

# Highball!

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION 6TH DIVISION PNR

March 2023



Larry Dickinson's Pacific & Great Western O scale layout features highly detailed scenes. It is one of the layouts to visit at the Queen City Express Spring Meet in May.

## **6th Division Officers**

Superintendent

Ed Molenkamp [6divsuper@pnr.nmra.org](mailto:6divsuper@pnr.nmra.org)

Phone: 780-455-1479

Assistant Superintendent

Rick Astle [ve6rla@gmail.com](mailto:ve6rla@gmail.com)

Phone: 403-507-3314

Secretary

Doug Johnson [djca@accesscomm.ca](mailto:djca@accesscomm.ca)

Treasurer

Rick Walker [walkr@telusplanet.net](mailto:walkr@telusplanet.net)

Achievement Program

Doug Burton [dwburton1234@gmail.com](mailto:dwburton1234@gmail.com)

Interim Convention Coordinator

Peter Ulvestad [ulvestad@telus.net](mailto:ulvestad@telus.net)

Highball! Editor

Rob Badmington [highball@pnr.nmra.org](mailto:highball@pnr.nmra.org)

---

## **Superintendent's Report – Ed Molenkamp, Supt. 6th Division, President NMRA Canada**

Greetings

I would like to start this message with my condolences to the family of Tom Price whom we all know. If you can't picture him in your mind just remember the many Shows/Meets /Conventions with his appearances on stage or at the microphone giving us a good laugh and wonderful history lessons on the CP. We will miss him.

Spring is in the air and the show circuit is in full swing. So far the shows the Division has attended were very well received.

Looking forward to the Swap Meet in Edmonton on April 1 and SUPERTRAIN in Calgary in mid-April as well as the Regina Show followed by the Convention in Regina on the May long weekend . You will see more details as well as dates of these Events in this issue.

We will be scheduling an AGM on Zoom in early June so keep an eye on your inbox as we will be sending out a notice soon.

---

## **From the Editor – Rob Badmington**

As Ed mentions above, our hobby lost a great friend and resource with the passing of Tom Price of Calgary on March 21. While Tom always said he was not a model railroader, he was certainly very active in our midst. He made numerous presentations on equipment and historical events at our Meets and Conventions, and served as Master of Ceremonies at several of them. He was also an enthusiastic volunteer at SUPERTRAIN, Heritage Park and Champion Park. His knowledge and humorous presentation style will be greatly missed.

On a happier note, we are in the midst of a very active model railroad season. Be sure to get out and enjoy the company of your fellow modellers at the upcoming shows, swap meets, and especially the Queen City Express. Doug Johnson and his crew in Regina are putting together a

great program of clinics, layouts to visit, and social get-togethers. A lot of details about the program and photos of what awaits us are included in this issue. It's shaping up to be a fantastic weekend.

Closer to my home in Calgary, it's only a couple of weeks until SUPERTRAIN returns after missing the last three years. The response from exhibitors has been amazing and it promises to be a great show.

Bill Smienk of Lethbridge has shared an article about making control panels which I'm sure you will find interesting.

As always, if you have an idea for an article, or wish to share some photos of your modelling activities, please send them to me at the email address above.

---

## **Achievement Program Report - Doug Burton, 6<sup>th</sup> Division, PNR AP Chair**

January and February were very active actually.

I was at the Moose Jaw show working the NMRA booth with Peter and Ed and got to chat with lots of members about AP. We did an assessment on a trestle for Doug Johnson which he got a merit award for. I also assessed (awarded) 8 Golden Spikes to members that have their own modules as part of club modular layouts or are getting theirs done at home. Part of the give-away was you had to get or renew an NMRA membership. Ha. We have a new assessor for

Saskatoon, Craig Mykytyzyn, and I would like to thank him for his enthusiasm. Craig is one of the Gold Spike recipients. I would also like to thank Fred Headon MMR for helping do Doug's bridge assessment and coming out and looking at Golden Spikes with me. Fred shared lots of knowledge with me. Thanks Fred

Greg King - Golden Spike  
Dennis Dreher - Electrical  
Dennis Dreher - Civil  
Dennis Dreher - Structures  
Peter Ulvestad - Chief Dispatcher

We have two other modellers getting evaluations done for multiple AP Certificates and another three getting ready for a Golden Spike assessment.

If you know of anyone who you think should have items looked at, please let us know.

I want to share Bill's PNR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bill Fassett, AP Manager PNR  
March 2023

Things picked up in February, and PNR is again leading the rest of the divisions in awards issued in 2023, according to Frank Koch's latest report. In addition to the awards in February, which are listed below, as of March 6 the region has sent another 6 SOQs to Frank.

I have been in touch with Dennis Terpstra and Kurt Laidlaw regarding AP evaluations at the convention in Tacoma. AP evaluations will take place on Friday evening between 7 and 9 pm. I will also be presenting 2 clinics (AP 101, and AP 102 with Bob Parrish) on Thursday afternoon of the convention.

Awards Earned since the last Report (Division numbers in brackets [ ])

Golden Spikes – The following members have earned a Golden Spike Award:

Greg King [6]

Merit Awards - The following members have earned Merit Awards:

John Decker [5] - Cars (2), Scenery

Dennis Dreher [6] – Civil (3), Scenery, Structures [6]

Rick Martin [5] – Civil (3)

Achievement Program Certificates – The following members have earned AP Certificates:

John Decker [5] – Cars, Scenery

Dennis Dreher [6] – Civil, Scenery

James Hochstein [4] – Association Volunteer

Scott Surber [4] – Association Volunteer

Tamara Whipple [4] – Association Volunteer

Nolan Woodward [5] – Association Volunteer

Rick Martin [5] – Chief Dispatcher, Civil

Master Model Railroaders – Two members have earned MMRs:

John Decker [5] – MMR #733

Rick Martin [5] – MMR #731

In this issue I would like to take a look at AP Scenery.

The intent of this category is for you to demonstrate "the prototypical rendering of scenic effects from the ground up." The type of scenery that you choose to model is entirely up to you. An urban landscape involves just as much scenery (if not more) as a mountain or desert landscape.

## To Qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery Certificate:

1. Construct a completed section of a model railroad of at least sixty square feet in O scale, or forty-five square feet in S scale, **or thirty-two square feet in HO scale, or eighteen square feet in N scale** or other scales in proportional relationship to HO scale. This completed section must contain the necessary scenic elements of **Terrain, Structures, Background, Lighting, and Realism/Conformity as combined to achieve a realistic effect** using applicable NMRA standards in that particular model railroad scene. The intent of this category is the prototypical rendering of the scenic elements from the ground up.

**It is not necessary to qualify for this certificate by constructing a single section of layout. You can construct several different scenes (such as modules),** each of which must be at least eight square feet and of Merit Award quality. They must earn 87 ½ points using the AP Scenery judging sheet.

Outdoor (garden) railways may qualify for the Master Builder - Scenery certificate. However, the modeler must show that they have worked to create a miniature railroad, not just run some track through the flower beds. For example, bridges should be modeled after prototype bridges (just as they are in other scales), not just track running across a plank.

The definitions of the various elements (which may be combined to comprise the setting for the model railroad) shall be:

- *Terrain (35 pts)*

The ground and all natural features such as rocks, water, trees, hills and depressions, as well as man-made features such as railroad roadbed, cuts, fills, drainage ditches, embankments, streets and roads, etc. **Take a look at the real world and some of those features. Structures need power; you don't have to run the lines; houses need yards - what is in a typical yard?**

Also remember different types of vegetation and the effects of weather and of animals. Remember the detail on streets and roads, whether in urban or rural areas: sewers / storm drains, man-hole covers, shoulders, drainage ditches, cracks, patches, road wear marks, oil stains, and tire ruts in dirt roads.

**Culverts so water can flow away.**

Make the transitions between different types of terrain as smooth as possible. Avoid glaring inconsistencies, such as a New England Farm house surrounded by palm trees. If you are going to have different scenes on your layout, use backdrop dividers or other vision blockers to separate them. **Most of the above does not cost a lot of money, just time.**

- *Structures (20 pts)*

Structures are considered from the standpoint of prototypical suitability, placement, and appearance as scenic effects - NOT as to construction (which is covered under Master Builder - Structures). **You can kill two birds at once if a structure can also be used for Structures AP.** This includes bridges, trestles, and culverts, buildings and all other types of structures (towers, power lines, signs, fences, retaining walls, etc.), track and right-of-way features such as turnout controls, signaling structures, crossing gates and shanties, turntables and other service structures, etc.

These are but a few examples - additional features are encouraged. **Also remember that structures should be in the ground, not sitting on top of it. This means you need to hide the edge that contacts the ground, this can be done simply brushing a little dirt against the foundation and blend it in.** Make sure that the appearance of your structures is consistent with your scenery. At the very least, weather it enough to take the "out of the box plastic shine" off of it. Switch machines, if not under the table, should be well disguised (this is one detail that will cause your application to be returned if it is not done). Remember details such as lights over the doors of commercial buildings.

- *Background (25 pts)*

Treatment of the wall, backdrop, and/or ceiling to realistically depict depth, distance, horizon, and sky. **A background is a must, also a divider so you can't see all the way across your layout so it is not just on the outside walls. The perspective for this is looking at it from bench height not from my 6'1" height.**

This doesn't mean that you have to have a photographic or landscape artist quality background. Your background should continue the 'illusion of reality' that you are trying to create with your scenery. The



background should match the scenery, and the transition where the two of them meet is smooth and/or hidden. **Using masking tape to hide a gap and then blend it in, easy.** One good question to ask yourself is: Is there enough good background to allow a photo to be taken without showing other parts of the room? **The perspective for this is looking at it from bench height not from my 6'1" height.** Take lots of pictures since it is cheap to do now. If a wall is the backdrop, make sure that the texture is appropriate, as well as the colour (a concrete block wall painted sky-blue, still looks like a concrete block wall!) **Here are some pictures of my layout so you get the idea of what they are talking about above.**



· *Lighting (20 pts)*

Illumination effects from three aspects:

An entirely daylight scene is acceptable. This lighting information must be included in the material prepared for Section 4 below.

Note that a fully day lit scene is perfectly acceptable (although you may get more points for a scene that allows you to show off more lighting elements). However, even in a day lit scene, there may be evidence of lighting - even if it is not operational (non-illuminated street lights, for example.)

Also note that not every scene will contain all of these elements. If the scene you are modeling is in the middle of the desert, there may not be any buildings or streets there to light!

- railroad cars, signals, etc.
- buildings, streets, and roads, etc.
- overall lighting effects - day and/or night.

· *Realism / Conformity (25 pts)*

In the other four judging areas, the judges evaluate what you were trying to do - what you remembered to include in your scene. In this one, they evaluate how well you did what you were trying to do.

Your entire layout does not have to be completed to be assessed - just enough to meet the minimum space requirements given above. However, the areas which are not to be judged should be blocked off (visually) from those that are. You could just put a sheet over some of the unfinished part maybe a couple of feet on both sides. If you have delicate details beyond what is being assessed do not sweat it as we as assessors are not daft.

2. Prepare a set of photographs (video tape presentation is acceptable) and a written description clearly describing the intended setting of the model railroad and the scenic details including towns or cities in the area being judged. If we are coming to assess at your place you really do not need this since you will be present with us to answer questions. If it is getting assessed at distance or in a contest we do need this.

These photos don't have to be professional quality - that isn't what is being judged. However, there should be at least one over-all picture of the layout, and pictures of all the parts which are being judged. Each picture should have an accompanying description.

3. Prepare a description of the materials and methods of construction used in creating various features of Terrain, Background, and Lighting.

These can be simple statements - nothing elaborate is required.

4. Attach one copy of materials in Sections 2 & 3 to the Statement of Qualification (SOQ, see below) for use by the judges in determining the effectiveness of the craftsmanship displayed by the member requesting certification.

5. Earn a Merit Award of at least 87 ½ points on the section of layout being judged.

6. Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) including the attachments for Sections 2 & 3 and the signed evaluation forms (see links below) and/or copies of the Merit Award certificates from Section 5.



Fred Headon, on the left, and Doug Burton were kept busy doing AP assessments at the Moose Jaw Train Show.

# **Area Reports**

## **Lethbridge – Paul Smith**

The Southern Alberta Model Railway Club has had a busy start to 2023. We're continuing work on our layouts. The HO scale layout has received more scenery and structures, in particular a waterfront coal dock for our harbour area and upgrades to our electrical system. The N scale layout is undergoing yet more trackwork, especially in the heavy grade run through our mountain area and at a key junction at one end of our urban yard.

We've had some events during this time. The club held a Social for members and guests on February 4 at our Gyro Park Clubhouse in lieu of our traditional New Year's dinner. This was followed on February 28 by our Semi-Annual General Meeting, during which we discussed possible changes to how we manage and conduct work

on the layouts. This matter will be examined over the summer with a plan to implement changes for the fall. We held our Spring Open House on March 18 and 19. We received nearly 1,000 visitors of all ages over the weekend (990 to be precise) as well as newspaper and television coverage. Everyone appeared to have enjoyed themselves, and the SAMRC is hoping to receive follow-up visits from individuals who expressed both a general interest in model railroading and a particular interest in the club's activities.

Highball readers who find themselves in Lethbridge on a Tuesday evening are welcome to visit us at our Gyro Park clubhouse starting at 1900 hours.

---

## **Calgary – Dale Sproule**

The March 12 weekend saw the twice a year Calgary Model Railway Society (CMRS) mini meet and with the spring meet comes the Calgary Model Trainmen's Club (CMT) Flea Market. It is good to see the Meets start again and particularly the Flea Market. CMT members were out in force finalizing the table arrangement for 27 tables, taking money from vendors and generally setting up for the 9 am start time of customers. The 2 hour Flea Market by itself is a great event but it is just a social event for many of us who have not seen each other for years, and isn't that the reason for the hobby. The Mini Meet featured three live clinics, Paul Clegg presented one on Railroad Engineering 103 – Signals, Ken Clarke's presentation was about Mine Operation and Equipment and Ian Mears' presentation was entitled "Bringing a Garden to Life."

SUPERTRAIN, Canada's Largest Model Railroad Show arrives into Calgary April 15 and 16. The show will be smaller this year fitting into 2 instead of 3 exhibition halls in the Genesis Centre, 7555 Falconridge Blvd N.E. in North

East Calgary. The show runs 9 am-5 pm each day, admission is \$15.00 for 16 years and up, FREE to those 15 and under. The show features over 40,000 square feet of Operating Model Railroad Layouts, Displays, Lionel, Lego Trains, Thomas and Friends, Garden Railroads, Photo Exhibits, Merchandise for Sale, Live Demos and more. There will be a number of food trucks at SUPERTRAIN featuring a wide variety of delicious snacks and meals. I have counted 95 separate exhibits -pretty well anyone interested in model railroading will be there. Entries are spread from across the country: Bowser, Rapido, Ggarden railroading, Hal Kinsey from Central Hobbies in Vancouver will be making his last appearance and will be selling his shop in May. There will be N scale right up through really big stuff!

I found a website that I hope will be of as much interest to you as it has been to me, (Jason Jensen Trains), that's it, no org, no com, just what you read. Choose the first option, youtube, then his videos. Happy modelling



## **Olds - Didsbury - Carstairs - Rick Astle**

The Mountain View Model Railroad Club operating out of the Didsbury Museum has recently completed the addition of a garden railroad loop as part of the railroad display on the second floor of the museum. The club is also actively recruiting new members and running some operating sessions in conjunction with regular club meetings. We are always ready to answer questions and share our knowledge with visitors and those beginning to establish their own layouts. The club has a DC powered train that is ready for visitors to operate and during our operating sessions we switch over to DCC to enhance operations. Check out our

web site at [www.mvmrc.ca](http://www.mvmrc.ca) or our schedule and stop in at the museum for a visit to the layout and view the many displays throughout the rest of the museum.



## **Moose Jaw – Doug Johnson**

The Moose Jaw Train Show was held at the Western Development Museum on March 18 and 19, for the first time since 2019. The show was a success, with about 25 layouts, displays and vendors. Public attendance was very good. In fact, Saturday recorded the second highest attendance ever. It was gratifying to see the enthusiasm shown by the public and the exhibitors. The 6th division was well represented and several new NMRA members were recruited. Congratulations to members of the Thunder Creek Club for putting on a great show.

Larry Dickinson's Mexicali Grande O scale modular layout won the People's Choice award at the show. Larry's magnificent O scale home layout will be available for viewing on Sunday afternoon at the Queen City Express 6th Division convention in May.



The Mexicali Grande



This is the NMRA booth at the Moose Jaw Thunder Creek train show, with Fred Headon MMR from Winnipeg, former NMRA director, along with 6th division members Doug Johnson, Doug Burton MMR, Peter Ulvestad and Ed Molenkamp. The team recruited several new NMRA members.



## **Airdrie / Iron Horse Park – Greg Orme**

There's a hint of spring in the air but we don't dare get too comfortable as old man winter can return at anytime. That was apparent this past Family Day weekend. The week before the weather was beautiful and it looked like we would be able to open on Family Day for our annual Frostbite Run but as luck or bad luck in our case would have it, Sunday night we received snow up here in Airdrie. and There was too much on the tracks to clear and we once again had to cancel due to inclement weather. I guess you could say we're suckers for punishment so we have decided that we would try an Easter Airdrie Food Bank fundraiser with what we're calling an Easter Bunny Run on Saturday April the 8th. Let's hope old man winter cooperates. If you don't have anything planned for this day and the weather holds, why not come for a train ride and support our cause.

The May Long isn't really that far off and we are getting ready for our opening day of the 2023 season. This year we are planning on hosting two come drive a train events to provide an opportunity for those who would like to run one of our trains a chance to do just that.

Not much else to report other than winter maintenance continues as we prepare for opening day and the Easter Bunny Run.

There is never an end to the work required to keep things interesting and the trains running throughout the summer months at Iron Horse Park, so if you find yourself with some extra time on your hands, we are always looking for new members or volunteers to help out. If you would like to get involved we would be happy if you would consider joining us. Information is available on our Web site.

On a more personal note I am happy to report that further progress has been made over the winter months to have three Locomotives now pulling trains on the "Kickamoose and Battle River Central". Additional trackage has been laid and two more towns are starting to appear on the horizon. Still a lot of work to do but just like eating an elephant - one bite at a time.

Till next time Happy Railroading....



The Moose Jaw show took place in the Moose Jaw Western Development Museum. A visit to the museum is part of the Sunday afternoon program at Queen City Express.

## **Queen City Express 2023 - Regina – Doug Johnson, Chair**

### **6th Division Convention, Regina, May 19 to 21, 2023**

The organizing committee is pleased to announce that the website for the convention is now open and full of information regarding the convention. Topics include the schedule of events, accommodation and registration details, a list of clinics, photos and details of the railroads on the layout tour, information on bringing models for display and/or AP assessment and a list of prototype sights in the Regina area. The website is [queencityexpress.ca](http://queencityexpress.ca). It will be updated regularly when changes occur.

The event begins with registration at the hotel, the Four Points by Sheraton, starting at 4 p.m. on Friday, May 19. A pizza meet and greet will take place at 6 p.m. at Bushwacker Brew Pub, Regina's best brew pub, which is located two blocks from the hotel. A private room has been reserved for convention attendees. The cost of the pizza is included in the registration fee. Beverages are extra.

Three clinics are scheduled at the hotel for each of Saturday and Sunday mornings. Topics include modelling a CNR electric subsidiary, making trees, stumps and ground cover, everything you need to know about making the Achievement Program simpler, building models with styrene, historical freelancing, and airbrushing. These promise to be very informative sessions. Cal Sexsmith will also be available for individual consultations on layout design. \*(see details below)

On Saturday afternoon, you will be able to visit six excellent home layouts, including N, HO, HO<sub>N3</sub> and On30 railroads. The layouts are located close together so travel time between them will be short and you will be able to spend most of your time viewing the layouts. Layout details and photos are available on the website.

Saturday evening will feature a banquet at the hotel, followed by a stimulating address by Trevor Marshall from Saskatoon. Trevor is a long-time model railroad enthusiast who has been widely published and who has hosted a model railroad podcast.

On Sunday afternoon, you will be able to visit three sites in the Moose Jaw area, located a short distance west of Regina. An excellent home layout and a club layout can be visited, as well as the Western Development Museum, which has a terrific collection of transportation equipment, including planes, trains and automobiles.

The committee is strongly encouraging you to bring models for display and/or AP assessment. There will be no model contest but this will be a great opportunity to show off your modelling skills. Before you arrive, fill out and send in the form on the website so that we will be able to provide enough space for your models to be adequately displayed and the AP assessors know what to expect.

The registration form is included on the website. Cost for adults is \$60 and \$40 for minors under 19. All convention registrants must be NMRA members. The banquet cost is \$40 per registrant or guest and guests at the meet and greet will pay \$20. The form can be completed online, saved and emailed to the registrar (the preferred route) or mailed back. Payment can be made by e-transfer (the preferred way) or by cheque. Details are on the website.

A block of rooms at the hotel has been set aside for the convention. The committee has arranged a low rate of \$119 per day plus taxes for either a king size or double queen size room. Please register directly with the hotel. Details are on the website. Please ensure that you register with the hotel prior to 5 p.m. on April 19 to receive this rate. After that date, the hotel cannot guarantee either the room rate or availability. It will be a busy weekend in Regina, with a large athletic event taking place, so rooms in the city will be scarce. Therefore please register with the hotel as soon as you can.

The committee will be thrilled to receive your registration for the first convention in Regina since 2012. It promises to be a great event, full of good modelling and good fellowship.



\*The Layout Design Special Interest Group will offer Layout design consultation at the Queen City Express. The sessions will be about 30 minutes long and can be scheduled in advance. Consultations can cover many areas and can include but not be limited to:

- Developing a concept
- Functional planning i.e. what will fit
- Detailed design
- Review of an existing design
- Modification of an existing Layout
- Operations planning

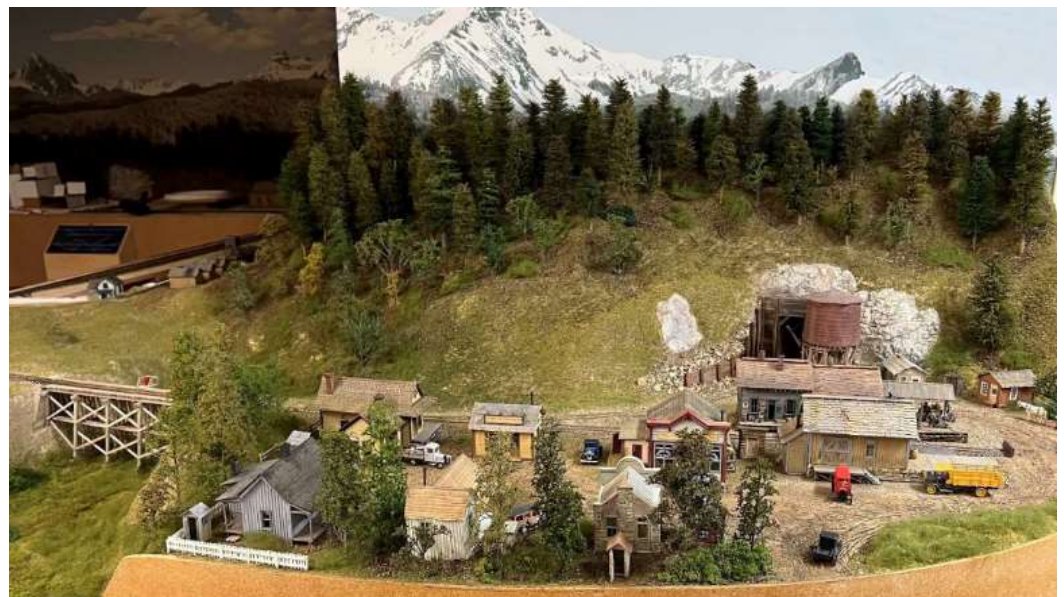
If you are interested, please bring information on era, prototype, layout concept, room size, any plans and sketches, and anything else you think that might help.

For further information please contact Cal Sexsmith at [calvinsexsmith@sasktel.net](mailto:calvinsexsmith@sasktel.net)



This is a model of a modeler's house and yard in Regina including a model of his outdoor G scale layout. The train running on the model is actually T scale – 1/450. What a great way to model an outdoor scene.

The Alice Arm Railway is HOOn3 set on the Northern BC Coast





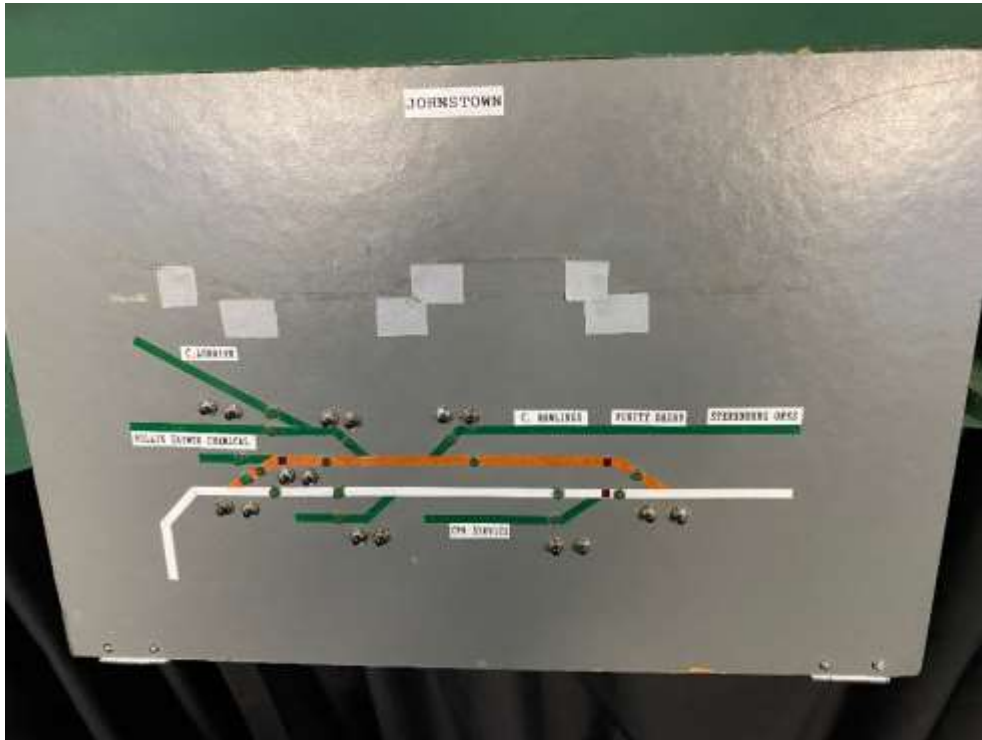
## Upgraded Model Railroad Control Panels - Bill Smienk



Have you installed temporary control panels on your model railroad? How long have they been there? If you are like me, I installed the temporary panels on my layout and they ended up there for about 20 years (maybe longer). There is sound rationale that supports the use of temporary panels. Reasons include possible additions to the design, changes to the track plan, and the need for a quick electrical panel solution. The original panels that I installed on my layout were made of plain 1/8" thick Masonite. They were painted a neutral gray colour so that the lines that represented the tracks would show up clearly in contrasting colours. The track schematic was added onto the face of the panels with different colours of 3/16" wide drafting tape. Colours were used to distinguish main line from sidings and spur tracks. Holes were added for toggle switches to control different track blocks. Several years ago I switched to DCC and the switches became obsolete, although they are still useful for troubleshooting if there is an electrical issue somewhere. Holes were also added into the panels for push buttons used to control turnouts. There are 2 push buttons for each turnout. There are also 2 LED's that indicate the turnout position and they also required holes in the Masonite panels. Fortunately, it is easy to drill holes into Masonite. Another advantage to Masonite is the ease of changes to the track schematic. If the track on the layout changes, simply pull up the tape and replace it in another location or delete it if the track was removed. The temporary panels functioned well and served their purpose for many years.

My model railroad has 6 control panels and I had always intended to replace the temporary panels with improved versions, but when is the right time to do this? There are many thoughts that may contribute to the answer. Do you wait until it is necessary, or until you have the cash, or you get tired of the old ones? Last year I finally decided to replace a few of my temporary panels with new, more professional looking ones. The main decisions that led to this are as follows: 1. I was tired of the appearance of the old ones; 2. I had the time to prepare the graphics for the new panels; 3. But the most important factor was the track work was now complete and I did not have any intention of changing it in the areas where the panels were to be replaced. There were several track changes made on my layout over the years. Some of these changes were due to scenery and some were due to operational improvements. My recommendation is that you have your track in place, tested and running smoothly, and make sure that you have some operating sessions

on your layout before embarking on the replacement of panels. Ideally, you should also have the scenery completed, or at least have an excellent sense of how it will appear when done. Photo #1 below shows one of the original Masonite panels.



Notice the tape marks that were used to patch areas where track changes occurred.

Once the decision is made to create new panels you need to consider what type of materials to use, and the process required to produce them. There are number of materials that modellers have used for their panels and various articles in the magazines have been written about this. Some have simple upgraded them to better Masonite, while others have used medium density fibreboard (MDF), aluminum, metal, and various types of acrylic. Some of the brands available include Lexan and Plexiglas. I had always intended to replace my panels with acrylic, due to the pleasing final appearance, although I have seen very nice panels that were done in aluminum. There are number of choices available and ultimately it is a personal modeller's choice. You should do some research before making that decision.

After selecting the acrylic, the next step involved how to print the track lines onto the surface. My previous panels required careful painting of lines with different colours to represent the different tracks. Once all of the track lines had been carefully laid out and painted onto the back of the acrylic sheet, the final paint colour (black in my case) was added to fill all of the remaining space. This provided a nice contrast. The last step was drilling the holes for all of the switches and then adding the wiring to complete the project.

One major obstacle to replacing the panels (for me) was the taping and painting of the lines on the acrylic, so I started to look for alternatives. The solution was found in shops that sell plastic products. I discussed this with Friesen Plastics in Lethbridge, Alberta and they told me that they were able to print all of the lines and other graphics for the panels onto acrylic panels. Here is the best part – They can print it onto acrylic of the thickness that you prescribe, it can be clear or coloured as per your preference, and they can also drill all of the holes for your switches using their computer controlled equipment. You are probably thinking great, but how much will I have extend my line of credit in order to fulfill this dream? Not as much as you might think. The cost for my panels varied depending on the size and the number of holes required, but each one was less than \$100, and some were less than \$50. This is a great deal if you think of trauma and frustration that can be prevented. Imagine cutting the acrylic to size, then painting all of the lines, the background colour, and then drilling that last hole only to watch the crack in the corner develop and ruin the entire thing. Grrrrrr!

Now that I had the right solution, moving forward what was next? The only thing that I had to provide were the graphics for the track schematic and the face of the panel. I have used CAD programs frequently in the past so the choice of graphics was easy for me, but you should check to see what your local plastics shop requires for the linework and

graphics. The graphics that you prepare should include the track lines, text for tracks, industries, or other information, and solid circles for the holes to be cut. It is a good idea to use different colours for these items. It is also recommended that you use colours that contrast with the background. Text items should include the panel title or name, track numbers for yards, industry names, station names, and other important information. Use a text font that is easy to read. You may also want to add graphics such as a logo or your specific railroad herald. Once the graphics have been prepared take them to the plastics shop for production. Refer to the photo #2 below.

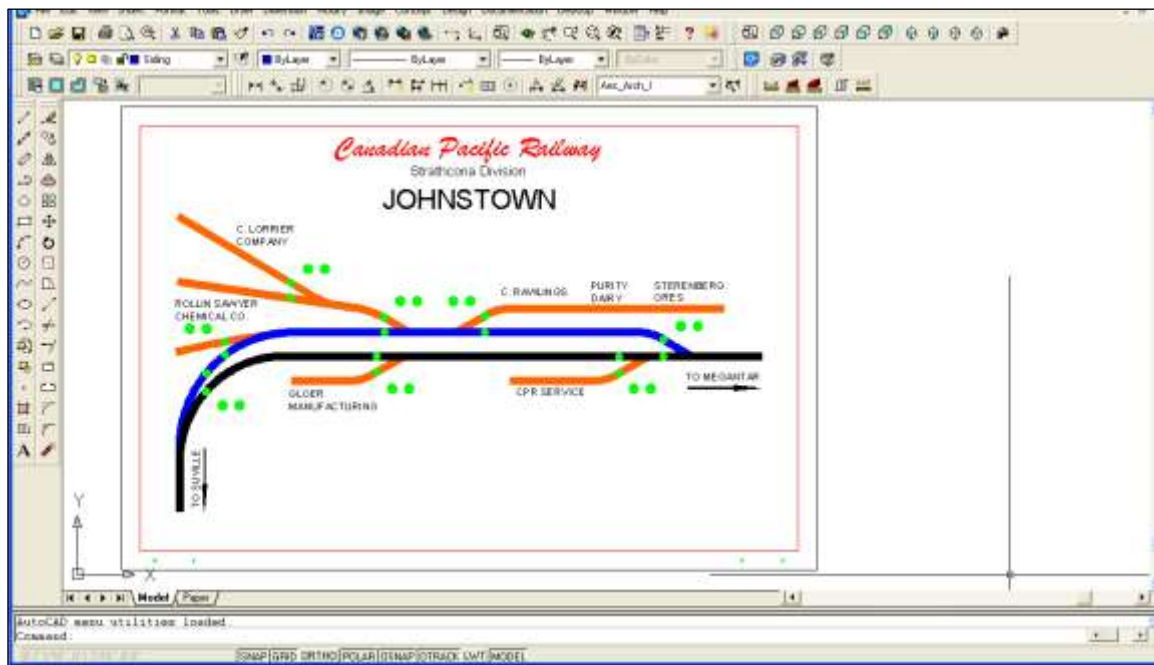


Photo 2 indicates the graphics work created in a CAD program for the first new panel at Johnstown. The green circles represent the holes that are drilled in the acrylic for the switches and LED's. This is done by the computer controlled system at the plastics company.



Photo #3 (above) shows the replaced acrylic panel at Johnstown. The colour of the acrylic is black. Extra graphics were added to enhance the overall appearance.

The plastics production facility will require your digital graphics file. I started with a small panel and, that was a good thing, as I had to adjust the size of the circles for the switch holes so that they would fit easily without any additional drilling. You may want to start with a small practice piece before committing to that major yard panel. Once the new



acrylic panels are ready all that's left is to reinstall the switches and LED's. I still have a couple of new panels to complete but I'm planning to make some minor changes to the layout in those areas so they will have to wait until the changes have been completed. The new panels have a professional appearance and it took less time and cost less than I expected. If your layout is at the stage where you are ready to replace the control panels consider the technology that a modern plastics shop can offer. Now that the panels have been replaced, I am very pleased with the results.

The remaining photos show the progression of panel replacement at a different layout location.



Photo #4 is of the original Masonite panel for one of my main yards in the Strathcona/Suville area.

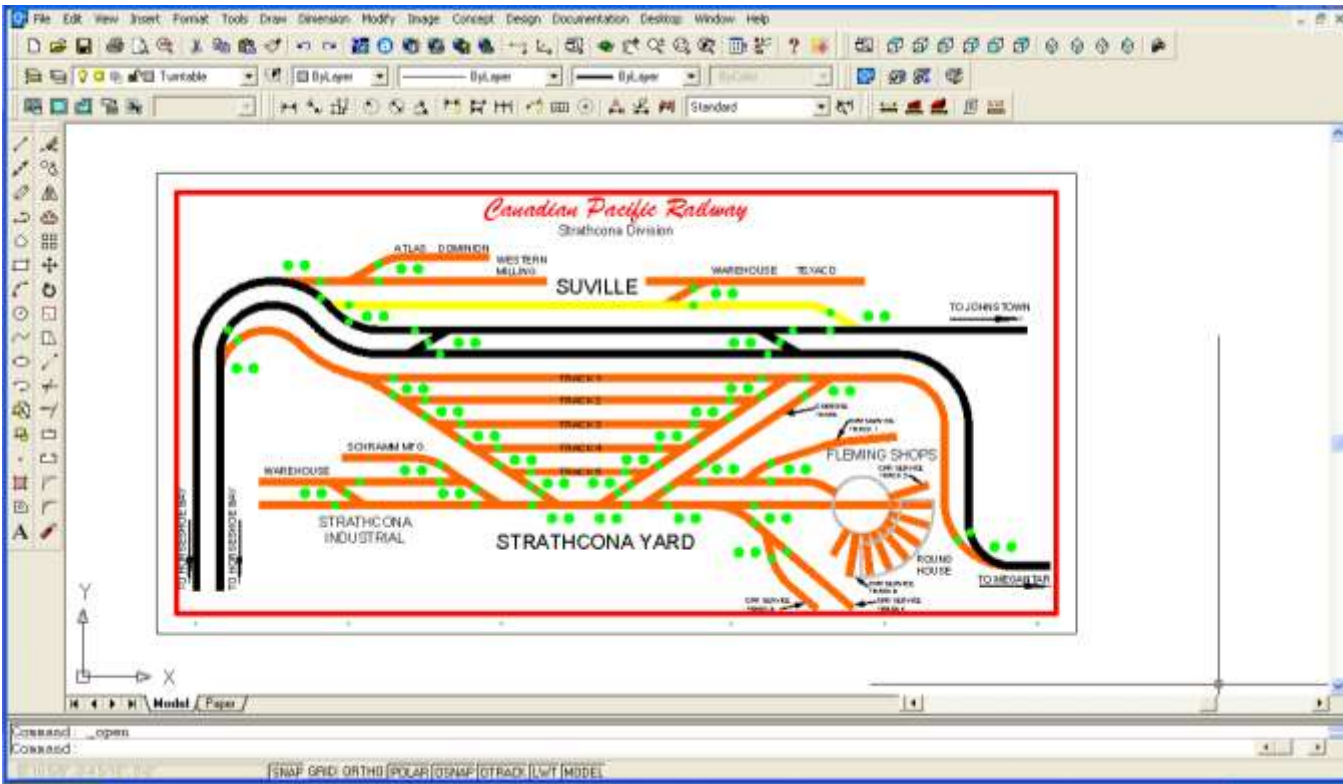


Photo #5 includes the graphics for the Strathcona/Suville area panel.



# Upcoming Events in and near the 6<sup>th</sup> Division

See all the PNR events and our most recent additions at [www.pnr.nmra.org](http://www.pnr.nmra.org)

**Note: All events are subject to modification or cancellation due to pandemic restrictions in effect at the time. Please check with the organizers close to the event date.**

## **Apr 1 (Sat), Edmonton, AB**

MMRF Spring Swap Meet: Central Lion's Senior Citizens Recreation Centre 11113 113 St. 9AM-1PM, Admission \$3.00  
Vendor Tables: \$25.00 Info:- Ric Francoeur, [swapmeet@mmrf.ca](mailto:swapmeet@mmrf.ca) Ph. 780-458-1032 [www.mmrf.ab.ca](http://www.mmrf.ab.ca)

## **April 15-16, (Sat-Sun), Calgary, AB**

SUPERTRAIN 2023, Canada's Largest Model Train Show. 9 AM to 5 PM both days. Genesis Centre, 7555 Falconridge Blvd. NE, Calgary. Adult - \$15, under 16 - free. Over 40,000 sq. ft. of operating layouts, exhibits and displays, railroad artists, hobby shops, model manufacturers, demonstrations, museums and railroad historical associations, Lego and Thomas Play Area, garden railways, ride-on trains, and much more. Info:- [www.supertrain.ca](http://www.supertrain.ca) or email to [info@supertrain.ca](mailto:info@supertrain.ca)

## **April 29-30, (Sat-Sun), Regina, SK**

Regina Railfest – Model Railroad Show. Over 25,000 sq. ft. of model railroad layouts, displays, exhibits, and vendors!  
SATURDAY 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. SUNDAY 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. ADMISSION: Adults - \$10.00, Youth (5-16) - \$5.00, Children (4 and under) – FREE, Families - \$20.00 (2 adults and up to 3 youth or children) More information available at [www.reginarailfest.com](http://www.reginarailfest.com). Caledonian Curling Club, 2225 Sandra Schmirler Way.

## **Online: May 4 & 18, In-Person: May 26-28, (Fri-Sun), Burnaby, BC**

Railway Modelers Meet of British Columbia (RMMBC) Virtual and live at Simon Fraser University. The emphasis is primarily on "modelling," as the name implies, with many interesting clinics, layout tours, and operating sessions. Latest information at: [railwaymodellertmeetofbc.ca/](http://railwaymodellertmeetofbc.ca/)

## **May 10-14, Tacoma, WA**

2023 Pacific Northwest Region Convention "The Prairie Line Experience" including multiple tracks of clinics, layout tours spanning the region, contests, AP evaluations, train spotting opportunities, tours and non-rail events. At the Comfort Inn and Suites. Info:- [www.pnrtacoma2023.org](http://www.pnrtacoma2023.org)

## **May 19-21, Regina, SK**

Queen City Express 6th Division, Pacific Northwest Region, National Model Railroad Association, Spring Meet. Convention hotel is the Four Points by Sheraton, 2415 Dewdney Avenue, Regina. Info:- [www.queencityexpress.ca](http://www.queencityexpress.ca).

## **Oct 14, (Sat), Calgary, AB**

42nd Annual Boomer Auction, Sponsored by South Bank Short Lines, ([www.sbsltrains.ca](http://www.sbsltrains.ca)) St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, 703 Heritage Dr. SW. Setup and viewing 08:30am, dining car opens 09:30 am, auction starts at 10:00am.

## **Oct 15, (Sun) Calgary AB**

CMRS Fall Mini Meet and AGM, Clinics, Show & Tell. More information at [The Calgary Model Railway Society](http://The Calgary Model Railway Society)

---



## Queen City Express

[www.queencityexpress.ca](http://www.queencityexpress.ca)

NMRA PNR 6<sup>th</sup> Division Convention, Regina, Saskatchewan

**May 19 – 21, 2023**

Convention Hotel: Four Points by Sheraton  
2415 Dewdney Avenue, Regina S4R 8R2 (306) 789-8008

**See convention website for hotel details**

This is a fillable PDF form that can be completed using a computer, saved and emailed to [qceregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:qceregistrar@gmail.com). It can also be printed and completed by hand.

Name:	
Name for badge:	
NMRA# (all registrants must be NMRA members):	
Street address:	
City:	
Province:	
Postal code:	
Phone (with area code):	
Email:	

*If you will be bringing a display model, please see website for information required.*

Item	Quantity	Cost per Each	Amount
Registration for adult(s)		\$60.00	\$0.00
Registration for minor(s)(under 19)		\$40.00	\$0.00
Extra guest(s) at Meet & Greet		\$20.00	\$0.00
Banquet		\$40.00	\$0.00
		<b>Total:</b>	\$0.00

**E-transfer payments to:** [qceregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:qceregistrar@gmail.com)

A **Meet & Greet** pizza event will be held at Bushwakker Brew Pub, 2206 Dewdney Avenue (a short walk from the convention hotel) starting at 6:00 PM, Friday, May 19, 2023. Minors are NOT permitted. Cost of pizzas is included in the registration fee. If additional guests wish to attend the Meet & Greet the cost is \$20.00. Beverages are not included but a selection of beverages will be available for purchase. Convention registrants who are minors will be charged \$40.00.

The **Banquet** will be held at the convention hotel, starting at 6:00 PM, Saturday, May 20, 2023. Minors are permitted. If you have any special dietary needs for the banquet, please elaborate:

--

Email your completed registration to: [qceregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:qceregistrar@gmail.com)

If you prefer to mail the completed registration and/or a cheque, please mail to:

Rupert James, Registrar, Queen City Express Convention

106 Wintergreene Lane, Regina, SK S4S 0A7

Cheques should be made payable to: Echo Valley Railroad Guild