

THE 2026 SUMMERAIL HAS COME AND GONE

Charles H. Bogart

The XXIX (29th) Summerail was held in Marion, Ohio, at the Palace Theater on August 7 and 8, 2026. I wonder how many other railfans can say, like me, that they have attended all 29 Summerails. The 2026 Summerail saw some 300 railfans in attendance. Mary Ann and I arrived in Marion at 2:00 PM on Friday. After checking in at our motel we drove down to Marion Union Station. As per my norm and, much to Mary Ann's disgust, I bought some of the used rail books and magazines the depot had for sale. We then joined the railfans who were gathering trackside to take photos. A good time was had checking in with friends not seen for some time. At 5:00 PM we left to get something to eat. After our evening meal, Mary Ann returned to the motel, worn out from all the excitement of train watching. I returned to Marion Station to train watch and attend the evening program. Four 30 minute PowerPoint presentations were made. Leadoff was Chris Mayhew who, supported by Jim Corbett, gave an excellent talk on the railroads along Cincinnati's river bottoms. The other three presentations were views of trackside photography. All four shows were outstanding. By 10:00 PM we were all outside the depot once again train watching. The CSXT Baltimore & Ohio Railroad heritage unit came through as a mid-train helper. At 11:00 PM I returned to the motel.

The next morning it was up early. Mary Ann and I were due at the Palace Theater at 8:30 AM to help set up. We went by Marion Union Station first; the parking lot was full of railfans' cars. At 9:30 AM Mary Ann, Jill Oroszi, and Myra Lindsey set up the Summerail ticket sales table ready to serve all. Two types of tickets were sold: one for the Whole Shebang (per Jill), and one for the train show only. Doors for the train show opened at 10:00 AM and a steady crowd came in. Only one table sold model trains, everything else was railroadiana material. Two food trucks located outside the theater took care of attendees food and drink needs.

At 12:55 PM I blew the whistle signifying the PowerPoint presentation would start showing in 5 minutes. A total of seven excellent shows were presented between 1:00 PM and 4:30 PM. Then there was a break for the evening meal. The train show closed at 5:00 PM. After supper I took Mary Ann back to the motel. I then returned at 7:00 PM for the start of the evening program. Five PowerPoint presentations were made. Overall, the 2026 railroad theme PowerPoint presentations were all top quality. At least a third of those attending wore an Hawaiian shirt to participate in the Railroad & Railfan Magazine Hawaiian Shirt contest. Four winners were picked.

Following the last presentation at 9:00 PM, there was a mad exodus from the Palace Theater back to Marion Union Station to talk and watch trains. Parking was at a premium. I should mention that almost all of the engineers, both NS and CSXT, on passing the depot gave us railfans a friendly toot on the horn. I stayed at the depot until 11:00 PM talking with various railfans, both known and unknown. The comradery of Summerail is one of its great drawing

points. Then it was back to the motel for some sleep in preparation for dawn to dusk railfanning on Sunday.

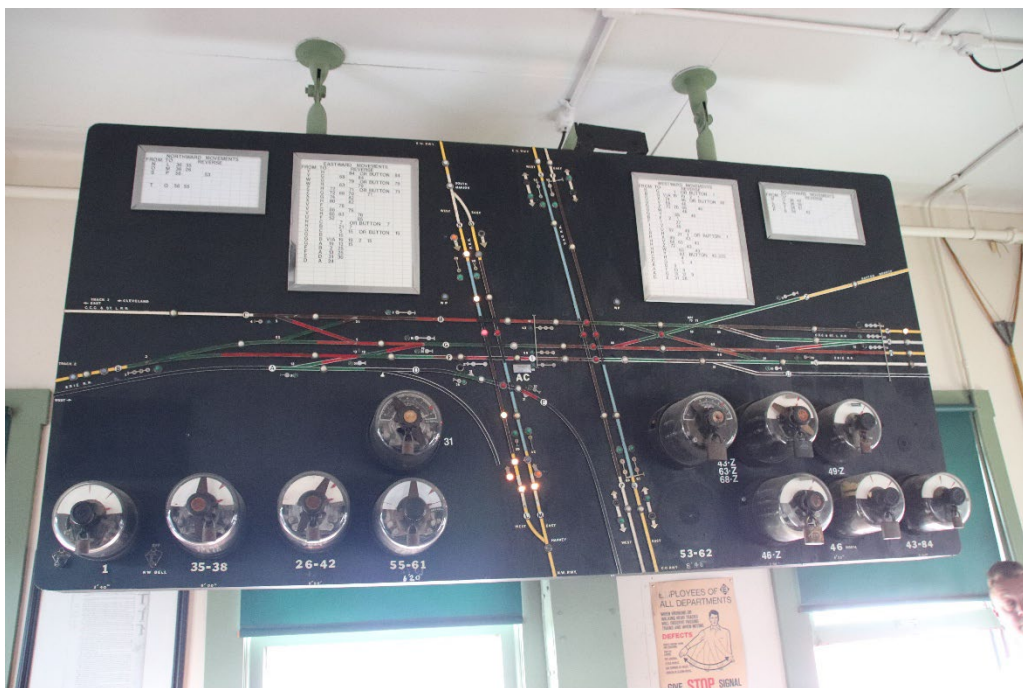
Dave Oroszi, the Big O, deserves all kinds of kudos from the railfan community for organizing these yearly Summerail shows.



Marion Union Depot and AC Tower



Inside AC Tower



AC Tower board



View out from AC Tower operator's desk.



Photo line outside the Marion Union Depot



NS train northbound at the depot



CSXT train eastbound at the depot



Chris Mayhew giving his talk at the Marion Union Depot



The BIG O with the other Summerail presenters



Mary Ann, Jill and Myra with Jim Berget who won the Hawaiian shirt contest.



Sales floor at Palace Theater



In the Palace Theater



Saturday night at the depot after the Summerail presentations



NS rolls by at 10:00 PM