



The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



September 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 MEETING on September 20th.

Non-Train Related Holidays & Special Events –September 2025

- Sept. 1st – Labor Day**
- Sept. 7th – Grandparents Day**
- Sept. 11th – Patriots Day**
- Sept. 22nd – First Day of Fall**



Editor's Comments

Don't forget our annual meeting is on September 20th at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club. For more information see the agenda on pages 5 & 6. October and December meetings will be held at The Rooster Call Restaurant on Shaver Road in Portage, 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 20th to the 13th to avoid conflicts with the Christmas holiday.**



Division 9 Board Members

Position	Board Member	Email address
<u>Superintendent</u>	<u>Garry Johnson</u>	<u>elecsprk@gmail.com</u>
Assistant Superintendent	Open	
<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>	Greg Marvin	<u>grmarvin@comcast.net</u>
<u>Website Manager</u>	Tony Vacha	<u>CKRHandler@aol.com</u>



Announcement - Changes to Bylaws & Board Positions

Due to recent events that are outlined below, the voting on changes to our bylaws is being delayed until after the October Board Meeting.

- Joel Pyard resigned his position as Assistant Superintendent. The responsibilities of this position are being redefined.
- Alan Bau will be giving up the Scribe Position but plans to continue as Editor of the Yardmaster Newsletter. Greg Marvin has agreed to run for the Scribe position in the upcoming election.
- Consideration is being given to eliminate one of the two Trustee positions.
- Job Descriptions for all of the board positions are being reviewed and any changes will be included in the bylaws.
- The plan is to complete the bylaw changes prior to the October board meeting and then publish the changes in the November newsletter, hopefully before and then to vote on the changes in the December Membership meeting.



Upcoming Division Nine Membership Meetings & Events:

Meetings & Events	Date	Location	Presenter & Topic
Annual Meeting	September 20 th	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	See article on Page #?
Board Meeting	October 5 th	Bob Lawrence's (Tentative)	
Membership Meeting	October 18 th	Rooster Call – Shaver Road Location	Presentation on GR&I By Jim Winslow
Membership Meeting	November 15 TH	Three locations	Local Area Layout Tours
Membership Meeting	December 13 th	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 2nd Saturday of December 13th.

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:

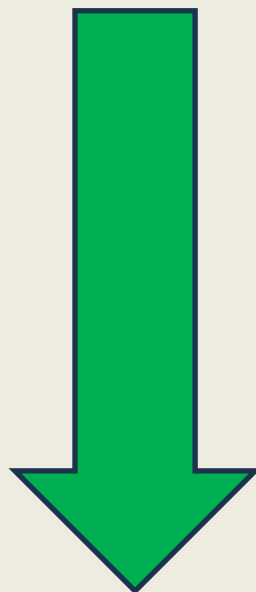
Jim Fankhauser - 15545 S 2nd Street, Schoolcraft

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

Greg Stonerock - 9344 S 8th St, Schoolcraft

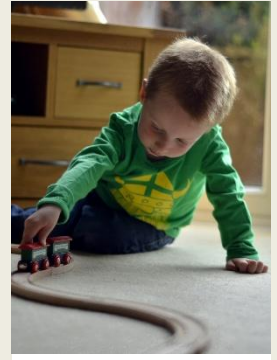


Annual Meeting Details on the next page.



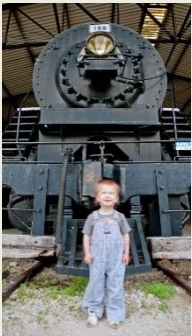
Annual Meeting Details

- **Date & Time:** September 20th 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 Train related 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

- Introductions
 - Officer Reports
 - Election of Officers (Superintendent, Scribe & Newsletter Editor)
 - 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.
 - **Mini-Clinics & Presentations**
 - Wiring your layout – Garry Johnson
 - Hands-on Demo of the Proxxon Foam Cutting Machine – Alan Bau
 - Presentation on lack of Tank Cars - Rich Mahaney
 - **Open Discussion**
 - Open discussion on anything related to trains whether real or models.



Presentation on Layout wiring for a 78-year-old guy. Ideas for younger modelers. – By Garry Johnson

Proxxon Foam Cutting Machine Demonstration - Alan Bau

Alan will be demonstrating his Proxxon Thermocut Machine (pictured below). If you have never used one of these machines here is your chance to give it a try and have a little fun at the same time.



Presentation Lack of Tank Cars by Rich Mahaney

Rich Mahaney's presentation is on the lack of manufacturers making model railroad tank cars for transporting flammable liquids under the new F.A.S.T. Act rules that have gone into effect this year. The rules were written in 2015 and have been phased into law over the years. The "big hit" happened this year in 2025. No more flammable liquids are to be transported in North America in DOT 111 and DOT 111-CPC 1232 tank cars. Those products must now be transported in DOT 117, DOT 117R, DOT 117P or DOT 120 tank cars. The real railroads are dealing with this rule change as well in North America. This is all part of dealing also with the "High-Hazard Flammable Liquid" train rules

[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 Buelmann 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.



[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.



**DON'T FORGET TO ATTEND THE
DIVISION 9 ANNUAL MEETING
ON SEPTEMBER 20TH**

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 2nd use lives appear on the next few pages.

Thanks for participating! Rich Mahaney

The June and July/August Yardmaster issues contain ideas that may be useful for consideration.

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.

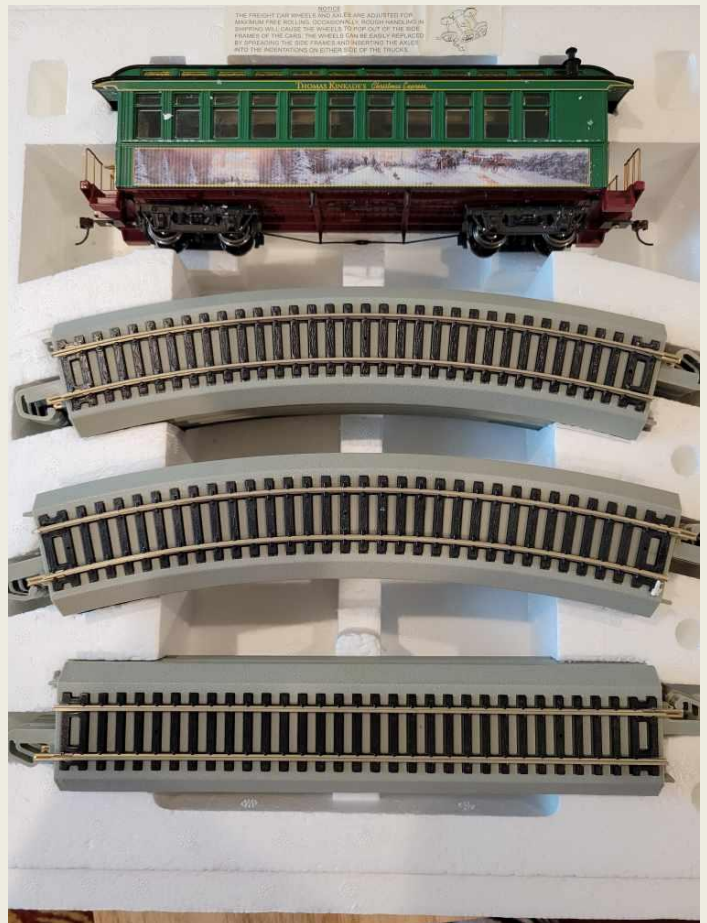
To list your for-sale items here, send your list of items along with a picture if one is available, a description of your item(s) along with your asking price and contact information. Send your information to alanwbau@gmail.com.

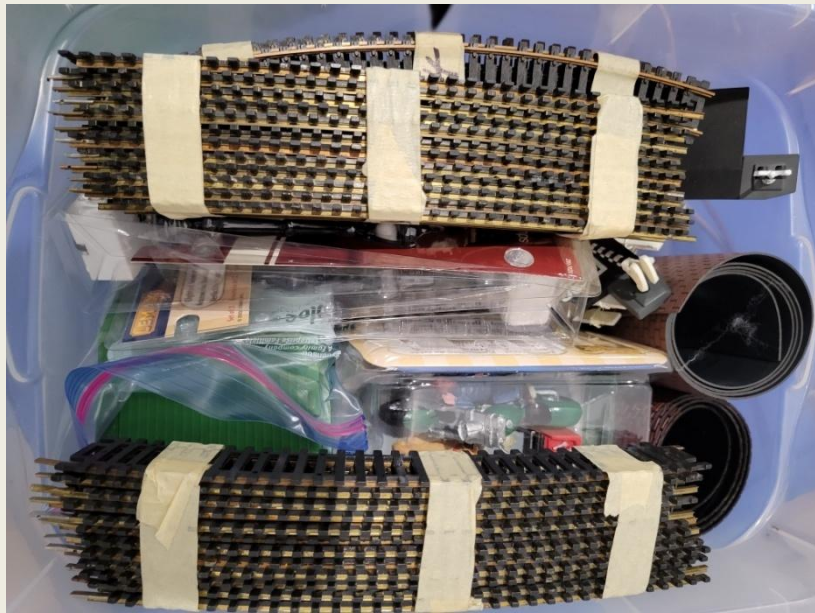
John Deere "HO" Equipment for sale

The following items were submitted by Susan Gall from Indiana.

Susan can be contacted at 260-316-5403. It is a "John Deere" theme train equipment and track in HO scale. She also has lots of buildings in a "Christmas Village" theme for a layout at Christmas time.

Christmas John Deere train set, it might be larger than HO scale









NMRA Three Strikes Policy:

There have been a few 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 overthink 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

**Did you know we are
having our annual
membership meeting
on September 20th?**

**Hope to see you
there!**



Rich's Travels

Rich's Travels starts out with part 2 of Rich's trip to Washington.

These photos are 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 north side 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.

WA#9



South bound
Amtrak costal
passenger train.



WA # 10



Train heading to the Columbia River Gorge tracks for an east bound trip.

Another Amtrak heading northbound.



WA # 11



The same northbound Amtrak from the last set of photos and a southbound UP train on BNSF tracks.

Remember on the Columbia River Gorge the north side of the river are BNSF tracks and on the southside of the southside of the river are the UP tracks. In many places along the east and west bound drives, you can see trains on both sides of the river.



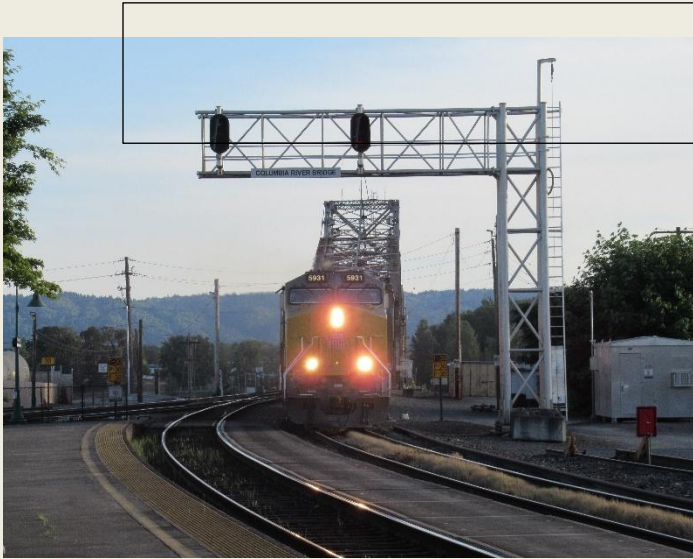
WA #12



Three photos of a train coming in from the Columbia River tracks and then heading north through the yard. During the time I was watching trains, they were always working in the yard, first photo.



WA# 13



Interesting story, as I was watching this approaching northbound UP train and it went by me with lots of noise, I never even heard the approaching CPKC train that came up on the tracks right next to me and from behind me. Had I heard it approaching, I would have turned around and taken a photo or two as it approached, instead I got a couple of photos as it passed me. Close call on the station platform. Surprised me! REMEMBER trains can approach at any time, from any direction, especially when there is double or more tracks.

Always be thinking about your safety when you are photographing trains!

Rich Mahaney



WA # 14



End of the CPKC train in the first photo, BNSF engines relocating for a later train usage.

Note the sun is going down, time for me to head east and start my drive along the Columbia River and look for a hotel room.

These photos were all from probably a three-hour time frame or so. The Vancouver, WA Amtrak Station is a great place to see lots of trains. Remember sun angles as you pick times to stop there for photos. Morning, noon and late afternoon has the sun on different sides of the trains.

One more email of photos coming that shows the train station and the train layout inside.



WA # 15 – Final Pics of Series



Vancouver, WA Amtrak Station with an HO layout inside.

This is one of my favorite places to watch and take photographs of trains!

Next photos will be along my drive from Vancouver along the Columbia River, then up to Toppenish and Yakama, WA. Then I will travel down to Pasco, WA for my NMRA meeting, then the day after that I will travel westbound along the river to Vancouver (but not stop for photos) to meet my wife up in Rainier, WA. Then while she shopped in Centralia, WA during an afternoon, I got to shoot train photos for 2 hours at the Amtrak station in Centralia for more BNSF, UP and Amtrak trains.

Hope you enjoyed this first collection of photos!

Be safe!

Rich Mahaney



CSX east bound freight at Holland, MI on Wed Aug 20, 2025

Coming out of Holland - Waverly Yard and heading to Grand Rapids and east.



My wife Jill took this CSX train photo last Wednesday in Grand Junction, MI. The train was running with the "long hood forward".



New York Central RR Historical Society

Information for all of you, I just got off a zoom call with the planning team for the 2026 New York Central RR Historical Society. They are hosting their annual convention in Kalamazoo, MI May 14 to 17, 2026, at the Delta Hotel (west of 131). That is the same weekend as our Sat Division 9 meeting. They are looking for a few layouts to tour in the area on Friday night. On Sunday, they will be heading to Grand Rapids to see Bruce Chubb's layout and maybe some layouts in the GR area.

Division 9 is invited to participate with their convention, I don't know what the price will be. They are sponsoring a passenger train ride from Coldwater to Fort Wayne. That weekend I am supposed to be teaching at a railroad convention in the Portland, OR area at this time.

More information to come.

Rich Mahaney

Dave Duchamp

Sad News: Dave Duchamp an active member and Scribe of Divison Nine for a number of years passed away on August 15th. An obituary was sent out earlier.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, September 13th 2025 at 12:00 PM at the Betzler Life Story Funeral Homes (6080 Stadium Dr, Kalamazoo, MI 49009). A reception will be held on Saturday, September 13th 2025 at 1:00 PM at the same location.



Wrap-up

After a couple of months off, our monthly membership meetings start again on September 20th 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.

In light of recent developments, voting on proposed bylaw amendments along with updated job descriptions will be deferred until after the October Board Meeting.

Remember that we are meeting at The Rooster Call Restaurant on Shaver Road in Portage in both October and December, as the Bridge Club is available. In November there are three tours of local area layouts.

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.ncnmra.org>.

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



Be sure to attend our Annual Membership Meeting on September 20th.