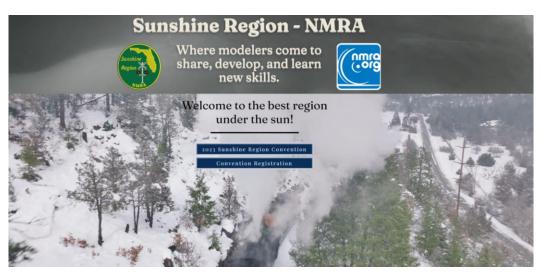
# The Telegraph Key

An NMRA Sunshine Region Monthly Publication

November 2024





WWW.NMRASunshineRegion.org





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# Editor's Message



Happy November and Happy Thanksgiving to everyone! I missed seeing a lot of you during our planned annual convention but I hope that the hurricanes left you fairly unscathed. My street mostly had tree debris and some fence damage after Milton and nothing from Helene. I know that a lot of others had it far, far worse.

Our Convention Committee were still grinding out the final details but had to make a decision based on the best for all. I had three clinics planned to present to you; now I have more time to work on them.

Keeping this message pretty short this month. I plan on attending Prototype Rails in Cocoa Beach next year, so if you see me, please say hi.

#### Mark Lewalski

### Vice President and Telegraph Key Editor



# President's Message



My Fellow Sunshine Region Members,

It is November and thankfully we are closing out Hurricane season. I hope this message finds you well and getting back on track, pun intended, While I already sent out an earlier message on the elections, I wanted to make sure everyone knows the outcome. I am pleased to welcome our new SSR Board members, elected to serve and

help us continue building an active, thriving community in the Sunshine Region of the NMRA for the next 3 years. Your participation in this election is deeply appreciated, and I am honored to share the results with you:

#### **Elected Officers:**

President: Andy Zimmerman, with 130 of 133 votes cast

Vice President: Mark Lewalski, with 130 of 133 votes cast

Secretary: Eric Menger, with 128 of 133 votes cast

Treasurer: Glenn Kopriva, with 129 of 133 votes cast

**Directors at Large** (4 Positions):

Jeff "Ski" Guzowski, with 93 of 133 votes cast

Robert Leonard, with 91 of 133 votes cast

Kenneth Hoot, with 86 of 133 votes cast

Paul Beckstrom, with 79 of 133 votes cast

#### **Division Superintendents:**

North Division: Robert Feuerstein, with 22 votes

Eastern Division: Jim Moore, with 26 votes

Western Division: Don Wetmore, with 56 votes

Southern Division: Richard Berger, with 17 votes

Congratulations to our new Board members! Together, they bring a wealth of experience and enthusiasm for advancing the Sunshine Region's mission. The new Board will be exploring fresh approaches to strengthen our organization, including the possibility of quarterly meetings instead of monthly ones, regular member outreach initiatives, and smaller events like one-day mini conventions in various divisions. We're also considering more virtual and in-person clinics, casual lunches, and other gatherings to enhance community outreach and build connections.

These smaller gatherings are designed to bring us closer together, creating spaces to learn and grow in our shared hobby. At the heart of any successful club, division, or region is a sense of fellowship. Model railroading is a hobby that thrives on shared knowledge, mentorship, and camaraderie. By

actively participating—attending meetings, volunteering, or mentoring newcomers—we strengthen the bonds within our community.

The Sunshine Region has always been a place for members to develop their skills and expand their network of fellow model railroaders. Mentorship is a crucial part of this journey. When experienced members share their knowledge with others, they help ensure the future of the hobby, creating a culture of learning and support that benefits everyone. How many of you out there would be willing to share your skills with fellow members in these one day meets? Do you have a skill you would like to share?

Now is the time to break the silence. Get involved with your region, division, or club, and make your voice heard. Whether you're attending a convention, voting in elections, or mentoring a fellow modeler, your participation matters. Together, we can create a vibrant, inclusive, and engaged community that continues to grow and thrive.

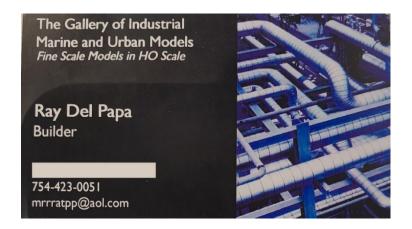
The sound of silence has no place in a thriving model railroad community. Let's think of new ways to engage our membership, get involved, and build a stronger future for the Sunshine Region and the NMRA.

On the topic of getting involved and shaping our future, I'd like to acknowledge our Treasurer, Glenn Kopriva. Glenn stepped up at a pivotal moment, making an incredible impact by restructuring our finances to serve the Sunshine Region more effectively. His dedication—both in time and personal resources—has been essential in securing a stronger financial footing for us all. Beyond finances, Glenn also worked tirelessly to develop a comprehensive website that will meet many of our needs in the coming years. It was my privilege to nominate Glenn for the NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division/Region, recognizing his outstanding contributions. In August, I had the honor of accepting this award on his behalf at the National Convention in Long Beach, and I had hoped to present it to him at our own regional convention. Please join me in congratulating Glenn on this well-deserved recognition!

I'd love to hear your thoughts and ideas on how we can better serve our community. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime at SSRPrez@NMRA.org

Happy Model Railroading

Andy Zimmerman President



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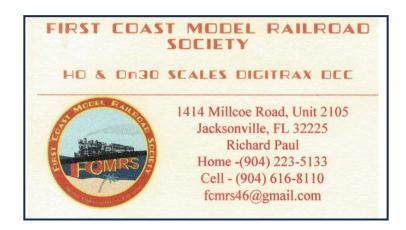
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The Western Bay Railroad is a 950 square ft On30 layout in Port St Lucie. We meet almost every Tuesday evening. We are looking for new members to join our group. There are OP sessions & scenery that we are still

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' westernbayrailroad.org



# Treasurer's Message



Hello All,

Let me start off with saying I hope everyone is safe and sound after our storms in October. I know it was a devastating time for some. Our prayers continue to go out to those of you still reeling from this and hope things improve quickly.

Our 2024 convention -- What can I say, I think the Board operated with everyone's safety in mind. While we are all saddened by the cancelation, we are already looking to make the 2025 convention even more special. Keep an eye on the website at the beginning of the new year to see what we have planned!

Everyone should have received their refunds for all the money spent on the convention. If you did not receive your refund, please email me so we can research it.

Lastly, if there is a subject you would like to learn more about or a how-to class that you would like to have us put on at the convention please email me with this information. We want to put on great clinics that are meaningful to you – and if you are knowledgeable in a particular subject or would want to share your experience, please email me!! We always are in need of folks that can share their knowledge with others. In this way we all grow and learn.

Have a fantastic Thanksgiving!!! Gobble gobble.

Glenn Kopriva

Treasurer

# **Achievement Program**



I have one AP for the month of October, and it is Chip Pecere for Author from Vero Beach who is in the Eastern Division. I am waiting for a couple of signatures and maybe we can have a couple more APs for next month. Also, maybe I will start listing all the requirements for the Statement of Qualifications, so everyone knows what is required for each of the eleven AP requirements. That is all I have for now.

Thank you,

#### **Ken Hoot**

# **Achievement Program Chair**

## Northern Division



#### First Coast Model RR Society Open Running

- Formal sessions with switch lists and assigned trains will be held to work on specific layout areas.
- Time: start 09:00 am to about 11:00 a.m.
- Place: FCMRS club layout. 1414 Millcoe Road, Jacksonville, FL
- Bring your favorite loco and a matching caboose to run with your train. We use club cars only for these sessions.

#### A few things are happening with trains in North Florida, including:

#### SunRail Phase 2 Northern Expansion

This expansion is expected to open in summer 2024. It will add a new commuter station in DeLand and extend the commuter rail service between DeBary and DeLand Amtrak Stations.

#### **First Coast Commuter Rail**

This proposed passenger rail service will connect downtown Jacksonville to downtown St. Augustine, with stops at Avenues Walk and Racetrack Road.

#### **Brightline**

This high-speed passenger train service connects Miami and Orlando, with stops in Aventura, Fort Lauderdale, Boca Raton, and West Palm Beach. Brightline is planning to extend to Tampa and is working with local transit agencies to develop local, regional rail for Orlando and Miami.

#### Florida Rail Safety Coalition (FRSC)

This coalition was created by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to address rail-related concerns. The FRSC brings together rail industry partners to develop solutions to reduce the likelihood of rail collisions.

#### Robert Feuerstein

# Northern Division Superintendent

# **Eastern Division**

As I write this month's column it's been five days since Hurricane Milton. Fortunately, the damage to our house and yards was relatively modest. Our thoughts (and offers of assistance) are with friends and neighbors more severely impacted.

Like many of you, I was looking forward to the Sunshine Region's annual gathering. Although the event was canceled due to Milton, am very appreciative of Glenn Kopriva, Jeff Guzowski, the event organizers, and clinicians who collectively labored for many months preparing for the convention. While the next Sunshine Region convention is slated for October 2025, preliminary discussions are underway regarding a possible division gathering in Spring 2025. Stay tuned

#### Developing a credible freight car fleet

New entrants to the model railroading hobby are soon faced with (at least) four decisions: 1) scale, 2) prototype or freelance, 3) setting and/or period, and finally, 4) fleet composition. Further, when you're at "ground zero" in the hobby, there's considerable temptation to acquire rolling stock based largely on visual appeal, uniqueness (the proverbial pickle car), and, yes, affordability or budget. Yet perhaps no aspect serves to convey period, purpose, and authenticity more than one's freight car fleet. Admittedly motive power selection also contributes to "period". However, based on my unscientific observations, few modelers own as many locomotives as they do rolling stock.

My return to the hobby following a 25-year hiatus was rather serendipitous. Saw an advert for a local train show. Ended up walking away with a half dozen HO scale steam-era boxcar kits (Red Caboose,

Intermountain, and Walthers/Train-Miniature). This relatively modest purchase helped define the direction my modeling efforts would take more than I realized.

Perhaps on a par with actual modeling, I enjoy the research aspect of the hobby. In my efforts to assemble a credible "transition era" freight car fleet, I have benefited from numerous resources, most of which are readily available to like-minded hobbyists. Particularly notable are the writings of John Nehrich (one of the early organizers of the renown New England, Berkshire & Western Railroad layout at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute), noted PRR historian and modeler Jerry Britton, Ted Culotta and Larry Kline (co-authors of the definitive tome, *The Post-War Freight Car Fleet*, NMRA 2006), Tony Thompson (noted SP modeler and prolific author), and steam-era freight car enthusiasts Tim Gilbert and Dave Nelson. Collectively their research and writings have contributed to my understanding of the subject as well as greatly influenced my decisions regarding fleet composition and model acquisition.

According to Culotta and Kline, during the early 1940s, the national freight car fleet was comprised largely of 40-foot cars, along with some 36 to 38-foot (including hoppers and gondolas) (30 percent), and 50-foot cars (five percent). In terms of construction, twenty percent were double-sheathed, thirty-five percent single-sheathed, forty-five percent all-steel.

The post-war steam-to-diesel transition remains a popular modeling period for a variety of reasons, perhaps not the least of which is the ready availability of so many high quality (i.e., prototypically accurate) HO scale models.

The state of the US freight car fleet was influenced in no small part by the prevailing economy. 1947 was a year of significant freight car shortage across many US railroads, large and small. Historians attribute this to the continuing impacts of the post-war industrial boom exacerbated by a belief that at least a portion of the US freight fleet was simply worn-out.

Just two years later (1949), the economy was in recession, translating to a freight car surplus. The absence of sufficient available loads to reload "foreign road" empties meant many returned home empty to avoid incurring per diem charges. (Note: In late 1948/early 1949, the per diem charge was raised from \$1.15 to \$1.75, a more than 50-percent increase.) And yet a mere two years later, the economy would rebound at least in part due to the outbreak of the Korean War.

In his *Modeling the SP* blog (May 7, 2021), Tony Thompson shares that some 25 years ago, freight car historians Tim Gilbert and Dave Nelson posited that on most railroad mainlines, the incidence of 'free running' freight cars (particularly boxcars, gondolas, and flatcars) would move about the country somewhat randomly, dictated in large part by the needs of (online) shippers. Further, the likelihood of seeing any particular railroad's freight cars would be proportionate to that particular railroad's total freight car fleet relative to the overall national fleet. From this, Jeff English (noted prototype modeler and early NEB&W member) shared his belief all (transition era) model railroaders are Pennsy modelers given the PRR had the largest freight car fleet. As corollary, this also make us modelers of the other large (freight car) railroads: NYC, B&O, MILW, ATSF, and SP.

The following table summarizes the national freight car fleet of the 1940s (courtesy of John Nehrich) contrasted with the PRR 1947 fleet (courtesy of Jerry Britton, pennsyrr.com).

Car type	National fleet	PRR fleet
Boxcars	42%	37%
Hoppers	20%	27%
Gondolas	15%	16%
Reefers	8%	6%
Tanks	6%	7%
Flats	6%	3%
Covered hoppers	3%	1%
Stock	-	3%

One of the most notable differences between the two fleet snapshots is the higher percentage of boxcars and a lower percentage of hoppers noted in the national fleet. A large portion of tank cars during this era were owned by private entities, as were reefers. (Note: In 1950, Union Tank Car Co [UTLX] owned 30 percent of all tank cars.) Covered hoppers were relatively uncommon prior to 1950, and used chiefly to transport cement, sand, and other high density commodities. Finally, cars used to transport coal and other high density commodities typically remained on the "home road" more so than the overall freight car fleet.

Additional factors impacting "typical" freight car travel include interchange requirements or pool agreements (e.g., reefers), and hostile or competitive relations between railroads. A long-standing "rule of thumb" suggests "home road" cars typically compose one-third to one-half of all rolling stock. This was especially true for "bridge route" or other long-distance traffic situations.

So how does the preceding apply to my in-progress late 1940s/early 1950s industrial-theme switching layout? Anticipate having twelve online customers plus a small interchange yard. Set-outs for each customer range from one to four car spots. A four-cycle waybill inspired by Tony Thompson will be employed to guide car forwarding.

Given the track plan is essentially a "terminal district", anticipate needing 120 cars to support online customers, realistic interchange activity, and avoid seeing the same cars over and over again. My starting point is Jerry Britton's 1947 PRR fleet tallies. That said, expect to reduce the share of opentop hoppers, and backfill with more boxcars, gondolas and flatcars. Lastly, given the commanding presence of the PRR in and around Pittsburgh at the chosen modeling era, the initial fleet will reflect 50 percent "home road", 30 percent "connecting roads", and 20 percent "others".

Assembling a credible freight car fleet has been both educational and enjoyable. Invite *Telegraph Key* readers to share their thoughts on the topic. Email me at jim@moore-associates.net.

# Jim Moore

# **Eastern Division Superintendent**

#### Western Division

Open House Announcement:

The CP&W was formed to preserve the legacy of John Brennan's Chicago, Peoria, and Western model railroad.

There will be an open house in Tampa on Sunday Nov 3. The Chicago, Peoria, and Western (CP & W) Model Railroad Club will be hosting an open house from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. Free Admission. The club is located at **3216 W, Marlin Ave, Tampa, FL**. You can view the club on Facebook by searching CP + W Model Railroad.

#### Don Wetmore

# Western Division Superintendent

# Southern Division

Hi, every thanks to Before m

Hi, everyone. I'm now the officially elected superintendent of the Southern Division. My thanks to everyone who voted for me.

Before moving on to club news, I'd like to express our best wishes to those members of the SSR on the gulf coast and up north who were adversely affected by Hurricane Helene, Hurricane Milton, or possibly both. Most of us down here have been through

hurricanes before as well, but two of that magnitude within a two-week period is fairly extreme. We hope everyone is OK and that you can quickly recover from any impact.

In club news, the Florida Citrus Model Train Society (FCMTS) will be setting up a display beginning on Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup> 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 society anticipates setup to take about a week, so the estimated opening date for visitors is Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>. 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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 <a href="https://www.fcmts.org">www.fcmts.org</a>.

The East Coast HO Exhibitors Society (ECHOES) is planning an SSR divisional meet and workshop on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, with a layout running session November 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> at the Cornerstone United Methodist Church. It's located at 20740 Old Cutler Road, Cutler Bay, FL 33189. The meet on Saturday opens at 8 AM for registration. The registration fee of \$20 includes attendance at the clinics, lunch, donuts and coffee in the morning, and a single raffle ticket (you can purchase additional raffle tickets separately). If you pre-register via email, you will receive a free 2<sup>nd</sup> raffle ticket. There are two

parallel clinic tracks planned 9:15-11:45 AM: one is focused on Tsunami DCC decoders, and the other combines sessions on backdrop painting and operations with JMRI. All division members as well as non-NMRA members are welcome to attend.

Starting at 1:15 PM on Saturday, an operating session will begin on the ECHOES modular HO scale layout. The layout is DCC using the Digitrax system. You are welcome to bring your own Digitrax throttle, or you may use one of several club throttles. The Digitrax system supports wireless operation with duplex throttles. At 4 PM, the layout will be opened for free running with a "to be determined" end time. On Sunday, open running will begin at 9 AM with an operating session from 1-4 PM.

If you need a place to stay overnight, there are two hotels located close to the church, a La Quinta Inn (305) 278-0001 and a Motel 6 (305) 253-9960. For additional information, please contact Rick Diaz, <a href="mailto:rickdiaz@att.net">rickdiaz@att.net</a> or Tracey Sanders, <a href="mailto:tassailor@mac.com">tassailor@mac.com</a>.

Operating sessions are planned to occur roughly every two months, so the next one after this is planned for late December in the same location. The target dates are December 26<sup>th</sup> through January 2<sup>nd</sup>. Once these plans are finalized, more information will be provided.

The club also plans to participate in an Auto Show on January 25-26<sup>th</sup> 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.

The Palm Beach Model Railroaders are planning to be open with trains operating during the South Florida Fair from January 17<sup>th</sup> through February 2<sup>nd</sup>. 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 <a href="mailto:PBMRRclub@gmail.com">PBMRRclub@gmail.com</a> for additional information.

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) located at the Deerfield Amtrak / Tri-Rail station at 1300 West Hillsboro Blvd, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442 continues to make updates to both the N scale and HO scale permanent layouts. Progress continues on the HO scale engine terminal, with test fittings of the new turntable underway and work continuing on the coal delivery structures and trackwork. Signal lighting for the helix has been ordered. The development of T-TRAK modules has neared completion and virtually all of the modules and associated infrastructure have been tested. The original plan to display them at the annual SSR convention in Ocala was sidetracked by the arrival of Hurricane Milton, so the initial display is now planned for the SFRM Train Show in late November.

In upcoming events, the SFRM annual Train Show at the St. Paul Lutheran Church at 701 West Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton FL 33486 is scheduled for Saturday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. Hours will be 9 AM through 2 PM with \$8 admission for adults and free admission for children up through 12 years old. Open houses at the club are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, with visitors welcomed from 11 AM through 4 PM. The next open house is November 9<sup>th</sup>.

That's all for now. I wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving. 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

Follow us on our website <u>www.sfrm.org</u> and our Facebook page

1300 W. Hillsboro Blvd. Deerfield Beach, FL (The south end of the AMTRAK station in Deerfield Beach)



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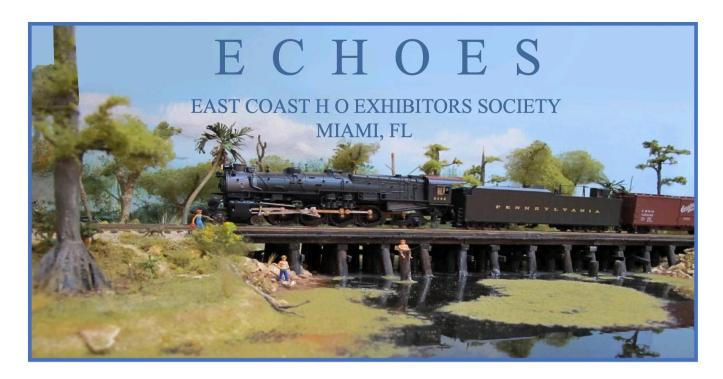
Remember do not to wait until December to check your Christmas Trains for repairs or cleaning!

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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 Diazrickdiaz@att.net305 496 9266Tracey Sanderstassailor@mac.com786 514 5667Herb Fordehf640@gmail.com786 375 1424



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You are receiving this email because you opted in when becoming an NMRA member.

Our mailing address is:

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