

Metro-North Division Annual Report – April 2016



1. Division Officers:

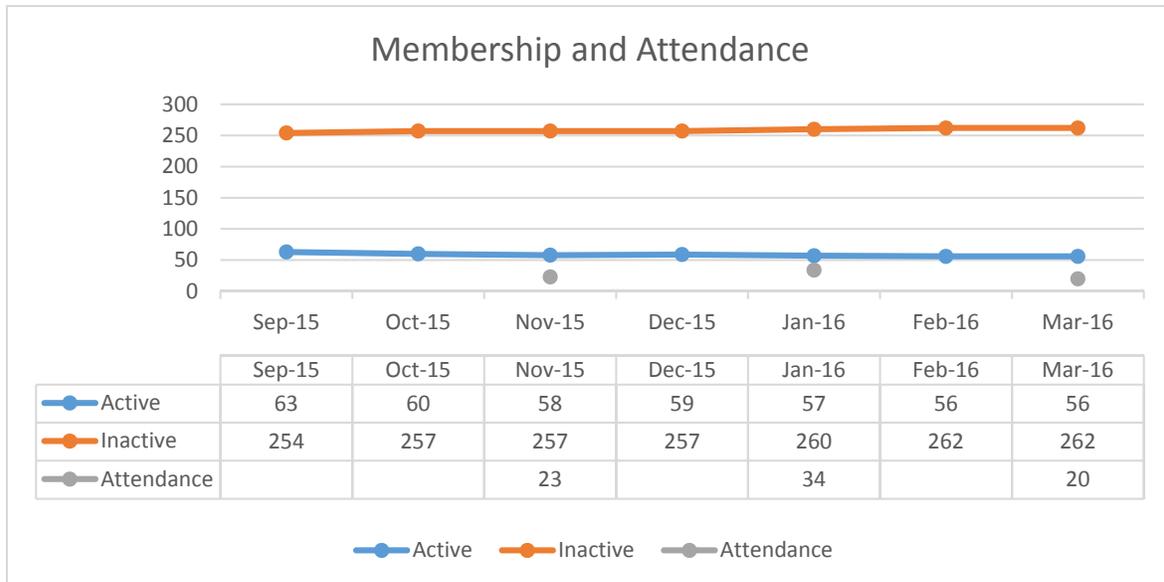
Scott Russell – Superintendent and Webmaster 27 Old Green Rd Sandy Hook, CT 06482	Term expires: June 2017
Roger Cytron – Director and Membership Chairman PO Box 5165 Brookfield, CT 06804	Term expires: May 2018
Chuck Thomas – Director and Treasurer 350 Thayer Pond Rd Wilton, CT 06897	Term expires: May 2018
Don Mitchell – Director and AP Chairman 223 Bennetts Farm Rd Ridgefield, CT 06877	Term Expires: May 2016
Ron Poidomani – Director and Clinics 41 Swamp Rd Newtown, CT 06470	Term expires: November 2018
John Shannon – Director and Facilities 44 High Point Rd Westport, CT 06880	Term expires: May 2016
Jeff Zeleny - Director 136 Far Mill St Shelton, CT 06484	Term expires: May 2018
John Grosner – Director at large 44 Country Lane Milford, CT 06461	Term expires: May 2016

The recently written by-laws provided for term limits (two 3-year terms), and staggered them so not all directors are up for election at any time. If we can't find new candidates, directors at their limit can still serve.

2. Membership Figures:

The Metro-North Division faces similar circumstances that most regions do: an aging membership, and a small percentage of active members vs. inactive. Since I became Superintendent last August, I have started to closely track our mailing list (numbering a little over 200). We currently have 58 active

Metro-North members, 27 members-at-large (many who attend from neighboring divisions) and 70 guests. Many of these are new recruits, but some are older members who have decided not to renew, but still want to come to meetings. Getting attendees to join has been my new focus, but is an uphill battle, as many feel the local meeting is all that interests them, and don't care about the Region and National. This is evidenced by the "take" at local meetings where we have a spittoon for attendees to drop a dollar or two to help defray the meeting cost (we dropped dues several years ago because our finances were sound and we felt it would help membership). The average donation per meeting is \$57 since we eliminated dues in 2007. Our meeting cost is \$50 at our current venue, with one meeting a year being free at a special venue.



3. Meeting types, etc:

We have 5 meetings a year, between September and May. The December/January meeting is held at a bank conference room we have access to, with a very large capacity. We usually have a keynote clinician of regional or national status to draw as many members and guests as possible. The other four meetings are usually held at a smaller, but consistent location. On occasion, we've had to change, but a previous superintendent stabilized the division by finding one reliable venue. However, we want to find another meeting location in or close to NY (Westchester County) as the Connecticut location has not been conducive to attendance of our NY members. The challenge is to not trade NY for CT members at meetings, but to find a more central location for all.

We have two major clinics (45 minutes each) or three shorter clinics per meeting. We try to be careful with the mix, but some members will not come if the clinics are of no interest to them. Our region also has a major challenge due to conflicts with shows, historical society meetings, etc. We had a major attendance drop when NHRHTA picked the same day we had already scheduled.

4. Financial status:

The Divisions finances are sound. We had \$4,025.00 in the treasury in February and are projected to have \$4,290.00 by year end 2016. This is why we eliminated dues and changed to the meeting donation method when we had to start paying for venues (to make sure we weren't preempted by another party needing the location on the same date).

5. Publications:

A meeting reminder/newsletter is sent out before each meeting. We have a booth for information and membership drive at the only train show that occurs within the Metro-North Division borders. We have developed a business card to hand out with the web site information. Our web site is maintained with current and future meeting info, train show, convention and meet info, archives of past clinics and an extensive gallery of members' layout and model photos and published Metro-North layouts from the model press.

6. Constitution Changes:

We do not have a constitution. We did have to draft By-Laws in 2011 when we began the effort to file as a 501(c)(3) organization. They are available on the Metro-North web site.

7. Other information:

There is a sentiment that may be more prevalent than I first thought, that is keeping membership down, especially among members with a good deal of "history" with the NMRA. One of our previous officers stated it this way: **"As far back as 2010 we have NEVER been represented on the NER Board. That's about the past six years. They have appointed different people to represent our Division over the years. These people have not once come to any of our meetings either board or general. Have never consulted us on how we felt about the actions of NER, nor took the courtesy to e-mail or call any board members. We received a paltry sum each year from the NER while they sit on over \$50,000, they need for their conventions. Conventions where I have rarely seen more than 3 or 4 members of our division attend. The NER has promised on several occasions to have the Supt's involved with Board matters. THIS HAS NEVER HAPPENED."**

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Russell
Superintendent and Webmaster
Metro-North Division