



# TIES AND RAILS

September 2025 The Monthly Publication of the Crossville Model Railroad Club

From the President,

Well, we have cleared our first significant hurdle with the mass movement of all our stored equipment. Unbelievably, it was accomplished in less than four hours by a very dedicated group of members.

However, this was just the first of many more hurdles to come as we have just begun the race to reopen to the public. For the next few months, every member will be called upon to help get us back to where we need to be. It will take every member to participate to achieve our goal.

Sometime in the next few weeks, the scale coordinators will be requesting assistance as they do a detailed inventory of what we have, what we need, what needs to be liquidated and what needs to hit the dumpster. Be prepared for a call to help with the inventory.

On September 4th, the CMRC and UCRS boards will meet at the library at 2pm with the fundraising committee as we work on securing a lease agreement and developing a fundraising plan.

Then, on September 8th at the picnic, we will have a short meeting to give any updates on both those issues to share with the attendees.

The one covenant we have prior to signing our lease is that we need to secure adequate funding to ensure we can complete the construction phase of the project. There is no doubt that we need to engage in an aggressive campaign to raise the funds needed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**NEXT CLUB MEETING is September 8th  
at the Club picnic**

**Board of Directors 2pm on September 4th at the Library**

**October 13th 4pm at Roane State**

**BOD meeting at 2:30 in the board room**

After months of discussion, debate and trying to get everyone to pull in one direction, that was accomplished at the August meeting with the overwhelming approval to proceed with building on the West Avenue location. Now that the club has a singular mission, we all need to work diligently to accomplish that goal and welcome back our dedicated visitors.

Pat Taylor



18th Annual  
**LUNCH ON THE LAWN**  
Friday, September 19th 2025  
11:00 am to 1:00 pm - Community Complex

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Cumberland County  
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### Marketing Report:

Ralph will need lots of help to set up at the "Lunch On The Lawn" annual celebration being held this year at the Community Center at the fair grounds.

It is only a two hour event, but we need not only manpower to set up, but to man the booth as well.

Ralph hopes to take the pop corn machine which needs some muscle to transport and setup. If you can help Ralph, please contact him at 931-337-0387 or 931-248-4263. His email is rxalph@gmail.com



### MEMBER RECOGNITION AT THE STATE FAIR

Sharon Shallcross's handcrafted Christmas Book, created for the Household category at the Cumberland County Fair, earned special recognition and will represent Cumberland County at the Tennessee State Fair in 2026. This tabletop book has been chosen as the county's official entry for the category at next year's State Fair.

Continued on page 4

**DEADLINE FOR PICNIC SIGNUP IS  
SEPTEMBER 4TH  
CLUB PICNIC**



The annual club picnic will be held on **Monday, September 8 at 5pm.** Hosting again will be **Jim & Ann** at their home at **5841 Taylors Chapel Rd.** Hamburgers and hot dogs provided by the club. All you need is a covered dish, chairs and drinks.

Sign up sheet at the August meeting.  
For more info, call picnic chairperson  
**John Benedetti at 931-287-4350**  
or **jonni1942@gmail.com**

He will need to know:  
How many and what covered dish.

There will be a membership meeting at the September picnic as we may have lots to discuss there as well.

Recognition at the Cumberland County Fair Continued from page 2

The Christmas Memory Book began as a published volume, which Sharon transformed into a 40-page collection of Christmas memories. Each page features Christmas-themed images, machine-sewn with metallic gold and red thread onto red card stock, then glued to the book's pages. Select pages include sewn-in pockets designed for tags and journaling cards, while others are adorned with colorful trims. Additionally, coffee-dyed paper was prepared and added to specific pages for recording personal memories.

For the book's cover, Sharon repurposed an antique table runner and enhanced it with machine decorative stitching, adding a unique vintage detail.

The book was entered in the Sewing category at the county fair because of its intricate sewing details and was classified as a tabletop decoration.



Continued on page 9

# Intriguing Facts About Model Railroading

Written by Alfy Boyd Modified & Updated: 08 Dec 2024

## Key Takeaways:

**Model railroading is a fascinating hobby with a rich history dating back to the 19th century. It brings people together, fosters creativity, and offers a therapeutic escape from everyday stress.**

**Model railroading offers endless possibilities for customization, from intricate landscapes to unique train models. It's a family-friendly activity that combines artistic creativity and engineering skills.**

**Model railroading has a rich history that can be traced back to the 1800s when miniature train sets were first introduced. These early models were simple and handcrafted, paving the way for the elaborate layouts we see today.**

**The largest model train set covers nearly 8,000 square feet**  
The Miniatur Wunderland in Hamburg, Germany, holds the record for the largest model train set in the world. Spanning over 8,000 square feet, it features intricate landscapes, detailed cities and a wide variety of train models.

**Model railroading is a popular hobby worldwide**  
Model railroading is enjoyed by enthusiasts all around the globe. From the United States to Europe, Asia to Australia, people of all ages are captivated by the miniature world of trains.

**It requires a combination of artistic and engineering skills**  
Creating a realistic and functioning model railway requires a blend of artistic creativity and engineering know-how. From designing landscapes to wiring tracks, enthusiasts must utilize both sides of their brain.

**Model railroad clubs and exhibitions are widespread**  
Model railroaders often come together in clubs to share their passion for the hobby. These clubs organize exhibitions and events where enthusiasts can showcase their layouts, exchange ideas, and learn from one another.

# Finding your comfort zone

Every so often, someone coins a new term – think “kitbashing” – that has considerable merit. This was the case in a recent discussion among prototype and prototype-based modelers. The focus was on freight cars, and whether a certain brand of freight car kit was sufficiently detailed to pass muster in today’s detail-oriented environment.

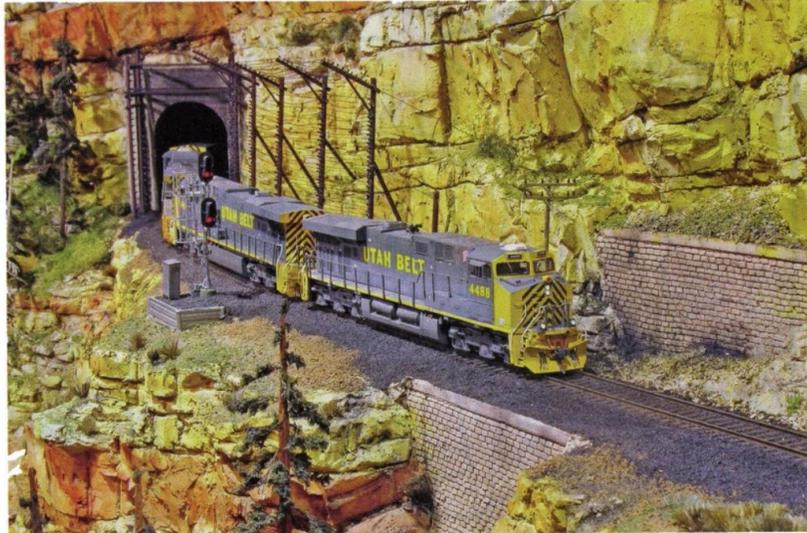
Clark Propst, a noted prototype modeler from Iowa [see *Model Railroad Planning 2018* for an overview of his latest project – *Ed.*], argued that the freight cars can be “enhanced” to resemble specific prototypes. He put that into context, saying it’s wise to adopt what he called a “layout standard” – a chosen level of detail seen throughout one’s layout. It’s “what’s good enough,” he added, using Allen McClelland’s long-established term.

I’m not sure there’s a substantial difference between “layout standard” and “good enough,” but I think Clark’s term is more precise. I believe he’s saying that for each of us there is a level of detail that we can aspire to, that we’re comfortable with, and that applies to every aspect of our modeling.

Put another way, it makes little sense to have super-detailed rolling stock operate among shiny plastic buildings or in Plywood Pacific scenery.

**Layout standard** makes this distinction clearer. It’s the level of excellence you select for your modeling endeavors. It may be low, medium, or very high. But whatever level it represents, it’s what you’ll strive to achieve across the board.

I’ve had the privilege of seeing a vast number of



Eric Brooman’s layout standard includes keeping the railroad up to date. The lead unit, one of three Utah Belt General Electric ES44ACs, is on a hot intermodal train drifting downgrade in the Furnace Creek Canyon. Eric Brooman photo

model railroads. What tends to make some of them stand out is consistency. I remember visiting one basement-size layout that had contest-quality structures, but they were arranged in an orderly fashion, much like you’d expect to see on a commercial display. The railroad, almost incidentally, ran by them.

Clearly, this talented modeler had since “gotten the memo,” as a large extension of the railroad was of high quality in all respects. Those structures set a high standard, and the rest of the railroad was of equal quality. The builder established a new layout standard that would ensure everything was of a whole, and that individual parts weren’t head and shoulders above other aspects of the railroad. Consistency in all aspects of the railroad was now the standard.

It would be nice if we could establish a high level of quality

Continued on page 7





Promoting the construction, maintenance and enjoyment of trails in Cumberland County, Tennessee

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Website: <https://crossvilletrails.com/>

August 29, 2025

Crossville Model Railroad Club,

Thank you for your generous \$500 sponsorship of the Cumberland County Hiking Marathon. The marathon has been very successful in its goal of encouraging county residents to get some exercise by exploring hiking trails throughout the county. Participation in the marathon continues to grow each year.

Your sponsorship helps cover the organizational costs so that we can keep it a free event for the hikers.

We are very fortunate to live in such a beautiful location on the Cumberland Plateau and as we develop more trails we get more opportunities to get up close and personal with this outstanding natural beauty.

Thank you for your generosity. We appreciate your support and we hope that you personally will enjoy our growing number of wonderful trails for many years to come.

John Conrad  
President, Friends of the Trails  
[john@time2meet.com](mailto:john@time2meet.com)  
(931) 287-2432

**HO Equipment For Sale**

The following lady has HO trains for sale. Her name is Judi Christian, 694 Meridian Dr, Crossville. Phone 931-484-1722. If you call, mention you are a member of the Club.

**Reservation deadline for picnic is 9-4-25 Please contact John as soon as possible**

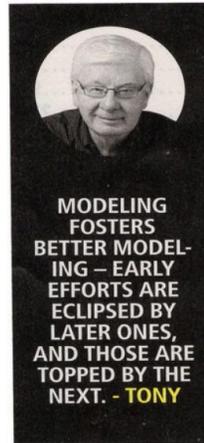
Continued from page 6

at the outset and then simply build on that as our railroads progress from bare-bones platforms to true railroads in miniature. But modeling fosters better modeling – early efforts are eclipsed by later ones, and those are topped by the next.

The lesson here is to set achievable goals – standards – that can be met using today’s skill sets, knowledge base, tools, and materials, and then keep improving on them. Remember when lichen was the standard for forest canopies? Then came lichen covered with ground foam, which was quickly supplanted by poly fiber “puffballs.” I remember segueing between all three media on

the Allegheny Midland as better materials or techniques were developed.

As those preliminary standards are established, the key is to keep an open mind when enhancements come to our attention. My favorite example is Eric Brooman, whose highly regarded Utah Belt always depicts the present day. Eric has accomplished this by being creative, not simply by throwing money at the problem. And he has always maintained a layout standard that has earned him plaudits from the modeling community.

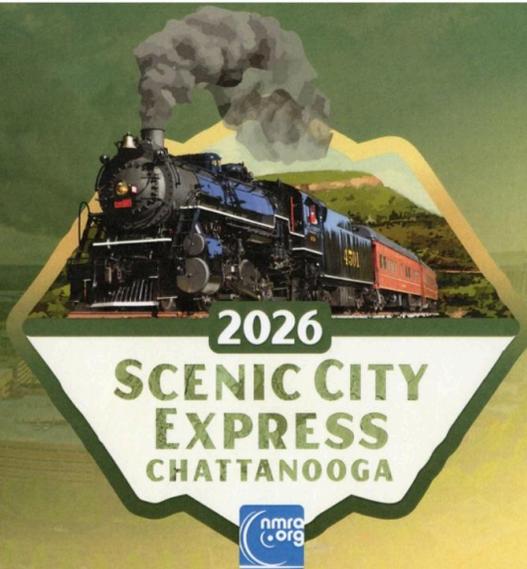


So, to paraphrase a popular credit card commercial, “What’s your layout standard?” **MFR**

# SAVE THE DATE

JULY 27–AUGUST 2, 2026

Make plans now to join us for the 2026 Scenic City Express NMRA National Convention. The convention will be held at the Chattanooga Convention Center. It will be a fun experience your family will never forget!



NATIONAL CONVENTION



We are thrilled to announce that the Southeastern Region (SER) of the NMRA will be hosting the 2026 NMRA National Convention and National Train Show in Chattanooga, Tennessee!\*

#### Why Chattanooga?

Chattanooga's central location makes it an ideal choice, being within a day's drive for over 4,400 NMRA members. The city's affordable travel, lodging, and dining options are significant advantages, promising a cost-effective and enjoyable convention experience.

#### Some things that are being planned:

- Incline Railway
- Riverboat cruises on the Tennessee River
- Rock City
- Ruby Falls
- Point Park
- Tennessee Aquarium
- NMRA organized bus tours to the historic Chickamauga Battlefield

#### The Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum (TVRM) will host several exclusive activities:

- Dinner Trains: Enjoy a scenic dinner train ride on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings (96 passengers per train).
- Summerville Double-headed Steam Special (Sponsored by ScaleTrains): A unique experience on Thursday, featuring locomotives 4501 and another special locomotive, carrying 240 passengers with lunch in Summerville.
- Hiwassee River Rail Loop Train: A 4.5-hour journey on Friday for 200 passengers.
- Non-Rail Activities: Attend a Homefront Tea Room session, back shop tours, blacksmith demonstrations, and WWII Army Camp reenactments.
- Night Photo Shoot Event: Limited to 50 attendees. Historic steam locomotives will be used at the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum.

\*Activities and dates/times are subject to change or cancellation without notice.



REGISTRATION OPENS  
MID-JULY 2025





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### **Model railroading can be a lifelong pursuit**

Many individuals start building model train layouts as children and continue their hobby well into adulthood. It is a timeless pastime that offers a sense of nostalgia and relaxation.

### **Scale and gauge are crucial in model railroading**

Model trains come in various scales and gauges, determining how accurately they represent their real-life counterparts. Popular scales include HO, N, and O, each with its own unique characteristics.

### **Model railroading can be a family activity**

Building a model train layout can be a fun and bonding experience for families. Parents and children can work together to build the scenery, paint the buildings, and operate the trains.

### **Weathering techniques add realism to model trains**

Model railroaders often use weathering techniques to make their trains and scenery look more realistic. This involves adding layers of paint, dust, and rust to give them an aged and worn appearance.

### **Dioramas and landscapes are integral to model**

**railroading** A well-crafted model train layout includes detailed dioramas and realistic landscapes. From rolling hills and mountains to bridges and tunnels, these elements bring the miniature world to life.

### **Model railroading offers a range of customization**

**options** Enthusiasts have endless possibilities when it comes to customizing their model train layouts. They can choose different train models, create unique scenery, and incorporate personal touches into their designs.

### **The model railroading industry generates billions of dollars annually**

**The model railroading industry is a thriving market worldwide, with collectors and enthusiasts spending billions of dollars on trains, accessories, and kits each year.**

### **Model railroading fosters a sense of community**

**Model railroading brings people together through shared interests and a love for the hobby. Whether it's attending exhibitions or joining online forums, enthusiasts can connect with like-minded individuals.**

### **Model railroading can be a form of creativity therapy**

**Building and operating a model train layout can have a calming and therapeutic effect. It allows individuals to escape from the stresses of everyday life and engage in a fulfilling and creative hobby.**

### **Model railroading continues to evolve with technology**

**Advancements in technology have greatly enhanced the model railroading experience. From digital control systems to realistic sound effects, enthusiasts can now create more immersive and interactive layouts.**

### **Conclusion**

**Model railroading is a fascinating hobby that has captured the hearts of enthusiasts around the world. From its humble beginnings to its modern-day innovations, this captivating pastime continues to bring joy and creativity to people of all ages. Whether you're interested in the intricate details of creating realistic landscapes or the thrill of watching trains run on tiny tracks, model railroading offers a unique opportunity to escape into a miniature world of imagination and craftsmanship.**

**With its rich history and limitless possibilities, model railroading is sure to continue captivating the minds of hobbyists for years to come. So, why not hop on board and start your own railway adventure? With a little patience, creativity, and a love for trains, you'll discover a whole new world waiting for you within the captivating realm of model railroading.**

# FAQs

## 1. What is model railroading?

**Model railroading is a hobby that involves building and operating miniature railroad systems. Hobbyists create intricate layouts with scaled-down trains, scenery, and buildings.**

## 2. What scale is commonly used in model railroading?

**The most common scales used in model railroading are HO scale (1:87) and N scale (1:160). These scales allow for a good balance between detail and space requirements.**

## 3. How do I start with model railroading?

**To get started with model railroading, you can begin by researching different scales and deciding which one appeals to you. Next, gather the necessary materials such as tracks, trains, and scenery. Finally, design and build your layout based on your chosen scale and theme.**

## 4. Can model trains be operated digitally?

**Yes, model trains can be operated digitally using Digital Command Control (DCC) systems. These systems allow for more realistic and independent control of multiple trains on the same track.**

## 5. How can I make my model railroad scenery more realistic?

**To make your model railroad scenery more realistic, you can use techniques such as adding realistic textures, weathering buildings and trains, incorporating foliage and trees, and creating realistic water effects.**

## The look and feel of the place



The prototype photo shows Tower CK from a westbound Milwaukee Road train, where it will cross the Chicago & North Western on July 18, 1981. Even though the model track is straight through the diamonds, the look and feel of the junction isn't significantly compromised. Prototype photo: Art Anderson, Jason Korth collection; model photo: Tom Wencl

**Prototype modeling isn't** always the strict discipline that those of you who have yet to try your hand at it may assume. It's a matter of making wise choices, of compromises, of not fighting battles you're unlikely to win but not giving in too soon.

The goal of prototype modeling is to re-create the look and feel of a certain location at a specific time, and then combine several such sites into a contiguous whole that allows you to operate a railroad through them in an equally realistic manner.

But doing this does not require acquiring scale drawings of the sites you're modeling, enlarging them to the scale you've chosen to model them in, and then fastening track down exactly where it should be — although I've seen examples of that done in the smaller scales. Rather, we need to capture the essence of a scene so that its key identifying features are there to inform the viewer about the location and time period.

**Which brings us to** Tower CK. It is, or rather was, where the Milwaukee Road's main line to the Pacific Northwest

crossed the Chicago & North Western's famous "Alco Line" at the west end of Winona, Minn. Chicago Great Western (CGW) had trackage rights on the C&NW for trains that originated in Rochester, Minn., and terminated in Winona. I know of at least three modelers — Jason Korth, Tom Wencl (who shot the model photo above), and Dennis Eggert (who models the Alco Line; see *Model Railroad Planning 2023*) — who have chosen to model it.

Tom Wencl wanted to have a tower as a primary Layout Design Element on his railroad because of a wonderful experience he had at Grand Crossing, about 30 miles down the Mississippi River southeast of Tower CK.

"I was invited up into Grand Crossing tower while it was still active," Tom says. "At age 21, I didn't have the sense to take any photos while inside. Every image of Kodachrome was money spent, so it wasn't like today where we pop off 75 photos in less than two minutes on our phone cameras.

"I vividly remember hearing the bell on the wall make a loud, blunt metallic ring,

and the tower operator saying a westbound was approaching. Several minutes later, it clattered across the double diamond and right past the windows of the tower, with a hand wave exchanged between the op and the engineer. The whole place shook from being so close to the tracks, and the loud throbbing cadence of the SD40-2s was an auditory delight. That experience inside the tower had a huge impact on what I eventually chose to model."

**Today, the Milwaukee Road** main line remains, but was reduced to a single track after

the railroad was merged into the Soo Line in 1986. It is operated by Canadian Pacific today. The tower was apparently razed in late 1989 after the junction was reconfigured a year earlier. The crossing was lost with the removal of a portion of the C&NW main line through the area.

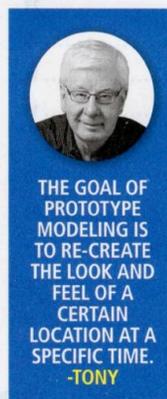
The model photo shows

Tom's HO version of Tower CK. He describes his railroad as a "one-town type of layout set in October 1968 that features the Tower CK scene as the focal point. It's operational, but still a work in progress." He scratchbuilt the Tower CK structure and out-buildings using commercially available styrene siding, windows, doors, and roofing.

What caught my eye, however, was how Tom was able to use commercial crossings rather than going to the trouble of handlaying the curving diamonds of the prototype, yet not losing the look and feel of the place in the process.

Had I not pointed this out, you and other visitors and crew members might never have noticed this slight compromise. He chose to spend the time saved on other, more rewarding projects, such as building Tower CK from scratch.

He, and we, must choose our battles wisely. **MR**



**THE GOAL OF PROTOTYPE MODELING IS TO RE-CREATE THE LOOK AND FEEL OF A CERTAIN LOCATION AT A SPECIFIC TIME.**  
-TONY

Agenda for Thursday September 4th  
2:00 pm Library  
Both CMRC and UCRS boards  
and the Fundraising Committee  
Negotiating Lease Agreement  
and Develop Fundraising Strategy

Picnic Agenda  
Review Lease Agreement  
Explain how to begin fundraising

Partial Monday October 13th Agenda  
Minutes and Treasurer Reports  
Scale Reports  
Committee Reports  
Approve Lease agreement  
Fundraising details on how to properly  
and legally ask for donations  
Officer Elections