



**NMRA**

A large graphic of a train engine's internal components, such as the boiler and wheels, rendered in a grey, metallic style. The words "JOURNAL BOX" are superimposed in the center in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font with a black outline.

# JOURNAL BOX

*OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SUNSHINE REGION, NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION  
"THE BEST REGION UNDER THE SUN"*



Volume 67 Spring 2026

## The Journal Box

### Volume 67

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Front page: Spring is in the air. Delaware Lackawanna switch job, Scranton, PA.

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## From the President's Corner

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### President's Update: Reflecting on the Last Quarter

***Editor's Note:** To eliminate redundancy and to give the president a break I will take some of the highlights the president has passed on in the Telegraph Key and create a synopsis of those highlights and issues for the Journal Box. In my opinion it is unproductive to provide the same content for two separate publications, hence my approach for the upcoming President's Corner column. I will continue to do this for all of the upcoming quarterly publications.*

*For the month of January our President welcomed the new year and described the reasons for being a SSR member.*

Dear Members of the Sunshine Region,

By the time you read this, Christmas will have passed, so I hope your model railroading Christmas wishes all came true—whether that meant a long-awaited locomotive, a new module, time at the workbench, or simply time well spent with friends and family. Most of all, I hope 2026 is already shaping up to be a great year for you—and for the Sunshine Region. And by every measure, it is shaping up to be a great year.

Across the Region, our Divisions are becoming more engaged and more connected. Membership is improving, energy is high, and the momentum is real. Our most recent Regional Convention set a high bar, and it has us all looking ahead with excitement to the 2026 Convention in Ocala. Just as important, the Region is financially sound, giving us a strong foundation on which to build. What excites me most is the bigger picture: the Sunshine Region is growing, getting connected, and coming together to create a more vibrant and robust NMRA community. This is the year to join in and participate. Get involved—leave the lone-wolfing to the wolves. Whether it's through a Division meet, a clinic, mentoring a new member, or simply showing up and lending a hand, your participation matters.

As we head into 2026, I want to continue emphasizing the values that define who we are and where we're going: **Mentorship, Fellowship, and Community**. You will also begin to hear more about NMRA rebranding efforts. I'll keep this high level for now, but know this: changes are coming, and they are intended to strengthen the NMRA—from the Division level all the way to National. Thank you for your support, your involvement, and your passion for model railroading. I wish each of you a fantastic New Year, until then—Aloha from Hawaii, and best wishes for smooth running rails in the year ahead.

*In February Andy followed up with a report of the activities and it is worth repeating.*

Dear Members of the Sunshine Region,

As we look ahead, one thing is clear: moving the Sunshine Region forward starts with being involved. If we want a more inclusive, more engaging, and more robust member experience, that journey begins with each of you. Today I had the opportunity to attend a Northern Division meet, and it reinforced exactly what our division gatherings can, and should, be. The room was filled with energy and collaboration: SER members attending under the leadership of their Division Superintendent, SSR members, and those off the street. Everyone participated side-by-side, united by a shared love of trains. It was a clear example of what our Division meetings should be: welcoming, productive, educational, and fun. It showed what is possible when we come together around our shared hobby and passion for model railroading. The future of the SSR is bright, but it will be built together. I encourage each of you to stay engaged, get involved, and be part of shaping what comes next. Our community, our fellowship, and our shared love of model railroading depend on it.

*For March Andy had a whole lot to say and again, wished us all the best.*

Dear Members of the Sunshine Region,

As we move into 2026, I want to share with you some important structural changes underway within the Sunshine Region (SSR). These changes are not cosmetic. They are purposeful, thoughtful, and designed to better serve you.

### **The Eastern Division Leadership Gap**

In January 2025, Jim Moore, who had graciously stepped in to fill the Eastern Division Superintendent role after Benita Jameson stepped down due to health issues. Jim had agreed to serve as a bridge, and he did so honorably. He worked to ensure the Eastern Division continued to function and was supported during a transitional period. When Jim stepped away, we began an extensive search for a permanent Eastern Division Superintendent. Numerous calls for volunteers were sent, we encountered a challenge that many of us understand all too well: time poverty. “Time poverty, the reality of having too many tasks to complete and insufficient time to do them.”

Out of 87 members in the Eastern Division, we were unable to secure one or ideally two individuals who could commit to managing and maintaining the division. After more than a year of searching and no solution in sight, it became clear that leaving a division effectively rudderless was not serving our membership well. To rebalance the system, redistribute the workload, and address the leadership vacuum in the eastern division, we embarked on a reorganization and realignment of the divisions. One superintendent overseeing disproportionate numbers can quickly become overwhelmed. That imbalance impacts communication, engagement, and member experience. It was time for a course correction.

### **A Bold and Necessary Redistribution**

To rebalance workload, eliminate the leadership vacuum, and create a healthier ratio of members to superintendents, the SSR Board undertook a comprehensive redistribution and redrawing of our divisional boundaries.

The result:

- Northern Division (3601) 145 members
- Central Division (3602) 147 members
- Southern Division (3603) 140 members

This realignment balances the member-to-superintendent ratio to approximately 140–150 members per superintendent. This was not a small decision. It was a strategic one — made to ensure the Sunshine Region remains healthy, responsive, and forward-looking.

### **What Does This Mean for You?**

For most members, very little will change in your day-to-day experience. However:

- Your Superintendent may have changed.
- Your Achievement Program (AP) Chair may have changed.
- You may begin receiving emails from new divisional leadership.
- Reporting structures may look slightly different.

Divisional lines are administrative, not restrictive. They exist to balance leadership and organization, not to limit participation. I encourage you to continue participating in your familiar groups. But I also encourage you to explore what’s happening in the broader Sunshine Region. Visit meets within your new division. Meet new

modelers. Attend a clinic. Share ideas. Engage the community That is how we strengthen the Region, our visions and the community.

*So, that is what was on the mind of our President of what took place this last quarter.*

See you on the rails,

Andy J. Zimmerman  
ATCS AW USN Ret  
President, NMRA Sunshine Region



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## From the Editor's Desk

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Last quarter the headcount for the region was listed on the second page of the issue at 426, that was incorrect and my fault. I failed to contact our membership chair in a reasonable amount of time and missed his reply. The correct number is 437 an increase of 11 members in the region, if that rate persists, we could be back to the 500 mark by this time next year. It is up to us to promote and mentor, I see a goal!

Also on the second page, you will notice the name of the secretary, it has changed from Eric Menger to Brian Campbell. Brian jumped into the fray willingly and the board appreciates his bravery and fortitude. Not that it's a dangerous job, it is a bit of a challenge at times. Another change to the page is the reduction of divisions and their responsible superintendents, we are now three divisions, equally distributed head counts.

To start off my year, the focus was Cocoa Beach RPM, once again I met some new folks as well as caught up with some old friends. I finally put a face to a name in the context of David Leider, I even bought a book from him. David has been providing articles for this publication for the past couple of years, and I had no idea who he was other than he was an MMR. I had seen him in previous RPMs, but he was just a familiar face, now the face has a name. In talking with him he did say that he would be amenable to another article, his travels provide him with much material, his bucket list I believe is extensive.

The event was a bit thin in my opinion, I did not see as many models on display as has been in the past, but the quality and diversity of what was there remained high. I was impressed with a model that I had seen in the contest room at the convention and I saw it again at the RPM and I put another face to a name. Luckily the owner of the model was within ear shot and I officially met David Vescovi, not just a nod passing in the hallway, but voices. The model I was impressed with is his 3D printed cane car, I'm surprised he is not inundated with requests for copies, it is very accurate! I don't believe there were as many attendees either, there are many reasons for this in today's atmosphere unfortunately. I missed my annual visitation with Bob's Photos, I missed him in Springfield also, but I did see many old friends. Marty Megregian has signed a contract with Hilton to freeze the room costs over the next three years, so that is a plus.

Two weeks later and once again, I traveled north to the Amherst train show in Springfield MA and this year we were awarded a blizzard. This is nothing new for those who have traveled there year after year, although the past three years have been quite nice, in the upper 50s, an early spring outing. Not this year, the weather came in on Sunday morning with vengeance, the news had been out all day Saturday, many of the vendors took heed and some left the show. For the stalwart group that hung in to the end, Bravo! In reality they didn't have much choice, the powers that be would not open the overhead doors to allow folks to clear out until four in the afternoon. Most of the displays, manufacturers, vendors, less the layouts, were packed up waiting to be trucked out of there. I would say anywhere from 16 to 20 inches fell, some say 36, but I think that came from the management of Home Depot. So, for a show that on good weekends normally has between 20,000 to 26,000 through the door probably did half of those figures. Since writing this paragraph over a month or better ago, I read that over 18,000 went through the door on Saturday (folks who heeded the forecast), and just over 3,000 (folks who damned the weather) on Sunday.

The one good thing that takes place on weekends like that, your ankles are not bruised at the end of the day. All too often on Sundays, the family shows up, either post church, pre lunch, but most times, in the morning. These folks show up with their strollers and not one of them knows the parameters or dimensions of what they push. These folks use the stroller as a weapon, using their child's transportation to maneuver through the crowds, some defensively, but the majority, offensively. They either rear-end you, play chicken head on,

sideswipe you (it's always the backpack hung from the side), or block the intersection looking for directions. Then there are the tandems, either in-line, or side-by-side, they are deadly, they should be licensed or carry WIDE LOAD signs. But, when it snows, they don't show.

Depending upon what location within the Springfield area you were in and the direction of the wind determined the depth of the snow. It was interesting to observe the river, west of the Memorial Bridge the river was white, frozen, collecting snow, east of it was a clear flow of running water. All in all, it was enjoyable, the group that I went with, albeit at times herding cats, went on their regular hellbent buying spree and as usual didn't have enough room in their bags to bring it all back. One of the big hazards of that show is to go up there, purchase with abandon and then wonder how it all is going to return to Florida. Bob Chait years ago, had the perfect solution, an oversized suitcase that could hold a 90-pound person, pack the bare necessities for a three, or four day trip and load it up on the way back. He made good use of his time spent at Amherst, if there was a billboard car to be found, he found it. The return for me was painless, for some it was delay after delay at the airport, but not me.

On to more local subjects. As I have said in the past, without content this publication becomes a glorified Telegraph Key, I can assure you this publication will not become a monthly offering. The entire reason for going digital was to provide more to the membership, from 16 printed pages to digital infinity. Therefore, the membership is the main source for content. Every individual in the region has a way of accomplishing things no matter what the task, yet they seem to keep it to themselves. Share, share what you know, how you perform building a structure, a flatcar, your method of aligning tangent track, turnout installation, the list is endless. Share your experience, your talents, your skills and publish it so others can learn, be the instructor. Without content the publication fails!

For all the bitchin and moaning from members for the past decade, the arguments, it is a mere 16 pages, the cost of the quarterly printing and mailing is draining the coffers. Why don't we get more for our money? Yet, here we are, no complaints that I have heard, but no action either. Other than two or three consistent contributors, there is a silence from the masses. Membership provides the content, instead of sharing members are sitting on their haunches waiting on others to step up, this scenario is letting the publication fail. To maintain what we have, we are all responsible for providing content. It is your publication, support it!

Robert Leonard



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## This Quarter's Contributors

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**Mike Collins MMR** - Another Collins' column for this edition, Mike takes us on a tour of his mancave, actually it's more like a Wayback machine in one room, a room festooned with memories. Mike describes the many artifacts and memorabilia that he has collected through the years. He does not however provide tonal color tips nor interior design guidance, his journey through the room is interesting.

**Ed Covill** - Ed provides the reader a story of the journey of a layout, its genesis, its travel, current disposition and evolution. The Chicago, Peoria & Western is the product of one man's efforts who was determined for his efforts to be appreciated by many. Ed tells of the individuals who have joined to preserve those efforts and continue the operations and legacy of the CP&W.

**John Crellin** - John is very proficient in structure building and his Step by Step instruction of building a 3D printed two track signal bridge is another example. His description of the assemblies and the sequence of construction are easy to follow. He has also provided links to his 3D files allowing the reader access to the source of the separate assemblies.

**Ana DeVido** - Ana makes trees, she is a model arborist, and she has offered her techniques as a presenter of a clinic at the regional convention. So, she is in this edition of the Showcase section displaying her efforts.

**Bill Koster** - Bill gives us another look to the past, a couple of views of the past, not the SSR this time, but his past. Bill was a manufacturer of 7 ½ inch along with being an HO modeler. He offers a rewrite of his original article written decades ago of his basement empire before moving out of the SSR region, yes, a basement in Florida.



Second Headlight, Small Number boards, Three Portholes, No Chicken Wire, High Fans, all features of the no rhyme nor reason of EMD F2s, but pretty!

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## Showcase

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This quarter we showcase Ana's Trees and Scenery, an advertiser in our region's publications.



Ana's Trees and Scenery is an offshoot of an individual providing support to a fellow modeler. Ana DeVido is a model arborist; her creations go beyond the norm when it comes to producing a specimen tree to be planted on a diorama or layout. Ana ventured into the hobby in support of her husband Jeff during his fledgling steps into the hobby. Jeff has been in the hobby and featured in the Showcase before, for roughly five years and has become very masterful in his scenery and structure building. Ana's contributions enhance Jeff's efforts that have grown beyond crafting a tree or two.

Ana has developed a talent in producing trees for both Jeff and others. On the DeVido's annual trip north to the Amherst show, they make a detour from Springfield to north of Boston to Peabody (that's pronounced as Peebuddy). They visit George Sellios of Franklin & South Manchester fame, who looks forward to their arrival. Each year George receives one of Ana's creations for the F&SM that always finds a significant spot to be planted on his empire.

Ana primarily models in HO scale and populates Jeff's layout, but she also has modeled in N scale and has delved into O scale. Most of the products she uses come from Scenic Express, Heki, Woodlands Scenic, and some guy in Sweden to create the base structures. She then has certain techniques she applies to build the basic tree and then applies her own methods in using unfamiliar materials to finish. She has, in a very short time, developed a knack in creating tree examples that stand out from the basic tree structure.

The pictures that follow are of her different tree types and shots of her creations on Jeff's layout.



This is one of her creations on Jeff's layout.



Another spot for a tree



Not often do you find Spanish Moss modeled



Royal Poinciana



Fall Foliage



Deciduous Leaf Tree



Yellow Trumpet



Configurable Tree Roots at the base



More of Ana's trees on Jeff's layout



Ana DeVido ... Ana's Trees

# 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:

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## Step by Step

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# HO Scale 2 Track Signal Bridge – Easy Scratch Build with 3D Printed Files

**By John Crellin**

My friend John Moran needed signal bridges for his Southern Pacific Layout in HO. We both own 3D printers so we went to work searching for printable files. The only version that we could find that met the needs was an N scale bridge design, so I went to work. First order was to scale each file to 185% to bring it to HO scale. Then I manipulated each part in Tinkercad ([tinkercad.com](http://tinkercad.com)) to reinforce the design to be printed at HO size.

Tinkercad is an on line CAD software that is easy to learn and use and is focused on 3D printing. I also designed three different types of bases that a builder can use depending on the prototype they are trying to follow. Last task, the original design did not include bracing to keep the top and sides from deforming, so I completed that in Tinkercad also. Printing the files takes a couple of hours depending on the speed of your printer. I highly suggest “slicing” the files for the printer in the highest quality setting available. The cross braces in the girders are very small and the finer the print setting the better your girders and supports will look. Finally, the ladders are long enough to be attached any way you want just trim the ladder to the size you want before gluing.

For the signal heads nothing needed to be designed, John bought them from Ebay from the seller called wehonest. These were of very good quality and for a reasonable price. The signal heads John bought are three color searchlights with three micro LEDs inside. They are wired as common anode. You can find the seller here: <https://www.ebay.com/str/wehonest>

The files have all been scaled to HO size and reinforced and ready to download for free from here: <https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:7221524>

All you need to do is put them through your slicing software and print them. Again, I suggest printing at the highest possible quality setting. For Sunshine Region members, I will print them for you in black and mail them to you. Reach out to me at [jcrellin0661@gmail.com](mailto:jcrellin0661@gmail.com). \$20 including shipping. I am not a 3D product seller this is for Sunshine Region members only. You can probably get a friend with a printer to do several sets for you for the price of a reel of filament. Also, a lot of local libraries now have 3D printers to use.

I needed some extra parts to complete the build, some styrene tubing and some strip styrene pieces. They are listed here:

Evergreen tubing PN 223 3/32 dia.

Evergreen tubing PN 224 1/8 dia.

Evergreen strip PN 106 .010 x .125

Evergreen strip PN 126 .020 x .125

What about glue? I found that CA glue and your typical plastic model glue don't work all that well with PLA filament (I did not try PETG type and my printer does not support ABS type). What I found was a type of glue

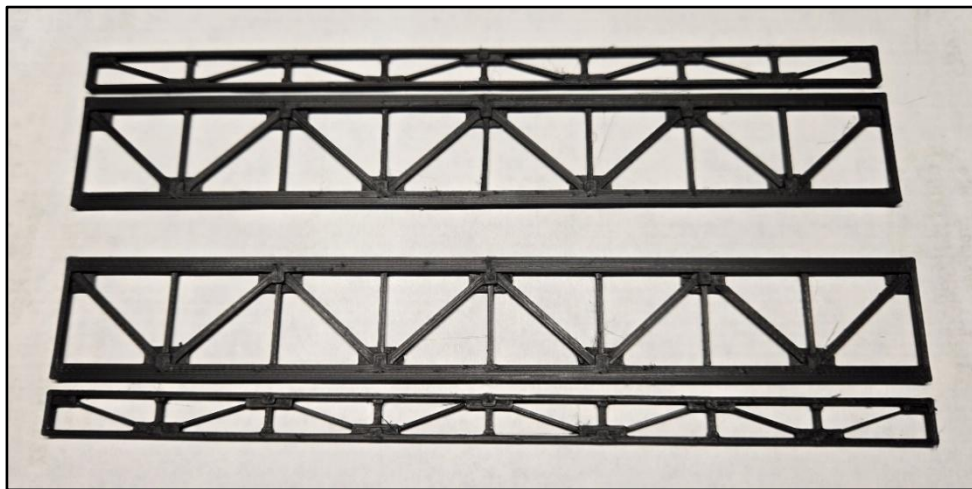
called Polyvinyl Acetate (PVA) that I call a cross between Aylene's craft glue and CA. It's called Crafter's Pick Ultimate. It did the trick for me. You can get it on Amazon here: <https://a.co/d/0j00oyQz> To attach the signal heads to the girders, I used hot glue. This sets up faster allowing you to hold the heads in position until the glue cools. Any excess can be cut off with a sharp number 5 blade.

### On to the Build

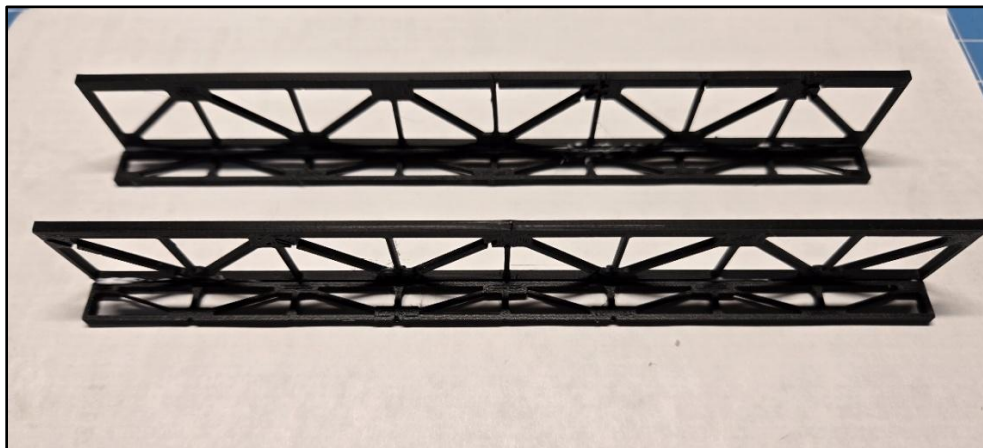
Once you have all the 3D printed parts in hand, make sure you clean up any burrs or strings of fine filament. Next cut the styrene as follows:

- 4 pieces of the 223 3/32 tubing - 3/4 inch long
- 2 pieces of the 224 1/8 tubing - 4 3/8 inches long
- 1 piece of the 126 .020 - 5/16 inch
- 1 piece of the 126 .020 - 1/4 inch

Glue the narrow top girder to the side girder. Note in Picture 1, the orientation of the support plates in the girders. Make sure when gluing any of the 3D printed parts together, the flat side that was on the 3D printer build plate should always be away from the viewer. Set these two assemblies aside to dry.

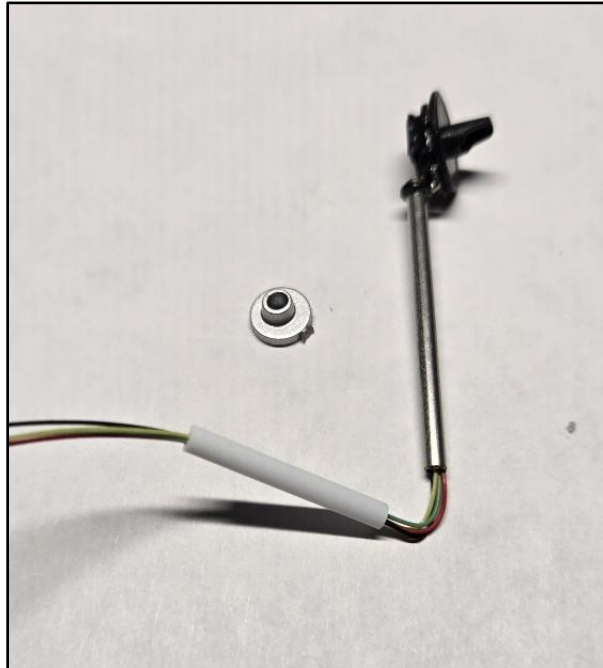


Picture 1



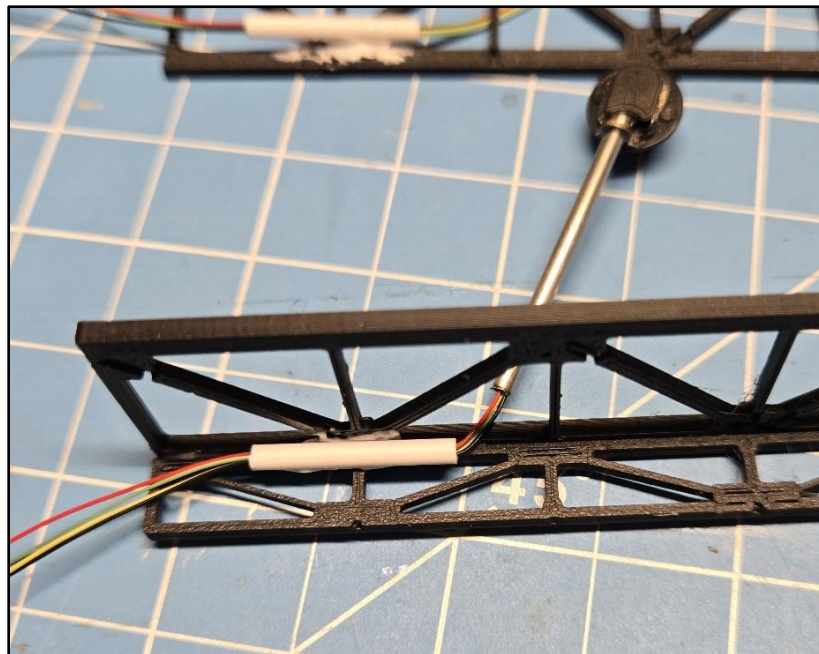
Picture 2

Now take the 4 signal heads and push the wires through 1 piece of 3/32 tubing per head. Make sure you removed the silver "plate". It will not be used. Picture 3

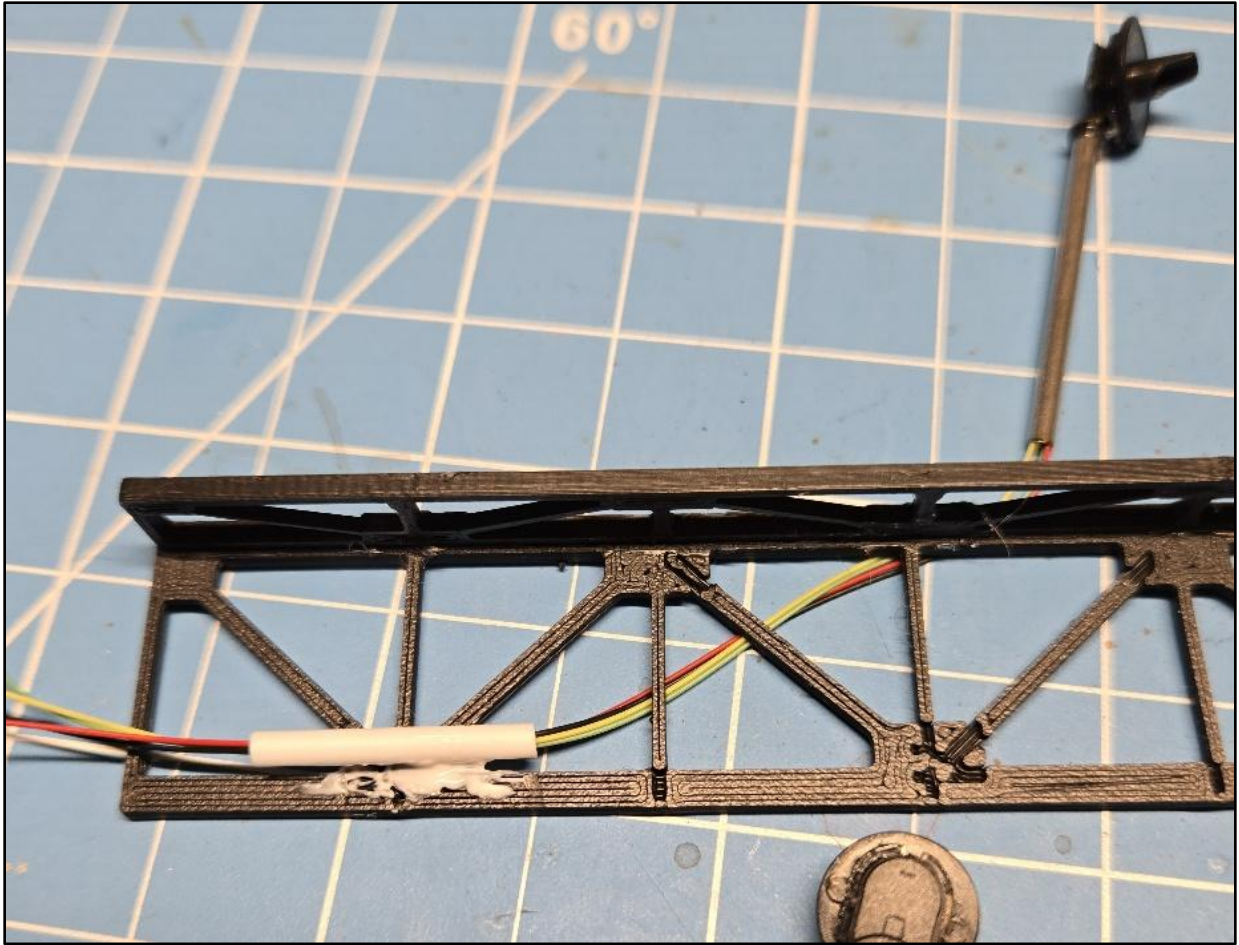


Picture 3

Once the 2 girder halves have dried glue the 3/32 styrene into the girders as shown in Picture 4. Make sure the signal heads are on the outside ready to be glued to the girders with hot glue. I placed the signal heads so they can be glued to the third upright support from each end. Remember, look carefully at Pictures 4 and 5 for the correct placement of the styrene tubing. Wait for the glue to completely dry at this step before hot glueing the signal heads otherwise the styrene might move and ruin positioning.

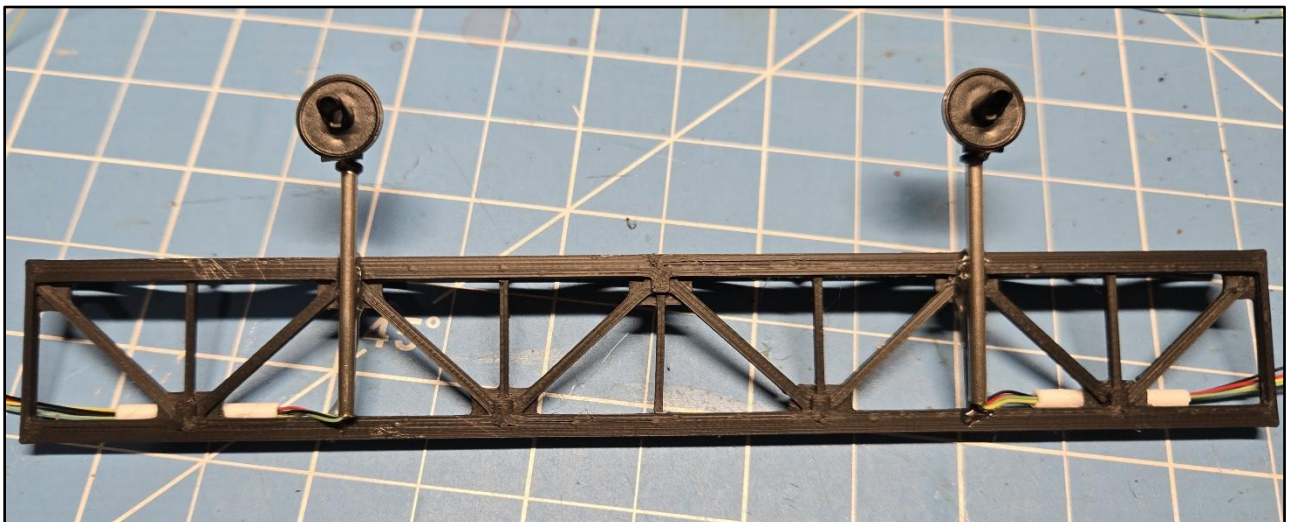


Picture 4



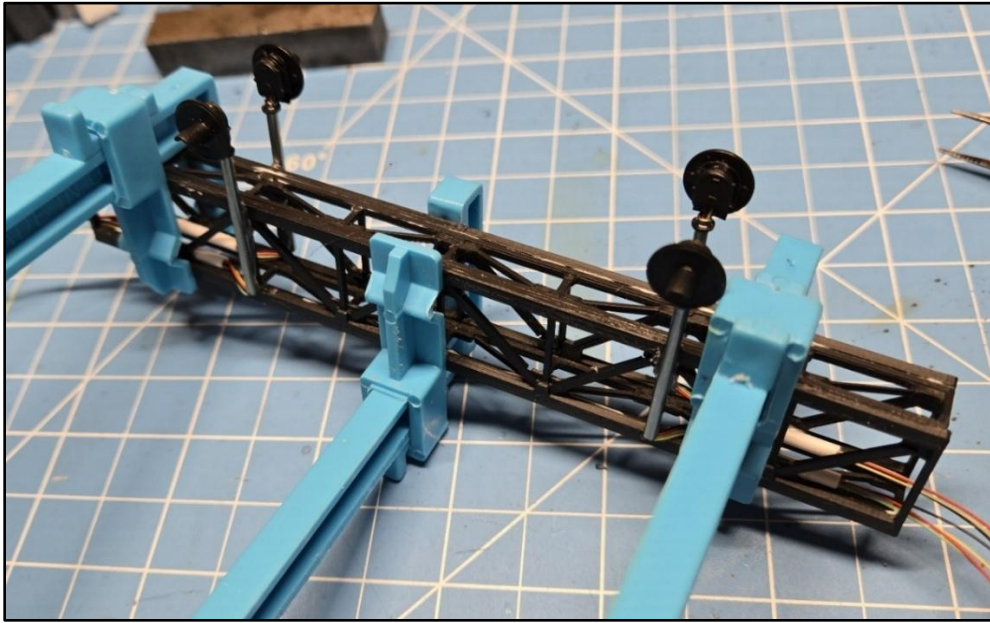
Picture 5

Hot glue the signal heads to the girder uprights as shown. I hold them in place until the glue cools, usually about 60 seconds each. Again, let the hot glue completely cool and harden before moving on. Picture 6



Picture 6

Glue the two girder halves together to form the full box girder. I leave the wires alone as shown.

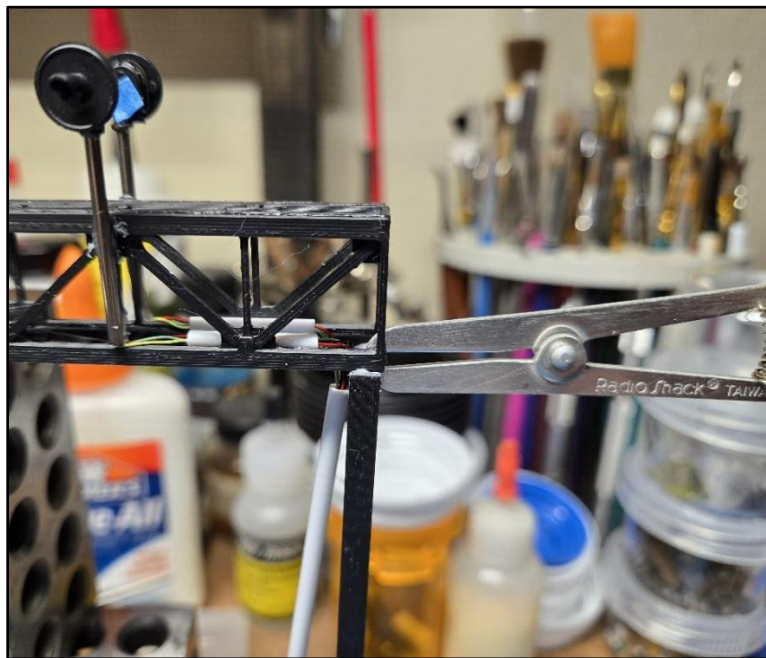


Picture 7

Now it is easiest (for later) if you feed one set of wires at a time down through the girder end and into the 1/8 tubing. When the first wires are in place I wrap a very small piece of tape around them to identify which wires go together. I then put a small piece of the same tape on the signal head. This makes final wiring to the signal decoder much simpler. All 8 wires should fit in the 1/8 tubing without issue.

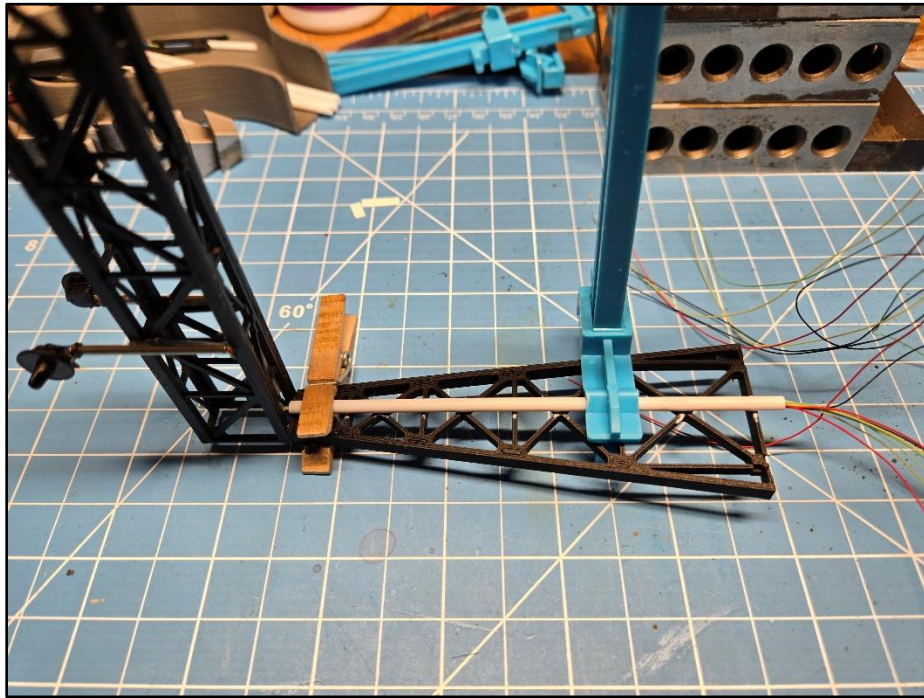
Glue the bridge supports to the girder. If you have some small clamps, it is easier to hold the girder and supports in place while the glue dries as shown in Picture 8.

Otherwise, carefully stand the bridge so the weight of the girder holds the supports in place.

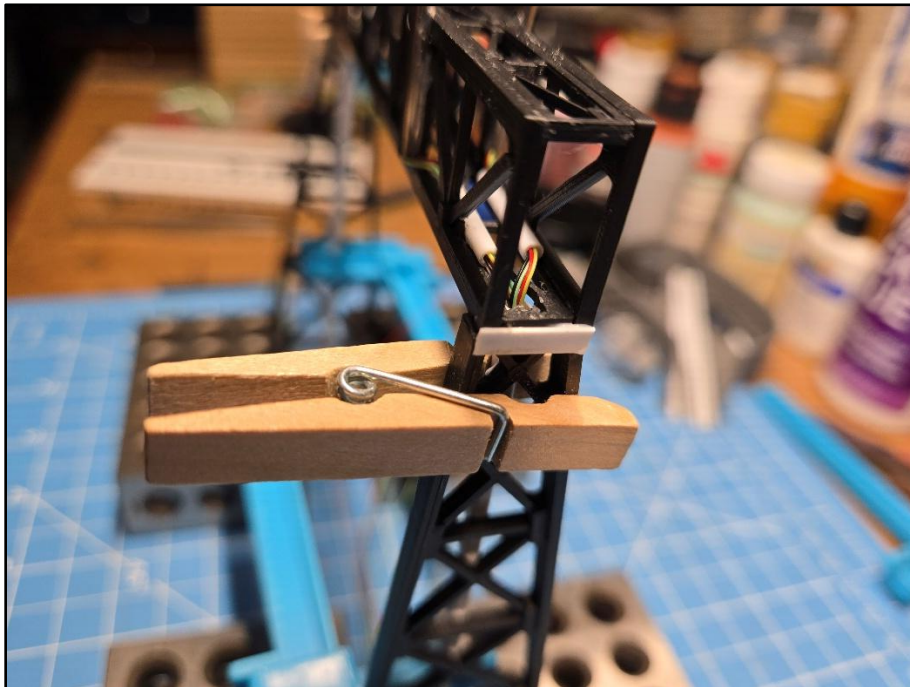


Picture 8

Glue the 1/8 tubing to the center of the bridge supports, glue them one at a time and put some weight on the tubing until it dries, then do the other side. This is the time to add bracing, both the 3D printed bracing and the end bracing. One end brace is very short because the ladder will be installed next to it. Pictures 9 and 10.



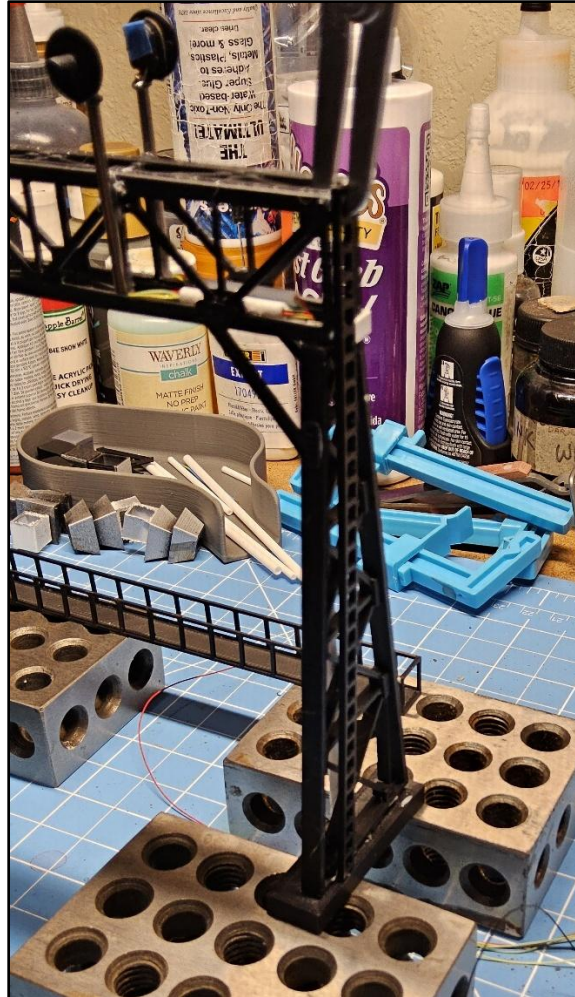
Picture 9



Picture 10

## Almost done

Attach the footers or base, depending on what type you picked to the bridge supports. The bridge will not stand up very well by itself with the wires protruding from the base so I use some blocks (any type) to hold it off the ground. You can now add the ladder to either side and trim it to fit. Picture 11.



Picture 11

Once everything is dry (I allow 24 hours), Mask the signal heads and paint the whole bridge. I have used both black and silver. If you use silver, I would follow the paint color with a coat of Dullcoat finish to allow weathering to “stick”. Finally, weather to your liking and place it on the layout. See Pictures 12 and 13



Picture 12



Picture 13

Addendum: There is a file you can use as an option to print and build a catwalk for the top of the bridge. Use it if you wish. See picture 11.



## **THE CHICAGO, PEORIA, AND WESTERN RAILROAD**

**By Ed Covill**

John Brennan's Chicago, Peoria & Western (CP&W) is a freelance railroad based on the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy Railroad between Chicago and Galesburg, Illinois. It also includes a branch line to Canton and St. David adapted from another route. The layout represents September 1940, with mostly steam powered trains. The mainline has 250 feet of single track and the Canton branch adds another 40 feet. These lengths do not include passing sidings or industrial tracks.

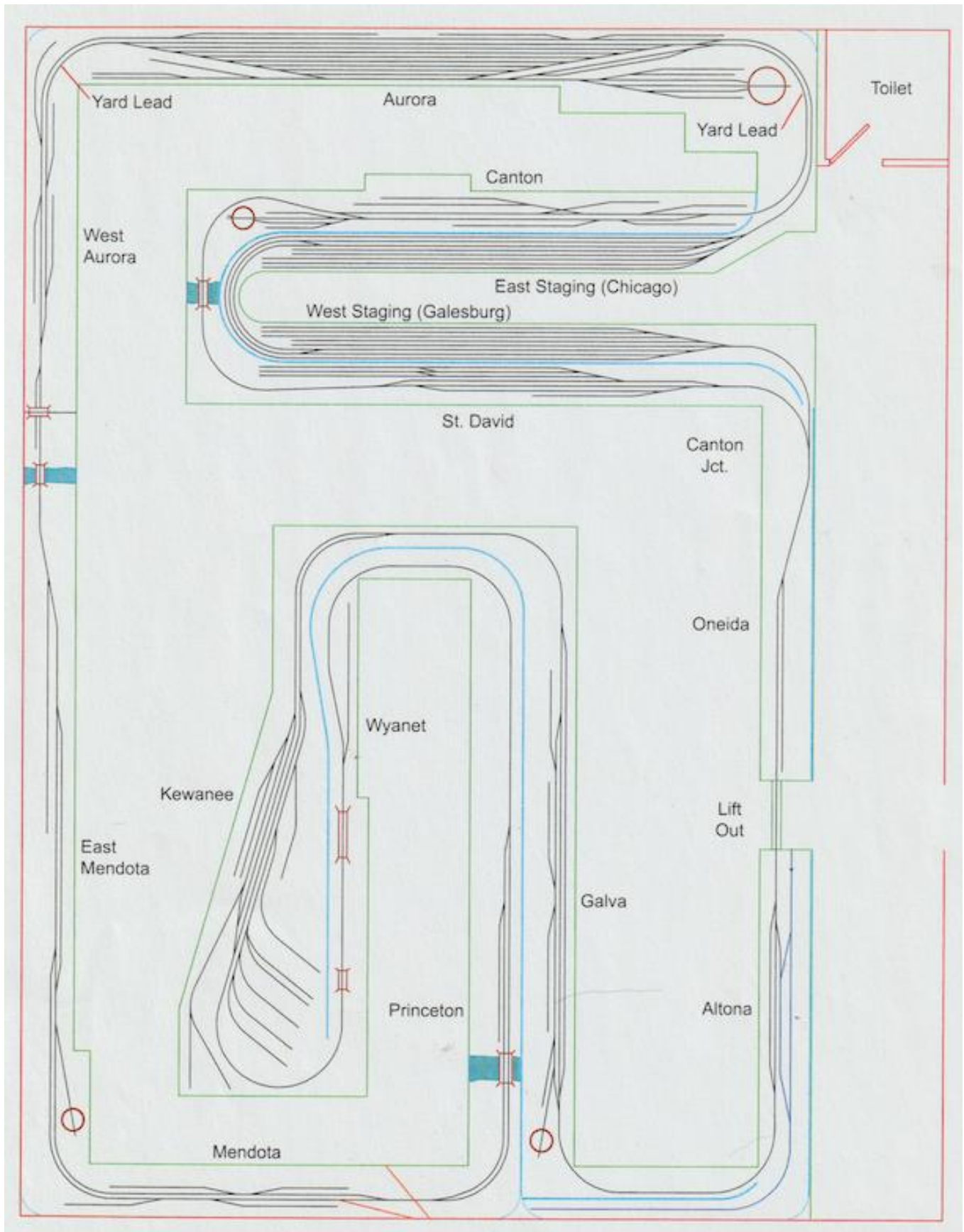
This article outlines the three phases the CP&W, from its origin in Chicago to its current operation as a model railroad club in Tampa, Florida.

### **CHICAGO**

John Brennan designed the track plan from scratch after studying prototype rail movements south and west from Chicago and considered the towns along the routes of the prototype railroads in the region. It was designed in the late 1990s to fit a 30 x 45-foot basement. Construction began in 2000 and early operations started in 2005. The track uses Code 70 rail on Central Valley tie strips mounted on Homasote over  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch plywood. The railroad is controlled using Digitrax simplex radio. Operations follow a timetable & train order system with a 4:1 fast clock.

### **TAMPA**

After retiring in 2007, John moved to Tampa, Florida to be closer to family. It took him nearly three years for him to find a suitable property with space for a large outbuilding. In April 2010, he purchased the property and built a 35 x 45-foot metal building to house the layout. He moved the layout before adding scenery, which made the relocation easier.



The layout was assembled and completed in Tampa and was opened to visitors during the 2017 **National Model Railroad Association** convention in Orlando.



## TRANSITION TO A CLUB

John Brennan passed away on September 17, 2023, leaving the future of his railroad uncertain. Before his passing, he expressed a wish for operations to continue at least through a scheduled **Model Railroader Magazine®** photo shoot with Lou Sassi in November 2023. His son John P. Brennan also wanted to preserve his father's work and legacy. The group of volunteers who had been helping operate the layout decided to establish a club and continue operations. In June 2024 the group signed a lease and the newly formed **Chicago, Peoria, & Western Model Railroad Club** officially began operations on July 1, 2024.



Overview of the Chicago, Peoria, and Western Model Railroad Club Layout

Photo courtesy of Jim Hopes

## THE CHICAGO, PEORIA, AND WESTERN MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

Now entering its second year, the Club recently renewed its lease. Members meet every Thursday. with operating sessions typically take place over two meetings and the third Thursday is reserved for maintenance and staging.



Staging trains for the next Operating Session.

Photo courtesy of Greg Komar



The two active staging yards at each end of the line face each other across the aisle and are joined by three through tracks. The aisle for this area is separate from the rest of the layout, minimize disturbance to the staging director.

Note the thick sprayed-on ceiling insulation for climate control in Florida.

CP&W MRR photo

Trains originate in staging yards, westbound from Chicago and eastbound from Galesburg. Currently, the Club runs 20 to 24 trains per session. Each session features four first-class trains, three second-class freights and additional extra trains. A typical session includes 8 to 14 operators covering roles such as:

- staging director,
- dispatcher,
- Aurora yardmaster,
- West Aurora switcher,
- Kewanee yardmaster,

All remaining operators are one-man road crews running trains through the track plan and scenery.



Aurora Yard at mid-session.

Photo courtesy of Greg Komar



Overtaking the local switcher at Galva.

Photo courtesy of Greg Komar



Westbound local freight departs W. Aurora bound for Mendota, IL.

Photo courtesy of Greg Komar



CP&W's Railroad Service Train prepares to depart from the siding at St. David, Illinois

Photo courtesy of Greg Komar

Operations use direct traffic control, with the dispatcher issuing clearance limits to trains. Crews communicate movements via telephone as they report arrivals and request new clearances. The dispatcher monitors traffic flow using magnetic train markers on a metallic track diagram board, while car cards and waybills manage freight movements.



The Author working as Dispatcher, recording actual arrival/departure times for schedule planning.

Photo courtesy of Greg Komar

## FUTURE PLANS

The Club plans to add a two-color signal system to enhance dispatcher control. The data collected on all train movements is used to refine the schedule and eventually develop a new timetable and train order system with a fast clock to resemble more authentic prototype operations.

**Editor's Note:** I asked Ed for additional photographs, and he was very responsive and provided the names of the club members. Now I did not get all the individuals named, but there are some very familiar faces. So, what follows are the extra shots.



2024 Christmas get together at the Clubhouse



Some of the Group Photo during the Operations Lunch Break



Staging the Railroad Service Train for the Next Operation



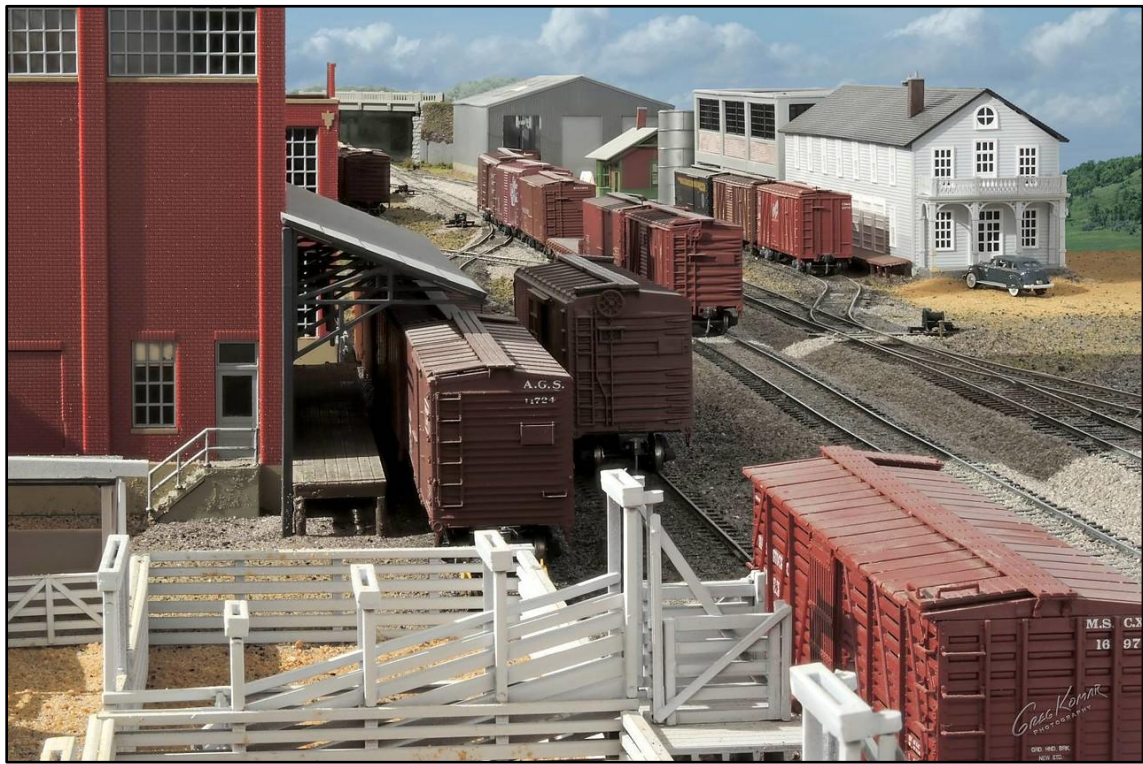
Siding at Oneida, Illinois



Moran's Bait Shop (Jon Addison at work)



Galva, Illinois Engine Facility



Switching at Canton, Illinois (End of the Line)



Operations at Galva, Illinois



Kewanee, Illinois Yardmaster at work.



Local Freight approaching Aurora, Illinois Station



Lunchbreak at Victoria's Sandwich Shop, Tampa, FL



Maintenance of Way Boss, hard at work.



Staging at Little Sister Mine, St. David, Illinois



Some of the gentlemen behind the CP&W (L to R)  
Joe Cirillo, Fred Guillermet, Paul Reid, Rob Jennings, Bob Lager, Royal Bruce, Ed Covill,  
Donovan Lewis (holding a photograph of John Brennan), Jim Hopes, and Jon Addison

**Editor's Note:** *I appreciate the additional group photographs of the members of the CP&W sent by Mr. Covill, the facial expressions tell the story of camaraderie and friendship. Of the railroad, I particularly like the format, that emphasis on the time period of 1940, it demands the use of steam power, which has so much more character than internal combustion. I have yet to visit the railroad, but the year is young. The CP&W appears to be in good hands, the dedication by the members indicates the railroad has a long life ahead of it. To the photos, most all the photos in this addition to the original article are courtesy of Greg Komar, actually Greg took the lions share of the photos.*

Also, for your viewing pleasure a link from the group taking you for a ride. A camera tour of the mainline, so for your viewing pleasure, Chicago, Peoria, and Western Railroad, The Movie: Video courtesy of John Crellin  
<https://youtu.be/LMfPAWWAcEI>





**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](mailto:als0622@yahoo.com)**

***'No dues, just a great experience'*  
[westernbayrailroad.org](http://westernbayrailroad.org)**



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## Observations

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These past three months have allowed me to view many things and form my observations; I am not sure if that is a detriment or positive, to some it may be an abrasion, but they are my observations and my views.

To begin, a positive observation! This past month I attended a meeting, one made up of likeminded individuals, a meeting that imitated a division meet. Well, not a complete imitation, there were no coffee and doughnuts to be had, which is probably a good thing taking into consideration the health of many of the attendees. It also did not imitate the normal schedule for one of these events, it was held on a weekday, which I thought, how many are going to attend since it is a workday. But I was pleasantly surprised to see that it was well attended, I believe there were close to 30 likeminded individuals in attendance, some of those from afar.

I saw some old faces and met some new faces, one in particular had traveled north from close to my area, only to realize that he really is from California. Now that is a commute! The N scale population of this hobby was prominent at the meet, in areas of attendance and of the presentations, most were based upon N scale operators, operations and owners. The only outlier was a presentation based upon narrow gage scenery. Considering what has taken place in the ex Eastern division, not much for awhile, this was a breath of fresh air. There is another gathering scheduled later in the year, same location, not sure of the date, but it will take place. Stay aware.

This past quarter I inserted a graphic in the Journal Box of our recently revised SSR logo and captioned it with "Use it or Lose it". The reason I captioned it as such is that after a certain date it would need to be configured to satisfy the edicts of the NMRA. As I mentioned last quarter the NMRA has done a REBRAND as they term it and changed the parent logo, thus all other logos need to be inline. As you can tell from the mast head of the Journal Box we now have the NMRA's REBRAND version of the CSX boxcar logo found on CSX motive power, rolling stock and containers. The rebrand, albeit somewhat modified, the brackets are missing that indicate the ends of the car, but other than that it is a close copy. A very close copy, it could be construed as a copyright issue copy, very close! To satisfy the edicts set forth by the hierarchy the next edition of the Journal Box we'll have the boxcar and it will have a different SSR logo.

It is irritating to me that our president spent time and effort creating a new SSR logo, a logo that in my opinion better signified the region than our previous one. With the new one displaying palm trees, an alligator and rising sun, a bit of green and tones of orange it is unique, as are most of the region patches. By the way, the remake of the old SSR logo was done just shy of a year ago, and here we are again, but driven by the heirarchy. As for other region patches, whether they illustrate a spoked driver and coupler, the "Rolling Boob", or regional elements, they illustrate the area they reside in. They are unique, the graphics represent their uniqueness, so much for individuality. Speaking of our past logo, most importantly it eliminated the John Deere green with the state and outlined and filled in yellow, a patch we've had for years. The new one illustrated more clearly what the region represents.

The reason for this change, the reason to pack everything under an umbrella, the NMRA claims the organization is not well known! That is the reasoning provided, lame as it is, the NMRA is not well known. Yet, all, or most (there may be a few outliers, I did not investigate everyone) Region / Division patches have one thing in common, all of them have the letters NMRA displayed. Bold uppercase letters separated from the region call signs and tags, there is no confusion as to who the overall organization is. Unless you are a model railroader and have been living under a rock, then you might not know who, or what the NMRA represents.

The new requirements are for all Region patches to be homogenized, all patches need to be one color, have the same format, the same look, individuality has gone out the window. To me the NMRA has indicated that

individuality of the regions, of the divisions is something that gives the Regions / Divisions too much freedom. I see no gain in this, I have been told, it is what it is, move on and accept it. But it is reminiscent of Big Brother ensuring that everyone stays in line, head down, no questions, but that's just my observation.

On another topic! In the past questionnaires have gone out asking the membership; What does it take to make you happy? What would you like to see in the future? What should be changed? Most times the questionnaire is unanswered, even at the convention where it can be filled out at the table, some are returned blank. The powers that be are not seers; they cannot read the minds of the membership. It takes time to set up a convention; there are many facets that need alignment and many questions to ask and answer. The fact that questions have been asked by the convention committee but have yet to be answered puts a strain on the committee. Questions such as, types of clinics, alignment of clinics, of activities, what is nice to have verses we are looking for something else, these all need answers. If you cannot respond to these questions, then no one has any complaints as to what is presented at the convention. Take the time to respond, don't sit on your duff waiting to the last minute and expect everything to adjust to your timetable, it doesn't work that way.

Last, I will speak to my observation of the SFRM rebuild of their "N" scale layout. Much has been done concerning the track plan, which at this point has probably had six iterations and still does not satisfy all individuals, but that is not something new. Most times when you get a dozen people together you get 13 to 14 opinions, this group does not have that many people, hence it is somewhat manageable. From the beginning to now, things that have been solidified are the basic benchwork, a mean figure on the amount of wiring, the era, the types of businesses to be modeled, the scenery to be modeled, and basic costs. What remains questionable is the amount of turnout motors are necessary, the type of power system and the size of the control system, how big does it need to be?

Another solid area is the start date of deconstruction of the workshop and construction of the basic benchwork. One positive thing to this entire endeavor is that individuals, both N scale folks as well as HO folks and some strap hangers are interested and excited. That is a good thing, as long as the interest and excitement drives the project, progress will be made. My next observation should be interesting. Until the next time, enjoy life, Model 60.

Robert



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# **My Homestead HO Gauge Model Railroad**

**By Bill Koster**

I have been active in model railroading my entire life. When I first moved to Homestead in 1957, I built a small model railroad in a bedroom. Not satisfied with that, in 1959 I added a larger room to my house and built a layout 6' x 12'. With bigger plans I built a new house in 1963 – 1964 and included a basement, 26' x 60'. Of course, the reason for the basement was for a model railroad, I used just under half of the basement to build the largest HO layout I ever built. The layout was visited by 200 attendees of the NMRA National Convention held on Miami Beach in 1967. For the attendees to get to my layout, a special train was run down the Seaboard Air Line Homestead branch adjacent to my back yard. Starting in 1970 I began manufacturing 7 ½" gauge trains in my garage. Several years later, needing more space, I sold and removed the layout and moved the business to the basement.

I remained in 7 ½" gauge until about ten years ago. At that time, due to a staph infection, I lost my right foot. With that situation and increasing age I decided to return to HO gauge. My current layout is in a 12' x 16' room attached to our mobile home in Wildwood.

My Homestead layout was featured in 1967 edition of the Journal Box. Since copies of that article are long out of print, I thought that some of you might like to visit a model railroad of almost 60 years ago. I have retyped the original article that appeared in the Journal Box.

## **Southern Santa Fe Lines Model Railroad Division**

Office of the President  
Wilfred C. "Bill" Koster

SOUTHERN SANTA FE LINES was modeled after two large railroads: the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe. The pike is large in size, (25' x 26') but simple in design to reduce maintenance. It occupies half of the basement which Brass Hat Bill Koster built more or less for the railroad. Construction of the pike started in the summer of 1964, shortly after the house was completed. In addition to the two major lines, there is a logging railroad running from Bithlo Lumber Company to the top of Library Mountain. This line has a minimum radius of 24" and grades over 8%. There is also a trolley line proposed for Dupont, the largest town on the pike.

The mainline which is owned by Santa Fe is also used by Southern Pacific. It is 420 feet, or seven scale miles in length. It is a folded over loop, giving the effect of double track for the majority of the line. The minimum radius is 40" and the ruling grade is 2.6%. 18 electrical blocks are provided, each with a 3 light signal, automatically controlled by the trains. At present all trains are controlled automatically and as many as nine trains have been run simultaneously. A freight car left behind will stop all trains at the signal preceding the block the car has been left in. Four Route Cab Control panels are in the planning stage and, due to a lack of engineers, at least two of these will be Progressive Cab Control with each running its own train over the system automatically.

Operations are run by a "fast-time" clock, modified locally to 6 times normal speed. This permits a 24-hour day to be condensed into 4 hours. Nighttime effects are achieved by using a motorized dimmer. Since trains take 6 times as long on this clock to cover the same distance, the mileposts have been placed every 1/6th of a scale mile. These we call Smile Posts instead of Mile Posts.

To get better acquainted with the system, we will take a local freight over the main line. We move out of the engine facility of Alpha yard and over to the string of cars made up for us by the yard crew. After a brake test, we are on our way, moving out onto the yard leads. Since the mainline has a train passing us, the signal is Red, so we stop on the lead. The signal changes to Yellow and we are on our way. We are climbing up a steep grade as soon as we leave the yard.

Halfway between Smile Post 3 & 4 we notice a deep canyon to our right. Behind the canyon we see Library Mountain, so named because it has a library inside. Bithlo station is next and then the Bithlo Lumber Company, the lower end of the logging railroad. The next signal is Green, and we proceed across a Scherzer Rolling Lift bridge to be built in the future. The track is level now as we are paralleling a river, then into a tunnel and across a short bridge, over the river. At this point our conductor notifies us that a boxcar has a hot box. We are glad Citra is only a short distance ahead and the car is quickly placed on a siding. Then we are on our way again, across a bridge and into another tunnel.

A cut is next, then a curve under a bridge and we see Dupont with its passenger terminal ahead. We pass by and climb a curving hill up to Electra, where we drop a car at the siding. Across a couple more bridges we come to Fairfield and our interchange with the logging railroad. We set off two boxcars and pick up one loaded with lumber. On our way again, through a tunnel, then across the longest bridge on the system. It is modeled after the Santa Fe bridge at Canyon Diablo. We swing around Library Mountain where the other track leaves us, since the eastbound and westbound tracks separate for easier grades. We go through another tunnel and proceed slowly across a large timber trestle. Then we take the left track at Grand Ridge to do some switching and to let the Chief pass.

Our switching done, we are on our way again using sand to get started. Our steep climb continues until we reach Summit, the highest point on the line, 24" higher than Alpha yard. We cross a high Arch Bridge, to be the only duck-under after the lift bridge is finished. Then around Tehachapi loop where we again take the passing track and stop at Howie. At this time we see one of the Daylights go past us. Then we are on our way again, back to Fairfield, where we switch cars from the ice plant to the packing house, set out empty reefers at the ice plant, and pick up loaded reefers at the packing plant. We are on our way again, past Electra and Dupont with a stop at Citra picking up a carload of oranges. Then, on to Bithlo, where we pick up several cars from the mines. From there we proceed home to Alpha yard, tired after a long day's run.

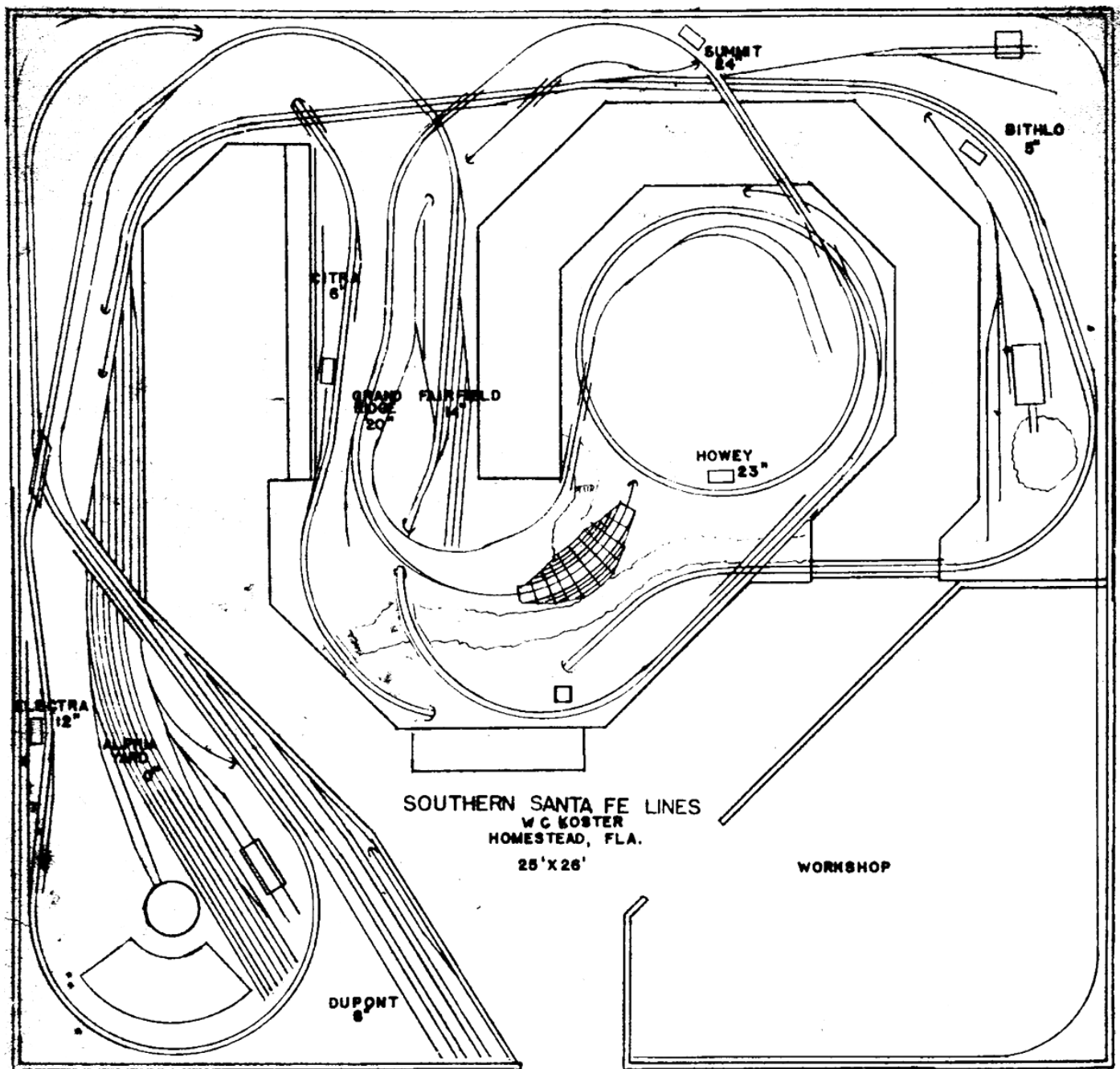
This is a typical operation on the Southern Santa Fe Lines. If you are down towards Homestead anytime, be sure to drop in and visit us.



The house I built in Homestead with a basement for my layout



Bill giving a tour of his Homestead layout



EQUIPMENT ROSTER OF THE SOUTHERN SANTA FE LINES

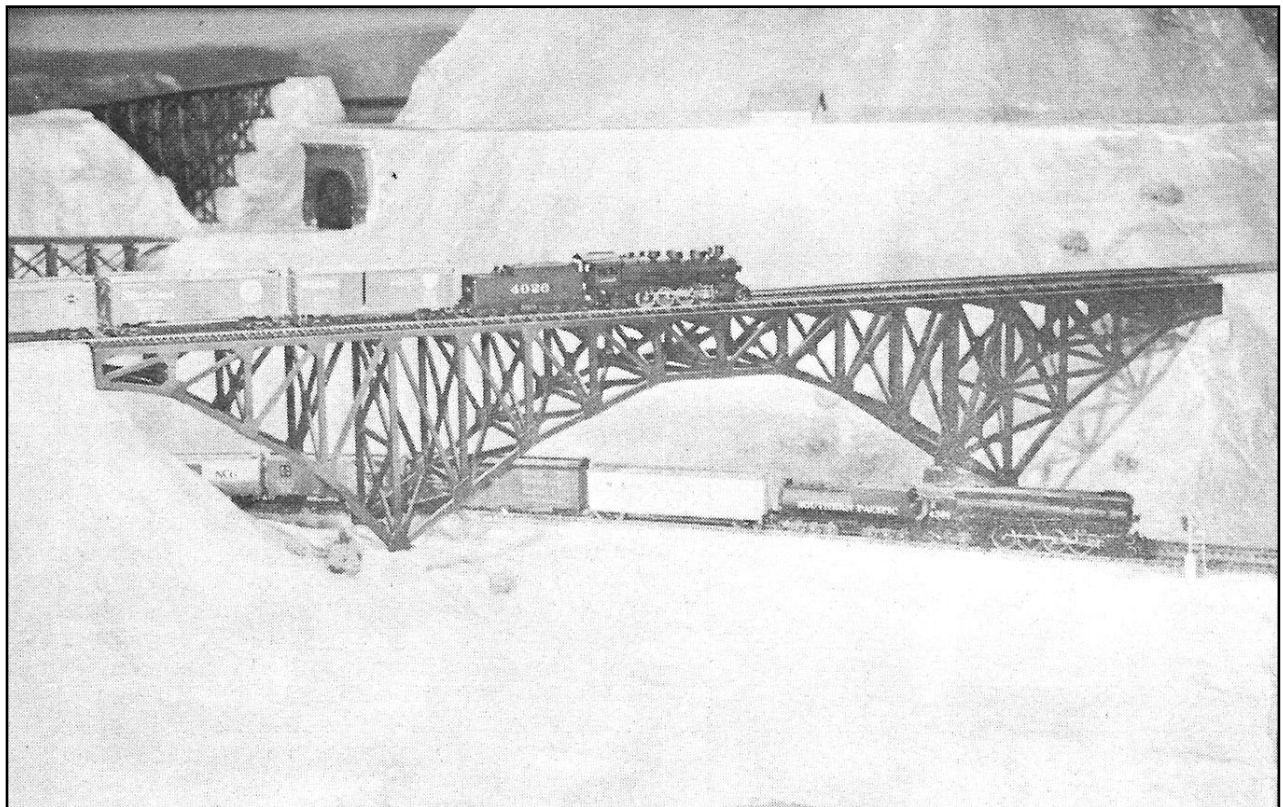
RAILROAD	FREIGHT CARS	PASS. CARS	CABOOSES	MW EQUIP.	LOCOS	
					STEAM	DIESEL
Santa Fe RR	48	27	8	7	8	11*
Southern Pac.	27	15	7	0	6	5*
Other R.R.	123	1	1	0	1	0
Totals	197	43	16	7	15	16*

\*units

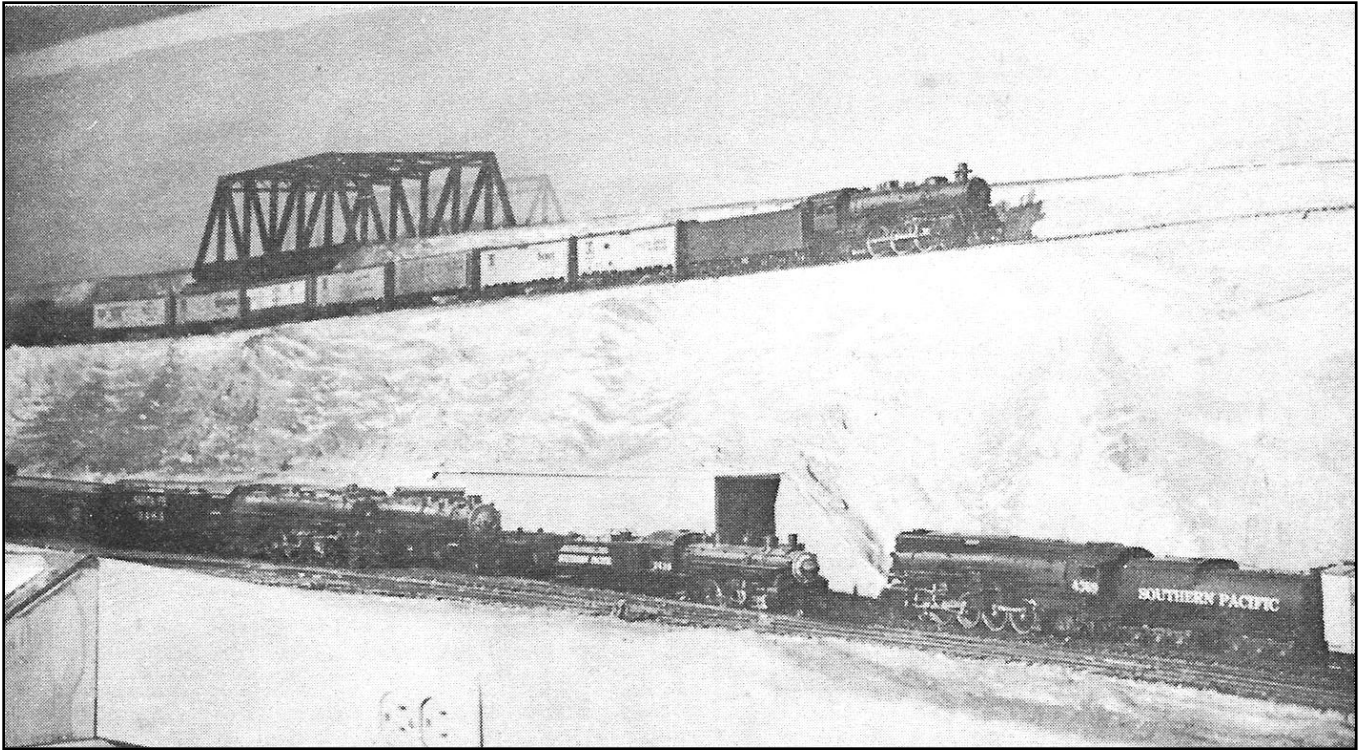
Track plan as presented in the Journal Box in 1967



My model of the Canyon Diablo Bridge



Another view of Canyon Diablo Bridge with a Southern Pacific freight below



A busy time at the Alpha yard entrance



# South Florida Railway Museum

View the current “N” scale layout for  
the last time, this April 11th



The Museum is Open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month, the  
following dates are our 1<sup>st</sup> quarter

**04-11, 05-09, 06-13**

**from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM**

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Mule RR

South Florida Regional &  
Metro



End details of Florida East Coast LNG gas cylinder



15 Years ago, this sat in the yard of Conrad Yelvington in Gainesville, FL,  
it is still there, when looking at Google Maps

# The Train Room

By Michael Collins, MMR

**Editor's Note:** *We are going to take a little tour through the memory and adventures of the author and of Mike's view of home decorating. Mike has over the years accumulated a lot of stuff, desktop displays of aircraft he has worked with, tickets to events, train shows, even subway rides. He displays model trains that he has built, photographed, and presented for contests, all representing his many years in the hobby. The arrangement of his awards is not in any chronological order, but they do show his association with the NMRA. So, not only do the awards recognize his membership in the SSR, but also the NER, since his history spans more than one region, he is from the north remember. You will be able to tell from the photos that his view of home decor covers many facets of his life. Enjoy the tour of a man's history, memories, remembrances, all of this contained in one room that represents a life past and also of the one present.*

Finding space for model railroading, or modeling in other areas maintaining collections and interests can be a predicament. Then, whatever you want to work with, it is up to you on how to best to utilize time and space. Here is my combination hobby cave, museum and my visiting great-grand kid's bedroom. Maybe you'll see something that will inspire or improve 'decorating' your train room.

## History

My wife and I moved into this new home in Pembroke Pines, an area in between Miami and Fort Lauderdale in 1996. I was still working (Airbus Training Center – Miami Airport) instructing avionics to various airlines. After a few years, when time permitted, much like I did in New York, I constructed a layout, this time in a bedroom. I started once again publishing pictures, writing articles, going to a few conventions, presenting clinics and entering contests. After I finished one railroad, I started another.

*Fast forward ...* I officially retired in 2003, but then, unofficially worked part-time to 2005. I joined a local club, the Florida Citrus Model Train Society, and participated in various activities, including building a 2x4 module. After the second railroad, I built a third, then I began taking videos and posting them on YouTube (Michael Collins model railroad Part 1 to 12). Part 12 focused on my NY Harbor – LV RR, which was also featured in the Nov. 2018 NMRA magazine documenting its removal. Since the demise of the railroad, I have now entered the next phase ... *this is what the room looks like today.*

## Entrance

As you enter and starting at the top, you see a used Long Island Railroad ticket from taking my great-grand daughter on her first train ride in 2024. Next, a Christmas card with a train. Our new SSR logo next to Grandpa's *Train Room* sign, and a wood cutout sign. Then, a special bowling gift from my lady team-mates (2012) with an abbreviation from my instruction 'hit the freaken (something like that) head pin'. Finally, a nice red pickup truck display. On the floor, *To The Trains* doormat.



## North Wall

On entering, you face the north wall, ... you see a 'G' scale trolley (rather than overhead electric, I say it uses battery power) just passed an operating tower on the way to *Barre* station on the *Wilkes* line on an LGB overhead track. I painted a country scene on the wall to reflect the scenery of the area where the trolley traversed. A metal cut-out train hangs below the track, it makes for a good window valance.

To the left, *I love MR* sign with a hanging A310 model Airbus (taught when working at Pan Am – JFK) flying in front of it, plus various awards and pictures.

To the right is a painting of a Central New Jersey Baldwin DR 6-4-2000 I bought since I have that locomotive. On the floor, to the left is a coin bag, or token bag of the New York City Transit Authority (a very clean bag). On the windowsill, an LGB train-in-a-bottle.



## Cabinet

The cabinet houses a PC and files. On top, various models of different scales, an O-scale locomotive representing PRR heritage and caboose used with my train I run on the FCMTS 'O' scale layout. A Pan Am Geep and a hanging model of a Pan Am DC-7, like I worked on at Idlewild (now JFK) in 1962. Also Air Force and Airbus aircraft models that I worked on or instructed (50 years of work history).



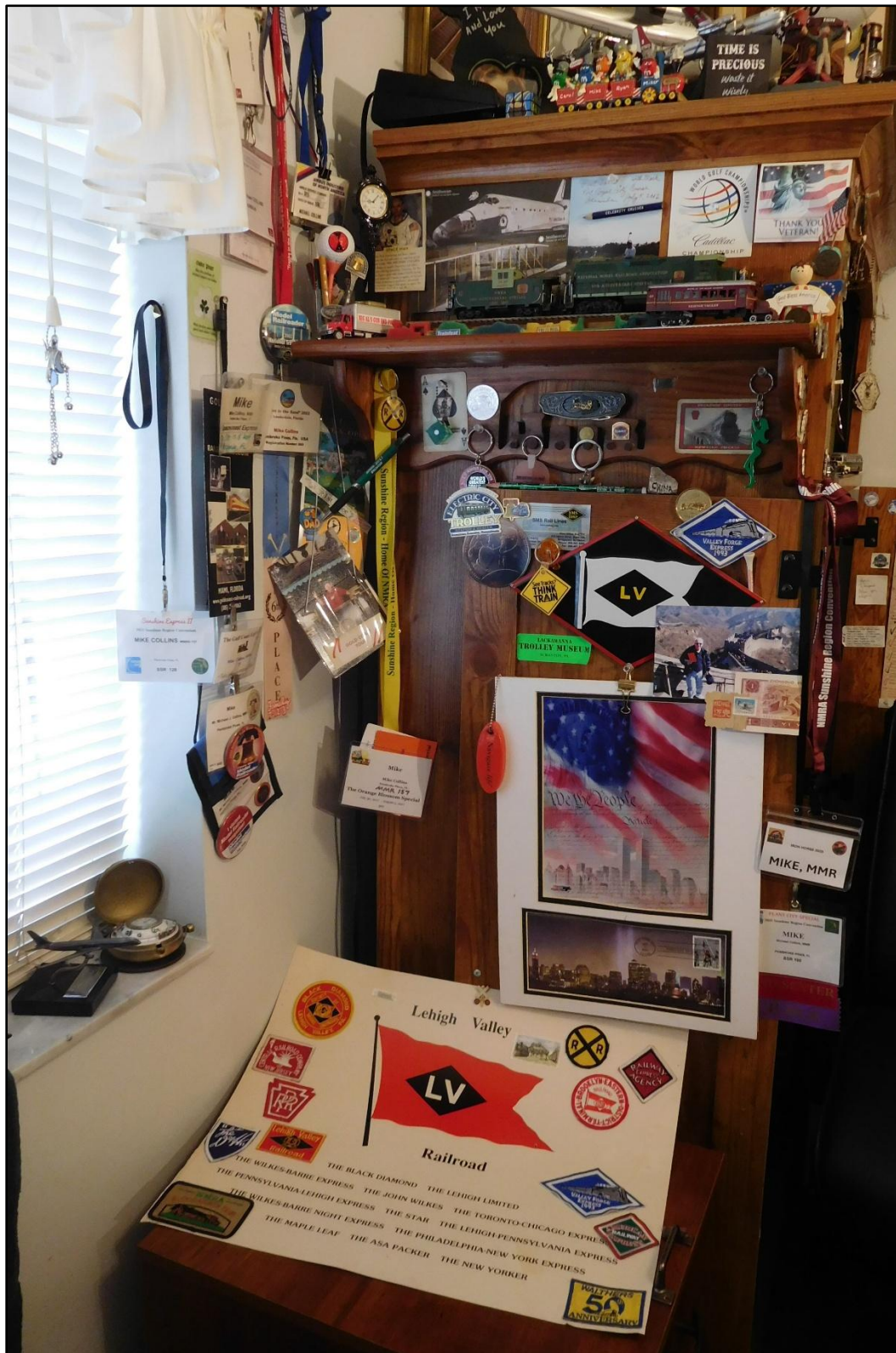
## Cabinet Display

Inside, there is an accumulation and conglomeration of memories and reflections of the past. An interurban rail-car, both in picture and model of the Lackawanna & Wyoming Valley Railroad (that ran between Wilkes-Barre & Scranton), commonly called the *Laurel Line*. (Laurel is also the PA state flower). The view from a third-floor apartment I lived in to age of 18 was of the W-B Station loop, hence the Jersey Central passenger cars displayed. They go with the Jersey Central double-ender locomotive. And a mixture of various models and collectables. The two *Thumbs* awards were for the business card hopper and one pictured 'A train-in-a-bag', won at the 2010 & 2017 National Conventions in Milwaukee & Orlando.



## Cabinet Side

On the side, various ID's on lanyards, models, odd items, information and pictures (all interesting and meaningful to me). *Mike couldn't let the side of the cabinet be bare.*



## East Wall

The sunrise is hand-painted, a station, covered bridge and an on-line freight station decorate the top of the wall. Below, awards and pictures on both sides of a 1990 National Convention in Pittsburgh poster. As you see, a lot of mementos, I'm a collector. A railroad crossing display bank is filled with new 'silver' coins. A bookshelf with models and keepsakes ... one is an iron (retired), my wife of 68 years, used multiple times a week is no longer in service since she passed away, June 2025. Thank goodness for Downy wrinkle-releaser spray.



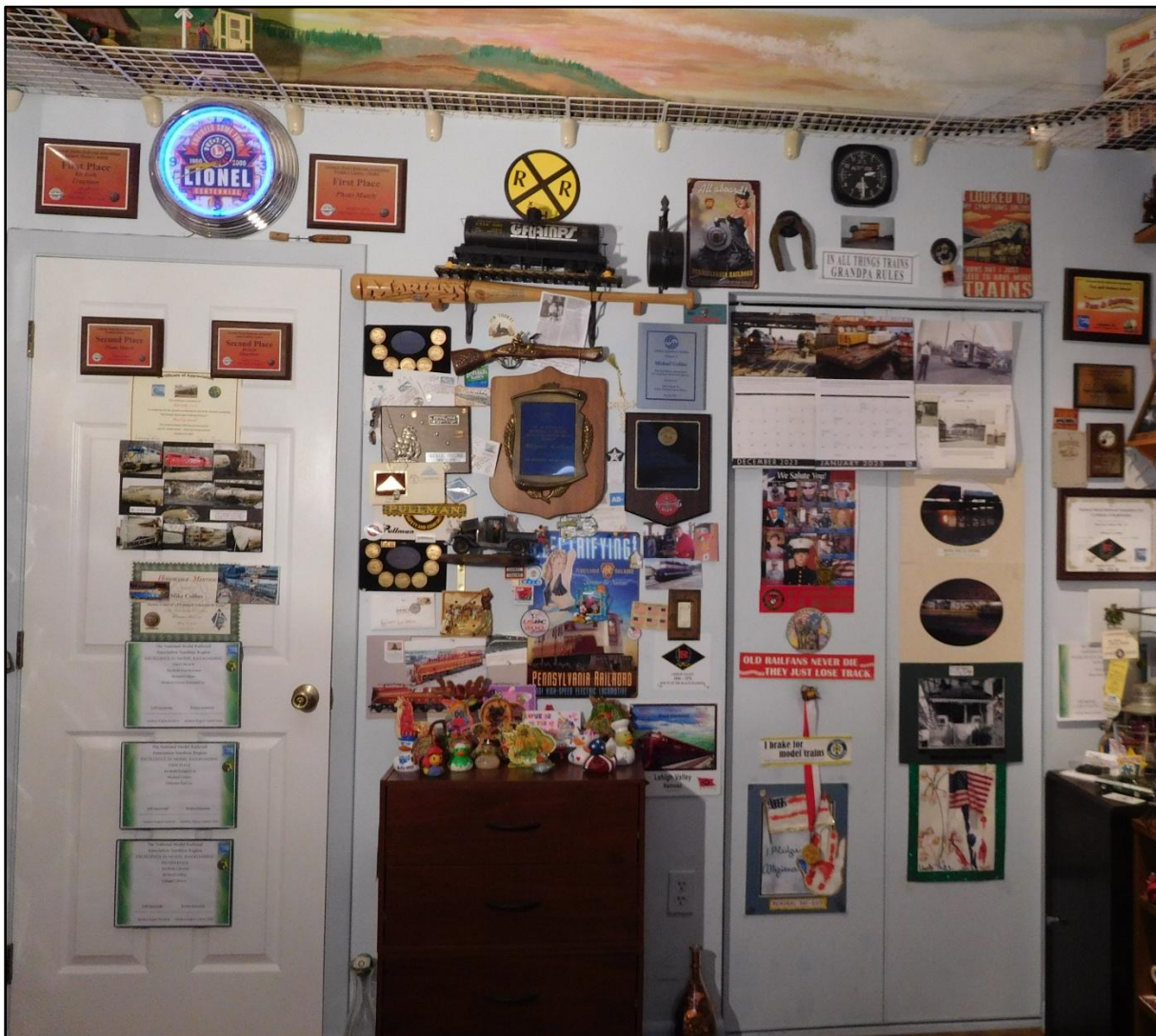
## South Wall

A scenic background for the around the 'ceiling' train. That's a mule-shoe, since they moved coal in the mines before electric engines. The two calendars that never change months; winning photographs selected by the NMRA staff, and I relate to the other Anthracite RR Historical Calendar when I was a kid. The three pictures are award winners, signs, family service members on a company poster. The Florida Governor's Veterans Service Award was given to my friend George. I did the artwork with his hand.

Just a side-note, he lived at the Niningner Nursing Home, State Veterans Facility in Pembroke Pines. Sandy Niningner was the first *Medal-of-Honor* recipient in WW2, was from Fort Lauderdale.

The main part of the wall has a mixture of collectables, plaques and meaningful items. When the opportunity arises, I can tell stories about everything. Visitors are impressed or overwhelmed. Maybe I should run tours.

On the dresser, is my collection of great grand-daughter mementos, 16 round trips to New York and she's only four. The jar on the floor is filled with 'new' pennies (maybe they will go up in value now they are no longer made).



## West Wall

It must be getting late; the moon and stars are coming out. Also, the ladies have gathered at the hotel. The old steam loco is on its run with a combination car. Below is a freight train on a storage track. The flag is from Afghanistan, brought back by my Marine grandson, my first grandson, an Army MP, was also there. Besides the model railroad awards, some of my artwork is on display. The map of NYC and Long Island was a gift, you can also see pictures; and the backdrop from my torn-down layout, which I've used in three clinics, a National, the 2025 Regional and a Southern Division.

The bookshelves hold a lot of models, books, artwork, videos, tools and whatever. This gives you an idea of some of my collection. Every piece has a story. I'm sure everyone has their keepsakes.





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