



COAL DIVISION

UP THE HOLLER

DIVISION 9, MID CENTRAL REGION, NMRA

March 2026

FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Sam Delauter, Superintendent

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As always, time is moving fast. It seems like we just wrapped up the holidays and our yearly Memorial Challenge but the calendar just rolled over to March. In February, we did not have a meeting since it was the same weekend as the KVRA train show. While we did not have a meeting, it doesn't feel like it has been two months since we were together.

The KVRA trains show was held the February 14th and 15th. The Coal Division was in attendance with the T-TRAK layout and the NMRA booth. The KVRA show is always a great time and once again we had a good attendance from the division. Thank you to each of you that volunteered your time at the show whether it was with T-TRAK, staffing the booth, or just speaking with the public. I also should mention that Randy Allio set up a couple of sales tables to sell pan-pastels. If you have not been to one these shows, Randy does as much or more with demonstrations and mini clinics at these event than he does selling the pan-pastels. This is a great way to introduce the general public to something they may have never known exists.

At the January meeting, Matt Kearns started a discussion on the state of the monthly contest. After some lively discussion by many members, the Coal Division has decided to make some changes to the format of the contest. The contest will now be "The Challenge". Going forward, we will not be voting on any of the entrants. The intention of "The Challenge" is to get as many people to bring something to talk about without it getting judged or having to feel like their entrant won't win so why bring it. This month The Challenge is "Locomotives Other Than Steam". Please bring a locomotive that you have finished or have been working on and tell us about it.

Nominations for Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent will close at the March meeting. If you have a nomination for either of these offices, make sure to let Dale Osburn or myself know and we will make sure that it gets put on the ballot.

Also at the March meeting, Eric Zimmerman, Division 3 Convention Chair, will be making a visit to the Coal Division to give a presentation on the convention. If you have any questions about the convention, this is a great opportunity to ask the people running the event. I know that many of us look forward to and attend the regional convention each year. If you have not signed up for the convention or have never been to one before, I would urge you to consider attending this year. The convention is a ton of fun and a great opportunity to learn from the clinics and layout tours.

Our next meeting will be March 14th at the St. Albans Historical Society building. The meeting will begin at 1:00 PM and the doors will open at noon. The clinic will be "Layout Tours at NMRA Conventions" by David Oliverio. The Challenge for March is "Locomotive Other Than Steam". I look forward to seeing all of you at the March meeting.

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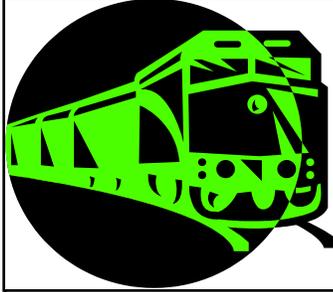
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Coal Division Monthly Railfun Event

1:00 PM Saturday March 14

St. Albans Historical Society Division Membership Meeting

Zoom Meeting
Time: Mar 14, 2026 12:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83065530100>
Meeting ID: 830 6553 0100

- **Welcome and Call to Order (Acknowledge members present)**
- **Treasurers Report**
- **Superintendents Report**
- **Assistant Superintendent Report**
- **Convention Presentation**
- **Challenge: Locomotives, All Types**
- **Adjourn Business Meeting**
- **5 Minute Break**
- **Raffle (always need new items)**
- **Clinic: David Oliverio 2025 Novi Layouts Part II**

**Next Meeting
April 11, 2026**

NMRA MCR DIVISION 9 *THE COAL DIVISION*

St. Albans Historical Society

St. Albans, WV

January 10, 2026

Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order by Superintendent Sam Delauter at 1:05 p.m. Members introduced themselves.

Division Clerk Report

There were no minutes to be approved.
Auctions in 2025 from Walt Mycoff's donation generated \$2,116 and the Memorial Challenge cost \$1,016 resulting in a net of \$1,100. The collection also supplied inventory for the monthly raffle.
Treasury Balance is \$10,084.56
Company Store \$0.
Raffle \$161.
Pike Ads \$70.

Superintendent Report

Sam Delauter commented on what a busy year 2025 was. With train shows, layout visits, clinics and our picnic; the Coal Division had a great year. Hopefully 2026 will be another great year.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Bill Stowe was unable to attend today.

Newsletter - Up the Holler

Bob Weinheimer noted the deadline of March 2 for the newsletter. The address for contributions is [edi-tor@coaldivision.org](mailto:editor@coaldivision.org).

Achievement Program

Bob Weinheimer noted it's been relatively quiet for the AP lately. Tony Puccinni will be evaluated for his scenery certificate soon.

Library

No report.

Clinic

The slate for 2026 is filling up. Randy Allio mentioned we will have some mini-clinics also this year. Today's clinic: *Diesel Locomotives: Innovation and Economics, A Short History* by Jerry Doyle.

Contest

Today's contest is modeler's choice. Next month: Steam Locomotives.

Membership

John Harris reported membership stands at 39, down from last year.

Raffle

Tony Puccini mentioned there were free candy canes at the raffle table in addition to several train items.

T-TRAK

Herb Parsons mentioned the new president of N Rail's comments on how important T-TRAK has been in model railroading.

Education

No report.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Sam Delauter noted the upcoming elections. Dale Osburn volunteered to serve as the Nominations Chair. Bill Stowe will not be running again for Assistant Superintendent; John Harris was nominated for this office. Sam Delauter was nominated for Superintendent and accepted. The election will be held in March.

Paul Lapointe will be hosting the May 9 "Steel Is King" meeting. The Parkersburg Model Railroad Club and Dave Stout's layout will be open before the meeting.

Staffing for the KVRA Charleston show was discussed. Some ideas about displays and activities were discussed. As part of the discussion it was decided to forego the February meeting, it was voted and passed unanimously.

Jerry Doyle brought up the topic of the 2028 Mid-Central convention and the possibility of smaller divisions hosting it. The issues/ideas of what it would take for Division 9 to host were extensively discussed.

Future Meetings:

March 14 – St Albans, WV

April 11 – St Albans, WV

May 9 – "Steel is King" Parkersburg, WV

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerry Doyle, Division 9 Clerk

FROM THE OFFICE DOWN THE HALL

Bill Stowe, Assistant Superintendent

So in the bigger scheme of things, I have written a very light and short note this month.

I finished the challenge model this past January. Thinking of the saying a ‘day late and a dollar short’, definitely several days late, and maybe instead of a few dollars short, a few bricks short of a full load.

I’ve been doing several structures the last couple of years, but up to now have focused on good clean modeling rather than a model with heavy weathering. I decided to take the challenge model as an opportunity to try weathering.

So after a lot of experimentation with multiple techniques (far too many to mention here), I finally completed the kit. My quick summation of the experience:

- Did I complete the model in time for the December meeting – no
- Did I try too many techniques – absolutely
- Did I learn new things – absolutely
- Did I challenge my modelling skills – absolutely

And should folks wonder if the end product will be a centerpiece on my layout. Probably not, unless I want a disaster scene where the smoke and fire effects and the flashing lights on the emergency vehicles mask the paint and weathering.

One final comment. It was really great to see the turnout at the Charleston train show on Sunday (my day at the booth). Speaks a lot about the group.

CLINICS

Randy Allio MMR®, Clinics Chair

Clinic Schedule for 2026

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| ◆ March: David Oliverio 2025 Novi Layouts Part II | ◆ September: Mark Maynard |
| ◆ April: Open | ◆ October: Mini Clinics |
| ◆ May: Open | ◆ November: Open |
| ◆ June: Don Cipolla, Prototype Modeling | ◆ December: Challenge |
| ◆ July: Randy Allio, Tips for building Craftsman kits | |
| ◆ August: John Harris, Rock Castings | |

Newsletter Deadlines

In order to produce Up The Holler about ten days before the monthly membership meeting, editorial work starts the Monday of the week preceding the meeting. That works out to be the dates below by which I need articles for the coming year.

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| • April: March 30 | • May: April 27 |
| | • June: June 1 |
| | • July: June 29 |
| | • August: July 27 |
| | • September: August 31 |
| | • October: September 28 |

My Word

Bob Weinheimer MMR®

In the January issue I noted there was a light at the end of the tunnel regarding my mobility issues. That light turned out to be an oncoming train as I have since been diagnosed with ALS, otherwise known as Lou Gehrig’s disease. As this progresses, things will only get worse.

With that in mind, I have advised the Division Officers that I should be able to prepare the April issue but beyond that things are uncertain. Does anybody want to become the new editor? I can certainly assist in a transition. The same comments apply to my position as webmaster. In the meantime, I hope to join the group virtual-

ly as appropriate.

On a brighter note, the front page of this issue looks a little different as I attempt to convert over to the new NMRA branding standards. Any suggestions for improvement are welcome. The Division logo needs to be colored, if you can help with that let me know!

Finally, convention season will be here shortly. The MCR convention will be in Dayton in June and the national convention will be very close, in Chattanooga this summer. Consider attend one or both, they are a great experience.

Challenge Don Cipolla MMR® and Mark Maynard Challenge Chairs

January 2026 Challenge

At the January 2026 Division 9 meeting a decision was made to change the monthly contest to a Modelers Challenge with a monthly category but with no voting.

The Challenge category for January was Modelers Choice. Six entries were displayed.

The March Challenge category is: Locomotives of all types.

2026	Monthly Model Challenge
January	Modeler's Choice
February	Steam Locomotives
March	Locomotives Other Than Steam
April	Kitbashing/Scratch Built, (Anything Railroad Related)
May	Anything Steel Related
June	Non Revenue
July	Structures
August	Electronics of a Railroad
September	Photo, Model or Prototype
October	Open Loads
November	Passenger Cars
December	Annual Memorial Modeling Challenge

Sam Delauter – CR 2181



Matt Kearns, David Oliverio, Sam Delauter – B&O 2020 & caboose



Robert Osburn – Brewery



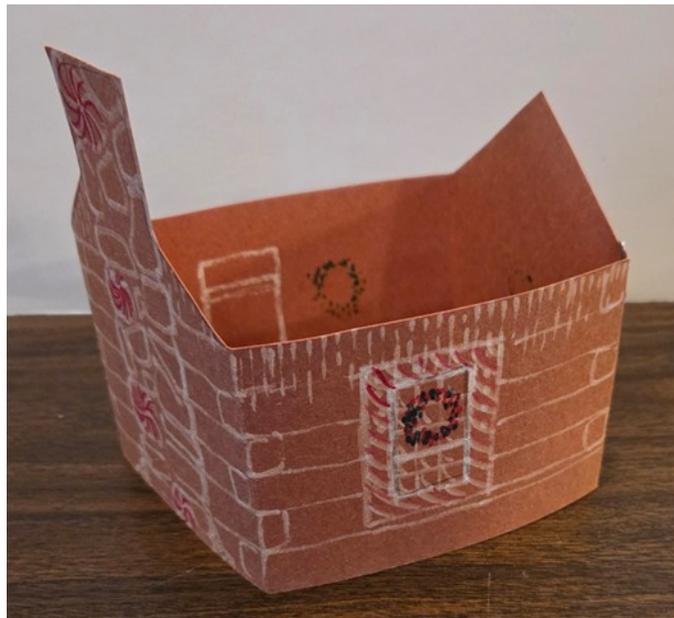
Tom Harris – NOLA Street Car



Randy Allio – Camp 14



Mark Maynard Log Cabin



Passenger Manifest John Harris, Membership Chair

It appears the recent KVMRA weekend show was a success. I am not sure of overall attendance numbers but our booth and T-TRAK seemed to have plenty traffic, at least on Saturday. I had a couple of folks interested in signing up for NMRA membership and one of those has already reached out for help in registering online. It was also good to connect with Nevin Wilson from Hurricane who has been a member of Coal Division since 2022 but so far not too active. I encouraged him to join us in March. Thanks again to the volunteers that help man the booth for the event. It is easier when we are adjacent to the T-TRAK modules as folks can keep an eye on both.

I brought a project to help pass the time but did not make as much progress as I had hoped as I spent so much time talking to people, but that is a good thing. I did, however, get a fire escape and an exterior stairway completed for one of my recent purchases from ITLA Scale Models. I also made progress on part of several buildings acquired for my South Charleston downtown and Union Carbide facilities. Recent snowy weather has allowed me to make significant progress on this new area of the layout. While much still remains to be done, I have officially run a set of tank cars from the loading facility and spotted them on a yard track next to the main line in Elk Yard.

While work on South Charleston is on pause as I await delivery of a factory building, I shifted gears and focused attention back to my Babcock Coal and Coke facility from Southern Heritage Models. The basic building shell has been completed and placed in position for several years but I was unhappy with the height of the tipple. It looked like it was on stilts and the proportions were nothing like the photos in C&O Historical Society or even the box the model came in. I had put off making corrections as it meant cutting 3/4" off posts and realigning cross braces for all 4 rows of the supports. Finally I decided to give it a go and make it work. Thankfully, all cuts were precise and reassembly went well. It then triggered the desire to re-

work the tracks serving the tipple. I had not been pleased with how the switching worked off the main so I ripped it out and started over with a new Peco medium radius curved turnout that lead to a small radius 3 way turnout to follow. That works much better and now opens space to allow a run-around track to serve the load out. Sometimes you just have to "crack a few eggs to make a better omelet".

Meanwhile, I recently became aware that a NCE Power Cab can be used for programming on a stand-alone track. It seems that years ago I had let all the smoke out of the Programming track side of my NCE system. NCE said it was not repairable and a new Command station could be purchased for almost twice what I originally paid back in 1999. Well, for some time I have programmed on the main with no issues. Recently several locomotives have been added but all with factory settings and all with address 3. Adding a Power Cab gave me the ability to program again on an isolated track with no fear of resetting the entire railroad plus gave me one more full function throttle at a fraction of the cost. Win win!

If it seems like I have been bouncing around from one thing to another over the last month, I have. It seems the attention deficit disorder I probably had as a child has returned. I constantly got bad marks in grade school when it came to staying focused, stays on task, completes work promptly, etc. By the time I got to high school I was much more focused. Through-out my career, we simply called that multi-tasking and it served me well. In retirement, I am not sure what it might be called. For me, it is allowing me to get much more accomplished as I am making progress that has been dormant for a while. Call it what you want, but railroading is fun when you see progress!

I look forward to seeing everyone again at the March meeting. Keep on modeling.



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NORFOLK AND WESTERN



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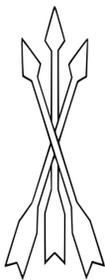
CRUSTY MOUNTAIN AND WILOBY SPRINGS R.R.

Mark Maynard, President
 Portsmouth, OH



CRESCENT VALLEY

Jerry Doyle, President
 Barboursville, WV



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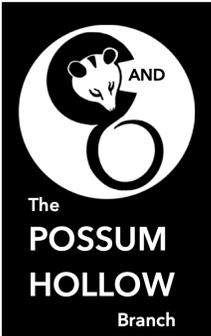
Ed Keith, MMR
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LAKESIDE LINES RAILROAD

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Under Construction

A small N-scale layout of a fictional Appalachian branch line of the Chesapeake & Ohio set in the early 50s or late 70s.

Matt Kearns, Chief Engineer
 South Charleston, WV
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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



John Harris, Chief Engineer
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HINTON DIVISION

Gary Burdette - Superintendent
 Point Pleasant WV



NEW RIVER GORGE SUBDIVISION

Clint Foster Superintendant
 Ronceverte WV

Upcoming Coal Division Events

**March 14, 2026
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Albans, WV**

**April 11 2026
St. Albans Historical Society
St. Albans, WV**

**Steel is King
Paul Lapointe's home
Waverley, WV**

**June 13, 2026
Don Cipolla's home
Hurricane, WV**

**July 11, 2026
Randy Allio's Home
Elkview, WV**