

Division 2 Newsletter

All Division Meeting

Saturday, May 5, 2018 1 - 4 PM

Charlevoix Public Library

220 West Clinton St. Charlevoix, MI

Our upcoming All Division Meeting is set for Sat May 5th at the Charlevoix Library from 1-4 PM. We have a busy agenda including elections. See page 9 for biographies of the candidates for Chief Clerk, Paymaster, and Trainmaster. Our 'show and tell' sessions at our yard meeting have been very informative, so please bring your models to this meeting and share with all of us what you are currently working on. As we have seen in the past everyone has much to share and we can all learn from each other.

The swap meet table will be open for those goodies that are taking up space under your layout and need to go to a new home. You have them, they are collecting dust, others want them, so bring them along. In addition, there will be some donated items to the Division that will be put on the auction block, so get ready to bid. The AP table will be ready for any of your AP Certificate you want to review. Our AP chair will be available to help you with your questions and models.

Scott Pandorf will present a clinic on learning JMRI Decoder Pro. If your layout uses DCC (whether NCE, Digitrax, or other) Decoder Pro is for you. Programming your engines to run smoothly, whether separate or in consists, and set sounds and volume levels for sound decoders is all easily accessible. Decoder Pro is free and will save each locomotive setting so a locomotive can be easily reset should a short occur and the decoder settings be corrupted.

There will be some timely announcements about upcoming regional and national conventions that the NCR BOD is working on. Our regional conventions are a great opportunity to attend many clinics and layouts over a three-day period. This regional is only 4 hours away. You can easily drive it and enjoy a great fun week-end with other model railroaders. There will be a presentation video on this year's Regional Convention in Lansing.

We have some ideas we want to share about how to increase our membership numbers in the north, so plan to come with your suggestions. Both the national and Regional have new programs for new members so bring a friend that has an interest in our great hobby.



Crew Call:

- 8/5/2018—NMRA National—Kansas City, MO
- 10/11/2018—NCR Convention—Lansing, MI

On the switch list:

- ♦ All Div Mtg1
- ♦ Super Sez.....2
- ♦ TC Yard Recap3-7
- ♦ Lessons Learned...8
- ♦ Division Elections.9
- ♦ AP Corner.....10—11



Super Sez...

We were fortunate to spend 4 weeks at state park campgrounds in Florida arriving home on Tuesday in time for our Wednesday night operations session. My wife is asking me after Saturday's storm and today's white out with sideways snow why we came home? This is really a late April Fool's joke.

How is everybody doing on their 12" X 12" caboose diorama? Plan on bringing them (what ever stage they are in) to the All Division meeting on May 5th in Charlevoix. They do not need to be finished until the NCR convention in Lansing on Oct 11th -13th. I still have 12" X 12" pieces of Gator Board donated by the manufacturer for this purpose. As I like getting emails let me know if you want it and I'll put your name on one.

We have had two new members join Division 2 recently both moved to the Traverse City area, one retired and the other for a new job opportunity. This has once again brought up the question of how do we advertise our up north Division to our 20 counties? As our advertising budget is rather small, local, town and county weekly newspapers seem to be a great idea. As a non-profit maybe we can get some to run an article. If you have a town or county newspaper please forward their contact info (paper name, distribution area, person, email etc.) to me so that we can put together a short article to have them publish. We know there are 'lone wolves' out there and the new retirees keep coming.

I mentioned the regional convention. The National this year is in Kansas City, which is one of the best rail fan cities in America. If you cannot make KC then definitely plan on coming to Lansing with us. It is a shorter convention, the distance is nearby, the cost is very reasonable, and the clinics and other offerings are great.

Finally, this hobby can be a 24/7 for you in that it is always there when you want it. My layout was waiting for me after being gone for four weeks. It is difficult to take a building to work on in a camper but a small box with little jars of paint doesn't take up too much room. Now what to paint, well all those detail parts that come with craftsman kits are small and do take a great deal of time are a great for passing the time if you can't run trains. In the weeks we were gone I got dozens and dozens of those little beauties done. Now what are you doing with your hobby today?

Dave



Traverse City Yard

Event Recap

Mike Cipko

The most recent Traverse City Yard Meeting was held on March 24th. I counted fourteen members (I think I'm close) attending.

A number of interesting items were on display for our Show and Tell session. John Cole brought his "World Famous Atomic Cafe", where the BBQ is 'da bomb'. Actually, look out for the guys out back cooking on a grill made from a converted "Fat Man" atomic bomb. Jim Eggert is completing work on "Dave's Sheet Metal Shop" which will provide custom fabrication of aluminum and steel items for commercial, residential and industrial customers on his layout. Neil Baerman has been working on a set of hopper cars for his railroad. We've all learned that small parts and big fingers can present a challenge. Mike Cipko brought a slide show and video that displayed progress that he has made on backdrop scenery on his layout. Another example of black and yellow paint making great

looking mountains. Scott Pandorf brought information on a module that can play multiple sound tracks, using up to 11 triggers to provide sound effects on your layout.

On the AP front, Dave Zolnierек continues work on his certificates. The historic research that he has done and the attention to detail make his diorama of a Colorado mine an eye catcher. His figures and use of tiny surface mount LED's help bring this scene to life.



John Cole Atomic BBQ

Ernie Barry and Scott Pandorf followed with a great clinics on locomotive and rolling stock maintenance.



Jim Eggert Sheet Metal Shop

Ernie has found that metal wheel sets roll better, add weight lower on the car and stay cleaner than those made of plastic. Critical issues for couplers are height and trip pins that are too high or too low. Couplers at mismatched heights are prone to uncoupling. Low trip pins can snag on uncoupling magnets, grade crossings, and turnouts which may cause the car to derail.

(Continued on page 4)

Traverse City Yard Event Recap

A coupler height gauge is a valuable tool for checking coupler and trip pin compliance. Car weight also affects performance. The NMRA standard is 1 ounce plus 1/2 ounce for every inch of car length. Trucks on the cars may also need adjustment. One truck should be tightened so the truck rotated freely. The other should be looser so that there is some lateral and longitudinal play. If the car wobbles, tighten the looser screw.

Scott's locomotive clinic highlighted several areas. Even new, out of the box locomotives may need a tune up. Why tune? How about for better operation, smoother running locos, lower amperage draw and easier speed match. Ongoing maintenance is important. It's necessary to re-lube, check electrical connections, power pickup and any loose details that could affect performance. Gears, worms, bearings and splines should be cleaned and lubricated. On the electrical side, ensure that power pickup, whether through the frame, wheel wipers or an t. Do everything that you can to keep your layout in great working order!



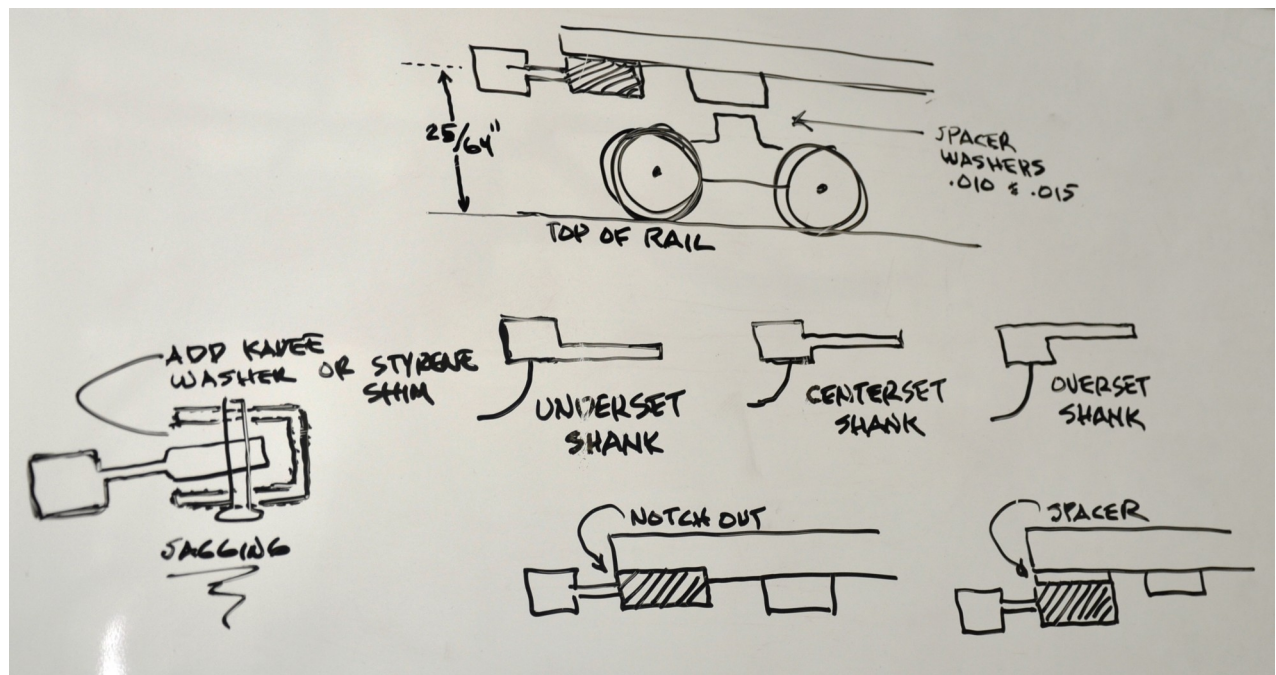
David Zolnierек brought an HO miner with a micro-smd-LED helmet light and talked about his structure work.



Traverse City Yard Event Recap



Ernie Barry covered car tuning with many examples and his artist touch drawings.



Traverse City Yard Event Recap

TC Yard Event Attendance

Baerman, Neil
Barry, Ernie
Bean-Larsen, Dennis
Cambell, John
Carver, Doug
Cipko, Mike
Cole, John
Crocker, Robert
Eggert, Jim
Graczyk, Jim
McDougall, Michael
Skoglund, Terry
Zolnierrek, David
Johnson, Al (guest)



Neil Baerman talks about his hopper car project.



John Cole talks about his 'Atomic Café' structure.



David Zolnierrek brought a mill structure he is working on.

Ernie Barry talks car tuning.



LESSONS LEARNED

A periodic column about things that go wrong on a model railroad and how to make them right.

Scott Pandorf

I have a moderately sized layout under construction that will have several trains running or in the yard, and several trains staged (power and all). Typically, I currently have two to three powered locomotives and at least one sound locomotive in each consist (two's better of course). During the first 'operating' session (we are just running trains around at present) I noticed we had a problem with control in the main yard when there were 5 trains with 12 – 13 powered locomotives in the yard at the same time. A quick check of the wiring and I realized that the yard (which is supposed to be on its own booster ('B' an NCE 5-amp unit)) was instead incorrectly landed on booster 'A' (another NCE 5-amp unit) which is also shared with part of the main level mainline and two multi-track staging yards. Oops! So, after the session I re-landed the yard bus to booster 'B', problem solved right?!! Well, no. While I was restaging for the next operating session I again had erratic behavior when there were multiple consists (trains) in the yard. WHATS GOING ON?!! Around the peninsula I went, when I hooked up the yard to booster 'B' I had also hooked up my RRamp meter in circuit, so I was getting an accurate amp reading. Meter only showed I was pulling about 1.2 amps, well under the 5-amp capacity of the booster. What was going on? Then the light dawned, quite literally, I

looked over at the board where I have the circuit protector bulbs and sure enough the bulb covering the yard circuit was glowing, not brightly as it would in a dead short but enough.

Now being a cheap guy, I am using auto taillight bulbs as circuit protectors. All the major manufacturers (Digitrax, NCE, DCC Specialties) make electronic circuit breakers. The idea of a circuit breaker is to prevent a short on the layout from being passed back to the booster and causing it to shut down, thereby killing all the track buses attached to that booster. ECB's are great, but they are also expensive (NCE EB-1 \$27, Digitrax PM42 \$63, DCC Specialties PSX2 \$70). Instead, I am protecting each of my track buses with an auto taillight bulb. The idea here is that when a short occurs, instead of the short being passed back to the booster, the bulb will absorb the short and disperse it as light, and since I am using a separate bulb to each track bus, in theory a short will only shut down the bus where the short occurred. Works.

So, what went wrong? Well remember that glowing bulb? When the bulb starts absorbing that short its resistance goes up (and in this case I had enough units in the yard pulling enough amps to appear as a short) the bulb was drawing down the voltage as well so suddenly the voltage in the yard dropped below the critical threshold (different for different decoders) and units began to perform erratically.

What's the solution? Well I guess I'm going to have to invest in one of those expensive ECB units, so I can draw nearer the rated capacity of the booster.

Lesson learned!

Candidates Division Elections May 2018

Robert (Bob) Crocker – Chief Clerk

I was born and raised in Suttons Bay. Graduated from Northern Michigan University (1974) with an Industrial Education degree and a 2nd Lieutenant's commission in the Army Reserve. Not falling for the "view of the Bay for half the pay" mentality, I spent 30 years teaching for the Utica Community Schools system in southeast Michigan. My love affair with model trains began in high school with an O-27 layout on two 4x8 sheets of plywood. But teaching & coaching left little time for Model Railroading until my retirement in 2005. At that time, I returned to Suttons Bay and began work on a 13 x 20, HO, Canadian & SOO layout. Apparently, building a helix on a layout qualifies one as a serious Model Railroader. Once Dave Capron found out about "the helix", my life would never be the same. The Little Finger, Wednesday night, operating group caused a major change in the mission and layout of the Canadian & SOO Railroad. Membership in the NMRA soon followed.

Jim Kurbel – Paymaster

I retired in 2014 from Olmsted Products Company in Traverse City where I worked as a controls engineer for 20 years. Like many others, my interest in model railroading began early with a hand-me-down Lionel train set on a 4x8 sheet of plywood. As I neared retirement, I started to get interested once again, realizing I would need something to keep me busy during the long Northern Michigan winters. I started by purchasing Model Railroader Magazine a number of years ago but have only become active in modeling recently.

My wife and I share an interest in the old logging railroads in our area, particularly the Detroit and Charlevoix which later became the East Jordan Branch of the Michigan Central, the mainline of which ran just a short distance from our home in Southwest Otsego County. My dream is to model the D & C and its interchanges with the MCRR and GR & I.

My other interests include fishing, hunting, camping, and metal detecting on old RR grades and logging camps

David Zolnierrek – Trainmaster

I was asked if I would like to run for the position of "Train Master "

Most of you know me but let me share a little bit more info here. Owning and operating a general construction company here in Presque Isle for the past 38 years has given me skills in management, discipline and project accomplishment.

Born and raised in Alpena, MI. living one block from where the Detroit & Mackinaw Railroad made three trips a day is where my interest in trains started.

A NMRA member since 1997. I have one AP certificate for Structures and close to having Cars, Proto-type Models, Scenery, and Civil done in the upcoming months.

I have been a Narrow Gauge modeler since 1988 working in Hon3 scale. I am currently building a railroad layout "The Silverton Railroad" 14 scale miles from the town of Silverton thru Red Mountain on to Ironston. Said to have the steepest grades, tight curves, engineering feats and magnificent mountain canons is my next phase in building the line. My Scratchbuilt structures that I have completed match the proto type that existed along the line.

If elected I will do my best to fill the position and share my skills with the members of division 2.

AP Corner

Pete Magoun, MMR

Happy Spring! At least that's what the calendar says. The white glare from what should be my lawn thinks differently, but Scott has reminded me that it's time to resume our look at the Achievement Program. Let's get to it.

Back in January we left off with a promise to look at the **Engineering and Operations** category. In many ways, this is the heart of the hobby, as this is the area that differentiates model railroads from static displays of nicely done, interesting shelf pieces either hidden behind glass or sitting there needing to be dusted. This category is where we build it, make it run and play with it.

First up in the NMRA Listings is **Model Railroad Engineer-Civil**. This is the part about building it. And first up here is The Plan. You're going to need to draw a scale plan for a railroad, preferably yours, but not necessarily, and you'll need to include certain items on the plan, so be sure to look over the requirements carefully. This process will, by the way, encourage you to think things through pretty thoroughly, which in the long run will save you time, money and frustration.

There's a note on the NMRA website description of the requirements that mentions also looking at the requirements for **Electrical Engineer** and **Chief Dispatcher**. Pay heed to this one, as the Civil and Electrical certificates are essentially a "twofer," in that you build it, and then make it run. With **Dispatcher**, you get to play trains with your friends.

The requirements list six separate items that must be included on The Plan. If you think about this some, these are not Draconian exercises—they're ways to make your railroad function more smoothly and to enhance your operating possibilities and therefore your fun.

Once you have The Plan in place, I'd suggest a good look and some cogitating, perhaps with an appropriate beverage, before you haul out the tools. "Run" the railroad in your head, using the plan as a guide. You might consider cutting out some markers and placing them on the plan to get a sense of what will be where when the railroad is operational. You might even run The Plan by some friends to get their input. Monday-Morning quarterbacks love to "suggest" things and note places where you've made "operating errors." Sometimes they even have good ideas that you hadn't considered....

With The Plan in place, it's Tool Time! If you plan your construction carefully, you'll be able to get the various required elements built, wired and running before the entire railroad is complete. Yes, you may have a Grand Plan for a 747 hangar and five decks worth of railroad, but in HO, which is what most of us work in, you need fifty feet of operational track to qualify for the certificate. That's "Operational" track, not "main line," so even the spur to the Moxie warehouse counts as good, as long as it's powered....

And while you're whanging away with the tools, consider the eighteen items listed as track "features," and note that of these, you need only six for the certificate. None of these is particularly difficult, but you need to have them on board.

With some of the Big Tools work done, it's also time to consider the Small Tools, work the math, lay in the supplies and commence scratch building your components. Again, there is a long list, but only six elements are required.

This portion of the certificate often provides the greatest hurdles, as it requires scratch building switches, diamonds, etc., and that's ... haaaard!!! Nope. Not particularly. It requires some preci-

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

sion, an NMRA track gauge and some practice, yes, but it's not hard. Making your own components is a skill that will serve you well down the track, so to speak, so why not invest some time and learn how? And while we're on that subject, yes, the fixtures available in the marketplace to assist you in hand-laying your turnouts and specialty track are indeed allowed, as long as you make your own frogs.

One major consideration here is that the track work you submit for Merit evaluation must be capable of having motive power operate through it in all possible directions under its own power. This is interpreted as being wired and electrically gapped in appropriate places, so the Power on Board ("Dead Rail") folks should pay heed to this aspect of the certificate.

We're running out of space right now, so I'll have to tackle Electrical engineer in the next go-round. As you work through **Civil Engineer**, though, become familiar with the requirements for the **Electrical Engineer** certificate—it's essentially a "twofer," and you can get credit quickly for things you've already done to get the railroad running.

And on the way out, I'll again recommend a look at the **Golden Spike Award** requirements, as you may have completed them and not realize it. Congratulations to Scott Pandorf, whose **Electrical Engineer** paperwork has been sent to the NCR for approval. Bravo!

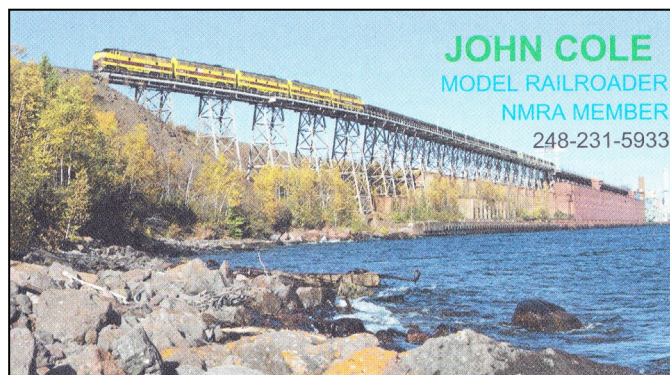
High Green!



Your editor receiving his Dispatcher AP certificate from Region AP Chairman Skip Luyk.

**BRING YOUR SHOW AND TELL
TO CHARLEVOIX!!
WE WILL SHOW AND DISCUSS WHATEVER YOU BRING.**

Pike Ads: Support your division by advertising your layout or business here!



Other Selected Events:

5/6/2018 Blue Water Railroad Show & Swap Shop
5/6/2018 Durand Model Train Show
5/17/2018 NMRA Mid-Central Region Convention

Port Huron, MI - Blue Water Convention Ctr
Durand, MI - Durand Middle School
West Chester, OH - Cincinnati Marriott North

Division 2 Leadership

Superintendent	Dave Capron	dcglrr@gmail.com
Assistant Superintendent	John Cole	modelman53@charter.net
Chief Clerk	Bob Crocker	rc6sb@charter.net
Paymaster	Jim Kurbel	jbkurbel@gmail.com
Yardmaster—Petoskey	Dave Comer	beechcomer@aol.com
Yardmaster—Traverse City	Mike Cipko	mcipko@charter.net
Trainmaster	Scott Pandorf	spandorf55@gmail.com