



THE *HotBox*

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL REGION, NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

VOL. 67 NO. 1

SPRING 2026

RAILFANNING - The Southern Belt Railroad of Jim Shirreffs



**GRAND RAILS 2026
NCR CONVENTION**

**DIV 1 2026 SPRING
MODELERS MEET**



**SEAMLESS
ALUMINUM
BACKDROP**

**COMPOUND STEAM
LOCOMOTIVES**



**BUILDING
C&O SIGNALS**



PLUS- RR History, Timetable, NMRA-NCR-Division News & more!

The HotBox

SPRING 2026
Vol. 67, No. 1



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The HotBox is published quarterly by the North Central Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Publication dates are-

SPRING, March 1 SUMMER, June 1
AUTUMN, Sept 1 WINTER, Dec 1

The HotBox is available online at-

<http://ncrnmra.org>

All material, articles and advertising must be submitted to the Editor. All material should be electronic, preferably MicroSoft Word or Powerpoint. Pictures should be in Jpeg format and color. Material can be emailed or sent via US Mail on thumb drive. Materials will not be returned, unless return postage and envelope are included. Material submission deadline is THREE weeks before publication date.

Business ads-

1/2 page \$20 per issue or \$65 per year
full page \$30 per issue or \$100 per year
business card \$10 per issue or \$35 per year

Pike ads- \$15 small, \$30 double and \$60 quad for a 3 year period!

NCR Division Event ads- FREE

To pay for any ad space... send your payment to the Editor. All checks/money orders need to be made out to "The North Central Region, NMRA"

Send address corrections to the

Registrar- Marshall Stull
248-817-9328
mstull@marshallstull.com

Feel free to contact the Editor via email, with any comments, questions or corrections.

Hello!! Welcome to 2026!! Brrrr.... it's been quite the "white & cold" start of the new year with January being the coldest in ten years! But, that shouldn't phase us model railroaders... right? I mean, we have layouts to build, work on, operate... so who cares what it's doing outside! I hope your model railroading has advanced to be more complete, skills improved and fun with OPS! To that end, I tried to start the year with a BIG OPS on the Friday after New Years Day. I had the reschedule to February due to a slight case of flu/cold. But it happened! Two OP sessions in one day – an afternoon shift, break for dinner, then an evening shift. It was a success and all that attended said they had fun and enjoyed bringing the Reading Lines to "life". It was a good day!!

It's still "train show" season and deals can certainly be found, but PLEASE don't forget about visiting and making purchases at your local hobby shops! The hobby shop page in the HotBox has been redone and we're always willing to list new shops. Just let us know about them!

We're back to the NCR Regional convention schedule, with your next convention in October 2026 and hosted by Division 4. Some of the arrangements are still being worked out, but check the center pages of this HotBox for as much of the details as we can give you at this time.

Well, time to do some MORE model railroading... and that's always a good thing!! Thanks for reading... Barry



MODEL RAILROADING IS FUN!

NCR ON FACEBOOK

NCR NEWS

In case you didn't know, the NCR does have a Facebook page! Check us out at <https://www.facebook.com/NCRNMRA> Please LIKE us and feel free to post your current projects, modeling and model railroad events! We'll also post announcements of interest too!

HOTBOX CORRECTIONS NCR "OOPS"...

Always striving to be correct is something we will do with the **HotBox**. But, we are human and mistakes can/will happen. Please forgive us, these are NOT intentional! For the Winter/December issue, we know of no concerns or typo's.

FRONT COVER PICTURES-

NMRA logo, Div 1 2026 Spring Modelers Meet logo; Grand Rails 2026 NCR convention logo; Aluminum Backdrops!; Building signal bridges; Busy Hanson yard on Jim Shirreffis' The Southern Belt Railroad

REAR COVER PICTURES- Grand Rails 2026 NCR convention logo; how to build a short detector for your layout; Division 9 model building display; Ridgeway Depot on Don Bergman's HO3 Rio Grande Southern Railroad

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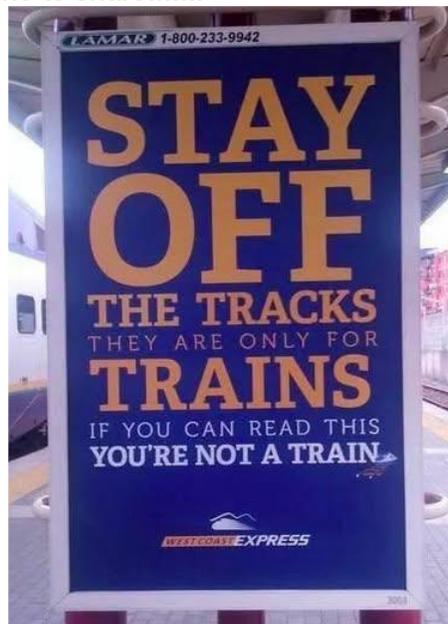
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RAILROADING "WHAT THE ???"

NCR HUMOR

Here's a few we've recently found online to share.....



PRESIDENT'S OBSERVATION

Rich Mahaney

Hello, as I write this, it has been snowing day after day here in West Michigan. Nothing new, I grew up in Holland, MI, I am used to seeing day after day of snow, wind and drifting snow, plus the great fun of driving in snow. I have been living in Gobles for about 14 years now. Gobles is south of Allegan, east of South Haven and west of Kalamazoo. It's on the old Kalamazoo & South Haven Railroad tracks, but it is in the heart of the "snow belt" of west Michigan. These are good reasons to head to the basement for model railroading fun. Lately I have been looking at all of the DPM wall sections I have and the ideas I have for a multi-building Del Monte fruit packing plant. I hope you are finding fun things to do in this snowy cold weather! Only a couple more months and nice Michigan weather will be back!

2026 is an important year for the North Central Region. This is my last year of my term as the President of the NCR. It has been quite a ride! This last year of 2026 will be another interesting year.

First up the NCR is changing; this is both good and bad. The NCR is still operating; the NCR is well set financially; the Divisions are still having meetings; there is a NCR Regional convention being planned for October 2026 in Zeeland, MI; there are new layouts being built; there are great layouts being maintained and improved; operating sessions on layouts are happening; model railroad car and engines, buildings, track are being purchased; large crowds are showing up at train show/sales and making purchases; and people want to participate in the hobby of model railroading. During 2026, the NCR will be conducting an election for new leadership or people may change positions to try a different position. I can tell you that serving as your President has been fun, rewarding and challenging! I am glad I stepped up twice to serve as your President. For me the best part has been getting out and visiting the Divisions and presenting some clinics.

On the bad side, I have watched us all "age" (yup got older)! The NCR membership for the most part is an "older group of women and men" that are interested in model railroading. We keep talking about how to get "younger" people into the NCR and the hobby? But first we need to define the word "younger". At train shows we see people of all ages enjoying the hobby. But at what age do we think we can entice them to join and enjoy the membership

of the NMRA. 10 to 20 years – lots of interest, may have some money but probably no home. 20 to 40 years – lots of competing challenges, family, money going different directions, kids, career, still lots of interest in model railroading, going to train shows. 40 to 60 years – maybe now time to model



railroad, empty basement, kids on their own, starting to have some savings, competing interests and vacation travel. So, at which age should the NMRA spend their money and their efforts to recruit new members? Also, at which age will these people participate the most (lead committees and teams, present clinics, serve in a leadership role) in a NMRA NCR Division? There is no best answer on when to recruit or at what age to recruit new members to the NMRA. People join at all different ages based on many things. Their participation will go up and down based on their age, interests, involvement, finances, and other things going on in their lives. I really think the best source for new members is at local train shows and at the various model railroad clubs in the NCR. Of course, while I say that, we have not had the best of luck in Division 9 getting new members from those two sources, but we try! I'm not sure how the other NCR Divisions are doing with those two groups.

Currently we have a special committee in the NCR looking at a variety of things in the Region, what the region looks like and will look like in the next 5-10 years. We know that the increase in age of our current members will change our Division memberships, we hear about layouts be taken down, but we also hear about new layouts be started or expanded, we see lots of people at train shows so we know there is a lot of interest in the model railroad hobby. The challenge is helping them see the value in being in the NMRA and the NCR. Again, the question comes up to each of us, why did we join the NMRA in the beginning and why have we stayed as members? If you have thoughts and ideas related to this topic, send them to Scott Kremer (email on page 2). This committee will report their findings and thoughts to the NCR Board at our spring meeting. *next page →*

PRESIDENT'S OBSERVATION

Rich Mahaney

Lastly, 2026 is election year for the NCR Board. I can report I have enjoyed my two terms as your President, but it is time to replace me at the end of 2026. The NCR has a two-term limit, so I will be moving to a "Region Director At Large" position which is for the "past president". I will still be involved, but just in a different seat. So, we need some new people to take on leadership positions for the NCR. This issue of the Hot Box has the information. We need people with ideas, solutions, opinions, leadership, can be on the NMRA President Zoom calls, lead the Divisions in new directions and ways, will recruit new members, help

plan and manage Regional Conventions, help with content ideas for the Hot Box magazine, serve on committees, that can solve challenging problems, and will be a team players. Several positions are available to run for in this election. See the information in this issue of the Hot Box.

Happy modeling, and I hope to see many of you at the one-day model railroad event coming up in Toledo, OH on April 18, 2026.

Rich Mahaney
NMRA NCR President



2026 NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION CHATTANOOGA, TN JULY 27 TO AUGUST 2, 2026

Layout Tours - Prototype Tours - Operating Sessions
Steam-Powered Excursions and Dinner Train - Banquet
Non-Rail Tours and other Activities - Train Show
Special Interest Groups - Railroad Historical Societies
Modeling with the Masters® - Celebration of Models

<https://www.nmra2026.org/>



NCR BOARD ELECTIONS

NCR NEWS



2026 is our next North Central Region Board of Directors election year. It's a year long process, to insure everyone gets their chance at a position, that there is complete information on our candidates and that the election happens on time. Positions that are up for election are – **President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and 2 Director positions**. What is somewhat interesting for this election, is that most of those in these positions are term limited, which means they cannot be re-elected! **NEW people are needed!**

THIS IS A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS AND SUBMISSIONS. DEADLINE IS MAY 1, 2026

Secretary John Young and Director TJ Stratton are heading up the Election Committee. If you would like to nominate someone, or yourself, please contact John or TJ before the May 1st deadline - John Young 517-449-9063 cdjhyoung@yahoo.com or T.J. Stratton 419-509-8822 michigancentralrr@hotmail.com . Nominating someone else will require that they accept your nomination. John and TJ will then contact you with more instructions to complete the nomination process.

RAILFANNING - The Southern Belt

NCR TRACKSIDE

Jim Shirreffs' freelance Southern Belt is set around St. Louis where it interchanges with another freelance RR the Chicago Southern. It is set for either the 1950's or late 1980's with a lot of influence from the Southern Pacific, some SP trains do get trackage right on the SB. *left down, then right...* Entrance to Hanson yard maintenance area • Station at Northridge • 2-6-6-2 articulated Heading to the roundhouse • Trailer park along the mainline with oil tank cars passing by • Downtown Northridge • Storm coming in near the elevator



RAILFANNING - The Southern Belt

NCR TRACKSIDE

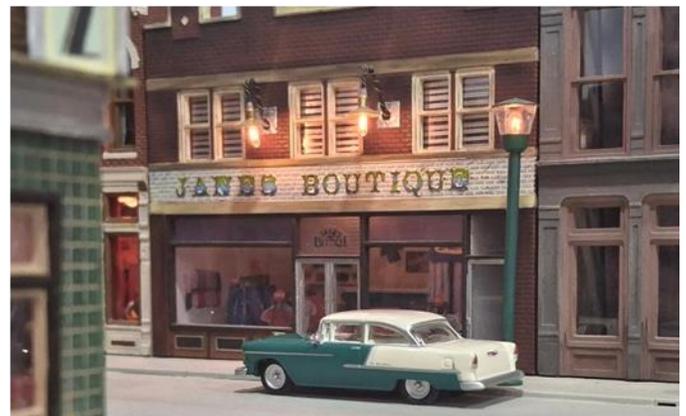
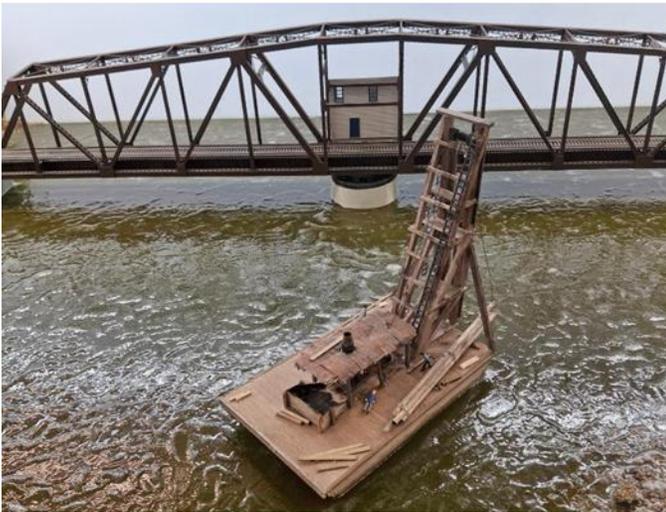
left down, then right... Industrial area • Local freight heading west of the river • Deliveries to brewery • Engine facilities at Hanson yard, always busy • Grain milling plant ready to ship product out • Downtown Southington



RAILFANNING - The Southern Belt

NCR TRACKSIDE

left down, then right... Local warehouse • Swing bridge spanning the Missouri River • Large farm along the mainline • Meat packing plant • More grain operations • nice '55 Chevy at the Boutiques in Southington
We hope you enjoyed rail-fanning The Southern Belt!!





New York Central System Historical Society



NYCSHS 2026 Annual Convention Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA

Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
May 15 - 17, 2026

Delta Hotel and Conference Center
2747 South 11th St Kalamazoo, MI 49009

<p>Friday</p> <p>May 15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning Check-in & Registration • Presentations - Covering various aspects of New York Central history and modeling • Self-guided Layout Tours
<p>Saturday</p> <p>May 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train excursion on Indiana Northeastern with former NYC equipment (Old Road & Ft. Wayne Branch) • Lunch (provided) @ Hillside Brewing Co. • Visit to 7-1/2" gauge outdoor Mid Michigan RR Club • No-host reception, banquet, speaker, and Annual Business meeting
<p>Sunday</p> <p>May 17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-scale train and memorabilia show • Presentations - Covering various aspects of New York Central history and modeling (Updated) • Afternoon Self-guided Layout Tours

REGISTRATION - Registration cost will be the same for NYCSHS members and non-members and is presently \$249/person. This includes ALL activities including our Saturday train excursion* and evening banquet. To download our registration mail-in form- https://www.nycshs.org/files/ugd/c2dc1b_537d65d9aeb4d6aa262c913306cea86.docx?dn=2026%20NYCSHS%20Convention%20Registration%20Form.docx

To register online- <https://nycshs.betterworld.org/events/nycshs-2026-convention>

NOTE – You do NOT have to be a convention attendee to go on the Saturday Train Excursion! This is open to everyone!! You can register online for JUST the excursion.



Full convention information and registration is available at - <https://www.nycshs.org/nycshs-2026-annual>

NMRA-NCR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NCR AWARDS

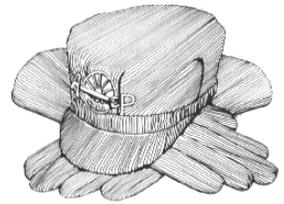
We get started on a new year for AP awards and Certificates! Thanks and Congratulations go to all NCR members that are participating in the Achievement Program.

Skip Luyk, MMR, NCR AP Coordinator

GOLDEN SPIKE – Bruce Mack, Div. 8

MASTER BUILDER SCENERY - John Martin, Div. 8

NMRA AUTHOR – Dr. John Campbell, Div. 2 (*NOTE – last cert for MMR!*)



John Martin (L)



Bruce Mack (R)



Dr John Campbell (R)

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the AP or requirements, start with your Regional AP manager, Skip Luyk, MMR. Also – Ron Gilbert covers Div 1 rarjgilbert@yahoo.com; Jim Macino, MMR covers Div 3 - 260-693-6102 jim@icmgt.com; Ken Chick, MMR covers Div 6 and 10 – 734-420-0276 kdchick@wowway.com; Pete Magoun, MMR covers Div 2 – 231-941-1669 orion@chartermi.net; Bruce DeYoung covers Div. 8 - bbdeyoung@comcast.com and Dorman Wilson for Div 9 - N8YNW@charter.net If you still have questions, contact the NMRA AP Chairman RAY PERSING! Ray can be reached at achiev@nmra.org

**How about writing an article on your latest modeling project!
Earn AP points! At the HotBox, WE NEED and WANT your articles!!**

NCR MODEL RAILROAD CLUB LIST

NCR INFORMATION

A few issues ago, we listed many of the model railroad clubs in the NORTH CENTRAL REGION. We did not provide any contact information, figuring if someone was interested in a club, they would be able to find them. It has been suggested that we expand that list with contact information. Sure... we can do that! However..... trying to keep a list like that updated could be quite the task (and the HotBox staff is already fairly busy).

SO.... here's the deal.... if you are a member of a model railroad club and would like to be included in this list, you need to provide your information to the HotBox. Name, location, phone, email and scale would be the information we believe would be needed for a good list. Also let us know if you are accepting new members!

Since model railroading is mostly a fall-winter-spring hobby (yes... many of us model year-round!), we'll publish this list annually in the Fall-September HotBox.

To be included, send your club information to the HotBox editor at – barry76LT@wowway.com
We hope this annual listing will encourage others to consider joining your club, thus increasing participation in our great hobby!

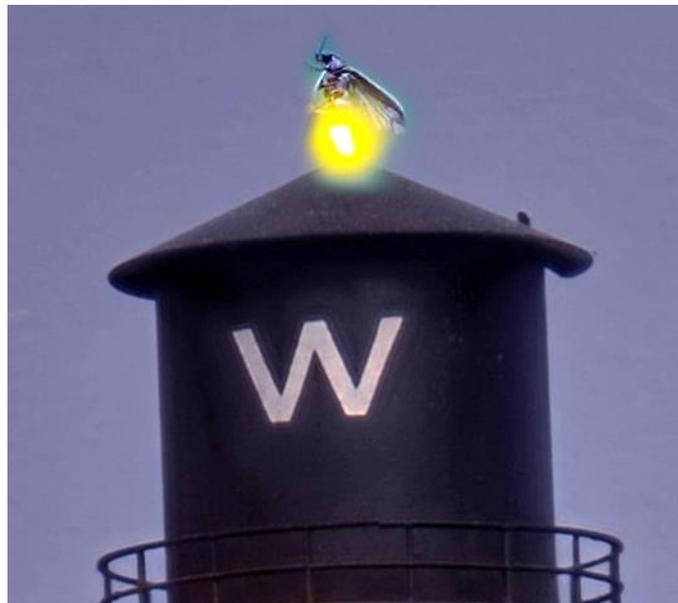
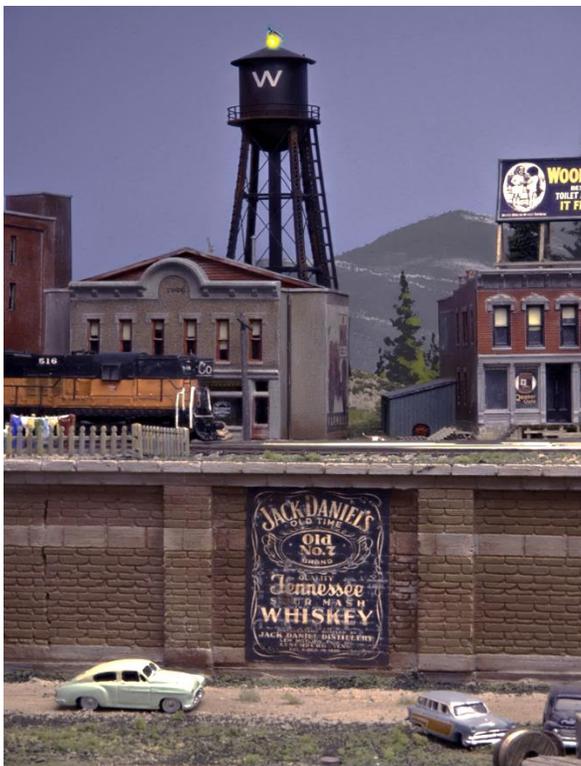
INEXPENSIVE FLASHING BEACON

It came to me one sultry evening in July, while relaxing in the back yard, watching the fireflies flash their intermittent bioluminescence to potential mates. Why not employ these little creatures on my model railroad? After all, model railroaders have been snipping weeds and other plant stems to use as tree armatures for decades in order to populate their model forests, so why not use a lightning bug to simulate an electrical effect? The genius of the idea was intriguing!

My initial idea was to use them for chase lights on a marquis in one of my modeled towns, but training glowworms to flash in sequence seemed like a labor of Hercules. One can train dogs, but how does one train a beetle? I finally settled on replicating a flashing beacon atop the water tower in Winnett, the sort of beacon that warns low flying aircraft to beware. With glass jar in hand, I collected a sampling of these little members of the Coleoptera family and headed for the basement.

Now, what sort of adhesive should I use? They needed to stay alive, of course, and I could hardly expect one to simply sit unattached to the top of the water tower and gaze at my modeling handiwork stretched out below him. Testor's plastic cement, Walther's Goo, Elmer's white glue? I ran through the possibilities, finally settling on Microscale's Micro Kristal Klear, a liquid plastic with a water base. With a toothpick, I deposited a small dab of adhesive on the very top of the water tower. Gently securing the wings of my lightning bug with tweezers, I carefully placed its abdomen on the spot of adhesive. He sat there for a moment, and then presto! He flashed. Every few seconds, he sent out a beautiful signal, precisely simulating the familiar beacon we see on water towers all over the country.

My only problem, of course, is longevity. Is it possible to feed and water these little guys? Typically, they draw their nutrients from other larvae, snails or slugs, but feeding fireflies by mouth with surgical tweezers and an Opti-visor seemed like a maintenance headache. I have enough trouble just keeping my track clean. However, Wikipedia says some live for several years, so I guess we'll just have to wait and see. If my new lighting system lasts until next **April Fool's Day**, I'll deem it a success!



How about writing an article on your latest modeling project! Earn AP points! At the HotBox, WE NEED and WANT your articles!!

Division One - Black Swamp Division (Northwest Ohio with Michigan Lenawee and Monroe Counties)

Our regular meetings are on the SECOND FRIDAY of each month (but check the web site for possible changes). We are currently running a build challenge to create a flatcar with a load. We are getting some very creative ideas! Stay informed of the latest news and information at the Black Swamp by visiting our website and subscribing to our newsletter at <http://div1.ncrnmra.org> . Our Facebook group is www.facebook.com/groups/ncrdiv1 (submitted by- Marshall Stull, Superintendent)

Division Three - 3 Rivers Division (Fort Wayne, Indiana and western Ohio area)

The Three Rivers Division is finishing our plans to participate in the Great Train Connection at the Fort Wayne Botanical Conservatory which will have around 2000 parents & kids in 3 days operating trains of all sizes and scales. In our next 4 meetings we are completing our DPM model which we started building late last year. When completed these models will have lighted detailed interiors along with exterior detailing so each member can place it on their layouts with a sense of accomplishment in some cases learning a new skill that they can use for future endeavors. We here at Division 3 are planning for future opportunities to get out in the community and promote model railroading. (Submitted by- Bob Jones, Superintendent)

Division Four – Grand Rails Division (Grand Rapids and west Michigan area)

The planning continues for the 2026 Convention and we are working on the Division meeting schedule for 2026. If you have an idea for a meeting of event let us know. Please watch our website and Facebook page for updates. For more information contact Mark Baldwin at grandrailsdiv@gmail.com or visit the NEW division website www.grandrailsdiv4.com (submitted by Mark Baldwin, Div 4 Superintendent)

Division Five – Capital Division (Lansing and mid-lower Michigan area)

After cancelling the November get together due to the Lansing Train Show, the Capital Division (5) finished up 2025 with a party at the First Congregational Church in Charlotte rather than our usual spat at the Meridian Fire Station. While enjoying some good food, we watched the Emperor of the North movie featuring Oregon, Pacific and Eastern 2-8-2 no. 9, now almost restored at the Age of Steam Museum in Ohio. Also on display and running during the get together was Gary Gazall's Z scale layout. January's meeting featured show and tell models received or worked on over the holidays. NCR Region President Rich Mahaney presented a clinic on "Five Busy Railroad Traffic Locations For Your Layout (Interchanges, Freight Houses, Team Tracks, Bulk Transfer Facilities and Rail Car Repair Facilities". February's get together was rescheduled for a week later because of the Saline Train Show. Andy Keeney will have a clinic on updating Layout Lighting on his Nashville Road layout. Show and Tell will feature small structures. You can subscribe to the monthly Division 5 Newsletter. Send a request to Mark Cowles, at nkpcowles@yahoo.com. For more info, see our website: <https://nmranncrdiv5.com/> (Submitted by- Mark Cowles, Div. 5 Clerk)

Division Six – Motor City Division (Wayne & Washtenaw Counties)

The Motor City Division, Division 6 meetings are now in the new Livonia Senior Wellness Center, located at 15218 Farmington Rd, Livonia, MI 48154. This is a new facility located adjacent to the Livonia Recreation Center. Our meetings are still year-round and on the 3rd Friday of each month from 7pm-10pm. The new location has been great!! Division 6 had two great events in January. First, we took our modular MI-Trak HO layout to the Novi Train show and promoted Div 6 and the NMRA. We answered many questions and had great fun letting the "smaller" engineers run trains on the layout! Our second event was our own Model Railroad Sale! This was our 2nd year at the 242 Church in Brighton and it again proved to be a great venue! We sold out of vendor tables for the 5th year in a row and public attendance held steady. This event keeps Div 6 "fee free" for our members! We're taking a break for a few months, but are still hosting layout tours, some great clinics and history lessons and lots of fun and education. Everyone is welcome to attend! Our newsletter "On The Rails" and other info can be found on our website - www.div6-ncr-nmra.com (submitted by Barry Hensel, Newsletter Editor)

Division Two - Tip Of The Mitt (Manistee to Iosco counties, north to the Mackinac Bridge plus Luce, Chippewa, and Mackinac counties in the U.P.)

Our meetings take place the 3rd Saturday of each month (from Sep. through May) at 10am at the Foster Family Community Health Center, located at 550 Munson Avenue, in Traverse City. We also go hybrid, connecting by Zoom. Our upcoming clinics are as follows: Feb. - Static Grass by Mike Hauk. March - Ann Arbor Cabooses by Craig Wilson. April - My Ann Arbor RRW by Ralph Moxley, May Division 2 Open House. We also enjoy "Show and Tell" as it gives us a chance to see members progress on all aspects of modelling To request meeting invitations and our quarterly newsletter, email our Superintendent, jens.hensel50@gmail.com (Submitted by Jens Hensel, Division 2 Superintendent)

Division Eight - Clinton River Division (Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair Counties)

For anybody who has not been at a Division 8 meeting for a while or has never had a chance to come to one of our meetings, I want to welcome you to come out to one of our meetings. They are a lot of fun. We want to make sure the members and visitors are happy, so we've had a lot of focus on making sure we have a high-quality clinic every meeting. We're also starting to plan for a division outing later this summer, and soon we'll be starting the planning for the Regional Convention that we will be hosting next year. We want to make sure that we're offering what you want, so if you have something you'd like to see or have some ideas to better serve the membership, please let me know. With that in mind, you're invited to join us at 7PM on the third Thursday of the month, please drop into the Troy Christian Chapel at 400 East Long Lake Road in Troy Michigan. Our NEW web site is, <http://div8.ncrnmra.org/> Our Facebook group is www.facebook.com/groups/288929175921717/ (Submitted by Mark Mincek, Superintendent)

Division Nine – Southwest Michigan Division (Branch, Calhoun, Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and VanBuren Counties)

Here is our agenda for the first quarter of 2026 - Mar 21 - A presentation and hands-on opportunity to improve the operation of your layout rolling stock by Norm Logan from Northville, MI (Division 6). A look at wheels, couplers, movement, weights, and other facets of railroad rolling stock. Bring in up to 6 of your favorite cars to check them out in this hands-on activity. April 18 - The Kalamazoo Model Railroad Club has invited Division 9 members to come to an operating session with their new layout. Join them in moving freight cars on their layout in trains to communities and industries. See their signaling system operate other special features on their new layout. Meeting content for May 9th, to be determined yet. May 16 - Participate in the New York Central Railroad Historical Society train ride day and other activities. June 20 - To be determined. Use this link to view the latest Yardmaster Newsletter. <https://div9.ncrnmra.org/yardmasterlibrary/> Our newsletter The Yardmaster, and other information are posted on our website. If you would like a copy of our newsletter via email, send your email address to alanwbau@gmail.com. (Submitted by Greg Marvin, Sr., Div 9 Scribe)

Division Ten – Ten Wheeler Division (Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, Tuscola, Sanilac, Saginaw, Bay, Midland, Arenac, and Gladwin and Huron Counties)

The 10 Wheelers from NCR Division Ten did not meet in January due to the extreme cold, but continue to meet on the fourth Thursday of the month, 7:00pm, at the EAA Chapter 77 meeting room at Dalton Airport in Flushing. We will be adding some new activities to our meetings this year, and plan on having some hands-on clinics. Come to our meetings to find out what we are doing. For more information, contact Superintendent Wayne Wilder at ncrdiv10@gmail.com or at 989-823-3409. (Submitted by Wayne Wilder, Superintendent)

YOU should join and attend your local NMRA/NCR/Division meetings and activities! Get the most out of your hobby – participate often!!

2026 Spring Railroad Modelers Meet

Hosted by the Black Swamp Division (Div 1) of the North Central Region (NCR), NMRA

April 18, 2026 – Sylvania OH
with additional evening activities on Friday April 17th!

Doors Open 8:00AM with activities into the evening. See website for details!
Sylvania Senior Center, 7140 W Sylvania Ave, Sylvania, OH 43560



MODEL SHOWROOM – Bring your models (Finished or in-progress) of locomotives, rolling stock, structures, dioramas, or scenery. All are welcome!

LIVE MODELING CLINICS – Some of the areas best modelers, historians and industry experts will share their knowledge, skills and techniques.



DIV 1 MODELERS MEET 2026

NCR EVENT

LAYOUTS and DISPLAYS – Small and modular layouts will be on display within the main venue. If you have a layout to share, please contact us in advance so we may reserve space for you.

LAYOUT TOURS – Tours of local home layouts will be available the afternoon/evening Friday, April 17th and Saturday, April 18th



OPERATING SESSIONS – Operating sessions are being planned for Friday and Saturday. Advance registration IS required for the Operating Sessions!!

FOOD SERVICE – Food trucks will be available on-site from 11am – 2pm. Additional food options are readily available a short distance from the venue.



<https://smm.ncrnmra.org/>

17 and under free, all individuals 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult
All event activities (minus lunch) are included in one low price!

BRING AN ITEM TO SHARE!

This is an interactive event so bring items to share at the Model Showroom! Share Models, Techniques and Ideas. Learn from Experts and Fellow Modelers. Attend Clinics and Layout Open Houses. Meet with Manufacturers and Historical Societies.

**This event is open to ALL MODELERS!!
NMRA membership is not required!**





Tip of the Mitt

Division 2 of the North Central Region, NMRA

NMRA

NORTH CENTRAL
REGION

Traverse City Area - 2026 Spring Open House

To benefit local Food Pantries

Saturday, May 16 @ 10am – 5pm



The *Tip of the Mitt* (Division 2), of the North Central Region (NCR), of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) is hosting a special one-time, **no-cost event**.

This is a free event, but we are asking that an at will donation be made to support our local Food Pantries: Leelanau Christian Neighbors and Father Fred Foundation of Traverse City. Donation containers will be available at each of the open railroads.

Reserve your spot now! Go to our website to [RSVP today!](https://div2.ncrnmra.org/event/2026-spring-open-house/) Space is limited.

<https://div2.ncrnmra.org/event/2026-spring-open-house/>

Please include the total number of guests in your group when you RSVP.

Railroad Basics

- There will be seven (7) operating model railroads to visit in and around the Traverse City area.
- There are 3 in Leelanau County, 3 in Grand Traverse County, and 1 in Benzie County.
- The model railroads range between 32 sq. ft. and 1500 sq. ft. in size; everything from a 4' x 8' tabletop to complete basements.
- Most of the railroads are between 90% and 100% complete.
- All the layouts are in HO scale (1:87).
- You are visiting individual residences.
- This is a family friendly event. Young children are welcome, but they must be supervised by an adult.
- Visit one or as many as you like.
- **Note:** None of the open railroads are considered *Handicap Accessible*. All have steps and/or narrow doorways.

Railroad Descriptions

Follow the links, on the website, to view descriptions, photos, and an occasional video, of the following open railroads:

[Ernie Barry's East Raton and Santa Fe](#)
[Jens Hensel's LNAC](#)
[Keith Aleo's Florida East Coast Railway](#)
[Al Johnson's New York Central](#)

[Bill Horning's Rio Grande Midland Railroad](#)
[Dr. John Campbell's Ann Arbor Railroad](#)
[Michael Coonrod's Big Sky View Railroad](#)



For this issue of the HotBox, the staff reached into our archives and found 3 GTW photos that we thought would be of interest. We hope you enjoy this page!

Night exposure of the GTW Battle Creek Yard from the top of the west tower. The photo was taken by CN engineer Stan Sienicki.

(*ED Note* – this is all the info we have on this photo, other than we received it in August 2012)

GTW-CR crossing St. Aubin Ave., Milwaukee Jct., Detroit, MI
1-20-81

Not much to look at down there these days with the engine house, towers, diamonds and GTW depot and office buildings all gone.

(*C. H. Geletzke, Jr. photo*)



On September 2, 1967 I climbed to the top of the sand tower at GTW's Pontiac, MI yard and took the attached photo of the "Old Rip." This was the one that was in service until the new one was built in the mid to late 1970's. Notice the use of boxcars (off their trucks) for various storage and workshop purposes. At this time, the facility had a complete carpenter shop! You do not see many enclosed tri-levels in the yard, yet, at this date.

(*C. H. Geletzke, Jr. photo*)

Here is where your news items, rumors, and gossip of just about anything in the Model Railroading hobby can be reported. Whatever it is, send it to us and we'll let everyone else know!

BTR #1 - We did get a few links to share, so we're passing these along....

They did it Tuesday morning (December 9, 2025). After waiting for a LSRC train, they moved the Holly depot. It was cold out there watching, but here is a short video I (Larry Burke) did. Pretty exciting to see. Larry Burk Productions www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8ES9_2rO6o

Car club friend of your HotBox Editor, sent this link to an unofficial tour of Northlandz. As a model train enthusiast, you've probably have seen this. But I'll forward it anyway. Let me know if you're digging your basement 30 feet deeper!!! https://youtu.be/HwrhCVLg_EU?si=JUHUAojN90_EYxjd

So do you set-up a village and train for the holidays? Try matching this guy.... WOW!!! Time-lapse video of a guy making a huge Lionel-Village 56 display! OMG! www.youtube.com/watch?v=aq3AFwavnMk

BTR #2 – If you have not had enough of the 2025 NMRA Convention (and we know you haven't) here's the chance to revisit many of the great layouts! TRAIN ROOM GARY did lots of video's during the convention and has a schedule of releases. These are free to view on his youtube channel. Gary has already posted video's on January 8 & 22 and Feb 12 & 26. Next are releases on March 12 & 26 and April 9 & 23. That's 8 video's and over 40 layouts! Go to <https://www.youtube.com/user/trainroomgary>

BTR #3 - MICHIGAN RAILROAD CLUB PROGRAM The Michigan Railroad Club will be meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at The Radcliff Center, 1751 Radcliff St. in Garden City, Mich. This is south of Ford Road and along Wildwood St. (east side of Wildwood). We will be meeting in Room #690. This can be accessed from the South parking lot through door RC-5. Enter from the parking lot on the West side of the building. ALL are welcome! Meetings will start at 7pm and end at 8:50pm. Here is the schedule –

March 04, 2026 – Mark Cowles. Streetcars, trolleys & Trams.

April 01, 2026 - Gary Sample with a program on the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of Conrail.

May 06, 2026 - Dale Berry. "Railroad History Jeopardy"

June 01, 2026 - TBA

For any other questions please contact: Kenneth Borg 3512 Merrick, Dearborn, MI 48124

BTR #4 - 18TH MICHIGAN RAILROAD HISTORY CONFERENCE - CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

There are opportunities for individuals to make presentations on various aspects of Michigan's railroad heritage, to be held in the historic Durand Union Station on Saturday, October 3, 2026. The conference offers an opportunity for students, faculty, officials and individuals engaged in railroad history to share their research or interests. To be considered, presentations should be received by March 1, 2026. If you are interested in making a presentation, please send a suggested title, a brief description of the topic you would like to cover and a bit of background information about yourself to: Michigan.Railroad.History.Conf@gmail.com or by mail to MRHC, P.O. Box 16235, Lansing MI 48901.

BTR #5 - NCR MEMBERS IN PRINT Since the last issue of Hotbox - Black Swamp Division's Doug Tagsold took the photograph that illustrated an article about Canadian John Brown's C&O layout in the December 2025, Model Railroader, page 36. Doug's own railroad, the Colorado and Southern, was featured in a photo by Craig Wilson on page 65 of the same December '25 MR. George Anderson (Clinton River Division) had a letter published in Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette on page 11 of the Nov/Dec issue. John Young (Capital Division) had a letter remembering Jack Ozanich published in November RMC, page 5. Ed Biegas enjoyed a photo of his Grandson Railroad, taken by Dan Lewis (both Clinton River Division) published in MR Trackside Photos, March 2026, pages 62-63. Published posthumous, Howard Andrews (Division 6) showed how he constructed a small stone arch culvert in the January 2026 Model Railroader, page 66. If you have an article, photo, or letter feel free to notify me for inclusion in this list. Phil Doolittle, doolittlep@comcast.net

DISCLAIMER!!- While we will try to verify most stories, the HotBox, HotBox Editor, NCR Board of Directors, its agents and representatives will not/cannot be held responsible for mis-information presented in this column.

GRAND RAILS 2026

NCR 3-DAY CONVENTION

OCTOBER 8-9-10, 2026

**HOWARD MILLER COMMUNITY CENTER
14 SOUTH CHURCH STREET
ZEELAND, MI 49464**



WELCOME to the NCR Model Railroad Convention, **GRAND RAILS 2026!** The convention is being hosted by DIVISION FOUR, located in West Michigan. We are planning a great weekend of model and prototype railroading, just for YOU! Please access our website for all of the important information you need to help you to decide to attend this event.

As you'll soon read, we're concentrating on having fun and learning all about model railroading! All you need to do is fill out the registration page, send it in with your registration fees and you'll be part of one of the greatest model railroad events in Michigan! Come and join us for the **MAXIMUM** model railroad FUN, all in one weekend!

OPEN TO ALL MODEL RAILROADERS!
You do NOT have to be an NMRA member to attend!

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE - layout tours, railroad operating sessions, clinics, railroad displays, and more

SEE THE DIVISION 4 WEBSITE FOR UPDATES AND EVENT INFORMATION www.grandrailsdiv4.com

Save the dates AND come join us for some great days of model railroading, learning and fun!



GRAND RAILS 2026 - NCR CONVENTION

NCR NEWS

**GRAND RAILS 2026 NCR 3-DAY CONVENTION
HOWARD MILLER COMMUNITY CENTER
14 SOUTH CHURCH STREET ZEELAND, MI 49464**

Registrant First Name		Last Name		
NMRA Member Number		___ Dr. ___ Mr. ___ Mrs. ___ Ms. ___ MMR		
SIG Memberships (shown on badge) ___ LDSIG ___ OPSIG ___ PRO ___ RPM ___ N ___ S ___ G				
Complete Name As It Should Appear On Badge		Telephone:		
Street Address				
City		State	Zip	
E-Mail Address				
Name Of Companion		___ Dr. ___ Mr. ___ Mrs. ___ Ms. ___ MMR		
Registration Rate		Amount	Quantity	Total
NMRA Member Registration		\$60.00		
NMRA Member Registration (after Sept 1, 2026)		\$75.00		
Non Member Registration		\$80.00		
Non Member Registration (after Sept 1, 2026)		\$95.00		
Become an NMRA Regular Member before Sept 1, 2026 (DOES NOT INCLUDE 9-MONTH RAIL PASS)		FREE		
Companion Rate		\$30.00		
Youth Rate (17 and under w/parent)		\$5.00		
Student 18 to 25 (with valid student ID)		\$20.00		
Total **Must accompany Full Registration				

Please make checks payable to "**DIV FOUR OF THE N CENT REG NMRA**"

Mail to:
**Grand Rails 2026 Registrar
Gaylord "Stu" Stewart
1349 Bent Tree Dr.
Hudsonville, MI 49426-9452**

QUESTIONS? grandrailsncr2026@outlook.com



GRAND RAILS 2026 - NCR CONVENTION

NCR NEW

LAYOUT TOURS AND OPS SESSIONS!

GrandRails 2026 will be a great opportunity to see model railroads which you have not yet seen, and to view progress on model railroads which you have seen before. The GrandRails 2026 Layouts sub-committee has begun contacting prospective layout owners for the Oct 2026 event. We'll begin with those layouts which were part of the 2017 GrandRails regional event, and continue with those we know about, or hear about from others. This is where you can help, whether you live in the area of GrandRails Div 4, or in other parts of our region. If you know of a layout that exists in our area of focus, please email to GR2026Layouts@yahoo.com, giving the owner's name and layout. We'll filter through the duplications, but you never know who will bring us the first word of an eligible layout that we do not yet know about. The convention on-site location is in Zeeland. Our focus is Ottawa County, Kent County and the adjacent counties to the north and south. We are willing to consider layouts outside of those bounds which might be willing to host convention attendees on their way to or from the convention. Layouts do not need to be finished (are they ever?) to be considered. There should be enough done to show the owner's vision, and hopefully, some part completed to the level of demonstrating operation. We already have a couple railroads which did not exist in 2017. The subcommittee members are relatively new to Div 4. John moved from Livonia (Div 6) several years ago, and Frank relocated from PNR/4th Div (western Washington) a decade ago. We know that there are eligible model railroads which we do not know about. We need your help to make the layout tours and ops sessions a success.



John Bona and Frank Dekker, GrandRails 2026 Layout/OPS Committee Chair

CLINICS!

We are now planning the NCR Regional Convention for Oct 8,9 and 10, 2026 in Zeeland, MI. While it will not be the quantity of events that the National had in Novi we will strive for the quality to be there. Clinics are always the number one attraction at any convention and we would like to work on a wide variety of topics at this regional convention. It is with that in mind that we want to invite you to present one or two of your clinics at the convention hosted by Division 4, the greater Grand Rapids area.

There will be three clinic rooms available Thursday afternoon and evening, Friday morning, afternoon, and evening, and again Saturday morning, afternoon and evening. The time slots will be one hour in length for your presentation, including Q&A. Please let us know your preferred clinic topic and your first and second preferred available times you would like to present. If you have two clinics please list them as #1 and #2 clinic topics and a brief description is required for us to arrange them during the convention. There are only 60 available time slots to fill so the sooner you sign up the better chances of your choices. Please fill out a separate form for each clinic; two sessions back-to-back need two forms. If you do two clinics do you prefer them to be back-to-back? Please fill out the attached PDF form for each clinic and return to me ASAP. (see next page)

We have set a **March 31, 2026** deadline so the schedule can be finalized for the convention booklet and web page. This is for the attendees to make their convention clinic, layout tour and op session plans. This may seem a long way off but proper planning is important and priority will be given to those that apply early.

This regional convention will be an opportunity for you to share your expertise with both the new modelers and those experienced that want to learn some additional skills. Your presentation qualifies for the author or volunteer AP certificate so bring the NMRA forms for us to sign.

Remember that there are only 60 slots to fill and the deadline is March 31, 2026. Please feel free to email me with any questions, suggestions or comments. A quality convention requires quality clinics and you are invited and needed to present yours.

Thank you

Dave Capron, GrandRails 2026 Clinic Committee Chair caprond33@gmail.com

GRAND RAILS 2026 - NCR CONVENTION

NCR NEWS

THE NMRA IS ABOUT SHARING OUR PASSION

NMRA North Central Regional Convention will be held on October 8, 9, 10, 2026. The convention headquarters will be in Zeeland, Michigan.

Do you have a Model Railroad in West Michigan ?

How about Sharing it with fellow model railroaders ?

We are currently identifying railroads that can be included in the Layout Tour portion of this event. A number of your fellow modelers have already agreed to open their railroads. But we are sure there are a many of you who have work you are proud of and would be willing to share. There are currently about 15 members agreeing to open their railroads during the convention. We are hoping to find among you a few new railroads for visitors to enjoy.

Your layout need not be large.

It need not have spectacularly scenery.

It need not be finished (whose ever is?).

So, Please.... Think about the opportunity to meet other model railroaders and share your passion and your hard work for a few hours this fall. Then drop us a quick email at GR2026layouts@yahoo.com .

We will get back to you to answer your questions and get you on the list for the tour.

Also, if you know of a layout in west Michigan whose owner is not in the NMRA? Consider forwarding this page to them, and invite them to submit their layout for consideration.

GR 2026 Layouts Committee

John Bona and Frank Dekker



A HISTORY OF COMPOUND STEAM LOCOMOTIVES IN AMERICA

THEORY OF COMPOUND STEAM ENGINES

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries compound steam locomotives enjoyed a brief popularity on American railroads. A compound locomotive is defined as one having one or more cylinders so arranged that the exhaust steam passes from one cylinder into another cylinder or cylinders, where it performs additional work before being discharged from the exhaust nozzle and stack.

Compound locomotives promised an improvement in economy, both of fuel and water, over ordinary simple expansion locos. The Locomotive Dictionary claimed the savings in coal and water to be "from 20 to 30 per cent". But under real-world operating conditions, with frequent starts and stops and running at various speeds, and over varying grades, the compounds showed more like a 10 to 12% improvement. While a great many roads tested compounds only a few were big purchasers of them. Roads in areas with ample coal supplies and plenty of water, like the Northeast, found the operating economies not worth the extra cost and complication associated with compounds. But in the arid Southwest, where coal was scarce and water supplies few and often of poor quality, the savings promised by compounds were welcome. The Santa Fe, for one, was a big user of compounds.

Locomotive builders promoted the improved economy of compounds at every opportunity. The Baldwin Locomotive Works, in their 1900 booklet, "Vauclain System of Compound Locomotives", devoted five pages to the theory of compounding, supported by graphs, charts, and formulas. This material was supplemented with test results and testimonials from satisfied users.

EXAMPLES OF COMPOUND LOCOMOTIVES TWO CYLINDER COMPOUNDS

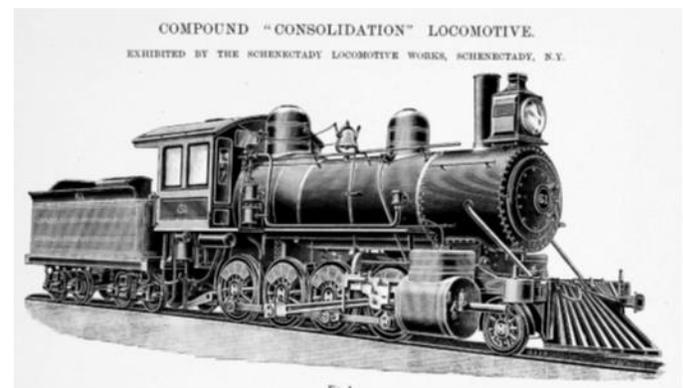
The two cylinder, or cross compound, was the simplest, mechanically, of the compound locomotives used on American railroads. In this type, the high-pressure cylinder was mounted on one side of the loco and the low-pressure cylinder on the other side. The running gear of a cross

compound was thus the same as on a simple expansion locomotive: familiar, uncomplicated, and easy to service.

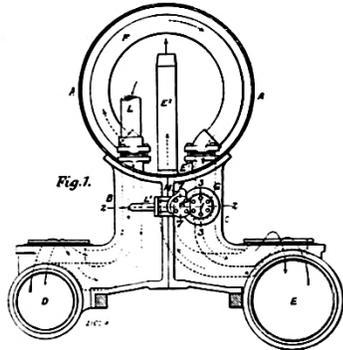
But, while these design features were attractive, it was found that cross compounds had limited operational flexibility. High speed running was problematic for all compounds because of back pressure buildup in the low-pressure cylinders. But cross compounds also exhibited a side-to-side imbalance at high speeds due to the high and low-pressure cylinders delivering unequal thrust. In fact, for a given valve gear setting there was only one, rather slow, speed where piston thrusts were equal. This limitation consigned cross compounds to slow freight operation, where they were well suited.

In operation any compound was started like a simple expansion loco with all of the cylinders receiving high pressure steam. This gave maximum piston thrust to overcome the inertia of a train at rest. Once the train was moving the locomotive could be switched over to compound operation by means of an interceptor valve.

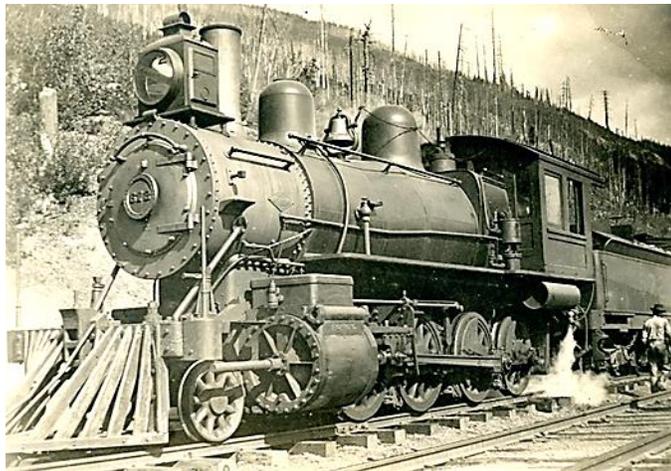
The 2-8-0 pictured below was built by the Schenectady Locomotive Works for the Mohawk and Malone Railroad Company, a New York Central subsidiary. It was exhibited at the World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893. On this loco the low-pressure cylinder was on the right side. Although it appeared to be flat on the side it was not. The lagging and jacketing of the low-pressure cylinder were flattened to alleviate potential clearance problems due to the large diameter of the cylinder. The piston and cylinder bore were actually round.



The drawing below illustrates the relative sizes of the cylinders of the Schenectady cross compound. Compounds performed best when the low-pressure piston had an area of between 2 to 2.4 times that of the high-pressure cylinder. The interceptor valve was mounted in the cylinder saddle. On Schenectady cross compounds the interceptor valve operated automatically.



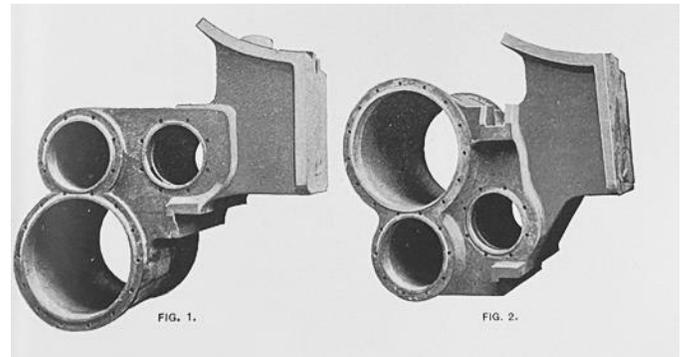
The next photo shows a Richmond Locomotive Works cross compound. This loco has the low-pressure cylinder positioned on the opposite side of the locomotive from the Schenectady cross compound.



higher speeds. However, the Vauclain compound wasn't free of the low-pressure cylinder back pressure problem common to all compounds, nor was it free of the problem of unequal thrust developed in each high-low pressure cylinder pair. This led to increased crosshead wear on the Vauclains.



Atlantic City Railroad No. 1027 looked every bit the racehorse it was. With a light train No. 1027 and her sisters could easily maintain mile a minute schedules across the flat terrain of New Jersey. But looks can be deceiving. This loco couldn't actually achieve the very high speeds suggested by those huge 84 1/4" drivers. Vauclain compounds, like all compounds, were somewhat speed limited. Compounds had to be fitted with larger drivers than comparable single expansion locomotives to reach the same speeds.



FOUR CYLINDER COMPOUNDS THE VAUCLAIN COMPOUND

The Vauclain four-cylinder compound was developed by Samuel M. Vauclain, general superintendent and later president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works. In this design, a high and a low-pressure cylinder were mounted on each side of the locomotive, one above the other. Their two piston rods drove a single crosshead. A single piston valve, driven by a single valve gear, served each pair of cylinders. Because the Vauclain compound's cylinder layout was symmetric from side to side, it avoided the racking tendency of cross compounds and was, therefore, capable of

The Vauclain compound was built with two cylinder configurations. On high-drivered locos the high-pressure cylinder was on top, while low-drivered freight haulers had the low-pressure cylinder on top, to avoid ground clearance problems.

TANDEM COMPOUNDS

The Vaucrain compound was surely the most popular of the four-cylinder compounds, but it wasn't the only one. Baldwin's competitors, which by 1905 had merged to form ALCO, found that their two-cylinder cross compounds couldn't equal the Vaucrain's superior balance and operating characteristics. Their solution was the tandem compound. In this configuration the high-pressure cylinder was placed immediately in front of the low-pressure cylinder on each side of the locomotive, as shown in the photo below. With this cylinder arrangement the tandem could match the Vaucrain's side to side balance, and since each pair of cylinders operated on a common piston rod, a conventional crosshead and guide could be employed.

But, like all compounds, the tandem had its share of complications. The packing required around the piston rod where it passed between the high and low-pressure cylinders proved difficult to maintain. And operation was limited to low speeds because of the difficulty counterbalancing the great weight of the combined pistons and piston rod as well as the large and heavy valve assembly needed to serve the tandem cylinders. Thus, tandem compounds usually operated in the same slow freight service as cross compounds but were generally considered to be superior to them.

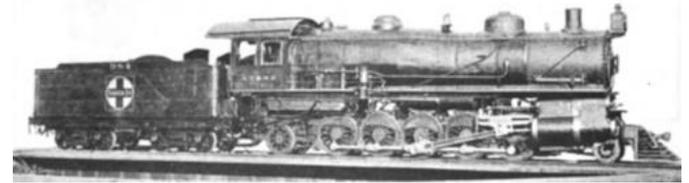


FIG. 3. FOUR-CYLINDER COMPOUND CONSOLIDATION LOCOMOTIVE FOR THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Great Northern No. 515 was a class F-1 four-cylinder tandem compound 2-8-0 exhibited by the Brooks Locomotive Works (who also exhibited a cross compound) at the World's Columbian Exposition. The class F-1s were later converted to simple expansion. This was the fate that befell most compounds in later years. It wasn't really a very difficult job since all of the compound equipment was contained in the cylinders and saddle. It was

relatively straightforward to replace that equipment with conventional hardware.

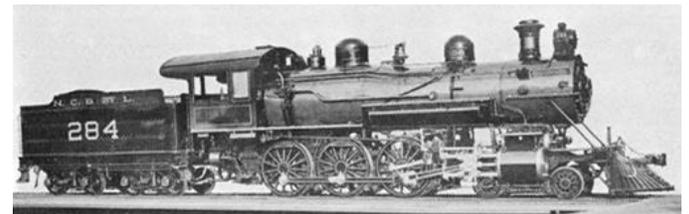
Thus far the compounds we have seen have been small to medium locomotives by modern standards. But very large compounds were also built in the early 1900s.



Santa Fe 984 was a 1903 Baldwin tandem compound. With a total weight of 287,240 lbs. and a tractive effort of 62,560 lbs. it was a real bruiser. This class of locomotives introduced the 2-10-2 wheel arrangement and gave the name Santa Fe to that type.

FOUR CYLINDER BALANCED COMPOUNDS

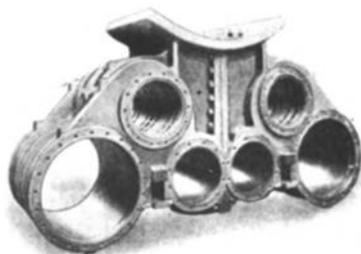
Nashville Chattanooga and St. Louis 284 is a compound though it doesn't look like any that we have seen thus far. It lacks the flat sided cylinder of a cross compound, the stacked cylinders of a Vaucrain, and the huge mass of a pair of tandem cylinders. But a closer look reveals some design oddities. The boiler is a bit long looking and there is a large gap between the first driver and the lead truck. The very short main rod connects to the first driver and the loco has outside valve gear, the first we have seen on a compound. But the biggest clue that this is a different design is the counterweight location on the first driver. Normally the counterweight is located 180 degrees from the crankpin, as on the number second and third drivers. But on the first driver of this loco it is located 90 degrees from the crankpin.



This locomotive is a four-cylinder balanced compound, probably the least well known of the compound types.

In this locomotive the low-pressure cylinders are in the conventional location outside the frames and drive the first pair of drivers. The two high pressure cylinders are located between the frame rails and drive the first axle, which is cranked. The cranks for the cylinder pairs on each side of the locomotive are oriented 180 degrees from each other and the cranks on the two sides are 90 degrees apart. The photo below shows the cylinder saddle of a Baldwin four-cylinder balanced compound, another design of Samuel M. Vauclain.

The cylinders all lie in a row with the large common valve above. The orientation of the cranks makes for far better balance than in any other compound, or in any two-cylinder simple expansion locomotive. And with eight power strokes per driver revolution, the four-cylinder balanced was an extremely smooth runner.



The price to be paid for all this was the cranked axle. Common in England, cranked driver axles were very rare in North America. Motive power departments here generally distrusted crank axles, regarding them as weak. Access to inside connected drives, with their rods and crossheads between the frames, was limited, making maintenance and repairs difficult and expensive.



Nevertheless, there was a market for four-cylinder balanced compounds and Baldwin's competitor, ALCO, had their own version, the Cole compound. New York Central 3803 was a typical Cole four-cylinder balanced compound. The front drivers had a cranked axle driven by the inside high-pressure cylinders, like the Baldwin. However, those cylinders are moved forward, onto the pilot deck.

This allowed the loco to be conventionally proportioned, with the drivers close to the pilot wheels. The low-pressure cylinders drove the rear drivers resulting in a split drive, which may well have been this design's weak point.

The front view of No. 3803 clearly shows the cylinder arrangement. The valves were located above the cylinders, as on the Baldwin version.



END OF THE LINE FOR THE COMPOUNDS?

The heyday of the compounds was the eighteen nineties and nineteen aughts. Popularity as well as production seems to have been on the rise in the nineties, then leveled off in the new century. But just how many were actually built? Your author has been unable to find production numbers for compounds during this period. However, some insight can be gained from the following table:

EVENT OR BOOK	DATE	TOTAL # OF LOCOS	NUMBER OF COMPOUNDS	PERCENTAGE OF COMPOUNDS
Columbian Expo	1893	48	16	33.30%
Loco Dictionary	1906	73	20	27.30%
Loco Dictionary	1909	76	18	23.60%

Actual sales figures for the 1890s can be found in Baldwin's Vauclain compound booklet. The first one was built in 1889 followed by three the next year. Production generally rose through the 1890s, reaching a total of 1866 built or on order at the time of the booklet's publication in 1900. In one specific year, 1896, out of a total of 597 locomotives built, 173, or 31.6% were Vauclain compounds.

Sales of compounds of all types seemed to continue at a good rate through the nineteen aughts but came to a crashing stop after 1910. As compounds aged, high maintenance costs became a more serious issue. Increasing train speeds worked against the compounds. But these factors alone don't account for the sudden, almost total, collapse of compound sales. The real cause was the superheater.

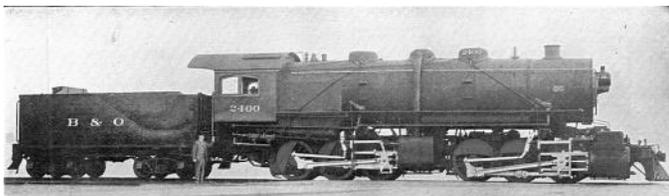
As water boils, the steam produced remains at the same temperature as the water despite the extra BTUs needed to convert it to steam. Steam at the same temperature as boiling water is referred to as saturated steam. The compound design was an attempt to improve the efficiency of a steam engine by wringing more work out of saturated steam. The superheater took a different approach. It heated the saturated steam by an additional 100 or even 200 degrees. Superheated steam, having more energy than saturated steam, could do more work than saturated steam in an ordinary single expansion locomotive.

The railroads loved superheaters. They provided better economy than compounds without the weight and expense of extra cylinders and complex valving. Indeed, they had no moving parts. They required no attention from the locomotive crew. And when maintenance was required, the whole superheater assembly could be removed through the locomotive's smokebox.

Few compounds remained in service after the widespread adoption of the superheater. Many were rebuilt with simple expansion cylinders and fitted with superheaters. Older compounds, which in any case might be too small for current needs, were scrapped. But superheating didn't spell doom for all compounds. There was one class of compound that did remain in service and continued to be built right up to the end of steam locomotive construction in the United States. That was the Mallet articulated compound.

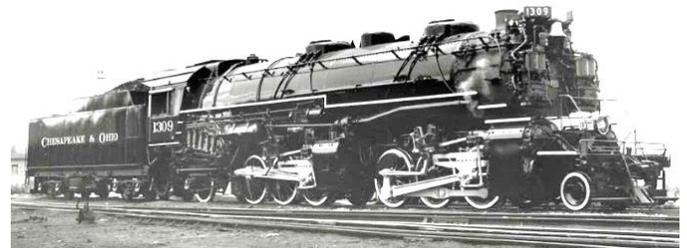
MALLET ARTICULATED COMPOUNDS

This four-cylinder articulated compound was the brainchild of Swiss mechanical engineer Anatole Mallet. Patented in 1884, the Mallet compound had two engine sections supporting the boiler. The rear engine, with the high-pressure cylinders, was rigidly attached to the boiler. The front engine, with the low-pressure cylinders, was hinged at its rear.



B&O No. 2400, nicknamed "Old Maude", was the first Mallet articulated to operate in America. It had features typical of early Mallets. Outside pipes from the steam dome fed the high-pressure cylinders which were fitted with piston valves while the low-pressure cylinders retained slide valves. A power reverse was installed to help the engineer deal with the four sets of Walschaert's valve gear.

Though it was an 0-6-6-0, Maude was intended to be a road engine. It was thought that its articulated chassis would eliminate the need for a lead truck. When this proved not to be the case, No. 2400 was relegated to slow speed pusher service on Sand Patch grade between Cumberland, MD and Connellsville, PA on the B&O's Baltimore to Chicago main line.



Most later American articulateds were not Mallets but simple expansion locos. Alleghenies and fast articulateds like Challengers and Big Boys were simples. But there remained a niche market for Mallets. The C&O found them to have the perfect mix of power and flexibility for mine runs. C&O class H-6 No.1309 is one of an order ten received from Baldwin beginning in September, 1949. Its design can be traced to the Chessie's first 2-6-6-2s of 1910. They were the last steam locomotives built by Baldwin for an American railroad.

Sources for this article can be found on page 28

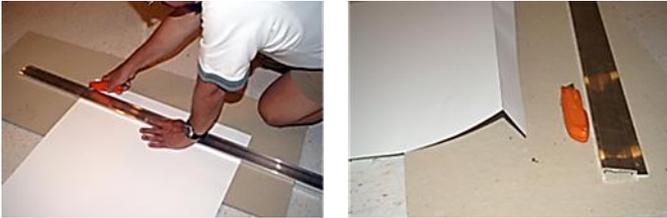
ED NOTE- John Bopp is a Division 6 member and has been our "historian" for several years, giving our members interesting railroad related history lessons nearly every meeting. The HotBox will be featuring many of his lessons. Thanks John!

ED NOTE – This issues History by John Bopp, Division 6, is extra long because the HotBox can now be as many pages as needed! For this article, this issue is 2 pages longer – 38 total! Enjoy!!

SEAMLESS BACKDROP by Ken Chick, MMR, Div 6 **NCR MODELING**

SEAMLESS ALUMINUM BACKDROP PART 2

Cutting the Aluminum - It is easy to cut the aluminum with shears. However, a better way to do it is by using the score and snap method we use with styrene. This will produce a nice straight edge with minimal effort. Using a utility knife and a metal straight edge, score the aluminum using a fair amount of pressure, then bend the aluminum along the scored line.



It usually won't break at the joint unless you bend it back and forth a couple of times; however, after you bend it, you can snap it apart. This can be done if you want to cut it vertically, or if you need to trim an inch or so off the bottom of the aluminum, you can score it deeply then "peel" the bottom off. You have to try this to understand how easy it really is. Unless you have construction grade hands, you should probably wear gloves when peeling the aluminum.

You can also easily cut a hole where your track needs to tunnel through the backdrop, as from one side of a peninsula to the other.



You can easily nibble a hole with shears, which is how it was done in the photo. Another way is to score and snap a hole the same way you would do a window opening in styrene - score the sides, top and bottom, then use the knife to cut an "X" in the middle and snap out the sections.

Snaplocks - The next step is to make the "hooks" that hold the aluminum in the channel we have secured to the wall. These "hooks" are called

"snaplocks" and are placed along the top edge of the aluminum.



It is these snaplocks that hook into the channel and hold the aluminum up. This is the secret to our system and is the only time you need a special tool - it is called a snaplock punch. You can generally buy one, for about \$28.00, from your local home center, or where you buy the aluminum. If a group is going to do it - share the cost.



Put snaplocks about every six inches or so. Make sure the snaplocks protrude toward the face of the aluminum (the white side) so that they will hook under the edge of the channel.



If you make a mistake, hammer the snaplock flat, turn the tool around and try again. When punching a long section, we have found it convenient to unroll the aluminum and re-roll it past the area where we are working. It's the same idea as the film on a projector going from one spool, past the lens (work area), to the second spool. It is easier to handle long sections this way. Once you have trimmed and put the snaplocks in the aluminum, you are ready to hang it.

SEAMLESS BACKDROP by Ken Chick, MMR, Div 6 ***NCR MODELING***

Hanging the Backdrop - Now it's time to hang the aluminum. You should take some care to avoid kinks. Get your crew together and position them so that they can support the aluminum evenly. Starting at one end, slip the snaplocks up into the vinyl channel one at a time. Gentle upward pressure from the bottom of the aluminum will usually accomplish this without difficulty. If necessary, you can place a putty knife under a snaplock to push it up into the channel.



Remember, do all this carefully to avoid kinking. Once kinks are there, you can generally repair them, but it is better to avoid them in the first place. If you get a minor kink, it probably will not be noticed once you are done, but if you get a major one, dent it back, cover it with some drywall joint compound and sand it smooth. If you are careful, you won't have any problems. We have frequently put up 50' lengths without any kinks.

By the way, if you need to remove the aluminum from the channel, use a putty knife to pry the edge of the vinyl channel away from the snaplocks, one at a time. Gently pull down on the aluminum at the same time as you slide the putty knife between the channel and the aluminum.

If you need to butt join two pieces of aluminum, cut a piece about six to eight inches wide. This will serve as a splice plate behind the two sections you are joining. Apply contact cement to the back of both the sections and the front of the splice plate. We have found the new water-base contact cement does not work as well as the original formula. Use the original. Let it dry, according to the directions on the can, then apply the splice plate to the back of the first section so that half of the plate is still

exposed. It should bond immediately. Once this is done, place the second section of backdrop over the exposed half of the splice plate. If you are uncertain about the alignment and the instant bonding, you can put a piece of wax paper between the pieces until the alignment is correct, then gently pull the wax paper out and press the pieces together. (This is the same process used for applying Formica to a counter.) It is best if you have all the splices on straight sections as the double thickness can affect the radius of a curve.

To make a peninsula divider, put up a length of the aluminum on both sides. The first peninsula we ever did had a 12" radius "balloon" curve at the end. One piece of aluminum was used to curve from one side to the other. Our second peninsula had a 4" radius curve at the end. Here we had both sides of the aluminum backdrop end near the end of the divider, and a curved "cap" or "end piece" was spliced to the two sides. We simply cut a short piece of aluminum and bent it around one of the basement's I-beam support columns to form the curve; however, a piece of PVC pipe of the proper radius would work just as well. On the peninsula built in this article, Jim plans on trimming the narrow end with a painted piece of wood.



After splicing two sections together you may want to hide the joint better. We have experimented with several materials, including automotive putty (Bondo) and drywall joint compound. We prefer the drywall joint compound as it is much easier to work with. After the compound has hardened, sand it smooth to make the joint disappear. Drywall compound can be worked with a damp sponge and feathered to the aluminum with Extra Fine or Wet and Dry, sandpaper.

SEAMLESS BACKDROP by Ken Chick, MMR, Div 6 **NCR MODELING**

The last step is to paint the aluminum with your favorite shade of sky blue and after that, add some three-dimensional scenery. On one occasion we found the aluminum had some sort of residue left over from the manufacturing process that hindered the paint from adhering properly. If you find this with your aluminum, simply spray a household cleaner on it and wipe it clean. Of course, you can always prime the aluminum prior to paint, but we have not found this to be necessary.



As I mentioned at the beginning, you can use aluminum to form a cove in a corner. If you already have a finished wall surface on which you are going to paint the backdrop, you can still use aluminum to round your inside corners. The process for hanging the aluminum is the same, only here the ends are to be attached to the wall. This can be done with contact cement. Once it is firmly secure, simply feather the edges of the aluminum into the wall with some drywall joint compound. The rounded corners will greatly improve the backdrop's illusion.



Well there you have it. I believe that if you take the time to try our aluminum backdrop method, you'll be impressed with how easy it is to work. You'll also find that it offers a better surface than you'll get with any other material.

**How about writing an article on your latest modeling project! We can use a clinic as an article!
Earn AP points!
At the HotBox, WE NEED and WANT your articles!!**

RAILROAD HISTORY By John Bopp, Div 6 **NCR HISTORY**

SOURCES

Dredge, James. A Record of the Transportation Exhibits At the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. London: Offices of "Engineering", 1894.

Fowler, George Little. Locomotive Dictionary. New York: The Railroad Gazette, 1906. Reprint: Novato, California: Newton K. Gregg, 1972; ISBN 0-912318-20-1

Fowler, George Little. Locomotive Dictionary. New York: The Railroad Age Gazette, 1909

Swengel, F. M. The American Steam Locomotive vol. 1 The Evolution of the Steam Locomotive. Davenport, Iowa: Midwest Rail Publications, Inc., 1967; LOC Catalogue Number 67-29846

Vauclain System of Compound Locomotives. Philadelphia: Baldwin Locomotive Works, 1900. Reprint: Ocean, New Jersey: Specialty Press, Inc.; ISBN 0-913556-08-4

BUILD C&O SIGNAL BRIDGES

by Joe Bliss

NCR MODELING

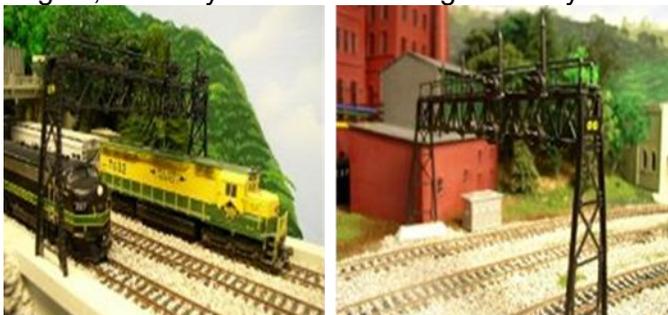
This article is based on a clinic and will show you how to kit-bash Bachmann's Two-Track Bridge to resemble a C&O (Ex.) Pere Marquette's, and others, signal bridge. Here is Bachmann's model, as-is! This may be OK for some Prototypes, but not quite what we want and is also a very good starting point. Don't throw away those Bachmann "Dummy" signal targets! I'll show you a use for these later, in making "Dwarf" signals!



Shown here is the stock non-operating kit fully assembled, with dummy targets.



Here are some Bachmann signal bridges nicely kit-bashed in to 3-track bridges, with Oregon rail targets, on Barry Hensel's Reading Lines layout.



Work from photos, or drawings to duplicate the prototype's design. These photos I took of the 3-Track Ex. Pere Marquette signal bridge, at Eckles road crossing in Plymouth Township, Mi.



C&O prototype signal bridge (location unknown)



Modifying the bridge kit - I wanted it to look more like C&O's, or PM's signal bridges! The first photo on the left, shows where to cut the walkway. The one on the right shows the bridge re-assembled, with the walkway on the bottom and railings removed on top.

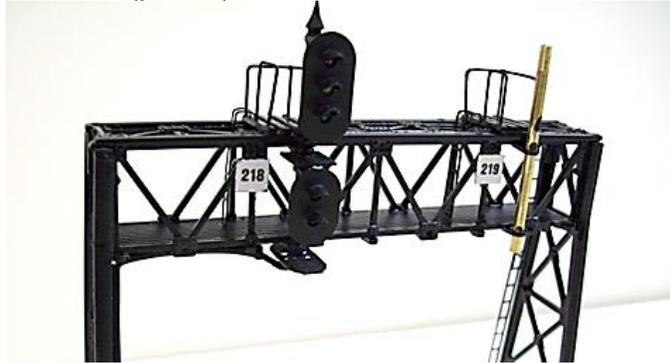


BUILD C&O SIGNAL BRIDGES

by Joe Bliss

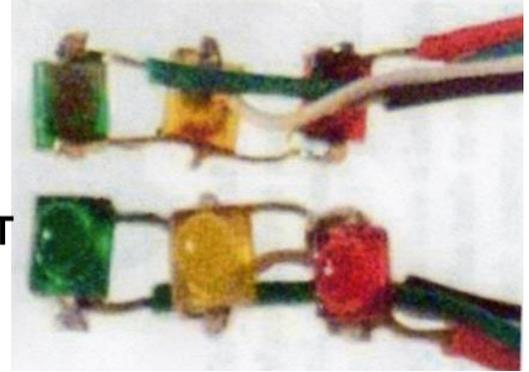
NCR MODELING

Next, we add new signal mast brackets, brass ladders, and new wire railings! All Ladders are cut from Tomar 12" ladder stock. Masts are cut from 3/32" brass tubing. Signal heads are either Tomar, or Oregon Rail products targets (Note: test fit the masts, targets, and platforms at this point!). Service platforms are either Tomar (brass), or Oregon Rail Products (plastic).



BACK

FRONT

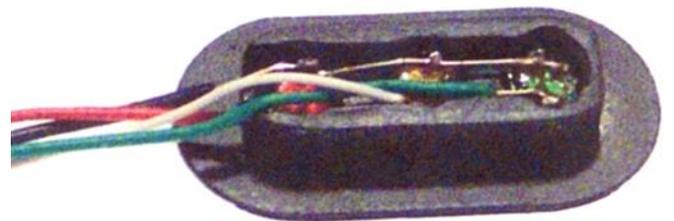


Trim and file the back of the signal head between the bores and below the lower bore. Then, carefully press the LED group into the bores and align the wires in the cavity, extending out of the bottom.

Prototype, compared to Model...



To wire the LED's and Install them in the signal targets, you need to build a wood jig with holes for the LED's spaced the same as the signal target. Place the LED's face down in the holes, align the cathodes (crossbar mark) and tape the leads to the jig. Attach 30-32 ga wire to the LED's, soldering as close to them as possible. Use one wire per LED. Then use a common wire to wire the anodes together. Trim the wires as close as possible and fold back the remaining wires 90 degrees.



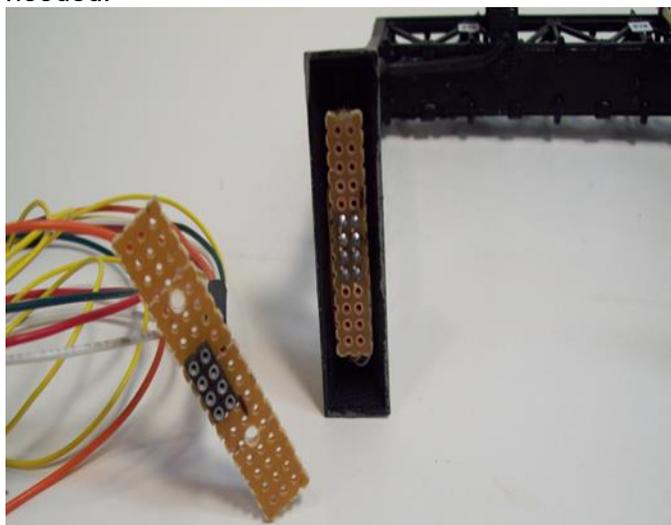
Make a cover for the back of the signal head from 0.020 styrene. Trim and file for a neat fit and appearance.



BUILD C&O SIGNAL BRIDGES *by Joe Bliss* **NCR MODELING**

Carefully feed the 3 colored wires into a hole in the mast and out the end. Deburr the hole to avoid cutting the wire insulation. All of the wires must be long enough to go along the platform, down the leg of the signal bridge and below the benchwork.

It's not a bad idea to make your bridges removable. Here I used an NMRA 8-pin socket, wired & soldered to a piece of electronic perf board, mounted in the layout, under both footings on the bridge. The targets on the signal masts are wired with 30 AWG solid Kynar wire and then brought down to an 8-conductor header pin and plugged into the base. This makes it easy to repair them, if needed.



Nice having working signals, to either a detection system or wired to turnout motors to show turnout positions. And that is the subject for another article....

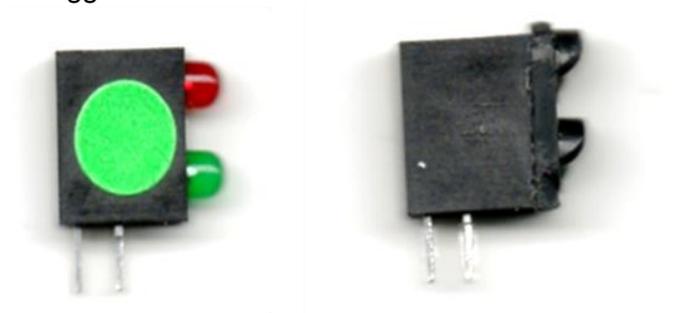


Now... remember those Bachmann signal targets we didn't use? It's easy to turn them into dwarf

signals. Cut down, and sanded, they make a nice hooded face for a 2-Light dwarf signal assembly!



Next, use a 2 light module, Yellow Green LED Circuit Board Indicator CBI 9.6mm x 8.1mm x 4.3mm 2 Stack (found on ebay). Glue the trimmed target to the module and wire to your turnout motor or toggle switch to show turnout direction.



Here's one that is also mounted to a pin connector and plug, acting as the concrete signal base and being easy to remove for repairs.



I hope this article and easy instructions help you add an attractive addition to your layout. Lighted signals are very cool!! Thanks for reading!

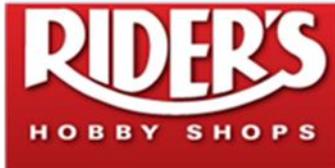


35101 Ford Rd Westland, MI 48185 734-722-5700
33350 W Nine Mile Rd Farmington, MI 48336 248-919-0040
1480 Washtenaw Ave Ypsilanti, MI 48197 734-961-7575
12020 Fort St Southgate, MI 48195 734-250-7382



43055 Van Dyke Ave Sterling Hgts, MI 48314
586-254-1600

21714 Harper Ave St. Clair Shores, MI 48080
586-771-6770



2061 S Linden Rd Flint, MI 48532 810-720-2500
2055 28th Street SE Grand Rapids, MI 49508 616-247-9933

21770 W 11 Mile Rd Harvard Row Mall Southfield, MI 48076
248-864-5277



OTHER HOBBY SHOPS in the NCR - Whistle Stop Hobbies & Crafts, Decatur, IN - Phil's Hobby Shop, Fort Wayne, IN - The Gladieux Train Depot, Oregon, OH - Carlton Hobbies, Waterford, MI - J-BAR Hobbies, Tecumseh, MI - Hobby Recycling, Wyoming, MI **Please visit your local hobby shop!**

HOBBY SHOP NEWS – If you have a favorite hobby shop in the NCR boundaries that you would like to see listed on this page, please let us know!! **THANK-YOU to our hobby shops for your support!**

NCR – NMRA IN FILM

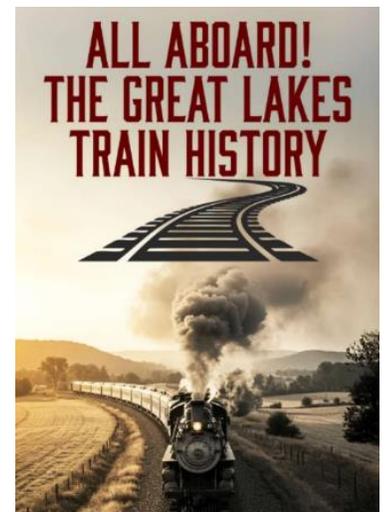
NCR NEWS

ALL ABOARD!! See this website below for the teaser/trailer for an up-coming documentary that Division 6, the North Central Region and the National Model Railroad Association had a part in - **ALL ABOARD: THE GREAT LAKES TRAIN HISTORY**. Done by renown Filmmakers Producer/Directors Keith Famie and Mark Salloum, this new project will explore the rich railroad history of Michigan. It will also touch on our great hobby and how we are preserving history in miniature! That is where our participation will be shown, seeing layouts and interviews with some of our wonderful members. A release date for this film has not yet been announced, but is expected in 2026. Website :

<https://www.bendingriverfilms.com/allaboard#trailer>

If you're interested in being featured as a train aficionado—either personally or through your company or foundation—via a tax-deductible donation, please contact Keith Famie at keith@bendingriverfilms.com

They are planning a wonderful Michigan holiday charity premiere celebration, which will include train displays for community leaders and media to enjoy.



Division One Black Swamp Division (Northwest Ohio and Michigan Lenawee and Monroe Counties)

We meet at the Proclaim FM radio station community center at 7112 Angola Rd., Holland, OH 43528. Meetings are held on Friday evenings once a month from September - May. During the Summer (June - August) we will have a field trip to a rail museum, prototype site, layout tour, etc. The exact schedule, information about our activities and our monthly publication, the Train Order, are posted on our website at <http://div1.ncrmra.org>

Division Two - Tip of the Mitt (Northern Lower and the Eastern UP) Twenty-four counties, both north and south of the Mackinac Bridge. Meetings are typically held in Traverse City on the 3rd Saturday of each month. Planning is ongoing for 2025. We also go hybrid, connecting by Zoom. To request meeting invites and our quarterly newsletter, email our Superintendent, jens.hensel50@gmail.com

Division Three 3 Rivers Division (Fort Wayne, Indiana and western Ohio)

Our meeting schedule is the 3rd Monday of the month with Zoom meetings in January, April, & October, In person meetings in February, May, August, & November with various meeting locations, & Operating Sessions in March, June, September & December at various members homes. Any updates/changes can be found on our website: <http://div3.ncr-nmra.org>

Division Four Grand Rails Division (Grand Rapids and western Michigan)

We meet monthly using locations in Holland and Grand Rapids. All meetings start at 10am and details to be determined. For additional information contact Superintendent Mark Baldwin grandrailsdiv@gmail.com or 616-258-0110 or visit the NEW division website at - www.grandrailsdiv4.com

Division Five Capital Division (Lansing and mid-lower Michigan)

Meets at 1pm, on the SECOND Saturday of each month at the Meridian Township Fire Department event room in Okemos. We meet September to May with additional activities added through the year. Please check our website or contact the Supervisor for meeting location. <https://nmranrdiv5.com/>

Division Six Motor City Division (Wayne & Washtenaw Counties)

Meets at 7pm-10pm, on the THIRD Friday of each month at the Livonia Senior Wellness Center 32001 Five Mile Rd, Livonia, MI 48154. Division 6 meets year-round. www.div6-ncr-nmra.com

Division Eight Clinton River Division (Oakland, Macomb and St. Clair Counties)

Meets at 7:00pm, on the THIRD Thursday of each month at Troy Christian Chapel, 400 East Long Lake Road, between Rochester and Livernois Roads, Troy. Division 8 meets year-round. <http://div8.ncrmra.org/>

Division Nine SW Michigan Division (Branch, Calhoun, Hillsdale, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren Counties)

We meet monthly on the 3rd Saturday of the month, except in December. Monthly meetings start at 9:30AM at one of two locations (check website for meeting location each month). Our meetings typically include a clinic and/or layout tour(s). Visitors are always welcome. For additional information contact Garry Johnson, Superintendent at 269-365-6777. Our NEW website is <https://div9.ncrmra.org>

Division Ten Ten Wheelers Division (Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, Tuscola, Sanilac, Saginaw, Bay, Midland, Arenac, and Gladwin and Huron Counties) Meets the FOURTH Thursday of each month at 7 PM at Dalton Airport on Pierson Road in Flushing. We meet in the meeting room of Experimental Aircraft Association Chapter 77. Contact Superintendent, Wayne Wilder 989-823-3409 or ncrdiv10@gmail.com for directions to the meeting location.

OTHER GROUPS meeting in the NCR AREA There are MANY rail organizations in the NCR area. They can be found at www.michiganrailroads.com www.ohiorailtourism.org www.irtg.org

YOU should join and attend your local NMRA/NCR/Division meetings and activities! Get the most out of your hobby – participate often!!

NCR TIMETABLE EVENTS!

NCR AREA EVENTS

NOTE- Events listed have been compiled from listings on www.trainshowlist.com/ and www.trains.com, website for Model Railroader magazine. If you have an event you want listed, it's FREE, but information must be submitted to the Editor at least 30 days in advance of our publication dates!

Saturday-Sunday, Mar 7 & 8, 2026 - Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House 104 North Saginaw St. Holly, MI 48442 Adults - \$5, Seniors (65+) - \$4, Children (5-18) - \$2, Children under 5 – Free New times - 2025: 11 am to 5 pm and in 2026: Noon to 4 pm See several O scale trains in operation, over a 350 foot double track mainline and several branch lines. Info: 248-634-5811 webmaster@dmrrc.org

Saturday-Sunday, Mar. 15-16; Apr. 19-20, 2026 - Blissfield Model Railroad Club Open House 109 E. Adrian St. (US 223) Blissfield, MI 49228 11am to 4pm FREE! Wheelchair Accessible <http://www.bmrr.org>

Saturday's, March 14 & 28; April 11 & 25, 2026 – Redford Model Railroad Club OPEN HOUSE Redford Model Railroad - Sand Hill & Western Division 27316 Michigan Ave Inkster, MI (East of Inkster Road on North Side of Michigan Avenue) 11am – 5pm FREE – donations welcomed More Information: www.redfordmrrc.org Facebook: Redford Model Railroad Club

Sunday, March 15; April 12, 2026 - Taylor Town Train Show Taylor Town Trade Center 22525 Ecorse Rd Taylor, MI 100+ vendors. All gauges. 10am Early bird (\$10 entry), 11am - 4pm \$5 entry kids under 14 free. Vendors: \$25 first table. \$20 for each additional table. Contact Info - Mike Leland via text or call 313-955-5523

Sunday, March 8, 2026 - Greater Toledo Toy & Train Show Owens Community College 30335 Oregon Rd., Perrysburg, OH 11am-3pm Randy Ramsey 419-215-4181 Toledotoymasters@gmail.com

Sunday, March 22, 2026 – 43rd Mid-Michigan Model Train Show NEW LOCATION!!! DoubleTree by Hilton 1 Wenonah Park Place Bay City, MI 48708 10:30am-4:30pm \$10 adults, children 12 & under free; limited early entry \$20 buy tickets in advance on website. Over 120 Vendor tables, One large room, Free parking, Timed basket raffles, Vendor dollar giveaways Contact Info - Mason Weisenberger 989-971-6020 Saginawrivervalleymodelrailroa@gmail.com Website: <https://www.srvmodelrailroad.org/>

Saturday, March 28 2026 - Lincoln Park Train Club's Train Show (Buy & Swap) J.F.K. Memorial Building 3240 Ferris Lincoln Park, MI Early Bird \$10 starting at 10 AM. Regular Admission \$5 11 AM to 3 PM. Contact Info - Bob Adler 734-675-5712 (10am-10pm)

Saturday, April 04, 2026 - 2026 Spring Swap Meet Kalamazoo, MI Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds Expo South 10am-3pm \$5 admission, under 10 free David Hayes-Moats 269-344-0906 kaltrainshow@kalnet.net

Saturday, April 11, 2026 – 40th annual Train Show & Swap Meet Bucyrus Model RR Assoc. Crawford Co. Fairgrounds 610 Whetstone St Bucyrus, OH 10am-3pm \$5 admission, 12 and under – free Contact Info – Jon Cooper 419-569-7374 cooperj12@yahoo.com

Saturday, April 18, 2026 - Greater Grand Rapids Spring 2025 Train Show HSB. Inc. 5625 Burlingame Ave SW 23 Wyoming, MI 10am to 3pm Adult entry: \$5 Children under 12: Free! We've got trains for sale, trains for seeing, trains for playing! All at West Michigan's largest train show! Features- Thomas the Tank Engine play area, modular layouts from local clubs, Lego Train Display, concessions, door prizes, and more! Vendor Tables available, 6ft tables at \$25 each! Vendor Set Up Friday at 7pm, Saturday at 7am. Contact Information- Tom Klonowski trainshow@grvrrc.org 847-691-1163 Website: <https://grvrrc.org/>

NCR TIMETABLE EVENTS!

NCR AREA EVENTS

Saturday, April 18, 2026 – 2026 SPRING RAILROAD MODELER MEET Hosted by the Black Swamp Division (Div 1) Live Clinics, Layout Tours and So Much More - This event is open to ALL MODELERS - NMRA Membership is not required Admission is \$20 at the door, 17 and under free, all individuals 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult All event activities (minus lunch) are included in one low price! Advance registration is encouraged. Doors open at 8AM, Clinics start at 9AM, Layout Tours begin 3PM
<https://smm.ncrnmra.org/> **See info on pages 14-15 of this HotBox!**

Saturday, April 25, 2026 - Muskegon Railroad Historical Society - Model Railroad & Hobby Expo
Cardinal Elementary School 2310 Marquette Ave, Muskegon, MI 10:00am to 2:00pm
We will be giving out reuseable gift bags filled with free items to the public as they come through the door while supplies last and will have 4 large 450+ pcs Rotary tool kits as door prizes come out and see us for this show!
Contact Information; Michael J Wood 6ftwoody@comcast.net 231-670-0751
Website: <https://mrhsonline.wordpress.com/>

Sunday, April 26, 2026 – 34th annual Planes, Trains & Automobiles – Flint’s R/C & Train Swap Meet
Lake Fenton High School 4070 Lahring Rd Linden, MI 48451 10am – 1pm Admission - \$5 kids under 17, active Military (with ID) and Ladies FREE www.rcflyingaces.com Bill Gerald 810-845-3007

Saturday, May 2, 2026 - Grand River Valley Model Railroad Club OPEN HOUSE
2405 Porter St. SW, Wyoming MI. (Back of the building, down the ramp to the basement). 10AM - 4PM
For Additional Information: Call the club at 847-691-1163 Or Email us at: trainshow@grvrrc.org
web: <https://grvrrc.org> <https://www.facebook.com/grandrivervalleytrainclub>

Sunday, May 17, 2026 – 44th Annual Model Train Show Durand Middle School, 9550 Lansing Rd, Durand, MI 48429 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM The 44th Annual Model Train Show, presented by Durand Union Station, Inc., in conjunction with Durand Railroad Days. \$5.00 admission for adults and children 11 and older. Operating Layouts - Vendor Tables - Great Gift Ideas - Food and Drinks 989-288-3561

Saturday, May 16, 2026 – NCR Division 2 Layout Open House Day!
See 7 great layouts, all in the upper lower peninsula of Michigan. Donation requested to local food banks.
See info on page 16 of this HotBox!

Friday-Sunday, May 15-17, 2026 - New York Central System Historical Society 2026 Convention
Delta Hotel 2747 South 11th Street, Kalamazoo, MI, 49009 Registration for NYCSHS members and non-members and is presently \$249/person. This includes ALL activities including our Saturday train excursion and evening banquet. The NYCRHS has decided to let non-members of the society attend and ride on the Saturday, May 16th convention train ride, without attending the convention at a special rate. Pricing and tickets are on the NYCRHS website for the train ride and also for the entire convention. The pricing and registration form for just the train ride is not currently on their website, but it will be. **See info on page 9 of this HotBox!**
<https://www.nycshs.org/nycshs-2026-annual>

Friday-Saturday, July 17-18, 2026 - 23rd Annual - Van Wert Railroad Heritage Weekend Model Railroad Show & Swap Van Wert County Fairgrounds 1055 S Washington St., Van Wert, OH
Friday 4pm to 8pm & Saturday 10am to 3pm Over 250 Vendor Tables, Operating Layouts, New & Used Trains - All Guages, Antique & Collectable Trains, Buildings, Kits & Scenery, Railroad Books, Photos & Videos, RR Lanterns, China & Paper Collectables. Test track (with DCC) available, Food Court, Free Parking. Friday Night is Kids Night (Adults Free when accompanied by a child under 12) Children 12 & under free. Scouts in uniform free. "Run a Train" hosted by the Three Rivers Division, NMRA. Last year we gave away 14 train sets.
Contact Info- Chuck White railcarman@frontier.com 260-760-1666 web- <https://www.vwrrhw.com/>

Do you live in one division, but attend meetings and participate in another? With the “DIVISION OF CHOICE” program you can become an official member and even hold office in the division of your liking! All you need to do is fill out the **DIVISION OF CHOICE** form and submit it to the NCR Registrar. Once filed, you can vote and hold office in the division of your choice. Please be aware, the North Central Region (NCR) will notify both divisions of your choice and records will be maintained within the NCR. The NMRA national office WILL NOT change your default division (which is part of your NMRA number). The NCR and your division of choice will honor your selection and provide all the rights of a standard member of that division.

<https://www.ncrnmra.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NCRDivisionOfChoice.pdf>

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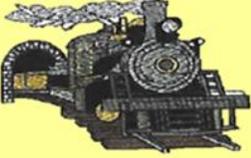
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www.socmrrc.org



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**How about writing an article on your latest modeling project! We can use a clinic as an article! Earn AP points!
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*in the next issue of THE **HotBox** –*

MORE LAYOUT PHOTOS

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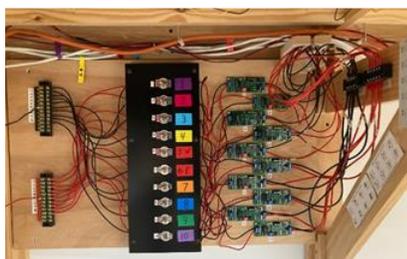
MORE INFORMATION

.... stay tuned! Stay informed!

Division 9 Model Building Display



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Building a Short Detector

**GRAND RAILS 2026
NCR - Div 4
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