

Volume 23/24 – 8

May 2024

# WHEEL REPORT

## SMD

SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

smdnmra.org

## From the Desk of the Superintendent

By Bob Johnson

A big thank you to everyone who participated in the annual SMD Mini-Con at Blue Ridge Summit in April. In my opinion the event ran very smoothly. A special shoutout to Grant Berry for again taking the lead on this ever-popular event.

## Mini Con 2024



Clockwise from the top: Maryland T-Trak, Frank Benenati; wire tree armatures, John Pursell, D.M.A.; improving structures, and Dave Thalman; basic scenery forms. (Tom Fedor)

This year's attendance was just about the same as last year. We still have not returned to the kind of numbers that we were seeing before the great COVID lock-down but those that attended seemed to be having a good time. Assuming we hold the event again next year I have some ideas for increasing the pre-event publicity that may help attendance.

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## Election of Officers

We will be “electing” the division officers at the May meeting.

The candidates are as follows:

- Superintendent (president) – Bob Johnson
- Clerk (secretary) – Alex Polimeni
- Paymaster (treasurer) – Ray Price

These are the only elected positions in the Division. There are numerous other unofficial positions (see listing at end of *Wheel Report*).

Please note that I have already announced that I will not serve again for the 2025 / 2026 program year, and Alex has stepped up to serve as Clerk, simply because no one else has volunteered. If we cannot get some new candidates for officers for the 2025 / 2026 we will be forced to declare the division inactive.

Email [southmountaindiv@gmail.com](mailto:southmountaindiv@gmail.com) to indicate your support. - Ed.

## May Meeting

The May meeting will be hosted by Jay Beckham who lives near Berkeley Springs, WV. on Sunday, 19 May starting at 2:00 PM. Please remember that this meeting is taking place on the third Sunday of the month, as opposed to the normal second Sunday, due to the Mother’s Day holiday.

Déjà vu. When Jay first started a layout in his current location he was modeling the Chicago, South Shore, and South Bend Railroad in the 1960’s but later changed to the PRR theme. When you arrive at Jay’s location you will see that he is again modeling the South Shore. <<https://jaysoscalelayout.blogspot.com>>

Jay writes, “My new layout concept is to model in O scale the Chicago, South Shore, and South Bend Railroad in the 60s, the time I first saw it in person. I have always had an interest in traction, and interurbans in particular. It was the railroad I modeled when we first moved into this house. I am trying to use as much of the old layout as possible as far as track design but a mid-western railroad is certainly different from the PRR that I was modeling. We have redesigned the CTC to suit the South Shore. Trying to use as many of my many buildings, most of which were scratch built. Also have corrected most of the track to a 60” minimum radius and from #5 to #6 or larger turnouts.”

He says that he hopes to have trains running, by the time of the meeting, partly through some of the old scenery and maybe some of the new.

Following the business meeting Jay will present an overview of the prototype Chicago, South Shore, and South Bend Railroad. This line has an interesting history and parts of it are still in regular use today as a commuter line.

Email [southmountaindiv@gmail.com](mailto:southmountaindiv@gmail.com) and we will provide the street address. -Ed

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## 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.

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.

## SMD Meeting Schedule

May 19 (3rd Sunday) – Jay Beckham, Berkeley Springs, WV  
August - Planning meeting; 2024-2025 program year (TBD)

## Summer Activity Planning

At a previous meeting we discussed the possibility of setting up a group trip on the [Western Maryland Scenic](#) out of Cumberland. The big draw there is of course C&O engine 1309. Unfortunately, I have been informed that the 1309 is currently out of service due to a cylinder issue. We will discuss this more at the upcoming meeting. FYI, EBT number 16 is also out of service due to a cracked driver hub. It is not a good time for steam in our area.

## Mid-Eastern Region Convention Planning

We have been officially asked to host the 2027 MER convention. Assuming we are still an active division I can see no reason not to do so. Under the current convention protocols the MER handles a significant portion of the work involved. I would like to form a small (3 to 4 people) exploratory committee to investigate available facilities, possible prototype tour activities, etc. If you would like to participate in this endeavor please contact me as soon as possible.

For details about the 2024 convention visit, <<https://portal.smdnmra.org/2024/05/04/piedmont-junction-2024-registration-now-open/>>.

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## Wheel Report Feature Articles

As previously noted, 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*. We will not be issuing a regular edition of the *Wheel Report* until August, so you have plenty of time to work something up.



## 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

Mini-Con Coordinator: Grant Berry