

Metro-North Division Annual Report – May 2019



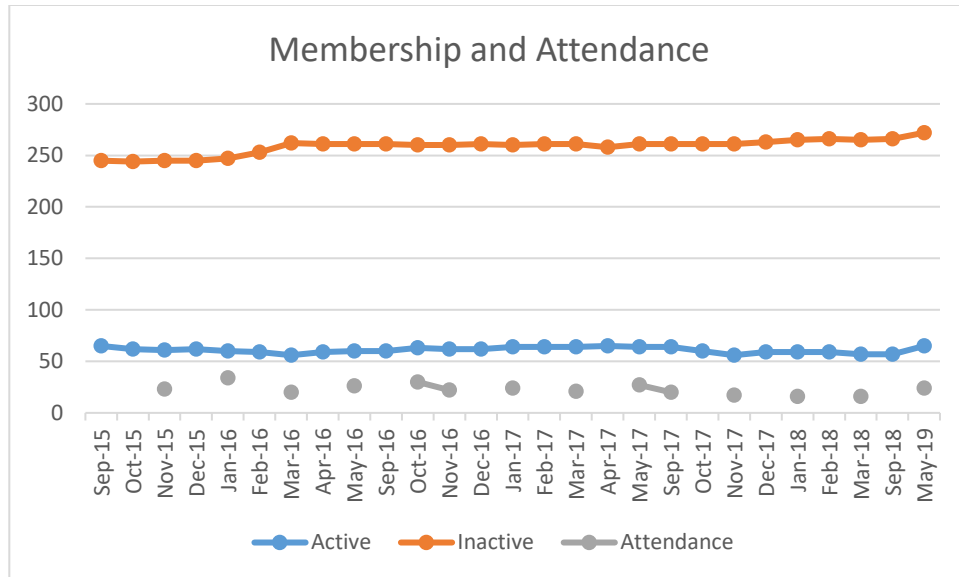
1. Division Officers:

Scott Russell – Superintendent and Webmaster 27 Old Green Rd Sandy Hook, CT 06482	Term expires: June 2020
Roger Cytron – Director and Membership Chairman PO Box 5165 Brookfield, CT 06804	Term expires: May 2021
Chuck Thomas – Director and Treasurer 350 Thayer Pond Rd Wilton, CT 06897	Term expires: May 2021
Don Mitchell – Director and AP Chairman 223 Bennetts Farm Rd Ridgefield, CT 06877	Term expires: May 2020
Ron Poidomani – Director and Clinics 41 Swamp Rd Newtown, CT 06470	Term expires: November 2021
John Shannon – Director and Facilities 44 High Point Rd Westport, CT 06880	Term expires: May 2020
Rick Abramson - Director 110 Evelyn St Trumbull, CT 06611	Term expires: May 2021
John Grosner – Director at large 44 Country Lane Milford, CT 06461	Term expires: May 2020

Three director positions (and Superintendent) are up for election. We usually have the business meeting at the May meeting for elections, but 2019 was a perfect storm for the directors (2 severe illnesses, 3 moving within the region, and me putting in 12-13 hour days at my day job since late 2018). Putting meetings together this year was all but impossible. We managed three for the 2018/2019 season, but ran into June for the last one. That, coupled with an aging membership severely limited attendance, and so an election was not held, and the director terms extended an extra year.

2. Membership Figures:

The Metro-North Division faces an aging membership (as do many divisions), and a small percentage of active members vs. inactive. Since becoming Superintendent in August 2015, I have been tracking our mailing list (numbering 241 at present, which is slightly up from last year, but that has been from guests coming to see if they want to continue) as well as the roster reports. We currently have 65 active Metro-North members (down from last year). This is mostly due to older members not renewing with the NMRA. Meeting attendance is low, but from a core group. Many of the older ones won't come if the clinics are not to their liking. We have continued to suffer from the "snowbird" syndrome, where older members have retired to Florida, and only attend when they happen to be up North when a meeting is scheduled.



3. Meeting types, etc:

We have 4- 5 meetings a year, between September and May. The December/January meeting is usually held at a bank conference room we had access to with a very large capacity. We usually had a keynote clinician of regional or national status to draw as many members and guests as possible. A change in bank management may have ended that arrangement. The other meetings are usually held at a smaller, but consistent location. On occasion, we've had to change, but we find that one reliable venue helps with attendance. 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 try to schedule around them, but it's not always possible.

As noted previously, the 2018/2019 meeting season was a disappointment. We only mustered three meetings. It has been difficult to get clinicians.

4. Financial status:

The Divisions finances are sound. We are getting our stipend from the NER and are still able to maintain our balance (increasing slightly) using meeting donations to pay for our venue instead of dues. The treasurer files our Federal forms in January to maintain our 501(c) status, and the CT filing to keep us current.

5. Publications:

A meeting reminder/newsletter is sent out twice before each meeting (one at 2 weeks before and one at 1 week before). We have a booth for information and membership drive at the only train show that occurs within the Metro-North Division borders. We have 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:

We have a core group of volunteers as directors (and Superintendent), but even though we have regulars at our meetings, no one will step up to even run for director. The ones we have are past their terms, but fortunately, continue on. It does not bode well for the future of this division.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Russell
Superintendent and Webmaster
Metro-North Division