



# UP THE HOLLER

## Newsletter of Division 9 THE COAL DIVISION

### Mid Central Region NMRA

December 2014



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#### From the Head the Holler By Gary J. Burdette, MMR

Fall is a busy time of year railroad-wise. There are train rides, train shows, holiday gatherings, football games, hunting, and many other activities in which many of us are engaged.

I enjoyed a trip in the parlor car of the Tygart Valley Flyer out of Elkins and a trip on the Cass Scenic Railroad, this past October.

Many of us traveled to the train shows at Parkersburg, Bluefield, and Huntington during the month of November. I'm sure we enjoyed visiting with friends whom we may only see once a year. I, also, know you all purchased much-needed items for your layouts. That's what I tell myself (and my wife), anyway. As I travelled to Huntington this past weekend, I stopped at Blenko Glass in Milton, West Virginia to attend another "glass day" open house and visit with Andy and Charlie our MCR buddies from the Pittsburgh area.

December will bring several Santa/Christmas related activities and our Coal Division meeting at the St. Albans Depot. The guys from Lexington will be stopping by to present information on the 2015 MCR Convention which is scheduled for their home town this spring. Along with our meeting, we will have our raffle, model contest (modeler's choice), and a clinic on stations by Dan Mulhearn. The depot will be highly decorated.

One note: we will be meeting in the baggage room due to Christmas activities being held in the conference room by Santa and Mrs. Claus. The holiday activities have been expanded this year at the station and the term multi-use will be in evidence. We had a couple of meetings, plays, talks, and displays during the National Train Day/Founder's Day Celebration in May with great success. Hopefully, similar results will be seen on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

While things might be a little busy at the depot, the renewed interest in and enthusiasm for the depot can only be a plus. Recently, I met with the mayor and several representatives from the various city departments as part of a grant-writing committee. Two of the leaders are experienced grant writers and many on the committee have written and received grants for their departments. This will be a team effort with the formation of a data base, communication center, and an information sharing / support group designed to enhance the process. The mayor noted several things going on at the depot. He has secured monies for two new windows (one of which is on-site) and discussed possibilities for obtaining monies for two more. I shared grant information that may provide funds in the near future. The city inspector has studied the building, making notes on needed repairs, and the mayor is committed to getting her back to her old glory.

Let's think about our role in the depot as educators and facilitators. Two of our members have expressed interest in promoting a TRAINING Day seminar similar to that which was held in the Dayton area recently. We can develop and build historic displays, etc. These things might be great Christmas gifts for the depot and the community from the Coal Division.

With everything going on, I don't to forget to wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

### Dan Mulhearn, Asst. Supt.

To sound, or not to sound, that is the question.. There has been an awful lot of discussion in the hobby of those who choose to try and run their models railroad as prototypically. This still leaves you with many choices: Timetable and Train Order, Track Warrants, Centralized Traffic Control, whatever. I have not noticed quite as much discussion of installing sound systems in our miniature locomotives. Now there is even sound for cars with brake squeal, light control, flat wheel thumping, etc. Sound, to me is the most realistic and enjoyable advance in the hobby since the introduction of DCC. The best part for me is the whistle or horn signals possible; though the sound of the various types of prime movers revving up is also super. I just love the sound of non turbo-charged EMD 567s at work. It brings memories of watching those old F units and GPs in years gone by. It should be noted that prototype often have rules against unnecessary horn blowing or bell ringing and some towns and cities have even instituted quiet zones where the grade crossings are properly marked and protected to prevent motorists from pulling out in front of a train. Yes, the temptation to overdo the horn and bell can be a problem on an enclosed home layout. My answer is, first, to put rules in place for horn, whistle and bell use. Second is

what I call scaling the sound. Many of the locos with factory equipped sound have dual speakers and are set at maximum volume. On a layout with a lot of sound equipped locomotives this can range from distracting to annoying.

My plan is to lower the volume so that the "crew" running the train can hear the motor sounds and use the whistle and bell as required by the rules; but it is not loud enough to disturb other operators. Of course, when meeting or passing a friendly wave and a quick toot toot would not be totally out of order.

Others are entirely content to do without the sound option. It certainly is modelers choice. Me, when I am running at an op session without sound equipped locomotive, the sounds are there in my head and it is just as much enjoyment.

To finish up, enjoyment of our hobby is what floats your boat.. Operating, building, wiring, painting, displaying, building models for competition; it's all good.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the December meeting at St. Albans. I missed Bob Weinheimer's op session in November as I was not feeling well. You can be sure I am not feeling well when I pass up an op session. Hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving.

## MEETING NOTICE

The December meeting will have us back at the St. Albans Depot but, as noted in Gary's column, in the old baggage room. It seems that Santa Claus has dibs on the waiting room. As usual, we start gathering around 1PM with the business meeting starting at 2PM. Dan Mulhearn will show us more depot photos. Also, the Thoroughbred

Limited convention planners will be with us to tell us all about the upcoming Mid-Central Region convention in Lexington, KY next May.

The raffle returns and the contest will be Modeler's Choice.

## 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 do the layout work the Wednesday 10 days before the meeting with distribution Thursday or Friday. For this to happen reliably, we need all items for publication by the 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.

January	December 22
February	February 2
March	March 2
April	March 30

## RAFFLE REPORT

**Paul Lapointe**

With the Division meeting away from the Depot in November, at the Bluefield Train Show, there was no raffle.

December's meeting is back at the C&O Depot so we will have a raffle. The box is getting low again, so please

take a look around for anything you can donate and bring it to the meeting.

## MY WORD

### Bob Weinheimer, Editor

All of you who contribute to this newsletter should take note that I would like all articles by December 22, a week earlier than usual. I will be out of town over Christmas and want to have everything in place so I can get right into the publication process so the newsletter gets out on time. Also, as editor of the Mid-Central Regions's King-Pin, I will be busy getting that publication out around the first of January. That issue will be a paper issue sent to all members. It will contain all the information about the MCR convention as well as a ballot for the election of MCR officers.

Early in the coming year all members will receive ballots for the national elections, I believe they will be in the *NMRA Magazine*. Even if you are not a subscriber you will get this issue. There are two candidates for NMRA President, two candidates for Vice President—Administration, and six candidates (including me) for the At Large North American Director. If you like the way things are going, vote accordingly. If you don't like the way things are going, this is your chance to do something about it. If you don't vote, don't gripe.

## NMRA MCR DIVISION 9

### *THE COAL DIVISION*

November 8, 2014

#### Minutes

The November meeting of Division 9 was called to order by Supt. Gary Burdette at 2:00PM at the City Youth Center on Stadium Drive in Bluefield, WV. Gary welcomed all and an attendance sheet was passed around.

**Division Clerk:** On a motion by Bill Wadsworth, seconded and approved, the minutes of the October business meeting as published in UTH were accepted. In the absence of the clerk there was no treasurer's report.

**Superintendent's Report:** Gary noted that Matt Crouch had gone to Dayton for training which may prove beneficial to the Division. Gary also reported that the St. Albans City Council is working on grants for the depot with a renewed interest.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report:** Dan welcomed everyone to Bluefield and the Pocahontas Chapter's annual train show. It was noted there was a bit of sadness in that the occasion also marked the first anniversary of the passing of Charlie Venable..

**AP:** Bob Weinheimer reports the scenery certificate for Paul Lapointe is on the way and Dan Mulhearn has his paperwork for the electrical certificate still simmering.

**Newsletter:** Bob reports there was a glitch in the newsletter link, which has been rectified.

**Clinic:** Dan stated future clinics are needed. Photos taken at the Age of Steam Roundhouse may be presented in December. Dennis McGeeney requested a clinic on lubing and maintaining locomotives.

**Membership:** John Harris suggested that training, partic-

ularly mini clinics for beginners, could be used as a recruiting tool. He stated that membership is holding steady.

**Old Business:** The review of our constitution is on hold pending action by National and Regional.

**New Business:** none

**Announcements:** John Harris reported that members of the NRHS Chapter at Johnson City, TN had invited us to attend their upcoming meeting and activities. This will be a meeting of the NRHS Region 5 Advisory Board to address the current problems with the National NRHS: however there are many railfan activities scheduled also. John provided a link at <http://admin.nrhs.com/public>.

**Next Meeting:** December meeting will be 12/13/2014, January meeting will be 01/10/2015 and February will be 02/14/2015. All three meetings will be at the St. Albans Depot with social hour and judging at 1PM and business meeting at 2PM. The December contest will be modeler's choice.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Bill Wadsworth, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:22PM.

**Contest:** Contest theme was vehicles and the only entry was Gary Burdette's scratch built flat bed trailer.

**Clinic:** Members were free to enjoy the Pocahontas Chapter train show.

Respectfully submitted; Dan Mulhearn, acting clerk

## CONTEST REPORT

### Paul Lapointe

November's Contest:

The category was Vehicles. Due to a lack of competition, Gary Burdette decided to suspend the contest for November. His entry, the only one, should be considered a show and tell model. Gary scratch built this trailer.

December:

December's meeting is back at the Depot. The contest category, as per tradition, is Modeler's Choice. So bring in your favorite model of any type.



Photo by Bob Weinheimer

## Plasticville on Your Scale Layout?

### By Gary Burdette, MMR

Remember those shiny red, green, brown, blue, white, and gray plastic railroad structures from the 1950s produced by Plasticville, USA (Bachmann)? The drawing of the building, in a scenic locale on the cover of the box, was much more realistic than the actual model. Even when we placed them on the model railroad and dressed them up with Life-Like grass and lichen there was much to be desired. At some point we abandoned them for more complex kits.

Looking back at what was available and picking up a few items at train shows for the sake of nostalgia reacquainted me with the brand and the look of these old items. What were these kits based on? Was it simple imagination or did they exist at one time or another. A visit to the Kool Wink Motel in Romney, West Virginia provided me with the origin of one of the Plasticville offerings. The 1950s motel is an extant version (in pristine condition) of the Siesta Motel model from the old days. There were probably dozens of this style throughout the country at one time. One of these old models could be painted and detailed to fit right into your model pike.

The Kool Wink was built with concrete block, brick, and wood construction typical of many ranch style houses of the day. Wings and other features were built from two-by-four framing with Masonite Hardboard walls/fillers, and quarter round molding as trim work. An old *Popular Mechanics Encyclopedia* I have from the period shows many outdoor and indoor remodeling projects using similar materials and designs. From game rooms to car ports and bookshelves to picnic areas, the "modern theme" is apparent and seen in the winged model and prototype.

The Bachmann model is almost an exact replica of the Kool Wink. The one pictured is on a friend's layout and is in original colors. However, a little flat white and an assortment of pastel yellow, green, turquoise, blue, and pink paints might turn the stock model into a totally different piece worthy of a fifties and later scene. Add the parking area, cars, bushes, people, and signs and there you have it.

Don't dismiss these old models. Are there more? We'll see.



Kool Wink Motel, Romney, WV

Bachmann model

All three photos by Gary Burdette

## Live Loads

### Bob Weinheimer, MMR

Photos by the author

As I was reading the December issue of the *NMRA Magazine* Business Car column I saw an article about making wood chip hopper car loads. That has inspired me to write a little about my version of bulk loads as used on the Pennsylvania Southern.

Bulk loads got my attention as my coal hopper car fleet grew. There are several types of cars from a variety of manufacturers. Some have internal bracing like their prototypes while others do not. The key is that they are all slightly different in length or width. That means I would have to keep a variety of loads around for each type of car. I did that for many years then it just got to be a hassle finding the right load for the right car. The answer turned out to be Black Beauty sandblast grit. It's available at low cost, I paid about \$10 for a 100 pound bag some years back. I hear you now get about 50 pounds for that same \$10. Don't worry, even 50 pounds is quite a lot! This material is fairly dense, a 100 ton HO scale hopper weighted empty to the NMRA standard ends up weighing close to 11 ounces when loaded. A twenty car train weighs nearly 14 pounds. Since the loaded trains go uphill on my layout, helpers are often required. Indeed, they are specified for all loaded coal trains. How do these operate? We have never spilled a car during a shove uphill in regular service in the nearly 10 years I have used this type of load. We have derailed light cabooses but they are now heavily weighted to preclude that problem. Some people often wonder if the load makes the cars somewhat top heavy. Well, they are no more top heavy on a relative basis than a fully loaded prototype car. I suspect they perform so well because they are so heavy, they may just be hard to derail.

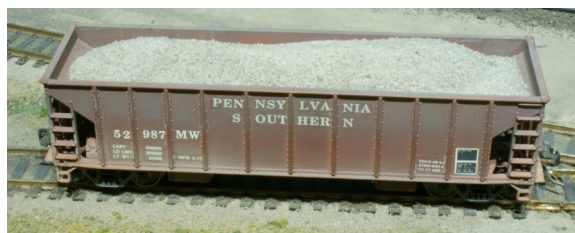


The experience with the coal trains led me to look at other bulk loaded trains. Like the coal fleet, I have several types of hoppers in rock and ballast service. For these I have taken sand, mixed it with acrylic coloring, and stirred. I have presented a quick clinic on this technique to the Division and at a Region convention. Using some black and white gives a gray that looks reasonable. I also use this technique for the ballast on the layout. I have an iron ore train, its load is sand colored to a dark rust color.

That brings us back to wood chip cars. I have a small fleet of these and find that sawdust makes a good load. Whenever the saw comes out for a project on the layout or around the house I sweep up the sawdust and keep it for loads. Note that I do this only with normal lumber, I avoid the sawdust from pressure treated lumber as I am unsure of the health effects of the chemicals added to preserve the wood.

I store unused sandblast grit in a five gallon plastic bucket. When a car is emptied it is dumped right back into the bucket. When cars are loaded I use a small plastic container (right now it's an 8 ounce container that once held sour cream) to pour the material into the car. The sand based loads and the sawdust are stored in large wide mouth plastic containers that originally held coffee. As with the sandblast grit, these loads are dumped back into their respective containers. To load the cars I use coffee scoops.

Photos of the various loads are below. I have no regrets about the use of these live loads. They are inexpensive and operate well. Keep this in mind if your layout moves lots of bulk material in open cars.



# Plan to attend

## PORTLAND DAYLIGHT EXPRESS

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION



We're working hard to bring you a great  
National Convention

**August 23 – 29, 2015**

Hosted by the Columbia Gorge Model Railroad  
Club, who also brought you  
the 1994 NMRA National.

The event is to be held at the Doubletree Hotel at  
Lloyd Center, near downtown Portland.

Bring the family to explore and enjoy  
the Great Pacific Northwest.

Check out our website  
<http://www.nmra2015portland.org/>  
and follow us on Facebook.  
<https://www.facebook.com/NMRA2015Portland>

### NMRA National Convention Portland 2015 Portland Daylight Express

80<sup>th</sup> NMRA National convention

Dates of event: August 23 – 29, 2015

Location:

Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Portland at Lloyd  
Center, 1000 NE Multnomah Street, Portland, Ore-  
gon 97232

National Train Show: August 28 – 30, 2015

Location:

Portland Expo Center 2060 N Marine Drive, Port-  
land, Oregon 97217

#### Convention features:

Clinics:

Six Clinic rooms with seven sessions per day pro-  
vides more than 200 clinic sessions and more than  
125 topics.

Modeling with the Masters:

Master Model Railroaders lead several sessions of 28  
each, guiding participants in constructing a project,  
which they can take home.

Contests:

The usual NMRA National Model, Photography  
and Craft contests offer opportunity for you to have  
your best creations evaluated against your peers.

Auction:

The Silent Auction attracts all kinds of hobby items  
including models, books, prototype historical gems.  
We expect about 3000 lots. Following Cleveland's  
lead in 2014 we plan to offer early online registra-  
tion of lots for sale. It saves time on the day.

Tours:


We have a great selection of Prototype, Industry,  
General Interest and Layout tours. Many of these  
facilities are rarely open for public visitation.

Non-Rail:

A full schedule of activities and tours, including a  
lunch, is planned for the non-rail family member.


**Editor's Note:** Yes, Portland is a long way from  
the Coal Division but it is a very beautiful city that I  
have had the opportunity to see while on a couple  
of business trips. Consider combining the conven-  
tion with a visit to other locations in and around  
Oregon and Washington.

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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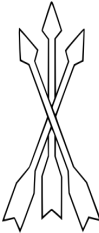
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Assistant Superintendent  
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Gary Burdette - Superintendent  
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**WESTERN MARYLAND RAILWAY**

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**NEW RIVER GORGE SUBDIVISION**

Clint Foster Superintendent  
Ronceverte WV

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

Western West Virginian



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 news-  
letter via the US Postal  
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address, please let us  
know so we can save  
printing and postage  
costs. Send a note to  
[editor@coaldivision.org](mailto:editor@coaldivision.org)  
to get onto the email dis-  
tribution list for Up The  
Holler.

**December 13**

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

**January 10**

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

**February 14**

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