

WHEEL REPORT

From the Desk of the Superintendent:

By Dan Mulhearn

Greetings, fellow model railroad enthusiasts. We are gearing up for the holiday season; and remember November is [Model Railroad Month](#)! It's a good time to recruit new folks, if not to the NMRA, at least to our hobby.

Thank you to Bob Johnson for hosting our October meeting, and the opportunity to inspect his outstanding West Virginia Midland. The meeting was well attended, and there were a couple of questions raised which might be discussed in the newsletter.

First, a home layout is not required in order to host a Division meeting. The only thing you need is the space and the willingness to host. This brings us to the topic of clinics at our meetings. Clinics need not be limited to topics related to model railroading. Most, if not all, of us have at least a passing interest in the prototype we model. Clinics on any of the many facets of the prototype would be fine. This could be history, development of a particular car, locomotive, operation, or your visit to a place of interest.

I was able to attend the recent [MER regional convention](#) in King of Prussia, PA. [The Philly Division](#) did a wonderful job hosting this convention; more on this later.

I was able to attend clinics on Layout Command Control, a subject which fascinates me. There were also "You can do this" clinics on attaining the AP Certificates for cars and locomotives; at least one of which is required to join the ranks of Master Model Railroader.

To repeat, the Philly Division presented a great convention. It bears mention that the New Jersey Division had committed to hosting the 2025 convention, then determined they were unable to host. This resulted in the Philly Division having only one year to pull the convention together.

Our Division has volunteered to host the 2027 MER Convention. It's time to get serious about preparing for that event. The Region does a lot of the work involved, but there is plenty of responsibility for us. The Region VP plans on visiting one of our upcoming meetings, and the 2027 Regional is high on his agenda.

See you at the November meeting.

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November Meeting:

Our host for the Sunday, 9 November meeting will be Larry Daily, who lives in Shepherdstown, WV. Larry has been a member of the NMRA for a number of years but says that until a couple of years ago, he had always been a "lone wolf" modeler. Then, in a burst of enlightenment, he decided that he could get more out of the hobby by becoming more active.

This will be the second SMD meeting that Larry has hosted. I encourage all of you to come to the November meeting and see what he has accomplished. Larry's layout is based on the C&O's Piedmont Subdivision in late spring/early summer of 1970. It occupies a good bit of his basement. The track plan is basically a big oval bent into an L-shape; about 25.50 feet on the long leg and 17.67 feet on the short side. Two-thirds of the scenery is completed, and many of the structures represent actual buildings found on the prototype. He says that if you really want to know whether it's worth the trip, you can check it out on his website: <http://www.piedmontsub.com/Layout.shtml>

As usual, the meeting starts at 2:00 p.m.

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

Reminder:

SMD membership meetings are always the 2nd Sunday of the month at 2 p.m. The only exception is due to Mother's Day 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.

Hosts Needed:

As of this writing we do not have any meeting hosts signed up for December through May of 2026. We need volunteers to step up as hosts. Your layout doesn't need to be large, or finished, or even operational. Without hosts we cannot hold our meetings. Repeat hosts (within the past year) are okay but we really would like to see some layouts that we have not visited for a couple of year or never seen at all. If you would like to host, or have any questions concerning hosting please contact your Division superintendent at southmountaindiv@gmail.com.

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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.

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 November we are publishing the third 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.

Wheel Report Submission Guidelines:

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.

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Notes from the Editor:

By Ron Polimeni

During our last SMD general meeting, it was decided that the Division will suspend our annual Mini-Convention. Since COVID, our attendance has been dropping. Up till the pandemic, it had been increasing every year. With the drop in attendance and possible difficulties in obtaining access to the venue, it was decided to drop the Mini-Con. Many of us, including myself, will be sorry to see it go. It was always a fun day. The "Con", as I called it, was different from other 'train shows' in that it wasn't a flea market. There were no 'vendor' tables. It was instead, a demonstration of the many ways in which our hobby can be enjoyed. It was a sharing of experience and will be missed.

In a slightly different vein, last year we experimented with a promotional exhibit hosted by [Hobbytown](#) of Frederick. A number of our members put together a promotional exhibit intended to show the many aspects of our hobby not generally known to the public. Rather than preaching to the choir, the show was intended to draw in folks who might not otherwise have considered model railroading as a pastime.

My own thoughts are that we could expand on this theme and perhaps exhibit our hobby at various venues (libraries come to mind) several times a year. With well-designed exhibits, it could be a way to draw more people into the hobby and appeal to a younger audience.

The Mini-Con did its job and did it well. Times change, however, and this could be an opportunity to create something new and exciting. I would propose that we develop a committee to explore a promotional display/show to replace the Mini-Con.

Changing gears for a moment, we're still in need of volunteers to host meetings. We have no clubhouse and depend on our membership to host our monthly meetings. It is not necessary to have a layout in order to host a meeting. Either the host or a member can supply a 'clinic' or give a talk for the entertainment part of the meeting. Meetings are about shared interests and camaraderie. A layout isn't a necessity for that. If you think you can help out by hosting a meeting, please contact our Superintendent, Dan Mulhearn.

Lastly, I will attempt to provide an outline for what I think should be included in a promotional display in the next Wheel Report. If anyone feels they have thoughts on the subject, please feel free to contact me.

Contact Ron through the Division email, southmountaindiv@gmail.com.

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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.

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Superintendent:	Dan Mulhearn
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Webmaster/Digital Assets Manager:	Tom Fedor
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