

# BUILDER'S PLATE

October 2021

Volume 4, Issue 9

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

## Superintendent's Letter

October is upon us, so hopefully we are spending more time working on our models and model railroads. I'm happy to report that I was able to have the first work session for my new layout this past September. It was mostly taking inventory of lumber and track supplies. Dale Desser and Jerry Jordak tackled the task of disassembling the remaining bench work from my old layout. Dave Bastow inventoried and organized all my flex track. Fred Lotte and I double checked some measurements and found there is a support post at the start of the ladder for Buffalo staging.



It was great to get out to some op-sessions in September. Those who could make it had a great time operating on the two layouts in Ohio. It was a long day but well worth it. There should be photos and write up in a future Builders Plate.

I would like to send a big thank you out to Roger Schulenberg for hosting the September Division 12 event. It was a wonderful tour of the railroad display at the Chautauqua County Fair grounds and then a visit to Roger's model railroad, the Niobe & French Creek.



I want to remind all our members that the Erie Train show is the last Sunday in October this year. This is one of our fund-raising events, so we will need volunteers to help Iron Horse Productions with table setup and running the kitchen. Lee Farnsworth will be organizing the volunteer list. We will have several tables for White Elephant sales with 10% of the sales going to our division. We will also have our T-Trak layout at the show.

Happy Model Railroading  
Bradley White  
Division 12 MCR Superintendent



**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)

## Meetings

As 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.

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### Next Membership Event:

Our October meeting event will be held at the Salamanca Rail Museum in Salamanca, NY, hosted by Chris Costello. Start time **12:00 Saturday, October 9th**. Event will feature a tour of the museum with updated displays including a layout, speeder rides (\$1.00 cover to benefit museum), and a work-in-process on high rail truck.

Visitors who would like to order any items from JL Innovative for pickup on Saturday should send their requests to Chris at: [chris@jlinnovative.com](mailto:chris@jlinnovative.com) PUT NMRA in the subject line of your email. Payment will be by card at the museum.

Lunch is on your own and available at the Museum from the Wanderer Hut food truck. Chris highly recommends this Polish delight serving freshly made Polish dishes. Check out the Wanderer Hut on line on their Facebook page.

## Division 12 Upcoming Events

October: **Erie Train Show:** Sunday, October 31, 2021 at Rainbow Gardens in Erie. Note: Division 12 will be staffing the concessions as before. We will also need volunteers to man the division table and to provide several hands-on clinics during the show. Look for an announcement regarding volunteer sign-up as the date draws closer.

November: **November Division Meeting Event:** Tour of the Western Pennsylvania Model Railroad Museum layout and the Youngstown Model railroad Association layout. Saturday November 13<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 12 noon at the WPMRM. Details to follow.

January, February, and March 2022: **Zoom hands-on clinics with Clark Kooning, MMR©.** See details later in this newsletter.

## Upcoming Meeting Programs

*To ensure that the membership meetings are of value, please let the leadership know what you would like to see in upcoming meetings by communicating directly with officers or board members.*

## Upcoming Model Railroad Events

October 2-3, 2021: **The Great Berea Train Show.** Sponsored by Division 4, MCR, NMRA. 10 AM-4 PM both days. <https://thegreatbereatrainshow.org/>

October 8–11, 2021: **NER Regional Convention.** Information at: <http://www.millcity21.org/>

October 17, 2021: **Great Batavia Train Show.** Batavia, NY., sponsored by the Genesee Society of Model Engineers. 9:30 AM-3:30 PM <http://gsme.org/More-Train-Show-Info>

October 21–24, 2021: **MER Regional Convention.** Information at: <https://mtclarejct.com/>

October 23–24, 2021: **WNY (Western New York) Layout Tours.** Non-NMRA layout tours in Niagara and Erie Counties in New York

November 20-21, 2021: **WNYRHS Fall Train Show.** Hamburg, NY Fairgrounds November 20th (10am-5pm) & 21st (10am-4pm), 2021. <http://www.trainweb.org/wnyhdc/index.html>



This convention is being sponsored by the Midwest, North Central, and Mid Central Regions of the NMRA. This combined convention will be four days of clinics, layout tours, operating sessions, and more, including a joint convention with the RPM Conference. More information including hotel registration at the convention website: <https://www.indyjunction2022.org/>

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## Division 12 September Meeting Event

September's meeting event was a field trip to the Alco-Brooks Railroad display at the Chautauqua County Fairgrounds in Dunkirk, NY hosted by Division 12 member Roger Schulenberg. The display consists of an 0-6-0 locomotive originally built for the B&M by the Brooks Works in Dunkirk in 1916, a restored outside-sheathed 36-foot D&H boxcar built in 1907, and a restored wooden NYC caboose. A small museum is contained within the boxcar. There were 6 Division 12 members in attendance. Our leisurely visit began at the locomotive, where Roger outlined the history of the engine and its preservation journey to Dunkirk.



After everyone had a chance to explore the loco, especially the cab and an opportunity to ring the bell, we next moved to the boxcar. Roger detailed the history of the car, and its preservation and restoration to the 1922 post-rebuild appearance, including the original Camel door hardware, reversed Hutchins-type end, and Hutchins roof. Once inside, Roger pointed out the interior construction details of this over century-old piece of railroad history. Once our curiosity was satisfied, we moved on to the caboose.

NYC caboose 19224 was built in 1905, and reportedly was used in the Dunkirk area on the Dunkirk, Allegheny Valley and Pittsburgh line of the NYC to Titusville. The caboose has been beautifully restored to active-service appearance both inside and outside by Roger's group, including the seat cushions and caboose stove. After Roger went over the details of the caboose and its preservation, the group had a second opportunity to explore all of the equipment and the enclosed grounds.



After that, it was time to move on to the second half of our event, a visit to Roger's home layout, the Niobe & French Creek. The Niobe & French Creek Railroad is an HO scale layout set in the summer of 1949. Motive power is a mix of steam and diesel. Layout control is by Digitrax DCC radio throttles, and traffic is managed by sequenced trains with car movements governed by car cards and waybills. A video tour of the N&FC can be found on Rob Bennett's YouTube channel here: [Layout Tour: Roger Schulenberg's Niobe & French Creek RR - YouTube](#).

Roger led the group around his railroad, describing the history of the freelanced line and pointing out the many scratchbuilt structures based on local real-life buildings. The highlight of the visit was a “Division 12 fan trip” from the Niobe station to the engine terminal at Alderbottom, led by 4-4-0 engine #6. The group then was able to wander freely around Roger’s layout, shooting photos and asking questions to our hearts’ content. We wrapped up at the N&FC around 3:30 PM.



Since we had some free time before our planned supper at Meeder’s Restaurant in Ripley, NY, the group made a detour to the Railroad Park in Westfield, NY. Listening in to the

CSX frequency on a phone app, we were able to catch both a westbound and an eastbound CSX train over the course of our brief 20-minute stay.

Tummies rumbling, we then wrapped up our day at Meeder's Restaurant with conversation and a fine meal capped by some of Meeder's famous pie. All-in-all, an excellent Division 12 event!

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## January-March 2022 Online Zoom Clinics

The January, February, and March division meeting events will be virtual, given the difficulties with weather and travel during those months. During one of our weekly Thursday night Zoom modeling sessions, Clark Kooning, MMR© offered to present a series of clinics he had previously done with the "Modeling with the Masters" series, involving the construction of a plaster kit (the "First-timer Bar") by Downtown Deco. Clark will proceed step-wise with construction hints and tips, including staining and weathering a hydrocal kit. Downtown Deco will discount the cost of kits for anyone participating, and will also include extra wall sections to practice on. This is a great opportunity to learn some new techniques from a well-known Master Model Railroader. Any division member seeking to participate should order a kit in their desired scale well in advance of the January 2022 online meeting. The kit can be ordered from Downtown Deco at: <https://www.downtowndeco.com/site/>. Make sure you mention that the kit will be used while working with Clark during his clinics.



## Division 12 Ohio Ops Day

Division members were invited to a second September Division event, held on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup>. Division members were invited to participate in op sessions on 2 model railroads in Ohio:

Jerry Jordak's Penn Central E&P Division layout, featuring operations centered around New Castle, PA during the summer of 1969, and Terry Kolenc's Union Pacific layout, set in the Sherman Hill-Cheyenne, WY area in 1978. Jerry's railroad is controlled by Digitrax DCC, and features a variety of through trains, local switching jobs, and yard work. Terry's layout in the current era of 1978 is DC controlled. Terry switches eras periodically, and some eras are controlled by DCC, but in the 1978-era he has too many locomotives to affordably convert. Also of interest are the many locomotives heavily modified to precisely reflect the corresponding UP prototypes of that date. Terry also has copies of actual UP train consists from the era, and every model mainline train has exactly the cars that were in that train on a given day in 1978.

Here, Lee F. holds down the Sharon local on Jerry's PC layout:



Division Super Brad W. acting as Moravia yardmaster has things under control, for now...



Dale D. moves an empty ballast train out of Cheyenne yard past Tower A on Terry Kolenc's UP Sherman Hill layout:



Lee and Dale line up for a photo run-by of a UP steam excursion special:



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## What a Way to Run a Railroad! (Part 3)

This is the third in a series and a continuation of the employment antics of our yard conductor. It gives an inside look into a rail yard through personnel files from the Erie Railroad's Meadville yard in the 1950s through the 1970s. These files were obtained at a recent public auction in Meadville. All names have been deleted or changed to protect the innocent (and in the case of our yard conductor, Mr. X, the not so innocent.)

**The Meadville Yardmaster Files:  
The Case of the Missing Can Opener ... and Pliers ... and Tires ... and ...**

(Note: Last month's installment looked at our yard conductor, Mr. X, in the 1950s up through the early 1960s. This month he is back. But ten years have elapsed and it is now 1970.)

Meadville, PA  
November 9, 1970

Dear Mr. X:

This is an investigation in connection with your alleged removing merchandise from the company property, Meadville, PA as per arraignment in the Office of the District Justice on October 23, 1970. This investigation is being conducted in the Trainmaster's Office, Meadville, PA on Monday, November 9, 1970 at 1000 HRS.

Present at investigation:

Mr. X ... Yard Conductor  
Erie Railroad Captain of Police  
Mr. Y ... Company Witness  
Trainmaster

Trainmaster: Captain, state for the record your knowledge of why this investigation is being conducted today.

Captain of Police: During the recent investigation of the alleged larceny of merchandise from the Erie Lackawanna Railroad Company at Meadville, PA, Mr. X's name was mentioned several times. When I interviewed a company witness, it was stated that Mr. X gave him an electric can opener and that he did not know where Mr. X got it but he presumed it came from the yard.

Trainmaster: Mr. Y, would you state for the record the gist of your statement in regard to the yard conductor, Mr. X.

Mr. Y (Company Witness): We removed a fan, electric heater, vacuum cleaners, and a broiler and one other time he gave me a set of tires, two tires.

Trainmaster: Mr. Y, you stated that "he" gave you a pair of tires. By "he" do you mean Mr. X?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): Yes.

Trainmaster And you also mentioned, Mr. Y, that "we" removed fans, heaters and a broiler which I believe you stated. By "we" do you mean Mr. X and yourself?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): Yes.

Trainmaster: Were these articles you mentioned removed from a car on the railroad property? That is from a railroad car?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): I am not sure about the tires, but the fan, heater, broiler and sweeper were.

Trainmaster: Were these tires given to you on company property?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): Yes. And a couple of pairs of pliers.

Trainmaster: Mr. X, Mr. Y has stated that you presented him with a pair of tires and a couple pairs of pliers and further testimony in regard to fans, heaters, broilers and vacuum cleaners being removed from a railroad car. Would you state for the record what you know of these incidents?

Mr. X: I would like to answer that question some other time.

Trainmaster: Why can you not answer that question now, Mr. X, and you feel that you could answer it later?

Mr. X: I would like to see how this investigation goes before I answer that question.

Trainmaster: Mr. X, the Police Captain has also testified here that you presented an Erie Lackawanna Railroad employee with an electric can opener. Captain, was this statement by this employee made in your presence in regard to an electric can opener?

Captain of Police: Yes sir. I might further add that the can opener did not work. It was apparently being sent back to the factory. It is my supposition that they were apparently defects and they were being sent back to the factory and whoever took them didn't know this.

Trainmaster: Mr. Y, did you happen to remember the brand name of the tires that you say Mr. X presented to you?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): General.

Trainmaster: Would you happen to know the brand name of the sweeper or the other articles described by you?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): Hoover sweeper, Hoover heater, Hoover fan, Hoover broiler.

Trainmaster: Would you know the brand name of the pliers presented to you?

Mr. Y (Company Witness): No.

Trainmaster: Mr. X, our company witness, Mr. Y, also stated that "we", meaning Mr. Y and yourself, removed fans, heaters, broilers, and vacuum sweepers from a railroad car. What can you tell me in relation to this?

Mr. X: Being that I have a court hearing there are things that will be brought out in that hearing that I wish not to disclose at this time.

Trainmaster: Mr. X, am I to understand that you will answer no questions in regard to these articles?

Mr. X: Yes.

Trainmaster: Rule L reads: "In case of danger to the company's property, employees must unite to protect it. Every employee is expected to help prevent untidiness, damage to, or waste of, the company's property." Mr. X, are you familiar with and do you understand this rule?

Mr. X: Yes.

Trainmaster: Rule G-2 reads: "Employees who are dishonest, immoral, vicious, insubordinate, quarrelsome, uncivil in deportment, or who are careless of the safety of

themselves or of others will not be retained in the service." Mr. X, are you familiar with and do you understand this rule?

Mr. X: Yes.

Trainmaster: Rule S-1 reads: "Employees must not sell, disposed of or purchase company material or supplies of any kind without the proper authority." Mr. X, are you familiar with and do you understand this rule?

Mr. X: Yes.

Trainmaster: Mr. X, is it your belief that you are a faithful employee?

Mr. X: Yes.

Trainmaster: Would a faithful employee refuse to answer questions put forth to him in an investigation?

Mr. X: I said that there would be things brought out at the trial which would not be advantageous to mention at this time.

And so the hearing draws to a close, and Mr. X will head to a trial to determine his role in the missing electric can opener, two General tires, Hoover sweeper, Hoover heater, Hoover fan, Hoover broiler and two pairs of pliers. Did anyone mention a partridge in a pear tree? What a way to run a railroad. Just ask the poor Erie Lackawanna yardmaster in the Meadville, Pennsylvania yard.

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## Trackside with Our Members

*Why did you choose N scale over another scale?*

**Bruce Bloomster** - I modeled in HO scale for most of my life. A few years ago I had my basement finished and had to dismantle my latest layout. I decided that I wanted to make my next layout more portable. My wife and I expect to move one more time when we retire, so having a portable layout would make it easier to preserve what I build.

I had toyed around with some small N scale layouts and had been intrigued by the T-Trak modular layouts that had been featured in Model Railroader magazine. It was then that I decided to switch from HO to N and focus on buildings T-Trak modules or small sectional units that can work with them. The other benefit I found with T-Trak was that I can work on projects in places other than my basement. I can build a module at my kitchen table, on the patio, at our club, or even when I'm traveling somewhere on vacation. It's nice to be able to get out of the basement and still enjoy my work. It's also nice to be able to take my work to other places

for people to see. Not everyone can get into my basement, but lots of people can see my work when I take the modules to shows. Another benefit is that I can make modules for different eras and then run equipment from the 1950s to the 2020s more realistically. The only drawback is that I can't be as creative with the track design or try to model specific rail lines that are single tracked. I'm willing to accept this negative compared the other benefits that the change has provided me.

### *What intimidates you about operating sessions on other layouts?*

I haven't done too many operating sessions, so I don't have a lot of experience with them. They don't really intimidate me too much. Here are a few items that I'm cautious about:

-The layout room and physical characteristics: I'm tall. That causes me to always have to be careful that I don't accidentally bump into the layout or hit my head on low hanging ceiling beams or doors.

-DCC consisting: I don't normally run more than 2 locomotives together at home. I'd have to learn how to consist more locomotives for the big trains.

-Using a fast clock for operating schedules: I've never used one and would have to get used to one instead of just freelancing. (Note: the railroads are rarely on-time, so if I'm late I might just be operating prototypically)

-Damaging someone else's equipment: I try to be extra careful when working with equipment that's not mine, but I always worry I'll knock off a handrail or put a fingerprint on a nice paint job.

-Having to use the bathroom when I'm in the middle of a run (I'm old 😊)

### *How did you end up modeling in TT scale?*

**Al Reibel** - I've been asked to describe how I wound up as a TT Scale modeler. There's an old Grateful Dead song that has a line, "What long strange trip it's been", that pretty much sums it up!

I actually started with HO when I was 9 or 10 with brown box Tyco and a mix of Athearn, AHM, etc. I was happy with that up until I went to college and packed everything away. I occasionally would buy something, especially if it was in Erie Lackawanna paint but didn't have a layout of any kind. It wasn't until I got married and purchased our home that the bug bit again.

After we had settled in and I had some spare time I decided to get started back into the hobby. By this time I had become a bit of a prototype modeler (I was heartbroken when I discovered my Bachmann GP 50 in EL paint wasn't accurate) so I sold off most of what I had collected and thought I would start over. My plans for a grand EL themed layout went out the door when I realized I had room for a 10 by 10 shelf layout and that was it. I considered N scale, but I remembered another mid-sized scale from my copy of *The Complete Book of Model Railroading* by David Sutton. It was written in 1964 and I remembered TT being

pictured, so I started doing a little research. There was a website that helped, TTscale.com that unfortunately has gone down, and the new online yard sale called eBay had some listed for sale so I bought some. It wasn't quite what I expected! When I thought of a boxcar kit, I assumed it would be a smaller version of an Athearn blue box, I was wrong.

My first kit arrived, I opened the box and dumped the contents onto my workbench. It consisted of two printed cardboard sides, two odd looking brass trucks and a pile of sticks. I immediately had second thoughts! But I had gotten onto a TT scale email group on Yahoo! Groups and made friends and got a lot of encouragement there. I began to think of it as a challenge. By this time (the late 1990's) original TT scale was 30-40 years old and there wasn't a company making any new U.S TT, but there were several guys that built some amazing models and I was hooked. I was able to get some track from a German company (TT is still common in Europe) and a few locomotives running (and even a few of those old freight kits built!). We actually made slow progress, Lionel produced a set of diecast "collectibles" in 1:120 scale that were unpowered but one of our members is a creative genius and designed a powered chassis for them using parts from one of the German manufacturers. A little later we went together as a group and had a GP38-2 shell produced and one of the small German TT manufacturers did a powered chassis for that. Gold Coast Models did a 1937 AAR boxcar that was actually ready to run, and a Czech company did a RTR SW1200 that made the cover of Model Railroad News a few years back.

Things continue to improve with 3D printed rolling stock available on Shapeways and a few small resin casters. We're still waiting on a few announced projects coming from Europe, but they're underway and should be ready soon. Life is getting better in TT Scale!

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“Until next time, keep `em polished!”

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