

National Model Railroad Association North Central Region

Division 2 Newsletter

Volume 8 No 3 Fall 2022



COLORADO RAIL TRIP

(By Al Johnson - See Member Pages)



The Durango & Silverton RR

Division Meeting

Saturday, September 17, 2022

Starting in September, our division meetings will be live and virtual via zoom. Invitations and other details will be sent out to Division members by email the week prior to the meeting. Following Division business and member Show and Tell, we will have a clinic (TBD).

From the Editor

Summer is almost over. It's time to start reviewing your activity list on what you would like to accomplish on your railroad for the winter. No railroad, no problem; start planning one in any space you may have available. Learn an ACAD program and see what you can dream up. We all need to stay off of the sofa and keep mentally and physically fit.

This newsletter relies on articles and photos that we receive from you, our members. Have a favorite structure, loco or railroad? Share it with us. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to this newsletter.

Send your photos (JPG or PDF) and articles (MS Word) to us for our future newsletters. Our goal is to publish quarterly in March, June, September, and December. Deadline for submittals will be the end of the month prior to each quarter.

Thank You,
Jens Hensel (jens.hensel50@gmail.com)

Assistant Superintendent & Newsletter Editor

Crew Call:

- 9/17/2022—All Division Meeting
- 10/22/2022—All Division Meeting
- 11/19/2022 —All Division Meeting

Watch for the invitation in your mailbox soon.

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Super Sez...

Fall is now only a few short days away. Boats are being stored and the Michigan golf season is coming to an end. Soon it will be leaf-peeping season along with apples, cider, donuts, and pumpkins. Did someone say Thanksgiving?

Don't think I've done any work on my layout since . . . May? Time for us to get back to our favorite hobby. There is benchwork to install, structures to build, locos and rolling stock to weather. Don't forget backdrops, scenery, and figures (people, dogs, cats, even birds and wildlife). Things don't operate on their own so don't forget track laying, track cleaning, and wiring.

Before I even get started, I need to clean up and get reorganized. Hope you've done better than I have!

We are looking forward to the fall. Division meetings are scheduled for September in Traverse City, October in Gaylord, and November back in Traverse City.

See you soon. Mike

Summer Announcement

AL Johnson has resigned as the Yardmaster of Traverse City. John Campbell has graciously accepted this position effective immediately.

Consequently we have John Campbell's former position of Trainmaster open.

Please contact Mike Cipko if you are interested. (The pay is great and includes benefits).



Clerk Report

Bob Crocker

We currently have 35 Active Members.



Railway Mail Service Clerk in Chicago, Illinois

Paymaster Report

Submitted By: David J. Zolnierek

David J. Zolnierek

From August 1, 2022 To August 31, 2022

000: REGULAR SHARE	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Beginning Balance	\$ 5.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.50	\$ 169.25	\$ 169.75	\$ 170.25	\$ 170.75					\$ -
Phone Transfer													
Pike Ads													\$ -
Year to Date Dividend Paid													\$ -
Show and Tell Fund				\$ 8.25									
Donations	\$ 100.00	\$ 0.00		\$ 35.00									
E Statement Bonus			\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50	\$ 0.50					
Other	\$ 20.00	\$ 0.00		\$ -	\$ -			\$ -					
Ending Balance	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 125.50	\$ 169.25	\$ 169.75	\$ 170.25	\$ 170.75	\$ 171.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 171.25

003: CHECKING ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance	\$ 986.81	\$ 986.81	\$ 986.81	\$ 1,281.81	\$ 1,361.81	\$ 1,431.81	\$ 1,431.81	\$ 1,431.81					\$ -
Phone Transfer (withdrawal)													
Pike Ads													
Year to Date Dividend Paid			\$ 295.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 70.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -					
Show & Tell Fund													
Donations				\$ -	\$ -	\$ -							
Other													
Ending Balance	\$ 986.81	\$ 986.81	\$ 1,281.81	\$ 1,361.81	\$ 1,431.81	\$ 1,431.81	\$ 1,431.81	\$ 1,431.81	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,431.81

000 & 003 ACCOUNT TOTALS

\$ 1,603.06

EXPENSES

Meeting Expenses	\$ -												\$ -
Clinic Expenses	\$ -												\$ -
Other	\$ -												\$ -
													\$ -
													\$ -
Total Expenses:	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Ending Balance in Wolverine State Credit Union

\$ 1,603.06

Around the Division

The Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad By Al Johnson

The Durango and Silverton narrow gauge railroad runs on a 45-mile extension of track called the Silverton branch. The line was constructed by the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in 1881-82. Their goal was the mineral riches of the Silverton area deep in the San Juan Mountains. The narrow-gauge track was laid at a width of 3 feet between rails, instead of the 4 feet-8 ½ inches of separation with standard gauge rail. It was capable of making sharper curves and was more suited to the mountainous terrain. The rail weighed about 30 pounds a yard, one half that of standard gauge track at the time. The D&RG was also able to operate lighter, less expensive equipment. The rails have been upgraded to at least 65-pound per yard and most of it is 85 to 90-pound rail. Some of the original 30-pound rail is still visible from the moving cars along the banks of the Animas River.



Silver Vista first -class Car

The steam locomotives used by the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge (D&SNG) were built during the 1920s and are capable 195 to 200 psi. The narrow-gauge locomotives were generally smaller, lighter with a shorter wheelbase to handle sharp curves. The D&SNG locomotives used today are the last, heaviest, and most refined narrow-gauge locomotives ever built. They are of two types or classes, K-28s, and K-36. The K represents the nickname for a Japanese locomotive design called a Mikado "2-8-2." The K-28s with full tender weight 254,500pounds, K-36s weight 286,600 pounds. When the Silverton Branch was purchased from the D&RGW, the deal included two K-36s and four K-37s (490 series) along with the three K-28s. Today the D&SNG owns four K-36s; 480,481,482 and 486. Five other-483,484,487,488 and 489 belong to the Cumbres & Toltec. (Data from the D&SNG guidebook)



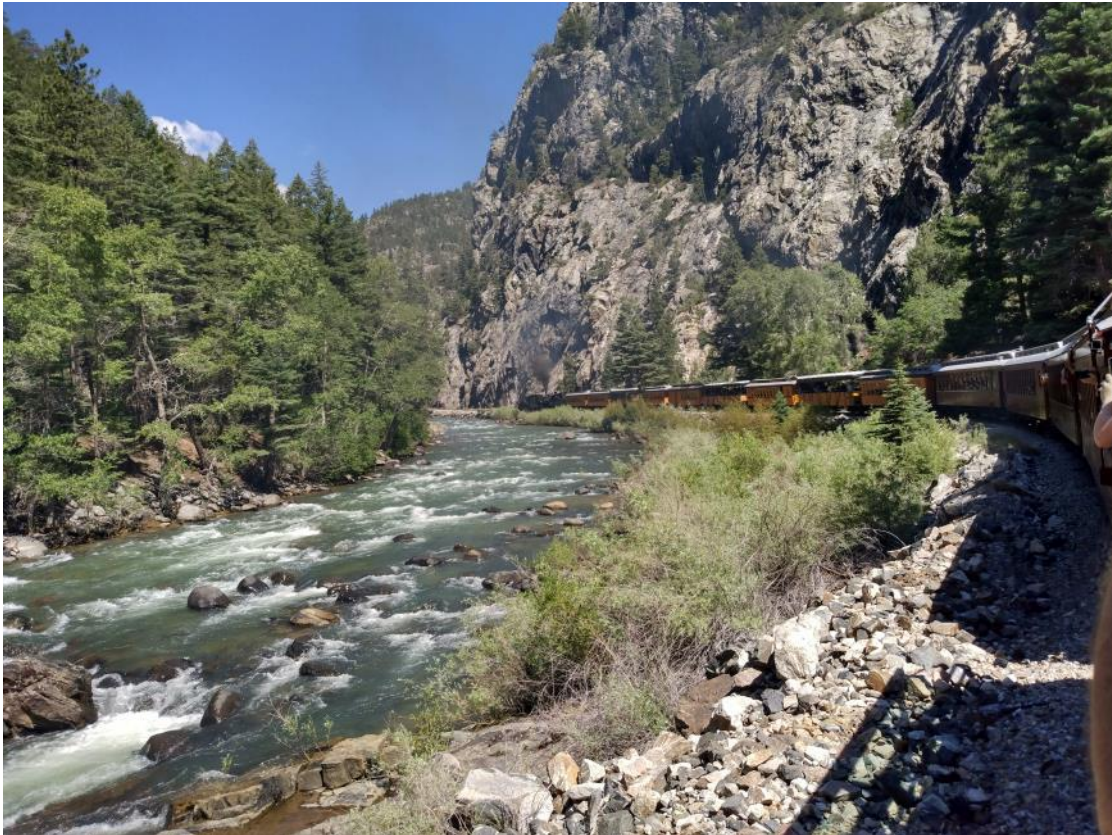
Looking Back

Due to hot cinders starting fires along the railway all of the D&SNG steam locomotives have been converted to oil fired and the Cumbres & Toltec is doing the same. In 2002 the D&SNG purchased their first diesel to pull trains whenever the fire danger grows too high. They purchased four more that same year.



The Animas River

When I rode the D&SNG on June 29th this year the diesel train left the station at 8AM with 8 cars, and the steam train I was on left at 9AM with 16 cars pulled by two steam locomotives. I was in the next to last car called the open-air silver vista with a clear see-through roof. It is a first-class car with a single row of seats on one side and doubles on the other side. There was a small open-air platform at each end of the car. A car attendant riding in each first-class car takes care of the food and drinks and points out areas of interest. The last car was also first class for ages 21 and above only. All first-class passengers get free non-alcohol drinks, snacks and a D&SNG gift. The train travels the 45 miles to Silverton at 15 to 20 mph and back to Durango with a one hour stop in Silverton for lunch and shopping. One of the cars had a wheelchair lift and special seating for handicappers.



Looking forward on the Animas River

The trains run year around with special trains for fall and the Polar Express, A Roundhouse fire on February 10th 1989 did considerable damage to the locomotives and the building itself. A new rebuilt 17 stall roundhouse was completed one year later and holds the free Museum, nine working service bays and a one-of-a-kind railroad machine shop. Durango is a tourist town with accommodations ranging from historic and quaint to traditional and value priced, some within walking distant of the train station. From World class dining to family restaurants, Art galleries, skiing, hiking, biking, fishing, rafting, zip lining and shopping. Worth the Trip!

Thanks,
Al


Around the Division

You've Got Mail!

By John Campbell MD FAANS

I was going through some of hundreds of seemingly worthless photos on my iPhone the other day, trying to find the keepers and discarding many to free up memory. I came across one picture from a trip earlier this year on the way down to Alabama to see my daughter. We spent the night in Bowling Green, KY, where they have beautifully restored the old Louisville and Nashville station and have a small museum there with some L+N equipment (Historic Rail Park and Train Museum), The museum was closed, but I was able to wander around outside and take a few photos. One photo that I was about to discard caught my eye.





I wasn't sure what this trackside device was at first, but I thought it might have something to do with picking up train orders on the fly. Close, but no cigar! Had I actually looked more carefully, I would have noticed the L+N railway post office (RPO) car immediately next to the trackside structure. I sent the photo to Pete Magoun, and he immediately recognized the purpose of this device. It was used for RPO cars to pick up bags of mail on-the-fly. This particular piece of equipment was manufactured by the Columbus (OH) Mail Crane Company.

A little on-line Google research reveals that railroads have been carrying mail since the dawn of rail travel with the first parcels and letters carried on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in November, 1830. In the US, mail was carried along with baggage as early as 1831 on the South Carolina Rail Road, and on the Baltimore and Ohio in 1834-35 as a mail contract. Congress designated all railroads as official postal routes on July 7, 1838, and the railroads found the income from these government contracts reliable and lucrative. Initially, this mail was simply carried as baggage where there was space on the train. Eventually, in 1862, the Railway Post Office (RPO) car was developed from a converted baggage car on the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad (which also carried the first piece of mail to the newly-created Pony Express). The first permanent RPO route was established on August 24, 1864 between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa. Chicago assistant postmaster George B. Armstrong developed the practice of processing and sorting mail on board the trains while underway, and the Railway Mail Service (RMS) was established in 1869, headed by the same. By the 1880's most major US railroads had RPO routes and RPO cars. In the early days, these RPO cars were often painted white with blue or red trim and stood out. Eventually, railroads painted these cars to match the livery of their passenger equipment, and RPO cars would travel almost exclusively as parts of passenger trains. The cars themselves evolved over the years to handle all sorts of mail and parcels, larger on-board staff, and increased security. At their height, RPO cars covered over 200,000 route miles in North America. Typically, one or two RPO cars were found at the head end of passenger trains, but some railroads operated solid mail trains between major cities.

By the post-war late 1940's, the RPO network began to decline due to increased delivery of mail using trucks and the evolving US highway system.

By the 1950's and 60's, more and more US mail was trucked on interstates, or flew by airline. The last surviving RPO car ceased operations between New York and Washington, DC, on June 30, 1977.

At station stops, bags of mail and parcels would be loaded securely from trucks, carts, or by hand aboard the RPO cars by postal staff.



The above-mentioned mail crane, or a similar device, was used by station personnel to position bags of mail for pickup by RPO cars on-the-fly. The mail pouch had a securing strap around the middle of the bag, and an equal weight of mail was placed in each end of the bag. The ends of the bag were suspended as shown with sprung clips. As the RPO car approached the station, the clerk would simultaneously position the catcher arm to hook the bag and immediately lower it into the RPO car, and also kick a bag or bags of mail out of the car forcefully enough to land on the platform and not under the train.



For those of us who model up until the 1970's, this might be an interesting item to add to our model railroads. There are numerous photos of both the mail cranes and RPO car catcher arms available online, and they could easily be scratch built with brass or styrene. Adding figures to a platform loading a cart with bags of mail, or adding figures and an interior to a RPO car might be a rewarding project. As a final thought, if you have any old letters or postcards from friends/family from decades past, look at the cancellation stamp from the post office - you might just find a hand cancellation stamp from a RPO. Happy model railroading!

John

Guest Pages

Forest in a flash

By Mark Albert (MCR Div. 7)

I have been creating trees for a model forest that I put together for a layout that I assemble at the local train show. To model a forest, you need a lot of trees. Each tree does not have to be an especially detailed model in itself. It is the mass of trees of different sizes that conveys the sense of a forest that might be suitable for timbering operations, let's say. I "mass produce" these trees by starting with commercially available pine trees that are intended for quaint holiday scenes under a Christmas tree. These trees are usually on sale at Michael's or Hobby Lobby a few weeks before the holidays. I buy them when they are deeply discounted.

The steps I follow are simple and few. First, I use a scissors to trim the sisal fibers to create the appearance of ragged, uneven branches on the tree. Next, I spray the tree with Rustoleum satin Hunt Club Green (354706) from a rattle can. When the paint is dry, I twist off the wooden or plastic base, and then I insert the wire into piece of a natural branch from a small shrub harvested at a local park. A 1/16 inch drill makes a good hole for this insertion. Finally, I drill a hole up from the bottom of this "trunk" and glue in a stout nail from which the head has been removed.

When building this forest at the train show, I use the nail to temporarily fasten the tree into stacks of blue foam that have been covered with a cloth printed to look like dark soil. I simply stick the tree through the cloth and into the foam underneath. The nail is enough to hold the tree upright in the foam. It takes about 20 minutes or less to create the effect of a heavily forested hillside.

At teardown, I simply pull the trees out of the hillside and put them back in a plastic tub. If I were creating this forest on a permanent layout, I might spend a little more time detailing the trees or highlighting them with a slightly different green color on the tips of the branches. I might even spray them with an adhesive (cheap hairspray) and roll them in a tub of ground foam. The key is remembering that you are not modeling trees, you are modeling a forest.



At left is the pine tree from Michael's. In the middle is the tree trimmed with a scissors. The finished tree (painted and new trunk added) is at the right. The tree is 6 inches tall. An HO scale truck was added for size reference.



Here is an example of a 14-inch tree similarly prepared.



I created this forest on the spot at the train show. I'll have more new trees to add this year.

Thanks, Mark

Mystery Layout

Who can identify this famous layout?

(Summer Newsletter's answer was:
Ernie Barry's East Raton and Santé Fe
In Northport MI)



AP Corner

June, 2022

Pete Magoun, MMR©

The brutal heat of the summer, which, mercifully, is now winding down some, should have shoved me down to the railroad to work in the relative comfort of the basement, but it simply wore me out and left me with no energy to blink. I suspect that the same is true of most of you, as I've had no information, questions or comments from most of you with respect to the AP, which is, after all, designed to challenge you to improve your skills and your enjoyment of the hobby. Well, Indoors Time is coming, and I hope to see many of you improving your joy with your hobby. I'd like to get back to the hobby, but right now I'm tilting with issues related to getting a new computer on-line, and it is turning out to be far more time-consuming and frustrating than it should be. This missive will thus be mercifully short....

David Zolnierek returned from the Three-Region convention in Indianapolis followed by a large envelope full of Merit Award certificates for passenger cars he entered into the contest. Hopefully he will bring one or two to the Division Meeting on 17 September for Show and Tell (or is it now "Bring and Brag???") to enhance the formal presentation of these Awards. I'm working on setting up a possible in-person AP Evaluation starring NCR President Dave Capron, MMR©, late of Division Two, and NCR AP Chair Skip Luyk, MMR© for the November Division meeting in Traverse City. This should be a good chance for you to see what the AP evaluators look at and for during the evaluation process and get your questions answered.. By the way, the only major difference between Contest Judging and the Evaluation Process is that the Judging is done blind, where the Evaluation allows you to interact with the evaluators to explain what you were trying to do. I'm looking for a few models to have them evaluate, so if you have one or two, please let me know and I'll see about getting them on the schedule!

And speaking of schedules, Jens needs this two weeks ago last Tuesday, so I'll sign off by asking all to Be Positive, Test Negative, and Stay Safe!

Pete



AP Awards

The NMRA Achievement Program is designed to challenge the skills of the modeler. The Achievement Program is divided into eleven categories covering different aspects of the hobby and the NMRA. As members of the NMRA earn credit in the different categories, awards are presented to signify the member's achievement. All current AP Awards are listed in the NMRA Magazine each month. Those who have earned the Master Model Railroader® award are listed both by number and by Region on this website.

Pike Ads: Support your division by advertising your layout or business here!



OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI



"Linking East and West through Cincinnati"

Scott Pandorf - Lake Leelanau, MI

In Memoriam



MOUNT HEALTHY TRACTION CO.
SUB OF SWEETWATER RAILROAD
WALT & CAROLYN WYATT
HOPE MI

Silverton Railroad
Coming Soon
David Zolnierek

Other Coming Soon Selected MI Events:

9/17/2022
9/24/2022
10/1/2022
10/8/2022
10/28-29/2022
11/13/2022
11/26/2022

16th Mich. RR History Conference
Mt. Clemens Train Show
Gratiot Valley Train Show
Grand Rapids Train Show
Kalamazoo Model RR Club
Lansing Train Show
Packard Proving Grounds Train Show

Ludington
Mt Clemens
Shelby Twp.
Grand Rapids
Kalamazoo
Lansing
Shelby Twp.

Division 2 Leadership

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Yardmaster—Traverse	John Campbell	Jcampb1513@aol.com
City		
Trainmaster	Open Position	

