

BUILDER'S PLATE

December 2019

Volume 2, Issue 11

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

Superintendent's Report

Season's greetings to everyone, I hope your holiday season is full of safe travels, family time together and trains... lots of trains.

As we close in on the end of our second full year I'd like to update you on what's on tap for next year: we will be assisting Iron Horse Productions with the March and November Erie Train shows, by the end of April or early May we will have the election of officers, June will be our annual picnic, September will be the Alleghany Western Mini-Meet, and lastly, we will need to fill some volunteer positions for the 2021 Regional Convention. To accomplish this will take the work of all of our members. As a division we have been doing a great job, so let's keep up the good work.

In February I will be attending the Buffalo area NMRA member's meeting. This is the group that is part of the

International Division (centered in southern Ontario) that is looking for a new Region in the US. The superintendent from the Lake Shore Division in the NER will be speaking to them at their January meeting, and I will speak at the February meeting. They are off to a good start and have a meeting schedule set for the coming year. They have also invited our division and the Lake Shore division to their summer picnic Saturday July 25.

So, have a Merry Christmas, and I hope to see all of you at the Christmas dinner Saturday, December 14 at Hoss's Restaurant in Erie at 1:00 PM.

Now back to packing up my model railroad.

Happy Model Railroading

Bradley White
Superintendent, MCR Division 12

Next Membership Events:

While our next regular membership meeting is in February of 2020, we have our Christmas party coming up this weekend, December 14, 2019 from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at Hoss's Steak and Sea House, 3302 W 26th St. Erie, PA 16506. If you haven't yet, please RSVP to social@div12mcr.org or check "going" on the Facebook Group page by end of day Thursday, December 12. Thanks!

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

Please visit our website: 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



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

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

Pennsylvania Model Railroad Museum.

Annual Holiday Train Display open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through early January. Visit their website for hours. <https://wpmrm.org>

Gowanda & Buffalo Model Railroad Club Open House

Open every second Sunday, November through April, Noon to 4:00PM Collins NY

Ohio Valley Lines Model Railroad Open House

November, December, and January

[Check here for dates and times](#)

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.



**Alleghany Western
Mini-Meet 2020**
September 12, 2020
Model Railroad Event

Saturday's events at the Ambassador Center*
I-90 Exit 24 – 7794 Peach Street
Erie, Pennsylvania
(*Home of the Northern Express, 2021 MCR Regional Convention)

- Registration 8:00-8:45 AM
- A variety of clinics throughout the day
- T-TRAK layout on display
- Option for lunch at the event
- *Awesome* raffle prizes
- White elephant tables
- *Your* models on display
- Judging offered for merit awards
- Raffle drawing and hors d'oeuvres 4:45-5:45 PM



Watch for program schedules, clinic lists, white elephant forms, display and judging information, model railroad tours and ops-sessions, vendors and donors, raffle prizes, and other information on our website:

www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/



BOD Report

At the most recent Board of Directors' meeting in early November, the general topic was a wrap up of the Alleghany Western Mini Meet (AWMM) and what steps we might take moving forward.

After discussion, the following suggestions were made and approved for exploration for AWMM 2020

- a) Clinics: hour long instead of 45 minutes, keeping fifteen-minute breaks with the need to develop a new schedule. Also, the need to talk to the Ambassador about clinic room temperature.
- b) Food: just coffee/tea during registration, add an in-house lunch possibility (perhaps an add-

on box lunch?), keep the hors d'oeuvres.

- c) Cost: raise the cost a bit, perhaps from \$28.00 to \$32.00. Also consider the possibility of an add-on price for a box lunch, while keeping the price reasonable. Also, take steps to push for even more registrants.
- d) Volunteers: add a position, room monitor, to introduce the presenters and trouble-shoot issues: timing, A/V, etc.
- e) Judging: worked with just one item to be judged, but all judges were also presenters and lead person for other things. If we had had more to judge, it would have been very difficult. Solutions: more presenters from outside the division, and additional judges available.
- f) Layout Tours and Ops-sessions Schedule: Move the layout tours to Sunday: we need more than just two hours; visitors will have badges, having already registered; visit on the way home. Ops-sessions to continue with web registration and/or sign-up prior. Friday afternoon and evening for operations. If more available, maybe Saturday evening as well.
- g) Registration: Treasurer will explore adding PayPal as an option for registration before the 2020 AWMM registration opens. Treasurer not prepared to take on full e-commerce store option.

Brad suggested discussion with apparel vendor: Do they have an e-commerce option?

- h) Discussed, but tabled to include Mike H. in the discussion: Have raffle and white elephant close earlier and complete the drawings before the wrap-up.
- i) Possible schedule created after the meeting:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 8:00-8:45 | Registration with coffee and tea |
| 8:45-9:45 | Clinics in two clinic rooms |
| 10:00-11:00 | Clinics in two clinic rooms |
| 11:15-12:15 | Clinics in two clinic rooms |
| 12:15-1:15 | Lunch (at Ambassador, maybe box lunches) |
| 1:15-2:15 | Clinics in two clinic rooms |
| 2:30-3:30 | Clinics in two clinic rooms |
| 3:45-4:45 | Clinics in two clinic rooms |
| 4:45-5:45 | End-of-the-day wrap-up with raffle results, settling the white elephant sales, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, etc. |

After discussion the following action steps were approved:

- Need to have AWMM 2020 and Northern Express flyers, web sites, and registration ready by MCR convention in May.
- Hold the date materials revamped and ready soon!
- Dave E. will do AWMM website as part of our current site, but not Northern Express also. We need someone to design and manage this.
- Need to have BOD meeting in January to prioritize tasks, as we will be preparing for both AWMM 2020 and Northern Express 2021.

Dave Ellis

Achievement Program Report

For those folks who missed our Division meeting in October, I want to again congratulate Dave Ellis on receiving the very first AP Award in Division 12. Dave is not only our Division Clerk; he also wears many other hats in service to our division behind the scenes, including newsletter editor and treasurer. Congratulations, Dave!

In that vein, we have other members who have also been working on various AP certificates, and will have several of those to present at our Christmas gathering on December 14.



I'd like to once again put in a plug for the AP Program here. I have heard comments from various other modelers (from outside our Division, thankfully) deriding the AP Program as "just a bunch of merit badges" and "why bother with all that paperwork." Well, it is true that completing the paperwork is a bit of a bother, but much of it is ultimately useful when building a model railroad. For example, I never really documented how my DCC system, including the boosters, reversers, and power blocks, was wired to my railroad when building it. It was all

in my head (and sort of made sense). However, completing the documentation for the Electrical AP Certificate forced me to go back, think about what I had done and why, and put it on paper. Yes, it was a pain to do so, but those diagrams now stand as a record on how things are wired if I ever have to troubleshoot a problem or make substantial changes, or God forbid, replace my DCC system.

As far as the "merit badge" business goes, this hobby is so varied and complex, that to demonstrate one's skills it must by necessity be divided into specific areas of focus. This has the benefit of concentrating one's focus and thereby fostering the growth of modeling skills in that particular area.

Another misconception is that the AP program is somehow for personal aggrandizement. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In actuality, the goal of the AP program is to demonstrate that you have sufficient skill in a particular area, and are now prepared to share that knowledge and skill to help other individuals further their own modeling skills. We are not trying to create model railroading "Grand Poobahs," we are instead trying to foster a deep pool of experienced model railroaders who have "been there, done that" and who can in turn help others with their own modeling conundrums. After all, isn't that why we gather as a division, to share our experiences and help each other with our hobby?

I now relinquish the soapbox...

Mike Hauk,
AP Committee Chairman

Treasurer's Report

The Alleghany Western Mini-Meet (AWMM) revenue minus expenses left us with "income" from the event of \$445.16. Also, the division brought in \$304.00 at the November Erie Train Show from the donation from Iron Spike productions, sales of donated white elephant materials, and 10% commission on white elephant materials.

Recent recurring expenses have included renewing our domain name, paying for our PO Box, and our yearly C.R.O.P. or certified registered agent service fee. As of December 10, we have a balance in our checking account of \$2,932.39.

While we are on a solid footing, I have two caveats to keep in mind as we move forward. We have an outstanding loan from the Mid Central Region, as they lent us a substantial amount to help us with the deposit on the venue for the 2021 Northern Express regional convention. Also, 2020 will be the final year on our three-year introductory rate of \$2.99 a month for web hosting.

Dave Ellis

Social Committee Report

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 House
3302 W 26th St. Erie, PA 16506 on
December 14, 2019 from 1:00 to 4:00
PM.

The apparel order from Silkscreen
Unlimited has come in and I will
distribute the orders at the Christmas
party.

At Hoss's, 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. Please RSVP by end of day Dec.
12 so I can confirm final numbers.

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

T-TRAK Committee Report

Hopefully those of you with T-TRAK
modules are planning to bring modules
to the Christmas dinner to share with
everyone. We have two banquet
tables for our display, and the plan is to
share the T-TRAK display with the other
restaurant patrons. This is a good
opportunity to share our hobby.

I have been looking at the T-TRAK
Wiki and T-TRAK.org web sites this week
after a long break. As usual I have
found things that were previously
missed, and as usual there are many
different ways to do things. I think I
have seen a standard or
recommended practice that the ends
of our leveling screws employ some
form of shoe or protection on them to
protect the tables. I have noted that
this might also help keep the tablecloth
from getting tangled up in the screw.
Wiring seems to be an issue that can
start a spirited debate, but as long as
you are able to connect with the KATO
plug it looks like you are ok. Many folks
are accommodating this requirement
with adapters.

Dave Ellis has suggested that we
revisit the use of backdrops for the
modules. Originally the thought was to
cover the gutter with scenery but in
practice this isn't always the best
solution. If we want to change we can
discuss backdrops and securing them
at the next opportunity that finds us all
in one place.

Doug Sandmeyer
[tttrak@div12mcr.org](mailto:ttrak@div12mcr.org)

Formation of Election Nominating Committee

As we are approaching 2020, an
even-numbered year, it is time to begin
preparations for elections in Division 12.
Our three elected positions are
superintendent, assistant
superintendent, and clerk. The treasurer,
board members, and committee chairs
are all appointed positions. Brad White,
Mike Hauk, and I are all eligible for one

more two-year term in our current positions. The details of the division's election procedure can be reviewed in "Article V: Elections" in our *Division 12 Regulations Amended 4-14-18* (by-laws) found at <http://www.div12mcr.org/documents/>.

Following our Regulations, a Nominating Committee has been formed, consisting of Tim Clint, Bill Schopf, and Roger Schulenberg. In addition to their ability to nominate candidates, according to our regulations:

"Nominations for Division 12 offices may also be made by a petition signed by four members and the nominee and submitted to the Nominating Committee. The signatures must be legible and the member's NMRA membership number and their membership expiration date must appear with the signature. The petition shall state for what office the candidate is seeking nomination. No candidate can be nominated for more than one office in an election."

They will be reporting the nominations at our next membership meeting, in February. At this point, if you need to contact the Nominating Committee, I will be glad to either forward an email to them or give you the contact information.

Thank you,

Dave Ellis, clerk@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 year, 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

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.

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An Ongoing Column: The Modeler's Workbench

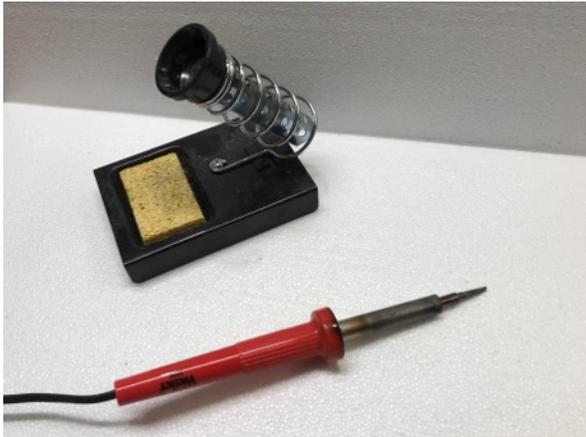
This month by: Larry Dodge

We hope to have this as a regular series that features tools or products that Division 12 members find indispensable on their workbench — things that their modeling efforts would be crippled without. The following three are ones that Larry has been using in rewiring and installing Tortoise switch motors in sections of Shorty Parker's layout recycled for new use in his model railroad. Think about what three of your favorite tools or products are and submit them to the newsletter. We would all like to read about them.



#1 Milwaukee Cordless Drill Driver . . .
One of my favorite tools at the present time is a new Milwaukee M12 Drill/Driver with 3/8" drive to which I have attached a mini drill bit holder for those small but necessary drill bit sizes. The Milwaukee power tools are available at the local Home Depot and work reliably for me, both on the railroad and for other projects around the farm. For work on the railroad such as adding feeders to the track, I have added a mini drill

chuck. This is available from Micro-Mark as item #81852.



#2 Soldering Iron and Stand . . . The second tool is a Weller soldering iron to which I installed a small 1/8" nose so I could more easily attach 22 gauge wire to the rails. I ordered wire and soldering accessories from All Electronics, <https://www.allelectronics.com>, an internet source that I have found to be very useful.



#3 Miniature pliers . . . Last but not least is my Harbor Freight miniature needle nose plier that seems to work everywhere I have tried it. I have found these to be small enough to hold wire next to the rail for soldering without taking heat away from the track or wire. These inexpensive pliers have held up well and have been very helpful in soldering feeders.

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

Modeler's tips, modeler's projects, the "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*.

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."

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.