



## **New Member Welcome Package**

### **Welcome Aboard!**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Short Line Model Railroad Club (SLMRC). The SLMRC is a very active club that operates a HO scale (1:87), 65 feet x 30 feet double-track-mainline layout that can handle multiple trains running at one time. Additionally, we can run trains in the yards, and on our popular Branch and narrow-gauge Logging Lines. Our layout features the Pennsylvania-Reading Anthracite Lines (PRAL), a fictitious railroad set in Eastern Pennsylvania in the 1950s.

### **Our Vision**

The Short Line Model Railroad Club is dedicated to advancing and sharing the hobby of model railroading with its members and the community. Through education, collaboration, friendship, and hands-on experiences, we strive to preserve railroad's rich history, promote creativity in model railroading, and inspire current and future model railroading enthusiasts.

### **Where are we located and when do we meet?**

The SLMRC is located at 11 S State Street (rear) in Ephrata, PA. Club meeting times are Thursdays at 7 PM with the second Thursday of the month reserved for business meetings followed by running trains. There are ample opportunities outside the Thursday evening sessions to run trains throughout the week.

### **Membership**

Membership in the SLMRC is a privilege granted to an applicant to join a community of motivated model railroad enthusiasts who have contributed a great deal of time and expense to create the railroad.

ALL applicants must respect the contributions of the current membership and by submitting an application agree to the following Code of Conduct:

All members are required to follow ALL rules and regulations in the SLMRC bylaws, a copy of which is available upon request from the New Member Coordinator. All members are expected to contribute to the well-being of the organization, railroad maintenance and to present the railroad in the best possible manner to the community (public). All members are required to conduct themselves at all times while in and around the railroad with courtesy and respect to all others. A recommendation to terminate membership may be made by the Executive Council to the membership at any time.

## **Classes of Membership**

**Regular Membership:** A Regular member shall be anyone eighteen (18) years of age or older who does not qualify for or does not elect to apply for any of the following classes of membership.

**Family Membership:** A Family member shall be a spouse or minor child twelve (12) through seventeen (17) years of age. A family member must have a parent or guardian that is a Regular member of the club. For example, a family of four wishes to join the club. One parent will be a regular member of the club; the spouse and children are family members. The regular member would be charged \$45 per quarter and a spouse and each child \$25 each per quarter. Upon joining, the probationary dues will be \$90.00 for the Regular Probationary member and \$40.00 for each Family Probationary member.

**Note:** Any minor family member must be accompanied by the Regular or Family member who is a parent or guardian whenever visiting the club.

**Probationary Membership:** A Probationary member shall be an applicant for Regular or Family membership. During the six (6) months immediately following his or her submission of an application for membership and payment of applicable dues he or she shall attend a minimum of twelve (12) regular weekly meetings. Upon the completion of participation in accordance with Article II, Section 3, Paragraph 3, at the first regular business meeting, following the six (6) month probationary period, the probationary member shall be eligible for Regular/Family membership.

**Honorary:** An Honorary member shall be a Regular member awarded Honorary membership by the Regular members, according to Article II, Section 2, Paragraph 3, who has been a Club member, in good standing, for a minimum of ten (10) years, made significant contributions to the Club and the Club's overall mission, served in a leadership and/or executive role, demonstrated outstanding service to the Short Line Model Railroad Club, and is facing extenuating circumstances (e.g. health issues, moving out of the area) that would negate him or her from attending weekly meetings and having a regular presence at the Club.

**Inactive:** An Inactive member shall be a member who notifies the Secretary in writing that for personal, educational, or occupational reasons he or she must suspend his or her participation in the Club.

## What Does Membership Provide?

So, what do I gain by becoming a member? We will first and foremost provide a fun environment to learn about the hobby of model railroading and to run trains. You can join the club with no experience or equipment but we will almost guarantee that you will quickly get hooked by possibly purchasing your own locomotive, rolling stock and maybe a throttle. If you don't know what that means, you will quickly learn. The initial cost of membership is a \$90 application fee, which provides the first six months of Probationary Membership. Once you satisfactorily complete the probationary period and have been voted to become a Regular member, dues are \$45 per quarter or \$180 per year.

You can become a member and not be required to purchase any of your own equipment (locomotives, rolling stock, and throttle), by using club owned equipment. You can even download free apps (software) on your cell phone that will allow you to get started running trains immediately. But if you choose to purchase your own equipment, prices can range from moderate to very expensive, depending on the type of equipment you buy and the options that equipment provides. This is an expensive hobby and the costs can balloon quickly. For planning, it's about \$200 for a throttle, \$200-500 for a locomotive and \$10-50 for a piece of rolling stock, i.e., box car, tank car, etc. Of course, eBay has a variety of used options and many club members will offer their opinion on what to buy and from whom.

## Overview of the Short Line Layout:

- The SLMRC is HO scale and is roughly 65 feet x 30 feet, with over 900 feet of track. There is a double-track, continuous-loop mainline and a shorter point-to-point branch line. Our newest addition is a recently completed narrow-gauge logging line that models a narrow-gauge railroad operating in the forests of the local community. The layout is set in Eastern Pennsylvania during the 1950s.
- Members are free to run any kind of equipment (steam/diesel, freight/passenger, vintage/modern). However, realism is the goal, so all rolling stock needs to have knuckle couplers and metal wheels (to minimize dirty track).
- The club owns a few dozen pieces of equipment that members are free to use but most members bring their own equipment to run.
- All trains are operated utilizing the NMRA Standard of Digital Command and Control (DCC), using the Digitrax operating system. If you have DCC trains, your locomotives will be compatible but will need to be programmed to run on the 'Short Line'. The club owns throttles (Digitrax and TCS) for those that do not have their own and there are free apps available online for both Android (Engine Driver) and Apple iPhones (WiThrottle or WiThrottle Lite) and devices (iPads) so those devices can be used as a throttle as well. When using club throttles and trains, return them to where you found them. Always ask permission to run other members trains.
- **DC-powered locomotives will not operate and are not allowed on the layout!**
- The majority of the 150+ track turnouts (switches) are operated by throttles. A few turnouts (switches) have push-pull knobs on the layout fascia, and a few others have manual ground throws. A project has been approved that will change the push - pull knob turnouts (switches) to powered turnouts (switches) in the near future to allow for smoother operations.

## **How do I become a member?**

Please understand that at the present time, opportunities to join the club are very limited. The club is presently only welcoming approximately two new members per quarter. Why? We currently do not have enough track space. To become a member, when the opportunity exists, you must complete the interest form below which will be forwarded to our New Member Committee for review. If a favorable review is received, you will be asked to meet with the New Member Committee for an interview. If accepted, you will complete an online application and pay a fee of \$90 which covers six months of probationary membership. During this time, you will have access to the club during normal club events but will not have access to the club unless you are accompanied by a regular member. You will have the opportunity to work with club membership to learn about the club's history, operating rules, bylaws, the layout, etc. and to run trains. You will be required to attend 5 of 6 monthly business meetings as well as obtain 12 signatures during this period when working alongside a club member (mentor), and show proficiency about how the club and the layout operates. You will also be required to complete 12 classes – 6 mandatory classes and 6 elective classes that cover a variety of how-to type clinics. At the end of this period, the New Member Committee will evaluate your progress and make a recommendation to extend your probationary period if additional work is needed or forward your nomination for regular membership for a vote by the club's membership at the next regularly scheduled business meeting.

To complete your probationary period, you must complete six mandatory and six elective courses listed below. Additional courses will be added as necessary.

### **Six Mandatory Courses**

1. History of the SLMRC
2. General and Special Operating Rules
3. Understanding the Bylaws
4. Operating on the layout
5. Programming a locomotive (JMRI Basics)
6. How to operate a throttle

### **Elective Courses (Pick 6)**

1. Air Brushing Techniques
2. Layout Electricity
3. Digital Command and Control
4. Model Building
5. Painting & Weathering Rolling Stock or Buildings
6. Basic Scenery Techniques

(Additional classes will be added soon)



## Membership Application Process Summary

- 1) Carefully read all of the accompanying documents.
- 2) Confirm that you meet all of the following eligibility criteria:  
Club members may be terminated for conduct unbecoming of a club member including but not limited to: failure to disclose any felony, misdemeanor, or crimes involving lying, cheating, stealing, or dishonest acts, during the probationary membership process; failure to pay dues; theft; dishonest act; willfully destroying or damaging Club property or the property of another member; engaging in conduct that endangers their own safety, another members' safety, or the Club in general; engaging in the use, sale, or distribution of illegal substances on Club property; and/or consistent infringement of Club Bylaws and Operating Rules.
- 3) If interested, return to the website and complete the attached form (membership request form) under the "How to Join Tab" and providing the information requested.

### [Short Line Membership Request Form](#)

- 4) Someone from the club will contact you to schedule an initial discussion. If the applicant is under the age of 18, a parent must be present for the interview meeting
  - a) The initial discussion will be a "get to know you" along with questions and answers to gauge interest in both parties for membership. If the feeling is mutual to move forward, an interview will be scheduled with the New Membership Committee
  - b) At the interview meeting, you will:
    - i. Be asked why you are interested in joining the club
    - ii. Be asked to provide a brief background on yourself
    - iii. Discuss with the Committee what expertise (electronics, scenery, etc.) you can provide to the club
    - iv. Receive information on the time commitment, financial commitment and overall expectations of membership
  - c) If the interview goes well and both parties want to move forward with the application process, you will be provided an online application to complete. The completed application shall be returned a minimum of 2 weeks prior to any regularly scheduled club business meeting which occurs the second Thursday of the month. Please review the application and pay the \$90 initial payment via check or Venmo (@SLMRC-103).

- 5) After receipt of the completed application, the club will:
  - a) Complete reference checks
  - b) Complete criminal background checks (if necessary)
  - c) The applicant will be provided information on how to complete the PA, Child Abuse Clearance and FBI Background check (if necessary)
  
- 6) After the required information has been received, the application will be presented to the club membership at a regularly scheduled business meeting. The club membership will vote to accept or deny the application.
  - a. If the applicant is accepted into membership, they will work through an onboarding process with an existing member (mentor) to begin the journey to become a Short Line Model Railroad Club member.
  - b. Within 90 days of acceptance, the applicant is required to complete a mandatory training program and demonstrate a willingness to participate and contribute. At the end of the probationary period, there will be a second vote by the membership to accept the applicant into full membership.

## **Revision Notes**

03.2026 - Revision 1 Adds more detailed definition concerning classes of membership found on page 2 as well as additional verbiage in the overview section pertaining to usage of throttles and returning them and permission to use of other members trains, cleans up spelling and grammatical errors.

03.27.2026 – Revision 2 – Added Honorary and Inactive Membership descriptions