

# The Telegraph Key

An NMRA Sunshine Region Monthly Publication

March 2026



No. 85 "Merlin" Great Northern Railway Ireland

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## Sunshine Region - NMRA



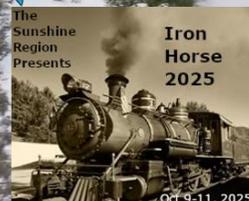
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## Editor's Message



Happy March, Sunshine Region!

I want to make a shout out to one of our Region's clubs. The **Chicago, Peoria & Western Model Railroad** is a 100% NMRA club that is featured in the April 2026 Model Railroader Magazine. Pick up a copy and learn about this great model railroading group!

That magazine article just happens to coincide with the CP&W co-hosting the Western Division Meet in Tampa on Sat, Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. If you are reading this before March, you have a chance to attend their Open House and Op Session in conjunction with that meet. See more info in my Division column below.

If you're looking for news on what changes are being made in our Region, scroll down a bit to the President's column and read through everything that's going on.

If you want to attend another fine Northern Division Meet, see Allen's column for info about the upcoming event on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Also, Chip Pecere is presenting an Eastern Model Railroad Meet on March 16<sup>th</sup>. See his info and registration form below.

This month, I'm presenting the SNMRA (Special Needs Model Railroad Association) SIG (Special Interest Group) History which is written by Todd Slaughter. See it and other SNMRA information about this group below.

Now, here is a call for volunteers who'd like to become involved in the inner workings of our Sunshine Region. Our Region is seeking members who are interested in becoming: the Region Convention Coordinator, the Region Webmaster, the Region Election Chair, and finally, the Region Telegraph Key newsletter Editor. Yep, I'm seeking a replacement for my editor position so I can more fully commit to the responsibilities of the Central Division Superintendent. Please contact me or a Board member if you are interested in any of these openings.

And... here's my final plug for the upcoming **Western Division meet** in Tampa at **American Legion Post 139** on **Saturday, Feb 28<sup>th</sup>**. Put on your Saturday morning clothes and join us for coffee, donuts, clinics, lunch, CP&W Model Railroad Open House and Op Session, an add on clinic at Suncoast Model Railroad Club, and the camaraderie of your fellow railroaders. **Details are below in the new Central Division section.**

Take care,

**Mark Lewalski**

**Telegraph Key Editor**



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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**

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## President's Message



### A Bold Course Correction for a Stronger SSR

My Fellow Sunshine Region Members,

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*.

### Looking Back: 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** was forced to step down due to health issues, resigned from the position. Jim had agreed to serve as a bridge, and he did so honorably. He worked diligently to ensure that the Eastern Division continued to function and that members were supported during a transitional period.

When Jim stepped away, we began an extensive search for a permanent Eastern Division Superintendent. We issued numerous calls for volunteers and spoke with at least five individuals who would have performed exceptionally well in the role. Each one expressed a genuine desire to help.

However, we encountered a challenge that many of us understand all too well: **time poverty**.

*“Time poverty is the feeling or reality of having too many tasks to complete and insufficient time to do them, resulting in a lack of discretionary time for rest, leisure, or additional involvement.”*

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, and it was time to plot a new course.

Combine the leadership void with the ratio of members to superintendents and one could see that the membership overall was not being served well due to disproportionate numbers. For one superintendent, it was overwhelming. To rebalance the system, redistribute the workload, and address the leadership vacuum in the eastern division, we embarked on a bold 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**.

### **What Are the Benefits?**

- ✓ More equitable leadership workload
- ✓ Improved communication flow
- ✓ Greater superintendent accessibility
- ✓ Stronger divisional programming
- ✓ Enhanced member engagement
- ✓ Increased opportunities for mentorship and fellowship
- ✓ Clearer administrative alignment

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.

Please review the updated **SSR Divisional Map** and the accompanying ZIP code list to confirm your new division.

### **Can You Attend a Different Division's Meet?**

**Absolutely!**

Let me be perfectly clear:

**Any SSR member may attend any divisional meet.**

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.

### **Growth Is Happening**

Since September 2025, the Sunshine Region has gained **19 new members**.

We are growing.

With growth comes opportunity — and responsibility. This restructuring positions us to better welcome new members, distribute leadership more effectively, and reinforce the culture of:

#### **Mentorship. Fellowship. Community.**

These are not just words. They are the foundation of who we are.

### **Moving Forward Together**

Leadership vacancies are challenging. Volunteer fatigue is real. Time poverty affects us all. We will need assistant superintendents in every division to support the Superintendents. Additional roles are also open for those willing to assist ask where you can fit in! Remember, the Sunshine Region remains strong because of you, your passion for model railroading, your willingness to help, and your commitment to building something larger than ourselves.

This restructuring is about balance, sustainability, and ensuring that no division is left without guidance again.

The trains are running. The membership is growing. The future is bright.

Let's continue to build it together!

Respectfully,

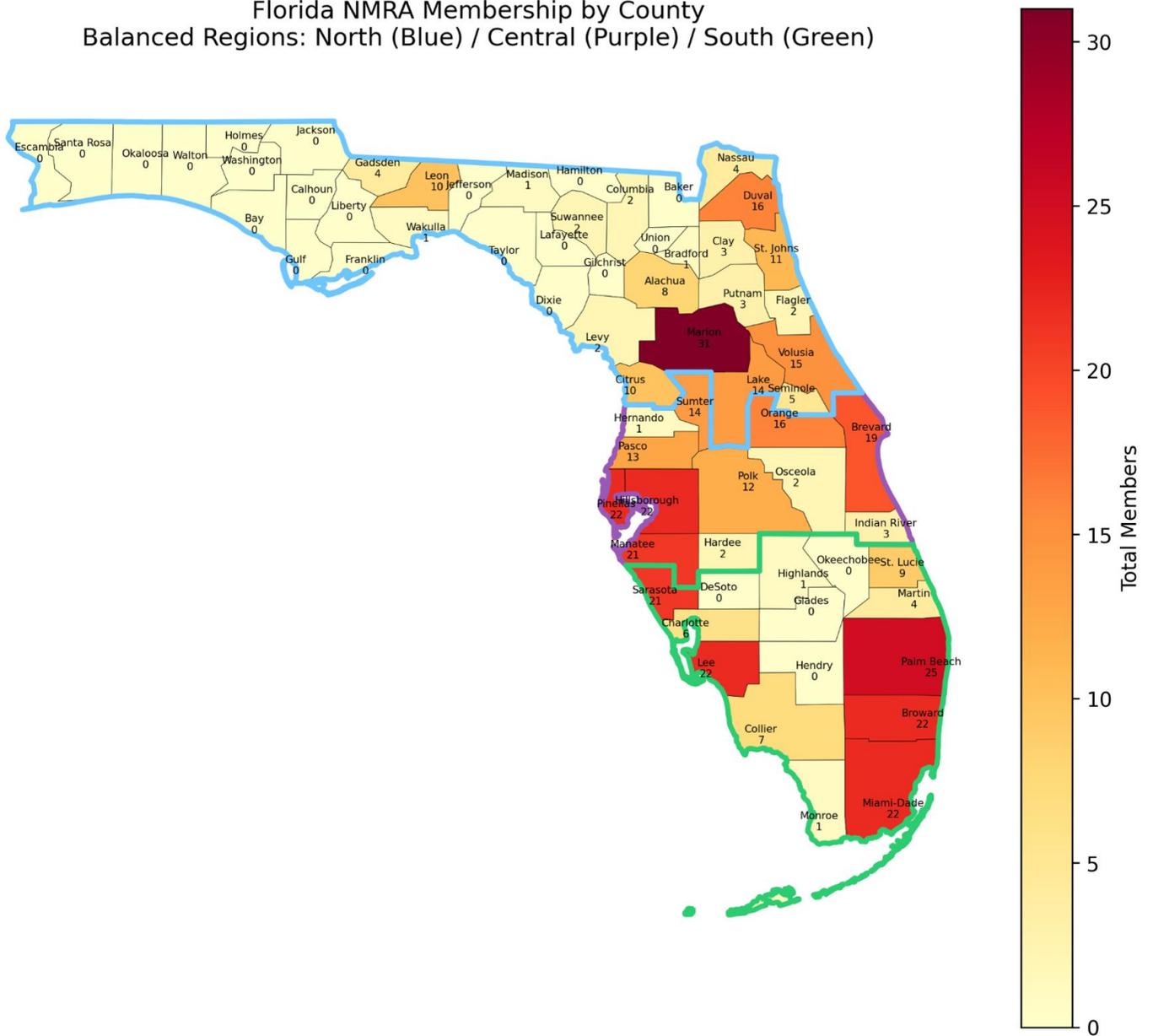


**Andy Zimmerman**

**President**

# New Sunshine Region Division Map

Florida NMRA Membership by County  
Balanced Regions: North (Blue) / Central (Purple) / South (Green)





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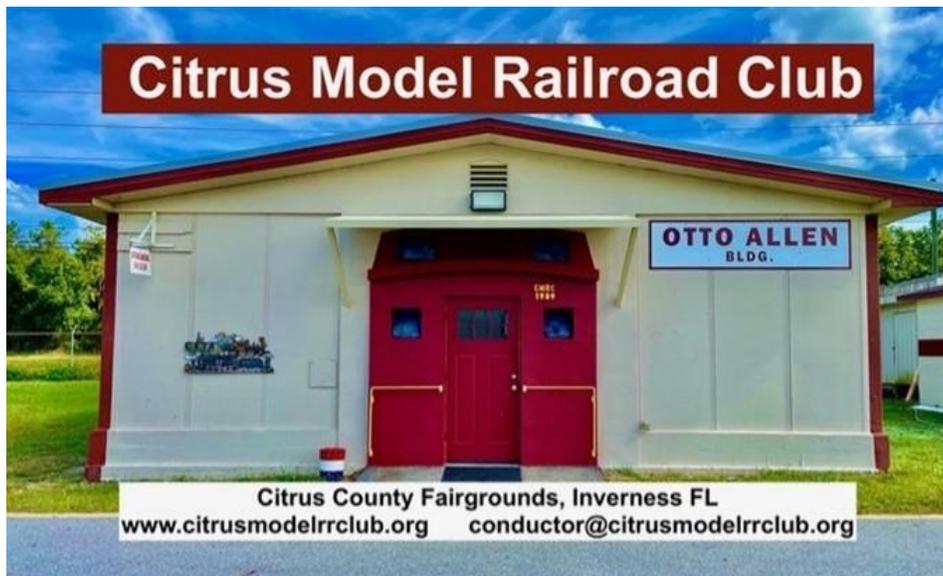
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## Treasurer's Message



Hello all,

We are in convention prep time; contracts signed, food selections, clinics sourced and planning some great fun!

We are going to hold our convention back at the Ocala Hilton October 15-17 with a member meeting on the 18. We are happy to say that the hotel rate will be the same as last year at \$149.99. Everyone that stayed last year knows this was a vast improvement over our Holiday Inn days. Please share your experience last year with others, I'd like to see us hit 100 attendees this year!

Once contracts are finalized I will update our website and share all information with you. My hope is to have the website updated in late March and ready to take registrations by April 1. (no April fools joke). ☺

Clinics—if you can provide a clinic or looking for a particular clinic please contact us. Our hobby is more fun when we interact and learn from one another. If you've found that winning formula to clean your track and they stay pristine for 20 years we want to know about it!! You don't have to be a professor, teacher, public speaker to do a clinic, just the desire to share what you've learned with others. We are stronger and smarter together!

Questions, comments, clinics email us at

[Nmra\\_sunshineregionmail@yahoo.com](mailto:Nmra_sunshineregionmail@yahoo.com)

Thanks folks, looking to see everyone in October!

**Glenn Kopriva**

**Treasurer**

## Achievement Program



I have no new Achievement Program information to report.

That is all I have for this time.

Thank you,

**Ken Hoot**

**Achievement Program Chair**

## Northern Division



On Sunday March 22<sup>nd</sup> the Sunshine Region Board of Directors voted to divide the State of Florida into three division, Northern, Central and Southern. This decision was not made without a great deal of planning and discussion among the Board Members. This was done to better serve the Sunshine Region Members. The Northern Division covered a large area before this decision was made and now it is even larger. I would like to welcome all of the new members to the Northern Division and I look forward to serving all of the members. With all of that being said I could use some help in the form of Assistant Superintendents. I would like to have volunteers from the southern part of the region and the Jacksonville or Beaches area. I have the authority to appoint them. Please contact me if you are interested in serving at [alco54@hotmail.com](mailto:alco54@hotmail.com) . Let's make the Northern Division better than ever!

On Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> the Northern Division will have a new event. The location will be the St. James Episcopal Church 2423 SW Bascom Norris Drive, Lake City Florida, doors will open at 9:00am for set up. Meeting will start at 10:00am. The theme will be modular model railroading. Please bring a couple of modules to display. Please tell us about your vision for building, frame work, track gauge, scale and wiring. Did you build to established standards or your own design? Please let me know what you would like to bring and the size for table arrangements. Our popular Show and Tell Table will be available for your projects finished or not. Coffee, donuts and other items will be on hand in the morning. Please give a generous donation for the snacks and building rental. Lunch will be on your own, plenty of places to eat in the area. Please RSVP me if you would like to participate at [alco54@hotmail.com](mailto:alco54@hotmail.com) (386)623-3030. Thank you.

The North Central Florida Model Railroad Club in Alachua Florida is having Operation Sessions for beginners and veteran operators. If you would like to learn about operating trains or need hours for your NMRA Chief Dispatcher AP contact Richard Segall at [resegall@gmail.com](mailto:resegall@gmail.com) The layout represents the area in North Florida around Alachua. Please check their website at [ncfmrc.org](http://ncfmrc.org) for more information on the Club and the layouts.

**Allen Scott**

**Northern Division Superintendent**

## Eastern Division



I'm posting some info for the former Eastern Division membership area.  
**Chip Pecere is putting together a meet for mid-March.**

# Eastern Model Railroad Meet

## Open to all Model Railroaders

### Monday - March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026

# Sign Up

**Location:**

Indian River County Library (MAIN MEETING ROOM)  
 1600 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960

**Time:** 10:30am to 4:30pm

**Donations:** \$12.50

Donation covers facilities and lunch

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*Join Us*

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**280 11<sup>th</sup> Court, Vero Beach FL 32962**

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First	Last
Name	
Email	
Phone	
<b>Please make your payment by March 5 so I have a head count</b>	

**Mark Lewalski**

**Telegraph Key Editor**

**Central Division Superintendent**

## Central Division



Hey new Centrals and prior Westerners,

As you may have discovered, my area of division responsibility has changed a bit. The north to south coverage of the previous Western Division, has been split between Northern, Southern, and the new Central. My area now extends across the state to cover two Florida coasts.

Let me say that although the Divisional lines have changed, *those lines on a map are really only imaginary*. To any member of our Region, this means nothing in regards to attending meets and/or events. I fully expect and plan on serving members across all divisions. Here's to our new endeavor.

If this is March, then I hope you were able to attend and enjoy our Western Division Meet on Feb 28<sup>th</sup>. Since I'm writing this prior to the actual event, I will have to bring you proper news in the April Telegraph Key issue.

As I stated in my Editorial, the **CP&W Model Railroad** is featured in the April Model Railroader magazine. You should take a look and consider giving this 100% NMRA group a visit in person.

Zitnik Trains held their Spring Parking Lot Swap Meet on February 18<sup>th</sup> and from what I can tell, it did quite well. I was there picking up several new-to-me items from the sellers while the wind gusts wreaked a bit of havoc. Good time had by most if not all.

### Events in the Central Division area

- Mar 28 – Suncoast Model RR Club Open House 10am – 2pm. \*
  - o Free clinics at 11am & 1pm – limited to the 1<sup>st</sup> 20 people to arrive.
  - o Clinic Topic: Rich Daniels will be hosting a clinic on ship to rail commodity loading and operations!
- Apr 12 – The next meet-up of the **Special Needs Model Railroad Association (SNMRA)** will be at the Florida Railroad Museum on April 12<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 3PM. This marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Autism Acceptance Extravaganza at the museum. This event is FREE to the community and there will be food trucks (for purchase), arts & craft vendors, sensory stations, train rides and knowledgeable resource vendors. The SNMRA will have their T-TRAK layout on display. Feel free to bring your N scale trains to run on their layout. Also on display will be the museum's G gauge layout.

As always, if you'd like to email me, please do so at [vwtrainsailor@gmail.com](mailto:vwtrainsailor@gmail.com)

I hope to see many of you out and around. Please work with me to do great things for all of us.

Thanks,

**Mark Lewalski**

**Central Division Superintendent**

## Southern Division



Hello Southern,

I'm still here in support of your Superintendent who remains floating around South America. As I reported last month, I was on my way to Springfield MA for the Amherst show and once again it was worth the trip. I also said I would report on the weather, it was cold, really cold, single digit cold at times, minus digit cold, damn cold. This time there was an extra added benefit, it snowed, white out snow, a lot of snow. So much snow, that attendance on Sunday was maybe 1500 through the doors, so much snow that some vendors took off on Saturday. For those who stuck around, buyers and sellers, the deals were good.

But that was there and this is here, locally there is not much going on! It has been quiet in this division! At the Florida Citrus, crickets, they do continue to gather for breakfast but without an address to set up I don't see them doing much but drinking coffee and eating eggs. They are looking for new members, membership cover all the bases, G to N, I'm surprised Z isn't in there. Take a look at their website [www.fcmts.org](http://www.fcmts.org) and get involved with them.

The Palm Beach folks must still be resting from their two weeks of constant hosting the fair's participants, I have not heard much from them either. They deserve the rest, waving back at thousands of fair goers is taxing, it can wear you out. With that in mind, there will be a more in-depth report of their recovery with next month's super's report. In the interim check out their Facebook page "The Palm Beach Model Railroad Club (Official)".

The South Florida Railroad Museum Is moving along with their plans for a reconstruction of the "N" scale layout, a total reconstruction, ground up. The tentative plan was to begin after the Springfield show, get Amherst out of the way and begin. But who knew one needed to thaw out from the cold (single digit cold), reacclimate to our weather (warmer, but cold) and get moving. Also, life sometimes (most times) does not cooperate, family and work just get in the way, so schedules get pushed. The base bench work has been drawn out, it still needs some refinement, but it is one plan out of four that seems solid. Now the commencement effort is out to March – April for removal, moving of assets and beginning construction.

The ECHOES are still having a grand time at the Gold Coast Museum, running trains every weekend and hosting the museum visitors and running more trains. I understand plans for the permanent layout are coming along nicely, with once again, emphasis on operations. Contact them if you are in the area, they are adjacent to the zoo. Make a right turn before getting to the zoo entrance gates. Check out both their website and Facebook pages for the special events they hold during the year. Their Facebook page, they have two, ECHOES and ECHOES at GCRM have some very telling videos of the effort they have put in at their new home. Especially the "Engineer's POV", although you may get a bit woozy.

Last month I said the future held a Division meet / workshop, and it does! The planned schedule is either the 18<sup>th</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> of April and it will be hosted by the SFRM. To reiterate, the normal format for meets will be followed for a day of clinics and a mini-RPM of sorts. The schedule, donuts / coffee, clinics, lunch, clinics, display of models and judging if required. Plus, there will be vendor tables for those of you who want more. The RPM side of it will hopefully engage a few folks to entertain

showing their stuff without going through the paperwork. Otherwise, if judging is on your agenda the Southern has a new AP Chair in Paul Beckstrom, a competent craftsman and proficient in evaluating, bring your stuff! All of this to be held at the museum's regular venue of the St Paul Lutheran church on Palmetto Park Rd. Once it is determined when the soccer mom who booked both Saturdays knows when she can get a DJ for her event (interesting story), I will know what Saturday it will fall on. It shall be announced on both the SFRM's website and Facebook page.

For this month, that is it, next month you will have your Superintendent in the house. He can tell you how many times he got on and off the ship and what he experienced.

Till then, Model 60!

**Bob Leonard for,**

**Richard Berger**

**Southern Division Superintendent**

## South Florida Railway Museum

# Happy New Year Sunshine Region

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

**01-10, 02-14, 03-14**

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

Follow us on our website [www.sfrm.org](http://www.sfrm.org) and our Facebook page

1300 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Deerfield Beach, FL  
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## SNMRA SIG

### How It All Began



What a journey this has been. At times it has been challenging, but always extremely rewarding. The SNMRA journey began on Saturday, October 07, 2023, my daughter Sophia and I were at the Suncoast Model Railroad Club (SMRRC) Train Show, and we were having a great time! I was enjoying a cup of coffee, and we were just getting acclimated to all that was going on. As we were making our way through the aisles Sophia saw a friend of her's, Ethan Drew, whom she knew from a special needs group in Sarasota called Adventure for All or "AfA." I was really surprised to see Ethan there, after all, he was from Sarasota and a friend of Sophia's. What were the chances? I asked Sophia about Ethan, and she told me that he was autistic like her. She said that we should start a model railroad club for those with Special Needs. I thought that was a great idea, but that something like that must already exist. After all, there are lots of model railroaders who have special needs, aren't there?

At that same train show there was a Women in Model Railroading (WIMRR) booth promoting their Special Interest Group (SIG). Sophia and I spoke with them, and Sophia was super excited to meet more women in the hobby. This was something she hadn't heard about before. Again, Sophia thought about a special needs model railroading group, and she asked them if they knew of any. They hadn't heard about anything specific for Special Needs but thought it was a great idea and that there definitely should be something. Later, Sophia and I went to the SMRRC Clubhouse to see their layout. Again, we spoke with some of their members about a Special Needs group, and again no one knew of anything, but everyone thought there should be something and that it was a great idea.

After returning home and later that week, I spoke with Dave and Kelly at my local model railroad store, Gulf Coast Model Railroad. They hadn't heard of anything like that. Coincidentally, in the following months they learned that Richard Pierson was starting the Sarasota Toy Museum, and he was very interested in supporting such an effort. As it turns out, Richard's son Jacob is autistic, and he loves model railroading. Richard was so supportive! I've worked with him extensively since that time, and we are now having our monthly meetings in his museum.

Richard brought the Toy Museum to Sarasota, and it includes a layout designed and built by Dave Frary and Dave Maynard, two of the most famous names in model railroading. Richard brought the layout to Sarasota and helped the Sarasota Bay Model Railroad Society to restore it. He now features it prominently in his museum. Continuing to follow up on Sophia's grand idea, I spoke with NMRA members in my region, and no one knew of anything specifically for the Special Needs community. The regional leadership offered to reach out to the NMRA, but even after I persisted, I didn't learn of anything remotely resembling what Sophia had initially suggested.

Soon after, as fate would have it as I was listening to Nick Ozorak of The Roundhouse Podcast, he mentioned the attraction to model railroading which many autistics experience. I sent Nick an email and he eventually suggested I start an NMRA SIG. I put some effort into that and didn't make any headway for quite a while. At that time, I couldn't find a lot of guidance on how to start a SIG which was frustrating. After about six months or so of following up, I finally learned that Seth Neumann was then overseeing the SIG program, and I emailed him directly. He helped me a great deal with the SIG application and suggested many ways to better facilitate my efforts to include starting

SNMRA@groups.io. Of course, I started a not for profit because I learned it is required to become an NMRA SIG. In that period, I also created a website ([www.snmra.org](http://www.snmra.org)), a Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1219352316029628/>), an Instagram page (@snmra\_online), a Threads page, an email address (info@snmra.org), etc. We now have business cards, stickers, magnets and even T-shirts and polos. I'm trying to spread the word that there is support for anyone who wants to participate in the hobby.

### **Our Mission Statement**

In order to provide a supportive community where model railroaders of all capabilities can gather, exchange ideas, and enjoy the hobby, the SNMRA actively engages with the community. From local model railroad clubs and retailers to the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA), we are working to bring all aspects of the hobby within the reach of our members. The Sarasota Toy Museum has been an integral part of our journey and monthly SNMRA meetings are held there. We are currently working with the Florida Railroad Museum to bring the joy of volunteerism and prototype operations to our activities.

### **We are STEAM focused**

Model railroading is such a multifaceted hobby...

**SCIENCE:** For example, many model railroaders enjoy conducting research and learning about the science behind how things work. What do you want to research? The history of your favorite railroad? Maybe the force generated by a steam locomotive?

**TECHNOLOGY:** For example, many model railroaders enjoy applying computer technology to their railroads. Have you ever heard of DCC or LCC? How about lighting and Light Emitting Diodes (LED)?

**ENGINEERING:** For example, many model railroaders enjoy track planning and civil engineering. Would you like to build a bridge on your model railroad?

**ART:** For example, many model railroaders enjoy the art aspect of modeling. Have you tried making your own mountains or trees? How about painting a locomotive?

**MATHEMATICS:** For example, many model railroaders enjoy building benchwork and track. Have you ever built a layout to fit in a specific space? How about figuring out exactly which piece of track will fit in the space?

### **World Record T-TRAK Layout!**

The SNMRA has decided to become a T-Trak club. We hope this will allow each member to create their own module which they will keep at home and bring to club meetings for help and assistance and to create a club layout. We are working to design and build a club module for the World Record T-TRAK Layout at the 2026 National Train Show during the NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, TN on August 1-2, 2026. We already have our module registered and are working feverishly to complete it in time. Each SNMRA member is encouraged to contribute what they can in planning, designing and building our module. Some are contributing design help. Some are working on scenery. Some, on structures. I can't wait to see how it all comes together.

## What's Next?

So, that's where we are right now. What do you think? Is this a worthy endeavor? Is it something you can get behind? Are you thinking to yourself, how can I become a part of this amazing movement? If you are, please contact us at any of our social media links.

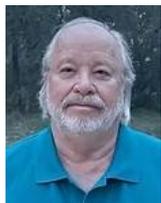
## SNMRA News

On the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2026, the Special Needs Model Railroad Association (SNMRA) Special Interest Group (SIG), represented the Sunshine Region (SSR) of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) at the "2026 RealRail Model Train Show," in Venice, Florida. It was a very busy weekend with many model railroad hobbyists featuring G gauge, L gauge, O gauge, HO scale and N scale. Over 100 dealer tables featured collectibles, American Flyer, Lionel, Atlas, Scale Trains, Walthers, Micro-Trains, and several cottage industries. One of my favorites was an artist making beautiful palm trees, many packing plant items, and semi-trailers filled with citrus. There were running G gauge, L gauge and T-TRAK layouts. The event was widely attended by many local model train clubs to include the Florida Garden Railroad Society (FGRS), Greater Florida Lego Users Group (GFLUG), Scale Rails of Southwest Florida, and of course the host RealRail. There was even an artist there painting railroad themed art by request. This was the first year that RealRail hosted the show at the Venice Community Center and based on the success, I'm sure they'll be back again soon!

**Todd Slaughter**

**SNMRA SIG  
SSR At Large Director**

## 2026 Sunshine Region Iron Horse Convention



Editor's Note – *I'm running this info again and until the questionnaire is emailed to our membership.*

The dates for the SSR 2026 Ocala Convention will be held on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, through Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Ocala Hilton Books Overflow for the University of Florida Gator Football Games and for 2026, The Gators play on the weekend of October 10<sup>th</sup>, so that weekend was unavailable for our convention.

At our 2025 Convention, we handed out a Survey at the Banquet, and your comments helped the convention committee, on what attendees want to see for 2026. One of the requests was to have shorter Hands-On Clinics, since it restricted you to 3 ½ hours in one clinic and you cannot attend other clinics. We can shorten the Hands-On Clinics to 1 hour, but just understand, you will not be able to get one-on-one attention with the 1-hour clinic as you do with the 3 1/2-hour clinic.

Another Survey request was, that you would like to have repeated clinics, like they have at Cocoa Beach Prototype Rails. Some of our clinicians are only available at certain times and for certain days when they can present their clinics. I will try my best to work with them to make that possible for 2026.

**LIVE ZOOM CLINICS** - We want to make sure you understand the concept of the Live Zoom Clinics. They are no different than a live In-Person Clinician except that the Clinician is on a screen from another location (maybe even a state), but you are still able to talk and interact with them, as if they are in the clinic room with you.

**QUESTIONNAIRE** - We will be sending out an email, in mid-February, directing you to go to the Sunshine Region website, where there will be a questionnaire that you can fill out, asking what Hourly and/or Hands-On Clinic YOU would like given at the 2026 Convention. We need you to give full details, so we understand exactly what clinic you're looking for.

For example:

**TRACK WORK?** – Laying Track? Wiring Track? Ballasting Track? Etc.

**WEATHERING?** Locomotives? Structures? Rolling Stock? Etc.

The more information you give me, the easier it is for me to try to get the clinicians for these clinics you would like to attend. Would you please fill out the Questionnaire as soon as you get the February email, so it gives me the time to work on all the requests. The Questionnaire will **ONLY** be open for 15 days, so **please** respond as quickly as possible.

Also, we've included in this issue of the February Telegraph Key, a **NUMBERED** list of all the Clinics/Clinicians from the 2025 Ocala Convention. If you would like me to repeat any of these clinics for the 2026 Convention, please use that number on the list when you fill out the Questionnaire.

*[Editor's Note: See the list of numbered clinics/clinicians after Ski's column.]*

Please take the time to fill out the questionnaire, because your Feedback is how we can make the 2026 Convention even better than the 2025 convention.

You can contact me if you have any questions about the Questionnaire or you would like to add something that wasn't included in the Questionnaire.

Jeffrey "Ski" Guzowski, Clinician Chairperson

Cell: 954-401-0804 Email: [Jguzowski@Bellsouth.net](mailto:Jguzowski@Bellsouth.net)

**Jeff Guzowski**

**Clinician Chairperson**

**SSR At Large Director**

# Iron Horse 2025 Clinics

## The Hands-On Clinics

### 1. Weathering with the (non) Masters – Clinicians: **Bill Cialini, Tim Ellis, and Bob Leonard** – 3 ½ Hours

This clinic will cover weathering three of the primary mediums used in weathering all our toys, whether those toys are on the rails, or alongside of them. There are three clinicians that will teach their approach to weathering, Gouache paint, Pastels / Powders and Watercolor Pencils. We can't teach airbrush techniques and practices because no one wants a smelly room!

All who attend will have the opportunity to employ these techniques as you follow along. There will be boxcar "mules" that will be distributed for your use to practice what you have been taught.

### 2. Tree Making Clinic – Clinician: **Ken Hoot, Region SSR AP Chairman/Rich Paul** – 3 ½ Hours

Ken will furnish all the materials, tools, jigs, and machines to make over 200 trees in 3 different styles, Bottle Brush, Furnace Filters, and Poly Fiber. I will furnish each attendee with enough material to build over 30 trees in the workshop. Also, I will have 3 of my plastic flocking bottles along with all the flocking that is needed to furnish the trees. Ken has a homemade jig to speed up your tree making and all attendees will take the jig home.

## The Hourly Clinics

### 3. The Ubiquitous F Unit – Clinician: **Bob Leonard**

The clinic describes the changes over the years of the (Bulldog) nosed design of EMC-EMD F units, from the 1940s to the 1980s. The emphasis is on the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of units built and the models that have been produced by the many manufacturers, FTs to F7s. Everyone has done an F unit, pot metal, brass, plastic, they are like "Big Boys" if you have seen one, you have seen them all. Not true!

### 4. Waterfalls, Oh the Grandeur – Clinician: **Bill Cialini**

This covers the creation of waterfalls using commercial products and some unorthodox methods.

### 5. Bridges – Clinician: **Bob Leonard**

There are seven types of bridges, which ones can a railroad modeler use prototypically? We look at the types of bridges and the manufacturers who provide models of them.

## **6. Florida Early Orange Production – Clinician: Tom Wilson**

In Central Florida, Transportation, Plants, Byproducts, to modern Production and what you did not know what is made from oranges.

## **7. How to detail your Steel Mills and Coke Ovens - Clinician: Tom Wilson**

Tom models in HO Scale the Pittsburg & West Virginia Railroad and the Union Railroad. The Union Railroad (a subsidiary of US Steel) around the Pittsburg area. US Steel had 2 Steel Mills and Coke Operations around the Pittsburg area. Tom worked for US Steel for 20 years and will show you how to correctly model steel mills and coke operations, from someone that actually worked in the mills.

## **8. Basic Switching Techniques – Clinician: Donovan Lewis**

This presentation will show the basic techniques and terminology used in delivering cars to customers. Car cards, waybills, and switch lists will be discussed. Techniques of switching will be demonstrated via videos of two railroads.

## **9. Operations – Clinician: Donovan Lewis**

This presentation will go into the details of how a railroad operates and how it can be duplicated in a modelling situation. Designs of railroads and their effects on operation will be discussed. Timetables, waybills, card cards, switch lists, and train orders will be introduced. Train operation will be illustrated step by step via video and still shots during this presentation.

## **10. Model Railroad and Artificial Intelligence – Clinician: Glenn Kopriva**

Have you heard about all this Artificial Intelligence (AI) stuff and wondered

if you could use it or wondered how it works, or how it could help you? Are you an expert in some aspects of our hobby and would like to share your knowledge as a clinician but don't know how to assemble a Power Point or even organize your thoughts? AI can help you with that! In

this clinic we will discuss how AI works and how you can take advantage of

it! This will be a fun, interactive clinic. You will walk away wanting to try it out.

## **11. Selective Compression Clinic - Clinician: Jeff Hanke, MMR**

This PowerPoint based clinic will walk through, step-by-step, the process to take a prototype railroad area and adopt it to a smaller area for a model railroad, while preserving the operational character of the place. The clinic will explore how to interpret a prototype track plan, how to determine the operational necessary features and how to conduct the trades needed to make a prototypically operating model railroad. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad's Hancock, WV yard will be the primary example used with photos of the actual model railroad compared to the prototype.

## **12. Decaling Clinic - Clinician: Jeff Hanke, MMR**

This PowerPoint based clinic will be an in-depth look at the dying art of decaling. Mastering this skill will open a world of opportunities for unique paint schemes on your railroad. The clinic will review the types of decals on

the market, care and storage of decals, recovering old and brittle decals, the process of applying decals, adding period correct markings and overcoming decal problems. It will also walk through a wide variety of manufacturers of decals on the market with examples being passed around.

### **13. Modeling Scrap Yards, The Metal Recycling Business – Clinician: Allen Scott**

1. Prototype research on buying, sorting, processing and selling.
2. Modeling the material handling equipment, buildings, fencing, gates and scales.
3. Modeling the materials to be recycled. Automobiles, heavy steel, lighter steel, copper, aluminum and brass.
4. Modeling gondola loads and other materials.

### **14. Advanced Tools and Tips – Clinician: Doug Geiger MMR**

Tools can easily be the most important part of enhancing your modeling skills. Join us as we explore various modeling tools and supplies, ranging from advanced (for example, calipers and material organization), moving to exotic (punch and die sets and scribes to name just a few), and concluding with some power tools (slow speed drills and mini sawz-alls for instance). Many of these tools are not often seen in the model railroading world but are used extensively in the IPMS world (International Plastic Modeling Society – those folks who build airplanes, armor, cars and ships). Modeling tips using these tools will also be discussed during the seminar. Some of the tools will be passed around for you to handle. Some of the more exotic supplies will also be discussed.

### **15. The Transcontinental Story, Trivia and Tidbits – Clinician: Doug Geiger MMR**

2019 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad from Omaha to California. We will explore some of the lesser-known events (and scandals!), facts and people involved in building one of America's greatest achievements. Year-by-year construction details (many of which you may not know about) are also covered. Come and hear fascinating facts about America's first major railroad construction project.

### **16. Laser Engraving for Rolling Stock – Clinician: David Vescovi**

Clinic will discuss using laser engravers for model railroading models, showing the Pros and Cons of Laser Engraving vs 3D Printing. I will talk about the costs and different features of engravers used on acrylic, wood, and Styrene. The Software Program is Lightburn and will show how to set up a project, use, tips, techniques with a demo. Examples: wood caboose, steam car, LNG tender, etc. Followed by discussion and Q&A's.

### **17. Judging for Celebration of Models - Clinician: Carl Smeigh MMR**

This class is mandatory for "New Judges" who are participating for judging in the Celebration of Models to achieve AP Certificates. Class is on Friday Morning 8:30-9:30am

### **18. Scratch Building with Wood – Clinician: John Giammasi MMR**

John will teach you how to build structures using Bass Wood.

### **19. Making a City Backdrop using Silhouettes, Building Fronts and Flats – Clinician: Mike Collins MMR**

Mike will have projected pictures and use a demonstration board to show the six steps of making a City Backdrop. He is bringing the seven-foot backdrop that won Second Place for Displays at the 2017 Sunshine Region National Convention in Orlando. He will provide a handout which includes the six steps and reference website with his YouTube videos that show the background.

### **20. Latest Technology and Trends using DCC – Clinician: Carl Marchand**

The clinic covers the latest tools, devices and software available for DCC users of all scales with heavy emphasis on HO and N scale. Highly recommended for newbies and seasoned veterans alike.

### **21. Creating a Small Switching Layout: Part One (and ½) – Clinician: Mark Lewalski**

This clinic describes the ongoing building of my small, portable HO shelf switching layout. I cover the ups and downs of my track plan journey, my search for a modeling era, changes I made along the way, and my final decision to put plan into action and actually get some modeling done. I will have my layout available during the clinic.

### **22. Laser Cutting and 3D Printing – Clinician: Andrew Deek**

We usually buy 3D printers and Laser Cutters with the intention of making Prototypical Models and Detail Parts. But you can also use those tools to create accessories for your layout. Come and get inspired by Andrew as he shows you things you can create using these high-tech tools.

### **23. Using JMRI for Operations – Clinician: Tracy Sanders**

Tracy will go over, using JMRI for Operations in class and then he will take you out to the Echoes HO Layout to do Hands-On demonstrations. You will then get to operate on the layout on what you have learned in the class. First time operators and seasoned veterans will find this clinic helpful.

### **24. The Military Moves by Rail – Clinician: Larry Lawler**

Using "Tiedown Instructions for Rail Movement", transportation TMs and FMs as guides covers both new model examples as well as detailing some old models to represent the rolling stock used by the military.

### **25. Penn Central Cabins and Cabooses – A Look at the Prototype and Modeling Options in HO Scale – Clinician: Larry Lawler**

A history of cabin cars and cabooses that were taken from the parent railroads and contacted after the merger to follow Penn Central consists. From PRR N 5s, NH Ns to NYC N 7s and beyond to the N 12, Larry covers them all. He also provides modeling information, what steps to follow whether it be for kit bashed models, craftsman models, or produced models to better represent those prototypes of the Penn Central.

**26. Water Water Everywhere – Clinician: Tim Ellis**

The clinic explains the use of two-part epoxies, UV epoxies and creating textures (ripples/waves) with other products to give your water a look of realism. It also covers the coloring, not all water is blue, have you been to the Mississippi?

**27. Modeling Deciduous Trees with Root Structure – Clinicians: Anna and Jeff DeVito**

We have no description for this clinic

**28. Installing DCC Decoders and Sound Systems in Locomotives – Clinician: Greg Garbacz**

We have no description for this clinic

## **LIVE ZOOM CLINICS**

**29. Talkin' T-TRAK - Presenters: Andy Zimmerman & Terry Moore**

**Description:** Curious about T-TRAK or looking to get started with this versatile and beginner-friendly modular system? Join Andy Zimmerman and Terry Moore as they dive into the basics of T-TRAK, covering everything from module construction and layout design to wiring, scenery, and operations. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned modeler, you'll gain insights on how T-TRAK can fit into your model railroading journey. Discover how this small, adaptable format fosters creativity, collaboration, and community involvement, making it an ideal platform for expanding your model railroading skills and connections. Come prepared with questions, and let's talk T-TRAK!

**30. Take Me to the River - Presenter: Dean Smith MMR**

**Description:** Ready to bring your layout to life with dynamic, fast-moving water scenes? Join Dean Smith in this hands-on clinic as he guides you step-by-step through the process of modeling mountain rivers, streams, and waterfalls. Fast-moving water can be an intimidating element for many modelers, but Dean will demystify the techniques needed to create realistic water features. From creating convincing rapids to cascading waterfalls, you'll learn methods to enhance the natural beauty of your layout. This clinic has been presented at regional and national NMRA conventions, National Narrow Gauge conventions, and on NMRAX, making it a must-see for anyone wanting to elevate their scenery skills. Don't miss out on this chance to master the art of water modeling!

**31. From Proto Photo to Model Scene - Presenter: Dean Smith MMR**

**Description:** Ever wondered how to turn a real-world photograph into a model scene? In this clinic, Dean Smith presents "From Proto Photo to Model Scene," showcasing how he constructed a detailed model of the gasoline fuel depot at Newland, North Carolina, for the Vida Division. Follow along as Dean walks you through the entire process, from analyzing a prototype photograph to recreating the structure with accuracy and realism. In addition to prototype modeling techniques, Dean will share essential tips on scenery and basic modeling along the way. This clinic has been featured at an NMRA national convention and on the "Off the Beaten Track" series. If you're looking to enhance your layout with prototype-inspired realism, this clinic is for you!

### **32. JMRI with DecoderPro - Presenter: Mark Juett MMR –**

**Description:** JMRI Decoder Pro is an essential tool for setting up and configuring your DCC decoders with ease. In this ever-popular clinic, presented at both Regional and National conventions, Mark Juett will guide you through the many features that Decoder Pro offers. With its intuitive graphical user interface (GUI), Decoder Pro simplifies tasks that used to involve counting bits and configuring complicated CVs like CV29.

You'll learn how to take advantage of Decoder Pro's capabilities, including setting up special lighting effects, speed tables and speed matching, momentum, and braking. Mark will also cover how to copy and duplicate settings for similar locomotives, saving time and effort. Additionally, you'll learn about programming on the main, as well as the benefits of using a dedicated programming track.

Whether you're new to DecoderPro or looking to enhance your skills, this clinic has something for everyone. It's a fantastic opportunity to discover how simple and efficient Decoder Pro can make your DCC experience. Come see just how easy it is to get started!

### **33. Car Forwarding with JMRI (Operations) - Presenter: Mark Juett MMR**

**Description:** Looking for an effective way to generate traffic on your model railroad? Mark Juett's popular clinic on JMRI for car forwarding is a must-see. Frequently requested and in high demand, this clinic was originally part of the "Setting Up for Operations" clinic but was split out to allow more time for both topics. It fits perfectly as a follow-up to "Setting Up for Operations."

Traditional car forwarding methods like car cards and waybills are still widely used but come with limitations—cars are typically assigned just four destinations before waybills need to be rotated. In the past, some operators used colored thumbtacks, which detracted from the realism. While various software programs exist, many rely on one person for updates and maintenance.

This clinic will introduce you to JMRI as a versatile solution for car forwarding. Learn how to set up and configure the software to meet your operational needs. You'll discover how to assign various car types to appropriate destinations, create flexible movements that aren't stuck in repetitive patterns (unless desired, like with unit trains), and generate switch lists customized with your railroad's logo and name.

Mark will show just how simple it is to get started and demonstrate how JMRI can handle freight and passenger movements with ease. If you're looking for a reliable, customizable system that enhances operations, this clinic will equip you with the knowledge and tools to get your railroad moving smoothly.

### **34. Cinematic Modeling: Creating Dramatic Scenes using Film Production Design Principles - Presenter: Roman Pastucha**

**Description:** Transform your shelf layouts, dioramas, and modular layouts into captivating, cinematic scenes using principles of cinematic production design. As trends like T-TRAK and modular railroading grow, a unique opportunity arises to elevate your model railroad scenes to a new level of artistry. This clinic explores how to design foreground scenes and backdrops as cinematic art, turning your trains into the "actors" on a well-crafted stage.

Drawing inspiration from theater and natural history museums—where taxidermy mounts are displayed in realistic settings—this clinic will guide you through designing backdrops that enhance the drama and realism of your layout.

The clinic is divided into three key sections:

1. **Design Elements and Principles:** Learn the foundational concepts of creating backdrops that enhance your scenes, including composition, perspective, and color theory.
2. **Materials and Techniques:** Explore the different materials and methods for crafting foreground and backdrops, from traditional painting to modern digital printing, and discover how to select the best approach for your layout.
3. **Final Installation and Photographic Composition:** Discover how to install your backdrops with precision and gain insights into photographic techniques that make your scenes look like they've been lifted straight from a cinematic frame.

Whether you're a seasoned modeler or just starting out, this clinic will provide the knowledge and inspiration to create backdrops that complement your layout and transform it into a cinematic masterpiece.

### **35. On30 Modular Railroading: The Pudding River Lumber Co. - Presenter: Kevin Spady**

**Description:** Join Kevin Spady as he takes you through the fascinating world of On30 modular railroading with his Pudding River Lumber Co. layout. This clinic offers an in-depth exploration of what it means to build modular scenes in On30, from concept to execution. Whether you're new to modular railroading or an experienced modeler, Kevin will share valuable "how-to" tips for creating highly detailed and realistic modules.

Kevin began his journey in modular railroading in 2012 when he joined the California South Coast On30 Modular Group. Since then, he has built several intricate and award-winning modules, many of which have been featured in the On30 Annual magazine. In this clinic, Kevin will discuss everything from layout design and construction techniques to scenery, weathering, and detailing that bring his Pudding River Lumber Co. to life.

If you're looking for inspiration to start your own modular project or simply want to learn more about On30 modeling, this clinic will provide the tools and insights to help you get started. Kevin's experience and passion for modular railroading make this clinic a must-see for anyone interested in building and showcasing modular layouts.

### **36. Introduction to 3D Printing – Presenter: Ray Persing**

**Description:** In 2020 I acquired what has quickly become an indispensable tool in my modeling arsenal – a resin-based 3D printer. This clinic covers basic questions of Why 3D printing; What printers are available and what can they do; Where can I get printers and files; When is 3D printing appropriate; and How do I go about doing this? This is designed as an introduction to 3D printing, with specific application to structures, rolling stock, and details.

### **37. Scratchbuilding in Wood – Presenter: Ray Persing**

**Description:** Nothing makes a more realistic model of a wood structure than using wood as a modeling medium. In an era when craftsman kits are becoming increasingly expensive, scratch-building makes high-quality models possible on a budget. For the modeler who is considering scratch-building but either hasn't started or hasn't started or has started with limited success. We'll cover techniques used in constructing wood models by stepping through the construction of a prize-winning structure. Methods used to build a Merit Award quality model, as well as a number of warnings of things to do, and alternative methods to achieve similar effects.

### **38. Achievement Program Update – Presenter: Ray Persing**

Description: The Achievement Program is one of the great perks of being in the NMRA – a structured way to learn more about this great hobby, improve your modeling skills, and have a great time in the process. For people who aren't active in the AP, we'll show you how participating in the AP can make you a better modeler and for those who are further along on their journey we'll talk about what we're doing at all levels to improve the experience to everybody.



**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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