



BULLETIN BOARD

Official Publication of the 7th Division, Pacific Northwest Region, NMRA Canada

Volume 34, Issue 3

May/June 2020



ABOVE: A half-empty log car is loaded at a backwoods camp of the Cedar Ridge Mine and Timber Company. The layout was built and operated by the late Gordon Varney, holder of MMR #126 and a long-time member of the 7th Division. If you were on the Trains 2006 layout tour you would have enjoyed in-person the modelling expertise shown here.

Photo by John Stevenson

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From the Editor's Desk

This month's Bulletin Board has proven a bit of a challenge. The original plan was to report on several of the events that were described as upcoming in the March/April edition, plus give updated reports on a number of new upcoming events. Well, things have changed a little. We are now all "sheltering in place" and practicing "social distancing", leading to no events taking place but a lot of time available for most people to do modelling. I needed a new plan – here's what I came up with.

This edition has the usual selection of reports on division business and the status of longer-term events, plus three new items:

- a description of a new initiative, the Virtual RMMBC, describing what it is and how you can participate (its free!)
- a report on what some modellers have been doing with their extra spare time
- an article on using Zoom, a virtual meeting application, to replace informal meetings of railway modelling friends

Hopefully you will find this of interest, and perhaps of use, during the next few months.

There is also been a change to the Bulletin Board publication schedule. This has two aspects.

The first is the replacement of the July/August edition with a September/October edition. This will hopefully allow better reporting on events in the fall, a time when a lot of modellers are feeling the urge to get back to their hobby workbenches after a summer on vacation or in the garden.

The second is the timing of publication and publication deadlines. Publication, presumably to support printing and mailing of paper Bulletin Boards, used to be targeted for the 15th of the month before the issue date (e.g., April 15th for the May/June edition). It will now occur a few days before the issue date. This allows the Bulletin Board to include reports on events occurring later in the month before the issue date. The deadline for article submission has been moved two weeks later to the 15th of the month. In reality, a lot of this has been in effect already, but this makes it formal.

Enjoy the issue!

Superintendent's Message

By John Martin, 7th Division Superintendent

Social Isolation

Despite being stuck at home, the Railway Modellers Meet of BC (RMMBC) committee is working on a project to offer you a video conference alternative to the popular annual event. Also in this issue, Tom Lundgren has done an excellent job of commenting on the coronavirus issues surrounding Vancouver Train Expo 2020 (VTEX). Many of you are using the mandated time at home to work on your layouts and tackle planned projects. All those things belong on the positive side of the ledger.

On the negative side, some folks are feeling a little too isolated. Our hobby is a fairly solitary activity, but it often involves getting together with friends and fellow modellers to socialize at work sessions or operating sessions. That has, of course, been severely limited.

One of the major advantages of NMRA membership is the opportunity to get in touch with other train nuts and talk about our obsession. Nobody is pretending to be a mental health expert but, if you are feeling isolated and wouldn't mind a conversation about model railroading, we can put you onto someone nearby who would be glad to hear from you. Just send me an email (jamartin@jdmartin.ca) with the subject line "HELLO" and I'll do my best to assist.

If you find the foregoing a wee bit too touchy-feely, please ignore me and just get to work detailing a freight car

or fine tuning your couplers – all those little projects that you’ve never had time to do. We really are fortunate to have an interest that we can enjoy while many other people are going nuts watching old television programmes. Go play with trains!

Rescheduled Events

Events like the Nanaimo and the Victoria train shows have been postponed or cancelled, as you undoubtedly know. Our Webmaster Brian Clogg does an excellent job of updating the 7th Division web pages with the very latest information. Take a look at <http://7divpnr.ca/> under “timetable” to stay informed.

This is also a good time to glance at older issues of the Bulletin Board. They contain some excellent articles and tips. It’s a much better way to spend a few hours than watching YouTube cat videos.

Pacific Northwest Regional Conventions

The 2020 PNR Convention in Eugene was one more casualty of the coronavirus. The Regional Board has decided to continue planning the 2021 event in Boise, Idaho and, after that, Division 1 is going to take another shot at hosting in Eugene in 2022.

For anyone making long-range plans, 2023 will be hosted by Div 4, most likely somewhere in the Greater Seattle area, and then we’ll bring the convention to BC in 2024, probably in the Lower Mainland. (We last hosted in Salmon Arm in 2016 and the 6th Division “borrowed” Cranbrook to hold the 2019 event.) If you really like to plan ahead, we’re scheduled to host again in 2031. Hope you and I see each other there!

Achievement Programme (AP)

This is a great time to work on the AP – or check out the Golden Spike award.

Some of our members are only one or two projects away from achieving the Master Model Railroader designation. Other have never even considered the programme. The whole idea is to get you more involved in model railroading by expanding your skills and interests.

<https://www.nmra.org/education/achievement-program> will give you an idea about what’s involved, and our AP Coordinator Mike Chandler is very willing to help. His contact info appears on the last page.

7th Division Awards

Thank you to those who submitted nominations for our three awards. Your suggestions are appreciated, and they are being carefully considered. The three awards and a list of past winners can be seen at <http://www.7divpnr.ca/node/4>.

All we need now is an opportunity to get together and present the awards. Maybe we’ll have some good news by the time this issue of the Bulletin Board hits your mailbox – meanwhile, wash your hands and stay safe!

Stay safe and stay healthy. We want to see you in person at the next 7th Division event.

John Martin

Call for Nominations

Nominations **and volunteers** are requested for the positions of 7th Division Secretary, and Treasurer, and Director-At-Large. Please submit nominations to our Returning Officer – Victor Gilbert by e-mail to victor@sugarwood.info or Canada Post to 3250 Matapan Cres, Vancouver, BC V5M 4B1. Successful candidates will serve a 2-year term on the Board of Directors in 2021 & 2022.

There are still a few people out there who have never served on a committee or as an executive. It’s not a lot of work and it can actually be enjoyable. We most definitely need at least one new face this year. Please email the Superintendent if you want to know more about what’s involved.

Changes to Events Due to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on railway modelling conventions, meets and mini-meets this year. The following table summarizes what we know about the status of events relevant to the 7th Division.

Event	Original Date	Current Plans
Northern BC Mini-meet	Apr 4, 2020	Cancelled (not COVID-19 related)
PNR Regional Convention, Eugene	Apr 21-24, 2020	Cancelled for this year.
Nanaimo Model Railroad Show	Apr 26, 2020	Postponed to Nov 1, 2020
Railway Modellers Meet of BC (RMMBC)	May 22-14, 2020	Cancelled for this year. Some activities will be available on-line as part of the Virtual RMMBC. See page 6.
NMRA National Convention, St. Louis	Jul 12-18, 2020	Cancelled for this year. Some activities may be available in on-line forms.
CPHA-GNRHS Joint Convention, Nelson	Sep 19-23, 2020	Cancelled. See CPHA website cptracks.ca
Victoria Model Railway Show	Sep 27, 2020	Cancelled for this year.
Vancouver Train Expo	Nov 9-10, 2020	To be determined. See below.

Check the [7th Division website](#) for updates.



Vancouver Train Expo 2020 Update

By Tom Lundgren, Leader, Vancouver Train Expo

My previous Bulletin Board “Update” indicated that work was underway to organize VTEX 2020. We are certainly in a different world now, with many unknowns and severe restrictions on travel and entertainment events, all a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The PNE has sent us a proposed contract for the weekend following Remembrance Day (November 13-15). The insurance issue I mentioned previously is still an outstanding matter. In addition, and more problematically, COVID-19 creates some unusual challenges and decision points in determining the best course of action.

The course COVID-19 will take going into the fall and winter is a great unknown. Currently, it appears that restrictions on non-essential travel and gatherings of any size will be in place for months. COVID-19 is a new disease for which humanity has not acquired immunity. There is no way to create the wide level of immunity necessary to prevent large scale transmission of the disease as no vaccine is currently available. The ongoing efforts to “flatten the curve” are intended to spread out the rate of infections so that the health care system is not overwhelmed, in particular intensive care for those who need it. These efforts will lengthen the time that the disease is active, thus necessitating the continuation of “social distancing” measures for months. There is a reasonable likelihood, even if COVID-19 dies down over the summer, of a return in the fall and winter when people are inclined to be indoors and in close contact with each other.

The wording of the Forum Rental contract contains the standard legal provisions for cancellation due to events beyond the control of either party. A government ban on events like VTEX would meet the criterion. The fate of the deposits, however, is less clear. The wording implies that the PNE would retain the deposits as the

advance for a rescheduled event rather than refunding them. The PNE has requested the first deposit be made on April 9th.

Managing the business risk to VTEX is of greater concern and more problematic. The contract wording is very clear that all deposits are forfeited if we, the organizers, elected to “voluntarily” cancel the event in the absence of a government order.

Why would we “voluntarily” cancel the event? There are two reasons:

1. Low Attendance: COVID-19 may die down, or not, over the summer only to reemerge in the fall at a level which does not trigger mandatory “social distancing” but causes people to be wary of attending events such as VTEX. This would lead to a decline in attendance and a drop in gate revenue. If attendance falls below 5,500 there will be a financial loss. It took four years, 2015 to 2018, for VTEX attendance to build sufficiently, as well as an admission fee increase, to achieve financial breakeven. Last year’s attendance of 6,400 was the first to assure financial viability and provide sufficient revenue to share with our exhibitors.
2. Exhibitor Cancellations: Concern about the reoccurrence of COVID-19 and the risk of contracting the disease might be sufficiently worrisome that exhibitors decide that “discretion is more important than valor” and elect to stay away, leaving a much reduced, or empty, show. Many are in the age group most at risk for severe consequences.

Although we are able to move ahead with organizing the event, and the PNE has invited us to commit by April 9th, it would be unwise given all the unknowns. The PNE deposits represent some fifty percent of the cost of staging the event. In addition, we will start to incur other significant expenses long before Event Day. By Event Day, the majority of expenses will have been incurred and that money could be lost. VTEX is in no position to absorb such a loss as it represents all of our assets. In light of the foregoing, organizing for the event is currently on hold while we talk to the PNE and monitor COVID-19’s trajectory.

Further updates will be posted to the website (www.vancouvertrainexpo.ca). Please send any thoughts, advice or opinions you wish to share with the Organizing Committee to me at chairman@vancouvertrainexpo.ca

Best wishes

Tom Lundgren

Leader Vancouver Train Expo

7th Division Annual General Meeting

The 7th Division Annual General Meeting will be held at 7:30 PM on Sat Nov 14th, 2020. All NMRA members are invited. The date, at least, is definite.

We hope to take advantage of a very kind offer from the BCSME folks to gather at Heritage Park in Burnaby but (surprise, surprise) those plans are somewhat indefinite because of the COVID-19 crisis.

If necessary, we might have to use technology to conduct a “virtual” meeting. Social distancing may have ended by November, but doctors believe the virus will still be a threat, especially to those over 60. One or two of our members fall into that category and most of us are not enthusiastic about taking unnecessary risks. Even if “in person” meetings are permissible, they might be unwise.

On the other hand, it is always highly desirable that we conduct our business in an open forum with all interested members in attendance. Further details to be announced.

The Virtual Railway Modellers Meet of British Columbia

By Marc Simpson, RMMBC Promotion

The RMMBC Committee along with the 7th Division PNR is pleased to announce that it will hold a Virtual Modellers Meet starting May 21st, 2020, to benefit the wider railway modelling community. Over the last several weeks the RMMBC Committee has conducted a number of test presentation sessions and the results have confirmed that Zoom will provide a useful and user friendly online experience.

Registration

The Virtual Railway Modellers Meet of BC (VRMMBC) will feature interactive clinics where audience members will be able to ask questions and participate much like at an in-person clinic. Registration is now open for the VRMMBC. Make sure you register today to be a part of the fun. The registration page can be found at <http://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/node/2158>.

It is a very simple process: All we need from you is your name and email address to participate in the event. Enter and submit them using the online form, and prior to each event the event coordinator will send you an email with the link to the Zoom event along with some instructions. That is it! There is no charge.

Virtual Clinic Presentations

We have the preliminary Clinic listing at <http://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/node/2154>. This is a great selection of clinics that is sure to appeal to many model railway enthusiasts. You'll be able to take in some top notch quality presentations from the comfort of your own home.

Sessions will run over the course of four Thursday evenings starting on May 21st and ending on June 11th, 2020. Each session will start at 7:00pm Pacific Daylight Time and we plan to end by 9:30 pm. We will be hosting two clinics in each session with a 30 minute “breather” between clinics.

The Zoom meeting room will open fifteen minutes in advance. Please plan to join before the 7:00 pm start time in case you have any computer issues. The clinic lineup looks like it will be a “must see” event. Be sure to set aside some time each Thursday to take part in the VRMMBC clinics.



ABOVE: The virtual clinics will capture the essential elements of a live clinic, such as this one, by using Zoom to display the clinic graphics and text along with a live video and voice of the clinic presenter.

Photo by Marc Simpson

Virtual Display Room and “Meet the Modeller”

The Meet the Modeller event is open to all model railway enthusiasts. Whether it is a freight car, passenger car, locomotive, building, piece of electronics or trackwork, scenery or a layout concept, all are welcome at the "Meet the Modeller" event.

All it takes is providing the display coordinator (meetthemodellercoordinator@gmail.com) with the information described in the submission form (<http://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/node/2156>) and good quality photographs of a model railway hobby project. You don't need to be a craftsman or even a builder to participate. We welcome all levels of model railway activity. The webpage for Meet the Modeller (<http://railwaymodellersmeetofbc.ca/node/2156>) has more information.

We are planning to have a two hour Virtual Display Room and “Meet the Modeller” session on the Thursday, June 4th evening session. We would ask anyone interested in participating in the Virtual Display Room to submit their photos to the coordinator by May 29th to ensure inclusion in the Display Room.

We will create an online slide show of the submissions and our moderator will walk through the photos in a real-time question and answer session with each participant. Each modeller will be invited to say a few words about the project, what interested them about it, and how they went about it. We're excited about the possibilities of this format for sharing the work of a wide variety of modellers.

Making the Best of These Challenging Times.

We have all seen the upheaval, disruption and loss due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Yet the RMMBC committee see an opportunity to give modellers a new way to participate in a meet experience from the comfort of their own home. As the saying goes, when you get lemons, make lemonade. We think the Virtual Railway Modellers Meet is going to be some of the best lemonade you can get. For many of us a break in the routine would be a welcome change, particularly these days. Stay tuned for more on this exciting new chapter for railroad modellers everywhere.

The RMMBC Committee



ABOVE: An example of a photo that could be used for the virtual Meet the Modeller event. Many other types of railway modelling subject matter would also be suitable.

Photo by Marc Simpson

Modelling in the Time of COVID-19

By Rob England with input from Mike Chandler, Anthony Craig and Doug Hicks

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, most of us find ourselves with a lot of time on our hands. While many may find this a bit of a problem, we are lucky enough to have a hobby that can fill endless amounts of time!

Towards the end of March, Mark Dance started an email thread asking people to post information on the railway modelling activities they have been using to fill their new spare time. The thread grew to have just under 40 names and, at last count, well over 60 posts. A few of the posts are shared below. Have a look and perhaps be inspired to get going on some of your projects.

Putting Up a Good Front

Mike Chandler is a Master Model Railroader with a layout in New Westminster. He writes:

Like most of you, I'm finding I have a great deal more spare time on my hands these days. We're fortunate to have a hobby like model railroading at a time like this.

Currently, I'm working on a series of store fronts which will form a commercial block against the back drop at Aurora. The first is now complete and displayed below. Because they're just flats, I initially and wrongly assumed the project would be relatively easy with just one wall to build instead of the usual four. I've since discovered commercial buildings have much more detail and ornamentation than the industrial structures I'm used to doing.



Photo by Mike Chandler

A Snowshed and Some Trackwork

Anthony Craig is the builder of the CPR Kettle Valley Division, a beautifully crafted layout in Burnaby. He has been building a wooden snowshed and working on improving the trackwork in his Princeton yard. He writes:

Work on the snowshed was interrupted for quite a while due to domestic obligations. I have started rebuilding the dining room chairs (full size, not 1:87) and making trim for our new basement windows. The layout room now has ventilation. I am also doing some upgrades in the home shop for dust extraction. If I do not do so, then I can only minimally work in the shop.

Another distraction occurred as a result of running trains one day to re-stage the layout. A few derailments occurred which made me decide that I had to do some mechanical and electrical work on switches and track. So, a complete reworking of the 13 switches in the Princeton yard limits began and has now concluded with 100% success. A normal passenger Test Train of 5 coaches and 2 head end cars can now back through those switches and "S" curves with complete reliability at 32 scale MPH! I had to rework the diaphragms as well, smoothing all burrs and rough spots on the edges of the striker plates. If a passenger train can back reliably at speed through the switches then any train can transit them. I guess I must now continue to upgrade the rest of the problem switches on the layout most of which were built 20 or so years ago. Here is a staged photo of the train backing through the "S" curve near Princeton tunnel.



As to the snowshed, it was nearing completion with only 12 feet to go on the west end before other things got in the way. Here it is so far. *[Anthony has now completed the snowshed and the scenery around it.]*



Photos by Anthony Craig

A Few Cars and a TOFC Track

Doug Hicks models the PGE/BCR in Burnaby. He writes:

I have been busy with several projects as usual so I start with the PGE Boosters open passenger car. This got started by finding a 1 dollar shell at Munro. Still very much in progress but here's a picture to show where I am at.



I had to fire up the airbrush for this car, and since I had my PGE Chip car effort on the backburner for way too long, I painted those up as well with the same paint. This 3 car project is now complete except for the removable loads. The removal of the horizontal ridges (Canadianizing, thanks to Tim) resulted in some surface scarring that then became rusted damage spots, hopefully convincing you of an older car in long-time service.



Photos by Doug Hicks

Prior to that I completed the wooden platform to service the TOFC track. The workers complained about a lack of lighting so lights were installed to keep the union happy. A day and a night shot are included below.



Photos by Doug Hicks

So as the isolation drags on, I wish you all to stay happy & healthy!

Online Model Railway Gatherings during COVID-19

By John Green

For the past ten years, I have been fortunate to be part of a group of about six people who are very keen on model railroading. We get together most Saturday mornings to enjoy a restaurant breakfast and then we go to one of the members' homes to help improve or operate on their layouts. Typically this goes on until mid-afternoon when we disperse or head out to enjoy a snack and chat before calling it a day.

With the advent of the current world pandemic with the associated "Shelter At Home" directives we must take steps to limit the spread of the dangerous COVID-19 virus. Social distancing seems to be effective at that. However social distancing, with the associated prohibition of meals at restaurants, severely limits social activities. While it is fun to have some uninterrupted quality time working on models or improving your own model railroad, many people find that they are yearning for some human contact.

Our group has partially adapted to these constraints by using an inexpensive online meeting facility called Zoom. Using this technology we can enjoy some group together time and share what we have been working on during the week. In short, Zoom provides a social event wherein you provide your own drinks and snacks.

Zoom software is available for free and operates on a wide variety of platforms including Windows, Macintosh, Android, Apple iOS devices such as iPad and iPhone, and other smart phones which use the Android operating system. Zoom meetings can also be joined using a land-line or mobile phone.

The Zoom software can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or from Google Play or directly from the Zoom home website. The Zoom site is often quite busy so it is important that you allow time for the download and installation to complete. For my first installation this took over an hour, while an update today took less than 10 minutes.

Once you have the Zoom software successfully installed, then you need to set up your own Zoom account and password. This will enable you to establish your own meetings. If you are arranging a Zoom meeting, then after you schedule the meeting, you will be presented with a text containing meeting information. As host it is up to you to distribute invitations to meeting participants. Here is a typical sample invitation with some scrambled information:

John Green is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: John Green's Zoom Meeting

Time: Apr 8, 2020 10:00 AM Vancouver

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/164123sss?pwd=WzbcL2R4aVJ5R0lVb2p5cZXk5Edz09>

Meeting ID: 164 123 sss

Password: aabbccdd

To join the meeting simply click on the link highlighted above in blue. That will take you to the requested meeting and log you on. You may next find yourself in a “waiting room” waiting for the meeting to start.

Waiting for the Host to start this meeting

Start at 10:00 AM

John Green's Zoom Meeting

If you are the host, sign in to start this meeting

Test Computer Audio

Once the meeting begins meeting participants see a screen similar to the following:



I have been using Zoom as an easy-to-use solution to enjoy fellowship with friends electronically. Last weekend we were using some advanced features of Zoom to electronically annotate a proposed track plan while we discussed and made suggestions about it. We are continuing to learn about concepts and to explore questions as if we were sitting around a table at home or in a restaurant.

You do need to be aware of your background surroundings, although it is possible to set up your video with a background, perhaps a favourite picture or one of a half dozen backgrounds offered by Zoom. If you have bright light behind you, your face will be obscured. If you are having a bad hair day you can turn off your video.

While Zoom has deservedly received some adverse publicity regarding the security and resulting abuse of their product wherein meetings are interrupted or hijacked, the organization has recently released updated versions of Zoom to address this. The host has the capability to remove any disruptive participants

The free version of Zoom will permit meetings up to forty minutes long for up to one hundred people. With our small group of six to eight people on a Saturday morning we have run up to three hours without getting bumped off. If this is a problem it is easy to pay a twenty dollar monthly fee for an enhanced version for longer or larger meetings.

So if you are growing tired of “lone wolf model railroading” this product (and there are others) provides a means of enjoying your hobby in the company of friends without exposing anybody to the COVID-19 virus.



Notices and Contacts

The Bulletin Board is the official publication of the 7th Division of the Pacific Northwest Region, National Model Railroad Association, Canada. It is distributed electronically to all members in good standing. In exceptional circumstances, such as Internet unavailability or medical conditions, the 7th Division may agree to distribute paper copies to affected members.

The Bulletin Board has five issues per year: January/February, March/April, May/June, September/October, and November/December. Each issue is published in the last week before 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.

Note that the views and opinions stated in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily reflect those of the NMRA or regions or divisions thereof.

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 (see below). 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 the following per issue rates: Full Page = \$48.00, Half Page = \$24.00, Quarter Page = \$12.00, Business Card = \$6.00. Artwork must be supplied in JPG or similar format and in the desired printed size. There may be an additional charge to complete artwork that is not ready to print. Please email your artwork to the editor. Remittance should be discussed and finalized with the division Treasurer.

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

Superintendent	John Martin	604-594-9719 (Delta)	jamartin@jdmartin.ca
Assistant Superintendent	Victor Gilbert	604-708-4161 (Vancouver)	victor@sugarwood.info
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