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# BUILDER'S PLATE

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February 2020

Volume 3, Issue 1

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

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### Superintendent's Report

Here we are starting our third year as the NMRA's newest (for now) division. Your board of directors met this past January to lay out the coming year, and what a busy year it's going to be! Please be sure to check out the coming events in the newsletter and on the Division website. The website is usually updated within days after we receive a notice.

The spring train show season is just around the corner and it's going to be a busy couple of months. We now have tables at the Hamburg, New York train show in February and November, our tables are booked for the Division 5 Railfest at Lakeland Community College in Kirtland, Ohio and we have our two Erie train shows. The March Erie Train Show will be here before you know it, and Lee should be sending out the call for volunteers in early February if it's not already somewhere in this issue.

For those who don't receive the NMRA magazine, an achievement section lists the certificates awarded. Three of our members were recognized in the most recent issue: Mike Hauk for Model Railroad Engineer- Electrical, Chief Dispatcher, and Association Volunteer; Doug Sandmeyer for Association Volunteer; and myself for the Golden Spike Award.

I'd like one of our goals for this year to be how many times we can get our division members' names in the national NMRA magazine for merit certificates.

Happy Model Railroading!

Bradley White

Superintendent, MCR Division 12

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### Next Membership Event:

Our next membership meeting will be held on Saturday, February 8, 2020 at 1:00 PM at the Cambridge Springs Trolley station. Part of the agenda will be status of nominations/election of officers. We will continue to have the "What's on your workbench" segment where members share what they have been working on. The program will be a hands-on review of weathering techniques with Rob Bennett, Chris Mincemoyer, and Bill Schopf. Please bring an inexpensive piece of rolling stock or a simple structure to work on. Our social committee chair is organizing an optional brunch gathering. Please read his report for details.



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 —  
[ap@div12mcr.org](mailto:ap@div12mcr.org)

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

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

### Division 12 Upcoming Events

February: Membership Meeting: February 8, from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at Cambridge Springs Trolley Station. Program: Hands-on weathering.

February: Greater Buffalo Train and Toy Show: February 15-16, at the Event Center, on the Fairgrounds (5600 McKinley Pkwy) Hamburg, NY. Hours: Saturday – 10 AM to 5 PM, Sunday – 10 AM to 4 PM. We will have an information table and be meeting with a neighboring division.

March: Erie Train Show: March 1, at Rainbow Gardens. Division 12 will provide volunteers for set-up and food concessions. We will have our T-TRAK layout, information, and white elephant sales.

March: Membership Meeting: March 7, (not the second Saturday) from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at Cambridge Springs Trolley Station. Program: Mike Hauk on using static grass.

March: Railfest: March 14-15, at Lakeland Community College, 7700 Clocktower Drive, Kirtland, OH, 44094. Hours: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. We will have an information table, T-TRAK, and white elephant sales. [Railfest.org](http://Railfest.org)

April: Membership Meeting: April 18, (not the second Saturday) from 1:00 – 4:00 PM at Cambridge Springs Trolley Station. Program: Prepping for the Golden Spike award.

May: Membership Meeting: May 9, ALCO – Brooks Locomotive Display at Chautauqua County Fairgrounds, Dunkirk, NY. Program: Guided tour by Roger Schulenberg.

May: Steel City Express, MCR Convention: May 28-31, information available at: <https://www.keystonedivision.org/convention/index.html>

We will be hosting the next one, so please consider attending in order to experience the event. Division 12 will be hosting a Northern Express table, providing volunteers, and participating in the T-TRAK layout.

The Northern Express:  
MCR Regional Convention 2021

Save the Dates: May 20-23, 2021



The Ambassador Center:

I-90 Exit 24 – 7794 Peach Street, Erie, Pennsylvania

- Clinics
- Contests
- Model Railroads on Display
- Ops-Sessions
- Model Railroad Tours
- Company Store and White Elephant Sale
- Prototype and Industrial Tours
- General Interest Tours
- Non-rail Activities
- Raffle
- Saturday Night Banquet



**Allegheny 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

Friday evening before the meet and Sunday afterwards, participate in off-site activities!

- Tour local model railroads and meet with the modelers
- Operate on local model railroads

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/](http://www.div12mcr.org/mini-meet/)



# Upcoming Model Railroad Events

## Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show.

February 22-23, 2020 – 10 AM-4 PM

Monroeville Convention Center

209 Mall Blvd, Monroeville, PA 15146

<http://trainshow.com/monroeville/>

## Gowanda & Buffalo Model Railroad Club Open House

Open every second Sunday, November through April, 12:00 to 4:00 PM, Collins, NY

**Save the Date:** Cincinnati Division 7 is planning a day of clinics and layout tours on Sunday, August 9, 2020.

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.

## Northern Express Volunteers Needed/Notes from the BOD

At the board of directors meeting in January we spent about half the time planning the schedule for 2020 and about half the time looking ahead to the Northern Express. Yes, it is still over a year away, but hosting the regional convention is a large undertaking.

We need to start advertising. Anywhere that we may be representing Division 12, we should start spreading the word about the Northern Express. I have posted a one-page "Save the Date" flyer to <http://www.div12mcr.org/documents/>,

the "Documents" page of our website. Brad White has already attended several meetings outside our division and passed out flyers and spoken about the convention. Rob Bennett has done likewise. Any member can do this! Once we have business-card-sized "Save the Date" flyers we will post those as well. If you have ideas on how to publicize the Northern Express or the 2020 AWMM please share them with any of the officers or board members or go ahead and do it yourself! At the very least, make sure you save the date to attend yourself. This year's MCR regional convention is in Pittsburgh; consider attending and/or volunteering there as well.

We, the board of directors, are working on a task list of approximately thirty-five task positions for the Northern Express. Some of these are one-person jobs, and some are leadership positions. Leaders from the Mid Central Region will fill at least four positions. Your officers, committee chairs, and board members can't fill all the rest. Members will need to step up, just as they have for last year's AWMM and as food vendors at the Erie Train show.

As we get closer, we will be able to be more specific about volunteer needs. To start, I have identified four positions and their descriptions that I hope to take off of my (or other officers') plates for the Northern Express.

1. Company Store: inventory, organize, and be in charge of (including sales) convention cars and apparel. Work with the treasurer and others.
2. Website development and maintenance: if we are to have a separate website for the convention,

we need someone to build it and maintain/update it. Work with the clerk/treasurer and our web editor.

3. Banquet coordinator: this person will coordinate with the Ambassador Center, the treasurer/registration clerk, and the board.
4. Convention Timetable editor: this person must be able to create the convention handout in a Windows word processing environment. A template (from the MCR) may exist, and it probably is in Microsoft Publisher. Work with the clerk and board to collect and edit the information. Once the final draft is approved we will have it printed commercially. (This is one that I literally cannot do because of computer incompatibilities.)

Thank you,

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

## Social Committee Report

Our Christmas party has become an annual event. After our December 2019 party I posted photos to our Facebook group page. Below is a link to those same photos in Google Photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/9dG2s8Jd5b75f25o6>

Four different versions of our group picture are available on the Google link; you, the viewer, might like one more than another. In other photos, achievement program certificates were handed

out. Congratulations to Brad, Mike, and Doug, who were also mentioned in the February 2020 NMRA Bulletin. Our T-Trak was up and running at the party. Once again Hoss's food and service was excellent. A fun afternoon of fellowship was had by all.



Save the date for our annual summer picnic on Saturday June 13, 2020; details to come.

Brunch at Venango before our February meeting will be held at 11:00 AM on February 8 at the Venango General Store. Please RSVP by checking "going" on the Facebook event or emailing me at [social@div12mcr.org](mailto:social@div12mcr.org) if you plan to attend. I would like to know how many attendees are planning to go by noon Thursday, February 6, so I can call the restaurant and make a reservation for us.

I attended the January board of directors meeting as Social Committee Chairman and got a list of promotional items for the Northern Express 2021. I am working with our vendor, Silkscreen Unlimited (SSU) and a new vendor, Kimcopy, a partner SSU uses for paper

products. I am working on a presentation of my discoveries and will present it to the board once I have all the details. That should be ready before our February 8 meeting, so if we want anything for the Erie Train Show I can place an order after the meeting. SSU says most orders can be filled in two weeks.

I will be organizing volunteers to help in the Rainbow Gardens kitchen at Waldameer again for the Spring Erie Train Show on March 1. Iron Spike Productions provides generous contributions to Division 12 in return for our volunteers helping out with the show. Please consider volunteering for a few hours. More details will be sent to the membership separately closer to the event.

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

## T-TRAK Committee Report

Greetings T-TRAK modelers!

I recently contacted Bruce DeMaeyer to get the latest update on the Pittsburgh Mid Central Region convention in May. Bruce DeMaeyer is the T-TRAK coordinator for the Mid Central Region. The Pittsburgh convention will be here before you know it, and I was interested in finding out if he had any new twists we should be aware of.

Bruce tells me that Pittsburgh promises to be a one-hundred-module show. This is big, as there were about

sixty modules at the Boardman convention last year. A call for modules will be going out later this month as a kind of wake up call to action. For those modelers that want to dip a toe into the T-TRAK puddle a module-building clinic will be held Thursday afternoon continuing into the evening as a part of the convention. Three to four completed modules will then be added to the operating layout on Friday. We have been advised to pay attention since our convention is just around the corner.

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

## Division 12 Officer Elections

As we enter 2020, an even-numbered year, it is time 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 on the "Documents" page of our website:

<http://www.div12mcr.org/documents/>

A Nominating Committee has been formed, consisting of Tim Clint, Bill Schopf, and Roger Schulenberg.

They will be reporting any nominations reported to them at our February membership meeting. If they have no nominations submitted to them, Sections 4, 5, & 6 will apply:

4. Nominations of members from the floor shall be presented at the February meeting of the election year. Nominations from the floor shall be by a motion and must be seconded. Nominees cannot nominate themselves.

5. No member shall be nominated to an elective office without his or her approval.

6. If after a diligent effort/search, only one candidate is nominated for any Officer position, the sole nominee may be elected by a motion to have an Election by Acclimation. In instances where the entire slate of candidates for Division Officers are running unopposed, balloting will not be necessary if a motion to have an Election by Acclimation is proposed and passed.

Thank you,

Dave Ellis,

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

## Brick and Mortar Hobby Stores in Division 12

We have a dearth of train stores here in the division or even near the division. Several that exist are in New York State. If you visit any of 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

Hobby Express

[www.hobbyexpressinc.com](http://www.hobbyexpressinc.com)

1713 Route 228  
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

Mercer Junction

<https://mercerjunction.com>

151 North Diamond Street  
Mercer, PA 16137

## Mentoring in Division 12

After discussing several approaches to offering mentoring in the division, 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

## 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)

## LED Lighting for Your Railroad Room or Shop

Doug Sandmeyer

A recent request from someone to convert their shop to LED lighting from four-tube fluorescent fixtures reminded me that a fair amount of confusion exists around this makeover.

Before diving into the snake pit I'd like to discuss some lighting basics. We are all familiar with the traditional lighting options of old, the Edison incandescent that gives off a warm glow resembling the firelight our ancestors lived by. The Edison bulb typically, unless you are a photographer, emits light with a color temperature of 3200 degrees Kelvin (32270000K). A Fluorescent is a completely different animal coming in numerous combinations of color temperatures listed frequently as Warm White (K), Cool White (4000K), and Day Light (5000K). If that wasn't enough, they are also defined by something called a Color Rendering Index or CRI. CRI indicates the faithfulness with which

colors are portrayed relative to daylight, with a CRI above 90 being the gold standard. So something like a daylight FI tube with a color temperature of 5000k and a CRI of 90 or better would be a nice bright sunny day and one that film photographers could photograph under without using color-balancing filters. It's probably a good match for using a camera flash for fill lighting.

So, what about these LED tubes for replacing fluorescents. Well they come in different color temperatures. I've seen 2700K to 6000K and different Color Rendering Indexes. From what I have seen the higher CRIs seem to still be a rare beast and not readily available at the big box stores. The confusion I mentioned earlier has to do with the fact that there are electrically four types currently. (Pun not intended.)

Starting with the easiest we have the direct replacement type where the original ballast is left in the fixture; no wiring changes are required. Note that the LED Lamp must be compatible with the ballast.

Next is the Universal replacement. This LED lamp will work in a fixture with or without a ballast. "What! No Ballast" you say. Yes, you can save more energy by eliminating that noisy ballast, and here is where the fun begins. These are called Bypass Types or "Type B" and there are several wiring arrangements -- they are not compatible! The configurations are known as Single Ended and Double Ended.

With "Single Ended" the lamps' Hot and Neutral terminals are

connected to the same end of the tube. In wiring these it may be necessary to replace the plastic end connectors that hold the tube and make the electrical connection. This is because some of these connectors do not isolate the contacts inside the plastic body. The lamp will not work if it is installed with the power end installed in the unpowered socket.

Experimenting with this at home tripped a circuit breaker. I assumed that there should not have been a short there but that the tube could be installed either way. Note to self, mark the fixture's hot end.

The other "Type B" is called Double Ended and is wired with one end hot the other end neutral. The double ended shouldn't care which end goes where but I was told by one supplier that his lamps are sensitive to installation orientation. My double enders are not. YMMV! Some early LED lamps were not UL approved so make sure you are purchasing an approved lamp.

I'd like to leave you with a caution that these LED lamps seem to be in a Beta stage and there is not a lot of general knowledge especially when shopping at the retail level. Know what you are buying, and make sure they come with a wiring diagram and stickers for marking your fixtures. It's important to label and use caution so that the wrong lamp is not installed at a later date by someone else. Lastly the pins on LED tubes are at line voltage unlike fluorescent tubes so power off the fixture when installing. Many of us are used to replacing fluorescent tubes with the fixture live!



## Modeler's Block

Dave Ellis



In a blog post earlier this winter, I left off with indecision about what to do next -- add another layer of scenery here or move on to another scene, after being in "the zone" moving the interchange track on my model railroad. Well, after the passing of over a month, I was frustrated with myself, or at least my lack of progress on the railroad. I attributed my frustration to what I call "modeler's block." So, in a different blog post I attempted to answer the following questions: what is this modeler's block of which I speak, why is it happening, and, more importantly, how do I get out of it?

Modeler's block, in my mind, is similar to writer's block. Production and creativity have come to a standstill. I am stuck. As with writer's block, conflicting feelings or aspirations can be a cause of avoidance and/or focus. My paralysis is not primarily caused by over-analysis, another blockage that can strike model railroaders, but lack of

focus. With so many possible things to do on the railroad, I can't seem to focus and instead do something completely different. (Yes, this sounds suspiciously like a form of procrastination!) If I focus on longer-term planning for operations and extensions to the railroad or prepping for visitors, operators, or open houses with infrastructure issues, the choices become overwhelming. Add to that my lifelong, ongoing issue with preferring to start something new rather than finishing something that I already have started. Part of this I believe is fear of making mistakes or not hitting the standard I am shooting for. While part of my motivation in building this railroad is improving my skills, once I hit a step that I am not as confident about, I am afraid to "ruin" what I have already accomplished. Lance Mindheim wrote an insightful blog post <https://www.shelflayouts.com/post/fear-of-mistakes> that explores how that fear can cause a "log jam of inertia" for model railroaders as well as some solutions to the so-called log jam.

So, how will I get myself out of this modeler's block? First of all, I need not search for perfection. Adding a first layer of scenery to what is now painted plywood, won't earn a merit award, but it will make some progress. I need to be very cognizant of my own foibles: don't start new projects, instead finish, or at least make progress on, projects that are already started. Really try to focus on scenery and structures rather than going deeper into operations beyond what I already have planned. The key is to not wait for inspiration, but to create some perspiration. Perhaps, just take the step of scheduling time spent in the railroad attic on a regular basis.



Start here. Add another square foot of basic ground cover. On another day, try ballasting the Northern Pacific interchange track. Don't start planning the scratch-built engine house, but instead make some progress on the fueling facility that is already started. Organize the workbench, if the juices aren't flowing. Get the materials ready for the next step of something. It doesn't have to be contest quality, but make some progress. Or not, but spend the time attempting progress rather than avoiding mistakes and procrastinating.

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## 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](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.

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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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