

The Pie Card

Volume 59, August 2025, Number 8

Mid Central Region, National Model Railroad Association



FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESK

By Ron Ellison

It's August! It will soon be time to put away your white seersucker bibs and get out your fleece lined bibs and your Division 8 fleece beanie. The days are getting shorter, and Santa Claus is busy, busy, busy in his workshop. Amazon already has their

Christmas items in the supply chain. Get ready!

It's time for the Silver Spike Nominations. On Monday August 4, 2025, eligible voting members will receive an email with instructions on how to make a nomination for the 2025 Silver Spike Award. Nominations will close 2 weeks later at the end of day on Sunday August 17, 2025. A nomination can be made by replying to that email or by sending a separate email to division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com. All nominations must be in an email to Division 8 and must clearly state the reason for nominating the person by listing their qualifications. And the email must state the member who is making the nomination. It will all be conveniently spelled out for you in the nomination email you will receive on August 4th.

A Division 8 member can only receive the Silver Spike award once. To see a list of recipients, go here - [Silver Spike Award Recipients](#). There you'll see a long list of Division 8 members who, as it reads on the award plaque, *Holds the railroad together, symbolizes the strength of the road, and shines as one of the stars to guide us down the track.*

The minimum service criteria are:

Served as a Division 8 officer or trustee for at least one full term
OR Served on Division 8 committee(s) such as train show, membership, picnic, etc., for at least four years, **OR** Volunteers on a regular basis to work at Division 8 functions such as train shows, meets, conventions, etc. for at least four years.

If there are qualified nominees, an election will take place by email ballot in September. In the event there is a sole nominee, the nominee may be given the Silver Spike award by a motion of the board of directors to have the Silver Spike awarded by acclamation.

If you have any questions, just reply when you receive nomination information on August 4th.

It's not too early to be thinking about what is for dinner on Thanksgiving and what you are going to put on your Christmas List.

And OH, by-the-way! – Train Show & Sale on Saturday, November 15, 2025. You can sign up to help with the Show at the August 16th Membership Meeting.



TIME TABLE

Aug 16, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

Sep 3-6, National Narrow Gauge Convention, Collinsville, IL.

Sep 20, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

Sep 27, Sat 10AM-2PM, Southern Indiana Train Show and Swap Meet, First Presbyterian Church, Jeffersonville, IN

Oct 11-12 Division 7 Cincinnati Train & Trade Show.

Oct 18, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

Nov 8, Sat 2PM, Div 8 Hybrid meeting, Jeffersontown Library and Zoom.

Nov 15, Sat 10AM-3PM, Div 8 Train Show and Sale, Safin Center, Holy Family Parish.

Dec 6, Sat 4:30PM, Div 8 Christmas Party Library and Zoom.

[DIVISION 8 TRAIN SHOW & SALE](#)

AUGUST 2025 CHARLIE KEELING HYBRID MODEL CONTEST

By Barry Christensen, Contest Chairman

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

The first, second, and third place winners for the 2024-2025 Charlie Keeling Hybrid Model Contest year were announced at the Division 8 picnic on Saturday, July 26th, held at Bluegrass Scenic Railroad and Museum in Versailles. Third place is Ed Brennan with 19 points for the year, whose HO modeling is consistently popular. Second place is Bob Frankrone with 22 points for the year, well known for his modeling, articles, and seminars on open loads. First place is Bob Kuchler with 25 points for the year, making a very strong showing in N scale modeling. Our winners receive contest certificates and Scale Reproductions gift cards awarded as prizes. Congratulations!

During this contest year we had 20 modelers participate with 65 total entries and 454 votes cast, almost a ten percent increase over the previous year. Final standings for the 2024-2025 contest year are as follows: Bob Kuchler with 25, Bob Frankrone with 22, Ed Brennan with 19, Steve Lasher with 12, Randall Griggs with 11, Russ Weis with 8, Bruce DeMaeyer with 7, Eric Waggoner with 6, Rick Maloney and Jody McNutt with 5 each, Chris Broughton and Al Goodman with 4 each, Paul Downs and John Helton with 3 each, Craig Hatter and Fred Soward with 2 each, and David Mertz, George Ronn, Barbara Soward, and Cecil Stewart with 1 each.

Here are a few things to be aware of as the new model contest year kicks off:

Clearly identify on the model contest entry form any prototype photos submitted.

List the scale of the model entered on the model contest entry form.

Enter one time per category (individual entries may include more than one related model).

Remember that the January contest focuses on freight car modeling and the June contest focuses on open load modeling.

(continued to column 2)



AUGUST MEETING INFORMATION

The August Division 8 meeting is **2 PM Saturday, August 16, 2025** at the Jeffersontown Library, 10635 Watterson Trail, Louisville, KY 40299. To maintain the security of the meeting, the Zoom connection information will be sent directly to members by email about a week prior to the meeting and will not be published online. Russ Weis is presenting, "Better Model Railroad Contest Photographs."

CONTEST (continued from column 1)

The August Contest is **MOW EQUIPMENT**

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

- August 2nd - First day to submit entries
- August 9th - Last day to submit entries
- August 14th - Members will receive the Contest Ballot
- August 14th & 15th - Voting in the Contest Ballot ends @ 10:00 PM on the 15th
- August 16th - Winners announced at the meeting - 1st, 2nd and 3rd
- September 6th - First day to submit September contest entries

MODEL PHOTOS & PROTOTYPE

PHOTOS (2 separate contests)

If you need more information, go here - <http://div8-mcr-nmra.org/site/html/contest.html>.

To enter the August Contest, use the **REVISED Contest Entry Form** on the Division 8 website here → [Contest](#) and just follow the simple instructions included in the form. Entering the Contest has never been easier.

Contest dates will also be listed in the Groups.io Calendar. And as always if you have questions, comments, or need help, email division8.mcr-nmra@gmail.com

We will publish the Contest timeline dates each month in *The Pie Card*.

SILVER SPIKE 2025

It's that time again for Silver Spike Award nominations, which open August 7, and close on August 19th. The Silver Spike is awarded to a qualifying member in recognition of exemplary service to the NMRA, MCR, Division 8. See this month's "From the Superintendent's Desk" on the first page of this issue for nomination information and qualifications.

PICNIC 2025

Photos by Fred and Barbara Soward

The 2025 Division 8 MCR NMRA Picnic Day was held in Versailles, KY. The activities began with a catered lunch followed by awards presentations at the Woodford County Agricultural Resource Building.



Left:

Superintendent Ron Ellison opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone and providing a summary of the day's activities

Right:

Intrepid Division 8 volunteers assisted the catering staff on the serving line.

From left to Right:

Russ Weis, Fred Soward MMR®, and Stan White; or was it Larry, Curly, and Moe?

Photo by Barbara Soward



Left:

The serving line stretched around the room.

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CONTEST AWARDS

Left:

Following lunch, Charlie Keeling Model Contest Chairman Barry Christensen presented the awards for the yearly contest period that ended with the July meeting.

Barry (left) presented Bob Kuchler MMR® with his first place certificate. Bob also received a \$100 Scale Reproductions Hobby Shop gift card.

The second and third place winners Bob Frankrone and Ed Brennan weren't present. Bob took second place, and will be presented with his certificate and \$75 gift card at a later date. Ed finished in third place. Ed will also be presented with his certificate and \$50 gift card at a later date.

Right:

In his capacity at as NMRA Central District Director, Fred Soward MMR®, presented Russ Weis with the NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division.

This is awarded to a deserving member in each Region annually, for recognizing their service to their Division, their Region, and the hobby.

Congratulations Russ!

Photo by Barbara Soward



Following the lunch and awards we proceeded across the road to the Bluegrass Railroad Museum for a train ride.

(more picnic photos on page 13)

FROM THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

By Fred Soward MMR®, Division 8 Assistant Superintendent

We had an amazing and exhausting week at the NMRA National Convention in Novi, MI. Barbara & I renewed our friendship with fellow NMRA members while we were there and we gained a few new friends as well. She attended many clinics while I was only able to attend a few because of my duties and responsibilities as a Director on the NMRA National Board. But we did set aside all-day Wednesday for layout tours with Darcy Elliott, Bob Weinheimer MMR®, Eric Waggoner, and Russ Weis. I also attended an all-day hands-on clinic on Thursday. There were also many meetings that I either led or participated in during the time we were there. Some small and some large.

- A visit to Bob & Cathy Kuchler's home to remove a filing cabinet for Barbara showed us just how much work Bob has completed on the new section of layout. I'm pretty sure all the trackwork is in place, many of the structures are ready to go in place, and there's a fair amount of scenery that's been completed. He's also reworking a section of the layout with new structures that he's been building (and posting to Facebook) over the past few years.
- In the week prior to leaving for the NMRA National Convention, while pondering some of the discussions that would happen there, I was able to lay down sixty-five feet of track on our layout. Evidently, laying down track is good therapy for me.

You'll be hearing and reading about many of the decisions that came out of those Novi meetings in the next few weeks and months. So, just as I closed out last month's column, "stay tuned" for more information about those decisions as many of them will affect you and Division 8 in the immediate and not-so-distant future.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Stan White Member Relations Chairman

As of the last report received from the Mid Central Region, we have 153 active members. We had ten renewals (Charles Buccola, Eddy Crowe, Ron Ellison, Tom Hollis, Carl Hulsewede, Lee Kirchhoff, CJ Reven, Ronald Sallee, Fred Soward, Mike Wingfield). One expired membership (Rich Esarey). There were no new members.

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM- LEVERAGING DIGITAL TOOLS FOR BETTER MODELING AND A FUTURE MEMBER

By Mark Norman MMR®, Achievement Program Chairman

Have you ever wondered what trees grew along your prototype railroad's right-of-way in 1955? Or struggled to find the exact paint colors for that obscure locomotive? Today's digital tools can answer these questions in seconds.

There are several AI tools available you might find of use. My 'go to' is perplexity.ai. Three queries demonstrate their power. 1. "Modeling alligators in north central Florida (NCF), what Vallejo paints should be used?" It listed the paints and what part of the body to use them on. 2. "List the 25 most populous trees in NCF from most to least common." Done! 3. "What about palm trees?" Mere seconds. This AI allows you to ask follow-up questions, ensuring you find answers. This is just a glimpse. This same AI will write code for Arduinos! AI is a time saver!

Google Earth Pro is very helpful to see what is happening now and in the past. There is a modest learning curve. You can zoom in and follow the track of a contemporary railroad or the roadbed of a fallen flag. Zoom out a bit and you have a clear view of the scenery. You can look at the industries served by the railroad and how they are laid out. It is possible to look at an earlier point in time! If you are interested in earning Master Builder – Prototype Models, this tool will be of use.

**A FUTURE MEMBER**

Left: A future member. Our grandson, Waylon James, 3y 7m, came over for a sleepover. Santa brought him a Brio layout for Christmas. Waylon helped me paint the barbecue grill for the yellow cottage model. The model was being overhauled. My father and I built it while we were stationed at Upper Heyford U.S. Air Force Base at Oxfordshire, England. Waylon thoroughly enjoyed himself. He's already been to the Division 8 Train Show and Sale, and an outing with Thomas the Tank Engine at the Kentucky Railroad Museum with his family. He's a future member!

Photo by Mark Norman MMR®

THE CENTURY GIRLS

By Russ Weis, photo by author



In June, the New York Central Historical Society had their annual convention held in Rochester, NY, where I attended and gave a number of presentations.

Like most conventions, the society had a day set aside for buying and selling goodies. In the middle of all the tables displaying NYC items there was one table that had nothing for sale, rather, sitting there was a very important guest, Joan Jennings, a NYC Century Girl! What is a Century Girl you ask?

On September 16, 1956, The New York Central replaced their male secretaries on the “20th Century Limited” with “Girls of the Century” – stewardesses, or flight attendants in today’s world, for the Central’s flagship.

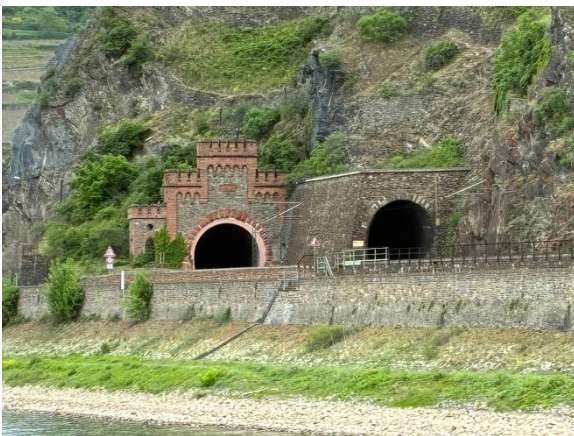
In 1960 Joan, then 27, was one of five young women with the public relations job of making sure passengers, famous or otherwise, were comfortable and attended to with services such as sending telegrams and baby-sitting.

Joan, now in her early nineties, is still going strong and a delight to talk with. During our conversation it came up what I did before retirement, and as it turns out Joan was a flight attendant for Eastern Airlines. I’m assuming it was after her time as a Century Girl.

A great lady, I hope if I live that long I can be as lively as Joan.

SOMETHING ELSE FROM RUSS

While sailing up the Rhine River in Germany, I was able to see a number of trains. Here is the European version of auto racks and containers. Obviously, the cars can't be tall to fit through the century old tunnel portals."



FRED & BARBARA'S TRIP TO THE 2025 NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION IN NOVI, MI

By Fred Soward MMR®, Photos by author except where noted.

The NMRA National Convention is all about fellowship and learning. These photos are from the convention hotel meeting spaces, the layout room at the hotel, the Layout Design Special Interest Group (LDSIG) Tour, and the National Train Show. Here are just a few of the more than 1,000 photos Fred & Barbara took during their week at the 2025 NMRA National Convention. Check this month's Assistant Superintendent column for more about the convention.



Left:

Barbara & Fred with Mark Herrick. Mark regularly remotely dispatches Don Irace's layout, which is where Barbara finds Fred spending a lot of time when they travel to Florida.

Photo by Bob Weinheimer
MMR®

Right

Lucy Dormont (NMRA Social Media Manager), Jordan Kramer (NMRA Elections Manager), and Cinthia Priest (NMRA Magazine Editor) at the Free-MoN layout in the convention hotel ballroom.



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Left:

Darcy Elliott with Michael Burgett on his HO scale C&O Clifton Forge Division layout. This is an amazingly detailed and prototypically accurate layout. There's a full-scale tower operator's office in the garage in the backyard with an LCD monitor positioned in a window that has a feed from a mini-camera mounted in the tower on the layout. Upstairs in a bedroom is a full-scale dispatcher's office complete with a working CTC panel and C&O office paraphernalia from the period.

Left:

That's Russ Weis chatting with his new friend Bryan Allen in the entryway to the 2-Rail O Scale Detroit Model Railroad Club's Detroit Union Railroad layout.



Left:

Many of you will recognize Dan Hinel MMR[®] becuz you've operated on Dan's HO scale RailXpress layout in Carmel, IN. Dan was walking "inside" the 2-Rail O Scale Detroit Model Railroad Club's Detroit Union Railroad layout.

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Left:

That's Barbara & Darcy Elliott taking photos of the 2-Rail O Scale Detroit Model Railroad Club's Detroit Union Railroad layout from the side viewing area.

Below:

Fred & Darcy Elliott aren't mountain climbing here. They've been walking on exposed sections of the 2-Rail O Scale Detroit Model Railroad Club's Detroit Union Railroad layout to get to this high point on the club's layout.

Photo by Barbara Soward

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Left:

The group spent quite a bit of time at Jay and Brook Qualmann's MMR® massive HO scale Michigan Central Layout. Russ Weis & Darcy Elliott are standing in the aisle near one of the three large roundhouses on the layout.

Right:

If you're looking at this photo of Jay and Brook Qualmann's MMR® HO scale Michigan Central Layout, thinking, "that's huge," you'd be correct. But you're only seeing about one third of the actual layout in their basement.



Left:

Fred's good friend Jeff Schultz from the Pacific Northwest and Technical Assistant for Model Railroad Hobbyist magazine was enjoying his visit to Jay and Brook Qualmann's MMR® HO scale Michigan Central Layout while taking photos for later publication in MRH.

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Left:

Russ Weis checking out some of the structures on Bill Bartlam's S Scale Surrey Valley Railroad.

Right:

Last stop on the LDSIG tour for the Division 8 group. Darcy Elliott and Russ Weis are taking notes on the winter scene on George VanDuyne's HO scale Rochester & Richmond layout while Eric Waggoner focuses on getting the best photo of the harbor scene.



Left:

Barbara spent some time visiting with Jenny Hendricks (NMRA Chief Administrative Officer) at the National Train Show, getting the inside scoop on next year's NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, TN.

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Left:

Barbara was maybe just a wee bit excited to see the inside of her new friend Gaylord Gill's scratchbuilt repurposed trolley car on the S Scale Southeastern Michigan S Gaugers layout during the National Train Show.

Right:

On the way home from Novi, Fred & Barbara took a 2-hour detour to visit Bruce Chubb's HO scale Sunset Valley railroad in Grand Rapids, MI. Barbara is standing at the same location where Fred took a Facebook profile photo when he was running trains on the layout during the 2017 North Central Region Convention. That's Mt Shasta and Black Butte in the background above her head and the Dunsmuir yard above her left shoulder.



Left:

After spending an hour touring the layout and visiting with Bruce Chubb MMR#164 on his HO scale Sunset Valley model railroad, Barbara was convinced that it was totally worth the 2-hour detour on the way home from this year's NMRA National Convention.

PICNIC 2025 (continued from page 4)

Our tickets were for First Class, an airconditioned car. A good thing since the outside temperature was 91 degrees.



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The half way (turn around) point on our train ride was at Young's High Bridge, Tyrone, KY. The bridge was built by the Louisville Southern Railroad in 1889. Successor Southern Railway operated the last train across the bridge in 1985.



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PICNIC 2025 (continued from page 14)

Upon our return, we were given a tour of the locomotive that pulled our train and the museum's locomotive barn. The locomotive is "Paducah Rebuild" EMD GP 8. It was rebuilt from a Reading Railroad GP7 by Illinois Central Gulf (ICG). It later went to Mississippi Delta Railroad, before coming to the museum. It is repainted as ICG #7738, as it was when in service with ICG.



Annual Train Show & Swap Meet @ First Presbyterian Church



Hosted by the Southern Indiana Railroad

Saturday September 27, 2025

Swap Meet : 10 am to 2 pm

Layouts : 10 am to 3 pm

Admission: 1-Can Donation for Food Bank

Location: First Presbyterian Church

222 Walnut Street @ Chestnut Street

Jeffersonville, Indiana 47130

For Information on tables for the swap meet contact:

Darcy Elliott 502-424-8682

Duke Green 812-267-0761

Ken Pettit 812-282-1658

Email: southernindianarailroad@gmail.com

www.southernindianarailroad.com or www.facebook.com/sirailroad

Seventh Annual NMRA Division 6

Train Show

Cambridge Ohio

Sunday

October 26, 2025

10 am to 3 pm



Easy Access from I-70 and I-77

Pritchard Laughlin Center
7033 Glenn Hwy
Cambridge OH 43725



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Vendors Contact Greg - (740) 607-3223 - trainshow@div6-mcr-nmra.org



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CLICK FOR HOURS & MORE INFORMATION

The Depot Railroad Museum

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To contact a Division 8 board member or committee director call or text (502) 653-5371 and tell us your needs. We'll get back to you. To contact Division 8 or any board member or committee director by email use - division8.mcr.nmra@gmail.com

THE PIE CARD

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And **CLICK** or **CALL** if you have any questions. We'll get back to you right away.

It's not too early to get your fall and winter Division 8 uniform up to date. Look your best! Visit the Company Store today and get your outfit on track.