



The Yardmaster



May 2026 Website: <https://div9.ncrnmra.org>

Division Nine Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a welcoming community for model railroad enthusiasts of all ages and skill levels. We strive to share knowledge, inspire creativity, and promote the enjoyment of model railroading through collaboration, education, and hands-on activities. Together, we celebrate the rich history and artistry of railroading while building lasting friendships and memories.

Non-Train Related Holidays & Special Events May 2026

May 14th – Mother's Day
May 24th – Indy 500 & Coca Cola 600
May 25th – Memorial Day



Featured Articles this Month:

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Editor's Comments

In past years, summer usually meant fewer model railroad activities for most of us. This year is different, with more events planned than usual.

Our May meeting will take place on May 9th—one week earlier than our usual schedule—with an evening Operating Session hosted by Sheila Nichols and Kevin Kiser.

Starting Wednesday, May 13th, Garry Johnson and I will lead a Rolling Stock Workshop, where participants can test and repair rolling stock. These workshops will continue on the second Wednesday of each month.

On our regular May meeting date, May 16th, members are invited to join a train ride sponsored by the New York Central Historical Society.

In June, we'll meet at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club, giving members and guests another chance to work on rolling stock.



Although July and August are typically quiet months, this year we have a tentative Operating Session at Greg Stonerock's place on Saturday, July 18th, starting at 9:30 AM.

In August, we'll hold a family picnic at the Vicksburg Train Depot for all members and their families.

The summer wraps up with our annual meeting in September at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club.

As you can see from this list, there are plenty of opportunities to have some fun with Model Railroading.

Hope to see many of you throughout the Spring and Summer months. Let's have some fun this Summer!



Division 9 Board Members

Position	Board Member	Term Expires	Email address
Superintendent	Garry Johnson	2027	elecsprk@gmail.com
Assistant Superintendent	Open	Open	
Paymaster	Bob Lawrence	N/A	robertlawrence44@msn.com
Scribe	Greg Marvin	2027	grmarvin@comcast.net
Newsletter Editor	Alan Bau	2027	alanwbau@gmail.com
Website Manager	Tony Vacha	N/A	CKRHandler@aol.com
Trustee	Doug Van Meter	2026	vanmeterda@gmail.com



NEW RECRUITING PROGRAM

NMRA Rail Pass Want to "test drive" the NMRA for a little while?

Sign up for our [9-month Rail Pass trial membership](#) for only \$19.95! This Includes 9 months of the *Digital NMRA Magazine*.

The Rail Pass offer is good in the U.S. only and is for new members and those who have not been NMRA members for two years or more. Individuals can join at the Rail Pass rate only once. Rail Pass members can attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot hold office or vote in NMRA events. Membership will renew at the regular membership rate.

To encourage model railroad fans to join the NMRA, Division Nine will pay the fee for the 9-Month Rail Pass Trial Membership for any new Division Nine member.

Upcoming Division Nine Membership Meetings & Events:

Meetings & Events	Date	Location	Presenter & Topic
Op Session @ 6:00 PM	May 9th	Sheila Nichols 5746 West VW Ave.	
Rolling Stock Workshop Session	May 13th	Alan Bau – 2441 Hunters Run, Kalamazoo	No meeting, just a few train enthusiasts having a great time working on their rolling stock.
NY Central Train Ride	May 16 th	Meet at the Delta Hotel	
Rolling Stock Workshop Session	June 10th	Alan Bau – 2441 Hunters Run, Kalamazoo	Rolling Stock Workshop Session
Rolling Stock Workshop Session	June 20 th	Kalamazoo Bridge Club No formal meeting, just a fun time working on our rolling stock.	Hands-on test & repair your rolling stock. Bring your own supplies & tools.
Rolling Stock Workshop Session	July 8th	Alan Bau – 2441 Hunters Run, Kalamazoo	Rolling Stock Workshop Session
Board Meeting	July 12th	Garry Johnson's	
Op Session - Tentative	July 18 th	Greg Stonerock's - @ 1:00 PM	
Rolling Stock Workshop Session	August 12th	Alan Bau – 2441 Hunters Run, Kalamazoo	Rolling Stock Workshop Session
Family Picnic	August 22nd	Vicksburg Train Station	
Rolling Stock Workshop Session	September 9th	Alan Bau – 2441 Hunters Run, Kalamazoo	Rolling Stock Workshop Session
Annual Meeting	September 19 th	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	
Board Meeting	October 4th	Bob Lawrence's House	
Membership Meeting	October 17 th	TBD	
Membership Meeting	November 21 st	TBD	
Membership Meeting	December 18th	Jim Fankhauser's	Breakfast & TBD

Overview of upcoming events.

May 9th – We are trying to set up an Operating Session on Bill Nichols layout. This will be an evening session starting at **6:00 PM**. This will be hosted by Sheila Nicholes/Kevin Kizer, 5746 West VW Ave, Schoolcraft, MI, (west of Schoolcraft on VW, off of 131). We need 10 operators, so we would appreciate you letting us know if you plan to attend. To sign up please contact Tony Vacha at 269-720-7571 or Kevin Kizer at 269-244-5634.

There will be no morning Membership Meeting in May.

May 16th – Participate with the New York Central Railroad Historical Society train ride day along with other activities. See flier for more information.

June 20th – Join us at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club for a hands-on Rolling Stock Test and Repair Workshop. You're welcome to bring your own rolling stock, supplies, and any tools you'd like to use. If you're not sure which tools to take, refer to Norm Logan's list from the March Meeting as a starting point. There will be no business meeting, just several enjoyable hours using what we learned from Norm Logan into practice. Even if you don't have rolling stock needing repairs, feel free to come and help out, as I have several pieces that require some attention.

July 12th – Board Meeting at Garry Johnson's

Board meetings are typically scheduled for the first Sunday of each quarter starting at 7:00 PM. However, when holidays fall on that weekend, meetings are generally postponed by one week. This adjustment applies in July, as the regularly scheduled date coincides with the July 4th weekend. Meetings customarily take place at the residence of a board member. All Division Nine members are cordially invited to attend.

July 18th – Normally there is no meeting in July, however, this year we are having a special Operating Session at Greg Stonerock's. All division nine members and their guests are welcome to attend. The Op Session starts at 1:00 PM

August 22nd – Like July, normally there is no meeting in August, however, this year we are having a family picnic at the Vicksburg Train Depot. All Division Nine members and their families are invited to attend.

September 19th – In September we will be meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club for our annual meeting. The tentative agenda is displayed below:

- Coffee, Donuts & Conversation 9:00 to 9:30 AM
- Introductions 9:30 AM
- Board Member Reports 9:45 AM
- Board Member Election – in necessary
- 50/50 Raffle, & Door Prizes 10:15 AM
- Show & Tell 10:30 AM
- Member Feedback & Open Discussion 10:45 AM
- Clinic 11:00 AM (TBD)

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](#)



Division of Choice

Do you live in one division, but attend meetings and participate in another? With the "Division of Choice" program you can become an official member and even hold office in the division of your liking!! All you need to do is fill out the [DIVISION OF CHOICE form](#). Once filed, you can vote and hold office in the division of your choice. Please be aware, the North Central Region (NCR) will notify both divisions of your choice and records will be maintained within the NCR. The NMRA national office WILL NOT change your default division (which is part of your NMRA number). The NCR and your division of choice will honor your selection and provide all the rights of a member of that division.



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.

Rolling Stock Workshops

After attending the Hands-on Clinic on "Preventive Maintenance for Your Rolling Stock," we've hopefully picked up valuable tips for upgrading and caring for our railroad cars. Finding time to tackle this often-overlooked task is our next step. To support each other, Garry Johnson and I will host a Rolling Stock workshop on the second Wednesday of the month, beginning May 13th.

All commonly used HO scale tools will be provided, but please bring your own cars and supplies such as couplers, wheels, washers, and similar components. The workspace can accommodate four additional modelers along with Garry Johnson and me, so reservations are necessary.

If you'd like to join us, contact me to reserve your spot. The first session takes place **on Wednesday, May 13th**, and future sessions will be held monthly on the second Wednesday from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Subsequent workshop sessions are scheduled for June 10th, July 8th, August 12th, September 9th, October 14th, November 11th & December 9th.

The workshops will be at my home: 2441 Hunters Run, Comstock. Reach out at 269-501-8999 or alanwbau@gmail.com.





NORTH CENTRAL REGION, DIVISION 4

Grand Rails 2026

3-day convention

Open to ALL model railroaders! You do NOT have to be An NMRA member to attend!

BASIC NMRA MEMBER REGISTRATION (PRIOR TO SEPT 1, 2026)	\$60.00
BASIC NON NMRA REGISTRATION (PRIOR TO SEPT 1, 2026)	\$80.00
YOUTH RATE (17 AND UNDER W/PARENT OR GUARDIAN)	\$5.00
YOUTH 18-25	\$20.00

There will be layout tours, railroad operating sessions, clinics, railroad displays, and more!

OCTOBER 8-9-10, 2026
HOWARD MILLER COMMUNITY CENTER
14 SOUTH CHURCH STREET
ZEELAND, MI 49464

CHECK THE DIVISION 4 WEBSITE FOR UPDATES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION
www.grandrailsdiv4.com

Save the dates AND come join us for some great days of model railroading, learning and fun!

Sponsored by
NMRA, NORTH CENTRAL REGION

The above is a preliminary flyer for the NCR Zeeland 3-day Convention.

To see more details click on the following link, which will take you to the convention website. [Grand Rails Division 4](http://www.grandrailsdiv4.com)



Time is running out, if you want to participate in this event, now is the time to get your tickets.

The New York Central is coming to Kalamazoo

The New York Central Railroad System Historical Society is hosting their 2026 annual convention in Kalamazoo, MI between May 14 and 17, 2026. The headquarters hotel is the Marriott Delta Hotel on the west side of Kalamazoo, just off US 131. Besides the standard activities of a railroad convention, they are planning a train ride from Pleasant Lake, IN to Coldwater, MI on Saturday May 16th. They are allowing non-NYCSHS people to register and sign up for the convention train ride and lunch to help increase the attendance at the convention and to help fill the train. More information, registration and pricing will be available at the NYCSHS website.

For more information click on the links below:

[New York Central System Historical Society](#)

[NYCSHS 2026 Annual | NYCS Historical Society](#)

The following note sent to Rich Mahaney provides more up-to-date information affecting non-members.

Rich, the NYCSHS Board has removed the requirement to be a Society member to attend the convention. Please advise your members.

Our present thinking is to bus riders from Kalamazoo to Pleasant Lake, board there and ride up to Hillsdale for lunch at the brewing company. We'd still appreciate your review if convenient.

Thanks

Alex Schneider President

Member Layouts:

This month features Bob Lawrence's layout, which is the fifth installment in a series highlighting different modelers as they share progress on their layouts. Alan Bau provided the photos of Bob's layout.

I have been a model railroader, in some fashion, since I was 14 years old and earned enough money that summer to buy my first HO train set. I have constructed seven different models over the years from butt-joint to L-girder, free standing and attached to walls, flat top plywood, foam top, cookie cutting construction all this has led to my current layout that encompasses all the construction methods mentioned above. Most of my layout building methods were inspired by Lynn Wescott's, "How To Build Model Railroad Benchwork"; 1st ed, 1979.

My current model railroad was started in 2002. While it has been sidelined often, giving priority to work and family, in recent years it has seen a significant building boom including a fully equipped workshop completed earlier this year. The current operating space is 18' X 35' but negotiations are always underway for future land rights. For this railroad, I wanted a double track mainline for continuous running in both directions and ease of operations for my children, and now grandchildren. The multi-level track plan design allows train storage and staging with a substantial main yard in a fiddle shape. The in-out setup of trains with a large engine facility has accommodations for both steam and diesel locomotives, since my no name railroad runs both. Adding upper-level mining and logging operations with a large open mountain provided space for a large radius helix and lots of opportunities for kids and grandkids to assist in scenery creation. Numerous spurs and branch lines for switching activities allow more opportunity for fun operations, model placement, and scenic design. The railroad is designed to run on DCC. I use Digitrax equipment, with radio control so that visitors of all ages can operate trains with very little chance of major accidents. Most turnouts will be controlled by Circuitron Tortoise switch machines which will require the removal of current Atlas switch machines on the lower level/storage tracks.

The overreaching theme of the Railroad is a bridge line between the C&O and the GTW with connections to mountain operations for logging and coal mining operations with one gold mining operation whose location must remain secret. The variable time setting allows for running of both steam and diesels and we are not opposed to running them at the same time so articulated Allegheny's run alongside SD70 Macs with coal and general freight. We have residential, industrial and agricultural locations including elevator storage and milling complexes. There is a mining quarry that produces the grey aggregate needed for gravel and concrete, a side benefit is the rock crushing machinery that produces multiple sizes of ballast for the railroad.

There will be a substantial engine servicing and storage facility that will house up to 25 locomotives at a time. The fiddle yard holds about 100 standard freight cars, and the storage/ staging yard can hold 100 more.

It is important to me that my children and grandchildren have a bit of ownership in the railroad and want to come over and play with the trains. I accomplish this by allowing them to design and install a small piece of the railroad. For me, a

successful railroad is one that holds a little magic and daydreaming for everyone. My Railroad is about family, not perfection, with special emphasis on designing a well running, fun memory.











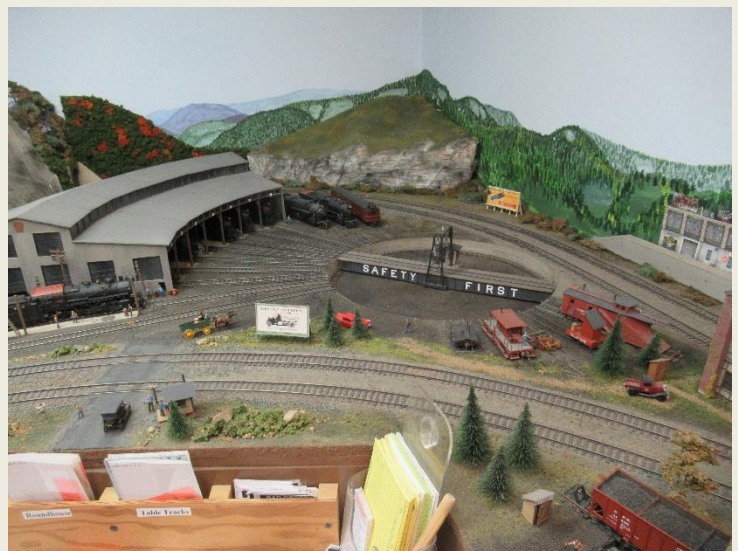
Blast from the Past

Recently, I have highlighted several articles by Dave Vinci in past editions of the Yardmaster. Dave was widely knowledgeable and had an impressive reputation in model railroading. Last week, Connie Vinci, Dave's wife, kindly invited Division Nine members and fellow modelers to tour his layout during an Open House. Though I hoped to be there, unexpected events kept me from attending. I'm grateful to everyone who joined and contributed photos, which you'll find on the next pages. A special thanks goes to Connie for welcoming us into her home and sharing Dave's outstanding layout with our group.

I received approximately 100 photos from attendees at the open house. This edition features photos taken by Rich Mahaney, while photos from other modelers who attended will appear in future editions of the Yardmaster Newsletter.











TRAIN No	E/W	DESCRIPTION	LEAVE FROM	TIME	C+E
FF1	E	Ore Train	Franklin		
563/4	W	LOCAL PASSENGER	Oak Ridge		
EXTRA	W	Highway Terminal Turn	Oak Ridge		
FF2	W	Ore Train	Oak Ridge		
E02	E	THROUGH FREIGHT	FRANKLIN		
OP3/4	W/E	COAL DRAG	Oak Ridge		
565/6	W	LOCAL PASSENGER	Oak Ridge		
EXTRA 566	E	NKP TRANSFER	GULF PLEASANT		
EXTRA	W/E	LOCAL FREIGHT	Oak Ridge		
EXTRA 566	W	NKP TRANSFER	Oak Ridge		
567/8	W	LOCAL PASSENGER	Oak Ridge		
E03	W	THROUGH FREIGHT	Oak Ridge		



Rich's Travels

Other Uses of Stock Cars



All the photos in Rich's Travels were taken by Rich Mahaney. Our many thanks go out to Rich for his many contributions to the Yardmaster Newsletter and to the NCR and Division9

While driving down the Red Arrow Highway towards Paw Paw, MI the other afternoon after a layout tour, this item caught my attention, first time I have noticed it, driven by a number of times.

I said, "wait there is an old refrigerator car with the outside re-covered". Nobody was out in the yard to ask questions of, but I will look again in the future, there is a roadside fruit stand near it, so they may have been used together, with railroad car used for storage, since it would be insulated. The address is 30384 Red Arrow Highway on the northside of the road by a farmhouse.



I was in Toledo, OH on this afternoon (4-17-2026) for an NMRA NCR Board meeting so I had a little time before the meeting and sometime after the meeting to watch 4 west bound NS trains pass. There was work being done on the east bound tracks so I could see a train down the tracks to the west waiting for the tracks to reopen.



Train #1 intermodal



Train #2 mixed freight - mostly gondolas



Train #3 intermodal/mixed freight
with a DPM engine in the center



Train # 4



Some track maintenance equipment went by at noon time, later after 5pm they were working down further east on the track



This afternoon when I was driven between layout open houses at the one-day model railroad convention (which was excellent) I had to cross the busy NS main line tracks again and looked down the track to see headlights approaching so I decided to stop and catch one more train. Another mixed freight.

There were three "refrigerant" tank cars, typically high-pressure DOT 114 spec tank cars.



Editor's Note: The March edition included part 1 of a 2-part series on other uses of Stock Cars, other than livestock. Part 2 will be included in the June Yardmaster.

Drove by this location this afternoon and they were moving cars around and taking the train to Hartford, MI.



More photos of West Michigan Railroad Transload Yard in Hartford, MI



Came to Lansing, MI on April 13th to teach at the MI Safety Conference on Tues and Wed. Nothing to do, on Monday evening so I went down to the diamond by East Lansing and only had to wait about 5 minutes for a west bound CN freight, which turned into the only train to go by, one train is better than no trains! Lots of tank cars.

1820 interesting pipe loads



The Hamilton Northwestern Railroad prepares to move a cut of tank cars from Hamilton, MI to Holland MI. They have been loading the tank cars with tallow.



Nice video of the UP steam locomotive traveling to CA

This video is over 13 minutes, but it is well worth the time to see an incredible Steam Locomotive.

[Big Boy 4014 at Carlin Tunnels \(Coast to Coast Tour\)](#)



Here are a few photos from the three trains I saw last Monday afternoon in Vicksburg.

1691 two chlorine filled tank cars

1695 anhydrous ammonia filled tank cars with the Canadian 1005 placards.



second train that went by

1706 DOT 117 with UN 1202 diesel fuel

Steel load at the end of the train



Four more. I will be back to photographing trains only with my camera, no more phone camera photos. This was the third train in Vicksburg going by the old train station which has a nice museum in it.

1729 gondolas with dirty dirt or other waste or environmental substances UN 3077



Had sometime today to watch trains pass through Vicksburg. 3 CN trains passed, 2 EB and 1 WB. Lots of hazmat tank car loads!. Nice weather, so i went over by the train station



Wrap-up

We hope you have a great time with our new summer activities. Your thoughts matter to us, so we truly value any feedback you share.

We invite members to submit news, updates on railroad events, upcoming train shows, or information about community gatherings related to railroading for consideration in future newsletters. Member contributions are essential to ensuring our community remains well-informed and actively engaged.

We anticipate one or two board openings at our September meeting. If you're interested in joining, please inform a board member.

If you're experiencing issues with your rolling stock, there will be a meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club on June 20th dedicated to testing and then making the necessary repairs.

In addition, we're launching a new monthly program where we'll gather at my home for two hours, focusing exclusively on improving your rolling stock. Since space is limited, please contact me soon if you'd like to participate. The first session is scheduled for Wednesday, May 13th, from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Most of the necessary tools will be available, but you should bring your own rolling stock and any supplies you may need.

Thanks to Connie Vinci for having the open house displaying Dave Vinci's layout. Also, thanks to Rich Mahaney and Joel Pyard for sending me photos of the day's event for inclusion in the Yardmaster Newsletter. Did you know that Dave Vinci was editor on the Yardmaster before I accepted the role?

Hope to see you at our next meeting.

Alan Bau

Division Nine Newsletter Editor

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