

# The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



March 2021

---

## **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.

## **From the Desk of the Superintendent**

Lately I've been mulling over how times and changes have taken place since last March. We went from having monthly meetings to no monthly meetings to virtual meeting and now blended meetings consisting of in-person and virtual zoom. Nothing better than in-person but with the bonus of incorporating zoom. My thought is how good it is to have a clinician that can present a clinic from afar. By the way thanks to Rod Tomson for his presentation on how to build trees via zoom. For those unable to attend in person this is an opportunity for them to share in the experience. This is a way for our division to perhaps invite clinicians from other areas of the country. Technology can't help but further our hobby.

Another thought that struck me is the Editor Cinthia Priest's March 2021 Observation Car article concerning do I have blinders on when it comes to dismissing an article based on a scale other than mine or an area of modeling I might not be interested in. I might be missing out on a tip or technique that can expand my knowledge and/or capabilities. Example, in the MRH magazines FEB 21 issue is an article located on page 123 with a link to a video of carving foam to make rocks, the author does not appear to be a model railroader.

Hope to see you at the next meeting in-person or on zoom. – Garry Johnson

## **Editor's Comments**

Greetings from your newsletter editor. 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)

## **March Membership Meeting**

The March 2021 membership meeting will be a joint meeting with the NMRA Michiana Division and Division 9 on **Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup>** as both a virtual **Zoom meeting** and in-person at **The Colonial Kitchen Pancake House**, 330 N. Drake Rd., Kalamazoo. The back room is reserved beginning at **nine o'clock** for informal breakfast. The Colonial Kitchen is in the same building as AT&T and Art Van's Pure Sleep on the east side of Drake Road in the block south of Main Street. The restaurant faces south in that building.

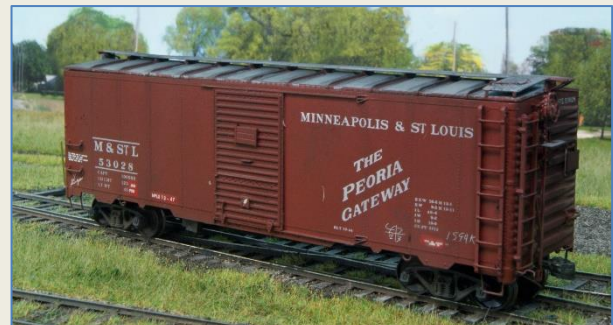
We will begin with an AV set up at 8:30am at the Colonial Kitchen Pancake House

Group breakfast : 9am to 10am

Division 9 Business Meeting: 10am to 10:20am

Bathroom Break: 10:20am to 10:30am

10:30am: Clinic by Clark Propst, from Mason City, Iowa (9:30am Iowa time)  
**Upgrading Generic Models to Prototypical Standards**



Bio: Like most Baby Boomers I was introduced to model trains early. I've always been motivated to model, trying to improve my skills, mostly by

using new products, both on layouts and models. I try to stay progressive and keep trying the great additions to our tool boxes.

Clark Propst  
Mason City Iowa



## **Here is the Zoom invite for March 20, 2021**

Greg Bueltmann is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: NMRA Michiana Division and Division 9 Joint Program - March 2021

Time: Mar 20, 2021 09:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84583814151?pwd=REZXNnk2SWd0SnZ0NWVabFRYRFE2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 845 8381 4151

Passcode: Trains

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,84583814151#,,,,\*946564# US (Washington DC)

+13126266799,,84583814151#,,,,\*946564# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 845 8381 4151

Passcode: 946564

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84583814151?pwd=REZXNnk2SWd0SnZ0NWVabFRYRFE2Zz09>



## **Membership Meeting Minutes**

**Saturday February 20, 2021**

**In-person Attendees:** Rich Mahaney, Joel Pyard, Garry Johnson, Randy Yeoman, Casey Bartman & Alan Bau.

**Virtual Attendees:** Bob Lawrence, Doug VanMeter, Walt Tracy, Dave Vinci, Bruce Nichols, Marilyn Holm, Jim Glenn, Mark Cowels (Division 6 Newsletter Editor) Charlie Chase, Clinic Presenter Rod Thomson.

This meeting was both an in-person meeting at the Colonial Kitchen, located on Drake Rd. in Kalamazoo and a virtual meeting. This was our first official Membership Meeting where both in-person and virtual meeting types were used. This approach was quite successful and will more likely be used moving forward, at least for the immediate future.

**Meeting was called to order** by Superintendent Garry Johnson at 10:00AM.

**Superintendent's Report** – Garry Johnson welcomed all members to our new meeting approach. He also introduced our featured speaker Rod Thomson.

**Assistant Superintendent's Report** – Joel Pyard reported that we are making progress on setting up virtual meetings.

**Paymaster's Report** – Bruce Nichols reported that the treasury balance of \$960.16 in our bank account and \$10 in cash-on-hand has not changed.

**Scribe's Report** – Alan Bau reported there was nothing to report since our last few meetings were not held.

**Yardmaster Editor's Report** – Dave Vinci thanked everyone for their contributions to the Yardmaster Newsletter. He reminded everyone that articles need to be submitted no later than the 12th of each month to get into the current issue.

**Rich Mahaney** – NCR Director reported that NCR supports our decision to postpone the one-day convention that was scheduled in April 2021.

- Toledo still plans to go ahead with their 3-day convention scheduled for October 21 – 24, 2021.
- Rich is working on scheduling joint virtual membership meetings between Division 9 and the Michiana Division
- March 20th Meeting – Clark Propst will be presenting a clinic on upgrading generic models to prototypical standards.
- April 17th - Virtual tour of Bill Neal's layout.
- May 15th – Division 9 will supply speaker - TBD
- June 19th – Division 9 will supply speaker -TBD
- July & August – No Meetings
- September – Annual Business Meeting & election of board members – planned to hold meeting in Sturgis
- October or November – Possible Lansing layout tours

**Meeting was adjourned** approximately 11:00AM

At the conclusion of the business meeting Rod Thomson gave a terrific virtual presentation on "Making Trees My Way". This was a highly informative presentation which Rod will most likely present at the one-day convention if we ever get to hold it.

Respectfully submitted.

Alan Bau  
Division 9 Scribe  
Model RR Photos



## Update on Rich Mahaney's Layout

By Rich Mahaney



layout bench work with new lighting

R. Mahaney photo



12 new LED light panels from Manards on ceiling

R Mahaney photo



new bench work legs waiting in the garage

R Mahaney photo



R Mahaney photo

Made some first steps today on the construction of my new layout. Bench work pieces have been around for years, but not much happened on them. So today a friend of mine from the Alamo Twsp FD came over and hung up and wired 12 LED light panels for me in the drop ceiling that was already there. Man, does that make a difference in the lighting, nice and bright now! On Sunday another



person with carpentry skills is coming over to install real table legs, bringing the layout up about 48 inches high, and I will get rid of the Menard "saw horses" that I have had for years. I am using 4" by 4" by 4 foot legs. Also doing a major clean up and reorganization to the basement since essentially it is "all my space now". All the bench work tables are either 2 foot by 8 foot or 2 foot by 4 feet. I have two more sections of 2 foot by 8 feet to tuck into the maze of this switching layout. This community will be switched by the GN, NP and SPS. The community is called "Empire" and is in Washington in the late 1950's.

I have 2' by 4' fluorescent lights from my basement ceiling to give away to anybody that wants them. I can bring to the breakfast meeting next Sat if somebody lets me know. 269-214-4221 or [hazmatrichm@aol.com](mailto:hazmatrichm@aol.com)



## **How to stop your trains derailing**

Bruce Nichols came across a blog from the UK that covers preventing derailments, It is reproduced below. Alastair Lee runs the blog and his e-mail is: [modelrailwaylayoutsplans.com](http://modelrailwaylayoutsplans.com)

"Al and my fellow modellers,  
Reading one of Al's eMails today I noticed in the comments how many people were suffering from derailment issues.

Well, I thought, they are not alone! I have spent a lot of time over the last couple of weeks solving all of my own.

Various things cause derailments and I have done lots of research on why individual items choose to jump off the track and ruin my day.

I thought I should share the findings with you and hopefully point you in the right direction.

Firstly, they are all solvable! Even my most stubborn lightweight wagons have been solved. What you need to do is tackle the problem systematically.  
Firstly, is it the track?

The track will only work well if it is in gauge. I foolishly assumed that my track (peco 100) would be in gauge at all times, after all it is made in a factory and the rail is inserted into sleeper chairs that are a fixed distance apart. WRONG!

Flexible track on curves has a tendency to slightly tighten up the gauge. Usually not a problem until you create a joint on a curve. These do tend to press inwards on the inside rail. I used a stout pair of pliers to bend the rail back outwards and re-checked with a track gauge. That was problem one solved.

Problem 2: almost everything struggled going into a particular point in the fiddle yard section. It was NOT the point (turnout/switch for the rest of the world) it was the 2 inch (50mm) section of track before it.

Once again the plastic sleepers had not proved sufficiently rigid to hold the track in gauge. The track had rotated inwards at the tops. You couldn't see it, but you could measure it with a track gauge. Sure enough it was about .75mm too narrow.

Now for wheels:-

OK so if your wagons / rolling stock / locos cope perfectly well on a straight flat section of track why is it they fall off the track when going through a point? Well first it is more common for a derailment to occur going into the point from the toe. Hence why certain railway companies insisted that there be no facing points on mainline track and where possible to avoid it altogether. Not bad advice for us modellers too! Apart from anything it increases the operating complexity and allows us to shunt more than we would otherwise.

However, having said that, at some point in time you have to approach a point from the toe end in order to choose between two (or even three) route alternatives.

The main requirement is that the wheels follow the desired route. Seems simple enough doesn't it?

Well often they don't bother and de-rail instead. So why? What stops them following the rails around the correct curve?

Well let's look at the relationship between the two wheels. They need to be the correct distance apart between their inner faces. This is known as the back-to-back setting. Buy a gauge! Set the back to backs and you will be a lot better off. Older wheel sets tend to be too narrow on their back-to-back settings for modern track. This worked well on the coarser track like Hornby and Tri-ang but often fail miserably on code 100 and probably won't even entertain code 75 track!

The best option for this type of stock if you can't adjust the back-to-backs is buy replacement wheels. A caution here too. Dapol wheelsets seem to have very small flanges that are designed for code 75 track. They do not resist sideways pressure at all and will pop off the track with the slightest sideways provocation. The Hornby replacement wheels are slightly deeper flanged and work really well.

Anyway let's look what happens if the back-to-back is too narrow.



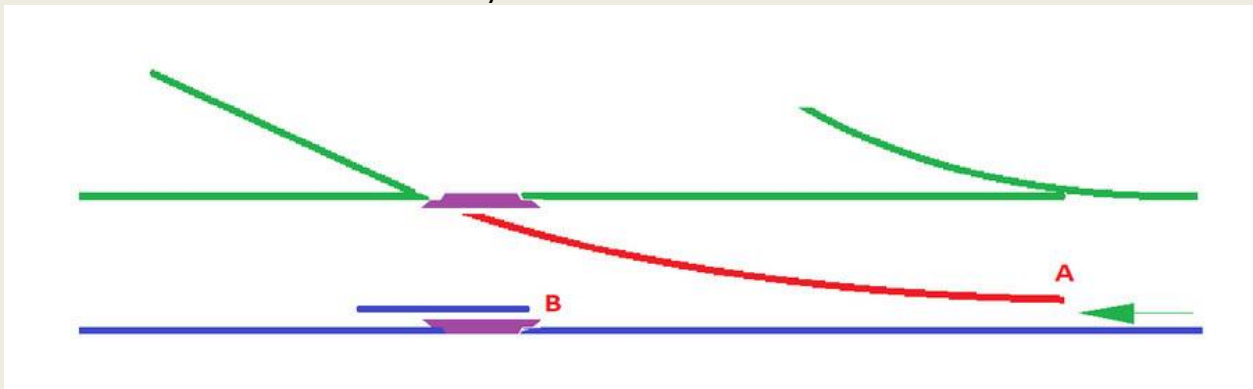
If the wheels are too narrow you can see that the flange is likely to collide with the switch blade at point A or collide with the check rail at position B.

Either way you will see the loco/wagon jump up slightly as it does so. Push it through by hand with very light finger pressure and you can feel the collision. Bad enough on the straight through section but almost always disastrous on the curved route and don't even think about a curved point where both routes are curved!

So you might think the wider I have the wheels the better! Wrong again I'm afraid. Let's have a look at what happens if you spread the wheels out so they are a tighter fit between the rails. i.e. too wide.



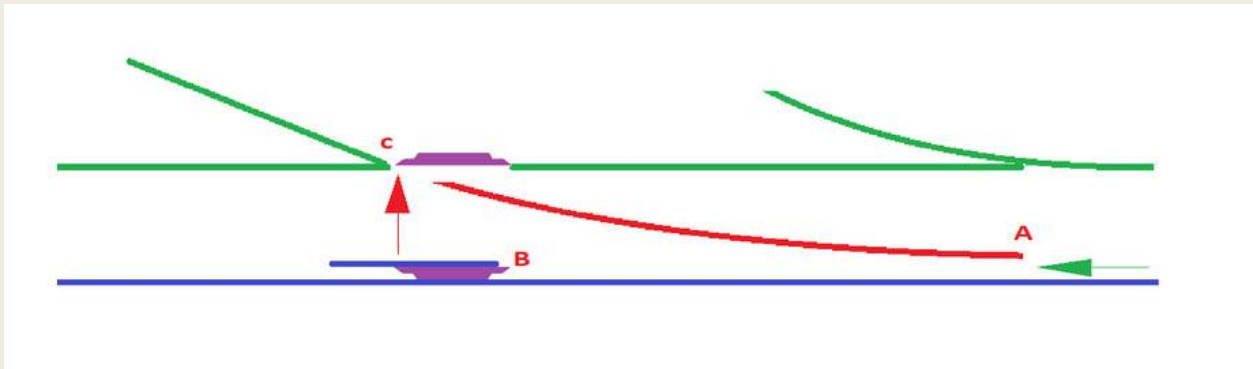
So initially it looks like we have solved the problem. As both wheels are pushed towards the rails then the clearance past the switch blade at position A is increased and no collision occurs, likewise at Point B the flange is held far from the check rail... but there is always a BUT!



Look carefully at position B. The flange of the wheel is far away from the check rail, so as we said no collision! BUT masses of free-play. The option is there to



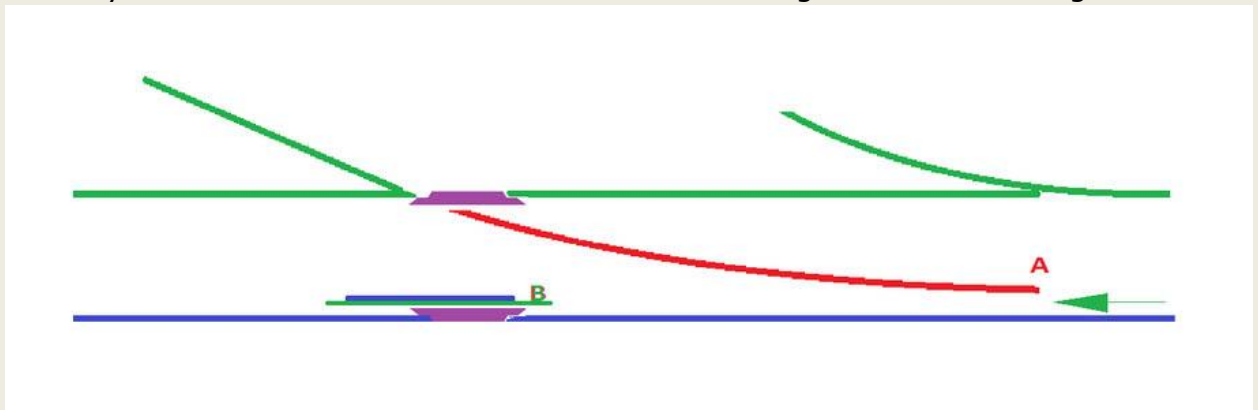
slide inwards and move closer to the check rail. So what then happens to the wheel crossing the frog?



The free-play at position B between the check rail and the back of the flange has allowed this wheel to ride inwards pushing the far wheel outwards, often catching on the wrong side of the frog and riding up outside the rail. Derailing!

Again this is particularly a problem for the curved route as it is easier for the wheel at the frog to arrive out-of-gauge and slightly at an angle to the intended route further promoting riding up and out.

- Ensure your track is in gauge everywhere. You can't be too particular in going over every inch even if it looks correct it may very well not be.
- ii) Ensure that the wheels you are running actually suit the track it is on. If not replace them.
- iii) Set the correct back-to-back using a commercially available gauge on every set of wheels you have.
- iv) If you still have problems then closing the gap at B will prevent the opposite wheel escaping over the Frog. The suggestion to glue in a small strip of brass or very thin plastic to the inside of the check rail will catch the sideways movement before it allows the far wheel to get outside the frog.



- v) You can glue check rails into position on the inside rail of any curve to do the same trick. Why not? Real railways have them and exactly for this

reason, they don't do it for fun you know! I did this on my own curves where the tracks split over a baseboard join. Before, almost everything de-railed, now everything passes without problems.

I hope you have found this explanation helpful in trouble shooting your own problems.

Happy Railroading everyone!

Mal

North Wales"



### **Unusual Open Car Loads – Military Cargo**

By Dave Vinci

Military loads are usually interesting. I'm sure most folks have seen Sherman Tanks on Flat cars, well, I model the 1920s so I went looking for World War 1 tank models in HO scale. A couple of years ago I found some resin models of the little French tank. I put 2 of them on a 40ft flat.



PRR #425690 class FM flatcar F&C kit - Tanks are resin kit HO scale

D.J. Vinci Collection

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this little tank, here's what the National WWI Museum has to say about the Model FT17:

"The Renault FT17, a French light tank, carried a crew of two (driver and commander/gunner). It was the first tank with a fully-rotating turret and held a 37 mm Puteaux gun (as exhibited at the Museum) or a 7.92 mm Hotchkiss machine gun. The "FT" designation simply came from Renault's prototype combination code and the "17" for the first production year (1917). By war's end 3,177 were delivered to the French army, 514 to the American Expeditionary Forces, and three to the Italian army."

The US Army brought a few back to the US at the end of the war for reasons of their own. I think it's a nice flat car load. But I got to thinking that wouldn't it be neat if we had a couple of the larger British tanks too. I found some HO scale models on Shapeways and I bought a couple.



WW1 British Mark IV Tank - Shapeways model

photo D. Vinci



WW1 British Mark V Tank - Shapeways model

photo by D. Vinci

These tanks are quite a bit larger than the diminutive FT17 and they came in male and female versions (different weaponry). I purchased a Mark IV and a Mark V. These tanks are the same width at the tracks as standard flat cats are wide, so the gun pods on the sides overhang the flat cars. The Mark V has larger pods with the result that the guns sticking out of them exceeded the clearances I built into my layout. Who knew? So only the Mark IV made it around the layout.



left to right: French FT17 Renault, British Mk IV, British Mk V Tanks

photo by D. Vinci

Here is a photo of all three tanks, with the British Mark IV sitting on a 50 foot B&O flat. I still have to build some blocking and arrange some tie-downs but it should make up into a nice model.



## **Prototype Photos**

If you have some photos of one of the railroads that ran/run through our area, that you've taken or have permission to submit for publication, please send scans of them to your editor for inclusion in our Prototype photo section. If you need help with this, contact Your editor.



WB CN intermodal train at Edwardsburg, MI - February 24, 2021

photo by Rich Mahaney







WB CN train passing another train (EB) in Marcellus, MI on 2/24/21. Photo by Rich Mahaney



EB train with mixed freight - lots of hazmat loads, check out the group of engines Photo by Rich Mahaney  
February 24, 2021



## Division 9 Calendar for March 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	29	30	31			

## Division 9 Calendar for April 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 Div 9 Zoom Meeting
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	