

BUILDER'S PLATE

April 2021

Volume 4, Issue 3

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

Superintendent's Letter

It looks like the fog is beginning to lift. We are closer to being able to meet in person as more of our members get their vaccines. We will still have two more virtual meetings (April and May) before meeting in person in June. We already have a virtual presenter scheduled for May. Without a reliable WiFi connection at the trolley station, your board thought it would be best to keep the May meeting virtual.

More activity in train shows is starting to take place. The Altoona Train show was in Mid-March and, as of this writing, two train shows are scheduled for Sunday April 11, one in Manaca, Pennsylvania and the other in Medina, Ohio. I also confirmed with Iron Horse Productions that the Erie Train Show is on schedule for this coming November. Once we get confirmed dates of other shows, we will add them to the newsletter and website.

The spring MCR BOD and the MCR Annual Meeting will take place May 21 this year at 8:00 PM. The plan is to start the BOD meeting at 8 PM followed by the Annual Meeting. This meeting would have been held at the convention in Erie, but due to the cancelation of the convention, the meeting will be held via Zoom. I highly recommend that our membership try and attend the Annual Meeting. Once I have the link to the meeting, I will forward to our clerk so that he can then share it with our members.

Lastly, as we start to return to normal, I try to focus on the positives that have come out of the past year. I think the biggest opportunity that we found was the ability of our distant members to interact with each other via Zoom. Our "Thursday Modeling Night" has been extremely popular with NMRA members and non-NMRA members. Many great discussions ranging from modeling ideas to the state of the hobby have taken place there. The one thing I had hoped it would do was act as a recruitment tool to attract new members and it has done that. I would

Next Membership Events:

Our next membership meeting will be held on **Saturday, April 10, 2021 at 10:00 AM on Zoom**. We will send out the invitation and agenda, as we get closer to the date.

One of the popular segments of our in-person meetings is the "What's On My Workbench" segment. Please consider joining in with this even as we meet virtually. If you have a few photographs on your desktop or a short PowerPoint, you can screen share in Zoom. Please contact any of the board members for help or advice with this process.

like to thank Dave Cole for becoming a NMRA member in the past month after attending some of our Thursday modeling nights. I have every intention of keeping the modeling night going if there is interest, even if it is just one other person and myself.

Happy Model Railroading
Bradley White
Division 12 MCR
Superintendent

Treasurer's Report

In 2021, we cleared all expenses, deposits and loans connected with the now cancelled *Northern Express*, but decided to keep the "convention" checking account open to use for future events such as the 2022 mini-meet. In January we received our full deposit back from Anderson Coaches. We received our deposit minus a cancellation fee back from Ambassador Center. I also transferred some funds from our general account to ensure that we stay above the minimum balance required to avoid monthly fees. On March 1, 2021 our check for paying back our loan in full from the Mid Central Region cleared leaving us with a balance of \$593.01 in the "convention" account with PNC.

In February we received two donations of fifty dollars in memory of Shorty Parker. One was from Peter Darling, a long-time friend of Shorty's and an NMRA member from the Lake Shore Division of the NER. The other donation was from Brad White. After exploring what would be involved in creating a separate restricted fund in our accounting system for this, I realized that would be a needlessly complicated step. Our intension is to apply these donations towards the establishment of an annual regional award for scratch-built structures. The superintendent and the contest coordinator of the MCR have approved the idea of this award, and Mike Hauk, our AP chair, has agreed to lead the criteria development and creation of the award.

As of March 31, 2021 we have \$594.01 in our convention checking account, \$2,195.64 in our general checking account, and \$63.60 in cash between the cash box and donation jar, so the total funds available are \$2,853.25.

David Ellis

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Division 12, MCR, NMRA, Inc.

The Alleghany Western Division:

Expanding your model railroading horizons

Please visit our website: www.div12mcr.org

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

Meetings

When face-to-face membership meetings return, they typically include announcements and limited business; “Modeling Question” and “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/>

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Officers and BOD

Superintendent: Brad White — superintendent@div12mcr.org

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

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

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T-Trak & Clinic: Doug Sandmeyer – ttrak@div12mcr.org

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Operations Coordinator: Dale Desser – operations@div12mcr.org

Achievement Program: Mike Hauk – ap@div12mcr.org

Division 12 Upcoming Events

April: **Membership Meeting:** April 10, 2021 at 10:00 AM. This will be a virtual meeting on Zoom.

May: **Membership Meeting:** May 8, 2021 at 10:00 AM. This will be a virtual meeting on Zoom.

June: **Membership Meeting:** June 12, 2021 at 10:00 AM. This will be an in-person meeting at the Cambridge Springs Trolley Station and grounds with safety protocols in place. Our Social Committee Chair is working on setting up an optional post-meeting lunch gathering.

July: **Membership Social Meeting:** July 10. Details will follow.

Upcoming Meeting Programs



Photo: Russ Weis

The next two meetings will be virtual ones on Zoom, which allows us to bring in guest presenters. As we get into better weather and possibly better COVID-19 situations we hope to

move to outdoor meetings as we move into the summer. In the meantime Doug Sandmeyer has been working to organize guest speakers from outside the division while we are Zooming. Tentatively, here is what is coming up:

April Membership Meeting: Russ Weis – “Americanized Kibri Freight House” and Nick Kalis – “Enhance Your Layout’s Storytelling: Practical Steps”

May Membership Meeting: Dave Meyers – “Introduction to Gatorboard for Modelers” and a second program on Homasote roadbed that is not yet confirmed

June Membership Meeting: Mike Hauk – “Weathering Rolling Stock with Artist Oils and Turpenoid”

Upcoming Model Railroad Events

April 3, 2021: **Hindsight 2020 8.0, A Virtual RPM.** Information and registration available at: <https://speedwitchmedia.com/product/hindsight-20-20-8-0-registration/>

April 10 & 11, 2021: **“Covid-Safe” Great Scale Model Train Show.** Information and tickets at: https://www.gsmts.com/Covid_Show_Info.htm

April 17, 2021: **World’s Greatest Hobby Online.** Information and registration available at: <https://www.wgh.events/>

Division 12 March Meeting

The membership of Division 12, MCR, NMRA met virtually on Zoom at 10:00 AM on Saturday, March 13, 2021. The following members were present: Rob Bennett, Dick Bradley, Ed Cronin, Larry Dodge, David Ellis, Lee Farnsworth, Mike Hauk, Jerry Longo, Doug Sandmeyer, Bill Schopf, and Brad White. Also joining us were Sasha Young and John, our program presenters from CMR, Andy MacVie from the Western New York Division, as well as Dave Cole, a guest/new member of Division 12. A quorum (at least ten members) was established with eleven Division 12 members present.

Announcements

- Brad White mentioned that the Erie Train Show in November is on at Rainbow Gardens.
- Sasha from CMR mentioned the Great Scale Model Train Show was on with advance sales tickets only. (This is listed in our upcoming events list elsewhere.)

Program

Sasha Young presented “Weathering with Decals from CMR Productions.” She and John did an excellent walk through of using their CMR weathering decals while the participants followed along at home. CMR had very kindly provided sample decal sheets to Doug Sandmeyer, who then mailed them to those who had signed up ahead of time. Among the tips I jotted down were:

- Use Microscale brand for the wetting and setting solution rather than the Walthers products.
- The blue MicroSet is used to thoroughly wet the surface of the model.
- Keep the decal wet to move it and work with it.
- Fingers, a knife blade, or brushes can all be used to slide the decal off the backing and onto the model. (This is a skill that requires practice!)
- Triangular make-up sponges or paper towel edges can be used to remove excess liquid after the decal is in place.
- The red Solvaset is applied with a brush and then left undisturbed to dry.

Modeling Question

Our modeling question was more of a discussion of alternatives to Testor’s Dullcoat. Sasha suggested Rust-Oleum 2X Ultracover matte clear. Larry Dodge suggested a different product: Rust-Oleum® Universal® Clear Spray Paint in “Dead Flat.” Both Bill Schopf and I brought up Krylon Low Oder Clear Matte Finish as a possible alternative. This is a topic for further exploration.

What’s on Your Workbench?

Several of our members quickly shared what they had been working on:

- Brad shared photos of several cars to model the Brocton to Buffalo *Nickel Plate Limited* that he is planning for his new model railroad. In re-reading my cryptic notes it appears that one was a Walthers baggage car, one was a kitbashed Athern dining car, and one was a Lackawanna sleeper car.
- Lee Farnsworth shared that he has started working towards having a layout by purchasing a **Pi-SPROG** full package that consists of a DCC system based on a Raspberry Pi computer and includes its own 2.5 amp booster, JMRI, and WiFi network.
- Rob Bennett shared the work he has been doing with the Sharon Westinghouse plant portion on his railroad. The prototype was huge, so even his compressed version is massive, using forty-two ITLA wall panels.

(Either a couple of photographs in a folder or in a simple PowerPoint can be easily shared during a Zoom presentation. Hopefully, as we continue to need to have virtual meetings more of our members will try this easy technique!)

Behind the Wall 2:

Brad White demonstrated more features from the members' only section of the NMRA website. For March, he shared the NMRA Store, taking us through the product categories. He pointed out that the NMRA is the place to purchase NMRA gauges, as they are significantly cheaper here.

For the Good of the Order/Further Discussion:

Rob Bennett pointed out that an American-made version of this razor saw that came up in discussion of building his plant is available from UMM-USA at:

http://umm-usa.com/onlinestore/product_info.php?products_id=37

He suggested checking out UMM-USA for their tool selection. He also found that they had a miter box that matches the razor saw.

Submitted by David Ellis clerk@div12mcr.org

Announcing NMRA Dispatch

NMRA Dispatch emails will be short announcements of important and time-sensitive information that cannot wait for publication in the *NMRA Magazine* or *eBulletin*.

Spam button misuse

It has come to the attention of the IT department that many NMRA members do not receive NMRA email publications (*Turntable*, *eBulletin*, *Dispatch*) because **other** members use the Spam button.

If the publication is not of interest, simply delete it. If you no longer want to receive **any** NMRA email publication, please use the Unsubscribe link, which is safe and secure. Never use the Spam or Junk button. If too many people do this, service providers such as Yahoo will block all people from ever seeing the emails. Most NMRA members want to keep in touch. Don't ruin it for them.

Please note that Unsubscribe will apply to all NMRA email publications, including the Turntable, eBulletin, special eBulletins, and Dispatch.

Missed a Dispatch? There will be a link to an archive of all old dispatches here, in future dispatches.

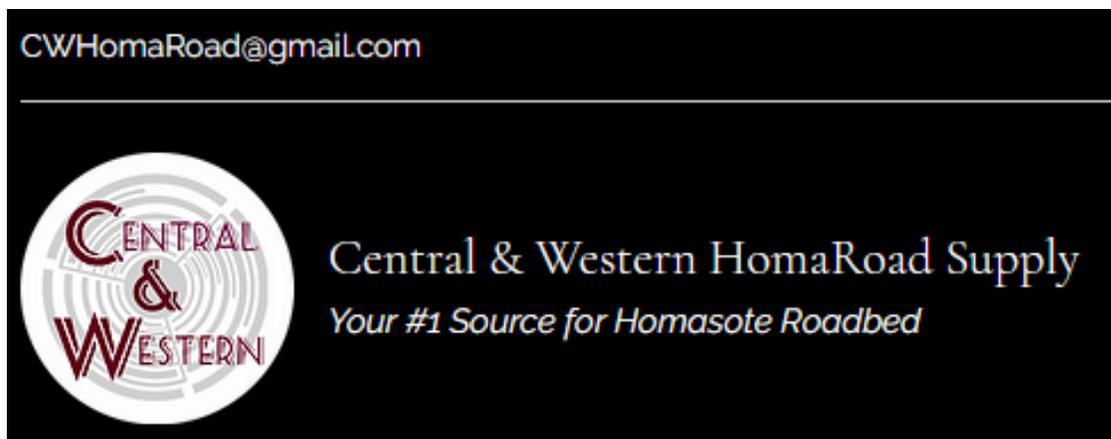
Product Review: Central & Western HomaRoad Supply

Brad White

When I started planning my new layout, there were two things I wanted to do differently than any other layout I had built before. One was to use spline constructions for the sub-bed. The other was to use Homabed for the roadbed instead of cork. I placed an order with Cascade Rail Supply in December of 2019. It took about six weeks for me to receive that first order. I was a little concerned about the length of time it took, but I wasn't too worried because I was at least a year away from starting the new layout.

Then, last summer, I found out that Cascade Rail Supply had closed; this was disappointing. I really like the looks of their roadbed on some of the local layouts. I was resigned that I was going to end up using cork. The biggest downside to using cork is that over time it dries out and shrinks. I had some of these issues on my last layout.

Then, shortly after the first of the year, Chris Mincemoyer sent me an email about C&W HomaRoad Supply, <https://www.cwhomaroad.com/> owned by Russell Chilton.



Boom! A quick \$400.00 later and I placed my first order with them. I received the order in just about a week (very nice). Russel emailed me and apologized that my order took so long to fill.

Due to my current work schedule, I did not have a chance to open my order when it arrived, so it was about a month later that I got to open the two boxes. It will still be a while before I will be using any of the new roadbed. The first thing I noticed was the lack of dust inside the boxes and on the roadbed itself. Back when I got the Cascade Rail Supply Roadbed, I found that the roadbed was a little dusty, which is to be expect with Homasote. It makes a mess when cut.

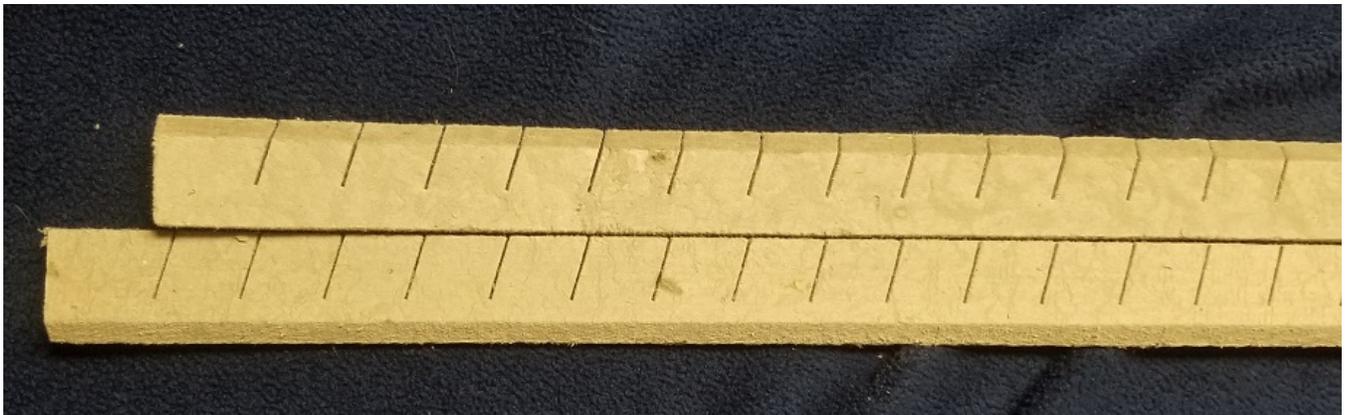
The second thing I liked was the nice clean edges. Please note them in the photos to follow.



Switch pad is seen above



Simple instructions are included on how to line up the kerfs



<https://www.cwhomaroad.com/product-page/ho-scale-12-thick-30-degree-shoulders-curved>

“This roadbed is designed with a more realistic 30-degree slopes found in many actual railroad roadbeds. The scale dimensions are 12" high, 11'-6" across the top and 14'-9" across the bottom. Actual dimensions are 3.5 mm thick (approx. 3/16"), 3.9 mm across the top (approx. 1-19/32"), 5.1 mm across the bottom (2") and 32" long. Minimum radius for the bendable products is 18". Roadbed is sold in 8' bundles. You receive a bundle of 6 strips, 32" long for each 8' of roadbed ordered. Roadbed is in halves, so 6 pieces make 96" or 8' of roadbed. This roadbed is designed so that laying it side to side will yield 2" track centers.”

They also offer roadbed with 45-degree slope plus a wide selection of turnout pads both ridged and curvable.

I have exchanged several emails with the owner about what their plans are. Current projects are:

- O and S scale roadbed.
- Working with Fast Track Diamond Line to make crossings pads.
- They will also do custom work.

NMRA Marketing Consultant, Christina Ganzer Zambri, has been notified that C&W HomaRoad Supply is interested in becoming an NMRA Partner.

C&W HomaRoad provides a quality model railroad product and I'm looking forward to spending more money with them in the near future.

A Member Moving Part One: Disentangling from Division 12

David Ellis

When I was first assigned to Division 5 and then was part of the team that helped form Division 12, my wife and I had recently moved from Seattle back to Meadville, my hometown and the town where we met attending Allegheny College in the 1970s. A large part of the rationale for moving back from the west coast after over thirty-five years was to be closer to my wife's family. While we had not contemplated making yet another move, one consequence of living through the COVID-19 pandemic this past year has been realizing that we are still too far from her family in Western New Jersey and making a move is a must.

One of the added complications of this move is disentangling myself from the roles that I have taken on in Division 12, hopefully without causing undue disruption to the organization. For our division to continue as a nonprofit corporation, some other members need to step up and take on the different positions that I am holding. It turns out that in 2022 all the elected leadership of your division has to change, as we all have been in our positions for two consecutive terms. Mike and Brad can continue in some leadership role, but not in the same position. To help the membership understand what roles or volunteer positions need to be filled, I will provide job descriptions of the positions that have been my responsibility.

These job descriptions are a combination of the documentation in the Regulations and what I developed, holding the position initially, as we formed the division. As a general note, all positions in Division 12 are unpaid volunteer positions. Another note is that the superintendent and board can alter these descriptions as needed for the good of the organization. While it will add an additional level of communication, I strongly suggest that these positions be distributed among several people instead of just one.

Clerk: The position of clerk is one of the three elected positions in the division, along with superintendent and assistant superintendent. The clerk, as I see it, has three main areas of responsibility: membership, communication, and secretarial. The clerk is responsible for taking attendance at all Division 12 meetings, maintaining a list of members (which includes coordinating with the official NMRA membership lists), and creating nametags for the membership and for larger official events. In a few of the larger divisions in the region, a separate person holds this membership position.

The clerk is also responsible for communication. In our division, the vast majority of communication is electronic. The clerk is responsible for maintaining current and accurate email lists of the membership and also what I call “friends of Division 12.” All email communication including the membership must be bcc as the expectation is that email addresses will be kept secure. The clerk initiates and provides ongoing communication for division-sponsored events such as meetings, crew calls for ops sessions, open houses, or public events. The clerk also sends out email blasts of notices at the request of other officers or committee chairs. The clerk coordinates with the editor of the *Builder’s Plate* for the publication of our newsletter in PDF form to the membership and other authorized recipients. Another responsibility is to coordinate with the Nominating Committee for actual distribution of ballots as necessary. As electronic balloting is allowed, coordinating something like ElectionBuddy might be the approach to take in the future.

The clerk position is also that of secretary of the organization. The clerk completes reports as required, keeps records, and takes the minutes at meetings. Membership-meeting minutes should be distributed to the board of directors (BOD) for approval and to the *Builder’s Plate* editor for inclusion in the next edition of the newsletter. Board of directors’ minutes should be distributed to the BOD for approval and kept in the “corporate binder.” In the event of formal executive committee meetings, the clerk is responsible for taking minutes and communication with the BOD. The clerk is responsible for keeping the Regulations and other official documents in the corporate binder and should have the Regulations available at all meetings.

In several of the communication and secretarial roles I have stepped outside the clerk’s basic responsibilities to craft some of the notices and reports. One clear example of this would be meeting agendas. The official role of the clerk is to distribute such items with the content provided by other officers and committee chairs. As part of a leadership team, I often went ahead and created the agendas myself. It will be up to the new leadership team to work together to fine-tune roles and responsibilities beyond the official ones.

Treasurer: The treasurer is appointed by the superintendent and serves on the board of directors and with the elected officers on the executive board. Therefore the position is a two-year term from June 1 until June 1 of even numbered years. Unlike elected officers, the treasurer is not restricted in terms of consecutive terms; the treasurer may continue in office if a new superintendent desires.

Beyond the general expectation that the treasurer be responsible, trustworthy, and provide the BOD with accepted accounting practice, the position includes the following requirements:

- Pay approved bills and expenses in a timely manner
- Keep records of all receipts and disbursements
- Maintain funds in an approved financial institution with a second officer as a second account holder. We currently have two accounts with PNC with Brad White as the second account holder.
- Keep accurate financial “books.” Currently, I keep a manual accrual system with a journal and general ledger, but the division could go to a digital system with a new person in the role.
- Work with officers and committee chairs to formulate yearly budgets
- Render financial reports
 - Expenses, deposits, and balances at BOD meetings
 - Yearly Budget Comparison, Balance Sheet, & Statement of Activities to be reviewed by April 1 per Regulations
- Complete required forms (IRS: Form 990, PA: BCO-10/23, etc.) on time

Newsletter Editor: The editor of the *Builder’s Plate* is a volunteer position serving at the pleasure of the superintendent. The *Builder’s Plate* serves as the official bulletin of Division 12, and meeting notices, announcements, and membership-meeting minutes serve as official statements. Additional news, information, or articles of interest to the membership should be provided. As we publish electronically, timely communication with the clerk will be important as only the clerk has the email lists for the membership and other recipients suggested by the officers. I have been creating the *Builder’s Plate* in Word. Microsoft Publisher is another option, but as I don’t have that application, I haven’t tried it. I strongly suggest having a copywriter or proofreader to review before publication. We have been putting out eleven editions a year, and over the past year, I have been trying to publish on or close to the first of the month.

Website Administrator: While Chris Mincemoyer has taken on the web editor position and is responsible for updates to the website content, I have continued as the website administrator. This role could be a separate position or roll over into either the web editor position or be split between the web editor and treasurer positions. The website administrator is in charge of interactions with our web host and with higher-end administration of the WordPress site including script updates and monitoring security of the site. If we enlarge our web presence with an online store or having a video channel, this person would be involved.

AP Committee Member: This is not really a position that needs to be filled, but I do recommend that when conventions start up again several more division members get training in contest/merit judging. That would give the committee more flexibility in providing division-level merit scoring. Also, I want to finish my draft of the AP Scenery Rubric to present it to our committee for revision and approval before leaving the region, so that Division 12 gets any kudos it might bring if we then submit it to the region/NMRA.

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.

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 separately attached JPEGs.