

WHEEL REPORT



From the Desk of the Superintendent:

By Dan Mulhearn

Well, folks, we have arrived at another new year. It is a tradition to look back over the past year and assess our doings. It is also a time to look ahead and make plans for the coming year. While this applies to our lives in general it also is a time to assess our progress in our hobby. What did you plan to accomplish in the past year? How did you do on that score? What would like to get accomplished in the new year? There are some things we might want to get to right away, and others that might involve some long-range planning. I have an Athearn SD40-2 sitting on my table. The Soundtraxx decoder has been plugged into the Athearn board and is fully functional. The remaining chore is to solder the two speaker wires to the main board. That seems simple and something I have done before. But, soldering, for me, has a way of turning disastrous on occasion. So, some days the unit sits there and I can do whatever else I am doing and ignore it. On other days it seems to fill the table and demand I get the job done. I won't admit how long The SD40-2 has been sitting there. But I will tell you that I sometimes kid myself that I could be President of the Procrastinator's Society except I haven't gotten around to sending in my dues. The point being it is a good time to give some deep thought to what your accomplishments have been. What goals in the hobby do you have; and what are you going to do about it?

Our January meeting will be at the Western Maryland Historical Society at Union Bridge, which should be an interesting venue. Bob Johnson tells me we have hosts marked up for February, March and May. We still need someone to step up for April.

This year we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the NMRA. We should appreciate the organization's contributions to our hobby. The interoperability of the different manufacturers' products, which we take for granted, are the result of the standards and recommended practices of the NMRA. Happy 90th birthday and many more.

WHEEL REPORT

December Meeting:

The January meeting will be hosted by Jeff Adams and held at [Western Maryland Railway Historical Society](#) museum located at 41 N. Main St., Union Bridge, MD 21791. As a part of the meeting Jeff will lead us on a tour of the museum.

Jeff writes, "The Western Maryland Railway Historical Society is one of the few organizations of its kind to own and operate its own museum. The Museum complex consists of two buildings built in 1902, an office building and the depot, which houses our extensive collection of WM artifacts and memorabilia. There are two model railroad layouts, an N-scale layout which represents the WM East Subdivision from Union Bridge to the Twin Bridges (west of Thurmont, MD), and an HO scale layout that represents the many industries and geographical areas served by the WM."

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

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 a meeting host signed up for April 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.

WHEEL REPORT



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:

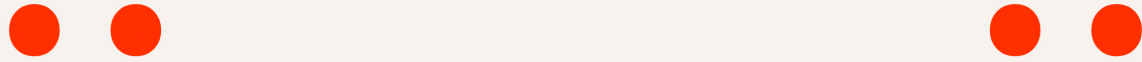
We are always looking for Wheel Report content from the membership. Articles addressing prototype railroading (including your experiences while visiting a prototype location) and model railroading (how you designed / built your layout, modeling structures, model railroad operations, etc. All of this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

WHEEL REPORT



Notes from the Editor:

By Ron Polimeni

First of all, I'd like to wish our members all the best for the coming year. For those of you who may not have heard, there'll be no Mini-Con this year and I for one, will miss it. Hopefully though, we'll be able to get something else going. I mentioned this in my editorial last month. Last year we put on a promotional exhibition at Hobbytown in Frederick, MD. The purpose of our exhibit was to promote the hobby of model railroading, the NMRA and our South Mountain Division. While not as big, nor as extravagant as the Mini-Con, it accomplished its purpose and we had fun doing it.

I would like to expand on this idea as I think it would make a good replacement for the Mini-Con. My feelings are that it should be geared toward the general public, rather than to those already aware of what our hobby has to offer. Perhaps we could manage two or three shows a year at various venues in our area. To this end, I would like to form a committee to explore creating a program geared to promoting our hobby. Anyone interested can contact me. This will save me the trouble of having to button hole and coerce potential personnel.

That said, I'd like to reiterate that we are in need of hosts for our meetings. SMD has no club house. We're dependent on members to volunteer to host our monthly meetings. Having a layout is not required to host a meeting. A "clinic" can be presented and several of us have portable displays which can be set up. The "clinic" can take any number of forms and needn't be a "how to". Most of us, even if we don't have a 'layout', have a model shop of some sort with one or more projects in the works that we can share.

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

WHEEL REPORT



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

SUPPLEMENT

Draft Meeting Minutes – 14 Dec 2025

Division members met at Rick K's home in Martinsburg, WV. The Superintendent called the meeting to order at 2:18pm with 13 members in attendance. The Superintendent thanked Rick for hosting the Division. Rick has recently retired from a career at CSX, and is rebuilding his layout after changing roads and design philosophy.

- The draft minutes from the May, September, October and November meetings were approved as submitted. These minutes were collectively published in a recent Wheel Report.
- The Paymaster reported a current balance of \$3337.66

Old Business

- Superintendent Dan Mulhearn appealed for more meeting hosts. Pete and Jane C will be our January host and Jay B has volunteered to host our May meeting, but February, March and April remain open.
- Wheel Report Editor Ron Polimeni and publisher Bob Johnson appealed for more submissions, stating that simply talking about and sharing your hobby is more than welcome.

New Business

- The question was asked whether or not the 2026 Mini-Con had been formally called off, which it has. The Superintendent confirmed that we will have a normal membership meeting in April instead.
- Alex P provided an update on behalf of himself, Bill M and Steve K regarding deciding upon a venue for the 2027 MER Convention the Division has been asked to host. Bill has drawn up a list of information but further action has not been taken at this time.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and carried at 2:30. The Superintendent then yielded the floor to Rick K to speak about his model railroad.