

GCMRA

Greater Cincinnati Modular Railroad Association

Established 1978

HO Gauge

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Club Introduction

The **GCMRA** is a group of *HO Scale* model railroad enthusiasts who gather together several times annually to connect their model railroad module tables together in order to form a large continuous running railroad layout. The **GCMRA** is the largest HO modular model railroad club in the Greater Cincinnati Area and has the capabilities of creating the largest modular model railroad layout in this area.

The main idea of this “coupling up” of the modular tables is three fold. The primary reason is to entertain and show the visiting public the many ways a model railroad can be built and landscaped. Secondly, the visitor can observe running models of the many types of cars, engines and equipment that working railroads use or have used over the years. Lastly, the cordial pleasure of operating, displaying ones own modeling techniques, exchanging ideas, and socializing with close friends is the great fun of it all. However, the most important issue is “**Keep the Trains Running!!!**”

The “Club” owns the control center known as the “Yards”, where the trains are controlled as they travel around the layout. The “Club” also owns the power transformers and the DCC radio control throttles, power cables, filler fabric skirting for the modules, filler modules, and a few corner modules plus other items required to assemble an extensive model train layout. All of this equipment is transported to the shows in the “Club’s” trailer.

The “Club” has a President, Vice-President, Advisor, Recorder, and Treasurer. Each member takes a turn as a Show Coordinator. Members simply pool their resources, module tables, freight and passenger train cars and engines to create the interesting trains that travel about the fascinating modular layout.

You may be interested in joining the fun by building your own module table. The **Club Operating Traditions and Rules** follow immediately. The Construction Specifications and Guidelines, complete with sketches and informative tips, can be found on the website under “Specifications”. Any member of the “Club” is always willing to assist with any questions that you may have.

The specifications are meant to be as generic as possible to maintain track, wiring, and construction consistency but are not intended to limit your display or imagination. Please discuss your idea with a member of the Club before starting module construction.

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION OF MODEL RAILROAD ENTHUSIASTS

Club Operating Traditions and Rules

Membership

Club membership is open to anyone 12 years of age or older. At all club events a responsible dues paying adult of at least 21 years of age must accompany youth members age 12 up to reaching age 16. The youth has a free membership. At age 16 everyone is considered to be an adult member.

A new youth or adult member will be accepted at any time during the year. First time membership is granted with payment of dues. Participation in shows is granted with successful completion and inspection of your module. At times there are existing modules available that may be used for a limited amount of time while you are building your own module so that you can participate in shows before your own module is completed.

A previous member requesting to rejoin must be voted back into the organization by a majority acceptance vote by members present at a club meeting.

Club Meetings

The club usually has three meetings annually. Club meetings are scheduled in the months of September, January, and May. Members are contacted regarding location by our website.

New Module Inspection

New module tables (even if built by a current member) **must** be inspected prior to being included in a show for accurate length, height, straight track, track location, wiring, sturdiness, scenery and detail. When you are ready for an inspection please call Jim Klare at 513-574-7048. He will coordinate and arrange with you for a local club member to visit your home to inspect your module. The inspection should be at least four weeks prior to a show to allow time to make any adjustments.

Partners on Modules

A man and woman may be partners on the same module as long as both pay dues if both are going to run trains or a man and woman may be partners on the same module with only one paying dues but only one of the two may run trains. A youth 12 to 15 years old with an adult may be partners on a module and the youth and adult must share train running time.

Club Shirt

The official shirt of the club is BLUE DENIM, long or short sleeve. This shirt is to be worn by all members at all train shows. Your nametag is to be attached to the pocket.

No Show Rule

Several weeks prior to a show, you will be contacted to learn if you are interested in participating in the show with your module. **If you agree, you are committed.** If you are a “**no show**” at set up time, this causes havoc with the overall layout plan and forces someone else out of the show. If you will be late or are delayed in arriving at a show, please advise someone participating in the show. “No Shows, No Calls” have a very good chance of *not* being asked to participate again.

Show Set-Up and Take-Down Traditions

You are always welcome to run trains even if your module is not included in a show due to layout space limitations and/or employment schedule, **however**, in order to exercise this privilege to run trains, you **must** come to set-up and/or take down.

Show set-up and take-down are Club Functions. The “**Club Tradition**” is for everyone to remain and help until the set-up is complete and the test train has circled the layout or all club equipment is loaded in the club trailer after the show. An acceptable exception to this requirement is employment requirements. Let’s all do it together.

Set-up is usually the night before the show dates. If you have a module in the show, try to be as close to “on-time” as possible. You are **responsible** to bring the following items to the show set-up if your module is included in the show:

Two (2) 4” clear open deep throat “C” clamps with your name on them, six (6) or more 6” rigid pieces of track, one (1) 3’ section of flex track, rail joiners, any tools needed to erect your module, and a yardstick. Don’t forget your loose detail and/or skirting. The “C” clamps and track are used to mate your module to your neighbor’s module.

When you have your module set up, then help anyone else or with the “Club” items, the yard, track connectors, skirting or wiring because the transporter of the “Club” items *is not* responsible to set-up all the “Club” items.

Take down is usually immediately after the show is over. Club items are disassembled and packed first by everyone before personal modules are disassembled and packed.

Bad Track Rule

If trains have difficulty operating on the main lines on your module, then repairs need to be made before you participate in your next show. The “club” retains the right to make emergency track repairs to a club member’s module at a show.

Bad Equipment Rule

If you own an engine, car, or train that continually de-rails or uncouples, **remove** it from the main line. Remember we want to “**Keep the trains running**”.

Train Running Rule

You must be a club member to operate on the layout. Operation by a club member of a single freight *or* passenger train is a Club tradition. It is permissible to operate two short trains simultaneously if you watch them. Please be considerate of your fellow members. Yard tracks are to be used for staging the next train to be operated. Members enjoy seeing their trains operating on the Club layout. Therefore, everyone deserves the opportunity to run his or her train equipment. You should fill in the Run Time Sign-Up Sheet, which will be available on set-up night and is limited to one (1) running time per show day. A second running time per show day may be selected after all participating club members have had an opportunity to sign up for their first running choice and so on until the run sheet is filled up. If a run time is not signed for when you arrive, you may sign for it and operate the additional time. However, if a club member comes in and has no running time, be courteous and relinquish your duplicate run time. When your run time is up, you must remove your engines and cars from the yard and staging area so the next member can have room to stage their train. A variety of passenger and freight trains maintains the public's interest. The show coordinator will attempt to resolve any running issues.

Train Operation Rule

When your train is running on the main line, you are responsible to operate the power pack or DCC control and be aware of your train's location on the layout. Do not run trains on all three mains in the same direction, side by side, or at similar speeds to ensure continually different spacing around the entire layout. You are the **engineer**. **Vacate the yards and power packs area when you are not running a train.**

Passenger Trains

These trains seem to be more personal; therefore an entire passenger train usually belongs to one person. They run faster than freights and sometime leave the rails. Please keep passenger train speeds realistic.

Freight Trains

These trains usually consist of train cars belonging to one or several members. Freight trains containing a large number of cars create slow moving trains of an interesting variety. While it also "Wows" the public, it also ties up the mainline thus keeping other members from operating their trains and potentially can create animosity amongst members. Freight train length is to be limited to ½ of the overall length of the show layout. Long freight trains are welcome, but not all day. We encourage you to bring your own complete freight trains.

Wiring Kit

The Club has assembled a wiring kit comprised of all the different components and wire colors and lengths as needed for a basic module. Refer to additional information in the Club Construction Specifications and Guidelines section titled Electrical Wiring located elsewhere on this web site under “Specifications”. Please contact a club member listed on the last page of the specifications for information and to arrange to purchase these items.

DCC and Analog Systems

All of the mainlines are wired for operation using the club Power Packs (Analog) **or** using a wireless Hand Held Throttle (DCC-Digitrax System) and selection is made by turning a switch on the control panel. You can select your preferred mode of operation. The Switching Track will be DCC operation only. The “club” has available handheld wireless throttles for the DCC system or you may use your own throttle. There is also an engine programming track available.

Special Note: DCC and Analog Engines cannot be on the same mainline track at the same time unless the DCC engine has a dual mode detector. You must check to see that the member who is operating on the mainline that you are about to use, either has their engine(s) off the track or is operating in the same power mode (DCC or Analog) as your engines before turning the switch on the control panel. **The member operating the mainline has power mode selection priority.** Damage to engines will occur.

Club Dues

Every member is required to pay the treasurer annually \$25.00 prior to September 15th each year. Non-payment by September 15th **will** incur a late fee of \$10.00. (Our season cycle starts on October 1st and ends on September 30 of the following year.) The dues and late fee must be paid before your participation in the next upcoming show. *Dues notices will **NOT** be mailed to you. Notices will be posted on our website, announced at club meetings and at scheduled shows.* Dues for new members are pro-rated at \$1.00 plus \$2.00 per month.

Switching Track

The ***required*** switching track at the back of the module (28” from front or public side) allows for operation and movement of freight cars and engines between industrial areas and/or other modules while full length trains are operating on the three mainlines. Turnouts from the ***required*** switching track into industrial areas on your module are encouraged ***but not mandatory***. When the module is located next to another switching module, cars can be taken to those modules and switched out providing the opportunity to simulate switching operations across several modules for more realistic operations, just like a real railroad.