

Super's Signal

A publication of Division 6, Mid Central Region of The National Model Railroad Association, Inc.



Superintendent's Report

Bob Baker, Division 6 Superintendent

Spring is approaching! The snow is melting, and higher temperatures are forecast for this week. How is this relevant to our division? We shouldn't have any more cancellations of our monthly meetings due to the weather for a while. It is quite unusual to cancel a meeting, but sudden weather changes in Ohio are common. The intensity of the snowstorm was a surprise, and we had to make a quick decision about whether to meet. I consulted with leadership, and most could not make it. We likely would not have had a quorum. I apologize to the few dedicated individuals who could make it to the library. We used all available means to spread the word, but we did not reach everyone in time.

The Buckeye Express Convention (May 15–18, 2025) is coming together quite well. Once again, I want to commend Greg Short and the committee members for their efforts in organizing it. Many complexities are involved, so it is not surprising that it takes over a year of planning to execute. If you have not already registered, please do so. I doubt you will be disappointed with the variety of clinics, layout tours, OPS sessions, the banquet, and other off-site activities. Also, please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. [Editor Note: Room nights help pay for the convention. The deadline for reserving rooms at Embassy Suites is fast approaching. Please book your rooms before the deadline: Wednesday, April 23, 2025. Why not register your room now before you forget? Please register at

<https://buckeyeexpress.div6-mcr-nmra.org/Hotel.html>

I will reserve a room for a few nights, even though I live only about ten minutes from the hotel. It is a lot of fun to meet and interact with other modelers, and it helps us learn more about our hobby through the experiences of others.

16 March (*Sunday*) Division 6 Meeting Smoke Syack Hobbies 342 Lincoln Avenue Lancaster

1:00: Smoke Stack opens

1:00: Social gathering at the Smoke Stack

1:05: Contest submissions open

1:40: Contest submissions closes; Voting begins

1:50: Contest Voting ends

2:00: Division 6 Meeting

2:05: Division 6 Director; announcing or talking nomination

2:45: Clinic: *Automating a Walthers Turntable using Arduino*, Bill Morgan

4:30: Smoke Stack closes

Model Contest: *Non-Revenue & MOW & Non Steam Locomotive*

Virtual Photo Contest: *Non Steam Locomotive*

*Super's Signal Deadline
20 March*

The Membership Recruitment and Retention Committee has been busy. In the coming weeks, expect a survey to help us meet the needs of the Buckeye Division members. When you receive it, please take a few minutes to complete it thoughtfully so that the leadership can make informed decisions.

At our meeting on December 14th at the Upper Arlington Library, I discussed my trip to Scotland and shared pictures of the Scottish (and some English) railways. [see photos below] To enhance the presentation, I brought some of my homemade shortbread, and I dressed the part to the extent that my

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A full list of Division 6 Chairs can be found at:

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Non-Credited Photos by Donald Wilke

Division 6, Mid Central Region, NMRA, Inc., known as the Buckeye Division, is an Ohio non-profit

Clerk's Report Buckeye Division, Mid Central Region, NMRA, Inc. Membership Meeting Gahanna Library, Gahanna 16 February 2025

Matt Goodman, Clerk

Editor Note: The February division meeting at the Gahanna Library was canceled because of the sudden snowstorm. The March division meeting will take place at *Smoke Stack Hobbies* in Lancaster. This will be the last meeting there, as they will close in March.

Because the February meeting was canceled, we will have two rescheduled events.

First, the Nomination Chair will announce the division members who have expressed interest to him in running for one of the three Buckeye Division Director positions, followed by nominations from the floor.

Second, we will hold the March Model Contest for *Non-Steam Locomotives* and the February Model Contest for *MOW*.

Continued: **The Super's Report**

wardrobe allowed. [see picture] I still need accessories such as a Sgian Dubh, flashes, and a more suitable jacket or waistcoat.

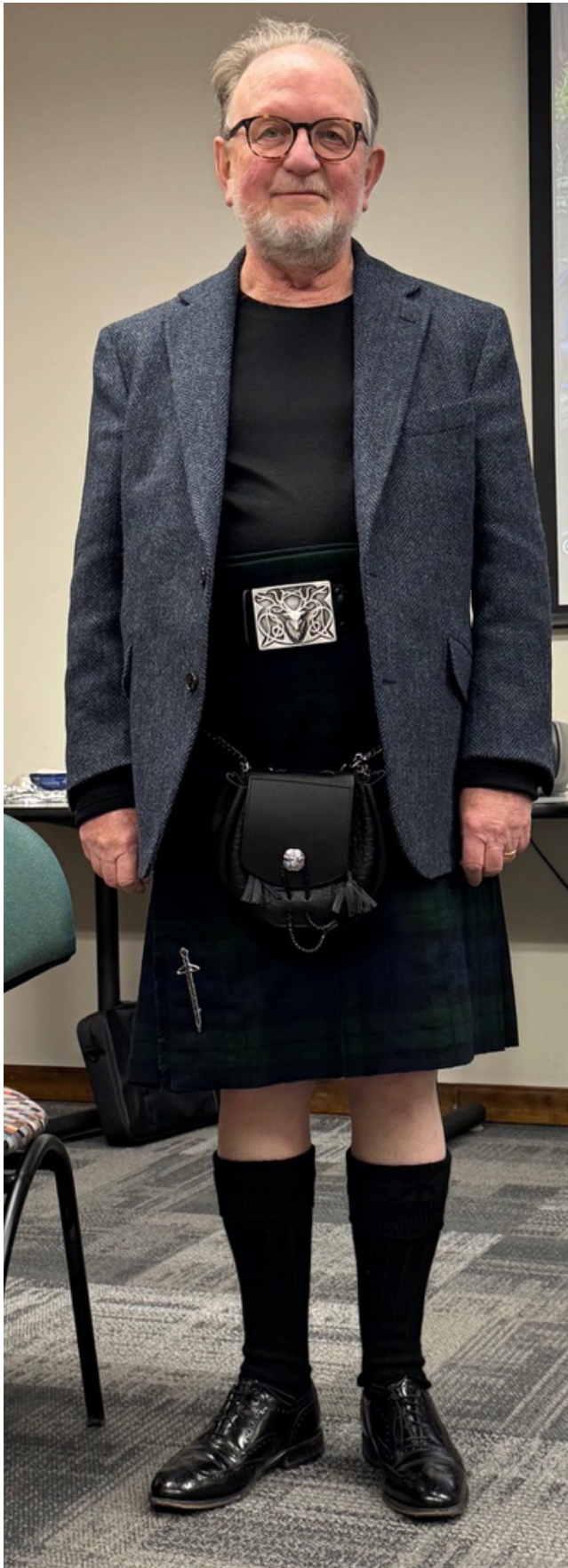
This is my quick update for the month. I look forward to seeing you at the convention. During happy hour, we can savor a wee dram of fine Scottish whisky together.

Happy Modeling,

Bob



*The Jacobite Steam Engine
(Photo by Bob Baker)*



Bob as a Scot
(Photo by Matt Goodman)



Fireman's view of the Jacobite Steam Engine
(Photo by Bob Baker)

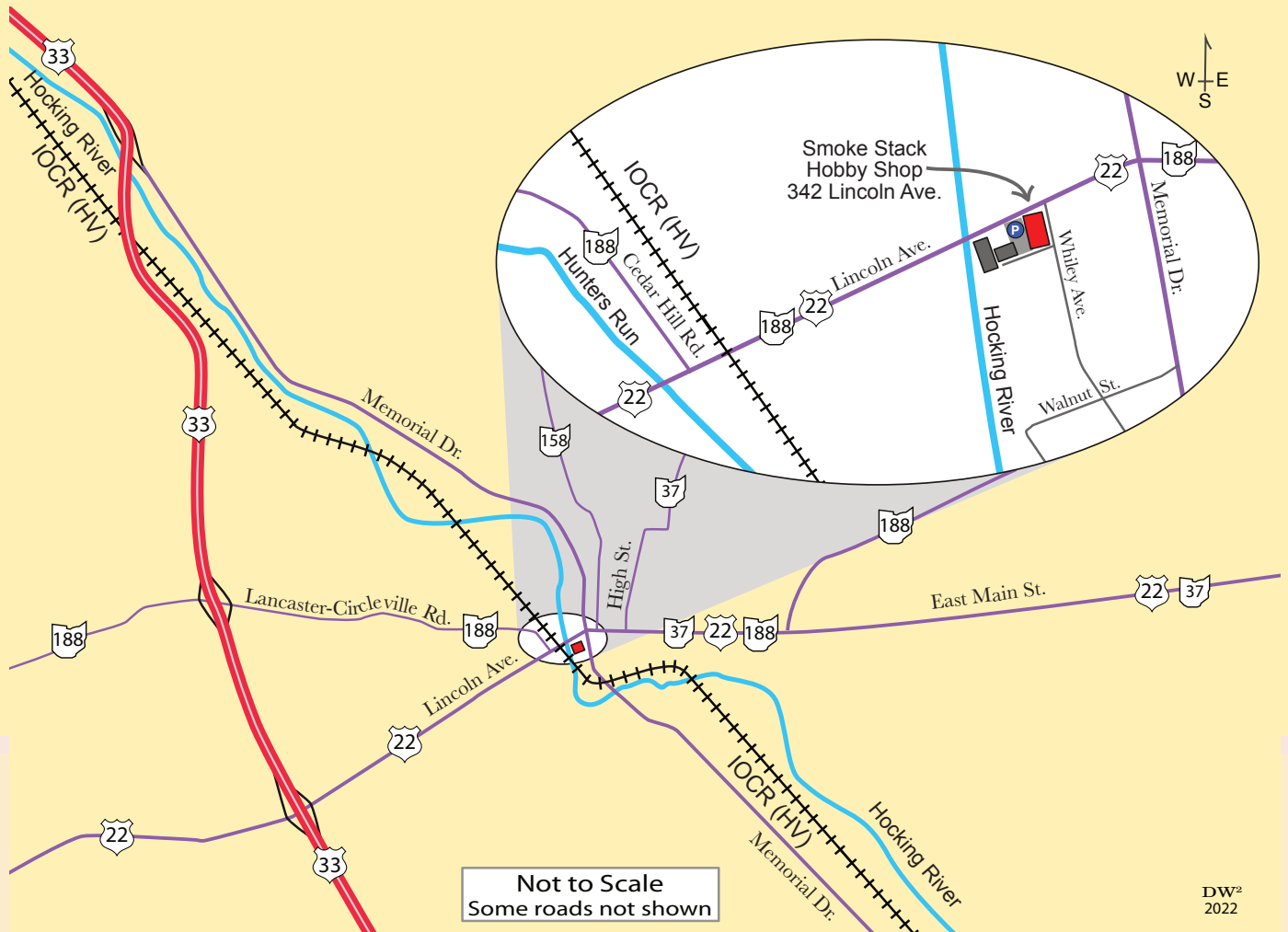


Kings Crossing Station
(Photo by Bob Baker)

Division 6 – 2025 Time Table

Date	Event	Meeting	City
18 January (Saturday)	Division 6 Meeting	Business Meeting: Hilltop Library Clinic: Contests: Open Car with Load	Columbus
23 January	<i>Super's Signal</i> Deadline		
16 February (Sunday)	Division 6 Meeting Canceled (Snow Storm)	Business Meeting: Gahanna Library Clinic: <i>Automating a Walthers Turntable using Arduino</i> , Bill Morgan Contests: Non-Revenue / MOW	Gahanna
20 February	<i>Super's Signal</i> Deadline		
16 March (Sunday)	Division 6 Meeting	Business Meeting: Smoke Stack Hobbies Clinic: <i>Automating a Walthers Turntable using Arduino</i> , Bill Morgan Model Contests: Non-Steam Locomotive & Non-Revenue / MOW	Lancaster
20 March	<i>Super's Signal</i> Deadline		
13 April (Sunday) (Tentative)	Division 6 Meeting	Business Meeting: Cambridge Club Clinics: Contests: Caboose	Cambridge
29 April	<i>Super's Signal</i> Deadline		
15-18 May	MCR Convention	The Buckeye Express	Dublin
21 June (Saturday)	Division 6 Meeting	Annual Meeting & Business Meeting: Marion Union Station Mini Clinics: Contest: Photo: Favorite Train ; Bring-N-Brag: Favorite Train	Marion
June	<i>Super's Signal</i> Deadline		

March Map



DW²
2022



Retention Committee Progress Report

By Mike Wolf, MMR[®]

The Recruiting and Retention Committee held its first meeting on January 29th. Our initial focus has been on retention, with most of our discussions centered on why members attend or do not attend meetings and division activities, why people renew or fail to renew their membership, and some preliminary thoughts on how

we can make improvements

We are committed to sharing the wonderful hobby of model railroading with more people in central Ohio by increasing both the membership in the Division and participation in Division activities. We are open to thinking creatively. Are you?

We held our second meeting on February 19th, and we focused on some immediate steps we could take to improve retention. One of those will be a survey asking YOU your opinion on some topics we have been discussing. Please take the time to complete the survey. Everyone has reasons for participating in the organization, and we want to hear about them.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their time and talents. The Committee members are Bob Baker, Matt Goodman, Bruce McDonald, Ken McDonough, Michael Percy, Butch Sage, and Jerry Severson.

You will notice some significant changes in upcoming meetings, and please look for monthly updates here in the Super's Signal as we continue our efforts.



Calipers

Matt Goodman

I've purchased several sets of calipers over the years, with the most recent (and highest-end) set purchased in 2016. I've used them all long enough to know their relative strengths, so I decided to share some thoughts.

The photo (Figure 1) shows the four calipers I currently own, each with a 6-inch (150 mm) range. From left to right, they are:

- ◆ General branded, Swiss-made calipers, synthetic. These have a resolution of 0.001 (one-thousandth) inch and weigh 1.5 ounces (43 grams). The right side of

the main scale features a secondary, metric scale with 1 mm resolution.

- ◆ These are Frankfort-branded, Chinese-made stainless steel calipers. They resolve to .001 inch and weigh 6.9 ounces (196 g). There are no secondary metric markings.
- ◆ General branded, USA-made synthetic. These measure to 0.01 inch, weigh 1.3 ounces (37 g), and feature secondary metric markings (1 mm resolution) along with a secondary scale on the dial showing fractional inches.
- ◆ Mitutoyo stainless steel calipers with a digital readout resolve to .0005 inches and .01 mm. They weigh 5.6 ounces (159 g) and measure both imperial and metric units equally well.

General Lessons

- Plastic is not necessarily an indicator of "cheap." I purchased the yellow General calipers in 1978, and to this day, they are still accurate enough for 90% of the measurements I make. Even the action is decent, though minor adjustments in the thousandths are tricky due to a very slight bind in the mechanism. Some consideration has to be given for jaw flex - i.e., inconsistent use of the thumbwheel can lead to inconsistent results measurements.



Figure 1
(Photo by Matt Goodman)

Calipers
Continued on **Page 6**

Continued: **Calipers**

- Chinese-made is not solely an indicator of being "cheap." I purchased the Franklins in the mid-'90s, and they became the go-to tool for light machining tasks. The action is very smooth, and the measurements are reliable and repeatable.
- Digital is not superior to dial. The Franklin dial and Mitutoyo digital gauges are very consistent between one and four inches. I personally prefer the dial for its mechanical precision and fine watch aspect, plus it doesn't require batteries. Digital has the advantage of being entirely agnostic about units of measurement - you can easily switch from decimal inches to metric. Choose your preference.

Pick your poison

- Alas, not all devices are created equal. A cheap digital set I picked up at a "tool man" display was so bad that I set it down somewhere. I don't know where it is, and I don't care if I ever find it again. It had inconsistent and terrible action.
- A note on batteries: Inexpensive digital calipers can go through multiple batteries each year unless you remove the battery between uses. My Mitutoyo caliper is still on its original battery - eight years and counting counting.

More Lessons

- Plastic is better than metal for some applications. Weight and relative softness are the key factors here. I find it much easier to use the yellow Generals for model building; they balance better, and there's no risk of scratching a finish or crushing a delicate model if it slips from your grasp. (I'm looking at you, Tichy).
- Metal is superior to plastic for certain applications. If you need to draw a line or require measurement consistency, you will find it here.
- More resolution is not necessarily better than less. For 90% of what I measure, I need accuracy to 0.01 inches. For another 5%, I require 0.1 inches. For the rest, I may want 0.001 inches. When sorting brass wire, they all work just fine.
- A longer caliper is not inherently superior to a shorter one. Most calipers available on the mainstream market today have a 6-inch or 150 mm measuring range. I can count on two hands the number of times I've used anything beyond four inches. Shorter calipers tend to be lighter and are less likely to

obstruct your movement or get caught on a shirt sleeve while working at the bench. However, shorter options are less common and sometimes more expensive.

- A "Brand Name" is not necessarily better than unbranded options. My private-label branded dial calipers are of very high quality; see the point on digital vs. dial above. However, if you are shopping for unbranded calipers, I'd advise buying from a source known for offering high-quality unbranded tools (see the last paragraph). When buying from an unfamiliar source, such as eBay or Amazon, selecting items by brand serves as a reliable indicator of quality.
- You get what you pay for. This is generally true at the high-precision end, but it's up to the end user to determine the necessary level of precision.

Here are backlit photos of the closed jaws of my four calipers, which indicate their manufacturing quality. I have also included specific comments for each one.

Yellow General (Switzerland). The jaw fit is not perfect, but it is very serviceable. I've had these since 1978, forty-six years! They are by far my most-used set. Some of that imperfect jaw fit may be due to wear. They were purchased for a different hobby, but now they are used much more for modeling. They are also my go-to tool when measuring depth in narrow spaces (i.e., a small hole) since the depth gauge is a round rod only 0.05 inches in diameter.

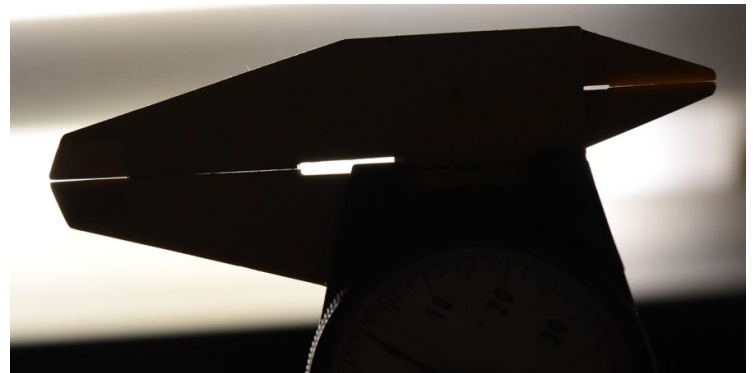


Figure 2
(Photo by Matt Goodman)

Orange General (USA). These calipers have a significant gap at the tip of the jaws, and their action is mediocre at best, but they are still serviceable depending on what you want to use them for. The dial has graduations for fractional inches and decimals, so they can be handy for sorting drill bits that have gotten mixed. I bought these on a

Calipers
Continued on **Page 7**

Continued: **Calipers**

Figure 3
(Photo by Matt Goodman)

whim when I spotted them on sale at a big box store - almost completely due to my experience with the yellow General.

Franklin (China). These calipers are really nice, but there's a bit of light between the tip and base of the jaw. There's also a tiny sliver of light at the tip that's hard to see in this photo. These saw more action after my wife got me a mini-mill about eighteen years ago, but I've had them for way longer than that. They're better suited for measuring metal than plastic and have a very smooth action. For model work, they're too heavy and unbalanced.

Mitutoyo (Japan). These have a dead-perfect inside and outside jaw fit. The action is smoother than the

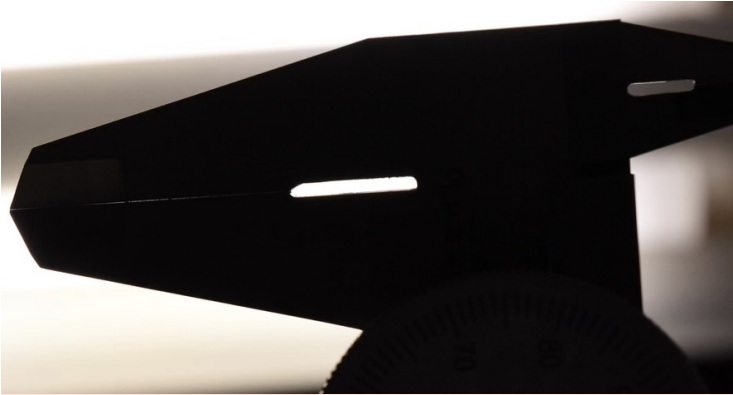


Figure 4
(Photo by Matt Goodman)

Franklin, though it has a different feel since there is no gear mechanism associated with the movement. They turned out to be more usable for modeling than expected as they are significantly lighter at 1.3 oz or 37 g less and better balanced than the Franklins.



Figure 5
(Photo by Matt Goodman)

Regarding places to source calipers and many other tools useful in the hobby, in the past couple of years, I have been going to McMaster-Carr for both high-quality and cost tools and especially for less expensive equivalents.

McMaster-Carr often lists their products as "Premium" vs. "High Grade" or sometimes, Economy, where Premium is a brand name vs. unbranded. Inexpensive tools don't have to be bad, and I've come to trust McMaster-Carr's buyers' choices. The inexpensive tools I've purchased from them have been of high quality. If I know my product, I may shop around. If I don't, I'll buy from McMaster-Carr.

For calipers, a good place to start:

<https://www.mcmaster.com/calipers/calipers-2~/>

A set of calipers is indispensable for this hobby. Consider adding them to your toolbox if you haven't already done so.



All Aboard Ohio

At the February All Aboard Ohio (AAO) meeting we received some positive news about Ohio passenger rail.

Mitch reported that the Ohio Chamber of Commerce spoke publicly in favor of passenger rail at the Ohio House Transportation Committee meeting. To the best of our knowledge, this marks the first time in the AAO's 50+ year history that the Chamber has expressed sup-

port for rail development. Having Ohio's most significant business advocacy group align with our efforts is a major milestone—it signals that passenger rail is a mainstream economic priority.

The Vice Chair of the Ohio House Transportation Committee, Jack Daniels (R-New Franklin), shared a shift in perspec-

AAO
Continued on **Page 8**

Contest Report

Contest Chair

February Contest: *Non-Revenue* Virtual Photo Contest

First Place: *The Moose Ridge maintenance truck is speeding somewhere!*, Howdy Lamprecht

Second Place: *This photo was taken at the NYC Museum in Elkhart, IN, in October 2022. Selkirk, NY, is my hometown,* Doug Kullman

Third Place: *Crew performing tie renewals the modern way at Troutdale, OR, along the beautiful Columbia River Gorge, August 2024,* Matt Goodman

March Model Contest: Non-Steam Locomotive and February's Non-Revenue

March Virtual Photo Contest: Non-Steam Locomotive

April Contests: Caboose



1st Place Virtual Photo by Howdy Lamprecht
Copyright by the entrant

Contest Point Summary February (Photographer) 2025

Modeler 2025

Carter Jastram	3	Paul Bender	1
Scott Brown	2		

Photographer 2025

Matt Goodman	6	Bob Baker	2
Dick Briggs	4	Scott Brown	1
Howdy Lamprecht	4	Connie Logan	1
Doug Kullman	3	Ken McDonough	1
Mike Wolf	3		

February Photo Contest Winners:

https://archive2.div6-mcr-nmra.org/ContestFold/contest250226-B/Contest_250216.html

Continued: **AAO**

tive. He openly stated that he would have opposed expanding passenger rail in Ohio ten years ago. However, after witnessing the changes in the world—especially post-COVID—he now believes that rail is the right step forward. Hearing a leader publicly acknowledge how and why his views have evolved gave me a renewed sense of optimism.

John reiterated the Ohio Chamber of Commerce's support for passenger rail. Step 2 of the state-sponsored Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Corridor ID Projects will be funded by the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC) General Fund. This funding is intended for further study of the 3C&D corridor. Funding for membership in the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) will be provided by the state.

(Note: *The Columbus Dispatch* reported that Ohio will fund the membership in the MIPRC.) The MIPRC is a multi-state compact vital for coordinating and advocating for regional passenger rail improvements.

Stu reported that advocacy for passenger rail development is divided into two parts. All Aboard Ohio will focus on passenger rail within the state, while the Rail

Passenger Association (RPA) will concentrate on issues related to passenger rail at the national level. He shared success stories from states like Virginia, North Carolina, Michigan, and Illinois, along with positive ridership trends on Amtrak routes such as the Borealis and the Downeaster. Despite uncertainty about the federal budget, considerable positive momentum is building across the country in support of passenger rail.

RPM-East Prototype Modeler Event

Eric Hansmann

The 2025 RPM-East returns to the Westmoreland County Community College in Youngwood, PA, on March 21 & 22! The location of our long-running railroad prototype modeler meet is just 40 miles southeast of downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Make plans to rekindle your modeling efforts!

Thirty-eight modelers and historians are scheduled to speak at RPM-East. The RPM-East website has posted many presentation titles. A tentative presentation schedule will be posted in late February.

Early bird registration is only \$40 (until February 28th). RPM-East is sponsored by Division 2, MCR-NMRA. Registration forms, presentation details, OP session layouts, and participating vendors can be reviewed at the RPM-East website:

http://hansmanns.org/rpm_east/index.htm

There will be plenty of action over March 21 & 22.

- two days of prototype and model presentations

- a large display room to share your modeling efforts and learn new techniques
- a variety of vendors selling goods for prototype modeling
- Thursday operating sessions on local model railroads
- Sunday model railroad layouts to visit

Several hotel options are in nearby New Stanton, PA, just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike. This Google Maps link can help you find lodging.

<https://goo.gl/maps/Kf55KEzfHJSMmaEV7>

Gather your models and plan to attend the 2025 RPM-East prototype modeler event in Youngwood, PA!

Eric Hansmann
RPM-East Publicity and Web Guy
eric@hansmanns.org



Division 7 Spring Model Train Flea Market

CINCINNATI, OHIO, Saturday, March 15, 2025

Annual Division 7 NMRA Spring Model Train Flea Market at Lakota West Freshman Campus, 5050 Tylersville Road, West Chester, OH 45069.

- Open from 10 am to 3 pm.
- All scales of new and used model trains, books, and collectibles will be available.
- Adult admission is \$7.
- Kids 12 and under, as well as Scouts in uniform, are free with a paying adult.

- No animals are allowed except for service dogs.
- The venue is wheelchair accessible.
- Free parking available.
- Food and refreshments will be provided.
- More info can be found at www.cincy-div7.org



2025 Division 6 Directors Nominations

Harry "Butch" Sage, Buckeye Division Election Chair

In 2025, the three Director positions will be elected. These positions are not term-limited, so the current Directors are all eligible to run for re-election. Two of the current Directors have decided to run for the office. If you are interested in running for one remaining Director position or have any questions about the election, please feel free to contact Bob Baker if interested. Nominations will be finalized at the February 2025 Buckeye Division meeting.

Michael Percy, our Assistant Superintendent, has decided to resign at the end of May next year due to the time limitations of his job. According to the Buckeye Division Regulations, the Assistant Superintendent position can be filled by the Superintendent with the Board of Directors' approval. The Superintendent is looking for division members who would like to be considered for the office of Assistant Superintendent. Don't hesitate to contact Superintendent Bob Baker if you're interested.



Company Store Update

Greg Short

The gondola kits are here, and sales have started. As of this message, we still do not have the final price for the gondolas on the website. But, we are offering the kits to the membership for \$25. This price is only good if a division member purchases the kits for personal use. Members must pay for and pick up the gondola at a division meeting. We will have the price for shipping the kits and how to order them by the next *Signal*.



The Buckeye Express Convention
15-18 May, 2025
Embassy Suites, Dublin



31st Annual Midwest Narrow Gauge Show 2025 Mini Bunch Spring Meet March 20-22, 2025

All Scales & Gauges Welcome
HOn30, HOn3, Sn2, Sn3, On2, On30, On30, Large Scale

Clinics Contest Dealers
Operating Layouts

New Location

FIRST FRIENDS CHURCH
1028 JENNINGS AVE
SALEM, OHIO

For More Information:

www.portlandlocomotiveworks.com/
M2FQ@AOL.COM





MODEL RAILROAD

SPRING FLEA MARKET & TRADE SHOW

Sponsored by Cincinnati Division 7, NMRA, Inc.

www.cincy-div7.org/local-events

Saturday, MARCH 15, 2025
10 AM to 3 PM

LAKOTA WEST FRESHMAN CAMPUS

5050 TYLERSVILLE ROAD
WEST CHESTER, OHIO 45069

FEATURING LOCAL MODELERS & HOBBY DEALERS

\$7 Admission (Cash only, ATMs off-site) – Kids 12 and under and Scouts in uniform free with accompanying paying adult – No animals allowed, except service dogs

All SCALES of Model Railroad Items, Videos and more!

Tables \$25 (2.5 x 8 ft) – Reservations: rhord@fuse.net

Don't miss this popular model train buy-sell event!
"A model railroad trade show"

This event will be operated under all local, state and federal health guidelines in effect at that time. Masks are currently optional. If recommended, hand sanitizer will be available at multiple locations. Subject to cancellation due to events beyond our control. See <https://cincy-div7.org/local-events> for last-minute information or changes.

2025 Spring Railroad Modelers Meet

Hosted by the Black Swamp Division (Div 1) of the North Central Region (NCR), NMRA

April 5, 2025 – Sylvania OH

Doors Open 8:00AM with activities into the evening. See website for details!
Sylvania Senior Center, 7140 W Sylvania Ave, Sylvania, OH 43560



Learn New Skills, Share Your Models, Share Techniques, Visit Layouts



This is an RPM style
Model Railroading event!
Lunch options will be available on-site!



This event is open to ALL MODELERS - NMRA Membership is not required

SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

Modeling Clinics – 9 clinics on 3 tracks to choose from on a mixture of subjects presented by modelers, historians, and industry experts.

Model Showroom – Bring your models (finished or in-progress) of locomotives, rolling stock, structures, dioramas, or scenery. All are Welcome! The showroom is about sharing the hobby in all its many forms. Freelance and prototype welcome.

Layouts and Displays - Small and modular displays will be available within the main venue.

Layout Tours - Layout tours of local layouts will be available during the afternoon and evening.

Admission is \$20 at the door

17 and under free, all individuals 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult

All event activities (minus lunch) are included in one low price!

This is NOT a swap meet!



Visit our website for more information
and event schedules
mmm.ncrmra.org

Hosted by the Black Swamp Division
Division 1, NCR NMRA
div1.ncrmra.org

