



# UP THE HOLLER

The Newsletter of Mid Central Region NMRA

## DIVISION 9

### The Coal Division



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#### FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Bob Weinheimer MMR

It was great to see such a large turnout at the June meeting! I had expected we might see a post convention slump, but the level of enthusiasm was outstanding. If you were not there you missed a great clinic by new member Dan Kennedy. Dan tried out the clinic about his layout and hobby relationship with Dean Freitag MMR that he will be presenting at the NMRA National Convention in July. Aside from a couple of technical glitches the presentation was very interesting. Dan has offered to have us over to his home after a future meeting so we can see the layout in person. I am certainly looking forward to that opportunity.

As mentioned last month, I have some ideas I would like to share about our meetings. On the one hand we are blessed with a central location for our meetings at West Virginia Hobbies and Crafts. This works well for us as well as Chuck. On the other hand, the area covered by our Division is quite large and it is nice to get out and see other parts of the Division. For example Mark Maynard has been a gracious host for our September meeting for the past few years. This has grown into an event we all look forward to. We have also had October meetings at Clint Foster's home in Ronceverte WV and at the Pocahontas Chapter NRHS train show in Bluefield last November. Indeed, last fall we had three meetings in a row away from the hobby shop. Of course, we also visit Lin Young's home in Gallipolis OH in July.

I feel it would be in our best interests to set up a more predictable cycle of meetings and locations. To that end, we are heading toward meetings in the even number months (e.g. February, April, etc) at the hobby shop. Odd numbered months will see meetings in other locations. This was determined by the Bluefield show, which always falls in the second weekend of November. In addition to the four meeting sites described above, Dave Stout has proposed we have a meeting in Parkersburg; an idea I welcome.

At this point, the schedule that is shaping looks like this: July, 2010 at Lin's, September 2010 at Mark's, and November 2010 in Bluefield. The August, October and December meetings will be at the hobby shop. Since the weather in January can be troublesome; I suggest we just meet at the hobby shop. By March things should be better and we are looking at having our March meeting at Lin's, the May 2011 meeting at Clint's and the July 2011 meeting at Dave's home in Parkersburg. I then see the cycle repeating, more or less, down the road.

Of course, the membership should have a say in all this. I welcome any suggestions you may have including other venues for the away from the hobby shop meetings.

## FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

### Gary J Burdette, Assistant Superintendent

Wow, the enthusiasm seems to have carried over from the MCR 2010 Convention to our monthly meeting. This is evidenced from the number of members present (around thirty - standing room only) to the variety of models in the contest, the memorabilia on display, the clinic presented by Dan Kennedy, one of our newest members, and the general overall feeling of camaraderie shared by those in attendance. Both Jerry Doyle and Greg McCartney have asked, "Where do we go from here?" after the energy exhibited at the convention was so great. We touched upon this topic in last month's "Up the Holler" and at the meeting. Perhaps, the answer has begun to unfold in front of us: we, as a group, will continue to do what we have been doing and, maybe, more! We are continuing to participate in our hobby and our group, sharing with one another. We'll continue to address this topic as time and space permit.

The model contest was On Line Structures. It was more of a series of mini-clinics as each modeler discussed construction techniques. Dan Kennedy took two factory kits and merged them into a 1940s-50s steel mill structure. Following an Art Curren article, Paul Lapointe cut and spliced various wall sections into a turn-of-the-century, Italian design, three-story factory. Kenny Day built a board-by-board On30 water tank complete with the water! Larry Richards used C&O plans to build board-and-batten and scribed siding out of card stock to make an exact replica of a company section house. I laminated several sheets of card cut to different widths to make the windows for the Art-Deco Prince Station. Five distinct modeling techniques offered us all tips on how we might attack that next project. As Jerry noted, "the convention may have put our group on the map as modelers." Five different modelers with five different styles of structures and five different methods of modeling may just help prove this observation true. Also, several in our group placed in various areas of the convention contest as noted in UTH last month. Bring your models to the contests, not just to compete, but to share your ideas. Participate!

Dan Kennedy, who had that wonderful steel mill at our convention, presented his clinic on how he built the huge structure along with a variety of related components. He will be presenting at the NMRA National Convention this summer.

He discussed his interest, research, and techniques. He had some models on display, as well. He has become friends with, the "King of Steel Mills," Dean Freytag, MMR. The stories Dan told of getting to know Dean and learning from him were as enjoyable as his discussion of the mill itself. In short, we were presented with another informative clinic, and, in this case, from a new face. Thanks, Dan, for participating.

Dennis McGeeney displayed a copy of "Portfolio of Trackwork Plans" by the American Railway Engineering Association which had numerous fascinating and detailed drawings. His book on the Reading Railroad was fun to see as he was a locomotive engineer for them, and many photos in the book were of his old stomping grounds. Finally, he had some shots of the Illinois Railway Museum and told us of a recent trip by Amtrak to visit a buddy in the Chicago area. Dennis will participate in this issue of UTH as he describes a recent trip several of us took via train.

I had entered my Prince, West Virginia station in the model contest and had my Amtrak tickets and C&O Historical Society information in the monthly Mini-clinic display as a prelude to Dennis' article. I won't steal his thunder here. Adding my two cents worth to Dennis' story, though, includes the autograph I received from former station agent Marvin Plumley and Amtrak stamp on the underside of the roof of my model, and the memorabilia I kept from our recent trip. Numerous trips to Prince have made it a special place for me. The signature and stamp came about during the Saint Albans C&O Modelers/COHS get-together to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the station in June 30, 1996. I kept the ticket stubs and Amtrak envelope to add to my collection of railroad keepsakes serving as a reminder of the trip we took in late May, departing from and returning to this special locale, and sharing a great day with friends.

All of the above may serve to illustrate that as we come up with new and various ways to participate in our hobby, we will continue the exuberating feeling we experienced at the convention throughout the year and have that value-added component as part of our membership in The Coal Division.

## ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

### Bob Weinheimer MMR

It has been a while since we discussed any of the Achievement Program requirements. Indeed, when I last presented the clinic on the AP, I did not have time to discuss the Golden Spike Award. The Golden Spike, while not a certificate that can be used toward Master Model Railroader, is still a first step that lets you sample several of the broad areas covered by the AP. So, what does it take to earn A Golden Spike Award? Well, let's see.

First, you must display six pieces of rolling stock that are either scratchbuilt, craftsman kits or detailed commercial kits. They do not have to be judged. Just do something a bit more sophisticated than a simple "shake the box" kit by painting, decaling, weathering or adding details. That is all it takes!

Second, by analogy with the rolling stock, build five structures such as buildings, bridges or the like. As with the rolling stock; these do not have to be judged but they must show some level of modeling effort.

Third, construct a minimum of eight square feet of layout. That can be as simple as two foot by four foot layout or module. The rules say nothing about scenery but I would suggest you look at the following requirements for ideas of how to spice it up a bit.

Fourth, while doing step three, keep in mind

the need to include three types of trackage such as turnouts or crossings. All must be installed on appropriate roadbed and ballasted. Commercial track may be used, there is no need to hand lay anything. Don't get worked up about the three types of trackage; three turnouts will suffice.

Fifth, the track you install must be properly wired so two trains can be operated simultaneously. This can be double track or single track with a siding. If you can get a train into a siding, stop it and let another train pass on the main you have met the requirement.

Finally, provide one additional electrical feature such as a switch machine, a turnout position indicator, or even a building light. Even an Atlas switch machine you connect to a power supply counts.

I hope you can see the relative ease with which the Golden Spike Award may be earned. If you think you have met the requirements; let me know so a couple of us can come out to look it over and sign off on the paperwork. The form is available at [www.nmra.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-golden-spike.pdf](http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-golden-spike.pdf). The best part is that this form requires your contact information as well as the sign off from the Division AP Manager. There is no need to write up anything, it is about as easy as it gets. Take a look at your layout; you may be pleasantly surprised!

## JULY MEETING REMINDER

Our July meeting will be Saturday July 10 at the home of Lin Young in Gallipolis, Ohio. Lin tells us the doors will open at high noon for operations on the Grafton and Greenbrier. If you did not make it to this meeting last year, you will be in for a big surprise. Lin's crew has approximately doubled the size of the layout. If you want to run a train, there should be no trouble finding one. There is not much scenery on the new part of the layout but it does offer many operating challenges including long grades and switching a huge coal preparation plant.

We will take a break at about 2 PM for the membership meeting. The contest is Off Line Structures. After the meeting we will head back

down to the basement to operate as long as anybody wants to stay.

While the doors open at noon, Lin will not be providing lunch so do get something to eat before arriving.

Lin and the G&G are at 19 Debbie Drive just outside of Gallipolis. From whatever direction you come, find Ohio 7. Just west of downtown Gallipolis, turn onto Ohio 141 then head about a mile to Debbie Drive. Lin's home is the first house on the left, look for the flag pole and lots of parked cars. If you get lost, call Lin at 740-441-5366 for help.

## THE PASSENGER MANIFEST

### Information for the Membership of the Coal Division

#### John Harris, Membership Chairman

Membership remains rather constant for the month of June now that your membership chairman remembered to renew his own membership. We would like to welcome Charles Montague from Ashland, Dan Kennedy from Hurricane, and John Ewart of Lewisburg as a new members. We now stand at 61 regular members in addition to the 7 members introduced last month traveling on Rail Passes. It appears that a few other memberships are about to expire, so check to make sure you are not one of them.

Over the next several months, I would like to initiate some incentives to increase membership for the division. This could include "bring a friend" to a meeting contest with a give away for the member that brings the most friends that actually sign up to become NMRA members. Another way of increasing membership is to encourage potential members to give NMRA a 6 month try through the Rail Pass program. For \$9.95, new members receive all the benefits of regular membership including a 6 month subscription to Scale Rails.

I hope several of you take advantage of opportunity to attend the National Convention in

Milwaukee July 11 thru 18. While many of the tours are already full, the National Train Show on the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> is worth the trip. Admission to the Show is just \$12 for a one day pass for this 188,000 square foot exhibition that features the latest in model railroad products and manufactures. Also included is over 39,000 square feet of modular layouts and a 6000 square foot Lego Mini Land.

As a further reminder, don't forget to mark your calendar for upcoming meetings. The meeting this month will be July 10<sup>th</sup> at the home of Lin Young in Gallipolis, OH. Clinic will be hands on operating session on the Grafton and Greenbrier. Contest is off line structures. For August we are back to WV Hobbies & Crafts on the 14<sup>th</sup> and then on September 11<sup>th</sup>, we are in Portsmouth, OH for an operating session on the Crusty Mountain and Wiloby Springs.

Don't forget to bring a friend and get them signed on as a new member. Better yet, seek out one of the new members who have already joined and make a new friend.

### Review - Mike's Train House HO Scale 2-8-4 Berkshire

#### By Jerry Doyle

Recently Mike's Train House has branched out into the HO scale market offering both steam and diesel locomotives. When I heard they would be doing the Nickel Plate S-2 Berkshire I immediately reserved one. MTH did a good job of getting these engines to market in a timely manner. It's common for there to be delays of many months with most new railroad items these days. The prototype 2-8-4 was built in September 1944 and served the NKP until 1958. There were a total of 80 Berkshires on the NKP that formed the backbone of the roster until retirements began in 1957. Five of them have been preserved and two (759 and 765) saw significant excursion service after their retirement. The 763 recently purchased by the Ohio Central's former owner and there are plans to make it operational again.

It was this second life in excursion service

that led me to want to own a model of the 765. It was restored by the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society in the late 70s and returned to service in November 1979. It became a fixture on the C&O mainline in West Virginia in the mid-80s pulling a variety of excursions, including the annual New River Train from Huntington to Hinton, WV. I have seen this engine in service more than any other steam locomotive. Since I model the year 1984, it also fits right into my era.

The model is quite heavy. Both the engine and tender are made of cast metal. The engine weighs 17.55 ounces and tender 11.65 ounces. The trend in the past few years has been to add more features to new locomotives and MTH has certainly upped the ante in that regard. It fea-

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## NMRA MCR DIVISION 9 *The Coal Division* Meeting Minutes June 12, 2010

The business meeting of Division 9 was held at WV Hobbies & Crafts, Winfield WV. The Meeting was called to order at 2:00PM by Superintendent Bob Weinheimer. Members present introduced themselves.

**DIVISION CLERK REPORT:** Minutes of the May 10th meeting were approved. Financial statements were distributed indicating the Division netted \$6,749.00 from the MCR Convention. Overall receipts were \$22,773.00 and expenses were \$16,024.00.

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:** Bob handed out awards to Dan Mulhearn and Dave Stout for their outstanding service during the convention. Bob mentioned that the next **KINGPIN** cited our convention as "a tough act to follow." The scheduling of meetings on a regular cycle was discussed. The options of meeting at alternate locations was discussed. Bob mentioned that an alternating schedule of WV Hobby and an away location would still create a need for six clinics a year. The discrepancy between the turnover of offices in the Division and the MCR was brought up. Bob suggested we align our bylaws to reflect the Region's bylaws. The change isn't critical for time; our next election is two years away. Over half the judged awards at the convention were won by Division 9 members. This was the second year our Division has taken over half the awards.

**ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:** Gary mentioned the superintendent's breakfast at the convention and discussion of the AP program. He mentioned the concept of "value added" activities. He shared many of the comments he

heard regarding the convention and member's layouts. The mini-clinic for the meeting featured the recent Amtrak trip to Clifton Forge VA by several members in recent weeks.

**WEBMASTER:** As expected; activity is down following the convention. During May we had nearly 10,000 hits compared to the usual 3,000.

**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM:** New member, Ron Blessing, will be submitting paperwork for his scenery AP Certificate. MCR President ( and holder of all eleven AP certificates) Dick Briggs and MCR Contest Manager Howard Smith judged Ron's logging module to be at merit level. Paul LaPointe brought a structure to be judged. Dave Stout's layout will be judged in the next few weeks.

**UP THE HOLLER EDITOR:** Dan mentioned having three items lined up for upcoming UTH use. More material could be used. Dan apologized to Larry Richards and Ken Day for omitting their names inadvertently from the last newsletter.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Charlie Venable continues to recover from his surgery and passed along his best wishes. Dave Stout mentioned the good turnout for the Sunday layout tours during the convention. A number of members expressed their positive experiences with their guests. Gary mentioned talking to Bob Sutler and others during the convention. Conventions are an excellent time to renew old acquaintances.

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tures good detail, on par with Broadway Limited offerings. Out of the box, it comes with traction tires on the #3 driver but a plain one is included along with a tool to install it. The big feature that MTH has added to their line is smoke, and man does this locomotive smoke! Within a minute of being turned on it began to produce a steady column of white wispy smoke while standing still. It filled my layout room with smoke in short order. Once moving, the smoke is always in sync with the sound unit. It doesn't take long for the engine to run out of smoke fluid. The directions rec-

ommend adding 10 to 15 drops.

Another big difference with MTH products is their control system. While other manufacturers use decoders that conform to NMRA DCC standards, MTH uses their proprietary Digital Command System (DCS) which is a vestige from their extensive O scale line. Their system does not support advanced consisting, which is something to consider if you buy one of their diesel locomotives. It features standard whistle signals for forward, backing, and grade crossing. It also has a series of in-cab comments that lack any semblance of authentic railroad chatter. The sound *Continued on Page 6*

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volume can be adjusted from the throttle, but I haven't found a way to turn some sound functions off individually.

A very useful feature is a wireless drawbar. Instead of a wiring harness you must plug in each time the engine is put on the track, MTH has engineered a set of conductors in the drawbar that carry signals and current between the locomotive and tender. While this sounds like a minor improvement, it is considerably more convenient if you store your steam locomotives off the layout as I do. The pilot truck is designed to offer some adjustment for tighter radius curves. My model did have some issues with the pilot truck derailing on switches.

The detail is excellent overall. It features a detailed cab complete with crew. It comes with

an operating Mars oscillating headlight. These were added to NKP locomotives in 1950. The 765 operated in excursion service with the light for a brief period in 1987 also before the mechanism was broken and the light was removed. The model lacks the third turbo generator that was required for the Mars light. The model best represents the 765 in the period from 1950-1955. In 1955 the 765 was equipped with a radio which was contained in a box behind the coal bunker, the MTH model lacks this box.

Overall I am happy with this locomotive. It seems robust and is easy to operate once you learn their function mapping. The detail is what we have come to expect from this type of offering. The two features that stand out from other manufacturers are the smoke and wireless drawbar. The street price for these is a bit less than \$400.

Photo by Jerry Doyle-



## Conversation: A Very Powerful Tool

### Dennis McGeeney

At a Coal Division meeting a couple of years ago, Jerry Doyle and I conversed about taking his students on an Amtrak passenger train trip from Huntington, WV to Clifton Forge, VA. They would spend about four hours enjoying the railroad town and its history then catch the westbound train for the trip back to Huntington.



took about ten hours (a bit longer for those of us from Charleston and Point Pleasant – Bob).

The punch line of this story is that we all need to do a lot more of this kind of activity together to enjoy life to its fullest. The travelers, shown above outside the Prince station, were Gary Burdette, Lee Parsons, Dennis McGeeney, Bill Wadsworth, Bob Weinheimer, and Walter Mycoff. Thanks guys, let's do more things together!

About a year ago, recalling what Jerry had said about the trip, I suggested to my wife a one day round trip from Prince, WV (closer to our home in Summersville) to Clifton Forge. She agreed and we had the trip of a lifetime. The price was reasonable, about \$70 for the two round trip tickets. We got off the train and walked about 100 feet and found ourselves at a café where the railroad crews eat. As it was open to the public, we stepped inside and had lunch. We then walked a few blocks to the Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Society's Heritage Center, a railroad museum that was a week away from its grand opening. We met a gentleman named Matt Couch from Nitro, WV. Matt was working as a volunteer. He knew a few of the Coal Division members and gave us a wonderful three hour tour of the Center then took us to the C&OHS archives building for a 45 minute tour. We thanked him and caught the train back to Prince.

Conversation can be a very powerful tool. A year later I talked to five other fellows, four of them Coal Division members as well as a friend of mine. We made arrangements and took the train to from Prince to Clifton Forge and back May 26. What a great time we had! The train was only a few minutes late getting to Prince and an hour late coming back. That was fine as it gave us another hour to enjoy the Heritage Center and archives facility. The people and crew on the train were top notch individuals. The whole trip

Below are photos of just some of the first place contest models submitted by Coal Division members at the Coalfield Express convention. All photos by Donald Wilke. We hope to have more photos in the coming months.

Gary Burdette built the Best of Show model, this coke car. Gary has written a detailed article about the construction of this car in the June 2010 issue of the Chesapeake and Ohio Historical Magazine.



Dan Kennedy's model of a continuous caster was the best On Line Display in the judged contest and the Favorite Model in the People's Choice contest.

Anthony Parrish took first place in the Judged contest for Diesel Locomotives with his SD-40-B.



Anthony also took first place for Cabooses in both the Judged and People's Choice contest with this transfer caboose.



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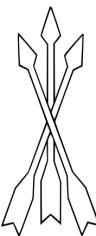
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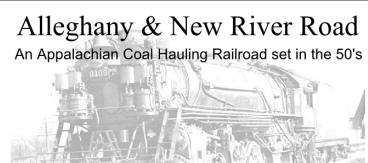


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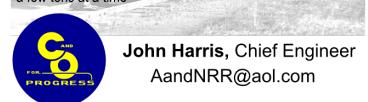
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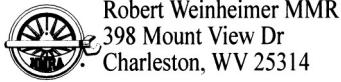


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## **Upcoming Coal Division Meetings**

**July 10**  
**Lin Young's Home**  
**Gallipolis, OH**

**August 14**  
**West Virginia Hobbies and Crafts**  
**Teays Valley, WV**

**September 11**  
**Mark Maynard's Home**  
**West Portsmouth, OH**

**October 9**  
**West Virginia Hobbies and Crafts**  
**Teays Valley, WV**