



The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



April 2025

Website: <https://div9.ncnmra.org>



This photo is the Pere Marquette Steam Engine # 1225, from the Steam Railroading Institute.

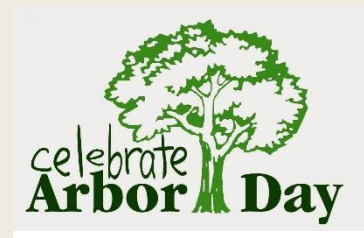
Featured Articles this Month:

Pages

Editor's Comments	2
Upcoming Event Schedule	3 & 12
Pickle Industry Photos & Information	4 – 11
KMRHS Train Show	13
Novi National Convention	13 & 14
Favorite Websites	16
March Meeting Photos	17 – 27
Thomas the Tank Engine Creator-Britt Alcroft	29
Alan's Adventures in Model Railroading	30
Wrap-up	31

Non-Train Related Holidays & Special Events – April 2025

April Fool's Day	4/01
Tax Day	4/15
Easter	4/20
Earth Day	4/22
Arbor Day	4/25



Editor's Comments

My apologies for the two mistakes in the March Yardmaster on dates of holidays and special events. I will make every effort to avoid these kinds of errors going forward.

For all board members and any other member wanting to attend our April 6th Board Meeting, it will be held at Garry Johnson's house starting at 7:00PM. At the conclusion of the business portion of the meeting, we will take some time to sit back, relax and just have great time talking about trains and our experiences with the "World's Greatest Hobby" of model railroading.

Remember there are no membership meetings in July and August, things will start again in September at our annual meeting. One of the key parts of the annual meeting is board elections. Terms expire for three board positions, Superintendent, Scribe, and the Trustee Position currently held by Doug VanMeter. For all of you out there that really want to join in on the fun and become a member of the Division 9 board, now is the time to get your name on the ballot. All you need to do is contact any of the current board members and express your desire to become a member of the board and which position you would like to hold. The list of current board members and their contact information is displayed below:

Division 9 Board Members

Position	Board Member	Email address
<u>Superintendent</u>	<u>Garry Johnson</u>	<u>elecsprk@gmail.com</u>
<u>Assistant Superintendent</u>	<u>Joel Pyard</u>	<u>pyardj@comcast.net</u>
<u>Paymaster</u>	<u>Bob Lawrence</u>	<u>robertlawrence44@msn.com</u>
<u>Scribe & Newsletter Editor</u>	<u>Alan Bau</u>	<u>alanwbau@gmail.com</u>
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Doug Van Meter</u>	<u>vanmeterda@gmail.com</u>
<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Greg Marvin</u>	<u>sr@earthworkslawnandlandscape.com</u>
<u>Website Manager</u>	<u>Tony Vacha</u>	<u>CKRHandler@aol.com</u>



Upcoming Division Nine Membership Meetings & Events:

Meetings & Events	Date	Location	Presenter & Topic
Board Meeting	April 6 th - 7:00 PM	Garry Johnson's	N/A
Membership Meeting	April 19 th 9:30 AM	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Presentation by Doug Harding – "Fun with Pickles: a look at the Pickle Industry"
Membership Meeting	May 17 th	Mid-Michigan Railroad Facilities in Turkeyville, Mi.	
Membership Meeting	June 21 st	TBD	TBD
Board Meeting	July 6?	TBD	TBD
No Membership Meetings in July & August			
Annual Meeting	September 20 th	TBD	TBD
Board Meeting	October 5 th		
Membership Meeting	October 18 th	TBD	TBD
Membership Meeting	November 15 TH	TBD	TBD
Membership Meeting	TBD	TBD	TBD

Upcoming Membership Meeting Information

April 19th Membership Meeting – Kalamazoo Bridge Club

We will be meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club. After our normal business meeting, our featured speaker is Doug Harding (pictured here) who will present a clinic on:

"Fun with Pickles: a look at the Pickle Industry".

Over the last few years, Doug has made several outstanding presentations to our group about several industries and the effects on model railroading.



The next few pages contain photos along with some interesting facts relating to the Pickle Industry in the state of Michigan.

Did You Know?

According to The **Vegetable Growers News** in an article dated April 2019 "Michigan devotes more acreage to pickling cucumbers than any state in the union."

According to **WKFR radio** in an article dated December 2022 "Michigan produces more pickles than any other state". In a second WKFR article dated February 2023, "West Michigan is the home of the World's Largest Pickle Factory". The plant pictured here is located in Holland, Michigan.



A few facts on the Holland Plant

The Holland Heinz plant opened in 1897 and has been called the community's longest continuously operating employer.

Projects planned by Kraft Heinz include the implementation of heat pumps, electric boilers, anaerobic digestors, electric heaters, biogas boilers, solar thermal, solar photovoltaic, and thermal energy storage, the company said.

In 2016, Kraft Heinz announced it was making a \$17 million expansion at the factory to begin producing the company's Grey Poupon French-style mustard. The expansion included additional production lines and an upgraded onsite wastewater treatment facility. At the time, Kraft Heinz employed 300 full-time workers and about 100 seasonal workers at the plant.

The company opened its Holland plant in 1897 after a group of West Michigan cucumber growers passed the hat and raised about \$800 for 2 acres, rail access and a dock on Lake Macatawa.

The next few pages display pictures taken or found by Rich Mahaney.

Photos of "Coffin" style and tank style pickle cars, photos provided by Rich Mahaney



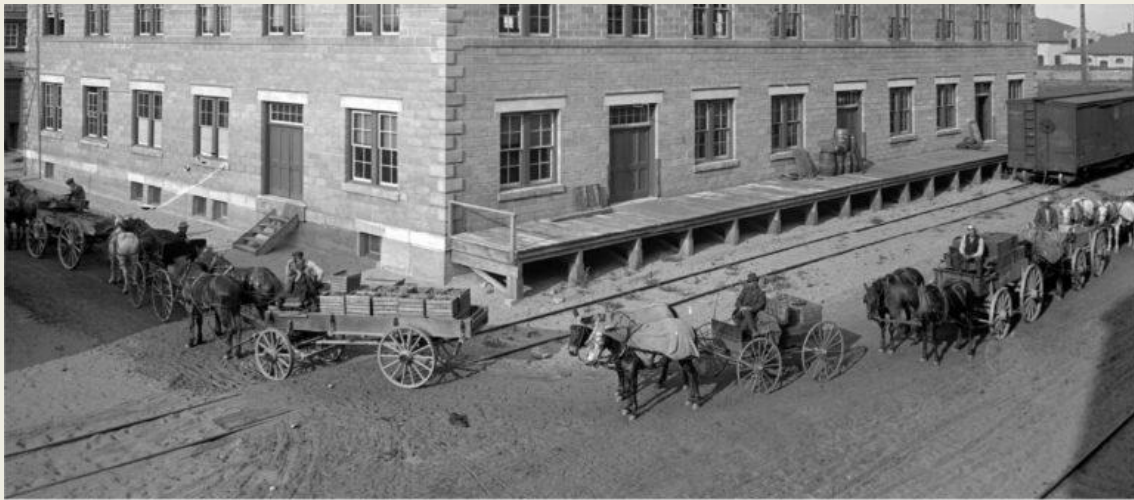
Images of Heinz Pickle Plant model that is displayed on numerous train layouts.



A couple of old photos of workers at a Heinz Pickle Plant



Pickle sorting, 1907



Wagons of cucumbers, 1907



Lots of Pickle Barrels



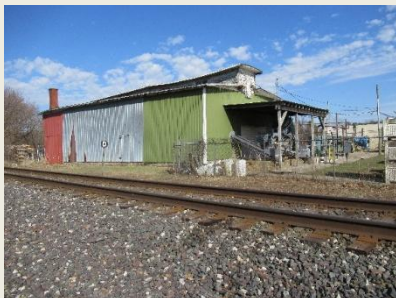
HJ Heinz's motto was, "Heart power is stronger than horsepower."

Photos of Vinegar Tank Cars





Since 1903, Freestone Pickle Company has produced the finest in pickles and related pickled goods. We presently make our full line of choice products with pride in in Bangor MI, at one of the original company locations. With a 50, 000 square foot manufacturing plant employing over 30 people, the company manufactures over 90 wholesale and commercial pickle and pepper items. From our 18, 000-bushel capacity in the 1930's, our pickle tanking capacity has grown to approximately 350, 000 bushels. That's over 17 million pounds of pickles! Our products are distributed through over 225 different companies in 35 states. We pack them in 128-ounce jars as well as 5-gallon pails. One of our specialties is individually packaged pickles for home or retail use. "Our family name on each package is your guarantee of a consistent and quality product and has been since 1903. Six generations of our family have been involved in the production of quality pickle products."



Pickles of all sizes



MIDGET GHERKINS--10,00 TO THE CASK



FANCY GHERKINS--15,000 TO THE CASK



SMALL GHERKINS--10,000 TO THE CASK



GHERKINS--100 TO THE CASK



SMALL PICKLES--100 TO THE CASK



SMALL MEDIUMS--200 TO THE CASK



SPECIAL MEDIUMS--200 TO THE CASK



MEDIUMS--100 TO THE CASK



LARGE MEDIUMS--100 TO THE CASK



LARGE PICKLES--100 TO THE CASK

We have more photos about the Pickle Industry, but these will be saved for the May edition.

May 17th Membership Meeting – Mid-Michigan Railroad Facilities in Turkeyville, Mi



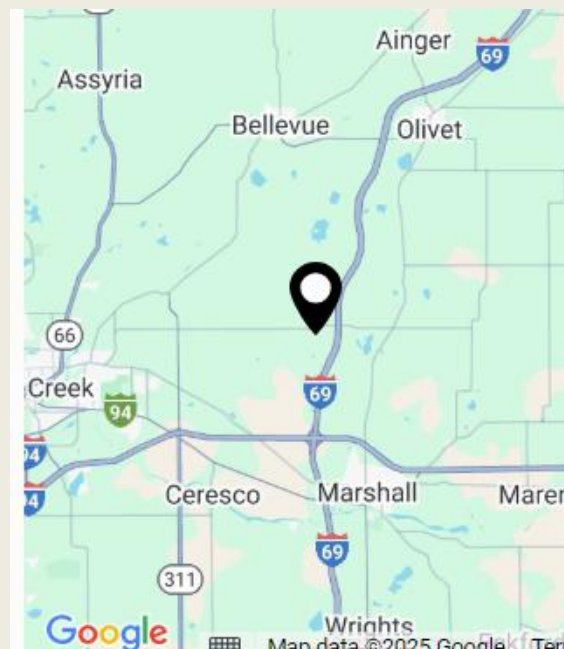
The agenda for the day is described on the next page.

The Mid-Michigan Railroad is a club like many other except their models are considerably larger than a typical O, HO or N scale.

We will actually be able to ride the trains, tour their facilities and train layout. Most likely some of their members will bring their own locomotives and cars. From what we know they have lots of stories that they are more than willing to share with visitors willing to listen. They have a Grand Elk RR caboose which was donated to the club. We expect to learn about the club operations, their size and their future plans. **Members should plan to arrive at 10:00AM**

For more information click on the link below:

[MID MICHIGAN RAILROAD CLUB - Home](#)



2025 NMRA National Convention

[2025 NMRA National Convention, Novi, MI | National Model Railroad Association](#)

If you plan to attend or would like information about the 2025 NMRA National Convention in Novi, Mi. to be held from July 14th through the 19th, click on the link above.



Kalamazoo Model Train Show & Sale



Spring Model Train Show & Sale

Saturday, Apr 5th, 2025

10AM - 3PM

**Kalamazoo County Expo Center
Admission \$5 • Kids 12 & Under Free**

KMRHS.ORG

Event Description

Come on out to the spring train show at the Kalamazoo Expo Center on April 5th from 10AM to 3PM. Whether you are adding to your layout, or just starting in the hobby, this is the place to be. Search all of the vendors to find that great deal, or that rare item. With over 150 vendor tables there are many bargains to be found! There will be running layouts to view from local clubs. This is your chance to see the beautiful layouts that these clubs spend many hours crafting. They would be happy to discuss model railroading, and current trends with you. This could be your one stop trip for model railroading supplies, toy trains, railroading memorabilia, and collectibles.

The link to the Train Show List is displayed below:

[The Train Show List - Hobby and Train Event Clearinghouse](#)

You will need to scroll down to find the details for the Kalamazoo Club.



2025 NMRA National Convention

Station No. VI - hosted by the North Central Region of the NMRA



July 14-19, 2025

Open to ALL model railroaders! You do not have to be an NMRA member to attend!
REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

WELCOME to the 90th NMRA National Model Railroad Convention, STATION No. VI

July 14-19, 2025 – Novi, Michigan

50+ Layouts to Visit



Clinics and Workshops



Suburban Hotel w/Free Parking



National Train Show



REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

The convention is being hosted by the NORTH CENTRAL REGION of the NMRA. Our goal is for [A Convention Like No Other](#). We are planning a great week of model and prototype railroading, just for YOU!

This convention is open to ALL model railroaders! You do not have to be an NMRA member to attend!

Come and join us for the MAXIMUM model railroad FUN!

LOCATION

[Convention HQ is the Sheraton Hotel](#)
[21111 Haggerty Road, Novi, MI 48375](#)

See all the accommodation options on our [Location Page](#)

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- [Suburban location HQ Hotel](#) with FREE parking!
- 50+ restaurants within 15 minutes of HQ Hotel
- [Operating sessions](#) available
- [NMRA model contest and model showcase](#)
- [Banquet Dinner](#) with guest speaker on Saturday evening
- 20+ [Clinics](#) per day Tuesday – Saturday
- [Modeling With The Masters](#) clinics
- 60+ [home/club layouts](#) 200 – 3000 sq ft to visit
- [Prototype tours](#) available
- [Model Showcase display room](#) with popular vote awards
- [Yard Sale](#) of new/used model railroad equipment
- Friday night [Pizza Party](#) with choice of soda, beer or wine.
- Event shirts available pre-order only
- EVERYONE welcome to attend!
- Unprecedented One LOW cost admission!
- Admission price includes ALL layout visits/clinics
- [National Train Show](#) Saturday – Sunday

Don't miss out on the latest updates leading up to the 2025 NMRA Convention! [Subscribe](#) now to join our community of industry enthusiasts, thought leaders, and passionate learners.

Subscribe

[REGISTER NOW!](#)

Operating Sessions



Model Showcase Room



National NMRA Model Contest



This is a screenshot of the 2025 NMRA National Convention that will be held in Novi, MI. from July 14th through the 19th.

There is a link to their website on the previous page if you want to see it in more detail.

It isn't often that a National Convention is held this close to our area.

2025 Spring Railroad Modelers Meet

Hosted by the Black Swamp Division (Div 1) of the North Central Region (NCR), NMRA



April 5, 2025 – Sylvania OH

Doors Open 8:00AM with activities into the evening. See website for details!
Sylvania Senior Center, 7140 W Sylvania Ave, Sylvania, OH 43560

Learn New Skills, Share Your Models, Share Techniques, Visit Layouts



This is an RPM style
Model Railroading event!
Lunch options will be available on-site!



This event is open to ALL MODELERS - NMRA Membership is not required

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Modeling Clinics – 9 clinics on 3 tracks to choose from on a mixture of subjects presented by modelers, historians, and industry experts.

Model Showroom – Bring your models (finished or in-progress) of locomotives, rolling stock, structures, dioramas, or scenery. All are Welcome! The showroom is about sharing the hobby in all its many forms. Freelance and prototype welcome.

Layouts and Displays - Small and modular displays will be available within the main venue.

Layout Tours - Layout tours of local layouts will be available during the afternoon and evening.

Admission is \$20 at the door

17 and under free, all individuals 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult

All event activities (minus lunch) are included in one low price!

This is NOT a swap meet!



Visit our website for more information
and event schedules
smm.ncrnmra.org

Hosted by the Black Swamp Division
Division 1, NCR NMRA
div1.ncrnmra.org



Some of my Favorite Websites

National Model Railroad Association

The NMRA website has tons of interesting and informative articles intended to help all of us train enthusiasts become better modelers and increase our enjoyment of the hobby. Over the next few months, the plan is to highlight one or more sections of the NMRA website and point out some things that may be of interest.

Member Benefits: The following are just a few of the benefits available to NMRA members.

- Access to coaching and support by Master Model Railroaders® (MMR)
NMRA assists other members whenever possible, whether or not the individual requesting assistance is a participant in the Achievement Program.
- Beginner's Guide
Learn the basics of trackwork, wiring, scenery, and more in this [online guide](#).
- Modeling With The Masters® (MWTM)
Get coaching in hands-on learning experiences led by Master Model Railroaders® in [MWTM](#).
- NMRA Interchange
Connect electronically with NMRA members around the world to ask questions, provide answers, post events, share ideas, and make friends in the [NMRA Interchange](#).
- NMRA Online Archives
Scans of more than 10,000 photographs, slides, plans, drawings, paint schemes, and more available for download at a discount to members in the [online archives](#).

NMRA Michiana Division Main Page

This link is from our friends from the Michiana Division. There are close to 200 videos covering a wide array of topics by many different model railroaders. Some of the presenter names that you may be familiar with include our own Joel Pyard, Maynard Mitchell, Clark Propst, Ron Christensen, Doug Harding & Greg Bueltmann along with many others.

Recap of the March Membership Meeting at KMRHS

We had a good turnout for the March meeting, which was held at the Kalamazoo Model Railroad Historical Society. After a cup of coffee and a donut, we were free to take a layout tour of the club's layout.

This was followed by a series of three presentations:

Jim Glenn started things off with an overview of the design and construction of the layout.

David Hayes Moat followed that up with a presentation on the Designing, building, installing and operating on their block signaling system.

Finally Frank Zajac finished things up with an overview of the Club's use of the JMRI system for Operations. For those of us that are not all that familiar with JMRI and have some interest in operations, this system can be quite useful.

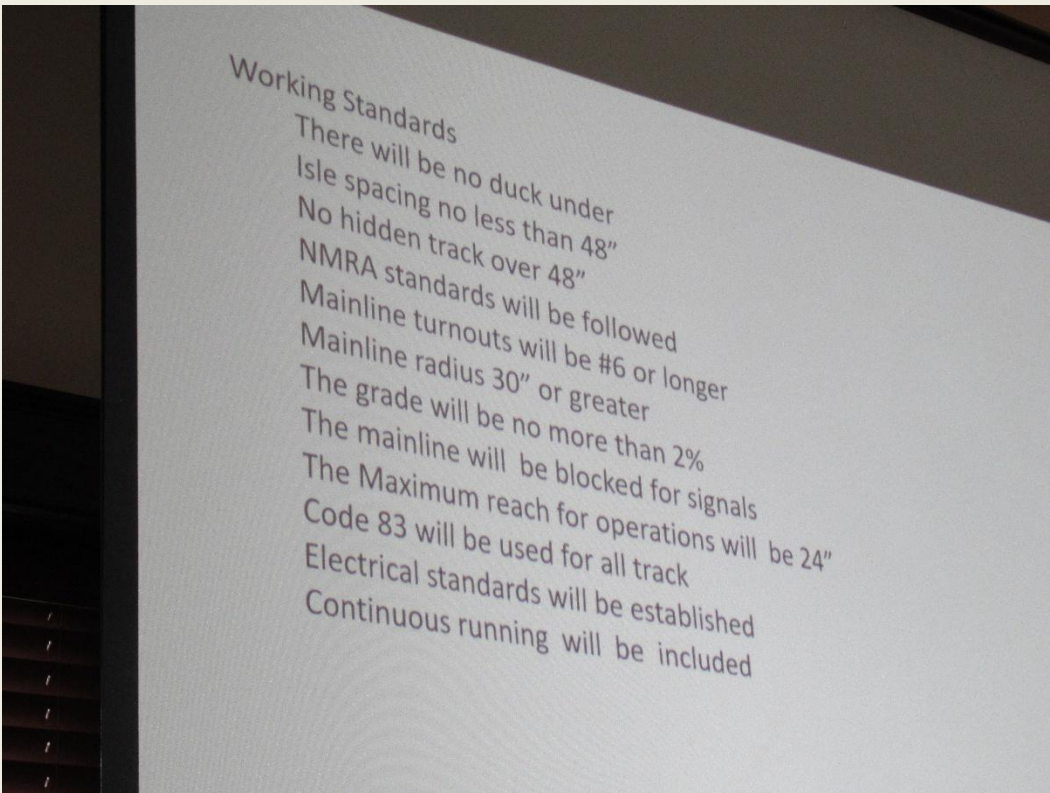
Thanks to Rich Mahaney for taking the following photos of our visit.

Pictured below left to right are Frank Zajac, David Hayes Moat & Jim Glenn.

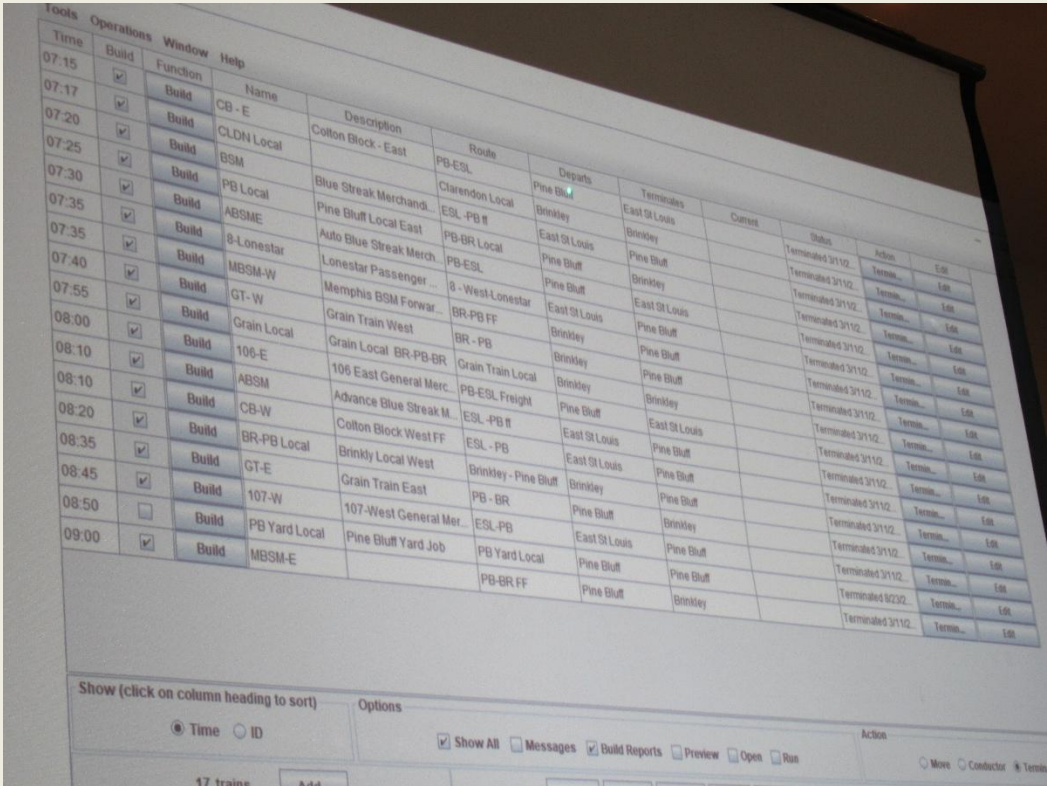


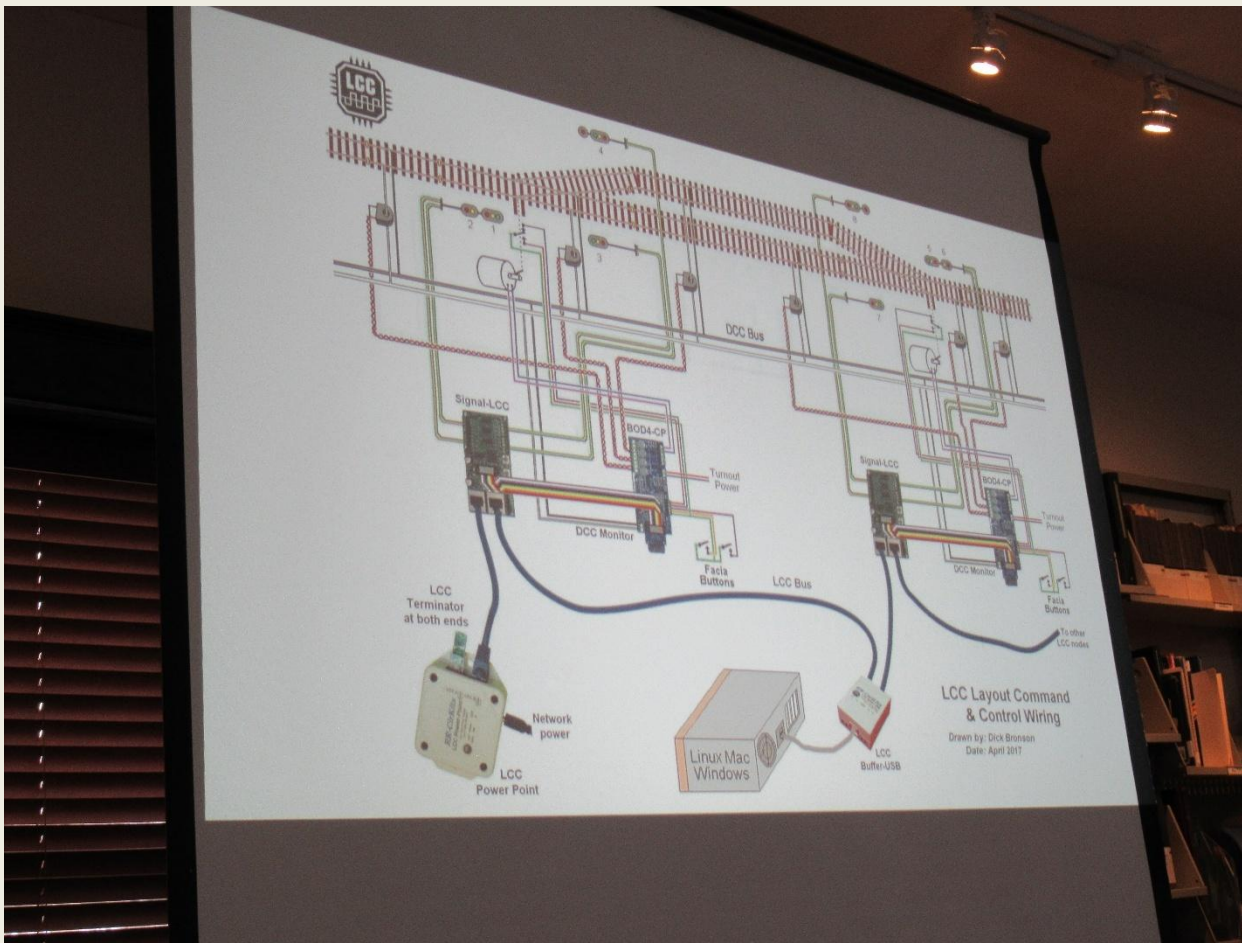
Copies of a few presentation slides.

Pictured to the left is a list of the Working Standards the club established prior to construction of the layout.



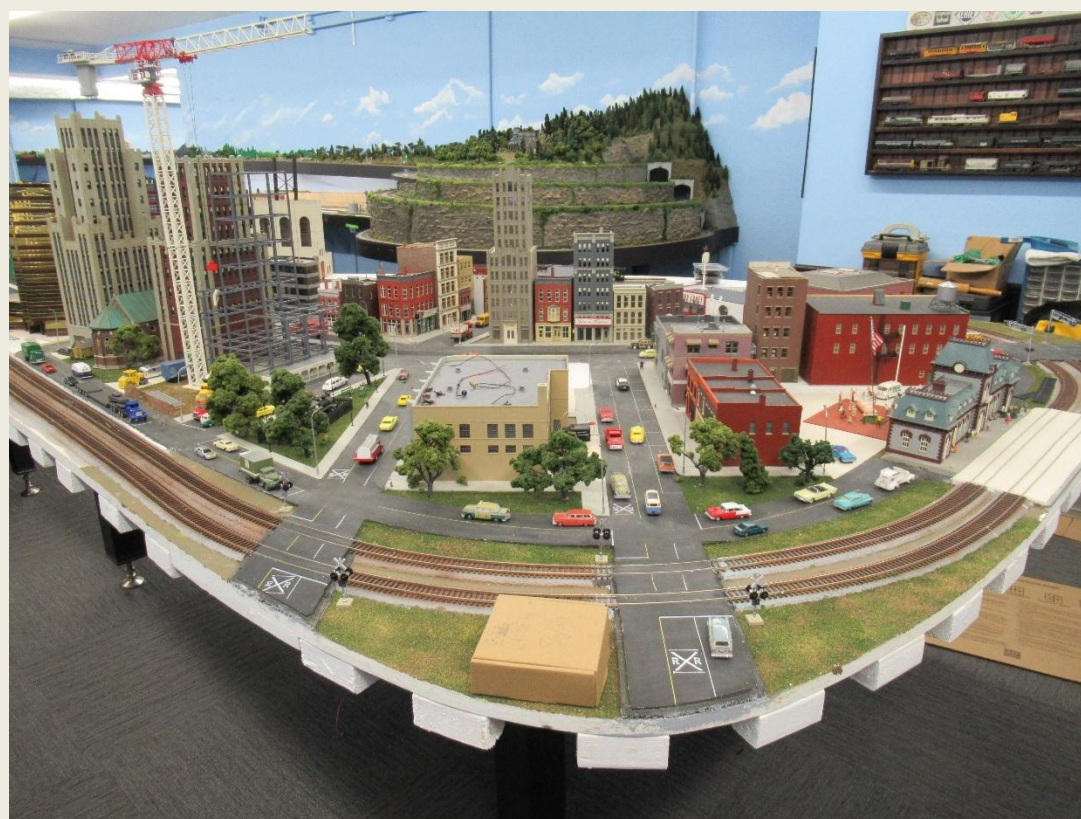
This is a snapshot of one of the JMRI screens that is used extensively by the club in building trains for an upcoming operating session.





The diagram to the left depicts a section of the Club's signaling system used throughout the layout.

The Following Pictures of the Club's Layout were taken by Rich Mahaney





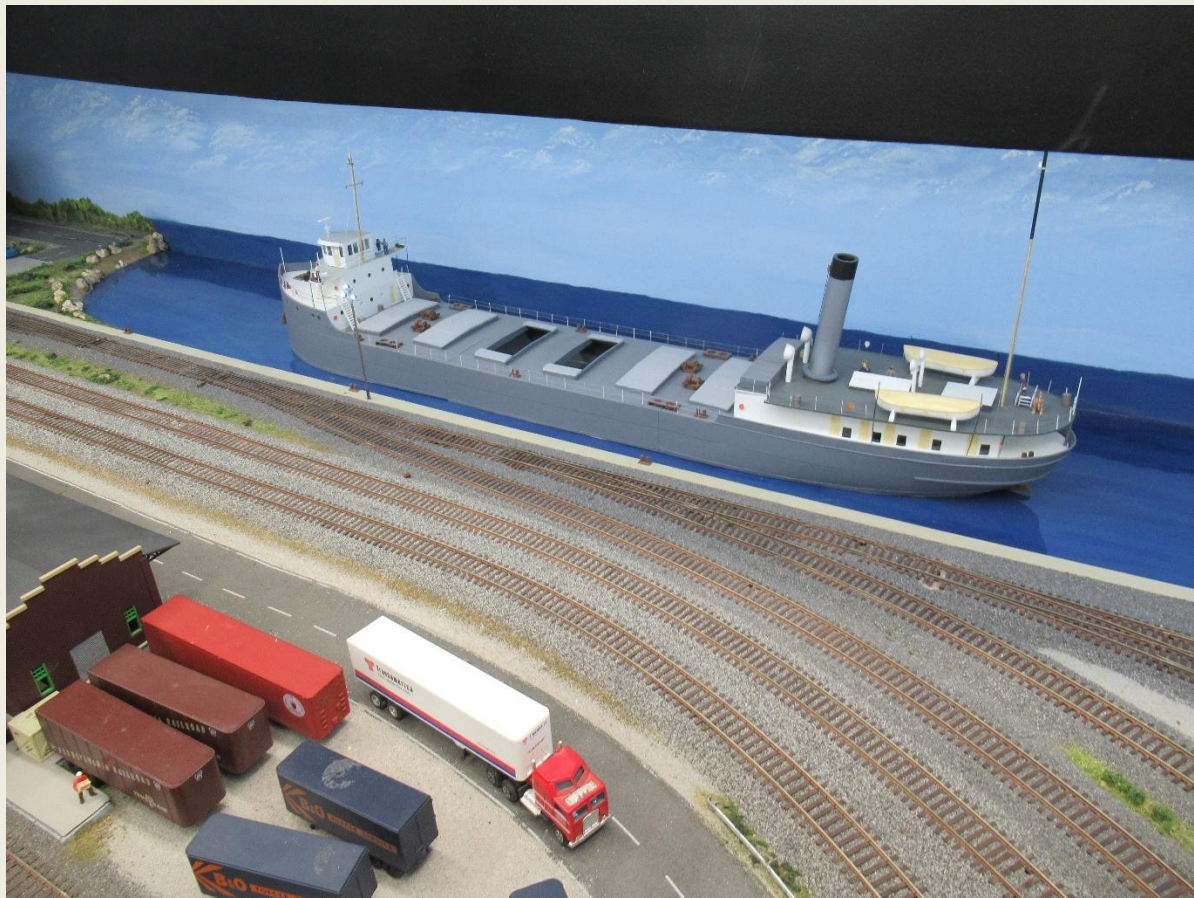












Making Hay Bales A couple of links to videos on making hay bales are displayed below:

These links are videos on making round hay and rectangular bales by Luke Towan's (Elle) website Boulder Creek Railroad.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ky39Y1P02A4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=neAbGyHFFUE>

For Sale Items

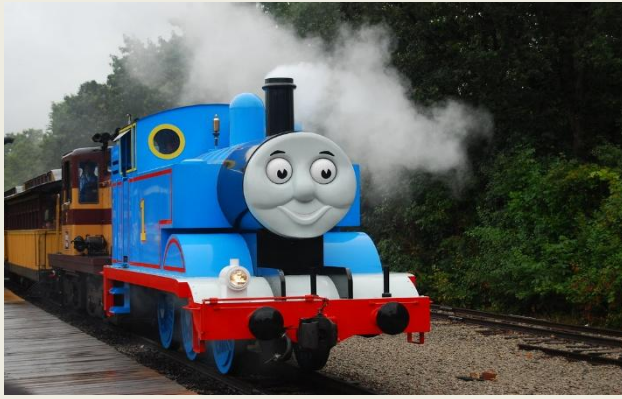
Do you have an excess inventory of cars, supplies, etc. which are just taking up space and most likely will never be used? You can list these items here and try to sell them, so you can buy more train stuff.

To list your for-sale items here, send your list of items along with a picture if one is available, a description of your item(s) along with your asking price and contact information. Send your information to alanwbau@gmail.com.

Free Wood Cutoffs & Styrofoam

Hey everybody, I am in the process of cleaning out my workshop and I have an excess supply of white Styrofoam and wood cutoffs of various sizes and varieties of wood. If anyone has a need for either of these, they are yours for free, all you need to do is pick them up. Please contact Alan Bau if you have any questions or want to set up a time to pick them up. (269) 501-8999. alanwbau@gmail.com





Britt Allcroft creator of the Thomas the Tank Engine passed away on December 25, 2024, at age 81.

NMRA Achievement Program

Do you have any interest in the NMRA-NCR Achievement Program. If you want more information or have any specific questions, contact our Division 9 Achievement Program Coordinator - Dorman Wilson N8YNW@Charter.net.



Alan's Adventures in Model Railroading

As some of you are aware I have been mostly absent from Division 9 Membership meetings. Hopefully, things are turning around and there will be more time available to attend membership meetings and work on my train layout. Over the last couple of weeks, I was able to do a few things with the layout, reorganized a part of my workshop and cleaned out some train items that I will never use. My current train projects are building a road, setting Robert's Printing Plant, Champion Meat Packing Plant and stockyard in place and developing the scenery around those structures.



Wrap-up

As always, we welcome your comments, suggestions, criticisms, photos, articles related to model railroading, maybe even some funny stories.

The link to the Kalamazoo train show list is displayed at the bottom of page 13 immediately below the flyer for the Kalamazoo Model Railroad Historical Society. You will need to scroll down a bit and click on the details for more information. We encourage you to attend the Kalamazoo Train Show and support this fine organization.

Thanks again to Jim Glenn, Frank Zajac & David Hayes Moat for their presentation at the March Membership Meeting.

The Link to our new website is <https://div9.ncrnmra.org>.

Thanks to all those that contributed to this month's newsletter.

Alan Bau
Divisions 9 Scribe & Newsletter Editor
alanwbau@gmail.com