
BUILDER'S PLATE

November 2019

Volume 2, Issue 10

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

Superintendent's Report

I would like to start off by thanking Lee Farnsworth for organizing the volunteer list for the Erie Train Show. Secondly, I would like to thank our members that stepped up to help make the Erie Train Show a success. Iron Horse Productions is appreciative of the help Division 12 is giving them.

Now on to the fun stuff: November is our month – that being National Model Railroad month. Many layout tours and model railroad club open houses are open this month and some carry over into December. Division 12 will be hosting a model railroad tour this month on Sunday, November 17 from 10:00 AM to 4:00PM. The tour is a week later this year because we are coordinating with the Independent Model Railroaders group. Their tour is scheduled for Saturday, November 16. You should have received information for both of these tours by email from our clerk. We will try and keep our website up to date on all public tours

and club open houses.

If you have a layout and don't want to have a mob of people over, consider doing something on a smaller scale (no pun intended). Have some relatives or neighbors over to see your model railroad. You never know, you may find a new model railroader.

One last note: Harriet and I have purchased a new house and will be moving by the end of the year. This November will be your last chance to see the current version of my PRR Chautauqua Branch Railroad. The layout will be open for the tour on November 17 and again on Saturday, November 30 from noon until 4:30 for anyone who would like to see the layout before it comes down.

Happy Model Railroading

Brad White
Superintendent, MCR Division 12

Next Membership Events:

While our next regular membership meeting is in February of 2020, we have several events coming up. This weekend the division has been invited to participate in several model railroad tours (Division 5 and Independent Model Railroaders) on Saturday, and we will hold our own on **Sunday, November 17 from 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM**. Members should have received flyers for these tours through email, but if you need information contact clerk@div12mcr.org.

Division 12, MCR, NMRA, Inc.

The Alleghany Western Division:
Expanding your model railroading horizons

Please visit our website: www.div12mcr.org

Or  [NMRAAlleghanyWesternDivision](https://www.facebook.com/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



Officers and BOD

Superintendent: Brad White —
superintendent@div12mcr.org

Assistant Superintendent: Mike Hauk

Clerk/Treasurer: Dave Ellis —
clerk@div12mcr.org

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

Division 12 Upcoming Events

November: **Model Railroad Tours:** We have reconfigured the model railroad tours to include others nearby, and details have been distributed by email to the members.

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

Lakeshore Model Railroad Association

Christmas Open House: November 16, 10-4.

2320 East Lake Road, Erie, PA 16511

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Organization/Lakeshore-Model-Railroad-Association-180902492087889/>

Pennsylvania Model Railroad Museum.

Annual Holiday Train Display open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through early January. Visit their

website for hours. <https://wpmrm.org>

Train and Toy Show: November 23 and 24,

The Event Center on the Fairgrounds,
5820 South Park Avenue, Hamburg, New York,
14075

<http://www.trainweb.org/wnyrhs/trainshow.htm>

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.

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
- Operating Layouts and Displays
- Retail Sales - Over 100 tables
- Information Stations
- Hourly Door Prizes!
- Great Food & Beverages
- FREE Parking

ADMISSION

\$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



New Roof on Meadville Railroad Depot

During the month of September 2019, workers dotted the roof of the Meadville Railroad Depot at 136 Mead Avenue in Meadville. On September 27th, the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society announced that Alvin Hostettler Construction completed roof repairs and installed a new roof on the developing railroad museum.

“An anonymous donor provided the funds for the roof work, bringing our dream of completely restoring this 1881 railroad building a little bit closer to becoming a reality,” said Bernie Hanmore, President of the Society. “We’re pleased to be doing this during our first year of restoration.”

The old, deteriorated, and leaking roof was removed and replaced with a new standing seam metal roof in a textured charcoal grey color that has the appearance of the roof that the 1881 building might have received when it was newly constructed.

“Phase One restoration is underway inside the building and the new roof will keep all of those new installations dry and protected,” noted Scott Ladner, Vice President of the Society.

Four new windows have been installed on the passenger depot, southern end of the building, and framing has been completed inside to prepare for construction of a gallery area, retail store, kitchenette, research library, work shop, and two handicapped accessible bathrooms.

“The project is moving forward as planned,” Hanmore stated. “We are fortunate to have a group of about a dozen volunteers who are doing nearly all of the restoration work inside.”

Maryann Martin, the Railroad Depot's Facebook administrator said, “Everyone can follow our progress as I post pictures from the developing railroad depot project throughout each week on the Depot's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/MeadvilleRailroadDepot.”

In December 2018, the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society purchased the former Bessemer and Lake Erie Passenger Depot and Freight House, more recently Meadville Farm and Garden Supply, at 136 Mead Avenue, Meadville, PA. The overall plan is to create a railroad museum that will tell the stories of the notable railroad companies operating in Meadville from the mid-1800s to the present.

Educational programs will be presented and the railroad museum will open to the public as a community center as well.

Donations can be made toward the Phase One Meadville Railroad Depot restoration project on the meadvillerrailroaddepot.com website or by mail to French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society, PO Box 632, Meadville, PA 16335.

Press release from Maryann Martin and the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society

Members' 21st Century Publications

Several of the members of Division 12 share information in some form of 21st century, internet based, "publishing."

As many of you are aware, Rob Bennett has quite a presence on YouTube with two channels. The

Bennett Railroad, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGN0O1Vkd8GdkzWpbOA0ktQ>, features videos on modeling techniques, layout tours, and layout updates on his model railroad. He also has the *Extra Section*, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC32jMsjk_q9Mhkl_9OoqfmQ, a channel tending to focus more on prototype railroad information.

Nick Ozorack hosts *The Roundhouse*, <https://theroundhousepodcast.com>, a railroad podcast. A podcast is a digital audio series that can be downloaded to a computer, iPod, or smart phone. A podcast is similar to a radio show, but produced by individuals and available free of charge and without advertising.

At least two of our members publish blogs. A blog, shorthand for weblog, is an informational website oriented in reverse chronological order, with the most recent posting appearing first. Mike Hauk's *Susquehanna & New York*, <http://snyrr.com/>, started as a "way to share information" and documentation about the prototype railroad. His blog also discusses modeling and operations on his HO scale version of the SNYRR. Dave Ellis's blog,

<https://gnbranch.blogspot.com/>, has the stated purpose to “document and share the planning, construction, and operation of a small HO model railroad set in the Pacific Northwest.”

You may find these publications to be of interest to you. Please check them out, if you haven't already. If the links, here in the *Builder's Plate*, aren't working, try copying them and pasting them directly into your preferred browser.

Dave Ellis

Social Committee Report Volunteers at the Erie Train Show and Upcoming Events



Breakfast at the Venango General Store before our Division 12 MCR NMRA October meeting on Oct. 12 at the Cambridge Springs Trolley Museum. Pictured Front: L to R Bruce, Jerry, Tim, Dick, and Rob Back: L to R Chris, Doug, Lee, Mike, Bill, and Dave

The volunteer schedule for food service at the Erie Train Show worked out well. In addition to myself, Al Reibel, Ed Blenner, Harriet Beckman, Jerry Longo, Emily Longo, Larry Dodge, Alan Zehe, Sue Zehe, Jason Graves, and Shorty Parker all helped out with the food concessions. Thanks go out to all. Organizers and brothers Aric and Bryan Hartle of CMR Products and Iron Spike Productions were pleased with our food service and thanked us for volunteering and helping to make their first show a success.

The Division 12 Christmas party is coming up! I created an event for our [Division 12 Christmas Party](#) on the Division 12 Group Facebook site.

The Christmas Party is at:
Hoss's Family Steak & Sea Company
3302 W 26th St. Erie, PA 16506 on
December 14, 2019 from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

We will order “traditional style,” full service order at the table, from the full menu. Checks and gratuity will be separate. This is our second annual Christmas party; let's make it memorable fun for all! All members are welcome to attend and bring a guest. Please RSVP by emailing or checking “going” on the Facebook Group page if attending, and please RSVP social@div12mcr.org if bringing a guest.

I called Hoss's to confirm our reservation and everything from last year will be provided again this year.

Thank you
Lee Farnsworth
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), who will forward your email, or contact them directly.

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

Ops Session #1

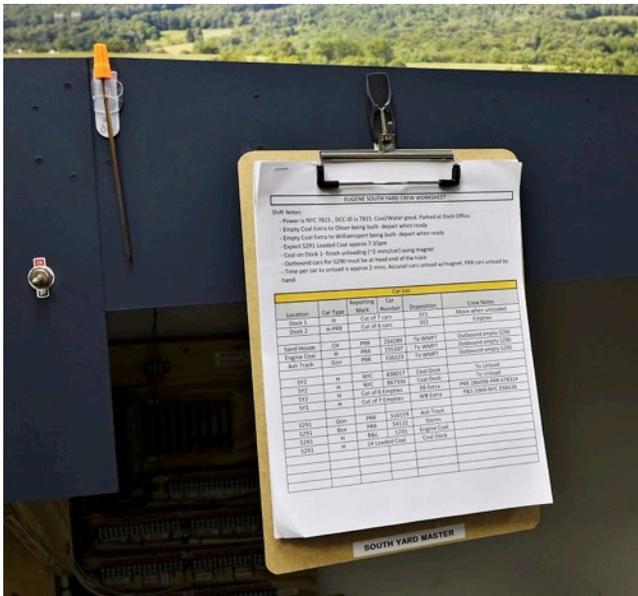
Rob Bennett



On Saturday Oct 26 the second Ops Session was held. This was, in reality, the first "true" session with a somewhat coherent operating plan and properly staged trains. Some updates and fixes that were incorporated from the

previous “shakedown” session are noted below. (See the article in the Sept 2019 Builder Plate for a debrief of the first shakedown session.)

- “Workshop” staging (Olean, NY) has been modified and expanded. All Micro Engineering turnouts are gone and replaced with Fast Tracks turnouts. These are thrown by Caboose Industries ground throws. One additional staging track has been added and the length of three tracks increased by over three feet.



Clipboard and skewer holder in action

- Clipboards with detailed session instructions were provided for the North Yard, South Yard and Sharon crews. Locations to hang clipboards were added around the layout.
- “Holders” for uncoupling skewers were added around the layout as well as holders for pens for crews to take notes on their train sheets.
- Train sheets were created for each train detailing the train

information, work required, train consist information/switch list and a drop sheet for any setouts at Eugene yard.

- The Sharon crew had an assigned switcher in the plant; it was not dispatched from Eugene.
- The Eugene East control panel has been updated with the current track and turnout controls.
- The wireless system is now a permanent addition- it works with the Easy DCC command station and the JMRI Wireless Throttle. All operators need to do is connect to the dedicated wireless network (just for the layout) and they can run trains using Engine Driver or WiThrottle.

Prior to the session a frog in the Sharon complex was found to be slightly out of gauge. A little attention with a file and an NMRA gauge fixed that. No major track cleaning was done other than what was needed when staging trains. Trains were staged, clipboards placed, the layout powered up and the JMRI Wireless throttle started. As before, fingers were crossed.

The session started with operators assigned to the North Yard, South (Coal) Yard, and Sharon complex.



Bill running the Milk Train

Three trains were initially dispatched from staging areas-- the Milk Run from Olean, an S291 loaded coal train from Williamsport, and the WEC-2 manifest from Cleveland. Out of Eugene North Yard a Eugene Turn (a long distance local to Sharon and return) was blocked and ready to depart once the power and cabin were added. Pick ups for the through manifests were pre-blocked and ready for pickup. A few local cars spotted at industries could be added to these blocks if time allowed, otherwise they were placed/blocked for "tomorrow's" pick up.

The session seemed to progress well, and additional trains were dispatched as the road crews completed their runs. Based on operator feedback and layout performance, the main items noted from this session are:

- The Eugene Turn was blocked **TOTALLY WRONG**. (Sorry Brad!) I suspected this, as I was unsure how to best block it. Next time it will be better. I hope.
- The Road Crew and Location Crew sheets seemed okay-- I didn't get any major complaints (or compliments) so will continue to use them.

- There seemed to be some issues with the Easy DCC wireless throttles. Several operators reported issues with sluggish running and losing control of their train. More operators were using the Easy DCC throttles this session (as opposed to cell phones) so the wireless controller may have been slightly overloaded. Also, the North Yard crew was using a wireless throttle which often put it directly near the antenna. This can tend to cause issues with the wireless receiver. Two possible fixes-- relocate the wireless controller or add a plug-in throttle for the North Yard to use. Or do both.
- A missing feeder was discovered! The track leading to an industry in Lake City was DEAD. Turns out I never installed one feeder needed. This was fixed the next day and the siding now works as intended. It had been that way for over three years!
- A brass caboos was initially on a manifest train. It caused a short circuit. It had to be removed from the layout as a bad order car. I saw why later-- the trucks are brass themselves and they were shorting from one side to the other. Wheelsets are properly insulated but the short was through the truck itself. I removed them and re-trucked the cabin with Kadee caboos trucks.
- A brand-new Bowser AS-616 had continual stalling issues. It also had to be removed. It is in the shop now for investigation and a good cleaning. It was replaced with a "cheap" Bachmann GP9

that seemed to be fine for the rest of the session.

- A frog in the North Yard ladder was noted as being a bit tight. It was subsequently given the “file and gauge” treatment and now is much better.
- No bridges were damaged and no fascia was ripped off this time!

Overall, I think it was a good session. I still need to work on the train sequencing and timings to allow better utilization of the road crews and avoid too much downtime. More work is needed in Sharon-- the operator there (very experienced) flew through the work I had set up much faster than I anticipated. I could stage a couple more trains-- once I get some more rolling stock to build them! The North and South yard work looked like it flowed okay. The South Yard didn't work quite as I had anticipated, but everything got done eventually.

I am noticing that a session length of three hours is about right, especially if an evening session is held. After that people get punchy and attention wanes. You also need flexibility in the plan as the number of operators can be critical and if less (or more) show up it can impact the operating plan significantly.

Committee Chairs and Volunteer Positions:

Achievement Program: Mike Hauk
ap@div12mcr.org

Newsletter: Dave Ellis
clerk@div12mcr.org

Operations Coordinator: Dale Desser
operations@div12mcr.org

Social Committee: Lee Farnsworth
social@div12mcr.org

T-Trak: Doug Sandmeyer
ttrak@div12mcr.org

Webmaster: Chris Mincemoyer
webeditor@div12mcr.org

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.

Editor: David Ellis
Copyeditor/Proofreader: Renee Reilly

What's on Your Workbench?

This month: Doug Sandmeyer



Oh, wait this *is* the workbench.

Some time back when I had less space and a darker basement, I built this laptop, desktop, or kitchen table work tray. I thought I might share the idea and some suggested dimensions for others who might find it useful. It's constructed on a piece of 18" x 24" 1/8" Masonite. The sides and drawer are 1/2" Poplar or Pine drawer stock from the big box store. The central work surface is 12" x 15" and is covered with another piece of Masonite as is the drawer bottom.

I'm not going to go into details about all dimensions because you will want to tailor it to your interests. Side and top trays can be used for tools, paints, glues, and whatever. The tray shown has a 3" wide tray across the top with a foam insert to stick in sharp tools, brushes, and screwdrivers. I also added a solid wooden block in the upper left corner drilled to hold a swing arm desk lamp. At one time carpet tape held

down a cutting mat. There was never a cover but one could be added easily enough making it easy to take to train shows. Depth of the box is up to you, at the time I was working in HO scale and made the box 2" deep. Now modeling in O scale I might make it deeper to hold a larger model but that might mean cutting down the size to keep the weight down.

Have fun with it and share your ideas at a meeting.

Doug

Division 12 "Goes to the Movies"

Episode #2

Jack Burgess and TSG Multimedia

By Bill Schopf

If you don't know the name Jack Burgess, then you owe it to yourself to discover him. By any standards Jack Burgess is one of the finest modelers in the country. He has the MMR pedigree from the NMRA and his Yosemite Valley Railroad is considered one of the pre-eminent model railroads ever built.

It seems as if Jack has been around forever. He won his first Best of the Show model at a national NMRA convention in 1976, and he began to be regularly featured in the major hobby publications in the late 70s and early 80s when he started construction of the Yosemite Valley. Now thanks to YouTube and the TSG Multimedia

channel, his layout and his incredible modeling skills are available to all of us in hours of delightful viewing.

TSG Multimedia features over a dozen videos of Jack Burgess talking modeling, prototypes, and his Yosemite Valley. An excellent starting point to introduce yourself to him is to go to YouTube, search "Jack Burgess" and locate the video "*HO Scale DCC Layout Tour Yosemite Valley Railroad with Jack Burgess*." This is the specific title for this video. The video has over 65,000 views and provides a gorgeous tour of a model of California countryside. But even more so it takes us into the mind of what I consider a true genius.

In his working life Jack Burgess was a design engineer. But as a modeler how can he be described? Talented. Eccentric. Out-of-the box. Passionate. Creative. Artistic. Focused. Iconoclastic. Thorough. Enthusiastic. Dedicated, with a life committed to the artistry of modeling.

In this forty-five minute video, Jack Burgess talks about how the Yosemite Valley layout evolved. It was one of the very earliest multi-deck layouts when he began designing it in the late 1970s. It is a layout that is incredibly faithful to the prototype Yosemite Valley that was built in 1907 and ran 77 miles from Merced, California to El Portal through the California lumber industry.

The railroad began in 1980 in a 20' by 20' garage of a house that he and his then-wife were renting. Later -- after his then-wife had left him (apparently she did not share his passion for modeling) -- he purchased

the house and kept the railroad intact.

Eccentric? The story he tells of the completion of the railroad shows a glimpse of this. In 2011 -- thirty-one years after he began building the YV -- the railroad was nearly done. He compiled a to-do list to speed the layout to completion before that summer's national convention in Sacramento. In what must have been an incredible sprint, he crossed off the last item on his list only days before the convention. Then -- unbelievably -- he put down his pencil, went to his workshop, opened up his parts drawer, and threw all the unused stuff away. "I don't need them," he said. "Everything is done." Perhaps Michelangelo said the same thing when he crawled down from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel? Threw out his brushes and tempera and walked away from the Pope? Maybe both were just visionary and knew when perfection had been achieved.

Thoroughness of design? When in the early stages of construction, he wanted to know how the upper level would look to a viewer, he actually built a trial section, hung it from the ceiling and lowered it by rope and pulley until he felt it was perfectly positioned. Ever hear of anyone being that complete in the design stages?

Out-of-the box modeler? He has never purchased a building kit in his life, he says. Every one of the over 100 buildings on his layout is built according to photos or measurements of the prototype. There are no --what he calls -- fantasy buildings. No kits. In fact, he says he would not know how to build something from a kit if asked to do so. In his mind, it all starts from a photo and

goes from there.

Focused? Patient? Committed? Every piece of track and every turnout is handlaid. Every piece of rolling stock on the layout is detailed down to full prototypical brake underbody with exact piping. Every single track and turnout of the El Portal yard is represented in precise reproduction (reduced to about 75% in order to fit it into his room). Unbelievably, he once spent three days -- that is three DAYS, not three hours -- getting one single brass pipe from one side of the underbody of a car to the other.

He scratchbuilt the huge multi-stall El Portal roundhouse to include all the machinery that was in the prototype. Every single machine and interior detail is scratchbuilt so that it represents precisely how that roundhouse looked in the year and date he models. The water tank at El Portal is mechanized (in HO scale, no less) and train order boards at his stations move up and down for signaling and the dispatching of train orders.

Amazingly, he does not operate. In another video he says he has an operating session every couple of years. He enjoys having visitor but when he does stage an op session, he watches and lets others operate. He simply has zero interest in operating. But boy oh boy does he have an interest in modeling.

The video is worth the forty-five minute view just to see the intricate prize winning models he has built. With the HO Yosemite Valley completed, he switched to Proto 48 scale for a

change-of-pace and modeled a YV passenger car that won first place at the 1976 National. Everything in the car is completely scratchbuilt except for the trucks and couplers. It features scratchbuilt brake gear, pipe fittings, swinging gates, trap doors that open and close to allow passenger access, men's and women's bathrooms.

He then walks us through a side-dump car that like the passenger car is completely scratchbuilt with staggering detail. To build a car this complex is staggering and puts to utter shame any clumsy attempt of mine to build a piece of rolling stock. I simply cannot imagine the time, patience and skill sets needed to produce a model as complex as this.

For those interested in using Shapeways, he shows full underbody car detail Shapeways created for him. He designed a full interior for MOW cars that once built by Shapeways simply needs sided over with styrene sheeting. He shows how he uses Cricut -- a 2D stencil maker available at stores like JoAnnes and Michaels -- and shows how he uses it to cut .020 styrene for his modeling.

All in all, this video provides a fascinating glimpse into the mind of a modeling genius and gives us hints as to how his imagination and skills produce incredible artistry. Jack Burgess's Yosemite Valley is not just a model railroad. It is truly a work of art. An imaginative masterpiece out of the mind of an artist/craftsman/engineer/designer. He is all of these. And more.

Once you watch this video, I am pretty sure you will want to view more of

TSG's videos of his modeling. It would certainly be worth your spending a long winter's night checking out Jack Burgess. You will never again look at modeling in the same way. I guarantee it.

Note: Builder's Plate encourages Division 12 members to share their favorite YouTube videos or DVDs. The more you share, the more the rest of us can learn from the modeling masters that are out there. Give it a shot in the coming months and tell us what you've been watching "At the Movies."

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. 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.