

---

# BUILDER'S PLATE

---

August 2020

Volume 3, Issue 7

---

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

---

## Superintendent's Report

### **NMRA Membership Meetings in the Virtual World**

One of the side effects of the "Great Pandemic" has been the use of virtual meetings. These have become very popular for continuing to have division membership meetings. Your Board of Directors (BOD) has been meeting via "Zoom" for the past few months. This past May the MCR region BOD was held virtually, and the NMRA national BOD has been meeting virtually for the past year or so in addition to the in-person meetings at the National Convention.

I was rather disappointed at the lack of participation in our first attempt at a virtual meeting — we did have a quorum, which was nice, but I thought we would have more attendees. Division 8 in Kentucky has had a lot of success with their virtual meetings. Their division covers a large geographic area

similar to ours. Their virtual meetings have enabled members that are far from their normal meeting locations to attend the meetings. Once they start up in-person meetings again, they also plan on including a virtual setup.

I was able to attend the WNY Division of the NMRA (the former Buffalo group) membership meeting. Here was their list of clinics:

*Fred Dellaiaco from the Garden State Division will present "How to make water out of toilet paper," this is a fascinating program, and Barry Silverthorn from Roomettes will present "What are Roomettes, how to assemble them and what are the upcoming products." If you like to make interiors for your buildings, this is your clinic, don't miss it. We also are hoping that NMRA President Pete Magoun will make a guest appearance.*

---

### **Next Membership Events:**

As we were recently informed that the meadow at the Venango General Store was not going to be available the weekend of our scheduled meeting, we will be holding a Zoom meeting. In addition to the details in this issue, our clerk will be sending out an email blast with details about the Zoom meeting to be held at 10:00 A.M. on August 8, 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, state, and local officials.

I missed the first clinic on tissue paper water but saw the one on roomettes. It was a very good clinic and I hope to have Barry do a clinic for us in the future. Here's the link to Barry's website <https://roometteslighting.com/>

Twenty-nine NMRA members attended virtually including NMRA President, Pete Magoun, from Traverse City, Michigan, all possible because no one had to travel. Don't get me wrong, I still prefer an in-person membership meeting, but this does open up a lot of possibilities.

If you have questions about how to use Zoom for meetings please reach out to one of our board members, we are here to help.

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](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

August: Virtual **Membership Meeting:** 10:00 A.M. August 8, 2020. The topic: "Mistakes I've Made." We will have minimal business, several members will have short PowerPoint presentations sharing mistakes they have made (and how they overcame the mistakes) with their model railroads. We will then open up a roundtable for discussion. Invitation and additional details will be sent to the members.

September: **Membership Meeting:** While we have "reservations" at the Venango General Store, many of the board members are hesitant to count on them as they have pulled the rug out from under us twice now.

## 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, no large, public railroad events are scheduled for the near future in the tri-state area.

---

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

## July Membership Meeting

The membership of Division 12, MCR, NMRA met online in a Zoom meeting on July 11, 2020. The following members were virtually present: Bruce

Bloomster, Rob Bennett, Dale Desser, David Ellis, Lee Farnsworth, Mike Hauk, Nick Ozorak, Doug Sandmeyer, Bill Schopf, and Dave Neff as a guest from Division 5.

A quorum (at least ten members) was not established with only nine Division 12 members present.

### Announcements

- Mike Hauk noted that he would be leading today, as Brad was not available.
- Mike mentioned that we are proceeding with planning for the *Northern Express*. An explanation of and request for volunteers for the *Northern Express* was presented.
- Dave Neff shared that he hopes we do something to avoid early cherry picking of items at the white elephant sales at the *Northern Express*. He also provided the name of a possible vendor.

### Modeling Question

Bill Schopf wondered how to best figure the ratio of home road, nearby railroad, and distant railroad rolling stock for his model railroad. Mike and others responded that it really depends on the era and type of railroad. Since Bill's is set in the 1930s, and it is a coal-hauling road with per diem charges in effect, a larger percentage of cars (particularly hoppers) would be home road or

nearby railroads, with only a few distant railroads.

### **Four Short Presentations: “What I’ve Been Working On”**

- Mike Hauk shared several things that he has been working on. He tried a salt technique on weathering rolling stock as well as trying AK Interactive weathering pencils, suggesting that the jury is still out on both of those techniques. He is continuing his work on scratch building accurate flat cars for the S&NY. The second attempt turned out a scale foot too wide. He is hoping the third time will be the charm. Finally, work continues on eighty-seven million acres of puffball trees.
- Nick Ozorak shared a Scalescenes mini layout that he is working on. This is a British kit; everything is paper! <https://scalescenes.com> has interesting downloadable paper scenes, buildings, bridges, and textures.
- Dave Neff shared some Micro-Scale Models craftsman kits from their Pine Creek series that he has been working on. He was particularly enthusiastic about their great instructions.
- Doug Sandmeyer shared the head frame and mine tibble that he has been working on.

### **Program**

Dave Ellis presented an EduTrain Clinic created by Bruce DeYoung, MMR: *Blending Backgrounds and Foregrounds*.

This and all the EduTrain clinics are available to registered NMRA members on the NMRA website. They all have the complete PowerPoint as well as notes. They are definitely worth checking out, and they are quite helpful if one needs a last minute replacement program!

Thank you,

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

## Brick and Mortar Hobby Stores in Division 12

As the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, the local shops (if they survive) 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](http://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.

# Work Smarter — With Your Smartphone

Rob Bennett

I just finished the installation and wiring of several signals. These include three multi-head bracket signals, a two-track double head signal bridge, two double head dwarf signals and two Tomar double head, three light target signals. The bracket signals and signal bridge were custom made by Integrated Signal Systems. The double head dwarfs I kitbashed from two single head dwarfs made by Showcase Miniatures.

All the signals are wired common anode and connected via a resistor board to my C/MRI system. The challenging part is making all the connections – with the very thin 34AWG wires – while under the layout. Try as one may, there is only so much that can be done to the mass of wires to properly identify them in terms of which track and which head they are. What this means is that a lot of testing – by trial and error, is required to find the proper signal LEDs and connect them to the resistor board. This also means one will be crawling out from under the layout many times over to check the signal.

After about ten minutes of multiple crawls, a light bulb (HA!) went on – why not use my smart phone, a Samsung Galaxy S7 – with my camera and view the signal while sitting under the layout? This way I could do all the testing at once without having to crawl out and back to check each LED. This

worked out very well and saved me a lot of time (and agony) in the connection and testing of the signals.

The camera I use is a Sony DCS-RX10 II. Sony provides an application to remote control the camera via a smart phone, and the viewfinder of the camera is visible on the phone.

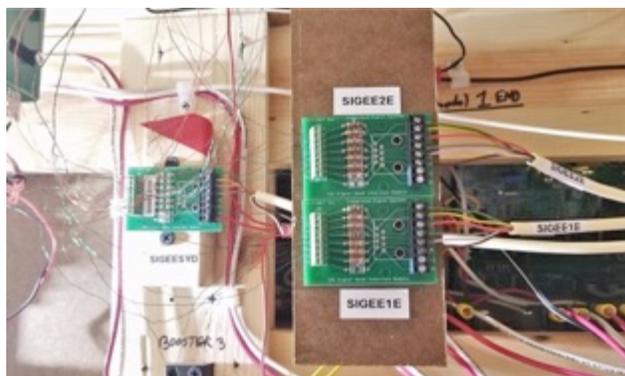


The Sony app is Play Memories Mobile. Most other camera brands will likely have similar remote control applications. Via a wireless connection one can view and control the camera from the smart phone – a very handy tool for working under the layout!



I simply placed the camera facing the signal I was working on and took the phone under the layout with me. I then

proceeded to connect the 30AWG signal wires, hoping I would guess correctly (I had about a twenty-five percent success rate!) on the first try. Once all the LEDs were properly connected and the mess of wires organized a bit it was a simple matter to run through all the LEDs as a final check, all while sitting under the layout and viewing the signal via the phone.



This photo of one installation shows the crowded nature of the area under the layout. This picture was taken with my phone, raised over and behind my head due to the tightness of the location. It shows one of the double head dwarfs to the left (SIGEESYD) and the double mast, three head bracket signal to the right (Signals SIGEE 1E and 2E). The connections from the signals are from the left, and the cable runs to the C/MRI Node Board are on the right. Not an easy area to get in and out of, and setting up the camera and phone at least made it tolerable to get these signals installed!

I have five more Pennsy position light signals to install and this new process will be used at that time. I am now considering additional uses for the phone-camera remote application. It

sure did save a lot of crawling in and out and my back and knees are thanking me!

**Robzilla!**



---

## 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)

## Working on the Model Railroad

Richard Bradley, MMR©

The single track between Knisely on the right and Risp Mill on the left has never had scenery. The current work is changing that. Work began on the right with the Knisely fuel dealer.



It is based on the Walthers Interstate Oil kit with a Stewart Pump House kit added. The kits are heavily modified to both fit their spaces and look like 1955. Atlantic Oil was common along the Ma & Pa. The decals are from MicroScale.

Farther to the right, the tram track now has a scratch built wooden dock with ramp. The dock is sixty-four feet long with a sixteen-foot ramp. A new asphalt lot serves it. Roads connect the dock with the fuel dealer. People, Silflor weeds, cross bucks, vehicles, and a black cat complete the scenery.

Toward Risp Mill on the left the commercial backdrop of hillside homes was cut back to make way for a farm scene. The farm scene backdrop began as six parts on a LARC Products disc. Five of those modified parts survive.



Their modifications include color changes to bring them into springtime, changes to the horizon, and fitting them into the scenery at their ends. Yes, I'll use the time-honored procedure of hiding it with trees. I like using these backdrop parts – when I ruin one it is easy to print a replacement.

Further scenery work will fill the area between the backdrop and the track. And then comes a farm field between the track and the aisle. With a box of new stuff from Scenic Express on hand I hope to make some progress.

---

## 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.

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