

THE *HotBox*

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

VOL. 67 NO. 3

AUTUMN 2026

RAILFANNING – Division 4 Convention Layouts



GRAND RAILS 2026 NCR CONVENTION

MODELING MANUAL RR CROSSING GATES



OTHER USES FOR STOCK CARS

NCR ELECTION INFORMATION

CABOOSE HISTORY



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

The HotBox

AUTUMN 2026
Vol. 67, No. 3

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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"

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

Hello!! It's almost Autumn... cooler temps, nice fall colors, pumpkin spice everything (OK... maybe not that last one!). It's also that time of the year when model railroading starts to pick-up in activities. Train shows and swap meets really fill up the calendar. Take a quick peek at the events listings in this issue of the HotBox. WOW! The shows are great... but also, please, don't forget about supporting your local hobby shop!! They need you too! So if you're thinking of ordering that latest loco or covered hopper.... give your hobby shop a chance to fill that need for you! Most do special orders and pricing, just like the many mail-order places. And most likely, you won't find those latest releases at the swap meet either. THANKS for your support!!!

You have ONE more month to pre-register! I'm talking about the NCR Convention – GRAND RAILS 2026, hosted by Division Four. ALL the info is here in the HotBox, so start making your plans very soon! Grand Rails 2026 is shaping up to be another great event in our Region. Let's all attend and support the efforts of Division Four! October 8-10, 2026, Zeeland, MI !! See YOU there!!

As usual.... I'll make that near issue plea for articles for the HotBox. It's really easy to do... just document your next modeling project with pictures and notes. We can turn that into an article, making you famous!

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 or will happen. Please forgive us, these are NOT intentional! For the Summer HotBox, we know of no concerns or typo's.

FRONT COVER PICTURES- NMRA/NCR logo, Grand Rails 2026 NCR convention logo; Modeling Manual RR Crossing Gates; Other Uses for Stock Cars; Busy engine facilities on Thom Posts' C&O Railroad

REAR COVER PICTURES- Modeling Manual RR Crossing Gates part 2; Wrap-up Grand Rails 2026; New – Lansing 2027 Convention news; Build a logging railroad water car; The Frankfurt MI loading area for the railroad Car Ferry on Dr. John A Campbell's Ann Arbor Railroad.

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RAILROADING "WHAT THE ????"

NCR HUMOR

Here's a few we've recently found on the Proses Facebook page..... These are pretty top-notch.... and funny!!



PRESIDENT'S OBSERVATION

Rich Mahaney

Lots of things on my mind this summer of 2026. Two popular songs come into my head this summer – Bob Dylan's "The Times are a-changing" and from Bob Seger's "Like A Rock" with the song lines of "20 years now, where they go, 20 years, I don't know, I sit and I wonder sometimes, where they have gone". These songs describe my model railroading thoughts for fall and winter.

I turn 75 in January 2027, and have not finished a model railroad layout in my lifetime. I switched from the S scale train I got around age 5 for a Christmas present to HO scale in junior high because of other model railroad kids in my neighborhood. My S scale Union Pacific diesel train did come with a wonderful NP refrigerator car, which may have started my interest in refrigerator operations and refrigerator cars (wish I still had that car on a shelf). Switching to HO Scale began a dream to have a layout and future layouts. The purchase of railroad cars and engines also began, plus track, structures and everything else that would be needed to build incredible layouts. Of course, like many of you I dreamed of layouts bigger than my space, skills and budget, but it was fun! Now am sitting on a "hobby shop" of supplies and materials in my basement, garage and a storage unit down the street, but still nothing more than some benchwork in a basement crying out for a layout. I probably have 1000 railroad cars & 100 engines in storage.

This summer, as I look forward to this fall and winter and the age of 75 and I am asking questions of, "am I ever going to build a layout or finish what I have started?" I have a dream, I have a concept, an era, and I have everything I need! The dream included building the Great Northern Railway in the late 1950's and moving fresh produce from Washington to the Midwest in "iced" refrigerator cars. Now my plan is more of just a switching layout to make up the trains, industries along the tracks, and get refrigerator cars started moving east. Then I think about what I am going to do with all this model railroad stuff, when do I start selling stuff and reducing my inventory? Even more about getting rid of a layout when I am older, I don't want to leave all of this to Jill (my wife) to do. All questions that all of you have asked yourselves. Then of course as I travel to different NCR Divisions and visit layouts around the North Central Region and I see people older than myself building wonderful layouts, operating trains, having fun and even starting new

layouts, then I think "wait go down to the basement and get working" on what you have. I have a large basement that Jill has given me to use, with really no rules, just go work on a model railroad layout and have some fun operating trains! I am still challenged by working 4 to 6 days a week at a Meijer store stocking shelves and I find it tough to include "basement modeling time" after work days.

So, 40 years of "working on a railroad" with really nothing to show. Decision making time for me this fall! Or should I get tables at the "Lansing Train Sale" or get to work on it? We will see what happens this fall as I really would like to have something to show for all this time and money. My "fame" in the model railroad hobby has not been building a famous layout like others, but instead it has been involved with producing clinics that I have presented across North America with all the photos from other people's layouts and real train photos. Presenting clinics will continue in 2027, as I have accepted to teach at conventions in WY, NH and Canada. I will report for one last time as your NCR President this winter and hopefully I will talk about layout progress. Rich... get to the basement, create something proud for the Great Northern Railway and learn and use modeling techniques that you think you have or need to learn from others!

So back to where I started this note. Many of you have had these kinds of thoughts. The words in my head as I work to make decisions come from Bob Dylan and Bob Seger. Maybe Bob Seger should have sang "40 years instead of 20 years" for these model railroad decisions I need to make this fall. What will be the inspiring item? Thanks for "listening!"

Also, please get signed up for the great NCR Division 4 Railroad Convention in Zeeland Michigan in October to hear great clinics, visit great layouts, participate in layout operations, visit with friends and make new friends! Division 4 has prepared a great convention for us this fall! October 8 through 10, there may be some layouts to visit also on October 11th.

Rich Mahaney, NMRA NCR President

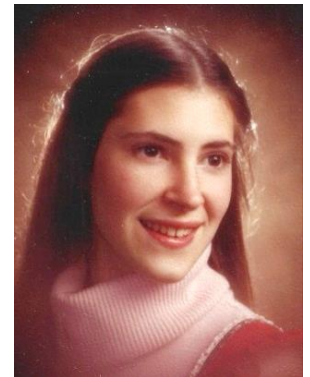


We are saddened to report on NCR members who have recently passed.

JAMES “JIM” TALBOTT, 84, of Canton, Michigan, passed on Saturday, June 6, 2026. Beloved husband of Janice, they had three children - James Talbott Jr., Jeffrey (Angela) Talbott, and Jody (Amy) Talbott. He was a proud grandfather of 12 grandchildren and great grandfather to 9. After completing his bachelor's degree at Marion College and his master's degree at Eastern Michigan University, Jim devoted the majority of his professional life to education, serving as a teacher and principal in the Melvindale/Northern Allen Park School System until his retirement in 2005. A gifted musician, he also played piano for several southern gospel quartets, including The Travelers, the Cavalrymen, the Templeaires, and most notably the Toney Brothers, with whom he served from 1965 to 1980. In addition, Jim faithfully served for many years as Minister of Music at Plymouth Church of the Nazarene. In his later years, he continued to share his love for teaching and worship by serving at Emmaus Road Church, where he remained active in ministry until his passing. Jim was an accomplished model railroader having built a layout in his home basement. The layout changed themes and eras twice. Jim was an NMRA and Division 6 member.



ANN MARIE KOCH, 63, passed peacefully on August 4th, 2026, surrounded by her devoted and loving sister, Yvonne Cashman, and husband, Ken Koch. She was a treasured part of her family, leaving behind her husband Ken, two nieces, aunt and her cousin. Her youth was spent engrossed in the family's community at St. Clements Eastern Orthodox Church, as well as with neighbors and school friends. As a teen, she was able to compound her immense vocal talent with her natural affinity for performance in her years at Sing Out, lighting up the stage with dancing and singing. The deep ties she had to her Bulgarian and Macedonian cultures were maintained throughout the entirety of her life, a connective thread between her and her many family members and friends. Her love of jewelry making and beading came in handy as an aunt to her young nieces. After being set up on a date by a family friend, she met her soon to be husband, Ken. They started a business selling train memorabilia and made a living traveling the country to train shows across the United States. Ann Marie will be remembered by those who love her as a fiery woman who loved rock music, Red Wings hockey games, and being there for the ones she loved.



Editors Note – While not an NCR member, most of us knew Ann and Ken from their sales at many local train shows in our Region and beyond. Because she was well known for these activities, we felt it was proper to include her here. She will be missed as the train show season starts again this Fall.

ROBERT “BOB” YOUNG, 81, passed away peacefully on Monday, August 17, 2026, at The Pines of DeKalb in Butler, Indiana. Born on February 5, 1945, in Baltimore, Maryland, he was the son of Donald Warren and Dorothy Estelle (Kettler) Young. He married the love of his life, Mary Angela Kuespert. Robert enjoyed taking trips up North in Michigan with his wife. He also enjoyed woodworking and anything to do with model railroads. He was a member of the Montpelier Trackage Modeler. Bob has been a member of Division 3 for over 20 years and was good at repowering & repairing locomotives. Robert is survived by his son, Darrol E. Young of Angola, Indiana and his brother, Brian Young of Jarrettsville, Maryland.



RAILFANNING – Division 4 Layouts

NCR TRACKSIDE

Here are some of the layouts (yes, there are more!) that will be available for tours during GRAND RAILS 2026!
left down, then right - Bruce Van Huis Alleghany Northern 3 rail O scale • Dave Caprons Freelance Mountains to Harbor HO scale • Rick Van Lars CSX Kingsport Sub HO scale • Don Bergmans Rio Grande Southern HOn3 scale • Grand Rapids Model Railroad Historical Society HO scale • Jim Shirreffs Southern Belt HO scale • Dirk Starts C&O HO scale • Riverbend Model Railroad Club HO scale



RAILFANNING – Division 4 Layouts

NCR TRACKSIDE

left down, then right - Ron Tennant SRs' Chessie/GTW/Conrail HO scale • Skip Luyks' Arcadia and Betsey River RR HO scale • Tim Scotts Tuscola and Saginaw Bay Clare RR HO scale • Ralph Moxleys Ann Arbor RR HO scale • Wayne Nelsons' Metropolitan Transfer HO scale • Mark VanWeeldens' 3 Rail O Gauge • RJ Tennants' Conrail CSX HO scale • Russ Elreds' White Creek RR 1/8th scale





Elections for the new North Central Region Board of Directors are this year – 2026. Ballots will be emailed or mailed out to all NCR members. You will have a 3-week period to return your ballot to the Elections Committee. Voting ends on October 15, 2026. Votes will be tabulated and the winners announced in the December HotBox. New officers will take office in January 2027.

Most positions are being re-elected without an opposing candidate, except for President. Current President, Rich Mahaney, automatically becomes a Director and we have three Directors on the Board.

Here is your slate of candidates for the NCR Board of Directors and some information about the candidates for President.....

President - Scott Kremer, MMR or Curt Danielewicz

Vice-President - Dave McMullian

Secretary - John Young

Treasurer - Steve Harsh

Directors - T.J. Stratton Dave Capron, MMR

Scott Kremer - Candidate for Region President

I am a candidate for the position of NCR President for the two years beginning in 2027. I have been a member of the NMRA for about 50 years. I am an MMR. I have been on the NCR Board for about 16 years having held every position other than Treasurer. I initiated and was Chairman of both the Indy Tri-Regional and the 2026 NMRA National Conventions, both of which are considered to have been a great success. They were a success because I had the support of great teams.

I want to have one more opportunity to work with a team, our Board of Directors, to address a critical issue. Our Region is on the verge of being incapable of functioning. To be specific, with the approval of the Board, last fall I worked with three others to take an in depth look at our Region. The data we accumulated has caused great concern. Simply, we are too few, too old and not enough involved. Given the age of our members, and simple statistics, the decline of our membership will increase unless something changes.

Our circumstances are not unique, with one exception. All the NMRA Regions have seen a similar reduction in membership. The difference is that we are, and have been, a very small Region. That makes the reduction more serious than is currently the case for other Regions.

The easiest thing to do at this point is to do nothing, but I can't do that. I still believe we can make the NCR the best Region around, with the right people/Team. The NMRA, and its activities, will be around for as long as most of us still have time. I have the energy and the interest and feel the obligation to do as much as I can to see that our great hobby, our Region and the NMRA will be around for a longer time.

I would appreciate your support.



Curt Danielewicz - Candidate for Region President

Life Member 5901, NMRA. Experienced Leadership. Member-First Focus. No Magic Wands, Just Real Solutions.

Fellow NMRA Members, I've been a model railroader since I was 3 years old. Over the last 55+ years, this hobby has given me incredible fellowship. I first joined the NMRA at age 14 with the 100% NMRA South Oakland County club. After taking time for family, apprenticeships, and university degrees, I rejoined the NMRA in 1993 and jumped into division leadership by 1997.

Since then, I've served as Division 8 Scribe, Secretary, recruiting, Nominating Committee member, and Chairperson for the 2005 Pontiac Junction Convention. I have also served multiple terms as Division President and

earned my Association Volunteer AP certificate in 2004 (with my Chief Dispatcher AP paperwork nearly complete!). Beyond the NMRA, I spent 15 years concurrently serving as Secretary, Webmaster, President, and Editor for the Grand Trunk Western Historical Society. Professionally, I bring 36 years of data-driven problem-solving as a skilled tradesperson and engineer at General Motors.

With my son grown and 6 years as an empty nester, I have the time, the energy, and the track record to step up as your next Region President.

I'm running because I'm not one for BS. I hear the rumors about merging our region due to membership decline, the pressure from higher-ups to force certain activities, and the reality that some divisions can feel unwelcoming. There is no magic wand to fix these things overnight, but I know what works:

- **Retention Through Engagement:** When Jim Clemons asked me to be a scribe in 1997, it pulled me in. If he hadn't, I might have disengaged. We must engage new members immediately, pull them into activities, and offer them true fellowship and the benefits of the Achievement Program.
- **Welcoming Younger Modelers:** The hobby isn't dying; younger modelers are out there—just look at the groups at Durand or the recent youth influx at SOCMRRC. But we need to loosen up. Younger people might not look or act like us right now, but neither did we in our teens or twenties. The division level makes or breaks the NMRA; face-to-face interactions must make people feel valued.
- **Volunteering, Not "Voluntolding":** Forcing people into roles sours them on the organization. If the time isn't right or the right person isn't available, we don't force it. We must encourage, mentor, and build a pipeline of willing volunteers.
- **Fiscal Common Sense:** As a lifetime member since 1999, I know national dues are astronomical. Throughout my past roles—like moving the Division 8 newsletter to email back in the dial-up days of 2001, or transitioning the GTWHS magazine to digital—I have a proven record of leveraging technology to slash costs and improve products. As Region President, I will use my voice on the national board to push for bottom-up cost-savings to respect your hobby dollars.

Our region has the membership to be viable and thrive. I want to apply my experience to improve our region, foster healthier interactions within our divisions, and provide strong, common-sense guidance to the national body. I would be honored to have your vote.

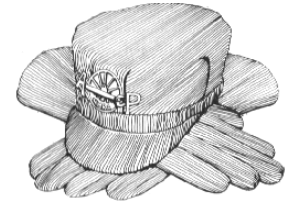


WATCH your EMAIL or MAILBOX for your ballot to appear in late September. Those with an email ballot will be using an email program to register your votes. Those receiving a paper ballot in the mail will have to fill it out and mail it in to the address on the ballot. PLEASE VOTE!!!

NMRA-NCR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

NCR AWARDS

With the clear procedures that Skip had in place, and with the historical data he sent me, my transition into the position of the NCR's Region Achievement Program Chair went smoothly. Since assuming the position in early June, I have reviewed the paperwork for three AP Certificates, have sent the forms up to National, and issued one Merit Award. Two of those certificates were for the Author Certificate (John Bopp, Div.6 and Rick Ware, Div. 10). The third certificate was for Association Official (Curt Danielewicz, Div.8). When we get those certificates back from the



National, they will be presented to the recipients and we will try to get photos for the HotBox. The Merit award was for three hand laid track components, including one nifty HO/Hon3 gauge separation turnout made by Phil Doolittle (Div. 8) as he works towards his Civil Engineering Certificate.

Thanks and Congratulations go to all NCR members that are participating in the Achievement Program.

Bruce DeYoung, MMR, NCR AP Coordinator

NMRA MASTER BUILDER STRUCTURES – Steve Weber, Div 8 and John Martin, Div 8



Steve Weber (L)



John Martin (L)

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM QUESTIONS: If you have questions about the AP or requirements, start with your Regional AP manager, Bruce DeYoung, MMR 8 - ***bbdeyoung@comcast.com*** Here are your Division AP leaders - Div 1 - Ron Gilbert ***rarjgilbert@yahoo.com***; Div 3 - Jim Macino, MMR 260-693-6102 ***jim@icmgt.com***; Div 2 – Pete Magoun, MMR 231-941-1669 ***orion@chartermi.net***; Div 9 - Dorman Wilson ***N8YNW@charter.net***; Div 6 & 10 -

Ken Chick, MMR 734-420-0276 ***kdchick@wowway.com***; Div 8 - Bruce DeYoung, MMR. If you still have questions, contact the NMRA AP Chairman Ray Persing at ***achiev@nmra.org***

AP NEWS! - NEW AP CERTIFICATE APPROVED AT THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL CONVENTION

For the first time in 40 years, the NMRA Board has approved a new AP Category. Master Builder-Modular Railroading will go in the Settings category with Scenery, Structures, and Prototype Models. Like the Prototype Models Certificate, the new certificate has some overlap with other AP certificates. The description and requirements of the new certificate are now up on the NMRA website and can be found at the link below.

<https://www.nmra.org/modular-railroading>

**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!!**

NCR MISC NEWS

NCR NEWS

PLEASE NOTE - Director Scott Kremer has a new email address and phone number!! See page 3

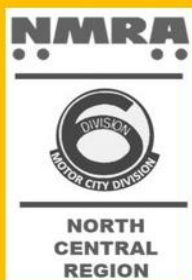
PLEASE NOTE - Division 3 website address has been updated.

TWO events in one!!

DIVISION 6, NCR, NMRA

47th MODEL RAILROAD

SHOW & WORKSHOP



rails on wheels

**10am – 3pm Sunday
November 22, 2026**

and Rails on Wheels

SE MICHIGAN MODEL RAILROAD SHOW & SALES MARKET

RR SHOW & WORKSHOP – see tables of demonstrations of “HOW TO DO” model railroading – basic kit building, historical displays, painting, weathering, track laying, Div 6 HO model RR
RR SHOW & SALES – see 130 tables of vendors selling all scales of new & used model train items – see model RR layouts

***GREAT FUN FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY! STOP BY TO
SEE OR BUY! ASK QUESTIONS – GET ANSWERS!***

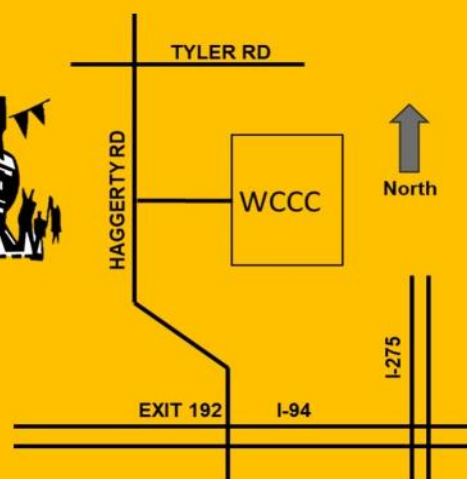
Wayne County Community College

Ted Scott Campus

9555 Haggerty Road

Belleville, Michigan 48111

1/2 mile north of I-94 exit 192



Admission - \$6 per person
under 12 is FREE

Early Bird entry 9am - \$10 per person

Vendor info - cdjhyoung@yahoo.com

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

Our summer break is over and our meetings will reconvene on Friday September 18th. Check the website for October dates and beyond. In August we had our summer outing to the Lost Railway Museum in Grass Lake MI and had a layout tour the same afternoon. Everyone had a great time. 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)

We just finished another successful Run a Train program at Van Wert Railroad Heritage Weekend giving away 11 new train sets to children ages 3 to 12. We are getting ready for our annual picnic as the summer is quickly drawing to a close and the kids are returning to the classrooms. We are going to be at the Van Wert County 4H Fair helping with the 4H Model Train Diorama's we helped them build as each kid has a piece of the final layout around 40 in all. We are in full steam getting things finalized for our Train Show on November 21 at the Memorial Coliseum here in Fort Wayne as we're hoping for another successful Train Show allowing us to continue our programs within the Division. *(Submitted by- Bob Jones, Superintendent)*

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

We are gearing up for the 2026 Convention in Zeeland. Take a look at the website and Facebook pages for updates. We will be having an election this fall for 2027 Division Officers to comply with the new mandates from National. Watch the website for a Division meeting leading up to the Convention. If you have an idea for a meeting or 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)

The Capital Division(5) ended the spring season with trips to two great model railroads: The HO scale "Old Goat" division of the Great Northern built by Bob Truax and Andy Kenney's HO scale Nashville Lines.

Members were invited to bring their own locomotives and/or cars to operate on the line.

Since then, the summer has been quiet except for the convention planning committee that has started working on plans for the 2027 Region Convention in Lansing. Dates and a facility have been determined and committee chairs appointed/volunteered. Plans for the fall get togethers are being worked on at this time.

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://nmrncrdiv5.com/> *(Submitted by- Mark Cowles, Div. 5 Clerk)*

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

The Motor City Division, Division 6 meetings continue in the Livonia Senior Wellness Center, located at 15218 Farmington Rd, Livonia, MI 48154. We are a bit "bummed-out" as a nice summer event that we participated in with our modular layout, got cancelled this year. We've also seen a drop in our monthly attendance and we're working on getting that back. THANKS to member Matt Letts, who volunteered to be our new Clinic Chairman (plus his Secretary and meeting coffee duties – wow!) A few members took part in the recent National S scale convention, helping with layout tours and clinics. Our annual FALL SHOW & WORKSHOP is all scheduled for Sunday, November 22 in conjunction with the Rails-On-Wheels fall railroad sale. See the flyer in this HotBox! Our own Division 6 Model Railroad Sale is all set for Saturday, January 23, 2027 and will again be at the 242 Community Center in Brighton, MI. If you need table reservations, email us at div6trainsale@gmail.com Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings! 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 in Traverse City. We also go hybrid, connecting by Zoom (soon to be Google Workspace). We are holding steady at about 42 members. We did lose a few members this past Spring/Summer but gained back a few through our May Open House and recruiting. Future Division 2 Meetings: Pete Magoun, to do a Clinic on "Jazzing Up your Layout" in September. David Zolnieriek will host a Clinic on Weathering a Craftsman Kit in October. Kits provided to participants by Pete Magoun. Keith Aleo will present a clinic in November on making Palm Trees. Keith models the Florida East Coast RR. 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)
Division 8 held our annual NMRA membership retention event at the Huckleberry Railroad on August 1st for their Railfan's Weekend. The visit included a special photo-op train ride, tours of the shop, and time to explore the rest of the village. Division 8, with the help of the NMRA matching funds program, covered the cost of each member's ticket. We had over 30 attendees and judging by the number of smiling faces that I saw throughout the day, everybody had a really nice time. This is another benefit of being a member of the NMRA and getting involved! I urge everybody to get involved in their own Division activities. I'd also like to invite you 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, <https://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)
Division 9 has some great activities planned for this Fall - September 19: Annual Meeting General Membership. Monthly meetings on Oct 17, Nov 21 and Dec 18. Clinics by Rich Mananey and Doug Tagsold. Several 50-50 raffles, items for sale table and coffee-donuts! There will also be an election for two trustee positions and Assistant Superintendent. A Christmas Breakfast is planned and hosted by member Jim & Shirley Fankhauser at their home. This is a full membership party event, and no general meeting would be conducted. Jim has a fantastic HO layout, The Tri County. Use this link to view the latest Yardmaster Newsletter. <https://div9.ncrnmra.org/yardmasterlibrary/> Our newsletter The Yardmaster, and other information is 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 DIV 10 have had an active summer with our regular meetings on the fourth Thursday of the month. We recently had a visit from NCR Director Rich Mahaney, who discussed events in the Region and presented a clinic on railroad served industries and how they can be included on our model railroad layouts. Many of us have been busy with Railfans Weekend and Thomas the Train events at Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad in Flint. We will continue with our regular meeting schedule, and if you would like more information on our meetings, contact me. We are also looking for layouts to visit, perhaps we could combine layout visits with an adjourning Division, let us know if you would like any visitors this fall. 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!!

Modeling Manual Railroad Crossing Gates ***NCR MODELING***

Crossing gates have provided protection for vehicles at grade crossing for over 150 years. In the early years signage and gates varied widely. Eventually standards evolved to the crossbuck signage, flashing red lights, and gates of the current era. In the early 20th century a design for crossing gates came into use, with wooden gate arms that would lower across the roadway from both sides, and a distinctive counterweight holder with two lobes.

These manual gates were opened and closed by a gate watchman or tower operator in contrast to current automatic gates. Chains, rods and bell cranks moved all the arms at the crossing when the operator used the activating mechanism. This took the form of a crank in one base unit or in a unit near the crossing, or in some installations pneumatic systems were used where the watchman operated a pump.

The watchman was informed of a train's approach by a bell and/or light in his shelter. The shelter might be a simple shack, or for more complex crossings on busy lines, the watchman might be in an elevated structure. In some cases, an interlocking tower operator might be responsible for nearby crossings. Photo 2 displays an example of a



gate crank mechanism and watchman's shanty.

The watchman's duties also included adding or removing counterweights. Rain or snow could change the effective weight of the gate arms, or at night lanterns might be added to the gate arms. Counterweights were

adjusted to keep the gates balanced such that little effort was needed to raise them. They were designed to close if the control mechanism failed.

For modelers of the steam era and even into the 1960's it can be challenging to model this style of crossing gate. Most manufactured crossing gates and signage are models of more current eras and

many offerings of this older design of gate are more suited to the toy train market.

Another challenge is that manufactured gates may not be the correct size for the road. Most manufactured gates I have seen are sized for two lanes of traffic. Notice in Photo 1 how the gates face each other. Manually operated gates originally blocked both sides of the road as the watchman could ensure vehicles were not trapped between the gates. Using most manufactured gates properly would require modeling a 4 lane highway or having a single gate completely span a 2-lane road which is not prototypical. (I should know better than to say that. There seems to always be a prototype somewhere.)

With limited offerings in this style of 20th century crossing gates, why not make your own? In this article I'll show you some methods I used.

Prototype Information

There are some resources available on the internet and in issues of the model railroad press which I drew on in writing this article. The Whippany Railroad Museum has an excellent page specifically about their collection of crossing gates, signs, and watchman's shanties, as well as the history of how grade crossings have been marked over the years. They generously agreed to share their pictures of artifacts on the museum grounds for this article. But their website also has historical photos which they could not share. It's worth a visit to the website for pictures of crossing signs and gates as well as watchman's shanties for ideas for your own modeling. One picture shows a large crossing warning sign in Mississippi in the 1930s which spanned the road like a bridge, featuring not just flashing red lights, but a flashing skull and crossbones, the words "DEATH – STOP – DEATH" and an ear-splitting siren. Imagine seeing a model of that on a layout tour! The museum website is <https://whippanyrailwaymuseum.net/buildings-and-structures/railroad-crossing-gates-signals/>

The RR Pictures Archive website has a photo album with several pictures, including watchmen operating the gates. Some of these pictures are as recent as the 1980's. See here: <https://www.rrpicturearchives.net/archiveThumbs.aspx?id=8791&Page=1>

Modeling Manual Railroad Crossing Gates ***NCR MODELING***

Another resource is an article in Railroad Model Craftsman, April 1996, titled "Manual Crossing Gates". The article was the original inspiration for my modeling. Of course, an internet search for "railroad crossing gates" will yield hundreds of pictures from a number of repositories.

Modeling Techniques and Considerations

Gates can be made of wood, styrene, or cardstock. In my examples here I have used cardstock and styrene for the gate arms, and wood or styrene for the base units.

While it is possible to make crossing gate arms and paint the black and white pattern on them, I chose to create images of the components that can then be transferred to modeling material. I have made decals of the gates using decal paper and my inkjet printer, and I've printed gate images on plain paper that was glued to cardstock or styrene.

It's also necessary to determine the level of detail you want to pursue. Gates in some of the historical photos show intricate cross bracing between the arms. I opted instead for what appears to a spacer block as shown in Figure 1. Notice the spacer block between the gate arms. Also notice the rod hanging down from the gate. This rod hangs from a pivot and holds the gate level when it is in the down position. I opted not to model this detail as it has to hang absolutely straight down, and if the gates are made such that they can be moved up and down then the rod needs to pivot also.

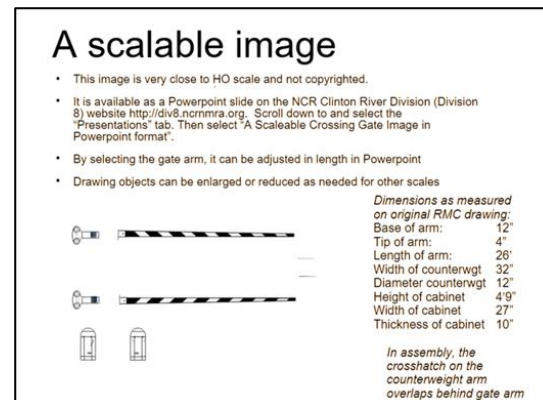
Another consideration is the thickness of the base units. I used material from 3/32" (.093") to .100" to 1/8" (/125"), which in HO scale represent 8", 8.7", and just under 11". The prototype base units could vary in thickness. The base unit thickness is a consideration based on the length of the gate arm. A shorter arm might look better with a thinner base unit as the arms are not spread so far apart at the base end. I have one grade crossing in which the road is much too narrow, or should I say "selectively compressed", so the gates are quite short. I used a thinner base unit for better appearance.

Printing Gate Images

The first step is creating an acceptable image of a crossing gate that can be transferred to the

material. The RMC article mentioned above has an excellent gate drawing which I was unable to reproduce here due to copyright restrictions. But as mentioned before, the correct length gate is also a challenge. I needed an image that could be adjusted in length so I created one in PowerPoint which is shown in Figure 3 below. In the Powerpoint program the gate arm it can be adjusted in length. More complete instructions are in the Powerpoint file itself, found here:

<https://div8.ncrnmra.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Scaleable-Gate-Image.pptx>



Using Powerpoint (or other compatible software), copy the gate, counterweight holders and base images to a new slide, adjust the gate arm length as desired, then copy & paste the gate components as many times as needed for the number of gates you need. Gates may be printed using a home printer on decal film or paper. For both decals or paper prints, apply a few coats of clear enamel such as Krylon Crystal Clear or Rustoleum Crystal Clear. This will keep the ink from running.



Modeling Manual Railroad Crossing Gates ***NCR MODELING***

Making Gates Using Cardstock and Wood

Cardstock (for the counterweight holders and arms) and wood (for the base unit) is a quick and inexpensive method for making gates.

Materials List:

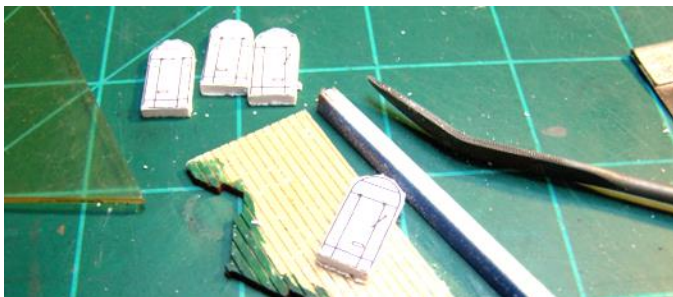
- For gate arms and counterweight holders: Cardstock. Mine was sourced from some packaging. Select cardstock that is fairly stiff. Some varieties are quite soft.
- For gate base units: Basswood 3/32" or 1/8" thickness.
- For counterweights to add to holders: cardstock, or plastic sprue about 1/8" dia.
- For spacers: Cardstock or styrene I-beam 1/8"
- Adhesives: Spray adhesive or glue stick, white glue, CA
- Black paint

Construction:

The first step is to cut the printed paper so the gate arms and counterweight holders are separate from the base units as they will be attached to different material. Glue the arms and counterweights to the cardstock, and glue the base station images to the wood. Use either adhesive spray or an extra strength glue stick. With a sharp modeling knife, cut out the arms and counterweight holders.



Use a razor saw to roughly cut out the base units from the wood sheet, then file or sand to the correct shape using the printed image as a guide.



Adding counterweights to the counterweight holders can improve the appearance of gates that are closer to the viewer. If gates will be a few feet away, adding counterweights may not be necessary. The easiest way to make counterweights from cardstock is to use a hole punch, 1/8" diameter for HO scale. Alternatively, draw a small circle on cardstock and use a modeling knife to cut it out. (Yes, it causes hand cramps!) The butt end of a 1/8" drill can be used as a template. Though the cut out circle will not be perfect, once the gate is assembled a slight deformation in the disk will not be noticeable as the counterweight assembly will be painted black.

Another material for counterweights is plastic sprue. Most sprue is not truly round so it will need to be worked into a round shape. This is a chance to use an old-school technique. Chuck a short length of sprue into a power drill, leaving about 1" protruding, and clamp the drill into a bench vise or otherwise brace it firmly on your workbench. As the drill turns the sprue, hold a flat file against it to shape it into a round and reduce the diameter to about 1/8". Again, this size is for HO scale. Adjust for other scales. After shaping the sprue, clamp it in a vise and use a razor saw to slice off a thin round. Take your time to make the slice thickness as uniform as possible.

With either method, glue the counterweights to the holders with white glue (for cardstock) or CA (for styrene). Paint the counterweights and holders black, then glue them to the arms. The crosshatched area on the counterweight shows the area to be overlapped by the arms.

Paint the base units black also.

Assembly:

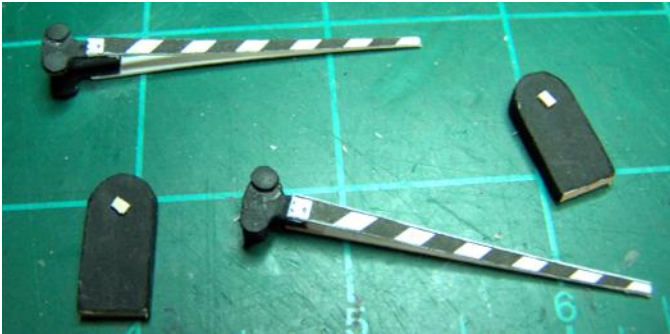
Start the assembly by gluing two arms together at just the tip. Next, cut spacers to hold the arms apart, to be located about halfway between the tips and the base. Very long gates may need two spacers, placed about 1/3 of the way from each end.

Spacers can be simply a thin strip of cardstock, bent into a "Z" shape, and glued between the arms. A short piece of styrene I-beam, just long enough to fit between the arms may also be used.

Modeling Manual Railroad Crossing Gates **NCR MODELING**

If the gate arms are short it may be necessary to file a taper in the I-beam to better match the natural bending of the gate arm between the tip and the base. After cutting the spacers, glue them in place between the tip and the base.

Before gluing the arms to the base units, glue a small piece of cardstock to each side of the base at the pivot point. This will hold the counterweight end of the arms away from the base unit.



For non-operating gates you can now glue the arms to the base units in the position you desire, up or down. Use care so that the arms are close to the same angle.

Installation on the Layout:

Crossing gates units may sit on a base of concrete or wood. Sometimes the base unit appears to be just sitting in gravel, where the underground portion of the mechanism was simply buried. It's up to you to decide how the unit should be installed. Take a look at the prototype pictures for an installation that looks similar to your railroad's grade crossing.



Part 2 in the Winter HotBox!

HotBox History!

NCR INFORMATION

Cupola Chatter

Why Neglect Our Numbers? Al Hammalin of Memphis, Tenn., suggests: "How about an official campaign by officers of NMRA to appeal to all members that when they write each other, the BULLETIN, and the model railroading press, they sign their name and NMRA number. In publications of the Society of Philatelic Americans all members do this when writing about their hobby, stamp collecting."

Open House: The South Nassau Model R.R. Society, 129 Neptune Ave., Woodmere, Long Island, is holding annual open house Saturdays and Sundays in March from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Donations to Red Cross, Henry Bolin, Secty.

Once an Editor: Al Kalmbach is back at his old stand of editing (the Silver Anniversary Journal) and is writing a historical account of the first 25 years in NMRA. And who'd be more appropriate to handle this task? He is unearthing some fascinating material.

Nothing Comes Easy: So you think you're having a tough time building a layout? Listen to what the Pittsburgh Model R.R. Club experienced: "We can be justly proud of our efforts in renovating the station (where the layout is) after three years of insurmountable problems. Nothing came easy. Our first visit to the dismal building was on a blustery, cold night when the roads were glazed with ice. Driving was treacherous. The basement floor lay under a foot of mud-



dy water and silt. A cold, forlorn furnace sat in a pit filled with dirty water. Cold, wet ashes had belched from its belly and lay over the floor.

"The six upstairs rooms were strewn with rubble. Plaster dropped from ceilings like gentle falling rain. Big hunks lay about. Moving day was a jinx. It simply poured. Following weeks brought more "rain"—the rain of plaster, soot and dust as demolition got underway. Sometimes we worked in frigid rooms, so cold conversation froze in mid air. Now we're back at railroading again. In the days to come we'll complete scenery, install signalling and develop foolproof electrical circuits. Animation will get a great deal of attention. The public likes our layout, but they 'ain't seen nothin' yet."

Movie Layout: Denver & Western HIO Club held its Annual Election (layout is in basement of Mayan Theater—visitors welcome, to the layout, not the theater). George Morin, Pres., Ed Bell, 1st, Erwin Chaim, Secty.

New Publication: Lansing Model R.R. Club will publish "The Hot Box", the North Central Region's quarterly, ready for distribution before NCR Convention in Fort Wayne, May 20-22. Copy deadline: March 15. Send material to Eric Lundberg, 656 Beech St., East Lansing, Mich. (Eric is a graduate of Journalism at Michigan State).

(Continued on Page 12)

WHAT HAPPENED TO...
Eric La Nalle?

Here's a bit of HotBox history! Submitted by Division 10 Superintendent Wayne Wilder.... a copy of a page from the February 1960 issue of the NMRA Bulletin. Look at the last paragraph. Was this the start of our current HotBox? Interesting!! Thanks Wayne, for this submission to the HotBox!

New Publication: Lansing Model R.R. Club will publish "The Hot Box", the North Central Region's quarterly, ready for distribution before NCR Convention in Fort Wayne, May 20-22. Copy deadline: March 15. Send material to Eric Lundberg, 656 Beech St., East Lansing, Mich. (Eric is a graduate of Journalism at Michigan State).

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 have a few links to share, so we're passing these along....

Can you get enough of the BB? Nope! From NCR President Rich - Nice video of the Big Boy Steam Engine at the Horseshoe Curve and other places in that area of PA www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVM3ycbCPX0
This is some GREAT aerial video!!! AND... nice drone video of UP 4014 in Philly....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VjjizlAuM>

Here's a couple of links for some Santa Fe action.... www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8D-DRfnhSM
www.youtube.com/watch?v=eS_bQhWJLoM

Didn't go to the NMRA National Convention or Train Show? Here's a video of the Train Show and some other displays..... The video is ok, the commercial interruptions are terrible. It's just over an hour long!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XTBuXkaq7Y

BTR #2 – SCALECOAT UPDATE - Back-in-Stock Alerts - A few more Scalecoat colors have been added, and we received our final blue pigment last week! We're still waiting on one remaining yellow pigment and a key additive needed for broader production. Once the additive arrives, we'll be able to move much more aggressively on bringing colors back. Some colors may still have to wait on the remaining yellow pigment. In the meantime, we've added Back-in-Stock Email Alerts to Scalecoat.com. Click "Email me when available" on any sold-out color you want. You'll be notified when it returns—and those requests will also help us decide which colors to prioritize. <https://scalecoat.com/>

BTR #3 - MICHIGAN RAILROAD CLUB PROGRAMS The Michigan Railroad Club meets the first Wednesday of each month. Meetings are held at the Radcliff Center, 1751 Radcliff St in Garden City, Michigan. This is south of Ford Road along Wildwood St. on the East side of the street. Parking is on the West side of the building at the main entrance and we are in room 135. The program schedule looks like this:

September 02, 2026 - "911, 25 years" by Gary Sample

October 07, 2026 - "Snow is Coming" by Kerry Conroy.

November 05, 2026 - Open projector nite. Bring up to eight minutes of your work to show to the group.

December 03, 2026 - Australia Get-away by Mark Hinsdale from Chicago.

Meeting starts at 7 p.m. and ends at 8:50 p.m. (we have to be out of the building by 9 p.m.) ALL are most welcome. Questions, contact Kenneth Borg, 3512 Merrick, Dearborn, MI 48124-3849

BTR #4 - MODEL RAILROAD CLUB LISTING So far, we've only received **two** responses. 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. Also let us know if you are accepting new members! 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!

BTR #5 - NCR MEMBERS IN PRINT Since the last issue of Hotbox, these NCR members have been in the model railroad printed media – Doug Tagsold (Div. 1) provided photographs of Brian Searles' Conrail Shared Assets Operations layout in the August 26 issue of MR. The layout is in Ontario. John A. Campbell, MD was featured as MMR #817 on page 56 of the June NMRA Magazine. James Matuszak (Div. 1) Had a letter remembering Alfred Pilz published in the July NMRA Magazine, page 9. Brooks Stover, wrote the RMC "Perspective" article in the July RMC and included 5 photos of his Buffalo Creek & Gauley railroad. The editorial is "The Case for Another Brown Boxcar," something with which we can all identify. (page 40) 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
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

CLINICS!

Thanks to those that have volunteered! We have a FULL schedule of clinics for you to enjoy and be informed to sharpen your modeling skills. Here's a look at the schedule –



THURSDAY	Grand Rails Division 4 - 2026		
8-Oct	North Room 66	East Room 74	West Room 90
2:30-3:00			Mahaney 5 Busy Traffic Locations
3:00-4:00	Verberg Dead Rail Options	DeYoung Modeling the Old Ones	
4:00-5:00	Capron Making and Modeling Rocks	Bergman Wood Trestles and Tresses	Mahaney Perishable Ops in the 50's
5:00-6:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
6:30-7:30	Capron Modeling Real Coal Loads	Bergman Modeling the Prototype	
7:45-8:45	Moxley Ann Arbor 1955	Chmielewski Prototype Railroads in the UP	

FRIDAY	Grand Rails Division 4 - 2026		
9-Oct	North Room 66	East Room 74	West Room 90
8:30-9:30	Gibbons Soldering for Model Railroads	DeYoung From Stump to Mill: Logging	Chmielewski Moveable Scenery
10:00 - 11:00		DeYoung Using AI in our Hobby	Golden Basic Principles of Mechanical Interlocking Part 1
11:30 - 12:30	George Hermech Layout Photos	Fred Soward What's New at the NMRA	Golden Basic Principles of Mechanical Interlocking Part 2
12:30 - 1:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:30-2:30	**Logan Museum Quality Backdrops Pt 1**	Harsh Lighting Structures and Scenes	Kenney Passing Siding to Busy yard
3:00 - 4:00	**Logan Museum Quality Backdrops Pt 2**	Harsh Scratchbuilding a Small Turntable	Zolnier Structure Lighting
4:15 - 5:15	**Logan Museum Quality Backdrops Pt 3**	Schneider Layout Friendly Bridges	Zolnier Making Aspen Trees
5:15 - 6:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
6:30-7:30	Young Ergonomics of Layout Design	Bryne Layout Ideas Often Over-Looked	Mahaney Making Stuff for Model Railroads
7:45-8:45	Gibbons Car Check Process		Mahaney Tank Cars 101

Saturday	Grand Rails Division 4 - 2026		
10-Oct	North Room 66	East Room 74	West Room 90
8:00 - 9:00			NCR Meeting
9:00 - 10:00	Capron Construction Craftsman Kits part 1	Chubb Sunset Valley Update	Logan Preventative Maintenance for Rolling Stock
10:30 - 11:30	Capron Construction Craftsman Kits part 2	Chubb Sunset Valley Update	Logan Preventative Maintenance for Rolling Stock
11:30 - 1:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Make N Take Trees	Lakin Arched/Bow String Truss Roofs	Bona Coal OPS at Campbell Plant
2:30 - 3:30	Make N Take Trees	Lakin LDE and Michigan City Indiana	
4:00 - 5:00	Make N Take Trees		
5:00 - 6:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
6:30 - 7:30	Capron Chief Clerk	Bergman Mountain Streams & Waterfalls	
7:45 - 8:45	Capron Full Operations, Small Layouts		Kenney Passing Siding to Busy yard

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. See pages 6-7 for some preview pictures! If you go to the Grand Rails website, you can view more pictures of the layouts - www.grandrailsdv4.com
Here is a list of the many layouts available for tours this weekend –

Bob Beukemas' BNSF PNW Layout
Dave Caprons' Freelance Mountains to Harbor
Don Bergmans Rio Grande Southern
Jerry Proctors' O Gauge PRR
John Bonas' Illinois Central
Muskegon Railroad Historical Society
Rick Van Lars CSX Kingsport Sub
Ron Tennant SRs' Chessie/GTW/Conrail Layout
Russ Elreds' White Creek RR
Thom Posts C&O Railroad
Wayne Nelsons' Metropolitan Transfer
John Buckleys' Johnstown and Maryville HO Layout
Mike Woods 7-1/2" Gauge
Bruce Chubb's Sunset Valley Oregon System
Grand River Valley Model Railroad Club

Bruce Van Huis Alleghany Northern
Dirk Starts C&O
Grand Rapids Model Railroad Historical Society
Jim Shirreffs Southern Belt
Mark VanWeeldens' 3 Rail O Gauge
Peter Burkeys' N Scale BNSF
Riverbend Model Railroad Club
RJ Tennants' Conrail CSX
Skip Luyks' Arcadia and Betsey River RR
Tim Scotts Tuscola and Saginaw Bay Clare RR
Ralph Moxleys' Ann Arbor RR
John Buckleys' Bay City Central N Scale layout
James Mull's Great Lakes International
West Michigan S Gauger's

OPS sessions for the convention include -
Wednesday "Drive Here"

Don Bergman 1PM-5PM

Thursday "Drive Here"

Bruce Chubb 9AM-1PM

Don Bergman 9AM-1PM

Bruce Chubb 2PM-6PM

Thursday Evening 7PM-10PM

Tim Scott Skip Luyk

Terry Merriman Bob Beukema

Friday Afternoon 1PM-4PM

Tim Verburg Bruce VanHuis

Terry Merriman Don Bergman 1PM-5PM

Friday Evening 7PM-10PM

Skip Luyk GRMHS

Terry Merriman

Saturday Afternoon 1PM-4PM

Tim Verburg Bruce VanHuis

Terry Merriman

Saturday Evening 7PM-10PM

Tim Scott Terry Merriman

Riverbend Model RR Club

Sunday "Drive Home"

Don Bergman 1PM-5PM

The Layout Tour schedule of times and locations will be in your convention book when you check-in at the registration table. Layout Tour schedule of times will be on the website. Layout Tour schedule of times and locations will also be distributed to registrants via email in early October.

MODEL SHOWCASE!

ANNOUNCING!! - We will have a model showcase as follows:

** Model check-in: Thursday noon to about an hour before op-sessions start and
Friday from registration start to noon, with exceptions if needed.

** Model pick-up: Saturday before 4:00 PM

** AP evaluations should be prearranged for Saturday between 9am-2pm

Also we are looking for help in the following areas

Model Showcase Coordinator - AP Evaluators -

Clinic Room helpers - Registration helpers



Back to the HotBox archives.... what did we find... GEEP's!! Actually, GP7 and GP9's! *left, down, then right....*
Huron & Eastern GP9 in Bad Axe, MI 1993 Geoff Elliott photo • NYC GP-7 # 5654 3-1967 in W Detroit • NYC GP-7 # 5643 Detroit 5-1965 • DTS unknown location • NYC GP-7 5612 W. Detroit MI 3-1964 • DTS passing Beaubien tower 1979 Charlie Whip photo • A non descript N&W local at Ohio City OH, with a trademark high hood Geep • DT&I Geep in Flat Rock in April 1980 Mr Calloway photo



A SHORT HISTORY OF CABOOSES

The caboose, cabin car, way car or whatever you call it is probably the best-known type of railroad car. Even those who don't know anything about railroads, the ones who call everything on rails a 'train', know what a caboose is. Little kids who have never even seen a caboose love them. What is it about cabooses that makes them so popular? Is it their tiny size, or their position at the very end of a long train of huge cars? Is it their often-bright colors? Or is it just that the word "caboose" is sort of funny-sounding?

The origin of the railroad caboose isn't known for certain, nor is the origin of the term, "caboose". It is thought to have originated in the Middle Low German *Kabuse*, meaning a small cabin on a ship's deck, migrated into Middle Dutch, and evolved into the modern Dutch *kombuis*, or *galley*.

If this is so, then the word "caboose" is well suited to one of the car's main functions. The caboose was the train crew's home away from home. It provided shelter from the elements, a place to bunk, and a place to get a meal, or at least a cup of hot coffee. It was also the executive suite of a freight train, the place where the train's boss, the conductor, took care of his paperwork and other responsibilities. Finally, the caboose provided for the safety of the train by carrying signal lamps to indicate its presence and a vantage point for the crew to keep watch over the cars for any problems that might arise, particularly the dangerous hot box. When or where the caboose was first used is lost to time. One account has it that Nathaniel Williams, a conductor on the Auburn and Syracuse Road in the 1840's used a boxcar at the end of a train for his office. He used a make-do seat and desk for his paperwork and kept various tools, flags, and chains in the car.

By the late 1850s the term "caboose" began to appear in trade journal and reports. By the early 1860s mentions of cabooses became more common. The 1862 annual report of the directors of the Michigan Central Railroad Company lists among the road's freight cars 28 covered 8-wheel way cars while the 1869 annual report shows 33 conductor's cars.

No photographs of these Michigan Central cars have yet been found but there is one railroad whose use of cabooses in the 1860s has been very well documented. The United States Military Railroad was established by the U.S. War Department to operate railroads captured during the Civil War. The USMRR was an early operator of cabooses, or conductor's cars, as they were often called. A surviving USMRR report of cars present at Alexandria, VA, lists nine cabooses on Sept. 1st 1863. But, what did these cabooses look like?



An 1863 photo taken in the USMRR yard in Nashville shows a string of conductor's cars. Their boxcar origins are apparent from their large side doors but they have windows added in the sides, baffles on the roof to hold lanterns acting as marker lights, and stacks on the roof suggesting that they were equipped with stoves.



Another photo, taken at Stoneman's Station, VA, shows a conductor's car being used as a field telegraph office. This car shows an early version of the end platforms typical of later cabooses.



An 1864 view shows a similar conductor's car on the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad at the Little River bridge. Given that southern railroads were so badly damaged during the war and short of funds, it might seem surprising to see a conductor's car on a southern road at such an early date.

The most distinctive feature of most cabooses is the cupola. This rooftop structure provided a protected vantage point for train crewmen to keep a lookout over the train. As with most things caboose-related, its origin is obscure. One popular story has it that one day in 1863, T. B. Watson, a Chicago & Northwestern conductor, had to give up his regular caboose for a beat-up old boxcar. This car had a large hole in the roof which Watson used as an observation perch to view his train by standing on a crate he placed beneath the hole. This worked out so well that he was able to convince a shop superintendent to add a "pilot house" to two cabooses that were then being built, and thus the cupola was born. This story may be just a legend, but the October 24, 1862 *American Railway Review* reported that the Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad had a dozen cabooses equipped with "observatories".

The caboose cupola took many forms. Some were short and some were tall but most had a gently curved roof contour similar the contour of the car roof. There were exceptions, though.



The most elaborate cupolas were those with the so-called Bombay roof. Despite the obvious advantages of the cupola, their acceptance was by no means swift. The 1888 Car Builders Dictionary states that "the majority of caboose cars as yet do not have them".

The earliest cabooses we have so far seen have had eight wheels as did their boxcar ancestors. But, in the nineteenth century many cabooses were built with just four wheels. The origin of the four wheel or bobber caboose is likely just as obscure as the rest of caboose history. Supposedly, Calvin Smith, master car builder of the Erie Railroad in 1854, cut a wrecked boxcar in half and made two short, four wheeled cabooses out of it.



The biggest user of four-wheel cabooses was, by far, the Pennsylvania Railroad. From the tiny class NA of 1869 to the class NE of 1905, the Pennsy built hundreds of them.



The B&O was another big user of four-wheel cabooses. Their class K-1 was first built in 1886 and continued in production until 1910.

At one time over 800 were in service and by 1945 twelve were still on the roster. One has survived and is preserved at the Monticello, IL, Railway Museum. The B&O removed the cupolas from several aging four-wheel bobs and used them as transfer cabooses. C1735 may well have been one of them.

Cabooses were like most railroad cars in the nineteenth century, built of wood. But, at the turn of the twentieth century, all-steel and steel underframe freight cars were introduced. These big, heavy cars soon made most all-wood rolling stock obsolete. Not so with cabooses. Tagging along at the end of a train, they were subjected to far less damage than revenue freight cars. There was one big exception to this, however. In pusher service, where a huge Mallet locomotive might be shoving on the caboose at the end of a long drag of steel hoppers, a lightly-built wood caboose was in a precarious position. Various attempts were made to strengthen the wood-framed caboose. H. H. Sessions of the Pullman Company designed a steel end platform in an attempt to eliminate a major weakness of the caboose.



The Pennsy tried steel underframes under its cabin cars. They built 1,125 class ND steel underframe wood bobs between 1903 and 1914. These developments were helpful, but only stopgap measures. All-steel cabooses were needed.



The Pennsy built their first steel cabin car, the class N-5 eight wheelers, in 1914. Although wooden class N6B cabin cars were also built until 1923, after that date all new PRR cabin cars were of all-steel construction. While railroads were relatively quick to adopt all-steel revenue freight cars this was not the case with cabooses.



The Santa Fe only started building all-steel cabooses in 1927, the Rio Grande in 1940, and the Union Pacific not until their class CA-3 of 1942. The steel construction era brought new designs to the caboose. The cupola may have been the signature feature of the standard caboose but it was a weak point in the caboose's roof structure. And, as freight cars got taller, it was no longer possible to look out over the top of a train from the cupola.



The solution to these problems was the bay window caboose, which is thought to have originated on the Akron, Canton and Youngstown in 1923. The B&O may have been the biggest user, however, building nothing but bay window models after 1930.



The extended vision caboose was introduced in 1953 by the International Car Company of Kenton, OH. In this design the cupola sides extend beyond the side of the car, allowing the train crew to see along the side of the train.



Cabooses were in regular operation on U.S. railroads into the 1980s. Regulations required that all freight trains have a full crew and a caboose. But technology had begun to overtake the caboose. Locomotive cabs grew large enough to accommodate the crew. Remote dispatchers, rather than train crew members, threw track switches. Roller bearings drastically reduced the occurrence of hot boxes and those few that did occur were identified by lineside detectors. The end-of-train device could signal the train's last car, detect low brake line air pressure, and report it to the locomotive crew.

A presidential emergency board, convened in 1982, directed United States railroads to begin eliminating caboose cars where possible to do so. As a result, cabooses have largely disappeared from regular mainline trains.

For further reading

White, John H., Jr. *The American Railroad Freight Car*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press; 1993, ISBN 0-8018-4404-5

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!



Oct. 8 - 10

Grand Rails 2026

Grandrailsdiv4.wordpress.com

GRAND RAILS 2026

NCR 3-DAY CONVENTION

OCTOBER 8-9-10, 2026

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

www.grandrailsdiv4.com

Stock Cars In Other Uses by Rich Mahaney, Div 9 **NCR MODELING**

ED NOTE - NCR President Rich Mahaney has a compulsion with items that have other uses. He pioneered the "Second Lives of Cabooses" modeling display at the NCR convention several years ago. That turned to an event that occurred in other states and other NMRA Regions. In addition, Rich has done clinics on the "second lives of cabooses and other types of railroad cars". Rich was behind the recent Division 9 modeling display, which was featured in the last HotBox. So, Rich is at it again! This time, it's other uses for livestock or stock cars! Follow along as we look at many pictures of what these cars carried, when not filled with live animals! If you are modeling a time period on your layout when stock cars were present, you may be surprised that they were used in transporting many other items. You may find that an industry that only received box cars, may also have received stock cars to transport loads out or received loads in. You may now see more stock cars moving on your layout among your industries and in interchange to other railroads to other destinations on and off your layout.

For many years, railroads used stock cars (also known as livestock cars, cattle cars and other names) to move live stock from the fields and farms across the United States and Canada to markets, processing plants and other places. Locations that can kill, cut up, process, and package meat parts of animals, plus process other parts of animals into products that consumers and other industries can use. BUT, there are times when stock cars are not in use and could serve to transport other products inside the cars. As model railroaders, our goal is to "use" all of the railroad cars that we have purchased and have them in regular movement on our layouts!

First, A Little Livestock Car History

In railroad terminology, a stock car or cattle car is a type of rolling stock used for carrying livestock (not carcasses) to market. A traditional stock car resembles a boxcar with louvered instead of solid car sides (and sometimes ends) for the purpose of providing ventilation; stock cars can be single-level for large animals such as cattle or horses, or they can have two or three levels for smaller animals such as goats, sheep, pigs, and poultry. Specialized types of stock cars have been built to

haul live fish and shellfish and circus animals such as camels and elephants. Until the 1880s, when the Mather Stock Car Company and others introduced "more humane" stock cars, death rates could be quite high as the animals were hauled over long distances. Improved technology and faster shipping times have greatly reduced deaths.



Rail cars have been used to transport livestock since the 1830s. The first shipments in the United States were made via the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in general purpose, open-topped cars with semi-open sides. Thereafter, and until 1860, the majority of shipments were made in conventional boxcars that had been fitted with open-structured iron-barred doors for ventilation. Some railroads constructed "combination" cars that could be utilized for carrying both live animals as well as conventional freight loads.

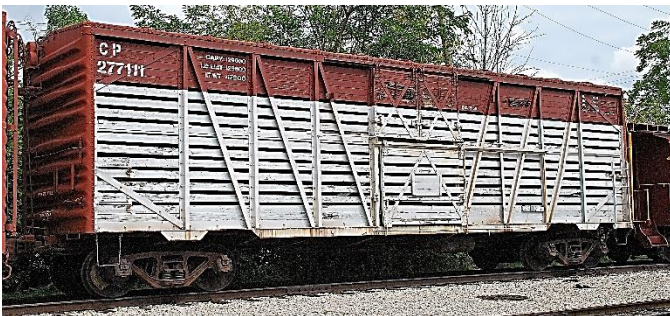
Some of the early railroad companies attempted to alleviate the livestock loss problems by adding passenger cars to the trains that hauled early stock cars. The New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company followed this practice as early as 1839, and the Erie Railroad advertised that livestock handlers could ride with their herds in special cabooses. These early passenger accommodations were the predecessors of the later "drovers caboose" designs that were used until the mid-20th century. Railroad operating rules for livestock and handlers that rode the trains were very limited, as the handlers were private contractors or employees of the shippers, not employed by the railroads.

However, even with livestock handlers and faster schedules, many stock cars were still listed on company rosters with open roofs and very little in the way of improved conditions for the livestock themselves.

Stock Cars In Other Uses by Rich Mahaney, Div 9 **NCR MODELING**

Most railroads resisted the call for as long as possible from shippers for improvements to cars specifically designed to carry livestock. The railroads generally preferred to use standard boxcars because that type of car proved much more versatile in the number of different types of loads it could carry.

When the railroads and cattle industry failed to act quickly enough to correct these perceived deficiencies, the government and even the public went into action. Claims were made that the meat of neglected animals was unfit for human consumption. In 1869, Illinois passed the first laws to limit the animals' time on board and required them to be given 5 hours' rest for every 28 in transit. Some railroads stepped in with their own new designs at this time, such as the Pennsylvania Railroad's class KA stock car, a design first published in 1869 which featured a removable second deck for transporting pigs or sheep. However, double-deck stock cars had been experimented with as early as the 1830s on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway in England. Other states such as Ohio and Massachusetts soon followed with similar legislation, though effective federal laws were not enacted until the passing of the Federal Meat Inspection Act of 1906. The first patented stock car designs that saw use on American railroads were created by Zadok Street. Street's designs (U.S. patent 106,887 and U.S. patent 106,888, both issued on August 30, 1870) were first used in 1870 on shipments between Chicago and New York City. They were designed for trips to take 90 hours between the two cities and included water troughs fed from tanks under the floor, and food troughs fed from hoppers in the roof. Street's design proved impractical as each car could carry only 6 steers.



Alonzo Mather, a Chicago clothing merchant who founded the Mather Stock Car Company, designed a new stock car in 1880 that was among the first practical designs to include amenities for feeding and watering the animals while in route. Mather was awarded a gold medal in 1883 by the American Humane Association for the humane treatment afforded to animals in his stock cars. Minneapolis' Henry C. Hicks patented a convertible boxcar/stock car in 1881, which was improved in 1890 with features that included a removable double deck. George D. Burton of Boston introduced his version of the humane stock car in 1882, which was placed into service the following year. The Burton Stock Car Company's design provided sufficient space so as to allow the animals to lie down in transit on a bed of straw.

In 1880, American railroads rostered around 28,600 stock cars. With the innovations developed by Mather, Hicks and others, this number nearly doubled in 1890 to 57,300 and nearly tripled in 1910 to 78,800. During this period, the cars' capacities also increased. In the 1870s few stock cars were built longer than 28 ft (8.53 m) and could carry about 10 short tons (9.1 t; 8.9 long tons) of stock. Car lengths increased to an average of 34 ft (10.36 m) in the 1880s and stock cars of this period regularly carried 20 short tons (18.1 t; 17.9 long tons) of stock.



Certain costly inefficiencies were inherent in the process of transporting live animals by rail, particularly because some sixty percent of the animal's mass is composed of inedible matter. Even after the humane advances cited were put into common practice, many animals weakened by the long drive died in transit, further increasing the per-unit shipping cost. The ultimate solution to these problems was to devise a method to ship dressed meats from regional packing plants to the East Coast markets in refrigerated boxcars.

Stock Cars In Other Uses by Rich Mahaney, Div 9 **NCR MODELING**

So Back To Our Main Concept:

So, are you modeling in a time period when stock cars were transporting livestock and already have stock cars on your layout, what do you do next. Or you are modeling right after the end of livestock being moved alive to a processing facility and still have a few stock cars on your layout, which would have been between 1970 and the 1990's. The UP RR went all the way to 1994 with the moving hogs to CA. So, if you model railroad between the 1970's to the late 1990's you would (or could) have stock cars still on your railroad and layout.

So, remember that stock cars have open slots on the sides and are open to the weather that is occurring as the car moves on the tracks. Issues such as rain, snow, hot and cold temperatures, humidity and other conditions, are concern for the contents being moved inside the car which need to be protected from weather and other dirt and grime that could come into the car. Also, the size of the door could be a factor, if it does not fit through the door, it may not be riding in a stock car. Weight would also be a factor.

So, a stock car could be delivered to a company making machines, parts for most anything, brick and blocks from a brick yard, drums of products, boxes of products (not fiberboard or cardboard containers), plants and other packages of growing materials, are just a few examples. Or they could be used in a MOW (maintenance of way) service to transport materials and needed equipment. While stock cars were specialized for "live" animals, many railroads also use them for other products when livestock is not the load. This is done by modifying the car's ventilation openings or using them as general-purpose freight cars.

For example:

- General freight use: Some stock cars are repurposed to carry bagged or palletized goods, rolled paper, metals, building materials, appliances, or food products.
- Lightweight, bulky shipments: When available, stock cars can be used for items like tissue paper, insulation, or other lightweight but bulky commodities.

- Combination cars: Certain designs can be used for both live animals and conventional freight, making them flexible for different needs.

Key points about using stock cars for other products:

- Ventilation modifications: If the car is not for live animals, ventilation openings may be sealed or altered to protect cargo from weather or pests.
- Load securing: Like other freight cars, they use rails, bulkheads, and securement systems to keep cargo stable during transit.
- Capacity: Standard boxcars (including some stock car conversions) can carry 70–100 tons, with hi-roof versions offering extra height for certain products.
- Flexibility: Because they are enclosed, they protect cargo from weather and theft, making them suitable for a range of dry goods.

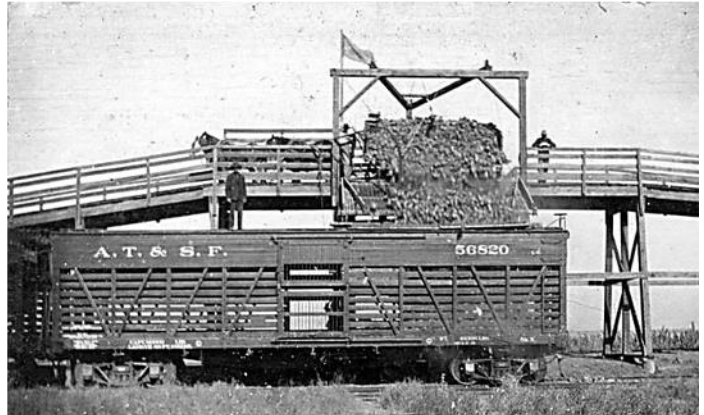
In short, while stock cars were built for livestock, their enclosed design and adaptability mean they can also serve as general-purpose freight cars for various products when modified or used in non-animal service. So, these railroad cars were built strong with good weight carrying capacity and deserve a longer life with a new work on your layout!

The photos that go along with this story illustrate the many other items and examples that can be transported in a livestock car and could be used on your layout for your model railroading purposes with your industries! Start looking and thinking about new locations and industries that could receive and ship their products in stock cars, instead of box cars or maybe other cars. So "cleanup" your stock or cattle cars and get them back into service transporting other products. No stock cars on your layout, but you model at a period of time where they would be found, then there is a reason to shop at a future train show weekend event, your local hobby shop or an on-line hobby shop for a few stock cars. So, what ideas do you have for the industries on your layout that could transport materials in a stock car instead of a box car?

OK... let's see some of these other uses.....

Stock Cars In Other Uses by Rich Mahaney, Div 9 **NCR MODELING**

Here's many pictures of items being loaded or unloaded from live-stock cars. Most pictures are from Doug Harding, a friend of Rich. Could you do this on your layout? *Left, Down, then right* – Watermellons! • Sacks of potatoes • Ice! • railroad ties being unloaded • crates of freash fruit • Pumpkins being loaded • pulb wood being loaded • Sugar beets loaded through roof hatches





Three Rivers Division of the **NMRA**

Train Show and Swap Meet

Saturday Nov 21, 2026

10:00am - 4:00pm

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

4000 Parnell Avenue Fort Wayne IN 46805

Admission: Adults \$8.00

Children: 12 and Under Free

NMRA Members: w/card \$5.00

Hourly Door Prizes

Children's Activities

All Gauges

Two Train Set Drawings

Rail Fan Items

Handicap Accessible

Over 170 Tables

Food Service

Contact

Don Hanley c/o NMRA Div 3 Show Superintendent for Table Reservations

19123 Maples Rd Monroeville, IN 46773

(775) 636-5725 or 3Riverstrainshow@gmail.com

A Destination for Any Type of Car

Most modelers have tendency to accumulate interesting cars beyond the ordinary box, flat, hopper, gondola and tank car. Most layouts cannot have enough specific industries for all of these types of cars, so modelers need some all-purpose destinations for these cars. One of the most useful is the interchange, that is, the cars are going onto a destination on another railroad, on or off of the layout. Many layout provide for a freight station, separate loading dock with a ramp and a team track, between which many types of cars can be handled. The British often use what they call a "fiddle yard", a location where cars can be physically removed or replaced onto the layout. A layout with two or more yards, actual or staging can be used with the odd ball cars just being moved from yard to yard, but that is not real satisfying.

But another type of industry that can be a destination for all types of cars is the car shop. On a small road, it might be a single track shed. On many small southern roads, the shed sides might be partially or completely open. Larger roads, or specific car repair shops may have several tracks, each for different types of cars or specific types of work. There are also private companies that contract to do car repair. An example the Union Tank Car facility in the old Erie shop complex in

Marion, OH. For a while, there was also a facility in Fenton that specialized in auto-racks.

On my N scale layout, my cars shop is two Walther's Cornerstone shops joined end to end with 3 bays. Any type of car can be routed to the shop for either major or minor repairs. Minor repairs might include damaged or missing grab irons or steps, missing or damaged doors or tie down appliances, minor repainting or adjusting shifted loads. Major repairs might include body damage or in some cases, fairly major rebuild or reconfiguration. Other buildings that would be suitable cars shops would be some of the other engine sheds offered or some of the factories that could be repurposed.

Each of the three bays on my shop do different work so the cars have to be shifted from bay to bay the repairs proceed. It starts with the finished cars being pulled from track three, some or all of the cars on track two being relocated onto track three, the cars from track one go to track two and the cars just being brought in being moved into track one. If you wish to make it more challenging, you can designate each car space on the tracks being for a different operation, some of which might take more time than the others, requiring shifting of some of the cars while pulling out the others. Extra OPS in a small area!



NOTE! – we've received this article several months ago and are not sure who sent it? From the article, it comes from a N scale modeler, but we'd really like to give credit where credit is due! Please let the HotBox know if you are the author. Thanks!!

HOBBY SHOP & BUSINESS CORNER

NCR BUSINESS

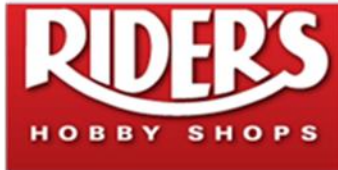


35101 Ford Rd Westland, MI 48185 734-722-5700
33350 W Nine Mile Rd Farmington, MI 48336 248-919-0040
1480 Washtenaw Ave Ypsilanti, MI 48197 734-961-7575
12020 Fort St Southgate, MI 48195 734-250-7382



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 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, September 12, 2026 - Lincoln Park Train Club's Train Show (Buy & Swap)
J.F.K. Memorial Building 3240 Ferris Lincoln Park, MI Train Show (Buy & Swap) Early Bird \$10 starting at 10 AM. Regular Admission \$5 11AM to 3PM. Tables \$20 prior to September 6, 2026. \$25 thereafter.
Contact Information- Bob Adler 734-675-5712 (10-10) Darrell Hicks 734-624-1462 (6pm-10pm)

Sunday, September 13, 2026 - Flag City Train Show Northwest Ohio Railroad Preservation, Inc. 12505 County Rd 99, Findlay, OH 10AM - 3PM \$5.00 per Adults, Children 12 under with adult = free. train barn filled with tables displaying and selling model trains, toy trains and railroad memorabilia. Quarter scale train rides will be available for additional cost (\$3.00 Adults, \$2.00 Children). 419-423-2995 nworrp@nwrrp.org

Saturday-Sunday, September 19-20, October 24-25, November 14-15, December 5-6, 19-20, 2026
Blissfield Model Railroad Club Open House 109 E. Adrian St. (US 223) Blissfield, MI 49228
10am to 3pm FREE! donations welcomed Wheelchair Accessible Website: <http://www.bmrr.org>

NOTE – MORE events starting on page 36.....!

NCR SCHEDULE

NCR DIVISION meetings

NCR INFORMATION

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.ncrnmra.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.ncrnmra.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://nmrancrdiv5.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.ncrnmra.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.ncrnmra.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

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Saturday's, Sept 26, Oct 17 Steam Day, Nov 21, Dec 19 2026 Passenger Trains – 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

Friday-Sunday, September 18-19-20, 2026 - Anthracite Railroads Modelers Meet XIII Reading Railroad Heritage Museum, Hamburg, PA Clinics, model displays, vendors, layout tours! www.readingrrmm.com

Saturday, September 19, 2026 - Battle Creek Model Railroad Club Train Show & Swap Meet
Calhoun County Fairgrounds 720 Fair St. Marshall, MI 10AM - 3PM \$5 Children 12 & Under: Free
Several operation layouts, including a "Hands on" Displays, vendor, door prizes, food, unlimited FREE parking, and FUN! Children 12 & under can register to win a Train set. Visit our website: <http://www.bcmrrc.net>
Contact Information - Shawn Rhoades shawn@lazys-k.com 269-758-3477

Saturday, September 26, 2026 – 24th Fostoria Rail Festival Fostoria Jr. Sr, high school & Fostoria elementary 1001 park avenue Fostoria, OH 200+ vendor tables, model train layouts, train mdse. Photo contest, soup contest Contact information - Ellen Gatrell ellengatrell@gmail.com 419-435-1781
Website: <http://fostoriairontriangle.com/events.htm>

Saturday, September 26, 2026 - Mt Clemens Train Show St. Louis Social Hall 39140 Ormsby St. Mt. Clemens, MI 48036 10am – 3pm 15th Annual Fall Train Show. Admission is \$5 per person, \$8 per family & children under 12 free. Tables are \$15.00 each with a max of 6 tables per vendor. Food & refreshments available,, free parking, barrier free access, operating layouts, hourly door prizes, all scales welcome , parts vendors. Contact Information - Carl Hikade 586-463-5184 cdhikade@juno.com

Saturday, September 26, 2026 – Gratiot Valley Model RR Club OPEN HOUSE 281 North Ave Mt. Clemens, MI 48036 10am – 3pm Admission FREE – donations welcomed <https://www.qvrr.org/>

Thursday, October 1, 2026 5PM to 8PM -- and -- Saturday, October 3, 2026 11AM to 4PM
Lansing Model Railroad Club Open House 5309 Old Lansing Road
Lansing, MI 11am-4pm John Hartmann oakandco4@gmail.com Website: www.lmrc.org/openhouse/

Saturday, Sunday, October 3-4, 2026 - The Great Berea Train Show Cuyahoga Co. Fairgrounds
19201 East Bagley Rd Middleburg Heights, OH 440-785-9907 <https://thegreatbereatrainshow.org/>

Saturday, October 3, 2026 - 18th Michigan Railroad History Conference Durand Union Station 200 S. Railroad St. Durand, MI 9:00 AM-5:00 PM Conference includes a day of historical presentations on various aspects of Michigan's rich railroad heritage. Contact Info - Jerry Becker beckerjer@comcast.net 517-242-0713 Website: <https://www.michiganrailroads.com/mrhc-home>

Saturday, October 3, 2026 - Timetable & Railroadiana Show Comstock inn & Conference Center 300 east Main St Owosso, MI 10am-3pm Annual timetable and railroadiana show sponsored by the National Assoc of Timetable Collectors Contact info - Gary Betz Geeb557@hotmail.com 616-527-4721 <https://naotc.org/>

Sunday, October 11, Nov 1, 2026 - Taylor Town Train Show Taylor Town Trade Center 22525 Ecorse Rd Taylor, MI 100+ Vendors. All gauges. \$5 Entry fee. Kids free under 14. 11am-4pm early-bird 10am \$10
Contact Info - Mike Leland 313-955-5523

NCR TIMETABLE EVENTS!

NCR AREA EVENTS

Saturday, November 21, 2026 – Three Rivers Division – NCR - Fort Wayne Model Railroad Show and Swap
Allen County War Memorial Coliseum 4000 Parnell Ave Fort Wayne, IN 10am - 5pm Contact Info- Don
Hanley dehanley665@gmail.com 775-636-5725 **SEE AD ON PAGE 27**

Sunday, November 1, 2026 – 45th Annual Model Train Show and Sale Kalamazoo Model RR Hist Society
Expo Center Building on the Kalamazoo County Fair Grounds 10AM to 3PM cost - \$6 adults Kids under 10
Free with paid adult admission. We have Operating layouts, A Hands-On Children's Layout, RR hobby clinics,
over 175 Vendor tables and tons of train and RR memorabilia in every scale. There will be Door Prizes, Free
parking, and MORE! Contact Information- David Hayes-Moats 269-344-0906 kaltrainshow@kalnet.net

Sunday, November 8, 2026 - Lansing Model Train Show and Sale Hosted by Lansing Model RR Club
Michigan State University Pavilion 4301 Farm Lane East Lansing, MI 48824 www.lmrc.org
10 am to 4 pm \$8 adults, free under 12 yrs and scouts in uniform. Wheelchair Accessible Free parking
over 500 tables of model trains, railroad collectibles, toys, operating layouts, how-to demonstrations, and more!
Contact Info- Flyer, table forms and map www.lmrc.org or call Ron St.Laurent 517-256-3588 or Dennis
Morley 989-723-2870 DJMorley0604@hotmail.com

Saturday-Sunday, November 14, 27-28-29, December 5-6, 12-13, 2026

Detroit Model Railroad Club Open House 104 North Saginaw St. Holly, MI 48442 11am – 5pm Adults - \$5,
Seniors (65+) - \$4, Children (5-18) - \$2, Children under 5 – Free See several O scale trains in operation, over
a 6500 foot double track mainline and several branch lines. Info: 248-634-5811 webmaster@dmrrc.org

Saturday, November 21, December 19 2026 - Military Veterans Host Train Show Bruce Post VFW #1146
28404 Jefferson Ave St. Clair Shores, MI Show time: 10 AM - 3 PM. Admission \$5 per person. Under 12
free. Food & refreshments on site. Barrier free access - free parking.
Contact Information - Cash Benford train_man44@yahoo.com 313-675-5484

Saturday, November 22, 2026 - Grand Rapids Model Railroad Historical Society Open House 4040 Leland
Ave NW Comstock Park, MI 11am – 4pm Website: <https://www.grmrhs.org/>

Sunday, November 22, 2026 - 28th annual Rails on Wheels' Annual Southeast Michigan Model Train Show
and Sale PLUS Division 6 Fall Show & Workshop. Wayne Co Community College – Ted Scott Campus 555
Haggerty Rd, Belleville, MI 48111 10 AM to 3 PM \$5, children under age 12 free with an adult. Early Bird -
\$10/person (8–10 AM) A family-friendly event featuring operating train layouts, a Lego layout display, plus a
train kids can run. Over 100 tables of scale and tinplate model trains, railroading and train-related books,
videos and photo for sale, too. Food available and free parking.
Contact Info: John Young 517-499-9063 or cdjhyoung@yahoo.com **SEE AD ON PAGE 11**

Saturday, November 28, 2026 - Train Show Packard Proving Grounds 49965 Van Dyke Ave. Shelby
Township, MI 48317 10am – 3pm Bigger and Better for 2026! Expanded vendor area in the newly renovated
Tank Test Center—where the cars are. That means more space, more vendor tables, and room for running
train layouts and static exhibits. Contact Info - Mike Neuendorf 586-271-6024 Mikelj318@gmail.com
Website: <https://packardprovinggrounds.org>

Sunday, November 29, 2026 - ST Valentine Men's Club Thanksgiving Train Show St Valentine Hall 25875
Hope St Redford, MI 48239 11am-3:30pm \$5, children under 14 free, Early bird 10am \$10 Family \$8
Contact information: Joe 248-875-9970 njjolines@gmail.com

Saturday, December 12, 2026 - Lima Train Show & Swap Meet hosted by HO Model Railroaders of Lima
Allen County Fairgrounds, 2750 Harding Highway, Lima, Oh 10am-3pm \$5 adults, under 12 free New &
used trains all gauges, antique and collectable trains, buildings, kits, scenery, rr books/photos/videos, handicap
accessible, food service, free parking contact info – Bob Hammell 419-225-8144 rhammell@woh.rr.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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For Information Contact
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www.socmrrc.org



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