



COAL DIVISION

UP THE HOLLER

DIVISION 9, MID CENTRAL REGION, NMRA

APRIL 2026

FROM THE HEAD OF THE HOLLER

Sam Delauter, Superintendent

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Happy April, I hope you are doing well. We had a very busy meeting in March. While I will talk about this throughout this article, I wanted to look ahead at the next few months. While we will be at the St. Albans Historical Society for our April meeting, our next few meetings will be held at members homes. In the upcoming months, we will visit Randy Allio, Don Cipolla, Paul LaPointe, Dave Stout, Mark Maynard and the Mid-Ohio Valley Model Train club. Each of these Coal Division members and the train club have been kind enough to host us. If possible, try to car pool with other division members if possible. Not only will this save on gas, it is a lot of fun and a great time to get to know your fellow members.

Over the last couple of months, there have been a number of office and chairs that have changed within the division. First, the offices of Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. These offices were filled at our last meeting. The division has elected me for a second term as Super and John Harris for Assistant. I look forward to working with John and think he will do a great job in the new position. I would also like to thank Bill Stowe for his time as Assistant for the last two years. With the election, John has vacated the Membership Chair position. Dale Osburn will be taking that position along with recently being appointed to Nominations Chair.

There were also several other positions that came open. Going forward, Don Cipolla will be taking on the Achievement Program, Matt Kearns will be our new webmaster, and John Harris will be taking over the newsletter. Thank you to all who were willing to take on these new roles. With that said, I need to take a minute to thank Bob Weinheimer. For many years, Bob has handled these roles. We can't thank him enough for his service in these positions.

At the March meeting, Ric Zimmerman, Division 3 Convention Chair visited us and gave a presentation about the convention. 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. Ric also gave us some insight into hosting the convention. This was great insight into the planning process. Many thanks to Ric for giving this presentation.

This year will mark the 10th anniversary of the Memorial Challenge. Over the last 9 years, Robert Osburn has given us the challenge as a great end to the year event. Robert announced a number of months ago that he would like to pass the planning off to the division. Robert has agreed to head a committee to help aid the transition. The first meeting will be held immediately after the April meeting. If you would like to be on this committee please plan to stay after the meeting.

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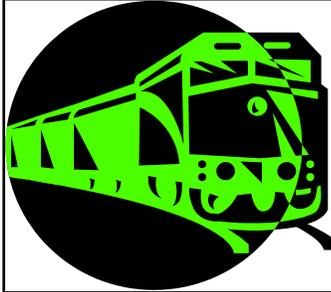
Raffle
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DIVISION STAFF

Editor
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Coal Division Monthly Railfun Event

1:00 PM Saturday April 11

St. Albans Historical Society

Division Membership Meeting

Time: Apr 11, 2026 12:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting

[Join our Cloud HD Video Meeting](#)

- **Welcome and Call to Order (Acknowledge members present)**
- **Treasurers Report**
- **Superintendents Report**
- **Assistant Superintendent Report**
- **Challenge: Kitbashing/Scratchbuilt Anything Railroad Related**
- **Adjourn Business Meeting**
- **5 Minute Break**
- **Raffle (always need new items)**
- **Clinic: Mini Clinics**

**Next Meeting
May 9, 2026**

NMRA MCR DIVISION 9 *THE COAL DIVISION*

St. Albans Historical Society

St. Albans, WV

March 14, 2026

Meeting Minutes

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

Division Clerk Report

January minutes were approved. (There was no February meeting.)

Treasury Balance is \$10,084.56

Company Store \$0.

Raffle \$46.

Pike Ads \$0.

There was discussion about upcoming expenses involved in taking over the charges for the Coal Division website. They are anticipated to be approximately \$150 per year. Matt Kearns volunteered to take over as Webmaster.

Superintendent Report

Sam commented on our activities at the Charleston Train Show last month. He noted that our membership is very open and welcoming to new and perspective members.

Assistant Superintendent Report

Bill Stowe reflected on his motivation when he joined the NMRA. He commented on how beneficial membership has been in learning new skills and the fellowship.

Newsletter - Up the Holler

Bob Weinheimer noted the deadline of March 30 for the newsletter. The address for contributions is editor@coaldivision.org.

Achievement Program

Bob Weinheimer noted it's been relatively quiet for the AP lately. Tony Puccini's scenery paperwork has been approved. Don Cipolla has volunteered to take over as AP chair. Bob gave a brief overview of the AP program.

Library

No report.

Clinic

Randy Allio mentioned we will have some mini clinics in April. Today's clinic is a presentation about the 2026 MCR Dayton convention.

Model Bring and Brag

Today's category is non-steam locomotives.

Membership

John Harris thanked members who manned our display at the Charleson show. Our membership now stands at 40.

Raffle

Tony Puccini mentioned there were several train items at the raffle table. He mentioned that the funds generated usually pay

for the meeting space.

T Track

Herb Parsons thanked everyone who brought modules to the Charleston show. We had 27 modules and one improvised bridge in our display. He updated members on plans for what modules to bring to the Dayton MCR convention in June.

Education

No report.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Dale Osburn, Division 9 Nominations Chair, noted we have nominations for both Superintendent, Sam Delauter; and Assistant Superintendent, John Harris. The floor was opened for further nominations and there were none. There was a motion that nominations be closed which passed unanimously. A motion was made to elect the candidates by acclimation which passed unanimously. The terms for office will begin May 2026.

Sam brought up the topic of potentially hosting a future MCR convention. There was discussion of the roles and other issues involved in planning and staffing a convention.

Certificates were distributed for participants in the 2025 Memorial Modeling Challenge. Robert Osburn asked for volunteers to help with the 2026 challenge. The group will meet after the next regular meeting.

Bob Weinheimer mentioned he will be able to handle the newsletter possibly through May. He discussed the logistics of producing the newsletter. John Harris volunteered to replace Bob as Editor.

John Harris stated that he would like to hand off the role as Membership Chair to another member. Dale Osburn volunteered to take over this role.

Sam thanked everyone for stepping up into these new roles and for those who have been doing them for a number of years.

There was discussion about using the NMRA promotional reimbursement for a new banner with the updated logo.

Announcements

Mark Maynard mentioned that we have been having the September picnic at his place for 20 years.

Future Meetings:

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

I have some final thoughts in my last newsletter article as assistant superintendent. After two years my thoughts and views on the NMRA have shifted as I have learnt more and experienced more with the organization. In this article I'm going to focus on the Achievement Program.

After two years I've come to believe that one common theme amongst us is we are all aspiring Master Model Railroaders®. The difference is simply around our skills levels, our focus areas, and whether we choose to go the extra steps and breadth to comply with the process.

I have also continued to experience and be amazed by the individuality, innovation, and experimentation amongst members as they engage in the hobby. My rule of thumb is that if a model railroader asks a group of 5 model railroaders how to do something, he'll probably get 5 different responses. Also, if you ask that same person how he ended up doing the task, it will probably be something uniquely his own. If there was ever a desire to pick a theme song for the NMRA members, I would personally advocate for Sinatra's 'I did it my way'!

With that perspective in mind, I have come to view the Achievement Program as a structure to put standards around the people part of the NMRA, without constricting the innovation and individuality of members. I have also come to the view point is that it is very important for folks to participate in this program. I believe the next 10 years will see a big change in the membership of the NMRA, either simply through the effects of father time and mother nature on a group with an average age in the 70's, or through the lofty goals on the NMRA's 2035 vision to approximately double membership by 2035. So to my mind the Achievement Program, becomes critical as a venue to ensure the transfer of all that knowledge and experience to new members. Of course we do that one on one, interaction with clinics, and on-line resources, but the breadth and structure of the Achievement Program stretches us to look beyond our natural focus areas, and set a common bar for our competency. In closing, please participate, and please support Don Cipolla as he steps up to take over this role from Bob Weinheimer.

CLINICS

Randy Allio MMR®, Clinics Chair

Clinic Schedule for 2026

April : Mini Clinics

May : Steel is King

June: Don Cipolla Prototype Modeling

July: Randy Allio Tips for Building Craftsman Kits

August: John Harris Modelling Rocks

September: Road Trip

October Mark Maynard

November: Bob Osburn

December: Challenge

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 the be the dates below by which I need articles for the coming year.

- May: April 27
- June: June 1
- July: June 29
- August: July 27
- September: August 31
- October: September 28

My Word

Bob Weinheimer MMR®

Well, all good things come to an end. In this case, my role as editor of Up The Holler ends with issue. The new editor, John Harris, spent time with me to see how the editorial process works. Fortunately, we both use the same software which makes the turnover process relatively easy. John already has a couple of ideas to make the re-branding process a bit better. I also told him not to be

shy about making other changes to improve the newsletter.

It was a pleasure working with Division members for the past several years in the production of the newsletter and I trust you will give the same enthusiastic assistance in the coming years.

Challenge Don Cipolla MMR® and Mark Maynard Challenge Chairs

March 2026 Modelers Challenge

The Challenge category for March was Locomotives of all types. Three entries were displayed.

The April Challenge category is: Kitbashing/Scratchbuilt (anything railroad related)

The May Challenge category is: Anything Steel Related.

Models displayed::

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

Bob Weinheimer – Pennsylvania Southern DD40



Jerry Doyle – Crescent Valley GP7



Sam Delauter – Kanawha River GP39-2



Passenger Manifest

John Harris, Membership Chair

First, let me start by thanking all those present at the March meeting who voted to make me the incoming Assistant Superintendent. I am truly honored by your confidence and will strive to fill the shoes of those who preceded me. I look forward to working with Sam throughout these next years to expand opportunities for our members and promote the hobby in general.

With this, I of course am stepping down from the role of Membership Chairman after 15 years or so in that position and am pleased to pass those duties on to Dale Osburn. Dale will bring fresh insight into the position and I look forward to what he has in store for promoting new membership as well as support for our current members.

This, therefore, is my final article for the "Passenger Manifest". I will be taking over the authorship of "The Office Down the Hall" with the next issue. I have enjoyed putting together the articles over the years even though sometimes the deadlines found me out of town or even at a loss for words. I tried to tailor the articles about something that appeals to all members of our group. I called it "Passenger Manifest" because I felt we were all passengers on the ride thru the hobby together. Sometimes the article was about some Rail Fan trip or an upcoming event or convention. Other times it was about a visit to someone's layout or their achievements. Frequently it was simply about what I was doing on my layout, both progress and setbacks. I tried to make it about issues that all of us face when dealing with modeling. Occasion-

ally, not everything goes according to plan. We often have to rethink where we are in the process of creating these miniature snippets of railroad reality and find ourselves taking a slightly different direction. It is not always a bad thing to tear something out and restart.

While recapping my own experiences, I have tried to give members a bit of encouragement and perhaps a little reassurance that there is no one way to do it. We all have different modeling skills and even goals. Some are all about the details and making models look as realistic as possible. Some are more about operations and making trains run as realistic as possible, regardless of whether there is an inch of scenery on the layout. Many want to create dioramas of a particular scene or era while other are looking to create their own railroad empire. Still other are content to run on someone else layout and immerse themselves in simply running trains.

The point is we are all at differing stages and with different goals in the hobby. But, still we have a common interest. A love of trains. It is because of that I consider us all "passengers" in the hobby. Not necessarily total sure where this track will take us, however, I am sure that the journey is perhaps what makes it fun. As I close this article, I want to say thanks to all of you for sharing the ride with me.

Look forward to seeing everyone remotely at the April meeting as Cathryn and I head off to our annual pilgrimage to Myrtle Beach. Meanwhile, keep on modeling.

T-TRAK REPORT

Herb Parsons

The MCR Convention in Dayton, Ohio is coming up on June 4-7, 2026 and we should look to getting our T-TRAK modules ready. Anyone who has a module with a turnout and would like to have it in the operation leg, you will need to have a way to control the turnout from the front of the module. If you have Kato remote control turnouts, just connect the level control to the turnout. Bruce said they will have power for the level controls. If you have manual turnouts, use a control similar to the Blue Point controls sold by Micro Mark or use a slide switch and rod to the turnout. Those of you that have

operated on David Oliverio's B&O layout have used the slide switch controls.

Steve Vicars gave me his T-TRAK modules, and these will fit in with the operating scheme and I will be getting the remote controls up and working for the convention.

And last, an item that is not T-TRAK related. The 78th Buckeye Model Train and Railroad Artifacts Show and Sale is on Saturday April 25, 2026 at the Ohio Expo Center in Columbus, Ohio. In the past, I have found models not usually available in our area, and some rare books and railroadiana for my collections.



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NORFOLK AND WESTERN



PIPESTEM BASEMENT
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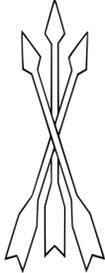
CRUSTY MOUNTAIN AND WILOBY SPRINGS R.R.

Mark Maynard, President
 Portsmouth, OH



CRESCENT VALLEY

Jerry Doyle, President
 Barboursville, WV



THREE ARROWS RAILROAD

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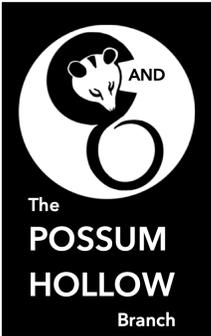
Ed Keith, MMR
 Assistant Superintendent
 Chesapeake, OH



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
 mattkearnswv@gmail.com

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

**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**