

Volume 25/26 – 1

September 2025



From the Desk of the Superintendent:

By Dan Mulhearn

Greetings fellow model railroad enthusiasts. I had just gotten home from the NMRA National in Detroit. My plan was to hit the ground running in my new job as SMD Superintendent. Well, hit the ground I did.

"Surgery on that broken right femur," they said.

"Twelve to fifteen weeks rehab," they said.

Given the circumstances, I will not be able to attend the September meeting. I am asking that Bob Johnson stand in for me. Which leads me to the thought, the Division could use an Assistant Superintendent position. I do intend to work very hard to attend all future meetings. I am looking forward to working with Division members to keep the Division and our mutual hobby rolling forward.

One important piece of my plan is the Achievement Program (AP). This lineup is an excellent way to gain or improve hobby skills. I encourage all of us to look into AP as a way to advance enjoyment of model railroading. In my case I currently have five certificates. It is time for me to choose one of the remaining two required certificates that will elevate me to Master Model Railroader (MMR). So I have chosen [Master Builder - Cars](#). Then, for my seventh certificate it's going to be [Master Builder - Structures](#). Both these certificates require scratch building. I'm hoping my Parkinson's tremors will allow me to get them done. Let me know how you are doing and what you are working on.

The annual [MER Convention](#) is also something well worth attending and should be on everyone's to do list. The Philadelphia Division is hosting, October 16-19 in King of Prussia, PA. Regional conventions are very affordable as compared to the National. You will find interesting clinics on many model railroad and prototype subjects. Rail oriented and non-rail oriented outings are available. There are often opportunities to attend op sessions at area layouts. You may wish to display your work in the display/contest room. I have seen Division members present interesting clinics after our meetings. Many of these could easily be prepared for presentation at an MER convention.

Since I am fairly new to this area I'm looking forward to meeting all of you. I'll see you at future meetings and hopefully at the MER Convention this fall.



smdnmra.org

September Meeting:

The September meeting will be a return visit to Steve King's home to enjoy his large "N" scale layout. As usual, the meeting starts at 2:00PM.

Please email southmountaindiv@gmail.com to obtain the street address.

Steve operates the Virginia Midland Railroad, which is a large "N" scale layout that features heavy coal operations with just enough general freight traffic thrown in to make things interesting for the operators. In many ways the Virginia Midland brings back memories of the N&W (post Virginian merger). It features long trains of hoppers, multi-engine power consists, and even independently controlled helpers. Even if you are not personally into heavy freight drag operations this layout is worth seeing. This is probably one of the largest N scale layouts in the area. All operations are controlled using CVP (Easy DCC) wireless throttles.

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.

Please consider hosting a meeting sometime during the 2025 - 2026 program year.

Email southmountaindiv@gmail.com. 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.

The schedule is as follows.

- October 12th - Bob Johnson; Jefferson, MD

Mini-Clinics:

It has long been the policy of the SMD to present mini-clinics at each meeting. In some cases clinics are conducted by the host. However, not every host is in a position to do so. We are asking for members to volunteer to develop and present mini-clinics at meetings to fill these gaps. If you can to do a mini-clinic please contact your Division superintendent at

southmountaindiv@gmail.com.



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Wheel Report Content:

We are always looking for *Wheel Report* content from the membership. Articles addressing prototype railroading (including your experiences while visiting a prototype location) and model railroading (how you designed / built your layout, modeling structures, model railroad operations, etc. All of this adds interest to your *Wheel Report* and builds membership enthusiasm.

In September we are publishing the first of a four-part article written by Division member Andrew Dodge, MMR. Note that Andrew's feature piece will only be available to members via the emailed distribution of the newsletter.

Your October issue will include an article by Bob Johnson discussing how he developed the concept for his West Virginia Midland and how that development drives operations on the layout.

If you would like to submit an article please email southmountaindiv@gmail.com. *Wheel Report* editor Ron Polimeni would like articles formatted in a Microsoft Word compatible file or pasted into the body of the email. Please do not submit PDF files. Pictures for articles should be attached to the email, with their corresponding captions clearly labeled with each picture's file name so they can be matched to each image. Do not paste images into a Word document. All submissions and pictures must be the property of the author to be considered for publication.

Notes from the Editor:

By Ron Polimeni

Over the years, I've been something of an instigator attempting to encourage others to step up and hold office in our SMD. This year, I figured it was about time I put my money where my mouth is and step up myself. So, I'm now the editor in chief of our *Wheel Report* newsletter. This year we're trying something new. There will be three of us assembling the publication. Andrew Dodge, MMR, will be assistant editor and Bob Johnson will be publisher. I will be responsible for collecting articles and material for publication. Andrew will assist with proofreading and editing. Bob will layout and publish the final copy. It's a new idea and time will tell how well it works out.

That said, I haven't given up on instigating others to step up. I will be looking for stories wherever I can find them. It is my hope that we can use the *Wheel Report* to rejuvenate enthusiasm for our organization. Our membership has much to share and it is my hope that we can do so through participation in the *Wheel Report*. I'm open to all thoughts and ideas. Please feel free to contact me through the Division email, southmountaindiv@gmail.com.

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.

SMD Officers and Officials:

Superintendent:	Dan Mulhearn
Clerk/Paymaster:	Ray Price
Webmaster/Digital Assets Manager:	Tom Fedor
Wheel Report Publisher:	Bob Johnson
Wheel Report Editor:	Ron Polimeni
Wheel Report Assistant Editor:	Andrew Dodge, MMR
Division Achievement Program Coordinator:	Jane Clarke
Mini-Con Coordinator:	Grant Berry