

Volume 24/25 – 7

March 2025



From the Desk of the Superintendent:

By Bob Johnson

It is almost hard to believe that spring is only three weeks away. That means that there are only two more SMD meetings, plus the Mini-Con left in this program year. We did not have any summer activity scheduled for the summer of 2024 but I would like to try to get something lined up for 2025. I am asking all of you to give some thought as to a possible railroad-related activity we could schedule for some time this coming July.

I want to thank Richard Benjamin for hosting the February meeting.

Come August our new Superintendent will be busy scheduling the first several meetings of the 2025 – 2026 program year. He will be looking for members to host meetings. So if you have not hosted in the past year (or possibly never) please giving some thought to volunteering. We are always on the lookout for new layouts to visit.

Elections:

We will holding our new officer elections for the 2025 – 2026 program year at the March meeting.

As of now the candidates are:

- Superintendent – Dan Mulhearn
- Clerk / Paymaster – Ray Price

We are in need of a volunteer to assume the position of Clerk. If you want to volunteer please let me know as soon as you can. In addition, we need a number of volunteers to serve in “appointed” positions (Especially *Wheel Report* Editor). A listing of the primary positions, along with a description of the associated duties, was published in the [December Wheel Report](#) and on our [web site](#).

Model Railroad Equipment Sale:

SMD member Don F will be moving in the near future and as a result will be dismantling his large HO scale layout. He will be holding a sale at his house on Saturday, 15 March. If you are interested in acquiring anything please email southmountaindiv@gmail.com and we will put you in touch with Don.

March Meeting:

The March meeting of the South Mountain Division will be held on Sunday, 9 March at Jane and Pete Clarke's home in Damascus, MD. As usual, the meeting starts at 2:00PM. Don't forget that the 9th is the first day of Daylight Savings Time. So be sure to set your clock ahead an hour Saturday night.

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

Pete and Jane are rather narrow minded (HOn3 narrow that is), and have a very nice operational layout based on the East Broad Top Railroad. This layout has been featured in Great Model Railroads and is well worth your time to visit. Jane and Pete have provided the following information for your edification.

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.

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 scratchbuilt the Orbisonia station and roundhouse and Pete the company store and houses in Robertsdale. 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.

Following the meeting Pete (or Jane) will provide us with an update on the status of the other EBT.

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SOUTH MOUNTAIN DIVISION - NMRA

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.

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 meeting schedule for the balance of the year is:

April 5th (first Saturday) – Annual Mini-Con – Blue Ridge Summit, PA.

May 18th (3rd Sunday to avoid Mother's Day conflict) – Dan M has arranged for us to visit the Quincy Village model railroad layout room.

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.

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.

Mini-Con 2025:

The 2025 SMD Mini-Con will be held on Saturday, 5 April at the Blue Ridge Summit fire hall (across from Mainline Hobby Supply). As always, Grant will need help with registration, event set-up and of course clinicians. Start thinking now about what sort of table clinic you could present at the event and let Grant know so he can add you to the schedule. Please email southmountaindiv@gmail.com and we will get you in touch with Grant.

2027 MER Convention:

We have volunteers for an exploratory committee to get things started for the 2027 MER convention which we are scheduled to host.

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.

SMD Officers and Officials:

Superintendent:	Bob Johnson
Clerk:	Alex Polimeni
Paymaster:	Ray Price
Webmaster/Digital Assets Manager:	Tom Fedor
Wheel Report Editor/Publisher:	Bob Johnson
Wheel Report Contributing Editor:	Alex Polimeni
Division Achievement Program Coordinator:	Jane Clarke
Mini-Con Coordinator:	Grant Berry