



From the Desk of the Superintendent:

First – a big “Thank You” to Dave Thalman for hosting the Division in January. His Pennsy “mainline” layout does a great job of capturing the flavor of the middle division. Now, at the risk of being accused of beating a dead horse, I am still looking for volunteers to fill positions in the division, host meetings (next year) and to present clinics at meetings. Unfortunately, the response to my call for volunteers last month has been met with a deadly silence. I think that most of you will agree that our monthly meetings are very enjoyable and provide us with the opportunity to learn more about our hobby. However, without your support, there may not be any meetings in the future. In addition to meeting hosts (2024 / 2025 program year) we still need volunteers to run for the officer positions.

- Superintendent (president)
- Clerk (secretary)
- Paymaster (treasurer)

These are the only elected positions in the Division. There are numerous other unofficial positions (see listing at end of *Wheel Report*) who voluntarily serve at the pleasure of the Superintendent. (they are pleased to have someone volunteer).

Not listed is the position of Assistant Superintendent – I would like to re-establish this position as both a back-up for the Superintendent and to serve as a membership coordinator.

If you would like to run for an elected position or be considered for one of the volunteer positions, please let me know before the February meeting. Remember, this is your Division and your help is needed to make it function.

Okay. Enough of that!

I would like to observe that I am continually amazed at all the different ways layouts can be designed to achieve the builder’s dreams. I think that is one of the things that makes model railroading so interesting. There is no one “right” way to do things.

February Meeting:

The February SMD meeting will be hosted by Jane and Pete Clarke.

At the risk of being beaten by the Clarke’s, I know that the 11th is Superbowl Sunday but the meeting will be over and everyone will have time to get home before the game starts. So don’t let that keep you away.

WHEEL REPORT

SMD

SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

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About Jane & Pete's HOn3 EBT

We model the East Broad Top Railroad in 1926. The EBT was a narrow-gauge line that ran from coal mines in the Robertsdale area of the mountains to an iron furnace in Orbisonia/Rockhill Furnace and then up to Mount Union where there was a coal cleaning plant, refractory brick plants, and an interchange with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

By 1926 the iron furnace was long gone, but on our version, it has been re-opened by the current owners, the Madeira Hill Co. The furnace consumes large amounts of coal (which needs to be coked first), limestone, and iron ore. Its output is pig iron which is then taken to Mt. Union. This has added a great deal of operational interest to the railroad. The fact that the iron furnace has reopened created a renewed need for iron ore and limestone. Both those had been mined along the Shade Gap branch of the EBT. So, the Shade Gap branch, which had fallen on hard times since the furnace closed in 1908, has been rebuilt. In Shade Gap this line serves limestone and iron ore mines. In Neelyton (the end of the Shade Gap branch) it serves the ganister mine for the refractory brick plants in Mt. Union and a lumber mill. Both towns also get miscellaneous freight and have coal dealers for home heating.

WHEEL REPORT

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More about Jane & Pete's HOn3 EBT

The layout is in a 20' x 26' basement and is fully scenicked. It's early fall, so it's still warm in the valley but cold on the mountain. Both of us work on models. Jane scratch built the Orbisonia station and roundhouse, Pete the company store and houses in Robertsedale. The excellent models of Ewings Mill and Neelyton station were built by Frank Benenati. Other structures are kits (many by White Ground) or kit-bashed. There are still models to be done, but there's at least a stand-in for every structure so the layout looks complete.

All trains are powered by steam engines (by Hallmark and one Blackstone), all but two have sound. The gas-electric M-1 (with sound) handles a portion of the mail train run. Trains run on TT/TO with a 4:1 fast clock. Control is Digitrax DCC (Simplex) using radio throttles. Car cards, timetable, instructions, and an operator's guide let guest operators know how to run trains. The EBT is a heavy-duty, busy railroad. Only the Shade Gap branch runs with a more relaxed narrow gauge feel. All trains do their own switching, so all operators should expect plenty of work to do. While the passenger train does not have much switching of cars, that operator is required to record the sacks of mail picked up and dropped off in each town. There is one yard operator, we call that job the furnace shifter. Please let us know if you'd like to get on the crew call list.

Mini-Clinic – Not really a clinic in the strictest sense of the word, but I am sure that Jane and Pete will be more than happy to give us an update on the goings on at the 12 inch to the foot version of the EBT.

Directions & Parking

Ed. - Email southmountaindiv@gmail.com and we will provide the street address.

Park on the street or driveway, and enter through the front door. Unfortunately, the basement is not handicapped-accessible.



smdnmra.org

Reminder:

SMD membership meetings are always the 2nd Sunday of the month at 2PM. The only exceptions are for April, when the Mini-Con replaces our business meeting, and in May, which will take place one week later, on the 3rd Sunday.

We have had some issues with finding hosts for meetings this year. Please consider hosting a meeting sometime during the 2024 - 2025 program year. If you would like to host, please let me know. We try to avoid back-to-back repeat visits so if you have never hosted, or it has been a year or so since you did, give it a thought.

Mini Con 2024 Update:

Grant Berry is making progress with the planning for the 2024 (10th annual) SMD Mini-Con. As usual it will be held at the Blue Ridge Summit fire hall and is co-sponsored by Mainline Hobby Supply. The date for this year's event is April 6th. It will follow the same format as last year with informal table clinics in the morning followed by a short lunch break (food available on site) and a modeler's round table session. We will then return for one more round of table clinics before calling it a day.

This worked well last year with less drop-off in attendance than we previously experienced when we had formal clinics after lunch.

The emphasis on the round table this year will be layout design and operations. We are planning on having individuals from the layout design, operations and industries SIG's participating in the round table. In addition, we will have a representative from the NMRA to address the benefits of NMRA membership to the group.

We are making a greater effort this year to use the Mini-Con as a vehicle for promoting the SMD and the NMRA in general. Don Florwick is working to place promotional information in the commercial hobby press and on various NMRA sites. There will be a large banner at the Mini-Con promoting the SMD and the NMRA will have a promotional table. Finally, we have updated the SMD brochure and have had 400 copies printed.

This will allow us to give a copy to every individual that registers for the Mini-Con.

Wheel Report Changes:

As noted last month, Alex Polimeni is now working with division members (and others) to develop feature articles, layout photo tours, written clinics, etc. to supplement the basic *Wheel Report* content. Please consider reaching out to him and providing content. Remember – this is your division and we are depending on you to support us and provide us with content for the *Wheel Report*.

Ed. - Email southmountaindiv@gmail.com and we will put you in contact with him.

WHEEL REPORT **SMD**

SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

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Renew On Line:

You can renew your NMRA membership on line at the following link;

<https://www.nmra.org/store/membership>

Remember that your national membership automatically includes membership in both the Mid-East Region and the South Mountain

Division and you will receive the NMRA Bulletin electronically on a regular basis.

Membership is a requirement for insurance purposes but guests can attend one or two meetings without joining. There is also a trial membership category available at a reduced cost (see link above).

SMD Officers and Officials:

Superintendent: Bob Johnson

Clerk: Harvey Heyser

Paymaster: Ray Price

Webmaster/Digital Assets Manager: Tom Fedor

Wheel Report Editor: Alex Polimeni

Division Achievement Program Coordinator: Jane Clarke