Super, Barry! Ever wary of a general's decisions I questioned why we needed to build enthusiasm within our sometimes reticent Division.

But being a good lieutenant, I put my judgments aside and drove the 90 odd miles up to Montoursville this past Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup>. Weather-wise it was the best day of 2014, sunny and warm. As it turned out it was also one of the best hobby shop visits of my life. My general, you are exonerated... I will never question you again!



A neat, clean *awnined* entrance greeted us. The building from the outside was of modern architecture and gave no clue as to what was inside. Its main feature was its size. It was HUGE! After a few discrete inquires inside, Lee English, the proprietor of Bowser and English's Model Railroad Supply, came out and

greeted me warmly. A bespectacled, overall wearing man, he had a perpetual smile on his face. His enthusiasm as he talked was infectious. He loves what he does and soon one was swept up by it.



We first toured Bowser's manufacturing facilities. He talked with a pride and childlike joy as he explained his injection molding machines. These machines were state of the art and immaculate. And, they kept American jobs here!



## English's Model Railroad Shop

by Ron Parisi

After we were finished in the manufacturing area and had seen a five-station Swiss pad printing machine, hand assembly area and art studio where digital art work was prepared, we ventured back into the store. It was here that English's uniqueness became apparent! It was humongous! The aisles stretched for hundreds of feet. The shelves were groaning with merchandise. Each brand of merchandise had scores of examples for sale.



Immediately to the right as one walks in is the 'O' gauge corner with a multi-level layout where trains scooted by every few seconds. The wall in this area is covered from floor to ceiling with beautifully displayed models; the shelves in the area are crammed with hundreds of Lionel's orange and blue boxes that contain model after model of great rolling stock or engines.

The rear corner on this side of the store contains the Thomas corner and merchandise. There are two table top layouts with everything Thomas that a young model railroader would need to keep him or herself busy while dad or grandpa revels in the rest of the store.



Notching down a scale, I found myself in the HO scale section. The immediate area contains Lee's own line of beautiful Bowser items in the hundreds. But, other premium brands such as Intermountain, Walthers, P2K, Atlas and Exactrail are there in profusion as well. Hundreds of new RTR releases of each brand fill this department to the bursting point!



## English's Model Railroad Shop

by Ron Parisi

Further on, parts and details were everywhere! Couplers, trucks, track vehicles, structures, electronics, and 10 different Woodland Scenic display racks provided scenic materials for whatever climate or season you wanted to set your railroad in. And my personal favorite was the rolling walls that provided 80 square feet per side of hardly ever seen detail parts. I especially liked the Cal Scale side as I have spent years buying parts from sometimes indistinct line illustrations so it was a treat to see the actual parts and I believe the entire line is here!



Be sure to take your back pain medicine before you hit the walls as I am sure you will spend hours searching and selecting here.

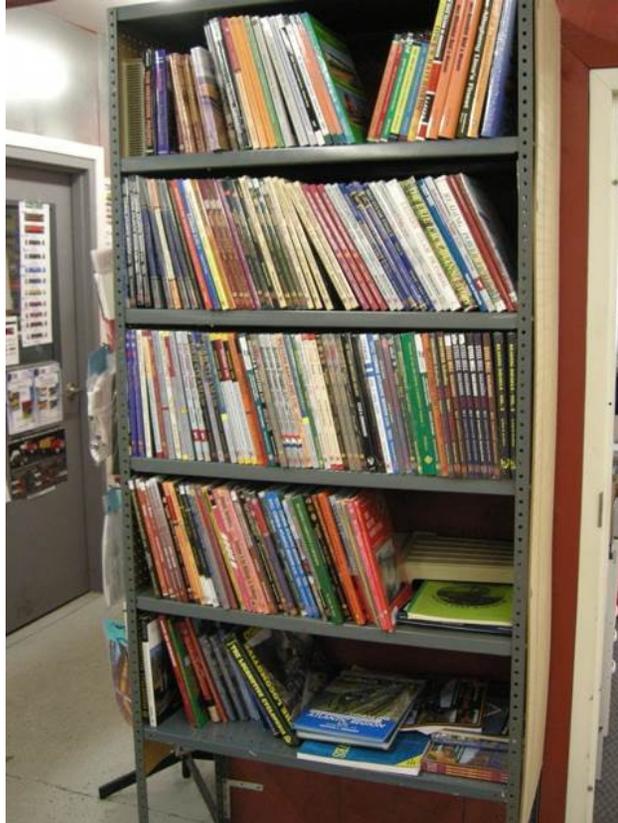
Richard Cox, the friendly retail store manager, made sure I saw the extensive 'N' and 'Z' scale sections before we ventured to see the other areas of the store. He showed me the modest plastic kit racks, and for the ethereally minded the Estes Rocket Display.



## English's Model Railroad Shop

by Ron Parisi

We also passed numerous book racks where the under-educated might improve their lot, and nestled somewhere up front Vern Trego was hard at work in the center of millions of parts in the stores' repair shop.



Bring your "want list" and plan on spending as much time here as you can. This is truly one of the best stocked and most friendly hobby stores you will ever shop in.

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201 Streibeigh Lane

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**Susquehanna Sidetracks**

Official Newsletter of the Susquehanna  
Division, NMRA

**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.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

When this form is completed, mail it to:

City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Scales(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date Of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_ (Required)

**Do not mail it directly to NMRA headquarters in Chattanooga TN**

(A Divisional or Regional officer or board member)

Date of Form: 2/1/2013

**Bob Price  
MER Business Manager  
666 Princeton Avenue  
Collingswood, NJ 08108**

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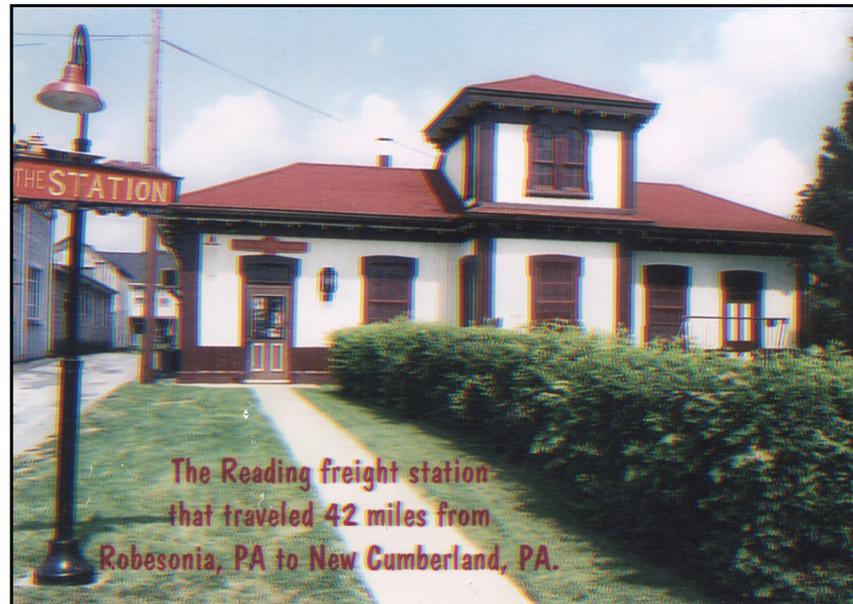
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