



The Relay

A publication of the Chesapeake Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA

Volume 2 Issue 4

Winter 2010

View From The Cupola

By Kurt Thompson



As I sit here before Christmas, the Division has just completed another year of events.

What a lot of growth and fun we've had as a Division (barring that little hand slapping I got from National over the new NMRA logo).

Just to gain some perspective on the Division, at the Annual Group meeting in 2009 we had 12 members show up and one of the members jumped in and gave us an impromptu clinic on his favorite (Eastern) narrow gauge railroad. At the AGM this past month (November 2010), 32 members of the Division showed up to hear clinics on scenery building basics, using a custom layout design service, good and bad points of having models judged in contests, and a presentation on "The Year of the Layout." What a difference a year made: almost a 200% increase in participation at our Annual Group Meeting. That coupled with the over 40 Division members who attended the joint Potomac/Chesapeake Mini-con back in April shows that we are active and vibrant as a Division. Not bad after less than 24 months from our exploration meetings to be this active.

At the AGM, we had the election for two of the five Board positions: Assistant Superintendent and Director-at-Large. Tom Casey ran unopposed as the new Asst. Super; Arthur Boyd ran for his second term as Director-at-Large. I want to thank publicly the outgoing Assistant Superintendent Jeff Hedge for his service to the Division. He was very helpful and instrumental in the start up of the Chesapeake Division.

Tom will be stepping in to follow up as the new Assistant Superintendent. If you have any questions or ideas,

he is another point of contact for the Division. I look forward to working with Tom and continuing to work with Arthur in the coming year, along with Didrik Thede and Gerhard Klose, in continuing to guide and lead the Chesapeake Division.

As we move into 2011, Chesapeake Division will be celebrating the "Year of the Layout." A copy of the full presentation I made at the AGM is available on the website. Each monthly meeting this year will be about some aspect of building our 2 x 8 foot portable display layout. The framework, backdrops, and scenery substructure is already completed and was on display at the AGM. Thanks to Jeff Mutter for his assistance and guidance in getting the structure done and out of the way so we can start having "fun" building the layout.

Two upcoming competitions are on the schedule: the 1 Sq. Ft. Scenery contest and the Chesapeake City layout design contests. Both of these will conclude at the

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March 2011 meeting. The winner of the scenery contest will be made by popular vote so bring your scenery piece to the meeting. The layout design contest entries need to be submitted to me in text and design format by the Feb 2011 meeting so I can make and email a complete electronic format package of all the layout designs with their accompanying descriptive text. The plans in the information package will be bundled and sent to the Division members blind (only the person submitting their plan and I will know whose plan is whose). Once voted on by the members present at March meeting, I'll announce the winner by name.

Also soon, I will open up the April Ops Saturday for people to send in their requests to operate on one of four layouts in our Division. Right now, two layouts are in Anne Arundel County; one in Baltimore City; and one in Harford County. The total number of available operator slots is twenty-eight. These will be filled on a first come basis, where the date time stamp of your email received by me will dictate. When you reply, please ask for your first, second and third choice of layout to operate on. If this is successful, we'll schedule more Ops Saturdays in the future.

As a side note, if you have a layout that you want to start operating sessions on, the Division will be happy to help you get started with setting up for operations. The more operating layouts in the Division, the more fun we can all have. (Getting off my soapbox now.)

If you look at the schedule of meetings, we have programs planned for the entire year. I need meeting locations for May, June, July, September, and November AGM. For the AGM, we need a place that can seat at least 50 people (I'm being optimistic that we will need more room this coming November than this past year.) Growth is contagious.

Growth happens because we talk and meet people who may or may not know about model railroading and the NMRA. On Dec. 4th and 5th, six of our Division members and I manned our Division table at the Greensburg show. Jim Burnside, Arthur Boyd, Gerhard Klose, Jeff Hedge, and Bill Wolf all volunteered their time. After only netting 2 new members with Railpass applications on Saturday, I was happy to see 8 more applications from the Sunday workers. Well done, guys and thanks for your help in getting new people involved and interested.

If you think this issue of The Relay is a little light compared to the Fall edition, well...it is. The reason for that is John did not receive a lot of new articles for the newsletter. Before the next edition, please sit down and write a small article to share with your fellow Division members. John's job as editor is to publish, but he can only publish what you send him.

See you all at the January 23rd meeting.

Kurt

The Relay

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The Alaska Railroad – *First Class on a “Second Class” Railroad*

By John Darlington



In June of this year, my wife (Elaine) and I returned to the state of Alaska to complete our excursion of the 49th state. Our first adventure there occurred in 2007 when we took a two week vacation to the far west that ended up on a cruise to the Alaskan Inside Passage. One of the ports of call we visited was Skagway, and we took advantage of a train trip that went from there to the Canadian border.. That particular part of the railroad is called the White Pass and Yukon Route which is primarily a tourist road following the route to the old gold fields. While the WP&YR is under the control of the Alaska Railroad Corporation, it is not connected physically or operationally to what is commonly known as the Alaska Railroad. The entire trip took only about five hours, and I was quite impressed with the condition of the WP&YR’s equipment, so much so that when I returned home, I started researching the history of the Alaska Railroad hoping that I would return to Alaska some day and see the operational ARR in action. I got my wish this year when Elaine suggested that we take a land tour of central Alaska as well as a southern cruise ending up in Vancouver. Figuring that this may be our last trip to the far north, I wanted to be sure to see as much of the ARR and its operations as I could, and as it turned out, I was not disappointed

A Little History of the ARR

The ARR began its history in 1903, and it was known back then as the *Alaska Central Railway* (ACR). Financed by private companies and individuals, primarily from Seattle, Washington, construction started in Seward, which is one of two ice free ports located on the southern coast between the Kenai Mountains and Prince William Sound. The other ice free port is Whittier which was the initial destination of the railroad construction. In 1909, after just 51 miles of construction, the ACR went into receivership. The ACR was reorganized that same year under the name of the *Alaska Northern Railroad Company* (ANRC) and construction commenced again for another 21 miles northward to Kern Creek. In 1914 the ANRC too filed for bankruptcy and went into receivership. Around this same time, the U.S. Government was contemplating its own railroad route which was planned to go from Seward to Fairbanks, some 500 miles northward into the interior of Alaska. In 1912 President Taft authorized a survey of the route, and in 1914 the U.S. Congress agreed to fund the construction for an estimated \$35 million. The name again was changed to the *Alaska Railroad*.

Nenana Station



The ARR was finally completed in 1923 and President Harding traveled to Alaska on July 15, 1923 to commemorate the occasion by driving a golden spike at **Nenana** (south of Fairbanks). This turned out to be rather auspicious since the President died on this return trip to San Francisco from a losing battle with food poisoning.

Although completed, the ARR had great difficulty financially. Prior to buildup to WWII, the combined populations of Seward, Anchorage and Fairbanks totaled a mere 5,400 people which was not nearly enough to sustain profitable operations. As tensions arose in the late



President Harding drives the Golden Spike at Nenana, Alaska

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30's over the international situation, the military began to build and expand in the interior of Alaska resulting in the ARR's first profitable year in 1938. During the war years, the ARR benefited greatly from the military expansion which resulted in significant upgrades in track, tunnels and rail fed port facilities. In 1944, the ARR begins its transition from steam to diesel, a process that was completed in 1966 when the last steam engine was sold.



The post-war years saw additional upgrades and expansion projects funded by a \$100 million rehabilitation project authorized by Congress. Passenger service, which was one of the original goals of the ARR, is scaled back making the railroad's primary function freight transport. On March 27, 1964 Alaska was struck by a significant earthquake causing over \$30 million of damage to ARR facilities and track. Through a herculean effort, the ARR was able to restore freight traffic from Anchorage to Fairbanks on April 6th and passenger service on April 11th.

On January 14, 1983, President Reagan signed into law legislation authorizing the transfer of the Alaska Railroad to the State of Alaska, and on July 5, 1984, a quasi-public corporation was formed and the transfer of all ARR assets to the State is completed on January 5, 1985.

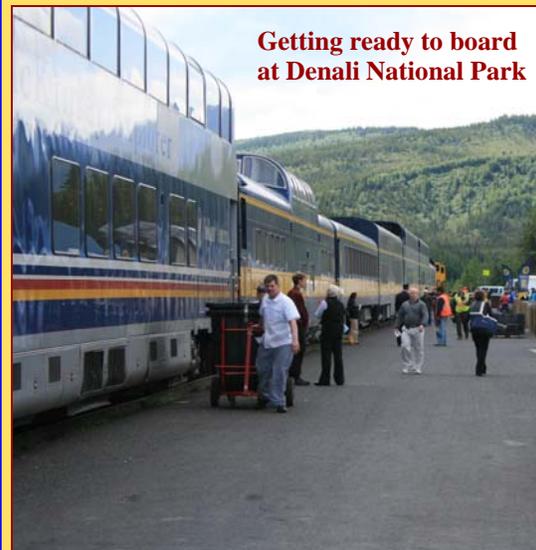
In the years since, the ARR has seen its profits and ridership increase dramatically (\$14.5 million and 512,000 respectively). The ARR's continued plan to upgrade its motive power sees a significant purchase of 16 SD70MACs in 2000 and 8 additional SD70MACs in 2004, bringing their total of locomotives to 60. The initiation of their **Gold Star** first class rail service in May 2006 between Fairbanks Denali, and Anchorage results in still further increases in their passenger services. Primarily targeting tourists, this service features the use of specially constructed domed cars with self contained dining facilities. Additionally, cruise lines like Holland-America provide their own domes cars for their land/cruise customers as a regular part of this overall train service.



Our Experiences

The ARR is classified as a second class railroad, but to my way of thinking it is "first class" all the way!

The ARR is primarily a single track railroad for most of its length, but there are a number of sidings along the route which allow for unimpeded passing. I had the opportunity of seeing both their main headquarters in Anchorage and the freight docks in Seward and it would appear that these facilities have been recently upgraded and expanded; no doubt to accommodate increased traffic



Getting ready to board at Denali National Park

From my brief observations (see accompanying photos) the ARR appears to be a well run railroad. Its locomotives and freight/passenger facilities seem to be in excellent condition, especially considering the harsh weather conditions their equipment is subjected to during 9 months of the year. Track maintenance, a priority for most railroads, looks to be the number one concern of the ARR especially when you consider that a significant amount of their track north of Anchorage is laid over the perma-frost. I observed a number of maintenance facilities during our trip and they were modern and well ordered.

Our land tour included an eight hour train trip from Denali National Park to Anchorage. Since we were part of a Holland-America Tour, we had the chance

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to experience the comfort and spectacular views from their specially constructed domed cars. Each car consists of a passenger compartment enclosed in a full length glass roof offering unimpeded sight lines to the dramatic countryside. Meals are provided by a full service dining room and kitchen running the full length of the bottom floor of each car. While the quality of the cuisine was not up to the standard of the old B&O dining cars, it was light years ahead of anything you can get on AMTRAK!

Elaine and I really enjoyed our experiences in Alaska and especially our trip on the ARR (Elaine is getting to be a real train fan). The people were cordial, the scenery was fantastic and the food was great. Top it off with a ride on a well maintained train and you have nothing else to ask for. If you ever get a chance to see Alaska, don't pass it up.

More Photos.....

The ARR's Terminal in Anchorage



Shunting Freight at the Anchorage Terminal



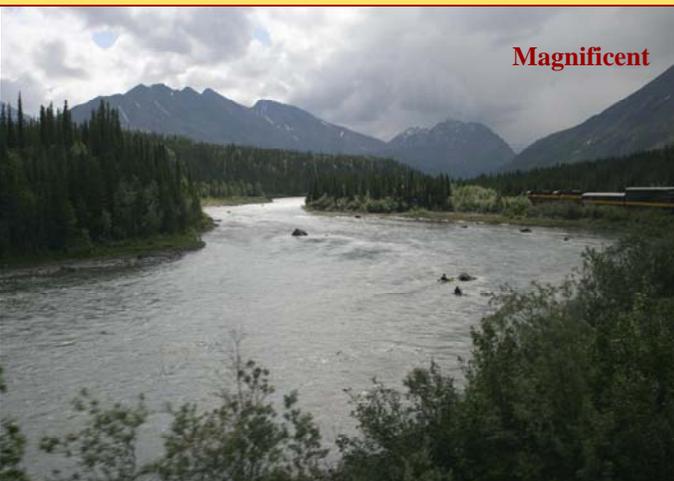
**Interior of the
Domed Car**



The Dining Car



Magnificent



Scenery





Letters to the Editor's Column

At the suggestion of our Division Superintendent, Kurt Thompson, *The Relay Newsletter* is instituting a new feature this month—a *Letters to the Editor Column*. This should not only be fun, but it will allow Division members to express their opinions on model railroading topics of the day, discuss a new modeling technique, comment on past and upcoming meetings and presentations, and generally “spout off” on what is or is not adding to our collective enjoyment of our hobby. Outside of bad words, bad grammar or threats, all letters submitted will be published unedited and in their entirety. I hope that you will enjoy participating in this new feature, and I am looking forward to receiving many future submissions.

John Darlington, Editor

Our initial column contains a letter from K. Travers Stavac that was originally sent to Kurt on November 11th.

On 11/11/2010 9:05 PM, K Travers Stavac wrote:

RE: AGM

I really liked Fred Scheer's presentation on the use of professional layout designers. He spoke from as unbiased a point of view as possible in his situation (a committed user, without a financial interest in the company discussed). He presented the thinking that brought him to his decision (keep drawing layout sketches for the next 10 years vs. get some thing done now, though at a cost) to avoid analysis paralysis. Fred described the relationship to the 'real life' process of writing a specification (or request for proposals for you government guys) that would include what he expected to receive (deliverables) based on his desires (Givens and Druthers), then used the vendors contract form. He reviewed the steps he went through with his vendor, and the iterations of the design.

Perhaps the best part was Fred's discussion of what he would do differently, next time: very little. He would have been more specific in the industries he wanted to model (the traffic he wanted to see run on the layout), and reduce their number. He would have liked another 6 inches of benchwork width, to support additional scenery, reducing the ratio of track to scenery.

And, Fred distributed a handout prior to starting, with all his slides and room for taking notes during the presentation.

K Travers Stavac

C

CHESAPEAKE DIVISION MEETING

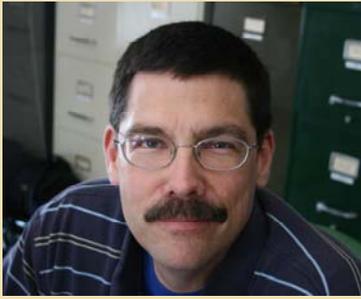
The next Chesapeake Division Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 23, 2011 from 2:00pm to 4:30 pm at the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 1713 Liberty Grove Road, Colora, Maryland

Planned activities during the meeting include:

A clinic by Didrik Thede on track planning software including Xtrak CAD and Right Trak (Atlas) packages

Be sure to mark your calendar

Visit the Division Web Site at <http://chesapeake.x10.mx/chesapeake-nmra.org/calendar.php> for further details



Shenandoah Branch Steel Trestle (Or They don't make them like they used to)

By Kurt Thompson

On the 4th of July this year, my family and I went over to Harper's Ferry, WV. Though I have been there before, this time we took a guided tour of the old water-run industries along the Shenandoah River. As we left downtown Harpers Ferry, we walked under the long wooden trestle that takes the Shenandoah Branch (formerly B&O, now CSX) away from Harpers Ferry and the main line towards Cumberland, Maryland.

I haven't yet seen a train on the wooden trestle but would like to see one sometime. The trestle is located right in Harpers Ferry and would provide a unique, nearly under the train view.



As we walked under the wooden trestle and headed over to the river bank, the ranger (a high school rising senior) told us about the waterways and the early water-powered industries located there. As we left the industrial site, the trail led us back under the Shenandoah Branch.

As we approached the trestle, I first mistook it for a 3-pier, wooden trestle much like the trestle supporting the first 1/4 mile of the Branch. But as I stopped and looked more closely, I found not a wooden trestle with dark brown creosoted bents and caps. The 3 piers and the stringers are all fabricated from steel components. (see 2524, 2525, 2526).

2524 ↑

↓ 2525



The trestle 45 feet long with a bent supporting the middle and one at each end with a wooden retaining wall to hold back the roadbed. The beams are each 22-1/2 feet long and are welded together on top of the center bent.

2526 →



Even though the 3 bents are made of the same 14-inch I-beam legs with 2 opposite facing 18-inch tall U-beams and a 16-inch welded cap (Figure 2525), the trestle has two different ends. The east end (closest to Harpers Ferry and the Main Line) has its original cut stone pier there. Whether the new pier was driven in or the stones were removed and then reinstalled, I don't know. The stone pier walls are 24 feet wide and 7 feet deep, approximately 4 feet high.

While the west end, if the original cut stone pier is still there, it's been buried as the hill/material as moved back down to a normal slope angle. (Figure 2530).

2530 →



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With the pathway underneath, I figured the depth from the underside of the stringers to the path is about 9 feet.



2531 ↑

I could not quite touch the bottom of the beams without a little jump. Figures 2531 and 2532 show the double I-beam stringers and how they are connected between the two pairs. The stringers are 22-inch I-beams with a 12-inch top and bottom plates.

2532 →



As you can see in figure 2534, the top of the trestle above the stringers has the usual tie and rail construction. A guard rail runs parallel and out the rails on the trestle. The bridge ties are 8-inch square on 12 inch centers. There are 46 of them. The guard rail is attached to each bridge tie with a nut-bolt-washer.

2534 →

Both the east and west end retaining walls are 6 by 12 creosoted boards. These are held in place by 4 12-inch I-beams driven into the ground. The outer two are 2 feet lower than the inboard two due to the sloping nature of the roadbed shoulder.



2537 ↑

(Figure 2537). The boards are set on the 6" side, 12" side is the height. The retaining walls have a stair step construction. The top board is 17 ft long, 4 feet beyond each side of the bridge. The next two lower boards are 29 feet long. The lowest two are 37 feet long. The outer two vertical I-beams are 22 inches in from the ends of the bottom two boards. The next two inner verticals are 4-1/2 feet inboard and 3 feet from the stone pier on the east end and reach to the top of the 29 foot long boards.



The walkway under the right hand/east side is 32 feet long and 8 feet wide. It appears to be just pressure treated wood but is not stained or painted. The top planks are 2 x 6 inches. There are 4 stringers underneath. The outer two are set in 6 inches; the inner two are then 2-1/2 feet further in. The planks are attached to the stringers with nails. The walkway is actually built in two sections since the ground slopes down from both side to a low point under the bridge.

As for weathering, don't bother. This is inside a National Park so it is repainted frequently. This is one time where weathering the model will lose you points for prototype fidelity. The stone piers are chipped and worn and the walkway is gouged and one board has its end ripped off. But don't weather this like normal.

Maybe this will be my project for the Square Foot Contest.

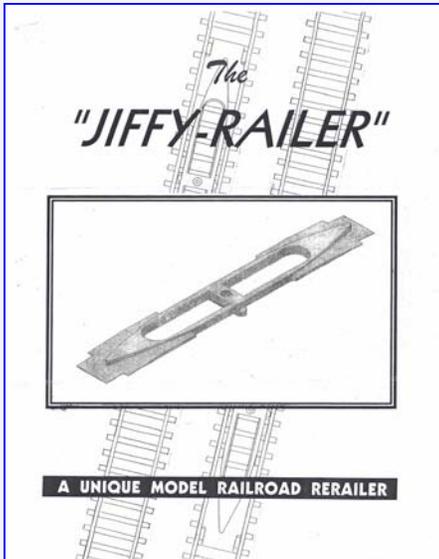
Kurt

New Product Review

From time to time, new products that have entered the marketplace will be announced and commented on in our "New Product Review" Column which begins with this issue of **The Relay**. This is an opportunity for Division members to bring colleagues up to date on new products and innovations that they have discovered.

The Jiffy Railer for HO and N Scale Layouts

by John Darlington



The Jiffy Railer is a re-railing device that can be retrofitted into existing track thereby eliminating the need to cut, remove or re-build sections of track. The Jiffy Railer will be especially useful in staging areas, on blind or concealed track sections and tunnels.

The Jiffy Railer is fitted in between the rails without the need to cut and remove ties, and it is held in place by one track nail fitted in the center beam of the railer. The only up front work required is to remove and ballast that is in-between the two rail ties on which the center beam rests. This minor excavation will enable the Jiffy Railer to fit flush within the rails and avoid any contact with the undercarriage or trip pin of a passing locomotive or car.

Although I have not personally used one, I plan on purchasing a package of three to test on my layout.

Shown below is a copy of an order form showing the

The "JIFFY-RAILER" will be packaged in a see-through blister pack mounted on a card containing three re-railers. It will be available in the following track gages:

'HO' @ \$7.95/pkg. of 3 railers
'N' @ \$5.95/pkg. of 3 railers

v

ORDER FORM

Customer Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Country (if outside of U.S.A.) _____
Daytime Phone _____ E-mail _____
 Please check this box and give your new address if you have moved since your last order

Date of this order: _____ Signature _____

Please enter my order for the following "JIFFY-RAILERS":

DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	QTY.	TOTAL
'HO' @	\$7.95 X	=	\$
'N' @	\$5.95 X	=	\$
Shipping Charges			= \$
TOTAL ENCLOSED			= \$

Shipping will be via cheapest way: FEDEX, UPS or USPS.
Add \$2.50/card for domestic delivery and \$8.50/card for foreign delivery

NOTE:
Payment by check or money order only!
Sorry, no Credit Cards or COD!

Mail orders to:
JIFFY-RAILER
15402 N. 60th Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85254

Membership, Subscriptions and Article Submissions

To become a member of the Chesapeake Division of the NMRA, please contact any Board Member, fill out the form for a free Railpass (page 10) or join us at our next Divisional meeting on Sunday, January 23, 2011. The meeting will be held at the Mt. Pleasant United Methodist Church, 1713 Liberty Grove Rd Colora, MD (See the Chesapeake Division Web Page under "Calendar" for further details

To receive electronic versions of **The Relay**, send an e-mail message to Didrik Thede at dthede@earthlink.net.

If you would prefer to receive printed copies, please send a check for \$6 (payable to the Chesapeake Division, MER, NMRA) to Gerhard Klose, 208 Holly Road, Edgewater, MD 21037

To submit an article for future publication in The Relay, please send it to the Newsletter editor, John Darlington, at jjdjr3@verizon.net later than

MARCH 15 2011

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region

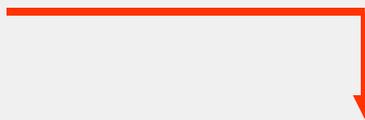
YES, please sign me up for a free six-month Railpass Trial Membership in the NMRA, which includes membership in the Mid-Eastern Region and my local Division. During the six-month period, I understand that I may attend conventions, meets, and participate in contests. I will receive the NMRA Magazine, the monthly national publication, and The Local, the bi-monthly regional newsletter. I will not be eligible to vote, hold office or receive a New Member Pack.

I also understand that the \$9.95 cost of this six-month Railpass Trial Membership is being paid by the Mid-Eastern Region. (Note: Regardless of who pays, the six-month \$9.95 memberships are available only once to each person) At the end of the six month period, I may join the NMRA by paying the regular active member dues.

During the past thirty months, I have not been a member of the NMRA.

Application for Free “Railpass” Trial Membership

When this form is completed, mail to:



Name: _____

Street Address _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____

Scale (s): _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Signature of “Recruiter:” _____

(a Regional Officer or Board Member)

**Fred Miller, MMR
MER Business Manager
8960 Challis Hill Lane
Charlotte, NC 28226-2686**

Please **do not** mail this form
Directly to the NMRA Head-
quarters
In Chattanooga, TN.