



UP THE HOLLER

Newsletter of Division 9
THE COAL DIVISION
 MID CENTRAL REGION NMRA INC
 March 2017



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FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

I'm filling in for Gary again this month. He sounded in good spirits when I talked to him recently and is gaining strength every day.

This month I'm thinking about nicknames. They are an integral part of railroading. Some names are definitely local but others became as well-known as any proper name. Take for example locomotives; they can have cumbersome names and designations that don't have a friendly ring to them.

EMD's answer to a truly useful locomotive capable of switching and branchline work was designated GP7 for General Purpose (The number 7 was the designation for the contemporary EMD products along with the F7, SW7, and E7). In short order they became known as *Geeps*. The term was already part of our lexicon due to the popularity of the ubiquitous military vehicle from WWII but note this was spelled Jeep instead of Geep. The nickname stuck as the line of locomotives became a staple of the EMD product line. The GP7 was replaced by the GP9, then the GP18 and so on culminating in the GP60 series in the early 1990s. Alas the Geep is no longer part of the EMD line (EMD itself became Progress Rail in 2016) but there are still thousands of Geeps in service today. It's a good bet that Geeps will probably be running in service as long as there are steel rails and flanged wheels.

Another common nickname in the history of postwar railroading was a locomotive line built by General Electric. GE had been in the locomotive business building small industrial units and as a partner to Alco. In 1959 they struck out on their own in the large locomotive market. The first units in their domestic line were named the *Universal Series*, denoting they were versatile designs. The first models were the U25B and U25C with U for universal, 25 for 2,500 horsepower and B or C signifying either four- or six-axle configurations. Almost immediately they acquired the nickname *U Boats* because it just sounded good. Over the next 18 years thousands of U Boats were produced, some with up to 3,600 horsepower, at their Erie, Pennsylvania plant. The U series was succeeded by a new product line in 1977 but these new units were often called U Boats as well. Alas, General Electric's older units don't seem to age as well as EMD units and there are relatively few units running today that rate the moniker U Boat. Other diesel locomotives have earned nicknames but I can't think of any as universal as these two in the world of railroading.

Jerry Doyle

FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Dan Mulhearn, Assistant Superintendent

It is good to hear that Gary is able to be home while having his chemo treatments in preparation for surgery. Let's all keep him in our thoughts and prayers.

This warm weather recently has me thinking of spring and trains. Lately I have been listening in to the radio traffic on Norfolk Southern in the Cresson, PA area. It is a very interesting and busy stretch of the former Pennsylvania RR main line. The app also picks up the CSX former B&O Sandpatch Grade which is not nearly as busy. NS runs more than 70 trains a day through Cresson and the radio chatter is non stop. I suspect the antenna is located on or near the Station Inn which is a railfan oriented bed and breakfast. It is an old hotel, very basic, nothing fancy. What I have in mind is to get away for a day or two and just sit on the front porch, enjoy the breeze, listen to the scanner and watch the show. Eastbound trains have pusher for the west slope out of Pittsburgh. The pushers

generally stay on to help with braking on the east slope down to Altoona. Westbounds out of Altoona also have pushers and will either drop the pusher at Cresson or the dispatcher will tell him to take the pusher to Pittsburgh. All the pushers are manned, no DPUs here, at least yet. With things the way they are at home just now, I won't be going soon but it is pleasant to eavesdrop on their radio chatter and dream.

Athearn has some good news for N&W fans. They are going to produce an accurate model of N&W's 500 series passenger GP9s. They are going to do two road numbers in Pevler blue and two in red. The internet arguments on the correct color for N&W red have already begun.

I really enjoyed our last get together and especially thank Tom Harris for his excellent tree making clinic. I am looking forward to our next event at the depot.

CLINICS

Bob Osburn, Clinic Chair

Tom Harris presented a very informative clinic at our February Meeting. Tom not only explained the process for using Super Tree materials to produce very realistic trees but also gave members a hands-on opportunity to practice their tree making ability. Photos of his Lakeside Lines Railroad showing his use and proper placement of scenic elements were so realistic you could easily mistake them as the real thing. Thanks, Tom, for a wonderful Clinic.

The March Clinic will be presented by Bob Weinheimer. Bob will explain and demonstrate how to install a

decoder in an Athearn Blue Box Locomotive. Many members have shown interest for a clinic of this type and knowing Bob's presentation skills, this should be a good one!

The April Clinic, presented by Dennis McGeeny is titled "My Experiences Being a Locomotive Engineer". Dennis gave a similar clinic months ago which was very informative and entertaining. His enthusiasm, knowledge, and pride in being a Locomotive Engineer really comes thru during his presentation.



**Mid-Central NMRA
Region Convention**

**May 18-21, 2017
Louisville, Kentucky**




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Presented by The Kanawha United Model
Railroaders Assoc., nmra club

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Sunday 11am - 4pm
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model railroading in the digital age



**Coal Division
Monthly Railfun Event
*“Diesels”***

Saturday March 11, 2017

- 12:30 Depot Open**
- 1:00 Standard Social Time – Mixing/
Viewing,**
- 1:00 Contest entries: Diesel Locomotives**
- 2:00 Superintendent’s Briefing**
- 3:00 Contest Results**
- Raffle**
- 3:15 Clinic: Installing a DCC decoder in
Athearn blue box locomotives**

LIBRARY CORNER

Bill Wadsworth

Recently there has been some more interest in our Div. 9 DVD library, which is really great as there is some great modeling information that the members can take advantage of. I'm still looking for any DVDs that the members would like to donate/lend to the library. Any

contributions will enhance the library and make it useful to all. I will strive to bring the DVDs to all the “home” meetings (St. Albans depot), but returns or donations are welcome anytime.

CONTEST
Larry Richards
Photos by Bob Weinheimer

The February contest was "Anything Coal" and a number of member submitted entries. The winner was Bob Osburn's animated truck dump. The photo is not very good, (photographer's comment, not Larry's) and certainly does not show the animation. There was a tie for second and hence no third place winner. The tippie is the work of Herb Parsons while the C&O hopper car was done by Tom Harris.

You may have noted some paperwork that was cropped away from the models. This was the introduction of written documentation in lieu of a verbal presentation by the modeler. This method offers a more detailed explanation of the modeler's efforts and allows voting all during the social hour in addition to right after the business meeting. It doesn't have to be very formal, an outline is sufficient. Just be sure to brag a little so the voters will know what you did. This worked well in February as it allowed the voters to see that these models were far more deserving of their vote than the hopper car submitted by the editor that received only a modest amount of work (again, editor's comment, not Larry's).

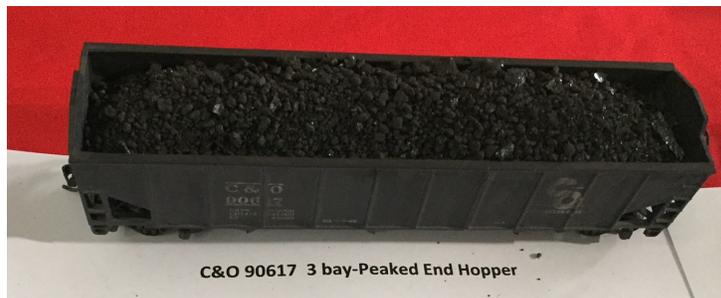
The March contest will be Diesel locomotives and April's contest will be steam locomotives.



Bob's animated truck dump



Herb's coal tippie



Tom's C&O hopper car

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

The goal of the newsletter team is to have this document reach you by email or snail mail at least one week prior to our meetings. We typically start the layout work the Monday 12 days before the meeting. This allows a day of review by the officers and a proofreader before the electronic version is issued, usually on Wednesday. The paper version is mailed Thursday or Friday. For this to happen reliably, we need all items for publication by that

Monday 12 days prior to the meeting. If we don't get it on time we can't print it. Please help us give you the most up to date information possible. Here are the deadlines for the next few issues

April	March 27
May	April 21
June	May 29

NMRA MCR DIVISION 9 *THE COAL DIVISION*

St Albans Depot
St Albans, WV
February 11, 2017
Minutes

Meeting called to order by Dan Mulhearn at 2:00 p.m.
Members introduced themselves.

Division Clerk Report

Treasury balance is currently \$9,119.17
December minutes were approved.
Pike Ads \$0.
Raffle Revenue \$0.

Superintendent Report

Gary Burdette was recuperating at home today.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Dan Mulhearn hoped everyone enjoyed his accounts of the Long Island Railroad in the last newsletter. He remarked "it was a very different kind of railroading from around here."

Achievement Program

Nothing new to report.

Newsletter Chair

Bob Weinheimer said there were issues getting the last newsletter uploaded this month that should soon be rectified.

Clinic Chair

Next month's clinic will be on installing DCC decoders in a Blue Box Athearn locomotive.
Dennis McGeeney will be doing a clinic on being a locomotive engineer for April.

Contest Chair

Larry Richards said next month's contest would follow what was done last year.

Membership Chair

No report.

Raffle

Tom changed things up with a packet of detail parts with the purchase of six tickets.

Library Report

Nothing new to report.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Sam Delauter mentioned the Coal Division Facebook page. He volunteered to be the Social Media Ambassador.

Announcements

Bob mentioned there will be several train shows in the coming months. The Kanawha Valley Railroaders February 17-19. Dunbar Show March 10-12. There was discussion about the water situation in the depot. Bob and Dale Osburn volunteered to take a look at the situation.

Future Meetings

March 11 – St Albans Depot
April 8 – St Albans Depot
May 6 – Steel is King Parkersburg, WV

Contest – Anything Coal

March's contest -- Diesels

Meeting adjourned 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Doyle, Division 9 Clerk

The Chicopee Road at One Year

Patrick Miller

I started building my Chicopee Road layout in December 2015, after a moving back to my hometown. Now, one year later, it is amazing to reflect on just how much has been accomplished.

This is my eighth layout since 1992. For the sake of context, I'll briefly review my journey in the hobby over the past 24 years. First, I'll summarize why I chose to build a freelance railroad and the route it takes across the Appalachian Mountains. Then, I'll review how the layout looks today, and finally, discuss what is ahead.

I blame my father

I got into the hobby in 1990 when I received a wind up plastic toy train from my paternal grandparents for Christmas. It wasn't until 1992, when my father, a trade school and shop teacher, built a Life-Like train set on the finest 4'x8' green-painted plywood-and-lumber layout a 7 year old ever saw. It was designed to slide under the bed for storage, but I don't think that layout left the basement den for 8 months. Man I was hooked! Every time we went to a toy store, I had to buy another Life-Like or Bachmann freight car for my layout. My father took me to a train show in Morgantown in 1993 or 1994 and bought me an Athearn Conrail SD40-2...that show and that engine is what lead me very early on towards prototype railroads. Every year or so, my dad and I would rebuild that layout. One year, we added a 1/2" plywood top and extended it to a 5'x9'. The next, we built a totally new 4'x9' with an access hole in the middle. This occurred every year or two all the way to high school, each year a little more complex and a little more advanced in scenery and design.

There was no model railroad club in my area at the time, but there was a relative of a family friend who had a large HO Scale layout in his basement. Ed Lowe was a retired handyman, who was most generous in letting this kid come over and mess with his trains. His layout was the first "other layout" I had ever seen in person. Somehow along the way, we lost contact by the time I was in middle school. I later found out he passed away in 2007, I regret having lost contact with him. I also count Ed as a big influence in my modeling experience.

It was the last layout I built before I went off to college that was the true beginning of "serious" modeling after years of simply running trains on circles of track on painted plywood. This free-lanced layout featured scenery, a coal mine and name; the Chicago, Pittsburgh & Eastern. Neither the small layout nor the name were well planned, but it was the first, nonetheless.

By the time I graduated from Fairmont State University in 2007, I had joined the Mon Valley Railroad Club in Morgantown, WV and learned a great deal about prototype operations. Through the MVRRC, I was also introduced to prototype modeling and transition period freight car modeling in particular. I moved to Wheeling, WV in 2008 and



CP&E GP30 #3207 has since been rebuilt and repainted as Chicopee Road #3207

spent two years with the Ohio River Northern Railway Modelers (ORNRy) group visiting and operating on dozens of layouts. I still associate with this group and attend when my nomadic work schedule takes me to the Northern Panhandle of WV.

After being laid off from my employment in Wheeling, I worked for two years on the South Branch Valley Railroad in the Eastern Panhandle of WV as a Track Inspector and fill-in conductor. This fulfilled a life-long dream, but also slapped me pretty hard with reality. I attempted to qualify as an engineer, but my hearing impairment disability kept me from being able to pass all of the FRA-mandated screenings. After two years of being underemployed by the state-operated short line, I transferred out to another agency. A wise man once said: "Do not make your hobby, your

career". In my case, that was absolutely true. Bumped and burned out, I didn't return to the hobby for over a year. But this wonderful hobby is a chronic disease, and it slowly crept back in.

Layout Planning

Prior to moving back to Buckhannon, WV in 2015, I had been working on a little switching layout project in a 10" deep closet in our old house. This layout really set the ground work for the current project. This allowed me to experiment with hand laid track, dead winter scenery, DCC and painting backdrops. The limited space was frustrating, but educational for what was to come.

In November 2015, my wife Heather, my son Landon and I moved back to my home town of Buckhannon. For the first time, we now lived in a home with *space*. Space for living, space for our children, space for..... *a layout!* Before we even moved a single box into the house, I had already measured the finished attic and was drawing up rough plans by the dozens.

Inspired by Allen McClelland's Virginian & Ohio and Tony Koester's Allegheny Midland, I knew I wanted to keep freelancing but within prototypical norms. I started out with the major cities I wanted the railroad to theoretically pass through, beyond the layout. From there, I scoured Google maps for real towns along the route and listed them, state by state. I knew I would model the West Virginia portion of the route on the layout, but where?

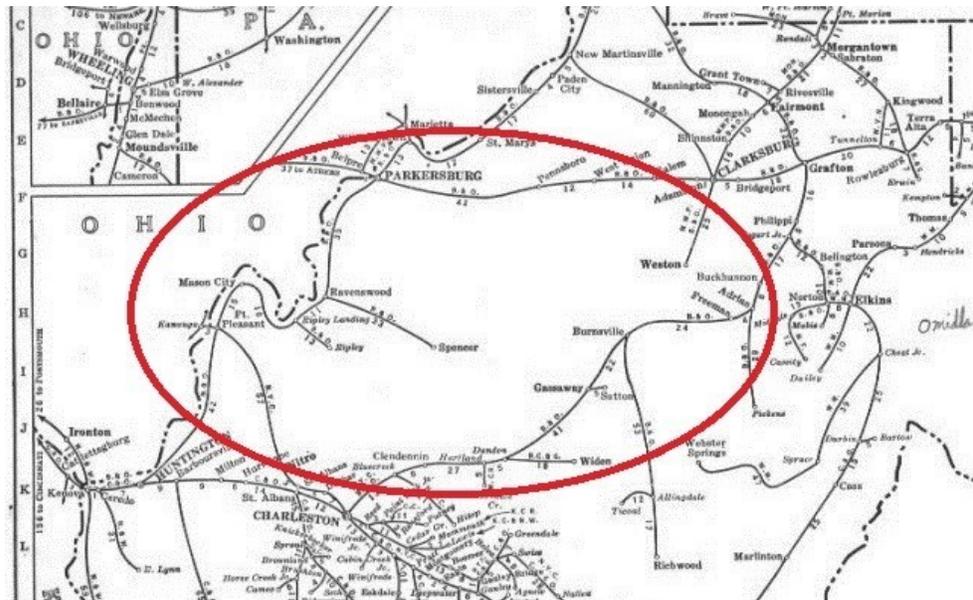


Untapped Potential

After studying some old railroad maps, I noticed there was a strikingly bare portion of West Virginia with no railroad having ever been completed. Hours of reading old newspaper articles online and researching the economy of Wirt and Calhoun Counties, one gets the sense that there always should have been a significant railroad presence there. Just after the turn of the 20th century, Calhoun County had the world's largest Carbon Black plant, thanks to the large oil and natural gas reserves in the area. Oil production also peaked at 16 million barrels in 1900 in nearby Wirt County. A railroad through this area may have significantly altered history in this area of West Virginia. And so, there is where my layout is based.

Route Overview

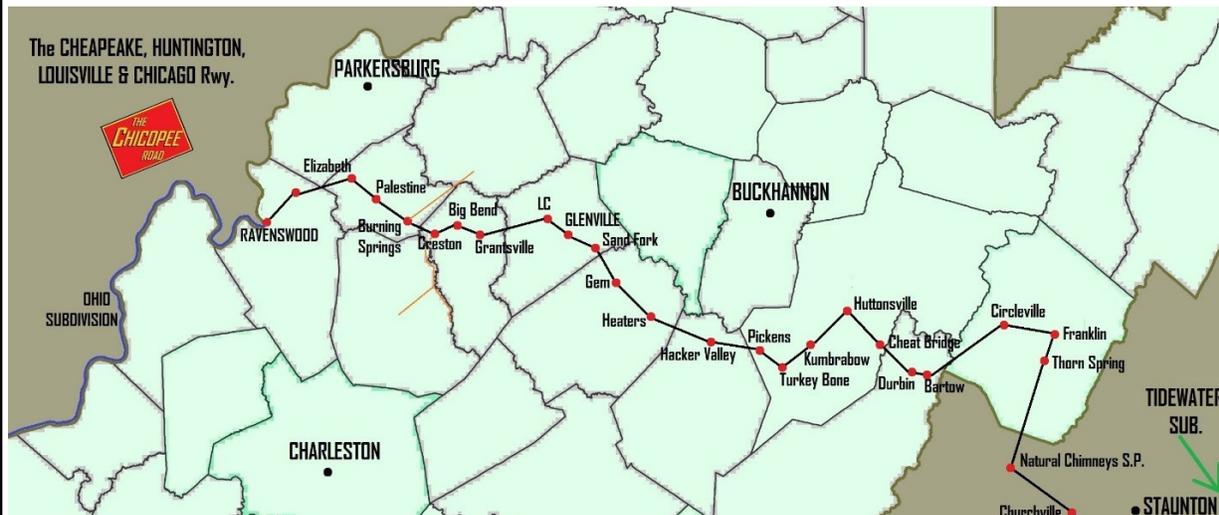
Crossing the Ohio River just south of Ravenswood, WV the Chicopee Road crosses the B&O Ohio River Subdivision and then parallels the old Ravenswood, Spencer & Glenville for about 6 miles to the east. There, the Chicopee main starts northeast along Tuckers Creek to Elizabeth where it runs east along the Little Kanawha River. I was able to find a few maps of where the original Little Kanawha River Railroad was supposed to extend to Grantsville, but was never built. While I am modeling a busy single-track main between Ravenswood and Grantsville, the railroad extends all the way to the Chesapeake Bay and also controls another railroad that runs from Petersburg, VA to Asheville, NC.



The 1969-1970 time period was one of great change in the US railroad industry. Federal regulation was choking the industry prior to the Staggers Act. Penn Central was a rolling bankruptcy and Amtrak was just one year away from its formation. In theory, the Chicopee Road would be at a disadvantage due to route geography and having a slower trek through the Appalachians than via the B&O West End to the north or the C&O New River Sub to the south.

The chosen time period was also a time of great innovation in the industry. ACI labels on cars, while ultimately

unsuccessful, helped track cars and expedite movements. New “modern era” freight cars were being built to replace the worn out cars left over from the steam era.



Construction

Due to building the layout in a finished attic space, I had a knee wall to contend with. At a height of 52", my layout height options were pretty limited. Due to the open floor plan in the attic, this was also the perfect place for the kids to play and keep the extra toys out of their bedrooms down stairs. I also know that we do not plan on living in this house 15 years from now, so the layout has to have the ability to be moved in the distant future.

With those considerations in mind, I had to design the layout to keep the top level under 52" height and also maximize floor space for the kids at the expense of mountainous scenic terrain and peninsulas. After more research I decided to utilize a cantilevered system inspired by Jeff Johnston's series on YouTube videos of benchwork methods for his Colorado & Southern. I set the top level benchwork at 48", which allowed for the plywood and riser subroadbed to change elevation as needed. I set the lower level at 28", which using rolling office chairs, works out well. You can read more in depth about my benchwork construction in the April 2016 edition of *Up The Holler*.

One year later

At the time of this writing, I have completed track laying between the Westbound Staging entrance beyond Ravenswood, the yard at Ravenswood and the main track through Silverton and Gates to the helix. The helix has also been built with most of the track laid upon it. I still need to solder in feeders and run the buss for the helix. I am using Atlas and Peco Code 83 Flex Track and mostly hand laid turnouts, also in Code 83.



West end of Ravenswood, looking east.

At the east end of Ravenswood Yard, I have a pair of older non-DCC friendly turnouts in use. They have recently caused issues with shorting under trains and if thrown to the diverging route. I will be replacing those with hand laid turnouts in the near future. Now is the time to do this before the yard is ballasted and they cause more issues during an operating session.

I installed backdrop for the lower level against the 2x3 wall-mounted braces for the upper level using Masonite hardboard cut in 16" strips. Each section joined together with a 1"x3" mounted behind for support, then the screw heads covered with wood filler putty and sanded flush before painting. I am using Valspar "Silver Leaf" Flat latex paint for the

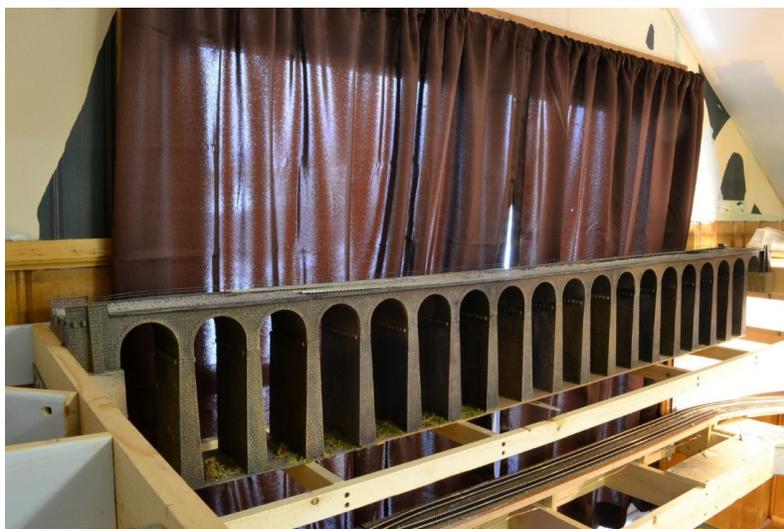
base backdrop color. I have experimented with three different methods of painting clouds, but haven't settled on one method as of yet. I have to admit, painting a cloudy winter sky has been trickier than I expected.

I have also started scenery construction at the west end of town at the entrance to the westbound staging. I also managed to recycle a Rix highway overpass and a pair of Chooch stone abutments to hide the end of track at the end of the yard next to the staging entrance. I plan to use primarily foam board insulation as a scenery base, as this allows me to manually insert individual trees for the winter scenery I am going to place. The foam board also allows for light but sturdy construction for moving sections in the future.

Last spring, I purchased a large custom-made stone arch bridge from a friend and fellow-ORNRy club member in Steubenville, OH. It had exchanged hands a couple of time since another ORNRy club member purchased the bridge from an estate. Neither Lester nor Larry could make the 6'-3" (544 scale feet) bridge work in their layout construction plans. So for \$100 the bridge was mine. I was able to transport it the 160 mile drive back to my house without damage and hauled up stairs to see where I could use it. Across the end of the attic is a double window that I built a lift out on the lower level to cross in front of the windows (in case of emergency), but I hadn't placed anything for the upper level to cross over the window back towards Grantsville. I lifted the bridge into place...*voila!* A perfect fit, the bridge couldn't have worked better if I had planned it!



Looking Westbound from Ravenswood, staging behind tunnel in eaves.



Stone Arch Bridge over the Little Kanawha River....eventually.

At this point, trains are able to be built and broken down at Ravenswood and trains may proceed Eastbound to the entrance of the helix. I have run several test trains up to this location, then switched the power to the other end by hand and run the track back down to Ravenswood. I have turnouts in place at Gates for the Cabot Carbon Black plant and for the Hope Gas transfer station. When those spurs are in place, I'll at least be able to run an eastbound with a purpose without having the upper level ready.

What's next?

At this point, I plan to continue pushing eastward with the track work. There is an immediate challenge that will need to be dealt with, as I have planned a wye track at the top of the helix where it opens up on the top level. This will be the location of Elizabeth, WV. This area will have a couple industries and a B&O interchange track running towards Mineral Wells/Parkersburg. The town and the industries will be built upon the helix. From there the main will cross the Little Kanawha River between Sanoma and Creston over the large stone arch bridge across the end of the room.

Once all of the track work is completed, I will start roughing in scenery with foam board and plan the semaphore signal system. The semaphore signals will most likely be the most challenging part of the whole layout. Thankfully, both *Model Railroader* and *Model Railroad Hobbyist* have published articles about using Arduino control boards and servo motors. Both of these are above my level of understanding, but a fully-functioning signal system is not something I envision having completed in the next 5 to 7 years. I've still got time to learn about those.

More immediately necessary is upgrading my control system. The layout is currently powered by an NCE

PowerCab DCC system that needs to be expanded or replaced as I am already pushing the limits of its starter-system design. I have been extremely pleased with the performance of the PowerCab, so I will be upgrading to a wireless Pro-Cab system sometime in 2017.

I also need to build and install the westbound staging yard in the eave beyond Ravenswood and build a removable staging yard to the east of Grantsville. I have thought about 6 tracks for each yard, with storage for extra cars and locomotives nearby. The westbound staging will be an early spring project, as I already have the lumber on hand and more cars on the layout than what Ravenswood hold.

So as I look ahead the future of the CHL&C, I am excited to continue building and continue to operate on what has been accomplished thus far. My goal is to be able to host an operating session by the end of 2017. I am also looking forward to getting to share more of this hobby with my son, who will turn 4 in May. He has shown great interest in trains and is always anxious to “help”.

As I continue working on the layout, I'll keep putting updates on my blog. Here is to many more years of progress to come!

Blog: <http://chlcr.blogspot.com>

MY WORD

Bob Weinheimer, Editor

At the February meeting I mentioned some difficulty uploading the newsletter to the web site. The link on the home page went well but then everything showed as having failed. A few days later I checked and it had all uploaded so I guess all is now well.

Gary Burdette is sounding better each time we chat, Jerry Doyle has noticed the same thing and commented on that in his column. Gary was even thinking about writing his column this month but I guess he wasn't quite up to it. Perhaps we'll hear from him directly next time.

As planned, I went to Atlanta to attend the NMRA BOD meeting. The one big item that will affect us all is a dues increase of \$3 effective September 1, 2017. Dues have not been raised in several years and this increase is in line with the change in the Consumer Price Index since that time. Nobody wants to see an increase but in order to deliver all we expect from National it is a necessary evil. I sincerely hope that none of you will drop your memberships over such a trivial change.

The BOD is also wrestling with the loss of membership. The biggest causes, per surveys, revolve around affordability and the perception of value. To address those issues the Discount Program is shifting into an additional direction. It will be rolled out to hobby shops as planned, that should happen in March. The big effort will be to court national retailers as well as model railroad manufacturers. The goal is that members will realize more in savings than the cost of their membership.

Track renovation on the Pennsylvania Southern has continued with the main, passing siding, and team track at Waynesburg getting the treatment. The new track is in place, painted, and fully operational. Instead of using a Kadee uncoupling magnet on the team track, I used a pair of rare earth metal magnets that had been given to me several years ago. They are now in place on the team track and seem to work very well. The cost of using these very small magnets is minimal and they are nowhere near as obtrusive as the larger Kadee magnets.



Above: Magnets in place on the team track. The ties are painted to indicate magnet location.
Left: New track in place at Waynesburg.

Now that Up The Holler is a monthly publication, your Pike Ad support is much more important. If you don't already have an ad, please consider buying one. We can help with the art work if necessary.



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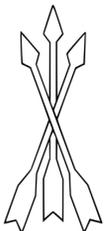
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NEW RIVER GORGE SUBDIVISION

Clint Foster Superintendent
Ronceverte WV

Allegheny & New River Road
An Appalachian Coal Hauling Railroad set in the 50's



Bringing a little bit of West Virginia to the rest of America a few tons at a time



John Harris, Chief Engineer
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With Connections to the B&O, C&O, Western Maryland, West Virginia Northern

Woody Higginbotham - Superintendent



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Upcoming Coal Division Events

If you received this newsletter via the US Postal Service and have an email address, please let us know so we can save printing and postage costs. Send a note to editor@coaldivision.org to get onto the email distribution list for Up The Holler.

March 11
St. Albans Depot

April 8
St. Albans Depot

May 6
Steel is King
Parkersburg, WV

June 10
St. Albans Depot