

The Lantern



Newsletter of the Western New York Division
Niagara Frontier Region - National Model Railroad Association

Volume 6 - Issue 1
March 2026



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Please visit for more info:
www.wnydivisionnmra.com
www.nmra.org

UPCOMING EVENTS:

16-19 March NERx
Virtual Convention

1-3 May NFR
Regional Convention

DIVISION MEETINGS:

21 March @ HDC

11 April @ HDC

16 May @ HDC

13 June Picnic @
Williamsville Depot

From the Cab

Division,

Thanks to Mike Grabecki for serving as the Division's Chief Clerk since October 2024. Mike has decided to resign. I greatly appreciate the effort Mike put into keeping the Division's records and information accurate and up to date. His attention to detail will be missed. Mike will remain a member and we'll see him at meetings and other events.

The Niagara Frontier Region Convention, "Bayview Junction 2026", is set to run May 1-3 at the Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario. There will be clinics, contests, model railway layout visits, and more. Visit their website for full details at <https://nfrhamilton.ca>. This is our Region's convention, let's support it and hope to see you there!

NERx The Northeastern Region virtual convention returns March 16-19, 6:30-10:30 pm, live-streamed on YouTube. It's open to everyone at no cost. More at <http://www.nerx.org>

The Western New York Division has secured grant money from the Niagara Frontier Region to build a switching layout. Since the Division's founding in 2020, we have been borrowing the Lakeshores Division layout for use at the Hamburg train shows. Steve Cotten, along with Gerry DiPaola, Mitch Friscia, and Rich Collins, will begin work shortly. The switching layout attracts the kids' attention at train shows. Parents watch their children experience the thrill of running trains and relive their own childhood memories; meanwhile, we get the chance to tell them about the benefits of NMRA membership.

Finally, a few Division events on the horizon...please save the dates!

- March 21st Division meeting...topics include 3D figure painting and static grass applications.
- April 11th Division meeting (*NOTE THIS IS THE SECOND WEEKEND OF THE MONTH*)...topic will be layout planning.
- June 13th - our annual Division Picnic will be held on Saturday, June 13th, at the Williamsville Depot.

Bill

Bill Wiedenbeck, Superintendent



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Division Contact for 2028 NMRA National Convention:**Andy MacVie**

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Remember that the National NMRA and the Regions are not where the hobby works, it works locally. We are the NMRA. Come and join us!

The best part of being a member of the NMRA is the friends you meet along the way!

**WNYNMRA Monthly Meetings**

Meetings are held at the Heritage Discovery Center (HDC) located at 100 Lee Street, Buffalo, NY 14210. Parking and building entrance are at the back of the building. A handicap accessible entrance is available only at the front of the building. Hope to see you soon!

From the Cabin Car



Greetings,

I hope everyone is doing well and making it through this winter's many storms unscathed. I had an opportunity to attend the Amherst Railroad Society Model Train Show in Springfield, Massachusetts, for the first time this past January. An-



other first for me was riding Amtrak (Lakeshore Limited to the Springfield's Union Station). For those who've never attended the annual show, it's a must see! Being able to visit four buildings full of layout displays, manufactures, and merchants is a treat we in the greater Buffalo area just don't have like we used to. To see numerous operating layouts of varying scales, speak

directly with major manufactures, and discover the numerous merchant offerings within a short walk is almost mind blowing! I almost didn't know where to begin, but thanks to our former Superintendent Andy MacVie, who joined up with me at the show, and the many internet resources about the show, I felt well versed in how to best attack the show. Then



Mother Nature stepped in and despite a well attended Saturday event, many vendors and displays began to head home a bit early in advance of Winter Storm Fern. So, Sunday's show had a bit of a damper on it, but understandable given the storm's extent. Another highlight were the show clinics. I attended both full days of clinics to include several layout planning clinics.

The Amtrak ride to and from the show went off without a hitch (I traveled Wednesday before the clinics and the Monday after the show). Amtrak was back operating the Monday after the show/snow storm. While waiting for the return Lakeshore Limited at Union Station, I had the pleasure of meeting two "YouTubers" from the mid-west that have their own channels related to rail-fanning and a narrow gauge excursion ride. Overall, I had a great time and want to share just a few photos from my trip, enjoy!



Photos by Gerry DiPaola

New National Model Railroad Logo!



Image from National Model Railroad Association



Gerry



Gerry DiPaola, Editor

The Crew Lounge..

Welcome to the inaugural installment of “The Crew Lounge”!

The thought process behind creating this new section was to create a place where we could discuss projects that you are working on, either on your workbench or on your layout, or questions that you may have regarding either model or prototype railroading. Questions could include, but are not limited to, how to do a certain scenery technique, issues that you’re having with a piece of rolling stock, layout wiring, or control system problems, questions about a different car you may have seen, or the load that it carries. Keep in mind that the only silly question is the one that you don’t ask! I feel that there is enough experience amongst our membership that we should be able to answer any questions posed!

You might be wondering how I decided on naming this new venture “The Crew Lounge”? Over the holidays, I attended a get-together at a friend’s layout. During the course of the operating session, there was much discussion about current offerings from various model railroad manufacturers, issues with certain pieces of equipment and problem resolution, current and past prototypical railroad operations, and so on. After some of us had our fill of operating the layout, we retired to the living room, aka “Crew Lounge”, where conversations continued. What I witnessed was the kind of dialogue that we are trying to create within the pages of our newsletter, “The Lantern”.

Don’t be shy to send in your photos of a project that you’re working on. It could be a piece of rolling stock or a building you’re working on, or something from a project on your layout. Also, don’t be shy about sending in photos of something you might have seen trackside and have questions about.

Photos, questions, and/or comments can be sent to: **Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com**

I’m looking forward to hearing from all of you!

Until the next issue, happy railroading!

Bob

Bob Korthals, Assistant Editor 

Election News 2026

*****Special Election message from the Superintendent*****

The two-year terms of our elected Division officials expire in October of this year. All members are eligible to run for another term if they so choose. Candidates are welcome for all positions. Elected Officer positions include Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Clerk, and Paymaster. Descriptions for each position will appear in the June 1st Lantern newsletter, and a call for candidates to make their intentions known will be issued at that time. The September 1st Lantern newsletter will include a printed ballot for the October elections.

Please consider stepping forward to serve our Western New York Division.

Thank you!

Bill

Bill Wiedenbeck, Superintendent 

In My Travels

Article and Photos by Andy MacVie

My son, Nicholas, and his family live North of Albany, about an hour away from Vermont. He had already taken my wife up to Manchester, Vermont, to see many of the sights there. Then it was Grandpa's turn. We all went up to Manchester, VT and they were all extremely excited to show me one particular site called [The Hildene](#), the Lincoln Family Home. Robert Todd Lincoln and his wife, Mary, built Hildene as a summer home during the time Robert served as President of the Pullman Company after George Pullman's death in 1897.



Photo 1



Photo 2

While my family brought me to see the Lincoln estate, their real reason was to show me a Pullman Palace car that was part of the tour, which they knew I would like. I skipped the house, which was beautiful by the way, and went directly to the Pullman Car. The car was built by the Pullman Company in 1888 as a 10-section luxury car. It was named the "Ortega" and built for the Southern Pacific. President William McKinley used the car until his assassination in Buffalo, NY in 1901 (the car was here in Buffalo at that time). In 1903, the "Ortega" and four other luxury cars were rebuilt, and the "Ortega" was renamed "The Sunbeam."

Theodore Roosevelt used the car during his 1912 campaign for President on the Bull-Moose Ticket.

Some basic car stats in its 1903 configuration include: 72 ft. in length, 12 ft. wide, weighs 70,000 lbs., with a build cost of approximately \$20,000.

The car is an Executive Car type, Charter Car, Family Car, or Office Car and carry 18 Passengers with 2 Porters (see berthing in photo number 4). One Porter would sleep while the other was on duty, providing 24-hour service. Photos 5 and 6 show the kitchen and icebox that the Porters used to store and prepare meals for the passengers. The car's build data indicates an Observation Platform, 2 Staterooms, Salon/Dining Area, Public Toilet, Crew Quarters, and a Pantry/Galley. Oak and Yellow Pine truss construction with Poplar filler pieces make up the car's frame.

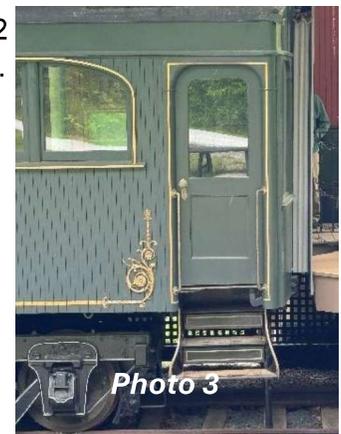


Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

In My Travels (cont.)



Photo 7

The siding is made from Western Red Cedar, and the original berths are from Cuban Mahogany. The roof is constructed of Terne, an alloy coating made of lead and tin. The mahogany bench seats fold down (photo 7), to create a bunk. Photo 8 shows the table removed, allowing the bench to drop down and create yet another berth area. Photo 9 shows the Dining area. Photos 10 and 11 are the Public Bathroom, and the window in Photo 12 is genuine Tiffany Glass.



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10

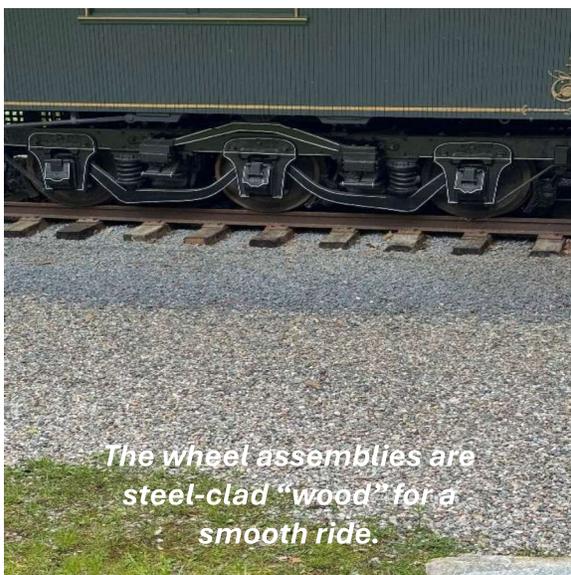


Photo 11

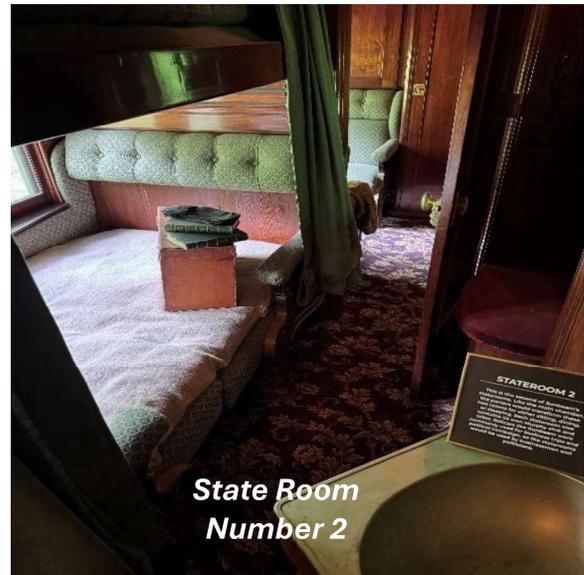


Photo 12

The factory furnished electric lighting (with gas backup) and battery power from the generator located on the truck axles. Baker heaters supply baseboard heat and running hot water. Finally, the Galley has a 2-burner coal-fired stove/oven. It's a unique and beautiful car, I'm so glad I had a chance see it and share with you here. Next time, I'll make sure to tour Lincoln's home too!



The wheel assemblies are steel-clad "wood" for a smooth ride.

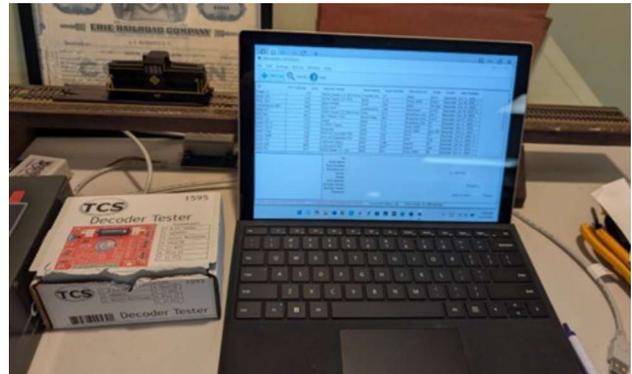


State Room Number 2

What's on My Workbench

Article and Photos by Gary Reynolds, MMR

Station 1 – This area contains me computer and it is where I record all the technical info for my engines. I also do any decoder programming that may be required.



Station 2 – This area contains my power tools, cutting devices, and any jigs that I may be using.

Station 3 – This is my assembly table. Right now I am in the process of building a New Bedford Whale Boat. Not shown are a couple of wooden boxcars that I am scratch building.



Station 4 – Currently, this area is used as a storage area and contains many items I need to find a home for or begin working on. 📍

Visit to Pennsylvania State Model Railroad Club

Article and Photos by Gary Reynolds, MMR

On the weekend of November 22, I visited my alma mater, the Pennsylvania State University (PSU), to go to a football game. During my visit I toured the PSU Model Railroad Club. It has blossomed into a vibrant community with students from over 15 different majors. Here, model railroading is more than just trains, it's bringing together skills in landscape design, electrical and civil engineering, woodworking, and countless other areas to make this a truly unique experience.



Jacob showing me around the club.



The club is the second oldest continuously run student organization Model railroad club.

Four of the students took the afternoon to meet me and show me around their club. The club has moved around campus several times from my initial visit fifty years ago. Each time they've moved — whether due to renovations, a need for more space, or other administrative changes - they've started a new layout of the tracks. Currently, the club is on their sixth or seventh layout in their lengthy history. They are currently in one of the non-descript lab buildings within walking distance from Beaver stadium.

Pieces on display now have been in the collection for decades, and the entire project is deeply connected to Penn State history. Their current model depicts a fictional rail line, the University Park & Eastern, reflecting the club's connection to Happy Valley and Penn State. The current layout, set up in the in Research Unit A Modular Lab Facility, is about 30 feet long by four feet wide, The club is made up primarily of undergraduate students, although memberships are available for graduate students, staff, and faculty. Once a semester, the Model Railway Club offers an open house for the public to come and view the trains, which are set up either in the HUB-Robeson Center or in the lab location. The last three photos show more of this great PSU model railroad layout!

PSU Model Railroad Club (cont.)



The PSU club car.



Part of the PSU club's layout with two 3D printed bridges.



A small T scale module is used for displays.



Division Calendar & Upcoming/Future Events

2026:

March 1- *The Lantern* newsletter publish date

March 7- Annual planning meeting at HDC 10:00am-12:00pm (*Executive Committee*)

March 16-19- NERx Virtual Convention 6:30-10:30pm on YouTube at <https://www.nerx.org/>

March 21- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30am

April 11- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30am

May 1/2/3- Niagara Frontier Region Convention - Bayview Junction in Hamilton, Ontario, CA. See page 12 for flyer and webpage (webpage includes *APPLICATION TO PRESENT A CLINIC AT THE NFR CONVENTION* if you are interested in presenting).

May 16- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30am

May 25- Deadline for submissions to June's *The Lantern* newsletter

June 1- *The Lantern* newsletter publish date

June 3- Division Executive Committee meeting 7:00pm (*virtual meeting*)

June 13- Division Picnic at Williamsville Depot 11:00am

July 27-August 2- NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, TN <https://www.nmra2026.org>

August 24- Deadline for submissions to August's *The Lantern* newsletter

September 1- *The Lantern* newsletter publish date

September 2- Division Executive Committee meeting 7:00pm (*virtual meeting*)

September 19- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30am

October 17- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30am

November 21/22- WNYRHS Toy & Train Show, Hamburg Fair Grounds

November 23- Deadline for submissions to December's *The Lantern* newsletter

December 1- *The Lantern* newsletter publish date

2027: NMRA National Convention in Seattle, WA

2028: NMRA National Convention in Rochester, NY

[Click here for NMRA National Conventions](#)

[Click here for NMRA Regional Conventions](#)

Division Calendar & Upcoming/Future Events (cont.)

[More information at https://nfrhamilton.ca/](https://nfrhamilton.ca/)



Watch for revised details!

BAYVIEW JUNCTION 2026

The International Division will host next year's

Niagara Frontier Region Annual Convention

Hamilton, ON

May 1-3, 2026

Mohawk College, 135 Fennell Ave W, Hamilton, ON L9C 0E5, on
Hamilton mountain, corner of West 5th.

Logo Design by Ben Simpson

Division Calendar & Upcoming/Future Events (cont.)



When conference registration is finalized you will be able to register directly from the website. In the meantime, we will be populating the site with convention details as they become available.

Reserving a room The College will create an account for attendees and a link will be available immediately for registrations.

GROUP NAME: **NMRA – NIAGARA FRONTIER REGION**

DATES: **MAY 1-3, 2026**

RATE: **\$115.00** (rates are per night, plus HST) Single – Double
Occupancy

If you are interesting in lending a hand, contact our email address:
intldivnmra.info@gmail.ca

Layout visits: This may be your opportunity to put your layout on display for guests from around the province—we expect about 100 participants.

Clinics: slots are open for presentations to highlight your interests and skills.

Contests: are always better with plenty of exhibits.

Photo and Model by Dave Patterson, MMR



Links and Notes



Heritage Discovery Center (HDC) Directions:

Get off the I-90 at the Smith Street Exit and go south on Smith Street to South Park Ave, turn left and head east on South Park to Lee Street, then turn left on to Lee Street and 100 Lee is on the left side of the street. Parking and an entrance are in the back of the building; however, a Handicap entrance is only available in the front of the building.

Use the QR Reader below to go to Western New York Division of the NMRA website. Yes fans we have our own webpage!
www.WNYDivisionNMRA.com



The Lantern Newsletter - Annual Publication Dates

Our Lantern is published monthly and is a great place to learn and share information. Contributions welcome! Consider adding to our Lantern newsletter by sending your ideas and articles to the editor, Gerry DiPaola, at:

Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com / 716-545-1740

Publication date March 1st - Deadline for submissions is February 15th

Publication date June 1st - Deadline for submissions is May 15th

Publication date September 1st - Deadline for submissions is August 15th

Publication date December 1st - Deadline for submissions is November 15th

Thank you in advance for your contributions!



Links and Notes (continued)

Good Reasons to keep your membership!

Click the below link for the most current information.

THREE BIG BENEFITS OF NMRA MEMBERSHIP:



Those are the discounts that manufacturers and hobby shops in our Partnership Program are giving us right now. Partners like Micro-Mark®, Model Rectifier Corporation®, Badger Airbrush®, Unreal Details®, Hot Wire Foam Factory®, Logic Rail™ Technologies. And over 30 more companies. It's savings that can actually pay for your membership!

And are you taking advantage of our other big benefits? Like 150+ national convention clinic videos. Or over 15 hours of "how-to" videos produced by the biggest names in model railroading videos. Or our directory of model railroad layouts all over the world that you can visit. The list goes on and on.

If you haven't visited www.nmra.org lately, you're missing out on some really great stuff. Starting with a boatload of discounts!



We make it more fun.



PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NMRA members can log in at www.nmra.org and click on the **Benefits** tab to view the **NMRA Partnership Program**. Please patronize all of our partners for some fantastic discounts as an NMRA member!

- *NScaleWorks** NScaleWorks offers N-scale scenery and rolling stock detail items, as well as custom designed and printed decals.
- *Tichy Train Group** Manufacturer of rolling stock and structure kits in N, HO, S, and O, as well as a wide array of detail & structural parts.

CatzPaw Innovations
Clever Models
Deluxe Materials
East Coast Circuits
Great Decals
Green Frog Productions
Hot Wire Foam Factory
Jason's Brass Poles
K.I.S.S. Method Inc
LARC Productions
Logic Rail Technologies
Micro-Mark
MinuteMan Scale Models

Modelers Decals & Paint
Model Railroad Benchwork
Model Train Catalogue
Motrak Models
MRC (Model Rectifier Corp)
OK Engines/Streamliners
Old West Scenery
Ram Track
RR-CirKits
Rusty Stumps
Scale Model Plans
Scalecoat Paint
Scenery Solutions

Showcase Miniatures
Team Track Models
The N Scale Architect
The Train Show, Inc.
Train Installations, LLC
Trainmaster TV/MRH Store
UGears
Unreal Details
**USA Airbrush Supply/
 Badger Airbrush**
WiFi Model Railroad LLC

***Indicates newest Partner**

[Click here for the NMRA's Partnership Program](#)

Links and Notes (continued)

WNY Division Members' Section

Member Ken Akerboom is looking to borrow a copy of the book "Merchants Despatch: Its History and Equipment" by Roger C. Hinman (Signature press, 2011?). Please reach out to Ken directly or contact the editor at Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com. Thank you!

WNY Division Apparel

Thanks to Frank Pastore for his efforts working with area vendors for WNY Division name tags and apparel items. Please reach out to Frank directly if you have yet to either pay for and/or pick up a name tag. For apparel related offerings, please visit <https://selectlinesports.com/collections/national-model-railroad-association-wny> or use the QR Reader to the right to take you to the website (select Fan Cave, Team Stories, then National Model Railroad Association). Currently available are polos, sweatshirts, 1/4 zip top, and oxford shirts.



Great Connections - Check Out These Links for Additional Information:

- [NMRA Membership Information](#)
- [NMRA Beginners Guide](#)