

# Super's Signal

A publication of Division 6, Mid Central Region of The National Model Railroad Association, Inc.

May 2020

## Superintendent's Report

Greg Short, Division 6 Super

Hey gang, I hope all is well since we could last get together. The state of things right now has us all hostage and making changes in our lives. As for me, I guess I am one of the lucky ones. I have not had any major changes in my life other than a work assignment and schedule, and no NASCAR. Now I know some of you will say it is I-racing but that is not auto racing it is a video game. It is like railfanning on a train simulator, just not getting it.

As everyone knows just about all events have been canceled through at least the end of May and some even further out. This includes both the Regional and National Conventions. I have not heard of any plans of how to receive refunds for either convention if any. For those who had already paid, hang tight, and hopefully, we will have an answer soon. I do know that Pittsburgh can have the next open year for their convention which should be 2023 if they want it.

Well, I hope everyone has been making progress on the projects you have had laying around, as there has not been much else to do. Although that is going to change soon as spring is finally looking to warm up and the outdoor work will begin. For some of us it means mowing grass, sometimes twice a week, getting the flowers planted and getting the garden in. Soon everything will be green again, it seems like it has been a very cold wet spring so far. I think that groundhog didn't have a clue what he was talking about.

Although we didn't get a chance to meet this month some of the guys came up with doing an online photo contest. I will admit that I was a bit skeptical at first and thought that the participation would be

**Super's Signal Deadline**  
23 May

## 16 May Contest Entries Closes Virtual Photo Contest-2

**Photography Contest:** Railroad Signals.

This can include dwarf type, switch stands, grade crossing signals, along the track, bridged over the track and even Semaphores.

## 17 May Contest Entries Voting

low. Boy was I surprised, this thing is a hit. We had a very good count on entries and some great photos, so much so we are doing it again. Check the website and jump onto the IO group to see the topic and how to enter, or look here in the Signal, DUH. Thanks to all the folks who thought it up, put together, and entered. One thing that I stated is that

I didn't want this to count toward the yearlong points for the contest. Jimmy convinced me that it is a good idea to do that so we are counting these as part of the photographer of the year. The Modeler of the year contest will resume whenever we meet again. I still need to work out with Jimmy how to handle the start-up and see what we do about the missed contests.

This leads me to the rest of the year schedule. As of right now the only things on the schedule as Marion in June and our Train Show in October. I am not pulling the plug on either yet till we see where we are when we get closer. By the time we get close enough, Matt will be at the helm and he can make the decision. My thoughts are to hold the Marion meeting as it has plenty of space social distancing. We can even move the meeting into the station if

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Continued on page 4.

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**Media:** Matt Goodman

**Members Aid:** Available

**Membership:** Rick Brown

**Program:** Mike Wolf, MMR

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**NMRA Central District Director**

Robert Beaty, MMR

Non-Credited Photos by Donald Wilke

**Clerk's Report**

*Patrick Hreachmack, Clerk*

**There was No April Meeting  
Due to Social Distancing****Northlandz**

*By Patrick Hreachmack*

*Photos by Author*

In early March 2020, Bill Frost (& Lila) and I traveled to western Flemington, New Jersey. We toured the Northlandz HO-Scale model railroad layout. For anyone who is not aware, Northlandz holds a couple of Guinness World Records. A few records now surpassed. It is still one of the largest HO-Scale layouts in North America. Northlandz is in Flemington, New Jersey, an hour west of New York City, and an hour and half north of Philadelphia.

Bruce Williams Zaccagnino created Northlandz when the Zaccagninos were building their first home. They decided to incorporate a model railroad. As the railroad grew, "Mr. Z" was encouraged to build a separate space for the layout. Within the next five years, he created Northlandz. It is now located in a large building comparable with a three- or four-story commercial building. Why "comparable"? Because once inside, one realizes that there are no distinct floor levels!

Northlandz incorporates a 50,000 square foot HO-Scale layout. Visitors find themselves moving up a zigzag incline to the top of the building then working their way back to ground level. They move all on ramps that are easy for wheelchairs. Northlandz contains over eight actual miles of HO track, on over 50 separate DC operated rail circles. This results in a max of 50 trains running at any one time, without any possible collisions! The layout includes over 100 incredible bridges and trestles, along with over 400 tunnels.

Northlandz also contains an art gallery, a 94-room dollhouse, a massive 2,000 pipe theater organ in a 250-seat theatre, a children's play area, and a gift shop, all under one roof. Besides all this, outside on the 16-acre grounds is a real live narrow-gauge steam engine and touring cars. The train engine is a live 4-4-0 converted oil-burning steamer painted in Christmas colors of green and red. The tour moves parallel to a river, over a bridge, through woods, and a tunnel and covered bridge.

What people don't realize is that the back of the main building wraps on two sides of Mr. Z's original home. This section is closed to the public. When Mr. Z retired and sold Northlandz in



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2018. The new owner, a major construction company, hired a full-time staff including Ken Vogel as a curator. After meeting accidentally and learning that Bill and I are active NMRA members, Ken escorted us to sections of the layout that the public doesn't see. This including the control room and under the layout. Several of the staff including curator Ken, occupy the original home. It is now divided into several apartments for the curator and several staff members.

The Northlandz staff and a local model railroad club maintain the Northlandz Model Railroad. The actual layout contains very realistic scenes such as the famous driving of the Golden Spike, rail yards, and other features. But due to the nature of the layout, it moves through tall mountains, and past some very whimsical scenes.

Near the top, there is a large monastery connected to the world across a deep gap, by a rickety foot bridge. One of the hotels is a major edifice in green, built in eight multi-floor steps, so it hangs way out over a gorge! There are many areas where visitors can look up, down, or over 10 to 18 feet of mountains. Another valley scene viewed from either the bottom level or the top levels. It features over ten levels of trains moving around and through mountains, across bridges, and past villages.

One of my favorite scenes is Grandma's Great Gorge Locomotive & Engine Rebuilder located on a mountain pinnacle. Their motto is "You smash them...we rebuild them." When you visit Northlandz, watch for many stacks of destroyed diesel and steam locomotives. As Mr. Z accumulated locomotives, and could not use some, stacks of rusty and damaged engines and rolling stock appeared around the layout. Sometimes in some very unusual places.

Another major feature is Grandma's home. Once a location on a nice pasture at the base of a mountain. The story is that a major mining company decided to build a quarry next to Grandma's home. As the quarry grew deeper, it expanded out around Grandma's home. Now Grandma's home is on a tall narrow pinnacle column of ground, connected to the mainland by a wooden car with a suspension bridge. But when the quarry cut Grandma's water and sewage lines, Grandma had it. She built an outhouse on a wood platform way out over the quarry. She trucks in her water supply now too.

During our tour, Ken Vogel escorted us through the control room. There are over 50 Tech II Railmaster 2400 controllers, each dedicated to a specific rail loop. These controllers are DC only. Ken asked us to spread the word that Northlandz is seeking new or gently used Tech II Railmaster 2400 controllers. They will replace some of the units now going bad from years of use. If you have this controller and wish to donate it, please mail to Ken Vogel, Curator, Northlandz, 495 Route 202, Flemington, NJ, 08822. Please mention that you are from Division 6, Buckeye Division, Mid Central Region, NMRA.

Northlandz is open year-round, except for certain holidays and two weekends in March and April. You may Google Northlandz at [www.northlandz.com](http://www.northlandz.com). Entrance is \$25 for Seniors.

There are some brand name hotels, motels, and restaurants in Flemington, five minutes west of Northlandz. I will warn you thou that NY and Philadelphia prices are very apparent!!

We highly recommend a visit to Northlandz. By car, it is about 8 hours from Columbus to Flemington, most of that on interstate including the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Plan to spend at least three hours touring the layout. Take your camera!



### Continued: **The Super's Report**

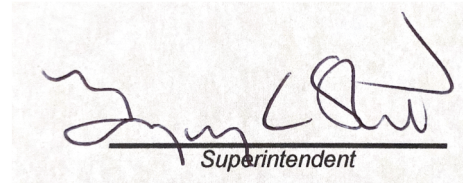
needed. We can make other changes to the day also to help out like cutting the lunch out.

As for the train show, we are still 6 months out and a lot can happen in that time. As it looks right now our train show may be the first one of the year. The show season is now winding down due to summer. Most other train shows were canceled since the middle of March. If everything goes smoothly we could be in a very good position with our show.

To go along with any of our meetings or events, if you do not feel safe attending stay home. No one

will be twisting your arm to attend any meetings. Please remember ours is a social group and there is some social contact that goes along with it. We will do all that we can to ensure the safety of the group and its members. But there is also the tipping point where we lose what the organization is really all about. That is socialization between model railroaders.

Till next time be safe and happy modeling.




## **Division 6 Regulations Update**

*Don Wilke, Division 6 Director*

Don't we live in interesting times? I have seen a number of stay-at-home projects posted on the .io-group site. The projects are varied and look great. Some members of the division's Board of Directors have been busy with paperwork.

We will soon have a new Superintendent and other officers. When we looked at the Division 6 Regulations to see exactly when this would occur, we found a problem. The new officers would take office at the end of the Mid Central Region's Annual Business Meeting. Since there is no MCR Convention this year, can we say Covid-19, there is no Business Meeting. And there may not be a meeting at the 2022 Joint Convention. The Mid Central President, Bob Weinheimer, is working on that problem.

At least seven of the twelve MCR divisions have their new officers take over on a set date. Any where from mid-March to October. Greg called for a Division 6 BOD Meeting to discuss the problem. Matt Goodman set up a virtual BOD Meeting using Skype. After trying various setting we finally got the BOD meeting working on April 26. While we were talking about the Regulations, we had also been talking about "cleaning up" some of the regulations for a while.

About ten years ago, the State of Ohio made us change "Trustee" to "Director." A shortened version of the "Board of Directors" was the term "Director." One of the things we had been talking about was cleaning this up.

We discussed, voted on, and passed the following changes to the Division 6 Regulations:

- Article III: Clarified the roles of the Board of Directors and the Division Directors.
- Article III, Section 5: Changed the date Officers or Directors take office from a floating date to a fixed date.
- Article IX, Section 1: Changed the date of the Division 6 Annual Business Meeting from a floating date to a fixed date.
- Article VI, Section 1: Added media to the list of Standing Committees.

The bottom of the "About Us" Page on the web site has a link to the revised Regulations for Division 6.





### Division 6 – 2020 Time Table

| Date                 | Event  | Meeting  | City           |
|----------------------|--|--|----------------|
| 4-5 Jan              | Great American Train                             | Fairgrounds  | Columbus       |
| 12 Jan               | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>Hilltop Library</i><br>Clinic: <i>Static Grass Applicator</i> , Darrell Logan & Rich M9<br>Contest: Open Freight Car WITH Load  | Columbus       |
| 16 Jan               | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| 9 Feb                | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>South-East Library</i><br>Clinic: <i>Weathering Cars</i> , Matt Goodman & Mike Wolf<br>Contest: Non-Revenue Car   | Groveport      |
| 14 Feb               | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| 8 March              | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>Smoke Stack Hobbies</i><br>Clinic: <i>Wiring &amp; Automation</i> , William Morgan<br>Contest: Non-Steam Locomotive   | Lancaster      |
| 12 Mar               | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| 19 Apr               | <b>Meeting Canceled</b><br>Division 6 Meeting    | Business Meeting: <i>Zanesville Club</i><br>Clinic: <i>Developing Operating Sessions</i> , Mike Wolf, MMR<br>Contest: Line-Side Railroad Structure   | Zanesville     |
| 23 Apr               | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| 17 May               | Virtual Photo Voting                             | Contest: Signals   | .io-group      |
| 23 May               | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| 28–31 May            | <b>Convention Canceled</b><br>Virtual Convention | <i>Virtual Convention Express</i>  | Pittsburgh, Pa |
| 20 Jun<br>(Saturday) | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>Marion Union Station</i><br>Clinic: <i>DCC++</i> , Richard Matejovic; <i>Weathering with Powder</i> , Patrick Hreachmack; <i>Super Detailing a Bowser Loco Kit</i> , Mike Wolf (MRR); <i>TBD</i><br>Contest: Favorite Train | Marion         |
| 25 Jun               | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| Aug                  | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>TBD</i><br>Clinic: <i>TBD</i><br>Model Contest: Thumbz (Humorous Whimsical stuff)<br>Photo Contest: Railroad Derelicts / Wrecks   | TBD            |
| Aug                  | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| Sep                  | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>TBD</i><br>Clinic: <i>TBD</i><br>Model Contest: Steam Locomotive with Caboose<br>Photo Contest: Steam Locomotive  | TBD            |
| Sep                  | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| Oct                  | <b>Division 6 Train Show</b>                     | Business Meeting: <b>NONE</b><br>Clinic: <b>NONE</b><br>Contest: <b>NONE</b>   | Cambridge      |
| Oct                  | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| Nov                  | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>TBD</i><br>Clinic: TBA<br>Contest: Closed Freight Car   | TBD            |
| Nov                  | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   |  |                |
| Dec                  | Division 6 Meeting                               | Business Meeting: <i>TBD</i><br>Clinic: <i>TBD</i><br>Contest: Passenger Car   | TBD            |
| Dec                  | <i>Super's Signal Deadline</i>                   | <i>Election Issue</i>  |                |

## Contest Report

Jim Ruisinger, Contest Chair

### “Virtual” Contest Re-Cap April 2020 via the Internet

Wow, is all I can say. We weren't able to gather at the Zane Trance Model RR Club in Zanesville like we planned so we held a contest anyway! Twelve members submitted a total of 18 very nice photos for consideration via email, for a “Virtual Photo Contest”. Photos were put on special page of the Division's website for everyone to vote on them. That's equal to or better than the turnout when we meet in person!

Congratulations to our winners. We will have certificates for you at our next opportunity to hold a division meeting where we can gather, in person, which will hopefully be in Marion. In the meantime since we're not having a Regional Convention, we're going to do another Virtual Photo Contest for May. The same guidelines apply that the photo can be of either a model or the prototype...

The subject matter will be Railroad Signals. This can include dwarf type, switch stands, grade crossing signals, along the track, bridged over the track and even Semaphores.

Submissions are to be sent via email to [NmraBuckeyeDivision@grouppps.io](mailto:NmraBuckeyeDivision@grouppps.io) just like we did last month. Deadline for submissions is midnight Saturday, May 16th. Voting will be done on Sunday, May 17th with a 6pm deadline. Watch your email over the next week or so for an announcement confirming dates and time frames. So you've got plenty of time to dig thru your stuff or head out and take a pic or two...

And once again, a very special thanks to: Richard Medinevik for coming up with the idea and passing it along to Darrell Logan. Cumulative point totals for Modeler and Photographer of the Year appears elsewhere in the *Super's Signal*.

Direct any questions to:  
Contest Chairman, Jim Ruisinger.

**Subject:** Line-Side / On-line Railroad Structures (examples: Switch Towers, Water Tanks, Engine Houses, Roundhouses, Turntables, Freight and Passenger Stations, Yard Offices, Handcar Sheds, etc.)

**Model:** None

**Photo:**

**1st Place:** Jim Ruisinger, Water Tower at Cass WV

**2nd Place:** Richard Matejovic, Yard Office

**3rd Place:** Matt Goodman, Lackawanna Tower at Scranton, PA



1st Place Photo – Jim Ruisinger  
Water Tower at Cass WV

### Contest Point Summary April 2020

Jim Ruisinger, Contest Chair

#### Modeler

|                   |   |               |   |
|-------------------|---|---------------|---|
| Steve Hurt        | 9 | Dan Dennis    | 1 |
| Pat Hreachmack    | 5 | Bob Doerflein | 1 |
| Jerry Hurt        | 4 | Alan Evens    | 1 |
| Howdy Lamprecht   | 4 | Connie Frazze | 1 |
| Richard Matejovic | 4 | Matt Goodman  | 1 |
| Peggy Doerflein   | 3 | Bill Hanna    | 1 |
| Darrell Logan     | 3 | Bob Lee       | 1 |
| Greg Short        | 3 | Judy Logan    | 1 |
| Jim Borcz         | 2 | Harry Sage    | 1 |
| Jim Ruisinger     | 2 |               |   |

#### Photographer

|                        |    |                 |   |
|------------------------|----|-----------------|---|
| Matt Goodman           | 11 | Jim Borcz       | 1 |
| Don Wilke              | 9  | Dick Briggs     | 1 |
| Steve Hurt             | 4  | Peggy Doerflein | 1 |
| Richard Matejovic      | 4  | Howdy Lamprecht | 1 |
| Jim Ruisinger          | 4  | Jim Oberst      | 1 |
| Bruce McDonald         | 2  | Harry Sage      | 1 |
| John Baker             | 1  | Jerry Severson  | 1 |
| (By way of Jack Brown) |    | Greg Short      | 1 |



## **Membership End of the Month Report March 2020**

*Matt Goodman, Membership Chair*

### **Summary/Comments**

Things sure have changed since my last update only a month ago, what with the sheltering in place business! I have a longer update than normal this time around, so I'm breaking it up into multiple sections.

### **New Membership Chair**

Let me start with some exciting news. Rick Brown will be taking over the Membership Chair position and responsibilities. I'm transferring to Division 6 Superintendent this coming May. I have had a couple of conversations with Rick about this role. His background in and experience with marketing, social media, and other communication mediums makes him a great fit.

I will be transferring the role to Rick in June, after which I'll continue as the "hit by a bus" backup. Along with the normal month-to-month roster maintenance and member service duties, Rick will manage the MailChimp mailing list. He will work with Darrell Logan and Jim Ruisinger to keep the postcard and Groups.io list up to date. He will also get the shared keys to our Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts and join the Membership Retention and Recruitment Committee.

Rick has been a member of the Buckeye Division since 2017 and is looking forward to taking on this work. Thanks for answering the call, Rick! You can read more about Rick in his accompanying bio/introduction.

### **Membership Meetings and Fellowship**

Just last month I waxed on about the large turnouts at the past two meetings, Groveport and Lancaster. I'm writing this on April 19th; the day we were to meet in Zanesville. Things are exactly the opposite, with ZERO attendees due to social distancing and group gathering guidance.

People the world over are finding that even with these rules in place, there is still an interest/need to stay in touch with others in our work, social and hobby communities. That is partly reflected in the huge increase in Video Conferencing for personal and group purposes. Zoom, a

video conferencing application (similar to Skype), has seen its daily users increase from 10 million in December 2019 to 300 million in April!

Specifically, model railroad groups that I'm aware of are using Facebook Live, Zoom, Skype, and other similar tools for virtual op sessions, layout tours, clinics, etc. Very cool! I see this as a watershed. Once people become familiar with new communication technologies, they are much more likely to use them. Heck, even telephones were cutting edge at one time. I once read an article in a 1930's magazine describing, step by excruciating step, how to dial a rotary telephone!

While our division doesn't have a video backup to physical meetings (yet), we have other tools to keep the membership engaged. Our Groups.io page has become much more active in the past month with workbench updates. And, thanks to a suggestion by Richard Matejovic, a virtual model contest was recently initiated by Groups.io admin Jim Ruisinger. If you are not yet a member of this forum/ mailing list, you can join by sending an email to [NMRABuckeyeDivision+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:NMRABuckeyeDivision+subscribe@groups.io).

Along with workbench updates and contest photos, the list remains a great place to get questions answered. In the past month, there have been discussions about 3D-printed servo mounts, broken shay gears, cloud stencils, Raspberry Pies, tie weathering, and various announcements. JOIN US! There are various ways to view the content and otherwise control the number of emails you get so that you are never overwhelmed.

### **Membership Updates**

Membership saw a 3% drop in March. This is not unusual. Our membership has sagged every March since 2011, except in 2016 during the run-up to the regional convention that our division hosted. It is, however, a larger drop than typical, exceeded only by 2015's drop. This past year has seen a slow decline from its recent peak of 181 in February 2019. See the chart for more details!

**The Membership Report**  
Continued on page 8.

*Don't Just Belong,  
Participate!!*

**Active Members** (end of the month):

|          |     |              |     |
|----------|-----|--------------|-----|
| March    | 162 | March '19    | 180 |
| February | 168 | February '19 | 181 |
| January  | 168 | January '19  | 179 |

**Upcoming Expirations – Check your dates!** Note: If you have questions about when your membership expires, check your magazine address label or contact Membership Chair Matt Goodman.

We have **eight** memberships expiring in February, March, and April.

**New Members, Renewals and Re-Rails**  
(returning lapsed members)

**Nine** members renewed in March. Send your checks in!.

**Introducing Rick Brown**  
**Incoming Membership Chair**  
Matt Goodman, Membership Chair

In my membership report, (elsewhere in the *Signal*), I announced that Rick Brown will be taking over the Membership Chair duties in June. The following is his introduction.

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My model railroad journey started like most of us....Lionel figure 8 on a 4x8 sheet, all provided by my grandfather. It wasn't long before I turned that 4x8 upside down and N-Scale (new in our town in 1966!) began to grow on that green-painted sheet. By the time I was in high school, I was working in Delaware's hobby shop, trains being a very important part of their trade. Fast forward through college, life, and career, model railroading was always an important part of my life. When my career of travel and busyness relaxed, model railroading expanded to fill the vacuum.

I am a member of the Delaware Model Railroad Group of Sunbury. I model in HO, with a home layout under

- Have you changed your address or other membership information?
- Are you not getting emails from the division?
- Not sure when your membership expires (or if it already has)? Notify headquarters by email: [nmrahq@aol.com](mailto:nmrahq@aol.com)

You can contact either the Buckeye Division membership chair, or the National Headquarters to give updates or get your questions answered:

**National**

Email: [nmrahq@aol.com](mailto:nmrahq@aol.com)

Phone: 423-892-2846 (9am – 4:30pm)

Mail: NMRA, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1328  
Soddy Daisy, TN 37384-1328

**Buckeye Division Membership Chair**

Email: [MembershipChair@div6-mcr-nmra.org](mailto:MembershipChair@div6-mcr-nmra.org)

Phone: 614-313-3681 (please leave a message)

Mail: Matt Goodman  
130 S. Algonquin Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43204

construction based loosely on the Chicago & Eastern Illinois RR. It ran through the farm I grew up on. My main focus on the layout is passenger equipment, passenger operations, and urban scenery. I have much to learn.

My career has been music education, and have had the opportunity to travel and teach all over the US. I have taught percussion and band at all scholastic levels, through high schools and college, as well as drum corps. When the travel days ended, I began to work for an educational publishing company (Highlights for Children and Zaner-Bloser) in sales and sales coaching. I reside in Westerville, along with my wife Lucy, who is a school district administrator in Westerville, five rescue dogs, and a cat. I have one son and daughter-in-law here in Columbus.

I am excited to offer my labor and skills to the Buckeye Division.

Rick Brown





## Quarantine Activities

Matt Goodman

I'm sure most of us have plenty of projects (or potential projects) in the backlog to stay busy while locked in at home. If you don't, here are some suggestions:

### Podcasts

Podcasts are pre-recorded shows that you can listen to on your mobile device (phone). They are roughly analogous to radio shows or audiobooks, and like those things, they are perfect to listen to while working on your railroad (or jogging or commuting, etc.)! Podcasts are on every topic under the sun; for this article, I'll focus on the hobby.

Podcasts that I listen to that you may consider:

#### Model Rail Radio



This was the first podcast I subscribed to, close to eight years ago. Its format is equal to a radio call-in show. Average and well-known modelers call in (via Skype) to give updates. Callers are from all over the world, though most are from the U.S., U.K. and Australia, and my house (g). Because of the number of people, age ranges, and locations, the topics run quite a gamut. Shows are about once a month, though during the quarantine. Tom has been recording weekly shows.

#### A Modelers Life



Lionel Strang, a former Model Railroader magazine writer, and NMRA modernization agitator, hosts & produces this show. The format for the free shows is a formal interview style. Lionel and his regulars talk to one guest during an episode. The tone is decidedly informal, with lots of barbs thrown and inside jokes. A Modelers Life is usually published free once per week, though it has been more frequent during the quarantine. He also has more shows with different formats on his Patreon pay channel.

#### Crew Call with Mike Rose



Crew Call has a long history, being a descendent of the very first Model Railroad podcast produced by Scotty Mason, Dave Frary, and others. Mike later became a regular on the show, then took over the feed from Scotty at the end of last year. It's also an interview format, though Mike does about 60% of the talking. He is a prolific modeler and model railroading author. So that "ball hogging" is not necessarily a bad thing.

#### The Roundhouse



Produced and hosted by NMRA member Nick Ozarack, this is decidedly a formal interview format. Nick does a wonderful job interviewing movers and shakers in the railroad preservation community; from Strasburg to Fort Wayne and others.

As an aside, all of these shows have a Facebook community presence; the first two in the list above are very active. The NMRA-X convention, described later, was a direct result

of discussion within the "A Modelers Life" community, by members who wanted to see the NMRA improve. Almost everyone I know in model railroading that isn't local, I met through the Model Rail Radio community – including now-Region president and fellow Model Rail Radio listener Bob Weinheimer, who later recruited me to the NMRA. So indirectly, Model Rail Radio is why I'm an NMRA member.

### How Do I Listen?

Like magazines, you subscribed to Podcasts. Once you have subscribed to a podcast, new episodes will automatically be download to your device. Most podcast publishers also post the audio to their websites, so you can stream from your computer. The steps below will focus on the mobile device approach.

#### iPhone

iPhones (and iPads) have a built-in app called, simply enough, "Podcasts". Open this app, then click the magnifying glass at the bottom right to search for show titles. Select a show from the search results, then click "subscribe". You can also listen to single episodes without subscribing.

Once subscribed, you'll be able to find new podcast episodes under the "Library" icon.

You can also find other Podcast players in the app store. I currently use the paid version of "Pocket Casts" (there is a free version as well).

#### Android

Android has a built-in app called "Google Podcasts" though it isn't well-regarded. I'd recommend Pocket Casts in this case (free or paid), which you'll be able to find in the Google Play store.

Once in Pocket Casts (this description also applies to iPhone users), click on the "Discover" icon at the bottom, and do a search. As described above, once you've found the show you want, click subscribe to get regular downloads when new episodes come out.

### Online Clinics

NMRA clinics are available on the NMRA's website and Facebook. For those that aren't on Facebook, the Facebook clinics will be loaded to YouTube, eventually.

Here's how to find them.

#### NMRA Website

The website has two types of videos available. Those recorded live and NMRA conventions. And those donated by external NMRA partners, such as Model Railroader Video Plus, Model Railroad Academy, or Trainmasters TV.

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## Continued: Quarantine Activities

Both are easily accessible from the “Member Home” page of the NMRA’s website. Here’s how to get there.

- Go to <https://www.nmra.org>
- If you have not activated your NMRA web account, go to the top right-hand corner and click on the “Member Log-In | Registration” link and follow the instructions.
- Once you’ve registered, or if you are already a member, click on the same link to log in.

Once you’re logged in, you’ll be on the Member Home page, which has six very large buttons on it. Click the “**Watch Clinic Videos**” button on the right side for NMRA convention clinics. Click “**Video Library**” at the bottom for the partner videos.

### Facebook

Several organizations have become a lot more active online during the stay-at-home time. This includes the NMRA and some of its SIGs (Special Interests Groups). Specifically, a leadership group recently (April 25-April 26) organized a world-wide online convention streamed live on Facebook. Why Facebook? Several reasons;

- 1) It’s free to use.
- 2) It has a very large user base.
- 3) The group that set it up are passionate advocates of using Social Media for the good of the hobby.

The convention, called NMRA-X, was remarkable because by NMRA members in the Orkney Islands, Australia, and the U.S. ran it. Clinicians came from those three locations, the UK and I don’t know where else. Gordy Robinson organized it, partly to prove out that the NMRA can successfully do things online. Thereby attract members who may not have an interest or the

wherewithal to attend a physical convention.

Here’s how to find those videos.

- Go to facebook.com and log into your account
  - If you are not a Facebook member, create an account. If you are not a user of Facebook, don’t worry – you don’t have to be pummeled by your daughter’s friend’s cousin’s political views. I spend 98% of my time in Facebook groups and see almost none of that. Limiting your “friends” and controlling how public your profile is will also cut down (or eliminate) that.
- Once logged in, type “**National Model Railroad Association (NMRA)**” in the search bar next to the Facebook logo at the upper right of the Facebook page.
- A list of potential matches will be displayed, select **National Model Railroad Association (NMRA)**
  - National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) is a private group. This means you have to request to join. Click the “Join” button. It may ask some questions to ensure you are actually a model railroader and not a troll.
  - The site administrators will vet Join requests. They may take a few minutes or a few hours to act on your request. The admins are literally worldwide, but may not be watching Facebook requests every minute of the day.
- Once on the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) page, click the “Announcements” link in the left sidebar.
- You will see a list of posts with video links, start watching!

Eventually, Facebook will edit clinics into individual videos and post them to YouTube. By the time you read this, that may have already occurred.

## Stuff on My Bench – “Super Glue”

Dick Briggs, MMR  
Photo by Author

Have you ever reached for your bottle of CA adhesive and discovered, much to your dismay, that it has turned to a brick since the last time you used it. Somewhat perplexing at least, let alone the waste of the eight bucks or so, now destined for the trash.

While wandering around the local Kroger store looking for items of interest, (not on the better half’s list), what to my wandering eyes did appear but a four-tube package of Duco “Super Glue” for a mere \$6.99. What a deal! I added it to the cart discretely. I hope it was not noticed, caught, and questioned at the checkout.

Once at home in the workshop I gave it a try and found that it works fine, just like the high priced products.

This glue comes in a 7 gram tube with an applicator tube and a twist-off cap. The nozzle tip allows controlled application quite nicely. It has the consistency of medium CA from the hobby manufacturer’s products. It has a reasonable set time, although not immediate, which is great for fumble fingers like mine.

The real beauty is the small size and the relatively low cost. I found online that Dollar General sells the same glue in a two-pack for a buck.





## Operations (Part 2)

### Designing (or reconfiguring) Your Layout for Operations

By Mike Wolf, MMR

After last month's intro article on operations, this month was supposed to be a follow up to the April clinic on Operations. We all know how that went. Instead, I am going to break down things into a series of articles on operations. This month, I will discuss some of the common design features found in most operations-based layouts. Hopefully, as you contemplate your dream layout or how you might modify your existing pike, you will find this article helpful. If you are not in either of those boats, I am sure there is another article in the *Signal* this month awaiting your time.

Last month, I defined operations as "a systematic movement of locomotives and cars from point A to point B with an underlying reason the cars are being moved." This does not mean that a layout designed and focused on operations needs to be a basement filling empire. While huge layouts like Gerry Albers *Virginian Deepwater District* are great. Gerry would be the first to tell you it takes a group of close friends to maintain, stage, and run an ops session on his layout. For those who have been following along in *Model Railroader* this year, you have seen how Tony Koester's portable O-Scale *Wingate* layout can provide hours of operational fun with a much smaller footprint. I have enjoyed operating on several small layouts over the years. They do not have the glitz and the glory of *The Virginian*. But they provide plenty of operational fun with a much smaller price tag in materials, time, and space.

One key design element most of the layouts I have had the opportunity to operate is staging. A location for the trains to come from or go to when they are not "interacting" with our railroad. This could take the form of a formal yard in the layout. Where someone assembles trains in the yard, moving cars to industries or siding, and then returning them to the yard. Dave Matheny's *Monongahela Southern* is a good example of that (Photo 1).



Photo 1 – Dave Matheny's *Monongahela Southern* is an example where trains originate and terminate from a yard.

In the case of Mr. Koester's *Wingate* project, staging is a 4- or 5-foot piece of track connected to one end of the modules. Trains "originate" on that track. It also provides a little extra working space for parking cars while pulling and spotting cars on this tight little railroad. For many layouts,

staging takes the form of a track (or many tracks) at the end of the visible portion of the layout from which trains enter and exit. Usually, that yard is "staged" ahead of time with train(s) assembled and waiting for the road engineer to get clearance "onto" the railroad.

In some cases, staging takes the form of a fiddle yard. Bruce Brintnall's, MMR, *Memphis Ridge Railroad* (which was fantastic for both operations and modeling detail) used a fiddle yard. It was in an adjacent room with a "filing cabinet" of cars mounted on the wall behind it. He would use a computer-generated switch list to assemble each train prior to the engineer departing to complete his job on the railroad in the neighboring room (photos 2 and 3).



Photo 2 – Bruce Brintnall's car storage area above his fiddle yard. The tubes were made from square PVC pipe. Photo by David Arday.



Photo 3 – Bruce Brintnall and his Fiddle Yard and wall of freight cars. Photo by Chuck Stancil

Local modeler Scott Williamson's *Tacoma Belt Railroad* has a fiddle yard in the same room as his layout and has even added scenery (photo 4). He stages several trains before the operating session, so the first round of trains can head out right away. He then spends most of his time during the session breaking down trains as they return and building up trains for departure. He uses a rolling cart with bins to store and sort his cars (Photo 5).

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Photo 4 – Scott Williamson's Fiddle yard complete with backdrop and scenery. (Photo by S. Williamson)



Photo 5 – Car storage for Scott Williamson's Tacoma Belt Railroad. (Photo by S. Williamson)

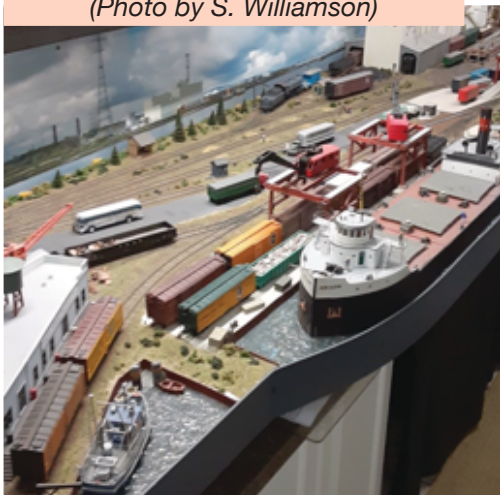


Photo 6 – The Port of Tacoma is one of a dozen "industries" for switching on Scott Williamson's Tacoma Belt RR (Photo by S. Williamson)

So we've got a place for trains to originate and/or terminate. Next, we need something for them to do. When Scott designed his *Tacoma Belt*, he masterfully connected a dozen individual switching industry areas (puzzles) into one layout.

Basically, each train departs from the fiddle yard with a cut of cars, travels to one of the industrial areas on the layout, spends 30-60 minutes switching around cars in that area, and returns the picked up cars to the *Tacoma Belt* yard for classification. The yardmaster classifies those cars and then ships them out

to each of the five class one railroads serving the Tacoma area. They leave via the fiddle yard where they go back into the bin for next time. The Port of Tacoma (photo 6) is one of the industrial areas on Scott's layout. For those that like switching puzzles, Scott's operating scheme is hard to beat.

If you like running long trains and dealing with puzzles of another nature, Dan Adair's *Marietta Division of the PRR* design is one to consider. Dan likes running looong trains (50+ cars) over the hill between Cambridge and Newcomerstown yards. He has long grades with helper locomotives required and long passing sidings. Depending on how many trains you want to run, passing sidings are an important design feature to consider (especially on a single track mainline). The Dispatcher who sits beneath the layout (yes, under the layout) solves most of the problems. He directs the flow of trains and helpers via 2-way radios and controls the mainline turnouts (and signals) from his control panel "in the hole."

Runarounds are another important design feature to consider when laying out your trackwork. Sidings are typically classified as a trailing point or a facing point (Photo 7).



Photo 7 – Trailing point (TP) vs facing point (FP) sidings for an eastbound train.

For an eastbound train, turnout 1 is a facing point siding and turnout 2 is a trailing point. The eastbound train could easily pull or drop off cars at siding 2. The train would need a runaround track nearby to get the locomotive on the other side of any cars to be set out or picked up from siding 1. I've got a neat animated slide for this in the presentation but you'll have to picture it in your mind for now. As you lay out your industrial tracks (or develop an operating scheme for your layout) consider where trains will temporarily park cars, run around, and/or swap out cars. Speaking of sidings and industries, one very useful siding to consider is an interchange track, often called a "universal industry." Trains can drop off or pick up practically any type of car from an interchange with another railroad.

One last design consideration (or limitation) when you build your layout is aisle width. Sorry to say, but very few of us are getting any thinner. 2 1/2-3' aisles are fine for one or two people watching trains go by. But it will be way to tight for several crews switching in one area. It is important to design your operating scheme/schedule and the location of switching areas/yards to minimize traffic jams. For some reason, despite your best plan,

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Continued: **Operation – 2**

somehow everyone ends up in the narrowest aisle at the same time.

Those are some design features to consider when designing or adapting your layout for operations. Next month, I will explore the various jobs and roles peoples operating on your

layout might fulfill. Also methods of routing cars over your layout. In the final installment, I will discuss the various methods available for controlling and directing trains and crews during an operating session.

As always, I'm available on the Division Groups.io or at [vvunion@gmail.com](mailto:vvunion@gmail.com) for any questions.

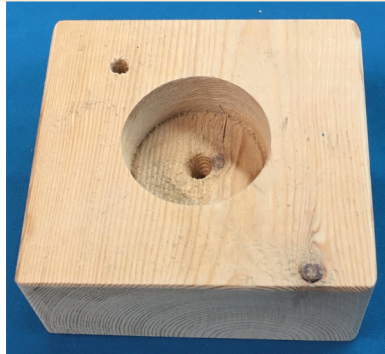


## Stuff on My Bench – Styrene Cement

Dick Briggs, MMR  
Photo by Author

Ever spill your styrene cement or model paint? Yuck, sure makes a mess, especially if the glue or paint lands on parts for the kit.

A scrap block of lumber can help 'ol fumble fingers out and help prevent a sticky mess. I cut a 3-1/2" length from a 2" x 4" which roughly gives a square 1-1/2" thick. Drill a 1-1/2" hole in the center about 3/4" deep using a spade point or Forstner drill bit.

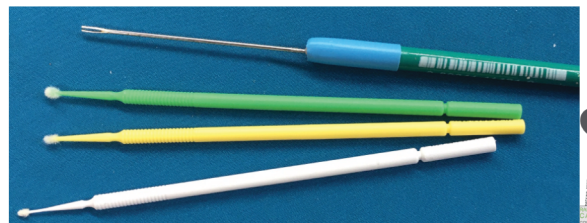


This size hole will accommodate most sizes of liquid cement bottles. For small bottles, a bit of double-sided tape will hold the bottle in place.

As usual one of the drawbacks of liquid styrene cement is the applicator brushes in the bottle tend to deliver more than the desired amount needed in most cases. Two options I have found to help solve the application of glue when and where you want it with less mess and accuracy are as follows:

For the first one, all you need is an old paintbrush and a large sewing needle. Cut off the brush end of the paint brush. Then using your Dremmel tool or bench grinder remove the end of the eye end of the needle. When finished it should look like a two-pronged fork. Mount the needle in the brush handle and you're ready to place a small amount of cement where you want it. Capillary action will hold the liquid in place until you touch it to your work.

I also discovered Micro brushes work equally well. Although a little short, they do not appear to be affected by most plastic solvents.



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