

# County Lines

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Empire Valley Lines – Established 1945

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**Editor Note:** This issue is thin due to lack of material! Please contribute! It's your Newsletter!



Reading T-1 at Bill's Bridge by Bruce Cole

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## Railfanning in PA by Lamont Ward

This past summer I decided I wanted to take a road trip to Pennsylvania. I was a little hesitant as to where to go because I wasn't sure of the amount of traffic I would see. So after some debate, a little investigation via the internet, and asking fellow club members I decided I'll take a ride.

I settled on going to Reading Pa and if time allowed I'll go to Allentown to see the famous CP Burn and catch some Norfolk Southern action. So I loaded up the car with food, drinks (soft drinks that is), video camera, and 35mm camera and set off. Oh yeah I brought along a road map-----this is a necessary item if your going into uncharted waters. The maps were courtesy [www.railfanreading.com](http://www.railfanreading.com). Unfortunately I don't have a scanner, but what the heck--- this is PA there has to be a lot of trains moving around there. About two and half-hours later I arrived in Reading.

The first stop was CP Wyomissing Jct. along Route 422 Business. This site has plenty of parking in the back of Philadelphia Hero and there is a little deli there as well. Since I don't have a scanner I thought how was I going to know if there was any action at this point? Well, I think when this portion of the line was built; they had railfans in mind. CP Wyomissing is on a curve so looking east there are signals that give indication as to when a train was approaching and also this area the tracks go from two to one. Additionally, any train heading west there was a clear line of sight to see the headlights.

Needless to say when you're searching for the spot a train always passes by. So there I was driving to the location and missed the first train. I thought that was it---another train in about an hour. Curses, curses and curses. As I was saying earlier I set up and no sooner did I do that-----headlights. A unit coal train was heading west and at speed. Then about 20 minutes later signals lit up like a Christmas tree as a train approached heading east at slow speed due to the cross over. I have to say I stayed there about two hours and saw a lot of trains (I didn't count the number but I have them all on video tape). So onto the next spot.

Next up on the agenda was the massive yard in Reading. Fortunately, one of the local streets parallels the yard and rises up so that you can look directly into it so I used this to my advantage. Upon arriving at the yard I noticed that the fence was torn down just a little. So I couldn't pass up on this wonderful opportunity to park the car and take some pics. I captured a set of GE units coming into the yard and getting ready for their assignment. Also I saw the new NS paint scheme applied to the front of its locos----pretty cool. Now the challenging part was to find a good spot to photograph the other side of the yard. A little guesswork and some driving I was able to find the other side and get pretty close to the yard. This side of the yard was pretty dead, but the yard was definitely full.

Moving right along I came to CP Laurel, which is between Route 222 Business and Route 61. Interesting location to watch trains because at the old station is the Reading Technical Society. Additionally there was some old equipment from Reading, SEPTA, MBTA, and Conrail on <con't page 2>

<con't from page 1> display. The station was closed; however I can look inside and see that there was a model railroad layout on display. This area is single track and right at the grade crossing you'll find the Reading Technical Society. Unfortunately there were no trains coming thru this part of town. So it's onto finding the local hobby shop.

Since I planned on going to Reading I needed to see what hobby shops were around town. Leave it to the internet you'll find anything. Sure enough there is a shop in Reading called Iron Horse Hobby Shop. I made my way over there and found it to be ---well ok for the area. Inside you'll find trains, rockets, model airplanes, etc. As for the model railroading equipment-----can you say Kato and Digitrax? There was more Kato equipment than Athearn and they had all the Digitrax decoders you ever wanted. That's what stuck out in my mind anyway. So I decided to leave there and head to another location when the sound of a horn caught my attention. So I ran up the street (about two long blocks uphill) with my backpack loaded with camera equipment. When I reached the grade crossing I saw two GE units (probably Dash-9's) pulling one tanker car. So for those of you who think pulling one car around a layout with two big locos isn't prototypical-----think again. Next stop Reading station!!! Reading station is a small station with one track passing thru it. It is located in a residential neighborhood were there are two grade crossings on either side of it. The station platform, canopies, and building are in good condition. Too bad it won't see passenger service again. Next Stop CP Belt!!

CP Belt is an interesting place along Route 61. At this point the two-track main line diverges with one track heading towards the yard and two tracks heading towards CP Wyomissing. Somewhere between CP Belt and CP Wyomissing the tracks become single track. While at this site, you have to climb an embankment to reach the tracks. Once at track level, there is about ten feet between you and the nearest track so you'll be ok as far not getting struck by a train. I saw one train while I was there, however a signal maintainer said there was a lot of talking on the radio, but no one was calling for the signals. The action can best be viewed behind Capello Construction and Steam Factory Restaurant's parking lot. At Steam Factory you can see the signals for trains heading east. So now that there is still some daylight and I'm not trained out-----Allentown here I come.

Allentown from Reading is approximately two hours away via Route 222. At that time I had never been to Allentown so I thought hey I'll find the trains. Keeping an eye out for any railroad tracks I kept driving down this one street which appeared to be the main street for business in the town. A little turn here and there I came across an old train station that's now a restaurant. They have an old coach sitting outside and the tracks are slightly covered up with asphalt. Unfortunately it started to rain and I thought that's it. So I continued driving trying to find where these tracks lead. Please don't ever drive in a town where you don't know where you're going but know that the railroad tracks are in your sight. The locals will honk at you even though you're moving at a good speed. Anyway as I rounded a curve -----to my surprise-----box cars. Not one, or two, or three, but it began to look like yes, yes a TRAIN!!! Jackpot. I thought to my self---"OK where can I park this car and get some pics." As I continued to drive I saw the lead loco---SD60 in the Conrail Blue. Then I came up to a traffic light and a grade crossing. Perfect I thought. So I made the right turn and saw a sign saying "CP Burn" on a relay housing. Also I noticed all the "Do Not Trespass" signs posted by NS Police. So I crossed the tracks and made an immediate left turn and parked at the grade crossing in a field next to an auto body shop. I waited about 30 minutes and finally the train began to move. After that train past, I waited for a while with no more trains to follow. Well now it's getting late, so I packed it in and headed for some grub. On my way back thru the area I noticed the crossing arms began to come down. Doesn't that always happen-----just as you leave a place a train always comes. I didn't see the train due to the traffic moving so I continued onto the highway and headed on home.

All in all, I say it was a good road trip. So if you're going to Reading, head up to CP Wyomissing. If you have a scanner, well you can go anywhere then. Speaking of anywhere-----next issue we'll visit Philadelphia and try to catch the fastest set of steel wheels this side of the pond.

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### **Scenery Update** by Bruce Cole

The stone wall behind the refinery is almost done. The finishing of this part, the town and the refinery will complete this section of the layout. The wall was constructed by Bill Duffin, a member that has not come to the Club for quite a while due to his work schedule. Bill has built many bridges and trestles on the layout. He is a fine modeler as the members in the Club can see.

I hope to start installing bridge abutments under the bench work at the site of the steel mill in the near future. I've also picked up a stone wall mold and have started to build wall sections for the area around Clifton

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## Calendar of Events

Please let us know of any upcoming events that the Club might be interested in.

### Club:

Fri, 2/20/04 Club meeting & op. session  
Fri, 2/27/04 Boy Scout Visit  
Fri, 3/5/04 Club meeting & op. session  
Fri, 3/12/04 Video night  
Fri, 3/19/04 Op. Session  
Fri, 4/2/04 Club meeting & op. session  
Fri, 4/9/04 Video night  
Fri, 4/16/04 Op. Session

4/30/04 – Deadline for material for next newsletter.

### Train Shows:

3/13/04 St Ignatius Show, Hicksville, NY  
3/20/04 STD Sunrise Trail Spring Meet,  
20 Clark Blvd., Massapequa Park NY  
3/20-21/04: Greenberg Timonium, Md. Show  
3/26-28/2004: Prototype Modelers Meet at Valley  
Forge PA.  
4/24-25/04: Greenberg Stony Brook, NY Show

### Web Sites of Interest:

[www.tcs.com](http://www.tcs.com) – TCS Decoders  
[www.loystoys.com](http://www.loystoys.com) – Loys Toys, DCC Dealer  
<http://www.proto87stores.com/p87stores> - Proto 87  
Modeling and supplies



Sample of Bruce's Birch Trees by Bruce Cole



New Rock Castings at Highland by Bill Duffin & Bruce Cole

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**Tom's Latest Creations** photos by Tom Belmont, EV Southern Division

Tom Belmont sent me these images and I'm sharing them with you. Tom has made a model of a factory his Uncle used to work in, complete with pigeon coop on the roof. The other is a Walthers Tug, modified to look like a New York Central Tug, complete with detailed cabin house (NY Harbor chart on the table!)

