

Waybill



Mid West Region NMRA –
Spring 2025



The *WAYBILL*

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The *WAYBILL*
is published quarterly by the Midwest
Region of the National Model Railroad
Association Inc. for the benefit of the
model railroading community.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Electronic delivery is free to all members
of the Region. Go to <http://www.mwr-nmra.org/mwr2016/waybill.html> to sub-
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webmaster@mwr-nmra.org
to be put on the Constant Contact email
notification list.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Articles, photographs and artwork are
encouraged in either hardcopy or elec-
tronic form. The editor uses Quark 5.0 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
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Editor's Musings

Congratulations to David Nelson
for receiving the NMRA President's
Award in 2024 for services to the
NMRA, Midwest Region and the
WISE Division. You may recognize
the name as Dave is the author of
the Frugal Modeler column.

I see we have added two new
MMR's to the region. Congratulations
to Dr. Robert Perry of Avon, Indiana
for achieving MMR#782 and Ray
Meyer of Port Washington,
Wisconsin, MMR #779

I attended Trainfest in Milwaukee
at the Baird Center on November 23-
24. I was helping manage the Soo
Line H&TS booth. It was nice to talk
to many people I had not seen in
four years.

The National will be relatively
close this year, in Novi, Michigan,
which is 25 miles northwest of
Detroit.

ON THE COVER

Photo was taken at Trainfest of the
Overland Western Lines, an award
winning modular layout. More photos
on page 13.

RIP Printed Waybill

In his column a year ago. President
McGeever said that "You can't avoid the
future." That has caught up with the
Waybill. I took over as editor of the
Waybill at the end of 2007. That makes 62
issues as editor. This will be my last
printed issue. Due to declining subscrip-
tions, (we are down to 162 names as of
January 1st. It used to be over 600) cou-
pled with the fact that National stopped
collecting money for Division newsletters,
made continuing a printed Waybill nearly
impossible. I will still remain as editor. As
Region President John Coy, MMR™ just
pointed out to me, there have been 25
editors in the last 80 years. The second
longest tenure was only 5 years. I guess
that I like my job.

The Waybill has been available online
from the year 2000 on. It was originally
just a copy of the print version, but for the
last 10 years I have been doing a sepa-
rate, enlarged Waybill for the internet, so
the change will lessen my work load by
about half.

The printed word has always been
dear to me as I have, and continue to
write books on Midwest railroads and top-
ics. I intend to continue as editor of the
Waybill as it keeps me up-to-date as to
what is happening in the Midwest Region.
That is until the day I am replaced by a
ChatGP bot.

All resident Midwest Region (MWR)
members who currently have their email
contact information on file with the MWR
will continue to be notified when the
Waybill is available for download.

MWR resident members who wish to
add their name to the MWR email list
should click on the following link to submit
your request:

<https://form.jotform.com/200925537633961>

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President's Report

Bob McGeever President, MWR

Dave has reminded me that this is my final President's letter. Some sort of retrospective seems appropriate. I thought about reviewing the four years of my prior letters for topics but that seemed kind of boring. I decided just to talk about the topics I recalled right off the top of my head. Since they are so easy to remember, they are probably the most important.

Midwest Region Board of Directors Meetings:

When I started this job, it seemed to me that all the MWR BOD meetings were happening north of Interstate 80. And they seemed a little under-attended. I thought if I moved them around the region the BOD could get to know all the divisions. We might even attract more members of the BOD to attend. It was an experiment that wound up getting rather expensive and not working well. No matter where or when we met, it just didn't improve attendance.

No matter how dedicated they are to our hobby, it just does not make sense to expect folks to drive up to 16 hours round trip and stay maybe two nights in a hotel to attend a 2-hour meeting. It made even less sense with the increased cost of travel in the post-Covid world. I also grew to suspect that the travel requirement was keeping some folks from volunteering to serve on the BOD. So, we switched to holding the BOD meetings on Zoom on two designated days of the year. Nobody has to drive or pay for a room. Scheduling conflicts are greatly reduced when the BOD members just need to block out three hours on a Saturday.

Our plan to hold the BOD meetings on Zoom is working. Attendance is up. We already have one new Director at Large who would not have run under the old system that required all the travel time. Thanks to Covid, most of us have become rather comfortable with video conferencing. We can make this work.

The WISE division:

Another north of Interstate 80 topic. Of all the things I thought I might be dealing with when I got this job, dealing with the dissolution of a division, much less the "home" division of the NMRA, was not on my radar. The WISE division was struggling with the burden of putting on Trainfest prior to

the Covid shutdown. From what I had observed, they just barely had the horsepower needed to put on the event before the shutdown. Then they had to cancel the show twice. Trying to restart the show after the extended shutdown tore the division apart. In October of 2021, the WISE BOD was ready to vote to dissolve the division. We came up with a better plan. The division declared itself to be inactive, which allowed the region to appoint a committee charged with the rebuilding of the division. Trainfest was put on indefinite hold. All the committee needed to work on was getting basic divisional activities back up and running. They have succeeded. The WISE division was restored to active status at our last MWR BOD meeting.

Regional Conventions:

Our process for putting on Regional Conventions took a hit thanks to the Covid shutdown. Post Covid, we were fortunate to be one of the three regions that put on the Indy Junction convention. This convention is being used by the National as a model for future National Conventions. You will see a lot of the Indy Junction influence at the upcoming Station No. VI in Novi, Michigan.

But it did take the resources from three regions to put on Indy Junction. Post Covid, the cost to put on a convention got so high that most of our divisions would not be able to host a convention. With our 2024 convention we worked out a task sharing partnership between the host division and the region. We put on a successful convention. The process we used can be used to organize other conventions.

There is one caution in the success of our Round the Bend convention. It only worked financially because one of the team members was smart enough to get us a grant from the local tourist board. Without this sponsorship, we would have lost money on the convention.

We have a process for putting on a convention, but we don't know how to make a convention pay for itself. We have more work to do on this topic.

We are not putting on a convention for 2025 because we don't want to compete with the National Convention in Novi for content and attendees. We might also decide not to put on a 2026 convention so as not to compete with the National Convention in Chattanooga. Part of me hates to take a multi-year time out on our conventions and part of me thinks it is important to support the nearby National Convention.

The Effects of Covid:

As I reread the above, I was surprised by how many times I mentioned the Covid shutdown. Becoming a member of the leadership team of any volunteer organization post-Covid was challenging. Or really bad timing.

All volunteer organizations lost active members. The Covid shutdowns disrupted the pipeline of new members. It disrupted the group activities that were reason folks joined an organization. Folks found other things to do with their time during the shutdowns and did not return to all their pre-Covid activities. We saw this in our divisional membership numbers plus the reduced participation in our events.

I believe we are starting to work our way out of this. In all the volunteer groups I participate in, we are starting to see new members. The new members are starting to actively participate in events. There is hope for a return to pre-Covid activity levels. And most of us got used to using Zoom during Covid.

Some parting words:

I'm not good at this parting words sort of thing. When it is time to leave, I usually just say something like "goodbye, hope to see you later".

It has been an honor to be the President of the Midwest Region of the NMRA.

It was a lot of fun working with all of you. We still have a lot of work to do to keep this region working. I wish John Coy and the rest of the Midwest Region Board of Directors the best in their new duties.

Goodbye, hope to see you later.

Region News

The next MWR BoD meeting will be held via the on-line Zoom application on Saturday May 3, 2025 at 10:00 am CDT. The meeting log-in credentials will be distributed by email to the BoD members approximately 1 week before the meeting. If you wish to participate as a guest, please contact the MWR Webmaster at: mwr.nmra.webmaster@gmail.com with your request.

Midwest Region Achievement Program Report

by Jim Landwehr- MWR AP Manager

I am happy to report that there has been a lot of activity from our members. They continue to take part in the Achievement Program all over the Midwest Region.

The following members received awards:

Larry Nelson	Canton, IL	Golden Spike
Mark Willmering	Wauwatosa, WI	Golden Spike
Mark Willmering	Wauwatosa, WI	Volunteer
Jeff Deasy	Chatham, IL	Volunteer
Timothy Jones	Galesburg, IL	Electrical
Dave Mashino	Kokomo, IN	Author
Robert Perry	Avon, IN	Prototype
Robert Perry	Avon, IN	MMR™
Ray Meyer	Port Washington, WI	Motive Power
Ray Meyer	Port Washington, WI	MMR™

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

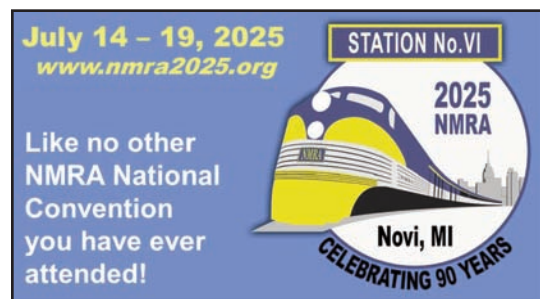
Thanks, Jim

New Officers for the Midwest Region

The slate of officers elected at the 2025 election are:

President:	John Coy MMR™	CID
Vice President:	Bob Perry	CID
Director at Large:	Mike Hirvela	FVD
Director at Large:	Bob Wundrock MMR™	SCWD
Director at Large:	Larry Nelson	IVD

Congratulations to all!

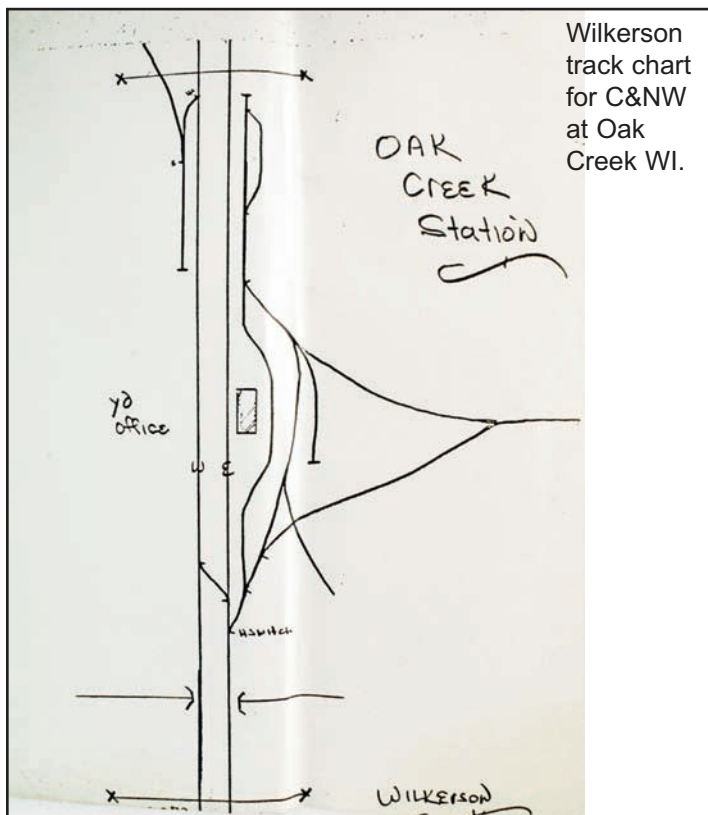
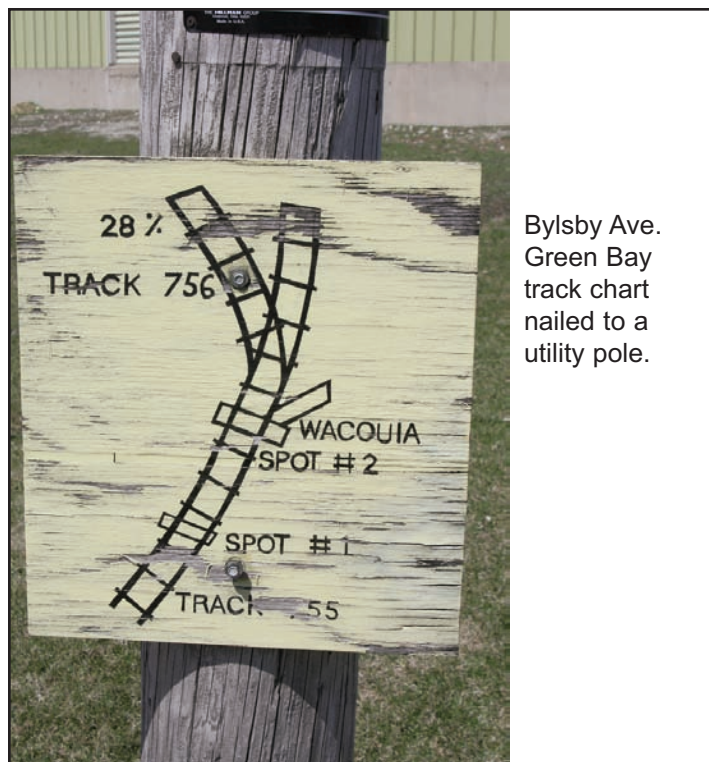


The Frugal Modeler

by Dave Nelson

My Frugal Modeler article in the Fall 2024 Waybill discussed the AT&SF Railroad's methodical "CLIC" system which involved numbered zones, tracks, and spots to enhance the train crew's ability to spot a car at the correct place on a siding or in a yard. The Santa Fe CLIC system could be adapted for model railroad use, since operating session crews face some of the same confusion and challenges that prototype crews do.

Now we will look at two other car spotting aids for train crews and both are readily adaptable on a model railroad. Green Bay's Bylsby Avenue is north of the CN (ex-C&NW) yard, and west of the Fox River as it empties into Green Bay itself. (The now-retired Pulliam Power Plant was on Bylsby Ave.) The busy rail-served industrial district on Bylsby Ave. has several spur tracks. Near a sign naming three industries (GLC Integrated Services, WinField United, and WinField Solutions) is a siding which receives mainly covered hoppers. A simplified schematic of the siding, painted on plywood, is nailed to a utility pole next to the track. It shows track number 755 has two "spots" for freight cars, Spot #1 being a trough to unload into the adjoining structure, and Spot #2 being a trough



Above: First two spots on the chart of track 755 above.
Below: End of track at Bylsby Ave., siding



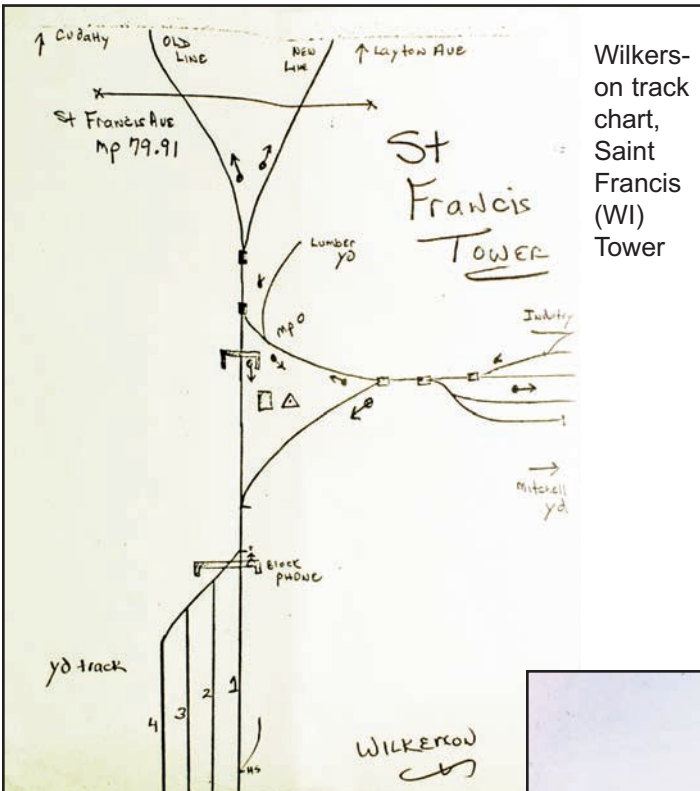


1986 photo of the main line at Oak Creek showing crossover and south lead into yard.

of something created by a frustrated crewman rather than the railroad itself. Either way, a sign like this would not be placed where it is if plenty of switch crews had not gotten it wrong when delivering cars. No other siding in the vicinity has any such sign posted.

While an actual model of the sign would be too small to be helpful in most popular model railroading scales, a smaller reproduction mounted on a layout or lighting fascia would create a neat bit of prototype atmosphere and still serve its purpose.

Years ago at a train show I purchased a stack of 21 sheets of paper stapled together, with somewhat crudely drawn and undated charts of various yards on the C&NW, signed by a crewman named Wilkerson. The seller did not know Wilkerson and said he got it from a different C&NW employee. It



Wilkerson track chart, Saint Francis (WI) Tower



Looking west from St. Francis Tower, with spurs on both sides.

Below: Ed Wilson photo showing lumber yard at St. Francis.

for an auger that can unload into trucks. Further up the track is another switch, hardly visible from the street, with diverging track No. 756 next to a structure; the track arrangement enables loads and empties to be swapped out. The sign shows a mysterious (to me) "28%" for track 756. Although this "cheat sheet" sign is neatly lettered, it gives the impression



was clearly a copy of an original that possibly had been repeatedly copied. Wilkerson had included track numbers, track capacities, industry names, and local landmarks such as street names, utility lines, buildings, and other identification aids. Wilkerson got around -- five of the charts deal with Proviso, but the list also includes South Janesville, Elk Grove, Des Plaines coach yard, Harvard, and -- of primary interest to me -- yards and sidings on the C&NW's "old line" between Chicago and Milwaukee, Waukegan (2 charts), Kenosha west yard, Racine (2 charts), Oak Creek Power Plant, Oak Creek, and Saint Francis tower (where the "old" and "new" mains met). Complexity and an enhanced probability of error are the common themes for the yards Wilkerson chose to map out for himself.

Oak Creek was a compact but confusing maze of switches and sidings and the Wilkerson chart is a more spatially useful presentation than any "official" C&NW track chart I've seen. I show the Oak Creek chart and some of the photos.

The St. Francis Tower chart is also a helpful way to grasp the unexpected industrial sidings that populate what was primarily an important junction for the railroad; again I show the chart and prototype photos that give a feel for the area. On a model railroad layout, the owner could provide a packet of similarly informal renderings of complex car spotting locations for the use of op session train crews; they would not have to be full size sheets of paper like Wilkerson's originals to be useful.

Midwest Region members are invited to contact me via the Waybill if they'd like emailed scans of some or all of the Wilkerson charts.



Happy Anniversary NMRA by John Robert Coy MMR™

REGIONAL CELEBRATION! Labor Day 2025!

On September 1st, 2025, the NMRA will reach it's 90th year of existence! It was on a Sunday in 1935 at the YMCA in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where 71 people gathered to create the NMRA.

President Gordy Robinson has encouraged Members to hold celebrations of the 90th anniversary on the actual day. This year, 2025, September 1st falls on a Monday and is Labor Day. Last year, a group of Central Indiana Division Members gathered at MCL Cafeteria in Carmel, Indiana, to commemorate the 89th anniversary.

This year 2025, the Midwest Region/Central Indiana Division shall be hosting the 90th celebration at the MCL Restaurant at 1390 Keystone Way in Carmel, Indiana.

National AP Chairman Ray Pershing and National Central District Director Fred Soward will be

NMRA 90th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EVENT
NMRA MIDWEST REGION EVENT
Labor Day Monday, September 1, 2025 11 A.M. To 2 P.M.



We, the Midwest Region, with the support of the Central Indiana Division, are hosting a 90th NMRA Anniversary celebration event in Carmel, Indiana on Labor Day, Monday, September 1st, 2025.

This event shall take place at the MCL Restaurant, located at 1390 Keystone Way in Carmel, Indiana, on Labor Day 2025 beginning at 11 A.M. September 1 is the actual anniversary day.

Fred Soward, Central District Director and National AP Chairman, Ray Pershing shall be our keynote speakers.

After the conclusion of remarks and lunch, you are all invited to visit a magnificent masterpiece of a world-class model railroad! It is "Rail Xpress (RxRR)" owned by Master Model Railroader #700, Dan Hinel. (address available at event—15 minute drive)

Don't miss this one chance, one-time only event!

the two keynote speakers.

The event shall open at 11 A.M. With opening remarks and introductions. The Keynote speakers shall address those present with information about the NMRA, themselves and other remarks that they deem appropriate for such an occasion.

At the conclusion of the Keynote addresses, it will be lunch time. At the conclusion of lunch there will be closing remarks and thank-you's. Then there shall be social time and/or possibly a visit to an area layout(s).

It would be especially helpful for those who plan to attend this special 90th celebration to contact John Coy to indicate your intention to attend. GUESTS are welcome!

PLEASE CONTACT TO RSVP

John Coy, Indycop999@hotmail.com

A Backup Plan For The Backup Plan MWR Committee Assignments by John Robert Coy, MMR™

In May of 2025 I will assume the duties of the MWR President. One of my first actions will be to add additional Members to the following Committees, which are listed in our Region Bylaws:

Audit

Clinic Clearing House

Convention (including Model Contest & Photo Contest)

Election

Internet

Long Range Planning and Implementation

Membership

Nominating

Promotions and Special Projects

Publications

Youth

In addition, I am also planning to create an Education/Achievement Program Committee, which I was very surprised to discover was never included in our (MWR) Bylaws.

Each of these Committees currently have at least one member assigned. However, for the sake of continuity and good business practices, my vision is to have a minimum of three members on each of these committees. WHY?

Too many times in the history of organizations,

including ours, one person was the Lone Member of a committee and then that Lone Member was "gone" for whatever the reason without warning.

The aftermath of such an occurrence creates a major headache for the leadership due to the fact that no one has the first idea of what the lone committee Member did or how he/she was did it.

The leaders responsible have egg on their faces for failing to recognize the possibility that something like that could happen. It does happen. It did happen. It will happen again.

Therefore, if elected, my objective shall be to have a minimum number of three members on each of these committees, more is better. All of these respective committee members shall be completely and totally "in the know" with the other members on their committee and shall coordinate closely with one another to prepare for an eventual future transition.

We here in the Central Indiana Division were very fortunate because very shortly after we installed backups to each committee, a member who was the only person on his committee approached the Superintendent and informed him that he was retiring after 20 years of faithful service.

In such an instance, prior to installing backups, the Superintendent would have been sent scrambling, but due to good planning on the Superintendent's part, a backup was already in place and the transition was virtually seamless.

That is precisely why the Midwest Region shall strive to ensure that there are a minimum of three members on each committee.

The MWR Board meets twice per year, the first Saturdays of May and November EXCLUSIVELY on ZOOM...no travel required.

The obligation for each Committee is to provide a bi-annual report to the Board Secretary prior to each of these two Regional Board Meetings.

Please consider submitting your interest to join one or more of these committees. Thank you for your consideration and support.

The Panama Canal Railway by David Leider, MMR™

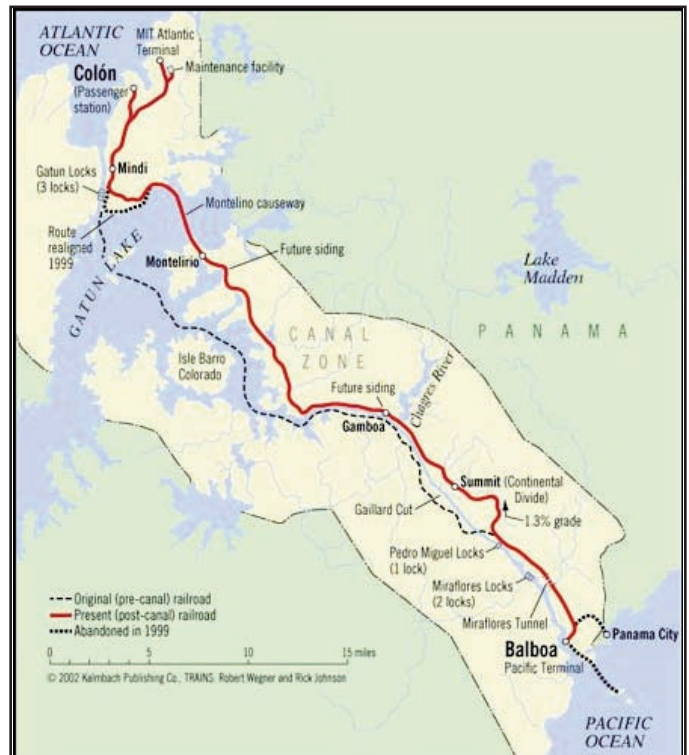
No trip to Panama is complete without a ride on the Panama Canal Railway. It is a subsidiary of Canadian Pacific-Kansas City.

The Panama railroad was incorporated April 7, 1849. The final spike was driven in a small clearing near the northwestern edge of South America around midnight on January 27, 1855. George Totten stood in the pouring rain with a nine-pound maul to drive it. No photographers were there to record the moment. The event was buried in an odious swamp, hidden from the world.



FP40PH locomotive #1863 at the station in Balboa.

When completed in 1855, it was America's first transcontinental railroad. The 47-mile line stretched from Aspinwel (Colon) on the Caribbean Sea (Atlantic) to the city of Panama on the Pacific. It was an instant success. Gold miners heading for California found it a convenient shortcut. Gold returning east also used it. Between 1855 and 1867, more than \$700 million in gold was shipped on the railroad without the loss of a single dollar.



Map of the railroad as it exists today.



Car hostess and staff by the train. Note the open-air compartment at the end of the cars. Perfect for shooting photos.



Boarding the train in Colon, Panama.



CPKC Beaver logo on the engine.

Its fortunes plummeted with the opening of the Panama Canal. Over time the railroad was only used

1,500 containers a day on the 47.6 mile run.

Passenger service was inaugurated in June 2001. It has since been cut-back and is only available for cruise ship bookings. The trip lasts 50-60 minutes. After the train ride, we boarded busses at the train station in Balboa to travel back to Colon, with various stops along the way, including a visit to Panama City. We were able to get off the bus at the Miraflores Visitor Center for a tour of the locks and a short video.



Rear of our train waiting at the station in Colon, Panama.

for transporting cargo taken from vessels to avoid paying the high canal fees. It quickly fell into disrepair. To attempt to salvage it, in July 1, 1950, the railroad became an adjunct to the canal. Under terms of a concession negotiated in 1996 by Kansas City Southern Industries and its partner, Chicago based Mi-Jack partners, a maker of gantry cranes, the railroad was rehabilitated for \$76 million. The gauge was changed from 5 ft to 4 ft 8 1/2 inches. Ten F40PH locomotives and a number of modern passenger cars were purchased. All new rail was laid, several curves eliminated and a modern signal system was installed. Two SD40-2s and 5 SD60's were added in 2008. Today it is a vital link in carrying containers from one coast to another, making the trip in only 1.5 hours. As of 2013, the railroad was handling



Some track maintenance equipment in Colon, Panama. The cranes for loading/unloading containers in the background.

Avon Indiana-Hotbed of Model Railroading

by John Robert Coy, MMR™

Many years ago, people routinely saw model railroads here, there and everywhere! Hobby shops were on every side of town and all around central Indiana. Model trains were in store windows and advertised in local papers. Model railroading is still to this very day one of the most popular hobbies ever!

Unfortunately, the Internet has all but killed the local hobby store. There are only a few hobby stores scattered far and wide where people may stumble across a model train. Model railroading just doesn't have the visibility it did 50 years ago due to the disappearance of the local hobby shop.

Do you realize that there are several great model railroads located right here in Hendricks County Indiana? There are a large number of model railroad enthusiasts living here; many of whom are Members of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Central Indiana Division (CID).

Four (4) of these people are Master Model Railroaders!

Phillip Burnside, Dr. Robert Perry, Connie and John Coy, all of Avon, IN, have achieved the distinction of Master Model Railroader.

Only 782 people from around the world have earned that distinction since October of 1961. People who have earned Master Model Railroader are few and far between and to have four in Avon, Indiana, is simply incredible.

Connie Coy is ONLY one of twelve women to earn it. Connie is the FIRST woman in the Midwest Region and is also a Midwest Region Board Member. The NMRA's primary mission and purpose is to promote the hobby and educate people in the craft of model railroading.

The way one earns a Master Model Railroader is to participate in the Achievement Program, which is an educational program designed to improve a participant's modeling skills.

As a Member of the NMRA, educational opportunities and resources abound! Outside of the NMRA, it is much more difficult these days because finding train enthusiasts is challenging.

HOWEVER, it is NOT Challenging if one

seeks out the NMRA! There is a very large group (CID) that is right here in the center of Indiana that put on multiple train shows, train displays, modeler's Meets, and special events annually.

If you are interested in model trains, these are the people to get involved with. Model railroading is a great family hobby. It is NOT just for males. The NMRA is fortunate to have many highly skilled and talented female modelers.

Model Railroading is the World's Greatest Hobby!



FOR 2025, OUR 41ST ANNUAL LINCOLN SQUARE TRAIN SHOW PLUS

3RD URBANA FREE-MO OPEN (UFO)
MARCH 29 (8A-5P) & 30 (11A-4P)
@ LINCOLN SQUARE VILLAGE MALL
100 W. HIGH ST, DOWNTOWN URBANA, IL
FREE PUBLIC ADMISSION & PARKING
PRESENTED BY ILLINOIS TERMINAL DIVISION



**VENDORS, DISPLAY LAYOUT,
FREEMO AND T-TRAK MODULE
OWNERS, SEE:**

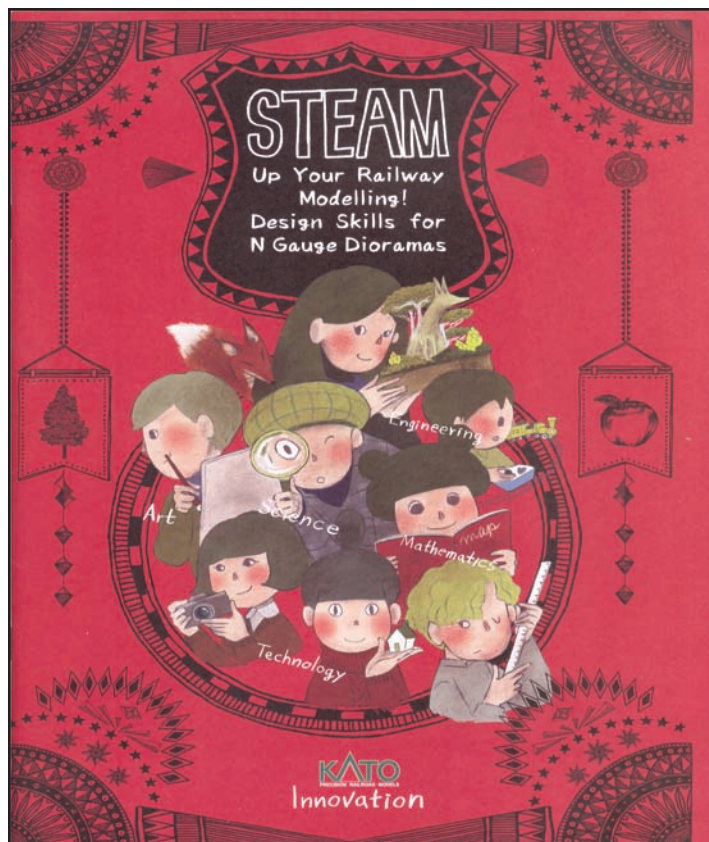
[HTTP://WWW.ILLINOISTERMINALDIVISION.ORG/SHOW/SHOW.HTM](http://www.illinoisterminaldivision.org/show/show.htm)

FOR REGISTRATION MATERIALS AND FULL INFO

Running late? Call 217-344-5609
EARLY BIRD SET-UP 6-8P FRIDAY,
MARCH 28

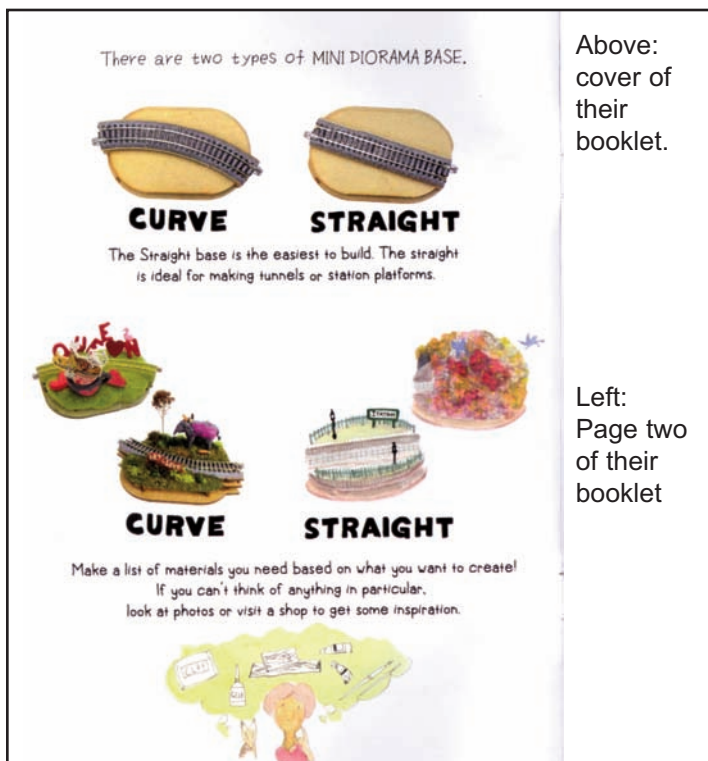
Kato's Learn & Build Mini-Dioramas by David Leider, MMR™

Speaking of Trainfest, the Kato booth was across the aisle from the Soo Line H&TS booth. They had a series of tables set up with chairs to serve as workstations, where children were building small N-scale dioramas. Kato sold a number of prepackaged materials and other supplies to build them. It was so popular that they had to add another table. I thought that this would be a good idea to get kids interested in modeling. Kato sold pre-packaged kits, but one could make up their own kit with a styrofoam base, a piece of track and various scenery elements.



Above: They also sold this book with lots of hints for beginners.

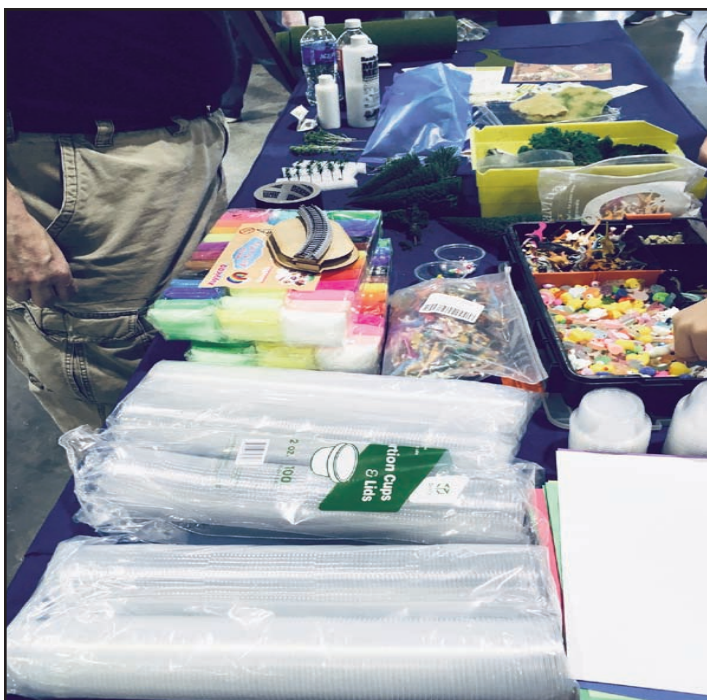
Below: A pre-packaged kit.



Above:
cover of
their
booklet.

Left:
Page two
of their
booklet





Participants at Trainfest could choose from a number of items to put on their diorama.



Some completed dioramas on display.



A few more photos of the Overland Western Lines.

All photos by the author.



July 14 – 19, 2025
www.nmra2025.org

**Big 2 day
National Train
Show!**

**NMRA National
Convention**

