



BULLETIN BOARD

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ABOVE: A C-liner exits a tunnel on Scott Calvert's CPR Boundary Subdivision layout. Scott's large and impressive layout will be one of those hosting operating sessions during the 7th Division's flagship meet, the 2026 Railway Modellers' Meet of BC, to be held this coming May. For more information see the article on page 5.

Photo by Scott Calvert

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From the Editor's Desk

The lead article in this issue is by Aidan Botting, a railway modeller and 7th Division member, who is also a teacher at Moscrop Secondary School in Burnaby. He has been involved in providing high school students to present mini-clinics at the PNR 2024 convention and the 2025 RMMBC, and has developed a art course for students building modules. His article describes how he did that.

On a much less positive note, this issue also has an obituary for Mark Dance, probably the most widely known local railway modeller and 7th Division member. Mark's layout and modelling efforts have become well known to most of our members and have been the subject of many articles in the railway modelling press. Although his health has been failing in the last few years and his death was not unexpected, it still comes as a shock. Mark's obituary is on page 10.

As usual, please let me know if there is something you think is missing or could be improved about the Bulletin Board. If you have any comments at all, or are thinking about providing an article to help or inform your fellow members, please send me an email at bbeditor@7divpnr.ca.

Enjoy the issue!



Superintendent's Message

By Victor Gilbert, 7th Division Superintendent

You may have noticed that the NMRA website (<https://www.nmra.org/>) has new look. The NMRA is doing what it does, setting a standard. This standard will be applied across the organization and will happen in phases. Headquarters and the regions have already been updated, and the division should be completed by April 2026. Look for the coming changes.

As I mentioned in the last Bulletin Board, our Director-At-Large is stepping down. We have had several members step up for the position. The board has decided to split the Director-At-Large position to three positions. The current Director-At-Large position will now be known as the Director-At-Large – Island. The other two positions will be appointed until next year when they will become elected. The new positions will be Director-At-Large – Coastal and Director-At-Large – Interior. Going forward, during even numbered years we will elect the Treasurer, Secretary, and Director-At-Large – Island. During odd numbered years the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director-At-Large – Coastal, and Director-At-Large – Interior will be up for election.

The 7th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region (PNR) of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) will hold its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 9th, 2026, at 8 PM.

As a part of the AGM, we will hold elections for Treasurer, Secretary, and Director-At-Large. The following positions are up for election:

- The current Treasurer, Larry Sebelley, has agreed to stay on for another term if elected.
- The current Secretary, Randy Nussli, has agreed to stay on for another term if elected.
- The current Director At Large – Island, Ken Rutherford, is stepping down. Dan Rowsel has stepped up.

There is an open call for nominations for all these positions. If you would like to nominate someone or yourself for any of these positions, please contact one of the board members. The official for this election is our Assistant Superintendent, Tim Horton, at assistantsuperintendent@7divpnr.ca.

Your membership is at work in our community. Moscrop Secondary School in Burnaby has an art program

featuring railway modelling. Aidan Botting, the teacher, has provided an update on their progress. Please read it and drop a comment to moscropmodelrailroading@7divpn.ca.

Lastly, it is with great sadness that I pass along the news that Mark Dance disembarked our train on Christmas night. Many of us were fortunate to have been invited to operate on his wonderful Columbia and Western. Mark was a fantastic modeller and an inspiration to many. My heartfelt condolences and the condolences of the 7th Division go out to Mark's family and friends.

Your Board of Directors generally meets the second Monday of each month. If you would like to attend, please contact me at superintendent@7divpn.ca for a link to the ZOOM meeting.

As always, whether you are just starting or have been modelling for years: welcome. Feel free to contact me or anyone on the 7th Division Board with questions or suggestions.

To our existing members, your continued involvement is valued just as much. You should also feel free to contact us for any reason.

Our contact information can be found on the [About Us page](#) of the Division's website.

All of you help the organization fulfill our goals of maintaining standards and educating. Thank you.

Victor Gilbert
7th Division Superintendent
superintendent@7divpn.ca

Adding Value to Your Membership

By Victor Gilbert, 7th Division Superintendent

New Members

The following new 7th Division members have joined us in the last six months. Please welcome them, and work to ensure they are included in our events.

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|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| • Nicole Acerra | North Vancouver | August 2025 |
| • Kai Jacques | North Vancouver | August 2025 |
| • Bob McArthur | Abbotsford | October 2025 |
| • Trevor Brown | Abbotsford | November 2025 |

Upcoming Events

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Yarrow Community Model Train Meet | March 7, 2026 |
| • Sea to Sky Model Train & Hobby Show | March 21 & 22, 2026 |
| • Nanaimo Model Train Show | April 12, 2026 |
| • Railway Modellers' Meet of BC | May 22 to 24, 2026 |
| • Railway Day – Parksville Museum | 2026 TBD |

Tim Horton has started a Modelling Night for those in the lower mainland, usually held on the first Friday of the month. The event takes place in North Vancouver. Bring a project with you and enjoy an evening of progress on your models, conversation, and collaboration. Please RSVP to Assistant Superintendent Tim Horton at assistantsuperintendent@7divpn.ca. Directions will be sent via email the Thursday before the modelling night.

Awards

Did you know that the 7th Division recognizes our members for their achievements?

If you know someone who should be recognized with one of the awards listed below, contact the award's

coordinator or the Superintendent of the 7th Division. Contact information can be found on the [About Us page of the 7th Division website](#).

The **Jack Work Memorial Trophy** is presented annually to the 7th Division member who best exhibits the qualities that Jack Work displayed: imagination, creativity, innovation, artistry, forward-thinking, quality workmanship, and the sharing of the results of these qualities with the rest of the hobby.

The **Ross Heriot Memorial Gold Spike Award** is presented annually to an individual or a group of individuals in the 7th Division who have made a significant contribution to the division.

The **Railway Heritage Award** is presented, when appropriate, to a current member of the 7th Division who has contributed in a meaningful way to the preservation of railway history.

Check out the [Awards page of the 7th Division website](#) for more details and past recipients.

Modeller's Help Desk

We are here to help. If you need a solution or an idea for your layout, ask Mike at the “Modeller’s Help Desk” at helpdesk@7divpnr.ca.

Changing Your Email Address

We have created a simple way to change your email address. Email the [7th Division Membership Coordinator](#), with EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGE as the subject line. Include your name, NMRA membership number, old email address, and new email address. We will update our records and pass the information to NMRA Regional and National levels.

Volunteering

We need volunteers and have openings for the following:

- Publicity Coordinator

Responsibilities: Coordinate with local events to have an NMRA presence, liaise with NMRA Regional and National for publications.

- Social Media Coordinator

Responsibilities: Work to establish a 7th Division social media presence.

- 7th Division Regional Education Team

Responsibilities: Work with the NMRA PNR Regional Education Team to establish a library of “How To” and research material for access by NMRA members

- Web Administrator

Responsibilities: Maintain the 7th Division’s website and post content as requested.

- Clinic Coordinator

Responsibilities: Work with the 7th Division’s Secretary to coordinate clinicians and resources for the 7th Division’s winter, summer, and fall clinics.

Would you like to volunteer for one of these positions, or perhaps you have an idea for the Division? Reach out to your Sub-Division Coordinator. They are listed on the [7th Division website on the “About Us” page](#) or you can contact me at superintendent@7divpnr.ca.



Are You Coming to RMMBC 26?

By John Geddes, RMMBC Publicity

Once again, we look forward to the Railway Modellers' Meet of BC this coming May. As in past years, the in-person meet will be held at SFU campus in Burnaby (just outside of Vancouver) on May 22th through 24th, preceded by the Online Kickoff, a collection of free online clinics presented on ZOOM on two prior evenings, Apr 30th and May 14th.

It will feature all your favourite events: Operating Sessions, Layout Tours, Clinics, Workshops, Model Displays, Meet the Modeller, Manufacturer Displays, and as is our tradition, we will include a few new things.

We are fortunate to have the annual RMMBC as an opportunity for us to gather to learn from each other, to share our experiences, and most importantly to connect as a modelling community. If you have not attended in the past, please consider it. We hope that in addition to having fun, the lasting reward will be the friendships you will make.

Coming from out of town? We do our best to keep costs as low as possible. One of the features of our SFU location for the in-person meet is the low cost accommodation available on campus.

Registration will be opening some time in February.

For full program information check out our revamped website: <https://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/wp/>

While you are at the website, be sure to sign up for the RMMBC newsletter to keep you on top of the latest news: <https://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/wp/sign-up-for-our-newsletter/>



Railway Modellers
MEET OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



ABOVE: One of the major attractions of RMMBC's site at SFU is the excellent presentation venues available. Here the 2025 keynote address is presented to a large lecture hall, while a smaller lecture hall was used for smaller clinics.

Photo by Marc Simpson

Model Railway Program at Moscrop Secondary

Text and photos by Aidan Botting

The unique Model Railway Building and Design program at Moscrop Secondary School in Burnaby – an elective offered through the BC Studio Arts 3D curriculum – has received a significant boost thanks to the generosity of the 7th Division, Pacific Northwest Region (PNR) of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA). The program, taught by public-school educator and long-time model railway enthusiast Aidan Botting, recently benefited from a \$500 contribution made collectively by NMRA members eager to support hands-on learning for youth.

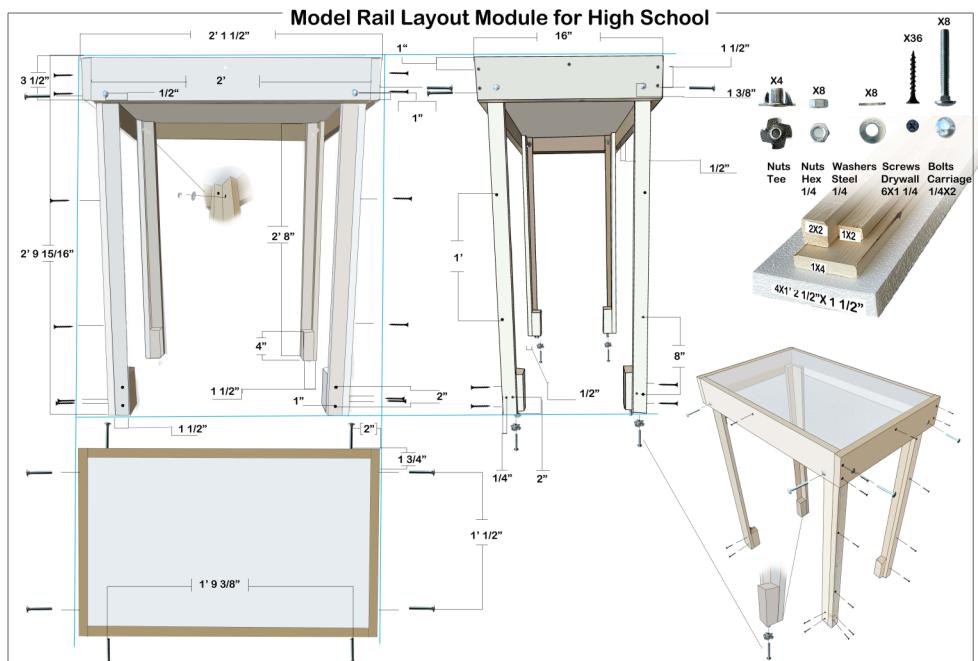
The funding was intended to help establish a reusable system of modular benchwork that students could build upon year after year. The 7th Division also hoped the modules would reflect the organization's established dimension standards as closely as possible. Yet meeting those standards within a public-school budget – and for a total of sixty students across two course blocks – presented several challenges.

With only \$8.33 in extra funding available per student, the design of the modules had to be efficient, affordable, and student-friendly. "Group work can be tricky," Botting explained. "More than two students on a single project often leaves someone disengaged. The modules needed to allow every student to do meaningful hands-on work while still being shareable between two classes." Ultimately, pairs of students were assigned to each module, effectively combining four students' allotments for a workable \$33.32 per bench. Gershom Poretz, a grade 12 student reflects on when he was helping to build the larger island format layout from the previous year. He explains, "The module-based system has been an effective way of building a large model railroad. It is nice working on it in small manageable pieces".

Another challenge was the need for multiple power drills, which would have significantly increased costs. To address this, the supporting surfaces were built not from wood but from 1½-inch foam, allowing students to thread feeder wires through the material using simple skewers. An unexpected benefit soon emerged: unlike wood, foam seals itself around inserted wires, preventing loose ballast from falling through during scenery work.

On July 3, 2025, planning for the standardized classroom modules officially began. With sketchbook in hand, Botting met 7th Division Superintendent Victor Gilbert at a Langley Tim Hortons before visiting a local hardware store to price materials. The original prototype design, later drafted in Photoshop, featured a 35-inch-high frame topped with a 24" × 16" foam surface, set within a 25" × 17" wooden border. Two prototypes were built for approximately \$100. Botting spent the rest of the summer making minor adjustments to improve alignment, foam-to-foam transitions, and interchangeability between classes.

The structural design also incorporated simple C-clamps for joining modules, allowing track alignment to be fine-tuned. Two centred rows of HO-scale



ABOVE: Using Photoshop, Botting drafted a plan, with materials and hardware, to define an affordable standardized module for his class.

track and ballast were installed to ensure consistency from module to module. Because both ends were identical, the track became fully reversible – an idea that required students to carefully wire their modules so that polarity flipped correctly when rotated.

Soldering proved to be one of the most demanding skills for students. Four spray-booth workstations, each equipped with ventilation and LED lighting, were set up to double as soldering stations. Students learned to pre-tin wires, sand rails, and solder connections from underneath the foam after threading and twisting feeder wires into place. While results varied, most students quickly developed competence, and locomotives were soon gliding smoothly across test sections.

Once wiring was complete, students moved into scenery work: carving drainage ditches, constructing reversible service roads with one-inch ramps, painting rails using a rusted railway spike as a real-world colour reference, adding chalk-pastel weathering, and preparing surfaces for gravel and dirt textures. More advanced scenery, such as rock castings created from rubber molds, talus, scree, and static grass, followed shortly after.

Some students also began work on curved 90-degree sections, using an old figure-skating scribe to mark the 36- and 40-inch radii. The new modular system has resonated strongly with learners. Grade 10 student, Arianne Acera, described the course as “one of the most unique classes a high-school student can take. Even though it’s an art class, it’s completely different from what I expected. Learning how to solder wires or measure rails was really cool... If there’s someone who likes learning new



ABOVE: Adaptations were made to the original design by lowering the module ends, allowing the two-foot foam sections to sit flush and connect seamlessly from foam to foam.



ABOVE: Grade 12 student Gershom Poretz and Grade 10 student Arianne Acera work together to help put together a curved section of track for the classroom layout.

things, they should take this class.”

Looking ahead to next term, students will begin developing BC-inspired plant life, constructing small architectural structures drafted to scale, and designing the background scenes that will sit behind their railway modules.

A deep sense of gratitude extends to the members of the 7th Division PNR/NMRA, whose generosity has transformed the classroom experience. Their support has allowed every student to engage directly with their own module to include all aspects of construction, providing meaningful technical, artistic, and design-based learning opportunities – some of which are already inspiring students to consider related future careers.



ABOVE: Set up just inside the art room door, this photograph of the layout currently features four of the twenty-six planned two-foot student sample modules – standard straight sections built in pairs across two classes – excluding the four 90-degree corner curves. When complete, the track will span 4 scale kilometres (150 actual feet) of track.

Call for Nominations

The 7th Division is run by a volunteer Board of Directors. Board members are elected by division members for two year terms, with half the positions filled by election each year.

This year we are calling for nominations for the positions of Treasurer, Secretary, and Director At Large.

The current Treasurer, Larry Sebelley, and the current Secretary, Randy Nussli, have both agreed to let their names stand for election to another term. Additional nominations for these positions are welcome. The current Director At Large, Ken Rutherford, is stepping down. We need at least one nomination for this position.

If you would like to nominate someone or yourself for any of these positions, please contact our Assistant Superintendent, Tim Horton, at assistantsuperintendent@7divpnr.ca. Tim can also be contacted if you would like information about the duties and responsibilities associated with these positions.

| TIME TABLE No. 60, SEPTEMBER 28th, 1930 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Obituary

Mark Dance, 1963 – 2025

by Rene Gourley

It is with much sadness that we share the news that our friend and 7th Division member, Mark Dance, took his last run on December 26th, 2025. He had been leading a years-long battle with Multiple Systems Atrophy (MSA) and while his body was letting him down, his mind was still as sharp as ever. He brought the same mixture of science, ingenuity, courage and optimism to overcoming illness that he brought to railway modelling.

Mark was a mechanical engineer by training and he spent his early career designing biomedical equipment for surgeons. He would often recount stories about working with doctors in the operating room to understand what kind of devices they needed to make their jobs better, and their outcomes more successful. He brought that same problem-solving practice to the design of his magnificent Columbia & Western: he was fascinated with how people interact with machines, and that shaped his approach to layout design.

From engineering, Mark progressed into technology leadership, where over the course of eleven years at Creo, he rose from project management to CFO/COO. Again, Mark brought his professional life into his hobby, attacking each project with a detailed plan, setting deadlines and ultimately meeting them. So once he started on the Columbia and Western in 2005, he progressed with heart-stopping speed, and had trains running over the hill by 2007.

In October 2008, Mark began hosting operating sessions, and that is when many of us first met him. Gorgeous to look at, and a joy to run, the Columbia and Western was a perennial favourite in the Railway Modellers' Meet of BC operating sessions and the Trains meets before them. We found Mark to be a warm and gracious host, and soon counted him among our friends.

If we didn't meet him through operating sessions, we met Mark through his leadership within the Seventh Division. For many years until 2018, Mark coordinated the clinics program for the Trains meets and for the Railway Modellers' Meet of BC. With his business experience, Mark challenged us to continually innovate and strive to improve. If you ever complete one of the RMMBC surveys, for example, you are responding to Mark's initiative.

We also have Mark to thank for the parts of Brian Pate's Klondike Mines Railway that were saved for display in museums in Dawson City and Revelstoke. Under a tight timeline, he assembled a team of volunteers to extract the un-extractable, stabilize it and ship it thousands of kilometres for reassembly. When it became clear that his own railway would have to come out, he leveraged this experience, and it is now awaiting reassembly by Brian Stokes in its new prairie home.

Sadly, as he himself said, Mark "was dealt a bad hand." His railway modelling days were over in 2022 as the disease progressed rapidly through Parkinson's-like symptoms. Even as MSA ravaged his body, he was forever the genial host, and bright engineering mind. Mark will be missed greatly among our railway modelling community, and our lives are much richer for having known him.



ABOVE: Mark, as perhaps many remember him, operating on Gary Hinshaw's layout – Gary Hinshaw photo



ABOVE: Rene Gourley, Gary Hinshaw and John Geddes with Mark, September 2023 – Rene Gourley photo

Notices and Contacts

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The Bulletin Board has five issues per year: January/February, March/April, May/June, September/October, and November/December. Each issue is published around the start of the issue period. Publication means the Bulletin Board is available for download from the 7th Division website. Members will be notified by email when the download is ready. In exceptional circumstances, such as Internet unavailability or medical conditions, the 7th Division may agree to distribute paper copies to affected members.

The PNR 7th Division maintains a list of members that includes postal and e-mail addresses and phone numbers. If you move or change your internet service provider or in any other way cause your contact details to change PLEASE contact the [Membership Coordinator](#) to provide the new information. If you fail to do this we will lose contact with you and you will miss out on 7th Division benefits. Note that the member list is held in strict privacy.

Your comments and opinions on this publication are always welcome. As well, contributions of letters, articles, event news, plans, photographs, and art are strongly encouraged and welcomed. All should be sent to the [Bulletin Board Editor](#). A phone call or email to the editor beforehand is advised if you are thinking of submitting something large or complex. The deadline for submission is two weeks prior to publication but this is somewhat flexible according to circumstances.

ADVERTISING in the Bulletin Board is accepted at reasonable rates. Please contact the [Bulletin Board Editor](#) for more details.

The following is a shortened list of division volunteers. A complete list that includes additional appointed positions as well as all area representatives is available on the [7th Division website](#).

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