



# UP THE HOLLER



DIVISION 9, MID CENTRAL REGION, NMRA

January 2024

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## FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Bob Osburn, Superintendent

It's hard to believe another successful year has passed for the Coal division. 2023 included a lot of positives but we have a lot of challenges ahead in 2024. We need to ensure our membership does not get any smaller by recruiting new members, and again in 2024 work together as a team. 2023 was a year where we were able to have a complete year of in-person/virtual meetings that included our regular outings, the Christmas luncheon, and a return to many of the train shows. Attendance has been very good, but I hope we will see more of our members returning as they see us as returning to a more normal existence.

The December Christmas Luncheon with the Memorial Challenge was a great way to finish 2023. This activity seems to be very popular with everyone and something everyone enjoys. We had an outstanding attendance with almost half of our members present, the Challenge projects were great, and as always, the food was delicious. Of course, the main focus of the December meeting was just to be together and to display our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Memorial Challenge projects. For this year's Challenge we distributed 17 vintage rolling stock kits to be completed. Fifteen completed projects were on display at the Luncheon. What a great turn-out! We certainly have a creative group of very talented modelers and this year's project definitely demonstrated that! Thanks to all who attended the luncheon and to those who participated in the challenge. I would like to also recognize Matt Kearns for bringing his wonderful N-Scale Christmas diorama for us to enjoy.

The January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting will find us back at the St. Albans Historical Society building. Again, this will be a hybrid meeting, so if you can't be there in-person please join us virtually. The January meeting will include a short business session, raffle, and contest. The contest will be "Modeler's Choice" which is always a very popular category giving members a time to display and talk about projects they have finished or are working on. Jerry Doyle will present a clinic about the first full year of operations on his Crescent Valley railroad.

In closing, I want to thank everyone for your participation and support during 2023. Please reach out to those members you know who haven't been here for a while and encourage them to once again enjoy the hobby together. Here's wishing you a very Happy New Year!!

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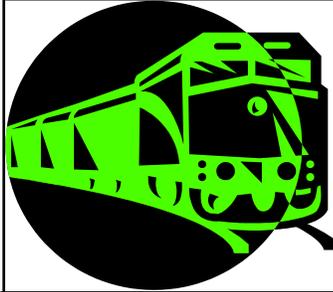
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## Coal Division Monthly Railfun Event

### Saturday January 13

### St. Albans Historical Society Division Membership Meeting

Time: Jan 13, 2024 12:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89144771069>

Meeting ID: 891 4477 1069

- **Welcome and Call to Order (Acknowledge members present)**
- **Treasurers Report**
- **Superintendents Report**
- **Assistant Superintendent Report**
- **Contest: Modeler's Choice**
- **Adjourn Business Meeting**
- **5 Minute Break**
- **Raffle (always need new items)**
- **Clinic: Jerry Doyle with One Year of Operations on the Crescent Valley**

### Next Meeting February 11

## FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

**Sam Delauter, Assistant Superintendent**

The December meeting was well received much like it has in years past. Once again we were at Diehl's in Nitro, WV. As always, they were well staffed and gave us the back room for our displays and meeting. This year we saw something a little different from the square foot challenge. Everyone built a vintage 1950's freight car kit. These kits are very different from modern kits and I think everyone learned a lot from building these kits. While I have built many resin and wood kits, these weren't like any that I had built. After building this car, it may be time to tackle an old Suncoast ATSF boxcar kit that I have had in my collection for some time.

Also at the meeting, Matt Kearns debuted his N scale mini layout. For more details, see his article "Tis the Season for Trains" from the December issue of this publication. While I was involved in giving guidance on this layout, I had not seen it until the meeting. Unlike many of

us, for his first layout he built a small one. As is the common but rarely followed advice, start with a small layout that you can finish in a reasonable amount of time. Matt completed this layout over the course of the last year. By doing so, Matt was able to complete his layout and have it ready by our meeting. Matt did a great job of sticking to his goal and completing it by his deadline. By starting small, Matt was also able to stick to his theme. I can't stress how often this gets overlooked. Something else that often gets overlooked, don't wait to build your dream layout, build something now that fits your space. Too many people never build a layout because they don't have room for their dream layout due to many constraints. Building a layout now instead of later let's you start to craft your skills for when you have the space and time for your dream layout.

## CLINICS

**Sam Delauter, Clinic Chair**

We had a great group of clinics in 2023. I expect 2024 to be no different. Starting the year off will be Jerry Doyle giving a clinic on operations on his layout.

January - One Year of Operations on the Crescent Valley  
Jerry Doyle

February - Tools, Randy Alleo

March - Making Your Rolling Stock Operate Better -  
Mark Maynard

April - Mini Clinic Event

May - Steel Is King

June - NMRA layout Tours, David Oliverio

July - Painting with Pastels, Randy Alleo

August - Building a Prototypical Rolling Stock Fleet, Sam  
Delauter

September - Crusty Mountain

October - Mini Clinic Event

November - TBA

December - Memorial Challenge

## T-TRAK

**Herb Parsons, T-TRAK Chair**

While there is no T-TRAK news, I have some information that may be of interest of the N-scalers.

The 2024 National N Scale Convention sponsored by

N Scale Enthusiast be start accepting advance registrations in January. The convention will be June 19 to 23, 2024 in Bethlehem, PA.

## NOMINATIONS

**Bob Weinheimer, Acting Nominations Chair**

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.

## CONTEST Dale Osburn

It's hard to believe this was the Seventh Annual Memorial Modeling Challenge. We had fifteen models displayed at the Christmas luncheon this year and I believe this has been the best year.

Everyone involved seemed to think this was definitely a challenge. Please see below the detailed pictures taken by photographer, Herb Parsons. Patrick Miller was unable to attend in person but sent along a photo of his entry.

Big "Thank You" to Sam Delauter for making the reservations for our group luncheon.

Looking ahead to January 2024, please see the categories to the right.



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 Modeling Challenge



## MEET THE MODELER

Patrick Miller

My earliest memories of model trains began with my father's Lionel 027 set that he was given when he was a boy in 1959. He took good care of his Lionel set and regularly set it up at Christmas time. In fact, he still has it to this day and now sets it up for my children. I'm pretty sure that set also got my son Landon hooked on trains, he also has his own Lionel collection now.

It also helped that my grandparents lived directly across the river from the B&O Cowen Subdivision in Buckhannon, WV. There was a perfect line of sight across and up and down the river, so railfanning started by accident at an early age. This was 1989-1990, so the Cowen Sub was relatively busy and colorful in the early CSX era. I wanted to spend the night at my grandparents' house every weekend. While they were wonderful, loving grandparents, I mostly went to see the trains! My grandfather, who was into trains, did indulge me with plenty of train stories from his youth, such as stealing coal from derailed hoppers as a child and long trips across the country on his way to the South Pacific and Japan after he was inducted into the Marine Corps in WWII.

At the age of 5, I received a wind-up toy train for Christmas. It was cheap but it was enough for my parents (and Santa Claus!) to see I needed an upgrade. The following Christmas, I received a 4x8 Life Like HO Scale layout, already assembled and operational. From there, it expanded, grew, and changed over the years until I moved away to college. That layout finally went to the dumpster when I moved out for good in 2004.

While attending Fairmont State, I became a member of the Mon Valley Railroad Club in Morgantown and then became a member of the NMRA Keystone Division. I learned a ton about prototype modeling and layout design from Eric Hansmann, Jim Kubanic and Mike Hohn. After college, I moved to Wheeling for a new job. Eric put me in contact with Alden McBee and Doug Day of the Ohio River Northern Railway Modelers group, a round-robin bunch in the Northern Ohio Valley known as the ORNRy Bunch. Those guys were so welcoming, and I made several life-long friends in that group. Circumstances eventually lead to my departure from Wheeling but



allowed me to live out a dream.

After leaving Wheeling, I worked on the South Branch Valley Railroad as a conductor and track inspector for a few years. It was a state job with reasonable benefits, but the low pay led me to transfer to a different agency inside WV DOT. My wife and I got married in 2010, we had three children and moved three times. Now I am building a 36' x 18' double deck layout in my basement. My Kanawha, Youngstown & Northern is a freelanced railroad that is a sort of melting pot of all my influences over the years. It is a regional coal hauler that also hauls a significant volume chemical and steel products as well. The early 70's period combined my appreciation for freight cars from the steam era, GP9s I learned to love on the SBVR, and passenger trains early in the Amtrak era. As of this writing, track work is about 85-90% complete but less than 10% of the scenery is done. I hope to start having operating sessions in 2024, all Coal Division members welcome!

## 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 the first few months of 2024.

February: January 29  
 March: February 26  
 April: April 1  
 May: April 29  
 June: May 27

## Passenger Manifest

### John Harris, Membership Chair

Looking back over 2023, I find that a large portion of the year was spent traveling. We spent 12 of 52 weeks on the road this past year and saw some amazing sites and enjoyed some great food and drink. It is only fitting that one of the last things that I did also involved travel. This time, it also included one of my other favorite past times, trains!

It had been some time since I had taken a ride on Amtrak. The holiday season offered an opportunity to not just ride the train, but also see the country side, enjoy the Christmas decorations at a world class resort, and partake of some not too shabby food and drink. All in a just over 12 hours and with minimal investment. Ok, minimal might be a stretch, but it could be if you want it to be.

For those who have not checked it out, Amtrak service out of Charleston east bound departs at approximately 8:30AM and travels along the Kanawha, New, and the Greenbrier rivers stopping briefly (only when necessary) at Montgomery, Thurmond, Prince, Hinton, and Alderson before arriving at White Sulphur Springs just after 12:00PM. There, shuttle service is available to the front door of the Greenbrier. The return train west bound is scheduled to arrive just after 5:00 and arrives back in Charlie West around 8:30. Round trip coach fare for two was under \$115 with senior discount and changeable itinerary. Regular price tickets were only slightly more.

During the holiday season, the resort is decorated with a dozen or more Christmas trees and plenty of lights and garland. Shopping is always available, and then there is an abundance of choices for food. That is, of course, where your budget could take a turn. Top choices for lunch are Drapers and Sam Snead's where you could expect to spend minimum of \$100 for lunch for 2. Less expensive options are available at Slammin Sammy's or there are several options in downtown White Sulphur Springs which is with-in walking distance on a nice day. Plan to stay for complimentary tea service with pastries in the Main Lobby at 4:15 but don't stay too long or you can miss the shuttle back to the White Sulfur Sorubgs station for the return trip.

The train experience aboard the Cardinal was quite pleasant. Eastbound locomotive power was provide by an older GE Genesis P42-DC #150 while the return west-bound power was a new Siemens ALC42 #335. Space in coach was fairly generous and in-spite of elevated holiday traffic, very clean and well maintained. The crew was pleasant and attentive. The only distraction was a very limited choice of food and beverage service in the Club car. Presently there is no full service dining car nor a business class car. Roomettes are available but for the 3 ½ hour ride did not seem to be worth the upcharge. A sleeper is also available but it is a day trip after all.

For me the train ride itself was the highlight. As I

model the New River and Allegheny Sub-divisions of the C&O, it was great to travel through most of the area I model. While I have been to each location model, riding along the entire route from the perspective of the rail was rewarding. Seeing it without foliage was even more eye opening and certainly the benefit of traveling this time of the year. The disadvantage was that you only see it one way, the return trip was entirely in the dark.

Consider this a fun way to spend the day and perhaps see sights you might not have enjoyed otherwise. After all, it is a great way to experience a train travel. Meanwhile keep modeling and be safe.



## CLUB NEWS

Clubs within the boundaries of the Coal Division are welcome to submit items of interest for inclusion here. The next editorial deadline for this column is Monday January 29. Items can be sent to [editor@coaldivision.org](mailto:editor@coaldivision.org)

Mid-Ohio Valley Model Railroad Club  
By Mark Suek

The Mid-Ohio Valley Model Railroad Club welcomed a record 649 guests to its Parkersburg facility for the annual Christmas Open House on December 2 and another 238 for a visit from Belpre Industrial Parkersburg Railroad's Christmas Train the following Sunday evening, at which members and guests donated non-perishables to local food pantries and animal shelters. Keys to the success of these events were:

1. Establishing a theme (The Polar Express),
2. Social media blitzing and advertising several times a week,

3. Publishing a feature story in local newspapers
4. Offering a great drawing prize (Lionel Polar Express O scale passenger set)

Also, MOVRC conducted the election of officers for 2024 at its December meeting. Jonathan Insley (president), Ed Baranoski (treasurer) and Mark Suek (secretary) retained their positions. Tom Ratkovich is the new vice president. Those four gentlemen will join Jimmie Bee and Joe Stephens for form the 2024 Board of Directors.

## MY WORD

**Bob Weinheimer, Editor**

As mentioned by other columnists, the December gathering was a very pleasant event. As I was building my model, I kept wondering what I would do with it when complete. It's from an era so far removed from mine that it wouldn't even be around as a work shed or other railroad use. After I had the roof on and the body sealed up it occurred to me that I should have installed a pedestrian door and a couple of windows. It seems an outdoors lover might have bought it and turned it into a cabin in the woods.

This issue isn't quite as heavy as December's but we do have a nice Meet the Modeler article by Patrick Miller. He gets down this way from time to time and during a work assignment a couple of years ago he became a regular operator on my railroad. That led to him earning the Chief Dispatcher certificate in the Achievement Program.

Speaking of the AP, who will be our next Master Model Railroader®? The race seems to be on between Jerry Doyle and Don Cipolla. Jerry is finishing the paperwork for his electrical certificate meaning he has one to go, likely cars. Don is not far behind and has developed a plan for the remaining two certificates that he needs.

In December I was pleased to present the Association Official certificate to Robert Osburn. This is a certificate that bears no relation to actual modeling. It does require the respect of your fellow members to be elected to a leadership position.

In National news, the Board of Directors will meet in

Springfield, MA Friday January 26. We will then attend the big train show that weekend. Until last year, I had never been to the show. Each year I drive to New Hampshire to visit family at Christmas. The thought of driving back to New England a month later, in the winter, was a challenge. Last year the weather cooperated and I hope it does again this year. The show is immense, it covers the equivalent of about seven football fields and uses four buildings. The smallest of those buildings is larger than most train shows I have attended. All the manufacturers, big and small, are there. It should be a bucket list item for any model railroader.

Also at the National level, I have some sad news. As I was driving home from New Hampshire December 28, I got the word that Bill Neale MMR® had passed away. I had the pleasure of getting to know Bill when he as the Central District Director on the NMRA Board. He served two full terms leaving the board this past summer. Bill was the speaker at the Mid Central Region convention banquet in Pittsburgh this past year so I imagine that many of you may have met him that weekend. Bill was an avid Pennsylvania Railroad modeler, he was also playing a key role in the 2025 NMRA convention planning. It should go without saying but he will be missed.

Finally, as I prepare this on the first day of an odd numbered month, I am waiting for the NMRA E-Bulletin to arrive. If you didn't receive it, make sure your correct email address is on file with the NMRA!

The Mid-Central  
Regional Convention  
May 16-19 2024  
Cleveland, Ohio



Early Registration is \$90.00  
through 12/31/2023



[www.northcoastlimited2024.org](http://www.northcoastlimited2024.org)

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Look for updates on the NCL site!*

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2024 NMRA

NATIONAL CONVENTION



AUGUST 4 - 11

LONG BEACH, CA



[WWW.SURFLINER2024.ORG](http://WWW.SURFLINER2024.ORG)

*GET ON BOARD TODAY!*





**Midland Atlantic**  
**Anthony Parrish, CEO**  
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NORFOLK AND WESTERN



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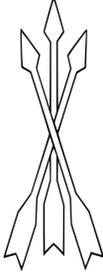
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**CRESCENT VALLEY**

Jerry Doyle, President  
 Barboursville, WV



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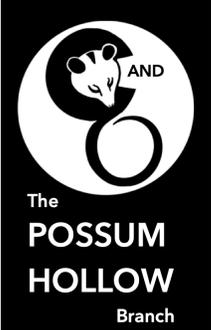
Ed Keith, MMR  
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**LAKESIDE LINES RAILROAD**

Thomas K. Harris, President and CEO

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**Under Construction**

A small N-scale layout of a fictional Appalachian branch line of the Chesapeake & Ohio set in the early 50s or late 70s.

Matt Kearns, Chief Engineer  
 South Charleston, WV  
 mattkearnswv@gmail.com

**Alleghany & 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  
 AandNRR@aol.com



**HINTON DIVISION**

Gary Burdette - Superintendent  
 Point Pleasant WV



**NEW RIVER GORGE SUBDIVISION**

Clint Foster Superintendant  
 Ronceverte WV

## **Upcoming Coal Division Events**

**January 13**

**St. Albans Historical Society  
In Person and Zoom**

**February 10**

**St. Albans Historical Society  
In Person and Zoom**

**March 9**

**St. Albans Historical Society  
In Person and Zoom**

**April 13**

**St. Albans Historical Society  
In Person and Zoom**

**May 11**

**Steel is King**

**May 16-19**

**Mid Central Region Convention  
Middleburg, OH**