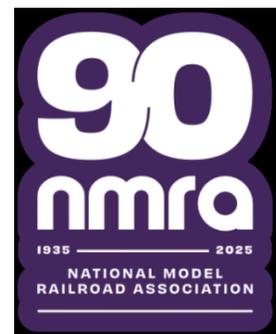


National Model Railroad Association North Central Region

Division 2 Newsletter

Volume 11 No 3 Fall 2025



We are Celebrating our 10-year Anniversary as a Division this Year.

Thanks to our founding Members:

Dave Capron - Superintendent, John Cole - Asst. Superintendent, Ernie Barry - TC Yardmaster, Dave Comer - North Yardmaster, Bob Crocker - Chief Clerk, Jim Kurbel - Paymaster, Scott Pandorf - Newsletter Editor, and Pete Magoun - AP Chair.

We wouldn't be here without you!!!

Division Meeting

3rd Saturday (or as noted) of each Month

The meetings will continue to be live and virtual via zoom. Meetings are from September through May (We take some time off for the Summer).

Our meeting location is the Foster Family Community Health Center, at 550 Munson Avenue, on the East side of town. Enter the north entrance (under the canopy) and proceed down the left-hand corridor. Near the end, on the right-hand side, you will come to Conference Room A. (or join us on Zoom). The meeting will start at 10:00 AM.

We now also have the option to host meetings in Gaylord. Details to follow.

Invitations and other details will be sent to Division members by email the week prior to the meeting. Following Division business and member Show and Tell, we will have a presentation (TBD).

From the Editor – Jens Hensel

We are reviewing making the prior Newsletters on our website searchable. This would allow you to find articles from past Newsletters easier. We need your feedback. Would this be something that you would like to see? How often have you had the need to search in the old Newsletters? Please let us know. We will have a clinic soon on how to use our new website.

This newsletter relies on articles and photos that we receive from you, our members. Have a favorite structure, loco or railroad? Share it with us. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to this newsletter.

Send your photos (JPEG) and articles (MS Word) to us for our future newsletters. Our goal is to publish quarterly in March, June, September, and December. The deadline for submittals will be at the end of the month prior to each quarter.

This newsletter relies on articles and photos that we receive from **you**, our members. Have a favorite structure, loco or railroad? Share it with us. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to this newsletter.

Crew Call:

- 9-20-2025
Division Meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 – 1:30
- 10-18-2025
Division Meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 -1:30
- 11-15-2015
Division meeting – Live & Zoom 10:00 – 1:30

Watch for the Division Meeting Invites via Email

On the Switch List:

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All Aboard,
Jens Hensel
super@div2.ncrnmra.org
Superintendent & Newsletter Editor



Super Sez... by Jens Hensel

This is our 10th Anniversary as an NCR Division. Below is the "Super Sez" from our 1st Newsletter. I felt that it was well worth reprinting this as all holds true 10 years later. Thank you, Dave Capron, our first Superintendent.

Super Sez...

As my bio states, it has been a long time since my father introduced this hobby to me. The Detroit Convention was my first introduction to the NMRA. That made a real impact on my outlook of the hobby and the organization. It was a year ago next month that the NMRA members from the "Tip of the Mitt" were invited to explore forming a new Division in the NCR. In less than 6 months, Division 2 was certified. We comprise the top 20 counties of the Lower Peninsula - a very large area. Our by-laws contain a very unique Article that defines our 'Yard' system. While the Division has events monthly from September to May, they are spread throughout our geographic region through the Yard System.

This offers the NMRA members the opportunity to gather and enjoy our hobby on a regular basis without having to drive downstate. It has been a pleasure to be involved with the organizers of this new division. I am honored to have been elected its first Superintendent and look forward to working with both the BOD and all the members of our new division in the future. Remember, this is your division so don't hesitate to let us know what it needs to develop and grow. Whether it is a clinic, layout tour, or op session, we want the division to give you an opportunity that did not exist before. Even the simple 'show and tell' goes a long way to share our hobby and to get ideas from. So, put the Yard events on your calendar and bring something to 'show and tell.'

Dave Capron

Well, after the Summer off, it is almost time for our next meeting. (Time sure flies).

Our September Clinic will be on making fall aspen and poplar trees hosted by our own David Zolnierek. T.J. Stratton will present a Clinic in October on how to make a Resin Gondola Freight Car. Doug Tagsold will be presenting a clinic on his "Terminal of Toledo" Railroad (in person) at our December 20, 2025, meeting, and Mike Hauk will be presenting a "Static Grass" clinic at our February 21, 2026, meeting, most likely via Zoom.

More great clinics to follow.

Division News

Assistant Superintendent News by Paul Anderson

This last summer we secured a new Zoom license in the name of Division 2 instead of one of our elected officers. The credentials for using the Zoom account are currently known to the Superintendent (Jens Hensel), the Assistant Superintendent (Paul Anderson), and John Campbell (since he provides the conference room).

Speaking of the conference room where we hold our meetings, Jens, Paul, John, and Dave Zolnieriek spent a few hours in the room in August to work out the best way to use the room and its features. We'll continue to use the room's projector, but we'll retire our use of the speakers and central room microphones because speakers and mic are very tricky to tune to avoid feedback. To facilitate in-room clinics and show-n-tell sessions, we acquired an external camera/microphone/light and a tripod. We'll place these items on a table in the middle of the room so the clinician or show-n-tell presenter can work under the camera, very close to the microphone, and still see the image that's being shared on the projector. It should make for easier presentations and less feedback.

I wrote up a set of guidelines for using both the AV equipment and Zoom screen sharing capabilities to present at the meetings. I also wrote a set of Zoom Etiquette guidelines for those who watch the meetings remotely. Both of these guideline documents are available on the Division 2 website at <https://div2.ncnmra.org>.

Board Meeting by Jens Hensel

Please see the Board meeting minutes which are posted on this Website. This meeting was held directly following the Division Meeting on May 17, 2025. We are planning to have quarterly Board Meetings starting again this September after the Division Meeting. There were no Division Meetings held in June, July, or August since we all took the Summer off.

Clinics - Yardmaster News

If you are interested in giving a talk or clinic to the group, please let us know. Please contact T.J. Stratton michigancentralrr@hotmail.com or Michael McDougall at michaelcoguy@sbcglobal.net.

Clinics can be hosted in Traverse City or Gaylord.

Website News by Paul Anderson

Our website is live – DIV2.NCRNMRA.org

The Website is updated at least monthly. New local railroad photos and writeups have been added. Please take a look.

For those of you who haven't, our Division Members want your railroad to be included! Send Paul photos (jpeg) of your layout with a brief description so we can add it to the website!

Over the summer, I created the following Division-2-specific email addresses for our use:
super@div2.ncrnmra.org - monitored by Jens Hensel
asstsuper@div2.ncrnmra.org - monitored by Paul Anderson
treasurer@div2.ncrnmra.org - monitored by David Zolnierok
webmaster@div2.ncrnmra.org - monitored by Paul Anderson
zoom@div2.ncrnmra.org - monitored by Jens and Paul

The idea behind these email addresses is that we use them on the Division 2 website, newsletters, and other publications. (For example, the two contact forms on the Division 2 website already use the new addresses). The division officers monitoring those emails can retain and organize important Division-2-related emails in these accounts. When we have elections and new officers take over these roles, we simply transfer ownership of these email accounts to the new officers, and any valuable history is maintained.

This summer I also tuned the Division 2 web site to better host post-based content. Starting in September and going forward, the meeting announcements, clinic summaries, etc. will all be added to the Division 2 web site as web content instead of PDF files. The primary reason for this switch is that the PDF content is not searchable. There is now a search button on the right side of the main menu bar across the top of the site, and you can use it to find content on the site. Going forward, I will be looking at making the old retroactive newsletters searchable. We are still reviewing the options that we have, to make this possible.

In early September, I added all the current Division 2 members (and special guests) as subscribers to the Division 2 website. Each time we post new content (clinic summaries, meeting announcements, board meeting minutes, etc.) all the Division 2 members will receive an email with a link to the new content. There are no accounts or passwords for this feature. We'll maintain the subscription list monthly, updating it as necessary to accommodate Division 2 membership changes.

Chief Clerk's Report

Membership Information from Keith Aleo

keith.aleo@interlochen.org

I'm actively reviewing ways to recognize our long-term members. We actually have members that have been in the NMRA for more than 40 years. Stay tuned.

You will also be receiving, in the coming weeks, a short survey asking how we can improve as a division. We need your feedback in order to improve!

We have 42 Active Members



Paymaster's Report

North Central Region NMRA Division 2

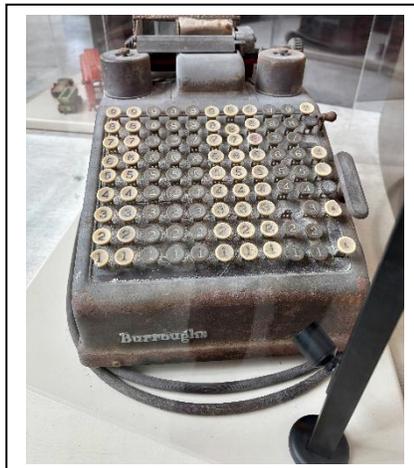
Financial Information

From David J. Zolnierek

treasurer@div2.ncrnmra.org

Ending July 31, 2025

• Regular Share Deposits-e-bonus, donations, div.	\$1.36
• Regular Share (Savings) - ending Balance	\$869.91
• Checking Account- Deposits for the year	\$32.00
• Checking Account Balance - Total for the year	\$1,590.81
• Withdrawals - Total for the year	\$0.00
• Ending Balance in Account as of 31 Jan 2025	\$2,460.72



Around the Division

Modeling the Equipment, Freight Station and Logging Forests of the Drake Lumber Company, circa 1910.

Part 2 - Modeling the Dade County Pine Trees and Saw Palmetto Palms by Keith Aleo

Dade County Pine Trees

There were several challenges in modeling these trees. First, these trees have a very different shape and character than the pine tree models you can easily buy. I would have to build them using something other than standard store-bought pine trees. Since I plan to do a lot of these trees (40-50), I also need to limit the amount of time and energy I put into the project, while also producing an accurate model.

I needed both: An accurate model and a quick way to build them. This balance was challenging, but I think I found a good solution that produces an accurate representation of the Dade County Pine trees.



Photo 12

I start with Woodland Scenics 5"-7" Deciduous pine tree armatures. These armatures have a wide base trunk, typical of most Northern pine trees, but not the spindly appearance I needed in the Dade County pine trees. Photo 12.



Photo 13

To get the thin trunk, I clip off the plastic trunk about $\frac{1}{2}$ way. I then attach a natural stick of wood to the plastic armature top. I collect different diameter sticks, so I have many choices to match the same diameter of the Woodland Scenics top. After I glue them in together, if I feel adventurous, I'll take a few of the discarded branches from the bottom of the plastic armature and attach them to the natural wood trunk I do this to follow the prototype photos which sometimes have a few branches lower on the trunk. I did this to one of the trees in the photos. Photo 13.



Photo 14



Photo 15

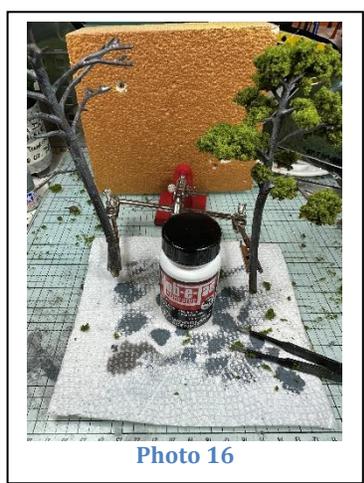


Photo 16



Photo 17

After the glue dries, I spray paint the trees with Rust-Oleum Painters Touch Warm Carmel. This will represent the bright brown below the bark and will eventually slightly show through the dry brushing I'm about to do. Photo 14

I dry brush the trunks using two shades of Tamiya acrylic grey. Dark grey (XF-24) first and then the light grey (XF-66) second. I finish the painting lightly with a little flat white (XF-2). Use the white sparingly! After the paint is dry, I complete this step with one or two coats of an India Ink wash of 2 Tsp. of ink to 12 oz. of water. Photo 15

I apply Woodland Scenics "Hob-e-Tac" glue to the end of the branches. After the glue dries clear, I add Woodland Scenics light green Clump-Foliage to the ends of the branches with a tweezer. Following the prototype, I leave a few branches bare without the Clump-Foliage. This part of the project can get messy! Photo 16

Finished Trees! Photo 17

Saw Palmettos

To model these palms, I use a technique I learned from Lance Minheim's article in Model Railroader Magazine. He was modeling Sabal palms in his article, so I will be altering the technique a little bit for the Saw Palmettos, which have a different look and color to them.

I first start by downloading a palm frond pattern that matches the Saw Palmetto fronds using the Cricut software that came with the machine. I thought these fronds were a good match! I made the pattern in several different sizes to match the variety in the prototype. The largest being 1" and the smallest being 1/2". Photo 18

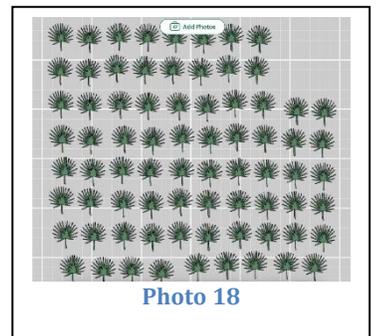
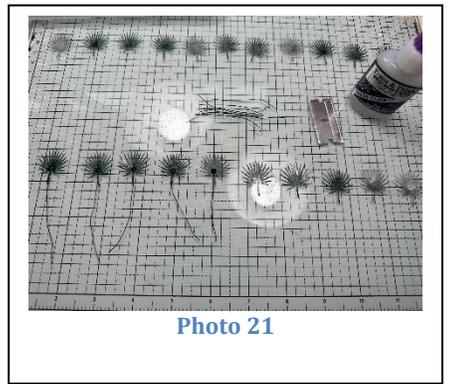
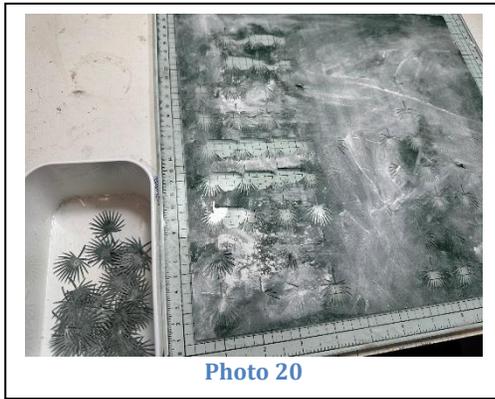


Photo 18



I mount the 12"x12" uncut vinyl on the Cricut mat, insert it in the cutter and send the pattern over to the Cricut cutter via my computer and the software. This vinyl is sold near the Cricut section in any store that sells the cutter. Photo is of the Cricut Maker cutter and the mat/vinyl going in for cutting. Due to the detail in the cut, I used a fine point Cricut blade. Photo 19.

The vinyl is sold with an adhesive backing, so when I remove the vinyl from the paper backing, I eliminate the sticky surface by spreading baby powder on the adhesive. I do this as I'm pulling the cut fronds from the vinyl. The cut fronds are in the left of photo 20.

I add "stems" to the fronds using 2"-3" pieces of 26-gauge floral wire, glued to the frond with medium viscosity cyanoacrylate glue. I keep a razor blade handy in case some glue gets on the mat, and I need to pry up the frond with the wire. I use a glass mat for this project as the glue doesn't stick to glass as well. Photo 21.



I then mount the fronds on a Styrofoam base and paint them. When looking at the palms in the wild, I saw multiple colors and a great deal of variety. Therefore, I used three different combinations of colors to varying degrees. Photo 22

The darker/healthy fronds were made with Rust-Oleum Painters Touch Eden, followed by a lighter coat of Moss Green and finished with a Vallejo Dark Green wash. Photo 23





Photo 24

The slightly yellow fronds were made with Rust-Oleum Painter's Touch Summer Squash, followed by a lighter coat of Eden and finished with a wash of Deco Art Americana Burnt Sienna. I also dabbed a little bit of the Burnt Sienna on the tips of the fronds. Photo 24.



Photo 25

The dead fronds were captured with Krylon White Chiffon, followed by a lighter coat of Tamiya Tan (AF-15) and finished with a wash of Deco Art Americana Lamp Black. I paint the fronds inconsistently intentionally. My mantra for this project needs to be: "VARIETY IS YOUR FRIEND." Photo 25.

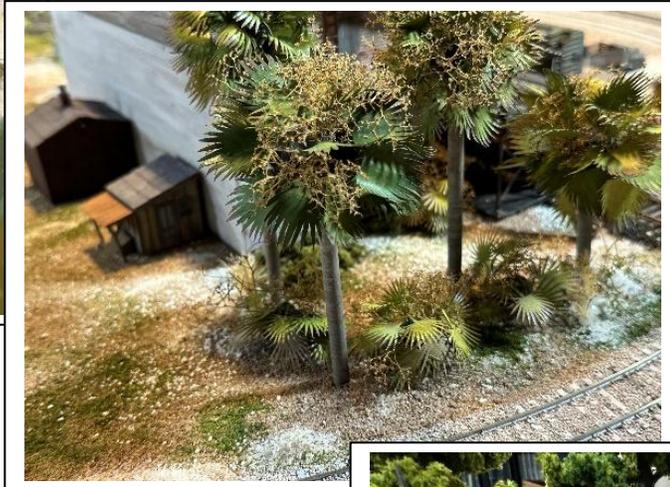


Photo 26

At this point, you can do several things with the fronds. Since I'm modeling the pine rock lands near Princeton, FL, I decided to put them under and around the Dade County pine trees. I use clay to mount them. You can make a ball of clay to get the fronds higher or the ball works well to mount them on a palm tree trunk. I did both as I wanted them in clumps (under my Sabal Palms) and low for the pine rock lands of South Miami.

I laid out a thin layer of clay and covered it with Woodlands Scenics Hob-e- Tac glue. When the glue was clear, I added ground foam and ground cover to the glue to cover the clay. After, I began adding the fronds, using a variety of colors. I also added a few sprigs of Scenic Express Super Tree material to help cover the clay as well as a few small trees that I made from the left-over branches from the Pines. Photo 26

The End Results



Stay Tuned for Part 3 – Modeling the Princeton Station and Drake Lumber Companies “A Frame” Skidder

Around the Division

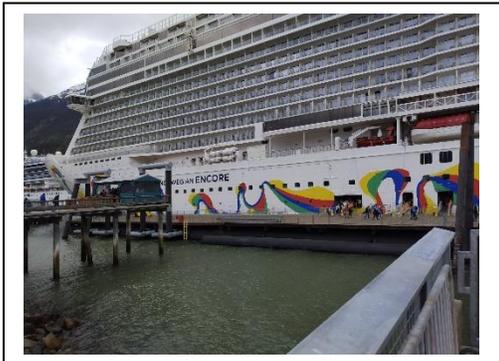
AMTRAK EMPIRE BUILDER and NORWEGIAN ENCORE to GLACIER BAY ALASKA

By Al and Susan Johnson

On May 29th this year Susan and I boarded the Amtrak Empire Builder in Chicago, headed for Seattle, Washington, where we boarded a Norwegian Cruise ship for a 7-day excursion up and down the Alaskan coast. We returned to Chicago via the Amtrak Empire Builder on June 11, culminating our 6,000-mile unique journey.



We started looking into the trip in February, by contacting Amtrak to inquire about the Glacier Bay Cruise. Working with the Amtrak and Norwegian agents we were able to modify and adjust our itinerary, to include upgrades to sleeping arrangements on Amtrak to changing rooms on the cruise and adding extras. The total package was through Amtrak, one price for it all. Extra side trips off the ship added to the cost, but we found we could make our own less expensive excursions through the various ports of call.



The Ports of call we visited were Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan, and Victoria, B.C. Also included were several days at sea, and a one-day cruise through Glacier Bay National Park. The ship had 16 decks. We were on deck 14 with a large and comfortable room with a portside balcony view. When we stepped on board



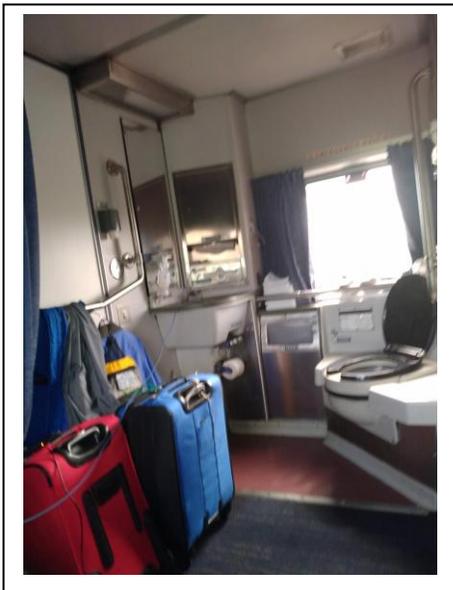
Glacier Bay

we found we were two old folks in a crowd of 5,400 passengers from all over the world! Trying to get on one of 8 elevators, finding the nearest coffee machine (deck 15), finding a place to sit in the main dining room, and exploring the ship were a bit crazy. However, the views were magnificent, the food was outstanding (at least 15 restaurants to choose from), the service and staff were excellent, the alcohol flowed freely for those who drank, with a bar at every turn, and there were many evening activities for the younger crowd. The wildlife viewing was minimal with only sea otters and seagulls a plenty and unfortunately, no whale sightings. It still was a unique experience to say the least.

A highlight of this cruise was a side excursion in Skagway on the White pass and Yukon narrow gage railway. Train cars were original with bench seats, a wood stove in each car for heat, and an open balcony at each end. It was a 3-hour joyful climb to snow covered mountains riding high above the tree line while we listened to the stories of the Klondike Gold Rush, and stampedeers making the treacherous journey along this route while heading north. We then made the easy descent next to beautiful waterfalls and rushing water. We needed our entire wardrobe of warm weather gear!

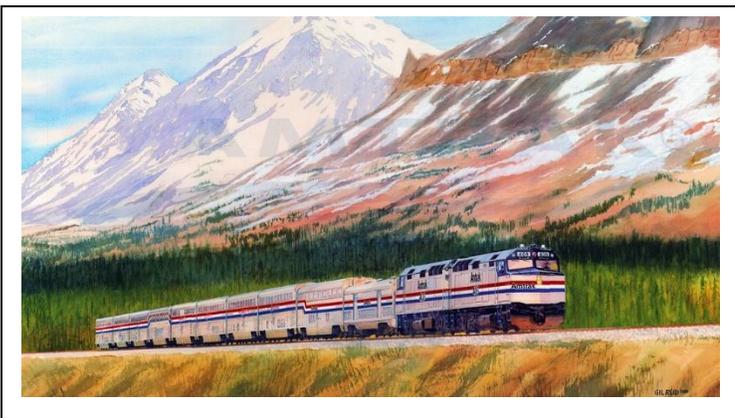


The Amtrak Empire Builder primarily uses the BNSF Railway's Northern Transcon Line. The route follows Interstate Route 2 through the northwest United States. This is a beautiful scenic route that allows you to view the great plains, the Mississippi River, the Rocky Mountains, Glacier National Park, the Cascade Mountains, and Puget Sound. We were treated to many fields of yellow canola, soybeans, wheat, hay, and cattle.



On the Amtrak sleeper there are three kinds of roomettes. The standard roomette is very small with one window, two facing seats that fold down for one bed and the other drops down from the overhead with safety straps to prevent falling out. With the door closed there is about 18" between the seat and the door. Large bags had to be stored on the first level at the boarding door. The second choice was a bedroom that afforded more space and sink. All standard roomettes and bedrooms are on the upper level with a small center walkway, with rooms on both sides. The bathrooms and showers are at both ends of the car or below. We had booked the small roomette until we found out that we could get a third option of an accessible bedroom (handicapped). This bedroom is located on each sleeper car just inside the loading door on the first level. This room was the full width of the car with one window on each side.

One side had a toilet stool and a sink with hot and cold water, the other side had two facing seats that folded down for one bed, and another bed that drops down from the overhead with safety straps to prevent falling out. There was room for large bags and handhold bars for holding on when moving around. There was a sliding curtain in the center to divide the room. The shower was just outside our door. This room was well worth the extra cost and made for a little smoother ride. On the trip out we were in the first car with a crew rest area in front of our room. On the return trip we were in the third car back with a family room in front of us with a family of four. The dining car was 4 or 5 cars back and could only be reached by the second level walkway. We had assigned times for dinner with four to a table. We had real dishes, silverware and linen tablecloths and napkins. Breakfast and lunch were open seating with paper plates. The menu was exactly the same outbound and inbound. The food was pre-cooked and re-heated in the kitchen on the first level. It was then sent up a dumbwaiter to the able hands of the wait staff. We met some very interesting people while sharing a table. This was definitely a highlight.



After we got under way in Chicago, the train stopped to add 4 or 5 passenger coaches to the back of the train. On the second night these cars were dropped off to head southwest to Portland. Along the trip the train made short stops to drop off and pick up passengers in various little towns and big cities. At some of the stops we could step off the train and walk around a little. This was a nice break from the constant rock and roll.

Riding the Rails, we saw a great deal of the “back side” of the America from our own little private room, such as, boarded up factories, abandoned churches, ghost towns, dead end roads, open fields with rusted and abandoned farm equipment, junk cars, piles of used tires, appliances and discarded bathroom equipment. Amtrak has a lot of work to do to compete with European trains in the areas of speed, efficiency, ride comfort, and cleanliness. All-in-all this trip gave us a fast-paced beautiful view of the northwest United States and Alaska, and some wonderful memories.

Around the Division

Milton Florida

West Florida Railroad Museum and Model Railroad (WFRM)

Part 1

By Dave Landis

During our time in Florida this past spring 2025 Jeanne and I discovered a Gem of a little city with deep roots in railroad history beginning in the 1880s. The city of Milton, Florida located in Florida's Panhandle about 48 miles Northwest of Destin Fl, was served by the Louisville & Nashville RR (L&NRR) and a depot was built in the heart of the city. The city of Milton, Florida being Incorporated in 1844, has the honor of being named in the National Historic District.

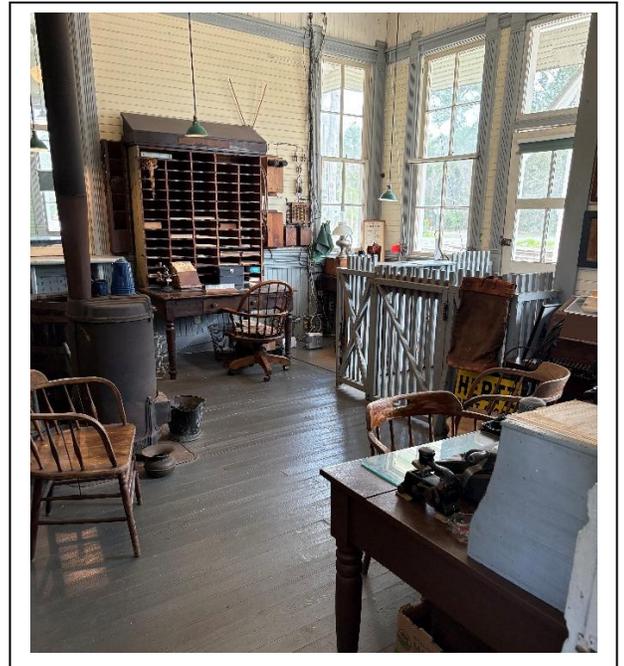


Unfortunately, as was often the case, the original wooden depot was lost to a fire in 1909. A second depot was erected that same year and today it houses the museum, general offices of the West Florida Railroad Museum and a gift shop.

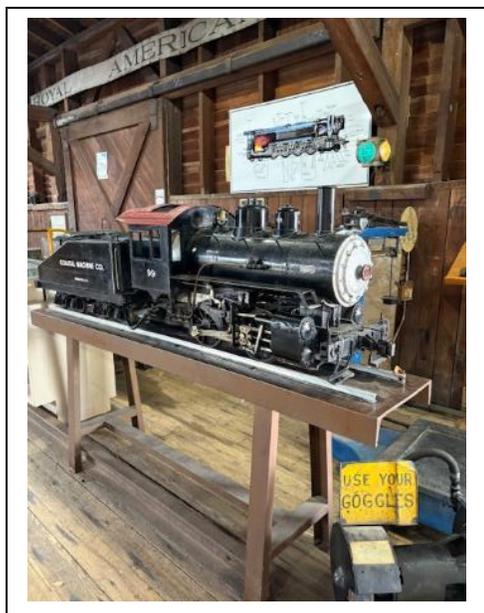
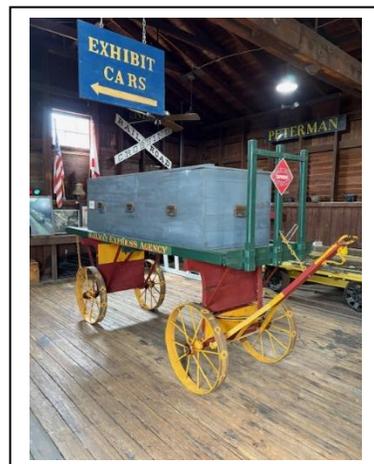
Service by L&N served the city of Pensacola, Fl and other regional cities and

small towns to the West until 1960. The depot and property sat vacant until 1992 when the Santa Rosa Historical Society purchased the depot and begin a restoration effort.

The property for the rail museum and related structures is open to the public usually on weekends and there is no admission charge, but donations are appreciated.



There are 17 highlights to see on the property (see property map photo above), including the 1909 L&N Depot & Freight House completely restored and is set in the period of 1920-1940. The museum located in the attached freight house has many artifacts from the L&N RR including a genuine “Casket Shipping Container” an unusual piece to be sure! (See Photo). Other interesting pieces from the L&N include a 1929 Dining Car completely restored and a 1917 Baggage Dormitory Car with a unique history of being in service for the Atomic Energy Commission in 1961 hauling personal and unusual cargo of nuclear material used in atomic and hydrogen bombs! There is other rolling stock as well, all are in excellent museum condition. A 40ft box car, flat car and 2 cabooses all 1940-50 circa.

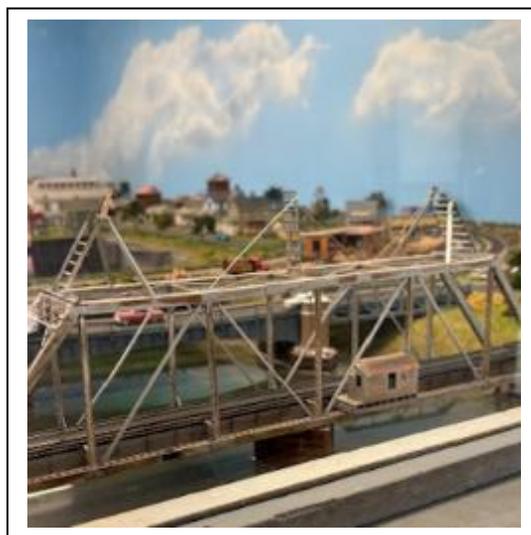


Included on property is a Garden Railway with G Scale locomotives steam and diesel; and on the outer loop is a 1/2-inch scale railroad that gives rides to children and adult rail fans. In addition, there are several smaller railroad buildings that are all in excellent condition and painted in L&N colors, including a small freight office circa 1950's, a 1906 section shed and 1950s bridge tender's house. Most buildings are open and have displays inside. Today the bridge tender house is home to the HO scale West Florida Model Railroad Club. The model railroad depicts several scenes of NW Florida Railroads including the city of Milton, Florida Circa 1950. Also included is an exact replica of the second Milton Depot that now houses the actual museum.

Viewing the museum and displays are a nice relaxing way to spend an afternoon in a small quiet town in

Florida's Western Panhandle. A Gem of a find if you or your family have an interest in small town Americana, enjoys railroad history and if you are a model railroader that's a bonus!

Note: A future article for the Div 2 newsletter will include more details and photos of this excellent model railroad along with interesting facts and photos of a still operational swing bridge built in 1872 that crosses the Blackwater River in the city of Milton, FL and served the L&NRR.



Around the Division

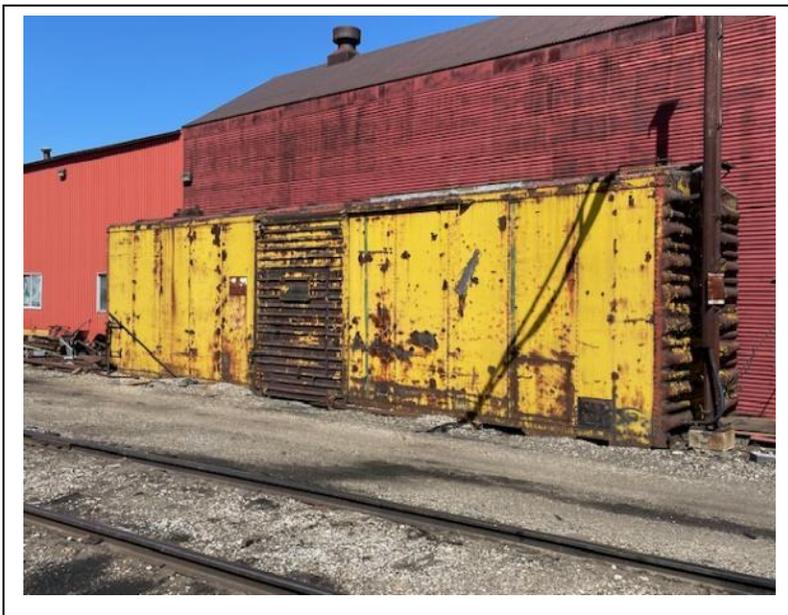
Random Pictures

By T.J. Stratton

Greetings From Cadillac,

Here are several railroad photos that I took over the summer months:

The T&SBY NW-2 was spotted at the Cadillac engine house. The locomotive had been assigned to Kalkaska area for switching duties.



The yellow boxcar is an old Detroit and Toledo Shoreline boxcar that has been converted to a locomotive sand storage facility at the Cadillac engine house.



The two Great Lakes Central locomotives are ready to depart Selma Yard in Cadillac with an eastbound freight.

The “Marquette” caboose in Manistee At the Morton Salt facility.



The Manistee and North Eastern NW-2 is on display in Kaleva at their depot.

Guest Pages

Introducing Sammy, the Yank Engine

By Mark Albert (MCR Div. 7) Photos by the Author Except as Noted

In recent years, I have enjoyed running Bachmann's Thomas the Tank Engine model on the layout I set up at the annual train show in suburban Cincinnati every October. Although the Bachmann product is not true HO scale, it is designed to run on standard HO track. Of course, kids rush to see Thomas and then their parents come over to the layout to join them. That gives me a chance to direct the adults' attention to the serious model railroading aspects of my layout, which are detailed logging and sawmill scenes.

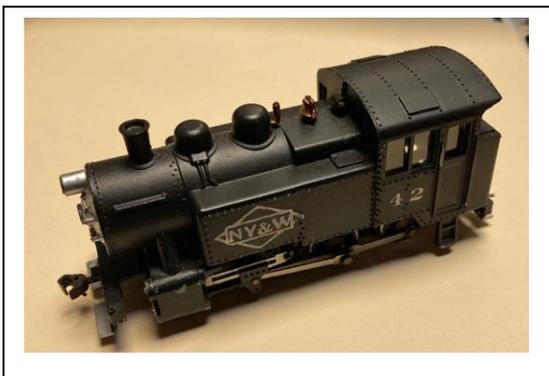
Bachmann's Thomas is a faithful rendition of the famous star of TV shows, videos and story books. Unfortunately, the model can't withstand the rigors of train show performance, especially since kids think Thomas has only two speeds—total stop or “fun” speed (as fast as it will go with the throttle turned all the way up.) Of course, I am eager to comply with gleeful demands to see Thomas at fun speed because the resulting squeals of delight are impossible to resist. However, the motor inside this Thomas is undersized and underpowered. I have blown out two of these models so far, and at more than \$100 MSRP, I had to find an alternative if I wanted to keep this popular attraction at the train show.

Here's what I came up with. I noticed that a vintage 0-6-0 tank engine in my collection has a passing resemblance to Thomas. This Mantua product has a solid, cast zinc body with some real heft. Its sizable open-frame motor delivers plenty of pulling power. Although the detail on this model is minimal, its proportions are pleasing, and I believe rather prototypical.



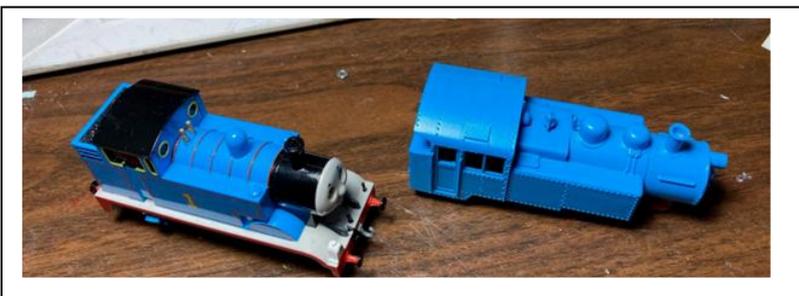
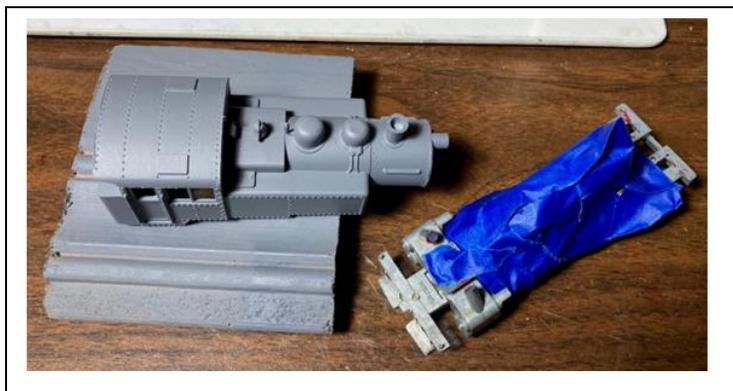
I decided to convert this engine into “Sammy the Yank Engine,” a private nickname I gave it to honor its genuine American appearance and made-in-the-USA origin. These photos show the stages of the conversion process. My goal was to create a robust, heavy-duty model that still would be recognizable as the real Thomas, at least to the eyes of his young fans. I intended to do the minimum on this project by relying mostly on new paint, red decal stripes and the distinctive yellow number 1. The biggest challenge by far was creating a believable face for the boiler front. For me, this may have been the most enjoyable aspect of the conversion.

I was lucky to find my second Bachmann Thomas on sale at a vendor's booth near my layout at the annual train show. This one lasted about as long as the first.



I deemed this vintage Mantua 0-6-0 tank engine to be a suitable candidate for conversion into a strong-running lookalike for Bachmann model.

First step was to strip the zinc body and prime it for repainting. The underframe got the same treatment. I used Rustoleum's flat gray primer out of a spray can for the job.



Here's where I got lucky. Rustoleum's Satin Oasis Blue is an almost perfect match for Thomas's distinctive blue color. Without a good paint match, my conversion would not have worked nearly as well.



Glossy black paint on the cab roof and boiler's smoke box along with bright yellow trim around the windows completed the paint work. Red decal striping brought out the outline of the locomotive body just as it does on the original Thomas.



Before filing off the boiler front on the Mantua model, I wanted to see if I could duplicate Thomas's perky little face. I used polymer clay to sculpt the new visage. Several evenings of gently tugging and pushing and carving and smoothing the clay finally gave me a believable copy. After baking the polymer clay to hardness by setting it

under a 100-watt bulb in a goose-neck lamp, I used light gray craft paint to give Sammy a complexion that matched his British cousin.

I was carefully to get Sammy's face the right diameter to fit the boiler front of the Mantua engine. His eyes do not swivel side to side like Thomas's do. I have yet to give Sammy his eyebrows at this point.



For the numbering, I simply scanned the side of the Bachmann model on computer copier, printed it with a laser printer on smooth paper, trimmed it with a hobby knife

and attached it with white glue.

Here's Sammy getting a test run on a loop of track under last year's Christmas tree. He's pulling a



short train of Bachmann "goods wagons" that complement the Thomas model. Sammy will make his public debut in October 2025 at Div. 7's annual train show.

NCR Region News

The NMRA National Convention Report

By Jens Hensel

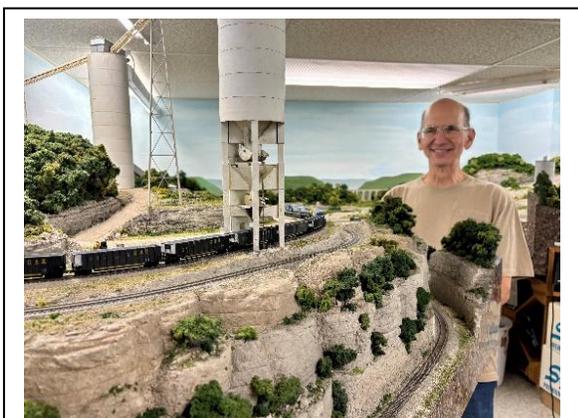


Hats off to all of the NCR and other Volunteers for putting together this great convention. I only attended for two days, but wish I would have been able to be there longer.

From the specially made pamphlet, the clinics, peoples choice model contest, layout tours, meeting old friends (and meeting new ones), and the National Train show; it was a wow moment for the time I was there.



Dave Capron's People's Choice Winner



Kevin Guthrie's N Scale CSX Coal Branch



Kevin Griffin's HO Iowa Central RR



Chuck Hughes' HO D+H Lines

Mystery Spot

What do these pictures all have in common?
Thanks to my brother Joerg, for sending these to me.



Summer Newsletter's answer was:

Clinch Park – Traverse City Michigan



AP Corner – September 2025

Pete Magoun, MMR©

As I write this in late August, we have moved from brutal summer conditions to where the outdoor temps are moderating, the moon is setting well south of where it did just a couple of months ago, and there are notices all over Facebook to the effect that one should NOT turn on the furnace yet! It's time to get Back in Training!! Which is to say that we need to clean the railroad up, ensure that the motive power works properly and prepare for Operating Sessions again! And with that comes the reminder that Mother Nature will undoubtedly favor us with a couple of additional weeks of summer temperatures just to remind us who is really in charge.... So be it....

As you know, our Division meetings crank up in earnest on 20 September; and I will have the honor of presenting Mike Cipko with his Association Official certificate and Superintendent Jens Hensel with his Association Volunteer certificate. I hope to have two additional certificates to present as well... Scenery and Prototype Modeler, both for Dr. John Campbell. The documentation for these has been received by the AP National Chair, who is delighted with what was submitted, but the certificates themselves have not yet arrived in my mailbox. And the Really Good News here is that once John gets the requisite number of "national publication" pages (he needs seven), he will also need to fill out the documentation for his MMR. Yes, he's that close!

As I mentioned back in February, this is overwhelming my own meager progress; and I'm OK with that, as my Antiquity issues are improving. It has become obvious that I am no longer a youth, especially since my eldest grandson has just started college....

But what of the rest of you? Are any of you contemplating using the Achievement Program for its intended purpose, which is to stretch your skills and abilities to improve the quality and joy of your hobby? Are you laden with questions on how things work or what is necessary? And are any of those questions ones you're afraid to ask because they're "dumb," but you still don't understand the answers? If so, then ask ahead; because there are NO "dumb questions" here. Again, the whole purpose of this process is to educate You, to help You become a better modeler and get more joy from Your hobby....

As I mentioned in our last Newsletter, if you have questions or comments on any of the AP stuff, I'm easy to find. Let's hear from you!

High Green!

08/27/25*****

The NMRA Achievement Program is designed to challenge the skills of the modeler. The Achievement Program is divided into eleven categories covering different aspects of the hobby and the NMRA. As members of the NMRA earn credit in the different categories, awards are presented to signify the member's achievement. All current AP Awards are listed in the NMRA Magazine each month. Those who have earned the Master Model Railroader® award are listed both by number and by Region on this website.

Need additional information? Please reach out to Pete Magoun - MMR©. orion@chartermi.net

AP Corner

MMR Requirements

(Reprint from Past Newsletters)

By Pete Magoun

The Achievement Program (or “AP,” for short) is divided into four categories:

MR Equipment, Settings, Engineering and Operation and Service to the Hobby: Earning an MMR requires a total of seven certificates out of the eleven possible, but you need at least one in each of the four categories. So, let’s have a look; and we’ll take them in order from the website: <https://www.nmra.org/categories>

Model Railroad Equipment

Master Builder - Motive Power (3 motive power models – 1 of which is scratch built).

Master Builder – Cars (8 models of 4 different types of cars – 4 of which are scratch built).

Settings

Master Builder – Structures (Need 12, 6 different types, 6 scratch built, includes 1 bridge or trestle)

Master Builder – Scenery (Scale specific – for HO you need 32 sq. ft, include terrain, structures, background, lighting, conformity/realism, etc.)

Master Builder – Prototype Models (6 prototype equipment or structures – with 4 different types)

Engineering and Operation

Model Railroad Engineer – Civil (Need a scale plan of your layout with 6 certain items included, and scratch-built track)

Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical (Must build & run a RR, Independent Ops of two mainline trains, demonstrate several items from menu)

Chief Dispatcher – (50 hours of Ops logged)

Service to the Hobby

Association Official (1 year at National Level or 2 years at Region Level with 1 being President or 3 years as a Region Officer)

Association Volunteer (60-time units as listed)

Model Railroad Author (42 Points from a combination of areas as listed)

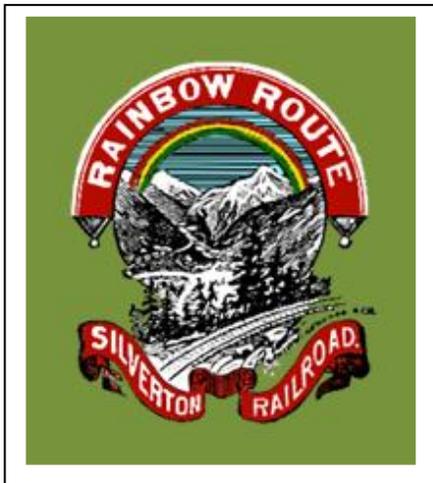
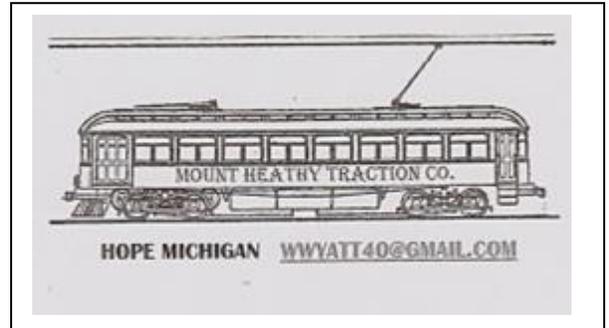
This is a summary of the requirements. Please see the NMRA Website for more detailed information. High Green!

Here is a must read; What I learned by becoming an MMR By Gerry Leone:

(Cut and paste this to your browser) <https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/mmr.pdf>

[*A really great talent finds its happiness in execution. - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*](#)

PIKE ADS: SUPPORT YOUR DIVISION. BUY A SPACE FOR THE YEAR – ONLY \$20.00
CONTACT DAVID ZOLNIEREK
 treasurer@div2.ncrnmra.org



For Upcoming Model Railroad Events:
<https://www.trainlist.com>
 (cut and paste into your browser)

Division 2 Leadership

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
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| • Asst. Superintendent | Paul Anderson | asstsuper@div2.ncrnmra.org |
| • Chief Clerk | Kieth Aleo | keith.aleo@interlochen.org |
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| • Newsletter Editor | Jens Hensel | jens.hensel50@gmail.com |

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Oh wait, there's more:



Ticket Collage from Mich Central Station