

Telegraph Key



Railroad History

America's First Narrow Gauge Railroad Begins On August 31, 1877, the Billerica and Bedford Railroad began operations as America's first 2-ft gauge narrow gauge railroad. This pioneering railroad connected the towns of Billerica and Bedford in Massachusetts.

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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Todd Slaughter

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Editor's Message

.....

Welcome to the August *TK*!

Whew, July was a whirl wind!

August promises more great opportunities!

As I write this, I have just returned from the Scenic City 2026, NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, TN. It was AMAZING! But, I must admit that I am pretty tired. We did so much!

I don't really know where to start, there were so many amazing milestones.

Certainly, you all know about the world record T-TRAK layout. That was a HUGE success.

I met so many wonderful people, attended so many amazing clinics, rode some beautiful restored trains, rode a river boat, visited the Moon Pie store, and learned so much!

My modeling is really going to reach the next level as a result of this experience.

The excursion trains were so much fun!

I have to say, that the highlight of the event for me, was watching Sophia run her brand new Frecciarossa, Italian high speed train, N-scale model around the entire T-TRAK red line. She was so successful and enjoyed the help and support from so many mentors. She even received a limited, commemorative car. This really is THE GREATEST HOBBY!

Choo Choo My Friends,
Todd

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NMRA SSR At large Director
Editor, Telegraph key
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Fun, Friends, Trains

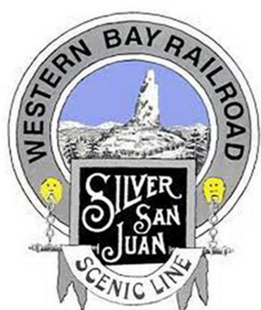
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The Western Bay Railroad is a 950 square ft On30 layout in Port St Lucie. We meet almost every Tuesday evening. We are looking for new members to join our group. There are OP sessions & scenery that we are still working on. If you're a

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

.....

As I write this month's message, I am in Chattanooga attending the NMRA National Convention, and it has been nothing short of extraordinary.

It has been a whirlwind of activity filled with old friends, new acquaintances, and model railroaders from every corner of the country.

Perhaps the most rewarding experience has been meeting first-time convention attendees. Several admitted they had always been "lone wolf" model railroaders, spending their hobby time alone in a garage, outbuilding, or spare bedroom or basement. They told me they never imagined a convention could be this amazing. They were overwhelmed by the sights and sounds, but even more so by the people. Within hours they found themselves welcomed into conversations, invited to meals, introduced to fellow modelers, and made to feel like they had belonged all along. That is the NMRA at its very best.

Throughout the week I have also witnessed mentorship in action. Clinicians, myself included, shared ideas with packed rooms, but the learning didn't stop when the presentations ended. People lingered afterward asking questions, sharing techniques, and exchanging ideas. Those conversations continued in the hallways, over dinner, and even late into the evening in the hotel lobby. That willingness to teach, encourage, and freely share knowledge is one of the things that make this organization so special.

Then there is the sense of community. The NMRA simply doesn't know a stranger. Everywhere you go someone is ready to strike up a conversation, answer a question, or invite you to join them. The fellowship here has been every bit as memorable as the layouts, clinics, and contests.

I truly believe this convention will be remembered as a turning point for our Association. There is something here for every model railroader. Regardless of your scale, your modeling interests, or your experience level, you are welcomed and valued. We continue to grow by embracing the diversity of our hobby while never losing sight of what brings us together, a shared passion for model railroading.

President's Message

.....

One of the undeniable highlights has been the National T-TRAK Layout. Spanning more than 11,000 square feet, it has become one of the signature attractions of the convention. Watching NMRA members and non-members working side by side to create something none of us could accomplish alone perfectly captures the spirit of this hobby. It is a powerful reminder that some of our greatest accomplishments come when we work together.

This October, our own Iron Horse Convention in Ocala will reflect that very same spirit. We may not have the 1,300-plus attendees Chattanooga is enjoying, but I can promise you this: everyone who walks through those doors will experience the same mentorship, the same fellowship, and the same sense of community that has made this National Convention so memorable.

I cannot emphasize this enough—THIS is what the model railroading community is all about.

It isn't just the layouts.

It isn't just the clinics.

It isn't just the contests.

It's the conversations in the hallway. It's sharing a meal with someone you've just met. It's asking a question and discovering the person standing next to you is eager to help. It's leaving with new skills, new friendships, and renewed enthusiasm for the hobby we all love.

If you've been enjoying this hobby by yourself in the garage, the outbuilding, or the spare bedroom, make this the year you step out and join us.

Our new convention venue in Ocala provides the perfect setting to foster the same mentorship, fellowship, and community that we're experiencing here in Chattanooga. Whether you're attending your very first convention or you've been an NMRA member for decades, you'll be welcomed, encouraged, and surrounded by people who share your passion for model railroading.

President's Message

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If you weren't able to make it to Chattanooga, don't miss the opportunity to experience that same spirit at the Iron Horse Convention. I truly believe it will be one of the finest Sunshine Region conventions we've ever hosted.

I look forward to seeing each of you in Ocala.

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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Treasurer's Message

.....

Hello Everyone,

It is now August, how time flies, but I want to remind everyone to make their reservations/registrations for our convention and hotel. October is right around the corner- don't wait any longer!!!

Please take care of this now so you are assured of getting your hotel room and a spot at our awards banquet.

If you were with us last year you know the fun that was had and we are looking to top that this year. We have updated the website with more specifics on clinics, op sessions and overall fun.

Now, I'd like to take everyone back to my article from last month where I talked about Computer Security. I'd like to expand on one chilling thought that is increasingly affecting seniors.

Artificial Intelligence(AI) is getting smarter and smarter and now can clearly duplicate your voice with just a few words from a video or social message. Our children and grandchildren's voices can also be duplicated by AI. So well in fact that you cannot tell the difference. The current scams going on are fear based. You receive a call from your grandson, he's upset, he needs money right now. He asks you not to tell his parents but he's been arrested or been in an accident or some other story. You recognize his voice and feel his urgency and want to help immediately. DON'T – take a breath, slow things down.

Artificial Intelligence

These type of actions are happening and increasing. They use these type of stories to force an immediate action on your part, transferring money in some form. We all want to help / protect our family especially the younger ones. There are a couple of easy solutions to prevent you from being scammed here.

1) Tell them your phone is almost dead and you'll call them right back. Trust me they do not want you to do this and will tell you anything to keep you on the line. But hang up and call your loved one back on their cell, at the police station wherever they say they are but DO NOT use the number displayed on your phone or a number they tell you to call --- look up the number yourself to insure you are getting in touch with the real location. If they are truly in trouble they will answer.

2) should a scenario like the one I mentioned occur the easiest way to insure you are really speaking to your loved one is to develop a safe word or safe phrase that all family members are aware of. A safe word or phrase should be something out of the ordinary – not someone's birthday or the dogs name. Trust me criminals will of looked at your social media page and know plenty about you and your family. Use a phrase like “the dishwasher is in the living room” or a word that is more memorable like “Uranus”. But use a word or phrase all family members are aware of. Should this type of incident occur you can ask them for the safe word. If they tell you they have forgotten it, go back to step 1 and call back.

We all hope this situation never occurs to any of us but knowledge is power and being aware of what is going on today is the best way to protect ourselves.

See everyone soon!!

Glenn

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find

My-Trains.com Helps Individuals and Clubs Document, Manage, Understand, and Protect Their Collections

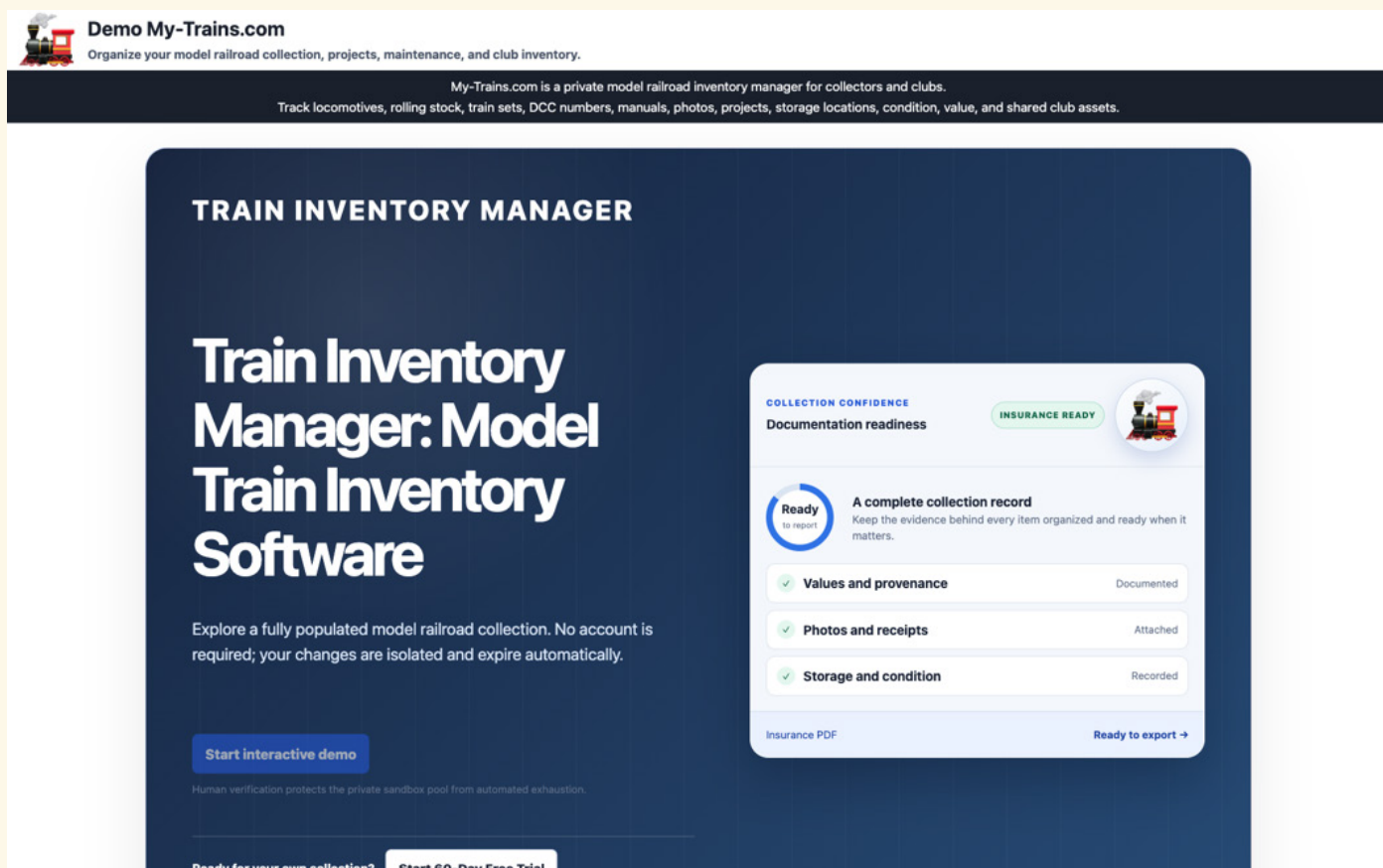
by
Brian Campbell

Like many model railroaders, I did not set out to build a large collection. It happened one locomotive, freight car, structure, decoder, tool, and box of track at a time. Eventually, “I know I own that” stops answering the questions that matter. Where is it? What road number is it? Which decoder is installed? What did I pay? Do I have a photograph or receipt? When was it serviced? Did I already buy another one?

The same problem is multiplied in a club. Club property may be in the layout room, a storage unit, a member’s garage, or traveling to a show. Donations arrive with incomplete histories. Officers change, and the person who knew where everything was may no longer be available.

That is the problem My-Trains.com is intended to solve. Its Train Inventory Manager, usually shortened to TIM, can be a simple list for one modeler or a more complete record for an individual collection or club.

Screenshots use sanitized demo data. My personal collection is not shown.



The interactive demo provides a disposable, populated collection for exploring TIM without exposing anyone’s personal records.

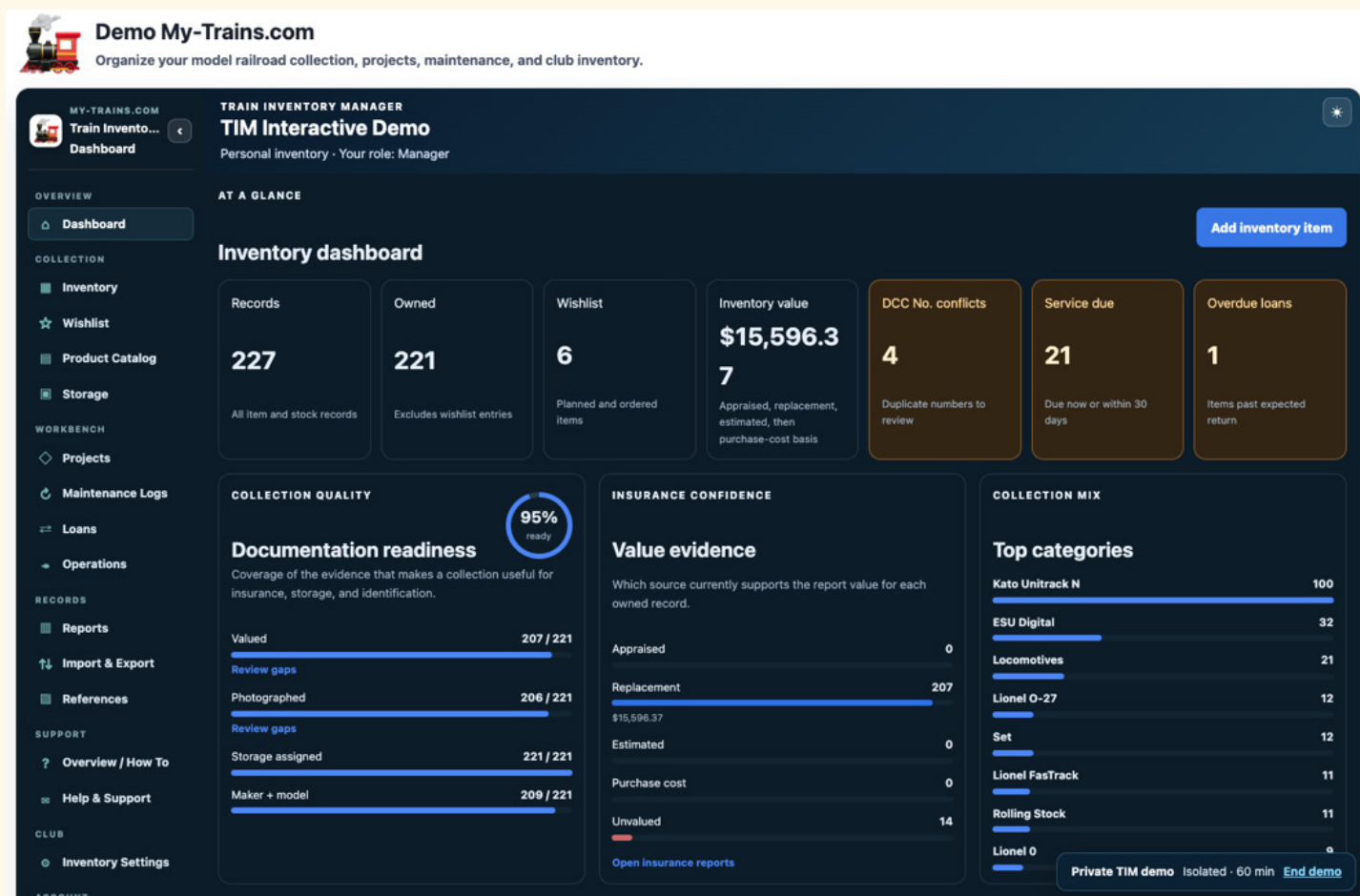
The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find

One place for the whole collection

TIM records locomotives, rolling stock, train sets and their components, structures, track, electronics, decoders, tools, parts, scenery supplies, books, memorabilia, and other property. Each record can be as brief or detailed as the owner needs. Useful fields include manufacturer, model or catalog number, railroad and road number, scale, condition, quantity, purchase cost, current estimate, replacement or appraised value, DCC address, decoder information, barcode, notes, and tags.

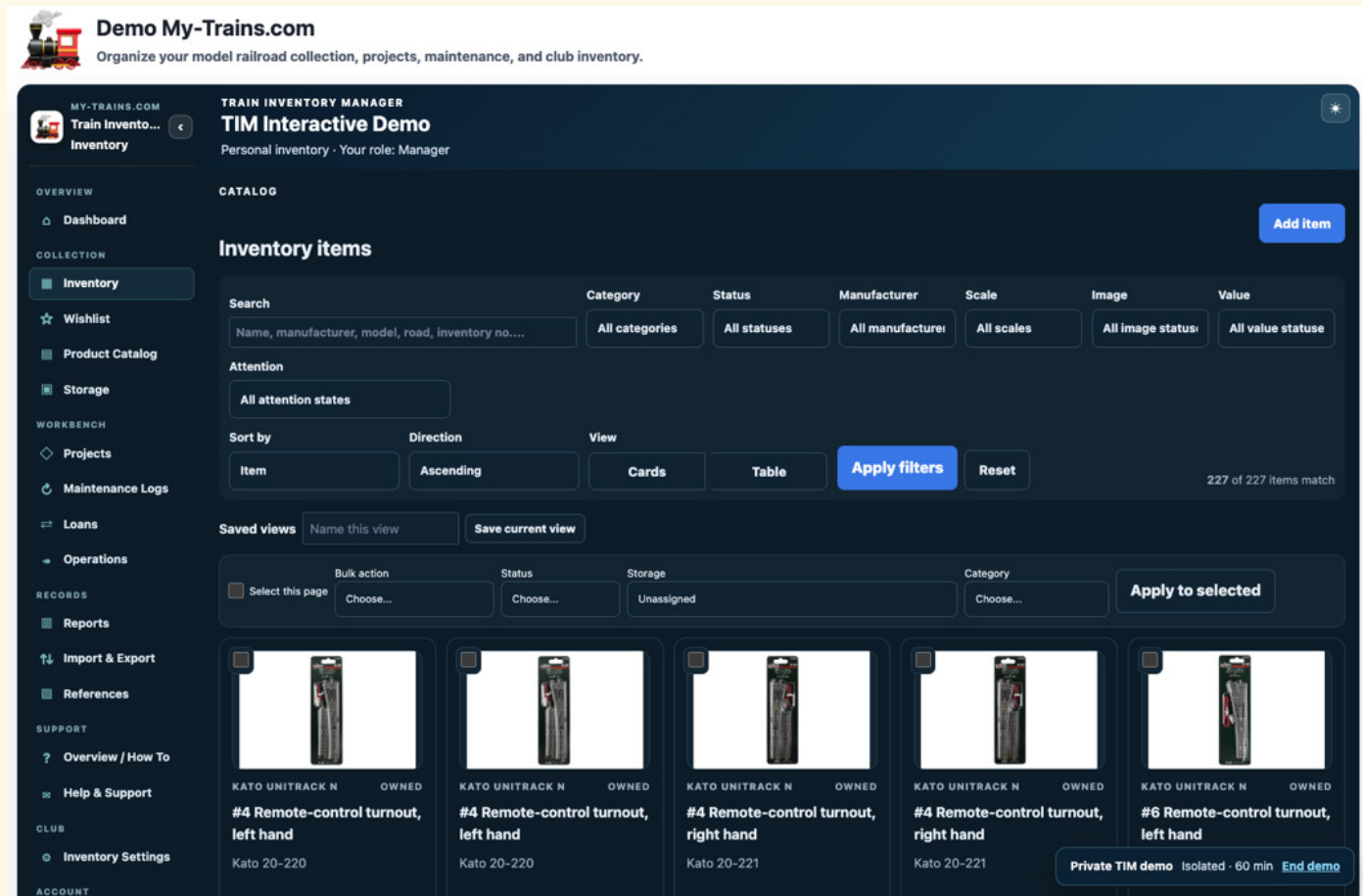
The Product Catalog holds reusable facts about a commercial model, while the inventory record holds private facts about the particular example you own. That separation matters. The manufacturer and product number may be useful to everyone, but your purchase price, condition, storage location, photographs, and service history belong to your collection.

Photographs can be attached to the item, along with protected receipts, appraisals, manuals, diagrams, track plans, warranty paperwork stored as a supporting document, and other reference files. A train set can be a parent record with its locomotives, cars, decoders, or other components beneath it. Quantity tracking works for items such as track sections and supplies that do not need a separate record for every identical piece.



The dashboard brings value, documentation gaps, storage, DCC conflicts, maintenance, loans, and projects together so the owner can see what needs attention.

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find



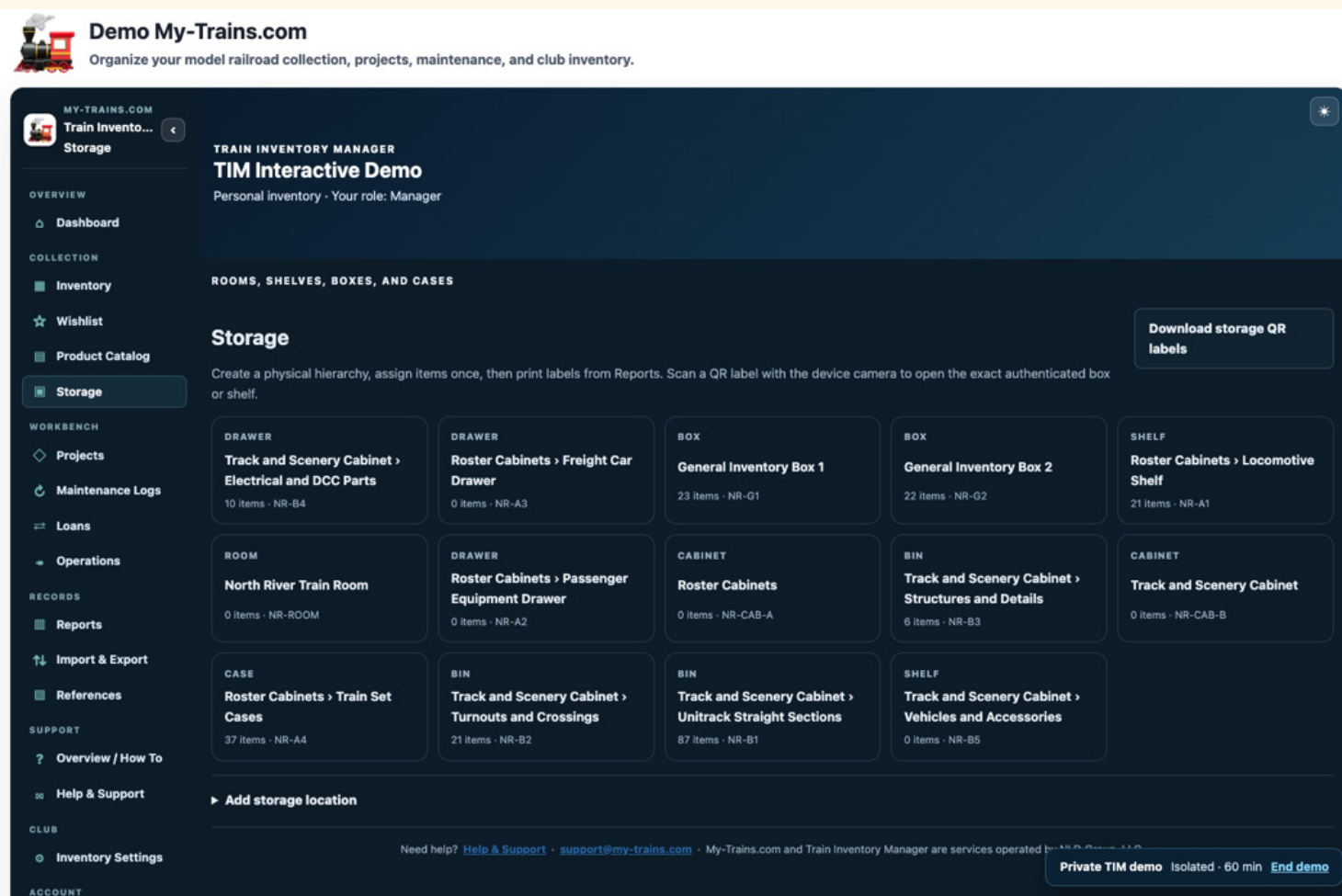
Search, filters, saved views, sorting, and bulk actions help answer “Do I own this?” before another duplicate comes home.

Finding what you own and where it is

Knowing that an item is recorded does not help if it is still lost in the house or club room. TIM uses a storage hierarchy that can follow the physical arrangement: room, cabinet, shelf, drawer, box, bin, case, or another location. A box can be on a shelf, the shelf in a cabinet, and the cabinet in a room. The item remains linked to the exact place.

Printable QR labels can point to an item or storage location. The code contains an authenticated link, not the private record itself. Scanning it may require sign-in, and it never bypasses inventory permissions. Optional NFC tags can use the same kind of link.

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find



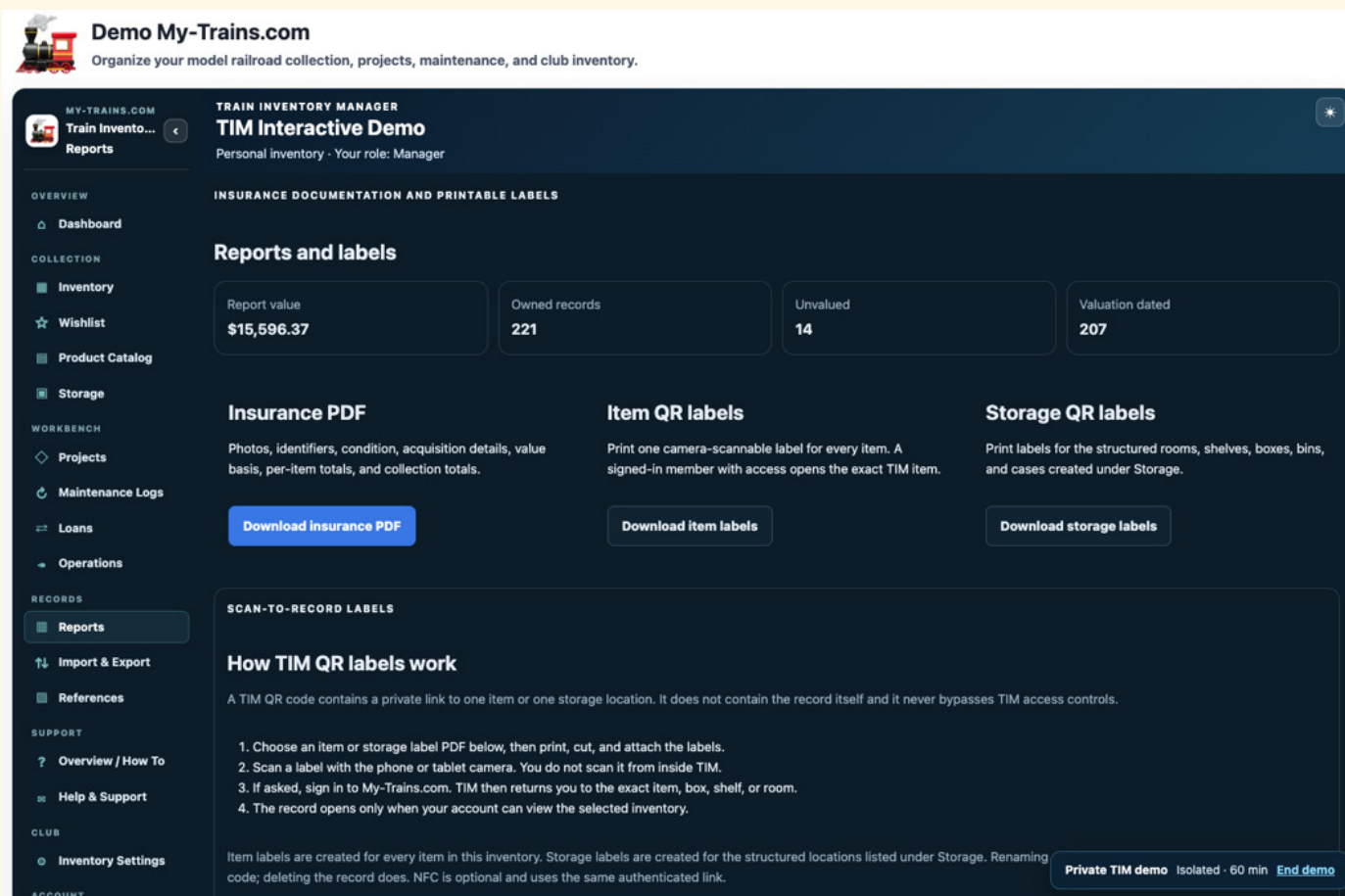
Structured storage replaces vague notes such as “in a box somewhere” with a searchable path to the room, cabinet, shelf, drawer, or container.

Documentation, valuation, insurance, and estate planning

After a theft, fire, hurricane, or other loss, “a lot of trains” is not useful documentation. A record with photographs, identifiers, condition, quantity, acquisition details, value basis, valuation date, receipts, and appraisals provides a much better starting point. TIM creates an insurance-oriented PDF with item photographs, identifying details, per-item values, and collection totals. Values remain owner-provided records, not appraisals by TIM.

The Reports workspace also produces a collection summary, detailed roster, data-completeness audit, storage manifest, maintenance and DCC rosters, acquisition and disposition history, loan register, and operating paperwork. These records can also help a family, executor, or club officer understand what exists and where to begin. TIM does not provide legal estate planning or insurance advice, but it can organize the evidence those conversations require. CSV and JSON downloads plus a portable backup help keep a copy away from the physical collection.

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find



Reports turn item records into insurance documentation, completeness checks, storage manifests, maintenance rosters, loan registers, and printable labels.

AI assistance for identifying an item

My-Trains AI is an optional item-identification tool. It is not a collection appraisal, an insurance decision, or a readiness report. Its practical purpose is narrower: reduce the manual work of reading small package labels, comparing possible catalog entries, and typing the first draft of an uncertain product record.

The modeler starts with one clear photograph, usually a box front or product label, and may add a barcode or a view of the model. Up to four prepared photographs can be used. Uploading them places them in protected TIM storage; it does not call an AI provider or spend a hosted credit. Before analysis, the screen identifies the selected provider and the exact billing method. Depending on the account setup, that can be My-Trains hosted credits or the member's own OpenAI or Anthropic API account. The annual Personal or Club membership and AI provider usage are separate.

When the modeler presses Analyze, only the selected photographs, their role labels, and the identification instructions are sent server to server to the named provider. The whole inventory, private values, storage records, receipts, and maintenance history are not included in that request. OpenAI requests explicitly disable response storage, while all provider processing remains subject to the selected provider's terms.

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find

The result is a reviewable proposal. It can suggest an item name, manufacturer, model number, barcode, category, scale, gauge, railroad, road number, and description. It also supplies a confidence level, warnings, and field-level evidence explaining which photograph supports a suggestion. TIM then compares the proposal with its Product Catalog and presents ranked candidates. A strong unique catalog match can fill certain missing product facts. If several products are plausible, TIM does not silently choose one.

Nothing enters Inventory until the modeler reviews every field, edits or clears questionable suggestions, and explicitly saves the item. AI does not decide whether the model is actually owned, its quantity, condition, value, storage location, or maintenance needs. A club Editor or Manager can use the same item-level workflow in an authorized club inventory, but it does not produce a club-wide evaluation. Recent identification jobs and reviewed suggestions are retained for the working record. Temporary analysis photographs are removed after the retention period shown on screen, normally seven days under the current default, unless the user deliberately keeps one with the saved item.

That is where the time savings are: the system prepares leads, candidate matches, and an editable draft that might otherwise require a careful label search and repeated catalog comparison. The collection owner or club officer remains responsible for the final record.

condition, value, photos, storage location, and internal inventory numbers.

to inventory of MyTrains, and contribute missing details or corrections for review.

MY-TRAINS AI

Explore the production-style photo, ranked-match, and evidence-review workflow. My-Trains AI searches Product Catalog and supporting online sources, then prepares suggested fields for review. AI requests are disabled in this disposable demo.

Turn a photo into a researched product record

Included with TIM on My-Trains.com. Choose how provider usage is billed:

The sanitized demo previews the photo, ranked-match, evidence-review, and billing choices. Provider calls are disabled in the disposable demo, and production suggestions still require human review before saving.

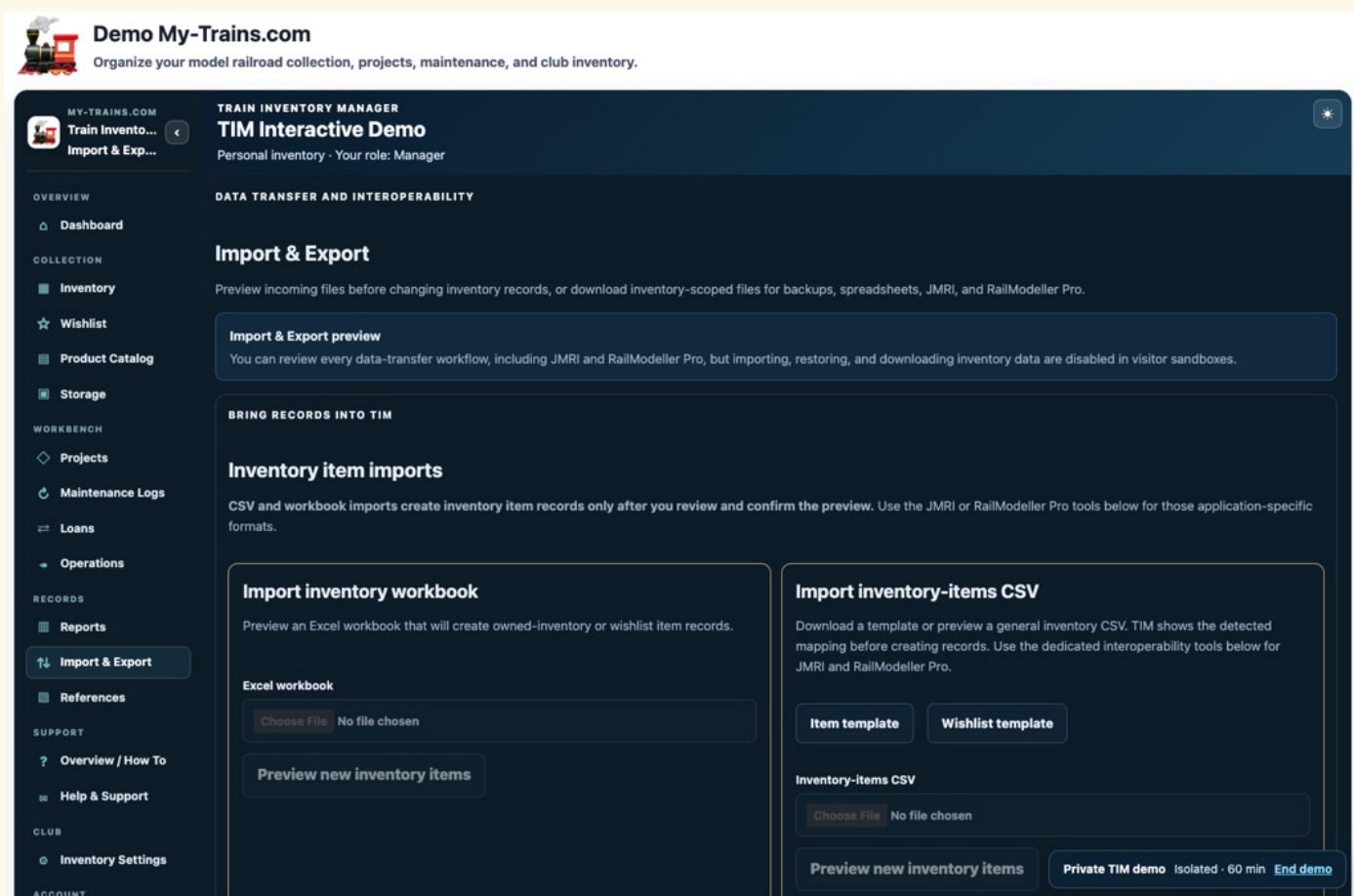
The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find

Importing information you already maintain

Many modelers already have years of information in a spreadsheet, JMRI, or RailModeller Pro. TIM is designed to build on that work. Spreadsheet imports accept CSV and workbook data, map recognized columns, and show a row-by-row preview. Possible duplicates default to a safe review choice. The user decides whether to create, skip, update, add quantity, or attach links, and a completed import can be rolled back.

JMRI remains the specialized tool for decoder programming and CV values. TIM can import one JMRI roster-entry XML file or a complete `.roster` package, then show the same duplicate review. It can export currently owned locomotives and other DCC-addressed items as a JMRI-compatible complete roster, exchanging identity, DCC address, decoder description, and notes.

RailModeller Pro remains the layout-design tool. TIM can import Stock and Part List CSV files using comma, semicolon, or tab separators, preserve the exact RailModeller library name, and export eligible owned items in Product Number, Library, and Count format. A native RailModeller layout file can be kept as a protected reference, but TIM does not read or create its track geometry.



Preview, duplicate matching, and row-level choices reduce retyping while keeping the owner in control of spreadsheet, JMRI, and RailModeller Pro exchange.

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find

Maintenance, projects, loans, and operations

Inventory becomes more useful when it records what happens after purchase. Maintenance logs can document cleaning, lubrication, repairs, modifications, decoder work, and service dates. Projects can group work across several items. Loans record the borrower, due date, return, and notes, which is especially useful when club property travels with a member. Lifecycle and stock-movement records preserve acquisitions, donations, sales, trades, moves, and quantity changes.

For modelers who operate a layout, the same inventory can support layout locations and tracks, consists, multi-car waybills, operating sessions, car cards, waybill inserts, and switch lists. No one has to use all of this. A basic inventory is a perfectly reasonable use of TIM.

Solving the club inventory problem

A club inventory should not be a spreadsheet on one officer's laptop. TIM keeps club-owned property in a separate shared inventory, apart from every member's private collection. Storage locations can show whether an item is in the clubhouse, a storage unit, a show box, or another recorded place. Loans can show who has possession and when the property is expected back. Acquisition history and supporting documents can preserve what was known about a donation instead of letting that information disappear during the next officer transition.

Access is assigned person by person. A Viewer can search and read the club inventory but cannot change it. An Editor can add and update records, files, imports, and exports. A Manager has Editor access and can administer that club's members and settings. Managers can review join requests, invite a new person by email with a time-limited link, change roles, and remove former members. A second trusted Manager helps avoid putting all institutional knowledge in one account.

The same reports that help an individual also help a club document value for insurance, plan budgets, schedule maintenance, track loans, and hand accurate records to a new treasurer, property chair, or superintendent. Members of the NMRA Sunshine Region provided a great deal of practical feedback while the application was being prepared for broader use, and their suggestions helped shape the system presented here.

Privacy and controlled access

Personal inventories are private to the owner and site administrators. They are not publicly searchable. Club inventories are available only to assigned people under their Viewer, Editor, or Manager role. Users and club officers decide who receives access, and former members can be removed. Product Catalog facts may be shared, but ownership, values, protected files, storage, notes, and history remain inside the selected inventory.

No system should be described as absolutely secure. Practical safeguards still matter: use a unique password, assign only the access a person needs, keep exports and insurance reports away from the physical collection, and download backups regularly.

The Model Railroad Inventory System I Couldn't Find

Explore My-Trains.com and the interactive demo

My-Trains.com currently lists Personal membership at \$24 per year and Club membership at \$99 per year for one shared club inventory with up to 10 people, including the Primary Club Manager. When the Personal trial offer is active, an eligible new collector receives 60 days of full Personal access without a credit card and one successful evaluation export. AI provider usage is optional and billed separately from the annual membership.

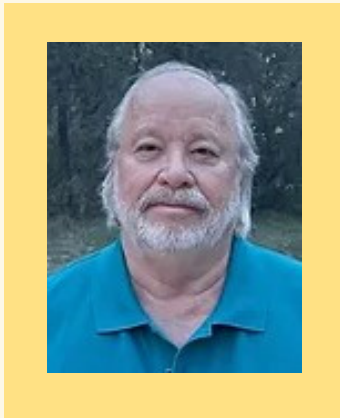
Visit <https://my-trains.com> for the current service and membership information. The sanitized interactive demo at <https://demo.my-trains.com> is separate from production, requires no account, and automatically expires. It is the best place to decide whether a simple inventory, or the more detailed storage, documentation, maintenance, operations, club, integration, reporting, or AI tools, fit the way you manage your railroad.

My-Trains.com is a working application, and responsible feedback from model railroaders and clubs will continue to make it more useful.

Scan the QR code to explore the sanitized interactive demo.



demo.my-trains.com



IRON HORSE 2026

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NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

Our 2026 SSR Iron Horse will be arriving at the Ocala Station in 74 days, on Thursday, October 15th - Saturday, October 17th, at the Ocala Hilton.

The Convention will be held at The Ocala Hilton (the same place as our 2025 SSR Convention) and is located just off I-75 (north of the Florida Turnpike) on State Road 200. Early snowbirds and tourists fill the Ocala Hilton on their way South and the Hotel was sold out before the end of August last year so make sure you get your reservations in as soon as you can.

Our Hotel Room Block opened in July, and the Ocala Hilton gave us a \$150 a night discount room rate, we can only get so many rooms at the \$150 rate after our room block is filled. Please remember that if you call the Hotel live, use the “SSR Convention” for your Discount Code. If you use the website to register for your room the code is automatically applied, so please don’t snooze on your reservation, you can always cancel your room reservation if you need to.

We have a great SSR Convention planned with Hourly and Virtual Clinics, the Orlando N-Trak Traveling Layout, Robert Raymonds Tuscarora Layout, Friday Night Social and a Saturday Night Banquet with Guest Speaker Amtrak Police Detective, Chris Hogan.

On Sunday morning, there will be a Sunshine Region Membership meeting open to all members and nonmembers, at 9am, and a closed Board of Directors meeting will follow right after. Room TBA, see Hotel’s marque for room information.

I have provided a list of the current Clinics/Clinicians that are booked for the Convention, see below. You can see the full list on the Convention website link for the descriptions of the clinics I have so far, with more descriptions to follow as soon as I get them. Make sure to check the Convention Website for all Convention updates.

The Clinics will be presented in 3 Rooms with 6 Clinics in each room on Friday and Saturday, with a total of 36 Clinics.

Looking forward to seeing everybody at the convention.

2026 NMRA CHATTANOOGA NATIONAL CONVENTION

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I wanted to write a quick note about the 2026 NMRA Chattanooga National Convention I attended last week.

There were almost 1500 people that came from all over, including over 25 of our own SSR Region Members. Everyone seemed to have a great time, including me, with all the activities that they planned, including Self-Guided Layout Tours, OPS Sessions both onsite and at outside locations, Prototypical Tours, Local Industry Tours, and 6 Days of Hourly Clinics, in which I attended 25 of the clinics myself.

The 2027 NMRA National Convention will be held in Tacoma, Washington, on August 10th to the 15th, and if you get a chance, I highly recommend attending next year's convention.

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

NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

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2026 SSR OCALA CONVENTION CLINICS & CLINICIANS

- 1. Modeling a Pulpwood Yard/ Clinician: Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
- 2. Modeling Vehicles/ Clinician: Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
- 3. Car Forwarding with the Micro Mark Car Card System/ Clinician: Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
- 4. Pictorial History of the Building of the WVN / Clinician: Gail Allen Komar (MMR)**
- 5. Tuscarora Operations/ Clinician: Robert Raymond**
- 6. Timetable & Train Order / Clinician: Robert Raymond**
- 7. Modeling Considerations for the 2000's Modeler/ Clinician: Gilbert Thomas Jr**
- 8. The Bicentennial and Semiquincentennial Locomotive/ Clinician: Gilbert Thomas Jr.**
- 9. Description (Audience Friendly, Building Focused) / Clinician: Scott Peal**
- 10. "3D Printing for Model Railroaders: A Gentle Introduction for Beginners" / Clinician: Scott Peal**
- 11. How I Create Removeable Flat Car Loads / Clinician: Richard Paul**
- 12. How to Model Florida Scenery/Trees / Clinician: Bob Miller**
- 13. T-TRAK / Clinician: Todd Slaughter**
- 14. Bridges / Clinician: Bob Leonard**
- 15. Benchwork Construction / Clinician: Mark Ellis**
- 16. Weathering with Mixed Media / Clinician: Tim Ellis**
- 17. Operations / Clinician: Mark Iannone**
- 18. Weathering Structures / Clinician: Jeff DeVito**
- 19. Weed Control on the Railroads-NEW / Clinician: David Leider**
- 20. Modeling the pickle industry / Clinician: David Leider**



Achievement Program

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We have one (1) Achievement Certificate this month and it is John Crellin, for Model Railroad Author and he is from Bradenton, Florida from the Central Division.

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.

This is your opportunity to give back.

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

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Hello Central Division! Welcome to August!

Division Day Out at Florida Railroad Museum!

I wanted to set up something that wasn't an actual Division Meet but still an opportunity to get together for trains and Fellowship.

I was looking at doing some train watching at the platform in Plant City but, from what I understand, railroad traffic there is quite sparse these days. I thought that the Florida Railroad Museum would be a better place to get together.

So please consider attending with me and others to enjoy our hobby together, maybe tell some stories about the recent National Convention in Chattanooga, share pics of your layout or models, and ride a train! If you're a member of the museum, you can ride for free. For non-members, the adult price is right around \$25 for the hour and a half ride. Everyone who attends is responsible for their own tickets and other purchases.

A Request for Division Help

I happen to live on the west coast of our division in the Tampa Bay area. Our new Central Division spans from east to west and I could use some help to better serve everyone I represent. I'm asking for anyone interested in working with me to set up division meets and events in the greater Orlando area and then further east to contact me so we can discuss the possibilities.

Thanks,

Mark Lewalski
Central Division Superintendent

Central Division

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ANYONE WHO HAS AN INTEREST IS INVITED!

No need to be an NMRA member.

What: Florida Railroad Museum Get Together

When: Saturday, August 22nd 10am – 4pm

Where: Florida Railroad Museum, 12210 83rd St. East, Parrish, Florida 34219

Please use this QR Code to RSVP for this event.



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The Golden Train – Romsdalen, Norway

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While I was in Norway visiting my wife, we took a week to travel around a scenic area about 550 km northwest of Oslo. One of the things we did was to ride the historic Golden Train. You don't see it but this 26 year resident of Florida was wearing a parka in July.

The Golden Train is most known as the route on which Norway's reserve of 50 tons of gold was transported out of the country while being chased and under fire during WW2.

It was a nice and comfortable ride with a LOT of scenic spots along the route including two horseshoe curves where we gained/lost a lot of altitude. Here are a couple of photos to share:



The King coach

The Golden Train – Romsdalen, Norway

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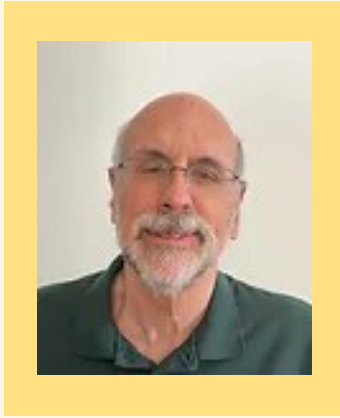
Also, during a walk in the town of Kongsberg where my wife lives, I had just crossed a steel railway bridge when this train hauling a load of lumber surprised me from behind. It had just exited a tunnel, come across the bridge, and took the opportunity to scare the bejeezes out of me with a blast of its horn! I was on a photo walk so I had my camera at hand for this shot.



A superb stone water tower at the location the engine was runaround for the return journey.



Lumber train in Kongsberg, Norway



Southern Division

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Hi, folks.

The national NMRA convention is currently underway, held this year in Chattanooga, Tennessee from July 27th through August 2nd. Some of the members of the Southern Division have traveled there this year, and I hope they are having a great time. IF you've never attended an NMRA national convention, it's definitely worth the trip. Speaking of conventions, the Sunshine Region (Florida) annual convention is scheduled for October 15-18 in Ocala. Registration is open if you're interested in attending.

In model railroad club news:

On the Gulf Coast, the ScaleRails 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. Their web site is www.sbmodelrr.com and You can contact David Fontaine at (941) 685-2221 for additional information.

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

Southern Division

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On the Atlantic coast, The Florida Citrus Model Train Society (FCMTS) continues to be in a quieter period. I was told there were plans to create a summer display associated with the 250th Anniversary of the country, but no notice of it was published on their web site. 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.

The East Coast HO Exhibitors Society (ECHOES) club will be running every weekend in August 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 PBMRRclub@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.org. Please note the correction from “.com” to “.org” which is correct, for those who were not able to reach it previously.

Richard Berger
Southern Division Superintendent

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, August 8th 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 all of the track already laid, almost all of the Tortoise switch machines operational, and much of the sophisticated electronics package close to completion. Trains are running in test mode now. Debug is taking longer than expected, and AI is being used to find and fix issues in the extensive software code. The custom software interfaces with Java Model Railroad Interface (JMRI) PanelPro, allowing the creation of an extensive centralized Traffic Control (CTC) display of the entire railroad as well as subpanels for the yards and switching areas. These displays can be viewed on a multiple display dispatcher desk as well as on iPads located around the layout. For younger visitors, 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.

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