



UP THE HOLLER



DIVISION 9, MID CENTRAL REGION, NMRA

December 2023

FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Bob Osburn, Superintendent

IN THIS ISSUE

Head of the Holler	1
Contact List	2
Meeting Agenda	2
Meeting Map	3
Office Down the Hall	4
Clinics	4
Nominations	4
Newsletter Deadlines	4
Meeting Minutes	5
Contest	6
Club News	7
Passenger Manifest	8
T-TRAK	9
N Scale Body Shop	10
Amtrak: My First Experience	11
'Tis the Season for Trains	12
Meet the Modeler	13
Editor's Comments	14
Pike Ads	16

The Appalachian Model Railroad Society held their Train Show on November 24th, 25th, and 26th in Huntington, WV. The Coal Division modular T-TRAK was again on display at the show and drew plenty of viewers and comments from those attending the show. Herb Parsons and Sam Delauter spent all three days there with the display answering questions and keeping trains running. Craig Laing, from Athens, Tennessee also brought modules for the layout and helped the entire show. Craig is very patient with the younger modelers and makes effort to answer their questions and sometimes let them run the trains. Thanks, Herb, Sam, and Craig, for a job well done.

The December 9th meeting will feature our Christmas luncheon at Dieh- l's Restaurant in Nitro, WV. This will also be the time we display our finished project for the 7th Annual Memorial Challenge. This year we are going to travel back into the late 50's and early 60's. From Ed Keith's estate we have obtained 14 Central Valley Old Timer semi-craftsman freight car kits and 4 Ulrich kits. It should be exciting to see the results. Please arrive for the Christmas Luncheon around 11:30 a.m. so we can order our lunch and begin eating at noon. Bob Weinheimer has included directions to the restaurant within this newsletter. If you can't attend the luncheon, please send me pictures of your project so we can display them during the meeting (super@coaldivision.org).

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for their participation and support. I feel this has been a great year for the Coal Division and hope 2024 will be even greater.

Thanks, I am looking forward to seeing you at the December 9th Christmas Luncheon!

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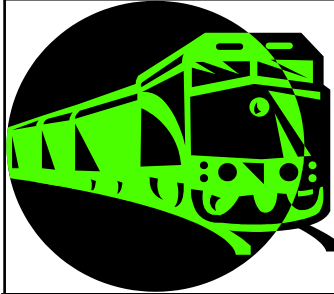
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Coal Division Monthly Railfun Event

Saturday December 9, 2023

Diehl's Restaurant, Nitro, WV

11:30 Arrive and set up models

12:00 Lunch

Buy raffle tickets

Superintendent's briefing

Discuss models

Raffle

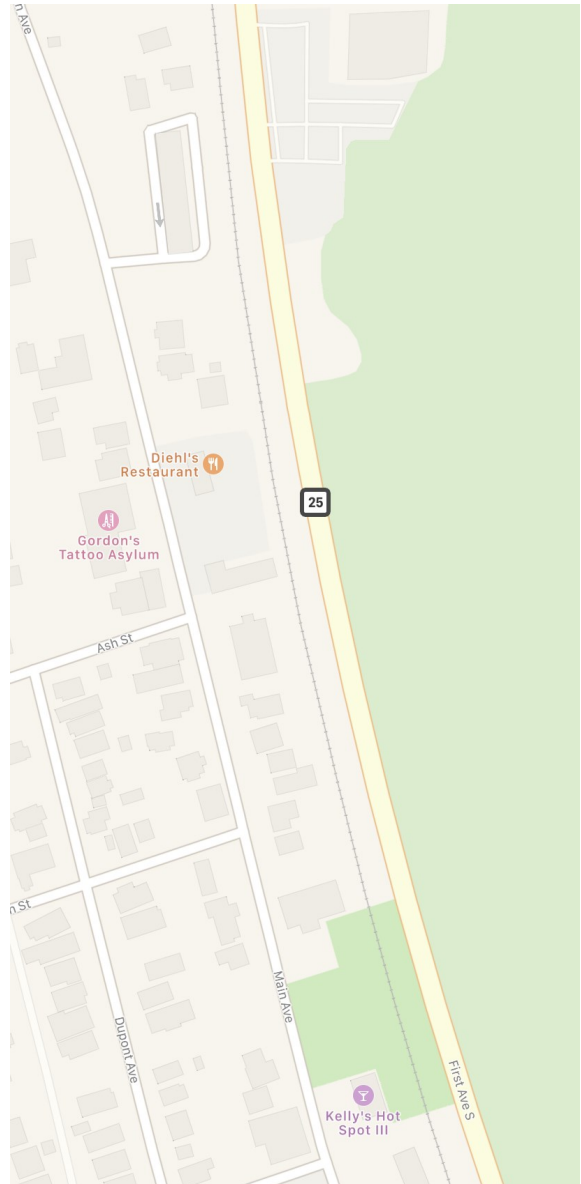
Next Event

Saturday January 13

St. Albans Historical Society

December Meeting Directions

The December event will be a luncheon at Diehl's Restaurant, 125 Main Avenue, Nitro, WV. Main Avenue runs along the railroad on the opposite side of the tracks from WV 25 (First Avenue). Main Avenue intersects the approach to the Nitro St. Albans bridge, a turn onto Main from either direction is one easy way to get to the restaurant.



FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Sam Delauter, Assistant Superintendent

With the December meeting upon us, it is time to visit Diehl's Restaurant again. The staff at Diehl's has always been very welcome and very accommodating to us. I am sure that this year will be no different. We will be meeting in the back room and will have plenty of space for displays and such. I hear that we might have a layout debut at Diehl's ... I am sure that we will hear more on that later in this issue.

As I am writing this, I am getting things put away from the Huntington Train Show. I, along with several

other Coal Division members, spent the weekend with our T-TRAK display. While our layout has seen a few modules come and go, we seem to keep the overall size about the same. Currently we are setting up a 9'x11' layout. Keep in mind that if I say that it is 9 feet long, there are actually two modules that made up that length. So if it is 9 feet long that means that it is 9 feet on both sides of the table. I look forward to seeing how large our layout can become once we complete the Memorial Challenge next year.

CLINICS

Sam Delauter, Clinic Chair

Mark Maynard gave the November clinic on switch machines. Not only was it on the functionality of switches but also on the history of switch machines. Thank you Mark for giving this clinic.

There will be no clinic at the December meeting, instead will be the presentation of the memorial challenge. With that, the clinics for 2023 are finished. Thank you to all that helped with a great year of clinics.

Upcoming Clinics:

December Memorial Challenge

January Winter Scenery, Patrick Miller

February Tools, Randy Allio

March	Making Your Cars Operate Better - Mark Maynard
April	Mini Clinic Event
May	Steel Is King
June	TBA
July	TBA
August	Building a Prototypical Rolling Stock Fleet, Sam Delauter
September	Crusty Mountain
October	Mini Clinic Event
November	TBA
December	Memorial Challenge

NOMINATIONS

Bob Weinheimer, Acting Nominations Chair

Nominations Chair Bill Wadsworth is still recovering so I have stepped forward to take his place as election season is upon us. Both elective offices, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, are in need of candidates as both current office holders are term limited. If you have any interest in either office, please let me know at [edi-tor@coaldivision.org](mailto:editor@coaldivision.org).

The nomination process is to conclude at the January meeting. Ballots should be mailed on or about February 1 and would be due back not more than 30 days later. If there is only one candidate for each position, Mid Central Region Regulations allow election by acclamation removing the cost of ballot mailings.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

In order to produce Up The Holler about ten days before the monthly membership meeting, editorial work starts the Monday of the week preceding the meeting.

That works out to be the dates below by which I need articles for upcoming issues.

January: January 1

February: January 29

March: February 26

April: April 1

May: April 29

June: May 23

July: July 1

August: July 22

September: September 2

October: September 30

November: October 28

December: December 2

Meeting Minutes
 NMRA MCR Division 9
 The Coal Division
 St. Albans, WV
 November 11, 2023

Meeting called to order by Superintendent Robert Osburn at 1:00 p.m. He recognized members past and present who served in the military.

Division Clerk Report

October minutes approved.
 Treasury Balance is \$8,971.71. We received a reimbursement check from the NMRA for the August picnic.
 Company Store \$0.
 Raffle \$52.
 Pike Ads \$0.

Superintendent Report

Robert mentioned participation at the November Huntington Model Railroad Show that would need to be discussed today.

Robert brought some information from Ed Keith's collection from Division 9 and Kingpin from 1968. Ed kept extensive files on many things. Robert also shared how he enjoyed looking through the multitude of old catalogs in his collection.

Robert noted that an inactive life member in our division, K. Wayne Hamrick, from St Albans had passed away.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Sam talked about body mounting couplers. He has confirmed our reservation for the noon December 9 meeting at Diehl's in Nitro. Several members attended the Parkersburg, WV show. He expressed an interest in putting on a T TRAK display next year.

Newsletter - Up the Holler

Bob Weinheimer noted the deadline of November 27 for the December newsletter. The address for contributions is cdi-tor@coaldivision.org.

Achievement Program

Bob Weinheimer mentioned that paperwork has been submitted for Robert Osburn for Association Official and Sam Delauter for Association Volunteer. Don Cipolla is working on the Rolling Stock certificate. Randy Allio is ready for evaluation for several certificates. Bob also noted that in his role as acting nominating secretary we now have nominees for Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Library

Bill Wadsworth nothing new to report.

Clinic

Today's clinic is *Switch Machine Mounting* by Mark Maynard. Most of the slots for 2024 are filled.

Contest

Today's contest is Passenger Cars. Several cars were still available for the December Modeling Challenge. Robert asked how many had started on their cars. Several members shared com-

ments and questions on their cars.

Membership

John Harris reported that membership has dipped to 39. He noted that although our numbers are low, our participation rate is quite high. John is still looking for more member biographies.

The topic of participation at the Huntington Model Railroad Show was discussed. It was decided that not enough members were available to staff a display. Several members will be there participating in the T TRAK display and will have Rail Pass applications available.

Raffle

Tony Parrish was filling in for today's raffle.

T TRAK

Herb Parsons updated members on the plans for the Huntington Model Railroad Show.

Education

No report.

Old Business

Sam Delauter mentioned some NYC/K&M paperwork and a photo of his Uncle Otto Krimblebine on his last run after 41 years on the Erie.

New Business

Robert Osburn presented The NMRA President's Award for the MCR to Jerry Doyle.

Jerry Doyle mentioned his layout would be open for operations Tuesday November 14 at 7 p.m.

Robert asked for ideas for the 2024 modeling challenge. After some discussion, building two-foot T TRAK modules seemed to be the consensus. Randy Allio mentioned he can get plywood at a good price and could cut the lumber for module kits with some help from members. Due to the time required, the project will start earlier than usual in 2024.

Announcements

Huntington Model Railroad Show Thanksgiving weekend.

Future Meetings:

December 9 – Nitro, WV Diehl's Family Restaurant

Meeting adjourned at 2:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Doyle, Division 9 Clerk

CONTEST Dale Osburn

The month of November was Passenger Cars. We had three entries for the contest.

First Place

Randy Allio
Mann's Creek Railway Coach

Second Place

Sam Delanter
PRR PBM 70

Third Place

Herb Parsons
Pennsylvania Railroad P70 Baggage Car

I hope to see everyone in December at Diehl's Restaurant for the Annual Memorial Modeling Challenge. At last count, there were fifteen car kits passed out for the challenge.

2023	Monthly Model Contest
January	Modeler's Choice
February	Steam Locomotives
March	Locomotive Other Than Steam
April	Kitbashing/Scratch Built (Anything Railroad Related)
May	Anything Steel Related
June	Non Revenue
July	Structures
August	Electronics of a Railroad
September	Photo, Model or Prototype
October	Open Loads
November	Passenger Cars
December	Eighth Annual Memorial Model- ing Challenge



First Place
Randy Allio
Mann's Creek Railway
Coach

The model was kitbashed from a Bachman On30 side door caboose. This is a model of the only known passenger equipment on the railroad. Details of the build can be found in an article written by the modeler Randy Allio in the On30 Annual magazine.



Second Place
Sam Delauter
PRR PBM 70

Model started with a 1970's Lima car. The sides were removed then details were added to the model (3d printed stairs and painted/weathered with various chalks).



Third Place
Herb Parsons
Pennsylvania Railroad P70 Baggage Car

This was a resin Kit with painted Tuscan Red and decaled accordingly. Rapido swing hanger trucks with body mounted couplers for Micro Trains # 1015.

CLUB NEWS

The Mid-Ohio Valley Model Railroad Club is busy with preparation for our annual Christmas Open House, set for December 2 at our facility in the rear basement of NOE Office Equipment at 610 Green Street, downtown Parkersburg.

Ahead of the open house, Jimmie Bee has completed a major renovation of the N scale layout, adding scenery to capture all four seasons of the year, including a large mountains, complete with snow and alpine skiing areas reminiscent of Austria or Switzerland. He has also altered the O scale logging layout, adding a winter touch so we can run Lionel's version of The Polar Express and associated accessories. MOVRC will be presenting commem-

orative golden Polar Express tickets to children at the open house and conduct a prize drawing for a Lionel Polar Express train set. Hours are 10-6 and coordinate with Downtown PKB's Winterfest celebration and the Parkersburg Christmas Parade.

MOVRC will also host an open house on December 10, in conjunction with a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus aboard Belpre Industrial Parkersburg Railroad's annual Christmas Train. The club will be open from 3-7 and the train is scheduled to arrive on the BIPR high yard tracks, right outside the club doors, just as the open house closes.

Passenger Manifest John Harris, Membership Chair

I can not believe we are into December and time for another Memorial Challenge. Robert has done another great job of setting up another project to get most of us out of our comfort zone and into an area of modeling that many of us have not done before. I, for one, have done several craftsman kits for structures and freight but never have I tackled one of these “Old Timer” kits. And while I am certainly one and have been in the hobby when these were more common place, this was a first for me. None of the components were unfamiliar but the combinations made for some challenge. Truck bolsters were unique and overly complicated. A couple of washers and a small wood screw would have perhaps worked just as well and preform great on modern shake the box kits. All in all, I think Gary would have glad to see us doing these types of projects and trying new techniques. What better way to educate than to try something new and unfamiliar.

I continue to believe that this is a major benefit of NMRA membership. The sharing of ideas and learning different skill sets is part of an ongoing process for improving any modeler. As we continue to learn these techniques, our models naturally are going to get better, and in turn, our enjoyment of the hobby will increase. These hands on projects are great additions to clinics offered but the division. Certainly “how to” clinics are great ways to share information, but actually participating in the process offers an immediate verification of the results. Since these projects are not judged, there no pressure to outdo someone else who has perhaps more experience with modeling than you do. It is more about the learning process. I believe that Division 9 has done a great job in providing its members with a unique value added benefit and look forward to future challenge projects as we head into 2024.

Another opportunity to provide value to membership has historically been out Rail fan trips. As previously discussed in Passenger Manifest articles, several potential trips are available in the region. Our last discussion at a membership meeting indicated that a ride on the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad behind former C&O 1309

would be most popular with the group. At the time, the railroad was uncertain of how long steam would in service and prior bookings and scheduling conflicts kept a fall trip from being realistic. I did have a chance to stop by the depot in Cumberland, MD while returning from DC over Thanksgiving, I learned that presently their Polar Express is behind diesel power and steam is not scheduled to return to service until May. They expect 1309 to have some routine but significant maintenance between now and then and could not say with any confidence if that would me early or late May. At this point their 2024 schedule has not been finalized but likely trips for 1309 will be on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays once they begin. I could not even get a brochure for the upcoming season so web site remains best source of information.

I will continue to monitor this and provide additional information including costs, possible dates, and types of service as it becomes available. I will also investigate potential accommodations as this is a trip that requires 3 ½ hour travel time each way from Charleston. There are several motels in the Cumberland area with varying prices and amenities. The Rocky Gap Casino and Resort along with the adjacent State Park are 15 minutes away which might appeal to some. Certainly we have time to work out the details as we move forward.

Thanks to David Oliverio for putting together an article for our Meet the Modeler series. David gives insight on his journey into model railroading and his approach to benchwork. Photos illustrate his unique curved casework and under layout storage. Clearly David has taken a methodical approach by starting with a good base and installing lighting and backdrops early are important first steps in creating a layout. He has resisted the temptation quickly getting down track and running trains. I am sure this will all lead to smooth operation and a great looking railroad when it is ready. Meanwhile, keep modeling and be safe.

T-TRAK Herb Parsons, T-TRAK Chair

We set up our T-TRAK modules at the AMRS show at the Mountain Health Arena over the Thanksgiving weekend. There were 16 modules in the layout belonging to Sam Delauter, Bob Osburn, Craig Laing, and Herb Parsons. Craig brought a WIFI adapter so that we could run the trains with a

remote throttle and with cell phones. On Saturday we had 3 trains running, 1 on the yellow line and 2 on the red line.

We had a lot of people stop and ask about our layout and we may have inspired some to join us next year.



N Scale Body Shop

Atlas USRA Single Sheathed Boxcars

Sam Delauter

I had originally planned to write about assembling Micro Trains couplers for this installment but decided to jump into body mounting couplers. I will write about assembly in a later installment. The freight car we will be installing this month is the Atlas USRA Single Sheath Boxcar. I had a handful of these cars and did all of them in one session. These cars are quite simple to body mount as Atlas has done most of the hard work for us.

First, I removed the trucks from the frame. There are a few ways to remove the trucks but prying with a screwdriver is usually the easiest way to remove them. Once I had removed the trucks I saw that Atlas was kind enough to drill a hole that we can use for mounting the coupler. Since the hole was predrilled, we do not need to center the coupler box and drill a hole ourselves. However we will need to tap the hole. For this we will need a 00-90 tap. Micro Trains offers a drill and tap set. It is MTL number 1059 and is an absolute must for all body mountings that we will do.

For this conversion we will use the 1015 coupler as we will with most conversions. As you can see in the pictures, there is a fair amount of cast weight on the frame. Due to the weight of the frame, we will not need to add any weight to bring this car to standards. We also will not need to worry about the length of the screw we use to mount the coupler since the hole goes the entire way through the car floor and the shell will hide whatever sticks up above the frame.

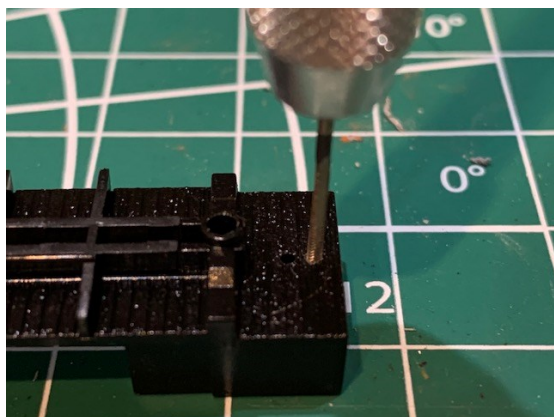
After tapping the hole with our 00-90 tap, install your 1015 coupler with a 00-90 screw. You can use the one that comes with the coupler or supply your own. At this point we will need to remove the coupler from the stock trucks. I remove the wheels and put the truck upside down on my vice. I use my exact blade with a chisel blade to cut straight down through the truck to cut off the coupler. I

find that usually one or two taps with a hammer to the end of the Xacto gives a good clean cut. While you don't need to cut as close to the truck as the one in my photo, you still need to trim enough material to clear the coupler box.

Once the couplers are cut from the trucks and proper clearance has been made we can reinstall the trucks. Next we will use the Micro Trains Coupler Height Gauge to make sure the coupler is not too high or too low. We also want to make sure that the trip pin is not too low. While Micro Trains makes a gauge to check the trip pin height, I don't use it. I just take a look and see if I can see air between the pin and the rail head. You could do this with a very thin piece of styrene. The Micro Trains gauge is just a thin piece of metal. The coupler gauge is part 1055 and is also a must for these installations.

At this point, we have proper clearance for our trucks, and our coupler and trip pins are at the correct height. At this point, the boxcar will need little to no added weight and we can pop the shell back on. There are a couple of final things we must do before we are done with this installation. We need to make sure that the screw head that holds on the coupler box on clears the axle. Depending on the screw that you use, you may need to file the head a little. I didn't have to do this on any of mine. We will also need to put a tiny bit of glue where the coupler box sits on the frame. I put a little on both sides to keep them from moving during operation. We don't want to put much glue so that it doesn't get inside the coupler box.

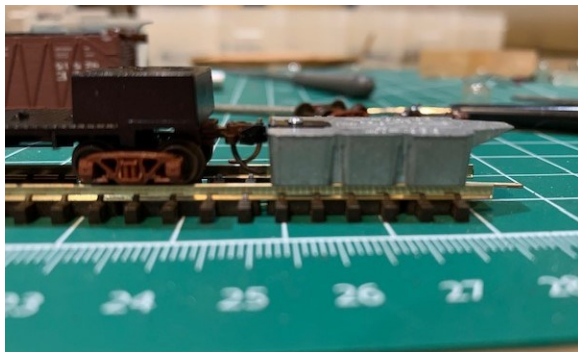
If you followed all of these steps, your boxcar should not only function better but should also look better with the reduced coupler length and better looks of the Micro Trains couplers.



Tap the hole for the coupler pocket screw



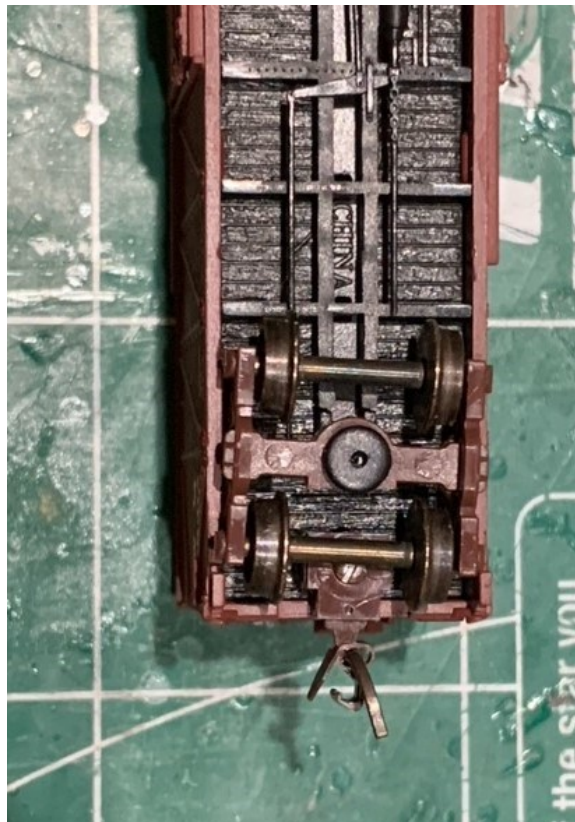
After tapping the hole, install the coupler



Check for proper coupler height.



The finished car with body mounted couplers



Check that axle clears the screw head

Amtrak: My First Experience Tony Puccini

I had been wanting to visit my daughter in Philadelphia for a few days. In the past I drove over which takes just over ten hours. As you know, you must be as alert in the last hour as you are in the first hour. In the last hour I would be driving in the heart of the city. Driving is fun when you are 16 but stressful when you are 79. I was talking about this with Bob Weinheimer and he suggested that I look into Amtrak. We both know the ticket agent, Matt Crouch, in Charleston, WV. I went out to see Matt about a month before I wished to travel as I am a better communicator in person than I am over the phone. Matt is a great guy who is super friendly as well as super helpful. Consequently, I booked a roomette on the Cardinal. I booked it on the spot and I am not an impulse shopper.

The Cardinal runs from Chicago through Washington, DC to New York with a myriad of stops. It offered stunning views of rolling horse country, the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains, and the Shenandoah Valley all done up in Autumn colors. There are three round trips a week and you must book early as there is usually a full house. It even stops at Hinton, WV for you C & O fans.

I chose a roomette because of privacy, and you can stretch out and sleep. My roomette was spotless, and the

conductors were friendly and helpful. Restroom facilities were close and extremely clean. A roomette is actually designed for two people. You can learn all about the sleeping cars and their features on Amtrak's web site. Three meals came with my sleeping car ticket. There is a menu and you can pay extra for beer, wine, or spirits.

I brought along a map of my journey which I had photocopied from one of Jerry Doyle's books. Two soft pillows were provided, and I brought along a book to read. I spent most of my time enjoying the scenery. We switched engines from diesel to electric in Washington and really sped up the Northeast Corridor to Philadelphia. We were always within ten minutes of our scheduled time.

Philadelphia's main station is 30th Street. It is huge. In the main concourse, there is a 40-foot-tall bronze statue of an angel lifting a dead soldier to heaven. It was built right after World War II to commemorate those who left the railroad for the services and were killed. For the locals it has always been a meeting place; it is where Danni and I met upon my arrival. I had a wonderful visit with Danni and all my future trips to Philadelphia will be with Amtrak. That is the highest accolade that I can pay.

‘Tis the Season for Trains

By Matt Kearns

There’s just something about the Christmas season and trains that makes for a classic combination. Growing up my dad and I would get a box of N-scale trains out of the attic and set them up for the holidays. More recently, I rediscovered my affinity for trains when my wife and I decided to put one around our own Christmas tree last year. I pulled that old dusty box out of my folk’s attic and was surprised that the trains still ran, although not particularly well. When the replacement locomotive arrived (a Bachmann Spectrum 2-8-0), I was blown away at the level of detail over the old set and it encouraged me to think of trains as models instead of toys. I attended my first NMRA meeting shortly thereafter.

For my first attempt at building a model railroad I decided to stick with the Christmas theme. My thinking was that I could practice on a small layout and build skills for my future modeling efforts while capturing some of that seasonal magic for years to come. I found a perfect little German village and N-scale Christmas tree (with tiny lights!) to use as the core of my layout. Keeping the European vibes, all the major scenery components - structures, trees, and figures - were sourced from German model railroad companies like Vollmer, Noch, and Faller. The loop of N-scale track was designed to accommodate a little Kato 0-4-0 tank steamer and short passenger train based on an Austrian prototype. Part of Kato’s “pocket line,” the train has no problems with 6-inch-radius curves and is powered by a small motor in one of the passenger cars. Track and lights are both managed with a Rohukan RC-02 DC controller, which runs off either a 12V outlet or eight AAA batteries.

I learned a lot building this small (15”x20”) layout. Sometimes in my haste it felt like I took one step forward and two steps back. Prepping the structures for lighting was one of the biggest challenges; I was constantly battling glowing walls and light leaks on all the joints of my buildings. Most of my other mistakes were easily hidden with a thick coat of snow, and a sheet of cardboard on the bottom hides my atrocious wiring job. However, I’m particularly pleased with some of the small scenes I was able to create, including a narrow snowy canyon and peak at the train station through the trees.

It takes a village to make a village. I’m thankful for the frequent advice, and loaning of tools, from fellow N-scalers David Olivero and Sam Delauter as I muddled my way through the layout. My wife was very supportive throughout this process: she had some great scenery ideas and helped me place the people and animals. I’m also grateful to whomever donated the Noch hedgerow to our Coal Division raffle, as it provided a terrific accent piece around the church.

I’m very happy and quite proud to have a working model railroad, even a small one, in less than a year since

I’ve returned to the hobby. Thank you for letting me share it with you. I hope everyone enjoys the magic of trains this holiday season and from my layout to yours, here’s wishing you a “Frohe Weihnachten!”



Overall view of the layout



Snowy canyon



Train Station

Meet the Modeler David Oliverio

I grew up in Clarksburg and lived a few hundred feet from the Baltimore & Ohio Grasselli Branch that served the National Carbon factory and other smaller industries along the route. Our house was on a hill above the railroad track and I always ran down the hill to watch the train when I heard the locomotive horn. As I ran down the hill, I would often race past my grandfather as he sat outside in a chair near his front door. He would yell at me in a combination of broken English and Italian imploring me to slow down so I wouldn't get hurt. I also remember other neighborhood kids coming from all directions to watch the train. The train always consisted of a small diesel switch engine, a few freight cars and a caboose. Those memories were the beginning of my lifelong interest in the B&O Railroad and the industrial cities and towns that existed along the right-of-way. Building models of a past era is an art form that gives me great pleasure and preserves the memory of lost family and friends.

My first model railroad consisted of a few pieces of used HO scale freight cars, track and a transformer that I purchased from a childhood friend. There was no locomotive so I saved some money with the intent of purchasing one. I remember riding the city bus and going downtown to Jerry's Auto Supply in search of a locomotive. Jerry's Auto Supply had a very nice selection of model cars, slot cars and model trains. I purchased the only locomotive that I could afford, a Tyco green Penn Central F unit. At that time I was more interested in slot cars, so I added the model railroad to my existing 4ft x 8ft slot car layout. I enjoyed that setup throughout my childhood years.

My interest in model railroading and model building paused when I entered high school and it did not resume until I received an HO scale John Bull set as a Christmas gift in the mid 1980's. With a rekindled interest in the hobby, I soon went to the local hobby shop to see what else was available. It was during this hobby shop trip that I discovered N scale and I have been an N scale enthusiast ever since.

It has often been said that model railroading is a multi-faceted hobby and I believe that to be true. Art, design, carpentry, electronics, mechanics, history, research, camaradery, etc. are all part of this wonderful pastime. I especially enjoy seeing the work of others and learning of their particular interests and skills.

After studying landscape architecture, I worked as a site planner for architectural & engineering firms. Later I returned to WVU to study industrial engineering and then spent the rest of my career managing facilities for Appalachian Power and the State of West Virginia. I retired in the autumn of 2021. Given my background, it is not surprising that I would find enjoyment in the hobby of model railroading. In early 2020 I began the construction of an

N scale double deck shelf layout. The setting is the Baltimore & Ohio railroad from Cumberland, MD to Parkersburg, WV during the early 1950s. I am not attempting to build a highly accurate representation of the prototype.

Instead my goal is to build a layout that captures the general appearance and feel of the B&O as it passed through West Virginia scenery and the cities of Grafton and Clarksburg.

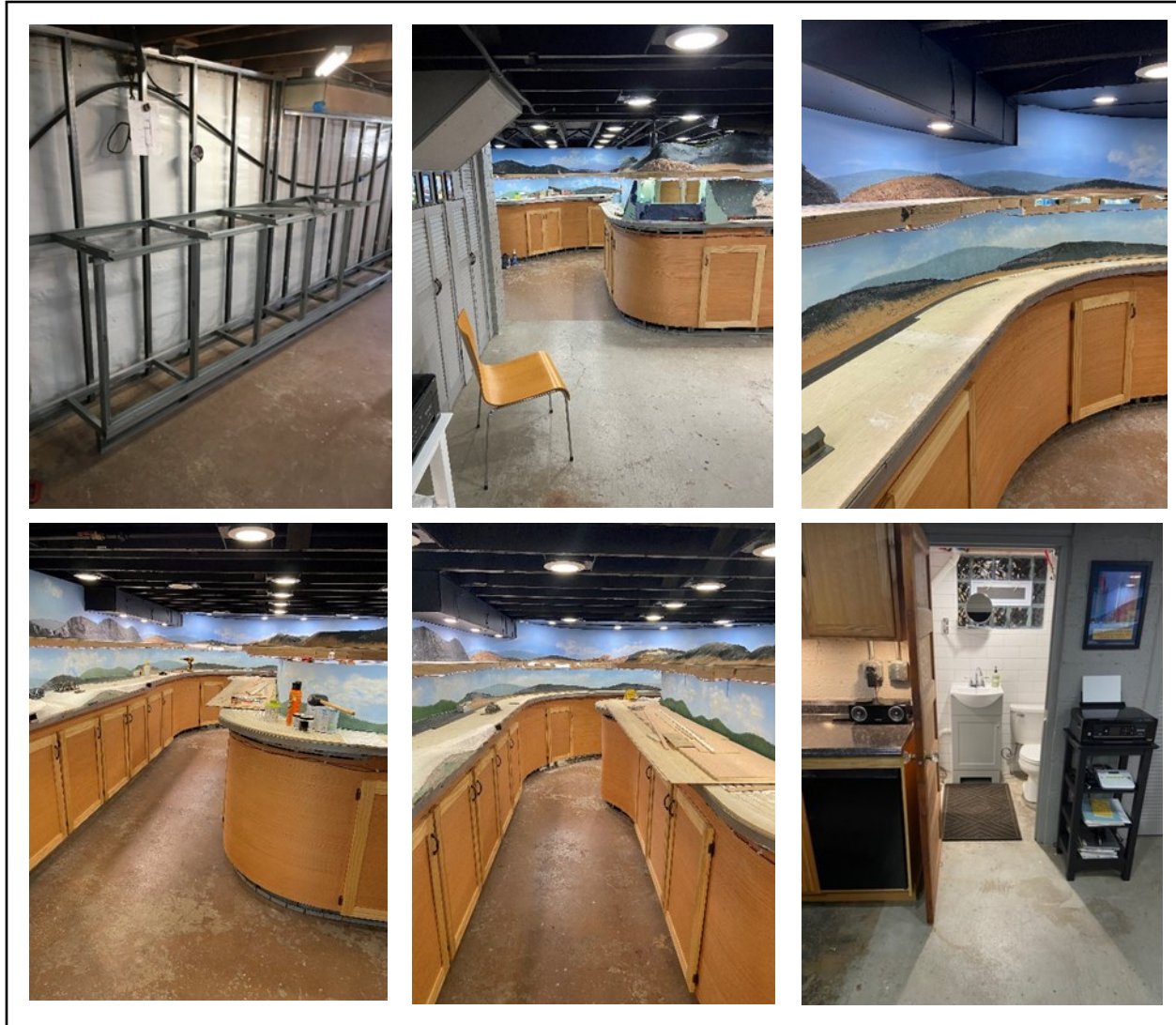
The benchwork is constructed of 1½" steel studs and the layout decks are ½" plywood. When trackwork is completed, the layout will be operated using JMRI Operations Pro to generate switch lists.

I considered switching to HO scale prior to construction of my current layout. Product availability, easier decoder and coupler installations, availability of Keep Alive circuits and ease of handling equipment were characteristics that were very appealing to me. However, the ability to have more railroad in a given space is an attribute of N scale that I could not give up. I like long main line runs with some distance between towns. I like industrial switching scenes, main line passenger trains, manifest freight trains, yard operations and imposing background scenery. I can have all this in N scale.

Several members of our Division contributed helpful suggestions to me regarding the design and construction of my layout. For this I am most grateful and I look forward to sharing the layout with all my friends now and when it is completed. In the future I plan to host regular operating sessions. A small crew lounge was included in the room to accommodate guests.

Below are a few photographs of my layout. I recently painted the background and am currently laying track. This winter I will continue to lay track and work on scenery. The rest room and kitchenette are complete and will be a nice amenity for the crew when operations begin. I live in Charleston near the state capitol building and welcome anyone that would like to visit and see the layout. Thank you for allowing me to share my story.





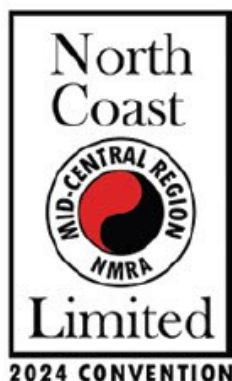
MY WORD
Bob Weinheimer, Editor
Photo by John Harris

As the saying goes, when it rains it pours. This issue has a number of items beyond the usual reports. Matt Kearns tells us about his first layout attempts. Tony Puccini recounts his first trip on Amtrak. Finally, David Oliviero tells us of his modeling interests and shows us a few pictures of his layout. Even the usual T-TRAK report is a bit longer after the Huntington train show.

At the November meeting Superintendent Robert Osburn presented Clerk and Mid Central Region Vice President Jerry Doyle with the certificate recognizing the NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division. Each year the President of each Region is asked to designate a member in the Region for this award. We all owe a thank you to Jerry for all he has done for the Coal Division over the years.



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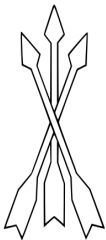
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