The Telegraph Key

An NMRA Sunshine Region Monthly Publication

April 2024



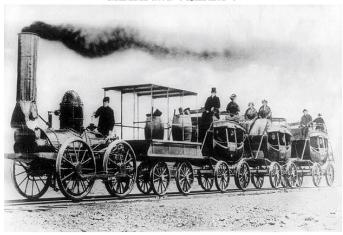




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Editor's Message



Little known to most of you but quite apparent in the computer room of our house, my roll around small shelf layout has sat quite dormant for the past five years or so until recently, when I took some time to really analyze just what the heck I was trying to accomplish. It sat dormant because, although enthusiastic about my track plan originally, I realized it was just too busy and I was trying to put too many industries in

such a small space. It has taken years for me to get around to pulling up the track and to start fresh since that was what was needed to get me going again. Up came the track, the roadbed, and out came the Frog Juicer wires. What I did then was to take a good long stare at the blank canvas before me and start to envision the structures, trackwork, and scenery that *might* make up my new layout. I even did some virtual switching moves in my head. Only then, when I thought I had something good cooked up, I laid some of the track out on the surface, played with some structure footprints, and cut out and taped paper representations of roads, crossings, and sidewalks where they fit into my newly formed plan.

I really liked what I created. I brought my wife in and said something like "Check out how great this is!" I played with the structures a little more, I put some boxcars, a couple tank cars, and an engine up there to see how switching moves could be made. I was really into something here.

It didn't last. Something was still bugging me about the setup. It wasn't just one thing – it was a few little things that just added up to not being satisfied. So... off came the cars and the engine. Off came the structures. Off came the track and off came all the taped down paper roads and crossings. Blank canvas again.

Slowly but surely, I re-re-evaluated what I was trying to do with this layout. Eventually, some new ideas came to me along with some older ideas and I was off to the races once again. Maybe this time....

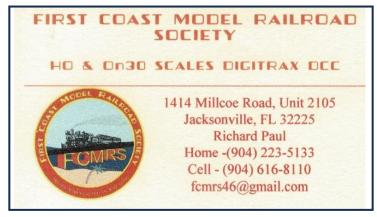
Someday, a little way into the future, you may read about me moving forward with gusto on my soon to be completed switching layout. But for right now, I am still just not quite sure.

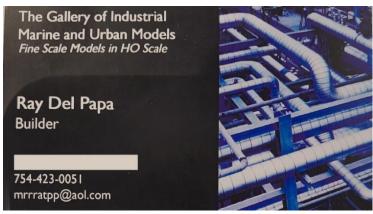
REGION ELECTIONS

Sunshine Region elections are coming up soon and this is the time to consider running for any of these positions. This includes any of the Board positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, and the four Directors. It also includes any of the Division Superintendent positions: North, South, East, or West. If you are interested, please prepare your Bio and email it to the SSR President at ssrprez@nmra.org. April 30th is the deadline for submitting your Bio and the position that you are running for.

Mark Lewalski

Vice President and Telegraph Key Editor





Your Questions & Answers



Welcome!

An answer has been provided for the first question asked by **Mark** in the Western Division:

"What are the lengths of covered hoppers used to transport plastic pellets and what year were they first used in service?"

Jim Moore writes in: "I believe that early transport of plastic pellets in covered hoppers (AAR Class LO) can be traced to GATC "Dry-Flo" cars in

the late 1950s. In the early 1960s, Pullman-Standard and ACF both designed and produced 3500cf versions. In 1965, ACF introduced a 5250cf cylindrical hopper equipped with the 503C outlet, which became the industry standard for several years.

In the late 1970s, producers introduced linear low-density resins. This development triggered several new (and higher capacity) cars including North American (5750cf), Pullman-Standard (5820cf), and Thrall (5800cf). In Canada, Procor manufactured 5800cf cars similar in size/design to the Pullman-Standard design.

Moving into the 1990s, National Steel Car (Hamilton, ON) designed and produced three versions which were considered "standard design" for their respective periods: 5847cf, 6245cf, and 6400cf.

Freight Car America manufactured 5800cf and 6250cf versions at its plant in Castanos (Coahuila), Mexico. Greenbrier (Lake Oswego, OR) produced a 6260cf version. Trinity produced (at least) three versions: 6241cf, 5251cf, and 5851cf.

While there's likely to be an exception, I believe many (most?) of the "plastic pellet" cars were painted light grey and carried private road names.

Sources include Model Railroad Hobbyist discussion list, Steam Era Freight Car discussion list, various (prototype) rail car manufacturer websites, and scribblings on rail crew bathroom walls."

And we are still looking for an answer to our second question that came from **Matthew**:

"Do you have or know of anyone near the Tampa Bay/Dade City area who does minor repairs to Hornby Model Trains?"

If **you** can help with an answer, please email me at wwtrainsailor@gmail.com.

Mark Lewalski

Editor, Telegraph Key



President's Message



Hello once again fellow Sunshine Region SSR Members,

As we head into the month of April, yes April, I am filled with immense pride and enthusiasm for what lies ahead. We have new members, new volunteers and some great news from National HQ. As a region we are gaining momentum and strength and as we add new members to our roll, I want you to keep this in mind – Our shared

passion for this intricate hobby binds us together in a unique bond, one that transcends mere tracks and trains to foster true camaraderie and fellowship.

In our Sunshine Region SSR community, we are not just enthusiasts; we are mentors and friends, supporting each other's creative endeavors and sharing our knowledge with open hearts. As we continue to grow and evolve, let us remember the importance of mentorship, of reaching out a helping hand to those who are just beginning their own railroading adventures. Together, we can inspire and nurture the next generation of model railroaders, ensuring that our beloved hobby thrives for years to come.

But beyond our shared love for model railroading, let us also celebrate the strength of our community. In times of joy and triumph, we come together to rejoice and uplift one another, participate in OPS sessions and help those less skilled to develop those skills by providing hands on leadership and guidance, adding scenery, laying track, building a T-TRAK module. And in moments of challenge or adversity, we stand united, offering support and encouragement to those in need, those less fortunate that may have lost a mentor and friend like the recently passed Robert Gangwish. This sense of solidarity is what makes our Sunshine Region SSR family truly special, and it is something we should cherish and nurture at every opportunity. I would even go so far as to say it is something we should celebrate.

As we look ahead to the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all who share our passion. Let us continue to embrace diversity and celebrate the unique perspectives and talents that each of us brings to the table. Together, we can create a model railroading community that is as vibrant and diverse as the trains that grace our tracks.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering dedication and passion. It is your enthusiasm and spirit that make our Sunshine Region SSR community shine so brightly. So let us continue to journey together, guided by our shared love for model railroading, our commitment to mentorship and fellowship, and our enduring sense of community.

We choose if we want to be positive, creating and fostering a welcoming environment and laying aside old mindsets, old assumptions and poor attitudes. There is so much talent and skill here I cannot imagine not wanting to be a part. Help us bring in new members, you all know someone who may have been a member in the past, or may have wanted to be one but had a hard time reconciling the cost. Let them know that there is good news to assist members over 65, You may have read the Presidents car in the recent NMRA magazine or received an e-mail from the national marketing team. If you did not then here it is...

We're excited to share news about a special offer exclusively for NMRA members over the age of 65!

The Telegraph Key

March 2024

Grouper, a health benefit focused on promoting social fitness, has partnered with NMRA to provide complimentary membership benefits to active participants.

If you have a qualifying Medicare Advantage or Supplement plan, you may be eligible to have your NMRA membership dues covered by your health plan through the Grouper Social Benefit.

Signing up to check your eligibility is simple. Visit www.hellogrouper.com/NMRA and enter your health plan ID. Once your plan's eligibility is confirmed, Grouper will send you a reimbursement check to cover your yearly NMRA membership. Plus, as long as you remain an active NMRA member, you'll receive yearly reimbursements, provided your plan includes the Grouper benefit.

For any inquiries or assistance, feel free to reach out to the dedicated Grouper team at (833) 205-2431 or via email at NMRA@hellogrouper.com.

Stay healthy and active with NMRA and Grouper!

I want to be sure you understand that the NMRA does not and will not pass any personal information to Grouper. If your plan is not on the list finish signing up, as members sign up it drives the point home that we want this as a benefit. What doesn't exist today may well be there next month. Head over to our website https://www.nmrasunshineregion.org/ and see if you and your friends can get signed up for free.

Best regards,

Andy Zimmerman

President



South Florida Railway Museum

Beginning January 2024

New Hours

The museum will be open from 11 AM to 4 PM on the 2nd Saturday of the month

Dates

01-13, 02-10, 03-09, 04-13, 05-11, 06-08, 07-13, 08-10, 09-14, 10-12, 11-09, 12-14

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

Call 561 441 6952 for more information

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

Treasurer's Message



Hello everyone – I'm hoping we have all sprung forward ☺ okay, bad dad joke.... I digress.

Financially the Region is strong and National will be "springing" (dad joke part 2) some great news to all members which will impact most of this Region's membership – if you are on Medicare Advantage or a Medicare supplement the NMRA has created a new

benefit similar to the Silver Sneakers program you may have heard of that would refund you the cost of your annual membership!! Yes, refund it up to \$100. National sent out a press release on March 26th. If you missed it you can find it along with the links to see if you qualify for the program, click here-> FREE MEMBERSHIP CHECK or follow the link on our websites homepage.

Convention plans are still in the works as I write this and am hoping to have more information on the 2024 convention soon. We have also initiated the inaugural issue of the digital Journal Box. You will see a new look and more content with the intent to continue to grow this publication over time now that we are not bound by hard copy printing limitations. Please share your comments on what you like, don't like, and would like to see in the new Journal Box via email at NMRA SunshineRegionMail@yahoo.com . This is our magazine; let's all take part in bringing more

<u>NMRA SunshineRegionMail@yahoo.com</u>. This is our magazine; let's all take part in bringing more content to all our members.

Lastly, I'm asking everyone to share our website with your favorite model railroad club(s) and hobby store(s). Please ask them to advertise with us. Our rates are extremely affordable, and our publications go out to over 500 members in our region plus all the other visitors we have to our website. It's easy to advertise, there is a button right on the home page that says "Advertise with us". Simply click the button and you will be taken to a web page that can be printed and has all the information needed to get an ad started. These ads are the best way we can fund the region and keep all our operating costs manageable.

Thank you in advance for your help.

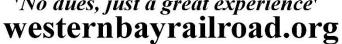
Glenn Kopriva

Treasurer



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'





Achievement Program



We have one Golden Spike for the month and it is Curt Ayers III of the Western Division and from the Fort Myers Scale Rails Club in Bonita Springs, Florida.

NMRA member **Chip Pecere** was presented his 4th AP certificate for **Chief Dispatcher** on March 5, 2024. Chip met most of his operations and dispatcher requirements at the Western Bay Railroad.

Additionally, **Marty Megregian MMR**, achieved his **Model Railroad Author** AP certificate in November 2023. Marty has been traveling extensively, so the certificate will be presented upon his return.

Ken Hoot

Achievement Program Chair

Northern Division

Events:

First Coast Model RR Society Open Running

Florida, Jacksonville (Beaches)–First Coast Model RR Society open, running every Sun. Operational 750 sq ft.

Double-level freelance mixed era HO layout 50% complete. Meet On30 modular layout members. Gated location near I295 & Monument Rd. Please contact us 24 - 48 hours before your visit.

John Piselli jpmickey@att.net. www.FCMRS.club, See the club on YouTube (FCMRS).

https://www.facebook.com/groups/471801286331141

BBMRA (Big Bend Model Railroad Association) Layout Tour

We begin the tour at Tom Rush's house (HO). He has added some operating features since last year, and we all look forward to seeing Max the wonder pup.

Doug Gyuricsko has been working with Joe Haley (HO) on the layout in a shed out back of his home. Joe had not tried to do anything with it for years. It is now something worth seeing once again. I have already snuck a peek. Park along Collins Drive, as there is not much room in Joe's front yard, then walk around the left side of the house into the back.

Ed Schroeder and his meticulous New Orleans setup (HO). Ed has been getting special help from some club members, including Stacey Elliott, Phil Weston, and Sheldon Harrison.

Gary Edwards' house, will cap off the tour. Gary will be taking down his tremendous vintage O Lionel O Gauge layout soon and he is not sure when it will be up again.

Visit:

Train Exabit In the Northern Division Area at the Grady County History Museum. It is about forty miles from Tallahassee FI to Cairo GA.

Don Nickerson, Director, 101 North Broad St, Cairo GA 39828, (229) 377-5142, info at www.gradyhistory.org

Be a Part of Your Area:

Example:

NRHS (National Railway Historical Society)

https://nrhs.com/chapters/florida/

In our area of Tallahassee Florida, the chapter adopted The Lloyd Train Depot to preserve and make it into a museum including running a train layout.

Robert Feuerstein

Northern Division Superintendent

Eastern Division



Greetings.

The May 2024 issue of *Model Railroad Hobbyist* includes an interesting article by Jim Six entitled, "Railroading in the Sunshine State". Jim is a talented modeler and a frequent contributor to various modeling publications.

Congratulations to Eastern Division members Marty Megregian and Chip Pecere. Chip recently earned his fourth NMRA AP certificate (Chief Dispatcher), while Marty earned his latest certificate for AP Author.

The Eastern Division "meet and greet" cookout is now slated for Saturday, May 4, 2024 at my home in Winter Springs (Seminole Co.) **The cookout date was revised so as not to conflict with the quarterly Volusia County train show.** Will email further details to all Eastern Division members in early April. Join us for a day of fellowship and brainstorming regarding future Division activities.

Recently received a supply of SSR brochures. They're glossy and three-panel, and include an easy-to-complete membership form. If you know of a club or hobby shop in the Eastern Division which would distribute these on our behalf, send me an email at the address in my signature line (below).

The 84th Florida Model Train Show and Sale will be held April 6, 2024 at the Volusia County Fairgrounds in Deland. Show hours are 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Entry fee. Operating layouts. Dealer sales.

The Eastern Division one-day meet tentatively scheduled for June 15, 2024 has been postponed indefinitely due to scheduling issues. The planning of future Division activities is one of the topics slated for discussion at the May 4, 2024 "meet and greet".

Spent a pleasant weekend rekindling friendships in Malvern, PA at the recent RPM Valley Forge meet. The meet was well attended, featured an array of clinics covering prototype freight cars, layout operations, railroad histories, and modeling techniques. Many top-notch models on display along with a very active vendor sales room.

Am planning to attend the Western Division meet on Saturday, April 20, 2024 in Davenport. Specifics regarding this event are included in Don Wetmore's column in this edition of *The Telegraph Key*. Hope to see you there.

Question of the month: What's your favorite railfanning spot in the Eastern Division? What makes it special? What's the best time to visit? Shoot me an email with your nomination.

Finally, I've heard from a few Eastern Division members who are interested in gaining some layout operating experience. If you have an operating layout and would consider including an occasional visitor or two, please contact me.

Until next month....

Jim Moore

Eastern Division Superintendent

Western Division



We had an excellent Western Div. Workshop on March 23 in N. Ft Myers, hosted by Scale Rails of Southwest Florida. There were 30 in attendance. 3 AP Golden Spike Awards were earned by members of the club. Congratulations go out to James Cameron, Curt Ayers, and Steve Cook on a job well done! There were 4 clinics: Bob McLaughlin on Decaling Tips & Techniques, Donovan Lewis on Modeling the Steel

Industry, Keith Kramer on Choosing Realistic Vehicles for Your Layout, and Mark Wilson on Weathering with PanPastels.

The next Western Div. Workshop will be on April 20 in Davenport, FL from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

Location is 50 Westridge Rd, Davenport, FL 33837

Admission is \$25 and includes:

Meet and Greet with Coffee and Doughnuts

Lunch

Raffle

Four Clinics:

Tom Wilson: Operation on the Pittsburgh and West Virginia

Car Card to JMRI using Operations Pro

John Wilkes: Construction of Appalachian Coal Tipples

Ken Hoot: Build a Foliating Machine for Tree Making

Don Wetmore: Modeling a Prototype Passenger Train Consist

A flyer with more details is included in this issue of the Telegraph Key.

RSVP to Tom Wilson wilsontoma1954@gmail.com so he has a headcount for lunch.

If your club is interested in hosting a workshop please contact me directly. A typical workshop includes 4 clinics and a tour or operating session at the host club. Modelers are encouraged to bring modeling projects to display and AP judging is available on request. Admission is usually around \$20-\$25 and includes lunch. Watch this space for dates and locations.

If you or your club have any news or events to share, please let me know so I can share it with the Western Division members.

Don Wetmore

Western Division Superintendent

Southern Division



Hello,

Spring is here, we can now escape from the confines of our basements, put aside the scenery construction, track laying, wiring, and other sundry rail building duties and get out in the garden. Oh, we are in Florida, it's too damn hot, scratch all that! But it was a

nice winter considering the weather, the pleasant weather, actually cold weather, like what Winter is supposed to be.

So, on to the news, or lack thereof, I have no idea what is going on in Palm Beach, one would think a couple of months would be recovery enough from the fair. Maybe next month.

The Florida Citrus group remains at the Plantation Historical Museum and they have an April 20th presentation of Florida East Coast Railway history. They have a historic speaker showing up for the presentation, Seth Bramson, I say historic because Seth has been at this for a long while, he is an engaging speaker even though. For those of you who don't know Seth, he is all things FEC, from owning most of what they had, shy of rolling stock and motive power, although that is questionable. On top of all this Seth is an associate professor at Barry University and the author of "Speedway to Sunshine", a chronical of the FEC railway, plus others covering Florida, from Miami to cheesecake, seriously! This would be a great time for those who want to take a step back in time and learn from the man who is the custodian of the history. Plan to attend the presentation, **04/20/24 at 2:00 PM**, 511 N. Fig Tree Lane in Plantation. Regular museum hours, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Wednesday through Saturday, only.



The ECHOES are in the planning stage, so a hiatus is being taken from running trains at the church, maybe June. Last month I said they would be on display in conjunction with a car show, unfortunately there are space restrictions, hence the opportunity has been cancelled.

The South Florida Railway Museum missed putting on a division workshop on the 16th of March because no one signed up. There was interest from a couple of SSR members from afar, there were members of the SFRM that would attend, but without knowing how many, planning becomes difficult as well as knowing how much room is needed, so until next time. Once again, it will be an experiment in attracting RPM modelers into the fold. The museum elected their new slate of officers for the coming year, well a somewhat new slate, two new board members, Alan Chesler and Dave Burgess are in their respective positions. The plan to hold another layout tour for their members was well received, it will be scheduled for the month of May. I know they would welcome non-members with layouts to the tour, so if you are interested let them know, go to their website. Remember the museum hours have changed, it is open to the public, the 2nd Saturday of each month, for April (04/13/24), from 11 AM to 4 PM.

Until next month, Model 60!

Robert Leonard

Southern Division Superintendent



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Remember do not to wait until December to check your Christmas Trains for repairs or cleaning!

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NMRA Sunshine Region Western Division Spring Workshop

Location 50 Westridge Rd Davenport, FL 33837

Date: Saturday April 20, 2024 Time: 9:00 am till 3:00 pm

Admission \$25.00 Includes:

Meet and greet with coffee/doughnuts.

Lunch

Raffle

4 Clinics:

Tom Wilson: Operation on the Pittsburgh and West Virginia
Car Card to JMRI using Operations Pro

John Wilkes: Construction of Appalachian Coal Tipples

Ken Hoot: Build a Foliating Machine for Tree Making

Don Wetmore: Modeling a Prototype Passenger Train Consist

RSVP to Tom Wilson wilsontoma1954@gmail.com 863-280-4406

https://www.nmrasunshineregion.org/



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 Diazrickdiaz@att.net305 496 9266Tracey Sanderstassailor@mac.com786 514 5667Herb Fordehf640@gmail.com786 375 1424



J , ,

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Our mailing address is:

NMRA Sunshine Region, Inc. 4621 Bexley Village Dr Land O Lakes, FL 34638

