



# The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



July/August 2025

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



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

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**HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE Annual MEMBERSHIP**

## Non-Train Related Holidays & Special Events – July & August 2025

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day**

**July 16<sup>th</sup> National Hot Dog Day**

**July 20<sup>th</sup> National Ice Cream Day**

**August 21<sup>st</sup> Senior Citizen Day**



## **Editor's Comments**

Don't forget our annual meeting is on September 20<sup>th</sup> at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club. For more information see the agenda on page 9. October and December meetings will most likely be held at one of the local restaurants as the Bridge Club is not available for our normal meeting dates. November will be layout tours in the greater Kalamazoo area. **Note: the date of the December meeting has been moved from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> to avoid conflicts with the Christmas holiday.**



## **Division 9 Board Members**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Email address</b>
<b>Superintendent</b>	<b><u>Garry Johnson</u></b>	<u>elecsprk@gmail.com</u>
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Paymaster	Bob Lawrence	<u>robertlawrence44@msn.com</u>
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Trustee	Greg Marvin	<u>sr@earthworkslawnandlandscape.com</u>
Website Manager	Tony Vacha	<u>CKRHandler@aol.com</u>



## **Announcement:**

Due to recent events the voting on changes to our bylaws is being delayed until the October Membership Meeting.

- Joel Pyard resigned his position as Assistant Superintendent.
- Alan Bau will be giving up the Scribe position but will remain on the board as newsletter editor.
- Greg Marvin will take over the Scribe position.
- We are taking a look at the responsibilities of some of the board positions.

Look for more details as they become available.



## Upcoming Division Nine Membership Meetings & Events:

Meetings & Events	Date	Location	Presenter & Topic
No Membership Meetings in July & August	Have a Great Summer		
Annual Meeting	September 20 <sup>th</sup>	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	See Agenda
Board Meeting	October 5 <sup>th</sup>	Bob Lawrence's (Tentative)	
Membership Meeting	October 18 <sup>th</sup>	Rooster Call – Shaver Road Location	TBD
Membership Meeting	November 15 <sup>TH</sup>	Three locations	Local Area Layout Tours
Membership Meeting	December 13 <sup>th</sup>	Rooster Call – Shaver Road Location	Mark Tomlonson or Rich Mahaney – topic TBD

**Note: We will be meeting at the Rooster Call Restaurant located on Shaver Road in Portage, for both the October and December meetings.**

**Also note that the December meeting date has been changed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of December 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**All Membership meetings held at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club start at 9:30AM, but coffee & donuts are available at 9:00AM.**



**Remember all board meetings start at 7:00 PM. Location varies between board member houses in April, July & October and the Kalamazoo Bridge Club in January.**



**The link to the Train Show List is displayed below:  
[The Train Show List - Hobby and Train Event Clearinghouse](#)**

## **Local Layout Tours in November**

Three local area layout tours are scheduled for Saturday, November 15th. The first tour will be at Jim Fankhauser's, followed by a tour of Jim Nichols' layout hosted by Kevin Kizer and Sheila Nichols and we will wrap up the day with a tour of Greg Stonerock's layout.

Addresses for each of the three layouts are listed below:

**Jim Fankhauser** – 15545 S 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Schoolcraft

**Jim Nichols** – 5746 West VW Ave, Schoolcraft, MI, (west of Schoolcraft on VW, off of 131)

**Greg Stonerock** - 9344 S 8<sup>th</sup> St, Schoolcraft



## **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](mailto:alanwbau@gmail.com).

## **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](mailto:N8YNW@Charter.net).

## Little River Railroad to commemorate 20th year in Coldwater



COLDWATER, Mich. - The [Little River Railroad](#) is pulling out all the stops to commemorate its 20th season operating out of Coldwater. An anniversary celebration, scheduled July 26 and 27, will include steam-powered excursions to Quincy, Mich., family-friendly activities, and a guest appearance by Nickel Plate Road No. 765. The 2-8-4 will be at the event on Sunday only due to prior commitments for the Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society's Members Weekend, July 25-26.

Visit the [Little River Railroad website](#) for more information and tickets.

## **2025 NMRA National Convention Recap**

The following pages were provided by Rich Mahaney.

On July 14 to July 19, 2025, The North Central Region (NCR) of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) hosted the annual model railroad convention for the 90th year of the NMRA. On July 19 and 20 the NMRA also hosted the annual National Train Show. The NCR/NMRA model railroad convention was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Novi, MI. The National Train show was held at the Suburban Collection Showplace, which is also in Novi, MI. 7 days of great model railroad activity!



More than 950 people attended the model railroad convention, which was sold out. They enjoyed more than 200 clinic offerings, toured more than 50 model railroad layouts, participated in more than 40 model railroad operating sessions, and other activities at the hotel. This convention had a large display of buildings, railroad cars and engines that were on display by various modelers, also a modeling contest that people could enter to have their modeling judged in competition, a Friday night pizza part for people (55 pizzas ordered) in the room with three large module layouts operating (which may have been a first), a "yard sale" in another room of railroad equipment and buildings that people were trying to sale and of course a complete set of activities and clinics for "non-rail" people and spouses. The registration process pretty much ran flawless because of the great work of "computer experts" on the registration team! The convention team worked under the philosophy of a "Convention like no other", as we made changes to some of the old ways and concepts that NMRA conventions have been done in the past. We hoped to make this a "convention model" for future conventions for the NMRA, shorter in length, cheaper in costs, free hotel parking and driving personal vehicles to see layouts instead of riding in buses to see layouts.

The National Train Show had an attendance of over 11,000 people. The show had a number of national railroad equipment manufacturers, vendors from their own hobby shops and specialty distributors, and a number of large module model railroad layouts in all scales. It was a great show! Lots to spend money on, if you wanted!

The next NMRA Convention and Train Show is in 2026 in Chattanooga, TN, in 2027 it is in Tacoma, WA and in 2028 it will be located in Rochester, NY. Start making your plans now!



Gordy Robinson, NMRA President speaking at the Saturday night banquet.

train engine models on display



national train show area



refinery on the European Model Railroad layout (we have two Division 9 members involved with this layout club)

## Modeling With the Master's workshop session



room with 3 modular layouts in it, 2 N scale and 1 HO layout, convention attendees could operate trains on the layouts



people loading on the buses for the river cruise trip and lunch



spouse's activities



registration area, 950 plus badges for attendees and volunteers to be given out



train layouts on display at the National Train Show



NMRA Board of Directors meeting



Registration Area



People waiting to get into the National Train Show



Pizza Party



Sheraton Host Hotel for the NMRA Convention



The national train show was at the Suburban Collection Showplace in Novi



President Gordy Robinson speaks to members at the NMRA Annual meeting.



Diorama submitted by Dave Capron MMR.  
If you recall Dave was the presenter at our  
June Membership Meeting on "Operations  
for a Small Layout"



Ho Train Layout on Display

## **Dave Capron Clinic Recap on "Operations on a Small Layout"**

Two photos showing discussion topics at the start of Dave's clinic on "Operations on A Small Layout".

Dave discussed how to increase operations and car movement by expanding the needs and details of different businesses and industries on a layout. As an example: if you have a passenger train, what support operations are need - railroad post office operations, add a food commissary for dining cars, add maintenance facility for passenger cars, baggage handling facilities and shipping operations, ice operations for dinning cars, and the list could go on and on. Passenger cars need more than passenger station.



# Operating a real railroad in Miniature

This clinic is about the design and redesign of your layout for model railroad operations.

What is the purpose and function of your railroad?

What industries do you want to serve?

Which industries can be on line and which off line?

How many operators do you want to have?

# Operations

An Insiders Look

Design

Trains

Consists

Interchanges

Yards

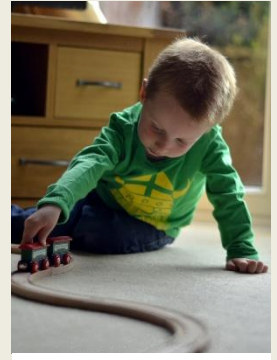
Staging

Round Robin



# Annual Meeting Details

- **Date & Time:** September 20<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:00AM for coffee & donuts, meeting starts at 9:30AM
- **Location:** Kalamazoo Bridge Club located at 648 Maple Hill Drive in Kalamazoo.
- **50/50 Raffle:** Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Winner & Division 9 split the pot
- **Door Prizes:**
  - (10) \$10 gift certificates at Rider's Hobby Shop in Grand Rapids. (1) Gift Certificate at Rider's Hobby Shop in the amount of \$25.
  - Other door prizes



- **For Sale Table**

- Members can bring in RR items to sell.
  - We will put up two tables in the small room to display items that members wish to sell.
  - Members must mark each item with the seller's name and price. It is up to each owner to put a description on the item at their discretion.
- The Division bears no responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen items.

- **Business Meeting**

- Officer Reports
- Election of Officers
- Upcoming Events



- **Show & Tell**

- Members are encouraged to bring in items for show & tell, or if they wish to just display the item, tables will be made available in the small room.
- Again, the Division bears no responsibility for lost, stolen or damaged items.

- **Mini-Clinics & Presentations**

- There will be a series of short clinics, discussions & demonstrations, presented by Division 9 Members.

- **Open Discussion**

- Open discussion on anything related to trains whether real or models.



## **National Model Railroad Association**

The NMRA is looking for a few good layouts for the annual calendar. If you want to consider submitting photos of your layout for consideration, click on this link for further information. [www.nmra.org/printed-calendar](http://www.nmra.org/printed-calendar). There is more information on page 51 of the May edition of the NMRA Magazine.



## **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.

## **Vicksburg Train Depot**

The Vicksburg Train Depot during the month of December has open houses on Saturdays. Last year two of our members provided some assistance in helping man their train layouts. Would you be interested in giving them a hand this coming December? It is an opportunity to answer questions and talk trains to parents and their kids about the wonderful world of trains. Maybe we can interest a few people in joining our group and becoming members of the NMRA and Division 9?

If you would like to become a volunteer or have questions, please contact Garry Johnson.

## **Division 9 Is Hosting A Modeling Challenge For Its Members!**

**The date for the Modeling Challenge has been set for the Membership Meeting scheduled on February 21, 2026.**

This modeling challenge is very simple. Select a model railroad car or cars from your collection (or purchase cars at a future train sale or by some other method) so that you can create a scene with it, in its new use and life.

This can be a railroad car in any scale and any type of railroad car. The key part of the modeling challenge is the railroad car is now being used in a different use, as compared to its original purchased use.

It should be built on a display that is one foot by one foot up to two feet by two feet. Foam or wood or something else is your choice for the display base.

There are no rules for this modeling challenge, only recommendations.

1. Base size for the display, so it can be shown at a Division 9 meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club.
- 2, Any scale of railroad car can be used. More than one railroad car can be used in the display.
3. The railroad car(s) in the display are in a new use as to what it was originally purchased for.
4. Type of railroad car chosen, can be any type. Caboose, open hopper, covered hopper, box car, refrigerator car, passenger car, flat car, stock car, intermodal well car, engine (steam or diesel), tank car (low pressure or high pressure or cryogenic), as examples.
5. Photos of examples - real railroad car examples and model railroad cars examples will be in the Division 9 newsletters through December 2025.
6. Be creative and use your imagination! Nothing is unacceptable!
7. Electrical lighting and electricity can be used in the display.
8. You can enter more than one display in the challenge.
9. There will be no judging of the displays, just the sound of "oohs and aahs" when people look at the displays!
10. Maybe you can find a permanent home or place on your layout for your car(s) on your layout to get more use out of your display ideas.
11. Again, have fun! Be creative, use your imagination! If you look around in the real world, railroad cars are found in all kinds of "second uses or lives". Watch for further announcements as to exhibition dates. Examples of 2<sup>nd</sup> use lives appear on the next few pages.

Thanks for participating! Rich Mahaney

Here are some more ideas for possible modeling challenge projects. Refer to the June Yardmaster issue for even more ideas to consider.



**"Caboose in a second life"**

**Caboose and a House**



This is/was a caboose kit you could buy commercially to put on your layout. It is in its second life as a yard office.



A flat car in a former life, now a bridge



## **NMRA Three Strike Policy**

There have been a number of questions concerning the NMRA Three Strike Policy, which is reprinted below for your information. All NMRA Division are expected to follow this policy. We discussed this during the July board meeting and will be putting this policy into effect starting with the September Annual Meeting.

### **Common sense talk about the three strikes policy: What is it and what does it mean?**

We've been getting a lot of questions about the Visitor Policy that the NMRA Board reaffirmed and publicized in February of 2015, limiting visitors to NMRA meetings to three visits during their lifetime.

This isn't really a new policy, since it was first adopted in 2007 and explained in the "President's Car" column in the November 2007 issue of Scale Rails (now called the NMRA Magazine). Then, as now, the needs of our insurance provider played a large part in the adoption of this policy, but there are also issues of basic fairness, as well as tax issues in the United States.

**Here's the policy:** Visitors are allowed three visits to an NMRA meeting IN THEIR LIFETIME. If they don't join by their third visit, they cannot attend any more meetings.

A lot of the questions we've been getting are from members trying to over-think the policy, worrying about this or that exception and making up complicated what-ifs. The policy does not apply to members' spouses who come along to the meetings so that they can go to dinner afterwards. It does not apply to non-member caregivers who aren't modelers, but who provide a ride to a member who cannot drive himself. It does not apply to events that are organized for the general public, like mall shows, swap meets, beginner clinic series, and the like, nor does it apply to things like joint meetings with another non-NMRA group or to family picnics or outings.

The policy does apply to non-members who continually show up at meetings at make themselves at home, month after month, year after year. Allowing freeloaders to participate as if they were members is unfair because it takes advantage of our members who HAVE paid up. We members are all paying to keep the organization going – what are the freeloaders doing, besides getting a free ride on our backs?

Tolerating permanent freeloaders can give our insurance providers a reason to cancel an NMRA group's coverage if there's an incident, leaving individual officers and members responsible for paying the claim. The IRS has rules about giving benefits of membership to non-members, too – they say don't do it, and there are tax consequences if you do.

Now, if your Division and Region are already following the rules (which would be a really good idea if you want the protection of our NMRA Liability Insurance policy), this policy is not the big deal you might think it is. We all know that if someone comes and tries us out three times and still doesn't join, he or she is not going to join. So after the third turn-down, don't worry about it – just move on to the next prospect.

If you're still wondering whether your group is in compliance, just ask yourself: are you allowing people who aren't members to come to your meetings month after month, year after year, and participate as if they'd paid their dues? If the answer is no, then fine, just keep doing what you're doing. If the answer is yes, then you have some changes to make.

If you have additional questions about this policy or how to implement it, please feel free to contact an NMRA officer, director, or NMRA HQ. We'll get your question to the right person.

Mike Brestel NMRA  
Insurance Coordinator  
At-Large Worldwide Director

## **Website Status**

We are starting to pick up a little steam in developing the various segments for our new website. <https://div9.ncrnmra.org/>. A tentative list of proposed segments is displayed below.

### **Current Website Segments**

- **Home**
- **Yardmaster** – Current Issue
- **Yardmaster Library** – June 2024 through May 2025
- **Links** – NMRA & NCR
- **Train Show List** (This opens a new page which links to Train Show List)
- **Upcoming Events** – list of upcoming member and board events

### **Possible Website Segments**

- **Contact Us** – This allows members & visitors to communicate with the Board of Directors.
- **Contact Board Members** – this is similar to “Contact” Us but would go to a specific board member. This would allow the viewer to select one or more board member and send them a note. No contact information would be displayed.
- **Mission Statement**
- **Minutes** – Board Meeting minutes and Membership Meeting minutes.
- **Bylaws**
- **Driving Directions** to the Kalamazoo Bridge Club. This would include detailed driving directions and a map of the bridge club’s immediate area.
- **Contests** – description of any contests that we run
- **Clinics** –.
- **Advertising Sponsors** Link & description
- **Division 9 History?**
- **Photo Gallery?**
- **TBD?**

## Rich's Travels

Thanks to Rich Mahaney for going out of his way to provide lots of photos for the Yardmaster Newsletter. He always finds some interesting railroad topics to photograph, and this month is no exception.

Here are photos of safety signs for entering the CN yards in Flint, MI and Battle Creek, MI for employee information. These could be modeled on your layout.



## WA#1

Rich took these pictures during his recent trip to Washington. This is only part 1, part 2 will be included in the September Yardmaster.

These photos will be from the Vancouver, WA, Amtrak Station area and the BNSF yard area. Lots of trains pass through these connecting tracks that come up from Portland, OR over the bridge, from tracks that run along the northside of the Columbia River Gorge and then everything from here heads up to the Seattle, plus the industrial tracks in the area. There are a number of different Amtrak trains that pass here and stop at the Amtrak station.



Pictured above - looking north from the Amtrak Station towards the BNSF Yard



Pictured left is a tank car for water service.

## WA#2

This is the Empire Builder train heading from Portland, OR to Spokane, WA, where it meets up with the train from Seattle, to head to Chicago.



**WA#3**



# WA#4



This is one of those Amtrak trains that goes up and down the coast.



**WA #5**



**WA #6**



**WA #7**



## WS #8A



Another Amtrak costal passenger train heading north bound.



On my way home from Novi and the great NMRA convention yesterday I photographed two CN mixed freights, on SW of Battle Creek, MI west bound, and one east bound at Vicksburg, MI. Both trains had lots of hazmat tank cars. Lots of UN 1830 - sulfuric acid and vinyl chloride - UN 1086 and UN 3475 - gasoline with more than 10% ethanal, plus the standard UN 1075 LPG, even a carbon dioxide UN 1013 filled tank car and two tank cars of hydrogen peroxide UN 2014.

Rich Mahaney



7108 and 7109 - Vinyl Chloride tank cars, this was the big problem in East Palestine, OH in NS derailment.

Pictured below: Sulfuric Acid tank cars



Pictured above and to the left are Vinyl Chloride tank cars, this was the big problem in East Palestine, OH in NS derailment.



The car pictured at the left is carrying Carbon Dioxide

The car pictured below is carrying Hydrogen Peroxide



The car above is carrying hydrochloric acid

The cars to the right are carrying ammonium nitrate (hot) UN 2426



## Trains 4 east bound CN train at Vicksburg



**DPU engine in this train**



**trackage signs - main 1 and main 2 for  
CN tracks markings**



**I Caught a WB Amtrak train in Kalamazoo after lunch today.**



## **Alan's Adventures in Model Railroading**

While May was a productive month, July & July have been non-productive as other things got in the way. I hope to have a better report in August.



### **Wrap-up**

After a couple of months off, our monthly membership meetings start again in September with our annual meeting. We are trying a few new ideas which we hope will be entertaining, interesting and helpful all at the same time. Look for future announcements as we finalize the schedule.

We have decided to postpone the voting on the amendments to our bylaws until some time after the October Board Meeting. As previously announced, there are a few changes to the board structure, and we are in the process of rewriting some of the board members' responsibilities. As soon as these changes are agreed to by the board we will send out a notice to all our members and include the details in the newsletter as well.

Normally we would be meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club in October and December, but it is not available. Why is it not available you ask, well they decided to play bridge on these days. However, we found a new location at the Rooster Call located on Shaver Road in Portage.

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

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

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