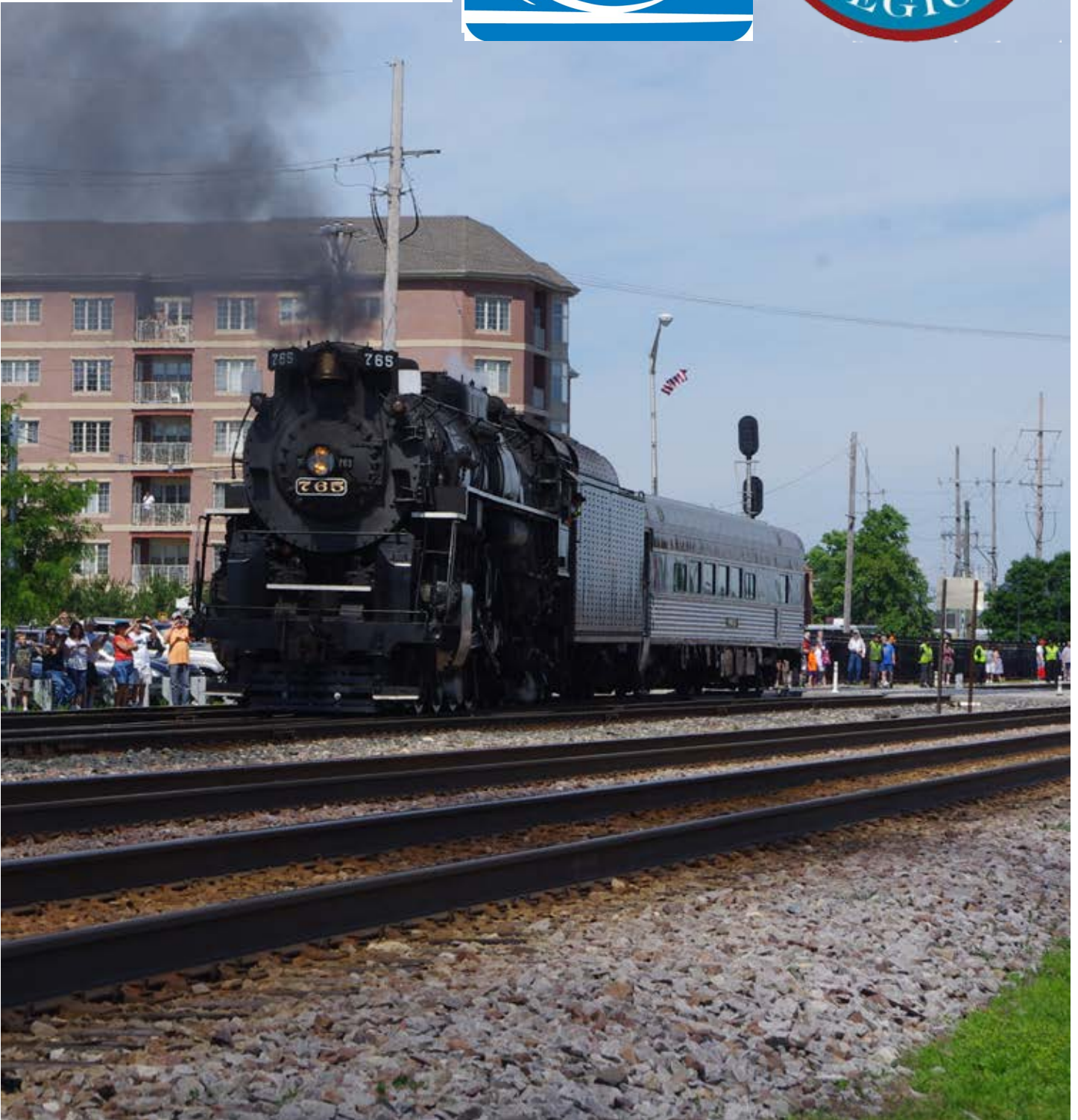


Waybill

Mid West Region NMRA –
Fall 2016



The WAYBILL

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The WAYBILL

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles, photographs and artwork are encouraged in either hardcopy or electronic form. The editor uses Quark 4.1 as his publishing software on a Mac. Word documents are also acceptable, but please send the photographs as an attachment. Copy is due by the 10th of February, May, August and November and should be sent to the editor at the above address. Submitted material will be returned upon request.

ADVERTISING

Deadlines for camera ready ads are the same as for the copy deadlines. Please submit by email to the editor as a TIF or .jpeg. We accept only railroad related ads.

Advertising rates are:

	yearly	or	per issue
Full page	\$100		\$35
Half page	75		25
Quarter page	50		20
Business card	25		15

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601 N. Elmhurst Rd
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Editor's Column

The next Board Meeting will be on Sunday October 2nd at 10:30 am local time. This will be after the Michiana Division's Education and Training conference and Workshops that is being held on September 30 and October 1st. For more information on the conference, see page 5.

The next MWR convention is being hosted by the Rockford Division in conjunction with their 50 year anniversary. They have several fine clinics lined up and the festivities will kick off with a "Hobo" Grill at the Rochelle Railroad Park. For more information on that event, see page 4, or go to the MWR webpage.

Speaking of the Rochelle Railroad Park, The Fox valley division had its annual outing there on Saturday, August 20. Over 30 members and guests came to watch the action while having brats, hamburgers and pulled pork prepared by our resident grillier, Bob Shlemon Jr.. Although interrupted by a few brief showers, everyone had a great time.

November 27, 2016:

Rails on Wheels' Annual Southeast Michigan Model Train Show and Sale.

A family-friendly event featuring operating train layouts by Rails on Wheels and other area clubs, a Lego layout display, plus a train kids can run. Over 100 tables of scale and tinsplate model trains, railroading and train-related books, videos and photo for sale, too.

Food available on site and free parking.

Contact: Jeff at:
wab2ndops@yahoo.com
(734) 944-9872

Walt at :trancywj@gmail.com
734-552-4581

Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds,
5055 Ann Arbor-Saline, Michigan

Cover: Photo by David Leider of NKP
765 at the Franklin Park Railroad Days



Action on both tracks is not uncommon as can be seen on this photo of a freight drag rolling by a container train.



Here are just some of the members having a good time.

Left to right:
Don Cook MMR, Bob Teuber, Bert Lattan, Mike Wood and Division Super, Mike Hirvela.

Waybill

Mid West Region NMRA – Fall 2016

President's Report

By Paul Mangan, President, MWR

I hope the summer is treating you well even though it is either "Hot town summer in the city" or "summertime and the living is easy". It didn't seem to matter whatever way the weather happened to be on the first week in July as the Central Indiana Division conducted the Highball to Indy 2016 NMRA National Convention. The weather was not a factor at all as attendees and hosts alike had a great time at this major event.

NMRA Conventions are great events that bring modelers from all over the world together to celebrate this hobby and CID made sure this celebration was as good as any other convention. Clinics were running all day every day and presented by some of the best clinicians from their area and around the world. A full schedule of layout tours was on tap so we could all see the talents of the area modelers. The prototype tours usually sell out fast and this was true here as they filled up early. My personal highlight was a tour of the Indiana Railroad engine repair facility. This was a very informative and educational tour as we got to see the latest in diesel technology from Cummins with its tier 4 engines.

One of the biggest non-rail events was in the Project Linus room. In this room the people who can do quilting get to work and make some fantastic pieces. After these quilts are made they are then donated to local hospitals and given to children who are patients. I first seen this at the Seattle convention and it has had increased participation every year. Thanks to Penny Studley for organizing this event.

The National Train Show is always big and at the top of the to-do list for a lot of modelers. A whole host of vendors and manufacturers were on site. Part of being registered at the convention is the ability to get admission to the show before it opened to the public.

Highball to Indy was on target with all of these items but the best part of all is revisiting with people that you have met over the years of attending. Some great friendships have grown from these conventions.

Thanks to Steve Studley, convention chair, Keith Clark, Superintendent and the entire Central Indiana Division for hosting this year's National Convention. Next year the NMRA will convene for the Orange Blossom Special 2017 in Orlando Florida. Start making plans early and see what goes on at these events

Our next Midwest Region Board of Directors meeting will be at Notre Dame's Morris Inn at Notre Dame IN. on Sunday October 2nd at 10:30 am local time. This will be after the Michiana Division's Education and Training conference and Workshops that is being held on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1st. Thanks go to Bob Blake, Michiana Division Superintendent for offering to host our board meeting.

The Education and Training Conference that is put on each year is a gathering of modelers to enjoy learning and improving from the best clinic presenters available. Did you ever wonder how they did that? Here is the place to find out. Go to their web page at www.michiana-nmra.org for information about the training and all about the Michiana Division.

The new modeling season will be starting up soon and with that many local and national events will be taking place. Almost every division has an event during the season which in my way of looking at it spans from September 1st to June 1st. so please support your local shows and of course you can take it to another level by volunteering to help out with these events. Being the volunteer coordinator for the Mad City Model Railroad Show and Sale I really appreciate volunteers and all the work they do. When you see volunteers at these shows give them a high five and say thanks. Without the volunteers the shows can't survive. And, seeing where the NMRA is a volunteer organization, we would not last very long without them.

The Region elections will be here soon and this is the year for electing a new President and Vice-president along with some directors at large. I want to thank all of you who volunteered to let your name stand for election. All the Best, Paul

Paul took a tour of the Indiana Railroad and provided this photo



Region News

Midwest Region Achievement Program Report by Jim Landwehr- MWR AP Manager

Big changes are still going on in the Midwest Region Achievement Program. For the past few months, we have been receiving some information to update the book.

If you received an Achievement Program award prior to 2002, I still need your help. Please take the time to take a picture or scan the award and email it to me. My email address is jlandwehr901@yahoo.com. With your help we can update the award book.

I am happy to report that there has been some activity from our members. They continue to take part in the Achievement Program all over the Midwest Region. The following members received awards:

Gary Baker	Pekin,IL	Volunteer
Michael Vivion	Fitchburg, WI	Official

As always, work with your division Achievement Program Manager first, and if there is a problem, feel free to contact me.

Thanks,

Jim Landwehr,

MWR Achievement Program Manager



SLRX Press Release

The Mid-Continent Region (of NMRA) is offering as its current car project a set of six 40' wood refrigerator car kits lettered for the St. Louis Refrigerator Car Company. The cars are produced by Accurail and include trucks and Accumate couplers. Car numbers in this set are 4265, 4317, 4280, 4302, 4894, and 4836 and unique to this project. St. Louis Refrigerator Car Company was established in 1878 by Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company to transport its products across the U. S. At its peak about 1920 the reefer fleet was made up of over 5000 cars. The build date on these cars is 10-42. The cars are priced at \$25.00 for one car, \$24.50 each for two cars, \$24.00 each for four cars and \$23.00 each for all six cars. Shipping is USPS flt rate based on the number of cars ordered. To order contact: <http://www.mcor-nmra.org/Regional-Car-Kit.php>



Top and Bottom: Photos of refrigerator cars being sold by the Mid-Continent region

Left: More pictures from Paul Mangan from the Indy Convention





National Model Railroad Association
Michiana Division Education & Training Conference 2016

Friday Sept. 30th & Saturday Oct. 1st

8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

University of Notre Dame Morris Inn – On Campus

Modeling like a Prototype

Selected Clinicians

Mont Switzer • Tom Johnson

Dan Lewis • Mike Shafer • Craig Wilson

14 Clinics covering topics like:

Favorite Flat Car Loads and Cars

The Mechanics of an Interlocking Tower

Kithashing, Finishing and Detailing Structures

Passenger Car Operations

Intro to JMIR

Creating Scenes using an Artist's Eye & Better Modeling with Photography

Modeling Sounds of the Prototype – 2 Parts!

4 Workshops!

2 Day Weathering Workshop!

Layout Tours!

Admission: \$35! Member Discount (Saturday Only \$20)

All Model Railroaders are welcome!

Rooms available at the University of Notre Dame Morris Inn

Call 800 280 7256 and ask for the \$89 NMRA Group Rate

Download the Conference Program and Register Now!

<http://michiana-nmra.org/>

Questions? Email danbrewer.nmra@yahoo.com or Call Bob Blake at 203-788-1342

Fall Board Meeting

University of Notre Dame Morris Inn

1399 Notre Dame Avenue

Notre Dame, Indiana

Sunday, October 2, 2016; 10:30 am

AROUND THE MIDWEST REGION

by Walt Herrick

In this “Around the Midwest Region”, we focus on the Central Indiana Division which just finished hosting the very successful 2016 NMRA National Convention in Indianapolis. Convention Chair, Steve Studley, was kind enough to do an interview with me about the convention for Waybill readers.

Walt Steve, I’ve heard a lot of good comments about the 2016 National Convention. Do you and your staff view it as a success?

Steve Yes. Though the final numbers are not in yet, we were pleased with the turnout which we believe was more than 1,100, and particularly pleased with how smoothly the convention ran.

Walt How did you become Convention Chairman?

Steve At the time we were thinking about doing the National I was Division Superintendent. The Convention Chair title kind of went with the job of division super.

Walt CID hosted an excellent MWR convention in the spring of 2013. How did it come about that you hosted the national only three short years later?

Steve I guess we asked for it! At the 2012 National in Grand Rapids we already knew we were doing the MWR convention the next year. We also knew that, as of that time, no one had bid for the 2016 National and national was in need of a host. So we approached them about hosting 2016. They responded favorably and asked us to do a formal presentation to them. We did this in February 2013 at the NMRA’s mid-year meeting in Atlanta, and they accepted our proposal.

Walt What happened next? Take us through the chronological steps of preparing for a national convention.

Steve Well, when our proposal was accepted, we all looked at each other and thought “what have we gotten ourselves into?!” But, the basic steps went like this:

- Even before our February 2013 proposal, we and NMRA headquarters staff did a preliminary site visit to Indianapolis in January 2013 to check out possible hotels and the Convention Center for the National Train Show.
- In March 2013 we chose the hotel and nailed down dates for the convention. The convention dates came as a result of the hotel’s available dates and the fact they could give us a nice price reduction during those dates.
- In March 2013 we also formed our convention committees. Your committees do all the work preparing for and running the convention. Once they were formed, work started on everything else we had to do to prepare for the convention such as arranging for prototype tours, clinics, general interest tours, layout visits, op sessions, arranging for the banquet, etc.
- By April 2013 we were pretty far along in organizing for the convention. Keep in mind that we were also working on our own MWR convention during those months, too. You could say we had a few “balls in the air” the first half of 2013!
- Organizing and running a national convention involves developing and using many checklists to keep track of all the things you have to do. From mid 2013 on up to and during the convention we were using those check lists A LOT. Normally preparing for an NMRA National is a five year process and we were doing it in three, so staying organized and on task was key for us.
- From mid 2013 to early 2016 we had a couple more site visits by NMRA Headquarters staff, and our committees kept hammering out convention arrangements and details.
- The several months leading up to the convention went by very fast. During this time all the contracts were finalized, paperwork completed, and details worked out for room scheduling, equipment rentals, printing, tour scheduling, staging for bus tours, etc., etc. etc.
- The convention itself also went very fast. We are now, at the end of July, are still involved in wrapping up the convention.

Walt What was the difference between hosting a regional convention and a national convention?

Steve They are similar in that you are doing many of the same things. But they are very different due to the size of each. The National is just so much bigger with so much more to organize and keep track of. The National also goes for 8 days compared to 2 1/2 days for a regional and that makes a big difference.

Walt What were the most difficult things you had to deal with running the convention?

Steve Just dealing with the sheer numbers involved: more than 1,100 people, nearly 200 clinics, more than 100 layouts open for touring and op sessions, a banquet for 300 people, etc. Last minute changes were also a challenge. Fortunately we didn't have many of these.

Walt What was the most enjoyable parts of the convention for you?

Steve Getting our own private tour of the Beech Grove shops when we were arranging for this tour was great. Having the convention week go so smoothly and run well for us was very gratifying.

Walt Were you able to personally attend any clinics, layout tours, visit the contest room, etc.?

Steve I saw nothing! In fact, I saw nothing for the two Nationals prior to this one also! For our own convention I was too busy managing the convention to be able to do anything except to attend the National Train Show a little Sunday afternoon. At the other conventions all I did was man our convention's publicity booth the whole time. So, I'm looking forward to the 2017 Kansas City National when I can actually do things!

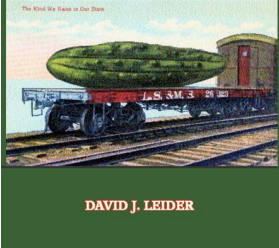
Walt What do you think the future holds for NMRA Nationals considering rising costs, a shrinking membership, etc.?

Steve I think we'll see a similar format to the one we've been using at least for the next several years or more. I haven't heard of any big changes in store. We must realize the National Convention moves around to different areas of the country. I like this because it gives local and regional members a chance to participate in a national convention, and it gives other members who live farther away a chance to see what goes on in another region and get the local flavor of model railroading in that region. As far as costs go, members must determine whether the cash outlay is worth the return they are getting from a convention.



Jim Koryta (left) and Bill Schoonmaker (center) were key members of Steve Studley's (right) 2016 NMRA National Convention Committee.

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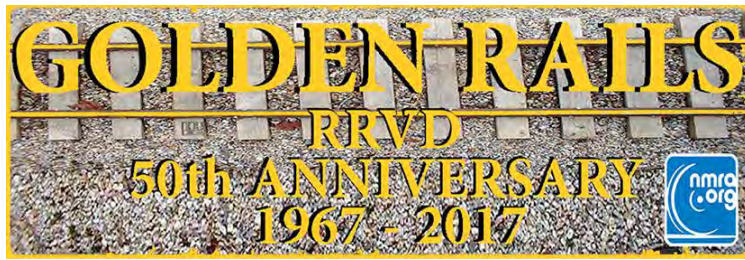
See you at Trainfest

Walt So in closing, what do you think an NMRA National Convention offers members?

Steve Two main things: the first is education. You can't beat the educational opportunities an NMRA National offers whether its at the clinics, prototype tours, layout tours, op sessions, or talking with other members and picking their brains. And the opportunity to socialize with other members they may not get to see otherwise, and opportunity to socialize with members they do see regularly is important. Hanging around with model railroaders is usually enjoyable!

Walt Thanks, Steve.

Rock River Valley Division



HOLIDAY INN, ROCKFORD, IL
APRIL 28, 29 & 30, 2017

Welcome to RRVD – Golden Rails

The members of the Rock River Valley Division would like to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Division with you. We are hosting the 2017 Midwest Region Convention with layout tours featuring many great railroads in our Division, operating sessions on some fine layouts, numerous clinics - some yet to be confirmed - which will include some well-known clinicians, a silent auction (bring items to sell), a photo and model contest, a few great non-rail activities showcasing the Rockford area and a not-to-be missed banquet program by Randy Garnhart and Jerry Pyfer.

The convention will be held at the Holiday Inn located west of Interstate 90 and north of Business U.S. 20 (State St.) at 7550 East State St in Rockford, IL. The Holiday Inn is only 60 minutes from O'Hare airport. The hotel also has an indoor pool, Jacuzzi, fitness center and free Wi-Fi service.

The Holiday Inn has reserved a block of rooms and is offering a special convention room rate of \$99.95 (mention NMRA-RRVD). Reservations can be made by calling the Holiday Inn front desk at (815) 398-2200 or 1-800-315-2621. You may also reserve via the Internet at [National Model Railroad Association](#).

Clinics

We are lining up some very fine clinics this year. Several clinics will be offered twice. As we go to

press, the following clinics have been scheduled:

Cody Grivno (*Model Railroader* magazine)

- TBD

Randy Garnhart

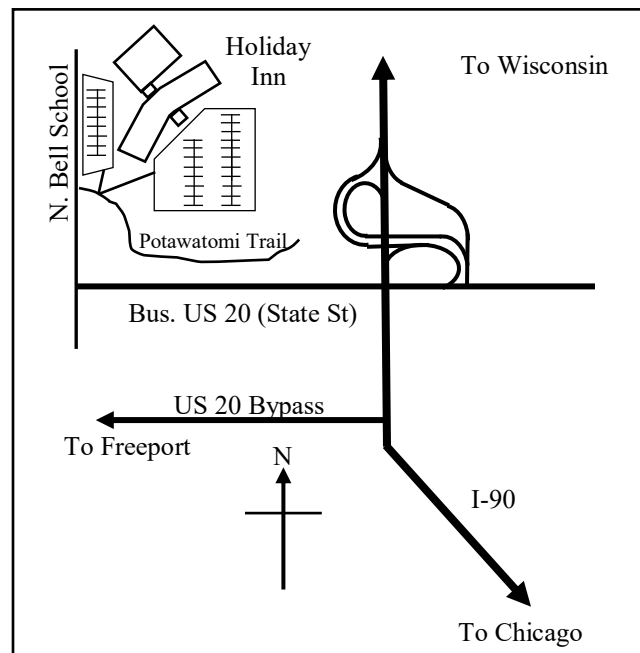
- How to Design your Model RR for Realistic Operation
- Realistic Operation of Your Model Railroad

Jerry Pyfer

- Chicago North Western – KD Line

McKeegan Curran (Nat'l Conv clinician)

- Teenagers: The Next Generation



Friday Night Operating Sessions

There will be three layouts open for Friday night operating sessions:

1. Toma, Onalaska & Western (TO&W); HO; Double decked; 2 staging yards, lots of industrial switching in 5 towns; Digitrax; 12 operators
2. Chicago & North Western (CN&W); West Chicago, IL to Clinton, IA; HO; double decked; 1950's; steam; 12 operators
3. Toledo, Peoria & Western (TP&W); HO; double decked, lower level is Peoria, IL, upper level is Effner, IN to Fort Madison IA; a lot switching and interchange with other railroads; 1960's; 15 operators

The operating sessions will be limited to the first 39 operators who register. Indicate your layout preference and the Registrar will make every attempt to get you to the one you want. A waiting list will be established for registrants who don't make the cut. You will be notified of your assignment when you check in at the Registration desk.

Layout Tours

We have layout tours planned for Saturday afternoon, and Sunday afternoon. There will be a number of layouts open for your enjoyment as we go to press. About half are fully scened. Most layouts are diesel; some are steam.

Convention Mug

All attendees will receive a commemorative RRVD - Golden Rails Convention Mug.

Non-Rail Activities

The Klehm Arboretum – provides a uniquely wonderful place to enjoy a beautiful natural landscape. With quiet space for contemplation, another for horticultural demonstration, and another designed for child's play; choose the places most intriguing to your personal interest. Klehm demonstrates standards of horticultural excellence through creative displays, collections, and educational programming. Klehm also offers a shuttle from which you can see everything in comfort.

Tinker Swiss Cottage – Robert Tinker's inspiration for the Cottage came during a tour of Europe in 1862, where he fell in love with the architecture of Switzerland. In 1865, Tinker began building his Swiss Cottage on a limestone bluff overlooking Kent Creek. He surrounded his Cottage with 27 acres of trees, vines, winding pathways, flowerbeds, and gardens. A Swiss inspired barn housed cows, chickens and horses. Tinker constructed a suspension bridge crossing Kent Creek, which linked the Cottage with the limestone mansion and estate grounds of his wife Mary Door Manny Tinker. In 1906, the railroad bought the remainder of Mary's estate. At the end of the suspension bridge, Tinker planted elaborate gardens, where passengers could stroll as they waited for the train.

Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens – Wander around inside and outside as you look at all the many different plants and flowers and great gardens; also visit the fish pond. From March to May you can find the Butterfly Exhibit.

Midway Village Museum – Come step back into Rockford's past. The main museum building holds a number of permanent exhibits reflecting Rockford's history and culture, including The Girls of Summer: Rockford Peaches of the AAGPBL. Stroll the grounds and tour the many Rockford area Victorian buildings which have been relocated to the museum.

Model/Photo Contest

Models will be judged in the Master and Novice classes. The Master class is for those modelers who have won a 1st place in the category at the regional level. The Novice class is for those who have not won a 1st place yet. The following categories will be judged: steam locomotives, diesel locomotives, traction, passenger cars, freight cars, cabooses, on-line structures, off-line structures, on-line displays and off-line displays.

The photo contest will include Model and Prototype in Black and White, Color Slide, and Color Print.

And don't forget the Bob Moskal Memorial Award for models and the Mick Grimsby award for best all-around N-scale model.

Auction and Banquet

This year we are planning an evening of super entertainment. Following the banquet buffet, Randy Garnhart and Jerry Pyfer have created a beautiful presentation centered on the 50th anniversary of our division using dual slide projectors and music. This program "must" be seen and heard! The program will be followed by the Awards presentations and the results of the silent auction. Don't forget to bring your own overstocked items for consignment.

Confirmation

Confirmation of Registration will only be mailed to those individuals whose registration materials are delivered to the Registrar by April 21, 2017.

Registration

Use the registration form on the next page or go to www.2017mwrconvention.com to download a form.

Registrar:

Don Brindle

815-874-6095

donbrindle@aol.com

Tentative Timetable

Friday, April 28, 2017

11 am – 4pm	Hobo Grill at Rochelle Railroad Park
4pm - 10pm	Registration
7pm – 10pm	Clinics
7pm – 11pm	Operating Sessions
6:30pm – 10:30pm	Hospitality Suite
7pm – 9pm	Contest Entry (Model)*
8pm – 10pm	Auction Entry

*tentative

Saturday, April 29, 2017

7am – 10am	Registration
7:30am – noon	Hospitality Suite
8am – 12:30pm	Clinics
8am – 10am	Contest Entry (photo/model)
8am – 10am	Auction Entry
10am – 4pm	Non-Rail Events
1pm – 5pm	Layout Tours
5pm – 6pm	Attitude Adjustment
6pm – 9pm	Banquet
9pm - ????	Auction

Sunday, April 30, 2017

9am - 11am	MWR Board Meeting
10am – 5pm	Layout Tours

Hospitality Room

The Rockford Club Car will be open Friday night, providing snacks, soda and coffee. Stop by and visit with old friends and make new ones.

Hobo Grill

Friday, April 28th, 2017

11:00am - 4:00pm

Rochelle Railroad Park

The Rock River Valley Division will be hosting a free grill-out to all pre-registered guests. We will be offering brats, dogs, chips and drinks; you sit back and watch the trains go by. You may want to bring a folding chair since there is limited seating. The park includes a gift shop, parking, public restrooms, picnic area, and RR artifacts. A great way to kick off the Convention weekend!

To help us plan for food, please indicate on the registration form if you expect to attend.

Midwest Region NMRA 2017 Spring Convention

“RRVD – Golden Rails” Registration Form

April 28, 29 & 30, 2017

FARES^{##}

(Spouse of a member will qualify for the member price)

	<u>NMRA</u> <u>Member/Spouse</u>	<u>Non-NMRA</u> <u>Member/Spouse</u>
Full Fare (Includes Banquet) ^{##}	\$50/\$50	\$60/\$60
Convention Only (No Banquet) ^{##}	\$40/\$40	\$50/\$50
Banquet Only ^{##}	\$30/\$30	\$30/\$30

^{##}Registrations received after April 14, 2017 or at the door will be \$10 extra

Activities Registration

- Friday Night Operating Session (indicate your preference, i.e., 1, 2, 3):
(Not a “layout tour;” you are expected to operate)

TO&W _____ CN&W _____ TP&W _____

- I expect to attend the Hobo Grill lunch at the Rochelle RR Park: # attending: _____

Enter Desired Meal Choice in the “Meal” column: B = Buffet (chicken & pork), S = Special Diet

<u>Name</u> (PLEASE PRINT)	Circle One for each registrant			
	Full	Convention Only	Banquet Only	Meal B/S
NMRA Member: _____ Last name First name	\$50	\$40	\$30	
Member Spouse: _____ Last name First name	\$50	\$40	\$30	
Non-NMRA Member ^{**} : _____ Last name First name	\$60	\$50	\$30	

Add \$10 each for late registration: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

****Includes \$10 RailPass membership – must be eligible (either never been a member before OR haven’t been a member for 2 years or more; can join at RailPass rates **ONLY ONCE**)**

NMRA #: _____ Phone #: (____) _____

Street: _____ E-mail: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Mail to: “RRVD – Golden Rails”
c/o Don Brindle – Registrar
3159 Far Hill Rd
Rockford, IL 61109

Office Use Only

Am’t Rec’d: \$ _____

Check No.: _____

Op Session Status: _____

Make checks payable to: “Rock River Valley Division - NMRA” (No cash, please)

Additional registration forms available for download at www.2017mwrconvention.com.

National News

For July 2016 Going Digital

I am often asked when the NMRA Magazine will be available in a digital version and when we will be more prominent on Facebook and other digital social media. These are important questions. In this column, I would like to address this topic and share with you what we have done and are doing to transition from the print era to the digital age. Let me start by saying we are not going digital tomorrow, but we are headed toward digital in an increasingly digital age.

Some of you may challenge the need to do anything, let alone go “digital,” but that ignores the adage that nothing can stay static, and that change is the only constant in the universe. Look at our hobby for proof. It has evolved over the decades and remarkably so since I started in 1961. When I was a novice model railroader, brass track, block wiring, open frame motors, mat board buildings, and lichen were common elements of a model railroad. Today, they have gone the way of the buggy whip in most cases. The hobby has evolved in new and exciting ways. Few of us would want to return to 1961 technology in an era of DCC, digital sound, smooth-running mechanisms, and unparalleled realism. The hobby has never been more fun or rewarding, at least in my over 50 years’ experience.

Yet, our communications and publishing remain the same as in 1961. Better edited and far better content; certainly graphically superior compared to the pulp Bulletin of my youth, but still printed, mailed, and delivered in paper form. Only the eBulletin and our excellent website, NMRA.org, present a new form of communication — and few complain about either.

When asked when the NMRA is going digital, the more accurate answer is, “We have!” We live in an era of the Internet, and we have embraced the opportunities it presents. We use email to communicate. Every other month, we publish a digital newsletter that is free to any member requesting it. Anyone can visit our Internet website, but members get special access to a host of additional features.

We have a presence, albeit somewhat tentative, on Facebook and other social media. In many ways, we have gone digital. Still, people ask when we are going digital, for the perception for some is that we have not at all, that we lag behind the times, and that the NMRA represents an old way of thinking.

In 1968, my father, a computer pioneer (he started with ENIAC in 1946) delivered a paper titled “The Cashless Society,” in which he predicted that by the 1970s, cash would be replaced by a sophisticated computer system. People would seamlessly pay electronically with no need for physical transactions. Some might argue we are close with credit cards, but banks still hold cash, and we pay the credit card bills with cash. Despite Apple Pay and Bitcoins, a truly cashless society has yet to develop. In “Star Trek,” such a transition apparently did occur — the characters refer to “Federation credits” and appeared confused in “Star Trek IV” when having to use cash in 20th Century San Francisco.

Similarly, the death of print media has been projected for more than 30 years now, and while newspapers are slowly eroding, the end of print is nowhere in sight. I have a Kindle but prefer books — taking the Kindle only on cruises and long flights. Though I have many of the digital archives published by Kalmbach and Benchmark Publications, I continue to dutifully read their magazines each month. Perhaps I am a dinosaur, but some wit did posit that few feel comfortable reading a laptop in the bathroom. There is something satisfying about a magazine that is hard to replace. Certainly, a physical plan, laid open on a workbench, is easier to work from than a digital version on a tablet.

Consider those digital archives. On a single disc is the entirety of over 80 years of Model Railroader, fully indexed and searchable. In a few inches of space, were all model railroad magazines digitalized, I could access the entirety of knowledge on the hobby. This is pretty heady stuff. When that day comes, I will happily embrace the digital age as we have embraced DCC. But we are not quite there yet. Our version of the Aldous Huxley “Brave New World” has not yet arrived. Sadly, I also doubt the entirety of the old Bulletin will ever appear on disc.

I read and enjoy Model Railroad Hobbyist, arguably the first fully digital model railroad magazine. The PCR and many other Regions and Divisions produce digital newsletters or digital versions of their print newsletters. Members assume we could do the same and simply produce a PDF version of the NMRA Magazine. The reality is far different. Producing a digital version of a quarterly newsletter is easier than the monthly full-color magazine we produce. In fact, the worst way to digitalize is merely to copy the print version. The digital magazine offers features impossible to do in a print version. As shown by MRH, you can click on a link and be whisked to the website of an author or advertiser. Read a review of a product and instantly gain the ability to order that product. You can have instant access to the issue's table of contents or index and go directly to an article. The advantages are prodigious, but digital requires a different preparation than the print magazine. We would have to produce two magazines, not merely PDF the print version, were we to truly digitalize. We have neither the staff nor resources to do so. Frankly, a truly digital magazine does not resemble a print version as MRH does. Look at the Yahoo home page, for example, with its news headlines and topic lists leading directly to a feature. That looks nothing like a newspaper, yet it is the electronic version of one. Similarly, a truly digital model railroad magazine would not resemble a magazine at all but more the Yahoo page. At first, disconcerting; it is actually a more convenient format.

So why not abandon the print version altogether and go exclusively digital? Well, we have studied doing so and continue to look at it. In 2015, the BOD was presented a report from Publications on digitalizing. Their conclusion was — and still is — that the time is not yet right. First, our members are just not yet there. Frankly, neither are readers of the commercial press. Other railroad-oriented publications offering both print and digital versions have found that only 2.5–4 percent of their readers subscribe to the electronic version. The latest ABC audited circulation figures for Classic Toy Trains, for example — one of the largest train magazines — showed a 4 percent digital readership. MRH claims a huge readership, which may be true. It is also a free magazine. Evidence indicates that

despite healthy ad content, digital magazines are questionably profitable. Few want to publish a money-losing magazine whether digital or print.

The NMRA figures support the profitability challenges. In 2015, we looked at our eBulletin readership numbers, which are impressive on the surface. Each issue we sent over 16,000 copies to members, of which 8,800 were opened but 6,200 were not. Remember, these are free issues sent to members who requested them, yet only 59 percent of them chose to read it. Even a “free” magazine is not accepted by a significant number of readers, who agreed to accept them. In addition, more than 1,000 bounced. Another hidden problem with digital magazines lies in the delivery headaches to digital addresses that often change, certainly far more frequently than mail addresses do. I have multiple email addresses, for example, but only one mailing address. The ladies at Headquarters spend an inordinate amount of time updating digital addresses. And do not get me started on the challenges posed by different electronic formats that over time change, often within months. Remember floppy discs anyone? Print is print; digital is defined by platform and format. Notwithstanding these realities, going digital far outweighs these limitations.

We are currently surveying our members and advertisers to gauge interest in a digital magazine. When we hit 40 percent who would subscribe to a digital magazine with a majority of advertisers who agree, we might reconsider the issue. As I said, the question is not if but when. So far, “when” remains an open question.

However, in one area, we are going full steam ahead: expanding our digital presence on Social Media platforms. We live in a world of YouTube and Facebook, blogs, and digital tutorials. It is very useful to find a blog or YouTube video on assembling that craftsman kit you just bought or to visit a chat room where its limits are discussed. The NMRA needs to be a part of this process, but we will do so in a directed and planned way. As with any new technology, while the promise is huge, the pitfalls can be even larger. I belong to a number of chat rooms and groups. Far too often, they devolve into a churning series of meaningless discussions, far from the original question. A good moderator helps, but the danger is there. Nevertheless, the advan-

tages far outweigh the disadvantages. Ask a question online and you often receive very helpful information back. We need to be a part of that process and be involved in using social media to sell our hobby and the NMRA to younger generations. It is truly a “no-brainer.” In so doing, we need to be smart and use our limited resources well. That is what we are working on presently.

We look forward to expanding our digital presence and one day, going digital. We just can't tell you exactly when. Until then, those are my thoughts; what are yours?

NMRA INFO-NEWS

2022 NMRA Convention Location Selected

The NMRA BOD has selected Birmingham, England as the location for the 2022 NMRA convention. This will be the second NMRA convention held in England – the first was in London in 1971.

Subscription rate change for the NMRA Magazine.

A message from Frank Koch, NMRA Chief Financial Officer:

Effective 10/1/2016, the annual subscription rate for the NMRA Magazine will be the following:

USA members - \$28 USD (RailPass stays at \$9.95)

Canada (FOB Guelph) - \$33 USD + local processing and Canada post as determined by Canadian home office. Susan will start charging \$33 USD on 10/1 for all Canadian subscriptions.

International - \$53 USD for all geographies, delivered via FedEx.

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You will find those addresses at www.nmra.org or in the NMRA Magazine

If the person holding a region or division office changes, or their email address changes, please contact me at tcdraider@aol.com with the corrected information.

Regards,
Tom Draper HLM, DSA, FA, MSA, PA
Director Support Services



Top: two more of Paul's photos from the Convention



Bottom: two of mine from Rochelle

