

Highball!

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION 6TH DIVISION PNR

November 2016



A well planned track design with detailed scenery, heavy main line action and plenty of industrial switching makes the layout of the North American Prototype Modelers Club in Milwaukee a fun place to operate trains or just to visit.
(photo by Rob Badmington)

6th Division Officers

Superintendent

Ed Molenkamp 6divsuper@pnr.nmra.org

Phone: 780-455-1479

Assistant Superintendent

Peter Ulvestad ulvestad@telus.net

Phone: 780-410-0788

Secretary

Doug Johnson dica@accesscomm.ca

Treasurer

Rick Walker walkr@telusplanet.net

Achievement Program

Doug Wingfield, MMR dwfield@telus.net

Convention Coordinator

Open – looking for Volunteers

Highball! Editor

Rob Badmington highball@pnr.nmra.org

Superintendent's Report - Ed Molenkamp, Superintendent 6th Division

Hello Everyone! The busy summer turned to the fall "show season" and now that winter is upon us, it is time to head to our basements to get some work done on our layouts and models.

The 6th Division hosted the Muskeg Mixed combined with the GETS Show. The Meet had 31 full registrations. The low attendance did not discourage the people who attended and a great time was had by all. We had interesting and unique prototype tours available. We combined clinics and the banquet with the train show folks. By combining we were able to save money on clinic and meeting rooms. This allowed us to turn a good profit. The host committee will be sending all profits to the 6th Division after the final bank statement is received.

Having said all this, we feel that it is not advisable to combine a Meet with a major train show because your volunteers are pulling double duty.

The AGM was held early Sunday morning. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the costs of mailing out the Highball. The Highball costs keep rising every year and currently the Division is running at a deficit because of the Highball. We had a motion to restrict Highball mailings to those

that do not have an email address and this motion was passed unanimously.

Rob Badmington has resigned as Convention Coordinator so we shall be actively looking for someone to fill that position. Thank you Rob for your years of service in that regard and we thank you for staying on as Highball editor. The regular issues are much appreciated.

As for next year's Meet, it will be held on the May long weekend in Red Deer. We have most of the committee together which includes both Edmonton and Red Deer members. The host committee will be contacting more 6th Division members to help fill a few more positions. As soon as the hotel contract is signed we will send an email regarding the date, place and any events associated with the Meet. There is a possible bid coming in for 2018 as well. Stay tuned for more details to come.

In 2019 it will be the 6th Division's turn to host a Regional Meet so we are actively searching for a host. The 6th Division last hosted a very successful Regional Meet in 2009. If you are interested please contact me.

From the Editor – Rob Badmington

As Ed mentioned above, members of the 6th Division voted at the AGM to control the costs of producing and mailing Highball! by distributing it electronically to everyone who has provided the Division with a valid email address. It costs over \$3 per issue to print and mail compared with no cost to read it on line. A further benefit is that all the photos are in colour on your computer, while it would be even more costly to print full colour copies.

Speaking of the AGM, the draft minutes are posted on the 6th Division's website at <http://pnr.nmra.org/6div/minutes/2016.pdf>.

If you look on the two last pages of this issue, you will see a long list of model railroad activities you can participate in. It seems that a great deal of concern is expressed in various publications about the downward spiral of the hobby of model railroading and what we should be doing about it. I for one would argue that the hobby is in great shape with more and better products available,

and literally hundreds of events to attend. Further back in this issue you can read about my experiences while taking in some of these shows. And while it is true that probably the majority of model railroaders are men well over the age of sixty, there still seems to be plenty of youngsters

interested in trains and attending the shows. I need only point to the younger guys running Rapido Trains, ScaleTrains.com, ExactRail, and many others to say that the future is in good hands.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Achievement Program Report – Doug Wingfield, MMR #484, 6th Division, PNR AP Chair

Jack Hamilton, the PNR Achievement Program Chair is developing a program for remote assessment of models for the Achievement Program. This allows people to participate in the program from afar without the expense and trouble of getting the models and the assessors together. This is accomplished by the modeler preparing a CD with photos of the model and all of the related paperwork and submitting it through the local Division AP Chair to Jack Hamilton. Various qualified AP Assessors will view the information and make a determination as to whether the model qualifies at 87.5 points for a merit award. This is a great idea and hopefully will encourage more people to participate in the AP program.

On another note, I have been doing a bit of travelling in the last few months with some model railroad activities as part of it. In September I went to Edmonton for the semi-annual (every two years) Northern Rails OPSIG meet. My adventure

started with a session on the layout of Mark Johnson on Friday and Norm Skretting's layout near Camrose on Saturday. Sunday was back in Calgary at Brian Keay's layout. All layouts were outstanding from the operations point of view. One can check out Brian's layout on YouTube by going to the Wolverine Lynx link and seeing videos on his extensive signaling system.

I just returned from Ontario and attended the last original 'Boomer Auction' in Harriston. They have been doing this for 62 years and this was the last one. On November 5 there was the annual HOMES home layout tour event where 24 home layouts were available for viewing in the Hamilton area of which I saw 7. They have been doing this for 16 years. Then last Sunday the 13th was the annual model railroad flea market in Ancaster which was huge as it filled a hockey rink plus additional tables in the hallways.

Have a good modeling winter. I look forward to seeing some of your projects next spring.

Area Reports

Edmonton – Mark Johnson

Back into the modelling season with a flurry of activity!

We started with a Murder Mystery trip on the steam-powered Alberta Prairie Railway, departing from Stettler.

The cast of players walked through the train as we ran south to Big Valley. They were in character, and were more than happy to discuss their successes and frustrations. Who done it? All was revealed after a wrap up presentation at the country dinner. I also have to mention the entertainer on the train. He had the bar car patrons singing along and laughing at his constant stream of jokes. He could really read the audience, and we all appreciated it.

A couple of weeks later, the combined 6th Div meet - the Muskeg Mixed - was held in

conjunction with the annual Greater Edmonton Train show. The clinics were informative and entertaining, and the banquet was delicious, but my favourite part is still meeting old friends and swapping stories. I was busy preparing for the next weekend, so I didn't get to participate in everything.

The next weekend was the biennial Northern Rails, and my Alberta Great Western was scheduled for two sessions. It's wonderful to watch your layout come alive, and for a real treat, I took a throttle in hand, and actually ran trains for a change - I almost never get to do that, and I thank my guest operators for putting up with my giggles of joy throughout the session.

There were a few cancellations, so I was also able to operate on Trevor Sokolan's magnificent BC

Rail North Lines. Big, modern equipment with enough space to strut their stuff.

The EMRA held its annual Open House the next weekend, and the weather cooperated with us, so we had lots of visitors who got a good chance to see a huge layout up close. Peter Ulvestad's JMRI automation ran trains while members got a chance to visit with the guests.

A busy start to a fun season!

P.S. From the "small world" department: I was working at the offices of a partner in one of our web projects, and we broke for lunch and some non-technical banter. One of the people from the

office asked "What do you do for a hobby?" When I replied "model railroading", he said, "My cousin is into trains, too, maybe you know him." It turns out that his cousin is Wolf Kirchmeier, one of the people most influential in my early days in the hobby.

Wolf would give some of us junior members a ride to the Edmonton Gardens club layout. My display case proudly displays Central Alberta #12, an Athearn 0-4-2 that Wolf gave me! Wolf's friendliness and generosity was a wonderful introduction to the social side of our hobby. Small world, indeed!

Calgary Model Trainmen – Dale Sproule

CMT hosted our Annual Public Open House on Saturday, October 29, 2016 in our new home layout located inside the Calgary Rehabilitation Centre, #7-11 Street, NE. We advertised (the key to success) our event being open 10 am-2 pm and our first visitor appeared at 9:45 (an obvious excited Model Railroader). The search for a new home took us 1-1/2 years but here we are. We found a new 700 square feet space with 300 square feet that we will take over during Christmas.

Since we moved in, we have installed our own private door. All our "stuff" from our previous 2500 square foot home layout still needs "trimming". One member offered the services of a trailer that we moved our "stuff" into so we could host our Open House. A good showing of our membership greeted 80-100 people: old and new friends, young and old visitors who are interested in the hobby. We may have recruited 3 to 5 new members. Five dozen Donuts and several pots of coffee later it was 2 pm! All we could offer to this point was our operating 8' x 20' modules used for shows, and a clinic on Diesel Detailing that was repeated during the day. Thanks go to those who visited us and a sincere thanks to those who made financial donations.

Meanwhile we will probably adopted a very nice twin level track plan with 2 helix (or is it helixes?) in December offering a lot of operating possibilities. A 1:25 scale model with 1:25 scale people viewing the new layout was available for viewing, giving our guests a better idea of what we want to build. The model shows only mainline trackage but does not properly show this as a 2 level layout (arrowhead shows direction to the lower level trackage much of which is a duplicate

of the upper level seen in the accompanying photo.

Overall we view our effort as successful and by the time our next Open House rolls around we should have a lot more to offer. As always we are accepting new members.



CMT's proposed double deck layout is represented in this model of the model railroad.

(Photo by Dale Sproule)

Calgary – Rob Badmington

We're only about three months into the traditional model railroad season in Calgary, but WOW, has it been busy!

Railway Days at Heritage Park was held on Sept 24-25 and the weather was beautiful. Many model railway displays were spread out in a number of different buildings. Unfortunately one of the park's two operating steam engines was down with unexpected mechanical issues, so double-heading was canceled. The fully restored 100 ton steam crane was not operational but was on display near the turntable. Park visitors could also get a glimpse of the restoration project underway in the roundhouse. Heritage Park has begun complete reconstruction of Colonist Car 1202 which was built in 1905, and until very recently, was thought to be car 2568 built in 1912. The rebuilding of 1202 will continue through 2017, while a travelling exhibit and performance honouring the history of Colonist cars will launch at Heritage Park on July 1, 2017 until the end of August. In September the exhibit will cross the country to Pier 21 in Halifax with five additional stops in the following 12 weeks.

South Bank Short Lines hosted the 37th Annual Boomer Auction on October 15th with over 100 attendees and 23 lots of model railroad items for sale. Bidding was intense on many items and both buyers and sellers appeared to be pleased.

The following day, the Calgary Model Railway Society held its Fall Mini-meet and AGM at the Glenmore Inn. Roger Walker MMR lined up 6 very informative clinics and the Show and Tell room was full of interesting models on display. At the AGM, three directors were elected to replace those whose terms were up and a new CMT rep was ratified. Bain Spielman, Brookes Harrow, Al Matchett, and myself are now on the CMRS Board.

On October 29th, a very special event took place at Champion Park near Okotoks. Beautifully restored Mail Express Car 3622 made an authentic Railway Post Office run carrying mail which was delivered to final destinations by Canada Post. This was the first RPO run made in Canada since 1971. People were directed to the Waiting Room of Champion Station where special postcards denoting the inaugural run of the "Champion – Conrad South RPO", First Day Covers in philatelic

terms, could be addressed, have regular Canadian postage affixed, and be shoved through the mail slot on Car No.3622 for the 'Mail Clerks' on board to cancel with three rubber stamps. All dated, these were the RPO cancellation, the official Okotoks Post Office stamp, and the Champion Park Railway, Champion Station Alberta stamp recording point of origin of the item.



Gerald Knowlton (left) looks over a busy scene around the Kendel sorting table in the mail section of Car 3622. (photo by Tom Price)



Depositing a card in the Mail Slot on the side of car 3622. (Photo by Yves Dansereau)

At Conrad Station, some 900 feet south of Champion Station, the mail was transferred to Canada Post for further delivery. My postcard was delivered to my mailbox in Calgary two days later.



No, it isn't Air Mail, as the postal bag full of special post cards is tossed from the RPO to the awaiting Canada Post Supervisor from Okotoks.

(Photo by Yves Dansereau)

In related news, Gerald Knowlton has donated Champion Park Land, including the Champion Park Railway, to be preserved in perpetuity, to the MD of Foothills No.31 and Town of Okotoks, effective December 15, 2016.

Airdrie - Greg Orme

Well it's official, summer 2016 for what it was worth has come and gone and so has another operating season for Iron Horse Park. We had a good year despite the terrible weather and we shared some good times with old and new friends alike. Our regular operating season ended on the Thanksgiving weekend but this year we ran a special Halloween excursion on Sunday the 30th. of Oct. with probably the best day as far as ridership and weather you could ask for. Young and old attended for the fun, and free rides were given to anyone who dressed in costume or donated a non-perishable food item. At the end of the day some 200 bags of food were collected and delivered to the grateful volunteers at the Airdrie Food Bank.

Ballasting of the new Subdivision continued right up to our closing day and was progressed to the

Also on October 29, CMT held an Open House in its new location, as reported by Dale Sproule in this issue.

Most recently, CMRS held its annual Slide Night on November 4th, with 61 members attending. Presentations included a feature on Railroads at the Front in World War 1, a look back at the SD-40's, when they ruled the rails west of Calgary, and "A recent and somewhat convoluted history of the boxcar."

Looking forward into 2017, upcoming events include the CMRS Layout Tours in February, and another "Model Railroad Weekend" in Calgary. You are invited to Calgary for the Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet on March 3 and 4, followed by the CMT Flea Market and CMRS Spring Mini-meet on March 5. Details on these events are on the back page of this issue. Finally, SUPERTRAIN 2017 is coming in April. Invitations have gone out to over 200 previous exhibitors and dozens have already registered. It promises to be an even better show than before.

point that non-revenue trains were able to run for the first time between Vancouver and Airdrie Station. Tamping and leveling will continue until the snow covers the track with the completion to operate regular service between Airdrie and Vancouver in early spring, hopefully before our opening on the May long weekend with the second phase to follow.

On a personal note I attended Northern Rails 2016 held in Edmonton and Calgary on the September 23rd to September 25th weekend. This was the first OPSIG event that I have attended and I had a great time operating the layouts of Mark Johnson, Norm Skretting and Brian Keay. Many thanks to everyone involved and to Cal Sexsmith for organizing the sessions.

Regina - Doug Johnson

Members of the Echo Valley Railroad Guild are continuing to plan for the upcoming Regina model railroad show, Regina Railfest, which will be held at the Tartan Curling Club on May 6th and 7th, 2017. This will be the largest show ever held in Regina and there will be lots of opportunity for layouts, displays and vendors. Interested persons are asked to contact Ian McIntosh at 306-586-0770.

Members of the Guild held a going away dinner for Wayne and Loretta Wessner in the railcar at Casino Regina. Wayne is a founding member of the Guild and is an NMRA life member. Wayne and Loretta are moving to Cambridge, Ontario. Wayne has contributed a lot to the model railroading scene in Saskatchewan and he will be missed.

Guild members are continuing with the development of several Free-Mo modules. Six are

Didsbury – Rick Astle

The Mountain View Model Railroad Club will be hosting the Olds Model Train show again the first weekend of February 2017.

Lethbridge - Tony Lee

As of early November we are now able to use our 1,000 square foot addition on a limited basis. There is still work to be done such as painting the concrete floor, installing baseboards and finishing cabinets in our new enlarged workroom. Then there will be a huge cleanup to get rid of all the construction dust.

Needless to say we cancelled our fall open house in October as we were nowhere close to being ready. We will however be fully functional for our public show the third weekend in March 2017.

We are also planning on taking our N scale portable layout to SUPERTRAIN next April 2017.

currently under construction and more are planned. They will be ready for public display at Regina Railfest next May.

2017 Olds Model Train Hobby & Craft Show



**Saturday Feb 4th 10am-5pm
&**

**Sunday Feb 5th 10am-4pm
at**

Olds College FGH Gymnasium

4500-50th Street, Olds, AB

(Look for signs)

**Admission \$5.00
Kids 5 & under Free**

**www.mvmrc.ca/page3.html
email Rick 1mvmrc@gmail.com
phone (403) 556-8121home
or (403) 507-3314cell
for more information**

Our annual election for 2 positions was held in October with the previous positions being refilled by the incumbents.

Planning is underway for both the HO and N scale layout expansions with lots of ideas being tossed around at this point. Construction is not expected to start on these expansions until late spring 2017.

That's about it from Lethbridge SAMRC. Hope everyone has a great Christmas and New Year with time for lots of modelling.

Camrose – Dave Halliday

The Battle River Railway Modellers are looking for a new home. When we returned from Great Edmonton Train Show, mall management advised that there no longer is space for us. Local mall manager was happy with our layout, but mall

ownership down east want to be able to rent available space at a moment's notice and not have to wait the few hours it would take us to tear down and leave.

Stettler – Dave Halliday

Alberta Prairie Railway has reached a deal with Warner Brothers Pictures to offer a Polar Express train ride this December.

The train ride will aim to capture the magic of the 2004 Christmas movie, The Polar Express, which starred Tom Hanks.

The one-hour long trips will leave Stettler and journey to the North Pole before returning to Stettler. The trips are offered from Dec. 1 to Dec. 21 – full information on the schedule can be obtained from Alberta Prairie.

After passengers board the train in Stettler, they will be served hot chocolate and a cookie treat by Polar Express chefs. During the train ride to the North Pole, passengers can read along with the children's book, The Polar Express, then sing Christmas carols on the way back to Stettler.

Santa will board the train at the North Pole and give a silver-coloured sleigh bell to each child 12 and under, reminiscent of the bell the boy in the movie received.

The train will operate with diesel engines at either end – a GP9 and a GMD1. One locomotive pulls the train to the North Pole and the other pulls it back to Stettler.

For more information about the Polar Express, phone Alberta Prairie at 1-800-282-3994 or visit the website at www.absteamtrain.com. Guild members are continuing with the development of several Free-Mo modules. Six are currently under construction and more are planned. They will be ready for public display at Regina Railfest next May.

Mighty Trains – Discovery Channel

If you have the Discovery Channel on your TV, you may have already found the six part feature called "Mighty Trains". If not, I strongly suggest you check it out. Each episode covers a different train, with the host Teddy Wilson not only riding but getting behind the scenes. In the episode on VIA's "The Canadian", Jason Shron of Rapido Trains explains each of the cars in the train using his HO scale models. I found the information about each train is presented with enough

technical detail to interest the serious fans but in a way that is entertaining to those poor misguided souls who are not rabid railfans. The other trains covered so far are The Glacier Express, Shinkansen, White Pass And Yukon Route, North Rail Express, and the Ghan. You can learn more about the shows, and maybe even see a free showing at:

<http://www.discovery.ca/extra/mighty-trains>

Attention History Buffs!

Inspired by the discovery of our "birth announcement", Mark Johnson is assembling photographs from 6th Division Meets to add to the 6th Division History page at

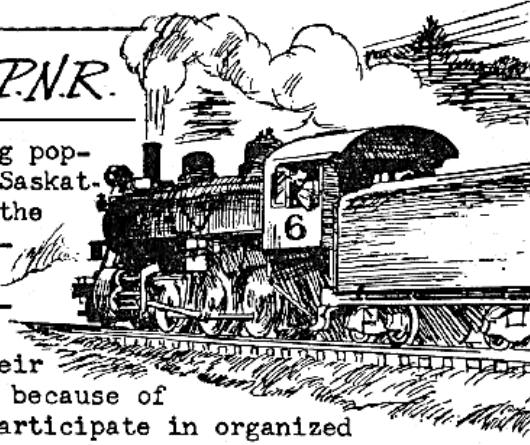
<http://pnr.nmra.org/6div/history.html> Pictures of anything from the Meets would be welcome, along with captions if possible. You can contact him at Mark.Johnson@InfoHarvest.ca.

The Formation of the 6th Division – Rob Badmington

Up until 1965, Alberta and Saskatchewan were part of the 7th Division. I recently acquired a few old 1963 to 1965 editions of "The Dispatcher", the former newsletter of the 7th Division PNR. In the March-April 1965 issue, there was an article describing the formation of the new 6th Division of the PNR. I scanned the article and include it below.

The 6th - A New Division in P.N.R.

For several years the model railroading population of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan (equivalent to "states" south of the border) has been increasing rapidly (especially in Alberta). Until recently the two provinces were part of the 7th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region of NMRA, and PNR members resident within their territorial confines found it difficult, because of the considerable distance involved, to participate in organized activities of the 7th, which were, understandably, held in the Pacific Coast area by reason of the greater concentration of the model railroading fraternity in the southern part of British Columbia. It was apparent that it would be much more convenient for PNR members east of the Rockies to attend functions within a reasonable distance in their home provinces, and also that better administration of PNR affairs could be effected if the 7th was split to allow for the formation of a new Division incorporating Alberta and Saskatchewan. Accordingly, at the mid-winter meeting of the PNR Executive body in Seattle, February 21st, it was properly determined that such a Division, designated as the 6th, be formed, and that W.A.D. "Doug" YUILL, 10110 - 139th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, be appointed as its initial Vice-President. Appointment to the office was necessary as obviously there was no organizational machinery to permit an election. Doug's appointment followed a request to all organized model railroading groups known in the two provinces, for nominations to fill the office (from which an officer would be selected by the PNR Executive in consideration of the merits of each). Doug was proposed by the Edmonton Area Model Railroaders, of which club he is President; other clubs and organized groups either endorsed his nomination or stated they would support whoever was appointed. Appointment was made by the authority vested in the President of PNR (Fraser Wilson) and the Region's Executive body.



Doug is 32; a Captain in the regular Canadian Army (The Regiment of Canadian Guards), is a very likeable, obviously enthusiastic, and a very capable person - without doubt a good man for the job.

The 7th Division still retains all British Columbia, Yukon and Alaska (even yet a very large territory!). As a point of interest, the numeral "6" formerly designated a Division of PNR that consisted of Vancouver Island. The boys on the Island requested a merger with the 7th Division several years ago, due to the fact that they were few in number and also found it difficult to organize activities. The new 6th, therefore, has caused a reactivation of the former identifying number. The forming of the 6th Division will create new interest in our hobby in Alberta and Saskatchewan and should assist in the strengthening of the Pacific Northwest Region.

Doug's term of office by appointment is valid until midnight August 31st, 1965. An election will be held to determine the Vice-President for the 1965-66 term, the results of which are to be known by July 1st.

A Model Railroad Odyssey – Rob Badmington

Does your idea of a great vacation getaway include trains? Lots and lots of trains? Mine does, and when I noticed that Train Fest in Milwaukee was on the weekend following the Railway Modellers Meet of BC (RMMBC) and Vancouver Train Expo, I got to thinking. It didn't take long to convince my long-time traveling buddy Rick Walker that we could fly to Vancouver, take in the meet and show, take Amtrak halfway across the US and attend Train Fest, and then fly home. Even better, my wife Bonny encouraged me to go.

The plan evolved quickly and train and plane tickets were bought, hotels and rental cars were reserved, and we registered for the meet and its accompanying operating sessions.

Our trip began with a short flight from Calgary to Vancouver on Thursday afternoon, November 3rd. Our rental car took us to the Atrium Hotel where we checked in and picked up our RMMBC pre-registration packages. We were lined up for our first operating session at Mark Dance's N scale Columbia & Western that evening so we went into the pub to grab a bite to eat first. One of the best parts of model railroad meets is getting to know new people. We met Jarrett Dumas of Quesnel and arranged to car-pool with him to Mark's. We met the other operators in the crew lounge and listened while Mark gave his pre-session briefing.

Mark's Columbia and Western N scale layout has been featured in many magazine articles, with amazing scenery and very realistic trains. It is even better in person, and operates almost flawlessly. Using the Timetable and Train Order system, more than a dozen regular and extra trains were run in the four hour session. Along with the challenges of keeping to the schedule



and avoiding collisions, dozens of freight cars were switched at industries, trains were made up in Nelson Yard, and even helper engines successfully pushed long freights up and over

Farron Hill. Too soon it was over and we headed back to the hotel for the night.



A long freight crosses the Kettle River at Cascade BC on the upper deck while a train passes Castlegar station on the lower deck of Mark Dance's Columbia and Western Rwy. (photos by Rob Badmington)

On Friday morning we attended the first of many interesting and informative clinics. We managed to take in five clinics throughout the day and had to miss three more which ran concurrently. We had another operating session to participate in after dinner so again in the pub we met up with fellow modellers, then headed to John Green's home.

John's HO scale Coquihalla Valley Railway is a large double deck layout patterned after the CPR line which traversed the rugged namesake canyon. Many of the signature bridges, tunnels, and stations are modelled. Traffic is controlled by TT and TO with Dispatcher Brian Dobbin issuing train orders to operators at various stations to keep trains moving. Again, it was a very enjoyable evening spent with model railroaders from all over BC and Alberta.

On Saturday, the meet provided five more clinics, and as well, the Vancouver Train Expo was open across the street at the PNE Forum. This was the second year the VTE has been at this location, and despite some rain (Vancouver in November, what a surprise!), the public attendance was good. The organizing committee put in a huge effort to get media attention which paid off in several TV stations doing features and interviews at the show. VTE filled all of the available space with modular layouts, hobby shops, historical displays, a miniature train ride, Lego, Thomas, and a large Market Place where new and used railway items were offered for sale. Overall public attendance over two days was about 5,400.

The RMMBC Saturday evening activity was a banquet at the Atrium Hotel. Starting with Happy Hour and the opportunity to meet more new and old friends, a delicious dinner followed. The evening wrapped up with a very interesting presentation by Mark Dance on the wonderful story of cooperation, ingenuity, and dedication of a group of Vancouver-area modellers who dismantled, relocated, and reassembled Brian Pate's HO_n3 Klondike Mines Railway to Dawson City, Yukon. The year-long project had plenty of twists and turns in the ultimately successful effort to preserve and display a fantastic model railroad.

The RMMBC featured six layouts to visit on the Sunday self-guided tour. All six were located in North and West Vancouver and with a little help from the GPS we found them with no problems. All the layouts were well worth visiting, and as a first, at least for me, one was located in a spare bedroom of a 12th floor apartment. Most of this layout's structure had to be built off-site and brought up in the elevator to avoid noise complaints from the neighbours.

Rick and I made one more visit on Sunday evening before dropping the car off at the airport. Scott Calvert has been a friend of mine for over 40 years so naturally we accepted his invitation to see the latest progress on his HO scale CPR Boundary Sub layout. This double deck layout in a purpose-built 1200 square foot basement room is being built with prototypical operations in mind. Many of Scott's construction techniques are innovative and the results are spectacular.

A late night ride on the SkyTrain and a city bus got us from the airport back to the hotel so we could get a very early start Monday morning. At a time neither Rick nor I are usually up, we took a taxi at 5 am to the Pacific Central Station to catch the 6:30 departure of the Cascades Amtrak train to Seattle. We cleared US Customs in the station then boarded the Talgo train. Our coach filled up quickly and before long we were crossing the Fraser River at New Westminster, then taking the BNSF route along the shore of Boundary Bay to the border. Once into Washington state, the electronic display in our coach indicated we were travelling at speeds up to 79 mph. We arrived at King Street Station on time at 10:55.

Our next train, the Empire Builder left Seattle at 4:40 pm so we had time to do a little railfanning near the station. We got shots of several Sounder commuter trains, an in-bound Cascades from Portland, and a BNSF freight carrying Boeing 737 bodies. Once on the Builder, we settled in for two

days and nights aboard Amtrak's busiest long-distance train. The train retraces the route we came into Seattle on as far north as Everett where it turns east to follow the original Great Northern Railway across the northern tier states. It was dark before we left the coast, so we had our first dinner in the diner, then watched lights out the windows until we went through the 8 mile long Cascade Tunnel.



During the night we stopped at Spokane where the Portland section of the Empire Builder was joined into our train, resulting in a total of 11 cars led by two P42 locomotives. Morning found us skirting Glacier National Park, passing through Essex, East Glacier, and Browning, Montana. Many of our favourite railfan locations were spotted from the train. The station stop in Shelby gave us the opportunity to get out and shoot a couple of photos of our train, with admonitions from our car attendant Rodney not to try to run over to a store to buy refreshments, lest we be left behind.



Once on the plains our speed picked up to above 70 mph and we seemed to meet or overtake a freight train on almost every siding. Short November days led to darkness as we passed into North Dakota. Some would say this was a blessing, but the sunset from the Sightseer Lounge car was spectacular. Past Minot, we were jostled and rocked to sleep, passing through Devils Lake, Grand Forks and Fargo in the dark.



Next morning in St. Paul, Minnesota an ex-Milwaukee Road Skytop observation car was coupled to the rear of our train.



A brisk walk on the platform for photos of the gleaming private car preceded breakfast along the Mississippi River. East of St. Paul, our train used the tracks of Canadian Pacific. Again we passed numerous freights without delays. There were brief stops in many cities and towns including Milwaukee, but we remained on the train, reaching our destination of Chicago Union Station right on time at 3:55 pm Wednesday afternoon. We stayed at a downtown hotel for the night.

Thursday morning was bright but breezy as we walked from the hotel to Roosevelt Road, an overpass that crosses over the south throat of Union Station. It is a well-known railfan location that offers a good view of dozens of Metra commuter trains coming and going as well as Amtrak trains arriving and departing from the east, south, and west. In an hour we took pictures of at least a dozen different trains.



From downtown Chicago we took a CTA train to O'Hare Airport to rent a car. For only \$2.25 we got our fourth train ride of the journey. Once in the car, we navigated to the town of LaGrange on the BNSF Raceway, the three track main that once hosted the CB&Q Zephyrs. LaGrange is also the home of EMD. From the station platform on the south side of the tracks we took pictures of five commuter trains, the westbound Amtrak Southwest Chief, and four BNSF trains, all in 62 minutes. We left when the sun started casting long shadows across the tracks. We headed for our next motel on the southern outskirts of Chicago.



If you are familiar with Chicago, you know that many rail lines cross each other on diamonds or overpasses as a multitude of different railroads make their way into America's rail hub. Consolidations and mergers have changed the routes and many lines have been abandoned, but there are still locations where traffic is concentrated and great photography opportunities abound. Our first destination on Friday morning was Matteson, Illinois and a railfan park that CN built beside a new junction. At this location CN's former Illinois Central main line crosses over the former Elgin Joliet & Eastern which CN bought to connect all its Chicago area lines. To be able to route trains from one line to the other in any direction, a new connection not unlike a highway cloverleaf was built, with the elevated railfan

platform beside it. Moments after we arrived, CN sent its first train through the loop, an eastbound to northbound double-stack with CN 8899 on the point and CN 2859 as distributed power on the rear. While this train was still rounding the loop, a southbound electrified Metra train stopped at the Matteson station on the IC line, and a few minutes later, the southbound Amtrak City of New Orleans blasted through.



We met up with an old friend from CN days, Rod Nagel, at Matteson, then headed to other railfan hotspots together. Broadway Street in Blue Island is a very busy location with CSX, Indiana Harbor Belt, and Iowa Interstate lines converging and crossing each other and a Metra line crossing overhead. In the two hours we spent there we shot pictures of 11 different trains.



Action at Blue Island. Iowa Interstate passes over BNSF.

Next we went to another hotspot, Dolton Junction. Here we took pictures of another six trains in only 45 minutes, including an unusual Norfolk Southern movement of bottle cars, carrying molten steel from one mill to another. With waning daylight, we said goodbye to Rod and drove to Milwaukee, our ultimate destination.



Train Fest in Milwaukee bills itself as America's largest operating model railroad show, and at 230,000 square feet, it probably is. There were over 70 operating layouts and 130 commercial exhibitors, as well as historical and special interest groups. Total attendance was about 25,000. The majority of the show is in a huge convention hall on the Wisconsin State Fair Grounds with a smaller hall about a five minute walk away. While the show is certainly aimed at serious model railroaders, there is also a big emphasis on entertaining families with young kids. A neat feature was a large number of layouts that kids were invited to operate trains on. There was a large oval of track on which three 1/8 scale trains took visitors on a ride around the Kids Area. One of the Lionel layouts staged train races the kids could compete in. And of course there were plenty of Lego and Thomas trains at the show.



For the scale model enthusiasts there were many hobby shops and other vendors, and most of the major manufacturers had booths showing off their latest products. At the Woodland Scenics booth,

an on-going clinic allowed kids to apply colour to rock faces, add ground foam and some trees to a small piece of scenery which they got to keep. What a great way to get kids involved in model building, while showing adults that scenery isn't so hard after all.



As if two days at Train Fest wasn't enough model railroading, Rick and I got invited to open houses at two area clubs on Saturday evening. The first was the Lionel Railroad Club of Milwaukee which has a huge layout full of trains, operating accessories, and most impressive, a forty foot long model of the Hell Gate Bridge from New York City. Members don't hide the fact that they are there to play with trains, and there was no doubt everyone was having fun.



The second club we visited was the North American Prototype Modelers which has a clubroom of over 5000 square feet in the basement of a commercial retail building. (<http://www.napmltd.org/>) The HO scale layout has over 26 scale miles of track. Modelling standards are very high, and realistic scenes are everywhere you look. The one thing that impressed me more than anything else was a fully

modelled Continuous Welded Rail train that carried 50 strings of CWR, snaking around the curves of the layout.



CWR train on the NAPM layout.

Rick and I went back to Train Fest on Sunday and chatted with many of the manufacturers that we have come to know at SUPERTRAIN. Rod Nagel drove up from his home in Northwest Indiana to spend the day with us. Another story in the "small world department", we ran into a fellow named Bob Kirschling who used to live in Great Falls Montana and was a good friend of the late Pete Ellis. If that wasn't enough, Bob's son Kevin used to work for CN's bridge department in Edmonton and Rod knew him from work.

On our final morning before we flew home, Rick and I took out our cameras once more in the small town of West Chicago, several miles from O'Hare Airport. CN's former EJ&E line crosses the three track UP main line, and in just over two hours, we shot another 14 trains in bright sunshine.



What a great way to end an eleven day trip, with trains, lots and lots of trains.

Upcoming Events in the 6th and 7th Divisions (and the Regional Convention)

See all the PNR events and our most recent additions at pnr.nmra.org

November 25 – December 24, Mossleigh, AB

Aspen Crossing Railway will operate two or three trips on operating days from Mossleigh to the North Pole and back on the on THE POLAR EXPRESS™. Visit the website at

<https://aspencrossing.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=15> or phone 1(866)440-3500 for more information.

December 1-21, Stettler, AB

Alberta Prairie Railway will operate two or four trips on operating days from Stettler to the North Pole and back on the on THE POLAR EXPRESS™. Phone 1-800-282-3994 or visit the website at www.absteamtrain.com for more information.

December 4-15, numerous locations

The 18th edition of the CP Holiday Train stops in 32 communities across the 6th Division. As in years past, two trains will operate coast-to-coast under the Holiday Train banner. At each stop, food and cash donations are collected for local Food Banks while entertainers sing and play music for the crowds. For the complete schedule, see:

<http://www.cpr.ca/holiday-train/schedule-canada>

February 4-5, (Sat-Sun) Olds, AB

2017 Olds Model Train Hobby & Craft Show Train Show at Olds College FGH Gymnasium, 4500-50th Street, Olds, AB. (Look for signs) Saturday 10am-5pm & Sunday 10am-4pm. Admission \$5.00, Kids 5 & under Free. For more information see www.mvmrc.ca/page3.html , email Rick 1mvmrc@gmail.com, or phone (403) 556-8121 home or (403) 507-3314 cell.

February 25-26, (Sat-Sun) Saskatoon, SK

All Aboard 2017 Train Show at Saskatoon Western Development Museum. <http://prairierailworkshop.com/train-show/>

March 3-4, (Fri-Sat) Calgary, AB

Railroad Prototype Modellers Meet, St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 703 Heritage Drive SW. Friday 7pm – 9 pm – Hands-on Decoder Installation Clinic, pre-registration required, \$15. Saturday 9am – 4pm – Show and Tell to share modelling ideas, four clinics, raffle tickets for displaying your models. For further information, updates, and Friday Clinic pre-registration, please contact: Dave Audley, 403-275-1869 (daudley@telusplanet.net)

March 5, (Sun) Calgary, AB

CMRS Spring Mini-meet and CMT Annual Flea Market, Glenmore Inn, 2720 Glenmore Trail SE (corner of Glenmore Trail & Ogden Road, SE). The Flea Market runs from 8:30 to 10:30. Time to start putting aside those items you no longer need so that you can buy more stuff that you do need! Tables are \$20 each, half tables can be booked for \$10. To book a table contact Brookes Harrow at bharrow@nucleus.com or 403-201-4937. The Mini-meet follows at 11:00 with several clinics lined up, along with Show and Tell. <http://www.calgarymodelrailway.ca/mini-meets.html>

March 18-19, (Sat-Sun) Lethbridge, AB

Southern Alberta Model Railway Club Open House at the expanded club building in Gyro Park, 15th Street and 10th Avenue A South. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm both days. Information at <http://www3.telus.net/samrc/> or contact Bill Smienk at (403) 328-4244 or bsmienk@telus.net.

March 25-26, (Sat-Sun) Moose Jaw, SK

Model Train Show. Sponsored by the Thunder Creek Model Railroad Club. Western Development Museum, 50 Diefenbaker Drive. The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10.00 for adults which then provides full access to the show and all museum exhibits. There is no charge for show participants or vendors who may rent tables for a small fee. Info:- www.tcmrc.org

April 1 (Sat), Edmonton, AB

MMRF Spring Swap Meet: Central Lion's Senior Citizens Recreation Centre 11113 113 St. 9 a.m.–Noon. Admission \$3. Info: Ric Francoeur, Ph. 780-458-1032 www.mmrf.ab.ca

April 22 – 23, (Sat-Sun) Calgary, AB

SUPERTRAIN 2017 - Canada's Biggest and Best Annual Model Train Show; 9 AM to 5 PM both days. Genesis Centre, 7555 Falconridge Blvd. NE, Calgary. FREE PARKING at Genesis Centre and McKnight-Westwinds C-Train Station with free shuttle. Adult - \$15, under 16 - free. Over 70,000 sq. ft. of operating layouts, exhibits and displays, railroad artists, hobby shops, model manufacturers, demonstrations, clinics, museums and railroad historical associations, Lego and Thomas Play Area, garden railways, ride-on trains, and much more. Info: www.supertrain.ca or email to info@supertrain.ca

May 5-7, (Fri-Sun) Vancouver, BC

The "Railway Modellers Meet of British Columbia" (RMMBC) is taking place at the Atrium Inn, 2889 East Hastings. The emphasis is primarily on "modelling," as the name implies, with many interesting clinics, layout tours, and operating sessions. Full information and registration is at: <http://railwaymodellermmeetofbc.ca/>

May 6-7, Regina, SK

Regina Railfest, the largest model railroad show ever held in Regina. At the Tartan Curling Club, it will have 20,000 square feet of layouts, displays, exhibits and vendors. Further information can be obtained by contacting Ian McIntosh at 306-586-0770.

May 19-21, Red Deer, AB

C&E Express, the 6th Division's Spring Meet. Watch the PNR website Events page for more details as they are confirmed.

Jun 7-10, Spokane, WA

SPOKANE FALLS EXPRESS 2017 Pacific Northwest Region Convention. Hotel information is now posted; phone reservations are now being accepted at 1-800-RED-LION; use "Spokane Falls Express" as the Group Code. The registration process for the 2017 PNR Convention is now open on the SFX 2017 website.

Info: http://www.pnr5d.org/index_spokanefallsexpress2017.htm



What better way to get kids started in model railroading than letting them run a train at a Train Show? Signs like this were at many layouts at Train Fest in Milwaukee on November 12 & 13, 2016.