



UP THE HOLLER

Newsletter of Division 9
THE COAL DIVISION

Mid Central Region NMRA

August 2012



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HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Bob Weinheimer MMR

As this issue of Up The Holler goes to press the NMRA's national convention is under way in Grand Rapids, Michigan. How many Coal Division members are in attendance? In any given year about 5% of the total NMRA membership attends the national convention; that means that two to three of us are there. Is that the case this year?

If you are not attending the convention, what is your reason? Is it the cost? Can you take the time from work of other responsibilities? By now you should be asking me if I am there; the answer is no. I have been to one national convention, the 1990 convention in Pittsburgh. I had a great time and would like very much to attend another but cost has been the obstacle for me. I have been to many of the nearby National Train Shows that are held at the end of the convention. In those cases (Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Detroit, Milwaukee) it was part of a day or weekend trip that involved other activities. Costs were shared with others and the final bill was palatable. I am planning to attend the National Train Show August 4 in Grand Rapids.

The national convention moves around the country on a set schedule: east, middle, west, middle, east, middle, and so on. Last year was Sacramento (west), this year is Grand Rapids (middle), next year is Atlanta (east), 2014 is Cleveland (middle) and 2015 is Portland, OR (west). Did you notice that the next two conventions are relatively close? Atlanta is a day's drive for most Coal Division members while Cleveland is right here in the Mid Central Region and within a very short drive for most of us. While the conventions are weeklong events, it is possible to attend only part of the convention, perhaps late in the week to include the National Train Show.

I am going to make an effort to attend both of these upcoming conventions. The one in Atlanta is in a suburban setting meaning some of the high costs of center city conventions will be no problem. By 2014 I may be an MCR officer which means I really should be at the Cleveland convention as we are the host Region. If you have never been to an NMRA national convention, the next two years offer a great opportunity to try one without traveling very far. Start saving those pennies and dollars and work it into your budget. Note that in 2014 there will be no MCR convention; perhaps you can divert money you might have spent on that to attending the national convention. I hope to see you there!

Do you read and write German? If so, check out the NMRA InfoNet News on page 4 for an opportunity to use that skill and to earn Association Volunteer points in the Achievement Program.

The minutes of the last meeting did not get here in time for publication in this issue of the newsletter, look for them as well as the minutes of the August meeting in the September issue.

FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Gary J. Burdette MMR

Old and new, antique and modern, then and now, historic and historic, or controversial and controversial. These are all descriptive words I could use to tell you about something very interesting I saw this past month while on vacation near Ludington, Michigan on “the big lake” along the western shore. Both items were within a few hundred yards of one another. Both have historic significance.

The “Badger” was my first encounter of the summer. That is not surprising for I have gone to see her every summer since I discovered her in 1972. She is the last coal fired ship of her kind (almost 500 feet in length) still traversing the Great Lakes. I arrived just in time to see her sail into the harbor, drop anchor, and swing her stern around to back into the slip ever so gently. Our own Commander Puccini, U.S.N. (Ret.), tells me this is a difficult maneuver. The Badger is historic because she is sixty years old and part of a one hundred year old transportation system. She is controversial because the EPA has given her owners until next year to convert her from acid producing coal to another source of fuel (perhaps, natural gas).

The second fascinating run-in with history was totally unexpected and something I had not seen in this area before: windmills! As we drove out to U.S. Route 31, we were stopped by a gentleman in a safety car who had blocked the road. Out beyond him were a couple other escort cars along with some police cruisers with lights flashing. Shortly, here it came: a tractor trailer cab with a large “disconnect-like” trailer, for lack of a better term, carrying the huge base of a windmill tower. No this was not the kind you’d see in Holland (Not that Holland (Michigan), either.). This was the modern style with gigantic tubular tower and airplane-looking motor and propeller. Those of you coming home from our Division 9 Potomac Eagle outing may have seen dozens of these around Seneca Rocks, Black Water Falls, or Elkins, West Virginia. This is one of the new, modern methods of electric generation. The controversy is that supporters wanted to put the machines out into Lake Michigan, just off shore. Opponents called this first-time experiment the

“Mistake in the Lake.” They are now being assembled just on shore a few hundred yards behind the Pumped Storage Electric Generating Facility near Ludington. Perhaps some sort of compromise. (I won’t get into any more of this now.)

Why would I write of such things? Well, both involve the railroad. While no longer carrying railroad cars, these ships once provided the railroads with a quick route across the lake between Michigan and Wisconsin avoiding traveling down to Chicago and back up for through freight. The new wind mills were transported to this area via train and were unloaded in a parking area (house track of sorts) just a few hundred yards from the old C&O docks. A friend of mine in Ona, West Virginia has built a beautiful model of the Badger’s sister ship, the Spartan. I’ve seen dock scenes modeled on a number of model railroads over the years. Recently, an article in [Classic Toy Trains](#) showed how to build a modern windmill in O scale. There are kits available. Both machines/industries could be fun to model depending upon your particular era.

So, the old and the new, the historic, and the controversial side-by-side in a little corner of Michigan just waiting for me to stumble upon and gain some enjoyment from the experience. While I’m not modeling the windmills, I have begun building the Badger from plans given to me by my friend and to be a companion to his Spartan. Keep windmilling... I mean rail fanning!



MY WORD

Dan Mulhearn, Editor

I was musing on what, if anything, I would write about this month when I was struck by Bob's column on national conventions. My first national was Cincinnati in 2005, and yes it was expensive but well worth the expense. The overall cost was ameliorated in that Kelley Massie, Charlie Venable and myself drove out and shared a room. On the flip side of that any money saved was spent at the wonderful National Train Show following the convention. My reason for joining the NMRA, a notion I had resisted for years, was so I could attend this national convention. I really did not think there would be any further participation by me. Then, I was contacted by Division 9 and this has led to years of new friends, new model and prototype railroading experiences and a great expansion of my own model railroad hobby enjoyment.

As I said, the circumstances of my first convention tended to keep the price down somewhat, kind of like traveling in coach. Now, in 2011, Kelley Massie, myself and our wives attended the national convention in Sacramento and that was a whole different story cost wise. Let's compare it to travelling first class plus. There was, of course, the cost of getting there. Kelley and Debbie flew, we took Amtrak which was an adventure in itself. The Citizen Hotel in Sacramento was not inexpensive and we took full advantage of the wonderful, but expensive, restaurants available to us. And, again, at the National Train Show I managed to find plenty of things I did not know I needed but could not be lived without.

So, yes, a national convention can be a major expense. At Sacramento the Napa Valley Wine Train, my fifteen minutes at the throttle at the Western Pacific Museum and several activities were quite expensive. However, they are not unreasonable considering the convention organizers have to set these up and pay the vendors who provide the activities and transportation. There are many activities at the convention site, clinics and such,

which are free as part of the registration cost or very inexpensive. You can spend a long enjoyable day at the National Train Show soaking up information and enjoying the exhibitions without spending anything but lunch money.

Nina and I are already registered for the 2013 Atlanta convention and will be staying near the convention center with relatives, which will lower the cost significantly.

I have been to national and regional conventions and they both have great attraction to me. But, if you can you should make a national convention your "big vacation" one year. They always have non rail fan activities for your spouse and, in my opinion, it's no more costly and a lot more fun than Disneyland. See you at the meeting.



Photo of the interior of our dining car on the Napa Valley Wine Train on one of the featured events at the NMRA National Convention at Sacramento in July 2011. This was truly an elegant car, a reminder of the golden days of railroading. The food and service came up to the standard set by this beautiful piece of equipment.
Dan Mulhearn photo

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Bob Weinheimer MMR

Coal Division members are keeping me busy with all of their Achievement Program activity. The latest is Tony Puccini who is putting the finishing touches on his Chief Dispatcher SOQ. Close behind is Dennis McGeeney. In the meantime, I was pleased to present Clint Foster with his first certificate, Scenery. Jerry Doyle took the picture.

Keep up the good work. While you are at it, please consider preparing a clinic as a way of sharing your modeling experience with the membership. You might just inspire somebody else to leave their comfort zone and try something new.



NMRA InfoNet News

Editor's note: This month's NMRA InfoNet News arrived July 15 and contained a number of items pertaining to the national convention which will be nearly over by the time you read this. We have chosen to remove those items in order to save some space. If any member would like to see the whole document, let us know and it will be emailed to you.

Welcome to the July edition of the NMRA InfoNet News.

Very soon we hope to be announcing the name of the new Director of Marketing and his team. Those folks will be meeting with members of the NMRA leadership team in Grand Rapids to formalize the process of developing a program to recruit and retain members.

The Standards & Conformance Department has an urgent need for an ATA Certified Translator to convert

German documents into English. The work includes translating the Lenz document describing Railcom into an English version. If one of your members has the qualifications and is interested, contact Didrik Voss, S&C Department Manager, at davoss@pvmtenr.com.

Atlantic District Director Nobby Clarke and his team have been invited to bring the NMRA Publicity Booth to the last-ever U.S. Railroad convention in Switzerland this October. This is a huge event, with attendance numbering in the thousands. More information at <http://www.trainmaster.ch/XCV-15-e.htm> .

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You'll find those addresses at www.nmra.org or in NMRA Magazine.

AUGUST MEETING NOTICE

The August meeting of MCR Division 9 will be held at West Virginia Hobbies and Crafts at the Teays Valley exit off I-64. The date is Saturday, August 11. 1:00PM is time for socializing, shopping and judging with the business meeting commencing at 2:00PM.

The August model contest subject is traction. Since we have so few traction modelers; there will be a second contest category for on or off road vehicles.

The clinic category is to be determined.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our September meeting is once again a joint meeting with Division 6. As he has for the past several Septembers, Mark Maynard has graciously agreed to host us and to provide lunch and beverages. Mark's layout will be on display, he tells us that he and his crew have made great progress on scenery in the past year. A big part of the day is the flea market sale. Bring any of those things you thought you couldn't live without but now realize you don't need. Make sure your name is on it or the packaging, set a price, perhaps do some haggling, and be rid of it. We hope to have somebody to handle the money and bookkeeping but if you make a sale privately, please don't forget to pay the 10% fee due from the seller.

Since the meeting is a joint meeting, the business of both divisions will be discussed. The plan is to go through our typical agenda alternating between divisions;

that seemed to work well last year. This should give Coal Division members an idea of how Division 6 does things and it might even give us some ideas that we may wish to consider implementing. As this is a joint meeting, there will actually be two contests. Our normal photo contest will be held while Division 6's normal contest will also be held. As I have entered models in the contests of other divisions, I can't imagine any Coal Division member bringing a stock car would be turned away.

The fun all starts around 11am, lunch will be available around noon or shortly thereafter. The business meeting will start at 2. While Portsmouth is a long distance for most of us to travel, car pooling can reduce costs and provide lots of good discussions en route. Now, all we need is a nice day. We will print direction in next month's newsletter.

Now that Up The Holler is a monthly publication, your Pike Ad support is much more important. If you don't already have an ad, please consider buying one. We can help with the art work if necessary.



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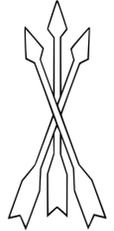
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Upcoming Coal Division Events

August 11

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

September 8

**Mark Maynard's Home
Portsmouth, OH**

October 13

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

November 10

**NRHS Pocahontas Chapter Train Show
Bluefield, WV**