



The

Relay

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

Volume 6 Issue 3

View From The Cupola

Fall 2016



By Greg Tidwell

POTPOURI!

I hope this edition finds everyone well. This is the last edition of The Relay before our general meeting on November 19th, scheduled to be held at the Towson Library, beginning at 9:30 AM. I encourage each and every one of you to attend as there will be several items being shown and discussed. After the meeting, for the rest of the afternoon, stick around and join us for our ‘Modelers’ Day-In’. For those of you who have not attended one of these before, we bring in various projects we are working on. We then work on our projects, help someone else with their projects and just have ole fashion camaraderie.

This is an exciting time to be in the hobby as there are many new and exciting things going on. There are now more websites that offer answers to any and all questions about the hobby as well as just pure entertainment. There is Model Railroader with MR Video, The Model Academy sponsors videos on a variety of subjects, Modeler’s Guild, Model Railroad Hobbyist, and Pixel Federation has ‘Train Station’, a game to play on your multi-media device that lets you build a railroad empire, just to name a few.

Going on in October, is the Mid-Eastern regional convention in Durham, North Carolina “*Tracks to Triangle*”. It will be running from October 20th to the 23rd. This looks like a great convention with the opportunity to see some great layouts and participate in a whole host of clinics. The convention sign-up and schedule can be found in your latest edition of “The Local” or on the website <http://www.mer2016.org>. I hope several of you will be able to attend and give us a short recap at our meeting in November.

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Included in this edition, we are re-running the Division survey. If you filled out the survey previously, there is no need to fill one out again. Rick will present the results at our November meeting. I encourage everyone to complete this survey and return it by October 31st. Make sure and check it out.

Greg

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**November 19, 2016
Beginning at 9AM**

**The meeting will be held at the
Towson Library
320 York Rd., Towson, MD. 21204**

**All Members of the Chesapeake
Division are encouraged to attend**

Division business and Clinics will be conducted in the morning session followed by an afternoon of modeling with our next "Modelers Day-In" Session



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 20) or join us at our next Divisional meeting on Sunday,

To receive electronic versions of The Relay, send an e-mail message to Russell Forte at Web.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com

If you would prefer to receive printed copies, please send a check for \$6 (payable to the Chesapeake Division, MER, NMRA)

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To submit an article for future publication in The Relay, please send it to the Newsletter editor, John Darlington, at

jjdjr3@verizon.net
no later than

**Wednesday,
December 21, 2016**



FINAL RUN OF “THE WEED LINE”: A CRAFTSMAN’S SHOWCASE



Article by Arthur Boyd,
Photography by John Darlington

Model railroading can be a lifelong hobby, and for many of us it surely is. It may have started in childhood with the Lionel train set, or as an older adult’s chance spotting of a model railroad magazine in an airport, or a retirement desire for a creative new challenge.



For Steve Reynolds it started as he approached early retirement from his regional administrative position with the federal judiciary in Washington DC.. At age 52, he sought new outlets for his craftsman skills. Already an accomplished modeler of RC airplanes and model cars, a skilled duck carver, and a maker of his own fishing rods and lures, he started in model railroading in 1988 with a small shelf railroad. That seemed just the thing to apply his talents in new ways, and upon full retirement, the layout “just grew.”

We can see echoes of that in our own modeling history. But for Steve, there was one more element rarely considered. What happens when the end of life nears? How will your spouse handle disposition of your dream railroad that you’ve put so much of yourself into? How can you prepare things to make it easier for your spouse?

Those were questions Steve faced after his cancer diagnosis, which later became more urgent after chemotherapy and the realization that his time was coming to an end. Steve died earlier this year, having made preparations for his wife, Joan, to address those issues.

What he accomplished is an HO model railroad of the first order, equal to the best ones we rarely have the chance to visit. He filled a

relatively small room (about 8 and a half by 20 1/2 feet) with enough craftsman kits and scratch built buildings, dramatic scenery, and highly detailed scenes to complete a layout three times the size. But he did it all with an artist’s



eye for what a scene needs, how each element “fits in” like real life, and how it should be aged and weathered so it seems to have been there for years. Try to find the familiar kit-built buildings, and you will be at a loss: everything is either scratchbuilt or heavily and expertly modified.



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At its height of completion, the layout was a folded dog bone design for continuous running, from a large mountain town with engine servicing and an industrial area, to a logging and mining area complete with a narrow gauge branch. Control is by MRC Prodigy DCC. Motive power is mostly Southern, Norfolk & Western, and B & O; mostly steam with some diesels, a large portion brass. Nearly all of the more than 40 engines have been detailed, weathered, and converted to DCC and sound. Wall-mounted display cases also have engines in N and G scales, plus some of the HO fleet, and scratchbuilt rolling stock.



Railroad memorabilia collected over many years adorn the walls.



There are different ways that modelers enjoy their layout, and it shows in the design of their empire. For some it is “rail fanning” – watching trains run through scenery. Others design a layout for “operations” – multiple operators moving trains simultaneously through staging yards, passing sidings, and industrial areas. Many get the most satisfaction from “switching” – a single way-freight stopping along the way to spot or pick up cars. For Steve, the primary enjoyment appears to have been in crafting buildings and scenes, and turning rolling stock into visually stunning elements in motion. And then, documenting it all with fine photography compiled into binders with extensive captions.



“The place is the Harrisonburg branch of the Washington Division of the Southern Railway,” Steve wrote. “The year is 1943 at the height of WWII. The B & O and the Southern Railway converge on this branch at Strasburg Junction, which, aside for my affinity for the Shenandoah Valley, is one reason why I chose the line as I wanted to have rolling stock from both railroads. The line is a hilly affair, and has always been poorly maintained such that the trainmen assigned to it called it the ‘Weed Line’ – hence, the name of my model railroad.”

“I must offer a disclaimer that anything on my railroad is an exact replica of anything on the Harrisonburg branch. Rather, I seek only to emulate the flavor of the valley and its surrounding mountains, the quaint towns and villages therein.” Locomotives and cabooses are a different story, all being modeled after those in

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photographs of the prototype line. “I do not, however, worry about whether a specific engine was ever assigned to the Washington Division.”

“I took the liberty of adding a coal mining operation and even a waterside boat-house/fish market although in reality there probably were none. They simply represent clichés that I lack the character and strength to resist.”

It is the magic of model railroading, after all, and Steve Reynolds captured it well.

How might pieces of this achievement be passed along to others who could continue to enjoy it? Steve thought of that as well. The entire layout was too large to easily dismantle and move. So, in his last year, Steve performed major surgery on his layout.

While leaving dramatic scenes intact, he cut off one end that could be transformed into a self-contained layout a bit larger than six by eight feet. The foam board table top is set upon a freestanding bench. This layout has a continuous standard-gauge loop and a narrow-gauge logging branch, and contains some of the best examples of his modeling skills, with many fine buildings. And it is ready to lift up and take out



the door. The bulk of the original layout remains along two sides of the room, and with care can be dismantled in pieces or structures preserved. The locomotives have all been listed on an inventory, with notations as to manufacturer, modifications, whether DCC and sound, etc.

So, the “Weed Line” is ready for its last run. But you still have a final chance to see it. Steve’s wife Joan has graciously offered to host an open house for the Chesapeake Division on Saturday December 3, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm, in Elkridge MD. Watch your in-box for an invitation with location details. After that, the layout, rolling stock and buildings will be up for sale, in parts or in whole; and the remainder will be disposed of.



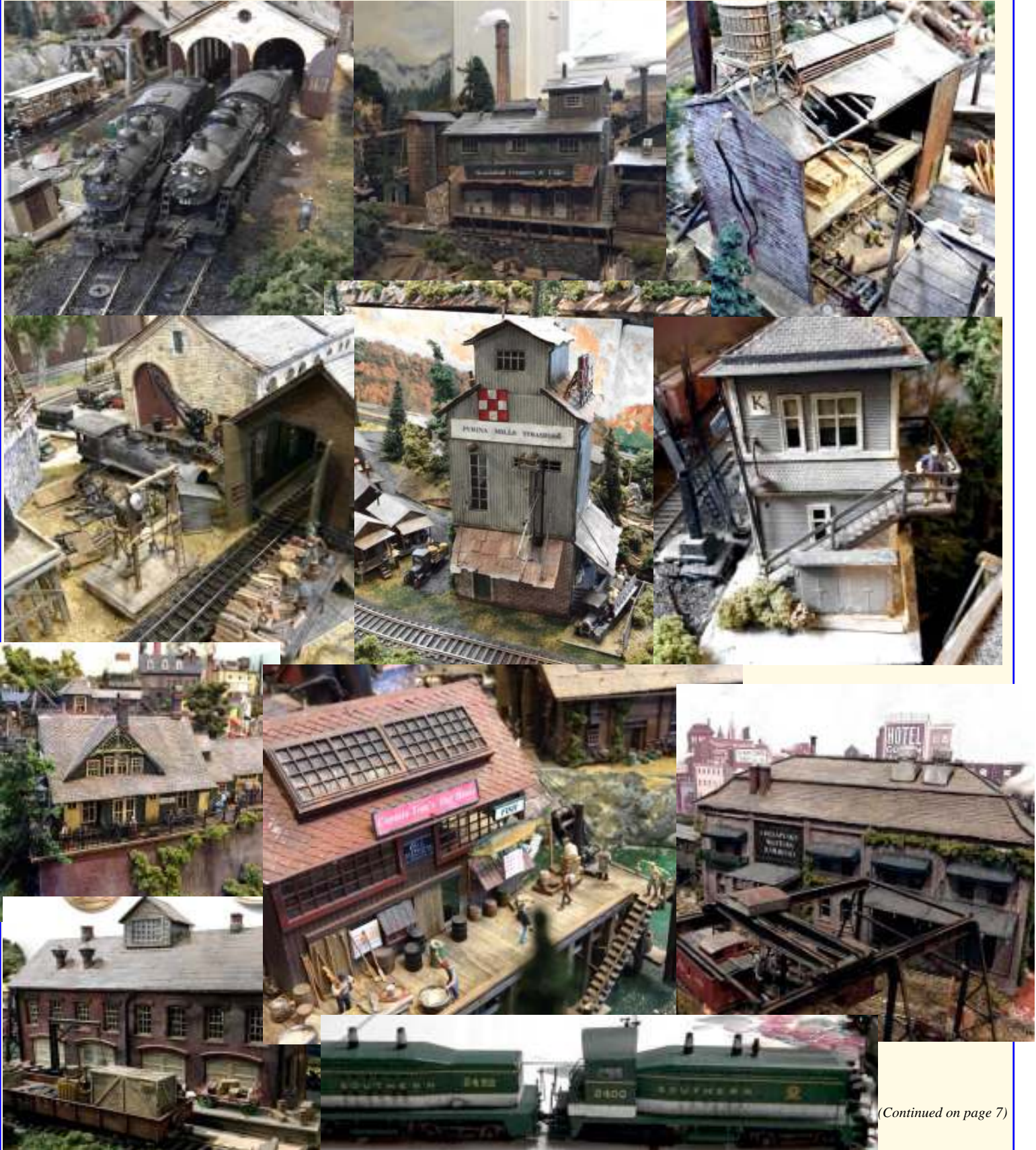
Arthur

Photographer's Note: None of these photos were taken with flash nor manipulated to show this layout in anything other than its natural coloring.

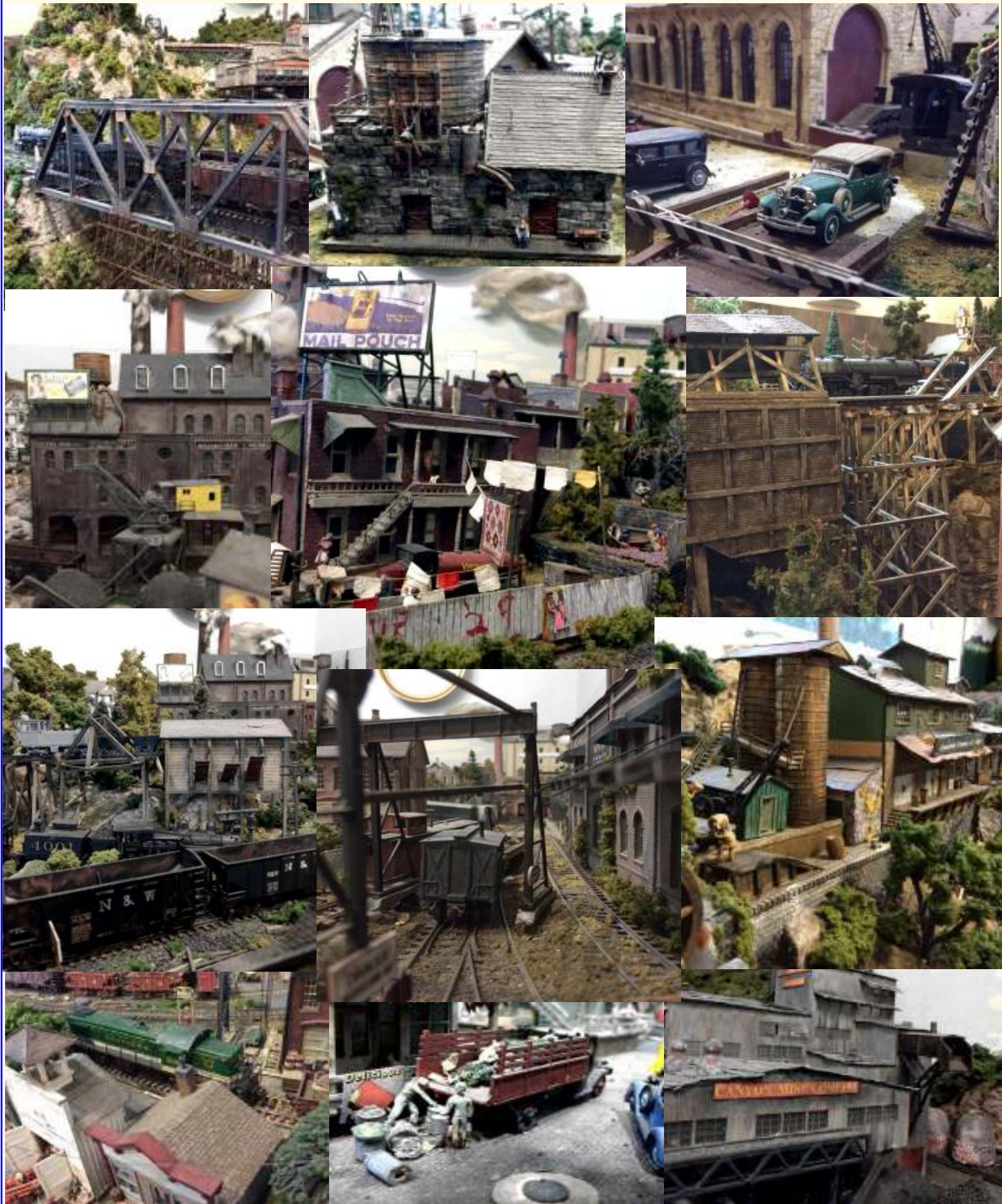
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A Photo Collage of the Weed Line Layout



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ADVICE FROM A SURVIVING SPOUSE

As far as Steve knew, none of his friends had an interest in model railroading, and he was not a member of a train club or organization. Model trains were a personal enjoyment, shared only with his wife. In that regard, he was much like the typical model railroader: a “lone wolf.” In my case, many of my friends, work colleagues and even acquaintances know of my interest in trains. That led to my learning about Steve’s layout. My car mechanic, knowing of my peculiar proclivity, asked me if I had any ideas for a relative whose husband had died leaving a beautiful model railroad.

Joan is an accomplished hobbyist in many crafts, most notably creating art works in stained glass. She well knew the value in skill and time that goes into model railroading, as in other crafts pursued to a high level. But she, too, did not know of other model railroaders – until, that is, conversations with other women after Steve’s death. These were friends she already knew from other parts of her life. “Many of these ladies had spouses who were model railroaders” she learned. “But none of them had a clue as to what to do with model trains after their husbands die.”

Joan did have a clue, many in fact, thanks to Steve’s preparations.

Over the years Joan had on occasion accompanied Steve to hobby shops and Timonium train shows, so that Joan at least knew about them and “knew the territory” so to speak. Steve made a careful inventory of the more expensive items – namely locomotives, with original prices marked for each, and their special features.

Steve made a list of a few particular items – mostly from his other hobbies - which he wished to go to relatives and friends. Joan made suggestions to add to that list, and made a list of a few railroad items with special meaning, including some she had helped construct, that she would keep for their memories and their intrinsic aesthetic value. Some tools and modeling materials have applications to other household and hobby activities of her own, and Joan will “re-purpose” these.

Most importantly, Steve thought about what portions of his layout might be reconfigured into an easily moved free-standing unit. Then he tackled that as a new modeling project he could accomplish as his capacities diminished. Was there more she wished he would have done to prepare her for handling disposition? “No, he did as much as he could.”

Joan has been looking into ads in the back of model railroad magazines, of people purchasing estates and collections. She will be visiting a large hobby shop and train shows to learn about current prices, including people who make and sell model railroads. She will seek out vendors who buy model railroad items for resale, and learn about options for her situation.

“My advice to ‘model railroad spouses’” says Joan “is to get your husband to at least make a list of valuable items, like locomotives. Get his wishes as to where he wants stuff to go. And from time to time take you along to hobby shops and train shows so you know about them.”

And to my fellow model railroaders, I would add that you should let friends and acquaintances know of your love of trains. You never know what might emerge from sharing your interest with others.

Arthur Boyd



Rick Uskert
Director at Large

The Director's Corner

FREE MODELING TOOL

(AKA: The Chesapeake Division Survey)

With the last issue of the Relay we distributed a Survey asking each of the members for a bit of information on their modeling habits and suggestions for Division activities. Since that time I have received ten (10) responses offering many great ideas for events and Relay articles. I look forward to helping mold the future Division activities around these suggestions.

During this November's annual meeting, I will present the results of the survey, followed by their publication in the following issue of the Relay. Before we get to November, however, I believe there are many more Survey responses to be gathered, and because of that, I am not above a bit of bribery. A little while ago I acquired twenty (20) "Helping Hands" and will freely distribute them to the next twenty survey responses (Board members excluded).



The "Helping Hands" tool is that third or fourth hand we all need when holding tiny bits for painting, gluing or wires to be soldered. The device has a base which will support small pieces standing on its own, but may also be clamped or drilled and affixed to your workbench to hold heavier items. Two adjustable alligator clips are attached to the adjustable beam, along with a magnifying glass, each independently positioned and locked in place with wing nuts applying a clamping force to the ball joints. It takes two real hands to position the two "Helping" ones, but once done, it's fantastic to leave an item to dry or cool while I move on to another item. I have two of these tools in my own collection.

For every fully complete survey--as in each and every question answered with a valid response, and "I don't know," or similar, does not count as a valid response--which I receive between now and October 31st, 2016, I will personally hand you a new "Helping Hands" at the November annual meeting. While there, you also have the opportunity to voice opinions and wishes in person.

The survey has been redistributed with this copy of the Relay, should the last email been lost. Once complete, please send it via email to directoratlg.chesdivmernmra@gmail.com.

For five minutes of your time, you will get a free tool and a vehicle to direct Division activities for months to come.

Rick

FROM THE BOARD ROOM

Call for Volunteer Leadership

Greg Kidwell,
Superintendent

Are you happy to have an active NMRA Division? Do you enjoy the time spent with your fellow modelers? Well, to keep the fun going, the Chesapeake Division is in need of volunteers, particularly two willing members to assume some responsibility for the future of the Division. These two positions are on the Board of Directors.

The first position is the Director-at-Large. He is the third in succession to the Superintendent. It basically is a three-year commitment since the Director-at-Large moves up each year from Director-at-Large to Assistant Superintendent to Superintendent. After his three years as a voting member, he sits on the Board as a non-voting member when he serves as Past Superintendent.

The second position currently vacant is the Clerk. The Clerk's duties are to act as a voting member of the Board and to handle all record keeping for the Division, including BOD minutes and the membership database (shared duty with the Superintendent). The Clerk is not in the line of succession to the Superintendent. If you want to help but not be "completely responsible" to ultimately run the Division, the Clerk may be a position for you.

Please consider serving the other members of the Division by volunteering for one of these two posts. Without your support and willingness, the Division suffers slightly each time. These positions will be voted on at the Annual Group Meeting to be held at the Towson Library on November 19th. The day will also include our next Modelers' Day In and White Elephant.



**AS PART OF THE
CHESAPEAKE
DIVISION
LEADERSHIP!**

Greg

The Relay

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of the
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The New Home of the C&LE

By Kurt Thompson

In the Spring 2016 Relay, I told you about the February demolition of the HO scale C&LE. On the day of the demolition, the first order of business was to empty the storage shelves along the back wall of the store room. For those who saw the old layout in person, the shelves were hideous and a blight on the “fun” environment of the layout. (Pictures of the demolition are in the Spring issue).



Walls where the shelves used to be



Will all this fit back under the new layout?

The old shelves were emptied from the store room to the downstairs living room (much to my wife’s dismay). With the shelves emptied, the old shelves were dismantled, demolished, and dissected (alliteratively speaking). That took less than an hour. The rest of Monday, 2/23, was taken up with building new and improved shelves closer to the door of the store room. At 8 PM, the rest of the usual gang of cohorts (Don Marvel, Fred Scheer, and Travars Stavac) joined Jack Keene, Stewart Sopher, and me in replacing the contents of the shelves on the new shelves. New shelves; same old stuff on them.



Harbor Freight dolly to help move stuff around



Primed Drywall

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The new smaller room (14'4" by 8'8") had additional studs added so it and the long left wall could be drywalled. Along with the drywall on the walls, a soffit frame was built to enclose the central air duct. Also additional lighting was added in the back ½ of the new room (the four double tube fixtures).



Plenty of lighting



Soffit surrounding the air duct

Then came the slow and steady installation of the new drywall. (Mr. Tortoise Drywall Co.) After 2-1/2 buckets of drywall mud, 2 boxes of drywall screws, and 14 sheets of drywall, the drywall was completed to the satisfaction of my drywall foreman, Don Marvel. Once he signed off on the drywall sanding and mud work, 1-1/2 gallons of primer were painted on the drywall.



How blue is my train room!



Still too much stuff

On Thursday, September 8th, Don Marvel, my train buddy and the drywall supervisor for my layout room, gave his approval for the drywall to be primed and painted. On Thursday, 9/15, the paint crew of Jack Keene and me painted most of the layout room with a gallon of Dark Arctic Blue paint. I say most since the gallon of paint ran out with some of the trim and edges still white with primer. Another quart of paint completed painting.

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New shelves, Old Clutter!



The entrance into the “new” train room

Now the fun begins of 1:1 track planning on the floor with sections of flex track, switches and paper copies of switch templates.

More will be shown in upcoming issues of ***The Relay***.

Kurt



Handlaying Switches and Track Clinic

One of the skills lots of model railroaders find useful is the ability to handlay track and switches to match their individual needs. To foster this skill, the NMRA includes handlaying track and switch components as part of the Achievement Program under Model Railroad Engineer - Civil.

To receive this AP certificate, the modeler needs to complete the requirements under Section 3. Construct for Merit Judging, scratch built scale models of any three of the following, and demonstrate their satisfactory operation:

- Turnout
 - Point or Stub
- Crossover
- Double Crossover
- Single Slip Switch
- Double Slip Switch
- Crossing
- Gauntlet Track
- Gauntlet Turnout
- Dual Gauge Turnout
- Gauge Separation Turnout
 - Narrow gauge splitting off from dual gauge.
- Double Junction Turnout
 - One set of parallel tracks diverges from another.
- Three-Way Turnout
- Spring Switch
- Operating Switch in Overhead Wire
- Other _____

What has thrown lots of model railroaders off their stride about this section is the specific admonishment that "commercial frogs are not permitted to be used....." (NMRA Website).

The way around this is to use a construction jig. Fast Tracks has jigs for many scales and turnout and rail sizes. The NMRA has determined that using a construction jig (in particular a Fast Tracks jig) is allowable. In the near future, the Chesapeake Division will hold a one-day, hands-on clinic to build a simple turnout/switch, gauntlet track, and a crossover. We will be using Fast Track jigs for the construction of the switch and crossover and free-handing the gauntlet track. In the afternoon, we will have several judges available for you to get some or all of your track components judged for Merit Award.

If you are interested, please let Greg Kidwell, Division Superintendent know of your interest. As soon as we get a sort of head count, we'll get in touch with Fast Tracks. Per their website, they will provide their tools and jigs at reduced price to clinic participants.

NMRA National Convention at Indianapolis, 2016,

Part 1

By Al DelGaudio



I had the opportunity to go to the National NMRA Convention last month. My main focus was layout tours and the National Train Show. While there were a number of paid workshops/seminars, I passed on them and likewise, the bus layout tours. Self-guided tours are \$5/day and if you have a car, it's a great way to go!.

Tuesday was a travel day to Ohio, going to Entertainment Junction near Cincinnati. That is a great venue to be covered another time. Likewise, I have a number of photos, so I thought to split this into two articles, one each for Wednesday and Thursday.

I arrived at Indianapolis on Wednesday before lunch and looked over the schedule to see what no-cost seminars were available. There were a few that interested me, but I chose some of the layouts, which took up from 3-9 PM on Wednesday and noon to 5 on Thursday.

I've selected a few pictures of each. It's always worth noting that some model railroads are completely awesome and many are in process. In all cases, they represent the hard work and love of their builder[s], and no matter which scale, era or level of scenery or operating sophistication, they should be appreciated in the most positive manner.

Armed with this mantra, I set out. There were 3 layouts I wanted to see in the Bloomington area, about 75 minutes south of Indy.

Robert Talbot has an impressive 16 x 38 HO layout based on the L&N Laurel Division. It features all hand laid track and turnouts, a huge staging yard mounted 2 feet under the operating RR and a 7 turn helix!. He set up the helix top level so trains can exit in either the northbound or southbound directions. It has a mix of mountains, some in process, towns and industries. I think he mentioned there are about 7-10 people in an operating session. One is in the helix hole and they have a pretty high tempo of trains coming from the lower staging area up the helix and down.



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Robert mentioned that his friend's layout, minutes away, [Paul Surburg has a 25 x 25 Pennsy fully scenicked layout] was unavailable due news that morning necessitating him traveling east. Bummed out not to see this one but prayerful, I headed to **Jim Koryta's** O scale layout 15 minutes away.

Jim has a nice 9 x 14 O-scale layout and a small trolley loop which is powered by the overhead wires. It would have been easy to gloss over this 6 x 2.5 layout, but when he told me the trolley lines are energized and the work it was to get good connections and clean up the soldering flux residue, I had to give it some thought. My hat's off to him. I'm not sure if I'd rather break rocks instead of doing that. The O-scale layout is very cohesive with several nice, more detailed vignettes worked into it.

Thankful for a soda and cookies, I headed to the western suburbs of Indianapolis for a couple more layouts.



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Steve Poe's Doctors' Orders RR is a terrific N-scale layout [8 x 23] in an "E" shape. Featuring the Union Pacific in the mountains, it has scratch-built everything, detailed



everything and weathered everything. It is there with some of the more detailed HO layouts!



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You can guess I was really impressed! I wish I had a tripod for my camera to take better pictures. You would not easily notice it is N-scale. Steve's doctor ordered him to work on a hobby to take his mind off of a medical condition, hence the name. What great work!



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Just a few blocks away is **Bill Moore's** HO Allegheny and Western RR layout featuring Cass, WV. It's a 20 x 14 layout built in a garage.



The 2016 Steel Mill Modeling Special Interest Group Meet

By John Teichmoeller

In 2004, an informal group of modelers interested in steel mill modeling held a meeting at the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Malvern, PA. This is the same location at which the bi-annual Pennsylvania Prototype Modelers Meet is held. This meeting offered presentations on steel mill modeling, a stunning display of steel mill models, specialized steel mill products for sale and tours of layouts with steel mill aspects. Since then, this group has had at least one such meeting a year (sometimes two if you count a brief schism and the “Steel Tracks” at some NMRA National conventions) at various places, although never again at the Desmond because “the numbers don’t work.” Several years ago the group became an official NMRA Special Interest Group (www.smmsig.org). The SIG publishes the *Steel Mill Modeling Journal* on a quarterly basis. In 2016 the meet was in mid-August at the Hilton Garden Inn in Merrillville, Indiana, a painful and vexing 11+ hour drive from the Baltimore area. Reported attendance, many from the East, was 71 plus 18 spouses, at or near a record.

One of the highlights of these meets is the models that show up. Sometimes they are huge, sometimes they are small but they are always inspiring. It didn’t seem as if we had as many models this year as in the past, but those that were there were excellent. A popular vote competition is held. The winner receives a plaque designated as the “Dean Freytag Award.” (Dean died in late 2010 and was the patron saint of steel mill modeling). This year the winning model was a highly detailed blast furnace built by Doug Geiger which he drove very carefully from Colorado. Doug’s blast furnace was inspired by U.S. Steel’s Carrie furnaces in Pittsburgh and used parts of the Walthers kit, but it is much, much more than just a “detailed Walthers blast furnace.” Doug has a world-class layout named the Granite Mountain Railway. Some readers may remember the Granite Mountain from a series in the 1990s in *Model Railroading* magazine. I forgot to ask Doug when he moved the Granite Mountain to the Rust Belt. Doug doesn’t just do excellent modeling; he shares his skills with us by producing and selling directly a very economically priced line of resin cast kits that are “add-ons” for blast furnace models (tap hole drill, mud gun, dust collector pug mill, 8-axle hot metal bottle car, etc.). I didn’t have enough time to talk with Doug, so the caption information on the photos is based on my interpretation and understanding and might be off-base here and there. (Having a partially-completed Walthers blast furnace on the bench also generates a higher level of understanding and appreciation for this project!)

As is the typical format, presentations started Thursday evening and continued during the day and evening Friday. Presentations are available for download at the meet onto an attendee-supplied thumb drive. There were eight layouts open for tour on Saturday from way east in Elkhart IN to northern Chicago. I managed to visit four of them and got back to the hotel in time for my 3:00 nap. After that we had a group dinner with no speaker (for many years we had an “ethnic” buffet called the “Hunkie Banquet,” but our group’s leaders apparently found that offensive or perhaps hard to arrange—certainly should have been able to be done in Merrillville!) There was also a small vendor room. Here members offered a fascinating array of assembled models and kits for various steel mill related items. These are things you will not see advertised in the commercial magazines and include not only resin castings but some amazing 3-D printed stuff.

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Discussions seemed to be leaning toward having next year's meet in or near Bethlehem, PA area. Check with the website for membership and future meet information.

John



Photo 1 General view of blast furnace stack, cast house and dust catcher. Note the lights. Doug said there are over 100 such lights, made using those teeny surface mount LEDs with the leads run through bent hypodermic needles. These are tiny and cheap—for example, check out 10 for \$7 (including resistors) from wehonest.com, direct from Guangdong. Bending that small diameter tubing without kinking is the challenge, and those must be horse needles Doug uses.

Photo 2 Closer view of blast furnace stack and “top”. The top piping arrangement is an older arrangement, different from the McKee design provided in the Walthers kit. Peach Creek Shops sells a set of tubing parts that will at least get you started. Note the vertical “reinforcing staves” on the blast furnace stack. This replicates the Carrie Furnaces in Pittsburgh. This detail is cheap and easy to apply and provides needed “texture” to the otherwise bare Walthers stack. The lowest circumferential platform, which I have seen labeled as the “pyrometer platform,” is not hard to build using styrene sheet and strip following Jeff Borne in his two *Super Detailing the Walthers Blast Furnace* DVDs.



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Photo 3 The back of the furnace showing the skip hoist and gas equipment. Doug modeled a single bucket skip hoist instead of the double bucket one that the Walthers kit provides. The gas equipment has been enhanced from that supplied in the kit using techniques shown in Jeff Borne's DVDs.

Photo 4 Detail of the base of the dust catcher. The structural element between the four legs with the yellow railings is a pug mill in which the dust from the stack is moistened and concentrated. Doug sells a resin kit for the basic pug mill but you have to supply the piping, valves and railings. He also beefed up the dust catchers' legs.



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Photo 5 View of cast house floor. Lots of great details— hot metal runner gates with counterweights, jib cranes, red siren flasher, crossover bridges, etc.



Photo 6. Closer view of the slag line. Doug has added outboard support framework for the slag deck, as suggested by Jeff Borne. Easy to build and a great enhancement. The diagonal member over the nearest slag runner I believe goes with the “slag bot” which is used to punch open the slag notch in the side of the blast furnace which is supposed to provide for a continuous slag run but sometimes gets clogged. Jeff Borne’s video shows a microsecond view of this. Note the furnacemaster’s office with open window. I give my furnacemaster a window air conditioner. For weathering, Doug studies the techniques of military modelers.





A VISIT TO LEETSDALE INDUSTRIAL PARK

By Kurt Thompson

On a trip up to Pittsburgh to see two friends and watch the Nationals beat the Pirates, I was able to finally drive around an industrial park in Leetsdale, PA. It was a treasure trove of rail-served industries and other interesting or unusual features.

Between the pictures I took early Sunday morning (before 9 am) and the Google/Bing maps satellite/bird's eye views, I found 3 Trackmobiles at 3 different industries and an older EMD SW-series switcher. Also the trackage in and around the industrial park includes two wyes. One wye serves a single industry and the other one includes two crossings. One of the crossings has one leg which is curved as it goes through the other route.

There are also several run-arounds in the park. A couple of them seem to serve just a single industry. When I first entered the Leetsdale Industrial Park on Leetsdale Industrial Drive, I followed the tracks around the front of one large building to West Park Road. The tracks were double tracked in front but as soon as I rounded the right end of the building, the outer of the two tracks ended with a pair of wheel stops. At one time, the inner (now continuous) track served a loading door in the curve.



As I went further back on West Park, the track on the side of the street looked like some fine trackwork: jointed and not perfectly aligned. But this isn't the Northeast Corridor but a slow speed busy industrial operation. On the right side at the river's edge stood the unloading and storage shed for Essroc, a manufacturer of Portland Cement. From ground level the trackwork looked interesting but I couldn't tell exactly how the tracks went for Essroc and the company on the left side of the street, as it had at least 4 different switches off the working lead. I suspected but couldn't confirm there was a wye there until I got on Google and Bing maps which confirmed my suspicions



about a wye being in use by Essroc.

Mol-Dok used to be a very active barge loading operation. They have/had their own SW switcher. There weren't any hopper cars being transloaded while I was there but the images on Bing maps show the operation in full force. So busy that the loaded hoppers were stashed along the double tracks on Avenue C. When I was there, the hoppers on Avenue C are now shorter aggregate hoppers, possibly used by Essroc around the other end of the park.

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Mol-Dok's engine is an easy study in weathering. The doors in the engine compartment are grimier than the doors in and around the radiator compartment. The radiator end is grimy too.

To the left in the picture (riverside of warehouse), the tracks split. The higher track goes around and served both the visible warehouse and the next one north. The low track leads down to the barge loading area. In the Bing/Google map images, Mol-Dok also used a Track-

mobile to position hoppers for dumping. However I'm sure the little guy was not up to the challenge of moving fully loaded cars down the grade or to pull a long string of empty hoppers back up from the low track.

At the road end of Avenue A are two legs of a wye



coming off the switching lead and storage tracks out by the NS mainline. Coming off the south leg is a switch that leads to another storage/unloading facility. The track leading to it



crosses the Avenue A track while the other legs of the wye crosses the first leg. (**Convolutd Wye picture to the right**). But hiding under the unloading shed awning was another of the Trackmobiles that inhabit this industrial park. When I compared my picture to the one on Bing maps, I found the awning was an addition made after the satellite picture was taken. Also beside the switching lead is a mailbox. In older days, I would guess it was where the NS crew would put the waybills for the all the covered hoppers that are tucked around the curve of the right hand track.

Oddities found in the Park:

As I came around Leetsdale Industrial Road, I turned right to stay on Leetsdale Industrial Road. I was met with a sign that should help the crews moving cars for the local industries and the NS crews. Inbound cars go to the left; outbound cars get pulled from the right. (Anyone need one of these signs

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for your switching crews? [“Loads to the right of me, Empties to the left, drive down the middle with you” to the melody of “Stuck in the middle with you” by Stealers Wheel]

Someone painting cars missed his stencil. Seems that NAHX has decided to make their cars stand out even more. In-



stead of having the reporting marks down in the “normal” position above the load/weight information, the reporting marks are up near the top edge of the side.

Kurt





Where are we headed? What did we find?

Wandering around the Internet

By Kurt Thompson

You never know what you'll find or where you'll end up when you have no defined purpose or end in mind. Letting your mind wander around the internet looking for railroad stuff is just such a situation.

It all started with pictures of railroads street-running on www.railpictures.net. One of the photographs was taken by J. Alex Lang. He also has a website of photos. So, off to his website www.jalexlang.com to see what else he has. Never know, maybe he has some other railroad pictures with street running.

No more pictures of street-running did I find on his website. But I found a lot of pictures in and around the Pittsburgh and Western PA area. Having lived north of Pittsburgh back in the early 90s, I was interested in the "modern" rail scenes in and around. Some of Alex's pictures were of the Allegheny Valley Railroad, a 1992 start up.

In one picture, in an industrial park setting, there were two trains: one AVR and one from NS. The track arrangement was interesting. Something I'm always looking for for my layout in progress. And from that picture, I went to www.bing.com/maps to find the overhead/aerial view. But the picture text only said the train was on the Youngwood Siding.

So off to the AVR website to see if I could figure out where the Youngwood Siding is. Well, it wasn't in the town of Youngwood, PA, since that place doesn't exist. But in looking at the featured warehouse sites the AVR is touting, I found the warehouse is located in the Youngwood Commerce Park in Greensburg, PA. Armed with that information, I went back to Bing Maps and found the location of the picture. From the aerial view, I got some ideas. The nice thing about Bing Maps, it has two nice features: Streetside and Bird's Eye. Streetwise is from those car-mounted cameras. The coverage isn't always as complete as I would like but when it's available, you can get some very nice pictures. Then it's time for the Snippet program (if you're using Windows).

Bird's Eye view is not the same as the strict Aerial view. Bird's Eye allows you to swing around your picture and view the track, buildings, and other structures from different angles. Again Snippet comes in handy for any reference images you want to snag from the screen. After snooping around on Bing Maps, I went back to the AVR website and wandered through their listing of facilities, including many different transloading facilities throughout their 115 mile system. They also have access to several private and competitor transloading facilities. One they listed was a CSX transload site. When I clicked on the hyperlink for Transload (http://www.transflo.net/share/wwwtransflo2014/assets/File/TRANSFLO_Terminal_Network_Guide.pdf), I was presented with a PDF document listing of all of CSX's Transflo facilities. The guide is alphabetically listed by city all of the facilities. Also listed are the number of car spots, what types of commodities the facility handles, and a simple aerial view. Most of these facilities are repurposed from other railroad facilities or yards. With the use of Bing Maps, an aerial survey could be done. And most of these sites can be inspected to see what they were before. One site clearly was an engine terminal inside a wye. The imprint of the roundhouse is still visible.

Well, as Buckaroo Bonzai said, "Remember, no matter where you go, well.....There you are!"

Happy Wandering!

Kurt

sign me up for a

The Relay

National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Mid-Eastern Region Application for Free "Railpass" Trial Membership

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.

Name: _____

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(a Regional Officer or Board Member)

When this form is completed,

mail to:

Bob Price
MER Business Manager
666 Princeton Ave
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Please do not mail this form
Directly to the NMRA Headquarters
In Chattanooga, TN.

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