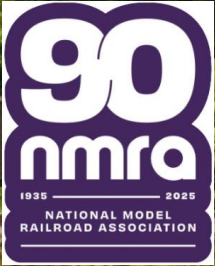




UP THE HOLLER



DIVISION 9, MID CENTRAL REGION, NMRA

January 2026

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FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Sam Delauter, Superintendent

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As has become the yearly tradition for the Coal Division, the December meeting saw the completion of the Memorial Challenge. This year the Memorial Challenge featured the ITLA Models Olympia Tool and Die Company kit. As in past challenges, this has given us yet another opportunity to learn a lot and try something new. With all of the members that completed the kits, it looks like that was accomplished. We owe Robert Osburn a debt of gratitude for his work running the challenge for the last nine years. This is always a highlight of the year. A new addition this year at the December meeting was a small T-TRAK layout coordinated by Matt Kearns and Herb Parsons. This proved to be a great success and was a nice addition to the meeting. I would also like to thank everyone that provided refreshments at the meeting. While we did not have a business meeting, I had a great time at the meeting. It felt more like a Holiday get together allowing plenty of time for fellowship and discussion of the Memorial Challenge.

While there was no business meeting in December, I did mention some upcoming business. In January we will need to fill the position of Nominations Chair. Please consider running for the position or a nomination of another Coal Division member. Once the office has been filled, the new chairman will need to take nominations for the offices of Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. At the December meeting Bill Stowe announced he will not be running for re-election. He will say a bit more about it in his article but I would like to thank him for his service while holding office.

Looking a little farther ahead, The KVRA Train Show in Charleston, WV will be February 14th and 15th. We will have the T-TRAK and the NMRA booth at the show. Please make plans to attend the show and help with the displays.

The January Coal Division meeting will be held at the St. Albans Historical Society. Jerry Doyle will be giving the clinic and the contest will be Modelers Choice. The doors open at noon and the meeting will start at 1:00 pm. I hope to see you there.

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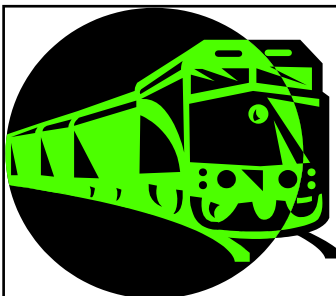
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Coal Division Monthly Railfun Event

11:00 AM Saturday January 10

St. Albans Historical Society Division Membership Meeting

Time: Jan 10, 2026 12:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84329176847>
Meeting ID: 843 2917 6847

- **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 will be the clinician**

**Next Meeting
February 14, 2026**

FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Bill Stowe, Assistant Superintendent

At the December meeting I announced that I will not be putting my name forward for nomination for a second term as assistant superintendent, due to personal reasons. If you would be interested in putting your name forward for this role I would encourage you to reach out to Sam, pending the identification of the new nomination chairperson. And of course I would be glad to answer any questions on the role that you might have.

With regards to the library, I donated the Model Railroader DVDs to the St. Alban's library in December. I will bring the NMRA DVDs to a future meeting to see if members wish to take some. Those remaining will be placed in the garbage.

CLINICS

Randy Allio MMR®, Clinics Chair

Clinic Schedule for 2026

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ January: Jerry Doyle ◆ February: Robert Osburn ◆ March: David Oliverio ◆ April: Open ◆ May: Open ◆ June: Don Cipolla, Prototype Modeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ July: Randy Allio, Tips for building Craftsman kits ◆ August: Open ◆ September: Mark Maynard ◆ October: Mini Clinics ◆ November: Open ◆ December: Challenge |
|---|--|

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 coming year.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February: February 2 • March: March 2 • April: March 30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May: April 27 • June: June 1 • July: June 29 • August: July 27 • September: August 31 • October: September 28 |
|---|--|

CONTEST

Don Cipolla MMR® and Mark Maynard Contest Chairs

December 2025 Memorial Challenge

The December Challenge was building an Olympia Tool & Die laser cut kit. 13.5 entries were displayed – Mark Maynard made a last minute substitution!

The January contest category is: Modelers Choice.

The February contest category is: Steam Locomotives.

2026	Monthly Model Contest
January	Modeler's Choice
February	Steam Locomotives
March	Locomotives 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	Annual Memorial Modeling Challenge



Randy Allio MMR

Jim Moon





Jerry Doyle



Dale Osburn

Tony Puccini





Herb Parsons



Bob Mershimer



Robert Osburn



Matt Kearns



David Oliverio



Nathan Dollison



John Harris



Sam Delauter



Mark Maynard

T-TRAK

Herb Parsons, T-TRAK Chair

We set up a T-TRAK layout for our Christmas party using nine modules supplied by Robert Osburn, Don Cipolla, Sam Delauter, Matt Kearns, Tony Puccini, and Herb Parsons. Matt Kearns and Bob Mershimer brought trains to run during the party. Thanks to everyone who participated.

The Kanawha Valley Railroad Association will be sponsoring the 20th annual Model Train and Craft Show February 14 & 15, 2026 at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. The hours are for Saturday Feb. 14 - 10:00 am to 6:00 pm and Sunday Feb. 15 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. We will setup a T-TRAK layout during the show. Contact me if you want to include your modules so that I

can plan the layout. If you want to include your modules, but cannot be there for the set up, let me know or bring your module to the January meeting and we will arrange to transport them to the show.

During NRail's December ZOOM TRAK meeting, they interviewed the organizer of the National T-TRAK layout, Bruce Arbo. Mr. Arbo stated that there will be 1400 modules, 1800 single equivalent modules. Mr. Arbo said that the layout will be several actual miles long and that anyone who can run a train from a starting point and back to that point without having to take a restroom break will receive an award.

Passenger Manifest

John Harris, Membership Chair

Starting the second quarter of the 21st century seems a bit anticlimactic. It is certainly quieter than the beginning of the millennium but that is perhaps a good thing. 2025 seems to be ready to bow out gracefully with little fanfare. For the Coal Division and NMRA 2025 was perhaps a bit more eventful.

We again had a year of very informative clinics aimed at increasing members modeling skills and were able to visit several home layouts across the Division and see first-hand how some of those modeling skills transformed into realistic model railroads. I really appreciate our member's willingness to open up their homes and share their railroads. I am sure everyone gets inspiration and perhaps a "take away" or two on how they might do something for their layout.

The Coal Division was also able to schedule a railfan trip to the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and see some steam action on a full sized railroad. I for one really like to see how these full sized behemoths really worked back in the day. The sheer size and complexity of these 2-6-6-2 locomotives is in itself awesome. I have two similar locomotives on my layout and I tend to forget just how large the real ones actually were. Sure, we do a reasonable job of recreating the sound with sound decoders, but you cannot capture the rumble, nor the smell of burning coal. (Perhaps someday there will be a wireless connection to a floor mounted sub-woofer) maybe even someday the Ol-factory Airs will return with the smell of smoking coal.

The 90th year celebration for the National Model Railroad Association was perhaps as good as any other division sponsored. I did not see publicity for any other division that had both a picnic and cake. Granted, we do that every year, just not with the cake.

Again, the Coal Division was treated to another great Gary Burdette Memorial Challenge with the help of Bob Osburn and the folks at ITLA Scale Models. The variety of options for putting this craftsman kit together made for some very creative solutions. While we all started with the same kit in either HO or N scale the resulting models were all different. What was particularly rewarding for me as membership chair, was to see the overall quality of the memberships modeling skill improve over the last few years. Not that I had anything to do with it, but it just points out one of the great benefits to NMRA membership, particularly membership in the Coal Division.

I have long been a proponent of providing our members with reasons to belong. I think thru the efforts of our leadership and volunteers, we truly do add value to NMRA membership. The events for the Division over the past year illustrate that value added. While membership for the Division has declined a bit over the past year, our attendance in monthly meetings is up. We seem to routinely have a 40 to 45% rate of attendance, which I feel is phenomenal considering the large geographic area the Coal Division covers. Some of our regulars travel 2 hours to get to a meeting. Some may think that is too far to travel to attend a Regional Convention.

I think as I look back over 2025, we are very fortunate to have the commitment from everyone, top to bottom; officers, chairs, volunteers and the general membership alike to make this group of modelers a success. Thanks to all that contributed and participated. May 2026 only improve these benefits of membership and make the Coal division even stronger.

My Word

Bob Weinheimer MMR®

It was very satisfying to see the level of activity in the 2025 Challenge. My mobility issues kept me from being there but putting the photos into the newsletter showed me quite a bit of talent in the Division.

Those mobility issues continue and I don't expect to physically attend meetings for a couple of months but I plan to participate virtually.

I am cautiously optimistic that there might be light at the end of my mobility tunnel but I won't hear more about that until a few days after the January Division meeting.

While editing this issue I noticed that our February meeting coincides with the KVRA train show. I'm sure

how to deal with that will be discussed at the January meeting.

Our Vision 2035 work continues. There will be a survey of Division leadership about how they and their Region management view the effectiveness of the various Divisions. The idea is to improve things that might not be well done and to highlight at a higher level good things being done at the Division level. Think of our Memorial Challenge as one of those things.

While I won't be able to attend the Board meeting, I expect to be represented well by my proxy.

Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's exactly what happens when you participate in the National Model Railroad Association's Achievement Program. One Merit Award here, another there, and pretty soon you're on your way to becoming a Master Model Railroader. All the while learning and having a ton of fun.

The Achievement Program is modelers helping modelers become better modelers and get the most out of their hobby. And it's yet another benefit of NMRA membership.

Visit www.nmra.org.
Then improve your
skills. And your hobby.



We make it even more fun.

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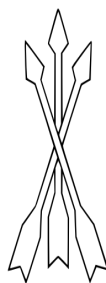
CRUSTY
MOUNTAIN
AND
WILOBY
SPRINGS R.R.

Mark Maynard, President
 Portsmouth, OH



CRESCENT VALLEY

Jerry Doyle, President
 Barboursville, WV

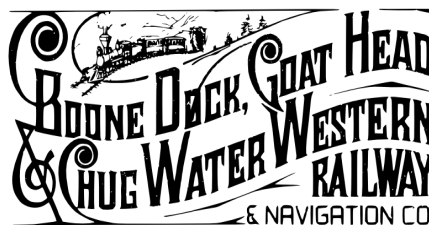


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Under Construction

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

**December 13
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Albans, WV**

**February 14, 2026
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Albans, WV**

**March 14, 2026
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Albans, WV**

**April 11 2026
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Albans, WV**

**May 9, 2026
Location to be determined**

**June 13, 2026
Don Cipolla's home
Hurricane, WV**