

# The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



January 2021

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## **Division 9 Officers**

Superintendent	- Garry Johnson	<a href="mailto:elecsprk@gmail.com">elecsprk@gmail.com</a>
Assistant Superintendent	- Joel Pyard	<a href="mailto:pyardj@comcast.net">pyardj@comcast.net</a>
Paymaster	- Bruce Nichols	<a href="mailto:bruce_nichols09@comcast.net">bruce_nichols09@comcast.net</a>
Scribe	- Alan Bau	<a href="mailto:alanwbau@gmail.com">alanwbau@gmail.com</a>
Trustee	- Doug Van Meter	<a href="mailto:vanmeterda@gmail.com">vanmeterda@gmail.com</a>
Trustee	- Greg Stonerock	<a href="mailto:lostnowfound@sbcglobal.net">lostnowfound@sbcglobal.net</a>

**The Yardmaster** is the newsletter published monthly by Division 9, North Central Region of the National Model Railroad Association.

**Submissions:** Please send articles, news items, inquiries, photos and comments to the Editor of **The Yardmaster**, **Dave Vinci** [dj.vinci@frontier.com](mailto:dj.vinci@frontier.com), **by the 12th of the month** for inclusion in the current month's edition.

## **Editor's Comments**

Greetings from your newsletter editor. First, an apology... I had a computer problem that cause the loss of a bunch of data including this newsletter which is why it is going out late. Lesson learned: Don't spill coffee onto your laptop because you may have to replace the computer. Fortunately I run a back-up onto a portable 1TB hard drive, so I only lost about 30 days of data. Thanks for your patience.

If any of you would like to try your hand at creating an article for the newsletter, please try and write one. It can be of any size or maybe just a photo of your latest project. How about a tip that you think other modelers could benefit from? This newsletter will only be as informative and entertaining as you, the membership, make it.

## **Achievement Program**

To see the requirements for AP awards see the NMRA website, or talk about the program, contact our Division AP coordinator, Dorman Wilson at [N8YNW@charter.net](mailto:N8YNW@charter.net)

## **January Membership Meeting**

We did a **virtual membership test meeting using Zoom on January 16<sup>th</sup>**. We had 10 members and there were few problems. Thanks to Joel for setting this up.

## **Membership Meeting Minutes**

NMRA NCR Division 9

Board of Director's Meeting – January 17, 2021

Location – Virtual Meeting

**Attendees** – Gary Johnson, Doug Van Meter, Joel Pyard, Dave Vinci, Rich Mahaney, Bruce Nichols, Alan Bau. **Absent** – Greg Stonerock  
Meeting was called to order by Garry Johnson – Superintendent at 2:21 PM

### **Officer Reports:**

**President's Report** – Nothing to report since our last meeting.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report** - Joel Pyard – nothing new to report

**Scribe Report** - Alan Bau – The latest Membership Report was received from the NMRA. After reviewing the information, a status report will be distributed to all Board Members.

No meeting minutes to report.

**Treasurer's Report** - Bruce Nichols - Nothing has changed since the last report. Current treasury balance is \$970.16, which includes our checking account and \$10 in cash on hand.

Bruce indicated that he plans to have the Division 9 Tax Return finalized in the next week or two.

**Yardmaster Editor** - Dave Vinci – nothing to report.

### **Old Business:**

**Virtual Membership Meetings** – Given the problems caused by Covid-19, we have been unable to have in-person membership meetings for several months. However, we have been holding virtual Board Meetings during this time without too many problems.

To see what types of problems we may run into with a larger group, **we ran a Virtual Membership test Meeting on Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup>**. There were 10 members involved in the test. Overall, we encountered very few problems. Based on our test results, the Board decided to run Virtual Membership and Board Meetings, until such time as we feel comfortable meeting in-person again.

**Division Website:** The plan is to create a Division 9 website for the purpose of improving overall communications and providing members with information on improving their modeling skills. To keep costs to a minimum the plan is to investigate sharing the North Central Region's hosting capabilities, rather than having our own host. A staffing change at NCR has made it difficult to contact the individual handling the NCR website activities. Rich Mahaney said he would obtain the contact information and forward it to the Division 9 Board.

#### **New Business:**

**Division Finances:** Several issues were discussed on developing a source of income sufficient to help cover the cost of Virtual Meetings, Newsletter Printing/Distribution and Developing and Maintaining a Division Website. No decisions were made other than continuing discussions at the next Board Meeting. To facilitate this discussion a Motion was made by Bruce Nichols and seconded by Joel Pyard for Alan Bau to put together a proposal on Newsletter Printing and Distribution. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Upcoming Activities:**

**February Membership Meeting:** scheduled for Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM. This will be a virtual meeting. Rich Mahaney will contact Ron Thompson and invite Ron to give his presentation on Making Trees.

**March Membership Meeting:** - scheduled for Saturday March 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM. This will most likely be a Zoom Meeting. Watch for more details as to planned activity.

**April Membership Meeting:** - scheduled for Saturday April 17<sup>th</sup>. This will also most likely be a Zoom Meeting. Watch for more details as to planned activity.

**April One-Day Conference** – postponed, no official date has been set, but most likely we are looking at April 2022.

With the struggles we (and all other model railroad groups) are dealing with, the need for Zoom meetings continues at this time. I as a presenter, I would much rather presense to real people rather than through a Zoom format, but at this time, if I want to teach this looks like the only way. The big four issues continue to be the covid itself, people are scared to meet in person, getting the covid from others, and the governor changing the rules related to indoor meetings and groups. I think Division 9 needs to continue using this format, to help keep Division 9 together as a group. Once the governor lifts the rules, we can try regular meetings again, a month after a rule is lifted, so we can information to the membership. I have several people that have agreed to present Zoom meetings for us for Feb, Mar and April.

Rich Mahaney, Division 9, NCR Director at Large

**Adjournment** – motion was made by Alan Bau, seconded by Doug VanMeter, and was passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alan Bau  
Division 9 Scribe

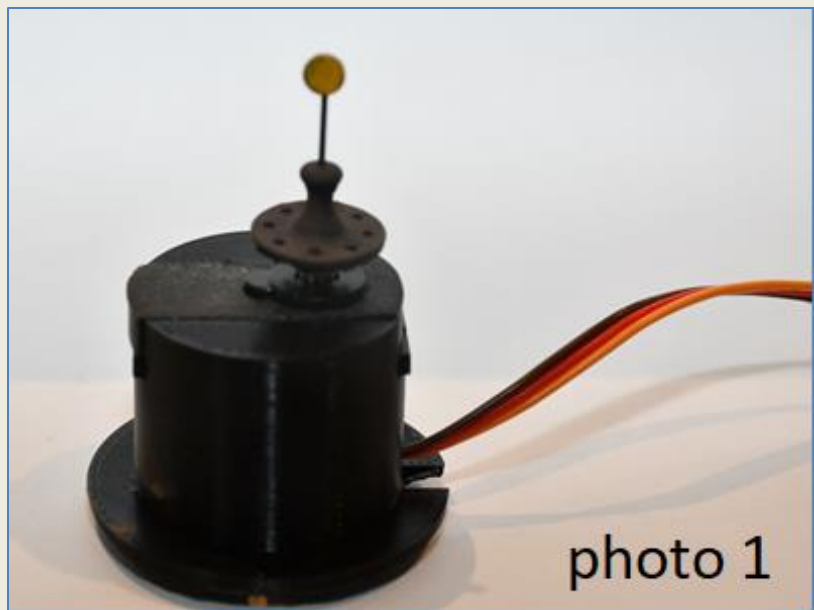


## **Works for Me**

By Casey Bartman

Welcome to my ongoing effort to fill the Yard Master's content for Dave. I hope that you enjoy these updates on what I am doing with model railroads. This month I like to address my efforts at constructing switch machines from RC servos.

About a 1 ½ years ago I brought some small linear servos to one of the regular meetings. I believe that these still may be a useful option for turnout control. They are small, low-profile, and low in cost. More recently, I began watching the Rapido YouTube channel. One of their recent videos was the marketing of their switch machines. I looked at their product and thought, why not make a similar device utilizing an RC servo.



The linear servos that I mentioned above have a stall torque of approximately 150 g\*cm at 6 volts. The more traditional SG 90 servos have a stall torque of approximately 1.5 kg at 6 volts. As in building Fasttrack turnouts with non-hinged closure rails, I was concerned that the linear servos might just not have the torque to ensure good closure at the points. I also desired a mechanical signal/switch stand for my yard turnouts.

**Photo 1.** is a complete unit that I designed, and 3D printed for the job. It is designed to be placed on a sub roadbed consisting of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch closed cell foam bonded to  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{3}{8}$  plywood. It would not be difficult to modify the barrel holder for thicker sub roadbed.



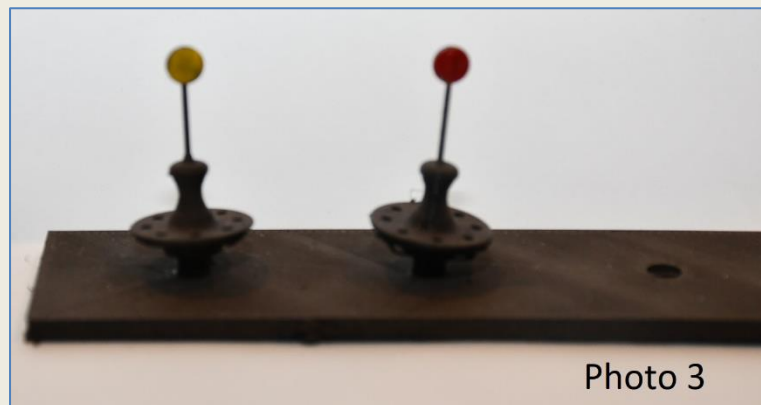
The holes in the flange except #6 sheet metal screws. The barrel of the unit fits into a  $1 \frac{1}{4}$  inch hole. The great thing about this design, unlike Tortoise Switch Machines, is that there is minimal depth required beneath the layout. **Photo 4** shows the mounted unit from the undersurface. This is a real plus for upper decks of multi-deck layouts. The minus is the lack of two auxiliary electrical contacts. I am addressing that issue with ESP32 microcontrollers. More on that in a future issue.

**Photo 2.** demonstrates the disassembled unit. There are three parts, the barrel holder for the servo, the top plate, and the switch stand. I finished the switch stand with Rust-Oleum Rustic Slate Roof Accessory paint. This color looks remarkably like the rusted sides of rail. I've also gone to utilizing this color to whether my track.



I fabricated the switch stands with .032" piano wire and 3mm brass rounds.

**Photo 3** shows a couple switch stands on the painting rack (also 3D printed). The indicators are painted red on one side and yellow on the other. I have uploaded all the photos, a short video of a unit in action, and files for printing the units at:



[github.com/crbartman/sg90.servo.turnout.control](https://github.com/crbartman/sg90.servo.turnout.control).



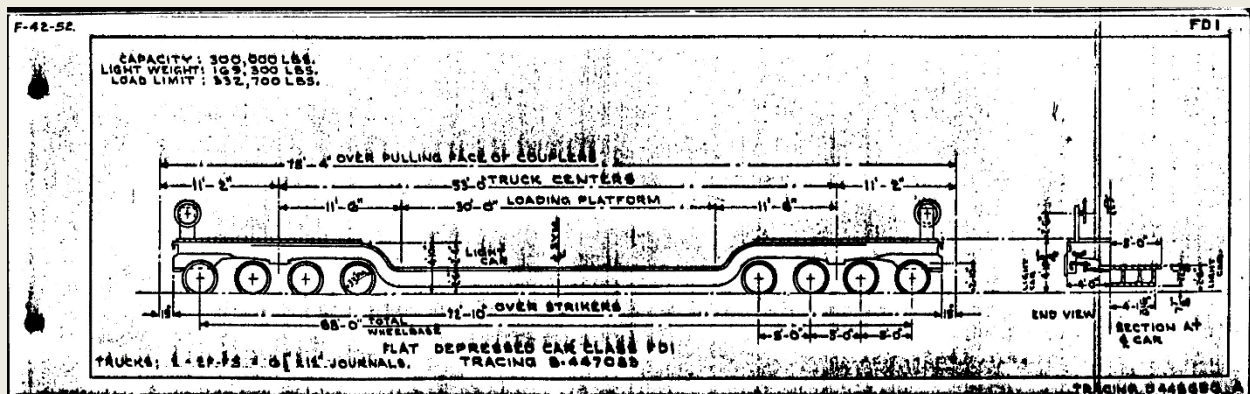
## Open Loads

By Dave Vinci

Here's are some more examples of open loads. I've been collecting these images for awhile and unfortunately I managed to lose most of the sources for these, so with apologies to those affected, here we go:



Here is an interesting load on a really big (72 ft-10" long) PRR class FD-1 depressed center flat car circa 1953. This car was modeled in brass I think, or you might scratchbuild one. Here's the drawing below from Rob Schoenberg's website:

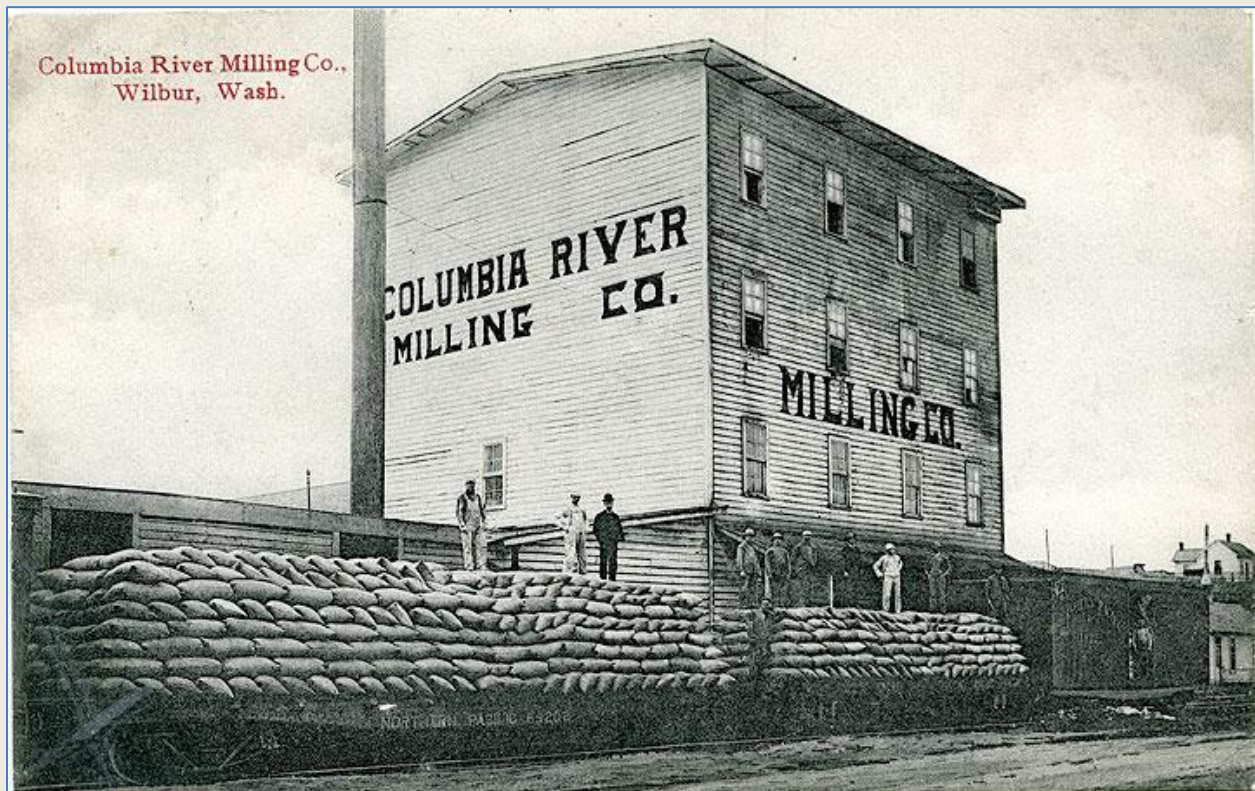


<http://pr.railfan.net/diagrams/PRRdiagrams.html?diag=FD1.gif&sel=flat&sz=lg&fr=>

There are most of the PRR's car diagrams at this site, it's worth a look.



Here is a B&O crane on a 53 ft flat car



Flat cars loaded with sacks of grain





Tractors on flat cars



Early GT flat #60303 with tractors





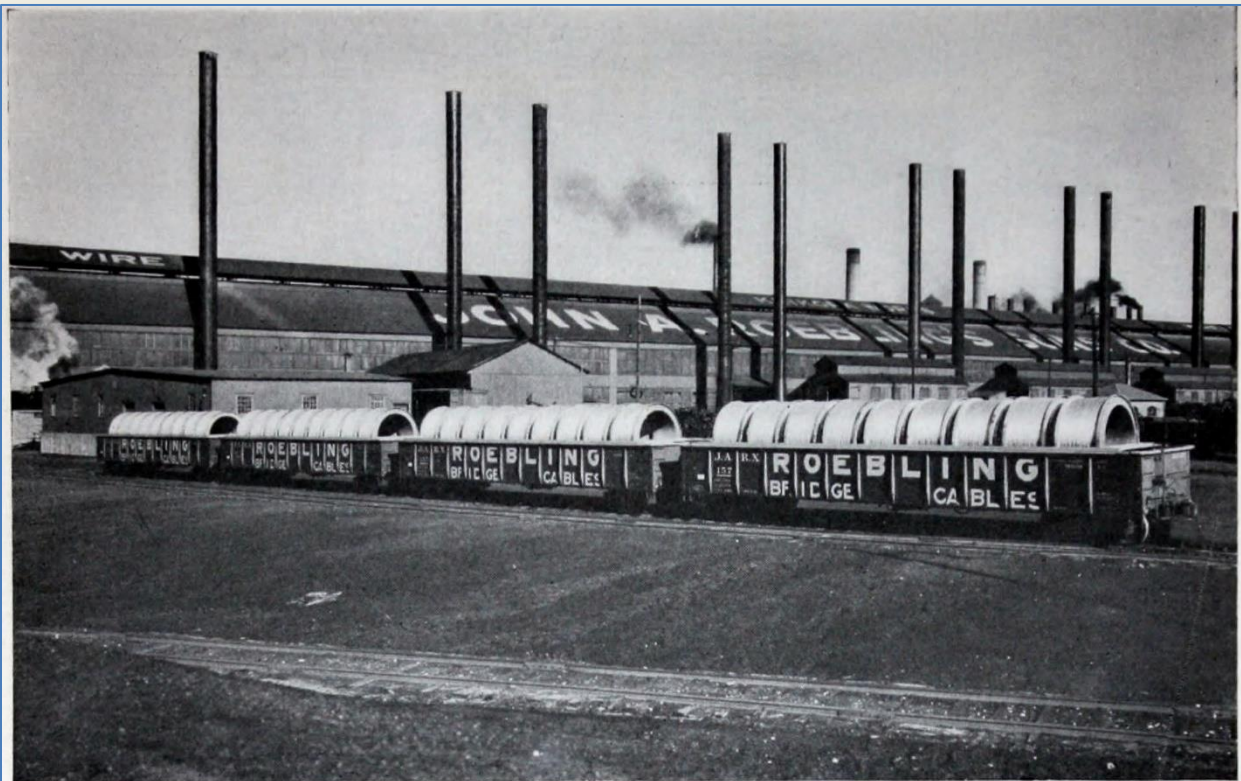
Pennsylvania RR class F30a flat car w police boat load in the 1950s. See, I bet you thought this was an imaginary car load that Lionel or Athearn made up.



From the collection of Stephen J. Agostini  
Circa 1954  
Altoona Brewery - Horseshoe Curve Beer

Gondolas are open cars

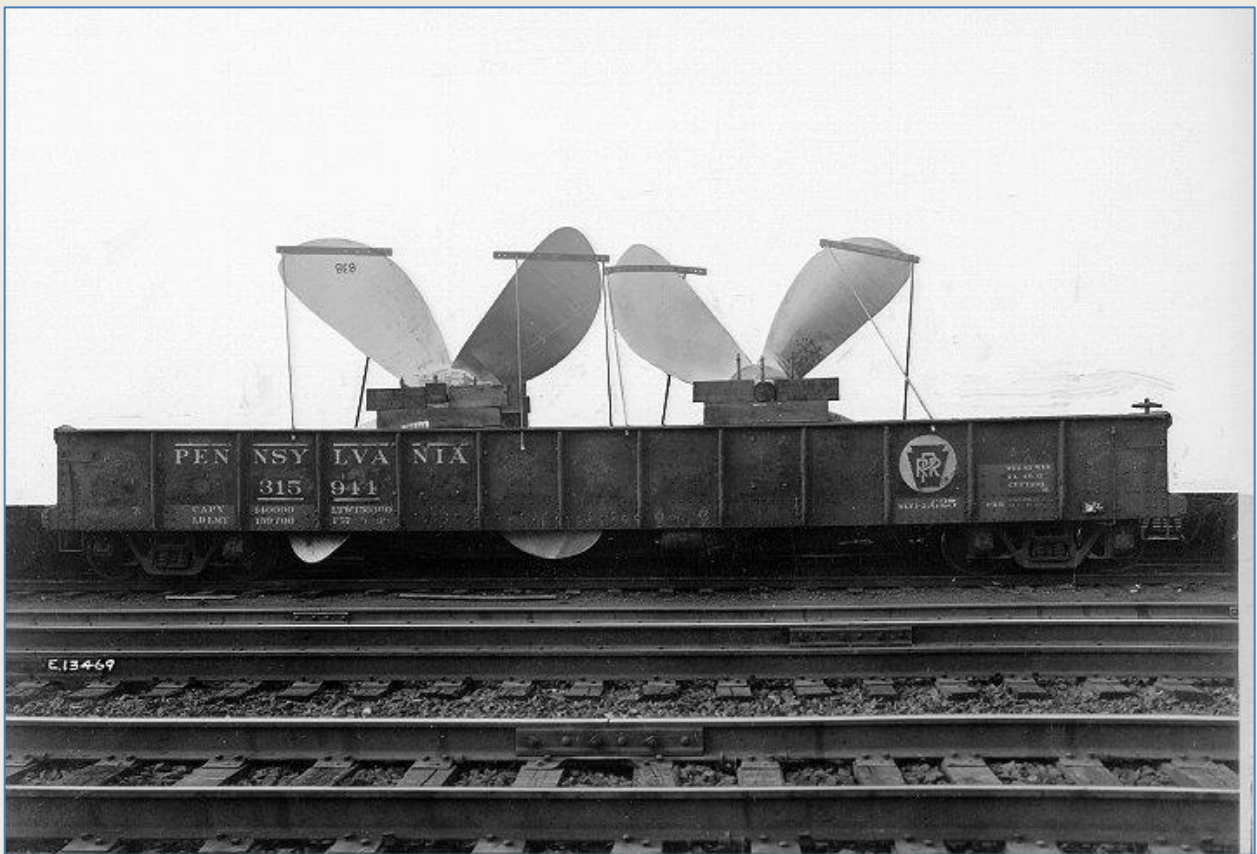
Here's a gondola with a cradle to hold rolls of sheet metal



36 reels, 288 tons, of bridge wire ready for shipment

**Source: Skinner, Frank W., Roebling Cables for the Hudson River Bridge. Digitized By Internet Archive**





This is a USRA mill gondola (PRR class G25) loaded with ship propellers. These cars had wooden floors which they cut away to allow the blades to poke through. Look at the bracing to hold the load in place.

Maybe next time we will look at some models.





## **Prototype Photos**

Had an hour to kill late this after after making some sales calls and having an evening meeting to wait for, so I stopped by the tracks in Battle Creek, MI and caught two EB trains for photos.

One was a CN local freight and then the other was an Amtrak, which had a stop in Battle Creek to make, but was late on its schedule.

It was starting to cloud up and was starting to get dark. -- Rich Mahaney



EB CN freight Battle Creek, MI - 01/14/2021

photo by Rich Mahaney



EB Amtrak at Battle Creek, MI - 01/14/2021

photo by Rich Mahaney



EB local CN freight at Battle Creek, MI - 01/14/2021

photo by Rich Mahaney

## Division 9 Calendar for January 2021

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Div 9 Zoom Meeting
17 Div 9 BOD Zoom Meeting	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## Division 9 Calendar for February 2021

Sunday	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Div 9 Zoom Meeting
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						