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# BUILDER'S PLATE

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September 2019

Volume 2, Issue 8

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## Newsletter of Division 12, Mid Central Region, NMRA, Inc.

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### Superintendent's Report

The train is in the station and ready to depart. We would like to welcome everybody aboard the 2019 Alleghany Western Division Mini-Meet. All the clinics are set, the model railroad tours have been scheduled, most of the raffle prizes have been received, and the food has been ordered.

We are still receiving registrations, though it has been a little disappointing that less than half of our Division members have registered as of this writing. I do know that one member has paid for his registration even though he will likely not be able to attend.

This is the type of commitment from members that will make sure we are sustainable.

So all I have to say this month is come to our mini-meet, have fun, learn some modeling ideas and maybe win some great prizes.

Happy Model Railroading

Brad White

MCR Division 12  
Superintendent

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### Next Membership Event:

The Alleghany Western Mini-Meet will be held on Saturday, September 14 from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM at the Ambassador Center, 7794 Peach Street, Erie, PA. We will be located in the Hilton Garden area, so park on the Hilton side and enter through the Hilton lobby area. We will have clinics, white elephant sales, models on display, raffles with great prizes, and complimentary continental breakfast and end-of-day hors d'oeuvres. Please visit <http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/> for more details about our inaugural mini-meet.



Division 12, MCR, NMRA, Inc.  
The Alleghany Western Division:  
Expanding your model railroading horizons

Please visit our website: [www.div12mcr.org](http://www.div12mcr.org)

Or  NMRAAlleghanyWesternDivision

## Meetings

Membership meetings typically include announcements and limited business; "What's On Your Workbench," during which members share what they have been working on; and educational model railroad related programs, presentations, or clinics.

NMRA: <https://www.nmra.org/>

Mid Central Region:

<http://www.midcentral-region-nmra.org/>

Division 12 Superintendent:

[Superintendent@div12mcr.org](mailto:Superintendent@div12mcr.org)



## Officers and BOD

Superintendent: Brad White —  
[superintendent@div12mcr.org](mailto:superintendent@div12mcr.org)

Assistant Superintendent: Mike Hauk

Clerk/Treasurer: Dave Ellis —  
[clerk@div12mcr.org](mailto:clerk@div12mcr.org)

Board of Directors: Rob Bennett, Doug Sandmeyer, Chris Mincemoyer

## FAQs for the AWMM

I have been asked about several details connected with the Alleghany Western Mini-Meet over the last few weeks. While the answers to many of these questions are in the Mini-Meet web pages, I will try to answer them here as well.

### How Does the White Elephant Sale Work?

If you have modeling or railroad items to sell we will have white elephant sales in the display room. First of all, download and print a "Division 12: White Elephant Sales" form found at <http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/display-room/> and bring the completed form with the items you are selling. The directions for filling out the form are on the form as is a sample line. The first step is to price items in whole dollar amounts. Number your items with your initials and a number for each item. (We will have stickers to label and price your items and extra forms at the display room on the day of the sale.) Include your name, price, item number

(initials and number), description of the item, and whether it is a donation or 10% commission to Division 12 on the form.

## How Do I Register for a Clinic?

You do not need to register for the clinics; you just attend the ones you want to attend. The tentative clinic schedule is posted on <http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/schedule-and-clinics/>. The clinic rooms and schedule will be in your Mini-Meet registration packet and posted on the Ambassador's screens at the event.

## How Will the Raffle Work?

We have received some very generous donations from a number of model railroad suppliers. The suppliers and some of the prizes can be seen at <http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/raffles-and-vendors/>. The raffle will be a "Chance Auction" in which you put your raffle tickets towards specific prize package(s). The tickets will sell for \$1.00 or twenty-five tickets for \$20.00. The drawings will be held during the end-of-day wrap up.

## What about the Ops-Sessions and Model Railroad Tours?

You should have been sent a guidebook to the tours as an email attachment. I sent an email blast to all the registrants when the schedule was finalized and as I confirmed more recent registrations. Most of the layouts are only open on Friday evening, while some are also planning on being open on Saturday evening as well. The tours are on your own; because of NMRA

insurance liability issues, we cannot help facilitate ride sharing or car-pooling in any way.

I forwarded the emails of anyone checking an interest in ops-sessions to Brad White, who set up the sessions on [www.operatingsessions.com](http://www.operatingsessions.com), and you needed to register there. Mike Hauk's clinic for first timers with TT&TO will include participation in an operating session with sign ups at his clinic.

## What Do I Need To Do If I Signed Up To Bring Models For Display or Merit Judging?

We have posted instructions, a template to complete for display items, and a "Judge's Score Sheet" form to complete for evaluation for merit judging on <http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/display-room/>.

David Ellis  
[clerk@div12mcr.org](mailto:clerk@div12mcr.org)

## Division 12 Upcoming Events

September: Alleghany Western Mini-Meet 2019: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM September 14, 2019 at the Ambassador Center, 7794 Peach Street, Erie, PA. Information including the registration form and initial clinic list is available at <http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/>.

October: Membership Meeting: 10:00 AM October 12, 2019 at the Cambridge Springs Trolley Station. Program: Mini-Meet after-action reflection and ongoing planning for 2021 regional convention.

November: Erie Train Show: November 3, 2019 at Rainbow Gardens is continuing under new ownership. Details TBD.

November: Model Railroad Tours: November 11, 2019. Division 12 will have the opportunity to visit some non-members' layouts. We are hoping for better weather this year!

December: Christmas Party: December 14, 2019 from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at Hoss's Steak and Sea House in Erie again this year.

## Upcoming Model Railroad Events

**Empire Junction 2019, Northeastern Region NMRA Convention:** September 19-22, 2019, Liverpool Holiday Inn, Syracuse, New York.

**Liberty Bell Special, Mid Eastern Region NMRA Fall Convention:** October 10-13, 2019, Crown Plaza Hotel, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

**The SouthWest Ohio OPerationS (SWOOPS) weekend has been scheduled for October 18-20, 2019.** SWOOPS is an opportunity to operate four sessions among twenty fine layouts. The event is sponsored by the Cincinnati Division 7 of the NMRA's Mid-Central Region. Operatingsessions.com will be updated regularly, and we expect to open for registration at the end of August. Establish an email account on the website to be notified of new information.

Links to these and additional upcoming model railroad events can be found on the Division 12 Website: <http://www.div12mcr.org>

Use the search button on the "Welcome" page or use the "News/Events" page, either by scrolling or clicking on the "Train Shows and Conventions" category link.

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**SUNDAY OCTOBER 6, 2019**

**10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

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## TRAIN SHOW & SALE

OUR 29TH YEAR



**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2019 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM**  
**Holy Family Parish Saffin Center ( NEW LOCATION )**  
**3938 POPLAR LEVEL RD, LOUISVILLE, KY 40213**

- Model Trains in All Scales
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\$6.00 Per Person – Children 12 and under free with an adult  
**NMRA members can enter the show at 9:00 AM**  
**with your current membership card in hand**

Dealer Tables available - \$30 per table

Sponsored by Division 8 - Mid Central Region - NMRA

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
Website: <http://div8-mcr-nmra.org>  
Facebook: @Division8.MCR.NMRA

## August Membership Meeting

Eleven members were present at the August 10 membership meeting at the trolley station at Cambridge Springs.

Brad White shared the upcoming events from the *Builder's Plate* and it was noted that our division website and cleveshows.com both have additional listings of upcoming shows.

He also shared an update that Buffalo area NMRA members are still working towards moving into either the Northeastern Region or our division. The next step involves working through the International Division of the Niagara Frontier Region. At least one of the Buffalo area NMRA members is registered for the Allegheny Western Mini-Meet (AWMM).

For the good of the order: Lee Farnsworth brought up the need for a survey for the AWMM. He mentioned a recent article in the NMRA magazine discussing successful publicity for events, pointing out that we need to find out how people are hearing about our upcoming event.

We also had discussion about the future of the Erie Train Show. At the time of the meeting, we were aware that the owner of the train show at Rainbow gardens was having serious health issues. Our approach was to take a wait and see attitude. (Editor's Note: since the meeting we have learned of Carl Amidon's passing.

<https://www.edderfuneralhome.com/notices/Carl-Amidon>)

Another new discussion was around whether to have some sort of point system as a reward for bringing items to the "What's On Your Workbench" segment. We had no action step suggested, but it was a timely question as only one member brought items to this meeting.

We had one modeling question: Doug Sandmeyer wondered about the best way to approach DCC programming of locomotive speeds. Brad suggested that using JMRI speed tables is a good way to go. Also, if using CVs, to set CV5 (max speed) to 70 and CV6 (mid point) to 35.

One member brought items for "What's On My Workbench." Rob Bennett shared three turnouts that he had constructed using Fast Tracks jigs. You may note that these are mentioned in his "Shakedown Session and Lessons Learned" article. He also shared several weathered gondolas, demonstrating what nice results can be had from simple weathering techniques.

Before the meeting Lee Farnsworth distributed apparel orders. David Ellis collected registration forms and fees for the Mini-Meet at the break.

The program consisted of two trial runs of brand new clinics developed for the AWMM by Rob Bennett and Doug Sandmeyer.

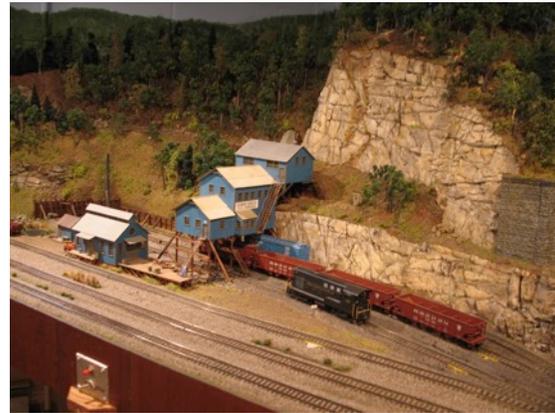
that the font is large enough and has enough contrast to be easily read.

David Ellis  
[clerk@div12mcr.org](mailto:clerk@div12mcr.org)

FOR SALE by member



Rob presenting on "Power Transformer Basics for Model Railroaders."



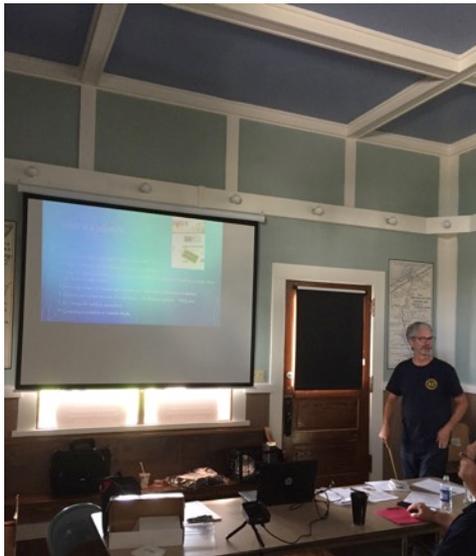
B.T.S. Cabin Creek Mine & Tipple

The model is removed from the layout. Includes buildings and dock platform. Operating conveyor with reservoir to hold coal.

With 12V DC motor with switches. 110 AC to 12V DC power converter. Does not include any scenery or track.

Interested: Call Shorty Parker

814-476-1030 or  
814-823-5929 (cell)



Doug presenting on NCE Light-It Decoders

Both presenters asked for feedback and without going into specifics, two general guidelines were mentioned that anyone presenting a PowerPoint might consider. One is to give some context or overarching framework before going into fine detail. The other is to make sure

Social Committee Report

Good breakfast and conversation were shared at the Venango General Store before our August meeting.



Breakfast at the Venango General Store before our Division 12 MCR NMRA August Meeting with Doug, Bruce, John, and Lee

Our recent apparel order was distributed at the August meeting in Cambridge Springs.

Mini-Meet volunteers have been signing up for time slots at the event. On our Mini-Meet website there is a link to the most current schedule and also a link to my email. As I receive e-mail from volunteers I add them to the volunteer schedule keeping it current.

Lee Farnsworth  
[social@div12mcr.org](mailto:social@div12mcr.org)

## Brick and Mortar Hobby Stores in Division 12

We have a dearth of train stores here in the division. Several that exist are in New York State. If you visit them, let them know you are a member of the NMRA and you learned about them from the Division 12 newsletter.

### Terry's Train Shop

1739 Foote Ave Ext.  
 Jamestown, NY 14701

716-397-5545

### East Dyke Depot

332 E. Dyke Street  
 Wellsville, NY 14895

585-593-0005

### Bova's Music and Train Shoppe

31 McClurg Street  
 Westfield, NY 14787

716-326-6891

## Brick and Mortar Hobby Stores Near Division 12

If you visit them, let them know you are a member of the NMRA and you learned about them from the Division 12 newsletter.

### Hobby Express

1713 Route 228  
 Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

724-779-2000

## Mentoring in Division 12

At a membership meeting last fall, we discussed several approaches to offering mentoring in the division. Ultimately, we decided the best approach was to keep it simple, or at least informal. We came up with starting a list of members who felt comfortable mentoring on specific topics. To contact the mentors, either email the

clerk ([clerk@div12mcr.org](mailto:clerk@div12mcr.org)), who will forward your email, or contact them directly.

- Brad White: DCC, Signaling
- Dave Ellis: Backdrops
- Ed Blenner: Scenery
- Doug Sandmeyer: Benchwork, Wiring, Soldering

## Mid Central Region Representative Needed

Brad White, along with the other MCR superintendents, just received an email from Bob Weinheimer, MCR president, with a request to let him know if anyone in our division would be interested in being the MCR representative to Jack and his committee. He also included the note from the NMRA president:

*As you may know, the NMRA is embarking on an update of the Long Range Plan. This plan will supersede the LRP adopted in 2015, and should take effect in 2020. At-Large Worldwide Director Jack Hamilton, MMR, is the Planning Committee Chair, and he'll need a representative from your Region to assist on the Committee. Please forward that individual's name and contact information to him as soon as possible so we can get the process underway in a timely manner.*

*In other news, you will be contacted by Elections Chair Mike Brestel, HLM, who is running the RAC Director election process this year. The RAC director sits on the National Board of Directors, is selected by the Region Presidents, and needs to be cognizant of all of the issues stated in the September eBulletin, as corrected.*

*Thanks for your help, thanks for what you do for your Regions, and thanks for being a member!*

*Pete Magoun, MMR  
President*

## Getting Ready for Operations Sessions: Part 2, The Shakedown Session and Lessons Learned

Rob Bennett

(Editor's Note: Last month, Rob described the rebuild of his railroad to better incorporate operations.)

Early in July 2019, right after the 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, the official grand reopening of the layout was scheduled. Several folks were invited over to have an (unofficial)! "operating session" --which was actually just me setting up some trains to be run and also letting the guys run whatever and wherever they wanted. Prior to the session the track was thoroughly cleaned. Turnouts were exercised. The layout was vacuumed. Fingers were crossed.

Overall the session went according to plan. The operational scheme needs much more work but the layout performed well. One of the attendees brought his Raspberry Pi/JMRI/Wireless set up and the guys were able to use their cell phones as throttles. The DCC system wireless worked fine as well. The swing gate worked and provided easy access to the layout (and to the restroom)! As a result of the session, several items were noted related to the layout itself and to the operational plan. Some of these items were to be expected, some absolutely were surprises.



Brad White and Mike Hauk operate during the "Shakedown Session."

To illuminate what can come from such a session, here are the major lessons learned:

- Turnout control locations in the Coal Yard area are inconvenient. This is due to their location on a control panel located on the far side of the coal yard and also used by the classification yard switch crew. Possible fix: add duplicate turnout control switches closer to the coal yard, which will avoid congestion at the main control panel.
- -Workshop area staging worked okay--but the Micro Engineering turnouts used proved problematic. Additional capacity would be beneficial. Fix under way: a three-way turnout was obtained and four new Fast Tracks turnouts are being built. This will allow the addition of one more staging track and an increase in track length. Also, the Fast Tracks turnouts will be much more reliable than the Micro Engineering turnouts.

- A road crossing in the Eugene Yard industrial area caused issues. This crossing is made from 2mm craft foam, which despite painting and sealing appears to have expanded just enough to cause slight interference with wheels as they pass over the crossing. (Hey, it is foam after all!) Not much can be done other than trying to push it down. I have since switched to using 1mm foam for any such installations with trackwork.

- Plexiglass panels were added in several areas to protect layout items. The corners need to be rounded, as they tend to be sharp. I can vouch for this!



Dave Ellis fumbles with his paperwork at the coal dock.

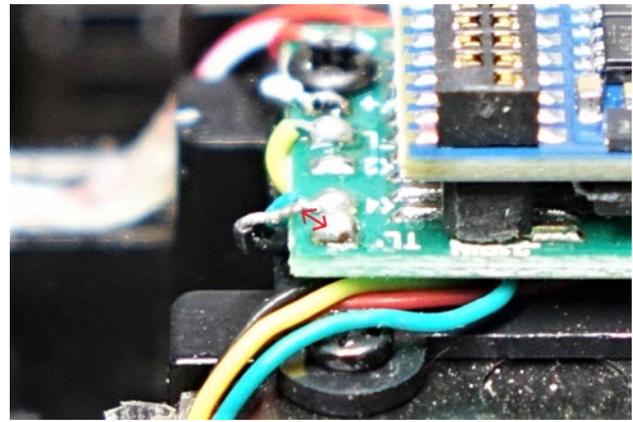
- Provide clipboards for the coal and classification yard crews, to enable easier working with paperwork.
- Running into the main staging area in the mechanical room required a person to run over to ensure a train was routed properly and did not run

off the track. For a true operating session a “mole” operator may be needed. I also added a remote camera to allow viewing of the staging yard from the layout room.

- Track alignment on the swing gate seems to be a “moving” target. This is likely due to the slight movement of the wood in both the gate and adjacent layout sections. Trains operate okay at reduced speed. I will monitor this throughout the seasons to see if the track needs to be re-laid or if it is just the way it will be given seasonal environmental variations.
- A road crossing in Lake City caused a new Rapido FA2 to stall. This was very interesting as it uncovered two issues, one of which I never would have known about if it wasn't for the crossing issue.

The first was that the crossing itself was a bit high, causing the trucks to rise very slightly off the rails. This was due to some pieces of strip wood used in the crossing being too high. The offending pieces have been sanded and the height reduced.

Due to the high strip wood, one truck of a brand new Rapido FA2 was raised off the rails and the unit stalled. Odd, as the unit has electrical pick up on both trucks. The unit was taken to the shop and the body removed. It turns out a power



Bad connection on the brand new FA2 decoder.

wire from the truck to the decoder board was off-- in fact not even soldered on! This truck was in effect “dead.” I soldered the wire to the board and the unit now operates properly. Without the crossing causing the other truck to lose contact with the rails I likely would never have discovered the one truck was dead. And this was literally a brand-new unit, out of the box for the first time for this session.

- A small switcher (NW2) was used as the power for the Westinghouse factory job. It was dispatched from the main yard at Eugene and traveled to the factory with a cabin. As the simulated distance it traveled was rather long, this was unprototypical as a small switch engine would not be used for such a lengthy main line trip. If dispatched from the main yard a larger locomotive will be used, such as a hood unit (RS-1, GP7, etc.) or a 2-8-0 consolidation.
- The control panel on the east end of Eugene yard is wrong due to

trackwork/turnout changes. I do have the new panel made; I just need to take the time to install/rewire it!

Overall, I was very pleased with the session, and the items noted were legitimate and all are fixable. There were a few stuck turnouts that were freed up and a few stalls due to missed dirty track, but in all, the layout held its own. A wooden bridge overpass had the railing dislodged when a crew-member was rerailing some cars due to running a mis-aligned turnout but that was easily fixed. I also noticed a small piece of fascia on the floor that apparently was knocked off. It is right next to the swing gate, so I will reattach and perhaps beef up the hardware used to secure it. I never did find out who knocked it off--and no one confessed!

I now feel much more confident in the layout's operating ability and am actively working on the operating scheme to enable a full-blown operating session. It was a long haul getting here, but I am glad I took the plunge and made the revisions to the layout. I learned some valuable lessons about how to prepare a layout for operations and how actual operators react to and interact with the layout. One nice fringe benefit of all the prep work and layout cleaning--it operates so well that I now really enjoy just heading down in the evenings and running trains. Imagine that--having a layout I actually run and enjoy. Now to get the scenery finished...

## Committee Chairs and Volunteer Positions:

Achievement Program: Mike Hauk  
[ap@div12mcr.org](mailto:ap@div12mcr.org)

Newsletter: Dave Ellis  
[clerk@div12mcr.org](mailto:clerk@div12mcr.org)

Operations Coordinator: Dale Desser  
[operations@div12mcr.org](mailto:operations@div12mcr.org)

Social Committee: Lee Farnsworth  
[social@div12mcr.org](mailto:social@div12mcr.org)

T-Trak: Doug Sandmeyer  
[ttrak@div12mcr.org](mailto:ttrak@div12mcr.org)

Webmaster: Chris Mincemoyer  
[webeditor@div12mcr.org](mailto:webeditor@div12mcr.org)

## To publish the *Builder's Plate* we need submissions!

Modeler's tips, modeler's projects, the new "Modeler's Workbench" column, or any other railroad or modeling related stories make excellent submissions. Any member can submit a short article.

To make our membership meetings less business-focused and include more model railroading fun, we also need reports from the officers and committee chairs submitted to the *Builder's Plate*.

Write it up and submit it as a minimally formatted Word document attached to an email to [clerk@div12mcr.org](mailto:clerk@div12mcr.org). Photos are best formatted as JPEGs.

## NMRA Partnership Program

The NMRA Partnership Program is a member benefit that truly has a tangible payback. The NMRA has partnered with model railroad manufacturers of all sizes, giving them exposure on the NMRA website in return for receiving generous discounts for NMRA members all year long. Some provide members with special codes, others prefer a phone or email order, but all appreciate the additional business from our members.

For complete descriptions of the partners, the discount they offer, and instructions on applying the discount on your order visit the NMRA Partnership website (<https://www.nmra.org/partnerships>). If you are not signed in as a member, you will only see a list of the partners offering the discounts. To see the instructions on how to apply the discounts you need to register or log in as a registered member. If you have not registered, here is an [FAQ](#) with instructions for how to register at the NMRA website.

The *Builder's Plate* is a publication of Division 12, Mid Central Region, NMRA. All opinions expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of Division 12, the MCR, or the NMRA.

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