



UP THE HOLLER

Newsletter of Division 9 THE COAL DIVISION Mid Central Region NMRA

May 2014



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HEAD OF THE HOLLER Bob Weinheimer MMR

By my count this is the 48th Head of the Holler column I have written. What does that mean? It means my terms as Superintendent have ended and I don't have to write a 49th! It has been a great honor to spend the past four years as your leader. In his column last month Gary Burdette listed the good things that have happened over the last four years but I must say that I cannot take all the credit. For example, Gary and Jerry were the leaders on moving meetings to the St. Albans depot. Nearly all the good things that have happened are due to the actions of the members. Please continue to give that same support to Gary as he steps into the job of Superintendent.

The next two or three meetings will see us on the road. May 3 (a week earlier than usual to avoid Mother's Day weekend) will be the 4th Steel is King day hosted by Paul and Dave in Parkersburg. See the meeting notice below and the map on page 6. Paul has added a new wrinkle to the contest, be sure to bring a steel related model. June 14 will see us in Marion, OH for a joint meeting with the Buckeye Division as well as the Mid-Central Region's Annual Meeting and Board of Directors meeting. The Annual Meeting is dictated by the Region's Regulations and is normally held at the banquet at the convention. Without a convention this year we are holding this event in Marion. The day will also include clinics and lots of train watching. Stay tuned for the details. July 12, we hope, will have us in Elkins, WV. Details of that event are still being developed.

The NMRA National Convention will be in Cleveland July 13 to 20. This is quite an event, one well worth attending. The last time the National Convention was this close was 2005 so don't miss the opportunity to see world class clinics and meet other modelers. Also, don't forget the National Train Show at the end of the event.

Now, let's see if Gary can keep to the 400 or so words that fit in this space!

MEETING NOTICE

The next meeting will be May 3 (note this is not the usual second Saturday) in Parkersburg, WV. Paul Lapointe and Dave Stout will host our annual "Steel is King" day. Paul and Dave will have their layouts open starting at 10 and lunch will be available at Dave's starting around 12:30. Full details including a map are on page 6. At the April meeting we had discussed the possibility of including the Mid-Ohio Valley Model Railroad Club layout on the tour, that turned out not to be practical for May 3. They hold several open house events each year, please consider visiting them.

FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Gary J. Burdette MMR

"Keep on Truckin'" and "Keep on Keepin' On" are a couple of old sayings that are intended to inspire or encourage us to press on and continue what we have been doing. That is my goal for the future of the Coal Division to continue the good works we have developed under the leadership of Bob Weinheimer, our outgoing Superintendent.

As noted last month, we have developed some organized and enjoyable components to our monthly meetings such as the raffle, clinics, and social time, as well as the meeting itself. A few times we have added a couple of wrinkles like a show-n-tell (Larry's locks), depot day, or passing clinic items down the table around which we had gathered. Maybe we can expand on that.

Over the past number of years I have brought in some mini-clinics on a poster display board for us to study and contemplate. I have prepared a list of some more things I could display and will prepare some boards to add a little info to the meeting. Maybe some of you could do the

same on occasion. A couple of us have tossed some names around. I'm throwing out "Get MADD," just for fun. That would be Models, Artifacts, Displays and Discussions for short. So, bring in some railroad related item and we'll talk about it as part of our monthly get-together. We have had a few quick-clinics of 15-20 minutes that went well. You don't have to do a full-fledged Power Point Presentation to offer a clinic. Some how-to or one-evening projects would be fine. Now, to get AP credit it must be 30 minutes with a hand-out. Well, put two quick-clinics together and you have it. Give it a try. Several of us will be available to help you.

I hope to put the tables down the center of the room again and do some more hands-on activities. If you have some ideas on this, let me know.

The main thrust in the future is to keep moving forward, enjoying getting together, and improving what we do as members of the Coal Division. "Keep on Keepin' On."

NMRA CLEVELAND 2014

Mark July 13 –20 on your calendar, the NMRA National convention is as close as it has been to the Coal Division in almost 10 years.

What is a National convention? Think of it as a week long Regional convention with five to ten times as many attendees. There will be more clinics than you can count, many presented by nationally known modelers who are just as anxious to meet other modelers as those other modelers are to meet them. There are numerous layout tours, operating sessions, and tours to such places as the Age of Steam Roundhouse. Check the latest issue of NMRA Magazine or go to www.2014cleveland.org for full details.

As if that is not enough, at the end of the week your convention registration gets you into the National Train Show for no extra cost. Act soon to get your preferred tours and hotel arrangements.



MY WORD

Dan Mulhearn, Editor

This month I would like to introduce you to a book which has really caught my attention and gotten me excited about the possibilities for modeling the southwest Virginia area. The book is *Norfolk & Western Clinch Valley Line* authored by Ed Wolfe, Charles Wilson Jr., and Paul Mandelkern. The book retails for \$65.00 although I got it at a discount through my membership in the N&W Historical Society. Believe me, it is worth every penny! Author Ed Wolfe, as a labor of love honoring his father who was a conductor on the Interstate RR, has written four books on the Interstate. He became intrigued by the interplay between the Interstate and the N&W in the area of Norton, VA as well as the relationship between those two roads and the L&N and Clinchfield in the same area. The other two authors had done a series of articles in the N&W Historical Society publication the *Arrow* which really piqued Mr. Wolfe's interest. They were not able to participate in the book project but were listed as coauthors due to the solid foundation they laid in the *Arrow* articles. The book chronicles the building and operation of the Clinch Valley line of the N&W between the main line at Bluefield, VA and Norton, VA from construction through current operations under Norfolk Southern. This includes the interchange and common operations with the L&N Cumberland Valley Division at Norton, the Clinchfield interchange at St. Paul, VA, and the integration of the Interstate and the Southern St. Charles branch into the Norfolk Southern's Pocahontas Division as the Clinch Valley extension.

This book is just priceless in so many ways. There is one picture which the author gave a two page spread on pp 374 and 375 which is worth the price of the book. It is 1957 and the photographer is in the vestibule of west-bound passenger train #5 at Richlands, VA. We see the beautiful brick depot, the vintage vehicles, and the overhead coal track where hoppers could dump coal into tenders on the main below. But more important we see small town America and what the railroad meant to it. The conductor, in his blue serge uniform, is strolling to the depot to check in with the operator. The engineer, in his white Kromer cap, peers back from the cab of E2A 578 as he waits for the highball. Local trucker Edward Mullins with

his young son are loading express from the baggage car while behind his truck a postal service truck is being loaded from the RPO. Meanwhile, on the platform and seated on baggage carts are the men and boys who had come to watch the train, see who arrived and departed, and what's new in town. It is simply a gem of a picture! The pictures in the book are crystal clear and include pictures scanned from the glass plates of Willis Vail who worked on the Clinch Valley among many other projects and took many wonderful shots of the railroad and the surrounding countryside during the late 1800s. His glass plates were found in an attic in 1975 and are a wonderful record of the early days of the line. Photos also appear from Ed Wolfe, Jill and David Oroszi, Ron Flanary, Everett Young, and the NS Special Collection at Virginia Tech. There are first hand accounts by folks who were involved in building the road. Al Hock was an engineer on the Clinch Valley in the early 1900s and provides an accurate and perhaps scary account of railroading in those days. Harry Dolan was a trainmaster at Norton VA from 1985 to 2000 and tells a very interesting tale of operations in that time frame. Not only was there the normal problems which occur in everyday railroading; but he also had to deal with ex Southern, ex Interstate and ex N&W employees all operating under different work rules.

If you are an N&W fan, a coal railroading fan, or an Appalachian railroading fan; I just can not say enough about this book. It has changed my concept of what I had planned to model. I have built a branch line with a staging yard which was going to represent St. Paul and Norton on the Clinch Valley. It was going to connect with the "Poky" main line at Bluefield. No more; it is going to be a branch, or perhaps the Interstate and the main yard on my layout is going to be the joint N&W/L&N yard at Norton, VA. The Clinch Valley is single track with passing sidings and will be more challenging to operate than the double tracked Pocahontas main which I had planned to operate. On my last visit to Chuck I already picked up my first L&N locomotive and have been perusing the catalogs and websites for L&N, Clinchfield and Southern hopper cars. Simply stated, I am stoked about this idea.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

The goal of the newsletter team is to have this document reach you by email or snail mail at least one week prior to our meetings. We typically do the layout work the Wednesday 10 days before the meeting with distribution Thursday or Friday. For this to happen reliably, we need all items for publication by the Monday 12 days prior to the meeting. If we don't get it on time we can't print it.

Please help us give you the most up to date information possible. Here are the deadlines for the next few issues.

June	June 2
July	June 30
August	July 28
September	September 1
October	September 29

NMRA MCR DIVISION 9

THE COAL DIVISION

Charleston Amtrak Depot Charleston, WV
April 122014

Meeting Called to order at 2:00

Superintendent Report

Bob mentioned alternate lodging for the Cleveland regional convention. The seat for Eastern District Director is open. A new region was approved for Europe. A temporary policy regarding clinics is being worked out. The Chattanooga headquarters was sold recently. Kansas City will be the site for the 2018 convention. An effort to develop a standard for Lego trains was terminated when it was determined that Lego already set most of the standards.

Division Clerk Report

Treasury balance is currently \$8,741.35
The proceeds from the raffle were \$50.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Gary mentioned the upcoming meetings in Marion, Ohio and Elkins, WV. Several members assisted in rescuing railroad documents from the CSX shops in Huntington. Gary presented the idea of the St Albans depot being proclaimed the official home of Division 9. We have been asked to participate in the St Albans Founder's Day on May 10.

Membership Chair

John discussed the recent table at the Dunbar Show. Traffic was light but we did have a few people express an interest. He mentioned the relative benefits of manning a table versus the response.

Achievement Program

Bob announced several members are making progress towards AP certificates.

Newsletter Chair

Dan is always looking for input and suggestions. The newsletter will be coming out earlier since the May

meeting will be held a week early in deference for Mother's Day.

Raffle

Paul showed items for today's raffle.

Clinic Chair

Next month will be layouts. June will be clinics in Marion. August will be our cook out. September will be a cookout at Mark's. A clinic is needed for October.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Announcements

Dan mentioned the Streamliner program being held in Spencer, NC in May.
The Division 2 Jamboree will be held April 26 in Pittsburgh.

Future Meetings

May 3 Parkersburg, WV
June 14 Joint with Division 6, Marion, OH
July 12 potentially in Elkins, WV
August 9 St Albans Depot

Meeting adjourned 2:34

Following the business meeting Paul Lapointe presented a clinic on the Salem, MA passenger depot

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Doyle, Division 9 Clerk

RAFFLE REPORT

Paul Lapointe

The raffle at April's meeting took in a whopping \$50 thanks to an overflowing table of donated items! Many thanks go out to our generous members; you're the ones that make this work!

May's meeting will be in Parkersburg so we won't have a raffle, but don't forget, we accept donations at any time for future raffles!

CONTEST REPORT

Paul Lapointe

April's contest was Freight Cars. There were two entries: a scratch built stock car from Nathan Robinette and a pair of box car kits converted to cement use from Ed Keith.

First place went to Ed's B&O cement cars and second place to Nathan's Virginian stock car.

May's contest will follow the "Steel is King" day theme. The contest entry can be any car or locomotive that would

be found in a steel mill.

Examples:

- ore cars
- coke hoppers
- hot metal cars
- slag cars
- open loads of scrap or steel mill products (I-Beams, steel plates, coils etc.)



Ed Keith's cement cars (above) and Nathan Robinette's stock car (left). Photos by Paul Lapointe.

SALEM DEPOT CLINIC UPDATE

Paul Lapointe

Those of you who caught my clinic on the Salem Depot in Salem Massachusetts at the April meeting may remembered my frustration at the lack of information about back of the depot. The only photographs available were of the somewhat sinister-looking, Dracula-castle-like front of the station. A fitting look for Witch-trial famous Salem MA, I admit.

I have since come across a website of someone who has built a model of the Salem Depot for his layout based on additional information as well as some reasonable guess-work. His name is John Ott and he likes to model 19th century railroads.

He places his model of the depot in the fictitious city of Arkham MA. It's a name that was used as a stand-in for

Salem MA by horror writer H.P. Lovecraft in several of his stories. The name of the layout is the Miskatonic RR, also an invention of Lovecraft's.

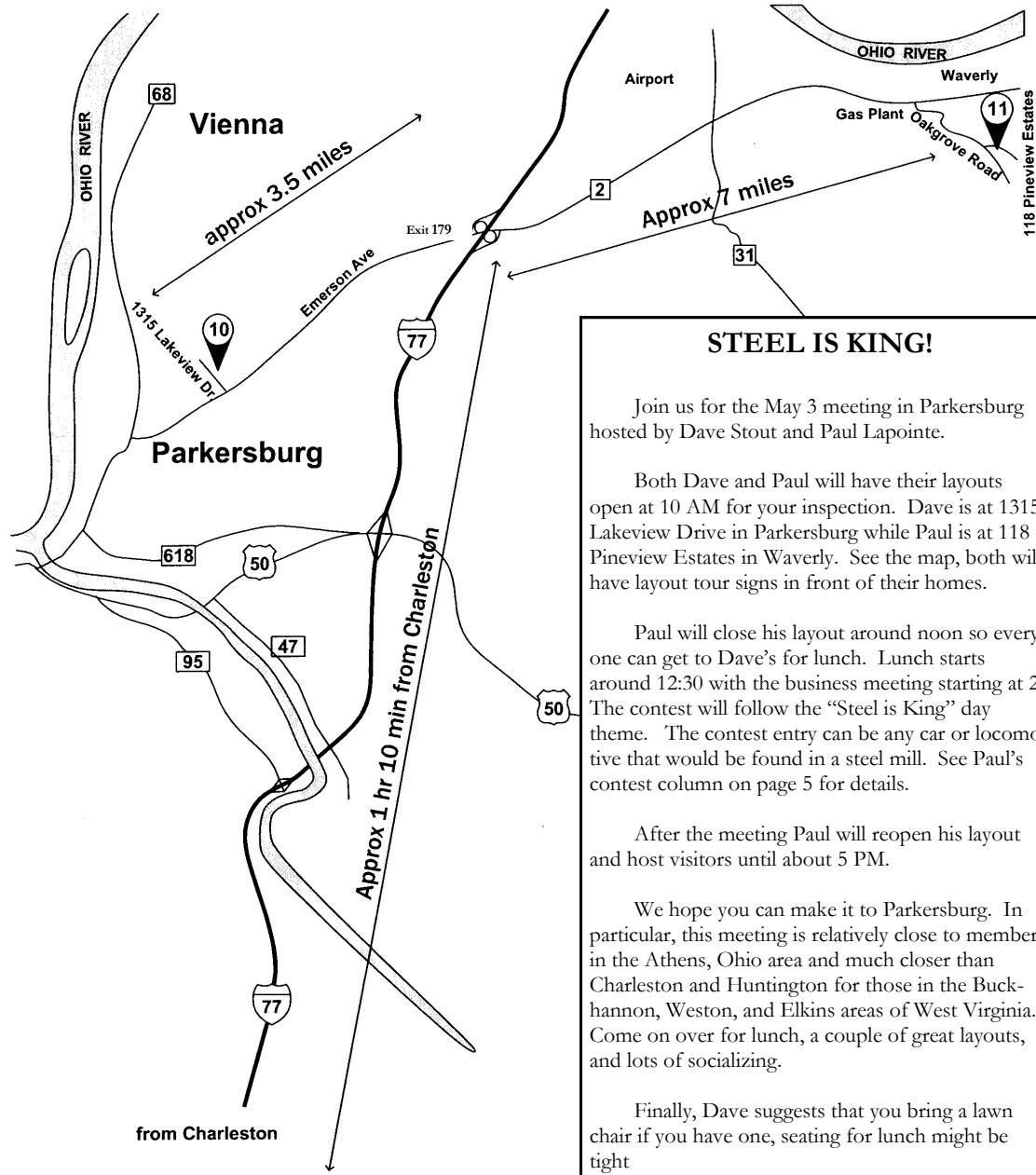
The website contains quite a wealth of information (could be made into a book, there is so much!) about 19th century model railroading.

Here is the "history" of the Miskatonic RR
<http://www.ottgallery.com/MRR.html>

Here's the information on how he built the depot:
<http://www.ottgallery.com/Salem%20Station.html>

Here is his main website:
<http://www.ottgallery.com/>

Parkersburg Area



BIG SHOT

The reminiscences of David Robinette

As a boy in the summertime, I was elected to deliver a hot meal to my dad at his job at the Pounding Mill Quarry five days a week. After my chores around the house were done I would leave at about 11:00 AM to walk up the railroad tracks to the quarry. Dad was in charge of the well drilling machine. The helpers at the quarry were called the bull gang and were laborers who did what everyone considered dirty work. The bull gang would strip all loose dirt from the rock leaving the bare rock exposed. Dad's job consisted of drilling six and three quarter inch holes through the solid rock to the base of the cut which varied between 125 and 225 feet in depth.

Some days the drilling went pretty well; while other days not so much. A drilling platform had to be built using eleven eighteen foot long twelve by twelve timbers. Moving the platform was the job of the bull gang. The bull gang boss thought this was hard on his crew; but Dad was the boss. The drilling machine was an old McNeada Ignition rig using three inch Seagrave rope to hold the stem and bit. In cold weather it was hard to start; but Dad liked to work despite rain, snow, heat or cold.

I would go to work after school and get home about 5:00PM. Dad was in the chair asleep and I would ask him if he had gone to work that day. He would stay at work until about 9:00AM, then come home and keep the cat and the dog company while his helper packed the bits and fueled and greased the drill machinery. The machine was on a platform six to ten feet above the ground; built solidly so that the pounding of the machine would not move it. The platform would sit above one drill hole for about two weeks. The platform had to be level and steady and a typical drill job would take about one year. When the drilling was complete all water resulting from rain, runoff or siphoning had to be removed. It took about two weeks to remove all the water at which time blasting powder was loaded into the drill holes. It took a lot of powder to fill a drill hole 125 to 225 feet deep.

The last big shot I saw took two days to load and it was only the second time this had been done in the quarry's history. They had a night watchman to watch the holes and prevent a premature explosion. The powder came in wood boxes, three sticks to a box. The sticks were cut into small pieces and dropped in the holes with sand used as a filler. A blasting cap was placed in the top of the hole. They used different strengths of powder with fifty

percent strength on top with sixty percent below on seventy five percent strength at the bottom. This did a better job of blowing out the bottom and cracking the rock. After all the holes were loaded with powder they were connected with wire for a simultaneous explosion. The community would gather on the high hillsides and wait and wait. Most of the time, between 4:00 and 4:30PM they would have a whistle blow to stop all traffic on US 19 and the railroad. About five minutes after the whistle blow the charges would be detonated. It was very quick and if you blinked you could miss it. You could see that the seventy five percent strength at the bottom would knock the bottom out. What was above the crack would fall straight which kept them from having to clean out the bottom all the time. It took about an hour for the smoke and dust to clear and the highway and the railroad had to be checked for rocks that might have gotten that far.

A bulldozer would then pile up the loose rock and a temporary track was laid to the pile. Rail cars were then loaded by steam shovel and the rock taken to a crusher. The track would be extended as the rock was cleared. The rock was crushed down to different sizes for all kinds of uses including roads, foundations, walls and porches. Pounding Mill also had a unique kind of rock called flux stone which was added to steel rail to strengthen it. This type of stone was hand loaded to keep it free of mud and dirt. I have had the chance to see this type of rock being loaded in a steel mill and it required a really hot furnace. As I said the rocks shipped to steel mills were all hand picked and loaded and made for stronger steel.

As time went on more uses were found for limestone than just roadways or driveways. For example, mine dust was packed in bags and shipped by truck directly to coal mines. My brother Samuel, who was thirteen years older than me, would take me along when he was delivering another product called agradust. This was a fine limestone which was used by farmers to enrich their fields. One time the farm driveway was a pure mud slick and I used some of this agradust thrown under the wheels to keep us moving. We went about a mile this way and then dumped the agradust where it would not run into the hollow below. The agradust looked like water but was heavy as a rock and was gray in color. You could not do today what I had done in the past as safety regulations would forbid it.



Photos above by David Robinette.



Photo from the collection of David Robinette

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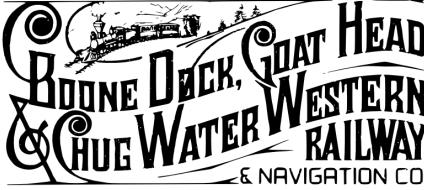
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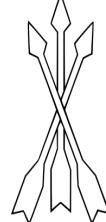
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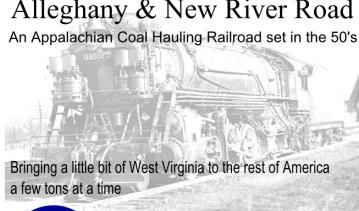


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NEW RIVER GORGE SUBDIVISION
Clint Foster Superintendent
Roncerville WV

Alleghany & New River Road
An Appalachian Coal Hauling Railroad set in the 50's



Bringing a little bit of West Virginia to the rest of America
a few tons at a time



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Upcoming Coal Division Events

If you received this newsletter via the US Postal Service and have an email address, please let us know so we can save printing and postage costs. Send a note to editor@coaldvision.org to get onto the email distribution list for Up The Holler.

**May 3
Steel is King
Parkersburg, WV**

**June 14
Marion, OH**

**July 12
Tentatively Elkins, WV**

**August 9
St. Albans Depot
Fourth Street and Fourth Avenue
St. Albans, WV**