



# UP THE HOLLER

## Newsletter of Division 9 THE COAL DIVISION

### Mid Central Region NMRA

March 2012



#### DIVISION OFFICERS

Superintendent  
Bob Weinheimer MMR  
304 343 1428  
super@coaldivision.org

Asst Superintendent  
Gary Burdette MMR  
304 675 3909  
asstsuper@coaldivision.org

Clerk- Jerry Doyle  
304 763 7169  
clerk@coaldivision.org

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Achievement Program Chairmen  
Ed Keith MMR  
740 867 5264  
Bob Weinheimer MMR  
304 343 1428  
super@coaldivision.org

Clinic  
Dan Mulhearn  
304 466 9188  
clinic@coaldivision.org

Contest  
Dan Mulhearn  
contest@coaldivision.org

Education  
Gary Burdette MMR  
304 675 3909  
asstsuper@coaldivision.org

Election  
Bill Wadsworth  
304 768 3266  
nominating@coaldivision.org

Membership  
John Harris  
membership@coaldivision.org

Raffle  
Paul Lapointe  
raffle@coaldivision.org

#### DIVISION STAFF

Editor  
Dan Mulhearn  
304 466 9188  
editor@coaldivision.org

Webmaster  
Bob Weinheimer MMR  
super@coaldivision.org

#### HEAD OF THE HOLLER

**Bob Weinheimer MMR**

I can't help but notice the recent level of Achievement Program activity in the Division. It started with John Harris earning his Association Volunteer Certificate; then Dennis McGeeney with scenery and Mark Maynard with electrical. Just before press time we learned that Clint Foster had earned the scenery certificate and Dan Mulhearn is now a Model Railroad Author.

I would like to point out that nearly all of this activity was what I have referred to as low hanging fruit ready to pick. Mark's electrical work had been done for some time, it was just a case of preparing the documentation. Dan's package of writings had nothing new in it, it was all stuff he had previously done. I can only imagine he assembled it into a pile and realized he had more than enough for the certificate. Similarly, Clint's scenery was judged with no advance warning. His write up followed.

Of course, not all of this activity fits that category. Dennis has worked diligently on his modest layout to earn the Scenery Certificate and he continues to improve his work with the suggestions made by the judges. John has been our Membership Chairman for some time but he also had a key role in convention planning. He, too, met the requirements fairly recently.

What else is in the works? At least two members have had enough structures judged and verified to earn that certificate, all that is missing is the paperwork. Two other members have done all the work needed for the Electrical Certificate; this is more low hanging fruit waiting for the picking. We have judged a number of models for another member but made a couple of mistakes about the appropriate category for some of the models. I think there are a couple of certificates in there once we get it figured out. That same member is ready to have his scenery judged. Gary Burdette has been looking around and thinks there are at least three Prototype Model Certificates that members might earn. I think this is one of the more difficult certificates so it would be a great accomplishment to grab that one.

Take a look at the requirements for the various categories then look at what you have done. Is there a certificate that is yours for the taking? If so, let us know so we can check it out and get you the recognition you deserve.

Let me close with a reminder to vote in the National Elections. Refer to last month's column for more on that subject.

#### NEXT MEETING

The March 2012 meeting of MCR Division 9 will be held at the C&O depot in St. Albans, WV. Coming in to St Albans on US 60 from either direction, turn south across the tracks at the C&O Chevrolet auto dealer and you will see the depot. Social hour and judging is at 1PM followed by the meeting at 2PM. This month's model contest is revenue freight cars. Paul Lapointe will delivered his clinic on Appalachian Scenery in 8 Inches. The snows of February stopped him but let's hope the warmth of March will make things work this time. Paul also promises another great raffle.

## FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Gary J. Burdette MMR

Operations may be the spice of life on our model railroads and the most enjoyable part of our hobby. While model building, train watching, socialization and such are great fun; running the trains seems to be the ultimate, the icing on the cake.

Sometimes, we can even add a little seasoning to the pot through some special operations. In his book *How To Operate Your Model Railroad* (Kalmbach 1977), Bruce Chubb mentions the use of situation cards to depict extra or particular activities or events beyond the normal running of trains. Such things as natural disasters, equipment failures or change in traffic patterns may be introduced. This is accomplished by the selection of a card with the event printed on it to effect our operating sessions.

During this time period, I noticed the interesting engraving of the C&O pictorial in the lower corner of the mailing envelope on my copies of the *C&O Historical Society Magazine*. I began cutting these off the paper in playing card size and saving them to make situation cards. When I got a pile of them I typed SITUATION CARD at the top and a situation or event on the back. For instance; turntable at Hinton broken, repairs to take six hours. Locomotives must be turned on the wye at Meadow

Creek. I submitted my suggestion and it appeared in the Basement Subdivision column of the *C&O Historical Society Magazine*. On the Grafton & Greenbrier we use EVENT CARDS with the G&G herald on the front. We have a stack of DEFECT DETECTOR cards also.

Dennis McGeeney and I have been discussing several of these real life situations he once saw and had to deal with as a locomotive engineer on the READING lines. Dennis is writing these up for your enjoyment and possible use. We actually called out the Jordan spreader to do some ditching at a recent op session on the PENNSYLVANIA SOUTHERN. Engineer Mulhearn ran it southbound out of Pittsburgh across the system to Waynesburg following the 20 MPH speed limit established in the timetable. At Waynesburg Dan put the spreader in front of the locomotive and began ditching at 5 MPH. All train crews had a "protect against" order for the ditcher and this was an interesting addition to the op session.

This is not something you want to overdo. A little goes a long way, as they say. However, here is the chance to run your work train, big hook, or fall foliage special and enhance the day to day operations of your pike.

## NEWS FROM NATIONAL

There was quite a bit of information coming out of the NMRA National Board meeting

1) Tom Draper, manager of the National Train Show reports the number of booth sales for the 2012 National Convention at Grand Rapids, MI is on a par with sales at this time for the last National Train Show in Sacramento.

2) Don Hillman, **NMRA Canada Director** stepped down due to health reasons and Clark Kooning stepped up and volunteered to take over the position

3) The NMRA ended 2011 in good financial position and is currently rebuilding some of the funds from which it had borrowed in the past. There is currently enough money in the budget to hire a professional IT person to repair, maintain and update the NMRA website.

4) The NMRA has announced an agreement of co-operation with the HRMA (Hasea.com Model Railroad

Association of China. This is a newly organized group of over 100,000 railfans. The HRMA has a deep interest in the organization and structure of the NMRA as well as promoting NMRA standards in the Chinese modeling community.

5) The National NMRA is looking in to the possibility of electronic balloting as a cost and time saving measure.

6) The Grand Rails website at [www.gr2012.org](http://www.gr2012.org) has several new features. These include; a page for the layout design SIG, an Operations SIG sign up sheet, PDF copies of all registration documents, a complete list of all extra fare evens and tours, a schedule of days and times, side-track events for the non rail, the silent auction schedule and the contest room schedule.

There will be further information on the National Board Meeting disseminated for next month's newsletter.

## TRAVELS WITH DENNIS

The Coal Division members and friends are scheduled to enjoy a ride on the **Potomac Eagle** tourist train out of Romney, WV on Saturday June 23, 2012. Dennis McGeeney has been working hard on setting this trip up and we now have the latest information. First; we need to discuss the price. Adult riders fare is \$42.00; riders ages 6 to 16 cost \$20.00 and those under 6 are free. The current plan is for those riding to meet at 11:00AM at Mario's Restaurant at 33 S High St in Romney WV. Parking in front of the restaurant is limited. Should there be no parking spaces; please use the Romney Fire Dept parking area just adjacent to the restaurant. Please do not block any of the apparatus doors!

We will be assigned a covered train car with tables for seating. You may bring your own food, visit the snack bar on board or there will be a caterer available. Tom Rothovich, who is setting this up for us, is a frequent visitor to Dave Stout's and Paul La-Pointe's layouts and is working with Dennis to make this a really special day. Our engineer will be Dave Snider, a retired CSX engineer.

Remember to bring binoculars to observe the eagles as well as cameras, sun block and drinking water. The train will depart Romney at 1:00PM and return about 4:30PM. Dennis has been designated at the bursar for this excursion and fares should be submitted to him. You may write a check to Dennis McGeeney with a note that it is for the Potomac Eagle excursion and submit to Dennis at a Division meeting or mail it to him at 509 Water St, Summersville WV 26651-1334. Dennis may be contacted at 304 872 7262. All payments must be received by our May meeting..

We will have restaurant menus and lots of other tourist information available at the March meeting in St. Albans.

### Photos courtesy of Potomac Eagle



Potomac Eagle motive power



Eagle in flight as seen from train



Baby ducks as seen from train

## MY WORD

### Dan Mulhearn, Editor

Yes, I admit it, I was the engineer on the work extra which ran the Jordan spreader on the Pennsylvania Southern out of Pittsburgh to Waynesburg. Once at Waynesburg we started ditching at 5 mph back towards Washington. I don't believe Bob Weinheimer, as President and CEO of PS was thrilled with this disruption to his smooth operation of important freight traffic between Pittsburgh and the WV State line. I think Bob was relieved when we outlawed at West Union and tied up in the siding there.

I am hoping to be less tied up with the ambulance company and freer to work on my basement layout in the coming month. Of course, it is also time to get lime and fertilizer down for the grass; so it is always a struggle to get in that model railroading time. The other night installed sound/decoders in three ALCO C628/630 units. All decoders were Soundtraxx Tsunami units specific for these units. The installations went well; but wait. Tried to install a QSI sound decoder in an Athearn Amtrak P40 chassis and managed to "let the smoke out of" the decoder. Then, while bench testing another QSI GE decoder, allowed the speaker to short against a live rail. Bottom line, two QSI decoders going in for repair or scrapping. Today I was programming a Soundtraxx Tsunami decoder installed in an N&W, ex WAB GP-35 and it sud-

denly ceased all sound or operation. Another tear down coming up!

I was recently looking over the internet traffic on sound decoders and came across some interesting information from QSI. They have acquired sound tracks for a Winton diesel and are offering them in a decoder. The engines were found in New York City Fire Dept. fire boat 9 based on Staten Island. This fire boat was built in 1938 and has recently been retired. The QSI folks were able to set up a taping session and immortalize the Winton engine sound for our use.

As a final note, I would like to echo Bob's point on the AP program and low hanging fruit. I had done a lot of research on EMD F units years ago and wrote the captions for a book my good friend, John Taibi, and I did on F units. This, along with some photos I had published and my clinic on "blue box upgrades" at Charleston put me over the top for my Author Certificate. I would be willing to bet, in fact I know for sure, that many of you have the requirements for particular certificates done. All that remains is to do the paperwork documenting your accomplishments.

### West Virginia Plan Would Connect Tourist Railroads

The *Charleston Gazette* has reported on a plan by the West Virginia Tourism Commission to restore 25 miles of abandoned track. This would connect the State owned West Virginia Central RR with the Cass Scenic Railroad over 25 miles of former Western Maryland RR right of way. The West Virginia Central currently hosts the Durbin Rocket, Cheat Mountain Salamander and Tygart Flyer tourist excursions. This would create an excursion train loop of about 90 miles. It would be possible to travel from Elkins to Cass; then via Cass to the abandoned town of Spruce then back to Elkins. The projected cost of the project is twenty million dollars. Tourist train cars would be equipped to carry kayaks, mountain bikes, fishing and camping gear making it possible for backcountry tourist to be dropped off and picked up at various locations along the rail loop. In addition to the needed funding; the plan needs approval by the State Railroad Authority, The Monongahela National Forest and various other agencies.

### NORFOLK SOUTHERN "Heritage Units"

Norfolk Southern has announced a major plan to paint new locomotives in paint schemes of the varied former component railroads of the current company. There will be a total of eighteen locomotives painted in various paint schemes of former lines now encompassed in Norfolk Southern's system. There will be units painted in New York Central, Pennsylvania, Erie, Lackawanna, Lehigh Valley, Central of New Jersey, Pittsburgh and West Virginia, and as Andy Griffith would say "who knows what all." My own favorite is the Erie unit which will be done in the two tone green passenger colors which appeared on the Erie's E8s and some of the Alco Pas. Of course, the black and yellow Erie "wings" freight scheme wouldn't be a bad thing either. NS management seems to realize that the heritage of railroading is a winner in promoting their current operations. They have implemented a small but promising steam program. Recently, in promoting the 30th anniversary of NS they have been running a trio of GP30 locomotive, one in Conrail colors, one in N&W colors and one in Southern colors. Can you imagine a big GE AC unit in black and yellow Virginian colors; WEEEOH!

## CONTEST CORNER



Dan Kennedy's Atlas Transfer Car was built on a locomotive mechanism and is otherwise scratch built from plans published by Dean Freytag.

## Thousands of negatives still need



## your positive support.

So do the thousands of plans, photos, and slides from our Kalmbach Memorial Library that we're working to digitize so that members can access them from their own computer. The good news is that the scanning is well underway. The better news is that our image library is even larger than we thought!

Which is why we still need your help. The more funds we receive, the more images we can make available.

If you haven't contributed to the Diamond Club, do it now:

**Silver Level** – Contribute \$75 and receive a silver 75th Anniversary commemorative pin and have your name listed in *NMRA Magazine*.



**Gold Level** – Contribute \$750 and receive a gold 75th Anniversary pin, a golf shirt with the Anniversary logo, and have your name listed in *NMRA Magazine*.

**Diamond Level** – Contribute \$7,500 and receive a diamond-and-gold Anniversary pin, a golf shirt and sweater with the Anniversary logo and your embroidered name, a print of the NMRA's 75th Anniversary commemorative painting, and have your name and photo printed in *NMRA Magazine*.

**Make a contribution that will make a difference for decades.**  
Visit [www.nmra.org/diamondclub](http://www.nmra.org/diamondclub) or call HQ at 423-892-2846 to contribute.





## Take the HIGH-LINE to Pittsburgh for the 2012 Mid-Central Region Convention!

April 26-29, 2012

### EVERYTHING YOU WANT IN A GREAT CONVENTION AND MORE!

**Clinics - Tours - Contests - Non-Rail Activities - Layout Tours  
Banquet - Raffle Door Prizes Galore - Railfanning - Great Location**

Our convention hotel, the Pittsburgh Radisson, is just minutes from downtown Pittsburgh, so you'll have the opportunity to see the city, visit Station Square Shops, ride our two historic inclines, railfan and enjoy the sights. Not only that, but right across the road from the hotel is Rook Yard, the former home of the Pittsburgh & West Virginia Railroad, now a part of the W&LE Railroad. You can practically railfan from your hotel room!

Just some of the potential activities you'll find at the HIGH-LINE to Pittsburgh Convention!

**A Variety of Rail Tours**  
Steel Industry History  
Hussey Copper  
The Bridges of Pittsburgh  
Port Authority Light Rail Shops and Ride

**Great Clinics**  
Hands-on clinics  
Western Pennsylvania Railroads  
Steel and Other Prototype Industries  
Operations: Real and Simulated  
Modern Railroad Equipment and Practices  
Narrow Gauge Railroads, Model and Prototype  
Modeling Structures, Rolling Stock & Scenery

**Non-Rail Tours**  
Pittsburgh Glass Factory Make & Take  
Just Ducky Tour of Pittsburgh  
In-House Clinics for Non-Rails.

**Local Attractions**  
Carnegie Science Center  
Station Square Shops

**Railfanning**  
NS & CSX Mainline Action  
W&LE Across From the Hotel  
Variety of Local Shortlines



For more information as it becomes available, see our convention home page:  
[www.highlinetopittsburgh.org](http://www.highlinetopittsburgh.org)

### MCR CONVENTION

Above see the ad for the upcoming MCR convention. This promises to be a great one, to start with the hotel is across the street from an active rail yard, how long has it been since that has happened?

Pittsburgh is a city with a wonderful steel industry and railroad heritage. The Pittsburgh area also has one of the largest concentrations of highway and railroad bridges you will find, check them out at [pghbridges.com](http://pghbridges.com).

Pittsburgh is home to more than its share of outstanding museums featuring everything from submarines to dinosaurs. You will also find a wide variety of restaurants featuring cuisines from all over the world. Bring the family, there will be lots of activities for those who are less interested in trains than us.

Mark your calendar for April 26 through 29. You can get registration forms on line or in the soon to arrive *King-pin*. Fill them out, send them in, and have a good time in a fun city.

## PIKE AD RENEWAL TIME

Do you see those pike ads in this issue? Yes, it's the time of year again for pike ad renewal. If you want to keep your ad, and haven't done so already, please submit \$10 to Clerk Jerry Doyle. If your ad needs any changes such as email or telephone number, let Jerry know and

he'll get the right person to make the change. I feel sure we can forget to bill the Grafton and Greenbrier and let Lin's railroad stay on the ad page as a reminder of all he did for the Coal Division.



### SHAMOKIN DIVISION

DENNIS MCGEENEY ROAD FOREMAN  
SUMMERSVILLE, WV  
304-872-7262



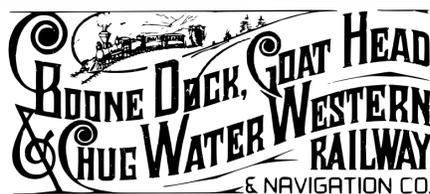
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Portsmouth, OH



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Anthony Parrish, CEO  
tony765@aol.com

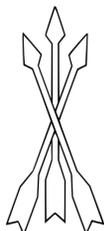


Ed Keith, MMR  
Assistant Superintendent  
Chesapeake, OH



### CRESCENT VALLEY

Jerry Doyle, President  
Barboursville, WV



### THREE ARROWS RAILROAD

Tony Puccini, President  
6 Garwood Drive Huntington, WV 25705  
puccinibaj@hotmail.com



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AandNRR@aol.com

NORFOLK AND WESTERN



PIPESTEM BASEMENT  
DIVISION (HO)  
DAN MULHEARN  
304-466-9188  
danmulhearn@gmail.com



HINTON DIVISION  
Gary Burdette - Superintendent  
Point Pleasant WV



Lin Young, President  
Debbie Drive  
Gallipolis, OH 45631  
www.graftonandgreenbrier.com



Bob Weinheimer, President  
398 Mount View Drive Charleston, WV 25314  
www.pennsylvaniasouthern.com



ROBERT WEINHEIMER MMR  
398 MOUNT VIEW DR  
CHARLESTON WV  
25314-1041

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## Upcoming Coal Division Meetings

**March 10**

**C&O Depot**

**Fourth Street and Fourth Avenue  
St. Albans, WV**

**April 14**

**West Virginia Hobbies and Crafts  
Teays Valley, WV**

**May 12**

**Parkersburg, WV**