

WHEEL REPORT

WINTER VOL. 19/20 No.2

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Winter SMD Meetings

2 PM to 5 PM*

December 8, 2019, Bob Morningstar, Greencastle, PA

January 12, 2020, HobbyTown USA, Frederick, MD, Layout visit @FCSME*

February 9, 2020, Cumberland Valley Model RR Club, Chambersburg, PA

**FCSME club will be open from 12-2 PM, before the meeting beginning at 2:30 PM.*

•Versions of the *Wheel Report* posted on the SMD web page contain no maps or street addresses. Please contact the Division at SouthMountainDiv@gmail.com for directions.

On the cover: I am finally calling Avery East Yard finished, although there are still a few more small items to place. I received a lot of help with this project, especially from Leonard (Lee) Davis, master structure builder and scenery artist, and Tim Edwards who built the bunkhouse out of a San Francisco “[Painted Lady](#)” kit, and the depot addition out of a couple [Ameri-Town](#) track side sheds. Lee built the depot and other structures from scratch. Stu Gralnik of [Model Building Services](#) built the substation, which had to be 85% scale size to fit my space.

It is amusing to me that after I crammed all the buildings into the scene, [Tony Koester](#) gave a clinic at the 2018 [O Scale National Convention](#) advising that the best way to compress a scene is to select a few key elements and space them so as to avoid cramming. Oh well!

The catenary bents are made by Dave Hikel of [Hikel Layouts & Trains](#). He assisted me in the construction of the catenary system. Tim Edwards made poles and sockets for installation in my various terrain. I still have a long way to go on the rest of my “Milwaukee Road Avery Division Point” O scale layout. -Rich Randall

Photo by Tom Fedor.

The *Wheel Report* is the official publication for the South Mountain Division of the NMRA. The newsletter is published three times annually. Please send your letters, articles, and pictures to

SouthMountainDiv@gmail.com.

2019/20 submission deadlines:

Spring 2020.....February 15

Fall 2020.....August 15

Winter 2020/21.....November 15

SMD Officers 2019/20

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Assistant Superintendent:

Jerry Skeim

Clerk:

Harvey Heyser III

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“Clutter from the Super's Desk”

Maybe it's just me, but Thanksgiving always feels far off until it's the coming Thursday and you realize you haven't bought a thing for holiday dinner...

Of course, Thanksgiving also means the South Mountain Division season is under full steam, and let me tell you, we're highballing it down the main this year. The year kicked off with a visit to Jeff Grove's new layout back in September, where Jeff gave a thoughtful talk on his eye-catching structure weathering techniques. Last month, we found ourselves in the south-west corner of Division territory, returning to Dave Thalman's PRR railroad four years after we'd last seen it. Next, we're coming back around to newly-elected MER Director Bob Morningstar's home in the run up to the Christmas holiday- and while I'll be away on travel that day, I've asked my assistant Superintendent Jerry Skeim to preside over what should be another good meeting.

Looking ahead, we're starting next year with a couple of real highlights. In January, the Frederick County Society of Model Engineers will be opening their doors for layout tours at 12PM, ahead of the meeting proper at Richard

Benjamin's [HobbyTown Frederick](#) location- so, plan to get an early start! Afterward, in February, we've been invited to hold our Frederick meeting at the Cumberland Valley Model Railroad Club in Hagerstown, MD. I haven't seen either of these club layouts myself yet, so I'm definitely looking forward to it.

Even further down the tracks, 2020's Mini-Con is coming together thanks as always to Pete and Jane Clarke's tireless efforts, [Mainline Hobby Supply](#) and, of course, YOUR incredible contributions. Simply said, we put on a great model train show, and that's something every Division member should be proud of. On that note, if you're not involved yet, we're excited to have you come aboard!

Finally, I want to say that it has been my pleasure and genuine privilege to serve as your Superintendent these past two and a half years. After a great deal of consideration, I have made the hard decision to step away from the Super's desk after May 2020.

I chose to accept my nomination in early 2017 because I wanted to honor Paul Rausch's memory, and the Division chose to give me a literal vote of confidence (and a leap of faith) in electing me Superintendent. Considering a personal history in other volunteer organizations with a, shall we say, similar membership demographic, it's meant more to me than I can say that you would trust your Division's youngest member at the metaphorical throttle.

Going forward, I've got a few things going on, with the prospects of getting married, starting a business, and taking classes all on the horizon for me, and a position like this shouldn't be allowed to stagnate around a single person regardless. If you think you'd be interested in taking a turn in the chair- or think somebody else really should!- we'll be setting up the nominating committee come January, and I'm confident we'll be in good hands no matter who steps forward for consideration.

Until then, I've still got 6 months to finish out, and plenty on the agenda to complete before then- including a “SMD Superintendent For Idiots” playbook I hope to pass along to our next Super, so maybe they can get the hang of it a little quicker than I did! I've learned a lot, had a ton of fun, and remain incredibly grateful to South Mountain Division for my time behind the Superintendent's desk.

Editors Notes

Our [website](#) is back up, along with the [blog](#). Currently it includes just the basics and serves as a landing page for those interested in reaching the SMD. Links to documents like our by laws and archived newsletters will function as the data is migrated to the new server.

The “Train Rides” page is not included in this edition. I made the decision to cut it due to space concerns and the fact that it's content is readily accessible on line. -Tom Fedor



Bob Morningstar

The 2019 Mid-Eastern Region "[Liberty Bell](#)" convention was held October 10-13 at the Valley Forge Crowne Plaza in King of Prussia, PA. I attended all 4 days and was really pleased with the experience. The

getting a financial review completed which serves the purpose of an audit but can be done by volunteers versus paying for a CPA. Not to worry as it appears we are in good financial shape and the MER treasurer is very conscientious.



hotel and hotel staff were excellent, the Convention committee did a great job of venue selection and negotiating a very reasonable room rate. The Convention Committee chair reported that there were 236 registered attendees.

The arrival and badging process was painless and took all of 2 minutes on Thursday. The "White Elephant" sale was well stocked with goodies to buy. I took up 15 items to sell, came home with only 5 items and I was \$62 to the good when I checked out on Sunday morning.

Thursday night was the quarterly MER board meeting, items of significance included:

- The MER newsletter editor has stepped down and the region is looking for a new editor, any takers? Tom?
- There was a discussion of having a full audit of the regions financials The expense is prohibitive and the board is working toward
- The executive committee chairperson provided an update on the convention attendance and there was discussion about the competing RPM events taking away both presenters and clinicians from the NMRA conventions.

Friday morning there was a regional editor's breakfast, for those involved in producing the divisional reports and the region report. Part of my duties as a director will be to oversee the production of the *eLocal*, so the opportunity to hear the various editors describe their processes and challenges was informative and useful. There was a interesting discussion about copyright and the importance that the editors ensure that any content (including photos and diagrams) be produced by the author or if from someone else that there is a written paper trail of permission to use. The main takeaway was that all the editors could use more content from the membership. Producing content for our *Wheel Report* provides an opportunity to share your modeling activities and is another avenue to learn from others. One division actually produces paper copies of the newsletter and places them in area hobby shops to increase the awareness of their division and the NMRA. Perhaps something for us to consider?

The clinics were well done, the audio visual equipment worked, and the Philly division staff excelled in ensuring that someone on the convention staff was at each clinic to introduce each speaker, assist with the computer and projector, and present a certificate to the presenter at the end of the clinic (This was a great idea and I hope future convention planners do the same.).

My contest entry this year was the Western Maryland Cement Hopper clean out facility that was located on my layout. It took 2 hours to gently remove it from the layout and place it on a piece of homasote for display purposes. I entered it in the online display category and earned 3rd place with 79 points. I intend on taking the judges comments and revising the model for a later submission, hopefully to get to the 87 points necessary for a merit award. Close but not close enough. The judges comments were encouraging and fair. A bit more attention to detail is what it needs.

I admit I am a clinic junkie and attended them from 8 AM until well into the evening (getting my monies worth). There were some very interesting clinics on 3D printing, another hobby of mine, and a fascinating clinic on poultry cars and poultry transport in the late 19th and early 20th century. Who knew that live chickens traveled by rail? I didn't.

Saturday was spent in clinics from morning until dinner, except for an informal meeting with a couple Master Model Railroaders and David Chance, MER AP manager.

They answered many of my questions and encouraged me to pursue the MMR.

I did not attend the banquet as I had plans to meet with old classmates from college that evening. The last day, Sunday, wrapped up with clinics in the morning and the annual MER business meeting. Twenty five or so members

attended and yours truly was installed as a new Director at the very end.

Overall it was worth my investment. I enjoyed a few days of total immersion in the hobby that

I love. The new friends I made were priceless. Next year's convention is in Charlotte, NC. I have already marked off for it at work and encourage all to attend.

Train Shows | Meets

- **Greenberg's Great Train and Toy Show**

Show: December 7 & 8, 2019.

Times: 10 AM to 4 PM.

Address: Maryland State Fair Grounds,
2200 York Rd. Timonium, MD 21093.

Web: trainshow.com

- **Frederick County Society of Model Engineers**

Operating exhibit (large scale): Weekends,
December 7-22, 2019.

Time: Saturdays 10 AM to 4 PM, Sundays
12 PM to 4 PM.

Address: 12 East Main Street, Thurmont,
MD 21788.

Club Car Open house: Sundays, January
12 - February 2, 2020.

Time: 1 PM to 4 PM.

Address: 423 East Patrick Street,
Frederick, MD 21701.

Web: [facebook.com/FCSMEtrains](https://www.facebook.com/FCSMEtrains)

- **Waynesboro Model Railroad Club**

Open house: Weekends, December 14-29
2019.

Open house: January 4, 5, & 12, 2020.

Time: 12 PM to 4 PM.

Address: 3291 Waynescastle Road,
Greencastle, PA 17225.

Web: waynesboromrrc.com

- **Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum**

Sale: February 8, 2020.

Time: 9 AM to 2 PM.

Address: Washington County Agricultural
Education Center, 7313 Sharpsburg Pike,
Sharpsburg, MD 21782.

Open House: Sundays, January, 2020.

Address: 17230 Shepherdstown Pike,
Sharpsburg, MD 21782.

Web: antietamstation.com

- **Great Scale Model Train Show**

Shows: February 1 & 2, 2020.

Times: Sat: 9 AM to 5 PM; Sun: 10 AM to
4 PM.

Address: Maryland State Fair Grounds,
Cow Palace, 2200 York Rd. Timonium, MD
21093.

Web: gsmts.com

[If you don't see your activity listed, please send future press releases to southmountaindiv@gmail.com -Ed.]



Jane Clarke

Thank you to those who contacted me about their aspirations in the Achievement Program (AP). look forward to getting your applications. Dave Thalman will receive his Golden Spike later this year and Bob

Morningstar is ready to have his electrical application reviewed and scenery judged. I look forward to presenting your awards!

This time I will focus on the requirements for Service to the Hobby/NMRA-Association Volunteer and Model Railroad Setting-Scenery.

Association Volunteer certificate

To qualify for the Association Volunteer certificate, you must:

Serve actively on one or more NMRA committees (National, Region, or Division) and/or as an Officer long enough to accumulate sixty (60) certified time units (TUs). The TUs you receive for various types of service are listed below:

1. Active satisfactory service as a National Department Head: 4 TUs per month.
2. Active satisfactory service as a National committee Chair/Manager, reporting to a Department Head: 3 TUs per month.

3. Active satisfactory service as a Region committee Chair/Manager or a National committee member, or Division Superintendent/President: 2 TUs per month.
4. Active satisfactory service as a Region committee member, a Division Officer other than as Division Superintendent/President, or Division Committee Chair/Manager: 1 TU per month.
5. Active satisfactory service as a Division committee member or Division board member: 1/2 TU per month.
6. Editors of an NMRA publication shall receive credit at the rate appropriate for committee Chairmen at the same level. At least four (4) issues of the publication, edited by the person applying, shall be attached to the SOQ or a URL provided for electronic newsletters before points will be considered for credit.

Note: What constitutes a "committee"?

Basically, just about any office or function that isn't covered under Association Official. Most other officers in a Division (or Region) are considered Committee Chairs/Managers. For example, if your Division has a person who runs the contest at the monthly meeting, they can be considered the "Contest Committee Manager", your local AP representative is a member of the "Region AP Committee",

and so on. Conventions (at all levels) are chock full of committees (Only the convention General Manager receives "Committee Manager" points - all others receive "Committee Member" points, even if their title includes the word "Manager"). Individuals who work just the day of the event (for example at the convention registration desk) receive credit for one month's work as committee members.

7. Service as a Division officer (other than Superintendent/President) or Division Director: 1 TU per month.
8. Newsletter Editors of 100% NMRA clubs having 10 or more members, may earn one-time unit per issue of the club newsletter (print or electronic), providing it is four pages or more. Four (4) issues of the newsletter, edited by the person applying, must be attached to the SOQ, or a URL provided for electronic newsletters, before the time units will be considered for credit.

(Other club officers, even of 100% NMRA clubs, DO NOT earn Volunteer credits.)

9. Official judges at NMRA sponsored model contests (including non-rail) shall be given time units for such service at the contest only (not monthly), as a one-time service credit per contest as follows:

- i. National Contest Judge 3 Time Units
- ii. Region Contest Judge 2 Time Units
- iii. Division Contest Judge 1 Time Unit
- iv. This credit is in addition to any credit that you may receive for being on the committee that works to set up the contest event.

10. Individuals (and their crews) who open their home or club layout for layout tours or operating sessions in conjunction with NMRA conventions or other NMRA sponsored events earn credit as follows for each day that the layout is open for viewing.

- i. National Event 3 Time Units / day (12 TUs maximum per event)
- ii. Region Event 3 Time Units / day (6 TUs maximum per event)
- iii. Division Event 3 Time Units / day (3 TUs maximum per event)

This credit is in addition to any credit that they may receive for being on the committee that works to set up the event.

11. Individuals who participate in modular layouts in conjunction with NMRA

Division events, or at NMRA sponsored events, earn credit as follows for each day the layout is open for viewing at the event.

- i. National Event 3 Time Units / day (12 TUs maximum per event)
- ii. Region Event 3 Time Units / day (6 TUs maximum per event)
- iii. Division Event 3 Time Units / day (3 TUs maximum per event)



SMD member John Madden (left) presents a live clinic at the 2019 Mini-Con.

This credit is in addition to any credit that they may receive for being on the committee that works to set up the event.

Note: There is generally a maximum of 48 time units credited for any one National convention, 24 time units credited for any

one Regional convention, and 6 time units credited for any one Division event.

12. Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Counselors who are NMRA members can earn: 1 TU (time unit) per month plus 1 TU per Scout that qualifies. This credit is retroactive with no time limit for those who have served as counselors in the past provided that they were also NMRA members during the time of service.

13. A live clinic (left) that is presented more than once earns Association Volunteer credits for each additional (the first presentation is credited toward Author unless the person already holds the Author certificate) presentation at the following schedule:

- i. National Clinic - 3 Time Units
- ii. Regional Clinic - 2 Time Units
- iii. Divisional Clinic - 1 Time Unit

14. Certification of accomplishment shall be by the Committee Manager (in the case of committee members), or by the appointing officer (in the case of Committee Chairmen). The Region (or National) President or Secretary may certify when the appointing officer is not available or when many positions will require several signatures.

Keep track of your service as you do it: Obtain the Record and Validation form from your AP Manager or [online](#), then fill it out and have it signed at the time of your service. This is much easier than going back and collecting signatures later when you're ready to apply for your certificate.

15. Submit a completed [Statement of Qualification \(SOQ\)](#) itemizing evidence of completion of the above requirements, along with the signed record of service.

Note: The Association Volunteer SOQ may be initiated by others.

Association Volunteer Award recipients in the South Mountain Division:

Jay Beckham, Bruce Blackwood, Jane Clarke, Pete Clarke, Richard Daniels, Steve Green, Bob Johnson, Richard Lind, Dennis Masters, Mary Miller, and Bill Miller.

In my case, I earned the maximum number of TU as chair of the 2009 MER Convention in Hagerstown. Additional points were from hosting divisional meetings and service as the divisional AP chair. As you have probably

found out, the years fly by; therefore, the points add up.

Model Railroad Setting-Scenery

To Qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery Certificate you must:



1. Construct a completed section of a model railroad of at least sixty square feet in O scale, or forty-five square feet in S scale, or thirty-two square feet in HO scale, or eighteen square feet in N scale or other scales in proportional relationship to HO

scale. This completed section must contain the necessary scenic elements of Terrain, Structures, Background, Lighting, and Realism/Conformity as combined to achieve a realistic effect using applicable NMRA standards. in that particular model railroad scene. The intent of this category is the prototypical rendering of the scenic elements from the ground up.

It is not necessary to qualify for this certificate by constructing a single section of layout. You can construct several different scenes (such as modules), each of which must be at least eight square feet and

of Merit Award quality. They must earn 87 ½ points using the AP Scenery judging sheet.

Outdoor (garden) railways may qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery certificate. However, the modeler must show that they have worked to create a miniature railroad, not just run some track through the flower

beds. For example, bridges should be modeled after prototype bridges (just as they are in other scales), not just track running across a plank.

The definitions of the various elements (which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad) shall be:

Terrain (35 pts)

The ground and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills and depressions, as well as man-made features such as railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads, etc.

Also remember different types of vegetation and the effects of weather and of animals. Remember the detail on streets and roads, whether in urban or rural areas: sewers / storm drains, man-hole covers, shoulders, drainage ditches, cracks, patches, road wear marks, oil stains, and tire ruts in dirt roads.

Make the transitions between different types of terrain as smooth as possible. Avoid glaring inconsistencies, such as a New England Farm house surrounded by palm trees. If you are going to have different scenes on your layout, use backdrop dividers or other vision blockers to separate them.

Structures (20 pts)

Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement, and appearance as scenic effects - NOT as to construction (which

is covered under Master Builder - Structures). This includes bridges, trestles, and culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, retaining walls, etc.), track and right-of-way features such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties, turntables and other service structures, etc.

These are but a few examples - additional features are encouraged. Also remember that structures should be in the ground, not sitting on top of it. Make sure that the appearance of your structures is consistent with your scenery. At the very least, weather it enough to take the "out of the box plastic shine" off of it. Switch machines, if not under the table, should be well disguised (this is one detail that will cause your application to be returned if it is not done). Remember details such as lights over the doors of commercial buildings.

Background (25 pts)

Treatment of the wall, backdrop, and/or ceiling to realistically depict depth, distance, horizon, and sky.

This doesn't mean that you have to have a photographic or landscape artist quality background. Your background

should continue the 'illusion of reality' that you are trying to create with your scenery. The background should match the scenery, and the transition where the two of them meet is smooth and/or hidden. One good question to ask yourself is: Is there enough good background to allow a photo to be taken without showing other parts of the room? If a wall is the backdrop, make sure that the texture is appropriate, as well as the color (a concrete block wall painted sky-blue, still looks like a concrete block wall!)

Lighting (20 pts)

Illumination effects from three aspects:

An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. This lighting information must be included in the material prepared for Section 4 below.

Note that a fully day lit scene is perfectly acceptable (although you may get more points for a scene that allows you to show off more lighting elements). However, even in a day lit scene, there may be evidence of lighting - even if it is not operational (non-illuminated street lights, for example.)

Also note that not every scene will contain all of these elements.

If the scene you are modeling is in the middle of the desert, there may not be any buildings or streets there to light!

Realism / Conformity (25 pts)

In the other four judging areas, the judges evaluate what you were trying to do - what you remembered to include in your scene. In this one, they evaluate how well you did what you were trying to do.

Your entire layout does not have to be completed to be judged - just enough to meet the minimum space requirements given above. However, the areas which are not to be judged should be blocked off (visually) from those that are.

2. Prepare a set of photographs (a recorded presentation is acceptable) and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details including towns or cities in the area being judged.

These photos don't have to be professional quality - that isn't what is being judged. However, there should be at least one over-all picture of the layout, and pictures of all the parts which are being judged. Each picture should have an accompanying description.

3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of Terrain, Background, and Lighting.

These can be simple statements - nothing elaborate is required.

4. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the Statement of Qualification (SOQ, see below) for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.
5. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87 ½ points on the section of layout being judged.
6. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed merit judging forms and/or copies of the Merit Award certificates from Section 5.

Master Builder-Scenery Award recipients in the South Mountain Division:

Bob Beecher, Bob Hazard, Bob Johnson, Mary Miller, and Bill Miller.

As the division AP Chair, my job is to encourage participation in the program, answer your questions, and help with your paperwork, if necessary. You can contact me at: jjclarke57@gmail.com or 301-253-4913.

AP Overview

Eleven AP certificates are available in these four functional areas:

1. **Railroad Equipment:** [Motive Power](#), [Cars](#)
2. **Settings:** [Structures](#), [Scenery](#), [Prototype Models](#)
3. **Engineering and Operation:** [Civil](#), [Electrical](#), [Chief Dispatcher](#)
4. **Service to the Hobby:** [Official](#), [Volunteer](#), [Author](#)

Once you have earned seven certificates, with at least one in each functional area, you will become a Master Model Railroader. You can find more information and all the forms you need at nmra.org.

General Forms

<https://www.nmra.org/forms>

Requirements: <https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/education/achievement/pdf/2006-ap-regs.pdf>

Checklist: <https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/education/achievement/pdf/2006-ap-checklist.pdf>

Who amongst us does not enjoy people watching? When you drive down a street, isn't your eye immediately attracted to peoples' activities? Utilizing figurines in your models can cause the casual viewer of your models to focus their attention not only on the human activity but also upon the buildings and scenery you have constructed.

I have had more opportunity lately to visit quite a few layouts. I am struck that very few modelers make much use of figurines. A very elaborate and well-constructed street scene will often be devoid of people making the scene seem abandoned. The addition of just a few figures can quickly make the same scene seem occupied and lively. Most of all it will draw the viewer's eye into the details of other buildings to search out for more such human activity.

A visitor to my recent open house commented on all the figurines I use on my layout. He wondered how I was able to use them in such different ways and most of all, how I didn't have a vast surplus of little people since he could often only find use for one or two figures out of a set of five or six.



Bob combined figure sets from Preiser and Woodland Scenics to create the ice cream stand line scene (above) and the scene (below) where a man gets an unsuspecting shower. He adds depth to his modeling using figures to create vignettes, each with it's own story to tell.



Figurines come in packets assuming that the set should be used to create a scene as provided in the packet. I have found that many of these prearranged scenes are often unusable because the scenes are often not the sort of thing that would be found along a railway or the figurines themselves are in poses that are not really useful or visually credible. By making a study of the various figurines available from all the manufactures I have come upon ways of combining different figurines from different sets to create new and more realistic human activity scenes. This requires creativity and thought but the results can be as rewarding as building any model.

Perhaps my most favorite scene on my layout is one I call "Mr. Beer gets a bath." (left) It is actually based upon a personal experience I had with a next-door neighbor years ago. We had labored hard to restore an old house and yard only to have a family move in next door that collect all sorts of junk cars and trash all around their house. I would have liked to have dumped a bucket of dirty water on my neighbor's head but never did - alas.

In the [Woodland Scenics](#) set “[Full Figured Folks](#)” there was a fat guy with a beer who much reminded me of my old neighbor. In a [Preiser](#) set there was a young woman holding a bucket about to dump the water from a set called “[Cleaning the House](#).” This figurine is now available as a solo figure. From this, the scene began to build in my mind. I obtained Woodland Scenics sets “[Children](#)” and “[Dogs & Cats](#).” I also ordered Preiser’s “[Women Hanging Laundry](#).” Of course, I also had to collect together all sorts of junk much of which came from my scrap box plus stuff found in the detailing section of the [Walters reference book](#) and a truck from [Jordan Highway Miniatures](#). I assembled this altogether into the scene. It was great fun.

I used most of the figures purchased in the scene. Yet I had all the rest of the full-figured people unused with no apparent place to put them. Then it occurred to me that the most probable place for chubby people to be would be at an ice cream stand. (previous page, top) Yet I wanted to create some comedy to that scene. I perused the available possibilities and came upon a Preiser set called “[Children](#)” with a boy searching for pocket change. This kid would be holding up a line of people searching

for the nickel he doesn’t have. Finding uses for the rest of the figures in the “[Children](#)” was easy. I used up a many figures I had left over from the “[Mr. Beer](#)” scene along with others.



Soon using up leftover figures became a challenge in itself that I came to enjoy. The scene I call “[Photo at the Burlesque](#)”(above) is composed entirely of left-over figures from various sets some of which I no longer can remember. The [photographer](#) is available from Preiser as a single figurine. The scene is inspired by something that I read about occurring during the heart of the Depression. Business was so poor that even the Burlesque houses couldn’t attract customers and had to resort to advertising (something they rarely had to do.) It was also inspired by a Depression Era song; “[Lulu’s Back in Town](#).” Here a

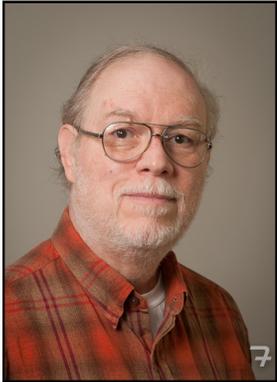
photographer is taking a picture of the ever-popular Lulu while the Mob and bribed police protect her. A pretty girl in front of a racy car always attracts attention in the newspaper.

Finding use for left over figures doesn’t have to be as elaborate as this. For instance, I was left with one figure from a Preiser “[Truckers](#)” set; a guy with both hands raised to open a roller door on a truck. I had no such truck. So instead he became a utility worker replacing a transformer (below) on a utility pole.

The possibilities are endless to create all sorts of interesting mini-scenes once you get into this as a creative challenge.



But take care. People may look at you askance and worry if you talk too much about the “[little people](#).”



Harvey Heyser

This coming year marks forty years since the SMD received its charter on April 26, 1980. The initial geographical boundaries were Jefferson and Berkeley Counties in WV, Washington and Frederick Counties in MD, and Fulton County in PA. In the absence of records from that early period, I have summarized mentions of the SMD in the MER newsletter, *The Local*, including some of the people [*SMD member names in bold face -ed.*] and activities from the early years of the Division.

The first officers were:

Paul Berger – Superintendent

Ed Staeblein – Assist. Superintendent

Dennis Masters – Clerk/Paymaster

Directors – **Larry Cunningham**, **Rick Morrison**, and **Ron Busey**

Early activities in 1980 included, a fan trip to the EBT, a meet at the Maugansville Ruritan (with movies, clinics, model displays, model contest, and operating modules), and meetings at held by **Ron Busey**, **Bill Madison**, and **Larry Cunningham**.

Paul Berger was listed as Achievement Program (AP) assistant, and AP certificates

were awarded to **Paul Berger** and **William (Bill) Miller** of the SMD.

Activities for 1981 included another meet at the Maugansville Ruritan, including contributions from **Dennis Masters** (HO modules), **Bill Rinn** (clinic on detailing cast locomotives), and Bud Sima (clinic on building structures from balsa).

This second group of officers was elected in 1981 (and re-elected in 1982):

Ron Busey – Superintendent

Robert Miller – Assistant Superintendent

Mary Synowiec (later Miller) – Clerk/Paymaster

Directors – **Warren Hart**, **Earl Reitzel**, and **Marv Kershner**

Planned activities for 1982 included a clinic on wiring by **George Perrine**, a visit to Harry Clark's Indian Creek Valley, tours of the Martinsburg Club's HO scale Blue Ridge & Allegany RR, their O scale Ditch & Gauly RR, **Lynn Breland's** HO Lost River & Western RR, **Bill Wood's** HO B&O RR, **Dave Southerly's** Piedmont Valley RR (WM branch), **Jeff Madden's** HO WV layout, and **Mike Kidwell's** HO Willoby & Western. There was a visit to the Hagerstown Model Railroad Club (including a raffle won by **Dick Powell**, Dispatcher for the WM Ry and a clinic on adhesives by **Ron Busey**), plus visit to the Strasburg (including mention of an injury to **Rev. Harry Miller** while demonstrating use of a handcar).

The March/April 1982 issue of the *The Local* contained an article about **Paul Berger's** Potomac Central Railroad including a track plan.

Planned activities for 1983 included meetings and clinics at **Ron Busey's** and **John Kelly's**, a third meet at the Maugansville Ruritan featuring tape slide clinics, a "Pale Pachyderm" sale, modular layouts, and 10 new members. It was noted that the winners of door prizes were **Chris Knight** (antique bottle car kit (bottle and trucks – he had to figure out how to assemble it.)); **Todd Michael** (G&D hopper); and **Jim Eells** (B&O caboose). Meetings took place at **Mike Kidwell's** HO Willoby & Western, and at **Larry Snook's** layout there was a wood structure assembly session led by **Ron Busey**. Carpools to the MER spring convention in Wilmington, DE.

Officers elected for 1983 were:

Bob Miller, Superintendent

Mary (Synowiec) Miller, Assistant Superintendent

Steve Green, Clerk/Paymaster

Director - [*names not listed -ed.*]

Notice of the SMD's first sponsored fall 1983 MER Convention in Hagerstown appeared in the November/December 1982 issue of the *The Local*. **Paul Berger** served as convention chair. **Jay Beckham** served as registrar, and **Warren Hart** gave a clinic on rocks.

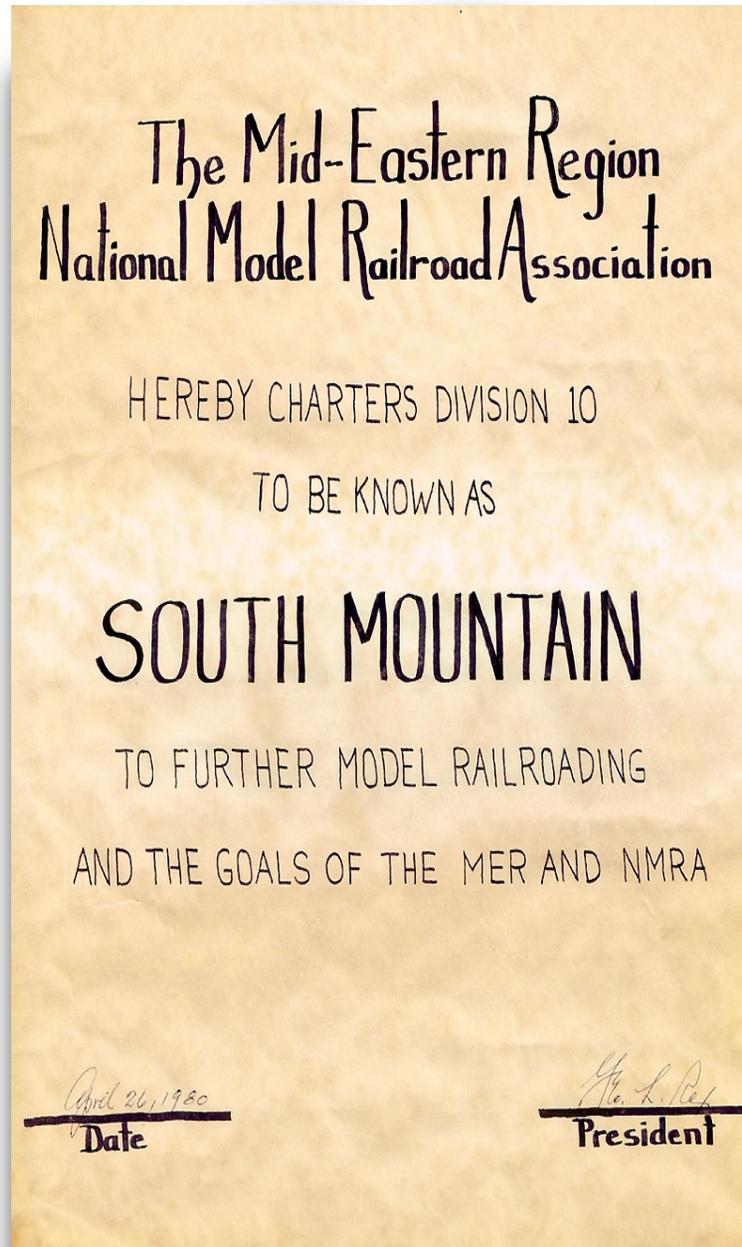
The convention included layout tours to the following:

- The Hagerstown Model Railroad Club,
- **Paul Berger's** Potomac Central,
- **Warren Hart's** Potomac Valley and Western,
- **Jay Beckham's** Columbia and Port Deposit Branch (PRR),
- **Will Snyder's** Antietam Valley,
- **Jeff Madden's** South Penn RR (B&O),
- **Mike Kidwell's** Willoby & Western,
- The Martinsburg Model Railroad Club,
- **Luther Ratcliff's** HO layout (un-named), and
- **Dave Southerly's** Piedmont Valley.

According to reports in *The Local*, **Jeff Madden** won three (3) prizes for photography, and the South Mountain Fireball Award was presented to Paul Backentose for a diesel and slug.

After 1983, *The Local* did not give a complete listing of SMD officers; however, **Mary Miller** and **Lynn Breland** were mentioned as holding the Superintendent position.

In the January/February 1985 issue of *The Local*, there was a notice of the SMD hosting a layout tour for the [Dixie Division](#) including layouts by the following: **Jeff Madden**, **Lynn Breland**, **Luther Ratcliff**, **Dave Southerly**, **Will Snyder**, **Warren Hart**, **Paul Berger**, and **Bob Johnson**.



Over the early years of the Division's history, the following SMD members served in various Regional positions:

Bill Miller – Director, MER

Mary Miller – Model Contest Committee Chair, MER

Paul Berger – Achievement Program Coordinator, SMD

Dennis Masters – Ballot Committee Chair, MER

After the 1985 Quad Regional Convention held in Harrisburg, **Mary Miller** thanked SMD members **Bill Miller**, **Jay Beckham**, and **Dennis Masters** for their assistance with the model contest.

Allow me to end this summary with some observations. Many of the activities the SMD scheduled in the past are similar to those the Division sets up today, including meetings in members' homes, visits to their layouts, clinics, and railfan trips. Also consider that the early meets held at the Ruritan were strikingly similar to present our day Mini-Cons.

Although many of the names listed above may not be familiar, a few are still active. These are the people who established your South Mountain Division and gave it the solid foundation it enjoys today. They deserve congratulations for their efforts starting the Division.

Join your fellow SMD members in a day of great fun and fellowship. And, oh by the way, spread the joy of model railroading. Saturday April 18, 2020, with the support of [Mainline Hobby Supply](#), we will again host the very popular Mini Convention. New members might not know and old members might have forgotten our format for the event, so here's a quick review.

Informal clinics

We need 10 volunteers to give one from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM and repeat it again from 11:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Not a formal presentation, just talk about a model railroading topic that's of interest to you. Bring what you want to have as examples or visual aids (no projectors, no loudspeakers). It's just you, talking to the attendees as they walk past your table. The guests are free to stay and talk with you for as long as they like, or move on when they choose. So don't think of it as a speech or public speaking. It's just you, talking to another interested model railroader. Note that officially you have an hour break from 10:00 to 11:00 AM. That's to allow you to get a snack, visit the rest room, and look around to see other clinicians.



More informal clinics

Then we need 10 other members to give 10 other clinics from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM and again from 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM. We want 20 informal clinics (two groups of 10), so there's plenty of room for you. Join in with SMD members and friends like Dennis Blank Jr. (Lighting SD40-2's with LED's), Bob Johnson (TBD), Jerry Skeim (Structures/Modeling water), Andrew Dodge (TBD), Bob Law (Using dry transfers), Ken Kime (How to make molds and castings for making hopper cars.), Don Florwick (TBD), Bill Reynolds (TBD), Gary Nastase (Roadbed and ballasting), Bob Geldmacher (Making pine trees), Bob Morningstar (How to make your own Current Keeper), John Madden (DCC ++), Dave Thalman (Weathering and Loading Coal Hoppers), Ron Polimeni (Budget model railroading), Harvey Heyser (Layout design), Lee Rainey (TBD), and Jane Clarke (TBD).

I can hear you saying, "Come on Pete. Look at that list. You must not need me." Wrong. We have space for you. I'm like Uncle Sam. "I want you." And the members and guests who will come to the Mini Con want to see you and learn about the topic that interests you.

Although many on the list would be happy to give their spot to you, the new guy, we do have room for you. Can I make that any more clear? I want you!

I can hear you saying, “But I don’t know what to do.” You may recall me writing this in the past, or saying it at a monthly meeting. “Just bring a model and work on it.” I really mean it. No-one seems to want to believe it, but it’s been done and it’s very popular.

Make And Takes

At 10:00 AM we will also have two “Make and take” clinics. Jeff Grove of Carolina Craftsman Kits (CCK) will again donate a group of (small, easy) craftsman kits and Mainline will again donate (small, easy) styrene (plastic) kits. Just like last year we’ll encourage young people by giving them priority on the make & take sign up lists. Also, another way you can help is by bringing tools to loan for these clinics. X-Acto knives, glue, and, well, look for a list of items once our build leaders have had time to think about it.

Modulars

We hope to have a modular layout or two set up and running during the morning as well. I’m having better luck this year, and have gotten “probably” from two. But we still can use more. So please contact me (Pete Clarke) if you are aware of a modular group and have contact information for that group. Email me at ebtmx5@aol.com or call 301-253-4913.

Vendors

There will be some vendors there with model railroad stuff for sale. Carolina Craftsman Kits, Dwarvin (Fiber optic system of lights) and Bob Van Zant (Misc. stuff) have all signed up and we are waiting to hear back from more. And of course you can, and should, carefully walk across the road to Mainline. Show them your gratitude for supporting this event by making a purchase, and while you are talking to them, say, “Thanks for sponsoring the Mini.” Out loud!

Raffles

Again this year we will purchase a \$150 gift certificate from [Mainline Hobby Supply](#) and sell raffle tickets (\$10 each) through the morning. Also [HobbyTown Frederick](#) (SMD member Richard Benjamin) has donated a \$50 gift certificate that we will give as a door prize. Both of these will happen at 1:00 PM.

Formal Clinics

Also at 1:00 PM we convert from informal to formal clinics. We hope to have a speaker from the Mid East Region (MER) tell us of the plans for the MER’s annual fall convention. Alex Polimeni will speak on Model railroading as game design, and noted historian and author Lee Rainey will speak on “Shortline Operating Patterns: What to Consider in Designing a Schedule.”

Food

We will have food on site handled by the SMD.

And that’s just what I know about already. There’s more in the pipeline, so watch for updates in the spring newsletter.

But we need you to make it happen. Please contact me and offer to help. Mostly we need folks to give informal clinics. Everyone who’s done one of these clinics has had a great time. If you have questions I’d be happy to talk with you about it. There are other things you can do, we’ll need extension cords, tools for the make & take clinics, help at the registration desk, morning set up and afternoon clean up. Know of a modular group? I’d love to hear from you. Just can’t do any of those? Attend, tell others about it.

Who:

Mainline Hobby Supply Presents

What:

Eighth Annual SMD Spring Mini-Convention

Where:

[Blue Ridge Mountain Fire Co.](#)
[13063 Monterey Lane, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214](#)

When:

Saturday, April 20, 2020
9:00 AM until 4:00 PM

Why:

For a good time, be part of the Mini-Con!