

# The Journal Box



**“The Best Region Under The Sun”**

Summer Issue 2023

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# The Journal Box

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To have news from your club appear in the Journal Box  
Send an article and photos to  
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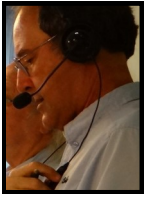
## SSR on the Web

Looking for the latest Region activities? Check us out on website at [www.sunshineregion.org](http://www.sunshineregion.org). You can also get there via links from the NMRA website at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org). Thanks to Chip Pecere, our Webmaster, for keeping the site up to date. You can also try [Florida Model Railroaders NMRA](#) on Facebook. This group is new and active and has a lot of content coming in daily. It can get you in touch with modelers in your area.

## Journal Box Submission Deadlines

Spring Issue	February 15
Summer Issue	May 15
Fall Issue	August 15
Winter Issue	November 15

The Journal Box will be in the mail 2-3 weeks after these dates. Please do not include events with dates close to mailing dates as information will not reach readers in time.



**Journal Box  
Editor**  
Robert Raymond

There was a bit of excitement here at the Journal Box publishing house.

I met a lot of fine fellow modelers at Protrails this year (one of whom apparently had Covid (thanks for sharing)). A number of you told me very nice things about this publication but there was a strange vibe running through the chats—a couple of people heard a rumor that our Journal Box might be going digital. And all of those shared the opinion that they liked their paper copies (to read from the comfort of their LazyBoy rockers or possibly to wrap fish in).

And so that's how I ended up attending an SSR board meeting and it turned out the rumors were true.

Hat's off to Treasurer Ken Farnham who spoke at length about the purpose and financing of this publication. In a nutshell, he explained how the newsletter brings in a small revenue stream (maybe a trickle) to the region. Furthermore, our subscriber base is pretty solid-going into a free digital form would end up with another payback like we went through after getting this rag jump-started years back. Nobody wanted to go through that again. So we will be paper, at least for the immediate future.

In that, I feel that I must personally thank our subscribers. Each and every one of you support this publication with your subscriptions and make its contents and physical form possible. Again, thank you for your support.

**Cover Shot:** A boozy conductor sways on the back porch of his crummy... even though his peddler freight is currently holding at Alpine for the final descent into Denver. (Photo Credit: Eric Menger. Layout Credit: Al Sohl)

Also, I'd like to thank **Jelsma Graphics** for their continuing ad copy. Our club is going to contract with them for our new shirts—you can do small orders, even single shirts, making them perfect for a growing club. No more waiting to get an order together. A couple of the home layouts also work with them for shirts. I've got a couple of these hanging in my closet here at home.

And while on the subject of thanks, a big thank you to those who provide content in the form of articles and photographs for our use. I'm looking at sixteen blank pages every month, so every submission helps. I'm actually thinking that this issue should be pretty full by the time I space everything in. And if you did submit and I didn't run it, you'll eventually get in!

Anyway, so that's enough of our ink-stained adventures. On with the issue!



**Webmaster/  
Facebook  
Moderator**  
Chip Pecere

Hi everyone, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Chip Pecere. I've been a member for a few years and now have the time to get involved. I am now your Webmaster and Facebook moderator. One of the first items I worked on is our

Facebook presence. Please visit our new Facebook group, "**Florida Model Railroaders NMRA**". This is for all modelers, all scales. Just share, help, and inspire your fellow modelers. Next was to rebuild our website. Check it out, **Sunshineregion.org** will be an ongoing project, but one of the best new features is our e-commerce store.

As you know we have our regional convention approaching, October 12,13,and 14 of this year. Sign up online, sign up early, take advantage of the discounts. PayPal or major credit card accepted. There will also be a train show/sale on the 14th from 9am to 3pm. Prepaid convention attendees get a nice discount. Purchase online for just \$3. We still have some tables available for \$25, and last year we had 100 tables.

On our website we've added an "EVENTS" page. If you know of any railroading events, even holiday displays, please contact me and I will add them to our events. As time goes by there will be tutorials added. I want these two platforms to be a source for sharing and learning.

Thank you.

Chip Pecere

[webmasterchip2023@gmail.com](mailto:webmasterchip2023@gmail.com)



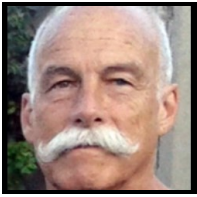
A sad note: Malcolm Furlow passed away in March of this year from Long Covid. He was known as a true model railroad artist, specifically for his San Juan Central project in Model Railroader in the 1980s. After this, he branched out into dynamic western paintings (which I saw in a Texas gallery some years ago). He moved the hobby forward, showing us how a layout could actually tell a story. He will be missed. (See page 4 for photos of his efforts...)

The *Journal Box* wants to share your Thoughts! Photos! How-tos! How-nots!

If you have anything that can help me burn white space, please don't hesitate to contact me, Robert Raymond, at...

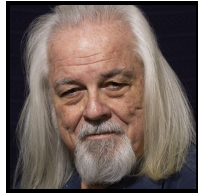
***RobertRaymond@bellsouth.net***

We pay a generous royalty of NOTHING except the prestige of seeing your words and images here in print. Don't delay! Our next deadline is August 15th!



## Southern Division

Robert Leonard,  
Superintendent



## Treasurer

Ken Farnham

### Judging Candidates

I asked my division AP chair the other day if he had any suggestions for judges within our division, his answer ... advertise in the Journal Box. Advertise in the JB, although a direct answer and to the point, it was not very encouraging, so I am advertising! The Southern Division has roughly 80 members of which roughly 10% have either started the AP process, or they are there with an MMR. So, I am looking for judging candidates in the Southern Division, any interest in doing so, send me a message, or call.

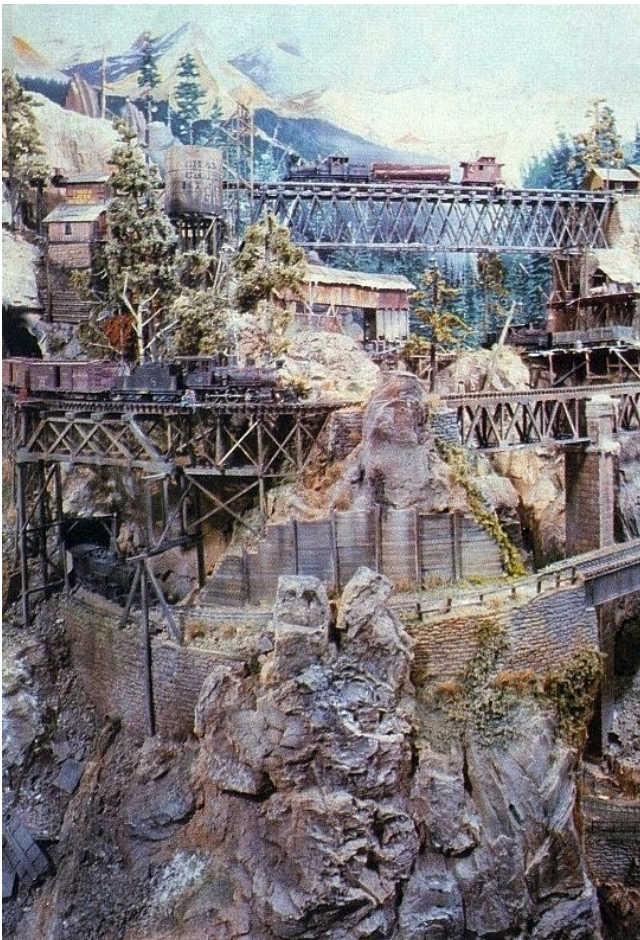
### Treasurer's Report for April / May 2023

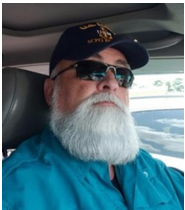
The region is receiving registrations for the 2023 Convention in Plant City, Florida. Check out our newly revised website which contains information about the convention and updated activities around the Region. The Region is financially stable, and the future looks good.

Several Division Events have happened since the first of the year and have brought some income into the Region which allows these events to be funded the next time. Donations are always accepted, and a complete receipt is provided to the donors. Since the establishment of 501c3 the region has been able to curb the extra cost of paying Florida sales taxes on purchases. The membership in the region remains at the same volume as the influx of new members and those who have polished their final rails and have departed. The continued subscriptions for the Journal Box has kept this Quarterly publication reaching you. Advertising space is available by contacting the Treasurer for schedules and pricing. Remember, support our advertisers as they support you by telling them you saw their AD in the Journal Box.



Below—Some of Malcolm Furlow's wonderful work....





**Contributor**  
 Andy J.  
 Zimmerman  
 NMRA SSR  
 Director at Large

## Social Media and Model Railroading

### Why does social media matter?

Given the average age of the Model Railroading community at large, I think it is safe to say we grew up playing outside, riding bikes, hunting, fishing, or just hanging out with our friends. If we were inside, we were running trains or playing board games. None of us knew what social media was. Our friends were few (when you contrast your Facebook friends), and they were close. It was all based on an interpersonal relationship.

When we needed information, we turned to the all-knowing all powerful Britannica encyclopedia that we either had in our homes or at the public library. We purchased Magazines like Model Railroader to bring us up to speed on the latest innovations and track plans and to learn “how to”. We joined clubs and learned from one another as we built layouts in our basement or spare room. Fast forward to today, and our youth couldn’t be more diametrically opposed. They are inside playing video games, surfing the internet, texting their friends, and posting on social media. Like



it or not, social media is as much a part of our society’s daily life as the newspaper was to our fathers and grandfathers. It is where we interact with our friends and like-minded individuals, and we learn from one another through Facebook posts, Tweets, and Reddit blogs and YouTube videos.

Model railroaders like myself and those I associate with want to see the hobby thrive and grow. But how do we do that? Ever heard the old adage “Adapt or die”? The Pandemic forced us all to isolate

ourselves, stay inside and look for methodologies to share our love of the hobby. It came in the form of YouTube videos, Facebook posts, Tweets on Twitter, and reading on Reddit. We had to adapt, but we were in unfamiliar territory. We found ourselves asking what is a hashtag (then learned it was the pound sign #) and why do I use the @ sign again, only to have our grandkids chime in and tell us why. This is where the younger generations live, get their news, talk to friends and share information about the things they are passionate about. In fact, some 84% of adults ages 18 to 29 say they have used social media sites, which is similar to the share of those ages 30 to 49 (81%). By comparison, a somewhat smaller share of those ages 50 to 64 (73%) say they use social media sites, while fewer than half of those 65 and older (45%) report using social media. Model Railroading enthusiasts are primarily represented by the 65 and older (45%) statistic, although that is improving. So how do we attract a younger group and keep our base informed and engaged? We must engage them where they live.

### Which social media platforms are most common?

YouTube and Facebook are the most widely used online platforms, and its user base is most broadly representative of the population as a whole. Smaller shares of Americans use sites such as Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Among U.S. adults who use Facebook, seven in ten say they visit the site daily, including

around half (49%) who do so several times a day. By comparison, 59% of both Snapchat and Instagram users, say they visit these platforms at least daily, as do 54% of YouTube users and 46% of Twitter users. Overall (keeping in mind there is crossover and multiple use), 69% use Facebook, and 40% use Instagram. Breaking it down, the statistics haven’t varied much over the past few years. Roughly the adult landscape looks like this:

- 18-29 **70%** use Facebook and **71%** use Instagram
- 30-49: **77%** use Facebook, and **48%** use Instagram
- 50-64: **73%** use Facebook, and **29%** use Instagram
- 65+: **50%** use Facebook, and **13%** use

### Instagram

Today around seven-in-ten Americans use social media to connect with one another, engage with news content, share information, and entertain themselves.

NMRA’s SSR is always working to increase membership. One way to do that is to reach out to young people who may be just entering – or are considering entering – the model railroading hobby. In today’s electronic world, social media is an important means of getting the NMRA SSR message to these potential members. The SSR is represented on just one social media platform. We need to be working on expanding our presence on others. That said, let’s talk about those media platforms, their nuances, and their basic roles in the social media scene.



Facebook is certainly the most prolific of the social media giants as you just read. It is a social networking website where users can post comments, share photographs, and post links to news or other interesting content on the web, chat live, and watch short-form video.

Shared content can be made publicly accessible, or it can be shared only among a select group of friends or family or with a single person. NMRA SSR has a Facebook presence here: Facebook-  
<https://www.facebook.com/sunshinenmra/>

Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets. Tweeting is posting short messages for anyone who follows you on Twitter, with the hope that your words are useful and interesting to someone in your audience. Another description of Twitter and tweet-ing might be microblogging.

Some people use Twitter to discover interesting people, companies, or organizations like NMRA SSR, opting to follow their tweets. However, NMRA SSR does not have a Twitter presence.



## What is the difference between Facebook and Twitter?

Facebook is a multi-purpose social networking platform, allowing users to chat, post photos and notes, and play games; Twitter is all about staying informed and updated. It is built around the posting of short 280-character messages, or “tweets.” If you are a verbose person like me, Tweeting can be a challenge.



Similar to Facebook or Twitter, everyone who creates an Instagram account has a profile and a news feed. Instagram is like a simplified version of Facebook with an emphasis on mobile use and visual sharing. On Instagram, the main intention is to share and find the best photos and videos and like other social networks, you interact with other users by following them, letting others follow you, commenting, liking, tagging, and private messaging. You can also save photos you see on Instagram. But as with Twitter, NMRA SSR does not have an Instagram presence.

Reddit is basically a large group of forums (Subreddits) in which registered users can talk about almost anything you can imagine, from news, to pop culture, to technology, to comics, to film, to literature, to the weirdest things in the world, and yes even Model Railroading! Be careful though, because even though there is some great content it can include some very NSFW (Not Safe For Work) stuff. Just know there is a community dedicated to just about every single hobby, interest,

fandom, and general aspect of daily life. NMRA SSR does not have a Reddit Presence.

YouTube is particularly popular among younger people who prefer the variety of content, interactive components, and instant gratification of YouTube video content over traditional television. Many use it for entertainment purposes, for learning how to do something (tutorials), for keeping up with their favorite hobby videos, and more.

NMRA SSR does not have an official YouTube presence.

## Now I know what the different sites are used for...

What the heck is the “#” and the “@” used for, and when should I use them? Respectively those are called the hashtag (#) and the at (@) symbols. Using the @ refers to a person/group in a conversation, such as @andyzimmerman or @NMRA\_SSR, and the # refers to a topic of conversation, #TTRAK or #ModelRailroading. Using the # tag generally indicates that you want to participate in a larger, ongoing conversation, it groups your conversation in with anyone else using that particular #. For instance, if I use #SSR or #NMRA, your conversation will appear in those larger conversations. Using the @ tag signifies to someone that you’re talking about them, giving them a heads-up about something, and/or would like them to respond. For instance, “Here is a great photo taken at the train show by @NMRA\_SSR or @SeniorChiefZ.”

## History is a Great Teacher

History is a great teacher, and it is a road map to where social media sites are trending. What was popular one day may lose its base in the following years based on the perception of the site and its relevance. Does anyone remember having a Myspace account? It was the dominant site when Facebook came on the scene, and they were the platform to beat. It still exists today but

is it relevant? Nuff said. Over the past couple of years, the trends are shifting for some and flattening out for others.

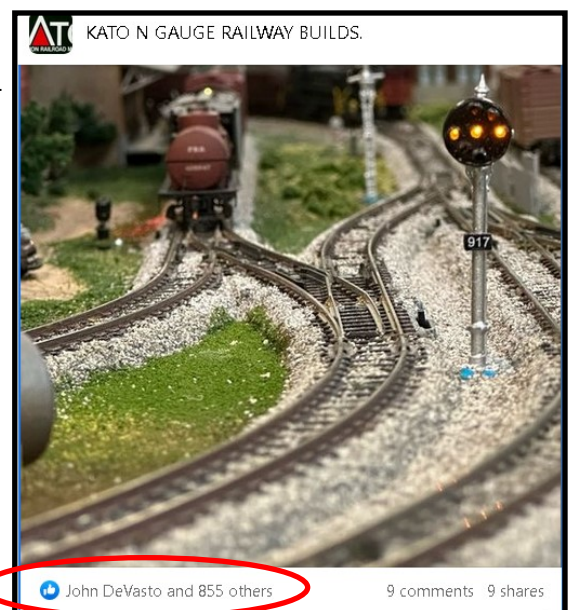
YouTube and Facebook continue to dominate the online landscape overall, with 81% and 69%, respectively, reporting using these sites. YouTube and Reddit were the only two platforms measured that saw statistically significant growth since 2019.

Other platforms do not nearly match the overall reach of YouTube or Facebook, however, there are certain sites or apps, most notably Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, that have an especially strong following among young adults. In fact, a majority of 18- to 29-year-olds say they use Instagram (71%) or Snapchat (65%), while roughly half say the same for TikTok. So, diversifying into other platforms helps us to get our presence known and message out to people who may have otherwise missed it, and most especially as people shift platforms, we are still there.

As people become discontent and move to other platforms, having a presence on Twitter, Instagram and Reddit is beneficial to the SSR community. How do we become an influence in the model railroading community? We must create and drive people to those sites. That means content, interesting content, and sharing, and that is where you come in! Your input is paramount to the success or the downfall of social media sites. Are you ready? Do you have an idea or post that our community would benefit from or be interested in? Seen something you find innovative or educational? Sharing is caring... Come join us on Facebook and when we bring new sites online, Get Aboard!!

*Editor’s Note (Below) An example of Internet Reach—a simple submission on the Kato Track page went viral.*

**Model Railroad Clubs**  
Would you like more exposure  
telling about your club?  
Place a 2" x 3" business card  
AD in the “Journal Box”  
Contact your Local Sunshine Region  
Division Superintendent or Officer or  
e-mail: [hobbygauge@bellsouth.net](mailto:hobbygauge@bellsouth.net)  
for full details and pricing





**Contributor**  
Chip Pecere

## Inexpensive Mold Making Let's mass-produce!

After speaking with a friend (Al Sohl, MMR) about the cost of purchasing all the roof detail and loads for the railroad, Al decided to put together a clinic on making quick molds for inexpensive mass production. By the following week, Al had put together a tutorial. Here are the basics that should really help with producing some great detailed parts for your railroad.

Let's start by taking the part you want to mass produce. For this example, we're going to use sacks of grain. These molds need to be durable enough to produce a number of parts from each mold. We need to create a frame in which to pour the silicone base mold material. With the part in the center of the frame, we allowed about 3/4 inch on both of the short sides, and 1 inch of space on each of the long sides. The mold must be strong, but also flexible enough to remove the finished parts without any damage to the mold, so that it can be reused. This also keeps us from wasting the casting resins. So we take a cardboard box lid, deep enough for the part to be covered about 3/8 to 1/2 inch. Using a small amount of GE Silicone, we glue the sacks of grain near the two sides. Allow 1 inch by 3/4 inch from the sides. Next is to box-in the other two sides. For this we use popsicle sticks. A dab of glue (CA) will do fine. We use a small amount of clay (modeling putty) to fill in the gaps, and radius the corners. To make sure that the mold releases well from the part and the box, here's the simplest trick I've learned. Purchase a jar of petroleum jelly. A small container will last forever. I also buy throw away paint brushes from the Dollar Tree, \$1.25. Using a hair dryer, warm the petroleum jelly till it's a liquid consistency.

The starter kit is \$26.00 and really does go a long way. (<https://www.amazon.com/BBDINO-Elastic-Silicone-Making-Casting>)

Lightly brush the part to be molded and the entire inside area where we'll be making the casting. This is a cheap mold release. We are ready to mix the mold material. Get a couple of plastic cups. To be sure that we're not wasteful



with the casting resin, fill the area to be cast with water. Now pour that water into a cup. This is the amount of material we need to mix. This is a fifty-fifty mix. Pour equal amounts of the resin into two separate cups, to equal a little more than what's in the cup of water. Start mixing both parts together. Stir it well and pour it from one cup to the other. Make sure it's blended. When you pour it into your mold, DO NOT pour onto the part. You do not want it to set, leaving pockets of air around the part. Keep pouring into the 4 corners so it will rise around the part. Make sure the resin is at least 3/8 inch covering the part. Let this cure for a few hours, (we waited a day).....

I use a popsicle stick, running it all the way around to release the silicone



*Above: Dr. FrankenAl*

mold from the box. Then carefully pull around to release it from the part that we cast. Look at the image and see how well it spread between the layers of the grain sacks. This mold is now ready to use.

Most of us use hydrocal; you can buy it at any hobby shop and most craft stores. It's very easy to mix and use. I always put the water in the cup and add the hydrocal while stirring. With your mix still soupy, pour it into your mold. Use the stirrer, dabbing it into the mold to make sure all air bubbles are out. I let it cure for a day. Carefully stretch on the sides of the mold. Release the part and you're ready to make another part. Need another mold? We have the original to make more. On our railroads, there are hundreds of items that we can cast to add detail to the scene. Boxes, sacks, barrels, windows and doors. Use a dental stone for a bit stronger part.

Have fun and happy railroading.





The end result of all that mold-making and fume-smelling from the prior page—nifty sacks, all ready for loading. Pictured above, Station Agent Raymond furiously waves after a departing Western Bay train whose crew forgot to pick up those eastbound sacks. Just another day on the railroad.



**Contributor**  
 Michael Collins  
 MMR 157  
 SSR AP Southern  
 Division Manager



**Building various tracks can be tricky when working toward the Achievement Program Civil Engineering Certificate.**

Obtaining this award is another highly technical craftsmanship endeavor with tight tolerances that will test your modeling skills and patience. To learn more about the requirements, go to the NMRA website, select Education, Achievement Program, Civil Engineering; and copy the requirements and Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) forms.

**Reading & Video Support**

Select the Masters Series, then Civil Engineering, and read the article MMR Bob Chait and I wrote for the NMRA Bulletin – September, 1992 issue that is conducted by MMR Rick Shoup, who was the National AP Chairman at the time.

Also read the 2008 article from Scale Rails titled *Model Railroad Engineer – Civil Certificate* by MMRs Miles Hale and Marty Vaughn which explains the requirements in another way.

Model Railroader Magazine has an Essentials Series Book, *Basic Trackwork for Model Railroaders – Special Edition* by Jeff Wilson (Item 12479, \$19.99). Chapter 9 covers ten pages of handlaying track. There is also a second edition. And if you need help drawing a track plan, MR has *Starter Track Plans for Model Railroaders*, and *101 Track Plans*; also *101 More Track Plans*, and others.

Under NMRA Video Library (page 3 of 6), check out *Handlaying Turnouts with a Jig*, a Train Masters TV presentation; and *Handlaid Trackwork* (p. 6 of 6) another Train Masters video by Model Railroad Hobbyist.

When you are ready to view more videos, select the You Tube Videos (upper right corner of the NMRA home page with the symbol box with the arrow). Then in the search box, type ... *scratchbuilding model railroad tracks*. Scroll-down to find many videos, click-on one, then see a list

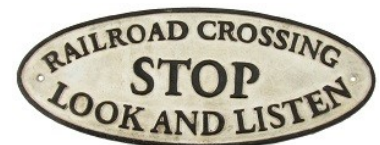
of more videos listed on the right-hand side. Pick those that may be helpful to you.

**Tools & Job Aids**

Micro-Mark ([mircomark.com](http://mircomark.com)) has spike insertion and removal pliers, also rail cutting pliers and alignment tools. The April, 2023 issue of Model Railroader has an article on *Track Bending Pliers* (pp. 43-44) that prevents kinks ([Micro-Tools.com](http://Micro-Tools.com))

A man called Otto, ‘the Track Rat’, has kits to make turnouts, crossings and trackwork. Check out Oak Hill Model Railroad Track Supply, LLC (and YouTube video) on his website: [ohrtracsupply.com](http://ohrtracsupply.com).

FAST TRACKS has a track building system. They have printable templates, assembly fixtures, tools, supplies and more. Check out their website [handlaidtrack.com](http://handlaidtrack.com).





## SSR Members Viewpoints

Our latest MMR, Carl Smeigh, reminds us, tracks are the foundation upon which all aspects of train operations are developed. First, draw a track plan that incorporates various aspects found on prototype railroads, with the four features required to fit the space available. In my case, the plan led me to a three-deck layout with two helixes to the three levels. My plan included a maximum 3% grade. Second, build and ballast your trackwork with at least six features listed in part two. Planning, skill effort and time gets you to complete sections to demonstrate smooth operation.

Finally, construct three of the fifteen models listed in part three. These can be incorporated in your layout or displayed separately. In my case, I used 'other' for two items. One was to construct a transition piece of standard gauge and narrow gauge. The other ... was recreating what old narrow-gauge used, stub switches which moved both tracks coming into the turnout. Some of your track modeling may apply to the electrical and scenery certificates or the Golden Spike Award.

*Carl's 19 degree crossing (Below).*



Here is John Crellin's view ...

First, don't read anything extra into what is required. For example, the scratchbuilt turnouts only need space to run a locomotive through the switch. So, you need the turnout, a small amount of track on each end to hold the engine and a way to power the track (think alligator

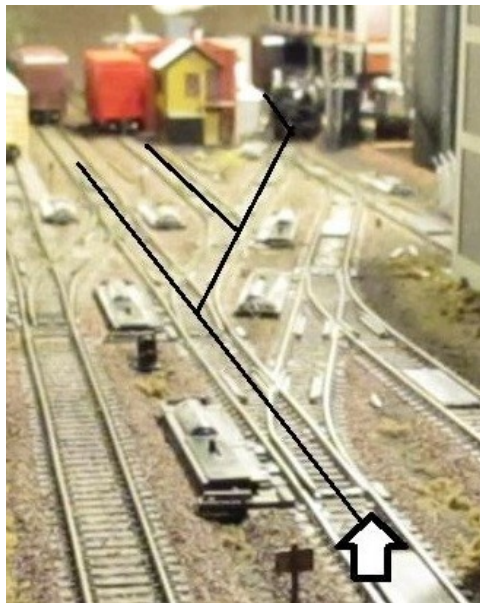
clips). Each turnout is judged pass/fail. There is no need for a full set of ties, ballast or roadbed.

You will need to hold the points in place for the loco to go through every direction. You need to make sure the turnout conforms with an NMRA track gauge. The loco just has to go through without stalling or derailling.



*John Crellin's scratchbuilt turnout that passed. Not shown is a switch stand to hold the points in place. (Above)*

For item two, you must build six different track items from a large list of choices. For documentation, yes, paperwork is necessary; you can include clear pictures and point out the item to reduce the wording. I used Microsoft paint program as an overlay. Remember, don't over think what is needed.



*An example using a picture with MS paint as an overlay rather than writing about all the details. (Above)*

And Joe Brann, points out his trackwork was 95% completed on his Susquehanna Valley Line when he decided to go for the civil certificate. For layout design work he used the Cadrail program to do the first requirement on the SOQ since

it includes elevation, curve radii, and turnout size data. Joe prepared four pages, main level and staging level track plans; and detailed data.

Like many of us, his layout is in a former bedroom (12.5 by 15 feet). Check-out his excellent website ([www.svl-rr.com](http://www.svl-rr.com)) that includes more than the six required elements in requirement two.

The dreaded 'scratch built' items in requirement three gave him some of the most fun and pleasure during this experience. To help achieve the requirements

he borrowed a set of Fast Track (see Tools & Job Aids) turnout jigs and filing blocks from a friend. First, he removed all the ties from a piece of flex-track. The slot in the jigs for the track is slightly wider than the base of the track. It is wise to have the rail touch the same edge of the slot as you form the rail. The filing jigs are critical in filing the points and the angles around the frog. Besides a turnout and crossing, Joe constructed a Gauntlet track. Information about judging his trackage was reported in the Summer 2022 issue of the Journal Box.

Joe is a half-certificate away from becoming a MMR.

## Epilog

Like all the achievement program certificates, it takes time, trial and error to improve your skill-level and perseverance, along with education (like this article) and tools. I'm sure everyone has personal problems and situations to overcome, but with determination you can be a *Model Railroad Civil Engineer* or if you prefer a model railroad 'gandy-dancer'.





## Off The Wire

The Big Bend Model Railroad Association of Tallahassee, FL would like to request that you share our upcoming 32nd Annual Tallahassee Model Railroad Show & Sale with your members and friends. This year's event will be a two-day event June 24-25, 2023. This event will take place at the North Florida Fairgrounds.

The BBMRA uses portable T-TRAK Modules in N/HO/O and Z Scale for displaying operating layouts at various events. Our G Scale and Live Steam divisions use standard layouts to display their larger size trains at indoors events.



It's that time of year again—time to start planning for the 2023 Sunshine Region Convention. Once again, we will descend on Plant City and enjoy clinics, train shows, comradery and even, possibly, if you are good, a tour of the Orlando Brightline Station.

Rather than me repeating all the interesting activities, hotel information and such-stuff, please visit the region's website (listed below) and click on the associated tab for information and registration. Looks like it will be a lot of fun!

[www.SunshineRegion.org](http://www.SunshineRegion.org)

Below, Eastern Division Superintendent Beverly Farnham introduces one of Rich Mahaney's four clinics given at the Eastern Division's Workshop on May 3rd, 2023. All four of the talks were solid—on my recent drive through Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, I found myself able to identify the types of storage tanks I saw along the line I model. It was a great day and everyone had a fun time!





*Rolling Hot*  
Mark Svendsen's  
C&A

Tune in for the latest episode of the Sherlock Holmes Steel Mill Mysteries series, the Curious Case of the odor from the mill, or as it is popularly known, "What's that smell?"

As soon as Holmes agreed to take the case those around him began offering various theories for the source of the problem. With great amusement Holmes decided to humor them all by following up each opinion, knowing full well that they would lead nowhere. He arranged for car number SSR 1980 to collect evidence from four different spots.

Dr. Watson was absolutely certain that the smell emanated from the coke plant, so Holmes sent the car to pick up samples from the coke breeze loader. (Right)



Mrs. Hudson, Holmes faithful housekeeper, suggested that perhaps the smell was from the blast furnace, so Holmes dutifully sent the car to the dust collector (Above).



Inspector Lestrade opined that surely it must be from the sinter plant, so the car was positioned under the sinter cake loader (Left).



Holmes of course knew that these clues would be fruitless (if not entirely odorless), as he had already deduced the source. The final stop would be the nearby Svendsen Fine Fertilizer Factory (motto: “Ours don’t stink”) which is conveniently served by the mill switchers. The car was spotted at the waste-waste loader (Below). This is the material that is not even good enough to be used in fertilizer (from what I understand it consists mostly of undigested tomato seeds and corn kernels, but I prefer not to think about it too much).



With all the necessary evidence collected the car was then loaded on the car float (Right) to be analyzed by Holmes to solve the case.

Dr. Watson asked “By George, Holmes, how did you know?” to which Holmes replied “Smellementary my dear Watson.”



**Tuscarora Switching Puzzle:** Here’s a puzzle that happened on my layout the other day. The crew came off the mainline (in the foreground) and needed to get the tank car into the fuel distributor on the spur to the upper left. Note that the yellow reefer is against the buffer and the tank car’s rear truck is sitting on the turnout points. Essentially, it’s 200 feet of train in 198 feet of siding.

So, how do you get the tank car into the fuel distributor ? Can you do it in a move or two, efficiently?  
Solution to the puzzle on page 15.





**Contributor**  
 Michael Collins  
 MMR 157  
 AP Chair—Southern  
 Division

## A Skeleton Driver

One day while I was stopped at a traffic light in the turning lane, I noticed a vehicle nearby with a skeleton graphic on the door without a head. The driver's head completed the body. Before I could take a picture of this eye-catching scene, the traffic light turned green and off went the vehicle.

Then, another day, I went to visit my friend at the Veterans Nursing Home in Pembroke Pines, Florida; and there it was ... the 'skeleton' driving vehicle. The car door graphic has a highly detailed scene of an x-ray driver with his seat-belt fastened and a stick-shift. This was a company car of a mobile x-ray business ... very creative. That's my SUV in the picture behind the x-ray business vehicle.



## It's Prototypical

With that in mind, my imagination thought about doing a skeleton graphic on a model. So, I used a black pickup truck and drew a skeleton, without a head, using silver and black Sharpie markers. I call the business, Bare Bones Trucking, a one-man operation.

I placed the truck in a scene on my layout, the New York Harbor Railroad-Lehigh Valley. To see my railroad and more of this scene, go to YouTube.com (search) Michael Collins model railroad Part 9. Also, the truck was in a picture that was selected by Walthers for their 2021 Reference Book to introduce *Scratch Building Supplies* (see page 883).



Eric Menger, Eastern Div. AP chairman presents Chip Pecere with his first (but not his last) Achievement Program award, that for scenery. They pose in front of the 'Salmon River' section of the O scale Western Bay RR. (Left)



Here Eric Menger, our Eastern Div. AP chairman presents Chip Pecere with his second AP Achievement Certificate, that for his Electrical. Pics taken by the Denver O scale dual gauge yard on the Western Bay RR. (also Left)

*Editor's Note: Chip has been a busy boy. Can you Eastern Division guys just give me one photo of Eric giving your recipients a stack of awards?*

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Suplicants bow before L&N Yardmaster Bob Martin, hoping beyond hope that they, yes, THEY, will be the crew chosen to finally depart Norton Yard. The action is hot and heavy on both railroads of John Wilkes' *Virginia Southwestern*.

**Tuscarora Switching Solution:** Above, we see the same dilemma from another angle. And the solution? I have no idea. I looked away for a moment and the car was spotted. I have my suspicions. Call Holmes of the C&A!



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