

  
**THE *Keystone Flyer***  
 MCR  
 Div. 2  
 January 2021 Vol. 63, Issue 01

Mark Vinski captured this stark image in June 1974. It beautifully contrasts the 3-year old US Steel Building towering over the Pittsburgh skyline with the sleek Amtrak Engine No. 590, an SDP40F pulling passengers eastbound out of town. The haze of the dusk lend an eerie glow to the lights, and I like how the headlights and lone light on the hillside above the station are refracted into 6-pointed stars, and I assume Mark used a filter to help to achieve this striking and balanced photo. Thank you to Mark for sharing this picture with us, and congratulations too, for this photo won First Place in the November Bring-n-Brag contest. There were other good photos entered in that contest, which results in 2-way and 3-way ties for Second and Third Place. See details on page 3.



Photo by Mark Vinski

### Meeting Schedule

**January 17, 2021** - Division 2 Meeting, 2:30pm  
 Zoom Online Meeting  
 Program: Jimmy Braum, East Broad Top RR

**February 21, 2021** - Division 2 Meeting, 2:30pm  
 Zoom Online Meeting  
 Program: TBA

### Bring'n'Brag

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| Jan | Anything goes                             |
| Feb | Motive Power: Diesel, Electric & Traction |
| Mar | Motive Power: Steam                       |
| Apr | Freight Cars                              |
| May | MCR Convention *Cancelled*                |
| Jun | Non-Revenue (incl. cabooses)              |
| Aug | Passenger Cars                            |
| Sep | Vehicles                                  |
| Oct | Structures                                |
| Nov | Prototype Photos                          |

**Submission Deadline for next *Flyer*:**  
**January 24, 2021**

Visit us online at  
[keystonedivision.org](http://keystonedivision.org)

Get the Color Version of the Keystone Flyer — as well as Online Extras — as soon as it comes out and other Division 2 news flashes and announcements via email. Contact Susan Werner:

[swerner48@yahoo.com](mailto:swerner48@yahoo.com)



## From the Super's Desk

January 2021? I just got used to writing 2020 on my checks.

I hope that everyone got to safely enjoy the holidays. My family and I were able to watch our grandchildren open their Christmas gifts through FaceTime. Not quite the same as being there in person but better than nothing.

With the virus still not under control, the Division will continue holding our meetings virtually. We have certainly missed our in-person meetings. Beginning with the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, all Division members are invited to virtually participate. Many other Divisions have been meeting this way and it is time for us to follow suit. We will be using Zoom as the media platform. Zoom is free to participants and has built-in passwords and waiting rooms for security. The Division is paying a nominal annual fee to host Zoom meetings. Susan Werner will send out a link in an email to the membership.

Andrew Blenko and several other members have been working on being able to present programs after the meetings, as we did in person. On January 17, Jimmy Braum will present a program on the East Broad Top Railroad. We are looking forward to this new format, not quite the same as being there in person but certainly better than nothing.

Please join us for our January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and Jimmy's presentation.

Stay safe,

... *Frank Benders*

### VIRTUAL PROGRAM ON THE EBT

This month, Jimmy Braum is presenting a program after the Zoom meeting on the East Broad Top Railroad and its planned return to tourist service. You will be able to watch the program online, and if you are on Susan's mailing list, you will receive the dial-in details. There may be an opportunity to watch it on the Division Two website [[www.keystonedivision.org](http://www.keystonedivision.org)] after the fact, similar to a podcast, if you cannot watch it live on Zoom.



### AP: Remote Model Evaluation

Dennis Vaccaro reports that during the pandemic you can still have your models evaluated for the Achievement Program. He has provided all of the details, which you can find online at the [Division Two website](http://www.keystonedivision.org) or [download directly with this link](#). It is also reproduced below and appended as page 10 to the online version of this issue of the *Keystone Flyer*.

### Division Elected Officers

#### Superintendent

Frank Benders  
(304) 296-2318  
fbenders@comcast.net

#### Asst. Superintendent, Meetings & Programs

Andy Blenko  
awblenko@comcast.net

#### Chief Clerk

George Pandelios  
(717) 503-3192  
gpandelios@verizon.net

### Division Appointed Officers

#### Treasurer

Jeff Gregg  
(724) 348-5855  
jwg625@comcast.net

#### Company Store

Susan Werner  
(724) 379-8584  
swerner48@yahoo.com

#### Achievement Program

Dennis Vaccaro  
(724) 929-2190  
vaccaro\_dennis@yahoo.com

#### Bring'n'Brag

Arely Mitchell  
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#### Webmaster & Membership

Tom Gaus  
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webmaster@keystonedivision.org

#### Keystone Flyer Editor

Patrick Altdorfer  
(412) 559-3079  
patrick.altdorfer@gmail.com

#### Jamboree Committee

Grier Kuehn gekuehn@comcast.net  
Neal Schorr naskss@yahoo.com  
Jim Sacco ctyclsses@aol.com

#### Module Committees

FreeMo (HO scale) group  
Patrick Altdorfer patrick.altdorfer@gmail.com  
  
T-Trak (N scale) group  
Richie Jodon richjodon30@gmail.com  
Jimmy Braum jimmy\_braum@yahoo.com

The *Keystone Flyer* is published ten times a year by Division Two of the National Model Railroad Association, Mid-Central Region. Subscription to the *Flyer* is included with your NMRA membership and sent via e-mail directly to each member who chooses to receive the newsletter in this format. Alternatively, you may also read the *Flyer* online, or download a copy onto your computer or mobile device by navigating to the link on the Division Two website [[www.keystonedivision.org](http://www.keystonedivision.org)]. Members without internet access or an e-mail address may request a printed copy from the Division; please send your name, address, and phone number to: Patrick Altdorfer, Editor, 6333 Morrowfield Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Pike ads are available to publicize your home or club model rail empires for a \$15.00 yearly fee. You may supply artwork or have it produced by the editor for a nominal fee. Pike ads are also posted in full color on the Division website.

# Bring'n'Brag

November 2020

Hello everyone!!

I first want to apologize to Alden McBee as his entry was inadvertently left out of the point totals for last month. He won too! I have no excuse.

This month's topic was **Prototype Photos**. I expected a lot of entries and was not disappointed—there were ten, and all of them were very good. In order of entry:

1. Buffer Car, by Grier Kuehn. Grier did a great job capturing a typical buffer car. Normally these cars (what I've seen on the WLE anyhow) are really "broken in." This one certainly is, and it  tied  for **Second Place**.



2. Amtrak SDP40F 590, by Mark Vinski (cover photo). Mark snagged a great night shot in Pittsburgh. This entry was voted **First Place**.



3. UP 9417, by Neal Schorr. Neal nailed a great shot of this engine coming out from under a bridge in Kansas City. This entry also  tied  for **Second Place**.

4. SD35 Helpers, by Alden McBee. I knew without looking that this was one of Alden's pictures, he and I have travelled to the West End several times. Great job, Alden!!

5. CSX SW1500, by Jeff Gregg. It seems odd that a SW1500 would be leading a couple of newer much more powerful units but the proof is in the picture! Nice job, Jeff!

6. Ligonier Valley 0-6-0 Switcher, by Jim Ferguson. Jim shared a picture of this old girl from a few years ago. This entry  tied  for **Third Place**.

7. Clark Bar Trolley, by Jim Sacco. Jim shared a picture of the trolley painted like a Clark Bar. The Clark Bar was one of my favorites when I could still eat chocolate. While this brings back some great memories it



# Arley Mitchell

may be a bit tough to digest though. This entry  tied  for **Third Place**.

8. Blast Furnaces, by George Pandelios. George captured a nice clean shot of the Blast Furnaces at Weirton Steel. At one time there were 5 of these in operation here, if I'm not mistaken. Progress has resulted in all of these being leveled and now just vacant property. Who would've thought this would ever happen? Nice work, George!

9. UP 4012, by Tom Gaus. Tom shared a picture of this locomotive at Steamtown in 2008. This entry  tied  for **Third Place**.



10. Station Square, by Fred Metting. Fred went into a lot of detail in his description, which I'm not going to repeat, but this entry also  tied  for **Third Place**.

Congratulations everyone for all of your efforts!! Everyone did an awesome job. December is our off month, we'll all be back in January!! The contest categories will not change for next year, so let's see what everyone can come up with.

Until then, stay healthy and safe!

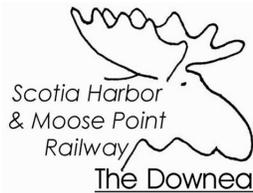
Arley Mitchell

## 2020 BRING N BRAG FINAL STANDINGS



	Name	pts	Name	pts
<b>Modeler of the Year:</b>	<u>Jim Ferguson</u>	20	Alden McBee	3
<b>Second Place:</b>	<u>Grier Kuehn</u>	16	Mark Vinski	3
<b>1st Runner Up:</b>	<u>Fred Metting</u>	10	Tom Gaus	1
<b>2nd Runner Up:</b>	<u>Neal Schorr</u>	5	Mike DeSensi	1
	Julius Fair	3	Arley Mitchell	1

January's contest is **Anything Goes**. **Submit** your entry (photo and description) **NOW** through Saturday, January 9 at 12 noon to [tom@tomgaus.com](mailto:tom@tomgaus.com), then send your vote to [arleymitchell@frontier.com](mailto:arleymitchell@frontier.com) by **Sunday, Jan. 17 at 1pm**. Good luck everyone!



Susan Werner, CEO  
292 Salem Church Rd.  
Belle Vernon, PA 15012  
swerner48@yahoo.com

### Cumberland and Lake Erie Railroad



"The Laurel Ridge Route"

D. E. Baker, V.P. of Operations  
118 Laurlis Lane, Johnstown, PA 15904 dbakerr@aol.com



### HUNTINGDON NORTHERN RAILWAY



"THE ALLEGHENY ROUTE"

R.J. Prehoda, Operations Manager

Serving Southwestern Pennsylvania with connections to:  
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### Turtle Creek Railroad

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Ken Hanawalt (724) 941-3186  
email: TurtleCreekRailroad@verizon.net

Snappy Service

### FREEMPORT AND CONEMAUGH The Yellowjacket Line



### SALTSBURG AND SLICKVILLE

Serving PA Coal Country

Robert Livrone, Owner/Operator Lower Burrell, PA



### PRR Panhandle Division



George Pandellos Chief Engineer  
Member: NMRA, TCA, PRRT&HS  
717.503.3192 gpandelios@verizon.net



The ASPEN SUB along the B&O  
from Morgantown to Keyser

Keith and Janet DeVault  
546 Aspen Street, Morgantown, WV  
(304) 276-2509 devaultkj@comcast.net



Richard H. Flock, CEO

\*\* Rest in Peace \*\*



### Blacklog & Shade Gap Eastern Railroad

Vagel Keller, Gen'l. Manager  
vckeller@comcast.net

Follow our construction progress online at:  
[http://www.railroad-line.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=22893](http://www.railroad-line.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=22893)



### PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD NORTH JERSEY BRANCH

John W. Wesner  
Owner & Chief Engineer  
3844 Henley Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15235  
412-731-7393 wesnerj@asme.org



### PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD MIDDLE DIVISION

Hey kids, you too can be a fan of the  
great Standard Railroad of the World!

Neal A. Schorr - Owner & Chief Engineer



### LEBANON VALLEY RR

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Phineas T. Foonman, Emperor and CEO

Jim Ferguson (412) 561-5203  
email: drfergie44@gmail.com

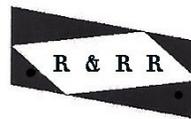


### BALTIMORE & OHIO WESTERN MARYLAND Consolidated Rail System



with connections to P&LE, PRR, C&O, EL, NYC

Chief Engineer John Bennett  
Phone: (814) 241-5547  
Johnstown, PA



### Rutland & Rock Ridge

232 Old Farm Road  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066

Haulin' Black Diamonds

Fred Roney, President  
fredron@zoominternet.net



### FORKS RIDGE RAILWAY



Gary P. Nastase - President & CEO  
Kathleen A. Nastase - Train Wifey ... R.I.P.  
207 State Street  
Woodbury, PA 16695  
gnastase02jo@gmail.com

Route of the  
Whitetail

### THE O.R.N. Ry BUNCH

15  
LAYOUTS  
AND  
GROWING  
N-HO-O-G



CONTACT  
JOEL EVERLY  
(740) 282-9854  
NEW MEMBERS  
WELCOME

OHIO RIVER NORTHERN RAILWAY CLUB

## November 15, 2020 Business Meeting

The special virtual executive meeting was gaveled open by Superintendent Frank Benders at 2:32 PM. He thanked Dennis Vaccaro for hosting the meeting via GoToMeeting.

Present: Patrick Altdorfer, Frank Benders, Andy Blenko, Jimmy Braum, Dennis Coglianese, Keith DeVault, Tom Gaus, Jeff Gregg, Mike Hohn, Richie Jodon, Grier Kuehn, Arley Mitchell, George Pandelios, Neal Schorr, Dennis Vaccaro, Susan Werner, Jim Whipple.

Prior to the start of business topic discussions Frank noted the passing of Dick Flock and recognized his positive influence, calling him "the sparkplug of the division." Dick was a strong promoter of the RPM meets. He will be missed.

Dennis Vaccaro proposed that Pass-the-Hat could be done virtually using PayPal, which is available on the Division website. Dennis Coglianese indicated that PayPal could be used to transfer money a number of ways (using Credit Cards requires a transaction fee). Dennis Vaccaro stated that a set of buttons (\$2, \$5, \$10) could be created that members could easily just click. PayPal would probably cost \$0.30 / instance + 2.9% transaction fee; it is probable that the Division would not qualify for the Friends & Family category, i.e. free. Susan Werner asked if we actually needed the income, given that the *Keystone Flyer* is now an online publication and that meeting venues do not need to be paid for (donations made to the hosting organization or facility). Dennis indicated that GoToMeeting costs the Division \$20/month or just \$15/month if we did a yearly contract. The general consensus was that, at least for the foreseeable future, an online Pass-The-Hat was not necessary.

An additional and vigorous discussion ensued regarding the various advantages and disadvantages of Zoom and GoToMeeting. The costs of both products were compared (they are comparable). The consensus of the group was that Zoom was more sophisticated and might be more useful for larger groups such as an entire division meeting. Frank asked Andy to meet with Joe Birsa, Dennis Coglianese, and Jim Whipple and come up with a set of recommendations for either Zoom or GoToMeeting as a tool for the Division. He was asked to report prior to the January meeting.

The minutes of the October meeting were accepted as published in *Keystone Flyer* online by acclamation with Susan Werner proposing the motion and Richie Jodon seconding it.

### Committee Reports:

Flyer: Patrick Altdorfer indicated that the new Flyer came out the other day. He reported that the submission deadline for next issue is 12/20. The Flyer will run the obituary for Don Flock; Patrick asked for any additional information. There will be a link to the published obituary in the online *Greensburg Tribune-Review*. He asked Tom Gaus to place the link on the website.

Richie Jodon asked when Flyer ads were due? Patrick responded that January 1<sup>st</sup>. Neal Schorr asked about Pike ads. They are \$15 / year. Please send payment to Jeff Gregg by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Patrick proposed running Dick Flock's ad for another year (in memoriam notation and the removal of contact information). The proposal passed unanimously by acclamation.

Treasurer: Jeff Gregg reported that the division is solvent. Andy Blenko reported no activity in the Convention account.

Programs: Andy Blenko doesn't believe the Division will be holding an in-person meeting until late Spring at the earliest. He is attempting to get Scenic Express to host a meeting perhaps in January or later in the Spring. Mike Hohn indicated that their facility is larger and might allow for social distancing.

A discussion of the attendance and venue regarding the Greenberg Show ensued. Reports indicated that at times people were obeying the rules and at other times disregarding the crowd size limitations.

Company Store: Susan reported that book sales are on-going. She published a new list and there has been some interest. She asked Tom to put the list of books on the division website.

Membership: Tom Gaus reported that we have 206 members. E-mails to dormant members have been sent.

Website: Tom reported that the website is up to date.

Free-Mo: Patrick Altdorfer reported Free-Mo is dormant. He did not put in for the Greenberg Show, and with COVID-19 cases increasing, he doubts there will be another show any time soon.

Bring-N-Brag: This time around there was some confusion as to the voting deadline for Bring-N-Brag. Arley Mitchell also indicated that he is a bit frustrated with the low number of voters. Neal Schorr indicated that voting might be enhanced by opening up the online meeting to the members. Arley reiterated that the submission deadline for B-N-B should be the Saturday 1 week prior to the meeting. Voting will begin the next day (Sunday) with the deadline being the Saturday before the meeting. Susan will send an e-mail advising the membership of the new deadlines and encouraging them to vote. She will use the e-mail Tom created which has a link to the website to view Bring-N-Brag entries.

Video Library: Bud Brock was not present so there was no report.

Achievement Program: Dennis reported that there have been no new submissions, but one member is working on a Structures Certificate. He sent Tom Gaus a synopsis of the remote judging to put on the website, and he is asking Patrick to also put this in the Flyer. The process is very simple; send your

## **Minutes** *(cont'd from page 6)*

paperwork to Dennis or Susan. They will determine a way to do the judging either by video or in person. Susan emphasized that the paperwork for judging is not an option and must be submitted. It was her view that the best way to judge models was in person. Dennis agreed but indicated that remote judging by video is working in Alaska and in Montana and that we should be willing to try it as well given the state of the pandemic.

**T-Trak:** Richie Jodon reported that there is no activity for T-Trak other than members working on their modules at home. However, he did recommend that members visit YouTube and search for "Next Generation X" to see some clinics on scratch-building. Richie has taken photos of the T-Trak modules and is sending them into the T-Trak Group for a virtual tour on YouTube. There were 240 attendees. He also reported that Kato is holding a T-Trak contest on Twitter. You take a photo and send it in; Kato is giving away a large number of prizes.

Jimmy Braum reported that as soon as it is safe, he plans to do a presentation on T-Trak for the DARE Club in Venetia, PA. He thinks that would be a great opportunity to get kids involved.

**Jamboree:** Grier Kuehn reported no news as the event is on hold for a year.

**MCR 2023 Convention:** Keith DeVault was present but there was nothing new to report.

**Old Business:** Last month, Keith volunteered to ask the NMRA legal representative about the applicability of "At Risk Policy" to family members bringing their grandchildren to NMRA meetings, e.g. Grier's grandson. He reported that the NMRA Legal representative wants to speak to the NMRA Board of Directors first about this as it constitutes a big liability to the organization. The next BOD meeting is scheduled for mid-January. Until that time, everything is on hold.

**New Business:** Frank raised the issue of a Zoom Primer. Frank attended a meeting on the capabilities of Zoom. Present also were Joe Birsa, Jim Whipple, and Dennis Coglianese. Frank asked Jim to give his opinion of the meeting. Jim indicated that he liked the Zoom Chat box. Susan indicated that GoToMeeting also has this capability. Mike Hohn indicated

that the Chat box could be used to send links for Pass-The-Hat types of donations. Frank tasked Joe Birsa, Jim Whipple and Dennis Coglianese to meet and determine which technology is best suited for the division. Andy is tasked to coordinate this effort.

**Concerns & Questions:** Susan reported that nothing had come in to her. She did note however that the NMRA is doing another virtual mini-convention on Facebook/YouTube. Everyone should have gotten an e-mail announcing this. Check out the NMRA Facebook page and join – you will see these announcements. The NMRA will run clinics on Tuesday, December 1<sup>st</sup> from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM. This will be a recurring event.

### For the Good of the Division:

Grier noted that Jim Sacco recently had a minor follow-up medical procedure related to the major procedure he underwent 3 years ago. Grier was happy to report that it went well. Jim is back home and doing well.

Dennis Vaccaro indicated no further building sales had occurred. However, he has sold out of the HO tower. He cannot order more because the producer, Gary Kohler came down with the Covid-19 virus. He is doing well, but Dennis will delay ordering new buildings until January. Dennis also asked if there was any place to make a donation in Dick Flock's memory. Susan indicated no – there was nothing in the obituary. She reported that there will be no viewing, but a celebration of his life is being planned for the spring.

Jimmy Braum reported that last week the East Broad Top Railroad performed a test run of a steam locomotive's running gear (no steam). They are expecting to have a full tourism schedule for 2021 and steam back on the EBT by late 2021, 2022 for sure.

Frank noted that the next Division meeting will be January 17, 2021.

With business concluded, Frank adjourned the meeting at 3:33 PM.



## **MCR 2021 Convention Cancelled**

Late news broke after publication of the previous *Keystone Flyer*: The 2021 Mid Central Region Convention, The Northern Express, originally scheduled for May 20-23, has been cancelled. Similar to our own situation from last year, Division 12 will likely host the next available MCR convention in the Erie area; details will be provided once they are known.



## **NEWS AROUND THE DIVISION**

### **Reverend Richard H. Flock (1935 - 2020)**

On November 13, our friend Dick Flock passed away. Dick was a longtime NMRA and Division Two member, longtime steward of our Company Store, and a driving force behind the RPM organization over many years. His health failed just in the past few years. A remembrance of his life is expected to take place this spring or summer; details will be shared when they become available. Dick was central to our organization for so many years, we have chosen to honor him this year by continuing to publish the pike ad he and Barbara faithfully submitted for many years for his Johnstown and Lake Erie Railroad ("Serving Steel"), which (to my knowledge) still occupies a substantial portion of his Greensburg basement. Dick also had an extensive magazine collection, and Susan Werner is coordinating its disposition, so please contact her (email: [swerner48@yahoo.com](mailto:swerner48@yahoo.com)) if you have interest in acquiring some or all of it.

### **Status of 2021 conventions, meetings, etc. still uncertain**

With the pandemic still not behind us, a lot is still up in the air about when we will again be able to safely meet in person. I am sure that most of us want to do just that, and I am optimistic that we will be able to do so sometime later this year. That also seems to be the thinking across the hobby, as most of the shows and meetings planned for early this year have been cancelled:

- Most MCR associated events have been cancelled until at least June.
- [Greenberg Show operations are on hold](#) and not expected to resume until summer, meaning the traditional February show at Monroeville Convention Center will not take place this year. Their smaller shows should resume this summer, and the World's Greatest Hobby on Tour is planned for 2022. Check [trainshow.com](http://trainshow.com) for updates.
- The February 6-7 [Great Scale Model and Train and Railroad Collectors Show](#) (Timonium, MD) was also cancelled this year, but they expect to be able to hold the show scheduled for May 8-9; follow [their website](#) for updates and details.
- The RPM-East (Greensburg) was also cancelled for March 2021; follow [Eric Hansmann's blog](#) for RPM events.
- As noted on page 7, the 2021 NMRA Regional Convention (Mid Central Region—Northern Express), previously scheduled for May 20-23, 2021, has been cancelled. For updates check in with the [Division 12 website](#).
- Our Division Two Jamboree (typically scheduled for April) is also on hold for now; updates will be known in the Flyer and on the [Division 2 website](#).

One bright spot in all of this mess: if we are stuck inside a while longer, we can get more reading done, so be sure to check out the current [Morning Sun catalogs here](#); you can place orders with Susan Werner at the Company Store directly via email: [swerner48@yahoo.com](mailto:swerner48@yahoo.com).

### **Classified Advertisements**

As we go to press (7 January), the *Keystone Flyer* has not yet received any classified advertisements. Here again are the guidelines for submitting your listings for items or services:

- (1) ads may be placed by Division 2 members in good standing;
- (2) each listing can be ca. 25-30 words (about 1-1/4 column inches), including your contact info;
- (3) up to 2 photos (jpg format only) may be included, but they will be sized to fit;
- (4) maximum of 3 ads per member per issue;
- (5) submission deadline: 28th day of each month. Submit your complete listing (including your phone number) via e-mail to the Editor ([patrick.altdorfer@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.altdorfer@gmail.com)).

**2021**  
HAPPY NEW YEAR

*Here's hoping that everyone had a joyous holiday season and that we can all look forward to a safer year!*



**The Keystone Flyer**  
 Division Two, NMRA, MCR  
 P.O. Box 223  
 Gastonville, PA 15336



NEXT MEETING:  
 Virtual meeting, January 17

 <p><b>Mon Valley Railroad Historical Society</b>        128 Pleasant Street        Morgantown, WV 26505</p> <p>Meeting Thursdays at 7:00 PM  <a href="http://www.MVRRC.org">www.MVRRC.org</a>        Call Rich Henderson (304) 276-1046 for more info</p>	 <p><b>MID-MON VALLEY        MODEL RAILROAD        CLUB</b></p> <p><b>159 Main Street, New Eagle, PA</b>  <b>Meetings: Fridays 7:30 pm</b></p>
 <p>Visitors Welcome  <b>MEMBERSHIP OPEN</b></p> <p>2209 Walnut Street        McKeesport, PA</p> <p>Open Wednesday &amp; Friday Evenings</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HO &amp; N Scale Layouts</li> <li>• T-TRAK Modular Display Layout</li> <li>• Extensive Library &amp; Video Collection</li> </ul> <p><b>OHIO VALLEY LINES</b>        1225 MERCHANT ST AMBRIDGE PA 15003</p> <p><a href="http://www.ohiovalleylines.org">www.ohiovalleylines.org</a> info@ohiovalleylines.org        Open Every Monday 7:30PM – 10:00PM Memberships available!!</p>
<p><b>All aspects of "S":</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale • Narrow Gauge</li> <li>• Hirail • American Flyer</li> </ul> <p>Monthly meetings    Two portable layouts  <b>Membership open</b>    Contact: Jon Knox 724-287-6829</p> 	 <p><b>BEAVER COUNTY        MODEL RAILROAD and HISTORICAL SOCIETY</b></p> <p>416 6th St.        Monaca, PA 15061</p>  <p>Visitors Welcome</p> <p>Worknights: Tuesdays 7:30  <a href="http://www.bcmrr.railfan.net">www.bcmrr.railfan.net</a></p>

## **NEWS AROUND THE HOBBY**

### **Scenic Express moving to Colorado**

In the Bad News / Good News department, Past Superintendent Keith DeVault had occasion to visit recently with our friend Jim Elster and hear about future plans for [Scenic Express](#), his Delmont-based model railroad scenery products company. We have all come to rely upon Jim and his company, and perhaps we have been a bit spoiled, having him near us all these years. Certainly we have been fortunate to enjoy his hospitality as he hosted one of our Division meetings each year. Unfortunately for Jim, he was not able to find a buyer for the business, but fortunately for us in the modeling community, he has decided to keep the business in operation, despite his plans to relocate to Colorado this summer. Future space considerations will require some downsizing of the business, but many products will continue to be available online ([view catalog here](#)), and hopefully once we can all travel again, those of us who make a railfanning pilgrimage to Colorado may be able to visit him (again) one day.

In the mean time, one way you can help Jim out — and yourself in the process — is to **order by May 2021** the scenery material, structure kits, details, or modeling tools and supplies you may still need to complete (or finally start!) your layout, modules, and dioramas. This could help him to reduce the amount of inventory he needs to take with him as he moves operations this summer.

### **Rod Stewart Layout Brexits America**

According to the (UK) *Daily Mail* newspaper, world renowned model railroader Rod Stewart [has moved his massive 23' x 124' "Three Rivers City" layout](#) permanently from his Beverly Hills attic back to his Essex home, where he has been quarantining for the pandemic since April 2020. Mr. Stewart, who funds his hobbies and palimony by moonlighting as a singer, says that he shipped his layout last fall and planned to have it "up and running after Christmas." Rumors are the layout will be reassembled in a shed in the back yard of his multi-million pound Sheering estate (or perhaps in the carriage house attic, above his Ferraris and other 1:1 toys). The HO scale layout, which depicts a 1940s American big city (though NOT Pittsburgh, apparently, despite the interesting fictitious name he gave it), took 23 years to complete and features Code 70 flextrack and Digitrax DCC control. You can read more about his modeling in four feature articles published in *Model Railroader* (December 2007, December 2010, February 2014, and June 2017), as well as in some of the British model railroad press (*Railway Modeller*, December 2019; *Continental Modeler*, January 2020).

If you want to learn more Mr. Stewart's side hustle, be forewarned: his railroad-oriented songs are limited to but two covers: "People Get Ready" by Curtis Mayfield and "Downtown Train" by Tom Waits. You can probably find these on those older cassette tapes or LPs that are gathering dust in your attic or mold in your basement. Or you can go to your local record store or CD shop and buy an album. If you are young (under age 40), you probably have no idea what I am talking about, so just sit back on your sofa and yell, "Alexa: Play songs by Rod Stewart!"

### **Guinness Book of World Records: Chocolate Train**

Bud shared this trivia tidbit that he recently stumbled across in his travels through the dark underbelly of the internet forums: the world's longest chocolate structure, [certified by the Guinness Book](#) in November 2012, was actually a (model) train. This was created in Malta by chef Andrew Ferrugia and his pastry team and transported to Brussels, Belgium, where it was assembled at South Station. It measures almost 34m (112 feet) and weighs 1,285kg (2,755 pounds), and



it took some 784 hours to create. You can read more about this delicious diversion [here](#).

# **Achievement Program: Remote Model Evaluation**

## **Div.2 Remote Model Evaluation**

This guideline is based on an Email from Frank Koch, NMRA AP Manager on remote model judging.

Judging is certainly more challenging during COVID, but most NMRA Divisions are using some form of Distant Evaluation that has historically been used to serve our members who geographically live far away from a population center and find it difficult to have in person evaluations. The NMRA has been doing this for about five years in some of our more remote areas like the far reaches of Canada, Alaska, Montana, Nebraska, and Mexico.

The approach takes one of several forms:

1. A team visits the home and, while practicing social distancing and other safe processes, does an in person evaluation either in the home or on a patio or on a car hood or some other safer environment. Even in the home, limit the number of people and stay apart. (Ex: Anchorage from Seattle, Dallas to Mexico City, and the Maritime Provinces of Canada to New York).
2. Teams of evaluators will assemble in a large open central space and evaluate a whole bunch of models at once like in a contest. Frank has done this successfully as he has access to a very large hall where it can be done while maintaining safe conditions.
3. Using video or photographs and a virtual evaluation. This works well for eight of the certificates. Four certificates - Prototype Models, Motive Power, Cars, and Structures - can be evaluated via videos or ZOOM/GoToMeeting or other interactive means with several caveats. All the documentation needs to be prepared by the modeler and forwarded to the evaluators before the evaluation. The "video" is VERY subject to the skill and quality of the submitter's videography. We have drawn several conclusions after about five years of testing:

The procedure is fairly consistent if the model scores very high or very low - clearly Merit or clearly not Merit. It lacks consistency in the range of 80-95 points, the critical area for determining a Merit Award. For models in this range, we typically require some sort of in person evaluation to quantify the score and determine if the model is of Merit quality. The reality is that most folks do not have the skills or equipment (lighting, focus, general appearance) to allow a good evaluation via video alone.

There have been models go both ways in the MCR Region. Some scored much higher in person and some went the other way. There is no substitute for in person evaluations in most cases. If you see a model that is clearly over 95 points or one that is clearly under 80 points, the answer is clear. The middle ground is more difficult.

For Civil, Scenery, and Electrical, video or photographs plus the documentation works fine. for Civil, a video showing a powered locomotive traversing the routes is sufficient with the other documentation. Since Scenery requires photos anyway, and the evaluation is more qualitative and not really quantitative, it can be done virtually.

The most interesting example so far of "distant evaluation" was an event in a large hall (and one in a parking lot) where everyone signed up in advance, put their models in a specific area, then backed off to be safely away. The evaluators had previewed the documentation, the evaluations took place, and the evaluators could ask questions of the distant modelers. It worked well.

Please contact the AP Committee if there is an interest in remote Judging.

Dennis Vaccaro - Chair MCR Div.2 AP