

The Telegraph Key

An NMRA Sunshine Region Monthly Publication

December 2024



Sunshine Region - NMRA

Where modelers come to share, develop, and learn new skills.



Welcome to the best region under the sun!

2023 Sunshine Region Convention
Convention Registration

WWW.NMRA SunshineRegion.org



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Editor's Message



Happy Holidays to all our Sunshine Region members!

I hope you each can celebrate this season in whatever way is special to you and close 2024 with positivity.

I ended up getting only a small portion of my model railroading goals completed this year but strive to do better in 2025 and still plan on sharing work on my small layout with you later.

Looking forward to Prototype Rails in January. Take care!

Mark Lewalski

Vice President and Telegraph Key Editor



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President's Message



Dear Sunshine Region Members,

At this Writing we are all about to celebrate Thanksgiving with Family and friends or in our own special way. It is hard to believe that Thanksgiving and Christmas are upon us. This can be a challenging time for some so look for opportunities to provide some hope and cheer to those around you. With that in mind I want to say as we embark on this new chapter together, I want to emphasize the importance of **Mentorship, Fellowship, and Community** within our Sunshine Region (SSR). These principles are the foundation of our shared passion for model railroading and are key to making the SSR an exceptional experience for everyone involved.

Florida's size and the spread of our membership present unique challenges, but they also offer opportunities for us to connect in creative ways. That's why your new board is committed to enhancing your membership experience and ensuring everyone feels welcomed and included.

Our Division Superintendents play a vital role in fostering local engagement, and I encourage you to participate in your division's activities. Look out for announcements about **in-person and virtual events**—these are perfect opportunities to meet, learn, and share ideas with your fellow model railroaders. Even if an event is outside your division, you're always welcome to jump in and join the fun.

Recognizing that not everyone can travel, we are prioritizing **Virtual Clinics and hybrid events** (offering both in-person and virtual options). This way, all members—whether near or far—can connect, learn, and grow together.

Since Hurricane Milton impacted our plans for the Iron Horse Regional Convention in Ocala, we want to ensure that we still come together as a region. Please mark your calendars for an **all-hands Membership Meeting on December 8th at 7:30 PM**. You should have already received an email with the invitation and meeting link, and the details are also listed on our website.

This is your chance to meet your new board, share your interests and concerns, and tell us what you'd like to see more of as we move forward. Your input is invaluable as we focus on building a positive and inclusive future for the Sunshine Region.

Together, we are dedicated to growing and improving the SSR to truly make it the "Best Region under the Sun." Thank you for your support, your passion, and your commitment to our incredible community.

See you on Sunday December 8th!


Happy Model Railroading

Andy Zimmerman
President

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The Western Bay Railroad is a 950 square ft On30 layout in Port St Lucie. We meet almost every Tuesday evening. We are looking for new members to join our group. There are OP sessions & scenery that we are still working on. If you're a

modeler and serious about learning, give us a try! Go to our website or contact Al Sohl MMR als0622@yahoo.com

***'No dues, just a great experience'*
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Treasurer's Message



Hello Everyone,

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays to all!!

I wanted to take this opportunity to share with our members what it takes financially to run the Sunshine Region annually.

We create a rough budget going out three years to help identify all income and expenses that will befall us and to ensure we have the cash to support this.

We derive income from 5 sources: 1) interest from the bank on our holdings in the form of CD's and a Money Market account, 2) our biannual stipend from the NMRA, 3) any monies from division meets or convention, 4) donations and 5) advertising.

On the expense side of things, we pay for insurance, website, postage, AP Awards, office supplies, software and equipment (laptops, projectors, screens and their repair or replacement), legal fees to the State, and expenses related to division meets/convention.

In round numbers it costs the Region about \$3000 a year to operate. We receive \$850 from the NMRA, \$1000 from advertising, \$1000 from bank interest, \$400 from division meets, and \$1000 in donations for 2024. Sounds good right? \$4000 in, 3000 out, we still have cash left. However, interest rates are falling, and our donations can't be expected to occur with any consistency, if at all. Take away our donations and a reduction in interest rates and we run short of cash to pay our bills. Sure, we can draw down our cash reserves to pay shortfalls or if we need a new laptop or projector or we spent money on a convention that didn't happen but that reduces future interest on our holdings.

But it's not all doom and gloom folks, I'm just pointing out as everyone knows, things are getting more expensive. We all feel it in our savings and our own monthly bills. As an organization we cannot guarantee interest rates, donations or monies from the NMRA. But we can work on increasing our

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advertising in the Telegraph Key, Journal Box and Timetable. If we all worked together to get our local hobby stores (or national ones) and clubs to place an ad with us we would be in sound fiscal condition for years to come.

Let me close with some of my thoughts. My goal is not to grow the treasury of the SSR by more than \$1 dollar year over year. Let's bring in the cash we need to meet our bills in any given year with any overage used to reduce the cost of the convention which, in turn, reduces your cost to attend. I ask that everyone try to sell an ad – a business card ad is only \$50 for the entire year, other ad sizes slightly more expensive (pricing is on our website). I plan on listing 2024 financials in our February 2025 Telegraph Key. If anyone has any questions, please email me.

Glenn Kopriva

Treasurer

Achievement Program



So, let's talk about the route to Master Model Railroader. Number one there are eleven (11) different APs in the program and they are divided up into four (4) different groups and you need at least one AP from each group plus three (3) from any of the other groups for a total of seven (7) to become a Master Model Railroader.

The Groups are:

#1 Railroad Equipment

- Master Builder Motive Power
- Master Builder Cars

#2 Railroad Setting

- Master Builder Structures
- Master builder Scenery
- Master Builder Models

#3 Railroad Construction and Operation

- Model Railroad Engineer Civil
- Model Railroad Engineer Electrical
- Chief Dispatcher

#4 Service to The Hobby and NMRA

- Association Official
- Association Volunteer
- Model Railroad Author

So now let's talk about The Statement of Qualifications for Master Builder Motive Power. To qualify for this certificate, you must:

#1 Build three (3) scale models of a railroad motive power, one (1) of which must be scratchbuilt. Motive Power is defined as a locomotive or a self-propelled vehicle. To qualify as scratchbuilt, the motive power must contain all of the following scratchbuilt items as applicable:

- Steam Locomotive: frame and boiler and cab; tender frame and body; and either valve gear or min and side driving rods.
- Other Motive Power: body and frame and cab/hood; power truck side frame; and pantograph or trolley poles where appropriate.

All models must be capable of self-propulsion on track of the same gauge as the model. Power trains for all models may be commercial motors and gears. All models must be super detailed either with scratchbuilt parts or with commercial parts as defined in the AP Regulations "DEFINITIONS" section

#2 Earn a Merit Award with each of the three (3) scale models of motive power via an NMRA sponsored model contest or AP Merit Award Evaluation.

#3 Submit a completed Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) which shall include the following for each model:

- Attachment giving detail descriptions of each of the models.
 - Identification of the scratchbuilt features for each of the models.
 - List all the commercial components appearing on the models.
 - List the materials used in building each of the models.
- Verification of the Merit Awards - copies of the evaluation's sheets or the Merit Award sheets.

Next month we will cover the Statement of Qualifications for Achievement Program Cars. That is all I have for this time.

Thank you,

Ken Hoot

Achievement Program Chair

Northern Division



Bob doesn't have an update for this month.

Robert Feuerstein

Northern Division Superintendent

Eastern Division



Thank you to everyone who participated in the recent Sunshine Region elections. I look forward to continuing my tenure as Superintendent – Eastern Division. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding SSR activities, please email me at jim@moore-associates.net.

The annual Railroad Prototype Modelers Cocoa Beach meet will soon be upon us (January 9 – 12, 2025). Once again, the venue is the Cocoa Beach Hilton, and 96 clinics are planned. This is a NMRA-sanctioned event. Registration details at prototyperrail.com.

Getting started with Operations

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There are probably as many ways to operate a model railroad layout as there are model railroaders. Some like to run long trains, be they passenger or freight. Others will run trains using a schedule or timetable, stopping at various waypoints along the line to drop off or pick up various cars. And further still, there is a growing contingent who operate in as prototypical a manner as their knowledge and enthusiasm allows. In some instances, these prototypical operations involve a sizeable layout with multiple towns, stations, and industries. By contrast, some layouts may be more modest, perhaps even confined to a relatively small shelf trackplan with the focus on switching a handful of online customers.

As I have shared in prior columns, am presently constructing a 15-linear foot industrial-theme shelf layout inspired by a former PRR branch across the Monongahela River from downtown Pittsburgh PA. My nascent layout features 12 online customers and a small interchange yard. Connections with the larger railway universe occurs “off the layout”. Although driving of the golden spike lies in the distant future, brainstorming re how best to operate this “bedroom empire” competes with the building, painting, and weathering scores of freight cars.

Literally volumes have been written on model railroading operations, some scholarly other intended to get the budding rail operator up and running as soon as practical. In pursuing this interest, I have discovered four resources to be especially helpful.

First, after joining the NMRA, one of my next investments was membership with the Operations Special Interest Group (OPSIG). This has provided several benefits including a quarterly newsletter (*The Dispatcher's Office*), online discussion group, and an online listing of actual (past and present) railroad industries (customers) segregated by geographic region.

OPSIG members also enjoy access to a large collection of *DO* back issues, something which has benefited me greatly as I strive to increase my understanding of waybills and car forwarding. Two articles by noted SP modeler Tony Thompson (MMR) stand out: “Freight Car Handling and Distribution” (October 2011) and “Contents of a Waybill” (April 2010).

Second, given my focus on the PRR in the late 1940s, securing a listing of stations, sidings, and online customers was important. The PRR produced such a document (CT 1000); initially annually, and then less frequently after 1918. The last two editions were released in 1923 and 1945. A Google search will reveal various regional, line, or branch extracts online as well as full editions via railway ephemera dealers.

Third, *Tom's 1938 Register* (Thomas A. Gloger, 2001) This 250-page, coil bound book contain a listing of companies (consumers and producers) categorized by product type. Example: “Food Ingredients: Standard Brands, Inc. (Peekskill NY). Yeast, alcohol, and other products. Employees 2,500. RR: NYC”. Have found this to be very useful in preparing waybills for both inbound and outbound traffic.

Fourth, over the last fifteen years or so, *Model Railroader's* Jeff Wilson authored a series of softcover books, each focusing on a specific industry or commodity. Published by Kalmbach Books, titles in the series include piggyback and container traffic; express, mail, and merchandise service; produce, and milk. Each volume typically includes an overview of the industry or commodity (as it relates to movement by rail), discussion of rolling stock and owners, insights into day-to-day operations, and discussion of customers and facilities.

We've all heard of Rule 1: "It's my railway.....". And while true, suspect many layout owners would also agree having a "reason for being" (albeit sufficiently flexible to reflect the current priorities of the brass hat) can add an element of purpose. After all, those online customers exist for a reason: the reliable movement of inbound materials and finished goods to and from their respective "loading dock".

Jim Moore

Eastern Division Superintendent

Western Division



Don doesn't have an update for this month.

Don Wetmore

Western Division Superintendent

Southern Division



Hi, Bob Leonard, my predecessor, sent me a departing message to include in this month's article. I do want to thank Bob for his years as superintendent and wish him the best in his new role as at-large director of the Sunshine Region.

From Bob:

Southern division folks, this will be my last installment informing members of what is coming and what has taken place. The Southern division has a new superintendent, Richard Berger, and he comes with credentials. Richard has an extensive history in the world of model railroading. Through the years he has been a proponent of getting manufacturers to produce some models that have been bypassed numerous times. His biography will show up here in the TK or in the next iteration of Journal Box, so you'll learn more about him.

Well, that was the lead in from me to the report from last month that I missed getting to Richard in time. I had wanted to introduce him to the division, but that has already taken place, making this redundant. I do want to say that this replacement of mine will be around, unlike my previous replacement who went so far as to leave the state. Anyway, for those of you who pay attention to this report, please provide Richard with the necessary information to create the report. With that, I thank those who I have had conversations with, and who have taken the time to give me the information. You are all in good hands!

Thank you, Bob Leonard

In club news, the Florida Citrus Model Train Society (FCMTS) has been setting up a display starting on Monday, November 18th at the Southwest Regional Library at 16835 Sheridan Street, Pembroke Pines, FL 33331. The display will be expansive with operating layouts in HO, O, and G scales as well as some N scale. The estimated opening date for visitors is Monday, November 25th. The display will be open from Noon to 4 PM Monday through Thursday and on Saturday (closed Fridays and Sundays). The Model Train Display will continue through January 15th, 2025 and the official grand opening date will be announced soon on their web site. Please contact Ken Sargeant at (954) 253-0413 for any additional information. Their web site is found at www.fcmts.org.

The East Coast HO Exhibitors Society (ECHOES) SSR divisional meet and workshop on November 2nd and operating sessions November 2nd-3rd was well attended by ECHOES members and members of other clubs in the Southern division.

The next operating session is planned for late December in the same location, the Cornerstone United Methodist Church at 20740 Old Cutler Road, Cutler Bay, FL 33189. The target dates are December 26th through January 2nd. Once these plans are finalized, more information will be provided.

The club also plans to participate in an Auto Show on January 25-26th at the St. Andrews church at 14260 Old Cutler Road, Miami. Their layout will be up and running during that show, which is a fund raiser organized by a local auto club to support the church youth group. No word yet on hours or fees. More information will be provided when it becomes available. For additional information, please contact Rick Diaz, rickdiaz@att.net or Tracey Sanders, tassailor@mac.com.

The Palm Beach Model Railroaders are planning to be open with trains operating during the South Florida Fair from January 17th through February 2nd. During the fair, the club will be open 7 days a week and for the entire day and evening each day the fair is open. Please check the South Florida Fair web site for specifics on hours each day. This will be their 50th year of participation in the fair. The club meets weekly on Tuesday evenings 6-9 PM at the South Florida Fairgrounds, 9067 Southern Blvd, West Palm Beach, 33411. They can be contacted at PBMRRCclub@gmail.com for additional information. The club's new web site is www.pbmrr.org.

Work on the layout continues, with the goal of completing a refinery addition by December in time for the fair. Repairs to track work and wiring are also ongoing.

The South Florida Railway Museum (SFRM) annual Train Show at the St. Paul Lutheran Church at 701 West Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton FL 33486 on Saturday, November 23rd was well attended. The SFRM T-TRAK modular layout made its public debut at the show and operated flawlessly. The club is assembling multi-layer racks to ease transportation of the modules. An HO modular layout was also on display at the show.

Work continues on both the permanent HO and N scale layouts. Open houses at the club are held the 2nd Saturday of each month, with visitors welcomed from 11 AM through 4 PM. The next open house is December 14th.

That's all for now. I wish everyone a very Happy Holidays. Until next month, enjoy our favorite hobby!

Richard Berger

Southern Division Superintendent

South Florida Railway Museum

4th Annual Train Show

**St. Paul Lutheran Church
701 W. Palmetto Park Rd, Boca Raton**

**Saturday 23 November 2024
9:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

Admission \$8.00, 13 and under FREE

Museum Open House 12:00 to 4:00 PM

**Remaining Open House Dates
11-09 & 12-14**

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E.C.H.O.E.S is a modular model railroad club located in Miami-Dade, Florida, dedicated to building and displaying our HO scale model railroad layout. Our purpose is to enjoy and promote the hobby of model railroading and preserve the history of railroading in South Florida. The club was started in the summer of 1985, with the goal of presenting a HO scale modular model railroad layout for display at “The Harvest Festival”. Throughout the years, the layout has been displayed at regional conventions, four NMRA National Train Shows (Atlanta twice, Ft. Lauderdale, FL and Orlando), and other events in Miami Dade and Broward counties. We do running/operating sessions several times a year and welcome guests to join us. Membership is open and we welcome anyone who shares an interest and passion for Model railroading.

For more information, please contact:

Rick Diaz	rickdiaz@att.net	305 496 9266
Tracey Sanders	tassailor@mac.com	786 514 5667
Herb Ford	ehf640@gmail.com	786 375 1424



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