

THE TIMETABLE



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ILLINOIS VALLEY DIVISION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Volume 45, No. 2, May 16, 2026

WEBSITE: nmra-ivd.org



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

It can't be THAT hard !!

Recently an acquaintance of mine who works at a Steel Mill called to see if he could drop by and see my Steel Mill – themed layout. Of course I jumped at the chance to show off my work, talk with a fellow Steel Industry colleague, and catch up with a friend I hadn't seen in a while. He was a Maintenance Manager who had worked his way up through the ranks and knew his technical field well. He worked at a modern minimill which required moving lots of different types of RR cars to and from different places every day to keep the plant stocked with materials and staged with empty cars for shipments. Knowing he probably didn't have much daily interaction with the people who manage plant material flow, I asked him if he ever gave any thought to all that is involved in making sure that the right cars are in the right place at the right time. He said that while he was familiar with the sights and sounds of the engines as they shuffled cars around the plant, to him it was a mundane job that wasn't very interesting and probably didn't require a lot of skill so he never paid much attention to it. Having been actively involved in Steel Mill operations for many years I disagreed, telling him that there's a lot more to it than somebody just jumping into an engine, hooking up to a few cars, and shoving them into a building so I challenged him to try his hand at switching the Steel Mill on my layout, which had just been set up for an operating session. He took me up on it saying.... "if some of the people I see on the engine crews around my plant can do it it can't be THAT hard".....

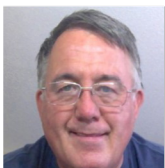
With that response I knew it was going to be fun to watch so I handed him the throttle and told him all he had to do was weigh the eleven cars sitting on the marshalling track at the scale house, exchange them with eleven other cars at various

locations around the Steel Mill, and weigh out the string of outbounds so they're ready for pickup by the local freight. After giving him a few minutes to get familiar with the throttle and practice running the locomotive, I offered to be his switchman since I knew where all the sidings were and which cars around the plant were to be exchanged so off we went with him making the decisions on car movements. Needless to say, it didn't take long for him to learn how the different combinations of facing point and trailing point sidings can quickly complicate the efficient movement of cars. After ultimately getting the job done and admitting that it took a lot longer than he thought it would, he said he had a whole new respect for the guys in the engine crews. But I wasn't going to let him off that easily, so I was obliged to tell him that the boss is not going to be happy about him blowing the entire overtime budget for the department all in one day.

My friend found out that being a good switchman is far from being a mundane job. Instead it requires spatial skills to visualize the day's work as a puzzle and organizational skills to determine how cars and car movements need to be ordered in order to minimize the time required to do the job. Critical thinking skills are needed to break the puzzle down into organized and manageable pieces and problem solving skills are required to deal with unexpected problems. Much like a switchman, a model railroader first visualizes what he or she envisions their final model railroad to be, breaks it down into smaller more manageable pieces, determines how each piece fits into the overall picture, and executes the plan a piece at a time to keep from becoming burned out by taking on too much at once.

Continued on page 4

DIVISION OFFICERS



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Randy Sommer
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Tom Dooley
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(2027)
Russ Smith
(309) 255-2058



DISTRICT 2 - Grundy, Livingston, McLean
and Woodford Co.(2028)
Ben Fehr



DISTRICT 3 - Bureau, LaSalle, Marshall,
Putnam and Stark Co.(2027)
David Hawkey
(309) 274-6150



DISTRICT 4 - Fulton, Henry, Knox, Rock
Island and
Warren Co.(2028)
Larry Nelson
(309) 789-6447



DISTRICT 5 - Adams, Brown, Cass,
Logan, Mason, McDonough, Menard,
Morgan, Pike Sangamon, Schuyler and
Scott Co. (2027)
Thomas Ose
(217) 483-4368

Year listed with title indicates the end of present term.

Upcoming 2026 IVD Meetings

Membership Meetings:

Unless noted otherwise, meetings are held on the third Saturday of January, March, May, September and November at a branch of the Peoria Public Library, Peoria. Doors open at 12 noon for a time of fellowship. A \$3.00 donation is welcomed by members which qualifies each donor participation in the door prize drawing.

MAY MEETING (note location change!!)

The May Division meet will be May 16, 2026 at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 4400 S Airport Road, Bartonville, Illinois. We will have a POTLUCK preceding the meet. Doors open at 12 noon and the meeting following. See the map on the last page of this newsletter.

Board of Directors Meetings:

The next Board of Directors Meeting, will be Monday, June 15, 2026, 6:30 pm by ZOOM. Members who wish to attend need to contact Gary Baker, Superintendent, at the email address listed to the left of this page to receive the ZOOM invitation.

The August board meeting will be August 17, 2026 at 630PM

2026 Popular Vote Contests

May Freight Cars On Line Dioramas

September
Passenger Cars
Buildings—On Line

November
Water Scenes
Dioramas—Off-Line

January 2027
Freight Cars
On Line Dioramas

March 2027
Freight Cars
On Line Dioramas

And based on what comes up along the way, problem solving skills are necessary to make sure everything fits together in the confined spaces of a typical model railroad.

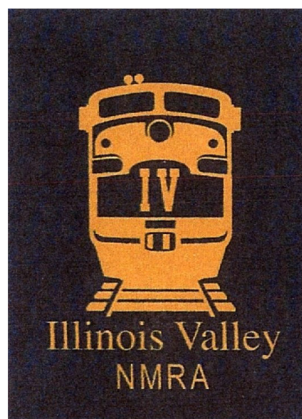
We all marvel at the immaculately detailed layouts we see in the magazines, at the conventions, and at many of the homes of modelers in our own Division, but they all started out with a sheet of plywood and a few tracks, proving that if you start with a vision of what you want your model railroad to be, take the time to plan it so all the pieces fit together cohesively, and have the stick-to-itiveness to take it to fruition, anyone can build a model railroad that they can be proud of It isn't that hard.

Gary Baker – IVD Superintendent

The May 16 meet will consist of a POTLUCK luncheon at noon followed by our meeting. The IVD will provide two meats. Please bring a dish to share.

IVD NMRA APPAREL 2025

For some time there has been a request for the availability of IVD green T-shirts and other apparel. The previous outlet for these items could be acquired through the Locker Room in Spring Valley, Illinois. When contacted, they could not find the patterns to



make the shirts. Therefore the IVD BoD looked into possible providers min the Peoria area and looked into a new logo for the shirts. A provider in Washington was chosen and a new logo was picked after a long, long discussion. After these decisions were made, the pattern produced and paid for and a few shirts made, the Locker Room reported that they had found their patterns. Therefore,

members who wish to order the older logo style can still get them through the Locker Room. The new shirts are dark green with a bright yellow logo.



Short Sleeve Shirts

\$32.70 Regular Sizes
\$34.88 Extended Sizes
(sizes 2X and larger)



Long Sleeve Shirts

\$37.06 Regular Sizes
\$39.24 Extended Sizes
(sizes 2X and larger)

ORDER FROM: Team Works, 2168 Washington Road, Washington, IL 309-745-9924, Cell: 309-712-1494, email art@teamworks2003.com.

Orders can be done anytime, no minimum order. Russ Smith can pick up and bring to meeting if you wish.

Information compiled herein is presented to the membership on an "as submitted by the authors" basis, and is assumed complete and accurate by the Editor as of the "Deadline For Submissions" date for inclusion in this edition of the newsletter, as posted in the previous, most recent edition of the TIMETABLE. Statements contained in this document are strictly the beliefs and/or opinions of the writer presenting them and not necessarily those of, or endorsed by, the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) of Soddy Daisy, TN, USA, its Midwest Region, or its Illinois Valley Division of the NMRA or their officers, agents and designates thereof. Information presented as factual is assumed true and accurate to the best knowledge and intent of the presenter of that information, and are believed to be such in good faith when

USING UP THOSE SCRAPS

BY LARRY NELSON

I do some scratch building and kit bashing as well as building commercial kits. As a result of this, I generate a lot of scraps. I don't throw away anything that has any size to it. One of the scraps that I seem to generate in abundance is the oddball triangular pieces left over from the gable end of buildings. Why collect such oddball pieces? What can I say? It's too good to throw away? I'm cheap? I'll find a use for them later. Maybe it's a little of all of the above.

Actually there are a lot of possibilities. I like to make small detail items. My scrap pile is a free supply of building materials for those small items. I build picnic tables and billboards and give them to friends as well as countless little details for my own layout. None of the pieces required to build a picnic table, fruit stand tables, a pallets, crates, or even an outhouse, are over an inch long. Many of these items can be made from the scrap box in an evening. Even a small layout can eat up hundreds of detail parts. The more details that you put into a scene, the more realistic it looks. You can buy all kinds of details parts readymade or in kit form. The only drawback is the high cost required to detail an entire layout with commercial parts. An example is picnic tables. As some of you know I make lots of picnic tables. Picnic table kits at \$8.95 each, or more, add up pretty fast if you want several for a park, or next to a business for lunch break, or in the back yard of your farm house. I can build a few out of my scrap pile for free. Outhouses are also available as kit or ready built at similar prices. What do you do, however, if you want one with two holes, a privacy screen, or one with separate men and women's entrance? You will have to build it yourself or hire someone to build it for you. How about a brick outhouse for those of you who have never owned one? Small details everywhere you look. Using your imagination is when this hobby starts to get fun! Simple things like pallets and cribbing are also needed in large numbers.

One of the things that prompted me to write this article was the need for some cribbing to place between some sheets of steel for a load that I am building for a friend. I had a couple of choices. I could use some of my precious scale lumber, or I could cut up some cribbing out of things in my scrap pile. I spotted one of those scrap gable ends and I quickly sliced and diced it into some cheap cribbing. I chose the latter since it was cheap (free), quick, and right there in my scrap pile. I didn't even need to make a trip to the hobby shop. I just cut along the scribed siding lines and then measured eight feet and cut several pieces on my chopper. I very quickly had a pile of cribbing to place between the steel sheets on my load. Now my little fork truck can get his forks under the sheets of steel for loading and unloading. I ended up using 48 pieces of cribbing.

For those of you who are mathematically challenged, a package of scale lumber the proper size would probably cost \$3.00 or more with tax and would be pretty much used up to make that much cribbing, that is if you have the scale lumber on hand. If you need to make a trip to the hobby that cost would need to be added in. I like to go to the hobby shop as much as the next person. However, I don't like to make unnecessary trips when I could be home building an outhouse out of scraps. Do you get my drift? This isn't a big thing, but it's a way of thinking and quickly solving a need by using the scrap box. I can finish a little project in one tenth the time and at one hundredth the cost. It makes sense to me! I do throw away the contents of the vacuum cleaner bag, but not before checking to see if there is anything in it that I can use! Show me what you have been building. Have fun.

Pictures for Larry's column



UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR MODEL RAILROADERS

Great Midwest Train Show, Sunday, April 12, May 3, June 7, August 2, September 13, October 4, November 1, December 6. DuPage County Fair Grounds, 2015 Manchester Road, Wheaton, Illinois. The show is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month of 2026 (except no show in July), 9 am to 3 pm. Admission \$8, online \$7, and children under 11 free. Free parking and handicapped accessible.

Illinois Valley Division Meet, Saturday, May 16, 2026 1:00 pm to 3:15 pm, \$3 donation accepted. Potluck beforehand.

2026 Galesburg Scale Train Show,

Saturday, June 27th, Knights of Columbus, 1556 E Fremont St, Galesburg, IL Adult admission \$8

NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION,

nmra2026.org. Scenic City Express, Chattanooga Marriott Downtown/Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN, July 27-August 2, 2026.

2026 Midwest Region Convention. There will be no region convention since the National Convention will be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

34th Annual Rail Fair, Saturday, July 18, 2026, Onalaska Omni Center, 255 Riders Club Road, Onalaska, Wisconsin, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission \$8.00, children under 12 free with an adult.

MAINLINE

MODEL RAILROAD PRODUCTS LLC

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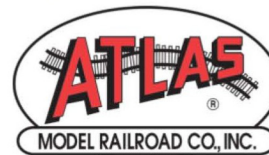
HO & N SCALE MODEL TRAINS

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mainline2006@gmail.com

WED – SAT / 12 NOON TO 6 PM

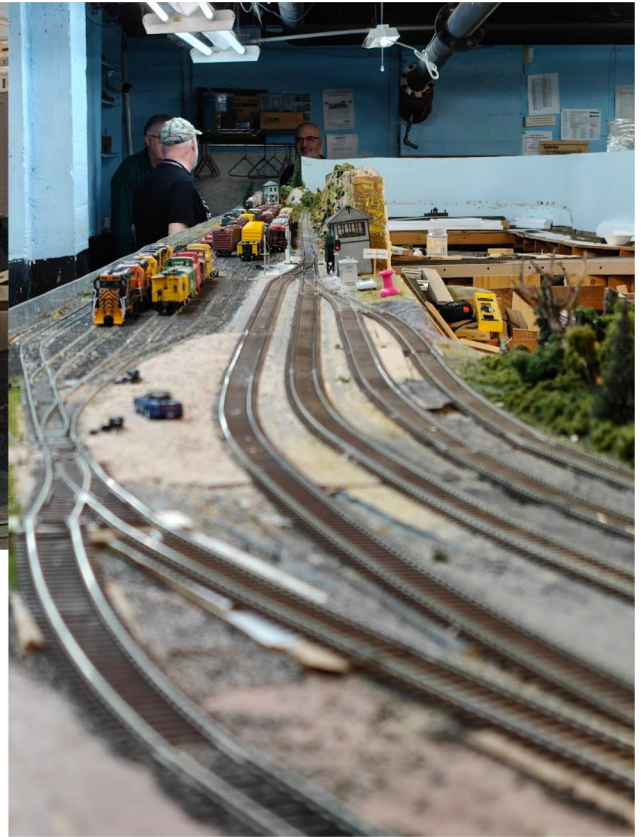
SUNDAY / 12 NOON TO 5 PM



PRE-ORDERS & CONSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED



Layout pictures from River City Model RR Club



Credit Ben Fehr and the RCMRRC Facebook page.



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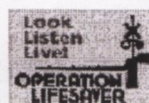
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May 16, 2026

Illinois Valley Division of the NMRA

Division Meeting

Trinity Presbyterian Church

4400 Airport Road

Bartonville IL—Across from

Limestone High School

Popular Vote Contest

May

Freight Cars

On Line Dioramas

Clinic: Russ Smith
Building a Tow Boat Model for
A River Scene

