

Tidewater Division

CALLBOARD

Volume 2025, Issue 3

NMRA MEMBER

May 2025

“Superintendent’s Desk”

John Robey, Superintendent

Well again, we had a good May meeting with several interesting topics. First, we had, what I had hoped, were informative “info-mercials” concerning the projected or proposed impact of shipping tariffs and impact on the model railroading industry. I hope this, at least, clarified and explained how the various vendors of our hobby might be affected. And, as of this writing, I don’t think we still know the outcome or the impact yet! Next, we had a great clinic by Alan Balma on lessons learned and helpful tips and practices that he has gained over the years as a modeler. His presentation was very informative, and it was great to see some of his accomplishments on his S scale layout buildings. Excellent modeling! The next item was the Suffolk Seaboard Station Museum request for assistance. There I outlined their progress in the recent remodel, their concerns about restoring the Division-built layout and some of the additions that they are proposing. Fred and I did have an initial

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This Month in Rail History

May 1972: Last steam passenger excursion into Washington Union Station Reading engine 2102 Philadelphia-Washington round trip.

May 1, 1971: National Passenger Railroad (Amtrak) a quasi-government corporation formed to takeover, maintain & operate virtually all inter-city passenger railroads, commences service.

May 7, 1960: Last Norfolk & Western Railway steam operation.

May 10, 1869: First transcontinental railroad is completed at Promontory Summit Utah.

May 17, 1958: Baltimore & Ohio final steam run, the Cleveland Railroad Club.

May 24, 1844: First successful use of Morse code sent from Washington to Baltimore. "What hath God wrought" was the first telegraph message sent by Samuel F.B. Morse from the Supreme Court chambers in the Capitol along wires placed on poles beside the B&O's Washington branch.

May 25, 1873: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad opens its 'Metropolitan Branch' from Washington to "Point of Rocks" Branch.

May 26, 1934: Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad's "Pioneer Zephyr" runs nonstop, from Chicago to Denver.

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“The Callboard” is the newsletter of the Tidewater Division of the Mid-Eastern Region of the NMRA and any opinions found herein are those of the authors thereof and of the Editors and do not necessarily reflect any policies of this organization. The Tidewater Division, as a non-profit organization, does not endorse any position. Your comments are welcome! Please direct all questions or concerns to: sorcerer54@cox.net

Master Model Railroader (MMR) Update

Tidewater Division Members

by Chuck Davis

Most division members are aware of who within Tidewater holds the prestigious “MMR” rating. Currently John Spanagel, Chuck Davis, Norm Garner, Dale Ridgeway and Bob Cook carry the coveted title of MMR. The “Callboard” would like to acknowledge the following member(s) for their most recent MMR Achievements:

Alan Balma – Master Builder Structures

Qualifications for this ranking include choosing seven of the following eleven categories and successfully completing all the requirements. They are: Author, Official, Volunteer, Master Builder-Scenery, Master Builder-Cars, Master Builder-Motive Power, Master Builder-Structures, Master Builder-Prototype Models, Model Railroad Engineer-Civil, Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical and Chief Dispatcher. For more details contact the Achievement Program chairman, Chuck Davis at chuck-davis@cox.net

NMRA Benefits Information

As an NMRA member, are you aware of discounts on purchased merchandise? Yes, the NMRA partners with multiple manufacturers giving the membership varying discounts when you purchase an item.

For more details, click on [NMRA Partners](#)

Callboard Subscribers

The Callboard is available for free via e-mail or at the Tidewater Division web-site: <http://www.nmar-mer-tidewater.org/>. Printed copies in B/W are available on request, contact the Callboard editor at sorcerer54@cox.net for details.

Division Mtg & Contest July 19, 2025

July 19, 2025, 10am – the Division Business meeting. Contest best Kit built buildings, weathering, details, paint. Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 424 Kings Grant Rd, Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Tidewater Division

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“Around the Bend”

Tidewater Division Pictures



Former Santa Fe Depot to be Repurposed

The former Santa Fe depot at Stillwater, OK stands on track that is no longer being used. Reports are that this track will soon be removed through Stillwater for a hiking trail. Former DT&I caboose #99 is on display behind the depot. It appears the depot is being used by a Fraternity from Oklahoma State University at this time. Taken on August 24, 2024. The roof has recently been replaced as well so it is in good shape.

On of the more famous Santa Fe depots is seen at Shawnee, OK. The depot was photographed on August 24th, 2024 and is not being used at this point. The former Santa Fe track in the foreground is still used by the AOK Railroad.



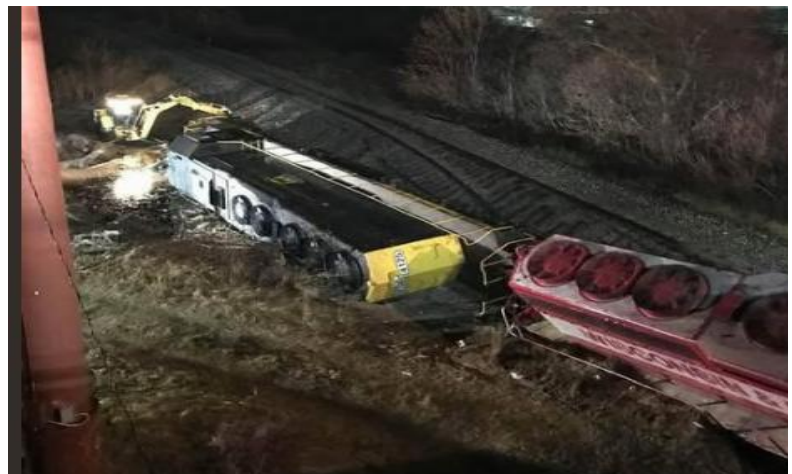
The Last Baldwin



In September of 1949, the Baldwin Locomotive Works built its last domestic steam locomotive, the No. 1309 "Mallet." Ironically, the "Mallet" was one of the last types of steam locomotives retired when diesel-electric engines entered the arena, yet its design dated back to the late-19th century. Anatole Mallet created the first 0-4-4-0 type compound engine in 1885 for the tightly curved tracks in Bayonne, France.

The design first appeared in the United States when ALCO constructed a 0-6-6-0 compound "Mallet" for the B&O in 1904. The engine was described as "compound" because it used the steam twice; first for the rear set of high pressure cylinders, and second for the low pressure front cylinders. It was changed in 1910 by the C&O, their version of the 2-6-6-2 compound "Mallet" was even more capable of hauling heavy coal drags around tight curves.

The No.1309 worked out of the C&O's Peach Creek terminal in Logan, West Virginia for coal transportation and shifting hoppers back and forth. In 1956, the No. 1309 retired from service as one of the last locomotives built for the C&O. It remained in the Peach Creek Terminal Roundhouse until 1972 when the No. 1309 was transferred to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum.



Chicago & North Western Transportation Company

Known for running a "Left-Hand" Main"

The Chicago and North Western Transportation Company was a Class I railroad in the Midwest United States. The C&NW became one of the longest railroads in the US as a result of mergers with other railroads, such as the Chicago Great Western Railway, Minneapolis and St. Louis Railway and others. In April, 1995, the Chicago and North Western Transportation Company was merged into the Union Pacific Railroad. The Chicago and North Western Railway was chartered on June 7, 1859.



The CNW was known for running "left-hand main" on double track mainlines. In other words, traffic was routed by default to the track on the left rather than the track on the right. In the United States, most railroads followed the "right-hand main" operating practice, while "left-hand main" running was more common in countries where automobile traffic drove on the left as well. According to a display in the Lake Forest station, the reason for this was a combination of chance and inertia. When originally built as single-line trackage, the C&NW arbitrarily placed its stations on the left-hand side of the tracks (when headed inbound toward Chicago). Later, when a second track was added, it was placed on the side away from the stations so as not to force them to relocate. Since most passengers waiting at the stations were headed toward Chicago, the inbound track remained the one closest to the station platforms. The expense of reconfiguring signals and switches has prevented a conversion to right-hand operation ever since.

The CNW's most famous train, the *Twin Cities 400* from Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul, was introduced in 1935 to compete with the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy's *Zephyrs* and the Milwaukee Road's *Hiawathas*. This train was named because it traveled the 400 mi (640 km) between the cities in 400 minutes.



Chicago and North Western also operated commuter train service in the Chicago area, where they developed what was perhaps the first cab car. A modified gallery car was built in 1960 with locomotive controls to allow push-pull operation. C&NW also pioneered the concept of Head End Power (HEP), generating 480V electricity from the locomotive to power the air conditioning, lighting, and heating on the new bi-level cars. This eventually became the standard for all railroads in the United States.



The Chicago and North Western was known for its installation of Western Railroad Supply Company wigwag signals at many of its crossing in the 1920–1940s. Almost every town on their route had at least the main crossing in town protected by them. The most common style were the Center Harp shorties. They were almost iconic to the CNW. Many of them, which were grandfathered in after the Federal Railroad Administration ruled them inadequate protection in 1949, survived until the 1970s and a few remain on lines in Wisconsin that have been sold off to other railroads. Lack of available parts and upgrades to roads have replaced all but a few of them.

The railroad also purchased a great deal of its equipment second-hand. CNW shop forces economized wherever possible, earning the railroad the nickname "Cheap and Nothing Wasted." Sometimes employees referred to the condition of equipment as "Cardboard and No Wheels." In 1891, the CNW adopted the infamous "ball and bar" logo which survived a few modifications throughout its 104 year existence.

Arsenal on board Amtrak

A Florida man's arsenal aboard Amtrak trains had triggered a significant indictment that challenges 2nd Amendment rights while exposing serious security gaps in America's rail system. Jeffrey Owen Kennerk, 34, faces multiple felony charges after being caught with a cache of firearms, including a bobby-trapped rifle that discharged without anyone pulling the trigger, while highlighting how Biden-era transportation protocols continue to miss dangerous individuals while hassling law-abiding American citizens.



New Jersey authorities have indicted Fort Lauderdale resident Kennerk on multiple charges, including aggravated assault endangering others, and weapons offenses. The 34-year-old was apprehended after allegedly bringing multiple firearms onto Amtrak trains traveling through Newark and toward Virginia.

The situation unfolded when an NJ Transit Police officer discovered an unattended zebra-pattern suitcase at Newark Penn Station containing loaded weapons and ammunition. Surveillance footage helped identify Kennerk, who had allegedly left the suspicious luggage behind before boarding another train, where he was eventually detained.

Law enforcement found a substantial collection of firearms in Kennerk's possession, raising concerns about the effectiveness of transportation security measures. The abandoned suitcase contained a Glock handgun, AR-style magazine, Zastava Arms AK-47 style rifle, and various ammunition types that could have fallen into the wrong hands in one of America's busiest transit hubs. When police located and arrested Kennerk in Trenton, they discovered additional weapons, including what authorities described as a "bobby-trapped" rifle. During the police search this weapon reportedly discharged without trigger engagement, demonstrating its potential danger in a public transportation setting.

The indictment carries substantial penalties that could land the individual behind bars for up to a decade if convicted on all counts. Second-degree charges carry potential sentences of 5 to 10 years in prison, with fines up to \$150,000. Fourth-degree charges could result in an additional 18 months of incarceration and fines up to \$10,000.

Authorities have not disclosed Kennerk's intentions with the weapons, creating speculation about his motives. The suspect claimed he had simply boarded the wrong train while in possession of his firearms, as he reportedly had a valid Amtrak ticket for a different train altogether.

The case highlights ongoing debates about transportation security and gun rights, with law enforcement officials praising the coordinated response that potentially prevented public harm. Deputy Attorney General Karen Bracizewski is expected to lead the prosecution as the case advances through New Jersey's legal system.

Railroad Lingo

BRASS: A babbitt-lined blank of bronze that forms the bearing upon which the car rests. To *brass* a car is to replace one of those bearings.

GUNBOAT: Large steel car.

LETTERS: Service letters given to men who resign or are discharged. Applicants for railroad jobs are usually asked to present *letters* proving previous employment. In the old days, when these were too unfavorable, many boomers used faked *letters* or would work *under a flag* on somebody else's certificates.

99: Failure to protect your train or to flag it.

POP: To let safety valve on boiler release, causing waste of steam, making a loud noise, and, when engine is working hard, raising water in boiler, thereby causing locomotive to work water.

Promontory Summit, Utah

The Point Where East Meets West – 156 Years Ago

On May 10th in 1869, the presidents of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads meet in Promontory, Utah, and drove a ceremonial last spike into a rail line that connects their railroads. This made transcontinental railroad travel possible for the first time in U.S. history. No longer would western-bound travelers need to take the long and dangerous journey by wagon train, and the West would surely lose some of its wild charm with the new connection to the civilized East.

Since at least 1832, both Eastern and frontier statesmen realized a need to connect the two coasts. It was not until 1853, though, that Congress appropriated funds to survey several routes for the transcontinental railroad. The actual building of the railroad would have to wait even longer, as North-South tensions prevented Congress from reaching an agreement on where the line would begin.

One year into the Civil War, a Republican-controlled Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Act (1862), guaranteeing public land grants and loans to the two railroads it chose to build the transcontinental line, the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific. With these in hand, the railroads began work in 1866 from Omaha and Sacramento, forging a northern route across the country. In their eagerness for land, the two lines built right past each other, and the final meeting place had to be renegotiated.

Harsh winters, staggering summer heat, Indian raids and the lawless, rough-and-tumble conditions of newly settled western towns made conditions for the Union Pacific laborers--mainly Civil War veterans of Irish descent--miserable. The overwhelmingly immigrant Chinese work force of the Central Pacific also had its fair share of problems, including brutal 12-hour workdays laying tracks over the Sierra Nevada Mountains. On more than one occasion, whole crews would be lost to avalanches, or mishaps with explosives would leave several dead.

For all the adversity they suffered, the Union Pacific and Central Pacific workers were able to finish the railroad--laying nearly 2,000 miles of track--by 1869, ahead of schedule and under budget.



Promontory was the site of a temporary city during and shortly after the construction of the railroad, but this was then dismantled. The area has never had any permanent population. The effective meeting point of the two railroads was moved to Union Station in Ogden, Utah.

Although there is no longer a continuous railroad track running through Promontory, Utah, a 1½ mile section of track was re-laid for Centennial anniversary in 1969. The NPS now operates replicas of the *UP #119* and the *Jupiter #60* on a seasonal basis. The original *Jupiter* was scrapped for iron in 1901 and *No. 119* was broken up two years later. The new ones were built in California in the 1970s with \$1.5 million of federal funds. These were the first steam engines constructed in the United States since the late 1950s.

Where is the “Real” Golden Spike?

It is in Palo Alto, California. Leland Stanford's (founder of Stanford University) brother-in-law, David Hewes, had the spike commissioned for the Last Spike ceremony. Since it was privately owned it went back to California to David Hewes. Hewes then donated the spike to Stanford University art museum in 1892.



George W. Schmidt

1940 - 2025

On March 21st, 2025, the Tidewater Division lost an icon...and a true good friend. George Schmidt answered the final conductor's call and departed the station after 85 years on this earth. I first met George at the TMRC. He'd show up for our Wednesday run sessions, bring a train, or just sit chatting with whoever was there. In one of these conversations, George asked about my background, and when I told him about my time as an A6/Intruder Bombardier/Navigator, his eyes lit up. I still enjoy in-depth conversations with Gary Brown about the F-4/Phantom and the F-14/Tomcat, both great platforms, but nothing compares to me than the A6. As it turns out, George was a Warrant Officer, aircraft maintenance...with the A6. His proudest accomplishment was that the Navy would allow him to test taxi the A6 after maintenance work. In flight school, the Navy kept saying, "attention to detail." After a while, I broke the silence and asked why the perpetual saying was constantly tossed about during flight training. I was told, "You can't pull an aircraft, flying 27,000 feet, to the curb when you have a problem." George laughed when I shared the story and said his ability to taxi an aircraft and be non-rated was a pinnacle in his Navy career.



George knew I modeled Union Pacific, and with each session at the TMRC, if we didn't discuss some aspect of the A6...we'd talk about UP. Regardless of his actions, he was always available to lend an ear or offer guidance. A trait such as that is a rare commodity in today's society. As his health began to decline, he told me of his pending move into assisted living. He said it with a positive smile because he had a new lady friend with whom to share this new adventure.

When the TMRC closed, my visits with George were limited to Tidewater Division business meetings. Regardless of the time in between, he would always greet me with a welcome smile, something about Union Pacific, and a tale or two about the A6. Godspeed to you, George, in this final your journey.

"From the Superintendent" continued from page 1

meeting with the staff and then had a follow-up meeting with senior management. That was supposed to happen shortly after the first meeting. But, as of this writing, that meeting is now scheduled for June 9th at Suffolk. So, stay tuned. I will update the Division members in a subsequent email afterwards. Our next agenda item was the MER 2026 Convention. Since our May meeting, Fred Humphrey has stepped up to be the head Co-Chairman and I will be assisting as the Assistant Co-Chair as the convention manager. Thank you, Fred. And with that I have reached out to members that we have identified as being possible leaders for the various positions and have gained good support from them. And as a side note, we have recruited and have gained volunteers from members spouses saying that they would volunteer to help out during the convention! Now for an update on convention hotel sites, the three RFP's have been sent out and responses have been received. We are in the process of selecting and clarifying our requirements with the hotels and currently have a meeting planned with one hotel events manager and the MER Executive Convention Coordinator (VP Gary Brown). So, the planning is moving along. The last item of the meeting was the video on buildings that was produced by DJ's Trains. It was great to see real prototype buildings that resemble Cornerstone kits! It was a good meeting, and I hope the Division members enjoyed it.

See you next meeting and keep enjoying the hobby!

John Robey