

Telegraph Key



Railroad History

On July 4, 1828, the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad held its ceremonial "Laying of the First Stone" in Baltimore, Maryland. This event is widely regarded as the birth of American railroading. The 92-year-old Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, attended and praised the project as "among the most important acts of my life, second only to that of signing the Declaration of Independence." The B&O's construction would connect Baltimore to the Ohio River Valley, laying the foundation for the nation's first intercity railroad.

Iron Horse 2026

The Sunshine Region, Iron Horse 2026, Convention will be at the Ocala Convention Center on Thursday October 15th through Saturday October 17th.

Scenic Express 2026

The 2026 NMRA National Convention will be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, from July 27 to August 2, 2026, featuring layout tours, prototype excursions, and a world-record T-TRAK layout.

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**Meet Your
NEW Editor:**
Todd Slaughter

**News from the
President:**
Untapped
Resources!

Division News:

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Editor's Message

.....

Welcome to the July *TK*!

What an amazing month of model railroading June provided.

July promises more great opportunities!

In June I had the pleasure of representing the Special Needs Model Railroad Association (SNMRA) at two fantastic train shows; Real Rail and the Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale.

I want to tell you that the Tallahassee show was one of the best events of my life! I had the great fortune of sharing that show with both of my daughters. On Saturday night, over dinner, I told them that this was the best show I'd ever been to because of them.

My youngest, Daphne, had such a wonderful time and made so many new friends. She was able to paint pictures for many of the show attendees and especially loved seeing the puppies, who were also enjoying the show.

My oldest, Sophia, finally operated on a layout. I've been trying to convince her to for quite a while, unsuccessfully. This time, several of the model railroaders at the show took her by the hand and helped her along the way. They were able to convince her that she could do it, and then they showed her how. I am such a proud father! I have two beautiful daughters who are model railroad enthusiasts!

Of course July is our big family trip to Chattanooga. I have very high hopes!

Choo Choo My Friends,
Todd

Todd H. Slaughter
CW3, USA (Ret)
NMRA SSR At large Director
Editor, Telegraph key
Ph- (C) 941-400-3253



Fun, Friends, Trains

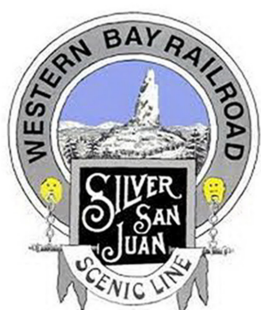
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Web Site: danasrailroadsupply.com

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The **Western Bay Railroad** is a 950 square ft On30 layout in Port St Lucie. We meet almost every Tuesday evening. We are looking for new members to join our group. There are OP sessions & scenery that we are still working on. If you're a

modeler and serious about learning, give us a try! Go to our website or contact Al Sohl MMR als0622@yahoo.com

'No dues, just a great experience'
westernbayrailroad.org





President's Message

.....

Fellow Sunshine Region Members,

The end of June marked another outstanding Tallahassee Model Railroad Show and Sale, and what a weekend it was! From the moment the doors opened until the final visitors departed, the fairgrounds were filled with wall-to-wall people who came to experience the excitement of model railroading.

How is this relevant, you ask? Here in the Northern division, we have about 145 members. We have a huge, untapped resource here.

Families, longtime hobbyists, collectors, and first-time visitors packed the aisles, watching trains in every scale, visiting with vendors, and discovering just how diverse and engaging our hobby has become. We welcomed attendees from across Florida and neighboring states, with visitors traveling from as far away as Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Florida. It was the most successful show in our history, proving once again that interest in model railroading is alive, well, and continuing to grow. We had 980 people through the door paid...that did not count the club members, Vendors, exhibitors and reciprocal agreements. It certainly did not count the 350 plus kids either...

One thing became abundantly clear throughout the weekend: people are eager to learn. Visitors asked thoughtful questions, sought advice from experienced modelers, and wanted to know more about the hobby and the NMRA. Unfortunately, because of the tremendous effort required simply to staff and operate the show, we did not have enough volunteers available to present clinics this year.

While that was disappointing, it also highlighted an opportunity.

Imagine what next year's show could become if we had enough volunteers not only to operate another outstanding event but also to offer a full schedule of educational clinics and demonstrations. Whether the topic is scenery, weathering, DCC, operations, prototype research, 3D printing, layout design, or any number of specialized skills, there is an incredible wealth of knowledge within the Sunshine Region just waiting to be shared.

President's Message

.....

Volunteer organizations succeed because members choose to become participants. Every hour donated before, during, or after an event makes a difference. Every clinic presented helps inspire another model railroader. Every new volunteer lightens the load for someone else and allows us to offer even more to our members and to the public.

As we look ahead, the next major stop on the calendar is the NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga. Excitement continues to build, and it is rapidly becoming one of the largest National Conventions in recent history. Registration numbers have been climbing steadily, and all indications point to an outstanding week of clinics, contests, prototype tours, operating sessions, and fellowship.

One of the highlights will undoubtedly be the National T-TRAK Layout. Spanning more than **11,000 square feet (about twice the area of a basketball court)**, it promises to be one for the record books. Hundreds of modelers from across North America have spent years planning and preparing for this event, bringing together an incredible collection of modules into what will be one of the largest T-TRAK layouts ever assembled. It will serve as a showcase not only for T-TRAK, but for what can be accomplished when model railroaders work together toward a common goal. Perhaps most importantly, it demonstrates something I have long believed: our hobby is at its best when NMRA members and non-members stand shoulder to shoulder doing what we enjoy most—running trains.

Whether you're attending the National Convention or heading to Ocala in October, I encourage you to watch the excitement unfold. Events like these remind us that while our models may be measured in inches, our ambitions know no bounds. Time and again, model railroaders have demonstrated that when we think big, collaborate, and share our passion, remarkable things happen.

After Chattanooga, our attention will turn toward the Sunshine Region's own Iron Horse Convention this October. I hope many of you will make plans to attend as we continue building on the momentum that has made our Region one of the most active and engaged in the NMRA.

President's Message

.....

Until next month, enjoy the hobby, share your knowledge with others,
and as always...

Keep the trains running!

Respectfully,

Andy,

Andy J. Zimmerman
ATCS AW USN Ret.
NMRA SSR President
NMRA Standards and Conformance Manager
Ph- (C) 850-524-4399

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The collage features several items of railroad-themed merchandise. At the top left, a blue apron with 'CSX TRANSPORTATION' is shown. Below it, a dark jacket with 'CENTRAL SYSTEM' is displayed. To the right, a collection of colorful t-shirts and jackets are arranged, some featuring 'UNION PACIFIC' and 'Rock Island' logos. A central graphic reads 'HOME OF THE RAILROAD JACKETS'. Below this, a section titled 'HATS and SHIRTS' shows various caps and shirts. At the bottom, a large image of a steam locomotive is featured, with the text 'We also provide for Clubs!' and 'www.jelsma.com' overlaid. The Jelsma Graphics logo is repeated at the top of the collage, and the website 'www.jelsma.com' is shown at the bottom right.

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Treasurer's Message

.....

Hello Everyone,

It's steamy, hot, and humid time again here in Florida. The best way to beat the heat is to be inside working on your trains!!

What?! You say you have no train, no layout?

Take a look into T Track -- learn how you can create your own world on a 1x2 piece of wood that can be plugged into other member modules whereby we can create our own functioning layout at future conventions made up from members modules! More info will be upcoming!!

Speaking of the convention, have you registered, secured your hotel room? If not, why not – let's not wait to the very last minute!



Don't put it off, if you have not registered do it right now – here's the link: **[Convention and Hotel Registration](#)**.

Finally, be aware and be as safe as you can possibly be. It's a new world out there and we need to keep a higher fence up. Be safe.

If you have any questions please feel free to email me.

See everyone soon!!

Glenn

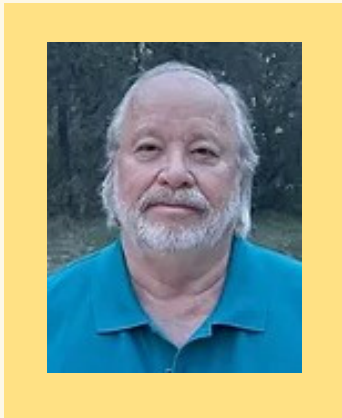
Treasurer's Message

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Computer Security

As technology evolves so do tactics by criminals and as we get older become an easier target to attack. Follow the points below to help keep you and yours safer.

- 1) Use strong unique passwords 15+ characters long. Never reuse a password across accounts. If this sounds daunting to remember a 15-character password purchase a password manager – its cheap insurance.
- 2) Use Multi factor authentication – that's where your bank will send you a code to your phone to enter after your password has been entered. It's a second layer of protection if your password was compromised. You should have this layer on all accounts but most important are your Banking, Email and Social Media accounts.
- 3) Keep all apps and devices updated with the latest patches to keep them secure.
- 4) DO NOT CLICK ON OR OPEN unknown text messages or emails. Simply delete them.
- 5) Limit information you share online. Even pet names can be used by scammers to try and guess your passwords. Less info shared is more digital security.
- 6) Monitor your financial accounts regularly (I look at every account every day) – the sooner you detect an issue the quicker you can cut the losses.
- 7) AI is certainly helpful in our daily lives, but it also is being used by criminals everyday making scams harder to spot. AI corrects many of the things we used to look for like misspellings, grammar etc. AI fixes all that and can impersonate images, voices and video making you believe it's real. Be vigilant – check the sender's phone number and email – if they are unfamiliar follow item 4 above – DELETE IT.



IRON HORSE 2026

.....

NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

We only have 107 days till our Ocala Iron Horse Convention starts for 2026. The dates are Thursday, October 15th to Saturday, October 17th.

Our guest speaker this year will be Chris Hogan, who is an Amtrak Police Detective, and I'm sure he will be sharing some great stories with us.

As of the July Telegraph Key, we only have 8 clinics out of 29 clinics needed. We have gone through a lot of our SSR Clinicians & clinics over the past 5 years, and they don't have any new clinics to present, so if anyone would like to present a clinic or two, please contact me (info at the bottom of my column), as soon as possible.

New Clinics – We ran a Survey in the past Telegraph Keys asking Members and Convention Attendees, what would you like to see presented for clinics for this year's convention, and unfortunately only one (1) member replied to our survey.

Please check the SSR Convention Website as Clinics will be added as they become available.

Jeff "Ski" Guzowski
Director at Large
Cell: 954-401-0804
email: JGuzowski@Bellsouth.Net



Achievement Program

.....

We have two (2) Golden spike awards for the month of June,

William Sheppard
Southern Division
North Fort Myers, Florida

Scott Peal
Southern Division
North Fort Myers, Florida.

Kenn Hoot
Chair, Achievement Program

E C H O E S

EAST COAST H O EXHIBITORS SOCIETY
MIAMI, FL



E.C.H.O.E.S is a modular model railroad club located in Miami-Dade, Florida, dedicated to building and displaying our HO scale model railroad layout. Our purpose is to enjoy and promote the hobby of model railroading and preserve the history of railroading in South Florida. The club was started in the summer of 1985, with the goal of presenting a HO scale modular model railroad layout for display at "The Harvest Festival".

Throughout the years, the layout has been displayed at regional conventions, four NMRA National Train Shows (Atlanta twice, Ft. Lauderdale, FL and Orlando), and other events in Miami Dade and Broward counties. We do running/operating sessions several times a year and welcome guests to join us. Membership is open and we welcome anyone who shares an interest and passion for Model railroading.

For more information, please contact:

Rick Diaz

rickdiaz@att.net

305 496 9266

Tracey Sanders

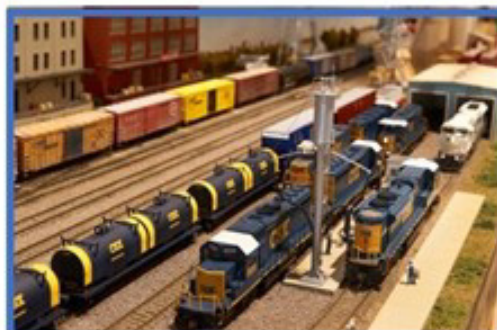
tassailor@mac.com

786 514 5667

Herb Ford

ehf640@gmail.com

786 375 1424





Northern Division

.....

We need your help!

Hello Northern Division!

Have you been feeling lonely?

Not feeling the love?

Superintendent Wanted!!!

Apply within.

You know that the greatest hobby,
model railroading, has given you so
much.

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If you'd like to experience how giving back to the hobby
by volunteering can be a truly rewarding experience...

Please contact Andy Zimmerman @

ssrprez@nmra.org



Central Division

.....

Depending on when you read this, I hope you will have or have had a wonderful 4th of July holiday! I can remember our Bicentennial and how big of a deal it was! 1976 was also the year I received my first train set (AHM) so, you know, that's a pretty big deal too.

Hello Centraleers! Welcome to July!

I'll be spending the 4th visiting my wife in Norway and we're celebrating by going to a John Coltrane Tribute concert at the Kongsberg Jazz Festival. I know a jazz festival isn't railroad related but I may see a train cross the nearby bridge. Then all is good.

The Central Division Meet that we had on June 13th was a success! We welcomed fifteen of us to enjoy a day of model railroading and camaraderie. Todd Slaughter presented his clinic on T-TRAK for Beginners, Carl Marchand presented DCC Basics, and I presented Creating a Small Switching Layout.

Todd set up his T-TRAK modules into an operating layout, explained the various types of module sizes and shapes, and his daughter built a small module right on the spot to show us how easy it was!

Carl told us about the different manufacturers of DCC systems and decoders and what setups might be appropriate for DCC beginners. He also explained the simple track bus and feeders method of wiring and how this can be expanded as layouts grow.

During my presentation, I gave an overview of the layout design aesthetics I considered, the different iterations of the track plan, and what considerations I gave to operating this shelf layout. I was able to get my layout out of my house and make it available to help show many of these concepts.

In between clinics and during our lunch break, we all talked trains and looked at the various displays that were brought in.

We had coffee and baked goods to start the morning. Water and sodas during the day. And a Door Prize drawing which included a couple of N-scale items, a couple of HO scale items, and two paintings that were graciously donated by Todd's daughter Daphne.

All in all, a good day for everyone!

I will work on getting our next Central Division meet "When and Where" and will keep you all posted of course.



Our Attendees at The Safety Harbor Public Library



Some Lunch Downtime



Todd's Clinic Setup (with Helper!)





DCC Lighting and T-TRAK Module Displays



Prewar Trains Display



Shelf Layout



Certificate of Appreciation for Todd Slaughter



Certificate of Appreciation for Carl Marchand

Central Division

.....

I hope we all got inspired to do something more, something better, or something different from this event. I had a fun time and it was great to meet new people and see old friends. I'm also so appreciative for EVERYONE'S help during setup and takedown... I could not have done that alone.

So, once again, I ask you to please work with me to do great things for all of us

Thanks,

Mark Lewalski

Central Division Superintendent

www.RobsHobbyWorld.com

Robshobbyworld@msn.com

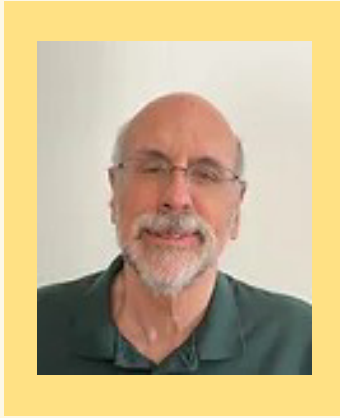
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Southern Division

.....

Hi, everybody. I am generating this month's report REALLY early, since I am traveling out of the country again. This trip is short, so it won't affect things too much. But I will have better updates for August, as very little has updated in the last few days. For those modelers interested in pursuing Achievement Program (AP) judging and awards, the AP manager for the Southern Division is Paul Beckstrom. He can be reached at :paulbeckstrom1948@gmail.com

In model railroad club news:

On the Gulf Coast, the Scale Rails of Southwest Florida club is located at 1262 Piney Street in North Fort Myers (zip code 33903). This is a well established and very active club with roughly 50 members. They have operating layouts in both HO and N scales. The HO layout models the southwestern US and incorporates an HOn3 operation located in Colorado. The modular N scale layout depicts the mid southeastern US. Their skills with scenery are impressive, featuring exact replicas of several iconic structures and well-known railfanning locations. Those interested in visiting the club may come on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday between 10 AM and 2 PM, with the exception of 11 AM-12 Noon on the 2nd Saturday of the month when the club members hold their monthly meetings. The club runs operating sessions on Monday nights, open only to members. For additional information, please contact the club president Jim Morse at jpmorse48@comcast.net or by phone at (239) 286-2499. The club web site is found at www.scalerails.org.

There is also a club in Sarasota called the Sarasota Bay Model Railroad Society. Their layout is inside the Sarasota Toy Museum at 3580 17th Street, Sarasota, Florida, 34235. The HO layout depicts Vermont, which was its original location prior to the move to Florida. The layout was designed by famed modeler Dave Frary. The toy museum is open Tuesday through Sunday. It is unclear if you need to purchase admission to the museum in order to see the model railroad, so I will look into that for next month. Their web site is www.sbmodelrr.com and You can contact David Fontaine at (941) 685-2221 for additional information.

Southern Division

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Scott Peal has informed me that he is also in the process of organizing a new club in the Babcock Ranch community. They have a Facebook account that you can check out for additional information <https://www.facebook.com/babcockranchrailroad>. For additional information, please contact Scott at (239) 292-9156

On the Atlantic coast, The Florida Citrus Model Train Society (FCMTS) continues to be in a quieter period during June, although they are beginning to work on plans for a summer display in July. The plans are different than usual this year because of the 250th Anniversary of the US. I will report on that when dates and the location are finalized. If you are interested in meeting the members, they hold a breakfast club on Tuesdays and Fridays at 8:30 AM at the Plantation Diner at 6903 West Broward Blvd, zip code 33317. Please contact Ken Sargeant at (954) 253-0413 for any additional information. Their web site is found at www.fcmts.org.

South Florida Railway Museum

The “N” scale layout is under construction

(a new trackplan with an increased mainline)

The Museum is Open on the 2nd Saturday of the month, the following dates are our 1st quarter **04-11, 05-09, 06-13 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

Follow us on our website www.sfrm.org and our Facebook page

1300 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Deerfield Beach, FL
(The south end of the AMTRAK station in Deerfield Beach)



Home of the
South Farmington Rail & Mule RR
South Florida Regional & Metro

Southern Division

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The East Coast HO Exhibitors Society (ECHOES) club will be running every weekend in June at the Gold Coast Railroad Museum located at 12450 SW 152nd Street, Maimi, FL 33177. They are running at the museum from 10 AM to 4 PM, but please note that there is an entrance fee to the museum (see the Gold Coast Railroad Museum web site) which includes many displays of vintage full-size locomotives and cars. The club is planning to reconfigure the layout this summer to improve the visitor experience and also to add plexiglass fronts to all the modules to eliminate damage being incurred by visitors. They do not expect this will result in closing the layout at all, as it can be updated while the museum itself is closed. If you are interested, ask about their operating sessions. For additional information on ECHOES events, please contact Rick Diaz, rickdiaz@att.net or Tracey Sanders, tassailor@mac.com.

The Palm Beach Model Railroaders (PMBRR) is located at the South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd, West Palm Beach, 33411. They successfully completed their big open house held during the Palm Beach County Fair. During the fair the layout is open all day, every day. During June they will be running their regular Tuesday evening operating sessions for club members. They can be contacted at PBMRRCclub@gmail.com for additional information. The club's web site is www.pbmrr.org.

Located at 1713 SW Castinet Lane in Port Saint Lucie 34953, the Western Bay Railroad is the On30 narrow gauge layout of the Port Saint Lucie O Scale Model Railroad club. The layout depicts the Denver and Rio Grande and Rio Grande Southern railroads. The club meets on Tuesdays. For additional information, please contact Al Sohl (Master Model Railroader) at als0622@yahoo.com and their web site is www.westernbayrailroad.com. The club plans an operating session on June 6th.

Southern Division

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The South Florida Railway Museum (SFRM) at the Deerfield Amtrak and Tri-Rail station at 1300 West Hillsboro Boulevard plans their next open house on Saturday, June 13th with visitors welcomed from 11 AM through 4 PM. The HO scale layout is open and on display and the new N scale layout which depicts southern Florida is well under construction with most of the track already laid, and much of the sophisticated electronics package close to completion. I am holding back a little longer on photos, but it is really impressive and shows great potential for both display and full operations sessions. There are wooden trains set out on the outdoor deck to keep the small children occupied with something more robust than the trains indoors. The HO layout team is currently finishing up their locomotive terminal and additional scenery upgrades are also in progress. The museum currently maintains a Facebook page in addition to the web site www.sfrm.org . For additional information, contact Bob Leonard, leonardstrait@gmail.com.

Southern Division

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Home Layout Tours:

For the last few years, the SFRM and the NMRA Southern Division have held an annual series of home layout tours. Last year we had 10 layouts on display, in N, HO, and O scales located from Palm Beach to Miami. As the organizer of this event, I need to begin scheduling the visits with a target of visits during July and August 2026. This has been delayed yet again as most of the hosts are not available during June. Please watch this column for information on the layouts and when they can be visited. I will also send out a mass e-mail when I have the schedule ready, as that is more real time than the monthly column. Note that most home layouts in Florida are in limited spaces as we have no huge basements, so only a few people at a time can see each layout. The hosts typically have set up a gathering room for visitors to talk while they queue up to enter the layout rooms. We always ask visitors to contact the host before coming so they know who to expect. Contact info will be provided for each host. I am currently running far behind on scheduling, due to the construction of the SFRM N scale layout and travel, but it's on my list to get things in place as soon as I can. If you have a layout with trains that run and want to host, please let me know. For 2026, this will only be on the Atlantic coast, but perhaps by 2027 we can set up a similar event on the Gulf coast.

For any inquiries, my contact info is rwberger@comcast.net.

That's all for now. Wishing everyone a wonderful 4th of July holiday and a happy 250th anniversary of the USA.

Richard Berger

Southern Division Superintendent