

It's Time For the 2026

Piedmont Pilgrimage

See great local Model Railroads, FREE, and Open to the Public!

WEEKENDS
October 24
Thru
November 22

www.piedmontpilgrimage.com

PIEDMONT DIVISION

SOUTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

TIMETABLE

VOLUME 28

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GARY FISH
SUPERINTENDENT

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OPERATIONS

DIANA WATSON
ADMINISTRATION

PETER THOMAS
FINANCE

RAYMOND STEWART
MEMBERSHIP

"We're All About The Trains"



Super Views

Dr. Gary Fish
Division Superintendent

It's been a wonderful summer for the Piedmont Division

As exciting as it was having the Scenic City Express on our northern boarder, we did have monthly meetings and events. There were wonderful classes by **Joe Nichols Jr**, **Mike Cummings**, **Mike Reed**, **Scott Dunlap**, as well as an event where local operating groups told the audience about their groups. These included: Boomers - **Mark Rieken**; Chattahoochee Express - **Joe Nichols Jr**; Intown Atlanta Model Railroaders - **Doug Alexander**; Jasper Roundhouse - **Gary Fish**; Joint Railway Association of GA - **Norm Stetzel**; N. Atlanta Rail Barrons - **Howard Goodwin**, MMR; and North County Interchange - **Mark Reed**.

Open houses were held at **Tom Gordon's** & **Joe Nichols'** homes.

I know we all look forward to the fall and cooler weather for working indoors on trains (unless you have a Garden layout and prefer the summer to stay outside)

Starting the 3rd weekend in October, the **Piedmont Pilgrimage** begins. Six weekends with over 70 open houses in the Atlanta Metro area are sure to attract train enthusiasts.

If you aren't having an open house, please consider assisting someone who has opened there doors. Running trains for the host allows them to talk with the visitors.

I hope everyone can visit as many layouts as possible and see what your fellow modelers are imagining and creating.

BTW… If you are afraid that you will miss the college and pro football games on Saturday and Sunday, you can listen to the football games on the radio while running around to visit the many layouts.

The Scenic City Express National Convention and the National Train show was on our northern border, and The Piedmont Division was intimately involved in the week's event and success.

To help start the show quickly, over a dozen of our members opened their doors for visitors heading north to Chattanooga. I was told that these open houses each hosted between 50 and 100 visitors. Thanks to all who welcomed visitors.



The National Convention and Train Show offered a phenomenal array of classes, events tours that were available for the taking. Everything from train rides at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, back shop tours at the TVRM where we observed their latest efforts on rebuilding Pullman cars, EMD E8, F7 and other iron horses.

Attending the MWF Solutions Railroad specialty fabrication factory back shop tour offered us an opportunity to observe the fabrication/rebuilding of a Shay locomotive's geared trucks. This shop had a phenomenal array of 60- to 80-year-old metal shop equipment allowing the company fabricate and recreate parts needed to rebuild trains from yesteryear. We were informed the biggest issue facing the company is getting qualified machinist to work.

We also had the first viewing of a CSX F550 super duty pickup truck with high-railers. A box was fabricated on the back that housed a generator, and transformer (for those of you in the know, those are the power source of an x-ray unit). The truck had "wings" on the side and on the bottom that swung out and "electrocuted" the vegetation. The advantage of this system will be that thousands of gallons of herbicide would not need to be used.

There was a tour of the Komatsu factory to see the line building their latest excavators. There were also multiple dinner train excursions, a tour of the Scale Trains factory (and an open house and warehouse sale) and lots of open houses and operating sessions.

I want to thank **Jon Meyers** and **Tom Gordon** who handled volunteers for the event. Thanks for sending out lots of "Sign-Up Genius" email notifications and working their magic to keep the convention staffed with volunteers. The Piedmont Division did a wonderful job staffing the necessary volunteer manpower. Thank you to all the volunteers that helped make the show a super success.

I would personally like to thank Roy **Masterson**, **Rick Coble**, **Mike Cummings**, **Walt Liles** and their team. They did a great job creating a wonderful Convention/Train show. Thanks to all.

Happy Modeling! I hope to see you on the road during the Pilgrimage!

Gary

Chattanooga Notebook

Our former Superintendent, Peter Youngblood, who now lives in California, attended the National Convention in Chattanooga, and as he has been doing since we hosted the NMRA in 2013, participated in the Modeling with the Masters (MWTM) program. He sent us these photos and had this to say:

> I've taught MWTM National Convention clinics continuously now for 13 years, occasionally also at Regionals. Clark Kooning, MMR, the creator and manager of the MWTM program, claims that I agreed to a lifetime contract when I was recruited…really?
>
> On average instructors each give 2 or 3 MWTM Convention clinics with dissimilar topics. The reward for this volunteer work is the appreciation and thanks expressed by students for teaching them new techniques and skills. We're always interested recruiting new instructors, so if you'd like to know more, contact Clark or me.

We also want to congratulate Peter in the recognition that National gave him for his many years of service to NMRA and our great hobby by making him an Honorary Life Member. There are only about 76 HLMs in the NMRA, so this is a pretty big deal!























The 2026 Piedmont Pilgrimage

by Scott Dunlap

Except where noted, photos by the author

During our Piedmont Division meeting on Tuesday, September 8, I shared information about the upcoming Piedmont Pilgrimage. For those who attended, much of this article will be a bit of a rehash, so bear with me.



Piedmont Pilgrimage chairman, **Scott Dunlap**, was put to work running trains at **John Travis's** Johnstown and Gerryville during the 2024 event.

Photo by Bert Jarrell

First, a reminder to all of this year's hosts: please visit the Pilgrimage website to verify that your open house information is accurate. The last thing anyone wants is for people to show up at the wrong time. If you find any errors, please contact me as soon as possible.

While we're discussing the website, take this opportunity to update your layout profile. Consider adding some new photographs or a video. By the way, I've noticed that 15% of the layout profiles currently don't have any pictures.

Let's get more folks to come!

Now let's take a look at our attendance figures, which many believe are significantly higher than they actually are. In 2025, our attendance was 2,965, about 800 more than in 2024. However, this number does not represent 2,965 unique individuals. This is similar to how attendance figures are reported for sporting events. For example, in 2025, the Atlanta Falcons reported a home attendance of approximately 565,000. Of course, this does not mean that 565,000 different people attended those games, not even close; many individuals went to multiple games, and some attended all of them. Each time a person passed through the turnstiles, they were counted again. The same principle applies to the Pilgrimage; our attendance figures reflect the total number of visits.

One thing is certain: despite previous misconceptions, the Pilgrimage does not draw thousands of visitors; it attracts hundreds but not thousands. So, what are we doing to change that?

Spreading the word

Everyone is aware of our website, which reaches hundreds of people each year. I have also reached out to local businesses that are hosting open houses and asked them to share information about the Pilgrimage on their websites as well. As I write this, Trainz already has and others plan to soon.

We will maintain a strong presence on Facebook with regular posts leading up to and during the event on the Piedmont Division, NMRA Community Group, Model Railroading, Model Railroading Layout Group, and the Events Around Atlanta for Kids pages. If you use Facebook, please help increase the visibility of these posts by liking and sharing them.

Look for a super new video

A new video about the Pilgrimage has been produced by V12 Productions. It will showcase the layouts of **Mark Bridgwater**, **David Godwin**, **Justin Jankauskus**, and **John Travis**. The video will be released on V12's YouTube channel on October 15. As with our Facebook posts, please like and share the video if you can. I plan to share it with every model railroader I know who is not a member of the Piedmont Division, from here to Australia.



Charlie Murphy of V12 Productions shooting video at **David Godwin's** Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee Railroad, also know as the GAT.

At around the same time, we will also send an email to everyone on our extensive mailing list, which includes approximately 3,000 people.

Lastly, we have printed and are distributing 1,500 booklets. Additionally, 250 flyers were handed out at this year's NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, the Atlanta Train Show in Duluth, and the Model Railroad Days event at the Southeastern Railway Museum.

Show your support!

I encourage all division members to support the hosts and attend as many open houses as possible. We have ten first-time layouts this year and another ten that are making only their second appearance, so even many of the most dedicated Piedmont Pilgrimage attendees have not seen them.

Please promote the Pilgrimage to anyone you know who might be interested, especially those with kids or grand kids who might enjoy it. Consider organizing a field trip to visit some layouts and invite your friends to come along. It helps boost overall attendance, and it's fun too!

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To all of the hosts, you have a significant role in increasing our attendance. While the division is making a great effort to get the word out, there is no substitute for self-promotion. Tell everyone you know about your open house—neighbors, friends, co-workers, etc. Better yet, send out an email invitation to everyone on your mailing list who lives within a hundred miles. Despite all of our best efforts, you can reach people that we can't. Even if you manage to get just a few extra people, your efforts combined with those of others can make a big difference.

In closing, as I mentioned at the division meeting, I challenge all hosts: if you are hosting a three-hour morning session, try to get 75 people through the door, if you are hosting a four-hour afternoon or all-day session, aim for a hundred. (I can almost hear everyone's eyes rolling!) Yes, I know these goals are aggressive, but they're achievable.

One thing I did not mention at the division meeting: my overall goal for this year's attendance: a 50% increase, no less. Together, we can make it happen.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the 2026 Piedmont Pilgrimage!



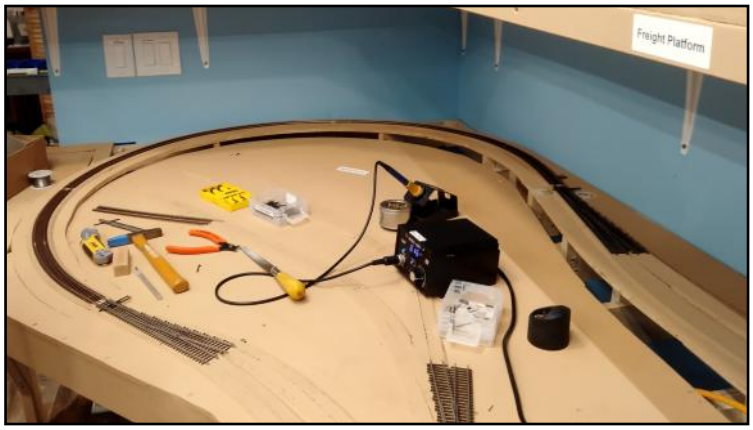
There's been a lot of progress on **Mark Brigwater's** Canton Southern since last year. Mark's layout is one of the biggest in the state



Justin Jankauskus's Delaware and Hudson Penn Division really captures the feel of 1970s railroading in the northeast. Justin's layout is one of the four featured on this year's video.



Steve Austin's Elkhorn Iron & Timber Co. Railroad is always a popular stop on the Pilgrimage, and for good reason!



Bill Bregar's layout is so new that he's barely had time to lay the track! But it will ready and running in time for his open house on November 21.





Welcome Aboard, NEW DIVISION MEMBERS!



Steven Eubanks Marietta

Michael Hawes Cartersville

Jay Holland Acworth

Nikhil Jammalamadaka Smyrna

Mark LaPlante Cumming

Luke Lewis Atlanta

Billy Little Canton

David May Lawrenceville

Asiri Mudcli Acworth

Jake Overton Johns Creek

Adam Preble Grayson

Joe Solorzano Marietta

Eric Swalberg Acworth

George Thurman Canton

Charles Townsend Gainesville

Michael Van Voorhis Acworth

Jeffrey Yeomans Braselton

Scott Yonek Jackson





On Saturday, September 19, the Piedmont Division held what has become our annual picnic at the Holcomb Bridge Park pavilion. A bit over twenty members and spouses attended, including SER President **Walt Liles** and his wife, **Janet**. And we want to salute and thank **Diana Watson**, and of course, her ever-helpful husband, **Randall**, for all their great work in putting the picnic together. It would not have happened but for her determination! The food was great, as was the fellowship! We hope we'll see more of you there next year!



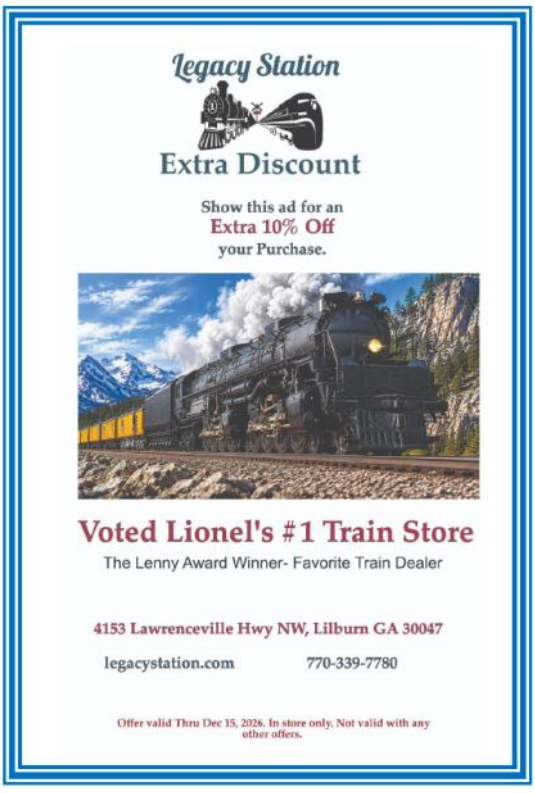




PIEDMONT ACHIEVERS

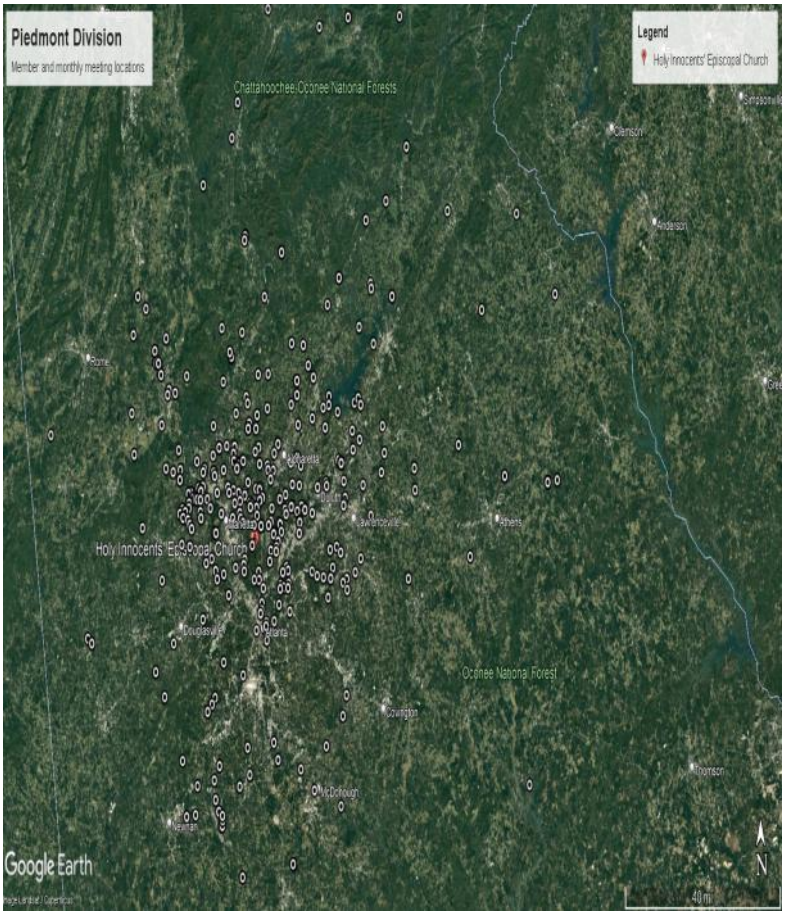


In spite of his work as Chairman of our annual Train Show, **Jim Travis** still finds time to pursue his MMR rating. Here AP Chairman **Charles Mason, MMR** presents Jim with his Model Railroad Engineer—Electrical AP certificate.



Supported Area Group Activities

This map shows there are many members living too far away to attend the monthly meeting location:



Therefore the Division wants to support activities by groups of members in the same area.

If you see from the map

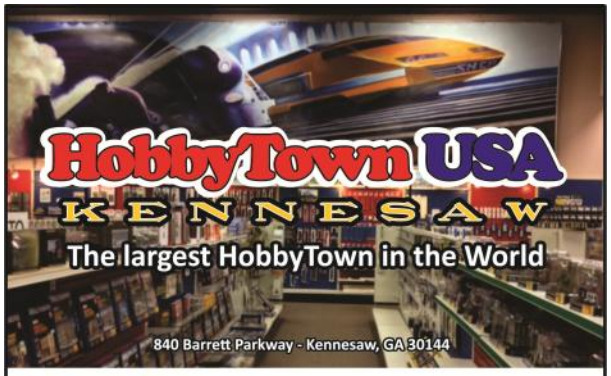
- that there are several members near you,
- or you are already gathering,

and would like support to enable you to share the hobby with guests, or need a clinician to come to you to share their expertise.

A Sponsored Area Group (SAG) will consist of four or more Piedmont Division members. The SAG Group will be completely informal and without officers.

For more information on the Piedmont Division's Supported Area Group Activities (SAGA), go to **piedmont-div.org/division-education-2/**

Peter Thomas
SAG Coordinator
sagainfo@piedmont-div.org





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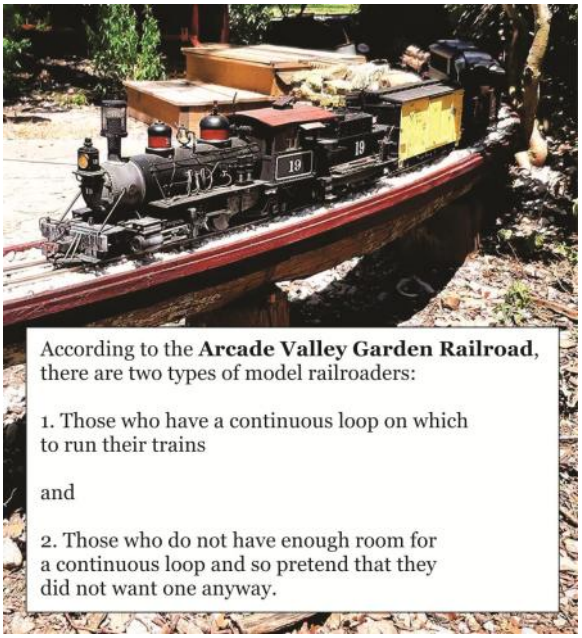
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Running Extra



This is what some people will think when you tell them that you have a "duck under" on your layout.



According to the **Arcade Valley Garden Railroad**, there are two types of model railroaders:

1. Those who have a continuous loop on which to run their trains

and

2. Those who do not have enough room for a continuous loop and so pretend that they did not want one anyway.

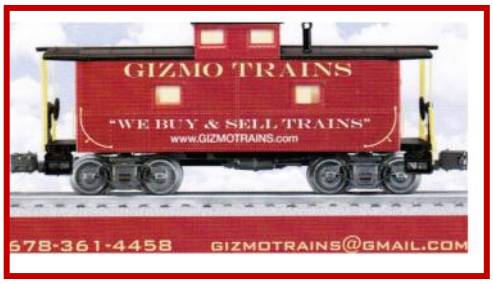














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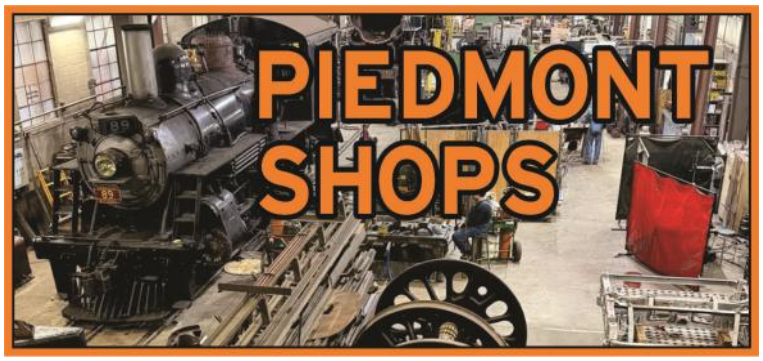
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The Piedmont Division's monthly meetings are held at
Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church
805 Mt. Vernon Highway / Sandy Springs, GA 30327

Division Meetings are Open to Everyone.
Please come join us to see
the fun that is Model Railroading!

We hope to see you at our next meeting!



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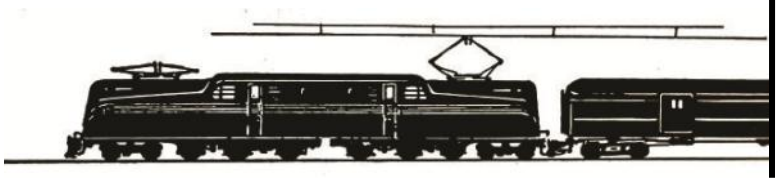
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