



# UP THE HOLLER

## Newsletter of Division 9 THE COAL DIVISION

### MID CENTRAL REGION NMRA INC

September 2016



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#### FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

By Gary J. Burdette, MMR

The menus were wide and filling! The list of items offered at our "Picnic on the Platform" event was varied and tasty. From hamburgers to hot dogs and potato salad to Western Pacific Gingerbread Cake, and everything in-between, it was GOOD. "Spray Day at the Station" (Phase II) provided us with a taste of decaling, decal types (Testors, Rail Graphics, dry transfer, and screen printed), completed models, adhesives, and vacuum forming model railroad parts. A well-rounded and complete menu satisfied our taste for meals and modeling.

Thanks to Bob Osburn for doing the cooking and to all those who brought items to eat or display. Thanks go to Bob Weinheimer for his fine hands-on clinic showing us how to properly decal a freight car. The contest was freight cars and we had several examples on display as well, so the subject was more than adequately covered. A great deal of activity was planned for the day and everything went off without a hitch...except one important area.

As I scurried around, I forgot to bring a sympathy card for all the guys to sign and send to our friend Clint Foster recognizing the death of his wife Joan. With a tear in my eye, Dan and I did announce her passing and noted what a wonderful person she was. Everyone remembered the fun we had as she and Clint ran the hospitality room at the 2010 MCR Convention. Joan was a hoot: joking, laughing, and chatting, she set the tone for enjoying the friendships we made and/or renewed at this event. For those of us who regularly operated on Clint's C&O pike, we knew her as an inviting lady who welcomed us into her home to "play with the trains." It was an honor and pleasure to have known her. We pass along our condolences to Clint and his family. The friendships we make in our hobby are deep and meaningful.

With that thought in mind, we look forward to heading west where we will meet in Portsmouth, Ohio for our fall picnic and "Ride the Crusty" event. As always, our friends from the Buckeye Division will join us for the dual meet. This year was a little special as our groups touched bases at the 2016 MCR Convention in Columbus and again at the June meeting in Marion. Mark Maynard is raising the pig as you read this, so the pork bar-b-que is in the works along with all the fixings. As always, other fun activities are planned.

The contest will be Mechanical, Electrical, Civil, and Rail Road Engineering. This is the venue in which you can present things that don't usually fit into the typical judged category. Animations, wiring diagrams or plans you have developed, a special technique (like Bob O.'s vacuum formed parts), Bob W.'s drawer slides collapsible bridge, control panels, Mark's removable scenery section, and a million other "engineering-type" items. Some gizmo you built will probably fit in. Remember the yearly flea market will be set up so bring your items for sale (10% goes the division), and you clean off your shelves and fill up the next guy's.

So, come out and enjoy the friendship, the modeling, and the food as we "Ride the Crusty" experiencing the wonderful model railroad Mark Maynard and his buddies have built in a beautiful part of Southern Ohio.

## FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

### Dan Mulhearn, Assistant Superintendent

Thank to all who brought food, drinks and condiments to St. Albans for our picnic on the platform. A special thanks to Bob Osborn and his crew for cooking in that blazing heat.

I hope you will indulge me this month as I tell a little story about why I am a model railroader. Probably it could be paraphrased in Gary Burdette's oft told quote about never meeting a train he didn't like.

I am driving south on the interstate, it is flat country and it could be almost anywhere. My exit is ahead, the usual huddle of gas stations, convenience stores and fast food joints. The windows are rolled down and the sweet smell of magnolias fills the air. It is April 1982 in the middle of Mississippi. The sameness of the interstate exit is replaced by the gloom of downtown Grenada. The square surrounding the Illinois Central depot is filled with vacant stores, dirty windows, and for rent signs folded over in resignation. The large brick depot itself is dirty, the platform bricks are uneven and missing in spots. On the north wall the plaque commemorating IC railroaders who served in World War Two is streaked and green with verdigris. Just north of the depot a GP9 sits forlornly with a lot of miles on it since it rolled out of Paducah Shops resplendent in orange and white. Across the main are several sidings slowing sinking into the mud holding various gondolas and pulpwood flats. On the sides of some, just barely visible through the rust, is the old slogan "Mainline of Mid-America". The men who built this railroad and scoured Europe for sturdy farmers to till the land must be rolling in their graves that their railroad has become just a tax write off for a large corporation.

The only bright spot in the scene is the agent's cherry red Chevy pickup. I found him seated behind his ancient typewriter. "No" he said, "nothing running until the Panama." He was referring to Amtrak's Panama Limited which was named after the old IC's most posh limited. Of course, a little later Willie sang Steve Goodman's song and the train name changed to "The City of New Orleans."

The northbound Panama was due a little after sunset so I returned to the depot to watch her by. Pretty much the same scene greeted me. An ancient black man in an equally ancient black truck jounced across the tracks with a small load of cattle for the little slaughterhouse down the road. He flirted his hand in greeting and as his truck hit each rail in the crossing a puff of smoke would jet from his pipe. The mournful lowing of the cattle was a sad quietus to the scene.

Wait, though, a three man crew showed up and after checking in with agent fired up that tired looking GP9. It

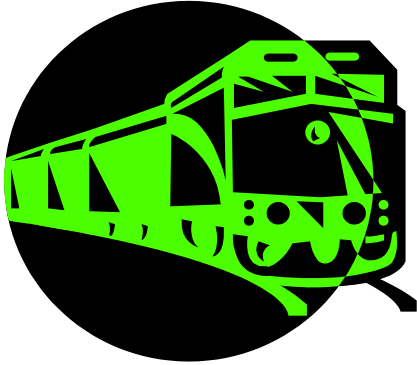
must be reported that that EMD 567 sounded sweet. They crossed over the main and began sorting cars on the sidings. Things are looking up. A man pulled up in a pickup and put his young son up on the hood so he could see the action. It is great that some men still will take their sons down to the depot to see the trains. Other vehicles begin arriving. People and luggage begin to populate the platform. Hugs and kisses are being exchanged, laughter fills the air.

The three green signals I can see to the south all drop to red. A bright star appears on the southern horizon, a five chime begins blowing for crossings echoing off the buildings. Here he is! The single F40 rolls by screaming in run 8 as they provide power to the train and remain at full throttle at all times. The wee-waw wee-waw of disc brakes sing in the air. The conductor, in the stairwell of the second coach, waves at the little boy on the pickup. We get a friendly wave from the sleeping car attendant as he alights to shepherd his passengers aboard. Luggage comes off, luggage goes on. As departing passengers come off there are more delighted cries, hugs, and kisses. The boarding passengers say their last good byes to friends and family. A terse "highball Grenada", two chimes of the horn and the Panama rolls north. Two red tail lights rapidly disappear in the countryside. Far away the beautiful down Doppler of the five chime announces it passing to some nameless farm crossing.

The man takes his boy down off the pickup hood and they leave with the boy smiling. Amtrak's version of the Panama Limited is far from a match for the beautiful streamliner once run by the Illinois Central. As I walk to my truck in the quiet early evening I am smiling like that little boy.

A postscript to this little tale is in order. I did not realize that what freight traffic IC had, except local switchers, ran on their alternate main line which was further west, closer to the Mississippi River. That line today, under Canadian National auspices, is a busy freight line. Amtrak's Chicago—New Orleans trains have also migrated to that line. The line through Grenada is now operated by a short line and they are doing OK.

I can tell you hundreds of tales like this, exciting, funny, sad, but all fond memories of about seventy years of chasing trains. From the little boy on the platform at the Long Island RR station at Valley Stream, NY to the man who has chased and ridden trains all over this Country; it's been wonderful.. So that's why I am a model railroader. I guess all this space could have been saved by just saying, Like Gary, I never met a train I didn't like.



**Coal Division**  
**Monthly Railfun Event**  
*“Ride the Crusty”*

**Mark Maynard’s Home, West Portsmouth, Ohio**  
**September 10, 2016**

11:00 - Doors open. Visit the layout, set out items to sell, socialize. Coal Division takes 10% of all sales from seller.

12:30 - Lunch

1:00 - Social time, contest is Civil, Elect., Mech. Engineer

2:00 - Superintendent’s Briefing

2:40 - Contest, Results

3:00 - Continue running trains and socializing!

Reminder: Phase III Weathering and undercarriage construction contest in October

***More details including directions are on the next page.***

## SEPTEMBER EVENT: RUNNING THE CRUSTY ROAD

Our September event is once again a joint gathering with Division 6. As he has for the past several years, Mark Maynard has graciously agreed to host us and to provide lunch and beverages.

Mark's layout will be on display, the editor hasn't heard of the layout upgrades but surely they are numerous and welcome by the operating crew.

A big part of the day is the flea market sale. Bring any of those things you thought you couldn't live without but now realize you don't need. In particular, consider items that you might think too valuable for the raffle. Make sure your name is on it or the packaging, set a price, perhaps do some haggling, and be rid of it. We hope to have somebody to handle the money and bookkeeping but if you make a sale privately, please don't forget to pay the 10% fee due from the seller.

Since the event includes a joint business session, the business of both divisions will be discussed. The plan is to go through our typical agenda alternating between divisions; that seemed to have worked well in the past. This should give Coal Division members an idea of how Division 6 does things and it might even give us some ideas that we may wish to consider implementing. As this is a joint event, there will actually be two contests.

Our contest will try something different. It will feature electrical, civil, or other mechanical subjects you may

have built for your layout. This can even include cars of the sort the prototype would never need but which are useful to the modeler, think of a track cleaning car. Entries might be the model itself, drawings, or photos of such an installation that is on the layout but not portable. See Gary Burdette's column on page 1 for more ideas.

Division 6's normal contest will also be held. This will be models of open loads as well as photos of open loads.

The fun all starts around 11AM, lunch will be available around noon or shortly thereafter. The business session will start at 2. While Portsmouth is a long distance for most of us to travel, car pooling can reduce costs and provide lots of good discussions en-route. All we need is a nice day.

Now, for some directions: If you are coming from anywhere but the west, find your way to Portsmouth, OH and leave town headed west on US 52. Look for Brouses Run Road about one half mile after the road narrows from four lanes to two lanes. Turn right onto Brouses Run Road, pass the first house on the right (Mark's) then turn right into the barn lot in about another 150 feet. The model railroad is upstairs in the barn, the other activities will be out behind the barn under the canopies. If you want to use GPS, the house number is 42.

### RAFFLE Dan Mulhearn

Our August raffle at the depot netted us \$43.00 towards the upkeep of the depot. We have some items on hand but your lovingly used treasures are always welcome and needed.

There will be no raffle at Portsmouth as the Division will hold the traditional white elephant sale. Bring your more valuable items that you wish to sell. Remember the Division gets ten percent of all proceeds.

I would also like to remind members that the Raffle chairmanship is up for grabs. Get to work toward your Association Volunteer certificate; it is one of the easier ones to earn.

### CONTEST Dan Mulhearn

The August model contest at the depot had some really nice work on display. First place went to Gary Burdette's scratch built G scale box car. Sam Delauter came up second with his Pennsylvania H22a hopper. Third place was a tie with Larry Richard's HOn30 hoppers and Woody Higginbotham's WWV HO hopper.

The September contest, at Portsmouth, will be electronic, mechanical and other tools, actuating devices, lighting devices or any other devices you have built to assist with operating your model railroad.

Again, as with the raffle; the contest chair is open and may lead you to your Volunteer certificate..

### LIBRARY CORNER Bill Wadsworth

The collection of NMRA Clinic DVDs now available for loan to the members has not been very popular so far. There's a lot of helpful information which I'm sure would be useful to many of you and it's there for the asking. Now that a list of the topics has been put together be sure to check it out and see what might be helpful to you.

As explained at the June meeting, I have some DVDs that I'm willing to loan out, and I believe some of you also have DVDs that you're willing to share with others.

These DVDs aren't the property of Div. 9 and are loaned to me as I loan them to the members. After a period of time – 1 year, 6 months, whatever – you decide when – the DVDs are returned to the owner. This way we can all share the information, and no one has to give away anything. If you're willing to share your DVDs with others, bring them to the next meeting. Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

**NMRA MCR DIVISION 9**  
***THE COAL DIVISION***  
***Picnic on the Platform***

**St Albans Depot**  
**St Albans, WV**  
**August 13, 2016**  
**Minutes**

Meeting called to order at 1:38 p.m.

**Clinic Chair**

October's clinic will be weathering.

**Division Clerk Report**

Treasury balance was unavailable due to issues with the clerk's computer.

June minutes were approved.

Pike Ads \$0.

Raffle revenues \$43.

**Contest Chair**

This month's contest – freight cars.

**Membership Chair**

Membership is down slightly but we do have some new members. The downturn is due to members not renewing membership.

**Superintendent Report**

The meeting opened with the news of the loss of Joan Foster. She was the wife of our friend Clint Foster and was a fine lady.

Gary recognized Bob Weinheimer for his recent President's Award from the NMRA for his work on the national hobby discount program. He discussed some of the current status of the program. Gary mentioned some activities for education and hands-on activities. He also mentioned the Yellow Pages for model rail-roading.

**Raffle**

Raffle netted \$43.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

None

**Announcements**

**Assistant Superintendent Report**

Dan thanked everyone for their work at the picnic today. He remembered Joan Foster and her spirit and hospitality and reminded us to treasure our friends.

**Future Meetings**

September 10 – Portsmouth, Ohio

October 8 – St Albans Depot

November 12 – Bluefield, WV

December 10 – St Albans Depot

**Achievement Program**

The paperwork has been approved for Jerry Doyle for Association Official.

Meeting adjourned 2:22 p.m.

**Newsletter Chair**

The last issue was 12 pages with lots of coverage from Spray Day in June.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Doyle, Division 9 Clerk

**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.

October	September 26
November	October 31
December	November 28
January	January 2

## Layout Expansion on the Pittsburgh & Western RR Part 6 DCC and the Layout by Paul Lapointe

I'm taking a break this month from the subject of benchwork construction to talk about wiring. Because I have a large layout that's getting even bigger, hooking up DCC is more involved than just attaching two wires.

As you'll see from the diagram, I have my layout divided into districts to ensure good signal strength and that reversing loops work correctly. Districts also simplify troubleshooting when things go wrong.

Looking at my high level wiring diagram, at the top we have the basic DCC system: handheld throttles and a Command Station. My handhelds are wireless. The engineer set the throttle values: locomotive number, speed, direction, etc. The Command Station takes all the information from each throttle and converts it to a signal format (called a "packet") that is sent along the track. Each locomotive on the track looks for a packet with its number on it and does only that command, ignoring all others.

If I had a very small layout, say 4x8 feet or less, I could stop here, hook up the wires coming out of the Command Station (the red "X") to the track and be done with it.

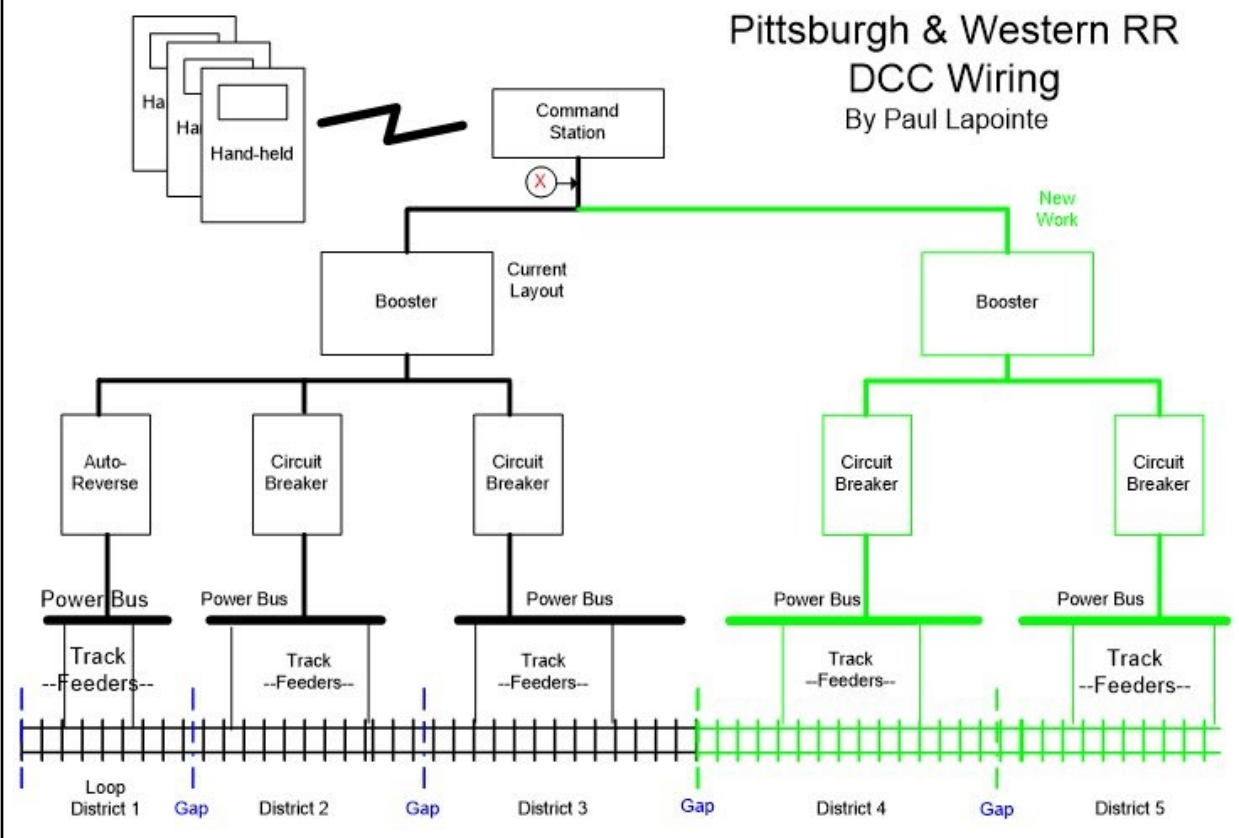
But with a physically large layout or one with a lot of locomotives, especially sound equipped ones, the Command Station does not have enough power.

To solve this I added a Booster. It's a power amplifier; it doesn't change the signal but makes it much stronger. We could hook that directly to the track, but with this level of power, we have to guard against a short circuit. The 8 amps of current my booster puts out could weld a locomotive's wheel to a rail in the event of a short circuit!

To handle that issue, we add circuit breakers. They act like fuses to limit how much current is allowed to reach the track. But unlike fuses, you don't need to replace them, they auto-reset. The Auto-Reverser is a special type of circuit breaker that performs an additional function. When it detects a short circuit coming out of a reversing district, like a reverse loop, it flips the district's current, removing the short circuit. The locomotive continues on, unaffected by the change. It's also used for other reversing districts such as a wye or a turntable.

Each district is insulated from the others by having rail gaps in both rails. Each circuit breaker or auto-reverser controls and isolates a section of the layout's track that is called a district. If a problem occurs in a district, the rest of the layout should be unaffected.

Now can we hook up to the track? Well, for all but the smallest layouts, the answer is no. You see our small size rail is a very poor conductor of electricity. The signal,



even from a booster, would get weaker and weaker every foot you get away from the connection.

We have to provide heftier wiring to avoid weakening the signal. Usually this is done by running household-sized wire (I use 12 gauge wire) to parallel the track and periodically “feed” the signal to the track.

So the circuit breakers connect to a “power bus”, a length of heavy wire that follows along the district track. Smaller-size wire connects to the power bus every four to six feet and is soldered to the track. I use so-called suitcase connectors to easily tap the power bus without cutting into it.

Even though, unlike DC wiring, you don’t have a positive and negative wire, it’s import to keep the orientation of the wires consistent to avoid unintended short-

circuits that will drive you crazy trying to correct them. A must-do is to color-code the wiring. I use red and white colors for all wiring and never connect different colors together. Be consistent with your connections, for example, make one rail the red rail and keep connections to circuit breakers, boosters, and other elements uniform. It’s a good idea to test the wiring incrementally as you go along.

I’ve described the current wiring of my layout. The expansion work will follow the same sequence: it will be powered by another booster with circuit breakers as shown in green on the diagram.

## MY WORD

### Bob Weinheimer, Editor

As Gary Burdette noted in his column, we mourn the passing of Joan Foster. I attended the memorial service August 21, Clint appeared to be holding up well. He even expressed a desire to get back to the layout, something he has ignored since October of last year. Let’s hope Clint can settle down and get the C&O operating once again, I sure do like that layout!

I really enjoyed reading Dan Mulhearn’s column this month. Dan was wordier than usual but the result was a wonderful look back over the years. No, Dan, you couldn’t have just quoted Gary, it was much better this way.

This month’s Info Blast confirms what I think I mentioned at the August event: the price of the NMRA Magazine is going up to \$28 per year. Yes, this is a \$6 increase but I feel it is still a bargain. If you are not a subscriber you are missing something including lots of NMRA news.

Paul Lapointe continues the saga of the construction of the new portion of his layout but takes a little detour through some electronics. I must admit my wiring is a bit simpler but I don’t have the sound equipped engines with the much larger power draw.

My layout got started before suitcase connectors came into model railroad use, my wiring uses lots of terminal strips to make connections. This method surely uses more wire but does allow easy disconnection in order to troubleshoot wiring problems. I also do something that other might not: I wire things with the full layout power on. Why? If you go to make a connection and see lots of sparks, you know you have trouble right then. If you do it cold, you

may have lots of connections to undo before finding the trouble. The other approach is to wire cold but to check things after every couple of connections.

I fully agree with Paul about the benefits of color coding. This is something I ignored while building my layout. Now, as I rebuild the track, I am replacing the wiring with an appropriate color code. I have already replaced the main buses: track power, switch machine power, and lighting power with color coded wiring.

Mainline replacement on the Pennsylvania Southern has taken a little break. At the National Train Show I bought Custom Model Railroad’s Power Plant craftsman kit. This will, along with their Turbine Hall, replace the stand-in power plant in Pittsburgh. Due to the kit’s arrangement it was necessary to rebuild the plant’s coal yard. I also used the opportunity to rebuild part of the main switch lead for the yard as it had been giving me some trouble. The next main line project is to work south from the south end of Washington toward West Union and Waynesburg. I hope to get that started after the September operating session.

Gary Burdette briefly mentioned this year’s Mid Central Region convention in Columbus. Next year the convention will be in Louisville May 18-21 and the folks in Division 8 are planning a nice event. The location will be the Galt House, one of the fine downtown hotels. This location is far nicer than the venue for their 2007 convention. You can read more about the convention at <http://div8-mcr-nmra.org/site/2017PanAmerican/>.



## Welcome to the NMRA InfoNet News (Infoblast) For August, 2016

### A special note about the promotional emails you'll be receiving from the NMRA.

Beginning this August the NMRA will be sending all members one promotional announcement per month from video production companies who are supporters of the NMRA.

As we mentioned in the July/August *NMRA eBulletin* article, these promotional announcements are in exchange for these model railroad video production companies donating videos to the NMRA. In other words, the video production companies are giving us educational videos for our website for viewing by NMRA members, and we are passing along information about those video production companies to NMRA members.

As the article stated, the NMRA mailing list never leaves our hands -- the video companies are sending us the graphics for their promotional email and the NMRA is sending out the emails, not the video production companies. So no outside company will ever see your personal information or email address, nor will they be able to use or sell your email address. Your email address remains private and in the hands of the NMRA only.

There will only be **one promotional email per month** sent to you. You can choose to click on the link to participate in the promotion, delete the email, or ignore the email. You can also opt to unsubscribe from the promotional emails by using the "SafeUnsubscribe" link at the bottom of the promotional email page. Unsubscribing from the promotional emails will not affect your subscription to the bi-monthly *NMRA eBulletin*. In other words, you'll still receive the *NMRA eBulletin* even if you opt to unsubscribe from the promotional emails. (Note: do NOT unsubscribe from this email, or you will cease to get anything from the NMRA.)

Please note that if you choose to respond directly to the video production company's promotion, you may begin receiving email from the video production company directly.

We think that receiving educational videos for our members is a great benefit... one that is well worth the inconvenience of one promotional email per month. We hope you take advantage of this special opportunity by watching -- and learning from -- the videos these companies are giving us! The videos will be uploaded to our site in a week or so. To find them, go to the Members Only portion of [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) and look under the "Special Programs" menu found near the top of the page.

[Gerry Leone](#), MMR  
NMRA Vice President / Special Projects

### **2022 NMRA Convention Location Selected**

The NMRA BOD has selected Birmingham, England as the location for the 2022 NMRA convention. This will be the second NMRA convention held in England – the first was in London in 1971.

### **Subscription rate change for the NMRA Magazine.**

A message from Frank Koch, NMRA Chief Financial Officer:

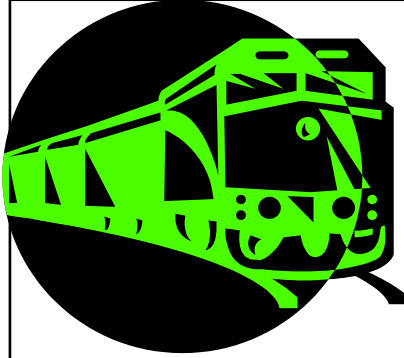
Effective 10/1/2016, the annual subscription rate for the NMRA Magazine will be the following:  
USA members - \$28 USD (RailPass stays at \$9.95)

*If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You will find those addresses at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) or in the NMRA Magazine*

Regards,

Tom Draper – HLM, DSA, FA, MSA, PA  
Director – Support Services





## Coal Division Monthly Railfun Event

### September 2016 - December 2016 *Portsmouth, Bluefield, & St. Albans*

*Featuring: "Spray Day at the Depot" Clinics, /Challenging Contests/ Running Trains, /Friendship, /Picnics/ Raffles*

### TIMETABLE

SEPTEMBER: "Ride the Crusty" - Portsmouth, Ohio - Picnic  
Contest: Civil, Elect., Mech. Engineer, Clinic: Run Trains, Raffle: Flea Mkt.


OCTOBER: "Fall Photo Special" - ST. ALBANS Depot - Photo Ops  
Contest: Open Load, Clinic: Weathering Frt. Cars, Raffle: 1/\$1.00 or 6/\$5.00  
\*Judging of special Freight Car Floor scratch-building challenge!

NOVEMBER: "Coal Division in the Coal Fields" - Bluefield Train Show  
Contest: Passenger Cars, Clinic: None, Raffle: None - Enjoy the Show

DECEMBER: "Santa at the Station" - ST. ALBANS Depot - X-mas Decour  
Contest: Modeler's Choice, Clinic: Fill-a-Foot-of-Foam- w-Scenery, Raffle

Remember:

- \* The New River Train - 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> weekend in Oct.
- \* The Appalachian Model Railroad Club Annual Train Show - Thanksgiving
- \* Other summer and fall activities may be seen in the MCR "Kingpin"




**HAVE 50 MODEL RAILROADING CLINICS RIGHT IN YOUR LIVING ROOM.**

Just because you can't make it to a national convention doesn't mean you have to miss out. Right now the NMRA's Kalmbach Memorial Library has over 50 DVDs of clinics presented at national conventions from 2002 to 2010. All available to NMRA members for the cost of postage.

So you can see clinics on everything from decoders to design, tools to techniques, helixes to highways, and research to resin casting.

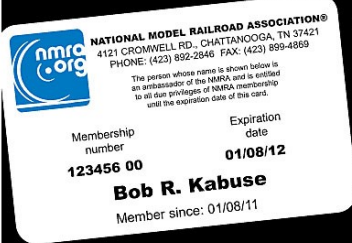
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Visit [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) and go to the Kalmbach Memorial Library page for a complete listing.



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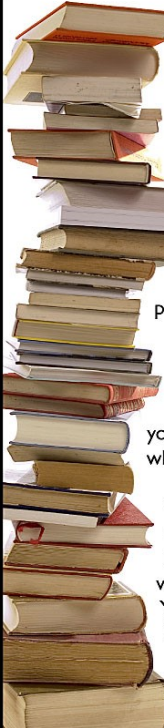
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Or 100,000 train photos. Or 50,000 train magazines. In fact, there are a lot of things you should be checking out at the National Model Railroad Association's Kalmbach Memorial Library. You'll find everything from prototype railroad periodicals to vintage model kit instructions.

As an NMRA member, you have easy access to everything – it's all just a phone call, letter, or email away. Our staff will even help you do research about virtually any train topic, whether it's model or prototype.

Visit one of the world's largest train libraries at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org). You'll find that the NMRA has a lot to offer modelers.





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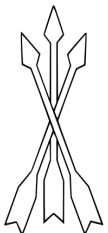
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**September 10**  
**Portsmouth, OH**

**October 8**  
**St. Albans Depot**

**November 12**  
**Bluefield, WV**

**December 10**  
**St. Albans Depot**