
BUILDER'S PLATE

July 2020

Volume 3, Issue 6

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

Superintendent's Report



It is less than eleven months until the MCR *Northern Express* Convention. There is still a lot of work to be done, and it is very disappointing that more members have not stepped up to take on some of the duties. Dave Ellis has sent out a list of open positions and I will ask him to publish that list in every newsletter until the convention.

It may be the fear of the unknown. This is all new to all of us. Even the board of directors is learning as we go. If you have questions about a committee job ask one of the board members. If we don't know the answer

we will find someone who does.

We do have two members from outside the board of directors who have stepped up, Lee Farnsworth and Bruce Bloomster. Lee will be Volunteer Coordinator and Bruce will be heading up T-TRAK and coordinating with Bruce DeMaeyer from the MCR.

Division 11 has also stepped up to assist us. Joining the convention committee will be former superintendent Howdy Veiheffer Jr and current superintendent Richard Kosakowski. We will be working on handing off some duties to Division 11.

There is a lot of excitement about this convention, partly because this year's convention was canceled, and also because we have WABTEC as our big tour. We are also working on having a number of vendors at the convention including some manufacturers and

Next Membership Events:

As the Division 12 board of directors is concerned for the health and safety of our members, **we have decided to "reopen" gradually, with our next meeting located outdoors at the Venango General Store.** Our clerk will be sending out an email blast with details about this outdoor meeting to be held at 10:00 A.M. on Saturday, July 11, 2020.

Please, before heading to any events, check their website to see if they are still occurring! Many state and local officials are limiting the number of folks that can attend events. Please be aware of and follow all protocols from the CDC and state and local officials.

possibly a major hobby supplier. We can't release any names at this time.

All of this will take people, and if we have enough people it won't be a lot of work. Some of the jobs just involve holding a sign and making sure attendees get on the right bus or staffing a room for a few hours.

As most of you know we have canceled this year's Alleghany Western Mini-Meet, partially because of the pandemic but mostly because the board really wanted to focus our attention on the *Northern Express*. I don't want this letter to be interpreted as a scolding to the members, but you may think of it as a wakeup call, or something more than a gentle nudge.

Happy Model Railroading!

Bradley White

Superintendent, MCR Division 12



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:

https://www.midcentral-region-nmra.org/mcr_home2.html

Division 12 Superintendent:

Superintendent@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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Division 12 Upcoming Events

- July: Outdoor **Membership Meeting**: July 11 at the Venango General Store, in the meadow along French Creek behind the store. The meeting starts at 10:00 A.M. Servers will wear masks. And we can certainly practice the social distancing members are comfortable with. She said they would come down at the beginning of the meeting, take our lunch orders, and then have them ready for whenever we would want them (say noon or 12:30 or whatever). Obviously, for the use of their meadow, they would expect attendees to order lunch there.

Upcoming Model Railroad Events

Links to additional upcoming model railroad events as they develop can be found on the Division 12 Website: <http://www.div12mcr.org> At this point in time, three public events are still tentatively scheduled in the tri-state area. **Please double check these as the situation may change.**

Greenberg Train Show: July 25-26 in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. <http://trainshow.com/>

Great Berea Train Show: October 3-4 at the Cuyahoga County Fairgrounds in Ohio. <https://thegreatbereatrainshow.org/>

Great Batavia Train Show: Sunday, November 15 in Batavia, New York. <http://gsme.org/More-Train-Show-Info>

June Membership Meeting

We held our first “virtual” membership meeting, using Zoom, on Saturday, June 13. Eleven members attended the Saturday morning meeting. Instead of one program, we had six short presentations. Details from many of them are available online, either as member’s blog posts, posted on the division’s website, or posted to the division’s Facebook Group page.

Announcements

Brad White noted that the Buffalo area group with which we have been in contact is now officially their own division, the Western New York Division, in the Niagara Frontier Region.

Brad mentioned several items from the MCR and the NMRA.

- Division 9 from Kentucky is holding Zoom meetings and finding that a number of folks are attending that don’t normally attend because of the distance involved.
- Also from the MCR, an educational committee is being formed. If anyone is interested they should contact Brad.
- He noted that with the cancellation of this year’s national convention, as well as the cancellation of the NMRA convention in England in 2022, a possibility exists that the proposed tri-regional convention in 2022 might become the national. This is still in the rumor stage, not official!
- Finally, he noted that the NMRA has changed their youth and at-risk

persons policy. Details of this policy can be found at

<https://www.nmra.org/nmra-risk-persons-policy>.

Business

Bill Schopf made a proposal that we meet in person in July at the outdoor space at the Venango General Store. The board of directors later met and approved his proposal.

Six short presentations: What I've Been Working On

1. Rob Bennett presented a PowerPoint including weathering rolling stock, working on his Sharon station scene, building some kits and sharing some cool details that he found. His PowerPoint is now posted to our website <https://www.div12mcr.org/presentations/> as "Div 12 June Meeting."
2. Mike Hauk shared a PowerPoint on his recent work on the short PRR section of his railroad including the new bridge over Lycoming Creek. He also posted about this on his blog, <http://snyrr.com/> as "Layout Construction Update 6/14/2020."
3. Doug Sandmeyer took us on a photo-tour of his Quartz Lake and Galena pointing out updates, particularly around the "Three Bridge Gorge" with its kitbashed and scratch built On30 bridges. He has a photo of his carved Styrofoam technique on the

Division 12, Mid Central Region, NMRA Group Facebook page.

4. Brad White shared a PowerPoint with highlights of his new workshop (Or is he modeling a hobby shop?) as well as some of the saved parts of his railroad and a kit he is building. He posts regularly to the Division 12, Mid Central Region, NMRA Group Facebook page.
5. Nick Ozorak shared a simulation that he built in Trainz: A New Era, a train simulator, based on Gary Hoover's N&W layout published in the April 2020 *Model Railroader*. Nick took us on a virtual tour of the layout inspired by the photography of O. Winston Link and explained a bit about building a simulation in Trainz: A New Era.
6. Dave Ellis presented a PowerPoint of photos of building an asphalt road for his layout following the techniques developed by Jerry Leone. He also posted a "how-to" narrative to his blog, <https://gnbranch.blogspot.com/>, as "Leone Road."

Thank you,

Dave Ellis
clerk@div12mcr.org

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) who will forward your email or contact them directly.

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

Northern Express Planning



Your board of directors is deep into planning for the *Northern Express*, the Mid Central Region convention that we are hosting in Erie in May of 2021. Many of the board members are managing several committees, and as Brad mentioned in his letter, we have had several other members step up. We still have a few other aspects that we need someone to manage, some volunteer positions helping in the preparations right before the convention, and a number of positions for which we need folks to volunteer for an hour or two so that we have the

bodies to make sure the convention runs smoothly.

Current Committee Chairs:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Treasurer: | Dave Ellis |
| 2. Registrar: | Dave Ellis |
| 3. Volunteer Coordinator | Lee Farnsworth |
| 4. Rail Clinics | Doug Sandmeyer |
| 5. Banquet & Speaker | BOD |
| 6. Company Store | Rob Bennett |
| 7. White Elephant Sales | Dave Ellis |
| 8. Raffle | Mike Hauk |
| 9. Painting Raffle | Mike Hauk |
| 10. Contest | Mike Hauk & Steve Zapytowski (MCR) |
| 11. Timetable Editor | Rob Bennett & Mike Hauk |
| 12. Website | Dave Ellis |
| 13. Social Media | Brad White & Mike Hauk |
| 14. Logo Design | Chris Hauk |
| 15. Layouts & Tours | Brad White |
| 16. Op Sessions | Brad White |
| 17. Rail Tours Coordinator | Mike Hauk, Brad White |
| 18. T-TRAK | Bruce Bloomster & Bruce DeMaeyer (MCR) |

Committee Managers Needed:

- 1. Clinic Room Host/AV connection:** This person will be in charge of volunteers at the clinic rooms, making sure that clinicians are introduced, helping with timely transitions from one clinic to another, coordinating with the Ambassador staff, and having the cellphone number of the Ambassador's Audiovisual expert. Doug Sandmeyer will be the main contact, providing clinician biographies etc.
- 2. Event Photographer:** The board is investigating whether a photographer will be provided by the MCR for the contest entries. Even if that is the case, we will need a person, without other responsibilities, that can take photographs during the convention activities as well as select, crop, and otherwise manipulate the photos to provide

publishable images for the division and MCR. If the region does not provide a photographer, having good quality images of the contest entries will be a top priority.

- 3. Bus Dispatcher:** Have you ever chaperoned a school field trip? Then you know what to do. You will be provided a list of folks signed up for the tour. Make sure everyone gets on the bus and make sure the bus driver knows where and when they are going and coming back. If you are not going on the tour yourself, make sure that you have a contact and cell number of someone who is going. It looks like we will have between two to four bus tours during the convention.

Volunteers needed during preparation leading up to the convention:

- 1. Registration:** Work with Dave and other board members putting together registration packets, nametags, and other handouts and signage. May become a knowledgeable volunteer manager during the convention
- 2. Contest Awards/Raffle Assistant:** Work with Mike and other board members obtaining and organizing the numerous award plaques and/or raffle items. May become a knowledgeable volunteer manager during the convention.
- 3. Hospitality Room:** Work with board members to make sure the hospitality room is set up before the convention and is maintained during the convention.

Volunteers needed during the convention:

- 1. Display Rooms:** The white elephant sales, company store, and raffle sales area will need to have two or three volunteers at all times to

handle sales and provide security. The contest room will need to be monitored at all times that it is open. The T-TRAK folks may need help during registration and set-up.

- 2. Clinic Room Hosts:** Several volunteers will be needed to assist the Clinic Room Host in making sure the rooms are ready, the clinicians are introduced, and troubleshooting any issues that may come up.
- 3. Registration Desk:** Volunteers will be needed to check people in and answer questions at the registration and information desk.

The volunteer web page is live:

<https://www.div12mcr.org/northern-express/volunteering/>

Brick and Mortar Hobby Stores in Division 12

As the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, the local shops could use your support. When the time comes to 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

Hobby Express

www.hobbyexpressinc.com

1713 Route 228
Cranberry Twp., PA 16066

Mercer Junction

<https://mercerjunction.com>

151 North Diamond Street
Mercer, PA 16137

If you are using this time to work on your railroad, and you find that you do need essential supplies to finish a project, check out the NMRA Partnership Program for online supplier possibilities.

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.

Starting Fresh

Kevin Garben

Trains and model railroading are something that I fondly remember from my childhood. My grandfather had a large layout in his basement in his home in Buffalo, New York.

Many parts of my grandparents' home were train-themed with pictures of steam locomotives lining hallway walls and a massive collection of Betamax tapes of recorded train movies and TV shows. Seeing my grandpa and "helping" him run the layout was always my favorite part of my trips to my grandparents' home. I could not wait for him to give the OK to head down to the basement.



Heading down the stairs to the basement, we first had to reach up and turn on the individual floodlights with aluminum reflectors placed around the layout. I could barely reach some of them even with a stool. I remember the feel of pushing in the switch and squeezing around the layout to each light with my shirt snagging on the old basement walls. Walking around the layout and making my way to the control board, ducking under a 3-track bridge that wrapped around behind the control area and led to a staging yard for passenger trains. Moving carefully, making sure to not accidentally touch anything. I remember how complicated it was, so many toggle switches and black dials. The control board must have been thirty feet long to my young eyes but was probably less than ten. It was a dizzying array hanging from the layout with some eyehooks and hundreds of small wires coming from the back of the brown board. My seating choices were an old gray barstool that spun or the world's most uncomfortable bench. I of course would choose the barstool, which by spinning the seat would rise, giving me

a better look over the layout. Getting a better view, but never touching the layout.

As I got older, I remember him daringly letting me operate the controls while he set switches with a long piece of balsa wood with a rubber band on the end. Grandpa lining up a consist, allowing me to control the locomotive. Occasionally getting yelled at for nervously turning dials clockwise and not counterclockwise when he said "STOP!" Thinking back, it seems funny now, but probably a bit more stressful for my grandpa. When I was old enough, he let me have a "push train", where I could push a dummy Alco and some boxcars. He must have had quite a bit of trust in young me, letting me perform my own deliveries to the different industries around his layout.

Over the years, I still had the memories but I lost my interest in trains as I pursued a career in IT. When I was around age thirty, we moved from Erie to Pittsburgh where I took a job as a Network Engineer for a signaling company. At the time, I had no idea what signaling was and I was more interested in building large IT networks that spanned miles.

About a year or two into the job, it clicked. I was working with trains! Not freight trains, but still, trains! Memories came flooding back in. I was hooked, I needed to have my own model train layout. Like many people, I started with a kit from the hobby shop and a Christmas tree.



Then two folding tables and some more track. Around this time my father gave me some of my grandfather's locomotives and some rolling stock. Well, with all this rolling stock we must go bigger! I found myself spending hours on YouTube and hobby websites learning more about how to build a proper layout. Then off to the hardware store to build some tables and more time at the hobby store picking out locomotives, scenery, and rolling stock.



I spent about two years trying different table layouts and track arrangements, watching trains go around ovals, and learning quite a bit along the way. Then my wife and I were blessed with our first son. Later that year I no longer had the time for the layout, and most days it sat dormant. We eventually decided to finish the basement and so the layout came down.



After that I spent some time at the local model railroad clubs but due to traveling for work, I found I could not adhere to a club's weekly schedule. I missed having my own layout and looked forward to the yearly Christmas open houses at the local clubs as well as the museum in Gibsonia.

Fast forward a couple more years and we were blessed with our second son! A move back to Erie to be closer to family was in order. We are now in a home with a large basement, plenty of room for a layout. I was not planning on working on a layout until my son was a bit older, but in the current state of things I find myself with a lot of extra time on my hands. I have been unboxing some of my HO rolling stock and locomotives for display in my office and taking inventory of my Digitrax equipment.

I look forward to any advice that our club members may have for starting fresh. I plan on documenting my progress, probably not to the extent that Rob Bennett has, but at least taking some pictures. I am also looking for someone to keep me honest, a sort of sponsor, who can help with goals and ensuring that I keep up progress and a healthy balance of hobby/life/work.

I have not made it to a club meeting since our move to Erie in August (moving in and having a baby is a lot of work!), but I look forward to the next one once the current stay-at-home situation is over.

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

Browsing the Internet: The Structure Guy's Top Ten Sites on Model Building

Bill Schopf

Let's wrap up this five-part series on structure building with a look at some excellent sources on the internet that provide mountains of information and inspiration for your modeling. The

ten sites are listed in no particular order of preference or quality. They are all deserving of hours of browsing and absorbing tips and techniques.

1. JASON JENSEN TRAINS

To access: Go to YouTube and search "Jason Jensen" and click "videos" ... also see Facebook

The skinny on the site: If Jason Jensen isn't the best structure builder around, he's in the top ten for sure. The YouTube site contains over sixty thorough videos on scenery, dioramas, kitbashing and structure building. Sorry, nothing on operations. Jason is not into ops, only structures and building a gorgeous waterfront diorama. You have to see this guy's work.

Just some of the good stuff: Video clinics on topics like these:
Starting Your First Wood Structure Kit
How to Apply Paper Shingles
How to Make Plastic Look Like Wood
How to Paint and Weather
Clapboard Walls
How to Paint Stone, Rust and Wood

2. LUKE TOWAN

To access: Go to YouTube and search "Luke Towan" and click "Videos"

The skinny on the site: Luke Towan is a superb Australian modeler who is building the Boulder Creek Railroad. Most of his site is devoted to wonderful videos on building scenery, benchwork, trees, water, and dioramas but he has some excellent videos on structure building as well.

Just some of the good stuff:
Matchsticks + Foil = Old Shed
Build, Paint and Animate a Working Freight House
3D Printing
Laser Cutting Tutorial
Scratchbuilding with Styrene -- Tools and Materials

3. WILEY'S SCALE MODELING

To access: Go to YouTube and search "Wiley's Scale Modeling" and click "Videos" ... also see Facebook

The skinny on the site: Lots of short to medium-length videos on all aspects of model railroading including structures. Extended 90 to 120 minute conversations with some of the biggest names in the model railroading community.

Just some of the good stuff:

- How to Paint and Weather Hydrocal Block Walls
- Weathering Basics
- Making Scale Newspapers
- Adding Loading Docks and Stairs
- Interviews and conversations with these modelers among others:
 - Bob van Gelder of South River Modelworks,
 - Doug Foscale,
 - Vilius Bileisis,
 - Dave Frary,
 - George Sellios,
 - and Lance Mindheim.

4. STEPHEN BENNETT (OR ROB BENNETT) (OR BENNETT FAMILY RAILROAD)

To access: Go to YouTube and search "Stephen Bennett" and click on "Videos"

The skinny on the site: Yes, this is Division 12's Rob Bennett. Many of Rob's 15,000 subscribers think Rob's name is Stephen. The confusion comes about because Rob's son Stephen as a teenager had a YouTube channel that the two then used to begin videos on model railroading. As Stephen grew, his interest waned and Rob took over the channel. So Rob is Rob and Stephen is Stephen in real life. On YouTube, though, Rob is Stephen. And Stephen? Well he's just off having fun fooling around with cars in Rob's driveway.

Rob may not even know how many videos are on his site. I counted over 250 and a new one was just added as I write this. They chronicle the progress of his

railroad from hanging the dry wall in his basement to his latest build. The videos are long (That is the standing joke among his subscribers.) but they give excellent insight into techniques and his thought processes. Lately the videos have highlighted structure building as Rob has done more of this the last couple of years. But search the videos as well for information on electronics, using Fast Tracks jigs, scenery, weathering, and benchwork. You name it, and Rob has probably covered it.

Just some of the good stuff:

- Shortcuts on a Structure Kit
- Two Craftsman Kits: Parts 1,2,3
- Scratchbuilding Lake City Train Station
- Scratchbuilding North East Freight House

5. BAR MILLS MODELS

To access: Go to barmillsmodels.com or see Facebook

The skinny on the site: Bar Mills is one of the top four or five kit manufacturers in the hobby. The site lists photos and details of all their available kits as well as audio how-tos and video clinics. Plus, Art Fahey, owner of the company, is one of the really nice guys around. Call the company with a question and Art will probably pick up the phone and take the time to tell you all you need to know.

Just some of the good stuff:

- Mike Tylick on Tarpaper Roofing (video)
- Painting with Spackle (video)
- Tissue Paper for Roofing (video)
- Using Transfer Tape to Install Model Roofing Material (video)
- Using Kraft Paper for Tarpaper (video)
- Realistic Results with Paper Shingles (audio)
- Weathering and Aging Wooden Walls (audio)

Aging Stripwood for Fences and Decking (audio)

6. LABELLE WOODWORKING

To access: Go to labellemodels.com and click on "11 Hints and Pointers"

The skinny on the site: Labelle is the largest manufacturer of wood scale model rolling stock craftsman kits. They began with old-time cars but are now making kits of more recent cars. They list 138 HO scale items, 43 O scale items and 111 decals. Included on the site is a photo gallery of model and prototype photos. For information on building rolling stock from wood, this is the first place to go.

Just some of the good stuff (all included under 11 Hints and Pointers):

- Altering car lengths
- Perfect Car Kit Construction
- Truss Rods on a Flat Car
- Straight Grab Irons
- Good Car Sides Forever
- Building Passenger Cars

7. MARK PAULSON

To access: Go to markpaulson.wordpress.com

The skinny on the site: Mark Paulson is an On30 modeler who is building the Denver, Durango and Silverton Railroad, a narrow gauge railroad set in the San Juan mountains of Colorado. Although he models in On30, his tips and techniques are applicable to any scale -- standard or narrow gauge. His work is unique, in particular the rolling stock that he scratch builds. The site includes hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of in-progress and finished photos of structures and rolling stock as well as loads of tips and advice. This is not a very well known site but every modeler should bookmark it. Mark Paulson is worth visiting just to see the unique rolling stock he has built.

Just some of the good stuff:

Construction photos and tips on all kinds of rolling stock (reefers, derrick cars, log loaders, wood coal cars, flangers, cabooses, rail-tie cars among others)

Construction photos and tips on building sheds, firehouses, cabins, ore tipples, stations and loading docks among others.

8. FOS SCALE MODELS

To access: Go to fosscalemodels.com or see Facebook

The skinny on the site: Fos Scale is one of the best sources for high-quality craftsman kits – mostly in HO but a few in O scale. The site lists kits, details and tools that the company sells plus a lengthy block of topics that offer great advice to enhance building skills. These are easy to print out and can form the basis of a nice library on structure building techniques.

Just some of the good stuff:

- Rust Effects and Chipping
- Better, Easier Roof Dormers
- The Case for Narrow Buildings
- Bored with Your Boards
- Using Metallic Markers in Modeling
- Planting Structures
- Easy Copper Finish
- Plus dozens and dozens more

9. SIERRA WEST SCALE MODELS

To access: Go to sierrawestscalemodels.com then click on "Forum" and then click on

"Working with Wood" or "Techniques"

The skinny on the site: Sierra West's craftsman kits are in a class comparable to South River and the advanced, later Fine Scale Miniature kits. As their name implies, most have a western theme. The site gives you photos of beautifully built kits. But, more importantly for the scratch builder there are

lots of blog-style Qs & As on building with wood.

Just some of the good stuff:

Under "Working with Wood"

Signage

Weathering

Wood Color Experiments

Fuzzy Wood

Peeling Paint

Using Rembrandt Chalks

Under "Techniques"

Corrugated Roof Rust

Creating Believable Concrete

Dry Transfer of Signs

Shadow Effect to Create
Depth

10. WORLDWIDE MINIATURES 2020

To access: Go to modvid.com.au

The skinny on the site: The work of some of the best modelers in the world is featured. There is no information on techniques or tips for building. But thousands of photos adorn the site. Viewing the work of these modelers provides lots of inspiration and ideas. Many of the included modelers are Australian (In my view, some of the best modelers in the world come from Australia.) but works of well-known modelers in the U.K. and U.S are featured.

Just some of the good stuff:

Detailed photos on incredible diorama and modeling groups:

Sundance Central, a Florida-based workshop

Muskrat Ramble diorama from Australia

Smugglers Cove diorama from Australia

Photos from these fabulous modelers (dozens and dozens more are included ... you will want to view these as well) But the guys listed below? You don't want to miss out and see how good they are.

Don Railton

Geoff Nott

Dave Revelia

George Sellios

Jon Grant

Jason Jensen

Laurie Green

Malcolm Furlow

Troels Kirk

So this concludes a series that has rambled on for the past five issues of *The Builder's Plate*. Hopefully, you have found one or two things useful. I encourage you to keep building, don't worry about making mistakes and, most important, just have fun.

The beautiful thing about our hobby is the creativity and innovation it inspires in us. What was included in these listings could be updated next month and again the next month and again the month after that with new and exciting techniques. Creativity in model railroaders is never capped. Model railroading brings out the hidden artistry in all of us.

So keep searching for help, ideas, inspiration and new directions. Scour the internet. Subscribe to some of the hobby's best magazines -- the online *Model Railroad Hobbyist* and its supplement *Running Extra*, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, or the *Narrow Gauge and Short Line Gazette*. Buy a medium priced kit from Fos Scale or Bar Mills and you will be amazed at what you will learn. Kitbash something. Scratch build something. I am sure you will discover really cool modeling techniques on your own that you can then pass on to others. All you have to do is just keep modeling. That's not a bad goal to have in life. I can think of lots worse.

Personally, I can't think of anything that is more rewarding than seeing a completed model that I have

worked on for days or weeks placed onto my layout. I hope you feel the same way. Keep it going.

Book Review

By Dick Bradley

Realistic Layouts

Use the Art of Illusion to Model Like a Pro

By CJ Riley

Kalmbach Media

Softcover

95 pages

Copyright 2020

ISBN 978-1-62700-771-9

\$ 21.99

The only time I met CJ Riley was at the 1990 NMRA Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His Beaver Forks & Muddgut was the gem of the model railroad tour. And he led us on a fascinating industrial tour. Over the years I have followed Riley's writing in the model railroad magazines. He has long been a contributor to the NMRA and is MMR® #97.

The book's subtitle appropriately reads like an advertising blurb. And it includes the current buzzword "Art." This is not the usual compilation of articles from Model Railroader Magazine. CJ Riley has written the entire book based on his extensive model railroading experience. The book covers a wide range of topics related to model railroading. Some receive a more detailed treatment; others present an overview. The organizing theme of the book, encouraging a cohesive planning of

your model railroad based on prototype practice, is very important. *Realistic Layouts* has ten chapters. It is good to read a chapter at a time. And then pause to consider how the topics pertain to your model railroad. Within chapters I sometimes stopped reading to reflect on how the information applies to my modeling. There were "aha" moments. Whether building your first or your fifth model railroad there's information here for you.

The text is profusely illustrated; that is important for CJ's principal theme: the model railroad must look prototypically correct. Pictures of modeling come from John Allen, Allen McClelland, Paul Dolkos, Jack Burgess, Tony Koester, and many others. And there are appropriate pictures from real life, not just of trains but also of structures and scenery. Illustrations are chosen to relate to the text and their captions are important. I wish the publisher had provided better color balance and density in some of the photos.

This book is weighted toward the model railroading style called "prototype freelancing." Freelancing offers the opportunity to include what you like. This is a valid approach to model railroad design. But CJ maintains that for convincing model realism the prototype must be the most significant influence in your modeling. He discusses how the more specifically the prototype is chosen – locale, era, operation – the more influential and important the adherence to the prototype becomes. CJ does not hold back criticism of fantasy bridges or impossible scenery contours – and illustrates them.

The first word in the title *Realistic* sets the theme. All the pictures, captions and text are there to show you how to achieve a more realistic appearance for your modeling. There are references to guide you to more information. Alternative methods to achieve realism for your models are suggested. For CJ, modeling illusions – smoke & mirrors – always based on prototype practice is what makes a model railroad believable.

CJ Riley writes in the first person. He is talking to you. It is good to listen to a master.

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. Share what you have been working on!

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. It is very helpful to the editor to include the JPEGs as a separate attachment rather than imbedding them into the document.