

Fall 2025

The Relay



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

View from the Cupola

Wow! The last few weeks have been filled with more nearby model railroading activities than I was able to attend, although I wanted to participate in all. And I'm sure there are some activities I didn't even know about.

The Division Board of Directors arranged for a terrific day of layout open houses September 6. We began our day at the Severna Park Model Railroad Club, taking advantage of them being open to the public that day. Following that, four of our Division members opened their homes to share their layouts. I hope you were able to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about and enjoy these layouts. Perhaps you received some inspiration, as well.

The Mid-Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers meet was held September 11-14 near BWI airport. I enjoyed this one very much! That same weekend, although further away, the NMRA Northeastern Region convention was held in Concord, NH. I know of one Division member who attended. Maybe he'll give us a report.

As I write this column, Mainline Hobby Supply is holding an open house with a storewide discount and a self-guided layout tour of local model railroads. So, plenty to do in the world of model railroading, and plenty more inspiration.

And, looking forward, the NMRA Mid-Eastern Region will be here very shortly. It is being held October 16 - 22 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania (a Philadelphia suburb ~20 miles northwest of the city proper). I hope you are able to join me there. You can learn more at the [convention website](#).

With all these activities, I am feeling inspired to build a model! Perhaps you are, too. And what an opportune time to be thinking about model railroading projects. Because with fall having officially begun and the outdoor chores and activities that have occupied so much of our time the past few months winding down, we'll have more time to devote to this hobby we enjoy. What are you inspired to do in the months ahead?

Kirk Bateman
Superintendent

From the Editor

Here's the second edition of the new *Relay*. In this issue we have an article about the Division's visit to the Baltimore Streetcar Museum; Alan Del Guido leads us through the development of an open area on his layout; John Teichmoeller brings us some insights on pipe bridges; and Greg Meeks provides his comments on the Division Open House.

I'd print and publish more, if you write more. I guarantee if you write it, it will be published.

Kurt Thompson, MMR
Editor



Streetcar Museum Struts Its Stuff for Chesapeake Division

Mike Shylanski
Asst. Superintendent, Chesapeake Division

On June 7, 2025 those from the Chesapeake Division group arriving early for our tour of the Baltimore Streetcar Museum (BSM) found a nice-looking cream over green PCC car parked in front of the museum. Our host, Mark Dawson and another museum volunteer were checking the condition of the complicated-looking rear truck of the car.



BTC PCC 7407 awaits riders at the museum

Next, Mark was consulted on the wiring needs of a much older, single truck car. These beautifully restored museum pieces do require constant care. Discussion completed, Mark offered to start us out with a ride. There is no better way to go.



Mark Dawson (right) and colleague were keeping an eye on the complex equipment

Now, the museum tends to do certain things by the book, so we lined up at a window inside the museum building for metal tokens for our journey. The small fee - waived for those with museum membership - was money well spent. Mark had brought out of the car barn the beautifully restored United Railways 4533, a single-truck car built by Brill in 1904 and remodeled for single-man operation by Baltimore's United Traction sometime in the 1920s.

We stepped onto the car and surrendered our tokens. We were given a traditional paper transfer that could be used



for other rides that day. The number of fares was totaled mechanically, and the results were displayed on a large disk at the top front of the car.



Mark explained the fare counting device and detailed the history of our car, which had been painstakingly renewed by volunteers at the museum. We set out for an enjoy-

able ride down the mile-long track on the museum premises. We passed under the CSX, former B&O, viaduct that crosses over the throat of the museum trackage serving the end loop and the car barn.

As we rocked along, we learned that much of the track we rode was reclaimed from former Baltimore-area trackage, and Mark was able to identify the specific spots around town where switches or other track components had once served. Interestingly, some trackage was uncovered and removed when the city tore up city streets for repairs. Over a period of years, the museum's tracks were laid on the former Ma & Pa Railroad right of way along Falls Creek.

On returning from our first ride, we entered the car barn for a behind-the-scenes tour. We were able to get a good look at a number of historic cars in various stages of preservation. A former Baltimore horse car really grabbed our attention.



Horsecar 129 bore the word "Canton" in huge letters and also "Penna. Avenue," along which it once was hauled by a 2-horse team. High on its side the car advertised the fact that it had served the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad (later Pennsylvania Railroad) Station. This 19th Century car was in pretty good condition, but other cars inside the barn were stripped down and very much in need of help.

We passed car 417, which had started its life circa 1888 as a horse car and was converted to first a cable car, then to an electrically powered street car. The car, now operable, is marked for serving Baltimore's Druid Hill and Patterson Parks. Like much of the original collection, this car once earned its keep in Baltimore, although a few Philadelphia cars were later acquired.



The 'I led 3 lives' car 417 was resting peacefully deep in the car barn

We viewed a car or two that have been saved, but will need much work. The museum scours the country for authentic replacement parts and designs and orders or even fabricates close replicas of original parts that cannot be found.

Mark showed us the intricate electrical box on one car in the collection to give us an idea of the durable early electrical gear that the museum must refurbish for use. The sophisticated repairs to and upgrades of museum cars are described in the museum's publication, *Live Wire*. It is mailed to museum members, but some issues



Trust us, the wizards at the museum will have the car looking shiny and new

can be read on the museum's website. Readers will be impressed by descriptions of the thorough, often ingenious, work done to restore the cars. At the end of

each issue, there is usually a reprint of an early 20th century article relating to Baltimore streetcars.



After we left the car barn, Mark gave us our choice of cars to take for a second ride. We could sample the PCC, or we could ride a gorgeous wooden open car. It being hot, our group chose the breeze inducing, older alternative.



Riding in the open car

This was the beautiful car 554, which was built in 1896 by the Brownell Car Company of St. Louis. It is an open-

sided streetcar intended for summer use only. It gave patrons of the Baltimore Traction Co. a cooler ride during the stifling Baltimore summers. We, too, appreciated the artificial breeze as we swayed along the track.

This time we got a really good look at the right of way and areas trackside. We passed the half-ruined roundhouse of the former Ma & Pa Railroad. The building, owned by the City of Baltimore, had been used in recent years for storage of road salt.

The Baltimore Streetcar Museum now has a well-thought-out plan for acquiring and renovating the roundhouse and moving the bulk of its historic streetcars there. Installed will be a new turntable, evidently one that once served West Virginia. An old, recycled Bollman Truss bridge will be erected near the “new” turntable. Fund raising for this dream project will be critical. As we rocked



along the right of way, Mark showed us the Bollman Truss girders half hidden by weeds and trees. We also passed by a former Ma and Pa structure whose rusty and weather-beaten exterior has seen better days. Now, it houses a well-equipped machine shop where BSM volunteers create replica parts.

Our tour continued with a special treat. At the request of Asst. Super. Mike Shylanski, Mark took us to see the Maryland Rail Heritage Library. This library is a joint project of the Baltimore Chapter and the Baltimore Streetcar Museum. It is housed on the second floor of the main museum building. Ordinarily, it is not open to the public. We were given special permission to get a look. The collection contains priceless artifacts and publications from Baltimore’s streetcar past. For example, there is an extensive collection of old transfers. There are many photographs of electric traction not only in Baltimore and Maryland, but also in other parts of the country. The museum also has a very large assortment of NRHS owned photos, slides, and timetables. There are hundreds of books about trains and travel. Periodicals such as Railway Age and Railroad Model Craftsman are on hand as well. Also housed here are shelves full of Official Guides of the Railways and Official Railway Equipment Registers. Researchers with permission and NRHS and BSM members can access this unique collection.



Maryland Rail Heritage Library

But wait, there was more. On exiting the building that elusive PCC was just returning to the museum loop with some BSM visitors on board. Now, we would get a ride on one of these legendary cars, whose introduction once was intended to save the streetcar industry.

Unfortunately, it did not do that, but the PCC was seen in many US and a few foreign cities. I, for one, grew up with these cars in the St. Louis area, where the PCC was a familiar sight. The museum also has restored a spiffy Philadelphia PCC, but we did not see it during this visit.

So, what does the division do for a second act? We are considering seeking another comprehensive tour of a similar institution, the National Capitol Trolley Museum, in 2026.



PCC gliding under the historic B&O bridge and by a cable car system cog

Our host and one of our tour members finished off the visit by taking a group photo.



The BSM tour posse

Modern Pipe Bridges

John Teichmoeller



Pipe bridges are common features of industrial sites. They are used to carry process piping overhead. They always seem to convey a suitably busy and serious industrial flavor to a scene.

Over the years I have seen and photographed lots of different varieties. However, when it comes to actual modeling, most pipe bridges I have seen are a bit intimidating. They have tended to be somewhat intricate being fabricated from lattice girders.

I have developed some thoughts on simplifying things, for example, using Plastruct's "pre-printed" lattice structures. I have not tried out my thoughts on actual models yet.

When the Railroad Industry Modeling Special Interest Group (RIM SIG) visited the Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) transload facility in Chattanooga in 2014, I was impressed by the simplicity of the units we saw there. One thing I found interesting was that there was no hardware visible from ground level showing the attachment of the pipes to the cross pieces. This style would certainly be easy to model and appropriate for a modern-day facility.



Creating a small street scene

Alan Del Gaudio

As is so usual in model railroading, this is an in-process diorama but most of the work is done. Though the scene is done in HO scene, the thoughts and planning are applicable in all scales.

The intent for this particular location has always been to have several shops that might serve a railroad. The area is bounded by a 2-track mainline with an extended siding at the top; a 2-track mainline; a medium length siding sized for ~12 40' boxcars at the bottom; and a siding for a warehouse with a run around track on the right ending in a wye. The wye has enough room for a road-switcher 4-axle to move between the tracks. A refueling tank and small tool shed is located on the wye.

Please excuse the top/bottom/right/left nomenclature since I have yet to settle on N, S, E and W for this railroad. At the top, the 3 tracks make a 90 degree curve with radii from 34-40 inches. Directly above will be a warehouse with a run around; to the right will be the village of Oakview. There is a ramp behind my described area leading to a bridge over the top tracks to the village of Oakview. To the left of this scene is a small freight house and/or switch tower, some woods and then a waterfall and the Oakview Viaduct.



The above descriptions provide some context for this diorama. It is a place for townsfolk to shop and a place for the railroad workers to grab some food and tools. Originally, the intent was for a hardware store, a luncheonette, a drug store and a gas station. The management of the Argyle, Oakview and Montclair Railway stipulated no bar rooms to be present within 250 feet of the railroad facilities to better improve productivity and safety.

A few years ago, I bought two wood craftsman kits from Bar Mills: Amos Cutter and Honest Joe's Pawn Shop. The plan was to combine them with brick structures to have that "village-y" look.



This scene is about 28 inches long by 7 inches deep and is bounded by the 24-inch long ramp to the bridge at the back. With the depth of the buildings being 4 inches, there was room for a sidewalk and 2 lanes of traffic.

The Honest Joe's had been started 4 years ago and I used a light blue color to be a counterpoint to brick structures. It's a narrow, 3-story structure just under 4 inches deep. The name Manda Moo's Ice Cream Shoppe is after my daughter. I added a large corrugated awning which will have some picnic tables and benches for folks to settle back,

While I was on a roll with the wood kits, I worked on Amos Cutter. As depicted on the box art, it's a plain white structure. Not what I wanted. I settled on a pale harvest

gold (yellow) color with a red roof for this single story peaked roof kit. So, it has a small 2nd story. I reduced the depth from the original 6 inches to 3-3/4 inches. Here is a huge benefit of wood kits, they are so easy to modify. The two clever things I did was to realize the woodwork for the front bay window, spanning the width the front was layered using 3 overlays of wood trim. Rather than paint them, I brushed them with 3 coats of Future floor wax and that deep honey color works well with the rest of the palette. City Classics makes nice photo interiors of various shops and stores, so I used the bakery one and curved to fill the front of the store behind the window. I named the shop Debbie's Bakery for my wife. We never did get into the bakery business, but this is hers.

Next up was the DPM *Seymour Block* kit. This is 7 inches across the front and has a right corner facade. Here I added awnings using sheet plastic with Tichy eave supports from and City Classic window interior details for a little market and dance studio. These are named after my granddaughters, Kylie and Alyssa.

The DPM Kelly's Saloon became David's Hardware store using the appropriate interior. For the end, my original



intent was the Lunde Cal's (Corner) Café, but it's a little small. I could not resist the Lunde Sacco's Department Store and built this with awnings and interior and named it Joanie's for my mom. As a kid, I sure remember she liked department stores. Most likely, I'll relocate this when the cities of Argyle and Montclair are built and substitute a drug store. New projects off this block but in the area will be a diner and probably a gas station, so long as I like the geometry.

Planning

Oh yes, this was about planning. So now I had a 7 x 28 area to plan. Since the stores would be in a row, I did not want a monotonic rise to 3 stories and down. Some of the signage along the sides of buildings would be better presented with the immediate neighboring building providing less obstruction. So, the Debbie's Bakery offered a lower building with a little set back to see the



Dance with Miss Allie signage on the side of the Seymour block building. The hardware store was to the left, the Manda

Moo's with Joanie's providing a fine 3-story corner department store.

Okay, so the buildings are about 4 inches deep out of the 7 I had. We need a sidewalk and then we need the street. And where were the shoppers going to park near this nice little run of shops? Using 2 HO trucks side by side, the street was defined to be about 1-1/2 inches wide. I settled on 3/4 inch deep for the sidewalk. So, then it hit me. Put a tunnel through the ramp to the bridge and make the street in front of the stores a 1-way lane plus a parking lane. I covered the ramp with Noch "Dolomite stone" paper. Since the stores are in front of it, I thought about using a stone sheet instead of a coloring sheet of plastic stones or a hydrocal wall. The time spent on coloring stones would be a time drain with not much visibility and there is so much more to do on this layout. Fortunately, I had an N-scale arcade wall which I cut out for the portal. Cars go through the portal and turn right to turn. This is bounded by the three top tracks.

To separate the diorama village scene from the 3 railroad tracks in front, I used the Busch Wrought Iron fence from Wal- thers. This has stone posts every ~2-1/4 inches topped by lanterns. I've gotten a few compliments on this.

The HO railroad will have an N-scale level 16 inches above. Some of that is in place, but not yet over this scene. What is nice with this arrangement is that it frames the HO scene sufficiently to pre- vent inquiring minds from seeing that the doctrine of selective

compression has been invoked on the other side of the ramp.



The Test

Enter my then mighty mite 5-year granddaughter who brings her stool over and says she likes the village. She is at eye level with the tunnel portal and says, “Grandpa, these cars have to go on the railroad tracks.” Realizing that arguing the intricacies of selective compression may not be fully appreciated, I said, “The cars turn before the tracks and come out on the other side of the ramp.” To which she replied, “I don’t think they can, the train tracks are there.” I said, “Well, you just have to pretend they do” and showed her at the end of the ramp on the far side where I was able to fit a delivery van. This was acceptable. At least I did not have to tell her to “stop messing with my illusion ‘cause there ain’t no more space.”

CONGRATULATIONS TO PAT FLASH

In September, the Chesapeake Division had a second member become a Master Model Railroader. Patrick Flash earned his seventh AP certificate for Cars at the end of August. His MMR SOQ was submitted on Sept. 12th. Pat is now MMR 809.

When National gets the plaque and goodies to the MER AP Manager (your faithful editor), we will arrange an appropriate presentation to Patrick. He will be inducted into the MER College of MMRs (not Cardinals) at the MER Convention at Valley Forge.

Sept. 6th Open Houses

Staff Writer

On Saturday, Sept. 6th, the Chesapeake Division was asked to visit the Severna Park Model Railroad Club and four local layouts. Over twenty of the Division members took the opportunity to see four layouts in the Severna Park and Arnold area after the visit to the SPMRC.

The layouts included three operational layouts: Don Marvel's HO B&O and WM layout; Jeff Mutter's HO EL Scranton Division; and Jack Keene's O scale D&H layout. The fourth layout, Kurt Thompson's O scale P48 C&O Brooke Ave. is currently under construction and not operational.

Though not operational, Kurt had many in-progress items to show the attendees. Among them a comparison of O scale 2 rail vs O scale Proto 48 trackwork and truck/wheel sets and the Southgate Terminal Warehouse at over 6 feet long.

Greg Meeks took the opportunity to provide his views and thoughts on the layouts he visited:

I try to pick at least one thing from every layout I visit, regardless of condition, progress, scale, or railroad, to appreciate. Every modeler, especially those who cordially open their houses to visitors, has something worth sharing. This is my way of recognizing them. On Sept. 6th, the Chesapeake Division supported the Severna

Park Open House and four of these modelers. Here are my personal takeaways.

Severna Park Model RR Club: I've been there over the years so I was already familiar with the basics. They installed DCC and are working through that change. One of the members brought their American Freedom Train to the layout! I've never seen that train in model form before. For those who might not be familiar with its story, the steam-powered train ran back in 1976 hauling a series of display cars around to celebrate the American Bicentennial. Neat.

Wilson Creek by Don Marvel: Don, I believe with Jack Keane's help, uses several adjoining railroads in West Virginia to bring traffic on/take traffic off the railroad. That's a very effective way to make the trains "go beyond the basement."

Erie Lackawanna by Jeff Mutter: Jeff really captured the essence of Northeast Pennsylvania railroading operations. I also appreciated his tour of the railroad, which really brought that to life.

D&H Oneonta by Jack Keane: Probably my first time seeing an Alco Century 620 (if I remember the digits correctly) (actually a 628, editor) locomotive in model form, much less in O scale. I don't know much about the railroad, the time period, or the motive power so this filled a gap in my knowledge.

Thank you to these model railroaders and to Kurt Thompson since I didn't get a chance to see his layout - next time! I'm sure others learned or noticed something special at each stop as well.

















