

THE TIMETABLE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE

ILLINOIS VALLEY DIVISION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



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WEBSITE: nmra-ivd.org



Sept 20, 2025 @ Peck
Park Pavilion in
Galesburg - noon to 4P

Catered food by Smokin'
Willie's Barbecue @ 1
PM followed by
fellowship & watching
trains

Watch for email blast so
we can get a headcount
for the food.

Please bring pictures of
your layout to share with
others.

We are starting a new
era of publishing of the
newsletter. Affinity
Publisher is a
reasonably priced
software and should be
just as easy to use as
the Microsoft version
which will be phased out
in a year.

Pretrial usage along with
video tutorials have
proven productive and
with practice, better
newsletters will be
forthcoming.

Superintendent Column

COMFORT ZONES

When I was in seventh grade I was a tall skinny forward on the basketball team. We were in a late season game when an opposing player lost control of the basketball ten feet in front of me at center court. It was a golden opportunity to steal the ball and the path was wide open for a lay up at the other end of the court. But instead I hesitated which gave the other player time to regain control and his team ultimately scored a basket. After the game my father, who was watching from the stands, pointed out that my indecision on that one play could have made a difference in what turned out to be a close game (which we lost). In his usual way he saw it as a teaching moment and told me that I can't sit back on my heels in my comfort zone when a golden opportunity like that comes along. I should have

gone after that loose ball and even if it wouldn't have worked out, I would have learned something that would have improved my game.

In model railroading, as in life, we all have comfort zones that can limit us. As an engineer, my model railroading comfort zones are the technical parts such as making drawings, designing and building robust electrical systems, ensuring problem free operations through good trackwork and regular maintenance, and most recently the number crunching and documentation skills required for the dispatcher AP certificate. But as a person who doesn't have a scrap of artistic ability in my DNA, roads, trees, ditches, ponds, buildings and the detailing that makes it all look "real" is much more difficult to envision and model which is why it was 9 years after earning the electrical AP before I even attempted to make the leap from a track and plywood layout to a miniature world.

Attending meets and other events sponsored by the IVD during that time is what finally gave me the courage and skill to “improve my game” in model railroading. By seeing what others have done on their layouts and benefiting from numerous how-to clinics over the years I finally felt confident enough to tackle the Master Builder Scenery AP and I earned the certificate. Now, because of that successful venture, I feel less intimidated by the AP’s that will be my ultimate challenge as I strive to achieve MMR, the Master Builder Motive Power and Master Builder Cars certificates with their super-detailing requirements.

Reflecting on how my layout looks now versus the plywood and track version of it that existed for many years, I’m glad took my father’s advice one more time and found the gumption to do things outside my comfort zone because it has improved my layout immeasurably. As we get into

the fall and winter months when we move indoors and spend more time on our layouts, I challenge you to have the courage to get out of your comfort zone and do the same. You can do it, and there are a lot of fellow modelers who are there to help you every step of the way. All you have to do is ask.

Gary Baker – Superintendent,
Illinois Valley Division, MWR,
NMRA

“A Convention Like No Other”.

Jeff Trimble

Being this was only my 3rd national convention I'm not sure I am a fair judge of the success of Station No. VI 2025 NMRA

National

Convention. But of the three I have attended this was the best.

Others thought the same too. These stats were posted by Barry Hensel on the NMRA Facebook page.

- 950 registered – includes all type of registrations – attendee, spouse/partner, children, 2- and 1-day passes. Registration had to be closed about a week before the convention!
- 268 first time convention attendees – these are people for who this was their first National convention!
- 90 non-NMRA members registered!
- Ten of the extra

cost events sold out!

As I've found in the past, the toughest part of the convention is deciding which clinics or layout tours to attend. This convention featured 120 different clinics including Modeling With The Masters events. Most of the clinics are repeated, so that helps. But I still had to skip some I couldn't fit in. I was able to get to 19. Highlights included:

- What's New on the Nickel Plate (by Tony Koester; he's a

great presenter).

- Two clinics about "Dead Rail" battery powered locomotives.
- Scratch-building My Way to an AP Certificate.
- Modeling the Wabash High Line in Proto 48 (another by Tony Koester)

It was the same with layout tours/open houses. Sixty layouts were open for tours! I had help selecting layout tours by signing up for the Layout

Design SIG track. This got me a curated list of recommended layouts. I was able to get to 4, including Bruce Chubb's Sunset Valley.

A unique event I was able to register for was a roundtable hosted by Walthers. Attendance was limited to 50 and fortunately I was paying attention to my email to sign up quickly. Individuals from their marketing and product development teams wanted to know what products we

wanted to see.

I also was able to get a slot in the Operations Road Show. One of the N-scale module groups hosted it and developed an elaborate layout that we operated by time table and train order. NMRA President Gordy Robinson, MMR, was in my session. He was assigned a passenger train we dubbed the "President's Special."

Some other interesting stats from Barry Hensel included:

- 25 layouts offered operations sessions providing 457 operator spots
- 200 models were displayed in the People's Choice Contest & Model display area
- 55 models/entries in the NMRA National Judged contest including models & photos
- 101 convention participants brought 1,477 items to sell at the Yard Sale (I off-loaded a few items)

Another highlight for me was the National Train Show. Over 11,000 people

visited 225 exhibitor booths and 23 model railroad layouts and displays. This was the best show I have ever been to. The diversity of vendors and layouts were terrific. The floor was well organized and never felt crowded. I thought I would be in and out in 2-3 hours, but stayed from opening to closing.

It's often said the NMRA is not only about the modeling but the friends you make too. I agree and enjoyed

meeting fellow
modelers during the
week. Mike
Shockley and I
connected a few
times during the
convention. We
enjoyed a meal
together with our
wives at Buddy's
Detroit Pizza. Mike
tipped us off to
another good
restaurant, The Ford
Garage.

The organizers did a
terrific job and
deserve a big thank
you. Next year's
convention is in
Chattanooga and it's
on my calendar.

The Illinois Valley Division wishes to express our gratitude to Minton Dings for his tireless pursuit of excellence in publishing the *Timetable*. His attention to detail and content were exemplary.

All Hail the Distinguished Gentleman from Havana, Illinois.

Your new editor is following in the same mold, with much less ability so far. We are working to improve what you see here to get it back up to the standard Minton set. The bar is high, the mountain is tall and majestic.