

# The Pie Card

Volume 55, February, Number 2

Mid Central Region, National Model Railroad Association



## From the Superintendent's Desk

By Fred Soward

So? How are you doing with your winter Model Railroad Task List (MRTL)? Are you on track with it and steadily working toward completion? Falling behind a bit? Do you even have a MRTL for yourself?

If you look back at my November 2020 column, you'll see that I had four primary items listed. The big checkbox on my own winter MRTL is that I completed all the track painting before the end of 2020. That was huge. Because of the way the layout is built in the first room, I had to paint both the front and back of every inch of rail – not just the side y'all will see from the aisle. So, take the usual rail painting task for most layouts and double it.

We did not get any Tortoise or Blue Point turnout controls installed before the end of 2020. We started installing those in January. Good news - they're all in now and they're all working, with many thanks to Russ Weis for his guidance and assistance. I owe him an oversized bottle of Advil for all the bending/stretching he did to get many of those things under the layout. The wiring is all in as well. You'll hear and see more about that at this month's Gathering. As it turns out, it really didn't matter this task wasn't completed before Barbara retired – she's had other projects she's been working on during her first month of retirement.

Next up on my winter MRTL? Lay the track in the interim/hidden Phase Two staging, then begin work on a few actual model railroad model projects in support of the next Achievement Program certificate. I've also added "modify and refine the layout track plan for Phases Three through Eight of the layout" to the list. Getting the trackplan updated now means that we can be ready to go outside to cut lumber for benchwork when the weather improves. Note – the only "completion" task is the trackwork. The others are interim steps to move things forward.

Admittedly, I've fallen behind on my current MRTL. And that's alright. I have a plan and things on it are getting completed. Everything on it is possible with a bit of a stretch for some of them. I know where I am with it. And, I can adjust as needed.

So? As I asked at the beginning— how are you doing with YOUR winter MRTL?

## JANUARY MEETING REPORT

The meeting was held on Saturday January 16, 2021, virtually on Zoom. Attendance was 28. Achievement Program Joe Fields is currently in the hospital. Superintendent Fred Soward said Mark Norman has agreed to temporarily assume Joe's duties until Joe can return. See page 2 of this issue for the results of the January Charlie Keeling Model Contest.

After a short break, Steve Zapytowski MMR®, MCR Division 1 presented "Do I Really Need to Fill Out this Form?" via Zoom. Steve is MCR Convention Contest Chairman. He covered why it was important to complete all of the forms required for convention contest entries. There were many questions following his presentation. His clinic is available for viewing on the Division 8 YouTube Channel.

The meeting concluded at 3:36 PM.

Left:  
Mt. Washington Cog Railway, 1958.

Photo by Charlie Keeling



## TIME TABLE

**Feb 13**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Gathering on Zoom  
**Feb 20**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Mtg. on Zoom  
**Mar 13**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Gathering on Zoom  
**Mar 20**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Mtg. on Zoom  
**Mar 28**, Sun 1-3PM Celebration Station,  
600 Bldg. Parking Lot  
**Apr 10**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Gathering on Zoom  
**Apr 17**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Mtg. on Zoom  
**May 8**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Gathering on Zoom  
**May 15**, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Mtg. on Zoom

**CHARLIE KEELING VIRTUAL MODEL CONTEST***Barry Christensen Contest Chairman*

<b>February</b>	<b>Non-steam motive power</b>
March	Structures
April	Passenger cars
May	Cabooses
June	Open loads
July	NO CONTEST
August	MOW equipment and highway vehicles
September	Photos (model) and photos (prototype)
October	Steam locomotives
November	Displays (no size limit)
December	NO CONTEST
January	Freight cars

The January Charlie Keeling Virtual Model Contest was for freight cars, a Division favorite that always brings out a variety of creative modeling efforts. There were six entries, with honorable mentions for Ron Ellison's grain car, Steve Lasher's Accurail boxcar, and Stan White's First Responder boxcar.

Bob Frankrone came in third with his Southern gondola with gears load, Russ Weis second with his AHM/Rivarossi hopper, and Rick Geerts first with his Intermodal freight cars. Congrats to all of our entrants!

The field has changed dramatically, as follows: Bob Frankrone is in the lead with 12 points, Joe Fields and Russ Weis following with 11 each, and Rick Geerts next with 10 points. Craig Hatter and Kevin Jones are tied with 7 points each. Steve Lasher has 5, Bruce DeMaeyer and Ron Ellison have 4 each, and Daryl Arend, Eric Waggoner, and Stan White have 1 each.

For February 2021, we will have the renamed category of "Non-Steam Motive Power" in the Charlie Keeling Virtual Model Contest. This broadens the scope and acknowledges that contestants frequently enter power other than the traditional diesel-electric locomotives.

For contest information, go here - <http://div8-mcr-nmra.org/site/html/contest.html> . To enter the February Contest, email 1 to 3 entry photos along with the Contest Entry Form as a PDF file to [division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com](mailto:division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com) . Contest dates will also be listed in the Groups.io Calendar. And as always if you have questions or comments, email [division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com](mailto:division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com) .

We will publish the Contest timeline dates each month in The Pie Card. The judging is strictly people's choice. If you would also like your model to be judged for the Achievement Program, contact Mark Norman and he will arrange to have AP judges assist.

(continued in column 2-**CONTEST**)

**FEBRUARY MEETING INFORMATION**

The February meeting is Saturday February 20, 2:00 PM. Instead of a face-to-face meeting, the meeting will be virtual using the Zoom conferencing app. To maintain the security of the meeting, connection information will be sent directly to members by email about a week prior to the meeting and will not be published online.

Program: Sam Swanson MMR®, nationally known clinician with MCR Div 7, will present, "Finishing Models" illustrating painting and weathering techniques with acrylic and water-based paints through a series of structure, rolling stock, and locomotive examples in both HO and O scale. Specialty approaches will also be discussed, including finishing sheet styrene to appear as weathered wood, highlighting and corroding black surfaces to accentuate detail, and representing a variety of metal corrosion on roofing and hardware components.

**CONTEST (from column 1)**

We will send out a reminder but below are some of the Contest timeline dates for February:

- February 6th - First day to submit entries
- February 13th - Last day to submit entries
- February 17th - Members will receive the Contest Ballot
- February 18th & 19th - Voting in the Contest Ballot ends @ 10:00 PM on the 15th
- February 20th - Winners announced at the General Meeting - 1st, 2nd, and 3rd

**FEBRUARY ZOOM GATHERING**

On Saturday February 13, 2021 at 2:00 PM we will gather again for the Division 8 ZOOM Gathering. This month the presenters will be in the following order:

- Steve Lasher - Signals Primer, Part 3
- Russ Weis - Buffalo Engine Facility on Russ Weis' NYC Layout
- Fred Soward - Electrical stufh on the Santa Cruz & Felton

Each presentation will be approximately 20 minutes including a short Q & A by each presenter. Zoom meeting information will be sent out a few days before the gathering. If you need help connecting, email [division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com](mailto:division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com) and someone from the Media Committee will help you. We look forward to seeing you on February 13th!





Congratulations to our January 2021 Modeling Contest winners. The January category was "Freight Cars."

Left: Rick Geerts' HO scale "Intermodal Freight," came in first place.

Right: Second place went to Russ Weis for his HO Scale "AHM/Rivarossi Hopper."



Left: Bob Frankrone's HO Scale "Southern Railway gondola with a load of gears" came in third place.

(see more contest photos on page 6)

**ANOTHER SILK PURSE**

*By Russ Weis, photo by the author*



In the February, 2019, Pie Card I wrote about how Steve Lasher transformed a plain AM Model's building into an eye-catching yard office for my Albany freight yard.

From time-to-time Steve had mentioned my engine facility needed a yard "goat," i.e., small engine that would pull disabled engines to their stall in the roundhouse.

A few weeks ago, Steve, along with Jon Vincent, presented me with an early Christmas present of a yard

goat. My goat is a B&O 0-4-0 prototype made by the brass company Sakura about 50 years ago. However, this is not a brass locomotive, but rather a die cast boiler and frame.

The Central did not have any 0-4-0s, but did have 0-6-0s for those engine facility jobs. Unfortunately, those models were never made, so this B&O dockside fills the bill.

So about that silk purse? Look closely at the Sakura model and the old Varney boiler and you'll see they are from the same mold. To be clear, Steve said the Sakura wasn't as beat up as the Varney right next to it, but start to look closer and you see all the extras Steve put into this loco.

On top of the boiler Steve added a generator, pop-off valve up on the dome, a whistle, and a new bell. There's more - cab awnings and grab irons which, unfortunately, don't show up in the photos. Keep looking and you'll see Steve cut off the original headlight and backup light and installed prototypical ones so an LED could be used.

Don't you run DCC? Yes, I do. So, Steve enlisted Jon Vincent who you may have met working at Scale Reproductions on a Friday. Jon is an excellent N scale modeler, so who better to figure how to get a sound decoder with speaker in such a small area. And Jon did just that, plus a partial keep alive. What's a partial keep alive? A keep alive has a number of capacitors in series and Jon took it down to two. I must say though that there is very little electricity stored in the two capacitors, so the engine still struggles through turnouts.

But the sounds are fantastic and for the most part runs very well for a 50 year old engine.

So once again with the help from Jon, Steve has taken a sow's ear and given me another silk purse.

**Progress photos of Kevin Jones' Mount Blue motor car kit.** *Photos by Kevin Jones*



Kevin has been working on an On30 motor car kit. He has completed it to the point where he can set in the drive. Since a lot of the drive is visible, he said will have to blacken it out. He ran into his first fit issue while installing the floor. The floor sits on top of the frame and was just a bit wider than it should have been. He glued the floor to the frame and then trimmed off the excess once it had dried. One of his next steps is to start on the roof. The base of the roof has to be forced into a curve, so lots of glue and rubber bands for that.



**We're Stopping Right.....Now!***By Steve Lasher*

Above: Steve Lasher at the controls of a locomotive simulator at the Paducah (KY) Railroad Museum. *Photo by Russ Weis*

It's 3:30 in the morning and you're wearily slipping down the railroad going back home, when...CHOW...you look over at the control stand to see your air gauges going to zero and the PCS (pneumatic control switch) brightly lit. Oh yes, that damned alarm bell is ringing its head off. When this started you were happily going down the railroad at 50 mph and, as of yet, your speed has not dropped off much, but it will. You pick up the radio and say, "I didn't do it" to let your rear end crew know it's an undesired emergency application and wait to hear back from them. In the meantime, you go ahead and move the brake handle to the emergency position since you'll have to do that to get the PCS switch reset (and that damned alarm bell to shut off) and gently begin to apply some engine brake.

Your rear end crew comes on the radio and tells you "we're stopping right...now". Unfortunately, you're still moving about 10 or 12 mph. This doesn't bode well. Sure enough, when you get the air recovered and try send air back in the train line you can't get the pressure back up and the air flow meter stays

pegged in the maximum flow range – meaning, you have a big hole in the train line somewhere. Your rear end crew confirms that they not getting any air to come up at all.

So begins the ruination of what had been a perfectly good trip up until then. Your head brakeman (along with his counterpart on the rear) suit up and gear up (taking 3 or 4 fusees along with an air hose and wrench – you can use the fusees to heat up the angle cock and get a reluctant air hose out if need be) to begin walking the train. Meanwhile, you wait. And...wait some more.

After an interminable wait, you notice the air start to come up. After more waiting you see the lantern of your head brakeman coming up along the train. When he gets in the cab, he gives the words you least want to hear – "We're in the ditch", followed by "we've got 15 cars scattered all over the country but nothing hazardous or on fire". Well, at least that's good news. He says, "but there's enough canned peaches to last a lifetime out there", chuckling. Adding, "we got the cut made on what we can take and the conductor and rear man are going to go over to the road (lucky for them there's a closely paralleling highway) and walk up and said to pull ahead to the next road crossing (fortunately, only a few hundred feet or so in front of us) and pick them up there.

So, we pull up to the crossing. Eventually, and it's a long eventually, the conductor and rear brakeman get on board and we pull up to the next siding where the conductor can get to the dispatchers phone and deliver the bad news. This, in turn, will set all sorts of phones ringing all over the railroad. Bad news, it seems, travels fast. In the next installment, I'll tell you all that begins to happen once the news gets out up and down the company. A lot more than you might imagine.

**Next...The Clean up**

Now the word has begun to get out all up and down the railroad. The Dispatcher told the Chief Dispatcher who called the Superintendent who called the General Manager who called the Vice President in charge of Operations. Of course, bad news goes downhill as well. The Chief also called the on-call Trainmaster and Road Foreman of Engines and, they would be the first officials on the scene.

The Trainmaster would give his initial assessment to the Superintendent, who by now, would also be on his way to the site. Decisions will have to be made and more calls made. The first one will likely be to either Hulcher or R J Corman to let them know their services will be needed. Perhaps surprisingly, the claims agent will be high on the pecking order as it will be his department that will need to contact the property owner to get permission to let Hulcher or Corman on his property to clean up the mess.

Since most property owners have no use for scrap freight cars, their eyes usually light up at the promise of a big settlement (\$\$\$) with the railroad. It usually isn't too difficult to get permission. Of course, the little weathered shed, termite ridden and on the verge of falling down on its own that has now been reduced to kindling courtesy of an errant boxcar was worth the price of a brand new three bedroom, bath and one-half ranch home according to the property owner. That'll be one for the legal department and courts, most likely. (continued on page 6)

**Next...The Clean up** (continued from page 6)

The Claims Agents will also have to make settlements with the shippers and decide the disposition of the damaged goods. Fortunately, there are no personal injuries involved, either to the public or employees, so that will simplify things significantly. Transferring undamaged goods to trucks or other cars will have to be arranged.

All sorts of other departments will have to come into play. The Signal Supervisor in co-operation with the Communications supervisor will have to provide for the replacement of damaged signal equipment and/or pole lines. The Division Engineer and Roadmaster will have to decide what materials will have to be obtained to restore the track to service and muster the forces to accomplish it.

Decisions will have to be made on what do with other trains. Rerouting and detouring other trains will likely be necessary and if so, the other railroads involved will have to be notified and arrangements made. Along with this, plans for crewing these trains will need to be formulated.

Early on it was determined that a rail broke under the train, causing the derailment, so no action is taken against you or the rest of your crew. You wound up getting called to re-crew a detouring train and thus got to see how life went on the foreign railroad you were detouring on. Interesting, of course - all twelve hours of it.



Above: L&N wrecker clearing a derailment on the Lebanon Branch in July of 1968. Photo by Charlie Keeling

Eventually things will return to normal, that is, except for the slow order and scarred earth covered with D9 bulldozer tracks and littered with left over freight cars parts. Oh yes, the peaches. Although most got covered up, some in broken cans wound up in a trackside ditch that eventually filled with water. Thus, the fragrance of fermenting peaches was in the air for quite some time afterwards to help denote the spot. Mother Nature is very patient, though. Given enough time, there will be fewer and fewer signs of the chaos that reigned here briefly.

**CHARLIE KEELING MODEL CONTEST** (continued from page 3)

Clockwise from top left:

Honorable mentions went to Ron Ellison's "Grain Hopper," Stan White's "First Responder Boxcar," and Steve Lasher's "Accurail Boxcar."



Photos by the modelers

**KEEP CONNECTED**

*From the Division 8 Media Committee*

These are the ways for Division 8 members to stay in touch and stay together:

- Groups.io
- Join us on Zoom for a virtual meeting - General Meeting and Monthly Gathering and NOW quarterly Bull Session in lieu of the Gathering - Next Bull March 13, 2021
- Division 8 Facebook
- Division 8 Webpage

Ever wonder what you're missing by not joining Groups.io? Why not join for a while and take a look? You can unsubscribe in the footer of any Groups.io message. But you have to ask for an invitation because it's a closed group. Send your request to - [division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com](mailto:division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com)

We are usually online 30 minutes before the start of any Zoom meeting so if you are unsure of your connection, join early. Or we will help you login on your computer, tablet or smartphone if you contact us at - [division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com](mailto:division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com) a few days before any meeting. Don't forget you can also dial in to any Zoom meeting from a landline or mobile phone - look for the dial up numbers in the Zoom Meeting Information.

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

*By Stan White, Division 8 Membership Chairman*

The current Division 8 membership stands at 125 with three renewals. This reflects a three month decline in membership. I am confident that part of this is due to the current health crisis and its economic impact.

**MEMBER WELFARE**

*By Rick Wehr, Member Welfare Committee Chairman*

Joe Fields and his wife Sue contracted COVID-19; Joe has been hospitalized and Sue is recovering at home. Alan Williams was hospitalized with COVID-19 and is now recovering at home.

Bruce DeMaeyer's wife Nancy is recovering from knee replacement surgery. Don Brock's wife is also recovering from knee replacement surgery.

Bill Edwards is recovering from cancer surgery.

**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM**

As reported in the January meeting report on page 1 of this issue, Achievement Program Chairman Joe Fields is currently in the hospital being treated for COVID 19. His wife Sue is recovering at home. Mark Norman has stepped up to temporarily assume Joe's duties until Joe can return. If you need a model to be judged contact Mark Norman at 502-797-2062 or email: [mark.norman@12pointssolutions.com](mailto:mark.norman@12pointssolutions.com). Mark adds, "I along with everyone else am praying for Joe and Sue's full recovery."

**Calling All Clinicians!!**

*By Barbara Soward*

Do you have a repertoire of clinics that you present? Have you presented them in a virtual environment? Are you willing to present them at other NMRA Region or Division virtual events?

If you have attended Division 8 virtual meetings and Gatherings, you may have noticed clinic presenters from other divisions as well as other guest presenters. While we would all rather be meeting in person, the virtual environment does offer some versatility in that people can participate from "virtually" anywhere, which brings me to my purpose for writing this. I have been asked to compile a list of Division 8 members who are willing to share their knowledge outside the Division, along with their best contact information and a brief description of the clinic(s) they are willing to present virtually. Many thanks to Division 12 for sharing such a list with us; hopefully other divisions will compile similar lists for sharing and the entire Mid Central Region will benefit! Watch your inbox for something from [barbarasoward@gmail.com](mailto:barbarasoward@gmail.com) seeking information about clinics you are willing to share virtually to include in Division 8's list of available clinics. Thanks in advance for your willingness to participate!

**NMRA 2021 Rails By The Bay Convention Cancelled**

The host committee of the 2021 national convention of National Model Railroad Association, Inc., NMRA 2021 Rails By The Bay, announced that it has canceled its convention that had been scheduled for the Santa Clara Marriott Hotel & Conference Center on July 4-11, 2021. A multi-day video virtual event—which will retain the name NMRA 2021 Rails By The Bay—is under development.



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**THE PIE CARD**

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The Pie Card is published twelve times a year by Division 8 of the National Model Railroad Association, Mid Central Region.

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Deadline for submission of articles is the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the previous month. The Pie Card goes to press by the first of each month.

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Because we won't be meeting face to face for some time, pickup of Company Store merch is no longer possible. We will ship your order via USPS and invoice you for postage at the least expensive rate along with your merch.

Amazon has nothing on us. We can deliver right to your door via USPS. But you can't wear your Division 8 Company Store duds unless you place an order. A hat, shirt or fleece is a conversation starter about the model railroading hobby. Help spread the word about model railroading! Start a conversation with your Company Store merch!

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