

Telegraph Key



Railroad History

September 6, 1869: The first westbound transcontinental passenger train arrived at the Alameda Terminal in the San Francisco Bay area, completing the first coast-to-passenger rail connection across the United States.

Iron Horse 2026

The Sunshine Region, Iron Horse 2026, Convention will be at the Ocala Convention Center on Thursday October 15th through Saturday October 17th.

Expand Your Horizon 2027

The 2027 National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) National Convention, titled "Expand Your Horizon," will take place in Tacoma, Washington, from August 10 to August 15, 2027

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Your Editor:
On the CP&W

News from the President:
History,
Fellowship, and
the Future

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NMRA SUNSHINE REGION

IRON HORSE

2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Thursday, October 15 th – Saturday, October 17 th , 2026



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Place: HILTON OCALA

3600 SOUTHWEST 36 TH AVE., OCALA, FL

**Hourly Clinics, OP Sessions, Modeling Contests,
Meet & Greet & A Banquet with Speaker on Saturday Night
For more info and Online Registration, go to**

NMRASunshineRegion.com

**You Do Not have to be an NMRA Member to attend
This event is Open to Everyone who likes TRAINS!**



Editor's Message

.....

In August I had the immense pleasure of joining a fantastic group of model railroaders on the famous Chicago Peoria & Western !

The Chicago, Peoria & Western is a freelanced HO railroad located in Tampa, Florida with modeled mainline running between Chicago and Galesburg. The main yard is located in Aurora and the rails proceed westward to Mendota, Princeton, Wyanet, Kewanee, Galva, Middletown, Oneida with a branch-line to St. David and Canton. The main yard has a capacity of 130 cars.

The railroad is located in a 35' x 45' free standing metal building with the railroad using 30' x 45'. The mainline is 250' of single track. This does not include passing sidings or industrial track. Track is code 70 spiked to Central Valley tie strips on Homabed. The branch-line has 40' of track.

The time period is September, 1940. The power is almost all steam. There are 495 freight cars, with 180 home road cars. These totals do not include waycars or passenger cars.

Operation is TT&TO with a 4 to 1 clock. There are train order boards and telephones to OS and pick-up orders. There are 5 first class trains and 2 second class freights. All the others run as extras.

For more on this amazing freelance railroad, visit: <https://chicagopeoriawestern.net/>, or see the April 2026 issue of Model Railroader magazine!

***Choo Choo My Friends,
Todd***

Todd H. Slaughter
CW3, USA (Ret)
NMRA SSR At large Director
Editor, Telegraph key
Ph- (C) 941-400-3253

Chicago, Peoria & Western



Johnny, Fred, Ed, Jim, Todd, Joe, Joel, Dave, Loyd, Bob, Royal, Donovan, Jon, Rob, Paul (Greg not shown).



Photos by Greg Komar



Fun, Friends, Trains

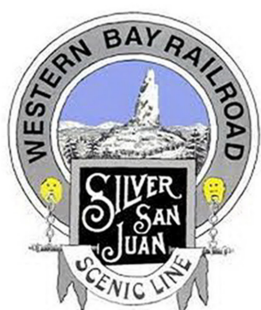
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The Western Bay Railroad is a 950 square ft On30 layout in Port St Lucie. We meet almost every Tuesday evening. We are looking for new members to join our group. There are OP sessions & scenery that we are still working on. If you're a

modeler and serious about learning, give us a try! Go to our website or contact Al Sohl MMR als0622@yahoo.com

'No dues, just a great experience'
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President's Message

.....

There are conventions you remember because of the **layouts**.

There are conventions you remember because of the **people**.

And then there are conventions **that make history**.

The **2026 NMRA National Convention** in Chattanooga managed to accomplish all three.

For one incredible week, model railroaders from across the United States and around the world gathered to celebrate the hobby we all love. The clinics were exceptional, the National Train Show was outstanding, old friendships were renewed, and new ones were formed. Throughout it all, we were reminded that model railroading has always been about far more than trains.

For those of us in the Sunshine Region, Chattanooga was particularly memorable. Everywhere I went, I saw familiar faces from Florida attending clinics, volunteering, operating trains, exchanging ideas, and enjoying the fellowship that makes an NMRA convention special.

One of the most visible examples was the National T-TRAK Layout, the largest T-TRAK layout ever assembled. Hundreds of model railroaders worked together to create something that no individual, club, Region, or organization could possibly have



.....

Florida was well represented in that historic effort. While I do not have an exact final count, Florida model railroaders contributed more than 50 modules to the record-breaking layout. Sunshine Region members and other Florida modelers were not simply spectators to history; they helped build it. What impressed me most wasn't the size of the layout.



It was the people.

NMRA members, NRail members, club members, and model railroaders with no organizational affiliation stood shoulder to shoulder. No one cared what logo was on someone's membership card. They cared about helping one another, solving problems, sharing ideas, running trains, and enjoying the hobby.

**This was, and is, the true definition of mentorship, fellowship,
and community.**

.....

Every module represented someone's craftsmanship. Every connection represented trust in a common standard. Every train completing its journey demonstrated what can happen when model railroaders work together toward a common goal.

Before the National Train Show even opened, another historic milestone had already been reached. On **Monday, July 27**, the NMRA Board of Directors approved the **Master Builder: Modular Railroading** Achievement Program certificate.

For the first time in four decades, the Achievement Program gained a new path toward earning **Master Model Railroader®**.

That decision represented much more than another certificate. It acknowledged modular railroading as a mature modeling discipline built upon craftsmanship, interoperability, standards, mentorship, and collaboration. Perhaps more importantly, it demonstrated that the NMRA continues to evolve alongside the hobby it serves.

As I walked through the convention and around that enormous layout, I realized that Chattanooga's real success wasn't measured in square footage, modules, or scale miles of track.



It was measured in people.

.....

The volunteers who transported modules across the country. The members who spent countless hours setting up and tearing down. The experienced modelers who mentored newcomers. The friendships formed over operating sessions, clinics, and shared meals.

Chattanooga reminded us that modular railroading is more than a method of building layouts.

It is a community.

Bringing That Spirit Home to Florida

That is why I am so excited about our upcoming **Sunshine Region Iron Horse Convention in Ocala**. Chattanooga demonstrated what happens when model railroaders do more than simply attend a convention. They **participate**. They ask questions, share experiences, exchange ideas, and start conversations that continue long after a clinic ends.

That is the level of interaction and discussion I hope we see in Ocala.

I want experienced modelers sharing what they have learned with those just getting started. I want members from different Divisions and clubs exchanging ideas and comparing techniques. I want someone who has never entered a contest or pursued an Achievement Program certificate to sit down with someone who has.

Most importantly, I want us to have fun.

The **Iron Horse Convention** gives us an opportunity to renew friendships, make new ones, learn something new, and return home with ideas we cannot wait to try on our own railroads. But that only happens if we participate.

.....

**Bring your questions. Bring your ideas. Bring your experiences.
Bring a model. Attend a clinic. Start a conversation. Introduce
yourself to someone you don't know.**

Because Chattanooga reinforced something I have believed for a long time: the greatest resource at any NMRA convention isn't the hotel, the layouts, the contest room, or even the clinics.

It is the model railroaders standing beside you.

That is how we strengthen our Region, keep our hobby moving forward, and ensure the NMRA remains relevant for generations to come.

Chattanooga showed us what is possible when model railroaders come together. Now I look forward to bringing that same spirit of **mentorship, fellowship, participation, and community** home to Florida.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy".

Andy J. Zimmerman
ATCS AW USN Ret.
NMRA SSR President
NMRA Standards and Conformance Manager
Ph- (C) 850-524-4399

.....
I hope to see you in Ocala.



**SUNSHINE REGION
IRON HORSE 2026
SUNSHINE REGION ANNUAL CONVENTION**

TWO DAYS OF CLINICS • OPERATIONS • FELLOWSHIP • JUDGING CONTESTS

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NMRA

SATURDAY 10/17/25 PM		CLINIC SCHEDULE		BALLROOMS/OPSTRAIN ROOM	
LOCATION	SARATOGA ROOM	SEENELAND ROOM	FINBERG ROOM	BELMONT ROOM	AQUEDUCT ROOM
TIME	CLASSROOM	CLASSROOM	CLASSROOM	CLASSROOM	CONTEST & BATTLE ROOM
1:00 PM TO 2:00 PM	Chromatic Modeling: Creating Dynamic Scenes Using Total Production Design Principles	Crafting & Switching Layout: Limit 1 (and 1.2)	The Military Moves By Rail		
2:15 PM TO 3:15 PM	Budget Friendly Plan: Trees for Your Dioramas	Advanced Tools Tips	Lower Cutting and 3D Printing		Judging Contests and ends at 4:00 PM
3:45 PM TO 11:45 AM	Quick Modular Railroad Building: River Lumber Co	Water, Water, Everywhere	The Transcontinental Story: Trails and Trails		

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Treasurer's Message

.....

Hello Everyone,

We are a month or so out from our annual convention. All the last-minute updates and finishing touches are being made. There is never enough time, and, as you may have expected, the heavy load of last-minute registrations is hitting our website and the Hilton. We were able to add more rooms to our room allocation with the Hilton, so if you were having trouble, you should be okay now .

For those of you attending the convention, we will be sending out an early listing of clinics, signage, and general information. I don't have an exact date for this email, but I suspect it will be sent out the weekend before the convention. Please don't hold me to that as changes always occur, and I want to provide all attendees with the most accurate info. I can't wait –another great convention on the horizon!

Lastly, I hope everyone has enjoyed the security information I've provided in the last couple of issues of the Telegraph Key. It's unfortunate that our demographic is hit the hardest with these various scams, but we tend to be the most vulnerable.

I look forward to seeing you at the convention – I will be easily spotted as the guy running around like a chicken without a head! 😊 ok, that's some of the entertainment!

See everyone soon!!

Glenn

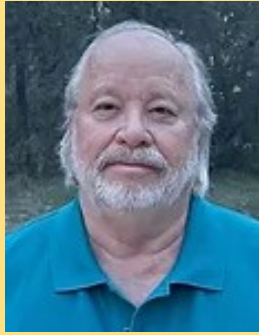
Criminals see us as an easy target.

Remember these simple rules:

Never click on a link in an email or text message that you are unfamiliar with

- 1 Know that criminals will spoof (make an item look legitimate) an email or text so you call or click the link – NEVER use this phone number –use the phone number from your statement or on your credit card
- 2 NO company will ask you to send money, gift cards, or any cryptocurrencies via phone/email or text.
- 3 Nothing is urgent – Stop, think before you react, contact a family member if you are unsure what is happening. Time is on your side – criminals love to make something seem urgent or create fear if you don't react right away. Don't fall for these tactics.
- 4 It's a new and dangerous world – be vigilant!

-Glenn



IRON HORSE 2026

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NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

Our 2026 SSR Iron Horse will be arriving at the Ocala Station in 46 days, on Thursday, October 15th - Saturday, October 17th, at the Ocala Hilton.

Our Hotel Room Block opened in July, and sold out already by August 17th, but the Ocala Hilton gave us another limited room block for same price at \$150 a night discount. You don't wait to miss out on this room price, so make your reservations as soon as you can. Please remember that if you call the Hotel live, use the "SSR Convention" for your Discount Code. If you use the website to register for your room the code is automatically applied, so please don't snooze on your reservation, you can always cancel your room reservation if you need to.

We have a great SSR Convention planned with 36 Hourly Clinics, the Orlando N-Trak 40'x50' Traveling Layout for Operations, Robert Raymond's Tuscarora Layout, Friday Night Social and a Saturday Night Banquet with Guest Speaker Amtrak Police Detective, Chris Hogan.

On Friday night, from 8:30 to 9:30pm, we will be hosting a 5-person Round Robin Q&A Forum, where you can ask any question you have to the 5 members, any of your modeling questions, on building your model railroad.

President Andy Zimmerman sent out an email Survey, canvassing members, what clinics Convention Attendees would like to see presented at the upcoming 2026 Convention. We received over 40 responses and with your help, we have been working hard to enlist Clinicians to fulfil your requests.

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

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

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

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

Looking forward to seeing everybody at the convention.

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

NMRA Sunshine Region Annual Convention

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2026 SSR OCALA CONVENTION CLINICS & CLINICIANS

- **Modeling a Pulpwood Yard with Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
 - This PowerPoint based clinic will review the history of the industry, how it interacted with railroads and how to model a pulpwood yard, vehicles and loads. Actual examples will be passed around.
- **Modeling Vehicles with Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
 - This PowerPoint based clinic will cover all aspects of modeling vehicles from available models, adding realism and creating an appropriate fleet. Creating custom decals will also be covered. The clinic will also cover the appropriate age, make-up and uses of vehicles to create the right feel on your layout.
- **Car Forwarding with the Micro Mark Car Card System with Jeff Hanke (MMR)**
 - This PowerPoint based clinic that will cover the complete set up of the car card and waybill system used to prototypically move freight cars over your model railroad. This will include filling out car cards, waybills and car request orders. The clinic will also cover modifications needed to make the system more complete. Finally, a brief overview of the Car Service Rules will be given to show the appropriate way to determine which empty car to choose for a given movement.
- **Timetable & Train Order with Robert Raymond**
 - Ever wonder how crews and dispatchers operated in the hundred years before radios became available? Robert Raymond explains the intricacies of Timetable & Train Order, including a method to bring it to your own club or home layout.
- **The Bicentennial and Semiquincentennial Locomotive with Gilbert Thomas Jr.**
 - This clinic is a review of the various paint schemes presented by the railroads celebrating our nation's 200th and 250th birthday. Gilbert will have models to display.

-
- **Pictorial History of the Building of their West Virginia Northern Railroad with Gail Allen Komar MMR 349**
 - The West Virginia Northern was originally built in St. Petersburg by Ross & Gail Allen and was the cover article of the June 2005 Model Railroader titled “A Handcrafted Gem”. After re-marrying, Gail moved the WVN to Tampa in 2007. This clinic is about how the WVN evolved into what it is today. The building of an addition for the WVN. Changes to the track plan, new overhead lighting & valances, photo backdrops, building coal mining facility, and other structures using historical data. Monthly operating sessions with call board, train orders, timetable, & signals.
 - **Tuscarora Operations with Working Yard Tower with Robert Raymond**
 - Operator Robert Raymond (designer of the Tuscarora Branch Line) gives ideas and tips on how to build your dream layout in a small and manageable area. The Tuscarora shows how much the N-scale railroad operations you can pack into a 2x4 foot space. Set in Pennsylvania in 1962, we can accommodate five operators (scheduled freight and local engineer, coal operations, an interlocking lever operator, a station agent and a dispatcher). If you are interested in how a Yard Tower works, the Railroad Tuscarora layout has an actual working tower with real Armstrong Levers. Come and run! Robert’s Layout will be set up in the Ballroom for attendees to operate on, so make sure you give it a try, it’s a lot of fun.
 - **Modeling Considerations for the 2000’s Modeler with Gilbert Thomas Jr**
 - The 2000’s have arrived in the usual way. The transition era is long gone, and the railroads have gone from 140 class one railroads to just 7 class one railroads. Oh, make that 6 class one railroads. I believe this is the perfect time to be a model railroader! This clinic will review the ever-evolving landscape of US railroads, latest trends in railroad cars and locomotives the railroads are utilizing and upgrades in railroad operations and technology.

-
- **SketchUP: Audience-Friendly, Building-Focused with Scott Peal**
 - This session shows model railroaders how to use SketchUp to create their own buildings, freight cars, passenger cars, and other larger layout items for 3D printing. No technical background is needed. We'll walk through two simple ways to get started: drawing your own model from photos or plans, and converting an existing model you find online. You'll learn how to bring pictures into SketchUp, trace the shapes, break the model into printable sections, and plan how to paint and assemble the finished parts. By the end, you'll understand the full path from idea to printed model—whether you print at home or use a service.
 - **3D Printing for Model Railroaders: A Gentle Introduction for Beginners with Scott Peal**
 - This clinic is designed for model railroaders who have little or no experience with 3D printing and want to learn how it can enhance their hobby. We'll walk through the basics in plain, non-technical language—what a 3D printer is, how it works, and how you can use it to create simple, useful parts for your layout. You'll see real examples, learn what equipment is truly needed (and what isn't), and discover how easy it can be to get started. By the end of the clinic, attendees will understand the full process from idea to finished model and will feel confident exploring 3D printing on their own.
 - **Take Me to the River Again: Modeling mountain streams, rivers, and waterfalls with Dean Smith**
 - Fast-flowing, clear streams, rivers, and waterfalls are part and parcel of the mountainous terrain shared by many of our favorite railroads. With their visible riverbeds, white water areas, and “see-thru” waterfalls, these cascading waterways can prove a challenge to effectively model. By utilizing a series of easy-to-follow techniques using natural materials and commonly available craft and hobby supplies, this clinic should give even the novice modeler the confidence to dive right in and create effective rivers and waterfalls. As an added bonus in a reprise of this popular clinic, we will also be taking a look at constructing a sawmill pond and log splash dam.

- **T-TRAK 101 with Todd Slaughter**
 - “T-TRAK modules are dioramas with sectional track, specifically Kato Unitrack, that snap together to create layouts from a simple circle to large complex layouts. The modules are designed to fit on tables. Layouts are easy to assemble and disassemble. The convenient size of the modules makes them easy to store on a shelf or in totes when not in use, or to transport.” He is the founder of the Special Needs Model Railroad Association (SNMRA) as well as the Tampa T-TRAK club.
- **Bridges – How do we Bridge the Gap? with Bob Leonard**
 - There are seven types of bridges, which ones can a railroad modeler use prototypically? The clinic covers the use of bridge supports, the types and applications, era and timeframe. It talks to the types of bridges and who manufactures the different types.
- **Weathering on a Small Scale with Tim Ellis**
 - Since last year Tim has ventured into other approaches to weathering, he uses the standard paint, pastels, powders and watercolor pencils; but in combination. The clinic describes the processes of all possibilities. Like last year, all who attend will have the opportunity to employ these techniques at your leisure as you follow along. There will be boxcar “mules” that will be distributed for your use to practice what you have been taught. Although they will not be “N” scale size.
- **Creating Realistic Water with Tim Ellis**
 - The clinic explains the use of using two-part epoxies, UV epoxies, UV adhesives, modeling paste and glue to create the base and texture (ripples / waves) of water scenes. From open water to rivers and streams, the clinic describes the methods to achieve and give your water a look of realism. It also covers coloring, from sky reflection on the ocean to muddy, brackish backwater.
- **Bringing it to Life with Lights with Jim Wiese**
 - How to add lighting effects to your engines, passenger cars, and cabooses using LEDs and the various components involved.

-
- **Layout Planning and Bench-work Construction with Mark Ellis**
 - This clinic describes an approach that can aid in the time it takes to create the bench-work for a layout. It outlines the different programs available and how, with some patience, the builder can utilize the software to solve problems.
 - **Operations on Their Level - How Deep Do You Want to Go with Mark Iannone**
 - The clinic covers the depth of operations an operator wants to go. From the simple scenario of moving cars from point A to point B to multi-train movements of freight and passenger consists and everything in between. How do you control this: TTTO, car cards, JMRI-created switch lists, how many set-outs and pick-ups, or termed Locations and Destinations? It all comes down to the question. How deep is too deep?
 - **Weed Control on the Railroads with David Leider**
 - Ever since the first rail was laid on the ground, weed control has been a problem for the railroads. Weeds foul the ballast, they obscure vision of the ties and they mat down, making the rails slippery. Weed control can be broken down into three categories: 1-Grubbing 2-Burning and 3-Chemical Control. I will discuss the pros and cons of each.
 - **Modeling the Pickle industry with David Leider**
 - Want a unique industry for your layout? Consider modeling the pickle industry. They are small, fit easily on a siding and you can use those pickle cars you got as a youngster. I will show the steps in making pickles and how they were transported with photos of salting stations and pickle cars. Did you know that there is a large pickle manufacturer in Palmetto Florida and Manatee County was the largest producer of pickles in Florida? Take Me to the River Again: Modeling mountain streams, rivers, and waterfalls / Clinician: Dean Smith
 - **How to Model Florida Scenery/Trees with Bob Miller**
 - Bob will show you how to model Florida trees, Cypress, Pine, and Palms. He will also be giving out a spiral handout on Florida Scenery.

-
- **How I Create Removable Flat Car Loads / Clinician: Richard Paul**
 - I am a big fan of operations and like to have open-type cars with the ability to arrive/depart with a load but also use the same car in arrive/depart as an empty visually. My method for adapting various commercial & scratch-built loads to be removable on a flatcar yet held on so they will not slide off during operation.
 - **Using DCC-EX with Steve Todd**
 - We'll describe the DCC-EX project and (hopefully) show why it's worth looking into using concrete usage examples for any size DCC or DC layout. Focus will be on usage, but resources for purchasing or building will be provided. It's easier (and more useful) than you think.
 - **Creating a portable AIO DCC System with Andy Zimmerman**
 - Focusing on N-scale and T-TRAK modular railroading, Andy walks attendees through the evolution of an all-in-one DCC control system designed to eliminate complexity, reduce wiring clutter, and expand operational capability. From concept to execution, you will see how integrating technologies such as Raspberry Pi, JMRI, wireless throttles, and modular power management resulted in a compact, portable, and highly functional system.



Achievement Program

.....

We have one (1) Certificate for this month, and it is a Golden Spike for Jonathan Berman from Boca Raton, Florida of the Southern Division.

We also have a new Achievement in the Achievement Program: Master Builder Modular Railroading.

This1 brings the total to twelve (12).

I will give you the basics of the achievement this month and then fine tune it next month.

You need to build at least three (3) modules to a standard and show them in at least three (3) different occasions and get at least an 87 1/2 score out of 125 points on each module.

That is the basics of it I will fine tune it next month for you. That is all I have for you at this time.

Thank you,

Kenn Hoot
Chair, Achievement Program

E C H O E S

EAST COAST H O EXHIBITORS SOCIETY
MIAMI, FL



E.C.H.O.E.S is a modular model railroad club located in Miami-Dade, Florida, dedicated to building and displaying our HO scale model railroad layout. Our purpose is to enjoy and promote the hobby of model railroading and preserve the history of railroading in South Florida. The club was started in the summer of 1985, with the goal of presenting a HO scale modular model railroad layout for display at "The Harvest Festival".

Throughout the years, the layout has been displayed at regional conventions, four NMRA National Train Shows (Atlanta twice, Ft. Lauderdale, FL and Orlando), and other events in Miami Dade and Broward counties. We do running/operating sessions several times a year and welcome guests to join us. Membership is open and we welcome anyone who shares an interest and passion for Model railroading.

For more information, please contact:

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786 514 5667

Herb Ford

ehf640@gmail.com

786 375 1424





Northern Division

.....

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much.

This is your opportunity to give back.

If you'd like to experience how giving back to the hobby
by volunteering can be a truly rewarding experience...

Please contact Andy Zimmerman @

ssrprez@nmra.org



Central Division

Hello Central Division!

Welcome to September!

I want to get this at the top of my column this month...

A Request for Division Help

I happen to live on the west coast of our division in the Tampa Bay area. Our new Central Division spans from east to west and I could use some help to better serve everyone I represent. I'm asking for anyone interested in working with me to set up division meets and events in the greater Orlando area and then further east to contact me so we can discuss the possibilities. I honestly can't support those areas with Division Meets unless I get some much needed assistance. Thanks.

Division Day Out at Florida Railroad Museum... Canceled

So, I need to get the word out better next time I try to do something like this. I was the only one registered and canceled the meetup. I will email everyone as well as post here when I do this again.

If anyone has any suggestions for meetups like train watching (which I have NEVER done), or museum visits, or riding trains, please get in touch with me. I'd like to have opportunities for like-minded train folks to get together.

Our Region Convention in October

I hope to meet many of you at our upcoming convention in Ocala. If you see me, please say hi and tell me where you're from in our Division. You can tell me what you'd like to see offered and what you'd like to do. I'm always open to suggestions!

And wrapping up this month...

As always, I ask you to please work with me to do great things for all of us!

Thanks,

Mark Lewalski
Central Division Superintendent



Southern Division

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Hi, folks.

Hi, everyone. With the national NMRA convention now complete, our focus turns to the Florida regional convention, scheduled for October 15-18th in Ocala. Registration is open on the Sunshine Region website. Once you are registered for the convention, you can book the group rate for the hotel. Of course, September is also the time when we often are plagued by hurricanes, so keep your fingers crossed that things are quiet again this fall. Regardless, please be prepared, just in case.

On a sad note, I wish to inform you of the passing of Mike Collins from Pembroke Pines. He was Master Model Railroader #157. Mike wrote 100 articles for the Journal Box. He will be missed.

In model railroad club news:

On the Gulf Coast, the ScaleRails of Southwest Florida club is located at 1262 Piney Street in North Fort Myers (zip code 33903). This is a well-established and very active club with roughly 50 members. They have operating layouts in both HO and N scales. The HO layout models the southwestern US and incorporates an HOn3 operation located in Colorado. The modular N scale layout depicts the mid-southeastern US. Their skills with scenery are impressive, featuring exact replicas of several iconic structures and well-known railfanning locations. Those interested in visiting the club may come on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday between 10 AM and 2 PM, with the exception of 11 AM-12 Noon on the 2nd Saturday of the month, when the club holds its monthly meeting. The club runs operating sessions on Monday nights, open only to members. For additional information, please contact the club president Jim Morse at jpmorse48@comcast.net or by phone at (239) 286-2499. The club website is found at www.scalerails.org.

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There is also a club in Sarasota called the Sarasota Bay Model Railroad Society. Their layout is inside the Sarasota Toy Museum at 3580 17th Street, Sarasota, Florida, 34235. The HO layout depicts Vermont, where it was originally located before the move to Florida. The layout was designed by famed modeler Dave Frary. The toy museum is open Tuesday through Sunday. It is unclear whether you need to purchase museum admission to see the model railroad. Their website is www.sbmodelrr.com, and you can contact David Fontaine at (941) 685-2221 for additional information.

Scott Peal has informed me that he is also organizing a new club in the Babcock Ranch community. They have a Facebook account that you can check out for additional information:

<https://www.facebook.com/babcockranchrailroad>. For additional information, please contact Scott at (239) 292-9156

On the Atlantic coast, the Florida Citrus Model Train Society (FCMTS) continues to be in a quieter period. I was told there were plans to create a summer display for the country's 250th Anniversary, but no notice of it was published on their website. If you are interested in meeting the members, they hold a breakfast club on Tuesdays and Fridays at 8:30 AM at the Plantation Diner at 6903 West Broward Blvd, zip code 33317. Please contact Ken Sargeant at (954) 253-0413 for any additional information. Their website is found at www.fcmts.org.

The East Coast HO Exhibitors Society (ECHOES) club will be running every weekend in September at the Gold Coast Railroad Museum located at 12450 SW 152nd Street, Miami, FL 33177. They are running at the museum from 10 AM to 4 PM, but please note there is an entrance fee (see the Gold Coast Railroad Museum website), which includes many displays of vintage full-size locomotives and cars. The club is planning to reconfigure the layout this summer to improve the visitor experience and add plexiglass fronts to all the modules to prevent damage from visitors. They do not expect this to result in the layout being closed at all, as it can be updated while the museum itself is closed. If you are interested, ask about their operating sessions. For additional information on ECHOES events, please contact Rick Diaz, rickdiaz@att.net, or Tracey Sanders, tassailor@mac.com.

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The Palm Beach Model Railroaders (PMBRR) is located at the South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd, West Palm Beach, 33411. They successfully completed their big open house held during the Palm Beach County Fair. During the fair, the layout is open all day, every day. During September, they will be running their regular Tuesday evening operating sessions for club members. They can be contacted at PBMRRclub@gmail.com for additional information. The club's website is www.pbmrr.org.

Located at 1713 SW Castinet Lane in Port Saint Lucie 34953, the Western Bay Railroad is the On30 narrow gauge layout of the Port Saint Lucie O Scale Model Railroad club. The layout depicts the Denver and Rio Grande and Rio Grande Southern railroads. The club meets on Tuesdays. For additional information, please contact Al Sohl (Master Model Railroader) at als0622@yahoo.com, and their website is www.westernbayrailroad.org.

Also located in Port Saint Lucie is the Treasure Coast Model Railroad Club and Historical Society. It's located at 273 SW Becker Road, Port St Lucie, Florida 34953. The club is open to the public every Saturday from 10 AM through noon, and admission is free. Their website is found at www.tmcrr.org, and they can be reached via email at tmcrrclubflorida@gmail.com. Their facility is 1800 square feet, devoted to a large HO-scale layout using Digitrax DCC, dated to cover the 1940s through 1970s. The phone number is (772) 621-9636, but I don't have a specific contact name for them yet.

The South Florida Railway Museum (SFRM) at the Deerfield Amtrak and Tri-Rail station, 1300 West Hillsboro Boulevard, plans its next open house for Saturday, September 12th, with visitors welcome from 11 AM through 4 PM. The HO scale layout is open and on display, and the new N scale layout, which depicts southern Florida, is well under construction, with all the track already laid, almost all the Tortoise switch machines operational, and much of the sophisticated electronics package close to completion. Trains are running in test mode now. Debugging is taking longer than expected, and AI is being used to find and fix issues in the extensive codebase. The custom software interfaces with the Java Model Railroad Interface (JMRI) PanelPro, enabling the creation of an extensive, centralized Traffic Control (CTC) display of the entire railroad, as well as subpanels for the yards and switching areas. These displays can be viewed on a multiple display dispatcher desk as well as on iPads located around the layout. For younger visitors, wooden trains are set out on the outdoor deck to keep small children occupied with something more robust than the indoor trains. The HO layout team is currently finishing up their locomotive terminal, and additional scenery upgrades are underway. The museum currently maintains a Facebook page in addition to its website [at www.sfrm.org](http://www.sfrm.org). For additional information, contact Bob Leonard, leonardstrait@gmail.com. For any inquiries, my contact info is rwberger@comcast.net.

That's all for now. Wishing everyone a wonderful rest of your summer and a good start to fall.

Richard Berger

Southern Division Superintendent

South Florida Railway Museum

The Kempner Award is available,
submittals are welcomed from
August 1st to September 30th.

See our webpage for particulars.

The Museum is Open on the 2nd Saturday of the
month, the following dates are for the 4th quarter.

10-10, 11-14, 12-12 from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM



Home of the

South Farmington Rail & Mule RR

South Florida Regional & Metro

The **Train Show** is coming. Same place, different day, **November 28th 2026**

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



1300 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Deerfield Beach, FL
(The south end of the AMTRAK station in Deerfield Beach)