



UP THE HOLLER

Newsletter of Division 9
THE COAL DIVISION

Mid Central Region NMRA

July 2013



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HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Bob Weinheimer MMR

Time sure does fly, it's already the day before newsletter articles are due once again. Last month I described the convention and the contest results at the expense of properly commenting on the May meeting. The third annual "Steel is King" event was great once again. Dave and Rhonda made sure we left very well fed, I don't think I even had supper that evening. Paul had his layout open twice during the day, in the morning then again after the meeting. I was amazed at the progress he has made and have to think an Achievement Program Scenery certificate might not be too far from Paul's grasp. A group of us are looking forward to a call asking us to formally evaluate his efforts. Thanks are due to Paul and Dave for opening their layouts for our visit.

In June we dispensed with our regular meeting and rode the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway instead. Dennis McGeeney outdid himself this year, the arrangements and weather were absolutely perfect. We enjoyed a nice buffet lunch then headed out the train. We had expected to be riding three cabooses coupled to the regularly scheduled afternoon train. Well, we got an even better deal: our own charter train. Thanks to the efforts of Coal Division member and Hocking Valley engineer Bob Schmoll we rode our train from lunch to the shops where we got to see all the latest activity in the group's restoration efforts. Our train then visited the rest of the Hocking Valley. It was also good to see David Robinette join us for lunch and the train ride.

June 10 saw an unusual and potentially disastrous event. The St. Albans Depot was struck by an automobile and sustained some serious damage. It appears that insurance will cover a quality reconstruction of the affected area. The other good news is that we will still be able to meet at the depot, our July 13 cookout and meeting is still on the calendar. Jerry Doyle's column in last month's issue was almost eerie in its timing, the preservation of the structure is subject to hazards we might not have expected. Check Gary Burdette's column on the next page for more on this subject.

Several Coal Division members are headed to the National Convention in Atlanta right after the meeting. The last time I was at such an event was 1990 in Pittsburgh. I have always wanted to go to another but finances, timing, or both have interfered. This year it all works and I am very much looking forward to the week. In 2014 the convention is even closer as it will be in Cleveland. There will be no Region convention next year so do consider going to Cleveland for a few days if not the whole week.

FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Gary J. Burdette MMR

It is often said that "We don't always appreciate something (or someone) until it is gone." For those who love the St. Albans depot, I know this saying is not true, but we might have been lulled into a state of comfort in which we assumed she would be here forever. The recent accident, in which an automobile plowed into the corner of the east end, has awakened us to the fact that the "Old Girl" is fragile and needs our protection.

Several of us have been discussing this very topic over the last few months. With Division 9 of the National Model Railroad Association beginning monthly meetings at the station, we have felt compelled to try to contribute to the long-time efforts of the St. Albans C&O Modelers and Museum as a partner in education, if you will, in preserving and participating in activities at this historic venue. Some ideas have been noted in past columns.

More recently, Bob Osburn, Matt Crouch, and I checked out the wood supply in storage and discussed replacing some trim, sills, and other items. Bob is a woodworker, and his skills will prove invaluable to the process. We have not set a date to begin, but that will come about in the near future. Other areas from painting, to contributing money, volunteering time to clean up or participating in railroad related activities have been mentioned.

I believe the members of SACOMM and Division 9 feel, with this latest disaster, the time has come to work together and extend the realm of the good works done so far and go to the next level. Perhaps we can expand the scope of educational outreach to numerous groups through a variety of activities. I will throw out some thoughts here prior to the meetings on July 13 when more discussions will occur.

We have been working on a display stand much like those seen in museums or at trade shows where photographs, diagrams, and other railroad items may be placed for public viewing. A series of "question-and-answer," cabinet door-style boxes might be built as an interactive activity. More artifacts might be available to add to what is already in the collection. Some of these items might be posted on the web site of both groups as a historic component for information and study.

We have seen success in Dennis' presentation of the "Locomotive Engineer" as well as Matt's "Conductor" reenactment. Reading of the "Polar Express" and other experiences such as tours and open houses were popular.

Are there more things that can be done, and what can the members of "The Coal Division" do to help?

One crazy idea popped into my head the other day: playing railroad games. Several of us always enjoyed the board game "Rail Baron." We, also, liked the "Southern Fast Freight" game which was produced by the railroad as an advertisement. At one time I had the computer game called "Railroad Tycoon." This was like "Sim-City" where the player built a railroad empire. Matt tells me that the C&O/B&O game is at the depot. Perhaps, we could set up areas where the public could come to the station and play these games as a change-of-pace to the modern, fast-paced life style.

Now, I have a murder mystery game set in the dining car of the Pullman limited. Might this be an experience we could provide in which the public could procure tickets (either free or purchased) and arrive at the depot to ride our simulated dinner train complete with table cloths, club-style sandwiches, and other related appointments, as well as, solve the "who-done-it?"

C&O Historical Society founder and president emeritus, Tom Dixon, has written a couple of short plays on railroad subjects. I have been working on a booklet (to accompany the plays) describing some easily-made props and backdrops, so production is possible in the near future. A couple of our guys have expressed an interest in acting in these stories. Again, tickets can be made available for one or more plays over a weekend of evening and matinee performances.

Hands-on seminars for kids has been noted, by the Australian NMRA region, where supplies and instructions were provided to guide the children in the scenery-making process on a 12 inch x 12 inch piece of foam board. I have a number of old box cars we might use in a similar fashion to teach weathering. Other areas may be added to the list.

Don't forget the N scale layout and a possible switching contest all of which are in the offing. These would be great for an open house, tour, etc.

Put on your "thinking caps," as they say, and see what you can add to the list. Some of you may be more comfortable with cleaning up and setting out chairs than in acting or building. That's ok...there is a job and a place for everyone. We just need to get started. Let's get involved!

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.

| | |
|-----------|--------------|
| August | July 29 |
| September | September 2 |
| October | September 30 |
| November | October 28 |
| December | December 2 |
| January | December 30 |
| February | January 27 |

MEETING NOTICE

Our July meeting will be a barbecue meal prior to our business meeting. The date is Saturday, July 13th and the location is the C&O Depot at St. Albans. The barbecue will kick off at noon with the business meeting to follow at 2PM. If you have not previously signed up to bring something, please consider bringing a salad, side dish or dessert.

As Paul notes below, the raffle will be back for the July meeting. The July contest category is off line structures, please bring your favorite such project. It will good to get back to our home venue, please seriously consider Gary's comments about us getting more active in preserving the building and it's related activities.

RAFFLE REPORT

Paul Lapointe

After a two-month vacation, we return to St. Albans and the raffle is back!

We've got several freight cars and lots of books! Model Railroad Planning and Great Model Railroads An-

nuals covering several years and always full of great ideas! Also prototype books about Cabooses and other subjects.

Remember we're always looking for more donations!

The Reminiscences of David Robinette

As we lived along the N&W at Pounding Mill, VA we would see some of the neighbors walking the tracks in winter. They would walk west over four or five bridges and wait for a slow moving coal train. As the train went by slowly they would hobo it (Editor's note; This means jumping on to a moving train and is extremely dangerous and illegal. The railroads do not even allow their trained employees to get on or off moving equipment any longer. Don't try it!) The train was on a grade with several curves which kept speed down. At this time coal trains would have various sizes of coal in different hoppers. The folks riding the cars would find a car with large lump coal and roll the big pieces over the side of the car. As they got closer to home they just pushed as much coal to the ground as they could. The pieces hitting the ground often broke into smaller bits making it easier to handle later. Depending on the train speed and the weather; they would work between three and five cars. After the train passed the depot they would jump off and walk back home. Sacks and buckets were produced to harvest the coal along the right of way and children would often accompa-

ny their parents in gathering the coal. Often, in winter, they used sleds to make it easier to get the coal up the hills to their homes. This was one way some folks were able to cook and stay warm in the winter.

The coal still rolls along the former N&W Clinch Valley Subdivision. Here we see empties rolling back to



the mines passing through Tazewell, VA. The train will soon be passing through Pounding Mill, boy-

hood home of David Robinette and scene of his story above. Digital photo by Dan Mulhearn

NMRA InfoNet News

Tom Draper

Welcome to the InfoNet-News For June, 2013

A message from Stephen Priest, MMR - NMRA RAC Director

As I near the end of my term as Regional Advisory Council Director, I wish to share with the NMRA membership some of my experiences. This position, often referred to as "the RAC," is responsible for providing a conduit between the NMRA Board of Directors and the Regions. That is to say, this board position was set up to provide the Regions with a contact person who will work to establish and maintain an open door to the concerns, issues, and ideas of the Regions. I have enjoyed meeting many Region presidents and talking to them personally at conventions and meets. I have also enjoyed talking with them on the phone and through e-mails.

What has surprised me the most is the great divide, a polarization if you will, between different presidents and Regions. Some Region presidents enjoy getting involved in the NMRA at a National level, and some really want to be simply left alone. In a nutshell, a "one approach fits all" methodology really does not work. There are Regions out there that wish to carry out activities without any involvement from National; others desire to be actively engaged at the National level. My challenge has been to provide good representation for the Regions, bringing their concerns and questions to the board, during board meetings and between meetings when appropriate. I will not pretend that I understand all issues and concerns -- there is no single consensus on approach or any issue. What I have tried to do is be approachable -- my work with the NMRA Magazine makes me easy to find. Several Region presidents have called and voiced concerns; I have taken those concerns to the board and we have worked toward solutions. Disappointingly, most presidents have been silent.

While serving on the board, I have attempted to represent the membership by making sound decisions that effect how the NMRA allocates its resources, time, and efforts. I am not of the mindset that all we can do is "hold out" for as long as we can. On the contrary, I see a great future for the NMRA and model railroading in general. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve. It has truly been a pleasure.

Stephen M. Priest, MMR
NMRA RAC Director

Atlanta National Train Show Update

The Atlanta National Train Show (NTS) has to date already sold more booths than either of the last two train shows in Grand Rapids and Sacramento. 283 booths (96.9% of available booths) have been sold so far for the Atlanta NTS.

The Atlanta NTS is being held in all four halls (A, B, C and D) of the Cobb Galleria Centre in 144,000 square feet of space.

There is 40,665 square feet of the hall area devoted to modular layouts with 23 different modular layout groups participating in the show. Scales represented are HO, N, S, O, On30, Z, G, TT, 7.5" and LEGO.

The Train Show dates and times are as follows:

Friday, 07-19-13 – 9 am – Noon – Convention Attendees and Trade only. Noon – 6 pm – General Public
Saturday, 07-20-13 – 10 am to 6 pm – General Public
Sunday, 07-21-13 – 10 am to 5 pm – General Public

General Public Ticket prices are:

Adult - \$12.00
Senior (65 and over) - \$11.00
Child (6 – 12) - \$6.00
Under 6 – Free
2 Day Adult - \$22.00

Tom Draper – HLM, DSA, FA
Chairman – National Train Show.

Regards,

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

Editor's note: Yes, Tom wears many hats, that's not a typo. This report was heavily edited to remove out of date content. Unfortunately, it usually arrives a few days after Up The Holler goes out. This one got to us June 12 and was full of updates on the Atlanta convention, by now it's moot as your plans are already made or you are not going. It also had a piece on the Testors paint issue which has already been well publicized. Perhaps the July issue will have more relevant content that we can print in August.

TRAVELS WITH DENNIS

Dennis McGeeney

Talk about miracles happening; On June 8th our Coal Division trip on the Hocking Valley was successful beyond our imagination. We had paid to have two cabooses added to the regular tourist passenger train. But, the crew at the Hocking Valley outdid us. They provided our own special train with three restored cabooses pulled by a side-rod GE 45 ton diesel!



we enjoyed the beautiful scenery including a re-stored canal lock. Many of us, especially the children, had never ridden in a caboose and we got to ride in the cupolas as well as the end platforms providing a wonderful view and a once in a lifetime experience. At Logan we took the siding to meet the regular train which proceeded south. Once the regular train had cleared we got to observe our locomotive running around our train for the return trip to Nelsonville.

We had perfect weather for the entire day and many of our attending members, friends and families got to spend time visiting the HV gift shop, the Rocky Gear Outlet, the antique fair in the town square and some of the nicer restaurants in the area. Our sincere thanks to the volunteer crews of the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway for what they did for us to provide a perfect day with them on the Coal Division caboose special.

All photos by John Harris



After a wonderful buffet at the Rocky Gear Outlet; where we were joined by David and Nathan Robinette; our Coal Division Extra departed the depot for the shops of the railroad. Again, thanks to the efforts of the HV folks, the wheel chair bound David Robinette was able to join us for the ride. We got a tour of the shops including a look at the under restoration steam locomotive. While at the shops the regular train passed us heading for Robbins Crossing. When it returned, heading for Logan, our train proceeded to Robbins Crossing. This is a restored 1840 village complete with costumed citizens and artisans. The train paused for one half hour to allow us to visit the village and then we were off for Logan, OH. On the way



LET'S TAKE A TRIP ON AMTRAK

Dennis McGeeney

Amtrak has been around since May 1, 1971 serving routes all over the USA as well as three cities in Canada. Coaches feature comfortable seating with plenty of leg room, 110 volt outlets handy, rest rooms, water dispensers, big windows to enjoy the scenery and many other amenities depending upon the particular train. Most trains also offer sleeping and dining cars as well as upgraded coach service on corridor and short distance trains. Most Amtrak trains run on smooth ribbon rail, with a smoother ride than you can get on the interstate.



It is amazing how many people have never had the opportunity to ride Amtrak. My son, his two sons and several employees of the local ambulance service had been discussing this fact. The upshot of our discussion was to take a ride on Amtrak. On a Wednesday morning we all met at Thurmond, WV to catch Amtrak train 51, The Cardinal, on its journey from Chicago, IL to New York, NY. While awaiting the train we took time to tour the Thurmond depot which has been beautifully restored by the National Park Service. An NPS employee was on duty to show off the depot and explain the history of this storied railroad town.



Once on board, we enjoyed the priceless scenery of the New River Gorge, the Greenbrier River and the climb over the Alleghenies to Clifton Forge, VA. While enjoying the ride we were able to walk to the food service car which serves snacks, sandwiches, all types of drinks including alcoholic beverages and on this particular train also serves breakfast, lunch and dinner at appropriate times of day. On arrival at Clifton Forge we had about four hours to enjoy the town and the C&O Heritage Center before boarding Amtrak number 50 back to Thurmond. We enjoyed a fine meal at a restaurant in town, where the above picture of myself with my son and grandsons was taken in front of a CSX mural on the restaurant wall. After an enjoyable time at Clifton Forge we boarded 50 for the two hour and forty minute trip back to Thurmond. This was an all daylight trip, and what a great way to spend a day out! Everyone of the group was overwhelmed with the enjoyment of riding Amtrak. Give it a try if you haven't done it!

Photo of Amtrak train at Ada, WV by Dan Mulhearn 11/20/2011

Group photo by JanCare Ambulance employee

MOVING SALE

Coal Division member Dwight Sherman and his wife Marilyn will be moving south shortly to be closer to their daughters. Alas, his railroad will very soon be history. The good news is that Dwight will be having a professionally managed moving sale that includes the model railroad equipment. We will have a more complete description of what will be available as well as di-

rections in the next issue of this newsletter. In the meantime, put Monday August 12 from 5:30pm to 7:30pm on your calendar. We'll explain the reasons for what seem to be odd hours next time. We will also make an effort to have a list of available items to make your shopping most efficient.

MY WORD

Dan Mulhearn, Editor

First off, this month, I want to thank Dennis McGeeney for the tremendous amount of time and effort he put into making our Hocking Valley trip such a wonderful day. I do wonder who he knows to get the weather he has gotten on both of the trips he has set up. Also, thanks Dennis for taking the time to write up that trip, and the Clifton Forge trip written about below. I hope you understand that I often have to edit them for space and clarity to fit in the newsletter. Some of you other folks out there might want to take a try at writing up a train trip, an op session, a product review or a how—to article.

Meanwhile, back in the basement, the Clinch Valley Sub is coming along nicely. The five track staging yard representing Norton/St. Paul VA is completely wired

through a 16 block detection device. This will allow future signal and CTC operation using a computer and JMIRI Panel Pro software (if I ever figure it out). Above staging, the George Branch is entirely in and wired including the two track Tazewell Lumber COOP tracks. I am now about to start on the track for the mine which is the main customer on the branch. The branch terminates in a main track and passing siding which will allow for nineteen fifty foot coal car trains to pull up the main and allow the locomotive to cross over and run around to the rear to work the mine. The more I get done, the more enthusiastic I get! At the end of July the C&O Historical Society is having its convention here at Pipestem. I am hoping to get things cleaned up downstairs to be able to invite people over to see my progress. That's called motivation! Meanwhile I am looking forward to Atlanta this month.



Railroads get into some really tough neighborhoods and I am sure this is one Dennis was familiar with when he was running on the Reading. RDG 5210 is leading a southbound freight out of Reading, PA with interchange traffic for the B&O. Here it is passing by the entrance to B&O's South Philadelphia yard. The train will pull by the yard entrance and a B&O yard job will grab the train from the rear and yard it then place the caboose on whatever RDG traffic they have. The RDG crew and units will then take their train back north. Even though I was a New York police officer and not legally entitled to carry my service revolver in PA: I was glad I had it with me this day. Photo spring 1968 by Dan Mulhearn

WORKING ON THE READING LINES


Dennis McGeeney

As an engineer on the Reading, part of my duties was the proper use of the engine whistle or horn signals. With the advent of sound equipped decoders on our DCC model layouts we can duplicate these horn or whistle signals. The signals prescribed are illustrated by “o” for a short sound and “—” for a long sound. The sound of the whistle or horn should be distinct, with intensity and duration proportionate to the distance the signal is to be conveyed. With minor exceptions, most railroads use similar whistle signals.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| o | Apply brakes, stop |
| — — | Release brakes, proceed |
| o o o — | Member of crew protect head end of train from trains moving in opposite direction |
| — o o o | Member of crew protect rear of train |
| — — — — | Member of crew may return from west. Where two or more main tracks are in service the proper track number will be designated by adding the number of short sounds corresponding to that track number. For example if a flagman were to the west of his train protecting the train which is on track two the engineer would call in the flag by sounding four longs followed by two shorts indicating track number two. |
| — — — — — | Member of crew may return from east. Where two or more main tracks are in service the track number is indicated in the same manner as illustrated above. It should be noted that east and west is not a geographical designation but is the railroad designation as delineated in the employee timetable. Other railroads may be designated as north—south. |
| o o | Answer to any signal not otherwise provided for |
| o o o | When standing, back up |
| o — — | Answer to a signal or combination of signals indicating train order to be picked up |
| o o o o | Call for signals, in other words you in the tower wake up and give me the route |
| — — o — | Approaching public crossing at grade; to be prolonged or repeated until crossing is occupied or when a trackman’s portable whistle sign is encountered |
| o — | Inspect train for air leak or sticking brake Repeated succession of short sounds Alarm for persons or livestock on track |
| — o | When running against the current of traffic; 1) approaching station, curves or other locations where view may be obscured, 2) approaching passenger or freight trains or when passing freight trains |
| o o — | Answer to stop signal |
| o o o o o o | Request to enter shop or repair track during working hours of shop or repair employees |

Think of all the enjoyment which could be added to the running of your model trains by incorporating these whistle signals in your operations. You may want to print cards for your train crews with these signals so they might be able to utilize them. Many of the whistle signals which communicated information between train crew members, train crews and tower operators, etc have been supplanted in the modern era by radio communications; but they are still in the rule book and may still be utilized. If your layout is in the steam era you surely will want to use these signals.

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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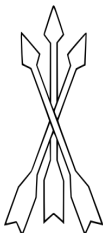


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An Appalachian Coal Hauling Railroad set in the 50's



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



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Upcoming Coal Division Events

July 13

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

August 10

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

September 14

**Mark Maynard's Home
Portsmouth, OH**

October 12

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